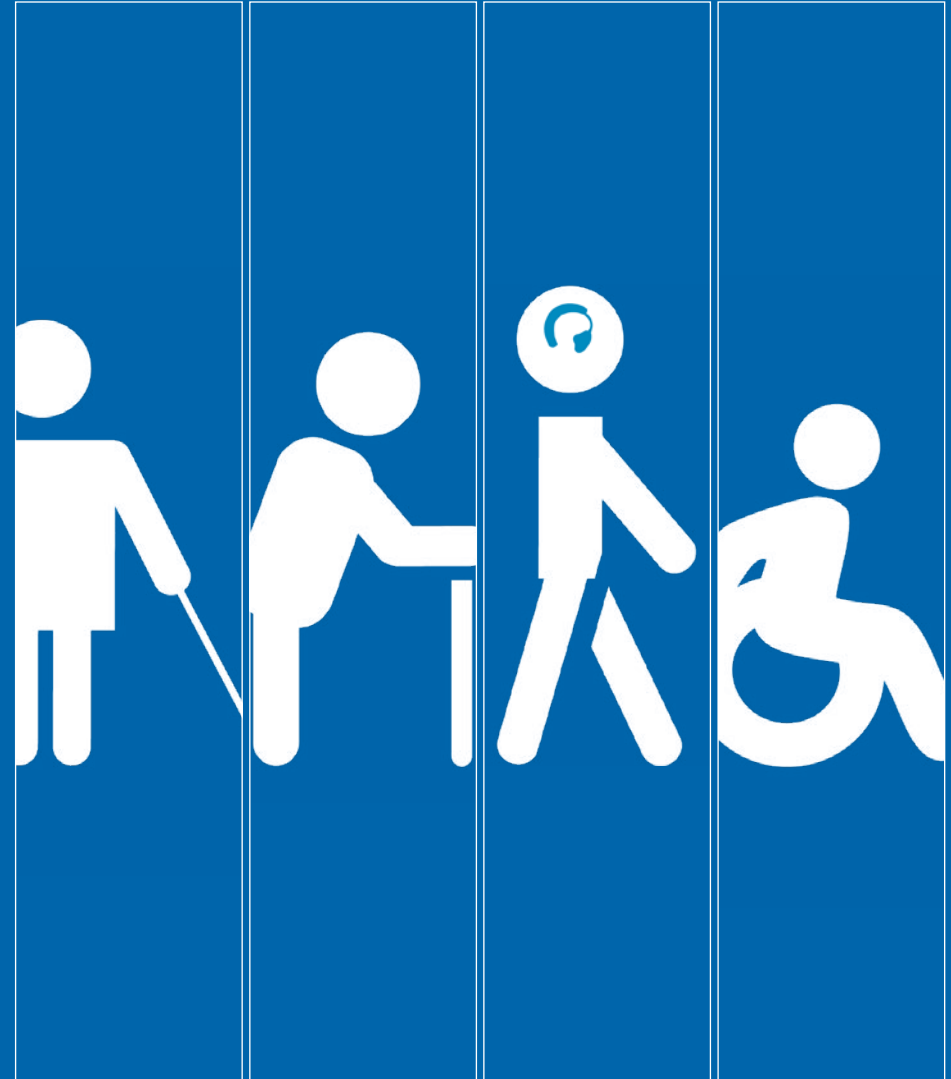


Rick Hansen
Foundation



**Rick Hansen Foundation
Strategic Plan
2021 – 2023**

Investing in
Transformation





What's in this Strategic Plan?

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**We exist to create an inclusive world
where people with disabilities are
living to their full potential.**

Our Purpose



Barriers limit the things people with disabilities can do, the places they can go, or the attitudes of others toward them. Removing these barriers is why the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) exists.

RHF is a registered Canadian charity with a vision of an inclusive world where people with disabilities are living to their full potential. The Foundation was established in 1988 following Rick Hansen's Man In Motion World Tour and his two big dreams to remove barriers for people with disabilities and find a cure for paralysis.

For the last 35 years, we've worked to fund spinal cord injury research, increase awareness, change attitudes, and remove one of the most fundamental barriers people with disabilities continue to face every day: physical barriers in the places we live, work, learn and play.

