

DABC's Response
to Bill 6

Accessibility Requires a
Disability Confident Culture

Decolonizing the
PWD Process

transition

The Magazine of Disability Alliance BC

Putting the Pieces in Place: The New Accessible British Columbia Act

SUMMER 2021



**Thank you
for helping
us grow.**



Programs and Projects

BC Housing

City of Vancouver

Community Foundations of Canada

ESDC, Lu'ma Native BCH Housing Society

Insurance Corporation of BC

Law Foundation of British Columbia

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Ministry of Public Safety

Vancouver Coastal Health

Vancouver Foundation

Dedicated Supporters and Friends

BC Hydro Employees Community Services Fund

Klein Lawyers LLP

Osborne Cane Personal Injury Lawyers

Provincial Employees Community Services Fund

Simpson, Thomas and Associates (Trial Lawyers)

TELUS Employees Charitable Giving Program

Tompkins Wozny, Chartered Professional Accountants

And many generous donors like you!

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of
the Province of BC.



inside

featured articles

Editorial by Pam Horton and Helaine Boyd.....	4
DABC Review of Bill 6 by Andrew Robb and Helaine Boyd.....	6
Making Housing a Priority by Christine Gordon	10
Let's Improve Online Accessibility by Richard Marion.....	12
Creating a Disability Confident Culture by Rachel Goddyn	16
Decolonizing the PWD Designation by Kelly Dede-Marshall and Natasha Kim.....	18
The Road to Accessibility Legislation by Stephanie Cadieux, MLA	20
What Does Accessibility Mean to You?.....	22
Reflecting on the Development of Bill 6 by Sam Turcott.....	23
The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy by Karen Lai	28

selected content

Planned Giving.....	8
How to Access DABC Services During COVID-19.....	9
Contact Tax AID DABC for Free Income Tax Assistance...	14
Meet the Pets.....	22
From Recovery to Transformation by Jason Schreurs	26





editorial by pam horton and helaine boyd

We've invited contributions from a variety of individuals and organizations who share their hopes and concerns for BC's new Accessibility Legislation.

We've dedicated this Summer edition to the new Accessibility Legislation, recently put forward in the BC Legislature.

This is an important milestone in our province's history, one that DABC is eager to engage in to ensure that any standards and policies implemented from the legislation will have enough substance to effect real change to the lives of people with disabilities.

It is long past due that our provincial government, businesses and society as a whole come together to be united under legislation that will enforce such things as accessibility in housing and the built environment; stricter protections in employee standards; accommodations in customer service interactions; or, increasing support in education—the list is long.

It is clear that, in order for the new Accessibility Legislation to make a real impact in daily life, the standards and policies that currently regulate housing, education, employment and the business sector will also need to be revised to reflect what we hope are stronger standards.

We are excited at the prospect of real change in these areas rever-

berating through many levels of our legislative system.

The round of consultations the provincial government held over the past two years was only the beginning. We have a long road ahead of us, over several years, to ensure that standards and policies are implemented that will bring a meaningful cultural shift.

As a silver lining to this long wait, the disability community here in BC is able to learn lessons from what has or hasn't worked in provinces that have already passed accessibility legislation, such as Ontario, Manitoba and Nova Scotia.

We hope you enjoy reading the perspectives on accessibility represented in this Transition. We've invited contributions from a variety of individuals and organizations who share their hopes and concerns for BC's new accessibility legislation.

These articles include, Let's Improve Online Accessibility, by Richard Marion.

Rachel Goddyn, mother of an adult son with a developmental disability, shares her thoughts about the need for Creating a Disability Confident Culture that will really make the difference in enacting all the standards and policies that come out of the new legislation.

In the article, Reflecting on the Development of Bill 6, Sam Turcott, a former colleague of ours here at DABC, talks about his involvement in the legislation through the Accessibility Secretariat.

In Making Housing a Priority, Christine Gordon takes a look at the evolution of accessible housing in BC and the need to address people with disabilities' invisible homelessness crisis.

And the crucial need to improve the inclusivity of disability supports for Indigenous peoples is examined by Kelly Dede-Marshall and Natasha Kim in the article Decolonizing the PWD Designation.

While it may be the provincial government which sets this legislation, it is the responsibility of all people in BC to uphold access, equity, inclusion and justice in all aspects of daily life.

Finally, the draft of *Bill 6-The Accessible BC Act* was released as production of this edition was underway. DABC and other disability organizations have significant concerns about gaps in the legislation's definitions, standards and enforcement. You can read our critique in DABC Review of Bill 6.

HELAINE BOYD IS DABC'S CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: PROGRAMS AND POLICY. PAM HORTON IS CHAIRPERSON OF DABC'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS. **T**

BILL 6 – 2021

ACCESSIBLE BRITISH COLUMBIA ACT

HONOURABLE NICHOLAS SIMONS
MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

This Bill supports the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to the full and equal participation in society of persons with disabilities by requiring the government and other organizations to establish accessibility committees and develop accessibility plans and by providing for the development and enactment of accessibility standards.

Contents

- Part 1 – Interpretation
- Part 2 – Recognition and Accountability
- Part 3 – Accessible Organizations
- Part 4 – Accessibility Standards
- Part 5 – Compliance and Enforcement
- Part 6 – Reconsiderations and Appeals
- Part 7 – General

Read the full text of Bill 6 online at
<https://tinyurl.com/3kuz4k4e>

I ABOUT TRANSITION

Editorial Statement

The views and opinions expressed within the pages of TRANSITION are not necessarily those held by the total membership or Board of Directors. The material presented is meant to be thought-provoking and to promote dialogue.

Planning Team Helaine Boyd, Pam Horton, Jake Anthony, Myung Lee, Cynthia Minh, Ann Vrlak

Editor and Layout Ann Vrlak

Cover Design Fiona Gamiet

Administrative Assistant Lynda Bennett

Subscriptions and Ads

TRANSITION is published three times a year by Disability Alliance BC. Subscriptions are \$15/year.

Any advertising in TRANSITION is for readers' benefit and does not constitute an endorsement by Disability Alliance BC.

Submissions and Reprints

Comments, articles and graphics are welcome for consideration. Publication not guaranteed.

TRANSITION content may be reprinted without prior permission, as long as the material is published in its entirety, along with this citation: "From TRANSITION magazine, Disability Alliance BC, [edition date]."

Contact Us

Disability Alliance BC
1450- 605 Robson Street,
Vancouver, BC V6B 5J3.
T: 604-875-0188 F: 604-875-9227

TRANSITION general and advertising:
transition@disabilityalliancebc.org

Online:
<https://disabilityalliancebc.org/category/publications/transition/>

DABC general:
feedback@disabilityalliancebc.org



DABC Review of Bill 6

| by Andrew Robb and Helaine Boyd

In its current form as Bill 6, the BC government has unfortunately conveyed to its constituents a lackluster approach to sincerely addressing the elimination of barriers in our province.

Bill 6 – the Accessible BC Act (ABCA) was introduced in the BC legislative assembly on April 28, 2021.

Disability Alliance BC (DABC) and several other disability advocacy organizations in the province have carried out a review and found several concerns that we feel are vital to address before the Bill becomes law.

