

## ACCELERATING ACCESSIBILITY COALITION

# Insights and Impact

ACCELERATING  
ACCESSIBILITY  
COALITION



**July 2026**

### **Welcome to the third edition of our quarterly newsletter!**

This spring has been an exciting period of growth, collaboration, and momentum for the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition (AAC). From bringing together members and industry partners at our inaugural Project Spotlight and Speed Networking Session to contributing to national and provincial conversations on accessible housing and inclusive design, the Coalition continues to advance accessibility through partnership, knowledge sharing, and personal stories.

In this issue, we recap our recent networking event, highlight National AccessAbility Week activities, and celebrate AAC Co-Chair Nevin Dunn's participation in a national housing conference focused on designing more inclusive rental communities. We also share updates on the Coalition's contributions to federal housing discussions, funding opportunities for accessibility training in Ontario, and ongoing efforts to address the shortage of accessible housing across Canada.

Thank you for your continued engagement and commitment to creating more accessible and inclusive communities.

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## AAC Members Recognized on Forbes Accessibility 200 List

Congratulations to AAC members **Accessible Standards Canada (ASC)**, **AccessNow**, and **UHN KITE** for their inclusion in the second annual [Forbes Accessibility 200](#) list. This global recognition highlights organizations, companies, and individuals driving innovation and advancing accessibility through products, services, technology, and inclusive solutions that help create more equitable experiences for people with disabilities. We are proud to see AAC members recognized among this year's accessibility leaders and changemakers.



## Funding Available for RHFAC Accessibility Training in Ontario

**The Rick Hansen Foundation**, with support from Ontario's Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security, is offering **tuition grants for eligible learners in Ontario** to participate in **Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) training programs**.

Two training streams are available:

- [RHFAC Fundamentals Training](#) – An introductory course designed to build foundational knowledge of accessibility in the built environment and provide practical tools for applying an accessibility lens to projects, processes, and decision-making.
- [RHFAC Professional Training](#) – An advanced program for professionals involved in planning, design, and construction who are interested in applying the RHFAC methodology and pursuing the RHFAC Professional designation.

These training opportunities help build the knowledge and confidence needed to create more accessible and inclusive spaces while supporting accessibility leadership across Ontario's housing and development sectors.

Only available until spots are full! We encourage AAC members to explore this opportunity and share it with their networks.



## Collecdev Markee Project Spotlight & Speed Networking Session Recap

On May 20, AAC members and industry partners gathered at Diamond Schmitt for the Coalition's first **Project Spotlight & Speed Networking Session**, featuring **Collecdev Markee's** innovative development in collaboration with CreateTO at 275 Merton Street in Toronto.

AAC Co-Chair **Nevin Dunn** and Collecdev Markee's **Alex Mather** shared how accessibility is being integrated throughout the 40-storey project, which will include **494 purpose-built rental units**, including **149 affordable homes**, and is pursuing **Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Gold**.

The discussion reinforced that accessible design can be successfully incorporated into large-scale housing developments through thoughtful planning and early decision-making. The event concluded with a speed networking session that fostered new connections and collaboration across the housing and accessibility sectors.

Thanks to AAC Programming and Events Committee member **Vickey Simovic** from RioCan REIT for leading the event and **Nigel Tai** at Diamond Schmitt for hosting. Read more in this [blog](#) by AAC Marketing and Communications Committee member **Arlene Etchen**.



## National AccessAbility Week: AAC Featured in Industry Conversations

During National AccessAbility Week, the AAC was showcased through industry initiatives that helped elevate the conversation around accessibility and inclusive design. AAC perspectives were highlighted in a **Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) [opinion piece published in the National Post](#)**, which emphasized the need to make accessibility a fundamental consideration in the planning, design, and development of future housing and communities.

Coalition members participated in ULI Toronto and DIALOG's free **[webinar "Designing for Dignity: Accessibility as the Next Frontier in Real Estate"](#)**, which explored how accessibility is reshaping the future of the built environment, from airports to office buildings to housing. Bringing together leaders from design, development, research, and accessibility sectors, the discussion emphasized the growing recognition that accessibility is not simply a compliance requirement, but a key driver of innovation, inclusion, and long-term value in housing and community development.