In Canada, almost 50% of adults have or have experienced a permanent or temporary physical disability or live with someone who has. The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened pre-existing inequalities, exposing the extent of exclusion and highlighting that work on disability inclusion is imperative. People with disabilities – 1 in 5 Canadian adults and growing as our population ages – are among the most excluded groups in our society.

Even as the global health emergency recedes, people with disabilities face the same issues as always. They're less likely to have access to health care, education, employment, and to be able to participate in their communities. This needs to change.

Removing barriers is imperative to ensuring that persons with varying disabilities affecting their mobility, vision and hearing are not left behind. Improved accessibility will result in a country where people of all abilities can contribute and participate – in the sustainable, resilient, and equitable future we want.



1. We collaborate respectfully

2. We engage authentically

3. We keep our promises

Defining Our Values

This past year the Foundation worked to define our organization’s values. More than just buzz words, our values are the core ethics that connect to our work. With input from our staff across the country, these values will be the guiding star in achieving our vision.

1. We collaborate respectfully - We believe in treating all persons with dignity. We invite emotionally intelligent dialogue and welcome diverse perspectives. We ask powerful questions, seek clarity, and listen generously. We come together with the communities we serve and go the extra mile. We see our differences as assets.

- 2. We engage authentically** - We are humble, open-minded, and compassionate. We are driven by making a difference. We are curious, courageous and committed to seeking out innovative solutions. What you see is what you get.
- 3. We keep our promises** - We say what we mean. We do what we say. When we get it wrong, we take responsibility, learn from the experience and vow to make it right. We foster a culture of trust and accountability where it’s okay to make mistakes as that’s how we get better, and high standards are the norm.



A Canada for Everyone



Accessibility and inclusion are fundamental human rights. Embracing them also makes good social and economic sense. But we're not there yet. **Together we haven't broken down barriers:**

- Many building and business owners build to basic minimum code. But too many haven't looked at their environment through an accessibility lens to really understand what people with disabilities experience.
- Employers want to embrace inclusion, however 90% of companies claim to prioritize diversity and only 4% consider disability in those initiatives.¹

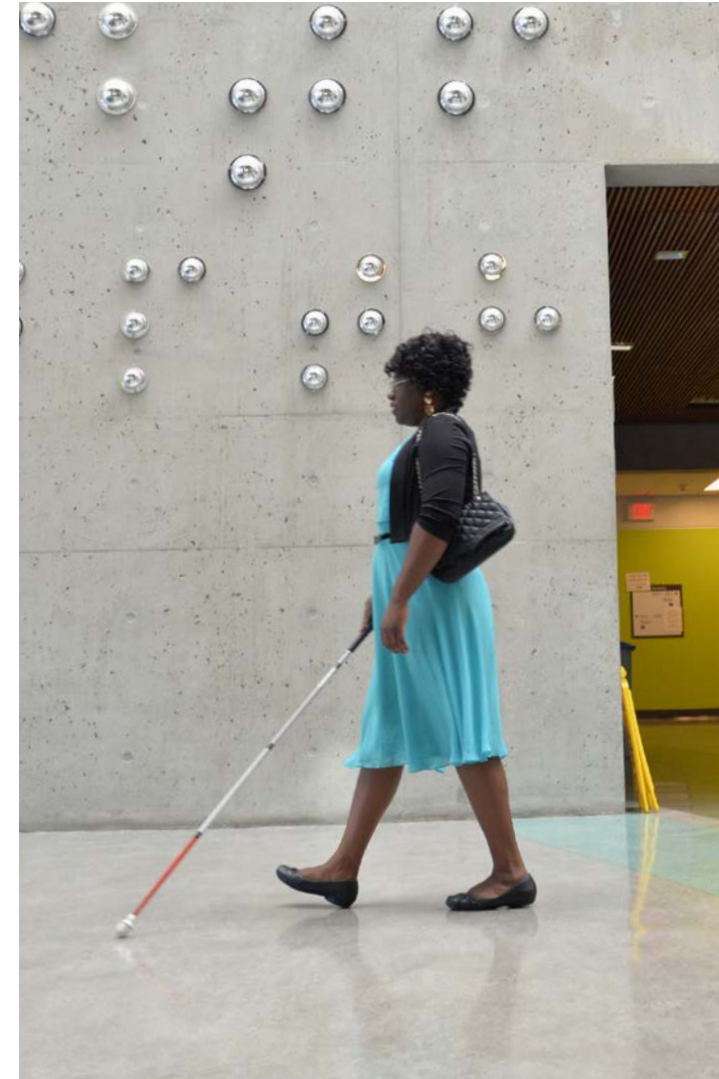
- Employers want or think they have accessible workplaces. However, 57% of Canadians with physical disabilities are unemployed due to barriers in the workplace.²
- Schools are embracing diversity and inclusion. But teachers in every corner of Canada need easily accessible resources to inspire and empower their students.

