

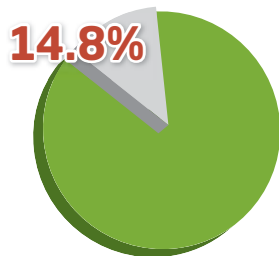
Disability Consultation Report: *Moving Together Toward an Accessible B.C.*

A REFLECTION OF THE VOICES OF
BRITISH COLUMBIANS HEARD DURING
THE DISABILITY WHITE PAPER CONSULTATION

May 2014



Ministry of
Social Development
and Social Innovation



There are about **546,760** people in B.C. who identify as having a disability which represents **14.8 per cent** of British Columbians over **15 years of age**.

Source: Canadian Survey on Disability, 2013, Statistics Canada

About **25 per cent** of British Columbians have a university degree. In comparison, **17 per cent** of people with a disability have a university degree while **33 per cent** have a non-university post-secondary certificate.

Source: Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, 2011, Statistics Canada

The employment rate for people with disabilities is **18 percentage** points lower than for people without a disability.

Source: Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006, Statistics Canada

Contents

Message from the Premier	2	<i>Accessible Transportation</i>	19
Message from the Leadership Team	3	<i>Income Supports</i>	20
Introduction	4	<i>Employment</i>	21
Executive Summary	5	<i>Financial Security</i>	22
United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	6	<i>Inclusive Communities</i>	23
Leadership Team	7	<i>Emergency Preparedness</i>	24
The Consultation Process	8	<i>Accessible Consumer Experience</i>	25
<i>In-person Community Consultations</i>	9	Appendix A: Summary of Ideas Shared	26
<i>Consultation Website</i>	10	Appendix B: List of Community Champions	53
<i>Other Meetings and Roundtables</i>	11	Appendix C: Schedule of In-person Community Consultations ...	58
<i>Conversation Toolkit</i>	11	Appendix D: Schedule of Other Meetings and Roundtables	59
<i>Other Ways to Participate</i>	12	Appendix E: List of Additional Submissions	60
Statistics	12	Appendix F: Moderation Policy	62
Analyzing the Data	13	Appendix G: Minister’s Council Action Plan Framework	64
<i>Open and Transparent Process</i>	13	Appendix H: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms	71
What We Heard	14		
Emerging Themes	15		
<i>Inclusive Government</i>	15		
<i>Accessible Service Delivery</i>	16		
<i>Accessible Internet</i>	17		
<i>Accessible Built Environment</i>	18		
<i>Accessible Housing</i>	18		

Message from the Premier



Our government has set a vision for B.C. to be the most progressive jurisdiction in Canada for people with disabilities.

That means finding the right balance between providing supports to take care of daily needs and encouraging the greatest level of independence possible. B.C. has some of the most comprehensive supports in Canada, but there is always room for improvement.

To better understand how we can move forward in a way that is consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities, and be the most accessible place in Canada, we asked British Columbians what they think needs to be done to increase accessibility and decrease barriers.

We had almost 30,000 visits to our website and close to 1,150 people participated in 23 accessible, in-person consultation sessions around the province. In total, we received more than 7,500 comments, with ideas, suggestions, and solutions.

I want to thank everyone who contributed and joined in this conversation. You opened up and shared your fears, frustrations, and hopes for a better B.C. These are not easy conversations, but you have shared invaluable insights and understanding to move forward in building a more accessible B.C.

One of the themes we heard in every community and across all platforms of this consultation is that people with disabilities want to work and be part of their communities. Our government is building a British Columbia where everyone can participate in the economic prosperity of our beautiful province. A well-paying, stable and secure job is one of the most important contributions to a healthy, strong family.

I look forward to the summit in June and working together to create a more accessible British Columbia.

A handwritten signature of Christy Clark in blue ink. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Christy' and the last name 'Clark' clearly legible.

PREMIER *Christy Clark*

Message from the Leadership Team

Whether you're someone living with a disability, or a friend, family member, neighbour, employer or co-worker, we all have a role to play in supporting people with disabilities to fully participate in our communities.

We have joined together as leaders within government, the disability and business communities to help move B.C. towards becoming accessible for people with disabilities.

Consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities to ensure consultation with persons with disabilities on issues that directly impact them, the comprehensive, three-month public consultation received wide support and participation from community members, with and without disabilities, throughout the province.

All the comments, ideas and solutions shared during the consultation have guided the development of this document about how we can decrease barriers and increase accessibility for people living with disabilities in B.C. Moving Together Toward an Accessible B.C. will become the foundation for a summit that will bring together leaders in the disability community, government and the business community to develop and recommend a plan of action.

We look forward to moving ahead with a shared roadmap that will include short-, medium- and long-term steps that support inclusion and make life easier for people with disabilities in British Columbia.

We hope you find the ideas and solutions shared in this document to be an accurate and authentic reflection of the thousands of comments shared during the consultation process.



Carla Qualtrough
Chair, Minister's
Council on Employment
and Accessibility



Don McRae
Minister of Social
Development and
Social Innovation



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

Introduction

About 550,000 British Columbians identify as having a disability. Almost every British Columbian has a friend, family member, neighbour or co-worker living with a disability. The majority of supports for persons with disabilities are provided by friends and family members—this is an issue that affects almost every British Columbian at some point in their lives.

.....

***Currently, the B.C. government spends over
\$5 BILLION DOLLARS on supports
and services for people with disabilities.***

.....

B.C. has set the vision of becoming the most progressive jurisdiction for people living with disabilities in Canada, reducing systemic barriers faced by people with disabilities in their everyday lives. This can only be achieved by creating a disability strategy that reflects and respects the needs and wants of people living with disabilities in British Columbia and, per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, this must be done in partnership with the disability community.

From Dec. 3, 2013 to March 11, 2014, the B.C. government held a comprehensive public consultation to provide British Columbians living with a disability and their friends, families, community members, disability advocates and employers an opportunity to share their thoughts on what government, businesses and communities can do to reduce barriers and increase accessibility for people living with disabilities.

Government cannot and never has supported the needs of persons with disabilities in isolation—support has always been provided by friends, family members, community, non-profit agencies, government and employers. It's important that all of these groups have the opportunity to share their thoughts on how B.C. can move towards being the most progressive place for people with disabilities to live in Canada.

Currently, the B.C. government spends over \$5 billion dollars on supports and services for people with disabilities. These programs are delivered by ministries across government and a number of Crown agencies and organizations.

Find information about government services available for people with disabilities in B.C. at www.gov.bc.ca/disabilityservices.

Executive Summary

This document is a reflection of the voices of the thousands of British Columbians who participated in the Disability White Paper Consultation from Dec. 3, 2013 through March 11, 2014. It includes opinions, ideas, comments and suggestions put forward about how we, as a society, can increase accessibility and decrease barriers for people living with disabilities in B.C.

The consultation was designed to give people multiple opportunities and ways to participate to make sure everyone had the chance to have their say. Participants were encouraged to be honest and open in their comments, both about what was working and where improvements could be made. The intention of this consultation phase was to get people talking about issues important to the disability community, and often people came to the conversation with conflicting approaches or solutions to challenges.

Twelve dominant themes emerged through this process. They are: Inclusive Government, Accessible Service Delivery, Accessible Internet, Accessible Built Environment, Accessible Housing, Accessible Transportation, Income Support, Employment, Financial Security, Inclusive Communities, Emergency Preparedness, and Accessible Consumer Experience.

The passion, concern, frustration and hopefulness of people with disabilities and their families, friends, neighbours and colleagues was clear throughout this consultation. The opinions, ideas and solutions captured in this document are diverse, rich and insightful. These are not comments from the leadership team, nor are they necessarily reflective of government, the business community or the whole of the disability community. These are the words of British Columbians who came to a consultation session, went online, phoned, emailed, mailed or otherwise took time to join the conversation and have their say about increasing accessibility in B.C.

It should be noted, however, that in some instances participants were not fully aware of the details of programs, services or supports currently in place. There are statements contained in this document that may not be factually accurate, but that nonetheless reflect comments made by participants. Any omissions or misrepresentations of ideas are unintentional. A summary of ideas shared is available in Appendix A.

.....
***“The White Paper discussion is a critical step
in moving the aspects of ACCESSIBILITY and
INCLUSION forward within British Columbia.”***

– participant, consultation blog
.....

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

On March 11, 2010, Canada ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), a historic international treaty that comprehensively recognizes the rights of persons with disabilities.

Canada was one of the first countries to sign the UNCRPD, which guarantees human rights for an estimated 650 million individuals with disabilities around the world.

British Columbia is committed to upholding and safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities and enabling their full participation in society. The rights of persons with disabilities are provided for in Canada’s Constitution, in provincial human rights legislation and in specific laws in a variety of social and economic areas.



British Columbia has made a base commitment to a progressive realization of increased accessibility and reduction of barriers by supporting Canada’s ratification of the UNCRPD. As such, government has a responsibility to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

The UNCRPD commitment includes a commitment to ensuring that any discussion of disability issues be done based on active engagement of the disability community.

.....

***Canada was one of the first countries to sign
the UN Convention on the RIGHTS of
PERSONS with DISABILITIES.***

.....

Leadership Team

The Disability White Paper leadership team was assembled to represent government, the disability community and the business community to support people in B.C. to live the lives they choose.

The leadership team included government, represented by the Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation, the disability community, represented by the *Minister's Council on Employment and Accessibility*, and the business community, represented by the *Presidents Group*.

The Minister's Council on Employment and Accessibility is a forum comprised of members from the business, non-profit, and government sectors as well as families and individuals with disabilities that advises the Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation on solutions and strategies to increase employment and accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The Minister's Council and leaders in the disability community, including the Supporting Increased Participation (SIP) group and the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, assisted in the design and implementation of the consultation and engaged with individuals living with disabilities and their families, friends, caregivers, community members and disability advocates throughout the consultation process.

In September, 2012, the Minister's Council provided the Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation with an Action Plan Framework for supporting increased employment for people with disabilities in B.C.

One of the key recommendations in this Action Plan was for the formation of a Presidents network to support employer leadership. Government acted on this recommendation and formed the Presidents Group to act as an advisory committee to government comprised of business leaders who will create a leadership network of prominent and influential business leaders in B.C. to champion advice, learnings, employment and consumer opportunities and improved outcomes for people with disabilities.

A copy of the Action Plan Framework is available in Appendix G.



The Consultation Process

The goal of the consultation was to engage a broad range of British Columbians from communities all over the province.



The consultation launched on Dec. 3, 2013—International Day for Persons with Disabilities—and closed on March 11, 2014, which is the anniversary of Canada’s ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Representatives from all sectors of the disability community shared their thoughts, feelings and ideas. Family and community members, groups and organizations who have a special interest in disability issues or who serve this particular community also made sure they had their say as part of this process.

Participants who live with a broad spectrum of different disabilities participated in the process. Of those who self-identified as having a disability:

- » 30 per cent of people identified as having emotional or mental challenges
- » 10 per cent of people indicated they had a hidden disability
- » People with mobility issues made up 20 per cent of participants
- » Individuals with developmental disabilities represented 17 per cent of participants
- » People with sensory issues, including Deaf, hard of hearing, Deaf-blind and blind, made up 14 per cent of the participants
- » Eight per cent were people identified as having an intellectual disability

It was important that the voices of Aboriginal people—First Nations, Métis and Inuit—in British Columbia be heard as part of this process. An in-person session was held in Terrace at the Kermode Friendship Society, and Aboriginal people attended a number of the in-person sessions throughout the province.

Unfortunately there were some negative feelings about the use of the term ‘White Paper’ within Aboriginal communities due to painful historical associations with the past use of the term by the Federal government, which may have impacted the level of participation by Aboriginal people in the process.

The British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) assisted in the design and implementation of the consultation.

Understanding some of the issues related to geography and size of community was also an important consideration in the planning process for the consultation. Many of the participation options were available anywhere in the province—mail, phone, email, online—and 10 of the consultation sessions were held in communities outside of Victoria or the Lower Mainland.

The consultation was designed to ensure people had multiple opportunities and ways to participate to ensure everyone had the chance to have their say. Participants were encouraged to be honest and open in their comments, both about what was working and where improvements could be made.

In addition to the 23 in-person sessions held in 15 communities around the province, hundreds of people participated in the consultation by taking the time to post their thoughts on the online forum, host their own conversation using a conversation toolkit, tweet out their thoughts, send emails, make phone calls, or send in written submissions.



IN-PERSON COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

All of the in-person consultation sessions had a lead facilitator, and community champions and facilitators/scribes at each table. Attendees participated in table discussions where the table facilitator took notes and captured all the feedback from that table.

These notes were transcribed and included in the overall collection of data and feedback to inform the development of this report. Participants were also invited to share their solutions for increasing accessibility or cutting red tape using a sticky-note on a Solutions Wall. The community champions helped facilitate the conversations and ensured that everyone had the opportunity to contribute.



.....
***The community champions 116 IN TOTAL
were selected because of their leadership
in the community where they live.***
.....



At every in-person community consultation session, table discussions were led by community champions—community members who understand the issues faced by people with disabilities who volunteered their time to help facilitate in-person discussions. In some locations, additional community champions were asked to step forward at the event when attendance was higher than anticipated. While efforts were made to capture the names of all community champions, there were some who volunteered last-minute, and unfortunately not all of their names were captured and included in the final list.

Throughout the process, the Deaf, hard of hearing and Deaf-blind community provided specific and helpful feedback to improve the accessibility of the Disability White Paper Consultation website and online materials. Their actions resulted in a consultation session specifically for the Deaf, hard of hearing and Deaf-blind community on February 25th.

A list of community champions is available in Appendix B.

The full schedule of in-person community consultation sessions is available in Appendix C.

CONSULTATION WEBSITE

The consultation website—www.engage.gov.bc.ca/disabilitywhitepaper—was the central hub for information about the consultation process, including registration information for the in-person consultation sessions and road stories that provided a synopsis of the community.

The website was also the home for the online consultation forum, which gathered feedback on a blog focused around six key areas. The six discussion areas included, but were not limited to: Innovation, Personal Supports, Work and Contribution, Housing and Accessibility, Social Networks, and Asset Accumulation.

.....

