

# ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

VILLAGE OF CUMBERLAND

2026



THE VILLAGE OF  
**CUMBERLAND**

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# PART 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Village of Cumberland respectfully acknowledges that the area of land covered by this plan is within the Unceded Traditional Territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1. About This Plan

The Village of Cumberland's Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan (The Plan) outlines a practical, community-informed approach to identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility and inclusion across Village policies, programs, services, and operations. Developed in response to the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, the Plan builds on many years of accessibility, age-friendly, and inclusion-focused work undertaken by the Village, while responding to emerging gaps and community priorities.

This Plan is intended to complement existing plans, audits, and standards, and build on work already underway related to the built environment. While physical accessibility continues to be an important focus for the Village, this Plan places greater emphasis on barriers related to communication, engagement, technology, sensory and cognitive accessibility, inclusive practices, and staff capacity. In doing so, it provides a broader framework for inclusion that can be integrated into everyday municipal decision-making and service delivery.

The Plan was informed by a review of existing Village documents, collaboration with the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee, a staff workshop, and engagement with community members, including people with lived and living experience of disability and exclusion. The actions identified are intended to be realistic, achievable, and aligned with current and upcoming Village initiatives. As a living document, the Plan will be monitored and updated over time to reflect community feedback, evolving practices, and the Village's ongoing commitment to creating a more accessible and welcoming community for everyone.

## 2.2. Our Progress in Accessibility and Inclusion

In 2016, under the guidance of the then Accessibility Committee, the Village undertook the Facility and Infrastructure Review to advance accessibility-related policies in the 2014 Official Community Plan through a 10 year planning framework for Village-owned facilities, parks and public spaces; a brochure to encourage owners of commercial buildings and businesses to make accessibility improvements; and ways to better meet accessible parking in the Village. The Committee also produced a checklist for accessible and inclusive events.

This work was further augmented in 2019 by Rick Hansen Foundation ratings of the Village office and Council Chamber, the Cultural Centre, South Wellington Colliery Trail, and Chinatown Walking Tour trail.

The Village completed an Age-Friendly Assessment and Action Plan in 2020 that made recommendations for action in the areas of municipal buildings and public spaces, transportation, housing, social participation, social inclusion, civic engagement, public communication, and community support and health.

In 2023, the Comox Valley Accessibility Committee (funded by the CVRD through the Comox Valley Social Planning Society) undertook accessibility audits through the region. Village staff are expected to utilize the recommendations provided by the CVAC in future work plans.

Many of the recommendations from these plans have been implemented either through specific small projects or incorporated into new plans, such as the Official Community Plan and Transportation Master Plan, as well as significant capital projects. Some recommendations remain outstanding as the Village works on planning major projects, e.g. Village Park field house, some on-street parking as part of larger construction projects.

Village staff implement accessibility standards for new infrastructure and works, and will be updating design standards for municipal street corridors in consultation with the Committee as needed. Examples include recreation facility and park upgrades, road and sidewalk projects, parking standards.

Work to reduce barriers to accessibility and inclusion has included:

- Recreation financial assistance programs: the Village's Financial Assistance In Recreation (FAIR) and the CVRD's Leisure for Everyone Accessibility Program (LEAP)
- Cumberland Recreation Adult 50+ Social Club
- Snow and ice control at transit shelters and sidewalk letdowns and crosswalks in the Village core
- Social Procurement Framework for Village purchasing policy
- Everybody Welcome stickers at all public facilities
- Kwaxdzi'dzas Affordable Housing Development (subject to grant funding)
- Affordable Housing land development application priority processing

