
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation
Ministry of Finance

Province, Rick Hansen Foundation team up on housing accessibility

BURNABY – The Province is providing the Rick Hansen Foundation with \$9 million to further their work building accessibility in B.C.

Finance Minister Michael de Jong made the announcement on behalf of Social Development and Social Innovation Minister Michelle Stilwell today.

The funds will be used to create and administer two housing and infrastructure programs that will reduce barriers for people with disabilities. The funding includes \$5 million to support the Rick Hansen Foundation as they create a LEED-style certification program that will identify buildings and developments that are leaders in accessible design. The other \$4 million will be used to create an accessibility fund that community organizations and businesses can access to help fund projects that will lead to a more accessible British Columbia.

The Accessibility Certification Program will provide a tiered rating system that recognizes developers, landlords and building owners who make a commitment to exceed the current accessibility standards. The program will design and implement a method to assess and rate buildings, public spaces, and new housing developments across the province.

The accessibility fund will provide incentives for public, private, First Nations and other groups to accelerate the adoption of universal and inclusive design principles across a wide variety of buildings including housing and public spaces in the current built environment.

These programs support Accessibility 2024, B.C.'s 10-year plan to make British Columbia Canada's most progressive province for people with disabilities by 2024.

Quotes:

Michael de Jong, Minister of Finance –

“The Rick Hansen Accessibility Certification program moves B.C. toward being an innovator and a leading example of building designs that support inclusive communities and ensure accessibility for all citizens. This is part of the B.C. government’s ongoing commitment to increase housing accessibility and affordability.”

Michelle Stilwell, Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation –

“As we continue along our path of making B.C. the most inclusive and progressive province in Canada, it is important that we continue to work with organizations throughout the province to help us reach our goals for all British Columbians. Our continued collaboration with the Rick Hansen Foundation is helping to make BC more accessible.”

Rick Hansen, founder and CEO, Rick Hansen Foundation –

“I’m grateful to the B.C. government for their partnership over the past 30 years. With this generous support, our foundation will be able to launch a LEED-style training and certification program that will set the leadership standard to professionally rate the accessibility of the built environment and recognize the adoption of universal design principles. Through this program, B.C. will be at the forefront of delivering on the values of accessibility and inclusion nationally and globally.”

Quick Facts:

- Accessibility 2024 is government’s 10-year action plan, released in June 2014, to make B.C. the most progressive province in Canada for people with disabilities by 2024. Accessibility 2024 responds to the thousands of British Columbians who took part in a public consultation on what society can do to reduce barriers and increase accessibility for people with disabilities.
- The plan is designed around 12 key building blocks, based on themes that emerged during this consultation: inclusive government; accessible service delivery; accessible internet; accessible built environment; accessible housing; accessible transportation; income support; employment; financial security; inclusive communities; emergency preparedness; and consumer experience.
- Through Accessibility 2024, a number of programs and initiatives are helping British Columbians to participate more fully in their communities, including, but not limited to:
 - Funding Technology@Work, which has provided assistive technologies to more than 316 people to overcome employment barriers.
 - Creating a BC Parks Accessibility Advisory Committee to advise on how to improve the visitor experience for people with disabilities. This committee provided input to the accessibility elements of the recently launched BC Parks Future Strategy.
 - In consultation with Disability Alliance BC, Emergency Management BC (EMBC) creating a comprehensive emergency planning guide for people with disabilities.
 - Extending the Home Renovation Tax Credit to people with disabilities.

Learn More:

Learn more about the Rick Hansen Foundation: www.rickhansen.com

For a two-year progress update on Accessibility 2024: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/accessibility>

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