***The consultation website
www.engage.gov.bc.ca/disabilitywhitepaper
was the central hub for information.***

.....

The website continues to be the source for information about the Disability White Paper process. The archived comments and submissions received during the consultation are all available on the website.

OTHER MEETINGS AND ROUNDTABLES

A number of other meetings and roundtables were held throughout the consultation timeframe which provided the opportunity to gather information from specific community or stakeholder groups.

On January 15, 100 members of the disability community met to share their ideas in a five-hour open space forum.

On February 18, about 20 members of the Vancouver Urban Core Community Workers Association met to discuss specific barriers faced by those living with mental health and addiction in the Downtown Eastside.

The mental health and substance use community and their advocates held a workshop on February 24 to identify the barriers experienced by people facing what are sometimes referred to as 'invisible disabilities'.

The Inclusion Powell River Society hosted a community consultation on March 4 where about 50 people came together to share their thoughts on increasing accessibility and decreasing barriers to create a more inclusive society.

The Small Business Roundtable took time on March 7 during their regular quarterly meeting to share ideas about increasing accessibility for people with disabilities for small business, both as employees and as consumers.

A full list of other meetings and roundtables is available in Appendix D.

CONVERSATION TOOLKIT

The Disability White Paper conversation toolkit included everything people needed to host their own conversation with friends, family, community or colleagues on what we, as a society, can do to make B.C. more accessible and inclusive. Toolkits were available for download from the Disability White Paper website.

More than 60 submissions were received from organizations and groups from all around the province. The effort, energy and passion put into the preparation of these submissions is evident. These submissions have been carefully reviewed and will be held by government to be available to all ministries to guide current and future policy and program development.

All submissions were considered in the development of this document and are available in full on the website.

OTHER WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

In order to be as inclusive as possible, there were many options for participating in the consultation process. In addition to the in-person community consultation sessions, the online forum and the conversation toolkits, British Columbians could also submit their ideas by:

- » Email
- » Regular mail
- » Phone line and TDD
- » Tweet
- » Videotaped message

A list of additional submissions is available in Appendix E.

Statistics

Summary of participation:

- » Attendance at 23 in-person sessions in 15 communities: **1,149**
- » Visits to consultation website: **27,965**
- » Average site visit: **7:56 minutes**
- » Downloads of Conversation Toolkit: **696**
- » In-person suggestions: more than **4,500**
- » Solutions wall posts: **1,650**
- » Online comments: **1,103**
- » Other submissions (including email, regular mail, phone messages, Conversation Toolkits and submissions from organizations): **405**
- » Mentions on Twitter: **1,281**

Analyzing the Data

Thousands of comments were received from British Columbians who attended in-person community consultations, commented on the online blog, phoned, sent emails or mail, or tweeted using #disabilitybc. Written submissions from organizations and groups were also submitted.

Every comment, submission, email, tweet and post was read. Specialized software was used to help sift through the ideas. The software tracked all of the comments and sorted them into themes. The software helped identify who said what in different parts of the province, and whether different groups have different or similar ideas.

.....

The White Paper team read through every COMMENT, SUBMISSION, EMAIL and TWEET.

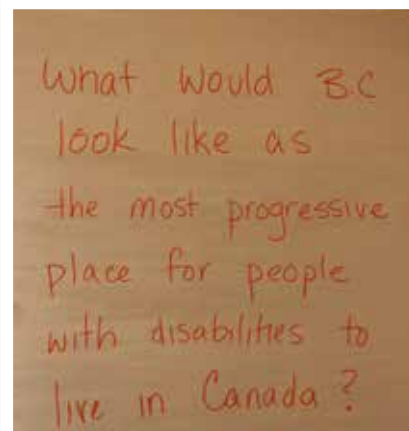
.....

OPEN AND TRANSPARENT PROCESS

Submissions made during the Disability White Paper Consultation were made publicly available on the consultation website as part of the reporting out process. No matter how people participated—online, in person, by phone, over email, through social media, by submitting a toolkit or by other means—all submissions were included for consideration.

In instances when publishing information would do harm to an individual or organization, submissions were modified to remove identifying or harmful information prior to posting.

Blog comments were moderated according to the government moderation policy, which is available in Appendix F.



What We Heard

The resounding messages from British Columbians through this consultation are that people want to be involved in increasing accessibility and decreasing barriers in British Columbia, and that there is much work that needs to be done.

The consultation posed four questions for participants to use as a guide to get the conversation started:



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

The Disability White Paper Consultation was organized around, but not limited to, six areas: Innovation; Personal Supports; Work and Contribution; Housing and Accessibility; Social Networks; and Asset Accumulation. While these six areas were helpful in providing some structure to the conversation, they were not meant to be restrictive and participants were encouraged to comment on any issue or topic important to them.



Emerging Themes

As the ideas flowed in, themes began to emerge.

These themes include: Inclusive Government; Accessible Service Delivery; Accessible Internet; Accessible Built Environment; Accessible Housing; Accessible Transportation; Income Support; Employment; Financial Security; Inclusive Communities; Emergency Preparedness; and Accessible Consumer Experience.

The full list of ideas is available in Appendix A.

INCLUSIVE GOVERNMENT

One of the themes that emerged through the consultation process is the desire for more inclusive government for people with disabilities. The idea of inclusive government—the belief that all people have the right to participate in government processes and influence decisions that affect them—is consistent with the UNCRPD commitment to involvement of persons with disability in decisions affecting them. Inclusive government also results in more accessible, accountable and responsive government, particularly around issues important to vulnerable populations.

Many people were concerned that individuals and families have no direct say in policy development. Suggestions brought forward by participants to create a more inclusive government structure included looking at other jurisdictions that have disability legislation in place and determine if a similar model could work in B.C. In particular, the American and Ontario accessibility legislation were held up as examples. As well, participants stressed the importance of a fully accessible voting system to ensure people with disabilities could more easily register and vote.

There were a number of people who attended the in-person sessions with their guide or service dogs. Implementing legislation around the rights of people who require guide or service dogs was a suggestion brought forward by participants to help decrease issues and challenges faced by people requiring service dogs in B.C.

Another suggestion that came up quite often was for government to demonstrate its commitment to accessibility by creating a disability ministry or centralized disability or accessibility office.



There was a lot of discussion around having a hub or centralized place where individuals with disabilities and their families could access and share information, find out about resources and services, and provide feedback on policies and decisions. Many participants at the in-person consultation sessions were supportive of the idea of having ongoing discussions within their communities and with government, as the idea-sharing and connections made at the in-person sessions were quite valuable.

ACCESSIBLE SERVICE DELIVERY

Accessible service delivery is about providing services and supports to British Columbians in a straightforward, easy to access and fully accessible way, with options for how a person chooses to interact with government to receive those services.

Many felt that front-line workers are not always trained and equipped to treat people with disabilities in a respectful, appropriate manner. Better education and awareness for civil servants, teachers and employers would help to raise people's understanding of disability issues and accommodation needs.

.....

At a community level, many people felt the in-person sessions helped to foster CONNECTIONS WITHIN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES with people from different service agencies and organizations, as well as with government.

.....

Participants frequently commented that it was exhausting to have to explain again and again what their disability entailed to different government organizations and asked for government to share information across ministries.



Frequently, people talked about the difficulty of effectively navigating through and between government services and programs, and the low awareness of the supports available. This navigation challenge was identified both in the online environment as well as physically between different locations and offices. Many people thought that having a fully accessible, one-stop hub or directory of resources and services was a smart idea. This was particularly important for people facing transitions, such as youth to adulthood and later in life into seniors' services.

At a community level, many people felt the in-person sessions helped to foster connections within their own communities with people from different service agencies and organizations, as well as with government. Many agreed that having more dialogues to share ideas and information at the local level, as well as on larger government issues, would be beneficial.

A common concern was that people with disabilities do not have choices about how best they can be served and how they use the resources. Many people believe that individualized funding or consumer-shaped programs work best for people with disabilities and asked for more ability to use funding in a way that meets their needs.

Participants from the Deaf community highlighted the importance of having American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters available.

A number of people also identified a gap in funding for people with disabilities who need supports, particularly personal supports, but who are not receiving disability assistance.

First Nations participants were concerned about the stress caused by the disparity in services between on and off reserve.

For people with mental health issues, many expressed that it's not appropriate for people to have to reach a crisis stage before they can access help or services. Establishing a service line for those with mental health issues before they reach crisis level was suggested by participants as an option for people with mental health needs. As well, they identified improving access to psychologists and other mental health clinicians as a priority.



ACCESSIBLE INTERNET

Social isolation and the inability to access information online are significant barriers for many people with disabilities.

A number of participants felt that Internet costs were too high for people with little or no money to spare. For people in rural or isolated communities where there are few other ways to connect, they felt that reliable and affordable access to the Internet is a necessity. Subsidies for Internet costs were suggested, especially in rural B.C., to help reduce isolation and support community connection.

Participants also felt that people with disabilities could have more opportunities to work remotely as long as they had reliable Internet access. Some people identified the lack of assistive technology to help them interact and communicate online as another barrier.

Accessible website and access to information was a common theme. Many participants felt that government had a strong responsibility to ensure that all government websites and information are fully accessible. Barriers were identified specifically by the Deaf and Deaf-blind community around accessibility issues with government websites.

ACCESSIBLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Our built environment includes everything from buildings and sidewalks to parks and recreational facilities to public spaces in neighbourhoods and cities. Anywhere humans have modified the landscape to support daily activities would be considered part of the built environment.

Many people from all areas of the province voiced concerns about the B.C. building code. There were concerns that the code was not being properly enforced, and comments that the building code needs to be updated to include more universal design features for public spaces, and a focus on 'visitability'.

.....

*Anywhere humans have **MODIFIED** the **LANDSCAPE** to support daily activities would be considered part of the **BUILT ENVIRONMENT.***

.....

A number of people felt that municipal leaders need to consult more with the disability community in order to better understand accessibility in their communities. The idea of city councillors touring their communities using canes, wheelchairs and other mobility aids to increase their understanding of the issues and challenges was suggested, but generally people felt that people with disabilities should be the ones assessing building accessibility.



ACCESSIBLE HOUSING

Throughout the consultation, many people were focused on issues relating to accessible, affordable, available housing. In the smaller communities, many people were concerned about the urban-rural divide and stressed the importance of addressing housing issues throughout the province.

There was a general feeling among participants that there is a significant lack of accessible, affordable housing and that there are no incentives for landlords

to create affordable, accessible rental units. Many people thought that if builders could be educated on the benefits of an adaptable, affordable house, they could use it as a selling feature. One way to show them would be to create a model accessible house to showcase how design and accessibility work together.

Participants identified the need for a central registry of accessible housing and rental units. As well, many expressed that people with disabilities had difficulties getting landlords to rent to them. People suggested creating supports to help people with disabilities when they first move out of their family home or supported housing to help them establish a rental history and smooth the transition towards independence.



People with disabilities were quite concerned about quality and safety related to segregated, low-cost housing. Suggestions to address these concerns included a portable rent subsidy, more access to mixed use, co-housing facilities and providing tax incentives or funding programs to encourage homeowners to make suites accessible. Participants felt that more communal-type, mixed-ability housing options would help to create stronger communities and promote independence.

Many participants also said that more funding for in-home supports and renovations is needed so people can adapt their homes to accommodate their disabilities.

“Visitability” was an issue frequently brought up through the consultation—which is about how easy it is for people with disabilities to visit other places in their community. Many people felt that requiring accessible features in new housing developments and making sure homes have at least one accessible entrance would help to increase visitability for everyone.

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION

In every area of the province, particularly in smaller communities, there were many conversations, comments and ideas shared around the need for safe, accessible and affordable transportation.

Most people believe that HandyDART provides a valuable service, but many feel the hours of operation are too limited and the routes are insufficient. The same concerns were raised in smaller communities around the regular public transit system. People were concerned that restricted access to public transportation meant people with disabilities were unable to accept on-call work assignments or participate in spontaneous social activities. The identified solutions were to extend transit hours in rural communities later in the evening and increase the frequency over the weekends and holidays.

For those who travel with an attendant, concerns were raised that often attendants have to pay to travel on public transit with individuals needing their services, which is an undue financial burden. Participants also identified the need for access to modified vehicles, whether for personal use or for community use, like a taxi.

For the Deaf and hard of hearing community, concerns were raised about the accessibility of public transportation and the need for visual cues, alerts and closed captioning to ensure all riders have the information they need to safely and easily access public transportation.

INCOME SUPPORTS

Income supports for people in British Columbia are delivered through the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation. As of March 2014, there were 90,799 people with the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) designation receiving disability assistance in B.C.

One issue that arose throughout the consultation was the call for an increase in disability assistance rates. A number of suggestions were put forward to address this issue, including establishing an evidence-based system to assess and set the disability assistance rates, aligning rates with Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement, and indexing rates to inflation.

Other comments relating to income supports included the call for more exemptions, help navigating the system, better transition supports into employment, and a separation between ‘welfare’ and people with disabilities. Expanding the B.C. Bus Pass Program to include all persons with disabilities in B.C. was suggested by a number of individuals.

People also asked for consideration of additional exemptions and increased asset limits as possible options for easing the financial pressure for people on disability assistance and providing them with more opportunity to build some wealth. One suggestion that was heard often was that single parents receiving disability assistance should be able to keep child support payments.

To ensure people with disabilities are accessing all supports and services for which they are eligible, participants brought forward the idea of a navigator or one-stop shop with information about all government supports and services. It was suggested that family caregivers save the government a lot of money in unpaid services and support, and more support and respite is needed for those families where parents or children have a disability.

There were many comments that people with disabilities need a better transition process to move off disability assistance into work. People want to be able to move into employment for a trial period without losing benefits, housing subsidies and bus passes. As well, many participants identified that there are many people who do not qualify for disability assistance but who need supports—these people make up the “grey areas” of disability.

EMPLOYMENT

In every community consultation, in many submissions and on every blog, one thing came through loud and clear—people with disabilities want to work and participate in their communities.

