

Tax AID DABC
Serving More Clients

Rent Control
for Units Critical

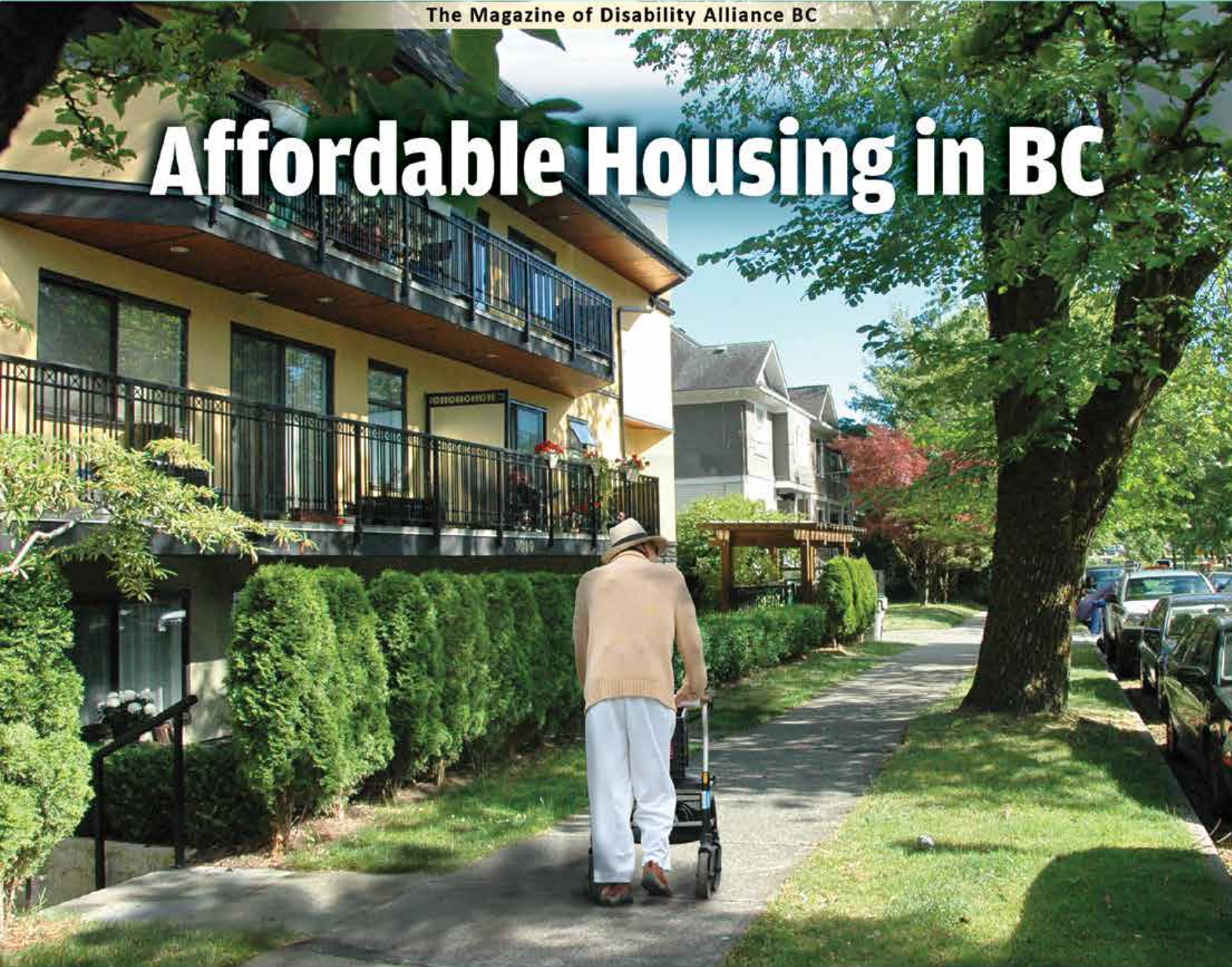
VRS Committed to
Housing with Home Care

FALL 2018

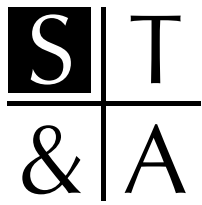
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Affordable Housing in BC



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editorial

by Lorraine
Copas

Accessible Housing in Accessible Communities: Unlocking the Promise and Potential

On June 26, 2018, the Province of British Columbia and the Federal government signed a ten-year agreement to invest nearly \$1 billion over the next decade to address the growing housing affordability and homelessness challenges that communities are facing.

This funding supports the implementation of the Federal government's first-ever *National Housing Strategy* which was released in November 2017.

Under this Strategy, the Federal government has acknowledged the importance of ensuring that everyone has a place to call home and has made a commitment to creating new affordable housing units, modernizing the existing affordable housing stock, providing technical assistance to local communities and providing funding to support research and innovation.

The Strategy also makes a commitment to better meet the needs of Canada's most vulnerable citizens including: women and children fleeing family violence, seniors, Indigenous people, and people with disabilities. It also includes a commitment to strengthening the system of services and supports for individuals with mental health and

addictions challenges, as well as vulnerable and at risk youth.

Under the program guidelines, the Federal government has made a commitment to provide low-cost financing and capital to create an expanded range of housing choices. The goal is to help improve the housing situation of more than 530,000 families and individuals who are in housing need and to reduce the number of individuals experiencing homelessness.

more of their income on their housing costs. The precarious nature of the housing situation for many people with disabilities is also evident in the point-in-time homeless count data. People with physical disabilities and health and activity limitations are over-represented among those who are homeless.

The renewed Federal funding has the potential to help address these needs through the requirement that 20% of units must include specific

Under the program guidelines, the Federal government has made a commitment to provide low-cost financing and capital to create an expanded range of housing choices.

