



CAIP Innovative Attitude Change Project Proposal - Advancing Access and Inclusion

Project Title: Mobilizing the Leaders of Tomorrow...Today
Submitted by: Robert Shaw
Sector Targeted for Attitude Change: <input type="checkbox"/> Employers, <input type="checkbox"/> Youth (preschool – Grade 12), <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community (geographic community or community of interest)
Specific Audience To Be Reached: Canadian organizations, community members,
Specific Attitude To Be Established: That youth and young adults with disabilities are capable, creative, and hardworking individuals who have the ability to create serious change in Canada.
Geographic Reach: nation wide
Project Description Summary: This year over 150 Canadian youth with disabilities were selected to attend the National Youth Forum of Accessible Canada. The event was held to provide a platform for youth and young adults with varying disabilities to discuss what an accessible Canada should be. This consultation process was part of the Government of Canada’s initiative to shape the country’s accessibility legislation. From this meeting, a group of young activists formed an online group called “Accessible Canada Young Leaders”. This online group is comprised of 182 members that span across all of the provinces and at least two of the territories. This online group was established in order to continue the discussion around accessibility and to share new initiatives and opportunities to help create a more inclusive and accessible Canada. Initiatives started by some of the group members include the creation of a webinar series to educate people about disabilities and the development of an app that allows users to find accessible businesses near them. Several members sit on accessibility committees and volunteer as accessibility advocates. This community has the numbers, education, experience, and passion to enact change in this country and are already doing so as single entities that belong to an unfunded, unorganized group. This proposal would ask that this group be officially recognized as an organization and be funded through the federal government. The organization would act to facilitate communication among youth and members of the community and would also facilitate the harmonization of different groups/organizations to work together to advance access and inclusion. Funding this group would result in specific mandates being created, an official charter to be developed, and would allow for a more organized, directed, and formal process for the members to continue doing the work they are doing. Creating initiatives and programs that aim to change attitudes has already been established as a major priority of this group. Harnessing the power of over 180 youth leaders stationed across Canada should be considered by the federal government especially given that these young leaders will be the leaders of the future. Furthermore, by establishing this group as a funded organization, current and future young activists and advocates would have an obvious and well established “home” to join thus creating a larger and stronger community of young leaders. This group has the ability to not only help make Canada more accessible and inclusive, but with the right exposure has the ability to break down negative attitudes that many individuals have regarding the capabilities and value of youth and young adults in this country. This group would be able to play a pivotal role advising government on issues critical to youth and access/inclusion and would be able to provide a breadth of information given the geographic spread of its members. The federal government has at their disposal over 180 young activists who are willing, able, determined, and committed to acting as advisors to better this nation, all that is missing is the funding, recognition, and support.
Project Outcomes: People living in Canada experience a shift in their attitudes towards youth and young adults with disabilities by witnessing the value that they have through the work they do. This positive exposure could lead to employers actively pursuing the employment of young adults with disabilities and could position them as potential community leaders.
Project Lead and Partners: Robert Shaw, CAIP,