



2025-2028

Accessibility Plan



Territory acknowledgement

The Law Foundation of British Columbia (the Foundation) is headquartered on the traditional, unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples. The Foundation is the recipient of funds derived from transactions taking place on Indigenous territories, treated and untreated, and is delegated the responsibility to distribute those funds for the advancement of the Foundation's mandate and the public good. The Foundation, therefore, has an extraordinary duty to build good relationships with, and actualize its responsibility towards, Indigenous peoples in the lands known as British Columbia.

Contents



| | |
|--|-----------|
| Territory acknowledgement | 2 |
| About this plan | 6 |
| Questions or comments? | 6 |
| Accessibility of this plan | 6 |
| A note about language | 6 |
| Key definitions | 8 |
| Disability | 8 |
| Barrier | 8 |
| Accommodation | 9 |
| Accessibility | 10 |
| Balancing accessibility and accommodation | 10 |
| About the Law Foundation of BC | 12 |
| Our mandate | 12 |
| Mission | 12 |
| Vision | 12 |
| Values | 13 |
| What guides our accessibility work? | 15 |
| Foundational context | 15 |
| Accessible BC Act | 17 |
| Requirements | 17 |
| Principles | 17 |
| Coming standards | 18 |
| 2023-2028 Strategic Plan | 18 |
| Internal employee policies and practices | 19 |
| Our approach to accessibility | 21 |
| Accessibility highlights/work to date | 22 |
| Initiatives with an internal focus | 22 |
| Initiatives with an external focus | 25 |



| | |
|--|-----------|
| Barrier identification | 28 |
| Staff survey | 28 |
| Governors and Advisory Group survey | 29 |
| Accessibility action plan | 31 |
| Built environment | 31 |
| Actions for the next 3 years | 31 |
| Why is this important for us? | 32 |
| Technology | 33 |
| Actions for the next 3 years | 33 |
| Why is this important for us? | 33 |
| Meetings and events | 34 |
| Actions for the next 3 years | 34 |
| Why is this important for us? | 35 |
| Interviewing, onboarding, and retention | 35 |
| Actions for the next 3 years | 36 |
| Why is this important for us? | 36 |
| Organizational learning | 37 |
| Actions for the next 3 years | 37 |
| Why is this important for us? | 38 |
| The next iteration of our action plan | 40 |
| Grantmaking | 40 |
| Actions for the next 3 years | 40 |
| Why is this important for us? | 40 |
| Grantee supports | 41 |
| Actions for the next 3 years | 41 |
| Why is this important for us? | 41 |
| Monitoring and evaluation | 42 |
| Our feedback mechanism | 42 |



About this plan

About this plan

Welcome to the Law Foundation of British Columbia Accessibility Plan

Our inaugural accessibility plan marks a significant milestone in our efforts to foster an inclusive environment for our staff, governors and advisory members, as well as the broader community of people we support through the Foundation.

This Accessibility Plan will answer the following questions:

- ▶ What guides our accessibility work?
- ▶ How are we approaching accessibility at our organization?
- ▶ What are the highlights of our accessibility work to date?
- ▶ What barriers remain at our organization?
- ▶ What is our action plan for removing these barriers?

We are grateful to the team at Untapped Accessibility for their expertise and guidance in this work. Together, we are paving the way for a more inclusive future in our province's legal system and philanthropy landscape.

Questions or comments?

If you have questions or comments about this plan, please reach us at accessibility@lawfoundationbc.org.

To report any accessibility barriers that you have noticed or experienced when interacting with the Foundation, please use our feedback mechanism available at www.lawfoundationbc.org/about-us/accessibility.

Accessibility of this plan

This plan is accessible to PDF/UA standards. If you require an alternative format, you can contact accessibility@lawfoundationbc.org.

A note about language

The Foundation understands that the language surrounding disability continues to evolve and that preferences for terminology vary among communities and individuals. As a small gesture to recognize the diversity of preferences, this plan alternates between “person-first” language (for example, saying “person with a disability”) and “identity-first” language (for example, saying “disabled person”).

We recognize that using preferred terminology is best when communicating directly with individuals from the disability community.



Key definitions

Key definitions

Disability

According to the [Accessible British Columbia Act](#), disability occurs when an impairment interacts with a barrier and impacts someone's full and equal participation in a particular context.

This definition recognizes the critical role that environment plays in the experience of disability. By understanding and acknowledging the impact of environment, we can take a proactive approach to removing barriers and reducing the impact of disability.

Barrier

A barrier is anything that hinders the full and equal participation of a person with an impairment. Barriers can be caused by:

1. **Environments** – for example, building entrances with steps but no ramp or air fresheners and strongly scented candles in an office space.
2. **Attitudes** – for example, unfairly judging the grant application of an individual with a disability because the decision-makers believe people with disabilities are less capable of managing funded projects.
3. **Practices** – for example, a funding application process that requires all submissions to be made online without providing accessible formats.
4. **Policies** – for example, an employee policy that does not offer any flexibility around working remotely.
5. **Information** – for example, written materials that use jargon, technical terms, and long sentences instead of plain language.
6. **Communications or technologies** – for example, relying on a web-based platform for accessing work-related information, submitting reports, or communicating with colleagues that does not include accessibility features, like screen reader compatibility.

Accommodation

Accommodation is a specific adjustment or modification made to address a particular barrier. Typically, accommodations are initiated by request of the person experiencing the barrier. When an organization fulfills an accommodation request, they are building access for this person.