Across Canada, the 2016 Census identified 1,292,575 renter households in housing need, including 169,265 in BC. These are households in the private rental market who are spending between 30% and 100% of their income on their housing costs.

The 2011 Census¹ showed that almost 4 in 10 renter households in housing need in BC reported a health and activity limitation; it also shows that almost half of these households were spending 50% or

accessibility features in their design and in common areas in the building.

Furthermore, while the new program holds significant promise and potential to address the current shortfall in affordable and accessible housing for people with disabilities, and complement and support Provincial efforts, success will depend on local innovation and imagination.

The precarious nature of the housing situation for many people with disabilities is also evident in the point-in-time homeless count data.

The collection of articles and stories shared in this edition demonstrate this innovation and imagination.

This includes strategic partnerships and alliances, like those created by the Vancouver Resources Society (VRS), which help to add incremental supply to better meet the needs of the individuals they serve. Other initiatives, like the Right Fit Pilot Project, led by DABC, highlight potential strategies and actions to make better use of the existing physical and social infrastructure.

It also includes the range of strategies and initiatives led by the BC Non-Profit Housing Association and its members and partners to respond to local housing needs across communities.

The reflections shared in this Transition by the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition also draw attention to the need to strengthen current tenant protection and rent regulations. The Coalition highlights the importance of adopting a systems-based approach when looking at issues of housing affordability and homelessness. In particular, the Coalition reminds us of the precarious housing situation of far too many families and individuals.

Even with the increased housing investments, affordability can still be lost if measures are not in place to protect the needs of low income and vulnerable households who are at risk of displacement through economic eviction, rent increases and displacement—a phenomenon that is becoming increasingly prevalent as housing demand pressures increase and rental market vacancy rates remain low.

In looking at issues of housing affordability and accessibility, it is clear that in addition to the physical design, there is also the need to look at issues of equity and to think about the kind of communities and neighbourhoods we want to create. While mixing market and social objectives can raise some complexities, it is the only way forward if we truly want to create communities that work for all citizens and that fulfil the promise and potential of a place that everyone can call home.

¹ 2016 data is not yet available.

LORRAINE COPAS IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE SOCIAL PLANNING AND RESEARCH COUNCIL OF BC (SPARC BC) AND IS THE PROVINCIAL LEAD FOR THE COMMUNITY DATA PROGRAM. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE HOUSING NEEDS IN YOUR COMMUNITY, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT LORRAINE AT LCOPAS@SPARC.BC.CA.

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.

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Subscriptions and Ads

TRANSITION is published four 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 the Disability Alliance BC.

Submissions and Reprints

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

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Should the PWD Shelter Portion Be Raised?

by Annette Murray

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction has not raised the maximum shelter rate since 2007.

Even at that time, the rate was unrealistically low at \$325. The increase to \$375 made little difference to people living on the Persons With Disabilities (PWD) benefit. Currently, non-profit housing societies are generally charging more rent than the Ministry's shelter rate.

It's long past time to raise the shelter rate or the PWD rate generally.

The argument against raising the shelter maximum rate is that an increase will simply encourage land-

lords to raise rents. Historically, that is exactly what occurred.

But there's something bigger happening here. Throughout the province, shelter costs have risen dramatically over the past few years. Many people simply cannot afford to pay rent and utilities, let alone food and other daily living needs.

Increasingly, landlords are refusing to rent to people in receipt of Ministry benefits. They are aware of the thin margin that enables people living on low incomes to pay the rent and cope with unexpected financial demands.

Increasingly, landlords are refusing to rent to people in receipt of Ministry benefits. They are aware of the thin margin that enables people living on low incomes to pay the rent and cope with unexpected financial demands.

Many PWD and income assistance recipients tell our advocates they are fearful that, if their landlords find out they are on social assistance, they will look for ways to end the tenancy.

These are some of the reasons why many people with disabilities are driven into homelessness. Homeless income assistance and PWD recipients are not eligible to receive the shelter portion of their cheques. And the longer someone is homeless, the more likely they are to become ill and lose touch with their families, friends and medical caregivers, if they have them. The cycle of homelessness traps more and more people with disabilities every year.

Simply raising the shelter rate may not be enough. Many disability advocates believe the Ministry should do away with the shelter portion of the cheque so all Ministry clients, whether homeless or not, receive the shelter amount as part of their cheque.

Much affordable housing is found on the fringes where landlords are often unreachable and/or unwilling to provide paperwork for the Ministry. And, as I've mentioned earlier, some do not want to have low income people with disabilities as tenants. The Ministry requires considerable shelter-related documentation from clients, who must




Many disability advocates believe the Ministry should do away with the shelter portion of the cheque so all Ministry clients, whether homeless or not, receive the shelter amount as part of their cheque.

at least provide a rent receipt or copy of the lease, and the landlord's contact information.

Eliminating the separate shelter and support portions of the cheque would remove an arbitrary barrier that makes it harder for people to find and keep housing.

The government has shown that it is prepared to invest in affordable housing and boost other supports for people with disabilities. Raising the shelter rate or raising the rates generally, and eliminating the demarcation between shelter and support on Ministry cheques, would go a long way toward preventing homelessness and promoting health.

ANNETTE MURRAY IS AN ADVOCATE WITH DABC'S ADVOCACY ACCESS PROGRAM. 

Pat Danforth
DABC President



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IN MEMORIAM

Craig Langston

1966 – 2018

DABC was very sad to learn that Craig Langston has passed away. He was a great friend to many of us and he will be sorely missed by the disability community.

Craig Thomas MacDonald Langston passed peacefully on July 14, 2018 leaving to mourn wife Margie, daughter Kailey, son Jamie, parents Margaret and Larry, sister Camille, and many other family members and friends.

