

Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion

# **Accessibility Survey Report**

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# BACI Accessibility Report

## Introduction

### Purpose

Completing an accessibility survey and plan is a requirement of CARF that helps BACI maintain its commitments to creating and advancing accessibility through every area of the organization.

The results of the survey will capture the current accessibility status and identify the barriers to be removed. The results of the survey will assist BACI to develop a plan that prioritizes the work around removing barriers and enhances commitments to accessibility throughout the organization.

### Survey Process

- Creation of Access Committee
- Development of a set of Surveys
- Completion of Surveys
- Submission of completed surveys
- Analysis of the findings/completion of the Survey report

### Survey Format

The set of surveys, to be completed by BACI staff were designed to capture information on accessibility from the following asset areas at BACI.

- Governance
- Leadership
- Technology
- Communication and Marketing
- Finances
- Human Resources
- Service Delivery
- Homes (Group Homes and Life Sharing Homes)
- Environment
- Architecture

Lists of indicators of accessibility were developed for each asset area. The lists were developed through compiling standards from various assessment tools already in existence. Space was provided within each Asset Area for assessors to suggest additional indicators of accessibility.

The surveys considered accessibility across the asset areas mentioned above, as it related to the following target groups:

- Persons Served
- Personnel
- Other stakeholders (particularly families, friends and funders)

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## Accessibility Rating System

The surveys used a simple AB (123) rating system. Each 'indicator of accessibility' was assessed as follows:

- A: Accessible
- B: Barrier
- 123: (priority level)
  - ✓ Each 'B' rating required a comment to fully describe the barrier and to indicate whether the removal of the barrier was a high priority (to be done within the next three months:1), medium priority (to be done in the next 6 month to one year:2), or low priority (to be reconsidered during the next annual review:3)
  - ✓ Each A rating could include a comment in the form of a 'success story' that describes how the accessibility of the criteria led to more inclusive participation for a person served, personnel, or stakeholder.

## **Findings**

### Overview

The results of the surveys are offered here in the following ways:

1. All surveys completed for each location/Asset Area by delegated BACI staff. **Appendix 1.**
2. All ratings and Comments by Asset Area. **Appendix 2**  
This section provides a snap shot overview of the accessibility of each Asset Area – and the comments associated with each – by location.
3. Accessibility Ratings Asset Area and location. **Appendix 3**  
This section captures only those indicators in each of the Asset Areas that were rated as 'Accessible' and provides BACI with a quick look at their successes!
4. Barrier Ratings by Asset Area and Location. **Appendix 4**  
This section captures all the Barriers across each Asset Area and location that needs to be removed. This section provides the basis for the 'Action Plan'.
5. N/A ratings by Asset Area and Location. **Appendix 5**  
There were a number of 'Non Applicable Ratings' given by assessors during the review. It may be instructive for BACI to consider these ratings and a recommendation addressing this is contained later in the document.

## Recommendations

- **The Composition of the Accessibility Committee**

The first step in the Survey Process was the development of an Accessibility Committee. This committee was intended to ensure a level of responsibility and accountability for accessibility at BACI and be the liaison between BACI and the Contractor retained to complete the Accessibility Survey and Report. The Committee was to provide feedback to the contractor on the development of the assessment process and tools, ensure the implementation and completion of the surveys, and provide assistance to staff as needed. For the most part, the committee functioned well. The following recommendations will enhance the effectiveness of the committee going forward:

- 1. Identify a fixed point of responsibility for accessibility at BACI within the Leadership Team. This leader should chair the committee.**
- 2. Ensure the leader/committee chair, has the delegated authority and responsibility to influence and be held accountable for accessibility in each of the Asset Areas within BACI.**
- 3. Ensure that each of the stakeholder groups (people receiving service, families/friends and BACI staff) are represented on the committee.**
- 4. Ensure that committee members are supported to become 'accessibility experts'; well versed in the use the survey tools, and able to support others to use the tools effectively.**

- **The Process and Format of the Survey**

The decision to proceed with the Accessibility Survey as a self assessment was made for two reasons; first to engage the staff in the process, and secondly to complete the survey within tight time frames. The results of the self ass process and format will be enhanced if the following recommendations are considered:

- 1. Staff would benefit from learning opportunities on accessibility generally, and specifically around how accessibility relates to the three stakeholder groups; persons served, families/friends and staff.**
- 2. Instructions on how to use the tools are communicated clearly and consistently to staff.**

- **About the Accessibility Ratings**

The indicators rated as Accessible, with few exceptions did not have 'success stories' to accompany them. Gathering 'evidence' to support some of the Accessible ratings will not only support the ratings, but will also provide a way for BACI to applaud their work on accessibility.

