

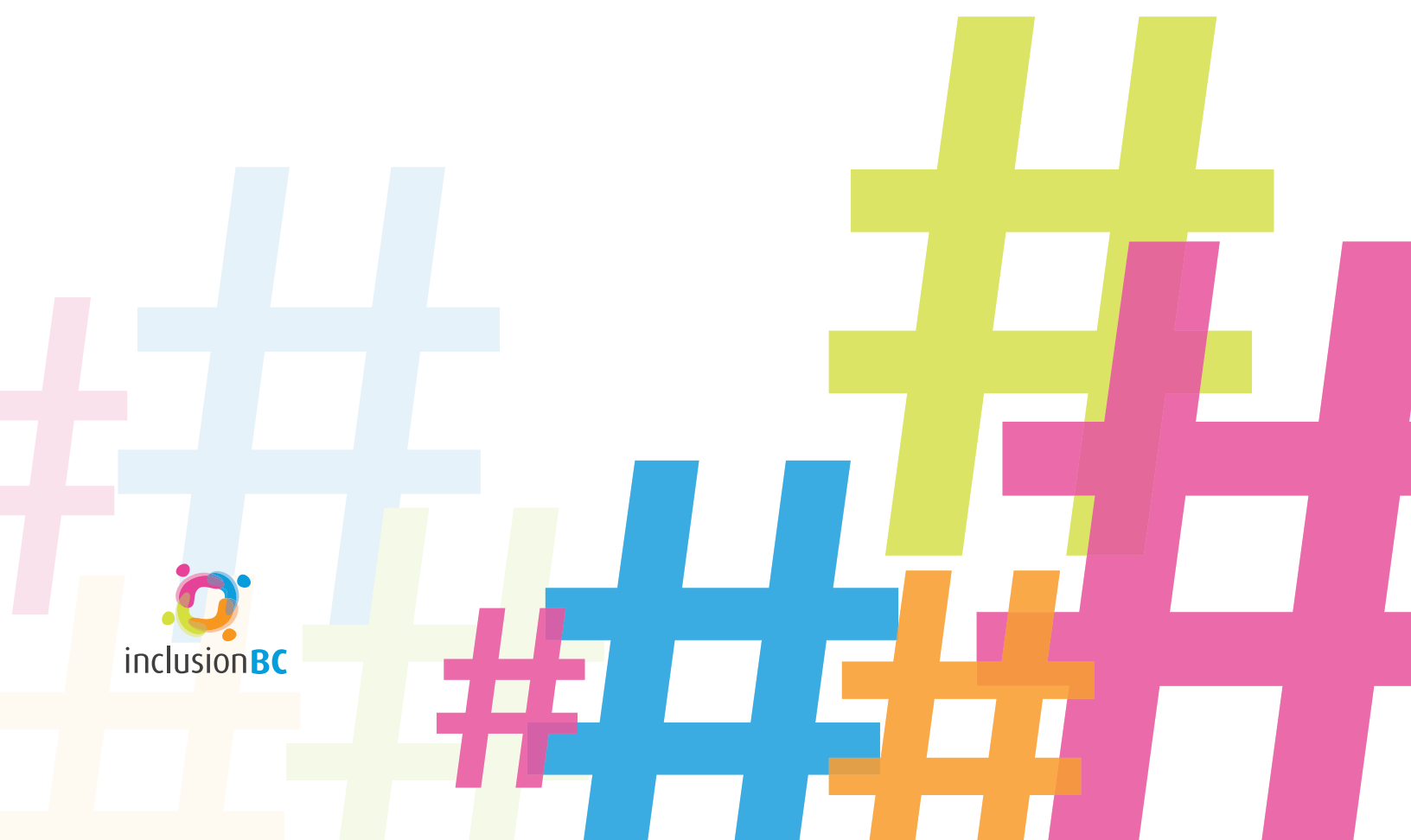
#BCweALLbelong

BC Election 2017

Join, Share, Discuss & Vote

Information Toolkit for groups and organizations

Putting people with developmental disabilities on the election agenda.