Connected to his Indigenous roots, Craig kept in touch with his biological family. Family members and friends attended a number of Pow Wows and ceremonies together.

Born in Edmonton, he spent his school years in Fort Saskatchewan where he was affectionately known in Fort Saskatchewan High School as "Crash." He was well liked by his many friends for his optimism. He met Margie at Naramata Centre and married her on November 5, 1988 in the Naramata Community Church. Kailey was born March 23, 1995 and Jamie December 11, 2000.

Craig attended Camrose College, and the Naramata Centre Tent-maker program. He was active in the Youth and Young Adult Program offering leadership within the BC Conference of the United Church.


Craig worked at the TD Bank and the Bank of Montreal, and later

as a Collection Representative for Revenue Canada. He was a Past President of the Cerebral Palsy Association of BC, consultant with Vancouver City Transit, and activist for more programs and benefits for people with disabilities, including the City of Burnaby Access Advisory Committee, the Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion Advisory Committee and the Disability Alliance of BC.

He described himself on LinkedIn as an Accessibility/Disabilities and Community Activist. Others have described him as a strong and persistent advocate.

Craig was proud to carry the torch for the Vancouver Winter Olympics in 2010. He won two golds at the Paralympics: in bocce and in an obstacle race. He also coached a bocce team that participated in a national competition in Eastern Canada. Cathy Browne, a Board Member on the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee, said she "loved his passion and dedication."

He was a good friend to many, with a great capacity to listen and offer support. The support from his close friends kept him going when things were really difficult for him and they admired him for his tenacity.

Celebrations of his life will be held at a later date, both in the Vancouver and Edmonton areas. 




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DABC Housing Project Update

The Right Fit Pilot Project's goal is matching people with housing | by Dawn Steele

We recently held an Accessible Housing Roundtable. We heard about the challenges facing wheelchair users in Metro Vancouver who are waiting for affordable housing, some for many years.

British Columbians who need affordable wheelchair-accessible housing often wait years to find a suitable home. Some confront the frightening prospect of homelessness. Others are stuck in care facilities or unsuitable housing, denied basic amenities like bathing or forced to forego job opportunities in a community that has no suitable vacancies.

Thanks to financial support from the Vancouver Foundation and the BC Rehab Foundation, Disability Alliance BC is working with key provincial, regional and community partners in The Right Fit Pilot Project (RFPP). Our goal is to test systemic changes that will make it easier for wheelchair users and providers of subsidized wheelchair-accessible housing to match needs with availability.

We recently held an Accessible Housing Roundtable. We heard about the challenges facing wheelchair users in Metro Vancouver who are waiting for affordable housing, some for many years. However, very low turnover rates offer little hope of finding suitable vacancies in the immediate term.

RFPP partners at the June Roundtable included the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR) which presented data showing there are approximately 8,700 wheelchair users in BC on PWD (Persons With Disabilities) benefits.

More than half of these individuals (58%) live in Metro Vancouver, concentrated in the urban centres with more affordable housing and transit, from the Downtown Eastside, through Burnaby and New Westminster to Surrey.

BC Housing also shared snapshot data from December 2017, showing 450 applicants to The Housing Registry who were listed as waiting for wheelchair-accessible housing in Vancouver Coastal or Fraser Health regions. Just over half were living in Vancouver or Surrey and around 65% had income below \$20,000/year. BC Housing also noted the turnover (number of vacancies listed through The Housing Registry) for wheelchair units in the region was approximately 45 units annually in recent years.

While these snapshots do not capture the full spectrum of supply

and demand, they reinforce concerns that the demand for affordable wheelchair-accessible homes in Metro Vancouver far outstrips the supply, jeopardizing housing security for wheelchair users. With significant new federal and provincial commitments to address the region's broader housing affordability crisis, a key challenge will be to ensure that the gap in affordable wheelchair-accessible housing will be addressed as a top priority under these new initiatives.

Despite the urgent need for affordable wheelchair-accessible homes, the Roundtable also heard that social housing providers are sometimes unable to find wheelchair users to fill vacant accessible units at short notice.

When accessible units are used to meet urgent social housing needs for individuals or families who don't need wheelchair-accessibility, these scarce units can be lost to the subsidized rental market for the long term, further aggravating the crisis for wheelchair users.

If these scarce wheelchair units are so urgently needed, why would that happen? In part, it's linked to the broader housing crisis, with social housing providers struggling to balance a range of urgent housing demands.

RFPP navigators are also learning that many wheelchair users need extra support to navigate eligibility processes to secure services like

home care, income supports and customized equipment before they can access social housing. Applying for and maintaining a current application for social housing over a lengthy waiting period can also be challenging. Social housing providers may also have multiple eligibility requirements that exclude some wheelchair users.

Other gaps include the lack of a single marketplace for listing and finding wheelchair-accessible rentals, and the need for common standards to document and communicate specific accessibility needs, such as roll-in showers or extra space to manoeuvre electric wheelchairs.

Through our partnership with BC Housing, MSDPR and regional

health authorities, RFPP is developing a better understanding of the challenges facing wheelchair users and housing/service providers, and working to develop and test solutions.

For example, MSDPR and health authorities are working with our navigators to test a streamlined process to match wheelchair users with home supports and equipment. Another key partner, the Individualized Funding Resource Centre (IFRC) leads our team of navigators who work with housing providers, applicants and project partners to facilitate connections and overcome barriers, while building the foundation for a more effective way to match available supply with demand.

| continued on page 30

L to R (with faces visible): Ken Fraser, Vancouver Resources Society; Brian Butt, City of Vancouver; Abigail Bond, City of Vancouver; and Chris Hofley, Individualized Funding Resource Centre



Tom Patch (left), City of Vancouver Disability Advisory Committee and Shane Ramsay, BC Housing



Creating Housing Solutions for People Who Need Home Care

| by Ann Vrlak

“Municipalities sometimes give developers incentives for building affordable housing. We become involved to create units specifically for people with a disability.”

