

VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Accessibility Plan

2026-2029

vcc.ca

DRAFT CONTENT August 2026

Questions or feedback?

Please email accessibility@vcc.ca by September 4, 2026.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE Accessibility Plan	0
Introduction	1
Land Acknowledgement	1
Message from VCC President	2
Message from Accessibility Committee	3
About the Organization	5
Our Accessibility Story	6
Acknowledgement of Key Contributors	6
Definitions	7
Framework Guiding Our Work	8
Accessible BC Act – Principles	8
Related Legislation	8
Existing Policies	9
Our Approach	9
About Our Accessibility Committee	9
Committee Members and Background	11
Consultation Conducted	11
Consultations to Date	11
Key Discussion Themes	12
Reporting on Plan Progress	13
Action Plan	14
Attitudinal Barriers	14
Information and Communication Barriers	15

Policy and Practice Barrier	15
Environmental Barriers	15
Technological Barriers	16
Educational Barriers	16
Contact Us	16

INTRODUCTION

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge that Vancouver Community College is located on the traditional and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MESSAGE FROM VCC PRESIDENT

Dear VCC community,

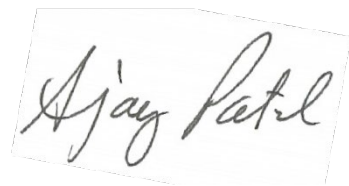
For more than 50 years, VCC has been proud to provide innovative post-secondary education in British Columbia while creating opportunities for students, employees, and community members of all abilities. Accessibility has always been an important part of who we are, and we remain committed to building a community where everyone can learn, work, and thrive.

As the needs of our students and communities continue to evolve, so do we. Our Strategic Innovation Plan reflects our commitment to creating an inclusive, accessible learning environment that will serve current and future generations. Together, we are strengthening accessible practices, removing barriers, and fostering a culture where everyone feels respected and supported.

We believe that meaningful progress is rooted in equity, accessibility, and reconciliation. These values guide the decisions we make today and will continue to shape the future of VCC.

I would like to sincerely thank the members of the Accessibility Committee for their dedication, expertise, and collaboration in developing this accessibility plan. Your commitment has helped create a stronger foundation for positive change across our institution.

Together, we can continue building a more accessible and inclusive VCC - one where everyone has the opportunity to succeed and where our collective efforts make a lasting difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ajay Patel", is displayed on a white rectangular background with a slightly distressed or torn edge effect.

Sincerely,

Ajay Patel
President and CEO
Vancouver Community College

MESSAGE FROM ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

Dear VCC community,

Three years ago, the establishment of VCC's Accessibility Committee and the release of our first Accessibility Plan marked an important step in strengthening our commitment to creating a more accessible and inclusive college. Since then, the committee has continued to meet regularly, bringing together faculty, staff, administrators, and students to share perspectives, identify barriers, and help guide accessibility efforts across the institution.

Over the past three years, accessibility has gained momentum at VCC. What has long been a shared value across the college is becoming more coordinated, intentional, and embedded in the way we design our spaces, services, policies, communications, and teaching and learning environments. Accessibility is increasingly being considered from the outset, alongside our broader commitments to Indigenization, equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

This progress has taken place during a period of significant change for both VCC and the post-secondary sector. We recognize the dedication of employees across the college who have continued to champion accessibility while adapting to changing priorities and resources. Their work demonstrates that accessibility is not the responsibility of one department, it is a shared commitment across our learning community.

Over the life of the plan, we have seen meaningful progress in many areas, including improvements to our physical and digital environments, more accessible policies and practices, enhanced teaching and learning supports, and stronger collaboration across departments. The Accessibility Committee has provided a consistent forum for listening to community feedback, identifying barriers, and helping shape continuous improvement.