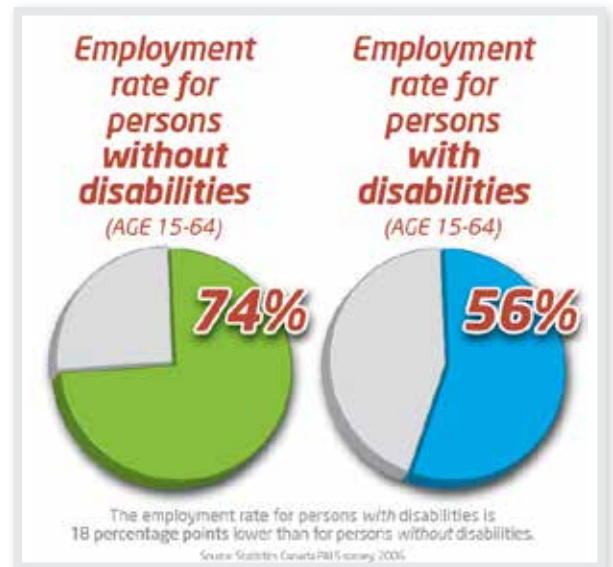
People identified many barriers that made it difficult for people with disabilities, including mental illness, to secure employment. These barriers include a lack of understanding and fear in the business community about hiring people with disabilities, rigid job descriptions that are not flexible to accommodate people with disabilities, and barriers in the initial screening process that filter out people with disabilities.

Many people felt that better education for employers about hiring and retaining people with disabilities was necessary. Employers raised concerns about cost of accommodations, costs of training and possible attendance issues related to employees with disabilities. Better collaboration and engagement between government and the business community was recommended.

A number of British Columbians also identified a lack of access to assistive technology as a major barrier to employment. Increased funding for assistive technology, creation of a central fund for supports and assistive technology, better transition of technology from school to work and innovation in technology solutions were ideas frequently heard for addressing this barrier.

Ideas to better equip people with disabilities to compete in the workplace included full access to education and training programs, decreased or subsidized tuition fees, better transition supports to help people move from education into the workforce, and awareness and diversity training for teachers and instructors.

.....
***In every community consultation,
in many submissions and on every
blog, one thing came through loud
and clear—PEOPLE with DISABILITIES
WANT to WORK and PARTICIPATE
in THEIR COMMUNITIES.***
.....



A prominent theme emerged regarding the role of the Employment Program of BC and the services being provided to people with disabilities. Many people felt that the one-stop WorkBC Employment Services Centre (ESC) model needed to be further modified to effectively assist people with disabilities. Some participants indicated they do not believe referrals are being made where needed to specialized service providers, and concerns were raised that some WorkBC ESCs were not fully accessible.

People felt strongly that government needs to lead by example in hiring and retaining people with disabilities, and that people with disabilities need to be more fully recognized and supported within the BC Jobs Plan.

FINANCIAL SECURITY

Having the ability to build wealth and establish a level of financial security can give people living with disabilities and their families comfort, knowing that resources will be available for necessary services and supports.

Family and friend caregivers provide more than 80 % of care

needed by individuals with long-term disabilities in Canada—estimated at **\$5 billion** in unpaid labour annually to the health care system.



Source: Fast, J., Niehaus, L., Eales, J., & Keating, N. 2002a, A profile of Canadian chronic care providers

A number of suggestions were brought forward through the consultation process to help people with disabilities achieve more financial security and gain financial independence. Participants also requested a financial orientation package for people with disabilities, and supports to help people better manage their money.

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

There was a lot of confusion and misinformation about RDSPs expressed throughout the consultation process. Many people thought that greater awareness and access to information about RDSPs and other financial instruments would help people with disabilities to better prepare for the future.

Creating a centre of excellence for financial management and creating incentives, like exempting RDSPs from seizure under the Court Order Enforcement Act, were suggestions for encouraging participation. Many expressed frustration that the federal government uses the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) as the front gate for eligibility for RDSPs.

Incentives to build wealth, like insurance and access to tax credits, were suggested. As well, several people expressed that government should be encouraging and supporting people with disabilities to purchase their own homes by working with the banks to help people with disabilities access mortgages. It was also suggested that people with RDSPs should be able to borrow from their RDSPs for down payments to purchase a home, similar to the RSP Home Buyers Plan.

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Every British Columbian wants the opportunity to fully participate in their community and be valued for their contribution.

Most participants agreed that there continues to be a stigma around people with disabilities, including children with disabilities and people with hidden disabilities such as mental illness and addiction. Participants suggested an education campaign to help people understand more about disabilities and the contributions that people with disabilities can make to our society. Sharing success stories and creating disability awareness programs in schools and workplaces were ideas that were heard most often about how to break through the stigma.

.....
...there needs to be more
COMMUNITY CONNECTION
BETWEEN PEOPLE
with **DISABILITIES**
whether virtual or in person.
.....

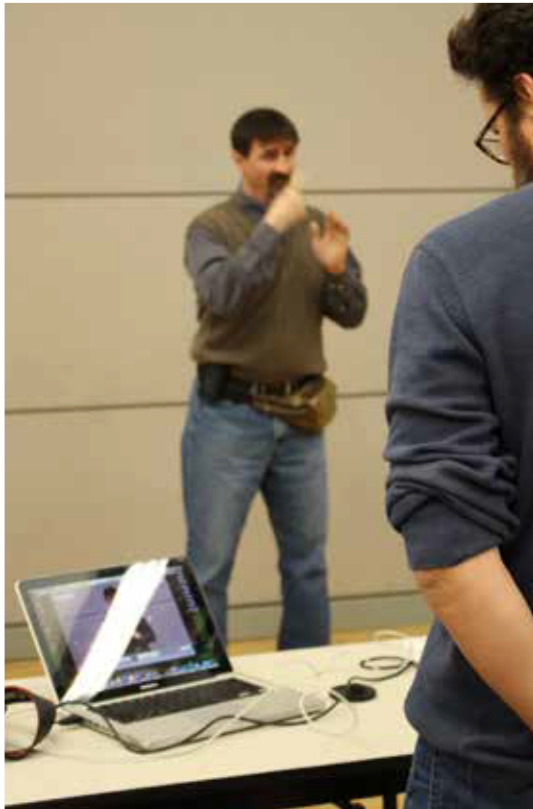


Many people said that there needs to be more community connection between people with disabilities—whether virtual or in person. Creating an online forum for sharing stories, ideas, experiences and resources was championed as a way to create this community gathering space. Frequently the idea of creating a mentorship program so people with disabilities can connect with others who live with disabilities was shared as a way to create connections and increase inclusion.

The importance of access to recreation, travel and leisure activities was a common theme. Most people felt that sports and recreation was critical to quality of life, and making sure funding and accessibility was in place to support this was a priority. People talked a lot about the importance of having access to personal supports and assistive technology to ensure full participation in community life, as well as work life.

To promote tourism, participants felt that all facilities—hotels, parks, fitness facilities or amusement parks—should be viewed through a disability lens to ensure accessibility and affordability for people with disabilities. To help people with disabilities know in advance if a facility or activity was accessible, the suggestion was made to create an ‘accessibility ratings program’ or disability standard certification.

The Deaf, hard of hearing and Deaf-blind community talked about some unique challenges they face related to every day communication. If a Deaf or Deaf-blind person does not have access to an ASL interpreter to help them with their everyday functions such as banking and shopping, they are at a significant communications disadvantage. Many agreed that creating a pool of interpreters for the Deaf community would be very helpful in closing the communications gap. As well, the Deaf community wants to be able to communicate using Video Relay Service in Canada using the same model as they have in the U.S.



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Making sure British Columbians with disabilities are prepared in the event of an emergency was a common issue during the consultation.

The Deaf and hard of hearing community raised concerns about the lack of visual emergency supports and alerts for people who are unable to hear the audible warnings. For many participants, there was a general impression that evacuation plans do not include provisions for people with disabilities.

Suggested solutions included requiring higher emergency preparedness and planning for people with disabilities to include evacuations, communications, provision of medications, etc., and ensuring that all planning committees include people with disabilities, including representatives from agencies working with the disability community.

Participants also felt that emergency plans should be reviewed and updated annually.

ACCESSIBLE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

Having the ability to choose where to shop, eat and travel was an issue heard throughout the consultation.

Participants shared stories about not knowing in advance whether the restaurant they're joining friends at can accommodate their needs or that the hotel they've booked really has the accessible features they need in the room. The embarrassment of showing up to meet friends and having a staircase with no lift was a common story told.

Others raised concerns about difficulties reading menus and navigating online shopping websites.

People were also concerned with the lack of understanding and accommodation provided by many shops and services. Inaccessible entrances and washrooms, no lifts in the change rooms, staff that were rude or dismissive, and not being able to see or reach merchandise were some of the concerns raised.

Barriers like inaccessible pathways to scenic viewpoints, hotel rooms that don't accommodate mobility aids and lack of accessible public transportation and taxis all make it difficult for people with disabilities to travel and spend their tourist dollars in B.C.

People felt that more government and business collaboration would be helpful here.

Companies that have created accessible shopping experiences, restaurants and hotels were warmly identified.



APPENDIX A: *Summary of Ideas Shared*

- » Allocation of disability resource services need to be optimally allocated across disabilities.
- » The disability assistance rate should be in line with Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement, about \$1200-\$1300 per month, and indexed to inflation.
- » An evidence-based system needs to be used to assess and set the disability assistance rates.
- » Funding for education to be transferrable to all programs and classes.
- » Government needs to hire and train individuals of all types of disabilities to help other people with disabilities.
- » Enact strong, effective, and enforceable provincial disability legislation through the creation of an Accessibility for British Columbians with Disabilities Act.
- » More funding to cover the cost of therapy sessions.

Greater awareness and use of 'PERSON FIRST' language.

- » The BC Jobs Plan should be expanded to meet the employment needs of those outside the current labour market because of disabilities, literacy challenges, and other challenges and barriers to employment.
- » Separate Welfare from Disability Assistance.
- » Money from child support payments, inheritances and contributions from family should not be docked from disability assistance payments.
- » Employees with disabilities should have the flexibility to adjust their work schedule to accommodate their disability.
- » WorkBC Employment Services Centres should do outreach with post-secondary institutions to work with students with disabilities and offer career counselling.
- » The government needs to lead by example and communicate to all community members that all individuals no matter what their ability are valued members of our society.
- » Recognize child support maintenance as income, and therefore eligible for \$800 exemption.
- » Create a registry so emergency personnel immediately know if they're responding to a person with a disability, and have access to relevant information.
- » Allow two classes of bank accounts—one PWD account which must remain under \$5,000 to retain PWD status, and one exempt earned income account which can exceed \$5,000 but allows for earnings accumulation toward life supports.

- » Improve benefits research services for First Nations on PWD benefits, especially regarding the details of medical coverage.
- » Consider a laundry supplement on top of existing benefits.
- » Create a service similar to the U.S. food stamp program, only these food stamps are only to be used towards to purchase of fresh foods and healthy options.
- » Ensure staff are aware of and present the Annualized Earnings Exemption program to clients.
- » Increase asset accumulation limits to allow people to save for their own care.
- » Deaf blind should receive higher rates.
- » CPP benefits should not be clawed back from benefits.
- » Increase support for children whose parents have committed suicide as a result of mental illness.
- » Set a standard of 24 hours for approval of urgent requests.
- » Use the cheque stub for PWD benefits as a way to communicate opportunities and program information to people with disabilities--e.g. job opportunities, learning opportunities, benefit information sessions.
- » Innovation can only be achieved if the basics are covered first, including food, shelter, adequate income and transportation.
- » Review PWD earning allowance for families with children.
- » Explore the Australian model of delivering benefits that affords people more personal control over how their funds are spent.
- » Review funding rates for all children with special needs.
- » Ensure equitable funding.
- » Simplify the rules around trust accounts.
- » Train emergency planning networks on issues for persons with disabilities.
- » Use technology for emergency call outs.
- » Interpreters available in case of emergency.
- » Be inclusive of special needs throughout the emergency plans, not as an appendix.
- » Train emergency planning networks on issues for persons with disabilities.
- » Ensure material to communicate about emergencies is fully accessible.
- » Build a data base for people who can help the vulnerable during an emergency.
- » Have a budget for emergency management.
- » Understand the roles of different levels of government in emergency management.
- » Require emergency plans to be reviewed publicly and annually.
- » Create certification for service dogs—card with picture of dog and owner, with chip.
- » Service animals should be admitted everywhere, including workplaces.

- » If someone with a disability has assets and needs help managing those assets, the government should appoint private companies to help them.
- » Much greater simplicity and generosity must be extended to people with developmental disabilities if they are indeed to make the full contribution to society of which they are capable.
- » In certain situations where it is in the best interest of the individual, parents should be paid as caregivers.
- » Protect RDSPs from bankruptcy.
- » Legislation should mandate that B.C.'s Individualized Funding system be administered by the Ministry of Finance (not by the Health Authorities, CLBC or the Ministry of Children and Family Development).

.....

***“It’s not every day that most people get the
OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A PROFOUND IMPACT
on their community, let alone their province.” – blog quote***

.....

- » More education and awareness is needed about Deaf and Deaf-blind cultural group with their own language (ASL / LSQ if Quebecois), experiences, and values.
- » Develop workshops to better understand those who have different learning and comprehension abilities.
- » Government should put people with disabilities in charge of service planning for people with disabilities.
- » Hard of hearing people who wear hearing aids could benefit from more hearing assistance, i.e. hearing Loops, in many public places.
- » Hearing aids for people at all life stages, including seniors.
- » Speech processors are a necessity and should be funded in the same way as other supports such as wheelchairs.
- » Funding for Deaf-blind intervenor services.
- » People with disabilities should not lose benefits when in hospital.
- » Increase awareness and understanding around the abilities of parents with disabilities to care for their children.
- » Changing views leads to changing society—we are humans first.
- » Government websites need to use more plain language and provide information in accessible formats, including ASL. (WCAG 2.0)

.....

**“What I observed during the White Paper discussions were
CARING PEOPLE CALLING OUT FOR CHANGE
and I think that’s what led to the robust response for input.”**

– participant, consultation blog

.....