Our main concerns are its:

- narrowed definition of impairment
 - lack of timelines
 - limited application
 - failure to refer to human rights and BC's Human Rights Code
 - failure to include interactive communication within its list of standards, and
 - weak enforcement process
-

British Columbians with disabilities deserve to know that their access to full and meaningful participation in society is being promoted and enforced through every level of society, not only through government services.

Definition

Bill 6 has excluded learning and communication within its definition of impairment. The *Accessible BC Act* should be in alignment with federal law, the *Accessible Canada Act*, which includes these two areas.

We are concerned this omission will systemically exclude and discriminate against British Columbians who have communication disabilities, as well as those who have learning disabilities.

Timelines

The Bill includes no timeline of any kind for the creation of accessibility standards or the elimination of barriers. Other Canadian accessibility laws specify deadlines for the elimination of barriers.

DABC believes that including a specific timeline within the ABCA is vitally important to ensure the BC government is accountable for delivering a concerted and timely effort towards promoting accessibility and identifying, removing or preventing barriers for British Columbians with disabilities.

Limited Application

Bill 6 currently only applies to the provincial government and organizations “prescribed” by the government.

We are concerned that, unless other organizations are explicitly prescribed in law, the ABCA may apply only to offices and services administered directly by provincial government ministries.

British Columbians with disabilities deserve to know that their access to full and meaningful participation in society is being promoted and enforced through every level of society, not only through government services.

Human Rights

Unlike other Canadian accessibility laws, Bill 6 does not explicitly state that nothing within the law diminishes the existing rights of people with disabilities.

Without explicit reference to the *Human Rights Code*, there is a risk that Bill 6 may make it harder for people with disabilities to exercise the right to be accommodated. This must not be allowed to happen.

Communication

While Bill 6 includes accessibility of “information and communications” as a standard, by making “communications” plural, it fails to acknowledge the requirement for human communication accessibility that may include speech, gestures, sign language, writing, pointing to object or pictures, spelling words, using a communication device, as well as human assistance.

We are concerned that this lack of distinction in Bill 6 will further systemically exclude people with speech, language and communication disabilities.

Weak Enforcement

Bill 6 does not provide a process for anyone to submit complaints when organizations fail to comply with accessibility standards. Other Canadian accessibility laws have better enforcement processes.

DABC is concerned that the lack of an individual complaints process within Bill 6 will, ironically, create further barriers for people with disabilities to seek remedy on the infringement of any rights granted in subsequent regulations and standards developed by the Act.

Last Thoughts

Without addressing these issues, DABC is concerned that the Act’s effectiveness, to ensure the full participation of people with disabilities in BC, will be diminished.

Bill 6 does not provide a process for anyone to submit complaints when organizations fail to comply with accessibility standards. Other Canadian accessibility laws have better enforcement processes.

In its current form as Bill 6, the BC government has, unfortunately, conveyed to its constituents a lackluster approach to sincerely addressing the elimination of barriers in our province.

We have sent a detailed review of these concerns, along with proposed changes, to all MLAs. You can find this document at: <https://disabilityalliancebc.org/disability-alliance-bc-review-on-bill-6/>.

DABC will continue to be closely involved in the Act consultations and will advocate for changes to address these crucial gaps.

HELAINÉ BOYD IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: PROGRAMS AND POLICY AT DABC. ANDREW ROBB IS STAFF LAWYER WITH DABC’S DISABILITY LAW CLINIC. 

SUBSCRIBE

Get all that Transition has to offer, three times a year. You can choose to receive Transition in print, by email or by reading us online.

Please add me to your mailing list. I am enclosing my \$15 annual subscription fee.

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City/Prov _____

Postal Code _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please check one:

I'd like to receive Transition in the following format:

- PDF (by email)
- I'll read it online
- Paper (by mail)

Please make cheques payable to Disability Alliance BC and send to Transition, c/o DABC, 1450- 605 Robson Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 5J3.

THANK YOU!



Planned Giving

You've always been there for others. It's part of who you are. Now, you can continue to give beyond your lifetime.

Planned Giving is the opportunity to think ahead about causes or organizations that you may want to financially support beyond your lifetime.

By planning ahead, you can research charities or have someone research charities for you that fit your values.

Why Consider a Planned Gift?

There are many benefits to Planned Giving. By writing down your wishes, you will have increased peace of mind and control over your finances.

You can also provide a significant future donation without reducing your income today.

A gift in your Will to DABC will help us to be here in the future for those who need us.

Tax Savings

You can realize significant tax savings with Planned Giving. For example, stocks, bonds and mutual funds

that you may have in a Trust can be transferred in your will to a charity and a tax receipt will be issued.

We're Here to Help

Our donors are important to us and we'll work with you to be recognized in the way that you'd prefer.

If you would like more information about Planned Giving, please contact Karen at DABC at karen@disabilityalliancebc.org or 604-875-0188. She will send you DABC's Planned Giving information to review with your financial planner or lawyer, family and friends.

Download our Resources

- Brochure (<https://tinyurl.com/yxbmn3b2>)
- Information Sheet (<https://tinyurl.com/yxnghs5f>)

Learn More About Us

- www.disabilityalliancebc.org

The DABC office is still closed and our staff are continuing to help clients remotely. Please see below how you can reach our core programs.

The best way to book an appointment with staff is by email. You can also book by phone. Thank you for your patience during this extremely busy time. Stay safe, everyone!

Advocacy Access

If you need help with provincial disability benefits or another provincial Ministry issue, or with Canada Pension Plan-Disability applications or appeals, contact Advocacy Access:

**Email advocacy@disabilityalliancebc.org
604-872-1278 or 1-800-663-1278 (Toll-free)**

Tax AID DABC

If you are a person with a disability who needs assistance filing your income taxes, contact Tax AID DABC:

**Email taxaid@disabilityalliancebc.org
236-477-1717 or 1-877-940-7797 (Toll-free)
Book an appointment online at <http://disabilityalliancebc.org/direct-service/file-income-taxes/tax-appointment/>**

Access RDSP

If you need help with the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) or Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP), contact Access RDSP:

**Email rdsp@disabilityalliancebc.org
604-872-1278 or 1-800-663-1278 (Toll-free)
<https://www.rdsp.com/supports-and-services/>**

Disability Law Clinic

Our Disability Law Clinic can help British Columbians with disabilities with legal issues related to their disability rights:

**Email LawClinic@disabilityalliancebc.org
(236) 427-1108**

How to Access DABC Services During COVID-19





Making Housing a Priority | by Christine Gordon

A BC Housing snapshot in December 2020 showed 606 Housing Registry applicants were waiting for wheelchair-accessible housing in Vancouver Coastal or Fraser Health regions.

Accessible, affordable wheelchair housing is a scarce resource and this scarcity has created a crisis for wheelchair users in the population of people with disabilities.

Here are some of the reasons why we are where we are today.

Throughout the 1970's and into the early 80's, there was federal spending earmarked for affordable housing. The BC Coalition of People with Disabilities (now called Disability Alliance BC) became a gathering

DABC community advocate, Jana Husseini, demonstrates the daily challenges of living in a non-accessible home, including kitchen cupboards that are too high. Jana has since moved to an accessible home with her family, with the assistance of the Right Fit.



place for disability activists who got involved in the co-op housing boom.

