

DISABILITY PRIORITIES

FOR THE 2025 FEDERAL ELECTION

NATIONAL DISABILITY NETWORK

Key Messages –

Income Security

1. Canada Disability Benefit

- We commend all federal political parties for their unanimous support of the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB). With regulations now finalized, we welcome its launch in July 2025.
- However, the CDB in its current form is insufficient to eliminate disability poverty in Canada.
- The next federal government must increase CDB funding to ensure people with disabilities are lifted above the poverty line, factoring in the additional costs of living with a disability.
- Eligibility must be expanded to include all 1.6 million people with disabilities living in poverty. Barriers to access must be removed, and the CDB's status as a tax-exempt benefit must be legislated.
- Federal government must act to ensure provinces and territories do not claw back the CDB like AB has decided to do.
- Key message: "No person with a disability in Canada should live in poverty. Raise the CDB to an amount that eliminates disability poverty."

2. The Disability Tax Credit

- The Disability Tax Credit (DTC) is a critical gateway to the CDB and RDSP. Yet, only 40% of eligible people hold a DTC certificate, revealing systemic access barriers.
- The next federal government must remove these barriers by:
 - Expanding automatic approvals to more permanent disabilities and conditions, similar to the existing process for diabetes and blindness.
 - Eliminating unnecessary re-assessments for individuals with lifelong disabilities.
 - Implementing a reimbursement system for professional fees related to DTC certification.

- Ensuring automatic DTC eligibility for recipients of federal, provincial, and territorial disability income supports

3. Automatic Tax Filing

- We support efforts to implement automatic tax filing for individuals with simple tax situations, particularly those receiving disability income supports.
- Automatic tax filing is essential to improving benefit take-up rates and ensuring people with disabilities receive the financial support they are entitled to.
- The next federal government must commit to fully implementing automatic tax filing by the 2026 tax year for those with simple tax situations

Accessible Canada Act

- Accessibility standards form the backbone of an inclusive, barrier-free society. Without standards in place – and enforced – people with disabilities do not have equitable access to Canada's built environment, services, economic, social, and political life.
- Standards must be developed and implemented more quickly to ensure equitable access for people with disabilities and certainty for the federal government and federally-regulated industries in an evolving economy.
- This is especially important in the housing sector. People with disabilities across Canada need housing that works for them, backed by built environment standards and a national building code that are enforced.

CRPD Compliance & Disability Justice

- The federal government must repeal Track 2 provisions of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) legislation, ending discriminatory practices for people with disabilities not at end-of-life, and currently permitted solely on the basis of having a disability.
- The federal government must work to ensure full compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and entrench the CRPD into Canadian law.
- In addition to a full repeal of problematic Track 2 MAiD provisions, we call on all federal political parties to enhance community-based services, commit to an employment first model, withdraw Canada's reservation limiting the right to decide, show leadership in ending segregated education for a quality inclusive education system, and implement stronger safeguards against systemic ableism particularly as experienced by women, girls, 2SLGBTQ+ persons, and Indigenous persons with disabilities.

Accessible/Affordable Housing

- Safe, accessible, and affordable housing is a basic right for people with disabilities.

- The federal government must increase investment in accessible housing and mandate accessibility standards in all federally funded housing initiatives.
- Due to the lack of affordable, accessible housing in Canada, many people with disabilities are unable to access housing that meets their needs and enable them to remain independent in their own homes and communities.
- The new National Housing Design Catalogue has accessibility as a core principle. This is a positive step forward. But current building codes don't properly address address accessibility for existing buildings and facilities.
- The federal government must prioritize development, implementation, and enforcement of the ASC standards, and parallel harmonization of the NBC across the country, to improve accessibility and adaptability of new and existing housing based on universal design principles.

Employment & Tariff Response

Tariff Response

- A 25 percent tariff on Canada's imports from the United States, combined with retaliatory Canadian tariffs, will drive up the cost of living, leading to inflation, job losses, and financial strain for many Canadians. People with disabilities are disproportionately impacted during economic downturns. The Government of Canada must ensure that its response to economic uncertainty includes meaningful support for people with disabilities.
- As Canada faces growing economic uncertainty, economists warn that rising tariffs will have widespread effects. People with disabilities are already twice as likely to live in poverty and face additional expenses related to accessibility, healthcare, and assistive technology.
- Economic downturns expose and deepen existing inequalities. Those on low or fixed incomes are often the first to experience job losses, reduced work hours, and limited access to essential services and supports.
- People with disabilities, particularly those living on low or fixed incomes, will be among the hardest hit by inflation and rising costs. The Government of Canada must prioritize their inclusion in all economic response strategies to ensure fair and equitable support for all Canadians.
- Recommendation: emergency economic response plans must be inclusive of people with disabilities.

Employment

- People with disabilities continue to be underrepresented in the workforce and faces persistent barriers to meaningful employment.
- While the full impact on Canada's job market remains uncertain, one thing is clear: people with disabilities want to work and contribute to the economy.

- With equitable access to training, adaptive tools, and inclusive hiring practices, people with disabilities can build meaningful careers and strengthen Canada's workforce.
- As Canada prepares for shifts in employment and implements economic relief measures, it is critical to ensure that income supports, financial aid programs, and job retention strategies are accessible and inclusive.
- Recommendation: The Government of Canada prioritize labour market opportunities for people with disabilities

Indigenous Disability

Funding for disability programs/support for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples is being reduced.

We call for:

- Full reinstatement and sustained funding for Jordan's Principle and the Inuit Child First Initiative to ensure the health and welfare of First Nation and Inuit children
- Full reinstatement and ongoing funding of the Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) Assisted Living Program, to ensure programs and supports are maintained for First Nations individuals and families with disabilities.

National Disability Network

admin@nationaldisabilitynetwork.com

Signed/Signée, National Disability Network (Réseau national pour les personnes ayant un handicap)