- 1. Accessibility Committee to gather success stories as evidence of the accessibility ratings.**

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Within the Asset Area – Homes – Life Sharing Homes, with the exception of one or two of 78 homes, all indicators were either rated as Accessible, or Non-Applicable. The comments revealed that the homes were assessed primarily from the perspective of the current needs of the person served and in some cases their friends and families. It would appear that if the person served did not ‘require’ an accessibility element at this time, the indicator was rated as N/A. It is not clear whether the indicators of accessibility within each home were actually considered – if they were not immediately relevant to the persons living there. It would be instructive for the Accessibility Committee/leadership group to understand the accessibility status of all the Life Sharing Homes in order to effectively plan for people as they age and their needs change.

***2. As part of the next Accessibility Review, in order to ensure the accuracy of the survey results the committee may want to consider distributing the surveys to the people who are life sharing within the homes for completion.***

Comparing/considering the connections and contradictions between the accessibility ratings of various Asset Areas might be instructive for the Committee/Leadership Group. For example within the Human Resource Asset Area a definite commitment is revealed to recruit, hire, and accommodate employees with disabilities, and yet in the Architecture, Environmental, and Group Home Areas many indicators that would ensure an accessible work space are considered to be ‘non-applicable’.

***3. Accessibility Committee/Leadership Group may find it helpful to review each of the Asset Area accessibility ratings to look for common themes and contradictions as this will help ensure that the organization develops an holistic Action Plan and not a disconnected and potentially contradictory plan across Asset Areas, and even locations.***

- **About the Barrier Ratings**

The idea, within the Survey was to have the assessors determine the priority level of the Barrier removal; either 1, 2 or 3. While some of the Barriers were rated with a priority of 1, 2 or 3, many were not. In order to capture the relevant information all non- prioritized Barrier ratings were considered to be B2.

As the Barrier priority ratings may not reflect the actual priority of the barrier removal it may be helpful for the Access Committee/leadership Group to consider the Barriers and re-prioritize them, if necessary. This will help ensure a coordinated approach to common Barrier removal across multiple locations. For example – signage is a common Barrier across many locations - and many locations have rated the barrier removal at a different priority level. If the Accessibility Committee considered all signage barrier removal – for example as a B2 - it may make removal a more coordinated process.

***1. Accessibility Committee to prioritize the removal of each of the barriers.***

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- **About the Non-Applicable Ratings**

Perhaps the most unanticipated valuable learnings to emerge from the Survey may come from the consideration of the 'Non-Applicable Ratings'. Some of the indicators are clearly not applicable to some of the locations, for example the 'Ramp' section of the Architecture Asset Area is only applicable to locations that need/have ramps. If no ramps are required (single level or elevators exist) then the indicator "The slopes of ramps are no greater than 1:12" would be rated N/A. However, as in the case with Fairhaven, N/A ratings were given for all indicators related to parking and drop off. Perhaps no parking lot or drop off area exists at Fairhaven, but parents pick up and drop off children at the centre everyday – which implies a requirement for accessibility.

- 1. Accessibility Committee reviews all the N/A ratings for accuracy.***
- 2. Accessibility Committee reviews all the N/A ratings to ensure accuracy across all stakeholder groups.***
- 3. Accessibility Committee coordinates the development of a staff learning sessions of accessibility.***

- **About the Stakeholder Groups**

It is difficult to know if the assessors considered all stakeholder groups equally when rating the accessibility of each indicator.

- 1. Accessibility Committee in the future is comprised of a representative from each stakeholder group.***
- 2. Accessibility Committee ensures that assessments are completed or feedback on accessibility is gathered annually, directly from all stakeholder groups.***

- **About adding Indicators that were missed**

Assessors were asked, and space was provided on the Survey to list indicators of accessibility that are important in the Asset Area, but not included in the Survey. There were two reasons to include this section in the survey; the first was to engage staff and the second was to build a comprehensive and relevant list of indicators so as to strengthen the next round of Surveys. For the most part, few assessors completed this section, even those that rated most indicators as N/A – mostly seen in the Asset Area Homes. Perhaps the VISIBLE Homes Guidelines used as indicators were not applicable to many, but it seems reasonable to think that accessibility considerations, of some sort would exist for the people who live, work and visit the homes.

- 1. Accessibility Committee to review the Asset Area Homes assessment before next year to ensure more meaningful and relevant indicators are included. This review may include seeking advanced feedback from stakeholders on indicators of accessibility to include in the survey.***

### **Conclusion**

The results of the Accessibility Survey will provide an important starting point for the development of BACI's Accessibility plan. The structure of the Access Committee along with the recommendations designed to strengthen its effectiveness and accountability will help maintain BACI's commitments to accessibility into the future.