

Media Backgrounder and Fact Sheet

Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Government of British Columbia

B.C. CREATES DISABILITY-FRIENDLY ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITIES

British Columbia is creating welcoming, accessible and inclusive communities for the more than 710,000 people with disabilities in this province. Through B.C.'s Disability Strategy, the Government of B.C. is providing leadership for communities to build an integrated system to help people with disabilities get the support they need – whether at home, at work, at play, or in their communities.

Thanks to partnerships with local organizations, different levels of government and – most important – people with disabilities and their families, programs and services are in place to support British Columbians with disabilities.

- In total, the Government of B.C. invests approximately \$5 billion a year in disability programs and services. In addition to many others, these supports include disability assistance to approximately 86,500 clients, health services and supports, employment programs, community living services, and optical and dental supports.
- Community Living BC provides services, such as employment and respite supports, to more than 12,000 adults with disabilities and their families so they can live 'good lives in welcoming communities.'
- Through the Labour Market Agreement, the Government of B.C. partnered with the federal government to provide a number of supports to help people with disabilities gain the skills and supports they need for employment. For example, participants may receive equipment and assistive devices to help them work or volunteer.
- B.C. invests \$20 million a year in the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities, providing individualized supports to all British Columbians with disabilities to help them enter the workforce. WorkAble Solutions – a human resources toolkit for businesses – connects employers to qualified workers with disabilities.
- In 2006, the Government of B.C. issued the 10 by 10 Challenge to communities to increase the employment of people with disabilities. To date, over 80 communities have signed up. Through creative initiatives tailored to local situations, these communities are helping demonstrate that everyone benefits when people with disabilities are gainfully employed.

- Ensuring people with disabilities can participate in daily life goes beyond the home and workplace. People with disabilities should be able to enjoy the many recreational activities B.C. has to offer – that’s why the B.C. government partnered with 2010 Legacies Now on a number of initiatives.
- Through a 2010 Legacies Now initiative – the Accessible Tourism program – B.C. businesses can assess their accessibility for people with disabilities. To date, Accessible Tourism has assessed nearly 3,700 businesses so far across B.C. and 64 % of those businesses have achieved a positive accessibility rating.
- Measuring Up, another 2010 Legacies Now initiative, is also fostering opportunities – from building wheelchair ramps to creating inclusive employment programs – in over 100 communities so that people with disabilities can participate more fully in everyday activities.

The Government of B.C. is helping to build three world-class, disability-accessible playgrounds in Vancouver, Whistler and Richmond – all venue cities for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Other partners supporting the playground projects include the City of Richmond, the City of Vancouver, 2010 Legacies Now, the Rick Hansen Foundation and the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Canada.

More information on programs for British Columbians with disabilities is available at: www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/pwd.htm

CONTACTS

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2010 Legacies Now is a not-for-profit society committed to creating sustainable legacies that will benefit all British Columbians as a result of hosting the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. To build more inclusive and accessible communities, 2010 Legacies Now is leading both the Measuring Up and Accessible Tourism initiatives.

VISUAL RESOURCES

- 10 by 10 Challenge Video – www.10by10challenge.gov.bc.ca

WEB RESOURCES

- 10 by 10 Challenge Success Stories: www.10by10challenge.gov.bc.ca/success.htm
- 2010 Legacies' Now Measuring Up – explains how the program is supporting communities with becoming more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities: http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/measuring_up/
- WorkAble Solutions – provides a human resource toolkit to employers and connects them with qualified people with disabilities: www.workablesolutionsbc.ca

MEDIA COVERAGE

- **Success marked in Measuring Up, people with disabilities in workforce**
Abbotsford News, Page 00a8, 22-Nov-2008
A group formed to increase the number of people with disabilities into the Abbotsford workforce has reported a perfect 10 so far.
Annette Borrows, the co-chair of the Measuring Up Working Group, has told Abbotsford council that Abbotsford businesses have responded well in the provincial 10 by 10 challenge. That initiative challenges communities to increase the number of people with disabilities in the workforce by 10 per cent by 2010.
Before the challenge started earlier this year, Borrows told council that only 44 per cent of people with disabilities were employed province-wide.
So far, she explained 70 B.C. communities have taken up the challenge and an additional 206 people with disabilities have become employed in Abbotsford.
In light of that, Borrows has now raised her goal to 500 people by 2010.
To recognize Abbotsford's achievements to date, the Union of B.C. Municipalities has presented its Innovative and Integrated Approach Award to the organizers of the local program. They, in turn, handed it over to the City of Abbotsford on Monday.
The Measuring Up Working Group is a sub-committee of city hall's Abbotsford Social Development Advisory Committee.
- Legacies Now grants promote accessibility, canada.com, September 21, 2007
<http://www.canada.com/cityguides/princerupert/story.html?id=995b742d-e071-4b70-8faf-30465ffaf29f>

- 30 -

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