Strategies to Achieve Meaningful Access in Preconstruction Projects

Ensuring meaningful access is crucial for successful, inclusive preconstruction projects.
The following outlines effective strategies to build accessibility in your projects from the ground up.

Prioritize Meaningful Access Decision-Making from the Start

Early decisions greatly impact project scope and risk of major errors.
Accuracy in budget, time, and execution = project success!

- **Start Early:** Make accessibility a priority from Day 1 – embed it in feasibility studies, site selection, initial design, contracts, and budgets.
- **Decision Hierarchy:** Address fixed criteria (laws, site constraints, budget) first, then flexible ones (finishes, furnishings).
- **Cost Efficiency:** Most accessibility features are inexpensive or have no cost, if planned early; changes become exponentially more expensive and require more time and effort later.

Use Proven Strategies

Reduce friction by using proven strategies.

- **Apply Proven Framework:** Use RHFAC to guide and integrate meaningful access into project goals.
- **Resolve Conflicts Early:** Address legislative, site, and design issues promptly. Prioritize decisions by flexibility.
- **Communicate Effectively:** Share information and maintain ongoing feedback.
- **Favor Repetition & Simplicity:** Use repeatable, simple layouts for efficiency and seek multi-benefit solutions.
- **Review Continuously:** Apply RHFAC throughout and regularly check assumptions.
- **Design for Everyone:** Incorporate universal design for all users (mobility, vision, hearing, neurodiversity, etc.).

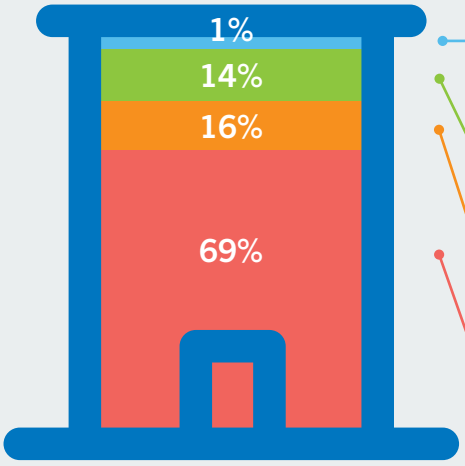
Assemble the Best and Right Team

Bring accessibility expertise early.

- **Composition:** Include architects, engineers, cost consultants, RHFAC Professionals, and key collaborators from the very start.
- **Structure:** RHFAC Professional works closely with the architect.
- **Best Practice:** Lead designer should have both architectural and RHFAC expertise or consult an RHFAC Professional early.

Engage at Key Phases

Embed accessibility throughout the process — feasibility, design, and construction — rather than treating it as an add-on.



% of RHFAC Decision

- **Phase 4: Description.** Finalize specs, drawings, finishes, and RHFAC rating submission.
- **Phase 3: Functionality.** Set wall locations and confirm room functions.
- **Phase 2: Logistics.** Finalize structure, core, and main circulation.
- **Phase 1: Feasibility.** Confirm site, budget, schedule, accessibility targets.

Let's build better together!

Source: The Art of Better Buildings: A Pre-construction Guidance Book. Strategies towards Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™, hygge Architecture, March2026.
Read the full report at: www.RickHansen.com/become-accessible/accessibility-resources