

Supports for Local Governments to Advance Accessibility

Accessibility benefits everyone. Advancing accessibility helps local governments balance the needs of diverse citizens and ensure that everyone can participate fully and equally in their community!

Local governments are among over 750 public sector organizations listed in the Accessible B.C. Regulation and are required by September 1, 2023 to establish:

- An accessibility committee
- An accessibility plan
- A tool to receive feedback on accessibility

These requirements are intended to get organizations planning for accessibility in a way that is informed by people with disabilities. They are flexible and there are lots of different ways to approach the requirements.

The following supports are available for Local Governments:

Disability Alliance BC - Accessible Organizations Project

The Accessible Organizations Project (AOP) is a project funded by the Government of British Columbia and led by Disability Alliance BC (DABC). The purpose of the project is to support over 750 Prescribed Organizations in the public sector to meet the requirements under Part 3 of the Accessible BC Act. DABC is working directly with partners and collaborators in all sectors to reach Prescribed Organizations and provide them with resources and services to establish a committee, develop a plan, and create a public feedback mechanism.

Information, resources, guidance, presentations and training for the public sector has been carried out by DABC over the past year. Please visit the BC Accessibility Hub (bcaccessibilityhub.ca) for further details and resources, including this comprehensive toolkit. Please reach out to Dr. Mike Prescott, Project Manager of the AOP for any questions or requests for support at aop@disabilityalliancebc.org

SPARC BC - The Local Community Accessibility Grant Program

The Government of British Columbia is collaborating with SPARC BC to run the Local Community Accessibility Grant Program of \$5 million which gives funding to remove barriers to accessibility within municipalities Province-wide.

All local and regional governments are eligible to apply for up to \$25,000 to support the implementation of projects identified within their Accessibility Plan or by their Accessibility Committee.

For further information, look to the SPARC website (sparc.bc.ca) where you will find a Program Overview and where you can sign up for our information sessions running every Tuesday until July 25th, 2023. Please reach out to Lily Connor, Manager of Accessibility Initiatives, for any questions related to this grant program at accessibility@sparc.bc.ca.

Supports for Local Governments to Advance Accessibility

Rick Hansen Foundation - BC Accessibility Grants Program

The Rick Hansen Foundation's BC Accessibility Grant Program supports BC municipalities and Indigenous communities improve accessibility in their communities. Thanks to generous funding by the Government of British Columbia, participating communities receive:

- A Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) rating for three sites to identify key areas of improvements;
- Up to \$82,500 (total) in accessibility improvement funds to be allocated for upgrades to the three rated sites;
- A post-accessibility improvement RHFAC rating to showcase enhanced access;
- RHF Accessibility Certification plaques for each site that achieves certification;
- Accessibility Awareness Training for municipal staff to foster a positive culture of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; and
- Complimentary RHFAC Training tuition grants for three eligible staff. Offered through the Vancouver Community College, this course teaches how to use RHFAC methodology to rate existing buildings and pre-construction drawings on their level of meaningful access.

Current participants include the municipalities of Coquitlam, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Port Moody, Prince George, Richmond and Whistler, and the community of Seabird Island.

The Rick Hansen Foundation is seeking to support 5 additional municipalities who are ready to improve accessibility in their communities through the BC Accessibility Grants 2023/24 Program.

For more information, see www.rickhansen.com/rhfac or email access@rickhansen.com.

Compliance Questions

For questions about compliance requirements with the Accessible B.C. Act or Regulation please contact: engageaccessibility.gov.bc.ca