They worked hard to ensure that wheelchair accessibility would be at the forefront of new developments. Many of them moved out of group or institutional care to live in these units.

Then, federal spending dried up and the supply of accessible co-op housing stagnated.

Although these 50-year-old units still exist, many are in need of repair or upgrading. Nevertheless, they are still highly coveted because they will actually accommodate a wheelchair.

Provincial affordable housing during the 90's and early 2000's tried to keep pace with demand, but too often new units were accessible for walkers and some small manual wheelchairs—not for the power wheelchairs that people were increasingly using. Building standards were inconsistent and there was no common denominator for accessibility.

At the same time, more and more wheelchair users wanted to live an independent life and sought affordable accommodation that could free them of parental or institutional control.

A Crisis in Accessible Housing

In 2014, the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee to the City of Vancouver declared that there was a crisis in affordable, wheelchair accessible housing.

A BC Housing snapshot in December 2020 showed 606 Housing Registry applicants were waiting for wheelchair-accessible housing in Vancouver Coastal or Fraser Health regions. Just over half were living in Vancouver or Surrey and around 56% had income below \$20,000 per year.

In recent years, BC Housing has seen regional turnover of between 30 - 45 units annually for vacancies listed through the Housing Registry.

The Right Fit is Born

Disability Alliance BC, in concert with some key partners like BC Housing, the City of Vancouver, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and Fraser and Vancouver Coastal Health, created The Right Fit as a response to this crisis.

In 2018, the Right Fit held a roundtable of 30 key participants from all sectors. The following three major recommendations emerged.

We need to reverse decades of neglect of affordable accessible housing and bring this invisible homelessness crisis to an end.

Better Utilize Existing Supply

The short-term goal of the Right Fit is to ensure that every wheelchair accessible unit in Greater Vancouver goes to people who really need it.

We have discovered, through our work, that too many wheelchair users fit the Canadian definition of homelessness—they are not living in “stable, safe, permanent and appropriate housing.”

Another immediate goal is to inventory every available unit to make sure it is truly accessible using The Right Fit’s *Accessibility Checklist*, a user-friendly tool to help landlords.

Accessibility standards are all over the map, varying from municipality to municipality. Many housing providers may think they have accessible units when, in actuality, they don’t.

Increase Housing Affordability

We have discovered that the quickest and most effective way to increase housing affordability is through rent supplements.

The Right Fit was awarded 10 supplements through BC Housing and all have been used to broaden the market options for wheelchair

users who urgently need appropriate housing. We need more rent supplements as quickly as possible to meet this crisis.

Address the Supply Gap

This recommendation addresses all of the construction that will be underway in BC in the next 5 to 10 years.

We need minimum ratios of either 20% accessible units or 100% of units meeting universal design standards. Landlords need more funding to retrofit existing units and more incentives are needed to install power door openers and other in-built assistive technologies.

The Right Fit believes that it is on the right track. We need to reverse decades of neglect of affordable accessible housing and bring this invisible homelessness crisis to an end.

CHRISTINE GORDON IS POLICY AND PROGRAM CONSULTANT FOR DABC AND THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE RIGHT FIT STEERING COMMITTEE.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE RIGHT FIT AT [HTTPS://THERIGHTFITBC.ORG/](https://therightfitbc.org/) 



Full-time manual wheelchair user Milli Paredes used to live in an inaccessible home with stairs and had to be carried in and out of her house. The Right Fit program placed Milli and her two sons in a three-bedroom apartment with a fully accessible kitchen and bathroom.



Adams Enokela Ogale is a soccer player who came to Vancouver from Nigeria to study at the university. He became a full-time wheelchair user after suffering a spinal cord injury in a soccer-related accident. He managed to find an accessible home, but could not afford the rent. The Right Fit program was able to obtain a rental supplement through BC Housing, and Adams can now enjoy the security of his home for the long term.

PHOTOS BY ISABELLE GROG



Let's Improve Online Accessibility

BY RICHARD MARION

Decades ago, when accessibility for people with disabilities was an emerging concept, we only thought of the physical world. The online world as we now know it did not exist.

So, when issues of online accessibility have been brought to the courts or human rights tribunals, decisions have usually been interpretations of policies and laws that were never intended to include access to digital content and facilities.

Services are Increasingly Digital

Over the last few years, many of us have been able to manage a range of daily activities on our computer or mobile smart device. That's the good news. The bad news is, banking, shopping and interacting with government now often assumes the ability to access the internet and other digital services.

What happens when a digital platform lacks even basic accessibility standards?

Like the physical environment, the online world has standards and policies that affect access. Governments, like the United States government and the government of Ontario, have now developed policies and standards that have become part of their accessibility laws. With the implementation of the *Accessible Canada Act*, it is hoped that similar policies will be developed for federally-regulated organizations and businesses across Canada.

Now, as BC is in the process of introducing provincial accessibility legislation, the inclusion of strong legislation and regulations that apply to online provincial-regulated businesses and organizations is crucial. These should cover all aspects of our online lives.

Online services must be scalable to operate with different devices and using different access technologies. Following content access guidelines is only a start.

Building in Accessibility

Accessibility planning should be part of any website and online services at all stages. Without this ongoing commitment, some users may not be able to independently access crucial information or participate in mandatory activities. Provincial legislation should be robust and flexible to ensure that accessibility is accounted for at all stages of developing online services.

We need to assume that all online resources will be accessed by people with multiple needs and access technologies.

People with disabilities need to be front and centre when developing or improving online services. Because of ever-changing technology, real people need to test online services on an ongoing basis, including activities that may not be considered public access activities. We need to assume that all online resources will be accessed by people with multiple needs and access technologies.

One of the biggest factors in online access is how well a site or platform works with screen readers such as JAWS, NVDA and Voiceover. However, good screen reader access may help people using alternate input devices as well.

Testing, Testing

Today, companies and organizations have sophisticated tools to test accessibility of online services. However, testing by qualified individuals with disabilities is the best way to ensure a fully accessible online presence.

There are now several organizations that can assist with providing testers with various disabilities and experience levels to help ensure services are understandable, usable and accessible.

Provincial legislation could keep up with the evolving accessibility needs of people by, not only defining key accessibility principles, but referencing already existing international accessibility protocols and guidelines.

If planning for accessibility is included from day one, it costs much less. And, people with disabilities will feel welcome and included.

Today, more than ever, participating in the online world is not a luxury. It is a crucial part of all our lives.

For more on online accessibility, see Fable Tech Labs (Fable) at www.makeitfable.com and Access Works at www.access-works.com.

RICHARD MARION HAS BEEN BLIND SINCE BIRTH. HE HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN ADVOCACY TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY FOR MOST OF HIS LIFE. RECENTLY, RICHARD RECEIVED HIS CERTIFICATION IN ACCESSIBILITY CORE COMPETENCIES FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ACCESSIBILITY PROFESSIONALS. **T**



WorkBC

Assistive Technology Services

Funding is available for hearing aids, restorative supports such as canes and crutches, vehicle modifications, and other assistive devices you may need for work!

1-844-453-5506
workbc-ats.ca



This program is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.