Example

For instance, imagine someone with low vision is applying for a grant with the Foundation. They request the application materials in an accessible format, such as large print or a screen-reader-friendly document. To meet this accommodation request, we would provide the materials in the requested format or hire an accessibility service.

From a legal perspective, employers have a duty to take all reasonable steps to avoid any employee experiencing a negative effect based on a characteristic that is protected by the *Human Rights Code*. Service providers have a similar duty in some contexts. This is called the *duty to accommodate*. The Foundation has an Accommodation Policy that applies to Foundation employees and addresses the legal duty to accommodate.

The existence of a barrier may not always mean there is a legal duty to accommodate. Regardless of whether or not there is a legal duty to accommodate, the Foundation will take reasonable steps to support full and equal participation in the workplace and activities of the Foundation where possible.

Some examples of where there may be limits to accommodation include where the built environment creates a barrier and the landlord has the decision making authority or where an accommodation could have a negative impact on another person or objective that is also important.

Decisions about accommodation often require careful and creative consideration of the context on a case by case basis that includes working closely with those who are impacted.

While related, accommodation and accessibility are not the same.

Accessibility

Accessibility is the intentional and proactive work we do to identify, remove, and prevent barriers that hinder participation for disabled people. According to the World Health Organization's *World Report on Disability* (2011), accessibility ensures that environments, services, and products are designed for the widest range of people possible.

Let's revisit the example of the grant-seeker who needs materials in an accessible format. In a reactive accommodation scenario, this individual must recognize the barrier and request the documents in a format they can use. In contrast, an accessibility-focused approach would require the Foundation to proactively provide application materials that are designed to be accessible from the outset. For example, documents would be formatted to meet accessibility standards and clearly labelled as such in application instructions.

By focusing on accessibility, organizations like ours take on the responsibility of better supporting access for as many people as possible. This reduces the need for disabled people to request accommodations to ensure their own access.

Balancing accessibility and accommodation

Even with a strong emphasis on accessibility, there will always be instances where individualized accommodations are necessary. Highly accessible organizations must still be prepared to provide specific support for unique needs, working closely with those impacted to consider their circumstances and the context.

That said, designing with accessibility in mind significantly reduces the frequency and effort required for accommodations. This proactive approach not only saves time and resources but can also inspire improvements. In many cases, accommodations can spark ideas for accessibility features that benefit a wider audience.

By striving for accessibility while being ready to address individual needs, organizations can foster more inclusive and equitable environments for everyone.



About the Law Foundation of BC

About the Law Foundation of BC

The Law Foundation of British Columbia (the Foundation) is an independent non-profit foundation established in 1969 under the *Legal Profession Act*. We distribute grants to fund law-related projects and programs that benefit people in British Columbia.

Our grant funding comes from the interest earned on the money lawyers hold in their pooled trust accounts at banks and credit unions across the province.

Our mandate

In accordance with the [Legal Profession Act](#), the Foundation's legislative mandate is to distribute grant funding in five areas:

1. **Legal education**
2. **Legal research**
3. **Legal aid**
4. **Law reform**
5. **Law libraries**

Within these areas, our aim is to support projects and programs that reflect the diversity of British Columbia. When considering diversity, we think about diversity in age, ability, socio-economic level, education, ethnicity, language, family, gender, marital/relationship status, race, religion, work experience, geographic size and location, and sexual orientation.

Mission

Through funding, collaborative relationships, and shared learning, we invest in work that empowers people and strengthens communities.

Vision

A future where systems of law and justice support all people to live and thrive in dignity.

Values

Reciprocity. We will listen and learn with humility, and we cultivate trusting, transparent, and supportive relationships, both within the Foundation, and with those with whom we interact, valuing the time, commitment, expertise, and energy that each contributes.

Equity. We acknowledge and respond to the ongoing harms to equity-denied people and groups caused by the legal system and philanthropy. We take an anti-racist, intersectional approach to counter systemic racism and discrimination.

Decolonization. We acknowledge and respond to the ongoing harms resulting from colonization, and the role of the legal system and philanthropy in perpetuating those harms. We decolonize our practices, centering the self-determination of Indigenous peoples and their leadership, knowledge, and expertise in justice transformation through their own laws, and Canadian law.

Sustainability. We ensure that our work, practices, finances, and the programs we support are sustainable over time, and consistent with good environmental stewardship.

Transformation. We encourage creative solutions to problems, prioritizing work informed by, and building with, people and communities facing systemic inequity.





What
guides our
accessibility
work?

What guides our accessibility work?

Foundational context

Disability rights is sometimes used to refer to civil rights organizing that took place in Canada, the United States, and elsewhere, gaining momentum and recognition particularly in the second half of the 20th century. In Canada, the disability rights movement has been successful in demanding change and lobbying government to enact new legislation protecting people with disabilities from discrimination, including in the areas of employment equity and human rights and through the inclusion of both mental and physical disability as protected grounds in the 1982 *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Disability rights advocates also played a key role in the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* which was ratified by Canada in 2010.

Despite these achievements, the disability rights movement has at times been criticized for primarily focusing on legislation, the legal rights of individuals, and a framework of legal recourse for addressing discrimination and other injustices. Patty Berne, co-founder and executive and artistic director of Sins Invalid, has argued “At its core, the disability rights framework centers people who can achieve status, power and access through a legal or rights-based framework, which we know is not possible for many disabled people, or appropriate for all situations.” In part, this is because of the inherent barriers in legal systems.

