

Retrofits and Upgrades Cost Study

February 2024

HCMA prepared a study to explore the cost to retrofit existing buildings to achieve Gold certification under the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) Rating Survey v3.0.

The study included **office tower** and **Kindergarten to Grade 12 school** building typologies, built between 1974-2019. It included 10 RHFAC rated office towers and 10 RHFAC rated schools in B.C. and Ontario in or near large urban centres. The researchers then developed prototype buildings based on typical conditions and features of these sites to determine average costs to retrofit.

Estimated Cost to Achieve RHFAC Gold for the Prototype Office Tower

>0.5%

The percentage of total replacement cost to achieve RHFAC Gold. Approximately \$584,000.

\$1.50/ft²

(\$16.00/m²)

The cost per unit of gross floor area to reach RHFAC Gold.

Cost per gross floor area to reach RHFAC Gold over time:

5 years*	\$0.30/ft ² (\$3.00/m ²)
10 years*	\$0.15ft ² (\$1.50/m ²)
15 years*	\$0.10/ft ² (\$1.00/m ²)

Estimated Cost to Achieve RHFAC Gold for the Prototype School

>1.5%

The percentage of total replacement cost to achieve RHFAC Gold. Approximately \$1,070,000.

\$9.00/ft²

(\$97.00/m²)

The cost per unit of gross floor area to reach RHFAC Gold.

Cost per gross floor area to reach RHFAC Gold over time:

5 years*	\$1.80/ft ² (\$19.00/m ²)
10 years*	\$0.90ft ² (\$9.00/m ²)
15 years*	\$0.60/ft ² (\$6.50/m ²)



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*Amortization or completion of upgrades over time.

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Upgrades to increase access include many cost-effective options

64

of 99 features (65%)
evaluated cost \$50K
or less.

*(See study appendix for
full list of costs.)*

Cost-effective upgrades include:

- Moving furniture and other obstacles
- Updating signage
- Adding colour contrast
- Adding assistive listening technology
- Adding seating
- Adding kick plates
- Adding/updating door handles and handrails

Strategic management can increase the feasibility of access upgrades

The cost to retrofit existing buildings to RHFAC Gold does not have to be a significant barrier to implementation. Some strategies to increase feasibility include:



**Prioritize life and
safety upgrades**



**Include accessibility
as part of planned
projects**



**Complete upgrades
over time**



**Seek additional
efficiencies through
building area groupings**



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