BC Election 2017

Join, Share, Discuss & Vote

Inclusion BC invites you to join our vision of a province where we all belong.

- Where each child has the love and support they need to succeed.
- Where families and communities are empowered, providing a welcoming and supportive place for all.
- Where the barriers to inclusion and full citizenship are broken down.
- Where everyone has the right to live a full life and to know that they truly belong.

Priority issues

We can all raise awareness and support action on four important issues to make BC a province where we all belong:

1. [Supports to Children & Families](#)
2. [Inclusive Education](#)
3. [Disability Supports](#)
4. [Income Security](#)



Take action

- **Join:** Follow Inclusion BC on the [Web](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and add your voice.
- **Connect:** Share our message with others as we grow our movement to build a BC where we all belong.
- **Discuss:** Talk about our vision for inclusion, explain the issues at all-candidates meetings or meet with candidates and encourage them to commit to solutions.
- **Vote:** Exercise your right to vote and share the [You Can Vote](#) guide to empower British Columbians with disabilities to vote.

BC election 2017 hashtags

Join us in using these hashtags on Facebook & Twitter to connect with others, strengthen our collective voice and spread the word:

#BCelection2017

#YouCanVote

#BCweALLbelong

#raisetherates

#kidscantwait

Resources

Visit our [BC Election 2017](#) Web page for more resources, election activities and updates.

Support to children and families

Our vision

Supporting children and families is an important part of our community culture. Supports are:

- well-funded
- provided when & where people need them
- personalized
- family-driven
- follow good policy and practice.

Why it's important

When we strengthen and empower families with the child and family-centred supports they need, the whole community benefits. Supportive, welcoming places help children and youth with special needs to grow, participate and belong. But in BC, *an estimated 5,000 preschoolers with special needs* are on waitlists for urgently-needed therapies and support services. As community agencies struggle to serve more children with more needs, services are delayed or reduced and in some cases not available in time.

Questions to candidates

Questions to ask candidates

If elected, will you support an immediate provincial investment to end waitlists for early intervention therapies and supports for children and youth with special needs and their families?

If elected, will you support a provincial commitment to strengthen early childhood intervention by working with families and service providers to solve the problems identified by Inclusion BC and its partners?



#kids cant wait

What we need

IMMEDIATE FINANCIAL INVESTMENT

BC needs to end waitlists and rationing by investing \$15 million right now, with more increases over the next two years. This will allow children to succeed, avoiding a lifetime of unnecessary hardship and avoiding long-term costs to society.

COMMITMENT TO RESOLVE SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES

Inclusion BC has worked with families, community agencies and provincial partners to identify *problems and solutions* to improve early childhood intervention services. We need the BC government to work with families and service providers on solutions that allow families and communities to support all children and youth to achieve their potential.

Inclusive Education

Our vision

An inclusive, publicly funded education system that celebrates and embraces diversity, has the right supports and resources, and provides fair access to lifelong learning.

Why it's important

Research demonstrates that all students benefit from inclusive education. But more students with special needs are not having their needs met in BC's public schools. Too many are no longer welcome at their local schools, excluded from regular classes, subjected to restraints or seclusion, or sent home due to a lack of supports. Too many families are forced to pay privately for their own education, which is often poorly-supervised and segregated.

Independent school enrollment for students with special needs has tripled since 2010.

Questions to candidates

If elected, will you support sufficient investment to fully cover costs of the 2016 Supreme Court decision?

If elected, will you support a new process where all parties work together to help rebuild inclusion in strong public schools?

If elected, will you say "no" to segregated special education schools and instead rebuild expertise in public schools so they can successfully include all students?



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What we need

INVESTMENT IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

The 2016 Supreme Court decision requires sufficient provincial investment to fully cover the costs of hiring special education teachers and to restore other resources lost since 2002.