Sins Invalid

Sins Invalid is a disability justice-based movement building and performance project that celebrates disabled people and centers the lives and leadership of disabled Black, Indigenous, and people of the global majority, and queer, trans, and nonbinary disabled people. [Sins Invalid’s 10 principles of disability justice](#) provide a helpful framework that goes beyond disability rights to address the intersecting systems of oppression that impact disabled people.

Meaningful access to justice

Legal systems may not be accessible for a variety of reasons, including barriers to access for people with disabilities, cost, lack of language supports, lack of consideration for culturally-safe and trauma-informed service delivery, and issues with availability of services, particularly in rural and remote communities.

Disability justice is understood by some to be an evolution of the disability rights movement. Disability justice recognizes and affirms the interconnectedness of ableism and disability with other systems of oppression and identities through a focus on and commitment to intersectionality, leadership of those most impacted, and collective liberation.

At the Foundation, we know we have more work to do, including learning about the history and principles of disability justice. While we are early in our accessibility journey, it is clear that the legal system does not always live up to its promise of protecting disabled people from discrimination and has perpetuated injustices and caused ongoing harm to people with disabilities.

As an example, in the context of housing law and rights, people with disabilities in Canada are overrepresented among evicted tenants and more likely to experience homelessness because of violence or abuse. Disabled people also experience barriers accessing government services and are more likely to live in housing with unsafe drinking water, poor air quality, pest infestations, and issues with mould or mildew. And while there is a lack of data on the number of people with disabilities in prisons and correctional facilities, we know many disabled people are forced to live in systems of institutionalization.

We also know these injustices are not experienced in isolation. They are compounded by other systems of oppression that disproportionately impact people with disabilities who also identify as Indigenous, racialized, newcomers, 2SLGBTQIA+, or belonging to other equity-denied communities.

Just as these injustices are systemic in nature, so must be the solutions and responses in order to bring about transformative change and one day achieve the Foundation's vision of a future where systems of law and justice support all people to live and thrive in dignity. As a primary legal funder in BC, we welcome the role that we have the opportunity to play – alongside the legal profession and the non-profit sector – in advancing accessibility for people with disabilities and strengthening systemic access to justice.



Accessible BC Act

Our accessibility work is also guided by the [Accessible BC Act](#), which became law on June 17, 2021. It outlines requirements, principles, and coming standards for accessibility work.

Requirements

According to the Act, prescribed organizations must comply with three requirements:

1. Create an accessibility committee to help the organization identify, address, and prevent barriers.
2. Develop an accessibility plan to identify, remove, and prevent barriers.
3. Establish a public feedback mechanism so people can share comments on the barriers they face when interacting with the organization.

In response to the first requirement, the Foundation mobilized a group of dedicated staff members with a commitment to accessibility, creating our first-ever Accessibility Committee. This committee includes participants with disabilities and representation from different staff teams at the Foundation. By offering advice and recommendations on accessibility issues, opportunities, and initiatives, this committee supports the Foundation to integrate accessibility into organizational policies, processes, programs, and services.

The Accessibility Committee was also involved in the development and review of this Accessibility Plan, which is our response to the second requirement.

For more information on the Foundation's feedback mechanism, please see visit the accessibility page on our website at www.lawfoundationbc.org/about-us/accessibility.

Principles

The Act also highlights six principles to guide accessibility work:

- 1. Inclusion**
- 2. Adaptability**
- 3. Diversity**
- 4. Collaboration**
- 5. Self-determination**
- 6. Universal design**

The Foundation has considered these principles in the development of this plan. We will continue to look to all principles as we execute the plan.

Coming standards

The Foundation acknowledges the ongoing development of accessibility standards under the *Accessible BC Act*. We eagerly await further guidance from the province, their accessibility committee, and other technical committees involved in shaping these standards.

The first two draft standards were released for public comment in May 2024. These standards describe how BC organizations will be expected to provide more accessible employment and service delivery. See the “Our approach to accessibility” section for more information.

2023-2028 Strategic Plan

Our accessibility work is also guided by our organization’s strategic priorities. Our [2023-2028 Strategic Plan](#) identifies key initiatives, many of which are related to accessibility and inclusion. For example:

Focus area: Strengthening structural inclusion and systemic access to justice

Key initiatives include:

- ▶ Prioritize the expertise of Indigenous, racialized, and equity-denied people in funding decisions.
- ▶ Support grantees’ capacity-building activities, including work to reduce power imbalances and improve access and equity of services.

Focus area: Building a thriving foundation

Key initiatives include:

- ▶ Continue to restructure the Foundation and its systems and policies so that it has the capacity to carry out its work in a sustainable, inclusive, and anti-racist way.
- ▶ Engage in evaluation, learning and communications in ways that build trust, understanding, and capacity for transformative action.



- ▶ Support the wellness of staff, Governors, and Advisors.

Internal employee policies and practices

Our accessibility work is guided by an internal commitment to inclusion and the full participation of our staff teams. We are dedicated to fostering an inclusive work environment where all employees can participate fully and equally. As such, equity, diversity, and inclusion drive many of the processes, policies, and procedures that are described in our Employee Policy Manual.

