

Accessibility 2024

**Making B.C. the most progressive
province in Canada for people
with disabilities by 2024**



Message from the Premier



Almost every British Columbian knows someone living with a disability. It might be a friend, family member, neighbour, or co-worker. It's an issue that affects almost everyone at some point in their lives.

Our government has set a vision for B.C. to be the most progressive jurisdiction in Canada for people with disabilities – where disabilities are no barrier to living full lives, contributing to communities, and where no British Columbian is ever told their goals and dreams aren't realistic because of their disability.

British Columbia is already home to some of the most comprehensive supports in the country – but that's no reason to rest on our laurels. We can always do better.

That's why we asked British Columbians for their input. I want to thank everyone who contributed to British Columbia's consultation because they shared helpful and innovative ideas on what government, employers, and communities can do to reduce barriers and increase accessibility in our province. The consultation received incredible support from the disability community, and I am pleased to deliver government's response to what we can do now and what we aspire to do over the next 10 years with the release of Accessibility 2024.

This 10-year action plan is designed around 12 building blocks that represent the themes that emerged throughout our consultation. It includes the goals, the early actions, and some of the long-term measures that will move B.C. forward as an accessible province – and a model for others to follow.

We can change attitudes, create new opportunities, and place an accessibility lens on all of our decisions. This will take partnership across government and across sectors to become the most accessible province in Canada for people with disabilities. Accessibility 2024 is the beginning. With your help, we'll get there together.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christy Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Christy" and the last name "Clark" clearly distinguishable.

Honourable Christy Clark
Premier of British Columbia

Accessibility 2024 Action Plan

From Dec. 3, 2013 to March 11, 2014, government held a comprehensive public consultation to provide people with disabilities and other British Columbians the opportunity to share their thoughts on what government, businesses and communities can do to reduce barriers and increase accessibility for people living with disabilities.

A summary of what we heard is available in the Disability Consultation Report. The report, *Moving Together Toward an Accessible B.C.*, and all public submissions are available as a permanent record at www.engage.gov.bc.ca/disabilitywhitepaper

Accessibility 2024 represents the early results of the consultation. It includes proposed outcomes and measurements that will increase accessibility in B.C. and outlines a set of initial actions that government is able to commit to today.

Annual Accessibility 2024 reports will provide updates on progress towards the 10-year outcomes and measurements, and continue to set a path forward by identifying new action items that will move B.C. forward as an accessible province.

An Accessibility 2024 website will be created as one space for ongoing conversation, information sharing, and reporting on how B.C. is moving towards being the most accessible province in Canada for people living with disabilities.

Partners will be key to moving the plan forward. Government is committed to ongoing engagement with the disability community, individuals, friends, family, local government and the business community.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Government of British Columbia has made a base commitment to a progressive realization of increased accessibility and reduction of barriers by supporting Canada's ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

