

BCANDS wishes to respectfully acknowledge that our work is done on the traditional territory of the Esquimalt Nation, where our office is located on.

BCANDS is pleased to be a part of the VisitAble Housing Canada, VisitAbility Project. Working in collaboration with two Vancouver Island First Nations Communities, our task force consists of members from the Esquimalt Nation and the Beecher Bay (Sc'ianew) First Nation.

The VisitAbility Project is a three-year national initiative that takes place from April 2013 to March 2016. This project was funded by the Government of Canada's Social Development Partnerships Program — Disability Component.

Our task force is committed to bringing awareness of VisitAble Housing to First Nations communities across British Columbia by highlighting lived experiences and reviewing current policies and practices, impacts, barriers, and best practices.



Esquimalt Nation



Beecher Bay (Sc'ianew)
First Nation



British Columbia Aboriginal Network
on Disability Society (BCANDS)

VisitAble Housing and First Nations Communities



What is VisitAble Housing?

“VisitAble Housing” or “VisitAbility” is the concept of designing and building homes with basic accessibility. VisitAble homes provide easy access on the main level for everyone.

VisitAble housing offers a convenient home for residents and a welcoming environment for visitors of all ages and mobility.

VisitAble Houses have three basic accessibility features

- No step entrance (at the front, back or side of the house)
- Wider doorways and clear passage on main floor
- A main floor bathroom (or powder room) that can be accessed by people who use mobility aids

Advantages of VisitAble Homes

- Easy access to the house and convenience in the house
- Ability to “age in place”, people can remain in their home as they grow old
- Reduced risk of falls or injury in the home
- Convenience for everyone: people with mobility issues, those with young children in strollers, those carrying large or heavy items, furniture, or equipment
- Reduced costs for home renovations at a time of mobility changes

Related Facts

- Most houses in Canada are built with environmental barriers which cause inconvenience or limit accessibility for homeowners and visitors.
- In Canada, older adults aged 65 or older could account for more than one-fifth of the population as soon as 2026 and could exceed one-quarter of the population by 2056.
- Over 50% of falls that older adults suffer occur in their own home.
- The vast majority of adults aged 55 or older (89%) want to age in their own home.
- Seniors are less likely to move to an institution or care home when their homes are equipped with some accessibility features.
- Stairs are the leading cause of serious falls among community-living elderly, accounting for about one-third of all fatal falls.

Costs

- When VisitAbility features are planned at the outset, additional costs are minimal.
- Additional costs for VisitAbility features vary from negligible amounts to several thousand dollars.

Why VisitAble Housing in First Nations Communities?

- Disability rates of Aboriginal People in Canada are twice the national average with 32% of Aboriginal People living with a disability. Disability rates increase with age and nearly half of Aboriginal people over 60 years old live with disability, most commonly arthritis and rheumatism which impacts mobility
- First Nations communities often have multiple generations of family living in a home, from the very young to the elderly. VisitAble home features support all stages of people’s lives
- Often, when homes become inaccessible, people are forced to leave their community. VisitAble housing features in First Nations communities will allow more members to remain in their homes and their communities, maintaining connection to their family and culture

Want more information?

Contact BCANDS Accessibility Coordinator at accessibility@bcands.bc.ca

or

Visit the VisitAble Housing Canada website at <http://visitablehousingcanada.com/>