- » All public agencies and all businesses should have accessibility plans, and require annual review of these plans.
- » Ensure proper equipment is available to evacuate special needs passengers off a ship in an emergency, and crews have the proper training in all cases to assist these passengers.
- » Aboriginal people feel that they are disabled in the eyes of the ministry just by virtue of being Aboriginal.
- » In order for British Columbia to be as barrier free as possible, it will require a significant mindset change within local, provincial, federal, and Aboriginal government, and within community with an investment in both time and funding, and not on the short term but an ongoing practice and policy.
- » Accessible, visitable communities.
- » Review all provincial government programs and funding to be inclusive for people with disabilities, seniors, children, Aboriginals, etc.
- » More support for Aboriginal families, especially delivered in the community.
- » Offer tax credits and incentives for investing in businesses and social enterprises that employ at least 25 per cent of their workforce from targeted groups: Aboriginal, new immigrants, youth-at-risk, persons with disabilities, etc.
- » Need to increase funding for travel for medical appointments and purposes.
- » The word ‘white paper’ is a trigger for Aboriginal people, as it references a federal document from the 1960s which was seen by Aboriginals as a map towards final integration of their cultures—there is definite dearth of aboriginal content/postings online.
- » Provide better personal supports to those who need help with paperwork, such as a worker or navigator who can verbally collect the information and then do the written part themselves.
- » People with disabilities are among the most vulnerable members of our population, and if costs a little extra in the short term to see that they’re being looked after I think it’s worth it.
- » Research shows it’s cheaper to look after and properly support people with disabilities than it is to not look after them.
- » Government programs and services need to be person-centred, not program-centred.

- » People with disabilities should have the ability to select and hire their care workers or service providers.
- » Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative is working well and should be continued.
- » Navigators with specific areas of speciality would be beneficial.
- » For some people with disabilities, phone trees are frustrating and confusing.
- » Need to provide supports for those who have no help to access the system.
- » Simplify and streamline applications—one application for all programs (federal and provincial).
- » Consistent PWD designation for all provinces/federal (transferrable).
- » Shelter rates need to be increased - the cost of housing in communities all around B.C. are much more than the shelter allowance.
- » Streamline process for medical supplies.
- » Access to fitness programs, along with specific exercises, trainers and equipment.
- » Integrate services so that people do not have to deal with multiple organizations, some of whom are competing for limited funding.
- » Dental policy needs revision so people are not forced to have teeth pulled instead of proactive treatment.
- » BC Services Card should have option to include disability information.
- » Need support for seniors peer support program/online forum.
- » Need to expand programs that support practical solutions for healthy living like CSIL (Choice and Support for Independent Living) and EATI.
- » More funding for extended benefits like hearing aids, dental, glasses.
- » Amend the Residential Tenancy Act so that if an individual has the support of a healthcare professional who states they need a pet for their mental well-being they cannot be denied housing, so long as it does not cause undue hardship.
- » Look at the real costs of housing and create a made in B.C. rate system.
- » Eligibility for HAFI should be expanded to be based more on need rather than income and value of the individual's residence.
- » There needs to be a better way to investigate potential abuse of the disability system.
- » Return the RRAP program to something that helps the disabled directly.
- » Develop apartment buildings where there is rented commercial space underneath and apartments above with a mixture of typical and special needs housing—a common kitchen where they can cook and have meals together and yet still have their own apartment.

- » Supports for people with disabilities that are already working but still considered low income. I.e. rental grants and bylaws that keep rent fees from increasing for persons with disabilities.
- » Encourage developers to build accessible housing.
- » Updating and enforcing building codes and practices to incorporate Universal Design and 'visitability' into all practices.
- » Need to be proactive about the housing needs of aging baby boomers and individuals with mobility challenges.
- » Need a shared vision for housing in B.C.
- » More funding for HAFI.
- » Adopt the city of Vancouver adaptable housing bylaw for the whole province with the addition of one accessible path to one entrance of all new dwellings.
- » Require at least 5 per cent of new housing to be fully wheel chair accessible.
- » Have a portable housing subsidy available to all people with disabilities to ensure housing is affordable and there is choice in where to live.
- » Adopt CMHC flex housing standard that can be adopted by cities and municipalities throughout B.C. if they wish.
- » More housing for mentally ill.
- » Incentives for building to include social housing in their developments.
- » Adopt a "housing first" philosophy.
- » Promote a "ready to rent" program, including education for landlords.
- » Incentive to landlords to do renovations to increase accessibility.
- » Make universal design and accessible housing information available to developers.
- » Assist theatre companies in meeting the 2-for-1 ticket price standard with rebates for tickets purchased.
- » Assist arts organizations in making their websites accessible and compatible with screen readers, magnifiers and other tools used by people who are visually impaired.
- » Enlist a disabled person to go around with people who inspect, approve, and rate tourism facilities, with an eye to accessibility issues in those facilities.
- » B.C. should become a centre of excellence in accessible hotel design, and focus new hotel builds with accessible requirements.
- » All public meeting places, arenas, gymnasiums and other such athletic facilities should be accessible not just to get in and out, but to be able to have hand rails that allow a more open seating choice for those who can walk with or without canes or crutches, i.e. hand rails in all arenas and theatres.

- » All venues such as parks, day use areas, highway rest stops, campgrounds or forestry backcountry rustic campsites and day use areas, whether government or private ownership be equipped with fully accessible toilet facilities.
- » Have shelter subsidies for those who choose not to live in a specific BC Housing—give individuals the choice of where to live.
- » More housing options for single people.
- » Easier or assisted transition from one type of housing to a more appropriate situation as a person's needs change.
- » Accessible sport facilities, such as gyms, recreation centres and sports arenas should be in all communities.
- » Update building code to account for larger mobility assistive devices.
- » Update the building code to ensure that all fire alarm systems include visual as well as auditory alarms.
- » Consider multi-unit buildings provide storage space for electric mobility assistive devices such as scooters, and recharging capabilities.
- » Educate construction industry about accessible housing.
- » Be transparent in decision-making so people understand why and how decisions are made regarding their funding, housing, or other supports or services.
- » The word disability is descriptive for inability—must change if attitudes are to change.
- » People without so called “disabilities” need to maintain an open mind, be respectful and welcoming. People with so called “disabilities” need to continue to have an open mind, respectful, and welcoming.
- » People with disabilities need to communicate with others about their needs, limitations, and abilities as no one knows what it is like to live in each person's shoes regardless of disabilities or not.
- » Disabled tourism in North America was worth 14 Billion dollars. B.C. needs to be accessible to attract accessible tourism.
- » Be able to book accessible hotels, etc.
- » The experience of air travel should be improved to make it more seamless for people to get on board, to get priority seating and manage special diets.
- » Signage in businesses can be improved to help people with challenges to navigate.
- » Hotels could be clearer about what kinds of accommodations are available to help disabled travellers make better choices.
- » Create an identification card program like the Leisure Access card or Access 2 Entertainment that could be presented to any organization or business that wishes to offer discounts to clients with disabilities.
- » Schools need to create an environment where students with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect.

- » Need to design programs that include people with disabilities as part of the community, not as a community unto themselves.
- » Joe’s Table is an intentionally inclusive environment, with employees from all abilities represented by their staff.
- » Once employers are able to see past the disability and realize that individuals with disabilities are able to contribute in real, tangible, cost effective ways they will begin to approach the relationship as an employer and not a charitable cause.
- » These WorkBC one-stop shops need to understand that people with disabilities take longer to serve than other clients.
- » B.C. needs to raise the PWD rate to at least what Alberta receives or better in order to be the most progressive place in Canada for people and families living with disabilities.
- » More available information for people with disabilities to find accessible businesses—the Planat project was cited as a means for people to find out about accessible businesses and travel accommodations.
- » I am very grateful for the assistance that is out there for people.
- » The \$800 earnings exemption and annualized earning exemption model are good initiatives, and should be expanded to help people with disabilities feel confident that they can try to work without losing their benefits.
- » Applicants for disability assistance should have to also apply for other programs like CPP, EI or Worker’s Compensation to ensure they don’t miss out on any benefits.
- » B.C. needs to have qualified workers doing Disability applications, not clerks.
- » The \$800 a month earning exemption should be raised.
- » PWD benefits need to be increased to encourage healthy living and hope for the future.
- » There needs to be some adaptation of price or income tax deductible for specific devices that are required by people with disabilities.

.....
***“If there are going to be any changes in the way
 that people are perceived with disabilities
 THERE NEEDS TO BE A CHANGE IN ATTITUDES.”***
– participant, Vancouver consultation wrap-up video

- » People in businesses should be able to access sensitivity training or advice to understand how to improve the consumer experience of people with diverse needs.
- » All shops and services need to be fully accessible to people with disabilities.

- » Online shopping sites need to be accessible.
- » Funding agencies should review funding models to include provision for the use and development of technology based tools.
- » Technology, and the required funding, is a large part of a school based experience and this needs to be expanded for programs and services for adults with disabilities.
- » Allow internet voting in B.C.
- » Create a program which automatically sorts and categorizes relevant information for access to individualized services: age, mental and physical challenges, employment or unemployed, income level, job skills and experience, education and size of family, etc.
- » Partner with major service providers such as TELUS to increase access to telephones and low rates.
- » Provide incentives to encourage new and innovative methods of making our communities more accessible.
- » Include disability information on BC Services Card or driver's licence so people can easily communicate their disability information to programs, police, universities and ferries. Saves filling out numerous forms and getting doctor signatures.
- » Develop programs where people can visit "companion" programs, like Big Brother's program.
- » One central place or website for access to support networks.
- » Offer video relay service in Canada.
- » Centralized place for information about available and new technology.
- » Text enabled 911 services.
- » Interpreters should readily available for emergencies.
- » Online network where people can share self-developed solutions to day to day challenges rather than have to rely on organizations.
- » Make sure government documents are readable for all—plain language, large print options, etc.
- » CAP-TEL needs to be brought to B.C. and Canada.
- » Restaurants require better lighting, larger print menus, and menus in Braille.
- » Permanent disability card.
- » Centralized resource database for sharing of information and resources available to people with disabilities.
- » Have a blog where people can promote their successes (employment, activities, innovations, etc).
- » More access to resources and new technologies—iPad, voice activated software, using Bluetooth to do household tasks.

- » Innovation leading to efficiency in communication technology and transportation can increase independence and inclusion at a lower cost.
- » Apply driverless car technology to power-wheelchairs.
- » Re-write the Ministry of Education *Special Needs Act*.
- » Make major changes to the *Wildlife Act* and hunting regulations that allows for more and better opportunities for disabled hunters and fishermen.
- » Teachers who teach Deaf children need to know sign language.
- » Schools need critical mass of Deaf children before offering educational services to them.
- » More supports for the Deaf community in Northern B.C.
- » Recognize unique challenges and issues faced by severely disabled indigenous people of British Columbia.
- » Re-open the BC Human Rights Commission.
- » Social responsibility policies and legislation that mandate all large employers identify areas of real work that could be fulfilled by an adult who requires accommodations.
- » Access to alternative healthcare should be paid for by the government.
- » Educate citizens, service providers and legislators with a focus on inclusion and compassion.
- » Free MSP coverage for all persons with disabilities.
- » ICBC discounts should be made available to Deaf—Form FIN 119.
- » Need legal interpreting services, like medical interpreting services.
- » Allow early retirement for people who are Deaf, by five years.
- » Pay equity for people with disabilities who work.
- » Create a Deaf and hard of hearing registry list for 911 use to determine if interpreter is needed.
- » Interpreters on local and national news broadcasts.
- » Government needs to understand its requirement to accommodate Deaf, hard of hearing and Deaf-blind citizens.
- » One-stop shop to access interpretation and intervenor services.
- » Fund a needs assessment/feasibility study for Deaf-blind adult support system.
- » Encourage WorkSafeBC to promote safety of workers with hearing loss.
- » B.C. Government should hire a Deaf ombudsperson.
- » Built environment must always include access for all.
- » Ensure people with disabilities who are being investigated by government are treated fairly and considered innocent unless it's proven that they have done something wrong.

- » Significant improvements are needed in order for citizens with disabilities to have a decent standard of living and to participate more fully in all aspects of society.
- » People with disabilities should be afforded the opportunity to work and contribute as they are able.
- » Advocates to help people with hidden disabilities.
- » Supports like job coach, clothing allowance and transportation subsidy, to help people with disabilities transition into work.
- » Encourage businesses and buildings to move beyond the building code.
- » Offer increased respite services for caregivers.
- » Improve awareness around what a disability is. Many people are also confused by what qualifies as a disability.
- » Children and youth with special needs policy needs to be updated to include children other than those with autism and developmental disorders.
- » Set up an RDSP for every eligible Aboriginal child in foster care.
- » Universal childcare.
- » Create a childcare subsidy for parents who have disabilities.
- » FASD circle of support.
- » Reinstate 5 hour/week support of a Child & Youth worker through NSDRC.
- » Incidences of police involvement with a person related to circumstances linked to the mental health act should be removed from their criminal record.
- » Mental health teams should be consulting companies about their clients and ways to get employed with their businesses.
- » Greater acceptance and understanding of people with mental illness in the work place.
- » More funding for peer support programs.
- » Mental illness is an invisible and overlooked disability—supports tend to skew towards physical disabilities.
- » Medications can make huge differences re: motivation and ability, and employers need to understand that employees with disabilities can function with proper medication.
- » Education and awareness needed to decrease stigma and fear of hiring persons with mental illness.
- » Regular, nutritious meals provided with other supports in housing for people with disabilities helps enormously to create stable routines.
- » System navigators and direct support for young people with mental illnesses.
- » Better housing and supports for those with mental illness including those with addiction issues.

- » Accessibility is not a “disability issue”, but rather a human issue
- » Hotline to report accessibility issues like potholes, icy sidewalks, etc.
- » Increase accessible parking spots on city streets and at malls.
- » Recognize the rights and responsibilities of a person with a disability to engage in community life to the degree they’re able and desire to.

.....

“We need to TAKE AWAY SOME OF THE FEARS AND THE LACK OF EDUCATION about what it is to work with someone who has a disability.”
– participant, Vancouver consultation wrap-up video

.....