When Ken Fraser describes the work of Vancouver Resources Society (VRS), it is heartening and disheartening at the same time.

Heartening because VRS has such a strong client-centered approach that it's a given “we want to know what people need and try to get it for them.” And disheartening because VRS' work is so far out of step with how our social services and programs are approaching the needs of people with disabilities.

The core mission of VRS is to provide a range of supported housing options for people with severe disabilities. For this client group, workable housing goes far beyond physical accessibility to affordability of home care.

“It's simple,” Ken said. “Without housing, without community living, other programs we or the community might offer are no use to people living with significant disability.”

“So, we acquire housing through partnerships with developers and municipalities,” Ken said. “Municipalities sometimes give developers incentives for building affordable housing. We become involved to create units specifically for people with a disability. We've been at this long enough that developers often come to us.”

VRS negotiates a below market value purchase price for the targeted units. “We pay for the units through a combination of our own fundraising, sometimes BC Housing will contribute to rent subsidies and the residents themselves pay a reduced rent for their unit based on their income.”

The organization is always looking for new housing models—ways to create housing for people who are usually excluded from living independently. The latest model is a creative one for clients on the CSIL Program (Choice in Supports for Independent Living).

CSIL is a self-directed home-support model for people with disabilities who want to manage their own

employees, rather than having support managed for them by an agency. People who qualify for the program enjoy the control it gives them to find attendants who are a good personal fit, and to manage the person's time and tasks.

The latest VRS housing model brings together five to six CSIL users into units in a larger residential building. “Each person has their own apartment and lives independently,” Ken said. “They have their own attendants they've hired working with them in the schedule they've chosen.”

The creative part of this model is a condition of tenancy that requires each person to participate in hiring and paying a shared night shift caregiver.

VRS provides an office for the overnight caregiver to dispatch from and respond to overnight tasks and emergencies. So, clients who usually have an extremely hard time having enough care hours to cover overnight support, can do it.

“I think this is the model that clients are finding most interesting and appealing,” Ken said.



“People who struggle most to live in the community,” Ken said, “are people who need 24-hour care. They may only need someone ‘on call’ overnight or for a five-minute task, but that means they have to hire someone for all those hours. This pretty much means people with these needs are cut off from living in community.”

The creative part of this model is a condition of tenancy that requires each person to participate in hiring and paying a shared night shift caregiver.

VRS has made a commitment to keep the portion of rent that residents pay to \$375 per month. “We cobble together the funds to pay for these units. Our sources don’t always come through, so we cover costs through our own fundraising. We want to keep the \$375 per person ceiling there, no matter what.”

Ken said that VRS wants to hear about people with disabilities’ housing needs. “Our application form is on our website. Tell us which housing options you’re interested in.”

And what if there are no options that fit a person’s needs? “Please get in touch with us. We still want to know,” Ken said. “Our goal is to create programs that meet the need as much as we can. So, you may have a great idea for a housing model that we haven’t thought of.”

“One thing I should emphasize is that our core client group is people who need home care or support,” Ken said. When people who apply are outside this group or VRS feels there’s not much they can do to

help, they’ll refer people to other groups like DABC’s Right Fit Pilot Project.

“But we still want to get your name on our list. We want to be able to tell politicians, developers and municipalities the scope and type of housing needs out there,” Ken said.

Ken said that people are often sent out from rehabilitation centres without information about their housing options or community organizations, like VRS and others.

“We really want people to know we’re here and what we do,” Ken said.

“We’re committed to doing our best to fill the huge gaps in creating housing for people to live well in the community, even when they need significant support.”

KEN FRASER IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF VANCOUVER RESOURCES SOCIETY
READ MORE ABOUT VRS AT [HTTPS://WWW.VRS.ORG](https://www.vrs.org), OR CONTACT THEM AT (604) 731-1020 OR EMAIL VANRES@VRS.ORG. **T**



Tax AID DABC Serving More People Across BC

I by Sam Turcott

Since 2015, advocates with Tax AID DABC have been providing free tax-filing support to people receiving Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers to Employment (PPMB).

This work has helped hundreds of people on disability benefits from around the province to access additional income and benefits.

In April 2018, Tax AID DABC expanded to three other organizations across BC:

- Together Against Poverty Society (TAPS) will provide services through Tax AID TAPS on Vancouver Island;
- Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society will provide services through Tax AID Ki-Low-Na in the Interior; and
- Active Support Against Poverty Society (ASAP) will provide services in the North through Tax AID ASAP.

DABC will continue to act as the Program Manager and provide services as Tax AID DABC in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley.

In addition to providing direct income tax filing services, program advocates are also available to hold workshops and community information sessions about income tax filing in communities around BC.

Thanks to these new partnerships, Tax AID DABC will have a significant-

ly greater provincial reach and will be able to provide more effective service in communities around BC.

A particular focus of our program continues to be helping people receiving disability benefits to get caught up on multiple years of unfiled income taxes.

For these clients, the benefits of our program are often greatest because they often qualify to receive money for each year they have not filed. Many of our clients live with incomes between \$750 and \$1500 per month, so receiving a few thousand dollars in back taxes can have a significant impact on their overall financial wellness.

The expanded Tax AID DABC program was announced by the Honourable Shane Simpson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction at a press conference hosted at DABC in May 2018.

Why You Should File Your Income Taxes

There are many advantages to filing your income taxes. Our clients typically 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
- Working Income Tax 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.

SAM TURCOTT IS PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY ACCESS.

Meet Our New Tax AID DABC Manager Myung Lee



I was so happy to join DABC as the Tax AID Program Manager, starting June 11.