- ▶ Equity ensures fairness by removing barriers to opportunities, sometimes requiring different treatment of individuals or groups to address effects of colonization, social disparity, and systemic injustices against marginalized groups, like people with disabilities.
- ▶ Diversity celebrates and acknowledges individual differences and unique histories, experiences, and perspectives. It encompasses various aspects like age, abilities, socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and more.
- ▶ Inclusion builds a community that respects and recognizes diverse human experiences, perspectives, and identities, promoting equity and fostering a sense of belonging. It ensures everyone has the right to participate and contributes to the collective well-being of the community.

Here are examples of internal commitments that relate to these values:

- ▶ Ensuring that policies, practices, and procedures promote accessibility, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- ▶ Recognizing different education and career paths as valid when assessing qualifications.
- ▶ Providing a safe, supportive, and accessible environment for all employees.
- ▶ Acknowledging and addressing the biases and stereotypes that limit opportunities in work environments.
- ▶ Supporting decolonization, reconciliation, and relationship-building with Indigenous communities, ensuring these efforts are consistently reflected across our work.
- ▶ Practicing human resources through a lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion to foster an inclusive, respectful, and safe work environment, in which collegiality among employees and a culture of collaborative learning is achieved.
- ▶ Offering on-going leadership, learning, and professional development opportunities for employees and Governors that foster equity, diversity, and inclusion, trauma-informed practice, and intercultural literacy.



Our approach to accessibility

Our approach to accessibility

The Foundation is committed to making lasting improvements to our organization's accessibility – and we acknowledge that much work needs to be done. To support meaningful and manageable success, we are starting with an internal focus. Our immediate priority is ensuring our staff, Governors, and Advisors have what they need to thrive in their roles.

With this approach, our hope is to create a strong foundation of accessibility to build upon as we look outwards to our grantees and community in the next iteration of this plan. This phased approach ensures that our commitment to accessibility is both sustainable and impactful, fostering a culture of inclusivity that permeates every aspect of our organization. It is also aligned with the principle of “Nothing about us without us” which emphasizes how important it is to meaningfully include people with disabilities in engagement activities, in advisory roles, in policy development and decision-making so that their perspective shapes decisions that affect their lives. Our actions for the next 3 years were primarily identified and prioritized based on feedback from on staff, Governors, and Advisors.

Furthermore, our approach to accessibility is informed by our values. We are committed to a positive, inclusive and proactive approach to addressing barriers to participation in the Foundation workplace and in our activities. In doing so, we also recognize:

- ▶ Transformative change requires courage, creativity, and self-reflection
- ▶ An individualized approach that privileges accommodation may be necessary for some impairments
- ▶ Not all impairments or barriers give rise to a legal duty to accommodate
- ▶ Even where there is no legal duty, if accessibility can be improved through reasonable accommodation and action, it should be considered and implemented where possible
- ▶ Sometimes there can be conflicting needs for accommodation; every reasonable effort should be made to assess and understand the circumstances to find a reasonable solution that supports equitable participation where possible
- ▶ Some barriers may not be resolvable (for example, due to factors outside our control); we will always consider the unique circumstances to see if there is a reasonable solution before we conclude there isn't.



Accessibility highlights/work to date

Although we are dedicated to the work that lies ahead, we celebrate the progress we have made. This section highlights our accessibility work to date.

Initiatives with an internal focus



Transitioned to a remote-first workplace

In response to staff feedback, we transitioned to a remote-first workplace. All staff have the flexibility to work from our Vancouver-based office or remotely. We offer flexible work arrangements and provide a home office expense benefit to cover some of the costs associated with remote work.



Virtual and in-person meeting accessibility

We continue to offer virtual attendance options for Governors and Advisors for Board and committee meetings. Through feedback gathered from Governors and Advisors, most meetings are held online by default. For in-person Board meetings, we provide free shuttle services to support travel between venues and have implemented an optional sticker system for name tags, allowing individuals to indicate their comfort level with physical contact.



Updated health and safety policies

We have refreshed and added new policies to our employee manual related to health and safety in the workplace. This includes the Respectful Workplace Policy and the Communicable Disease Prevention Policy. Additionally, we offer paid leaves that exceed the minimum requirements of BC's employment legislation, including vacation, holidays, care days, and birthing and parental leaves.



Expanded Care Days

The scope of Care Days (formerly known as Sick Days) has been expanded to support staff with caregiving responsibilities. These days can also be used for mental well-being needs, including mental health or wellness days, providing comprehensive support for our employees' overall health.



Enhanced health benefits

In response to findings from a previous staff survey, we have increased the claim amounts available under our extended health benefits plan for paramedical services. The list of mental health providers has also been broadened by our extended health benefits plan, which now includes a wide range of types of counsellors and psychotherapists. We have also added support for staff facing major health events.



Indigenous-specific supports

We provide additional paid time off for Indigenous staff to participate in ceremonial, cultural or spiritual events or practices. In forming the Foundation's Indigenous Advisory Circle, we have also committed to making funding available as needed for mental health and cultural wellness support for Advisors. This wellness support is separate from regular advisor compensation and acknowledges the mental, spiritual, and emotional costs associated with the group's work.



