



Date: August 6, 2020

Address: 301, 1240 Kensington Road, NW  
Calgary, Alberta Canada  
T2N 3P7

Alberta Real Estate Foundation  
Attention: Sarah Stuebing

Dear Sarah,

On behalf of Accessible Housing Society, we are pleased to provide the following final report to the Alberta Real Estate Foundation in agreement with grant #2018- 25, signed on October 24, 2018. As you know, the Society has experienced a significant amount of change within the organizations leadership team and we are grateful for the ongoing support and patience provided by the Foundation to allow us to work through our internal changes and complete the project funded by the grant. This grant enabled us to gather and share a great deal of information to tell the story of Inclusio and further the story of Accessible Housing.

Though the sharing of our story, Inclusio, our purpose built 45 suite home, has gained attention from around North America. Using data gathered/evaluated and documentation of key learnings Accessible Housing was able to translate this specific information to share the success of the Inclusio model with many others. The success of this project was measured using obtained data and analytics as well as the increase in engagement of others with Accessible Housing since telling the story.

The need for accessible and affordable housing in our city is significant. Less than 3% of affordable housing units in Calgary are accessible and 58% of adults with disabilities in Calgary have incomes under \$30,000 per year. Accessible Housing has a strong focus on building capacity and providing supports to ensure everyone has a home and belongs in community. Whether community is considered to be created within our programs or the greater community as a whole, our organization has a positive impact on the lives of individuals with limited mobility and those around them. Overall, this grant contributed greatly to our success, and we are appreciative for the opportunity to engage other stakeholders and share the information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stacey Stilling", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Stacey Stilling  
Executive Director

## *Final Report*

Describe the results of the project. How were the stakeholders, industry members and consumers or the community impacted by the project?

The original intent of this project was to share our story and learning lessons following the development and opening of Inclusio, a purpose built 45 suite home to support Calgarians living with limited mobility. Although focused on a few key areas initially this project brought forth a number of additional learnings and opportunities for further discussion and investigation. The project outcomes as well as the additional learning have been (and will continue to be) collectively used to help inform and support the organization with strategy planning and future development of service delivery over the long term. Accessible Housing identified a number of opportunities to share initial learnings through the development and construction of the Inclusio building as well as a richness of new learnings, which were identified due to the project.

As learnings were further identified Accessible was able to expand its reach to encompass more areas of collaboration with different stakeholders (ie. Centron Group, Digital Lifestyles, Gibbs-Gage Architects, and five care service organizations). This project also gave rise to knowledge and learning which focused on the general day-to-day operations of Inclusio and how Accessible, with thoughtful detail and planning of the building, can provide greater opportunity for individual independence for people living with limited mobility.



Accessible Housing operates in a very niche market within the non-profit sector and focuses on support of individuals with limited mobility. We are keenly aware of the challenges faced by each individual we serve; however, what was not evident at the inception of this project was exactly how significant some of the statistics are representing the overarching need for both accessible and affordable living in the community of Calgary. Through our project research and overall results it is understood under 3% of affordable housing units in Calgary are also accessible for a person with a physical disability and 15% of individuals with a disability **do not** have housing which currently meets their needs. This puts the City of Calgary far below the national average of 6% of homes considered affordable.

This information is valuable to Accessible Housing and partners on a broader scale such as construction groups, government ministries/agencies, additional service providers and the non-profit sector as a whole. The lack of current availability (housing and supports), and the story of how Accessible was able to close the gap for 45 individuals helps offer additional strategies, points of discussion and collaboration opportunities to engage further with different levels of government to offer additional spotlight on this topic. Accessible and other stakeholders can also further engage with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to open the conversation for funding of future housing development supporting the city's focus on housing that is both affordable and accessible.

## What are the indicators that this project made a difference?

Sharing the story and learnings (both good and bad) of Inclusio allowed others (individuals and agencies) to connect with Accessible for further information about how the building was designed, constructed and is operated. An organization from as far away as the state of Maine has connected with Accessible Housing as they try to build and navigate a system to provide a level of service and support to a similar demographic of citizens. This project has highlighted a significant need of advocacy for accessibility and affordability, which requires recognition from all levels of government.