Our changing demographics make the issue of increased access even more critical. In 2014, over 6 million Canadians were aged 65 or older, representing 15.6 percent of Canada's population. By 2030— just nine years from now—seniors will number over 9.5 million and make up 23 percent of Canadians.³

¹ Return On Disability Group, March 2020, [Do Your D&I Efforts Include People with Disabilities?](#)

² Conference Board of Canada, 2018, [The Business Case to Build Physically Accessible Environments](#)

³ [Statistics Canada \(1971-2010\) and Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions \(2020-2080\)](#)



Our Way Forward



The COVID-19 pandemic has precipitated significant change. We have pivoted and adapted our programs and initiatives to capitalize in the new environment as opportunities to reach more Canadians and affect change:

- There will be significant economic recovery through infrastructure spending. We must ensure this infrastructure is built to be inclusive of people of all abilities and that our governments and businesses don't invest in creating new barriers.
- Organizations and leaders around the globe have a renewed focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Environmental Social Governance. We must help ensure that disability and accessibility are part of these strategies.

- Youth are more empowered than ever before to lead by example and advocate for social justice. We must provide youth with the education and tools to be the next generation of disability champions.
- Virtual communication has become the norm – something people with disabilities have been advocating for years. Let's embrace this to educate and engage more Canadians on the critical importance of improved access and inclusion.

Our 2021-23 Strategic Plan provides the roadmap to ensure we emerge stronger in our ability to remove barriers and liberate the potential of people with disabilities. It includes investments in the transformation of three key strategic areas of focus:

1. Creating Meaningful Accessibility
2. Empowering Canadians to Create Inclusive Communities
3. Financial Sustainability

This plan embodies the world we want to live in – accessible in both attitudes and environments. It also demonstrates how we can collectively accelerate change and fuel the movement to remove barriers and create a world for everyone, everywhere.



Strategic Priority #1: Creating Meaningful Accessibility

Overview

Legislation, standards and building codes by themselves are not enough to ensure meaningfully accessible spaces.

Now more than ever, we need to incorporate tools that will encourage the decision-makers – building owners and operators, influencers, architects, designers and developers – to adopt an accessibility lens to all new infrastructure and major retrofits and continually apply innovation to enhance accessibility beyond compliance. The Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) fills this crucial gap.

By 2023 we will have positioned RHFAC for successful growth. As a result of this work over the next two years, we envision more key sectors and organizations participating in accessibility ratings with major jurisdictions and/or organizations adopting a higher level of accessibility in their policies for new buildings and major retrofits.

We will...

1. Strengthen the value proposition of RHFAC, focusing on the following sectors: federally regulated entities, municipalities, post-secondary institutions, commercial building owners and operators, and residential.
2. Advocate to governments and other leading organizations to incentivize and/or mandate a higher level of accessibility for new infrastructure and major retrofits.
3. Improve the user experience of our online platforms and provide greater support for RHFAC Professionals.
4. Develop efficient and scalable operational processes for the RHFAC program.
5. Research and evaluate the positive impact of improved access for people with disabilities.

Strategic Priority #2: Empowering Canadians to Create Inclusive Communities

Overview

The first step to creating an accessible and inclusive country for people of all abilities is ensuring Canadians understand the significant attitudinal and physical barriers that continue to exist and the critical importance of removing them. By educating and engaging Canadians in this conversation, we'll help to mobilize the country towards positive action.

