

HANDOUT 4**PSAC Local Accessibility Fund****Table of Contents**

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Introduction

The Public Service Alliance of Canada is committed to ensuring that every member of our union has the right to be represented by the union and to be free from any act or omission on the part of the union that would discriminate against the member on any basis, including disability.

At the 1994 PSAC Triennial Convention, delegates unanimously adopted a resolution that would assist Locals in providing a barrier-free environment to members through a fund that would subsidize the cost of necessary aids and services. This was one of several initiatives undertaken to address the needs of PSAC members with disabilities as defined by them at the Access Conference.

To ensure that members with disabilities are accommodated and able to participate at events, the AEC approved the Accommodation of Disabilities at PSAC Events – Guidelines. Also, the PSAC adheres to a Disability Rights Policy adopted by the NBoD which conforms to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* legislation.

This guide was created to provide an understanding of the Local Accessibility Fund and the process involved in making a request to the fund.



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Purpose

The Local Accessibility Fund aims to eliminate barriers for PSAC members with disabilities to better ensure their full participation in all official Local functions.

PSAC recognizes that persons with disabilities are one of the most marginalized and employment-disadvantaged groups in society. This is due in large measure to the many attitudinal, structural or architectural, technology, information or communication, and systemic barriers present in today's workplaces and society. This discrimination comes from a lack of understanding, negative stereotypes about disabilities and from employment systems that are designed with only able-bodied workers in mind.

A disability is only one aspect of a person and should not be used to define the person or limit his/her full participation in employment, society and the union. PSAC is therefore committed to eliminating barriers for people with disabilities in their participation in the union.

Guidelines

Who can apply for funding?

Locals requiring monetary assistance to assist members with disabilities to fully participate at their event can apply for this funding. Applications must be signed by one of the recognized signing officers of the Local and by the member requiring the aid or service.

Which events qualify for funding?

Any official meeting or event of the Local qualifies for funding. This includes general membership meetings, committee or executive meetings, general education or information sessions sponsored by the Local and other events sponsored by the Local.

What can be funded?

Given the purpose of this fund as defined above, aids and services can be subsidized under the following general areas including:

- **Communications**
 - This includes sign language interpretation, braille production, rental of sound amplification systems, oral interpretation and more. The use of professional services will be subsidized, to ensure that quality of service is of utmost importance when addressing any specific need.
- **Transportation**
 - This pertains to special transportation that is directly related to the member's disability. For example, if a parking fee was required by all members to attend a meeting, no subsidy would be provided. However, if the member required parking closer to the location of the meeting due to a mobility impairment and the cost was higher, the Local may wish to make up the difference.

○ **Physical Accessibility**

- This pertains to a member's ability to use the Local's office or meeting space. This can include:
 - A need to make a space accessible through some form of renovation.
 - A need to purchase furniture or equipment to make the space accessible.

Please note the application form asks for limitations and restrictions only in order to be able to assess the accommodation request. Members do not need to disclose their disability.

When can an application be made?

Applications are accepted on an on-going basis. Applications must be received two weeks in advance of the event/meeting and require pre-approval from the National Programs Section. Failure to obtain pre-approval in a timely manner may result in the claim being denied. If necessary, additional information may be requested from the member such as medical or other information.

How much funding will be provided?

Locals will be provided with up to \$500.00 per year to make their event accessible for their member(s) with disabilities.

Application Process

The attached form is the 'Local Accessibility Fund Application'. The form must be submitted prior to the actual event/meeting for approval.

The application is to be filled out by the Local representative, along with the member for whom this aid or service is being requested. Both parties must sign the application. The application contains personal information and must be kept confidential.

Details for the funding requirements for the specific event must be included. The application form shall be submitted to the National Programs Section at HumanRights-DroitsPersonne@psac-afpc.com.

Upon receipt of the application, the National Programs Section will review the accommodation request, including the options and/or alternative proposed by the requestor. If the criteria have been met, the funding will be approved and communicated to the Local representative in writing prior to the event/meeting.

Subsequent to the event/meeting, the following must be submitted:

- Any and all receipts for the required accommodation
- A short statement describing the provided accommodation including:
 - How many members benefitted from the aid or service?
 - Was the aid or service adequate to ensure that the member(s) was able to fully participate?
 - Would you use this aid or service again? Why or why not?
 - General comments regarding the event

For more information, please contact the:

Human Rights Program Office
Programs and Negotiations Branch
Public Service Alliance of Canada
Suite 901, 233 Gilmour Street
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0P1
Phone: (613) 560-4387
Email: HumanRights-DroitsPersonne@psac-afpc.com



Appendix A

Background

The Constitution of the Public Service Alliance of Canada states that every member of our union has the right to be represented by the union and to be free from any act or omission on the part of the union that would discriminate against the member on any basis, including disability. Consequently, the barriers that members with disability face should be removed, up to undue hardship, in order to allow them to participate at PSAC events.

Resolution 102, which was unanimously adopted at the 1994 PSAC Triennial Convention, seeks to assist Locals in addressing a particular issue member with disabilities may face in participating in PSAC local events. This resolution states:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT PSAC set up a fund of \$10,000 in order to assist Locals to provide adequate communication and access for these challenged members.

In 2003, the PSAC Triennial Convention approved a budget that included funding for other accessibility costs for Regional Conventions, and national activities such as national conferences, in addition to funding the local accessibility fund.

In 2018, the PSAC Triennial Convention increased the amount of the accessibility budget, which now includes the Local Accessibility Fund.

The following is the Statement of Commitment that should guide any accommodation initiatives by Locals:

The purpose of the PSAC Accommodation guidelines is to affirm our commitment to proactively design and organize our events in a manner that is as inclusive, barrier-free and as nondiscriminatory as possible for our members with disabilities. The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) is committed to ensuring that all members with disabilities are able to effectively participate in and to contribute to the organization's mandate. Accommodation helps ensure equal opportunity for all people. The duty to accommodate recognizes that true equality means respect for differences



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among people. It includes taking all steps necessary, short of undue hardship, to facilitate accommodation. Each request for accommodation will be assessed on an individual basis in a timely, confidential and sensitive manner.

PSAC Local Accessibility Fund Application Form

LOCAL INFORMATION

Local:

Component:

Contact Name & Local Position:

Phone: _____ (cell) _____ (home)

Local Mailing Address:

_____ Postal Code: _____

Type of Event:

Date / Location of Accommodation required:

Specific functional restrictions/limitations related to disabilities (Please note, the disability does not need to be stated. If necessary, additional information may be requested from the member such as medical or other information.):



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Accommodation Requested:

Type of Aid or Service:

Organization or individual providing the service:

Anticipated Cost of Aid or Service:

(Please attach invoice. Please keep the original if requested at a later date.)

Total requested from fund:

Local Officer (signature): _____ Date: _____

This form must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event/meeting and must be approved prior to the event/meeting.

After the event, please send a short statement describing the accommodation that was provided, including:

- *How many members benefitted from the aid or service?*
- *Was the aid or service adequate to ensure that the member (s) was able to fully participate?*
- *Would you use this aid or service again? Why or why not?*
- *Do you have any general comments about the fund or this event?*

MEMBER INFORMATION (filled out by the member)

(If more than one member requires the aid or service, please have each member fill the member information form.)

Name of Member using the aid or service:

Membership No.:

I self-identity as a person with a disability:

YES: No:

Mailing address:

Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ (cell) _____ (home)

I understand that I may be required to provide medical information if requested.

Member signature: _____ Date: _____