It's my privilege to be invited to lead the program.

This will be a new journey for me to be in a workplace serving people who need help with their income tax filing. Up-to-date taxes open the door to many benefits for people with disabilities.

I am confident that the new partnerships for the Tax AID Program will be a successful collaboration, over the next three years.

client stories

Katerina had three years of tax returns to file from several years back and needed help from Tax AID DABC to catch up. As a result, she received over \$10,000 in tax benefits, including child tax benefits. Her son will be starting post-secondary studies at Langara College next year. Katerina was overjoyed that she will now be able to help pay for her son's education.

Baxter lives in a supported care facility in Vancouver. In addition to his disabilities, he has experienced periods of homelessness and ongoing instability for many years. His social worker and a Tax AID DABC advocate worked with him to gather documentation that had previously been lost or stolen. Tax AID DABC helped Baxter file 10 years of tax returns and he received thousands of dollars in GST/HST credits, BC sales tax credits and carbon tax credits.

Andy is a young man who received the PWD designation at age 18. When he came to Tax AID DABC at age 27, he had never had any guidance about how to file a tax return. He knew he was missing out on benefits like the GST credit, but did not know about other benefits or how much would add up after 10 years—likely thousands of dollars. Tax AID DABC staff helped him find his tax slips and file 10 years of taxes. He hopes the money he gets back will help him move from Surrey to Vancouver to be closer to his friends.

we're here to help

For questions about Tax AID DABC, please contact Myung Lee at DABC or the program partner nearest you.

Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley Program Manager

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Northern

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Program Website

<https://taxaiddabc.org>

Our sincere thanks to the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction for funding this program expansion.

And thank you to the Vancouver Foundation for the initial funding for Tax AID DABC.



vancouver
foundation



Rent Control Units are Critical

| by Trish Garner

When rent control is based on the renter not the unit, when tenants move out, landlords can increase the rent as much as they like.

According to the Rental Housing Index, 40% of renters in Canada are living in housing insecurity, spending more than 30 per cent of their income on rent; and 1 in 5 renters are spending more than half their income on rent, leaving them with little left over to support themselves and their families.

It is not news that the cost of housing is already too high for far too many people in Canada and, with no rent control, there's nothing to stop that increasing.

Currently, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Prince Edward Island have some form of rent control in relation to rent increases. In these provinces, the provincial government determines the maximum allowed increase in the rent, which goes some way to alleviate huge rent increases.

However, another critical aspect of rent control is tying rent increases to the unit not the tenant. Both measures are necessary to maintain the affordability of existing rental housing. PEI is a good example of this set of rent regulations.

When rent control is based on the renter not the unit, when tenants move out, landlords can increase the rent as much as they like.

This gives landlords an incentive to force tenants to move through harassment, neglect or any other means when they see an opportunity to charge higher rent. This leaves all the power in the landlord's hands at the expense of the renter's long-term security in their home. Rent control attached to the unit has the potential to rebalance the power and protect renters from unscrupulous landlords.

In British Columbia, the situation is especially critical. So-called "renovictions" have been taking place in Vancouver and Victoria over the last decade, and are now an issue throughout the province, from Prince Rupert to Kelowna. This is

leaving evicted families scrambling to find other affordable, adequate accommodation in a shrinking rental market.

Renovations are sometimes necessary, especially when new affordable housing is scarce and the rental landscape is overrun with aging buildings built between the 1970s and 1990s. "Renovictions," however, refers to the shady practice of using renovation as an excuse to evict in order to raise the rent not, in fact, to make substantial changes to the building. Strong rent control would help to reduce this problem.

There are concerns that rent control decreases housing supply as rent caps might dissuade some from fixing up their basement suite to rent or building rental property. Landlords may also have little incentive to repair or renovate when needed, as competition to attract higher-paying tenants is limited. But that is easily fixed by the provincial government reinvesting in building and maintaining more affordable social housing to ensure a healthy supply.

Without rent control tied to the unit, many of the government's policy changes will not have the benefi-

cial impact expected or hoped for. Last September, income and disability assistance rates were increased by \$100, but the average rent of a Single-Room-Occupancy (SRO) unit in the Downtown Eastside went up by \$139; and the living wage also went up despite decreases to childcare and MSP costs because rents increased so much. The living wage calculation is based on a two-parent family with two children—the most common family unit in BC—and each parent working full-time. The current living wage rate for Metro Vancouver is \$20.91/hour.

This form of rent control is not new to BC. Part of the 1974 Landlord and Tenant Act limited rent increases to once every twelve months, regardless of whether a change in tenant or landlord had occurred. In place from 1974 to 1984 with cross-party political support in response to a 0.5% vacancy rate, there was no discernible impact on new rental housing or an increased neglect of buildings.

Rent control has the potential to maintain the diversity of our neighbourhoods, rather than making a growing number only available to those that can afford them, squeezing everyone else out and leaving our communities lacking. In a housing economy where increasing numbers of people are renters, now is the time for stronger protection for tenants.

As we wait for the government's poverty reduction plan to be

launched in February 2019, let's tell the government that we need an **Accountable, Bold and Comprehensive** poverty reduction plan that includes rent control tied to the unit as a central measure to tackle the depth and breadth of poverty in BC.

To email the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, please visit <http://www.abcplan.ca/>.

For more information about the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition,

visit <http://bcpovertyreduction.ca> or contact Trish Garner at trish@bcpovertyreduction.ca or 604-877-4553.

TRISH GARNER IS THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZER WITH THE BC POVERTY REDUCTION COALITION.

SHE RECOMMENDS READING THE VANCOUVER TENANTS' UNION SUBMISSION TO THE RENTAL HOUSING TASK FORCE ([HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/YCHX6K9J](https://tinyurl.com/YCHX6K9J))

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TENANT RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS. **T**

Rent control has the potential to maintain the diversity of our neighbourhoods, rather than making a growing number only available to those that can afford them, squeezing everyone else out and leaving our communities lacking.