- » Only through adherence to the “Participation Model” for personal supports will meaningful programs be developed that will support the achievement of individual participation goals.
- » City councils should have a day/week to tour their city with canes, manual and electric wheelchairs.
- » Make services available in every community.
- » All venues, such as parks, day use areas, highway rest stops, campgrounds or forestry backcountry rustic campsites and day use areas, whether government or private ownership, be equipped with fully accessible toilet facilities.
- » All levels of government work to provide accessible recreational use venues.
- » Eliminate fees for alternative care options such as physiotherapy.
- » Establish a comprehensive assistive devices program designed to ensure full inclusion of all persons living with limitations caused by disabilities.
- » Better funding of Pharmacare.
- » Funding for equipment, assistive technology and services not covered by MSP or private insurance are greatly needed.
- » Expand definition of ‘technology’ to include simple things, like shoes.
- » Make funding agencies review funding models to include provision for the use and development of technology based tools.
- » Greater supports for youth who are transitioning to adulthood, and adults transitioning into old age.
- » EATI is the single most innovative program for persons with disabilities.
- » Individualized funding should be incorporated into the second generation of EATI.
- » Individualized funding should be an option for all persons with disabilities.

- » All individuals should have access to adequate and appropriate income and supports to meet their needs and live a good quality of life.
- » Home support needs to include housekeeping, laundry, meal prep, etc.
- » Personal supports must be client centered not program centered.
- » CSIL should be expanded to include universal eligibility requirements, and it should be portable so that people moving within BC do not have to be reassessed.
- » Handrails are an ongoing issue.
- » People with disabilities who are working or independent still need access to programs for funding for assistive devices and supports.
- » More work experience opportunities for students with disabilities.
- » More inclusion at the Grade 6—high school age.
- » Ongoing funding to provide more trained professionals and specialized equipment in schools for students with a disability.
- » Subsidies for programs for teacher training to aid independence.
- » Interpreters at school.
- » The government needs to lead by example and communicate to all community members that all individuals no matter what their ability are valued members of our society; what better place to do this than within our education system.
- » The education system needs to better prepare all students, regardless of ability, for life as an adult in ways that respect the individual's gifts and contributions.
- » Kids need continuous support of individuals from early youth through to adulthood.
- » Adaptive sports programs need to be offered in elementary school/high school/college/university for students with a disability.
- » Schools need to partner with disability sports organizations and the community to direct students towards age appropriate extra-curricular adaptive sport opportunities.

.....
***Physical activity is important to providing
 a positive environment to BUILD CONFIDENCE
 and SELF-ESTEEM, improve social skills,
 leadership skills and have fun.***

- » Where appropriate, ensure access and inclusion is available when joining able-bodied teams.
- » Provide more access to specialized transportation and accommodation services for persons with disabilities participating in sporting programs.

- » A central database where volunteers can match up with the people with disabilities for outings, social events, etc.
- » The BC Bus Pass Program should be expanded to include all persons with disabilities.
- » Expand HandyDART services and other transportation options for people with disabilities.
- » Do not restrict borders, transit zones with HandyDART.
- » One phone number (like 211) for people with disabilities to inquire about services.
- » Make it easier and more convenient to access Taxi Savers.
- » Have more taxis that can accommodate wheelchairs.
- » Every community should have access to an accessible taxi service.
- » Transit signage—improve visibility for transit stops, include Braille.
- » Sidewalks—update codes to ensure wider sidewalks that allow easier and safer pedestrian flow, particularly considering increased use of mobility assistive devices.
- » Audible traffic signals—require all controlled intersections to have audible traffic signals, preferably with speech and directions.
- » Traffic islands—ensure all traffic islands have improved design for larger mobility assistive devices.
- » HandyDart—people with disabilities need to be coded #99 (hand-off).
- » Train all taxi drivers in accessible issues—the Vancouver Taxi Driver Training Manual.
- » BC Ferries need to have more dedicated staff to assist those in wheelchair transfers to and from the vessels.
- » Cars—give \$1,700 mileage allotments, should also be a maintenance allotment.
- » SPARC—bring back “no pay” decal for parking provide tier system of funding and income.
- » Need to ensure sidewalks and walkways are cleared of snow during winter.
- » Need additional disability employment and services and programs outside of WorkBC model.
- » WorkBC does not have the expertise or the funding necessary to properly support people with disabilities who are looking for work.
- » Train WorkBC staff about how to properly work with people with disabilities.
- » EATI should become the front door for WorkBC.
- » Create more programs and opportunities for increased social inclusion.
- » People need purpose—work volunteer, social.
- » More incentive needed for volunteer programs.
- » Bring back the Community Volunteer Supplement program.

- » Provide an advocate for people looking for work.
- » There needs to be supports to help transition a person between being on assistance and earning above rates (i.e. continues housing subsidies, bus pass program).
- » Rehabilitation services for those with vision loss enable confidence and independence and increase the likelihood of employment.
- » More funding for programs like Blade Runners.
- » Create and support individualized work plans for individuals with barriers to employment.
- » Joint problem solving among ministries and working groups needs to happen to address employment challenges for people with mental health issues.
- » Invisible disability—issue of disclosure and when/how this is perceived by employers.
- » Make ASL an official language.
- » Require Deaf children to learn ASL.
- » Parents of Deaf or hard of hearing children should have the option of sending their children to the school of their choice.
- » Parents of Deaf children should be connected with the Deaf community.
- » Create an Ombudsperson for people with disabilities.
- » Create a disability ministry or centralized disability office within government.
- » Provide funding to take a matter to Supreme Court if necessary, on behalf of all disabled people who have been denied either employment or contract work on the basis of their disability who are otherwise qualified.
- » Public consultation needed around WorkSafeBC.
- » There should be an inquiry into how many people on PWD status came from the failure of WCB's files.
- » Work with the broader library community, specifically CELA (Centre for Equitable Library Access), to ensure that accessible library services are funded by government and fully accessible, just as they are for sighted British Columbians.
- » Amend the Health Professions Act to include regulations that require pharmacists to provide prescription information in alternate formats for patients with print disabilities.
- » Support appropriate specialized employment services, particularly for those with vision loss. Employing more people with disabilities will improve their quality of life; reduce the amount of money spent on providing financial supports, and increase tax revenues.
- » Look to Alberta and Ontario for their universal assistive device programs.
- » Once a year, all families with special needs children/adults should have the opportunity to get together so they, also, can communicate with each other, make new friends; someone they can call and discuss like-problems.

- » There aren't enough classes available on "how to cope with special needs".
- » The federal Disability Tax Credit does not serve children and families equitably.
- » Inadequate provincial funding for hearing equipment and early intervention service providers.
- » Lack of legislation to enforce children's rights to an individualized appropriate education.
- » Lack of public awareness about deafness, hearing loss, hearing equipment, and accommodations for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing.
- » Police should not cuff Deaf people behind the back—cuts off their ability to communicate.
- » Mental health funding—start more funding processes for non-profits and innovative ideas especially those coming from the community and from people with lived experience.
- » The Government should encourage change by funding projects only when the project progresses the inclusion of people with disabilities.
- » The Provincial Government needs to fund an equipment resourcing program to support the employment objectives of people with disabilities.
- » CLBC, BC Housing and the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation need to find better ways to communicate with families who have a family member with a disability or individuals with a disability who are looking for housing.
- » There needs to be better coordination between the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and Community Living BC to fund social support programs that span the ages 14—24.
- » Need to provide additional funding to people on disability assistance to allow them to contribute to an RDSP.
- » Increase access to work rehabilitation services (such as those provided by WorkSafeBC) to all persons with disabilities.
- » It is imperative the business community and those in helping positions (including 'professionals') be encouraged to become better able to recognize and respond appropriately to those with a hearing impairment.
- » We need to increase accessibility of the welfare and disability assistance system.
- » Increased communication between organizations and between police and community.
- » Improve employer accommodation training and availability.
- » Offer more support for training to use computers/assistive technology.
- » Home visits either by physicians and/or ministry worker who would make more of an investment to get to know the person's issues.
- » More knowledge packages for public trustees/guardians, caretakers and/or lawyers.

- » More standardized provincial processes as opposed to jurisdictional.
- » Rather than service providers competing service providers should be collaborating—maximize funding.
- » Partnership between employer and MSDSI for processing SD0081s, etc. as well as tech support.
- » Deaf seniors are isolated in hospitals and care facilities without access to an interpreter—Deaf staff would help offset cost of hiring interpreters.
- » Plain language and picture signage, including Braille.
- » Have an app to make a connection with someone who wants to go to an event/buy their ticket.
- » Adopt a grandparent.
- » Greater awareness and education about the Registered Disability Savings Plan.
- » Community database for people who want to help or participate in programs.
- » Have a designated advocate to approach employers.
- » Loan forgiveness for people with disabilities who complete training (trades, etc.).
- » Tele-health—video conferencing with specialist/professionals.
- » Inclusion of community gardens.
- » Provide allowances to pay for technology /resources (policy).
- » Get banks, doctor offices, etc. on board to provide services at low-no cost to people with disabilities.
- » Need recognition symbols for each disability to increase public awareness—wheelchair symbol just doesn't work for all disabilities.
- » When you become disabled there should be a package of information that is given to you like 'welcome wagon'.
- » Let credit unions offer RDSPs.
- » Medical expense should be accumulative not expiring each year.
- » Service dogs should be admitted everywhere
- » Do YouTube video that explains RDSP for Deaf people (use ASL).
- » Offer no-cost audit courses at the university if you have a disability.
- » Have technology conferences in B.C. that is showcase for assistive technology.
- » Hiring bonus for people who know sign language.
- » Kiosks in the city that will point out what is available, accessible to all.
- » Job coaches—disability training (create something like apprenticeship).
- » Job portfolios for people with disabilities: Proposals instead of resumes—how person can benefit employer.
- » HOV lanes should include people with disabilities.

- » When equipment is purchased for someone with a disability, make sure they receive adequate training to use it.
- » Every major institution should have an accessibility coordinator position.
- » Eliminate fixed tables and chairs, bus benches with narrow dividers, etc.
- » There should be a no or low interest loan available to kick start an RDSP.
- » There should not be administrative fees for trust accounts.
- » Government representatives need to regularly meet come to communities to meet with people with disabilities to discuss issues, challenges and solutions.
- » Government website needs to be fully accessible.
- » Full funding for doctors to confirm disability status.
- » Integrated planning approach in emergency planning to include people with special needs (not as separate plan).
- » Increased funding for equipment programs in rural and remote communities.
- » Sufficient funding for CLBC to ensure basic needs are met.
- » Improve access to adaptive vehicle technology.
- » Establish a transparent system of outcome measures for all Labour Market Development Agreement funded and related programming based on securing paid employment.
- » Improve access to and quality of day supports for people with developmental disabilities.
- » Design and implement a strategy to enhance uptake of earnings exemptions.
- » Continue to support the development of social enterprise but separate out disability support costs from enterprise costs and revenue.
- » CLBC should undertake a detailed review of how well they, and the broader community living sector, respond to issues of diversity.
- » Review those currently on Old Age Security to identify those eligible for Guaranteed Income Supplement.
- » Align municipal building codes and accessibility laws.
- » Consider a comprehensive funding plan through grants or other methods to assist businesses in hiring people with disabilities.
- » Funding for adaptive technology companies to bring their products to market.
- » Funding for employers to retrofit or invest in adaptive technologies.
- » Create the Community Care (Direct Payments) Act and the Civil Rights of Persons in Community Care Act.
- » Create a provincial advisory group on social inclusion, and a provincial social inclusion plan for B.C.

- » Evaluate and audit existing programs, policies and legislation for people with disabilities.
- » Recognition of dual diagnosis in individuals applying for government subsidized housing.
- » For RDSPs, lower the initial investment required before government contribution.
- » Increased funding for Community Legal Assistance Society.
- » Consider funding for alternative service delivery models for persons with acquired brain injury.
- » Community based service delivery, including rural and First Nations communities.
- » Coordinate provincial and federal services and responses to ensure system integration to meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- » Simplify the system without eliminating existing disability-related supports.
- » Changes needed to Motor Vehicle Act to ensure safety of operators of motorized mobility devices (scooters), including continuing cognitive assessment of operators.
- » Playgrounds need to be accessible.
- » Have American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters in the legislature.
- » Provide interpreters to support community inclusion and employment activities.
- » Interpreting services should be tax-exempt.
- » Drivers tests in ASL.
- » Government websites should have captioning on videos and ASL videos.
- » Text-only phone plans.
- » Funding for online ASL and better recruitment and training of ASL instructors.
- » Loan forgiveness program for sign language interpreting students.
- » Expand the Deaf Access Grant.
- » WorkBC needs expertise in working with Deaf and hard of hearing clients.
- » Disability Tax Credit and provincial as well as federal level.
- » Provide support funding for late-deafened adults using hearing aids and cochlear implants.
- » Create accessible services for women survivors of violence living with disabilities.
- » Failure of the family law system to acknowledge the impact of violence in creating disability.
- » Establish a full-support access Centre for employees with disabilities.
- » Introduce a conductive education program.
- » Consider adopting existing programs and services currently being delivered by governments and sector partners outside of B.C.
- » Provide white canes at no costs, within reason, maybe one per year.

- » Integrate wheelchair accessible routes and facilities into smartphone apps.
- » Educate youth about risks of noise-induced hearing loss.
- » Publically funded and publicized lifting devices in large changing rooms.
- » Develop a family advisory committee on disabilities.
- » Create a centre of excellence to assist families who have a child with a disability secure their future.
- » Remove restrictions on trusts.
- » Ensure all B.C. agencies recognize and accept the Representation Agreement.
- » Convert housing assets owned by CLBC to personal ownership.
- » Encourage families to work together, pooling their resources, assets and supports, to provide supports for their family member with a disability.
- » Add email/text option and mobile phone alerts to services to increase access.
- » B.C.'s adult guardianship legislation remains incomplete, with care facility admission and the complete package of modernized guardianship provisions unproclaimed.
- » Use "diversabilities" instead of "disabilities".
- » Close gap in services between graduation at 18 yrs. and CSIL supports at 19 yrs.
- » Mandate that dodge ball is never played in public schools.
- » Every school should have a physical education specialist as appointed department head.
- » Government should conduct a thorough assessment of the limiting factors for the uptake of recommendations in past projects.
- » Poverty is a barrier.
- » Create home based self-employment opportunities without barriers.
- » Examine cost of confinement.
- » Basic services such as internet, telephone and basic cable need to be subsidized for low income individuals and families.
- » Online network where people can share self-developed solutions to day to day challenges rather than have to rely on organizations.
- » Have a blog where people can promote their successes (employment, activities, innovations, etc).
- » Government website needs to be fully accessible.
- » Government websites should have captioning on videos and ASL videos.
- » Create online platform where persons with disabilities in the community can connect with each other.
- » Computer equipment needs to be more affordable.
- » Funding for communication aid equipment to type in and translate into voice or text.

