

BC Budget 2019 Consultation Brief | September 2018

Written Submission to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

From:

Inclusion BC

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About Us: [Inclusion BC](http://www.inclusionbc.org) is a provincial federation whose members include people with intellectual disabilities, families and 60 community agencies that deliver child, family and adult services around the province. Our work includes advocacy, education, training and support, with a focus on partnerships and collaboration to advance systems change and public awareness.

EDUCATION

Recommendation #1-A: \$500,000 in targeted funding for a professional development day to equip teachers with tools for safe, inclusive learning. This could include Positive Behaviour Support, which is the standard for supporting individuals and promoting safe, inclusive school-wide culture.

Recommendation #1-B: Adequate, stable and predictable funding for K-12 so that our public schools can meet their obligations to ensure full access to inclusive, quality education for all students.

- Despite challenges, our schools want to honour BC's unfulfilled commitment to inclusive education.
- When we fail to provide the necessary leadership and resources to help schools and districts remove barriers and support diverse learners, students are denied equitable access to learning and a safe school environment.
- For students with special needs, these failures have been disproportionate, discriminatory and inconsistent with British Columbia's commitments to human rights and equal opportunity.
- Over many years, our advocacy has highlighted inadequate resources as a key barrier to ensuring full access and implementation of inclusive education.
- Our work this past year has highlighted opportunities to address some of the most acute challenges facing educators and students with special needs. (1) Professional Development and (2) Positive Behaviour Support training.

Professional Development – positive behaviour support training

Our May 2018 report, [Stop Hurting Kids II](#) documented persistent and shocking examples of abusive practices to manage student behaviour in BC schools. We called for provincial action, including stronger prohibitions, more transparency and training in violence-free methods to support student behaviour. The Hon. Rob Fleming, Minister of Education, promised to act quickly to ensure all school districts had policies and guidelines addressing restraint and seclusion. The proposed investment in training is essential to successful implementation of such new policies and guidelines.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

Recommendation #3: A \$43 million increase to Community Living BC's annual budget to support adult services. Roughly 600 youth are transitioning into adult services annually, and another 400 aging adults live in unstable arrangements that depend on elderly parents.

Community Living BC's caseload increases by approximately 6% every year. Provincial budgets have failed to keep pace with this increase, with standard measures of inflation and with the growing costs of supporting an aging population.

We are deeply concerned by CLBC's financial incapacity to meet the growing needs BC's diverse population.

- An estimated 70% of adults with intellectual disabilities still live with their parents. ([CLBC](#)).
- 82% of those parents are over age 65.
- This population of aging parents has grown by over 20% in the last four years.
- From 2008 to 2016, CLBC experienced a 161% increase in requests for supported independent living, a trend that is expected to continue.

Inclusion BC receives ongoing complaints from families across the province that CLBC has denied their support requests for dependent adult children, citing insufficient budgets to fund the supports they need. As aging parents try to find alternative residential supports, they are told that new CLBC funding is only available for "health and safety" risks. Many families are thus thrown into crisis when the family fragments or a parent dies, leaving a vulnerable adult facing an emergency need for a new supported housing solution. Proactive early supports are more effective and fiscally responsible than funding such crisis solutions.

Younger families entering into CLBC's mandate are also being told there is no funding to support them in this year's budget.

MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS & HOUSING

Recommendation #3: \$3.4 million in new annualized funding for an additional 400 portable rental housing supplements to ensure that people with intellectual disabilities who rely on PWD benefits can access safe, accessible and inclusive market housing anywhere in the province.

Like other vulnerable populations, people with intellectual disabilities have been hit especially hard by BC's affordable housing crisis. Many are on waitlists for social housing and independent living supports, forced to live in unsafe and unhealthy living environments and unable to access independent living supports until they are in crisis.

Inclusion BC is leveraging our community living experience and relationships as a key partner in the Inclusive Housing Task Force working to advance long-term solutions to the limited supply of inclusive housing in British Columbia. But additional targeted funding is needed to provide immediate relief and help British Columbians living on PWD benefits to access inclusive, affordable housing in their communities.

Portable rental supplements would address the significant gaps between the shelter portion of PWD benefits and current market rents for BC communities, allowing British Columbians with intellectual disabilities to access safe, inclusive housing in the community of their choice.