

Rick Hansen Foundation calls on people of Ontario to improve accessibility

Complimentary accessibility ratings through the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ program available to 250 sites in Ontario

(Toronto) Thursday, January 30 – Thanks to funding of \$1.3 million from the Government of Ontario’s Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) is accepting applications from organizations across 10 municipalities in Ontario to obtain a snapshot of their buildings’ accessibility through the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) program.

RHF is calling on non-profit, public and private organizations to apply to receive complimentary RHFAC ratings. This includes spaces such as community centres, libraries, schools, retailers and office buildings. Two hundred and fifty sites will have the opportunity to be rated through the RHFAC program. The 10 eligible municipalities are:

1. Brampton
2. Greater Sudbury
3. Hamilton
4. Kitchener
5. London
6. Markham
7. Mississauga
8. Ottawa
9. Toronto
10. Windsor

RHFAC rates the level of meaningful access of the built environment, keeping in mind user experience of people with varying disabilities affecting their mobility, vision and hearing. This means attracting more consumers and potential employees for organizations across the province. According to the Conference Board of Canada, improvements to workplace access would allow more than half a million Canadians with disabilities to work more hours, increasing GDP by \$16.8 billion by 2030. To date, more than 1,200 buildings across Canada have been rated through the program.

“People with disabilities and our seniors deserve to be independent and fully participate in their communities as consumers and employees,” said Raymond Cho, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. “This certification pilot project will help businesses and communities understand how to be more accessible and inclusive for everyone – so that we all benefit. By helping to build awareness of accessible built environments, we are fostering a culture of accessibility and inclusion.”

Speaking about the complimentary ratings, Brad McCannell, VP of Access and Inclusion at RHF, said, “This generous funding from the Ontario government will enable many organizations to understand and showcase their building’s accessibility, and help inform their future accessibility plans with respect to the built environment. This is a great opportunity for organizations to help make Ontario more inclusive for our aging population and the growing number of people with disabilities.”

Applications from building owners and tenants can be submitted online until March 27, 2020. RHF will be engaging municipalities and their Accessibility Advisory Committees to select finalists in their local communities.

To learn more and apply for a complimentary rating, visit [RickHansen.com/FreeRating](https://rickhansen.com/FreeRating).

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 nearly 30 years, RHF has worked to raise awareness, change attitudes, and remove barriers for people with disabilities. Visit www.rickhansen.com to learn more.

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