- » Government offices should allow use email to communicate.
- » Encourage self-advocacy/empowerment.
- » Basic PWD should become a life-long pension.
- » Employers should be able to make contributions to RDSP directly.
- » Create community with multi-abilities, 'mainstream' apartment living.
- » Joint ownership without penalty—many individuals qualifying together with a 'buy back' strategy.
- » Customized employment options and supports.
- » Partner with non-governmental organizations.
- » Expanded core curriculum to include children with visual impairments.
- » Increase parking fines for those who park in accessible parking illegally.
- » Every store should have an accessible washroom.
- » Community mailboxes are problematic for people with disabilities.
- » Build entrepreneurial skills, knowledge in support staff.
- » Remove the age restriction on RDSPs.
- » Change labour standards to allow people to work shorter shifts.
- » Allow more frequent replacement of eye glasses and orthotics.
- » More accessible BC Housing.
- » More housing programs that target people with developmental disabilities.
- » Allow people to make monthly payments for bus pass.
- » Rural buses need to run more often, and to more outlying communities.
- » Inclusion training for educators.
- » Medical Services Only should be available to both provincial disability assistance recipients as well as federal Canadian Pension Plan – Disability (CPP-D) recipients.
- » Amend the legislation so it matches the BC Family Law Act definition of spouse.
- » Add 'employability' as a daily living activity to EAPWD regulation.
- » Take immediate steps to implement recommendations in 2009 Ombudspersons Report regarding Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB).
- » Repeal lifetime ban from income assistance.
- » Monthly Nutritional Supplement should be modified to provide nutritious foods, not simply for caloric intake.
- » Refer clients with Trust questions to law foundation funded community advocacy organizations.
- » Reinstate \$75 shelter minimum.
- » Increase asset limits.

- » Assist arts organizations to make their website accessible.
- » Host an arts symposium or conference for information and resource exchange among arts access providers.
- » Create and support transition houses that are accessible to women with disabilities.
- » Establish additional treatment facilities that accommodate pregnant women and women with children.
- » Establish a t.v. channel for Deaf and hard of hearing much like Aboriginal Network.
- » Colleges and universities need to expand or establish interpreter training programs.
- » Work in care sector needs to be recognized as important work, with higher wages.
- » Make sure front line service workers treat people with disabilities with respect.
- » Think tanks on accessibility.
- » Advocate to help people apply for Disability Tax Credit.
- » Books and information should be published in multiple formats.
- » Car rental companies should have accessible vehicles for rent.
- » Reinstate Camosun College's Employment Skills Action program.
- » Older schools need retrofits to be properly accessible.
- » CLBC programming needs to include assessment, treatment and re-evaluation.
- » Broaden eligibility to CLBC services.
- » Legalize marijuana and use profits for services for people with disabilities.
- » Accessible parking stalls should have signs, not painted lines as not visible in winter weather.
- » Education for doctors on how to complete PWD designation paperwork—make it part of mandatory professional education requirement.
- » Allow bus pass holder to use pass on HandyDart.
- » Annual disability assessments for all adults.
- » Host conferences for people with disabilities to get together and learn.
- » Provide short-term bus passes for people when they secure employment (match probationary period).
- » Parking at hospitals should be free for people with disabilities and their families.
- » CEO Network should have all-agency meetings once/month.
- » Need to be able to do monthly PWD reporting online or by email rather than mail.
- » Public Guardian should not make money off clients.
- » Too many programs—need to integrate and find efficiencies.
- » Need adult guardianship legislation with supporting budget.
- » Decriminalize prostitution so that people with disabilities can have intimacy.

- » Create a national disability assistance program.
- » Review and simplify all forms.
- » Better education on programs and services for front line workers to ensure consistency.
- » Should be able to transfer money from RRSP to RDSP.
- » People should be aware of hurtful language that reinforces disability stigma—“blind leading the blind”, “that’s insane”, and “that’s lame”.
- » Move away from payer of last resort principle.
- » Tactical sidewalks.
- » For environmental sensitivities, accommodation is difficult.
- » Front line workers need to build trust and respect by treating clients as human beings.
- » Need accurate statistics on the real situation for people with disabilities.
- » Treat CPP as earned income.
- » Create certification for service dogs—card with picture of dog and owner, with chip.
- » Tax top earners one per cent to finance services for people with disabilities.
- » Inform employers about the Opportunities Fund.
- » Basic cable and internet should be provided.
- » Re-organize the home support program to provide adequate support for all activities of daily life.
- » The safety of operators of motorized mobility devices (scooters) requires changes to the Motor Vehicle Act, including requiring safety helmets for motorized wheelchair and scooter riders.
- » Affirmative action legislation stipulating employers must hire a percentage of Deaf and hearing impaired workers.
- » Form a working group at the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, similar to Health Technology Assessment Committee, which examines high impact, low cost devices specific to people with disabilities.
- » Use the cheque stub for PWD benefits as a way to communicate opportunities and program information to people with disabilities--e.g. job opportunities, learning opportunities, benefit information sessions.
- » Leverage local schools as neighbourhood learning hubs to create more opportunity for socializing and access to information about benefits.
- » Update the building code to ensure all exits, not just the main exits/entrances are wheelchair and scooter accessible.
- » B.C. building codes should mandate public/commercial space to have non-slip flooring.
- » Encourage municipalities to install roll over curbs where parallel parking is offered.

- » It is critical that British Columbia ensure that municipal building codes and accessibility laws for the built or physical environment of a workplace are aligned.
- » Need mandatory provincial (not municipal) building codes.
- » Should have an overarching PWD Act that governs all municipalities so no differences between cities.
- » Exclude the value of a home from consideration when accessing a HAFI grant.
- » Public/Private Partnerships for providing affordable housing.
- » Create housing that is based on the retirement community concept (e.g., individual living quarters with a common eating area).
- » Easier or assisted transition from one type of housing to a more appropriate situation as a person's needs change.
- » Pets allowed in housing for people with disabilities and seniors.
- » Ensure equitable access to PWD post-secondary housing options through all levels of post-secondary education.
- » Need more accessible student housing and transportation.
- » Increase access to interpreters and ensure they're at all government events.
- » One-stop service centre for Deaf and Deaf-blind with service in ASL.
- » Improve coordination between CLBC and ministry-provided services.
- » Improve access to benefits for people who are blind.
- » Set a standard of 24 hours for approval of urgent requests.
- » Improve in-community support for Aboriginal people.
- » Leverage Aboriginal Friendship Centres to deliver services.
- » Shift the opening hours of service offices to be more convenient.
- » Implement case management upon request.
- » Ministry of Education should consider transition planning in partnership with Provincial Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services (MCFD) and the Well-Being Program (MOH), and other programs for children who are Deaf.
- » Have ministry staff travel to rural areas to deliver services.
- » Create visual system for notifying passengers of information and alerts on public transportation.
- » Subsidize bus pass for children of people receiving disability assistance.
- » Ensure bus ramps are wide enough for wheelchair loading and unloading.
- » Integrate wheelchair accessible routes and facilities in to smartphone map apps.
- » Provide free fare for attendants on public transportation.
- » Intervenors to assist the deaf and hearing impaired when using public transit.

- » Provide subsidy for gas, maintenance and insurance for B.C. residents who have no transit access.
- » Provide funding for vehicle conversions.
- » Exempt drivers from toll fees who are driving individuals with disabilities.
- » Fund interpreters for driver's education classes.
- » Create network of ride-shares.
- » Re-design accessible parking to accommodate vans with side lifts.
- » Retroactive to date RDSP program started—can invest retroactively.
- » Most psychiatrically ill people do not qualify for the Disability Tax Credit, therefore they do not qualify for RDSP—this needs to change.
- » Shorten RDSP timeline for those with terminal illness.
- » Have excellent tax incentives for individuals or families contributing to children in permanent foster care or charitable not-for-profit agencies.
- » Assist theatre companies in meeting the 2-for-1 ticket price standard with rebates for tickets purchased.
- » Reward arts organizations that provide accessible programming with tax breaks or other assistance.
- » Have new legislation implemented governing the use of guide dogs/assistance dogs—Guide/Assistance Dog Act.
- » Develop an education program regarding the nature and purpose of service guide dogs, as well as a registration numbering system or certificates that can be verified.
- » Look to source new kinds of assistance from the community, encouraging peer networks, and finding volunteers who can help do everyday things or just break down isolation.
- » Improve training for health and social service professionals in projecting empathy and respect to people with disabilities and their families.
- » All mental health people should have sports and activities (paid for) before given prescription drugs.
- » Ensure those who play sports are educated about preventing brain injuries.
- » Provide government staff, police, and medical personnel with sensitivity training.
- » More supports are needed to support disabled tourism – including amenities on highway rest stops to those at camp sites.
- » Facilities and supports are needed to allow the disabled to use B.C. parks and to do outdoor activities: use trails, hunting and fishing.
- » Establish a self-reporting tool that would allow seniors and people with disabilities to report where they encounter mobility problems so that these issues can be addressed.

- » Require all multi-unit dwellings including assisted living, long term care, group homes etc. to have emergency plans, to be filed with local fire departments &/or other emergency personnel and reviewed annually.
- » Emergency planning networks should include information and training about people with disabilities, especially Deaf and Deaf-blind residents' needs. BC Coalition of People with Disabilities and other cross-disability groups do not have enough knowledge of our Deaf community's needs.
- » The number of people with disabilities living independently is increasing and government has a responsibility to ensure emergency plans incorporate supports to meet the needs of all.
- » Expand eligibility criteria for BC Bus Pass Program to include recipients of CPP-D.
- » Train emergency planning networks on issues for persons with disabilities.
- » Continue to use printed material to communicate about emergencies.
- » Use technology for emergency call outs.
- » People in businesses should be able to access sensitivity training or advice to understand how to improve the consumer experience of people with diverse needs.
- » People with disabilities can be entrepreneurs by helping bring their expertise to businesses to help make their services more accessible to everyone.
- » More interpretation services need to be available for Deaf and hard of hearing people to be able to access businesses.
- » Supporting service technology such as Teletypewriter (TTY) and video relay services should be more available to the business community to support better experiences.
- » Assist arts organizations in making their websites accessible and compatible with screen readers, magnifiers and other tools used by people who are visually impaired.
- » Allow married couples to access the same level of benefits as two single people.
- » Look at how people with multiple disabilities are forced to choose a 'primary' disability to receive benefits in a timely way.
- » The experience of air travel should be improved to make it more seamless for people to get on board, to get priority seating, and manage special diets.
- » Signage in businesses can be improved to help people navigate.
- » Hotels need to be clearer about what kinds of accommodations are available for travellers with disabilities—standardization in accessibility reporting.
- » Restaurants should examine table heights and spaces between tables to help accommodate people with mobility issues, and consider menu font size for people with visual challenges.
- » Strengthen curriculum to include how to teach to a diverse student population.
- » Expanding adult special education to allow personal support workers in the classroom.

- » B.C. should have at least one university provide an attendant care program for students with disabilities (like Carleton University).
- » More opportunities for mainstream training with adaptations.
- » Create an organization to link employers to students with disabilities.
- » Look at the model of the Job Readiness Program in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Department at Vancouver Community College.
- » Waiving or subsidizing the cost of post-secondary education for people with disabilities, subject to three years of full-time employment in B.C. following completion of a diploma or degree.
- » Equal pay for the Deaf and hard of hearing.
- » Offer job grants that allow someone to stage their progress back into the workforce, while maintaining health benefits.
- » Create community workforce plans, encouraging employers to understand available labour in their area.
- » Re-think job banks, matching up incentives for employers and profiling the strengths of people with disabilities.
- » Re-think the 'sheltered workshop' model of employment for people with disabilities; instead look to create meaningful work in social settings.
- » Government should lead by example by hiring more people with disabilities, and ensure working tools are accessible.
- » Reimagine Riverview hospital as a training and care facility for people with disabilities, with a special focus on skills development and job training.
- » The Get Youth Working Program should be reviewed to ensure it does not exclude young people with disabilities.
- » Encourage small business ownership.
- » Volunteering should be recognized as a necessary step to employment.
- » WorkBC clients need a way to report feedback about employment service providers.
- » Move away from institutions.
- » No institutions in B.C.
- » More home supports for all regardless of friend/family are able to assist.
- » More monitoring of home supports to ensure the individual is safe, getting proper nutrition and being allowed to socialize and participate in activities.
- » Better at home project—home supports provided by volunteers/non-profit (UW).
- » Focus on inclusion, not segregation.
- » End the use of restraints and segregation in schools.