Tax Assistance & Information For People with Disabilities



Contact Tax AID DABC for Free Income Tax Assistance

SPECIALIZING IN MULTIPLE YEARS OF RETURNS

Program Manager | Disability Alliance BC
taxaid@disabilityalliancebc.org
<https://taxaiddabc.org>

Appointments During COVID-19

You can book your remote appointment with DABC online at
<http://disabilityalliancebc.org/direct-service/file-income-taxes/tax-appointment/>.
We also offer our services by email and mail. Please send your tax slips and photo ID to
taxaid@disabilityalliancebc.org. We will contact you for follow-up.

Tax AID DABC helps people in BC receiving PWD (Persons with Disabilities) or PPMB (Persons with Persistent and Multiple Barriers to Employment) benefits to file their income taxes.



CONTACT THE TAX AID DABC REGIONAL PARTNER NEAREST YOU

- METRO VANCOUVER & FRASER VALLEY | VANCOUVER | DABC | 236-477-1717 | Toll Free 1-877-940-7797
- INTERIOR | KELOWNA | Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society | 250-763-4905 ext. 215

Yes, our income tax services are FREE.

Am I eligible for Tax AID DABC services?

We help people who are receiving:

- Persons with Disabilities (PWD) or
- Persons with Persistent and Multiple Barriers (PPMB) to Employment benefits.

What if I Haven't Filed Taxes for Years?

We help prepare simple income tax returns for the most recent tax year, as well as for previous years. One of our specialties is to help people who have multiple years of taxes to file.

What if I Don't Have All My Tax Documents (T5007, T4s)?

Don't worry! We'll contact government agencies to help you find them.

My Income is Low. Why Should I File Taxes?

There are many advantages to filing your income taxes! Our clients usually receive \$400 to \$600 in income tax credits for each year they file. People eligible for an income tax refund, and those with dependent children, often receive much more.

If you haven't filed your taxes for multiple years, your refunds may grow dramatically.

Other benefits you may be eligible for include:

- GST Credits
- BC Sales Tax and Climate Action Tax Credits
- Canada Workers Benefit
- Child Tax Benefits
- Registered Disability Savings Plan Grants and Bonds

Income tax filing can also help you qualify for MSP Premium Assistance coverage, subsidized housing, and other income-tested benefits.

What Should I do Next?

Contact Disability Alliance BC or one of our Regional Partners. We'll set up an appointment to meet with you. Call us today! We're here to help.

CONTACT THE TAX AID DABC REGIONAL PARTNER NEAREST YOU

- VANCOUVER ISLAND | VICTORIA | Together Against Poverty Society | 250-361-3521
- NORTHERN | PRINCE GEORGE | Active Support Against Poverty Society | Toll-Free 1-877-563-6112

Creating a Disability Confident Culture

My son Leslie has a rare developmental disability call pachygyria. Together, we tackle life.

BY RACHEL GODDYN | What does accessibility look like for people with developmental disabilities, such as autism, Down Syndrome or Fetal Alcohol Syndrome?

I confront this question every day.

My son Leslie has a rare developmental disability call pachygyria. Together, we tackle life.

Last month, that meant spending the day at UBC hospital to have his teeth cleaned and x-rayed under general anesthetic. This weekend, it will mean meeting friends at the park to play Pokemon Go.

Participating in the BC Accessibility Legislation consultation gave me the opportunity to think deeply about what accessibility means to individuals with a developmental disability. I contributed to the submission made by Inclusion BC, as well as making a personal submission.

When I was working on the submissions, I realized that accessibility is far more than ensuring everyone can use public buildings or read government websites. Of course, these things are vitally important, but ultimately accessibility is about our ability to connect to and interact with our communities.

For Leslie, accessibility primarily means living in a disability confident culture. Culture is the set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices that characterizes an institution or organization.

Disability confident culture starts with accepting and valuing people of all abilities. It is built by removing obstacles to accessibility, asking and listening before making assumptions, allowing flexibility and adaptability, including people with disabilities in the work force and valuing everyone's contributions.

Disability confidence also means leaders, managers and front-line workers feeling confident and comfortable at a personal level as they interact with people with disabilities.

Supportive Policies

I believe that organizations that receive provincial funds must have a disability confident culture policy.

What would that look like? When creating a policy, an organization would take time to evaluate how they operate and what steps will be taken to ensure people of all abilities are served, welcomed and valued.

This can include examining the organization's mission and vision; staff training and education; special days and events specifically for people with disability; and, educational materials for users.

In 2014, Vancouver airport began a partnership with Canucks Autism Network to increase autism accessibility. Together, they created a program that has several well-thought-out components. For example,



Participating in the BC Accessibility Legislation consultation gave me the opportunity to think deeply about what accessibility means to individuals with a developmental disability.

people with autism can request certain accommodations such as skipping the line-up to go through security. Or, they can prepare for their trip using a free resource kit and videos that answer their questions and allay their fears.

Leslie and I can attest that, since this program started, airport staff are noticeably more engaged with travellers with disabilities.

On one trip, as we went through security, Leslie wanted to show his ball cap to each security person we passed by. Rather than waving him past, the staff took time to tell Leslie how well he was doing. This approval filled him with pride and all nervousness he had about moving through security was gone.

Staff Education

Organizations that receive provincial funds should also have appropriate staff education and training.

Historically, people with developmental disabilities have faced isolation, stigmatization and institutionalization. Unfortunately, some negative perceptions of people with developmental disabilities persist.

Education and training give staff the tools they need to serve people with developmental disabilities in a respectful and responsive way.

Coast Mountain Bus Company has developed videos to train their staff. I've noticed that drivers now interact with Leslie, before turning to me as his support person. Leslie rarely speaks with strangers, but is learning that bus drivers are interested and approachable. He now speaks with drivers who are familiar to him.

Representation Agreements

Organizations that receive provincial funding must recognize Representation Agreements (RAs).

Finally, adults with a developmental disability often have Representation Agreement that allows a close friend or family member to represent them.

These are legal documents created by provincial legislation. However, many organizations receiving provincial funding do not recognize RAs.

The coronavirus pandemic has shown how we must plan ahead so people with developmental disabilities will be empowered to speak for themselves.

I was heartsick and scared when I learned that Ariis Knight, who depended on family and staff to communicate for her, died alone at Peace Arch Hospital. Leslie will always depend on those who love him to advocate for him. He must be able to rely on those advocates being by his side.

Although the new Accessibility Legislation will be a game changer, the work to build accessible communities will never be complete.

I recently met with architects designing a new pool near Leslie's day program building. Together, we figured out important, but often over-looked, details such as the best

Coast Mountain Bus Company has developed videos to train their staff. I've noticed that drivers now interact with Leslie, before turning to me as his support person.

place for HandyDART vehicles to drop off and pick up passengers.

Leslie's work to build accessible, inclusive community is less structured, but just as important.

By living, learning and working in the most active, energetic way he possibly can, Leslie shows everyone he meets that a life lived with a developmental disability can be full, rich and meaningful. **T**

The Transit Police say, "Good job wearing a mask, Leslie."



Decolonizing the PWD Designation

Reclaiming Space for Indigenous Peoples and their Cultural Needs

by Kelly Dede-Marshall and Natasha Kim

Applying for disability assistance in British Columbia is a challenging, inequitable and alienating process for Indigenous applicants who confront longstanding barriers to their health and wellbeing.