The UN Speaks Out on Housing

Unaffordability of housing is a worldwide problem.

Last fall, UN Special Rapporteur on Housing, Leilani Farha, spoke to the General Assembly on the housing crisis for people with disabilities.

In the video below, she gives a comprehensive critique of all the factors working against available housing for people with disabilities, as well as her recommendations for radical change to fix these issues.

► <https://tinyurl.com/ycaa68y4>

Ms Farha also gave a fascinating TED X talk about the beginning of our housing crisis: housing becoming a commodity, rather than places for citizens to live.

► https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ve_-FbNvy0w#fauxfullscreen

Thank You to Our Contributors!

We'd like to thank the community experts who shared their experience and expertise with Transition.

Lorraine Copas, the Social Planning and Research Council of BC

Annette Murray, DABC's Advocacy Access Program

Dawn Steele, DABC's Right Fit Pilot Project

Ken Fraser, Vancouver Resources Society

Trish Garner, BC Poverty Reduction Coalition

Krystele Chavez and Brain Clifford, BC Non-Profit Housing Association

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THANK YOU!

Access RDSP

Change your tomorrow today



Disability Alliance BC, Plan Institute and BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society in a new partnership.

Information and Support on the Registered Disability Savings Plan



CONTACT OUR PARTNERS



BC ABORIGINAL NETWORK ON DISABILITY SOCIETY

For Indigenous people with disabilities, contact BCANDS and we can help you with the RDSP process. We can assist with the DTC application, filing taxes, and opening the RDSP account. Phone: (250) 381-7303 ext. 204 | Toll Free: 1-888-815 -5511 (TTY Accessible) | rdsp1@bcands.bc.ca



DISABILITY ALLIANCE BC

To access DABC's RDSP and DTC services, or to request one of our workshops, please contact us at: Local: 604-872-1278 | Toll Free: 1-800-663-1278 | rdsp@disabilityalliancebc.org



PLAN INSTITUTE

We can provide you with information on the RDSP, future planning, and the Endowment 150 (free \$150 for BC residents).

- Call our disability planning hotline at 1-844-311-7526
- Take the RDSP tutorial or apply for Endowment 150 at www.rdsp.com
- RDSP info sessions and other future planning workshops at planinstitute.ca

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INVITE DABC TO HOST A WORKSHOP

DABC provides workshops across BC to share information on provincial and federal disability benefits, the Registered Disability Savings Plan, Disability Tax Credit, income tax filing and emergency preparedness.

Most of our workshops are provided free of charge; however, we ask that a minimum of ten participants be confirmed for workshops outside of Metro Vancouver.

For more information or to request a workshop, please go to: disability-alliancebc.org/programs/workshops. Or contact Val at DABC at 604-875-0188, feedback@disability-alliancebc.org.

Tax Filing

Our Tax AID DABC program provides workshops on simple income tax filing issues for people with disabilities, common tax filing credits, options for dealing with tax debt, and much more. In April 2018, DABC started a partnership with three organizations across BC to expand the availability of these workshops. Please see page 14 for details.

Disability Benefits

DABC advocates provide workshops on provincial disability benefits (Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and the Persons with Persistent and Multiple Barriers (PPMB) benefits), as well as federal disability benefits (Canadian Pension Plan-Disability). The workshops include information about financial and medical eligibility criteria and the supplementary supports that are attached to PWD and PPMB. The workshop can be tailored to the needs of the organization or group.

RDSP/DTC

Access RDSP advocates provide workshops on the eligibility criteria for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC), strategies for communicating with your doctor, options if your DTC application is denied and eligibility criteria for the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP). Other topics include: tips for communicating with your bank, information about Canada Disability Savings grants and bonds, best practices for maximizing RDSP benefits, and accessing the Endowment 150 grant.

Emergency Planning and Preparedness

DABC offers workshops to businesses, provincial and local governments, and community organizations on how to create emergency plans that include people with disabilities and seniors. These workshops may be provided at no cost, when funding is available.

CMIST and the Functional Needs Framework

CMIST stands for the following needs: Communication, Medical, Functional Independence, Supervision and Support, and Transportation. This approach to emergency planning and response offers a different way to consider the range of needs of the people in your local community.

The Duty to Accommodate is part of the BC Human Rights Code. You will learn what the law says about providing public services in a way that is accessible to all citizens and how to implement solutions to address accessibility.

The CMIST workshop can make your emergency planning and response more comprehensive and inclusive.

We provide half and full-day workshops (half-day workshops are offered only in Metro Vancouver). Through presentation, table top exercises and group discussions, you will gain an understanding of how disabilities impact a person's ability to respond in emergencies, and you will take away planning and response solutions you can implement to meet those needs. **T**



FIND WORK THAT WORKS FOR YOU.

We offer specialized services for people with disabilities.

Contact your local

WorkBC Employment Services Centre

Centre de services à l'emploi

VANCOUVER WESTSIDE

300 - 2150 W Broadway
Tel 604.688.4666

VANCOUVER CITY CENTRE

900 - 1200 Burrard Street
Tel 604.434.0367

VANCOUVER MIDTOWN

110 E 3rd Avenue
Tel 604.829.2300

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

112 West Hastings Street
Tel 604.872.0770

VANCOUVER NORTHEAST

312 - 2555 Commercial Drive
Tel 604.708.9300

VANCOUVER SOUTH

7575 Cambie Street
Tel 604.263.5005

NORTH SHORE

106 - 980 W 1st Street | North Van
Tel 604.988.3766

FREE SERVICES

Nos services en emploi gratuits sont également disponibles en français.