While we are proud of the progress made, we know our work is far from complete. Building a culture of accessibility by design will continue to require deep listening, learning, collaboration, accountability, and a shared commitment to change. Creating an accessible college depends not on a handful of change-makers, but on accessibility being embedded in the decisions, practices, and experiences that shape our entire learning community.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed their time, expertise, lived experience, and commitment over the past three years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dina Figg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "F".

PAGE 4

Sincerely,

Brianna Higgins
Disability Services
Accessibility Committee member
Vancouver Community College

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

VCC – the first choice for innovative, experiential learning for life.

Located in the heart of the city, Vancouver Community College (VCC) offers academic, cultural, and social environments that inspire relevant real-world training. With over 13,000 students, including a growing number of Aboriginal learners, 1,400 employees, VCC is a key player in the post-secondary landscape in B.C.

VCC is committed to educational quality, student support, and college operations that are responsive, innovative, and relevant.

One of the college's core values is to create an accessible environment where students build the skills, develop the attributes, and gain the experience in the classroom, industry, and community needed for success now and in the future.

VCC is proud to inspire a new generation of students to discover their passions, gain essential skills, and learn what it takes to succeed in a competitive workforce.

OUR ACCESSIBILITY STORY

Accessibility has long been part of Vancouver Community College's commitment to student success. For nearly 60 years, VCC has worked to create learning environments where students with disabilities can access education, develop their skills, and achieve their goals. This commitment is reflected in specialized programs that have supported generations of learners, including the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Program, the Visually Impaired Program, and the Employment Access and Skills Development Program. Together, these programs provide educational upgrading, employment preparation, communication training, and skill development opportunities that respond to the diverse needs of the communities VCC serves.

Beyond these specialized programs, VCC strives to ensure that students with disabilities can participate fully in every aspect of college life. Through Disability Services, students receive accommodations and supports that promote equitable access to learning, campus services, and co-curricular activities. VCC's Interpreting Services department continues to be a unique and valued resource, providing professional sign language interpretation through a team of full-time Registered Sign Language Interpreters who support both students and employees.

In recent years, accessibility has become an increasingly integrated part of how VCC plans, delivers, and evaluates its services. Following the introduction of the Accessible British Columbia Act, VCC established an Accessibility Committee made up of students, employees, and community members with diverse perspectives and lived experiences of disability. Over the past three years, the committee has guided the development and implementation of VCC's accessibility plans, helping the college identify barriers, prioritize actions, and advance accessibility across all areas of the institution.

This work has strengthened awareness and accountability across the college and has encouraged accessibility to become a shared responsibility. Through ongoing consultation, feedback, and collaboration, VCC continues to improve the accessibility of its physical spaces, digital environments, communications, programs, services, and employment practices.

While much has been accomplished, VCC recognizes that accessibility is an ongoing journey of learning, improvement, and partnership. The college remains committed to working alongside students, employees, and community members to identify, remove, and prevent barriers and to build a more accessible, inclusive, and welcoming VCC for everyone.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF KEY CONTRIBUTORS

The College would like to acknowledge the indispensable contributors that have made the development of this plan possible. We would like to thank VCC Senior Team members Kate Dickerson and Clayton Munro, who have sponsored this work and have guided its development. Student and Enrollment Services representative Nigel Scott and People Services representatives Vion Rizzardo and Raksha Topiwala who have taken on the work of facilitating the Accessibility Committee, as well as being key developers of this document and accessibility plan. Lastly, the college would like to recognize the Accessibility Committee's members for their valuable insights and advice.

DEFINITIONS

Barrier

Essentially, anything that stops those with disabilities from being included. Specifically, anything that hinders the full and equal participation of a person with an impairment.

Disability

An inability to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier.

Impairment

A physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, or cognitive impairment which is permanent, temporary, or episodic.