## AAC Co-Chair Nevin Dunn Speaking at Rental Housing Canada Conference

We were proud to see **AAC Co-Chair Nevin Dunn** participate in the **Rental Housing Canada Conference** panel discussion, **"Designing for Inclusion: Prioritizing Accessibility in Rental Housing."**

Joining leaders from across the rental housing sector including Coalition member Killam Apartment REIT, Nevin shared insights on the importance of moving beyond minimum accessibility requirements and embedding inclusive design into the planning, development, and operation of rental communities. The discussion highlighted practical strategies for creating more accessible, adaptable, and future-ready housing for Canadians of all ages and abilities.

Nevin's participation reflects the increasing prominence accessibility is seeing as a core component of housing design and development across Canada.



## The Daniels Corporation Recognized with BILD Award

The **Daniels Corporation** was recently recognized with a **BILD Award for Best Narrative Campaign**, celebrating its efforts to elevate accessibility through storytelling. By sharing lived experiences and championing inclusive design, The Daniels Corporation is helping bring greater visibility to the importance of accessible housing and community development.



## Resources in Accessibility Toolbox

Check back often for new resources in the [Accessibility Toolbox](#) including Standards & Guidelines, Learning and Development, and Resources and Support. Among this quarter's standouts:

- **AccessNow**

AccessNow helps people discover and share real-time accessibility information about places around the world. Through its community-driven platform, MapMissions, and AccessNow Verified program, the organization is helping turn accessibility awareness into meaningful action.

- **CNIB & GoodMaps**

A collaboration between CNIB and GoodMaps is improving navigation for people who are blind or partially sighted through precise, audio-guided wayfinding technology. The platform helps users navigate indoor and outdoor spaces with greater confidence and independence.



## Policy Developments

- **Meeting with Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing**

In May, AAC member and strategic communications advisor Riva Finkelstein led a team of Committee members to meet with officials in the office of the Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The group spoke to the accessible housing gap in Ontario and how AAC members can support the government in meeting Ontarians' housing needs.

- **National Housing Council's Review Panel on Lack of Accessible Housing in Canada**

The AAC and its members contributed submissions to the National Housing Council's first ever Review Panel on the Lack of Accessible Housing in Canada, sharing perspectives and recommendations to help address accessibility challenges across the housing system. The Review Panel will consider these submissions as it prepares its final report and recommendations for the federal Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, helping inform future housing policy and action.



## Committee Updates

- **Impact**

The Impact Committee is supporting the collection and reporting of AAC Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure the impact of the Coalition and the broader ecosystem. Committee members are working with other AAC committees and external organizations to establish baseline measures and monitor progress over time. The committee will also focus on assessing the composition of AAC membership to help identify opportunities for strategic recruitment and ensure diverse representation across lived experience, technical expertise, and other key perspectives.

- **Engagement and Outreach**

The Engagement and Outreach Committee recently hosted its first two Member Welcome Sessions, providing an opportunity for new members to learn about the AAC's mission, resources, and ongoing initiatives. These sessions also create space for members to share

their interests, priorities, and ideas for contributing to the Coalition's work. The next Member Welcome Session will be held on **July 30 from 12:00-1:00 PM ET**, with additional sessions planned throughout the year on a bi-monthly basis.

- **Programming and Events**

Coming off the successful Project Spotlight and Speed Networking event, the Programming and Events Committee is planning an exciting workshop for October 14 at RioCan REIT, **Inclusive Design Case Studies from the UK: Building Empathy Through Serious Games**.

Co-hosted by AAC and Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, the event will feature **Professor Vikki McCall** (University of Stirling), an internationally recognized expert in inclusive design, housing, disability, and ageing. The session will combine presentations and interactive activities to explore innovative approaches to creating more inclusive communities.

The committee is also exploring opportunities for a site visit later this summer and welcomes suggestions for projects or developments that would be valuable to showcase to AAC members.

- **Marketing and Communications**

The AAC LinkedIn community continues to grow, with **263 followers** helping amplify accessibility and inclusive housing across Canada. Follow [our page](#) to stay up to date on Coalition news, member achievements, upcoming events, and resources, and help us expand our reach by sharing our content with your network!



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Toronto