



REAL ESTATE  
**Foundation**  
OF BC

# Accessibility Plan

*October 2023*

# About the Real Estate Foundation Of BC

The Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC) is a philanthropic organization working to advance sustainable, equitable, and socially just land use across British Columbia. We fund projects, connect people, and share knowledge.

→ Learn more by visiting [refbc.ca](https://refbc.ca).

## Land Acknowledgement

We recognize and acknowledge the x<sup>w</sup>məθkwəy'əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, as well as First Nations throughout BC, on whose territories we live, work, and learn.

## About Accessibility Legislation

In 2019, the federal government passed the [Accessible Canada Act](#). The Act aims to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility in seven priority areas: employment, delivery of services, the built environment, information & communications, transportation, health, and education. Standards for each area are under development. Currently, the Act applies to Government of Canada itself and federally regulated industry sectors, such as banking, telecommunications, transportation, crown corporations, etc.

Following that, in 2021, the provincial government passed the [Accessible British Columbia Act](#). The purpose of the Accessible BC Act is to reduce barriers to access and promote equal participation for individuals with disabilities. Currently, the Accessible BC Act applies to the provincial government and BC's public sector but, eventually, will also apply to the private sector.

# Executive Summary

**The Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC)** is committed to building a culture of inclusivity and accessibility. Not only is this part of our company culture but opening access to all is imperative to our continued growth.

As part of BC's public sector, we will contribute to a barrier-free province for everyone by building an Accessibility Plan that will support our employees and stakeholders to have the best experience possible when working with our Foundation. This first iteration of the REFBC Accessibility Plan will guide our organization in meeting our accessibility commitments and in building an accessibility-confident culture.

To address organization-wide gaps in accessibility, it is important to recognize and understand the needs of those with disabilities. For this reason, this initial plan was developed in consultation with employees who identify as having a disability. Future versions of this plan aim to include consultation with external organizations that serve people with disabilities as well as people with disabilities living in the community.

## **A SUMMARY OF INITIAL OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:**

- Improving the attraction of persons with disabilities to jobs at our Foundation.
- Being better prepared to provide information in accessible formats when requested.
- Improving the knowledge of our internal Tech Committee and leveraging the capabilities of accessibility features in current and future IT equipment, programs, and systems.
- Initiating processes where there is a more thorough review and a “through an accessibility lens” approach to the assessment of our internal process and procedures.

# Our Accessibility Plan

## *Statement of Commitment*

REFBC is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in ways that allow them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion. We are committed to meeting the needs of people who face accessibility barriers. We will do this by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers and by meeting the requirements of the Accessible BC Act.

In developing and updating our Accessibility Plan, we considered the following principles that are outlined in the Accessible BC Act:

- **Inclusion**
- **Adaptability**
- **Diversity**
- **Collaboration**
- **Self-determination**
- **Universal design**

## *Barriers, Actions & Goals*

Below you will find barriers that we have identified within our own Foundation and have organized them into the eight accessibility standards - employment, delivery of services, the built environment, information & communications, transportation, health, education, and procurement – as outlined in the Accessible BC Act.

We have created achievable, short-term actions that we can take in response to each of the identified barriers to help us achieve our goals based on the above principles of inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design.

### **EMPLOYMENT**

• **Barrier:** REFBC employee recruitment and retention processes to support persons with disabilities are not easily identified in public facing communications.

• **Action:** Review our recruitment process to ensure it is accessible to candidates with disabilities.

→ **Goal:** To better communicate employment opportunities to persons with disabilities, and support their well-being through recruitment, hiring and employment processes.

## DELIVERY OF SERVICES

- **Barrier:** Currently there is no standard approach for ensuring our internal process and procedures have taken accessibility into account.
  - **Action:** Provide training on the Accessible Canada Act and Accessible BC Act for those whose role is to develop programs, processes, and procedures.
- **Goal: The ability to apply an “accessibility lens” when reviewing internal policies, programs, and processes.**

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- **Barrier:** We aren't sure if our physical workspace is completely accessible to people with disabilities.
  - **Action:** Conduct an accessibility audit.
- **Goal: To have an accessible office space.**

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

- **Barrier:** REFBC does not have a consistent process to ensure alternate formats of communication that it issues to employees and other stakeholders are available and provided in a timely manner.
  - **Action:** Prepare standard resources and commonly issued company communication in alternative formats so that they are ready to be distributed upon request.
- **Goal: The ability to reach a more diverse audience.**

## TRANSPORTATION

REFBC does not coordinate a transportation system, or a fleet of transportation vehicles, as defined in the Accessible Canada Act. This means that standards for transportation are not in the scope of this plan currently.

## HEALTH

The extended health benefits offered to employees ensures coverage of hearing aids, vision care, and mobility devices. By offering these benefits to help cover the costs of disability related equipment, we hope to support health equity for employees with disabilities.

## EDUCATION

- **Barrier:** The Tech Committee is not well versed in accessibility technology and does not know how to assist persons with disabilities in the workplace.

- **Action:** Provide training to Tech Committee members to learn how to adapt services and improve interactions with persons with disabilities.

→ **Goal: Increased accessibility knowledge.**

## PROCUREMENT

- **Barrier:** Ensuring that event and meeting venues meet accessibility requirements of persons with disabilities.

- **Action:** Screen event and meeting venue vendors for accessibility standards.

→ **Goal: Event and meeting spaces are accessible to persons with disabilities.**

## *Reporting & Updating Our Plan*

Overcoming the above barriers to accessibility is not the “be all end all” to becoming a disability-aware and inclusive organization. We know creating a barrier-free environment takes time and we are dedicated to the ongoing identification, removal, and prevention of barriers.

We will build on our current efforts through the consistent review and revision of our Accessibility Plan every three years to align with our organization’s strategic plan. Future updates to our Accessibility Plan will be shaped by consultation with persons with disabilities and the organizations that serve them.

# Your Input & Feedback

REFBC welcomes feedback on our Accessibility Plan from the public, employees, grantees, and our program partners. This feedback is valuable to us as it helps us break down accessibility barriers and build on our commitment to accessibility and inclusion.

If you have an inquiry or feedback, please use one of the contact methods below. We will respond to all feedback in a timely manner. If you require support while providing feedback let us know and we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

**Contact:** Kimiko Johanson, Governance and Operations Manager

**Mailing Address:** 460 – 355 Burrard Street, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6C 2G8

**Email:** [info@refbc.ca](mailto:info@refbc.ca)

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**Website:** [refbc.ca](http://refbc.ca)

## Glossary Of Terms

Please refer to the [Canadian Institutes of Health Research's glossary of terms](#) used in accessibility and systemic ableism policy work. It draws from Government of Canada documents, such as the [Accessible Canada Act \(2019\)](#) and the [Guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology](#), and from many other reputable sources.

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