APPENDIX B: *List of Community Champions*

COURTENAY

Vivienne Gorrige – Wachiay Friendship Centre
Suzan Jennings – Access Oceanside Association
Darcy Walters – Comox Valley Regional District
Maggie St. Aubrey – Comox Valley Nursing Centre
Kathryn Wozny – Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

PRINCE GEORGE

Joanna Sheppard – AimHi Prince George Association for Community Living
Pat Harris – Spinal Cord Injury BC
Nancy Harris – BC Wheelchair Basketball
Terry Robertson – Vela Microboard
Gordon Robertson – Vela Microboard
Heather Lamb – Spinal Cord Injury BC
Dawn Hemingway – UNBC School of Social Work
Les Smith – Child Development Centre of Prince George
Lori Forgeron – Employment Action

VANCOUVER

Karen Lai – BC Centre for Ability Association
Richard Faucher – Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion
Chris McBride – Spinal Cord Injury BC
Melissa DeGenova – Vancouver Resource Society
Hemant Kulkarni – posAbilities
David McGregor – Provincial Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Ken Kramer – KMK Law Corporation
Jeanette Moss – Vancouver Foundation, Giving in Action Society
Jane Holland – Advocate for Service Quality
Susan Masters – Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Paul Gauthier – BC Personal Supports Network
Duane Geddes – Sam Sullivan Foundation
Alona Puehse – Open Door Group
Roger Jones – community member

WEST VANCOUVER

Lori Wallace – Organizer of Aspires

Pat Hanbury – Down Syndrome Research Foundation

Deb Wanner – Principal, Lynn Valley Elementary School

Brian Platts – North Shore Disability Resource Centre

Suzanne Klassen – North Shore Disability Resource Centre

Jody Watt – YWCA Employment Services Centre

Sandra Severs – CMHA, North & West Vancouver Branch

Don Collett – community member

Camilla Boisvert – WorkBC North Shore Employment Services Centre

David Platt – Student Support Services

Sandy Parkinson – community member

Wendy Eves – VCH – North Shore Pediatric Resource Team

SURREY

Inderjit Dhillon – community member

Doug Tennant – Semiahmoo Housing Society

Teri Thorson – community member

Marco Pasqua – Lions Society of BC, Inspirational Speaker

Dan Collins – Langley Association for Community Living

Gerard Bremault – The Centre for Child Development

Shira Standfield – City of Surrey

Walter Gagen – community member

Linda Perry – Vela Microboard

Rosalind Moret – CLBC

Karen Williams – SPARC BC

Gerald O'Sullivan – CLBC

KAMLOOPS

Kristi Ardell – Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Dianna Churchill – CMHA Shuswap / Revelstoke Branch

Marg Spina – City of Kamloops

Leah Flor – Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Kathy Aldus – Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

VERNON

Benita Elliott – Kindale Developmental Association

Laura Hockman – Independent Living Vernon

Arlene Brenner – community member

Bob Tomich – Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Tracey Griffin – Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

KELOWNA

Michael Niculeac – community member

Leslie Munro – Pathways Abilities Society

Michelle Turner – Penticton & Area Access Society

Dr. Rhonda Nelson – Central Okanagan Child Development Association

Derek Wilson – community member

Keith Fielding – Peachland Wellness Centre

Louise Abbott – Kelowna District Society for People in Motion

Davina Brodeur – Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Dave Crawford – community member

RICHMOND

Ella Huang – Richmond Centre for Disability

Alan Hill – City of Richmond

Vince Miele – Richmond Centre for Disability

Paul Gauthier – BC Personal Supports Network

Alanna Hendren – Developmental Disabilities Association

PORT MOODY

Cathy Anthony – Simon Fraser Society for Community Living

Jerome Bouvier – PoCoMo Youth Services

Al Hogarth – City of Maple Ridge

Paul Gauthier – BC Personal Supports Network

Jamal Muhammad – Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

ABBOTSFORD

Annette Borrows – Community Futures South Fraser

Brenda Gillette – Chilliwack Society for Community Living

Karyn Santiago – Communitas Supportive Care Society

Debbie Wieler – Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Arlene Schouten – The MSA Society

Neil Stark – Abbotsford Community Services

Carol Paetkau – Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association

Bert Altena – Bethesda

CRANBROOK

Jacquie Thom – Kootenay Employment Services

Nancy Reid – CMHA Kootenays

Melanie Fiorentino – Cranbrook Society for Community Living

FORT ST. JOHN

Lori Slater – community member

Bruce Christenson – North Central Local Government Association

VANCOUVER

Consultation for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind Community

Heidi Feenstra – Provincial Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Vincent Chauvest – community member

Leonor Vlug – Greater Vancouver Association of the Deaf

Scott Jeffery – community member

David McGregor – Provincial Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Cecilia Klassen – community member

Sarah-Anne Hrycenko – Provincial Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Forrest Smith – community member

Nigel Howard – community member

Jascine Peterson – Provincial Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Kirsten Pranzl – Provincial Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

VICTORIA

Marcopolo Costa – Marcolopolo Resources Inc.

Janet Barclay – Recreation Oak Bay

Neil Belanger – BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society

Catriona Johnson – Second Wave

Pat Danforth – President BCCPD & CCD representative

Arlene Zukernick – Second Wave

Julie Robertson – BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

Michael Prince – UVIC

Andrea Paquette – Bipolar Babe

Alistair Green – Vancouver Island Society of Disabled Artists

Kelly Newhook – Together Against Poverty Society

Chris Marks – Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee

*While every effort was made to accurately record the names of all community champions who participated in the in-person consultation sessions, some may have been missed. If there is an omission on this list, please contact disabilitywhitepaper@gov.bc.ca.

APPENDIX C: *Schedule of In-person Community Consultations*



Between January 20 and March 7, 2014, 23 consultation sessions were held in 15 communities around British Columbia. Nearly 1150 people participated in these sessions.

January 20, 2014 – Courtenay

January 21, 2014 – Prince George (*evening session*)

January 22, 2014 – Prince George (*morning session*)

January 22, 2014 – Quesnel

January 28, 2014 – Vancouver (*afternoon*)

January 28, 2014 – Vancouver (*evening*)

January 29, 2014 – West Vancouver

January 30, 2014 – Surrey (*afternoon*)

January 30, 2014 – Surrey (*evening*)

February 4, 2014 – Kamloops

February 5, 2014 – Vernon

February 6, 2014 – Kelowna (*afternoon*)

February 6, 2014 – Kelowna (*evening*)

February 11, 2014 – Richmond

February 12, 2014 – Port Moody

February 13, 2014 – Abbotsford

February 18, 2014 – Cranbrook

February 20, 2014 – Fort St. John

February 24, 2014 – Terrace

February 25, 2014 – Vancouver

(*Deaf, hard of hearing and Deaf-blind session*)

February 26, 2014 – Victoria (*afternoon*)

February 26, 2014 – Victoria (*evening*)

March 7, 2014 – Victoria

APPENDIX D: *Schedule of Other Meetings and Roundtables*

December 11 – Minister’s Council on Employment and Accessibility and guests
On Dec.11, 2013, members of the Minister’s Council on Employment and Accessibility invited members from the disability community to spend an afternoon discussing what can be done to increase accessibility and decrease barriers for people living with disabilities in our province.

January 15 – Open Space Session
On Jan.15, 2014, 100 members of the disability community met to share their views about increasing accessibility and decreasing barriers for people with disabilities in B.C. During the five-hour forum, participants identified more than 40 discussion ideas. In the time available, discussion groups were held around 18 of these ideas.

February 18 – Vancouver Urban Core Community Workers Association
On Feb.18, 2013, about 20 members of the Vancouver Urban Core Community Workers Association met to discuss some of the specific issues and barriers faced by those with mental health and addictions in the Downtown Eastside.

February 24 – Canadian Mental Health Association and guests
On Feb. 24, 2014, the Canadian Mental Health Association (BC chapter) hosted an event in Vancouver to look at issues and barriers faced by people with mental health issues in B.C. 50 members and staff met to discuss ways to improve the lives of people with disabilities, including invisible disabilities, in our province.

March 4 – Inclusion Powell River Society
The Inclusion Powell River Society hosted a community consultation session, using the conversation toolkit. This society has been active for 60 years, working to ‘foster a safe, inclusive community where everyone belongs and lives a good life.’

March 7 – Small Business Roundtable
The Small Business Roundtable, which is chaired by the Minister of State for Small Business, Naomi Yamamoto, devoted part of their regular quarterly meeting on March 7, 2014, to discuss ideas for how small business owners can increase accessibility for people with disabilities. The Small Business Roundtable was established to engage with and identify the key issues and opportunities facing small businesses in British Columbia, and to develop recommendations for small business and government on strategies to enhance growth and success.



APPENDIX E: *List of Additional Submissions*

CONVERSATION TOOLKITS AND OTHER SUBMISSIONS FROM GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

- » Abilities Alliance
- » Access Association of Disabled Students (submission 1)
- » Access Association of Disabled Students (submission 2)
- » Access for Sight-Impaired Consumers
- » Access Oceanside Association
- » Advanced Listening Systems
- » Agur Lake Camp Society
- » BC Blind Sports and Recreation Association
- » BC Coastal Transportation Society
- » BC Hands and Voices
- » British Columbia Public Interest Advocacy Centre
- » BC Schizophrenia Society - Victoria Branch
- » Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion (BACI) Advocacy Committee
- » Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists—British Columbia (CAOT-BC)
- » Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) Comox Valley Branch
- » Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association Inc. (CLHIA)
- » Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) BC Division and CMHA Vancouver-Burnaby
- » Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Shuswap-Revelstoke
- » Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) British Columbia-Yukon
- » Canadian Red Cross
- » Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship
- » Cineplex Entertainment
- » Civil Rights Now!
- » Community Connections (Revelstoke) Society
- » Community Legal Assistance Society (CLAS)
- » CONNECT (submission 1)
- » CONNECT (submission 2)
- » Department of Access for Students with Disabilities, North Island College
- » Disability Without Poverty Network (DWPN)
- » Disappearance of Human Rights in BC
- » District of Sechelt's Advisory Committee on Accessibility
- » Family Network for Deaf Children (FNDC)
- » Greater Vancouver Association of the Deaf
- » InclusionBC
- » Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre (IDHHC)
- » Jane Doe Legal Network
- » Lifetime Networks - Being a Citizen Program
- » March of Dimes Canada
- » Movie Theatre Association of Canada

- » North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues
- » North Shore Disability Resource Centre
- » Pacific South Western Advocates
- » Pacific Training Centre for the Blind
- » Peers for Mental Wellness Advocacy Group, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Kelowna (submission 1)
- » Peers for Mental Wellness Advocacy Group, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Kelowna (submission 2)
- » People In Motion
- » Planned Lifetime Advocacy Networks (PLAN) Society
- » Provincial Advisory Committee to the Board of Directors of Community Living British Columbia
- » Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health
- » Quesnel Multiple Sclerosis Self-help Group
- » Raise the Rates
- » Rick Hansen Foundation
- » Shared Vision
- » Shared Vision (reference document 1)
- » Shared Vision (reference document 2)
- » Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia (SPARC BC)
- » Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia (SPARC BC) - Gathering Place Event
- » South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society
- » Spinal Cord Injury BC
- » Terrace and District Community Services Society
- » Together Against Poverty Society (TAPS)
- » ViaSport British Columbia
- » VocalEye Descriptive Arts Society
- » West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF)
- » Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WIDHH)

EMAILS, PHONE MESSAGES AND MAIL SUBMISSIONS

We received more than 325 email submissions and 60 written submissions over the course of the consultation process, as well as phone messages and mail submissions.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media, such as Twitter, was used to promote the consultation process and engage with different groups. The disabilitybc hashtag was used in over 1,100 tweets over the course of the consultation.

APPENDIX F: *Moderation Policy*

The website features a public discussion in a blog that encourages candid dialogue and diverse views about services and supports for persons with a disability. We welcome your participation in the discussion and look forward to an active exchange of information and ideas.

There is a corporate Moderation Policy that sets the standards for comment moderation. The Moderation Policy is as follows:

Comments will be pre-moderated and published in accordance with the Moderation Policy and the Terms of Use:

We want to publish your comments, but we expect conversations to follow the conventions of polite discourse. Therefore, we won't post comments that, in our opinion, are objectionable or inappropriate, including comments that:

1. are defamatory, threatening, hateful, indecent, obscene, illegal, immoral or sexually explicit;
2. makes unproven or unsupported accusations against individuals, groups or organizations;
3. potentially or actually infringe any third party's copyright, trademark, right of privacy, publicity or any other intellectual property or other right;
4. contain information about or images (i.e., photographs, video, or illustrations) of any person other than yourself;
5. advertise a product, person or organization;
6. contain long embedded URLs, excessive links, code, or other material that could compromise the integrity or security of the Discussion Forum, or of the website or server on which the Discussion Forum resides; or
7. are far off-topic.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING PRIVACY:

This Blog is moderated by our [Moderation Policy](#) and requires that you review and agree to our [Terms of Use](#). By clicking on 12-18 in age category, you are acknowledging you have legal parent or guardian consent for participation and you acknowledge your legal parent or guardian will be responsible for your use.

The BC government has an obligation to ensure that people's privacy is protected, especially when participants are talking about people other than themselves. As a rule, we are not able to post comments that include specific details about other people, including parents or guardians talking about their children. To protect privacy, please be sure not to share personal details of others or your children, like first and last names, communities where they live, school they attend, and any specific details that may identify them, including medical information.

MEDIA INQUIRIES

Media inquiries will not be posted on the Blog. Reporters are asked to send questions through their regular channels.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Your comments are welcome at any time—subject to unforeseen circumstances such as power outages and system failures, the Blog is expected to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. However, given the need to manage provincial resources, your comments may not be posted immediately. Moderating and posting of comments will generally occur during regular business hours Monday through Friday. Comments submitted after hours or on weekends or holidays will be read and posted as soon as possible.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

Since most government information, including the contents of this Blog, may be the subject of a freedom of information request, it is possible that some or all of the information you submit will be disclosed publically under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (British Columbia). Please consider this when commenting. To protect your privacy, please do not include your phone number or e-mail address in the body of your comment.

If you have an inquiry of a personal nature, if you have questions about this Moderation Policy or how we apply it, please contact us at citizenengagement@gov.bc.ca.

APPENDIX G: *Minister's Council Action Plan Framework*

Minister's Council on Employment and Accessibility

Action Plan Framework for the Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation

September 2012



Minister's Council on Employment and Accessibility

Action Plan Framework for the Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation

September 2012



Supporting increased employment for people with disabilities in BC

Leadership, partnership and action by employers, people with disabilities and their families, governments, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders are key to the success of the provincial Disability Strategy, and the Families First and Jobs Plans.

The Minister's Council on Employment and Accessibility (the Council) was established in February 2012 to advise the Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation, as the lead of the provincial Disability Strategy, on solutions and strategies to increase employment and access for people with disabilities.

Members of the Council include BC employers, citizens with disabilities and their families, organizations serving people with disabilities, aboriginal peoples, as well as local and provincial government.

The Council advises the Minister on policies, initiatives, legislation and priorities related to people with disabilities, engages with stakeholders, and draws on personal and professional experience to form their advice to the Minister. Council members act as champions for employment for people with disabilities and work to identify and support opportunities for people with disabilities within their sector or community.

The Council is committed to working to support the Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation in developing tangible deliverables that are informed by the perspectives of stakeholders, and whose outcomes work for benefit of employers, citizens and government alike.

