

Five New B.C. Municipalities Join Others Around the Province To Make Their Communities More Accessible

Rick Hansen Foundation B.C. Accessibility Grants program awards complimentary accessibility ratings, improvements and training to local municipalities

February 13, 2024: Traditional territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm (Musqueam) First Nation / Richmond, B.C. – The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) is pleased to announce five additional municipalities across British Columbia have committed to improving accessibility through their participation in the RHF B.C. Accessibility Grants program. Thanks to generous funding from the Government of British Columbia, the program was developed to support communities across the province to improve accessibility for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. The program will provide complimentary RHF Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) ratings, up to \$90,000 in funding for accessibility improvements to existing sites within each municipality, and accessibility training for city staff.

Currently more than 926,000 people in British Columbia have a disability. Municipalities were selected based on population and geographic representation. **Chilliwack, Delta, Maple Ridge, Saanich, and Victoria** join the following previously announced municipalities of Coquitlam, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Port Moody, Prince George, Richmond and Whistler, as well as the Indigenous communities of Seabird Island Band, Ditidaht First Nation and Malahat Nation.

“We are honoured to continue our support to communities across British Columbia as they improve accessibility thanks to generous support from the province,” said Brad McCannell, VP Access and Inclusion, Rick Hansen Foundation. “Accessibility improvements to spaces such as community centres, libraries and arts facilities will benefit everyone across our province – parents, seniors, people with temporary and permanent disabilities, their caregivers and loved ones. Almost 50% of adults in Canada have a permanent or temporary disability or live with someone who does. Everyone has a right to real, meaningful access and we applaud all of these communities working towards making that a priority.”

RHF Accessibility Certification is a rating and recognition program that consistently measures the meaningful accessibility of a site based on the holistic user experience of people with varying disabilities. Some of these features include accessible entranceways, vehicle access, emergency systems, accessible washrooms, and wayfinding signage.

By participating in the B.C. Accessibility Grants program, the five newly selected municipalities will receive:

- An [RHFAC rating](#) for three sites to identify key areas of improvements;
- Up to \$90,000 (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;
- Accessibility Awareness training for municipal staff to help inspire a positive culture of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility; and
- Complimentary [RHFAC Training](#) tuition grants for up to three eligible staff within each municipality. This training will be offered through Vancouver Community College and will teach participants how to use RHFAC methodology to rate existing buildings and pre-construction drawings on their level of meaningful access.

“Not only do we recognize that municipalities require access to this program and funding, but we want to ensure that future building upgrades and new structures can be designed with accessibility in mind,” adds McCannell. “Through accessibility training, each municipality will have the opportunity to continue their community’s accessibility journey and help build a positive culture of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility.”

Learn more about the RHF B.C. Accessibility Grants Program [here](#).

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About the Rick Hansen Foundation

The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) was established in 1988, following the completion of Rick Hansen’s Man In Motion World Tour. For over 35 years, RHF has worked to raise awareness, change attitudes, and remove barriers for people with disabilities. Visit www.rickhansen.com to learn more.

RHF Media Contact:

Cynamon Schreinert, Hartley PR

Cynamon@hartleypr.com

604-802-2733