In this article, we'd like to talk about the Indigenous-specific challenges with the current colonial Persons with Disabilities (PWD) process; recommend new standards for Indigenous culture and dialogue, accountability and cultural supports; and, set out the need for legislation that can be the groundwork for a reformed PWD system that is consistent with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

Flawed Application and Appeal Processes

To qualify for the PWD designation, applicants must complete an application filled out by themselves, medical professionals and an assessor. Then they must submit the form to an adjudicator with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

Both the application and appeal processes are designed from a colonial viewpoint that limits space to value and respond to the cultural, emotional, mental and physical

Both the application and appeal processes are designed from a colonial viewpoint that limits space to value and respond to the cultural, emotional, mental and physical needs of Indigenous applicants.

needs of Indigenous applicants. It is a system designed for bureaucratic convenience—to move applicants through the process as quickly as possible. This result is a routinely negative experience which often harms Indigenous families.

The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) has a strong mandate to advance the Title, Rights and welfare of First Nations in BC, and is committed to dismantling the barriers that marginalize Indigenous people with disabilities.

Working with advocate Kelly Dede Marshall, UBCIC recently passed Resolution 2021-17, “Decolonizing the Persons with Disabilities Designation (PWD) Application and Appeal Process.”

The Resolution calls upon the provincial government to address the critical shortcomings in the PWD application and appeal process, and to consider how its new accessibility and inclusion legislation can address these shortcomings.

BC's new Act will set accessibility standards aimed at identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility and inclusion. As part

of the Province's commitment to align legislation with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the accessibility Act should support the creation of culturally safe, supportive and positive experiences for Indigenous peoples, and set the stage for the complete reformation of the PWD application and appeal processes.

Standards for Indigenous Culture and Dialogue

Having a designation method that ensures an applicant's culture is respected and supported is vital for capturing Indigenous reality, and producing a clear and informed narrative of the applicant's life and hardships.

A culturally-informed approach removes divisions and inequities, and allows an Indigenous person to use their culture to strengthen their application—and to heal.

The current process requires applicants to “prove” their pain and “failure to function,” and give the worst examples of their disabilities to prove they are “worthy” of support.

Often, Indigenous applicants do not disclose the depth of their struggles and experiences because they do not feel safe to do so or because of cultural considerations.

The result is misinformation and misunderstanding about their disabilities and circumstances, and rejection of their PWD designation.

PWD forms need clearly defined spaces for applicants to disclose their traditional and cultural ways, and how their disability prevents them from accessing these ways.

A family member or Elder attending an application appointment could help with personal disclosure.

This disclosure can then inform and encourage adjudicators to consider the cost, effort and necessity of cultural practices (harvesting, canning, fishing, hunting, attending and preparing for ceremony, supporting Elders, etc.) that strengthen and heal an Indigenous person with a disability.

Standards for Accountability and Cultural Supports

All staff responsible for assisting and assessing Indigenous PWD applicants need to be selected, trained and monitored for their ability to deliver highly effective, ethical and culturally-sensitive service.

Currently, sections of the PWD application form are completed by workers who do not know or work closely with the applicant and do not have the time or training needed to fill out the application with

the care and attention the applicant deserves. This too often leads to application errors, denial of benefits, and a long and painful processing delay at the emotional, physical and mental expense of the applicant.

The application and appeal processes are long and gruelling for applicants who already endure great pain, are at great emotional risk and struggle to find a trained, committed advocate to support them.

Shorter forms and mindful interviews are needed to establish trust and respect, to promote empathy and understanding, and to expedite decisions.

Applicants should have access to an Indigenous advocate to ensure competent presentation of culture, and accurate, discrimination-free completion of forms.

Above all, assessors and advocates should be trained to facilitate the process in a culturally-appropriate manner and be accountable to gather information which clearly represents the reality of the applicant's disability and loss of function.

Moving Forward with BC's New Act

New accessibility legislation needs to provide the framework to overhaul a system that replicates the long-held institutionalized practice of minimizing truths and experiences of Indigenous survivors/claimants seeking PWD designation.

Shorter forms and mindful interviews are needed to establish trust and respect, to promote empathy and understanding, and to expedite decisions.

Respecting Indigenous Elders, families and community members begins with knowing who the applicants are, and learning what they have gone through and are still going through.

The provincial government needs to decolonize the PWD process, so Indigenous people with disabilities no longer feel judged, shamed and fearful, but rather are supported, valued and honoured for who they are and what they have endured.

KELLY DEDE-MARSHALL IS AN ADVOCATE AND THE ADMINISTRATOR OF NATION GRANTS AND NETWORKS. SHE IS ALSO AN EXPERIENCED ASSESSOR OF PWD APPLICATIONS. NATASHA KIM IS POLICY WRITER AND RESEARCHER WITH THE UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS. 



The Road to Accessibility Legislation

BY STEPHANIE CADIEUX, MLA

I share my thoughts here from a number of perspectives: as a person with a disability, as someone who has been an advocate and a service provider, and as a legislator.

Over my last decade serving in the BC Legislature, I have been proud to help move the accessibility agenda forward. At the cabinet table, I contributed to significant changes to our persons with disabilities income supports, specifically earnings exemptions and asset and trust exemptions. I also championed a

province-wide consultation that led to the commitment to Accessibility 2024 which listed twelve building blocks government needed to advance to address access and inclusion.

While I spent years believing we just needed to educate people and change would follow, I have shifted my thinking to more stick, less carrot, and I am in full support of stand-alone accessibility legislation. That said, I recognize there are challenges to legislating the depth

and breadth of things we want to see changed. There are limitations on what legislation can and can't do effectively.

It's these challenges that I'm expecting we will discuss now that BC's legislation is tabled.

There is no doubt we have much to do. The positive thing, in my mind, is the stars have been aligning in terms of understanding the need and value of diversity in the workplace and accessible environments. I believe we've reached a place of near consensus that more needs to be done.

More than 926,000 British Columbians identify as having some form of disability—representing almost 25 per cent of the population. If you're reading this, I don't have to tell you that. As our population ages, the number of people with disabilities, and the severity of their disabilities, are likely to increase.

Reframing Accessibility

Regardless, in my mind, the case for accessibility needs to be reframed. This 25 per cent of the population is not a discrete group. It is not a group that needs something special. It is 25 per cent of every group, every market segment or target, every cultural group, every workplace, every community.

It's clear people with disabilities continue to feel disenfranchised by policies that are ineffective because



STEPHANIE CADIEUX
MLA | SURREY SOUTH

Critic for Gender Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion

Stephanie.Cadieux.MLA@leg.bc.ca

-  StephanieCadieux
-  Stephanie_Cadieux
-  Stephanie4BC

 BC LIBERAL CAUCUS

The challenge I see is the legislation is too high-level, focusing the disability lens on government programs and services. While this is important, I don't know too many people who interact with government on a daily basis.

they were not developed with a lens on accessibility.

Governments and private sector organizations have for years espoused the value of inclusion and accessibility, but too often it isn't required.

Even worse, frankly, unconscious bias allows folks to decide a lens on accessibility isn't needed and we go forward building new problems.

As we all know, Canada has a robust human rights system. Disability is a protected ground under these laws and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Our country is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Again, the challenge is not the high-level statements or buy-in, but rather that anti-discrimination laws are reactive. These laws alone have not gotten it done.