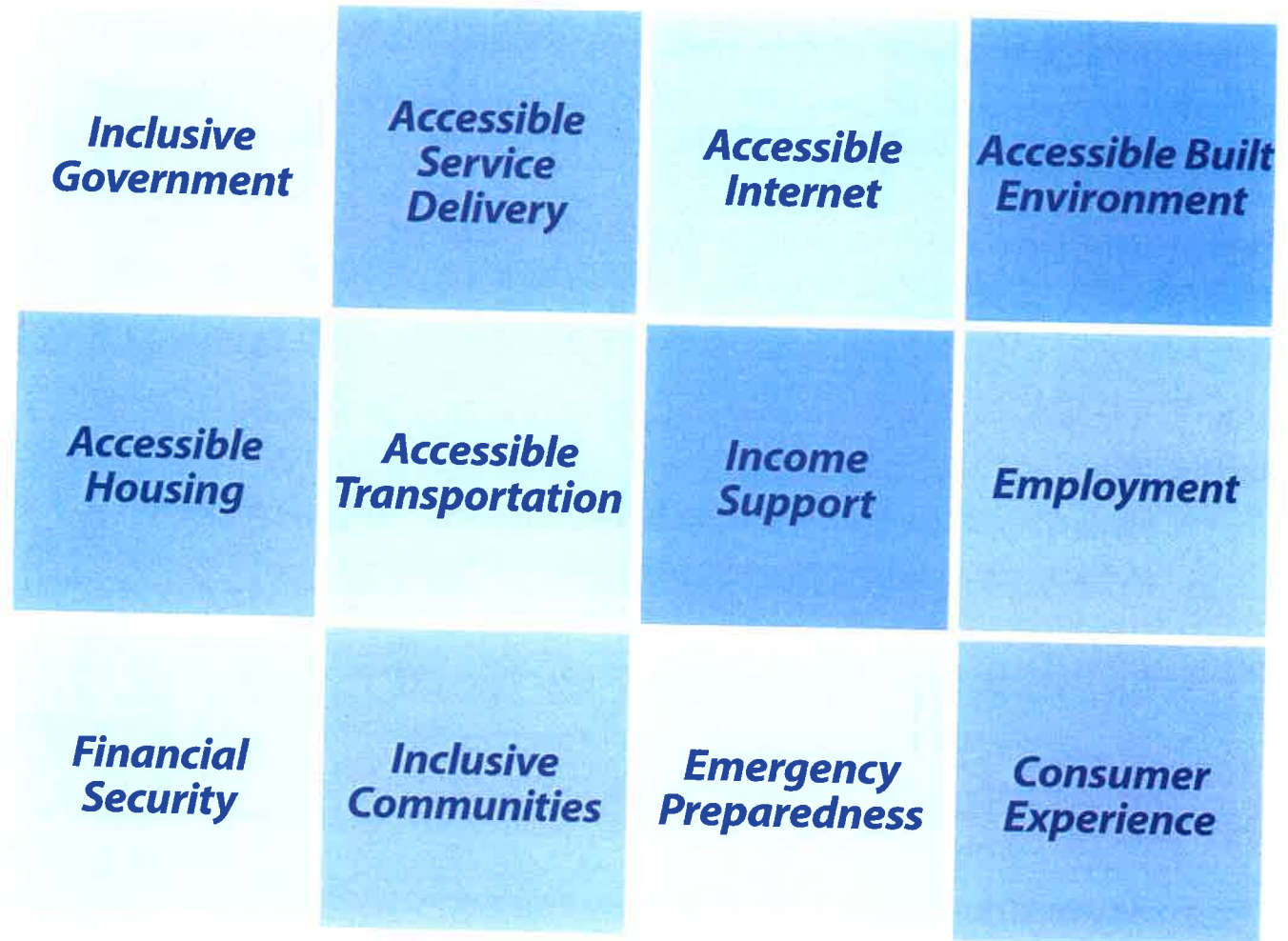
As such, government has a responsibility to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

British Columbia is committed to upholding and safeguarding the principles outlined in the UNCRPD.

- Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons
- Non-discrimination
- Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
- Equality of opportunity
- Accessibility
- Equality between men and women
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities

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

Building Blocks for Accessibility 2024



Inclusive Government

OUR GOAL:

B.C. is the most inclusive government in Canada by 2024

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS:

By the percentage of British Columbians engaged annually in disability related policy discussions

What we can do now:

- Establish an accessibility lens on regulations and legislation
- Consult on options for a made-in-B.C. approach to accessibility related legislation
- Commit to modernizing B.C.'s guide and service dog program
- As a leader in supporting an accessible electoral process for all British Columbians, B.C. will continue to move forward to support participation of persons with disabilities
- Enshrine the Minister's Council on Employment and Accessibility
- Launch a Presidents Group of business leaders to champion employment and improved consumer access
- Create a government Accessibility Secretariat



Accessible Service Delivery

OUR GOAL:

B.C. services are the most accessible in Canada by 2024

HOW WE WILL

MEASURE SUCCESS:

By the percentage of fully accessible B.C. government services

What we can do now:

- Commit to accessible service delivery – phone, online and face-to-face
- Launch a website and a 1-800 number service to assist people with disabilities to navigate government services
- Ensure all government-owned and leased customer service building stock is fully accessible by 2020 (where possible given heritage constraints)
- Include accessibility as an aspect in government's 10-year capital plan
- Work on transferability of aids and devices across government programs
- Develop a disability strategy for the BC Public Service to enhance accessibility for hiring and advancement of persons with disability within the public service
- Create single point of information about American Sign Language interpreter services

Accessible Internet

OUR GOAL:

Internet access in B.C. is the most accessible in Canada by 2024

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS:

By the percentage of B.C. government websites meeting international accessibility standards

What we can do now:

- Upgrade government website (gov.bc.ca) to meet international web standards: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines [WCAG 2.0 (AA)] standard by 2016
- Work with federal government to bring video relay service to Canadians, starting as early as fall 2015

Accessible Built Environment

OUR GOAL:

B.C. has the most accessible building code and the most declared accessible communities in Canada by 2024

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS:

1. By the number of B.C. communities incorporating accessibility strategies into their Official Community Plans
2. By the percentage of publicly owned and leased facilities that are accessible

What we can do now:

- Ensure all government-owned and leased customer service building stock is fully accessible by 2020 (where possible given heritage constraints)
- Work with B.C. technology companies to be early adopters, and to showcase and test new accessibility technologies in B.C. government buildings
- Develop guidelines for accessibility that communities can incorporate into their Official Community Plans
- Continue to update the building code to be the most accessible in Canada



Accessible Housing

OUR GOAL:

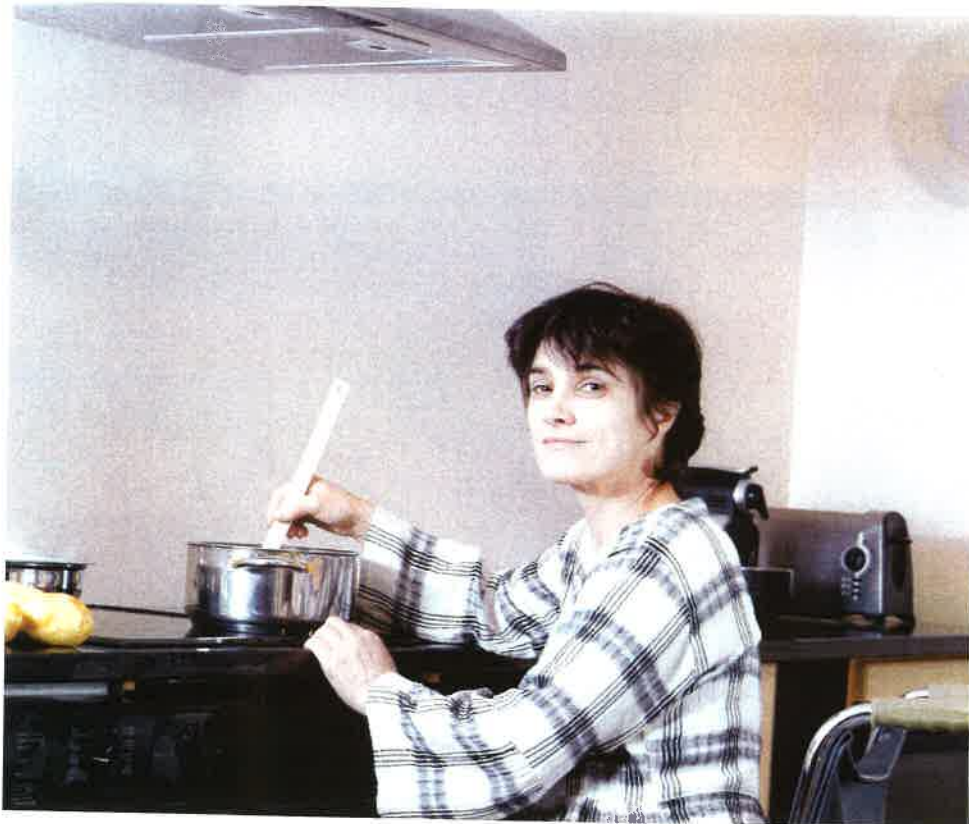
B.C. has more accessible housing options than other provinces in Canada by 2024

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS:

1. By the percentage of B.C. publicly-owned housing that is accessible
2. By the percentage of new homes that are built to be accessible

What we can do now:

- ▶ Introduce measures requiring a percentage of all new homes be constructed to include adaptability requirements
- ▶ Develop a checklist to make existing housing more accessible
- ▶ Continue to explore options for a registry of accessibility housing in B.C.