Members

Dr. Jaimie Borisoff, Canada Research Chair in Rehabilitation Engineering Design at British Columbia Institute of Technology and the International Collaboration On Repair Discoveries (ICORD)

Dr. Henry G. Harder, Professor and Chair, School of Health Sciences, University of Northern British Columbia

James Ho, Founder, CEO, Mainstream Broadcasting Co.

Shafiq Jamal, Vice President, Western Canada, Retail Council of Canada

Karen Lai, Program Developer for the AIM program, BC Centre for Ability Association

Jennifer Leyen, Registered Rehabilitation Professional, Director, WorkSafeBC

Dr. Nigel Livingston, Professor, University of Victoria and Founder/Director CanAssist

Dr. Joe McLaughlin, (Deputy Chair) McLaughlin Educational Consulting Services

Roger Mundell, CEO, Uduu Online Learning Solutions

Carla Qualtrough, (Chair) Vice-Chair, Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal of BC

Michael Schratte, Teacher, David Oppenheimer Elementary School

Mayor Mary Sjostrom, City of Quesnel and First Vice-President of the Union of BC Municipalities

Sheila Taylor, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Marilyn Tyfting, Vice-President Human Resources, TELUS International

Christa Williams, Executive Director, First Nations Public Service

Member bios available online:
www.sdsi.gov.bc.ca/pwd/ministers-council/members.htm



Opening Remarks from the Chair

Finding solutions to multi-faceted complex issues that are rooted in the social and economic fabric of our society is not easy. Creating opportunities for anyone who wants to work is a challenge, and for persons with a disability this challenge is even greater. There are additional attitudinal, structural and social barriers that need to be acknowledged and addressed. The Council recognized from the start that it wanted to recommend actions – to focus on real change, both in the immediate and longer terms. We want to assist those British Columbians with disabilities who want to work now, and lay the foundation for future generations to have improved access and opportunity. This is a daunting task, but one that our Council and the excellent Ministry staff that support us are prepared to address.

This action plan framework strives to focus the attention, efforts and resources of decision-makers and stakeholders on priority areas. We are very excited to be putting this framework forward for consideration of the Minister.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to thank the Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation for her unwavering attention to this very critical issue.

Introduction

In spring 2012, the Council met over two days to undertake an annual planning process and develop the focus of their work. The process involved examining the problems, causes, solutions and opportunities of the central goal of increasing employment for working-age people with disabilities in our province. The discussion was informed by the members' personal and professional experience with disability, as well as presentations on employment-related data on people with disabilities in BC and a successful UK model to engage employers in employing people with disabilities, called the "Employer's Forum on Disability."

Over the course of developing their action plan framework, the Council worked with the following key facts and general assumptions to frame their discussions:

Key Facts

- » There are over 700,000¹ people who self-identify as having a disability² in BC, of whom approximately 400,000 are working-age (15-64).
- » People with disabilities have an employment rate that is about 20 percent lower than those without disabilities.
- » People with disabilities have comparable education levels to those of people without disabilities.
- » The Persons with Disabilities caseload in the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation has increased by over 100 percent since 2000, and is growing over five times faster than the working-age population.
- » According to Statistics Canada's 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) data, 38 percent of people with disabilities report they have unmet needs.
- » Disability has no one definition and is an evolving concept. It has been defined differently through history, with definitions changing with the prevailing attitudes and models by which it is

¹ Based on Statistics Canada 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey data adjusted to population growth and incidence.

² Self-identification is based on response to a series of questions in the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey that determine severity of the person's limitations to activities of daily living.

defined through, such as a medical model of disability and social model. Through a series of questions, PALS, for example, defines disability in terms of the severity of the limitations a person experiences with activities of daily living.

Assumptions

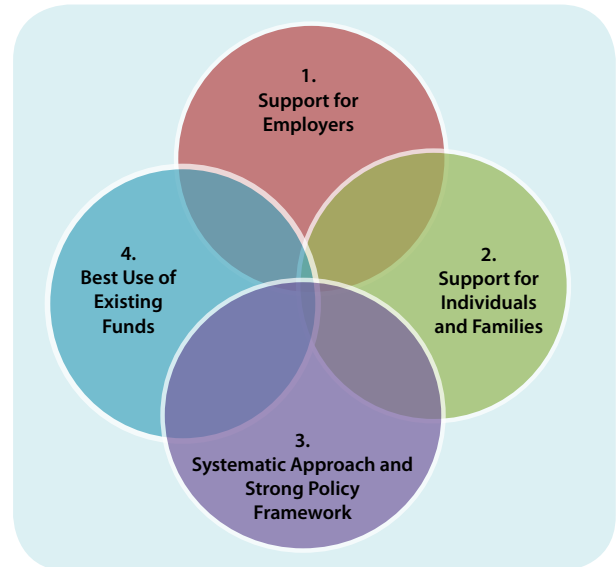
- » *Complex social issues cannot be solved by one sector alone.*
Partnerships and open communication between sectors and systems enables collaborative and mutually beneficial solutions.
- » *Work, for many people, is the key to a good life.*
People with disabilities want to work, can work and do work, yet remain significantly under-represented in the workforce. People who work are typically less socially isolated, experience better health outcomes, and are able to contribute to their financial well-being. People with disabilities need the right supports to remove barriers to secure meaningful employment and employers also need these supports to employ people with disabilities in meaningful jobs.
- » While the employment rate for people with disabilities is about 20 percent lower than for those without disabilities, this may misrepresent the severity of the employment situation among certain disability types, age categories etc. The 20 percent statistic includes all people self identifying as having a disability and who have mild or moderate disabilities that may not significantly impact their ability to participate in the labour market.
- » *Finite resources combined with a growing need for services requires a focus on the best use of existing resources.*
- » *Employers need the right supports to employ people with disabilities.*
A new relationship is required with the business community to promote employment of people with disabilities – a business approach where employers' needs are met. Supporting both the "supply" and "demand" side of the socio-economic equation is essential for success.

» *The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation's responsibility under the provincial Disability Strategy is to recognize the needs of all approximately 700,000 people with disabilities in the province – not only clients who are part of the ministry caseload.*

The Council identified the following top problems and causes they perceived as contributing to low rates of employment for people with disabilities in BC, including:

- » Lack of employer leadership and champions
- » Lack of employer incentives and supports, including a lack of an overall business case for hiring people with disabilities and support with the hiring and integration process and any additional costs
- » Lack of a general understanding of the systemic barriers of low employment rates of people with disabilities (*barriers to work go beyond the workplace*)
- » Lack of a comprehensive legislative and policy framework
- » Fear of losing benefits by people with disabilities and their families
- » Low expectations for people with disabilities that can lead to poor self-esteem
- » Lack of visible role models for people with disabilities, such as business leaders or government officials
- » Negative attitudes and perceptions by employers, families, school system and decision-makers lead to feelings of disempowerment and perception of limited employment prospects for people with disabilities
- » Inaccessible physical infrastructure, in particular transportation
- » Disconnect of the key stakeholders such as employers, educational institutions, community organizations, etc
- » Lack of support for individuals with disabilities in the workplace

The recommendations emerged as a direct response to the identified problems. The result of the process was recommendations in the following four areas of focus:



The four focus areas contain recommendations that intersect and overlap with respect to causes and solutions. The recommended priority actions are intended to have a positive impact on all four focus areas and propose opportunities for government and community to work together, both in the short and long-term.

The Council identified several opportunities to better meet employer needs when hiring people with disabilities through a variety of supports, and leadership development across the range of stakeholders. The Council expressed, "the Disability Strategy is about building a new relationship with employers and the business sector" as well as with families and people with disabilities.

The Council recommends removing barriers to create a comprehensive policy framework (considering possible legislation change as required) as a foundation to long-term change that supports employers and removes disincentives to work for people with disabilities. While considering foundational longer term opportunities for change, the Council also is recommending concrete initiatives for piloting and implementation in the short-term.

They emphasized these opportunities must focus on early intervention, as well as efficiency for the user.

The Council also agreed on the need for face-to face exposure between employers and job-seekers with disabilities, and improved communication and dialogue between key sectors, in particular business, government and service providers.

Recommended Action Plan Items – in order of implementation:

1. Support for Employers

- » Develop a CEO/Presidents network (employers) and support employer leadership
- » Provide specialized support to employers to hire people with disabilities and become “disability confident,” including:
 - Employer Advisors
 - Employee with disabilities champions
 - Interpretive advice for employers on policy and legislation
 - Helpline for managers
 - Toolkit for managers with practical tips, checklists, and business case models
- » Create a central fund for employers to help to offset the cost of accommodations (Access to Work fund)
- » Demonstrate Public Sector leadership as an employer

2. Support for Individuals and Families

- » Promote graduate recruitment and post-secondary training accommodations
- » Review and update policies to provide further incentives for people with disabilities to work
- » Develop learning tools, as well as mentorship and leadership programs for individuals and families
- » Create opportunities for face-to-face exposure between job-seekers with disabilities and employers
- » Create opportunities for self-employment for people with disabilities

3. Systemic Approach and Strong Policy Framework

- » Review policies to support persons with disabilities and consider targeted legislative change as required to address issues of people with disabilities
- » Facilitate a cross-sector dialogue on the systemic barriers faced by people with disabilities entering or maintaining work
- » Support the development of partnerships between employer organizations (Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade, sector organizations)

4. Best Use of Existing Resources

- » Ensure service providers are familiar with employer needs and are knowledgeable of the business perspective
- » Co-ordinate and source assistive technology and devices more cost-effectively
- » Leverage best practices already developed in other jurisdictions and develop regional, federal and global partnerships
- » Review existing programs for integration, efficiency and best practices, particularly in the private sector

Next Steps

This framework for an action plan reflects work that can be implemented over the short-term with more immediate results, and work that is longer term with broad foundational systemic impacts.

APPENDIX H: *Glossary of Terms and Acronyms*

211 – a telephone help line and website that provides a gateway to community, social, non-clinical health and related government services to help people deal with life's challenges

Accessibility – a work environment, business, service, facility or program that is easy to approach, enter, participate in, operate and use

American Sign Language (ASL) – the predominant sign language of Deaf communities in English-speaking Canada and the U.S.

Assistive Device – a device designed to enable a person to perform a daily living activity that, because of a mental, physical, sensory or cognitive impairment, the person is otherwise unable to perform

Assistive or Adaptive Technology – includes a range of devices, equipment and software such as mobility devices like wheelchairs, magnifying devices, visual alarms, hearing aids and speech software

Barrier – anything that gets in the way of people participating in day-to-day activities, or taking part in opportunities that are available to all citizens including physical, information and communication, attitudinal and systemic barriers

BC Employment and Assistance – a financial benefit available to British Columbians who qualify, subject to ongoing income and asset eligibility criteria

Built Environment – includes all person-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activity such as buildings and facilities, playgrounds, sidewalks and boardwalks

CAP-TEL – Captioned Telephone

CELA – Centre for Equitable Library Access

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

Choice in Supports for Independent Living (CSIL) – is a self-managed care option program offered through the Ministry of Health for home support services where funds are provided to eligible clients to purchase and manage their own home support services

CMHC – Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Cognitive Disability – a term used to describe a broad range of disabilities which may include challenges with memory, problem-solving, reading, attention and visual comprehension

Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) – the provincial Crown agency responsible for providing supports and services to adults with developmental disabilities and their families in British Columbia

CPP – Canada Pension Plan

CPPD – Canadian Pension Plan Disability Benefit

Disabilities / Persons with Disabilities – Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (Reference: United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 1)

Disability Assistance – a financial benefit available to people with disabilities who qualify, subject to ongoing income and asset eligibility criteria

Disability-related Supports – any and all supports that meet the specific disability-related need of an individual

DTC – Disability Tax Credit

EI – Employment Insurance

Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative (EATI) – a program that provides a source of funding for assessment, trialing, acquisition and/or training with equipment and assistive devices for people with disabilities who have employment or volunteer goals

Home Adaptations for Independence (HAFI) – a BC Housing program that provides financial assistance to help eligible low-income seniors and people with disabilities in British Columbia to continue to live in the comfort of their home

HOV – High-occupancy vehicle

ICBC – Insurance Corporation of British Columbia

Inclusion – providing individuals with access and choices to fully participate in all aspects of life and take part in activities to fulfil their potential

Invisible Disability – disabilities that are not immediately apparent, such as visual or auditory disabilities, cognitive disabilities or mental health issues

LSQ – Quebec Sign Language, known in French as “Langue des Signes Québécoise”

MCFD – Ministry of Children and Family Development

MOH – Ministry of Health

MSP – Medical Services Plan

NSDRC – North Shore Disability Resource Centre

PALS – Participation and Activity Limitation Survey

Phone Tree – an automated phone system where the caller is led through a series of automated, pre-recorded voice prompts

Plain Language – information presented in a logical order using familiar, everyday words and expressions with limited jargon and a minimum of technical language

PPMB – Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers is a category of assistance under the BC Employment and Assistance Act that recognizes individuals who are unable to achieve financial independence because of specific barriers to employment

PWD – Persons with Disabilities is a designation under the BC Employment and Assistance Act. A person may be designated as a Person with Disabilities if they have reached 18 years of age and have a severe mental or physical impairment that meets a specified set of criteria

RDSP – Registered Disability Savings Plan

RRAP – Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program

RRSP – Registered Retirement Savings Plan

Screen Reader – software that reads out loud what is on the computer monitor

Supporting Increased Participation (SIP) – a group of disability advocates who advise the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation on policy issues related to low income British Columbians

SPARC – Social Planning and Research Council of BC

Supported Decision-making – help for individuals with making decisions and legal matters from people who know them well

TDD – Telecommunications Device for the Deaf

TTY – Teleprinter / Teletypewriter / Teletype

UNCRPD – United Nations Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities

Universal Design – the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design

UW – United Way

Video Relay Service – a video interpreting service that allows deaf, hard-of-hearing and speech-impaired individuals to communicate over video telephones and similar technologies with hearing people in real-time, via a sign language interpreter

Visitability – home design with a basic level of accessibility so everyone can come into the home and have access to the washroom

WCAG – Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

Work BC Employment Services Centre (Work BC ESC) – are employment centres that provide a wide range of services and supports to help BC job seekers find and maintain employment and improve employment readiness, including specialized services for people with disabilities



Ministry of
Social Development
and Social Innovation