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British Columbia News

Provincial funding supports people with disabilities

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Victoria - In celebration of British Columbia's fourth annual AccessAbility Week, people with disabilities will be supported through \$500,000 in new community grants aimed at improving accessibility and inclusion.

AccessAbility Week highlights the efforts of people, communities and workplaces that are actively removing barriers so people of all abilities have a better chance to succeed.

"AccessAbility Week is an opportunity to appreciate the many ways that people living with disabilities and their advocates have made our province more accessible and inclusive," said Nicholas Simons, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. "This past year has put additional pressures on people facing barriers and these grants, along with our tabled accessibility legislation, demonstrate our government's commitment to building a barrier-free B.C."

Disability Alliance BC (DABC) will distribute the grants to support local accessibility projects throughout the province. Calls for proposals will be posted on DABC's website later in the year. Grants will vary depending on each project's size and scope, and will be given to projects focusing on accessible education and learning, sports and recreation, arts, culture and tourism, community participation, emergency planning and response, or accessible employment.

The Province proclaimed May 30 to June 5, 2021, as AccessAbility Week to promote inclusion and accessibility, while also celebrating the people in the disability community who are working to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. B.C.'s week coincides with National AccessAbility Week and National Indigenous AccessAbility Week.

The accessible British Columbia act was introduced on April 28, 2021. Once passed, it will enable the Province to move ahead with establishing new accessibility standards in a range of areas, including education, the built environment and the delivery of services.

Quotes:

Dan Coulter, Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility –

"This week, we celebrate the abilities of people, recognize the individuals and organizations who continue to go above and beyond, and raise awareness about what each of us can do to make our province more inclusive. Today's announced grant funding will support organizations across the province in removing barriers and creating new local opportunities for British Columbians with disabilities."

Karen Martin, executive director, operations, Disability Alliance BC –

"Disability Alliance BC is very pleased to be selected to administer the Accessibility Project again in 2021. We are grateful that the ministry continues to support the work of organizations as they increase accessibility and make their communities and programs more inclusive of people with disabilities. Projects that make connections and provide opportunities to participate are especially important during the pandemic and going forward."

Tiffany Tjosvold, executive director, Embrace Arts Foundation –

"The Accessibility Project Grant has opened up such exciting possibilities for our organization. We are now able to run our new artist-to-facilitator program, where a group of local disabled and neurodivergent artists will train

together and refine their skills as community facilitators. We believe it is important to have more disabled and neurodivergent artists in leadership roles within the community. We can't wait to see what impact this will have on our organization and our community at large.”

Lynda Edmonds, CEO, Fraserside Community Services Society –

“The Accessibility Project Grant has helped Fraserside be better prepared and equipped in keeping the people we serve and employ safe. The grant gave us the means to design and implement an effective pandemic response plan that ensured persons served by Fraserside, especially those with disabilities, continued to receive support during this difficult time. We also created a disaster response plan that will act as a guide during an emergency to keep everyone safe and informed. Thank you for helping our persons served live a barrier-free life.”

Quick Facts:

- In 2020, 14 organizations received funding for accessibility projects.
- As of 2017, there are more than 926,000 British Columbians over the age of 15 with some form of disability.

Learn More:

Visit the Disability Alliance BC website for more information: <https://disabilityalliancebc.org>
(<https://disabilityalliancebc.org/>)

Previous Accessibility Project Grant recipients can be found here:
<https://disabilityalliancebc.org/program/accessibility-projects/>
(<https://disabilityalliancebc.org/program/accessibility-projects/>)

Learn more about British Columbia’s accessibility legislation:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/accessibility/legislation>
(<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/accessibility/legislation>)

View the AccessAbility Week 2021 Proclamation:
<https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/proclamations/proclamations/AccessAbilityWk2021>
(<https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/proclamations/proclamations/AccessAbilityWk2021>)

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Media Relations
778 974-3851