Whether it's through sharing the message, volunteering, supporting advocacy efforts, participating in educational activities and presentations, or raising funds, by 2023 we envision a place where significantly more people have "joined the movement" and are taking action to create a world for everyone, everywhere.

We will...

1. Re-invigorate our #EveryoneEverywhere public awareness campaign to clearly articulate the return on investment of greater accessibility and positive impact for people with disabilities. This includes providing straight forward ways to "join the movement" through various integrated communications channels.
2. Expand our RHF School Program beyond formal K-12 education by continuing to develop a content and e-learning strategy, improving website user experience, building strategic partnerships, and providing RHF Ambassadors with a broader range of volunteer roles.
3. Revitalize the RHF School Program Difference Maker initiative by creating a clear "difference maker" journey, bolstering the awards, and providing opportunities for continued engagement.



Strategic Priority #3: Financial Sustainability

Overview

To increase the impact of our core activities and programs, we need to ensure the financial sustainability of our Foundation. While we work to advance our Strategic Plan, we must do so in a way that improves our economic resilience in the medium to long term future. By 2023 we will have revitalized and strengthened our philanthropic fundraising and diversified our revenue streams to ensure our key programs are fully funded on an annual basis, our business model is functionally streamlined, and we have sufficient capacity to operate and grow.

We will...

1. Develop and implement a robust, multi-faceted National Philanthropic Strategic Plan to strengthen traditional revenue sources and to secure unrestricted, consistent funding.
2. Strengthen existing and explore new social enterprise opportunities, develop a framework to evaluate and refine viable concepts, and review and optimize revenue-sharing partnerships.
3. Strengthen in-kind, sponsorship and program partnerships.



Our Commitment to Investing in Care and Cure for Spinal Cord Injury

One of our Founder Rick Hansen’s original dreams is to find a cure and the best care practices for paralysis caused by spinal cord injury (SCI). Our Foundation remains committed to funding initiatives that advance SCI research, and these priorities are examined and set periodically by the RHF Board of Directors.

Through partnerships with organizations such as the International Collaboration on Repair Discoveries (ICORD), Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), the University of British Columbia (UBC), and the Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) & UBC Hospital Foundation, RHF is making strides every day toward the goal of accelerating research, elevating care, and improving lives.

Our partnership with ICORD includes support for the following key priorities:

1. Translational Research

This branch of medical research aims to connect patient care more directly by turning research studies into new treatments and using approaches that tackle the most pressing needs of people with SCI. It takes 17 years on average for health-related scientific discoveries to go from research lab into clinical practice. Our goal is to expedite this process.

2. Network Development

These funds provide new opportunities for collaboration and partnerships through international exchange, meetings, and sharing of information.

3. Supporting the Best and the Brightest

People are one of the most valuable resources in discovering effective treatments for SCI. This strategy

assists with the recruitment, development, and retention of up-and-coming researchers. This includes funding seed grant projects through ICORD. Many of those researchers RHF has supported have gone on to significant recognition in the field of SCI.

4. Consumer Engagement

Consumer engagement helps develop resources for people with SCI, their families, and supporters. It also helps recruit people with SCI to participate in research.

Our partnership with UBC and VCH includes funding for the Dr. Marcel Dvorak Chair in Spine Trauma supported by the VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation. We provide Dr. Brian Kwon, Dvorak Chair, the means to advance important discoveries that will improve the care and treatment of people living with SCI.

**Together,
we'll get
there faster**

An accessible and inclusive country for people of all abilities positively impacts every family, every workplace, every community and every Canadian.

The Rick Hansen Foundation remains steadfast in pursuing Rick Hansen's original dream of a world without barriers. Our 2021-23 Strategic Plan sets a bold and ambitious plan to continue this journey. By building strong partnerships, creating meaningful accessibility, and empowering Canadians to take action - all in a financially sustainable manner - we will accelerate positive change to further our impact and ensure people with disabilities aren't left behind.

We have the ability to make this change happen in our lifetime. With continued determination, leadership and focus, together, we will get there faster.

