
GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION TO PSAC LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY FUND



Produced by the Public Service Alliance of Canada

Greetings!

At the 1994 PSAC Triennial Convention, delegates unanimously adopted a resolution to create a \$10,000 per year fund that would assist Locals in ensuring that all their events were accessible to members with disabilities. This was one of several initiatives undertaken by the PSAC to address the needs of PSAC members with disabilities as defined by them at the Access Conferences. The following guidelines have been updated for Locals to access this fund which has since been increased to \$15,000 annually.

Unions are about solidarity and inclusion. They are about ensuring that every member has the full range of rights to which they are eligible. We are very proud to be circulating this revised handbook as just one more step in the process of making our union fully accessible.

Alliance Executive Committee

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION TO PSAC LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY FUND

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. It is clear, however, that PSAC members with disabilities are not always able to take advantage of their rights as union members because of barriers they must face that other members do not.

Resolution 102, which was unanimously adopted at the 1994 PSAC Triennial Convention, seeks to assist Locals in addressing a particular issue they may face in providing members with their constitutional rights, namely the cost of necessary aids and services. 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 accessibility costs for Regional Conventions, local and national activities, including National Conferences. The Convention approved a budget of \$60,000 per year for accessibility costs. The PSAC recognized the importance for Locals to be able to directly access funding for accessibility costs.

In 2004, the AEC has approved that \$15,000 will be put aside for the Local Accessibility Fund. These following guidelines provide for funding up to one-half the amount (to a maximum of \$500.00) required for the accessibility costs. If the request is more than \$500.00, approval will be required by the Director of Membership Programs Branch.

The PSAC has also developed Guidelines for Accommodation at PSAC National Events. 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 non-discriminatory as possible 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 that equal opportunity for all people. The duty to accommodate recognizes that true equality means respect for differences among people. It includes taking all steps necessary, short of undue hardship, to facilitate accommodation. There is no magical formula for accommodation. Each request for accommodation will be assessed on an individual basis.

The PSAC is committed to the following:

- to establish and maintain an effective system to ensure that our events are designed to be inclusive and barrier-free.
- to ensure that all policies, practices and procedures related to the organization of events do not result in discrimination for members with disabilities.
- to respond in a timely, confidential and sensitive manner to requests for individual accommodation at our events.

What is the purpose of the fund?

The purpose of the fund is to ensure that PSAC members with disabilities are able to fully participate in all official Local functions.

Who can apply for funding?

Locals can apply for funding. Applications must be signed by one of the recognized signing officers of the Local and by at least one member who expects to use the aid or service requested.

What types of events qualify for funding?

Any official meeting or event of the Local qualifies, including general membership meetings, committee or executive meetings, general education or information sessions sponsored by the Local and other events sponsored by the Local, such as celebrations for International Women's Day.

What can be funded?

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

- Communications: For example, sign language interpretation, braille production, rental of sound amplification systems, oral interpretation. In the event that a service is being provided, for example sign language interpretation, a professional interpreter must be used. This is to ensure the best services are provided to address any specific need.
- Transportation: This pertains to special transportation that is directly related to the member's disability. For example, if there was a parking cost for all members attending a meeting, no subsidy would be provided. If, however, 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. In particular, it may apply to three different situations.

- 1) The Local owns its own space and wishes to make it accessible through some form of renovation. An application for funding will be considered.
 - 2) The Local is renting space on a permanent or temporary basis. Locals should always attempt to rent a space that is already fully accessible. If this is not possible, the Local should approach the owner of the space and request that they make it accessible. If neither of these options is available, an application for funding will be considered for a temporary measure to make the location accessible. (Note: funding is not intended to make permanent accessible changes to a property that is not owned by the union).
 - 3) The Local wishes to purchase furniture or equipment that will make its office/meeting space accessible. This might include the purchase of a telecommunications device for persons with hearing disabilities, a table or a desk that will accommodate a wheelchair and so on.
- **Integration:** This is for other initiatives that don't fit in the categories noted above, but are directly related to the member's ability to participate in a Local function.

When can an application be made?

Applications are accepted on an on-going basis. There is no specific deadline. Applications should be made, at a minimum, two weeks in advance of the event/meeting.

How much funding will be provided?