So then, perhaps, stand-alone legislation is the lever to move the dial once and for all on access and inclusion.

Bill 6

Bill 6 - The Accessible BC Act that has been brought forward by government sets the table to guide the development, implementation and

enforcement of accessibility standards, and will draw on the expertise and experience of people with disabilities.

Accessibility standards could cover a variety of areas such as service delivery, education, employment, housing and the built environment, information and communication and transportation, and would rely on having the appropriate mix of incentives, compliance and enforcement tools.

The legislation loosely resembles legislation in other provinces, as well as Bill C-81 (the *Accessible Canada Act*), and is what we refer to as enabling legislation.

The challenge I see is the legislation is too high-level, focusing the disability lens on government programs and services. While this is important, I don't know too many people who interact with government on a daily basis.

Instead, for the legislation to have a real impact on people with disabilities, the barriers we need to see removed include things much closer to home: being able to find an accessible home; barriers accessing restaurants, transportation and doctor's offices; and, finding employment.

This is possible with the legislation, but it will likely be many years before these issues are addressed.

Of course, there are thousands more examples, and different people with different needs will prioritize them differently. These are just meant as examples of the reach we need this legislation to have.

People's individual needs are real, but the solutions need to be systemic.

It can be a difficult balance to find, and even harder to ensure, that an appropriate structure for complaint resolution is available and also transparent.

Setting standards will be challenging, and certainly, the community expects to see themselves at the table. But this needs to be balanced with a desire to harmonize standards across jurisdictions. The multitude of standards, guidelines and codes across the country, and across sectors, only adds confusion.

The question is: how do we set up a harmonized standard and still be responsive?

The hope, that I believe is shared by the majority, is that the legislation is only one (albeit essential) part of a broader strategy to bring about cultural awareness and change to facilitate meaningful inclusion.

STEPHANIE CADIEUX IS THE MLA FOR SURREY SOUTH AND IS THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION CRITIC FOR GENDER EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION. 



MEET THE PETS

Here are Solly and I working from home. I adopted her from the SPCA in Squamish on December 21st, so her full name is Solstice. She has brought a lot of joy into our house.

Celia Arruda
Community Advocate
DABC's Advocacy Access
Program



This is my labradoodle Cypress. He's 8 and thinks he's Louis Litt from Suits. He loves mudding and pretending to be a lawyer. He is basically hilarious.

Jackie Nicklin
DABC'S Right Fit Program



What Does Accessibility Mean To You?

The front entrance to my apartment building doesn't have an automatic door opener.

When I am using my walker, I've been managing to hold the door with one hand, but this isn't an ideal option for me. My physical strength is deteriorating, so I'm at risk for falls.

These days, I need to use a scooter to conserve my energy. The front door is heavy and it's becoming impossible for me to hold it open while steering my scooter into the building.

For the past four years, I've needed someone to hold the front door for me to get into the building.

So, my only option is to sit by the front door and wait for someone to let me in. Imagine what it's like waiting outside in the cold when you need access to a washroom.

I urgently need new accessibility legislation in BC to ensure equal access. Public and private buildings need to be equipped with automatic buttons to provide easy access for people using mobility aids.

The conversation on accessibility is personal to me. It affects my dignity and my daily living activities. **Linda Tang**

So, my only option is to sit by the front door and wait for someone to hold the door for me.

Accessibility means more awareness of visual impairments. Even an uneven surface of less than an inch is enough to trip someone. And there's no need for another study. Just follow Walmart's lead. They have the smoothest transition areas for walking, entrances, exits and parking lots of any stores. They were also the first to provide electric shopping carts for customers and have benches inside stores for people to rest or wait for pickup or pharmacy orders. **Donni D.**

Accessibility means that we no longer have to advocate for ourselves and others to be treated equally, and that everywhere we go in the community we can freely enter all buildings and participate as a valued community member with all the same rights and freedoms. **Marnie Essery, Chair, Intermunicipal Advisory Committee on Disability Issues**

Reflecting on the Development of Bill 6 | by Sam Turcott

A little more than two years ago, I made a hard decision. I decided to leave a job I loved for the opportunity to initiate the development of Accessibility Legislation for British Columbia.

Now, after more than two years of work, many new friends and colleagues, and a few bumps along the way, I am proud that the legislation has been introduced.

As a legally blind kid growing up in a family of modest means, I never really expected to have the types of opportunities I have had in my career. I started volunteering and working for disability organizations when I was in university as a way to better understand my own identity as a person with a disability, and to gain skills and experience in the labour force.

In no small part, my time working at Disability Alliance BC (DABC) was instrumental in shaping how I think about disability and my own place in the disability community today.

The relationships I formed, and skills I developed during my time there, first as a student, later as a Director of its Advocacy Access Program, and eventually as Executive Director for Policy and Programs, continues to inform how I think about my work today.

The proposed accessibility legislation is designed to provide the framework for government to work in partnership with people with disabilities and the broader com-

munity to identify, remove and prevent the barriers that impede people with disabilities from fully and equally participating in their communities.

I believe that this law, if passed in the legislature, will be an important step forward in an ongoing journey towards a more inclusive and accessible province.

However, I also know that its true impact will only be understood in hindsight. The steps that will come next, developing and implementing accessibility standards, will be pivotal in realizing the ambitious aspirations of the new legislation.

As we embark on this new phase of the journey, it is more important than ever that people with disabilities continue to be at the heart of the work. For many, the passing and implementation of the proposed legislation cannot come soon enough. In many ways, I share this impatience.

I also know that there is real value in taking the time to ensure that government implements this legislation in a way that is truly collaborative and reflective of the immense diversity that exists within the disability community and in British Columbia generally.

Whatever comes next, I am left, in the moment I write this, with a sense of deep gratitude. I am grate-

In no small part, my time working at Disability Alliance BC (DABC) was instrumental in shaping how I think about disability and my own place in the disability community today.

ful to continue to do work that I love. I am grateful for the passion and dedication my friends and colleagues in the BC Public Service and the broader community bring to this work every day. I am grateful to live in a province that is taking steps to become a truly inclusive and welcoming place for all.

Not least of all, I am grateful for all the ways that my disability continues to shape who I am and who I will become.



SAM TURCOTT IS EXECUTIVE LEAD FOR ACCESSIBILITY, MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION. T



Connect with DABC

ABOUT US

Our mission is to support people, with all disabilities, to live with dignity, independence and as equal and full participants in the community. We champion issues impacting the lives of people with disabilities through our direct services, community partnerships, advocacy, research and publications.

SERVICES & PROGRAMS

Our Advocacy Access Program provides one-on-one assistance with provincial and federal (Canada Pension Plan Disability) income supports and other benefits. Our Tax AID DABC program helps PWD and PPMB recipients to file their income taxes year-round. Access RDSP helps people with the Disability Tax Credit and with opening a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP).

Our programs and projects respond to community need and increase people's ability to participate and contribute.

GROWING PARTNERSHIPS

We stay connected with a large network of community organizations across BC and regularly provide them with updates about issues of importance to the disability community.

FREE PUBLICATIONS

We publish a range of capacity-building, self-help guides and advocate resources, in reader-friendly language. Resources are provided free of charge, either by mail or from our website.