The Employment Program of British Columbia is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.



Support 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.

FRONTLINE SERVICES

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.

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Our 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).

Please return your payment/donation with this form to:
DABC, 204-456 W. Broadway, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1R3.

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

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INVALUABLE 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 _____

KEEP IN TOUCH!



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Sign up for our Enews at
disabilityalliancebc.org

Visit our website often to see our work on behalf of the disability community, and to connect with us through social media.

We hope to see you there.

The Big Picture

Working on Systemic Changes in Housing

I by Krystele Chavez and Brian Clifford

By empowering and elevating the non-profit housing sector, we are beginning to see meaningful change in the housing landscape. In recent years, BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA) released projects and campaigns to focus on ensuring everyone has access to safe, decent, and affordable housing.

In 2016, in partnership with the BC Rental Housing Coalition and Housing Central, BCNPHA led the development of An Affordable Housing Plan for BC.

The first of its kind in BC, the Plan measures affordable housing demand in each regional district across the province over the 2017-2026 period and provides funding targets to meet that demand.

The Plan called for the construction of nearly 115,000 units of affordable rental housing over this period, as well as significant financial support for low-income renters and individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

By advocating for our members, we're seeing a shift in government policies at all levels that will change the direction of affordable housing for the better. Many of the targets contained in the Plan were adopted by the NDP in Budget 2018 and provide a baseline for measuring progress.

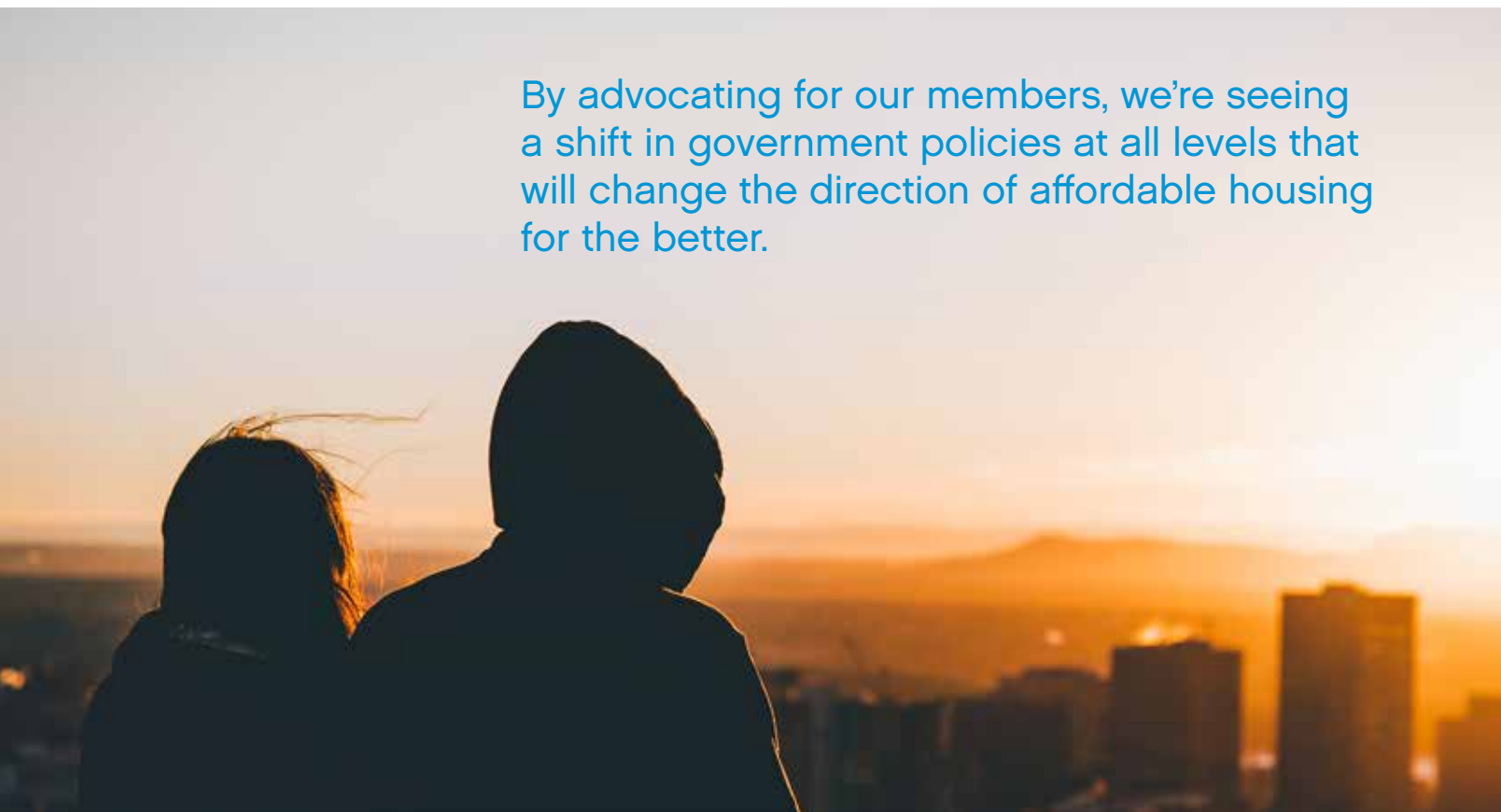
We work with stakeholders in the affordable housing sector to develop research that helps our members plan for the future. Along with

organizations across the country, we released the Canadian Rental Housing Index in 2018. The Index is a comprehensive database that provides information on rental housing markets for over 800 communities in Canada, and outlines affordability and supply in these communities to assist with advocacy and planning.

In addition to becoming the leading voice for affordable housing in the province, our mission is to lead systems change.

