

Disability Statement

Disability inclusion benefits everyone. When Canadians with disabilities have equal opportunities to contribute to their communities, to have the same quality of service from their government, to work, and to enjoy the same quality of life and choices as everyone else, we build a stronger economy—and a stronger country.

Over the past six years, we've made accessibility and disability inclusion a priority. We have moved to a human rights-based approach to disability inclusion and are moving away from the medical and charity models, to a social model of disability and a focus on poverty reduction. We have focused on removing barriers and addressing disability discrimination and exclusion in our systems and processes. And, in the spirit of "Nothing Without Us," we have a plan to move forward with historic investments and actions that will improve the social and economic inclusion of millions of Canadians.

In 2015, we appointed Canada's first ever Minister responsible for Canadians with Disabilities/Accessibility (now Disability Inclusion). In 2016, we increased access to alternate format material, including the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty. From 2016 to 2019, we held landmark consultations and passed the *Accessible Canada Act*. In 2019 we, established Accessible Standards Canada.

We made investments in successive economic statements and budgets, in disability-specific programs, including the Opportunities Fund, the Enabling Accessibility Fund, Canada Student Loans and Canada Student Grants, and the expansion of the Disability Tax Credit. We applied a disability lens to our flagship policies and programs, such as the historic investment in inclusive and accessible \$10 a day child care. We addressed the financial security of Canadians with disabilities through important changes to the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP). We adhered to our international human rights obligations: we signed the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) and appointed the Canadian Human Rights Commission to monitor the UNCPRD. We announced a Canadian candidate for the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2022 election.

Last fall, we committed to the creation of the Disability Inclusion Plan, to include a new Canada Disability Benefit modelled after the Guaranteed Income Supplement, improved processes for eligibility for federal disability programs and benefits, and a robust employment strategy for Canadians with disabilities. In June 2021, we tabled Bill C-35, setting out the framework for the creation of the Canada Disability Benefit, a direct monthly

payment to low-income Canadians with disabilities ages 18-64.

In recognition of the fact that Canadians with disabilities were disproportionately affected by the health, social, and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we took a disability-inclusive approach in our pandemic response. We appointed the COVID-19 Disability Advisory Group, provided targeted funding for seniors and students with disabilities, and issued a one-time payment to persons with disabilities to help mitigate the economic shock of the pandemic.

Moving forward, there is much more work to be done. A re-elected Liberal government will build on our previous investments through the implementation of the first-ever Disability Inclusion Action Plan, in consultation with the disability community.

The objectives of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan are to:

- Improve the social and economic inclusion of Canadians with disabilities.
- Reduce poverty among Canadians with disabilities.
- Contribute to the realization of a barrier-free Canada.
- Improve access to federal programs and services for persons with disabilities and ensure that disability inclusion is considered in all government programs, policies, and services.
- Foster a culture of inclusion and a shift away from attitudes of disablism and discrimination.

As part of our Disability Inclusion Action Plan, a re-elected Liberal government will re-introduce and implement the *Canada Disability Benefit Act*, which will create a direct monthly payment for low-income Canadians with disabilities ages 18-64. This will reduce poverty amongst persons with disabilities in the same way the Guaranteed Income Supplement and the Canada Child Benefit have reduced poverty among seniors and families with children.

A Liberal Government will also develop and implement an employment strategy focused on supports for workers and employers, creating inclusive and welcoming workplaces, and building business disability confidence.

This strategy will include an investment in the Opportunities Fund and the Ready, Willing & Able inclusive hiring program to support employment for persons with disabilities.

We will also commit to making permanent funding to support services that ensure equitable access to reading and other published works for Canadians with print disabilities so that more Canadians are able to fully participate in these activities.

We will proceed with the timely and ambitious implementation of the *Accessible Canada Act* and the harmonization of accessibility standards across Canada. We will work across federal departments and agencies to

uniformly adopt the definition of “disability” in the *Accessible Canada Act*. We will adopt a consistent approach to disability inclusion across the federal government. We will put a disability lens on decision-making. This will specifically include our child care and infrastructure commitments. We will assume a more prominent role within the international disability inclusion community.

Only a re-elected Liberal government will build on the foundational work to date to support persons with disabilities in the post-pandemic recovery, by continuing to build a better Canada, for everyone.