This knowledge provides Accessible Housing a stronger, more informed opportunity to speak at the table making a more compelling case/statement to various decision makers. Recently, Accessible Housing has made application to be part of a technical committee developed by the Government of Canada with focus on Bill C-81, the Accessibility Standards. Additionally, through sharing this story, MBA students completing an evidence informed business case study connected with Accessible Housing to gather information for another organization in the United States attempting to scale up a similar model to Inclusio. From research results, we were able to share information with many others regarding the lessons from direct stakeholders of Accessible as well as learnings and challenges from builders, architects and others.

### Inclusio's Impact

Since opening in 2018, Inclusio has provided affordable accessible housing with supports to 47 individuals with physical disabilities. Surveys, interviews and a focus group with residents and their family members have revealed that Inclusio is creating numerous positive experiences and outcomes. In particular:

Most residents feel that **without Inclusio they would be living in worse conditions**, including :

- Inaccessible or unaffordable housing in the community
- Long-term seniors care facilities where younger adults have difficulty engaging and fitting in
- With family or natural supports who are not well-equipped to provide ongoing care and medical support

77%

of residents have been able to become more active and involved in my community because of Inclusio

82%

of residents feel that involvement in Inclusio has helped them move their life in a positive direction

82%

of residents say that they would recommend Inclusio as a place to call home to someone they care about or someone in a similar position



These learnings of the initial benefits experienced by residents and their families demonstrates a workable housing/support model to be able to scale up and provide more of this unique opportunity to individuals with limited mobility.

Through part of the project survey 82% of residents indicated Inclusio has helped their life move in a more positive

direction knowing they have access to so many services and supports at their fingertips while still offering independence within an age demographic more suitable to their needs.

### *Project indicators cont'd*

Initial indication from residents noted without Inclusio many would be trying to live independently but with inadequate supports and would be isolated/depressed in community. The opportunity to reside at Inclusio has allowed 77% of residents to be more active in the community. Their activity is seen within paid work environments, as well as volunteering.

These engagements move community further towards an understanding of the need for inclusion for all citizens. There is also a link to success of offering affordable suites; this allows lower income residents more individual free cash flow, which is often spent within the broader community and results in the enhancement of their own quality of life.

From a long-term perspective for the organization, Accessible now has better knowledge and information to build upon and enhance the capacity of the organization. This growth could be multi-faceted if it decides to construct an additional bricks and mortar facility to provide service to those with limited mobility or the enhancement of services to best support the needs of a specific demographic of the population. The ability to use the information garnered through this project will support additional grant requests and fundraising initiatives towards supporting more individuals.



The most impactful area of the project for Accessible Housing was the survey results from resident and family experience. The survey results identified strong feelings and statements including but not limited to:

- successful inclusion within a community;
- a feeling of safety and peace of mind;
- decrease in stress due to the affordability of rents;
- a reduction in social isolation and creation of friendships and support networks as well as a reduction on reliance of family
- directly impacted (and decreased) the stress load of caregiver burnout noted by families and loved ones within the support network.

It is encouraging to know that even with the larger variety of needs managed within this building, Accessible Housing is able to functionally adapt service delivery to meet the unique needs of so many.

## What did your organization learn?



Accessible Housing took the opportunity within this project to gain valuable information on the building as built, how residents use it, and to enhance the learning of staff. Storytelling, presentation skills, engagement of residents and families as well as our larger group of staff being involved in providing and obtaining feedback has opened up many new opportunities. The

engagement of our residents was crucial to help define telling the story. Accessible Housing developed what is now known as the “Inclusio Speaker Series.” Approximately four times per year residents speak to staff to “tell their story.” This engagement has been invaluable to attendees by providing them a better sense of the impact of the services provided by Inclusio. Engaging more members of the team, has increased internal capacity for others, who can help to share the learnings (successes and challenges), with a genuine voice to a wide variety of stakeholders, reaching beyond the general contractors and architects to contracted care providers and other service organizations.