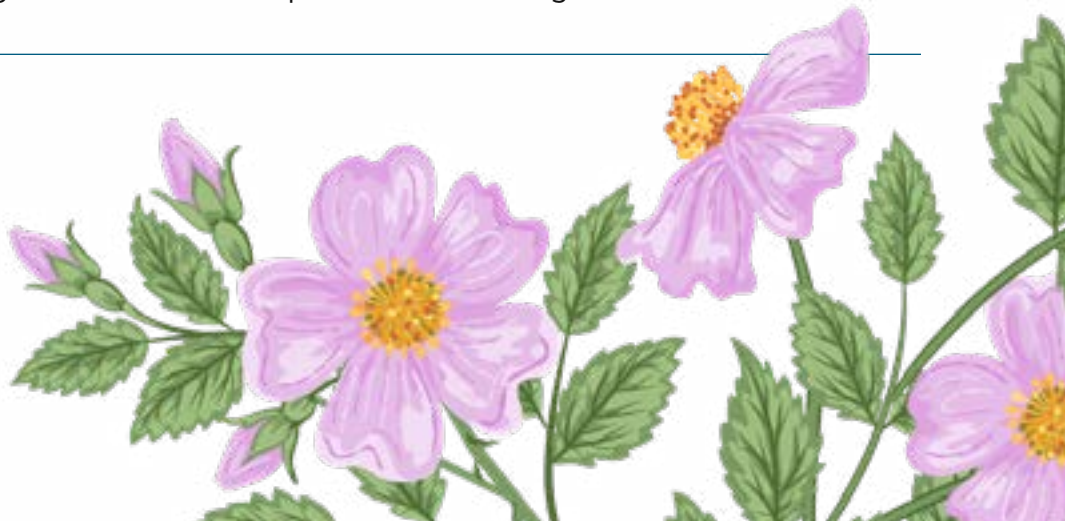
Improved support for caregivers

We have formalized support for staff with caregiving responsibilities by reimbursing dependent care expenses arising from attendance at in-person events and meetings.



Relaxed dress code

We have relaxed our dress code and empower staff to use their judgement in external settings. There is now effectively no dress code, and we encourage casual and comfortable dress for all staff. This change promotes a more welcoming and inclusive atmosphere within our organization.





Updated hiring processes

We have updated our hiring process to be more accessible. Changes include:

- ▶ Providing interview questions 48 hours in advance.
- ▶ Compensating candidates for preparation time and interview time.
- ▶ Opening hiring to candidates across BC for most roles.
- ▶ Encouraging applications from people with disabilities and other equity-denied communities.
- ▶ Offering and providing accommodations during interviews including expanding the length of time of the interview for candidates using assistive technologies.
- ▶ Valuing diverse lived experiences and removing strict requirements for precise combinations of skills and qualifications.
- ▶ Ensuring our job postings include information about the accessibility of our office.



Staff training

We have provided staff-wide training around justice, equity, and inclusion, with a particular emphasis on accessibility. These trainings better equip our team with the knowledge and tools necessary to foster an inclusive environment and deliver accessible services.

As members of the [Disability & Philanthropy Forum](#), staff are eligible to register for webinars and workshops offered by the Forum. Staff are supported in taking these opportunities to enhance their learning on topics about disability justice and the philanthropic sector.

We also support staff learning around trauma-informed practice and building trauma-informed teams. This learning enhances an intersectional lens when thinking about accessibility and barriers experienced by team members and grantees.



Initiatives with an external focus



Changes to grantmaking practices

We are actively exploring ways to create accessible and low-barrier options for grant-seekers and are committed to integrating innovative grantmaking practices that value Indigenous ways of knowing/being/communicating and promote trust-based granting relationships. We have started offering oral grant application options (with questions provided in advance) and alternative reporting methods for some funding streams. Additionally, we have piloted application assistance where grant-seekers can inquire about honoraria for time spent preparing applications, particularly for volunteer-run organizations or those facing capacity challenges.



Restructured counselling funding program

Based on grantee feedback, we have restructured a counselling funding program to reduce barriers, increase confidentiality, and expand access. Previously, this program was only available to Foundation-funded legal advocates under limited circumstances. Now it supports more frontline service-providers providing direct legal services at an increased funding amount. The program primarily helps eligible individuals access counselling and therapy through mental health professionals. We are considering further improvements based on a recent program evaluation to better support the mental health of people whose work at grantee organizations is funded through a Foundation grant.



Accessible event planning

When organizing in-person training and events for grantees and the community, we select venues, caterers, vendors, and consultants based on accessibility considerations. For example, our Racial Justice team has shortlisted illustrators and graphic designers and asked each company to share their approach to accessible design. Additionally, we offer reimbursement for dependent care expenses to funded staff at grantee organizations, ensuring these expenses are not a barrier to attending in-person Foundation events. We also offer ASL interpretation and autogenerated captions for some online grant information sessions.



Grantee support programs

As part of our portfolio of grantee supports, we offer programming and small discretionary funding streams to address needs that cannot be met through regular grant funding. These supports have at times addressed accessibility-related needs at grantee organizations. For example, they have funded needs around medical assessment documentation, paid leaves, equity and inclusion organizational development work, trauma and mental health-informed training, workplace accommodations, and stay-at-work/return-to-work plans.



Wellness grants for racial justice grantees

In response to feedback from our racial justice grantees, we are piloting different approaches to supporting the health and sustainability of racial justice organizations, including wellness grants. These grants can be used to support various wellness needs. For example, health and wellness benefits and additional paid time off, care days, and leaves for grantee staff.