FRAMEWORK GUIDING OUR WORK

ACCESSIBLE BC ACT – PRINCIPLES

The legislation requires adherence to the following principles when developing or updating this accessibility plan:

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

RELATED LEGISLATION

In the development of this plan VCC has been mindful of ensuring that we are adhering to the following legislation:

- Accessible BC Act
- Accessible Canada Act
- BC Human Rights Code
- Canadian Charter of Rights
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

EXISTING POLICIES

VCC has an Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Policy (2024) which states as its purpose: Vancouver Community College (VCC; the College) is committed to fostering a community that supports full participation of students to engage in all aspects of the learning environment.

OUR APPROACH

In developing the accessibility action plan, the college leveraged our existing strengths and the good work already done to remove barriers.

Our approach was also informed by conversations with the VCC Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) co-chairs to ensure that EDI principles were central to our work.

This 2026-2029 plan is built upon our previous plan and incorporates the ideas and feedback provided by a diverse group of employees and students.

ABOUT OUR ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

The Accessibility Committee was established through a collaborative recruitment process involving Senior Team sponsors, Student and Enrollment Services, People Services, and the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) co-chairs. A self-selection model was intentionally chosen to encourage broad participation and ensure members brought diverse experiences, perspectives, and areas of expertise.

A call for members invited interested individuals to attend introductory sessions outlining the committee's purpose, scope, and expectations. This open and transparent approach supported prospective members in determining their fit and contributed to a well-rounded, representative committee.

Over the past three years, the Accessibility Committee has grown into a stable and engaged advisory body. The Committee met regularly to provide guidance to the College, review progress, and support the implementation of the 2023–2026 Accessibility Plan. Through this work, the Committee helped strengthen awareness, accountability, and accessibility practices across the institution.

As the College enters its second three-year Accessibility Plan, the Committee continues to play a critical role in advancing this work. Building on the foundation established during the first

planning cycle, the Committee will maintain its regular meeting schedule while placing increased emphasis on monitoring outcomes, addressing emerging barriers, and supporting continuous improvement. The Committee remains committed to fostering an inclusive, barrier-free environment through ongoing collaboration, informed advice, and sustained engagement.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND BACKGROUND

The Accessibility Committee consists of 14 members and two facilitators. These members each come to the committee from different departments and services areas including the student union. The committee also meets the composition requirements of the Accessible BC Act, which are:

- At least half of the members are (i) persons with disabilities, or (ii) individuals who support, or are from organizations that support, persons with disabilities, and these members reflect the diversity of persons with disabilities in British Columbia;
- At least one of the Committee members is an Indigenous person; and
- The Committee reflects the diversity of persons in British Columbia.

CONSULTATION CONDUCTED

CONSULTATIONS TO DATE

In developing the action plan, below, a number of consultations were conducted with internal partners. Areas consulted included:

- Employment Access and Skills Development
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing department
- Visually Impaired Program
- Disability Services
- Counselling Services
- Interpreting Services
- People Services
- Student Conduct and Judicial Affairs
- Indigenous Education and Community Engagement
- Education Council
- Curriculum Committee
- Centre for Teaching, Learning and Research
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
- Students' Union of VCC
- Accessibility Committee representing 14 additional VCC departments
- VCC leadership

The Accessibility Committee co-facilitators met with leaders from each area to discuss accessibility-related opportunities and barriers, review progress on the previous Accessibility Action Plan, and gather recommendations to inform the development of the 2026-2029 action plan. These conversations provided an opportunity to reflect on what has been effective in supporting students and employees with disabilities, as well as to identify ongoing challenges and areas for improvement.

Through these discussions, leaders shared insights on barriers experienced within their areas and highlighted priorities for advancing accessibility across the College. Detailed notes were taken during each consultation and later consolidated to identify common themes and shared priorities.

These themes directly informed the development of the actions outlined in this Accessibility Plan, ensuring it builds on the progress of the previous cycle while responding to current needs and opportunities for improvement.