It is now well understood Inclusio is a workable model from both a design and service delivery perspective, this will help further discussion for future growth. Throughout this project, the organization appreciated the capacity to gather additional statistics and industry information related to accessibility and affordability which will support strategy discussion. As a non-profit, Accessible has not had the financial capacity to develop a government/external relations position within the team to help gather and identify the research in a cohesive, relevant and timely manner to aide in decision-making. The learnings informed us that there is a much broader and more systemic concern of supporting options for enhanced accessibility not only within Alberta but Canada as well. Accessible Housing has connected with the Premier’s Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities and as noted prior the Government of Canada’s technical committee on the new Accessibility Standards.

Additionally, and of great importance the organization was able to identify where gaps were during the design and build process as well as service needed/delivered and how those gaps can be filled if Accessible Housing was to position itself to construct another building of similar scope. Filling the identified gaps on another project/program, would enhance service delivery to many more individuals who require this type of housing but also allow the organization to look at a mixed model of operations to help others with a lower level of required support. The new understanding of the knowledge gaps also provides a connection point to reach out to other groups/agencies for support in an identified area truly enhancing collaboration and working from a larger voice of advocacy.

*“The most important thing is providing people a sense of home and dignity where they can live their best life.”*  
– Accessible Housing Staff Member

## How did the project connect with the Real Estate Industry? What was the outcome of the connection?

What this project has shown is, within the city, there remains a lack of affordable and accessible housing options for individuals who require a level of support services on a regular basis. In the fall of 2019, the Executive Director of Accessible had the opportunity to present to Realtors who attended the CREB's RealTips meeting. During the presentation, information was shared from within the sector in which Accessible Housing operates, much of the shared information was new to those who attended. Many attendees did not realize housing such as this existed and the nature of the housing challenges individuals with limited mobility living in Calgary face on a day-to-day basis. While the Inclusio building provides long-term supportive living, throughout the project, the organization and stakeholders came to understand there was a variety of needs within the building and not all persons with disabilities will require something like Inclusio for housing to be successful.

What was most eye opening was in some cases adult residents moved into Inclusio, and out of a parent's home for the first time in their lives. Some leaving the security of their family home for the first time in over 30+ years. Their move to Inclusio and the initial support provided them independence, confidence and understanding of what they could accomplish on their own. With newfound determination, some residents decided they did not need the level of support offered and provided by Inclusio. As a result, they ended up making connection with local real estate professional and moved out in favour of purchasing their own condominium. As a collective group, with what Accessible has learned there may be further synergies with the housing sector and the real estate industry as well as other stakeholders to support the need for purpose built/designed spaces at different functional levels.

The industry in which Accessible Housing is funded speaks a great deal about the philosophy of "Housing First", this term is often used for individuals that have become homeless and need a new start. Noted within this project, was an understanding that individuals who already had a level of housing still needed to have certain other basic needs met in order to be able to focus on, set goals and achieve them within their lives. Residents who have moved into and then out of Inclusio in favour of their own home ownership or additional independence identified a level of need/support not originally planned nor anticipated. The outcome of residents experience and the ability to focus on making progress elsewhere in their lives allowed them to make positive changes for their own integration into the community and developing connection with others.

## Project Expenses

Grant received December 2018

Project Expenses	AREF Approved budget	2019/2020 Actuals
Executive Leadership Team	23,500	52,024
Marketing & Communications	3,500	3,588
Staff Training & Recognition	7,500	9,016
Consultant Fees	20,000	25,555
Administration	5,500	6,648
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>96,831</b>

## Recognition

All documentation, including written reports, online posts, and videos produced in relation to this project have been identified as funded by the Alberta Real Estate Foundation (AREF). Recognition to other donors and funders was also noted in our annual Community Report. In addition, during the information gathering process through interviews and surveys funding information was shared with residents and families of Inclusio, site staff, executive leaders and Board Members of Accessible Housing.



This screen clip, obtained from our website highlights the story of Inclusio. Within the story, reference to funding from the Foundation is indicated. To read the full article please click on the included link.

<http://accessiblehousing.ca/accessible-housing-society-the-story-of-inclusio/>

Additionally please take the opportunity to use this link to view the video sharing not only the impact of Inclusio but also other programs of Accessible Housing.

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/ry6ggseam9z34oc/Accessible%20Housing\\_2020\\_HD%20h264.mp4?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/ry6ggseam9z34oc/Accessible%20Housing_2020_HD%20h264.mp4?dl=0)

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