PROVINCIAL LEADERSHIP & COLLABORATION

The Education Ministry should engage all education partners to guide the work of rebuilding strong, inclusive public schools. This includes promoting:

- A culture of inclusion
- Professional capacity
- Leadership
- Accountability

REVERSE SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOL POLICY

Stop approving new special education schools and spend public dollars instead on rebuilding expertise in inclusive public schools so they can support all students.

Disability Supports

Our vision

Every British Columbian has the supports needed to live full and meaningful lives, so that we all truly belong in inclusive and accessible communities.

Why it's important

Every person in our province is important, is valued, and has the right to be fully included in our communities. Many adults with developmental disabilities need supports to live at home, develop life skills and find employment so they can live safe, healthy lives. But too many British Columbians still do not have these supports. Many young people fall into a "black hole" after they leave school because provincial funding for Community Living BC (CLBC) has fallen behind the need for adult supports. Most adults with developmental disabilities in BC still live with and are primarily supported by their families, who face a lifelong struggle because CLBC programs *are under-funded*.

Questions to candidates

If elected, will you support a one-time investment to end CLBC's service backlog, plus future funding that matches changes in the number of eligible adults and the cost of living?

If elected, will you require CLBC to track and publicly report on the number of eligible adults not getting all the supports they need?

If elected, will you support an independent, collaborative and transparent review of CLBC's governance, resources and capacity to meet opportunities and challenges?



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What we need

INVESTMENT IN COMMUNITY LIVING BC

Closing the gap in supports to adults with developmental disabilities and the families who support them requires a major one-time provincial investment.

Future CLBC budgets must be linked to the number of adults qualified for supports and rising costs, as support needs change through the lifespan.

IMPROVED REPORTING

Community Living BC should report on where they are unable to respond to needs, including waitlists, wait times and service reduction.

EXTERNAL REVIEW

An independent, collaborative and transparent review of CLBC to ensure it is able to respond to opportunities and challenges.

Income Security

Our vision

No British Columbian with a developmental disability lives in poverty.

Why it's important

Some 107,000 British Columbians are struggling to live on Persons with Disabilities (PWD) benefits, which increased by \$50 to *\$1,033/month effective April 2017*. Most people with developmental disabilities who rely on PWD benefits are unable to find enough work, in part due to employment barriers, and are forced to live in lifelong poverty. *A new report* shows that PWD rates only cover about 60% of the cost of living in most of BC. The \$375 maximum allowance for housing is far below actual costs of rent in much of BC.

This is cruel, unnecessary and unfair. Poverty increases health and social issues, including:

- Poor nutrition
- Inadequate housing
- Lack of healthcare access
- Stress
- Loneliness

These preventable effects cost society more than funding income and employment supports that empower British Columbians with developmental disabilities to live with dignity and share the benefits of truly belonging in our province.

Questions to candidates

If elected, will you support an increase in PWD monthly rates to \$1,200/month in 2017, with yearly cost of living increases and portable housing subsidies?

If elected, will you support increased investment in employment programs for people with disabilities, in consultation with community partners?



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#raisetherates

What we need

INCREASE THE PWD BENEFIT IMMEDIATELY TO \$1,200 PER MONTH

This will help benefit rates catch up after a long period of no real increases. Benefit rates that are closer to the cost of living would allow people who can't work because of their disability to still live in dignity as valued citizens.

INDEX PWD RATES

Yearly PWD increases to match the cost living will help keep future generations out of poverty.

PORTABLE HOUSING SUBSIDY

To ensure people can afford quality accessible housing anywhere in BC.

IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Greater provincial investment in programs that empower job seekers with disabilities to improve skills and to find and keep employment. This will allow more people with developmental disabilities who want to work to enjoy the fulfilment and independence of employment, and reduce the need for PWD benefits.

[Back to BC Election 2017](#)