BECOME A DABC MEMBER

Numbers matter. The more members we have, the stronger our voice in the community.

Please become a Disability Alliance BC (DABC) member today. You can be a voting member or a non-voting member, and we welcome both individuals and groups.

I accept your invitation to join the DABC and enclose my membership fee of \$15 (individuals) and \$25 (groups).

I am also including a tax-deductible donation of \$_____. (Donations over \$10 are tax deductible).

You can also become a member or donate online at: <http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/about-dabc/become-a-member>.

Please return your payment/donation with this form to: DABC, 1450- 605 Robson Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 5J3.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Please check the applicable boxes:

- New membership or Renewal
- Voting Member or Non-voting Member

Voting members are people with disabilities and self-help groups where at least 50% of members have a disability.

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City/Prov _____ Postal Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

SUPPORT DABC!

Our rent for the new DABC offices has increased by 100%.

If you support DABC's work, please consider a one-time contribution or become a monthly donor. Our monthly donors help us to create a funding base we can count on.

Please visit our Support page at <http://disabilityalliancebc.org/support-us> for ways you can give.

Thank you for helping us continue our work on behalf of people with disabilities.



Icons designed by EpicCoders from Flaticon

From Recovery to Transformation

| by Jason Schreurs

With rehab, I could claw back to where I was before. Except, I was in a horrible place before I went into crisis.

I'm starting to dislike the word recovery.

When I see it in my manuscript, I scratch it out mercilessly and replace it with frustrated question marks.

Recovery. It's been one of my buzz words for two and some years and I'm sick of it, frankly.

Since my mental health crisis and bipolar diagnosis, my immediate goal was to start the process of recovery. I wanted to face my illness. I wanted to punch it in the face. I

needed to persevere, overcome and win. Recovery would lead to rehabilitation. With rehab, I could claw back to where I was before.

Except I was in a horrible place before I went into crisis.

With the damage I did and was capable of, how the link between mind and body snapped under the weight of my actions, I never wanted to go back.

Did my fear of failure stop me from looking at a bigger picture? I thought recovery was my light—my way out. With its comfort, I could move forward.

Then, one day, I screwed a new light bulb into my socket and had a luminous “aha” moment that I'm still buzzing from.

If to recover means returning to who I was before my mental health crisis and diagnosis, that feels like going backwards. If it means being in a holding pattern, that feels like purgatory. Looking forward with horse blinders on dismisses my past.

The word recovery doesn't fit. This is my journey, and I will use the words I want to. They may change along the way and I won't let myself be strapped to them.

I had been using the concept of recovery to make sense of a foreignness I thought I'd never comprehend. To recover was to cope, find a secret code, and unlock myself from myself. I could crack my ribs open and pull out all the pain.



A month and a half and I'm still in a much-welcome period of mood stability.

My psychiatrist and I are talking about tapering back my lithium medication. It's a trepidatious victory. I've had a few of them lately, so I'm open to the idea.

I ask her about the health benefits of taking less lithium.

"Not many. We've talked about risk of kidney damage, but your lithium levels have always been low, so there's no concern there. You've had no side-effects."

I trust my psychiatrist more than any doctor I've seen. She's always so damn direct and honest.

It was her resolve that was the clincher when I couldn't decide whether to pursue my Master's—or whether I wanted to write a book. I was so scared, even though I'd already been accepted into the program. I fell into a pit of indecision.

I'll always remember her turning to me with absolute certainty. "Do it, Jason! Do it!" Her decisiveness continues to inspire me as I enter my final year of studies.

I'm asking about my meds again.

"So, I don't understand. Why would I take less lithium if there aren't really any side effects?"

My anxiety ramps up when I'm confused. I'm flustered by the uncertainty of taking less lithium.

"Let me put it this way," she says. "If you take less lithium, how are you going to feel about yourself?"

This throws me, but I answer. "Like I'm healing or something. Like I'm changing." Her knowing nod soothes me.

Sascha DuBrul lives with bipolar disorder and has been hospitalized four times for psychosis, all before he turned 35. Sascha, now 46, founded Transformative Mental Health Practices in Oakland, California, and is one of many mental health care professionals moving away from the language of recovery.

As a coach and counsellor, he encourages clients to consider a different perspective on their journeys.

"A chrysalis doesn't just stay a chrysalis, it becomes a butterfly," he says, "and a butterfly doesn't fly around for a bit and then go back to being a chrysalis."

The issue with this metaphor, he says, is we don't stay a butterfly either—evolving it's a continuum.

The American Psychiatric Association found more than 50 per cent of people who "recover" from a depressive episode will experience at least one more in their lifetime. Some health care professionals and members of the mental health community are now encouraging the term "pathways to recovery" rather than "recovery."

I'm not sure that cuts it either.

I don't want to recover.
I want to reflect, learn,
heal, and transform.
Transformation. That's a
word I like.

Recovery is a placeholder that replunks me at the bottom of a ladder. At the top—a lookout to my past. I climb, rung by rung, on wobbly legs, put my hand to my brow.

In the distance, I see the life I never want to return to. Recovery waits below, but my hands are fused to the ladder.

I don't want to recover. I want to reflect, learn, heal, and transform.

Transformation. That's a word I like. To transform is to un-fuse my hands from the ladder, climb down on unwavering legs, reach the bottom with newfound reflection, and enter my new chapter with clarity and recognition, leaving recovery behind.

Past, present, and future—the pillars of transformation.

JASON SCHREURS IS A WRITER, PUNK ROCKER, HOST OF THE SCREAM THERAPY PODCAST, AND MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATE. LEARN MORE AT JASONSCHREURS.COM. 



The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy

“We’re committed to involving people with diverse experiences and abilities in our engagement process,” says Karen Lai, Accessibility Planner at the City of Vancouver.

The City of Vancouver is working on the first phase of a new Accessibility Strategy to create a universally accessible city.

The City is investing in this essential project to ensure a culture of equity and inclusion for all residents, employees and visitors.

“We understand that people with disabilities have historically experienced barriers to participation in the planning and design of City policies and processes, and so have been excluded or under-represented. We’re committed to involving people with diverse experiences and abilities in our engagement process,” says Karen Lai, Accessibility Planner at the City of Vancouver.

“As we develop this first Phase of the Accessibility Strategy, we must take into consideration the multiple identities that intersect to make us who we are and ask how and why experiences differ depending on factors such as gender, disability, age, race, ethnicity, sexuality and gender identity.”

At the heart of the strategy is recognition of the rights, dignity, and independence of people with disabilities, seniors, and people with lived experiences of mental health concerns or substance use issues.

This will lead to an action plan that focuses on identifying, preventing and removing barriers to access, so that everyone can fully engage with City departments and their own communities.

An Accessibility Task Force, which has been meeting since early 2020, is guiding the creation of the strategy and is composed of volunteers from the City’s Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee and the Seniors Advisory Committee.

Since the Spring, the City has had conversations with individuals and their families, disability organizations and City staff, and will continue these conversations into the fall.

The City is approaching this strategy with a sense of curiosity—asking questions, and challenging assumptions and unconscious biases.

By applying an accessibility lens to all of its work, the City is striving to foster a more robust culture of inclusion for everyone who lives in Vancouver.