This includes ensuring that new affordable housing being constructed can accommodate the diverse needs of British Columbians, such as individuals with physical and developmental disabilities, Indigenous households, and LGBTQ2S.

By advocating for our members, we're seeing a shift in government policies at all levels that will change the direction of affordable housing for the better.




We advocate for at least 15 percent of new housing stock to be accessible to people with physical and developmental disabilities, and that this housing be integrated within existing communities.

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For our Housing Central Conference, we work in close partnership with Community Living BC, Inclusion BC and the BC CEO Network to offer specialized education sessions for our members and other housing stakeholders.

Accessible, inclusive housing is a key component of healthy, vibrant neighbourhoods where everyone feels welcome. British Columbia today must anticipate the needs of citizens of all ages, life stages and abilities, including children, parents, older adults and seniors, in order to create accessible communities of the future.

KRYSTLE CHAVEZ IS BCNPHA'S COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR AND BRIAN CLIFFORD IS POLICY MANAGER. 

BCNPHA is the provincial umbrella organization for the non-profit housing sector, comprised of nearly 600 members, including non-profit housing societies, businesses, individuals, partners and stakeholders. We believe that everyone deserves a safe, secure and affordable home, and we're proud to have been a big part of making that happen for more British Columbians than ever before. Together, non-profit housing societies manage more than 100,000 units of long-term, affordable housing in more than 2,500 buildings across the province.

Visit bcnpha.ca to learn about our journey, our community, and why affordable housing is at the core of everything we do.



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Working together for all British Columbians



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We couldn't get there without you.

Program and Project Funders

- ♥ BC Rehabilitation Foundation
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- ♥ Department of Justice Canada, Victim's Fund
- ♥ Law Foundation of British Columbia
- ♥ Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General—Emergency Management BC
- ♥ Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- ♥ Notary Foundation of BC
- ♥ Province of British Columbia
- ♥ Vancouver Coastal Health
- ♥ Vancouver Foundation

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



Dedicated Supporters and Friends

- ♥ BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities
- ♥ BC Government and Services Employees Union
- ♥ BC Hydro Employees Community Services Fund
- ♥ BC Teachers Federation
- ♥ CUPE Local 1936 (Community Services of Greater Vancouver)
- ♥ CUPE Metropolitan Vancouver District Council
- ♥ Davies Home Health Care
- ♥ Health Services of BC
- ♥ Home Medical Equipment Dealers Association of BC (HMEDA)
- ♥ Hospital Employees Union
- ♥ Inclusion BC
- ♥ Island Mediquip Home Medical Equipment Specialists
- ♥ Klein Lawyers LLP
- ♥ Sodexo
- ♥ Simpson, Thomas and Associates (Trial Lawyers)
- ♥ TELUS Employees Charitable Giving Program
- ♥ Tompkins Wozny, Chartered Professional Accountants
- ♥ United Way of the Lower Mainland
- ♥ Vancity
- ♥ Vancity Credit Union Fairview Community Branch
- ♥ Vancouver Taxi Association

And many generous donors like you!



Warm wishes for
Thanksgiving from
everyone at NABC.

NEW DTC RESOURCES FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Access RDSP has created two new booklets to help health professionals support clients with DTC 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.



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

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

| DABC Housing, cont'd from p. 11



Rick Campbell spoke about how the RFPP helped him find housing. Very sadly, Rick passed away shortly after and we send our sincere condolences to his loved ones.

Building on Lessons from Year One

We are now into Year Two of this three-year pilot project. Following an initial planning stage, we launched a Phase One “mini-pilot” in August 2017, accepting applications from both wheelchair users who receive PWD benefits and social housing providers. This narrower focus has allowed BC Housing and MSDPR to test different approaches to support our project objectives.

However, a major challenge has been the extremely tight supply and low turnover rates of subsidized accessible rental units in Metro Vancouver. This has significantly limited the pace at which we can match wheelchair users with suitable vacancies, despite extensive outreach and strong support from many of the largest providers of subsidized accessible housing in the region, including: BC Housing, Metro Van-

couver Housing, Affordable Housing Societies, the City of Vancouver and the co-op housing sector.

Some accomplishments to date:

- Developed a new case management model, and navigator team and collaboration protocols with BC Housing, MSDPR, Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health.
- Collected baseline data on supply and demand for subsidized wheelchair accessible housing.
- Launched our Wheelchair Accessibility checklist as a key tool for documenting and communicating housing accessibility needs and features in a standardized way.
- Navigators have worked with 73 applicants seeking subsidized, accessible housing and supported four successful placements.
- Conducted extensive outreach, including community presentations, newsletter articles and news media coverage, a growing social media following and Web presence.
- Hosted an Accessible Housing Roundtable with key government decision-makers, community partners and wheelchair users to identify priorities for Year Two and beyond.

As our pilot enters its second year, we will continue to focus on housing provider engagement, participant intake and housing placements, as vacancies permit.

Other Year Two priorities include:

- Refining our case management and partner collaboration protocols as we learn more about what works well.

- Furthering our research to improve our understanding of demand demographics.
- Documenting subsidized accessible housing inventory, using our standardized Accessibility Checklist.
- Continuing to strengthen relationships with housing providers, including co-operatives, landlords and residential developers.
- Exploring options for a new way to collect and share information on housing inventory and demand (basis for central registry).
- Developing resource packages for wheelchair users and housing providers.
- Sharing our learning through community and policy-maker outreach to promote solutions and build support for development of new affordable and accessible housing.

Visit rightfitproject.org to learn more, join our quarterly newsletter email list, or find links to connect with us on social media.

Contact Us

For more information on RFPP or to apply, contact one of the following:


Paul Gauthier

Executive Director and Navigator
Individualized Funding Resource
Centre

RightFit@IFRCSociety.org
604-777-7576

DABC RFPP web page

rightfitproject.org

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

