

One of the founding objectives of Citizens for Accessible Neighbourhoods (C.A.N.) was to increase access to information, as such, our first act upon incorporation was to create a website that has become known as a go-to hub for people with disabilities (and those within their support systems). Over the past thirteen years, CAN has seen the positive effects of providing people with information, resources, tools, and contacts.

C.A.N. is excited to announce the launching of our latest initiative, the **Board Diversity Project**, a continuation of our initial commitment to access to information.

The Board Diversity Project is a multi-year strategy to assist boards in finding, retaining, and utilizing board members that truly represent our province's diverse population, as well as to supply those interested in joining boards, or new to boards, with reliable, accessible information and resources.

The long-term goal of the Board Diversity Project is to have a website that both acts as a hub of information for boards and board members (current and future) and offers boards a database of diverse board candidates to search when positions become available.

Our informational focus is twofold: 1) to support boards in creating welcoming and inclusive environments that ensure meaningful and active participation, and 2) to supply information to those new to or considering boards, including what boards are, individual responsibilities, how a board member can contribute, available training, and how one can get involved.

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In 2019, as C.A.N. works to build the website, we will spend the year having dialogues across sectors, experience levels, backgrounds, and geographical locations to gather a broad range of experiences to find out what capacity Citizens for Accessible Neighbourhoods can support, build or tie into to ensure available and reliable resources in supporting boards as they welcome people from underrepresented populations into their boardrooms.

We want to hear from as many people as possible, current, past, and future board members. We will utilize these discussions to find ways to better support all parties in attaining and retaining meaningful and active participation.

As we move forward, we hope those who participate in this year's dialogue feel like active participants in this project. While C.A.N. has spearheaded the project, this is a community project and we want the conversations to be the beginning of collaborative relationships.

CAN plans on launching a newsletter in the spring to update participants about the conversations, topics being discussed, resources being found, and progress being made.

The next page outlines ways you can assist the Board Diversity Project. Please share this information with your network.

Citizens for Accessible Neighbourhoods is seeking:

- Individuals and boards interested in participating in conversations about what works for board diversity and inclusion, what can be improved upon, ideas for the future, as well as the challenges, rewards, and responsibilities of board participation. We are looking for a broad range of voices, backgrounds, experience levels (lived experience, board experience, academia, work, etc.), geographical locations, ages, etc.
- People who don't see themselves on boards or who have only just begun looking into board participation, we want to know what precludes participation, what support is needed, and what would assist them in joining a board.
- Resources for the website, including individuals, organizations or businesses that assist boards, diversity, inclusion, equity, and/or decolonization, as well as articles, research, and websites with information about supporting increased diversity.
- Researchers interested in gathering resources for the website and looking into best practices for inclusion, equity, and diversity.
- Funding opportunities; C.A.N. is covering the start-up costs as we actively seek funding.
- Individuals interested in adding a profile to our database of diversity, which boards will access for board position candidates.
- We are considering the creation of a mentoring program for future and/or new board members. Please contact us if you are interested in being a mentor, mentee, or supporting the program organizationally.

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We at C.A.N. are excited to begin work on creating a website that will be a hub of information for boards and current and future board members, as well as for consultants, facilitators, and educators who support boards in creating welcoming and inclusive environments that lead to meaningful and active participation and boards who are truly representative of British Columbia's diverse population.

Contact information:

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To learn more about Citizens for Accessible Neighbourhoods:

Website: <http://www.canbc.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CANBC2005/>

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