The strategy will align with the *Accessible Canada Act* and the new BC Accessibility Legislation, as well as with many areas of the City’s work including the Healthy City Strategy and the upcoming Equity Framework.

For more information, please contact karen.lai@vancouver.ca or visit: <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/accessible-city.aspx>.

KAREN LAI IS THE ACCESSIBILITY PLANNER FOR THE CITY OF VANCOUVER. SHE HAS AN MA IN HUMAN KINETICS FROM UBC AND UNDERGRAD DEGREE FROM VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY. **T**

Download DABC's Free Resources

Did you know DABC has a library of help sheets, self-help guides and resources for individuals, organizations and community planners? Here are some of the free resources you can download from our website.

BC Disability Benefits

We have over 15 Disability Benefits Help Sheets that are our most popular downloads. You'll learn about applications and appeals for the PWD and PPMB benefits; health benefits and nutritional supplements; filing income taxes for people receiving PWD and PPMB; PWD applications for people with disabilities living on reserve, and more.

Canada Pension Plan Disability

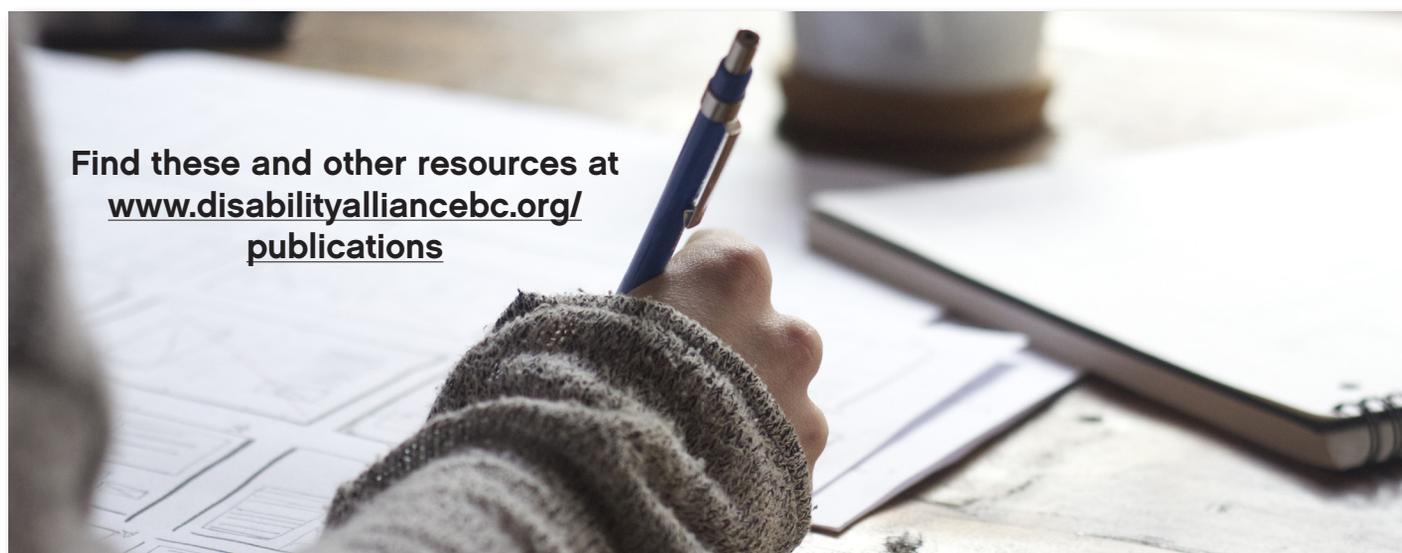
In the CPP-D section, you'll find our application and appeal guides for CPP-D, as well as a benefits checklist.

Registered Disability Savings Plan and Disability Tax Credit

We've created guides and help sheets on these key financial tools for people with disabilities and for health professionals who want to help their clients access these tools.

Other

- Anti-violence resources to help people with disabilities understand the steps they will go through if they have been a victim of a crime. We have also created resources for front line anti-violence workers.
- Emergency Preparedness guides on inclusive emergency planning for community partners.



Find these and other resources at
[www.disabilityalliancebc.org/
publications](http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/publications)

35% off
for non-profit
organizations

TRANSITION RATES Advertising and Sponsorships

FULL COLOUR ADS			
Ad size position	Number of editions booked		
	1	2	3
COVER PAGES			
Outside back cover	\$1,650	\$1,425	\$1,275
Front inside cover			
Back inside cover			
INSIDE PAGES			
Full page	\$925	\$780	\$640
2 columns	\$685	\$575	\$480
3 column large	\$650	\$555	\$465
2 column small	\$300	\$250	\$210
1 column	\$340	\$280	\$245
1 column mini	\$200	\$175	\$150

BLACK ONLY ADS			
Ad size position	Number of editions booked		
	1	2	3
COVER PAGES			
Outside back cover			
Front inside cover	\$900	\$765	\$635
Back inside cover	\$750	\$635	\$495
INSIDE PAGES			
Full page	\$710	\$600	\$485
2 columns	\$525	\$450	\$385
3 column large	\$500	\$410	\$365
2 column small	\$240	\$190	\$170
1 column	\$265	\$225	\$185
1 column mini	\$155	\$135	\$110

Sponsorships

Sponsors have a unique opportunity to promote their business or organization to DABC’s readership and followers. For full details on ads and sponsorships, please contact us at transition@disabilityalliancebc.org.

Premiere Sponsorship

- A 1/2 page, colour banner ad on the back cover
- Two inside colour pages
- A thank you in our e-newsletters, for one year

Feature Sponsorship

- A 1/3 page, colour banner ad on the back cover
- One inside colour page
- Two thank yous in our e-newsletter

Ad Design

Sponsors can design their own banner ad or we will design it for you at no charge. We can also design interior pages for you from text and graphics you provide.



DTC RESOURCES FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Access RDSP has created two new booklets to help health professionals support clients with Disability Tax Credit applications:



- **A Nurse Practitioner's Guide to the Disability Tax Credit**
- **A Guide to the Disability Tax Credit for Occupational Therapists**

The Disability Tax Credit (DTC) offers significant benefits for people with disabilities who qualify.

With these guides, we explain the different sections of the form and offer suggestions for supporting patients' applications.

For more information, please contact the Access RDSP Outreach Coordinator at DABC at 604-872-1278 or rdsp@disabilityalliancebc.org.

ACCESS RDSP IS A PARTNERSHIP OF BC ABORIGINAL NETWORK ON DISABILITY SOCIETY, DISABILITY ALLIANCE BC AND PLAN INSTITUTE, MADE POSSIBLE WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM THE VANCOUVER FOUNDATION.

THANK YOU TO THE BC NURSE PRACTITIONERS ASSOCIATION FOR THEIR COLLABORATION ON THIS RESOURCE.

Access RDSP
Change your tomorrow today



vancouver
foundation





we are all
connected

Suite 204, 456 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1R3
(604) 875-0188 • fax (604) 875-9227
trans@disabilityalliancebc.org • disabilityalliancebc.org

CANADA		POSTES
POST		CANADA
Postage paid		Port payé
Publications Mail		Poste-publications
40051676		

CELEBRATING OVER

40

YEARS

Thank you to the Province of BC for their continuing support.

