

FROM VISION TO ACTION: PLAIN LANGUAGE VERSION

Background

Many Canadians with disabilities are poor, excluded and alone.

- They may not have the supports they need to go to school, work, live in an accessible home, and participate in their community
- They may live in institutions instead of with friends and family in the community
- They often do not have enough money
- Children with disabilities may not get the help they need to succeed at school
- People with disabilities, especially women, are at very high risk of being abused and many are abused
- Life is even harder for Aboriginal people with disabilities

Life is better for Canadians with disabilities than it was 25 years ago. But there are still many barriers to full and equal participation in society. We must do more to help end poverty and make the communities more accessible for everyone.

We Need Action

We need to have a plan for Canada. We know that new kinds of programs are starting to happen. But we need to make them happen in Canada now. The government has made some promises and the government must keep those promises.

Countries around the world are starting to see that people with disabilities have rights and these rights must turn into action. Canada can lead the way.

On November 2, 2006, 300 Canadians with disabilities, their families and their friends went to Ottawa to celebrate. They celebrated 25 years of making the lives of people with disabilities better. But we're not finished yet.

On November 22, 2007, at End Exclusion 2007, more than 300 people are going to get together to talk about making an inclusive and accessible Canada real. Canadians with disabilities and their families have made a plan to help the government take action.

A Shared Vision

Canadians, governments, people with disabilities and experts all have a shared vision about what an inclusive and accessible Canada looks like. All Canadians with disabilities will:

- Have the supports they need to fully participate in Canadian society
- Make choices and have control in their lives
- Have safe and accessible housing and live in the community, not in institutions
- Have the money, support, medicine and access that all other Canadians have

When we say **all** Canadians with disabilities we are including:

- Women with disabilities
- Aboriginal People with disabilities
- People with disabilities from minority groups
- People with disabilities that are invisible
- People with chronic illnesses
- People with episodic disabilities
- People with environmental sensitivities

An Outline for Action

We need the help of the Canadian government to make our plan a reality. They can make a national plan. Some parts of the plan can begin sooner. Other parts may take more time.

The government can:

- Help people with disabilities have better supports
- End poverty for people with disabilities and their families
- Help people with disabilities find work
- Encourage all Canadians to work for accessibility and inclusion
- Work with provincial and territorial governments and First Nations to help people with disabilities

A Plan for National Action

1. Put money into community disability-related supports

- Work with provinces and territories to make more disability supports available
- Work with provinces and territories to build housing that is affordable and accessible
- Admit that institutions for people with disabilities have no place in Canada and help provinces and territories to close them
- Work with Band Councils to make sure First nations people with disabilities living on reserves have enough supports

2. Help put an end to poverty

First Steps:

- Changes to tax system to help people with disabilities
- Increasing Employment Insurance sick benefits

Future Steps:

- Expanding the Canadian government's role in providing income support for people with disabilities

3. Help more people with disabilities to get jobs

- The Canadian government has already agreed to make sure people with disabilities have better access to training, education, and accommodation at work. This can be helped by making sure the provinces are meeting targets for the employment of people with disabilities.

4. Support more accessibility, inclusion and full citizenship

The Canadian Government should look at changes in the following areas:

- **Transportation** – all transportation that is controlled by the Canadian government should have accessibility rules
- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities** – work with provinces, territories and the disability community to sign this agreement
- **Accessible Technology** – make sure the government buys accessible technology so that people with disabilities are able to work for the government
- **Support the Disability Community** – make sure the voices of people with disabilities and their families are heard in all debates about policies for people with disabilities
- **Accessibility Design Centre** – create a centre responsible for ensuring barrier removal
- **Access Principle** – Update the National Building Code to make sure building have Universal Design for maximum accessibility

A Long-Term Plan

This plan could be the foundation for future planning by the Canadian government. Now is the best time to address today's disability issues and move toward a more accessible and inclusive future for all Canadians.