If all other qualifications are met, Locals may be provided with up to one-half the amount (to a maximum of \$500.00) required for the aid or service. If the request is more than \$500.00, approval will be required by the Director of Membership Programs Branch.

How can we get funding?

Attached is an application form for funding. The Local representative should fill out this form along with at least one member for whom this aid or service is being requested. Both of these parties must sign the application.

The application form should include all funding requirements for a particular event; however, where more than one event is involved, individual applications must be made for each event.

The application form should then be submitted to the PSAC Human Rights Program Office.

Once the application is submitted, the PSAC Human Rights Program Office will consider the written request for accommodation including the options proposed by the Local representative and/or participant and if necessary, will consult with the Local Representative and/or participant requesting the accommodation. The PSAC Human Rights Program Office will approve funding for a reasonable and suitable plan of accommodation and communicate that plan to the Local representative. The Local will receive a letter to this effect and an evaluation form (sample attached).

After the event is finished, receipts for the subsidized item and the completed evaluation form should be submitted to the Human Rights Program Office and a cheque in the approved amount will be issued. The evaluation form should again be filled out by both a Local officer and by the member(s) who used the aid or service.

In the event a Local does not complete the evaluation form and forward it to the Human Rights Program Office or provide receipts for the subsidized item, no further monies will be available for that Local from the fund until this information is received.

For more information, please contact the:

Human Rights Program Office,
Membership Programs Branch,
Public Service Alliance of Canada,
Suite 901,
233 Gilmour Street,
Ottawa, Ontario.
K2P 0P1

(613) 560-4387 (phone)

(613) 236-9402 (fax)

APPLICATION FORM – PSAC Local Accessibility Fund

LOCAL INFORMATION

Local: _____

Component: _____

Contact Name & Local Position: _____

Phone: _____(w) _____(h)

Local Mailing Address: _____

_____ Postal Code: _____

Type of Event/Requirement: _____

If Event, Date/Location: _____

Type of disability (i.e. mobility, physical, psychological, etc.)

Specific functional restrictions/limitations related to disabilities:

Accommodation Requested:

Type of Aid or Service:

Who is providing the Service:

(e.g., Mary Smith Inc., ASL Interpreter)

Total Amount Required for Aid or Service: _____

AMOUNT REQUESTED FROM FUND: _____

(No more than one half the above amount to a maximum of \$500.00)

MEMBER INFORMATION

Name of Member(s) to use aid or service: _____

Membership No.: _____

Mailing Address for PSAC material: _____

_____ Postal code: _____

If you are not already on the Members with Disabilities Equity Mailing List, would you like to be added:

Yes _____ No _____

Local Officer: _____

Member using service: _____

Date: _____

EVALUATION

Please Note: The information provided in this evaluation form will assist the union in assessing Local needs in terms of accessibility. The information will not be used to determine whether a Local will receive future funding or not.

MEMBER INFORMATION

Name of Member(s) to use aid or service:

Membership No.: _____

Mailing Address for PSAC material: _____

_____ Postal code: _____

LOCAL INFORMATION

Local: _____

Component: _____

Contact Name & Local Position: _____

Phone: _____(w) _____(h)

Local Mailing Address: _____

_____ Postal Code: _____

1. What was the functional limitation/restrictions that required accommodation?

2. What type of accommodation was provided? Who provided it?

3. How do you expect the funded item to be used?

IF THE FUNDED ITEM WAS NOT AN EVENT, GO TO QUESTION 5.

4. Was the aid or service used at the event? _____

By how many members? _____

If no one used the aid or service, please explain why not.

5. Was the aid or service adequate to ensure that the member(s) was able to fully participate?

6. Will you use this aid or service again? Why or why not?

7. Do you have any general comments about the fund or this event?

Local Officer Member using service: _____

Date: _____

Submit to:

Human Rights Program Office,
Membership Programs Branch,
Public Service Alliance of Canada,
233 Gilmour Street, Suite 901
Ottawa, ON K2P 0P1

(613) 560-4387 (phone)

(613) 236-9402 (fax)

NOTE: DO NOT FORGET TO INCLUDE THE RECEIPTS FOR THE AID OR SERVICE USED WHEN YOU SUBMIT THIS EVALUATION FORM. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.