Barrier identification

Barrier identification

We developed barrier identification surveys and sent them to Foundation staff, and Governors and Advisory Group members. The focus of these surveys was to create an anonymous space for folks to share their feedback on barriers experienced or witnessed at the Foundation. The information about respondents reported below applied at the time that the surveys were conducted.

Within the action plan, we have referred at times to examples of barriers from the feedback received in the surveys. These examples are not weighted either in terms of the number of respondents who identified a barrier or the degree of concern tied to the barrier. Additionally, some of the identified barriers are matters that have already been addressed, are in process, or that we have already attempted to address but have determined cannot be resolved at this time. As we take steps to explore the barriers that have been identified, we will give careful consideration to the context and potential impacts as we prioritize next steps.

Staff survey

About 90% of our staff completed the barrier identification survey. Of these respondents, more than half self-identified as experiencing one or more disabilities.

All barriers from the staff survey were analyzed and themed into five categories:

1. Inaccessible meetings
2. Inaccessibility at the office (built environment and technology/tools)
3. Inaccessible documents
4. Inaccessible policy and practice
5. Insufficient benefits



Governors and Advisory Group survey

Just under half (49%) of our Governors and Advisors – including members of the Foundation’s Indigenous Advisory Circle and Racial Justice Grants Advisory Committee – completed the barrier identification survey. Of these respondents, less than half self-identified as having a disability.

All barriers from the Governors and Advisory group survey were analyzed and themed into two categories:

1. Inaccessible meetings
2. Inaccessibility at the office (built environment and technology/tools)

The Foundation notes that the response rate among our Governors and Advisors was low, particularly when compared to our staff response rate, and the survey may not have been an effective form of outreach for this group. However, the survey was not the only way members of this group were engaged as part of the plan development process. The Indigenous Advisory Circle was also invited to attend an online meeting on the accessibility plan process and provided a copy of a draft version of the plan for review and comment.





Accessibility action plan

Accessibility action plan

Built environment

We wish to create a more inclusive and accessible office environment by identifying and addressing environmental barriers, improving transparency, and embedding accessibility principles in all future office-related changes.

Actions for the next 3 years

1. Conduct an accessibility audit of our office space

- ▶ Engage an external consultant with expertise in accessibility to evaluate the office space.
- ▶ Identify and document environmental barriers that may impede access for staff and visitors.

2. Develop and share accessibility information on our office space

- ▶ Create a comprehensive, shareable resource that highlights the accessibility features and limitations of the office.
- ▶ Make this resource available to staff, Governors, Advisors, grantees, and visitors to help them anticipate and plan for their needs.

3. Address identified barriers

- ▶ Prioritize and begin assessing barriers identified in the audit and other sources, such as staff feedback and emergency planning assessments.
- ▶ Develop reasonable accommodations to address identified barriers where possible and effective, with a view to promoting accessibility while also recognizing that there may be limits to available accommodations.
- ▶ Implement solutions that align with universal design principles wherever reasonable and possible.

4. Integrate accessibility into future office changes

- ▶ Embed accessibility principles into planning for any renovations, office moves, or significant changes to the office environment.
- ▶ Use findings from the audit to inform decision-making and support ongoing accessibility improvements.

Why is this important for us?

Responding to staff feedback

The staff survey identified barriers in the office as a key concern, making this work essential for improving the workplace experience. Barriers mentioned were ones that are experienced and potential. Accessibility for wheelchair users was identified. As an example, the back entrance to the building is inaccessible because it lacks a proper ramp, and the door's surface has a concrete lip. Staff also mentioned the weight of the doors and windows. They are too heavy to open comfortably and are not equipped with an automatic-open button.

Other built environment barriers described relate to lighting, temperature, and office furniture. Staff shared that the lighting cannot be controlled from the main office area. There are no dimming features or separate lighting for different areas of the main space. While the landlord agreed to install separate light controls for the offices and we also purchased moveable lamps in response to these concerns when we moved in, it remains challenging to manage lighting in certain areas of the main space without impacting the rest of the space. There is also a lack of temperature controls and depending on the time of year, some rooms can get very hot – and as mentioned, windows are difficult to open because they are heavy. Lack of ergonomic office furniture also impacts staff.

In the Governors and Advisors survey, one office barrier was identified in relation to the layout of the space. It was noted that wires and cords are sometimes placed in high traffic areas, posing a tripping hazard.

Proactive and transparent approach

Conducting an audit is a proactive step to identify additional barriers before they cause significant issues. Sharing findings through a resource promotes transparency and accountability, allowing people to understand and plan for potential barriers.

Alignment with standards and best practices

These actions support draft accessibility standards under the *Accessible BC Act* related to employment and service delivery. They also align with actions and best practices promoted by the Disability & Philanthropy Forum, particularly around conducting audits and promoting universal design.

Strengthens emergency preparedness

This approach also helps address gaps in emergency planning, ensuring safety measures are inclusive and accessible.

Supports broader organizational goals

An office audit also connects to our occupational health and safety efforts.

Technology

Our objective is to provide equitable access to digital systems and platforms by proactively identifying and addressing barriers, embedding accessibility into procurement practices, and aligning with accessibility standards and commitments.

Actions for the next 3 years

1. Conduct an accessibility audit on our technology

- ▶ Assess the accessibility of current digital systems and platforms.
- ▶ Identify and document barriers impacting both internal users (staff) and external users (grantees and other participants).