KEY DISCUSSION THEMES

The themes that emerged from the original consultations were then grouped into five categories. Consultations for the 2026-2029 plan identified a 6th category:

- Attitudinal Barriers
- Information and Communication Barriers
- Policy and Practice Barriers
- Environmental Barriers
- Technological Barriers
- Educational Barriers

A key theme that emerged from consultations was that accessibility at the College is improving, particularly in relation to attitudinal barriers. Participants noted a growing awareness, openness, and commitment to inclusive practices across the institution, while also recognizing that continued effort is required to address remaining gaps.

Many partners highlighted that the College is actively advancing a range of initiatives and processes aimed at improving accessibility and reducing barriers. Partner areas took pride in the work already underway and shared examples of their efforts to support students and employees with disabilities.

At the same time, a consistent gap was identified in how information about these initiatives is communicated and shared across the College. Improving the visibility and coordination of accessibility efforts was seen as an important opportunity for further progress.

Additional themes identified through the consultations are reflected in the action items outlined in this Accessibility Plan.

REPORTING ON PLAN PROGRESS

Progress made on the actions identified in this plan will be reported annually. Reports will be reviewed by the Accessibility Committee each year. Any proposed changes to the action plan will be made in consultation with the identified Senior Team sponsor, the Accessibility Committee and approved by the Accessibility Committee sponsors.

ACTION PLAN

Building on the progress achieved through VCC's first Accessibility Plan, this second plan continues to organize its actions across key barrier areas, with the addition of a sixth category: educational barriers.

The inclusion of educational barriers reflects an increased understanding of the learning environment and its impact on accessibility, expanding the College's approach to more fully address the experiences of students and employees.

These categories represent the primary types of barriers experienced across the College and provide a structured framework for advancing accessibility. Within each functional area, goals and actions have been identified to address both ongoing and emerging priorities.

Responsibility for implementing this plan is shared across departments and functional areas, reflecting a more integrated and distributed approach to accessibility. This shift supports collective ownership, encourages collaboration, and embeds accessibility more consistently into everyday practices.

Recognizing the complexity and evolving nature of accessibility work, the actions within this plan are intentionally designed to be adaptable. This allows departments and subject-matter experts to apply their expertise, respond to changing needs, and build on existing initiatives while working toward shared outcomes.

ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS

Goal

To see VCC employees further develop their perspective on disability and recognize and value it as a natural and valuable aspect of a diverse work and learning environment. This will enable staff to appreciate the unique contributions that individuals with disabilities can bring, adding richness to the overall environment.

Actions

- Develop and offer employee learning opportunities focused on practical ways to increase accessibility.
- Increase the visibility of people with disabilities throughout the college.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Goal

VCC will strive to ensure communication and information is clear and accessible.

Actions

- Support the use of plain language institutionally by providing training and resources to employees.
- Provide awareness and further learning opportunities related to Duty to Accommodate and Duty to Inquire.
- Audit and ensure forms for employees are available in accessible formats.

POLICY AND PRACTICE BARRIER

Goal

VCC policies and practices are regularly evaluated to identify and remove barriers to accessibility.

Actions

- Develop a Student Support and Wellbeing policy.
- Explore the need for an Accessible Learning policy.
- Develop a toolkit for accessible events.

ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIERS

Goal

VCC will strive to ensure that its campuses are as accessible as possible for individuals with disabilities.

Actions

- Increase the number of accessible classrooms by installing automatic door openers on more classrooms throughout the college.
- Increase the number of sensory friendly environments throughout the college.

TECHNOLOGICAL BARRIERS

Goal

VCC will consider the impact on individuals with disabilities, and overall accessibility requirements, in identifying and implementing technological resources and infrastructure.

Actions

- Further improve Moodle accessibility for Blind and Visually Impaired students and employees.
- Regularly review VCC website for accessibility.

EDUCATIONAL BARRIERS

Goal

VCC will work to continually improve the educational experience of students with disabilities.

Actions

- Research and implement ways to imbed accessibility into curriculum design and development.
- Further support orientation and transitions for neurodivergent students.

CONTACT US

To contact VCC regarding this plan or accessibility, please email accessibility@vcc.ca