Accessible Transportation

OUR GOAL:

B.C. communities have the most accessible transportation options in Canada by 2024

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS:

By the number of B.C. communities that have transportation options for people with disabilities

What we can do now:

- ▶ BC Transit and Translink are committed to fully accessible bus fleets
- ▶ BC Ferries is committed to improving accessibility and continues to improve service for customers with disabilities
- ▶ Continue to work with communities to support discussions on transit options for persons with disabilities



Income Support

OUR GOAL:

B.C.'s disability assistance system best recognizes the unique circumstances of persons with disabilities in Canada by 2024

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS:

Comparison of B.C.'s income supports, asset limits and earnings exemptions to other provinces

What we can do now:

- ▶ Commit to policy reforms to address income assistance issues raised in disability consultation, including separating disability assistance from income assistance
- ▶ Consider disability assistance rate increases as the fiscal situation allows
- ▶ Consult on family maintenance payments for families receiving disability and income assistance



Employment

OUR GOAL:

B.C. has the highest labour participation rate for people with disabilities in Canada by 2024

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS:

The labour market participation gap for persons with disabilities in B.C. is the narrowest in Canada

What we can do now:

- ▶ Declare September Annual Disability Employment Month
- ▶ Improve WorkBC services for people with disabilities, including up to \$1 million annually in research and innovation funding aimed at enhancing services and improved outcomes for individuals with disabilities
- ▶ \$1.5 million to implement a pilot program for innovative training and initiatives at public post-secondary institutions to increase the success of people with disabilities in trades / technical programs or high labour market demand programs
- ▶ Provide \$3 million in annual funding for assistive technologies that support employment for people with disabilities
- ▶ Develop a disability strategy for the BC Public Service to enhance accessibility for hiring and advancement of persons with disability within the public service
- ▶ Mandate Presidents Group to increase employment for people with disabilities in the private sector
- ▶ Explore options to enhance work experience opportunities for youth with disabilities in the education system



Financial Security

OUR GOAL:

B.C. has the highest savings rate for persons with disabilities in Canada by 2024

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS:

Maintain B.C.'s position as the province with the highest per capita number of Registered Disability Savings Plans

What we can do now:

- ▶ Declare October as Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) filing season
- ▶ Build and maintain B.C.'s position as province with the highest per capita uptake on RDSPs
- ▶ Market RDSPs and Registered Education Savings Plans through government offices
- ▶ Work with leaders in financial and disability communities to create a centre for financial expertise for persons with disabilities
- ▶ As part of government's review of the Court Order Enforcement Act, consider exempting RDSPs from being seized to satisfy a court monetary judgment
- ▶ Create an RDSP Action Group



Inclusive Communities

OUR GOAL:

More communities in B.C. are proclaimed accessible communities than anywhere in Canada by 2024

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS:

By the number of B.C. communities declaring themselves accessible communities

What we can do now:

- ▶ Develop accessible community guidelines for communities to incorporate into their Official Community Plans
- ▶ Provide \$2 million in one-time funding for the University of Victoria's CanAssist program that develops and assesses new devices and technologies to help people with disabilities increase independence
- ▶ Ensure the 2015 Canada Winter Games enhance accessibility in Prince George
- ▶ Build on the success of the two-year after school disability sport pilot in the Surrey School District to include arts and culture programming in 2014/15
- ▶ Launch a recognition initiative for B.C. Paralympic athletes at the Richmond Oval



Emergency Preparedness

OUR GOAL:

Every community in B.C. has accommodated the needs of persons with disabilities in its emergency planning by 2024

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS:

By the number of community emergency response plans in B.C. that comply with a Functional Needs Framework

What we can do now:

- ▶ Ensure consultation on all aspects of disaster preparedness and response includes full involvement and consideration of persons with disabilities. Stakeholders will be asked to identify key issues, challenges, and recommended solutions across a wide range of issues.



Consumer Experience

OUR GOAL:

B.C. is recognized as a premier accessible consumer and travel destination in North America by 2024

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS:

1. By the number of accessible B.C. visitor centres
2. By the percentage of hotels in B.C. that are accessible and easy to identify

What we can do now:

- ▶ Ensure Visitor Services are meeting the evolving expectations for accessibility of the travelling public
- ▶ Upgrade rest stop accessibility
- ▶ Profile the existing and emerging accessible tourism opportunities on key travel sites such as HelloBC <http://www.hellobc.com/british-columbia/about-c/accessibility.aspx>
- ▶ Undertake key accessibility parks projects – Liard River Hot Springs, Tow Hill, Sea to Sky Gondola in Stawamus Chief Provincial Park
- ▶ Partner with the Rick Hansen Foundation to expand planat™ tool in B.C.