2. Address identified barriers

- ▶ Prioritize and begin assessing barriers identified in the audit, focusing on platforms critical to employment and service delivery.
- ▶ Develop reasonable accommodations to address identified barriers where possible and effective, with a view to promoting accessibility while also recognizing that there may be limits to available accommodations.
- ▶ Implement improvements in alignment with the latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) wherever reasonable and possible.

3. Develop an accessibility-focused procurement policy

- ▶ Create or update a policy that makes accessibility a key consideration when purchasing new digital systems, platforms, or working with vendors.
- ▶ Provide staff with tools and resources to integrate accessibility into procurement decisions.

Why is this important for us?

Responding to staff feedback

The staff survey also revealed barriers related to technology. For instance, the software used for sharing Board materials lacks accessibility features and there's a general lack of tools and resources available to support non-linear, multi-dimensional thinking.

Proactive planning

Conducting an audit of our digital tools will allow us to identify further barriers before they become significant issues. Proactive planning also better ensures equitable access to online services and digital tools for disabled users, fostering inclusivity.

Alignment with standards and best practices

These actions support draft accessibility standards related to employment and service delivery under the *Accessible BC Act*. They also align with actions and best practices promoted by the Disability & Philanthropy Forum, by supporting digital accessibility for websites, grant-making processes, and internal systems in compliance with WCAG.

Supports broader organizational goals

The actions also align with our other internal initiatives, such as a planned website redesign. They will also help us improve meeting accessibility and onboarding processes for staff.

Meetings and events

We will create more inclusive and accessible meeting and event experiences by reviewing current practices, providing staff training, and implementing new strategies that reduce barriers and improve participation for all participants.

Actions for the next 3 years

1. Review meeting practices and culture

- ▶ Assess internal meeting practices and culture through an accessibility lens.
- ▶ Audit a selection of meetings to identify barriers and opportunities for improvement.

2. Provide accessibility training

- ▶ Offer staff training on best practices for creating accessible meeting experiences, building on an initial session provided by Untapped.
- ▶ Include strategies for both internal meetings and external events with grantees and other participants.

3. Adopt new practices and create resources

- ▶ Pilot new approaches to meeting accessibility, such as meeting-free days, standardized agenda requirements, time limits, and scheduled breaks.
- ▶ Develop a comprehensive guide or resource outlining best practices for organizing accessible meetings and events.

Why is this important for us?

Responding to staff feedback

Meeting-related accessibility barriers were the most common theme in staff survey feedback. Most barriers related to the structure and expectations surrounding meetings – with the biggest identified challenge being length. Staff struggle with long meetings being scheduled back-to-back with no breaks.

Many staff also identified anxiety/stress-related barriers. For example, feeling that one has not had enough time to prepare, or feeling unsure when they are expected to contribute.

Other meetings barriers were more technical. For example, there are often audio issues for remote attendees. They cannot hear the contributions of their in-person colleagues.

Governors and Advisors also identified meeting barriers. Most related to the structure and expectations surrounding meetings. This included a lack of captions and breaks in long meetings. Additionally, challenges with travel to in-person meetings was reported.

Understanding these concerns and taking reasonable steps to address them where appropriate demonstrates that we value staff, Governor, and Advisor feedback and take their input seriously. Additionally, improving meeting accessibility can boost staff morale and productivity.

Broad organizational impact

Accessible meeting practices benefit both internal operations and external engagement, fostering more equitable participation across all areas of work.

Interviewing, onboarding, and retention

We wish to better ensure inclusive and supportive interviewing, onboarding, and retention practices by proactively addressing barriers, providing accessible resources, and fostering a culture of transparency and support for all staff, including those with disabilities.



Actions for the next 3 years

1. Develop an interview scorecard

- ▶ Create an interview scorecard to mitigate against the potential for bias in decision-making in screening and interviewing candidates.
- ▶ Provide training for all staff involved in hiring teams on surfacing biases, inclusive facilitation, and how to use the interview scorecards.

2. Standardize onboarding processes

- ▶ Develop an accessible onboarding toolkit that includes clear guidelines, resources, and accommodations to ensure new hires have a positive and inclusive experience.
- ▶ Incorporate accessibility considerations into all aspects of the onboarding journey.

3. Develop a communications strategy

- ▶ Create a system for regular reminders and updates about available health and wellness benefits, accommodations, and assistive technologies.
- ▶ Actively offer accommodations and support resources throughout the year to reduce the burden on staff to seek out information.

4. Review and improve leave-related policies

- ▶ Evaluate and revise policies and processes to address barriers related to increased workload after time away from work.
- ▶ Implement practices to better support staff taking time off without creating undue stress or barriers upon return.

Why is this important for us?

Responding to staff feedback

Feedback related to onboarding was another theme from the staff survey. For example, responses revealed how the lack of documentation and timely communication about accessibility can pose barriers when staff are onboarded. They must rely on whomever is training them, with existing staff having varying levels of recall when it comes to remembering and understanding policies and processes.

Proactive planning for accessibility

Creating an interview scorecard aligns with good practices in interviewing designed for greater equity and inclusion. Developing an onboarding toolkit better ensures potential barriers are anticipated and addressed in advance, rather than reacting to issues as they arise. Regular reminders and active offers of support demonstrate transparency and reduce the onus on staff to seek out critical information during challenging times.

Alignment with standards and best practices

These actions support draft accessibility standards under the *Accessible BC Act* related to employment, particularly in onboarding and retention practices. They also align with actions and best practices promoted by the Disability & Philanthropy Forum, by improving the accessibility and inclusivity of employment practices.

Strengthening staff support and retention

These actions provide critical resources to support staff with disabilities, helping retain talent and further fostering a culture of inclusivity. They build on existing efforts in the recruitment phase to ensure accommodations are offered throughout the employment journey.

Organizational learning

Our objective is to build and sustain accessibility capacity across the organization through regular, targeted training that equips staff, Governors, and Advisors with the skills and knowledge to proactively address accessibility and inclusion.

Actions for the next 3 years

1. Provide regular accessibility training

- ▶ Offer foundational training on accessibility principles, with tailored sessions for different roles, including managers and Governors/Advisors.
- ▶ Include specific training topics such as accessible procurement, meeting accessibility, plain language, and creating accessible documents.

2. Support manager-specific learning

- ▶ Deliver specialized training for managers focused on barrier identification, accommodations, and supporting staff with disabilities.

3. Respond to new accessibility developments

- ▶ Incorporate training on emerging accessibility standards, legislation, and best practices as they are developed or updated.

Why is this important for us?

Responding to feedback and recommendations

These actions address survey feedback that identified a need for greater awareness and skill-building around accessibility.

Building capacity for sustained change

Regular training also builds organizational capacity and ensures accessibility knowledge and skills are continuously developed and maintained over time. Proactive planning through education helps the organization anticipate barriers and address them effectively.

Alignment with accessibility standards and best practices

These actions strongly align with draft accessibility standards under the *Accessible BC Act* related to employment, emphasizing the importance of training for sustained progress. Additionally, they align with actions and best practices promoted by the Disability & Philanthropy Forum, including disability education in diversity, equity, and inclusion training.

Supporting organizational goals

The actions also enhance other accessibility commitments, including meeting accessibility and onboarding, by embedding a culture of learning and continuous improvement. They will better equip our organization to respond to accessibility developments, such as new legislation and standards, in a timely and effective manner.





The next
iteration of our
action plan

The next iteration of our action plan

This action plan is focused on building a strong foundation and understanding about accessibility within the Foundation. As we move forward, we will look outwards and consult with our grantees and community in the next iteration of this plan.

The initial aspects of our plans related to grantmaking and grantee supports have started to form and include important actions in the next 3 years so that we can develop a more detailed plan, that is also informed by stakeholders, in the spirit of “Nothing about us without us.”

Grantmaking

We wish to enhance the accessibility and inclusiveness of grantmaking processes, creating more opportunities for people with disabilities to participate as grant-seekers, grantees, and as decision-makers.

Actions for the next 3 years

1. Consultation and strategy development

- ▶ Engage grantees and the disability community to gather feedback on existing grantmaking practices.
- ▶ Develop a strategy to better address barriers and support grantmaking that is accessible and aligned with the interests of grant-seekers with disabilities and grants that service disabled people.

2. Increase disability representation

- ▶ Actively recruit people with disabilities to participate in funding decisions, including board and advisory groups.
- ▶ Implement targeted outreach and inclusive recruitment practices when spots become available.

Why is this important for us?

Accountability and barrier removal

Consulting with the disability community better ensures that grantmaking practices reflect the lived experiences of people facing barriers. It allows for the identification and removal of systemic barriers in grantmaking processes, fostering more equitable access to funding.

Alignment with grantmaking best practices

This work is aligned with actions and best practices promoted by the Disability & Philanthropy Forum, a network that mobilizes the philanthropic sector to dismantle ableism. This work is also related to sector-wide findings that indicate that disability is a significantly underfunded area in philanthropy; by taking intentional action in support of disability grantmaking, the Foundation can be better aligned with broader equity goals.

Strategic plan alignment

These actions complement our strategic initiative to prioritize equity-denied perspectives in funding decisions.

Grantee supports

Our objective is to empower grantees to advance accessibility and equity within their organizations by providing targeted funding and support.

Actions for the next 3 years

1. Launch grantee supports program

- ▶ Develop and implement a program that offers funding to grantees for initiatives aimed at improving accessibility and advancing equity within their organizations.

Why is this important for us?

Advancing accessibility across the sphere of influence

By supporting grantees, this program will amplify the Foundation's impact on accessibility and equity beyond its direct initiatives. It will enable grantees to address barriers within their own organizations, fostering widespread improvement across the sector.

Actions also reinforce the Foundation's commitment to enabling other organizations to deliver accessible services. This promotes a ripple effect of accessibility improvements throughout the Foundation's portfolio of grantees.

Alignment with strategic plan

These actions support the strategic initiative to build grantees' capacity, reduce power imbalances, and enhance access and equity in services. They encourage grantees to prioritize accessibility as a core component of their organizational development.

Monitoring and evaluation

To better ensure the effectiveness and continuous improvement of this Accessibility Plan, the Foundation will closely monitor and evaluate progress.

Over the next three years, the Accessibility Committee will meet quarterly to review barriers received through community engagement or via the feedback mechanism, analyze progress, and address any emerging opportunities.

We will report on our progress each year through regular implementation updates.

Our feedback mechanism

You can view our feedback mechanism or submit a report of an accessibility barrier on our website at www.lawfoundationbc.org/about-us/accessibility.





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The Law Foundation of BC is headquartered on the traditional, unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) & səlił wətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples.

The work supported by the Foundation takes place on the unceded and treaty lands of First Nations across what is now known as British Columbia, Canada.