- Community Grant Program
- Community Service Partnerships with not for profit organizations, focusing on providing low-barrier access to community recreation and culture services
- Service contracts for services with Beaufort Services and Journey Recycling.
- Use of Automark voting machines for elections
- Updated policy through the Official Community Plan review (2025-2026)
- Live streaming of Council and Committee of the Whole meetings
- Artwork in the Village Council Chamber acknowledging the K'ómoks First Nation and the Village's commitment to reconciliation
- Use of an online engagement channel, Engage Comox Valley, to supplement in-person and other online engagement opportunities
- Universal design in the Transportation Master Plan (2024)
- Cultivating Safe Spaces staff training
- Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy (2020)
- Parks and Facilities Conduct and Compliance Policy (2024)
- Programming changes to support children with diverse needs to participate in recreation (2026)
- Community Events and Bookings Policy (2024) requirements for special event organizers to enable access for people of all abilities

Plans and resources can be reviewed at <https://cumberland.ca/plans/> and <https://cumberland.ca/accessibility-and-inclusion>

## 3. DEFINITIONS

**Accessibility:** means all people can take part in their communities through work, play and other daily activities. Accessibility is important for everyone, especially people with disabilities. Accessibility is about removing barriers and increasing inclusion and independence for everyone.

**Accommodation:** means an employer's responsibility to tailor the workplace to meet the needs of an individual employee (as per the BC Human Rights Code)<sup>1</sup>. An accommodation would be a direct response to identified barriers found in the workplace.

**Barrier:** means anything that hinders the full and equitable participation in society, creating disability<sup>2</sup>. Barriers are and can be:

- Caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, or technologies, and

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<sup>1</sup> Government of British Columbia. "Managing Employee Accommodation in the Workplace" Last updated: January 24, 2024 <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/careers-myhr/managers-supervisors/employee-labour-relations/managing-accommodation>

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization, World Report on Disability, 2011

- Affected by intersecting forms of discrimination and ableism.

Multiple types of barriers can be present at the same time and can impact people differently, even for people with the same disability. Influenced by the Barriers identified in the British Columbia Accessibility Plan<sup>3</sup>, the following barriers have been identified for consideration within this plan:

- **Attitudinal / Social:** Facing stigma and discrimination because others don't understand personal experiences or culture.
- **Physical:** When places are hard to reach or enter because of how they are designed or because they are far away.
- **Technology:** When technology cannot be accessed or used because there is need for tools or specific features.
- **Information / Communication / Language:** When individuals struggle to understand or be understood because of language differences or how they process information.
- **Structural / Systemic:** When policies may be unfair as they don't consider the challenges faced by equity-deserving groups.
- **Sensory:** When environments are difficult to be in because of things like bright lights, loud sounds, or strong smells.

**Disability:** means any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society<sup>4</sup>.

**Diversity:** means the variety of identities found within an organization, group or society. Diversity is expressed through factors such as culture, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, language, education, ability, family status or socioeconomic status.<sup>5</sup>

**Impairment:** means a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual or cognitive impairment, whether permanent, temporary or episodic<sup>6</sup>.

**Inclusion:** means helping make sure people of all backgrounds, abilities and identities feel welcome and have what they need to thrive. This includes mindful and equitable effort to meet individual needs so everyone is able to contribute to their fullest potential

**Universal Design:** means creating, building, and maintaining services and environments that can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people.

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<sup>3</sup> Government of British Columbia. AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan

<sup>4</sup> Government of Canada: Accessible Canada Act (S.C. 2019, c. 10) <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-0.6/page-1.html#h-1153395>

<sup>5</sup> Government of Canada: Guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology <https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/en/publications/equite-diversite-inclusion-equity-diversity-inclusion-eng>

<sup>6</sup> Accessible British Columbia Act, SBC 2021, C 19  
<https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/21019#section1>

## 4. GUIDING FRAMEWORK

### 4.1. Federal and Provincial Legislation

#### 4.1.1. Accessible Canada Act

In 2010, Canada ratified the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* requiring the government to promote and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights of persons with disabilities including full equality under the law. In 2019, the *Accessible Canada Act* came into force with the goal to reach a barrier free Canada by 2040 and applies to federally regulated entities.

#### 4.1.2. Accessible British Columbia Act

In 2021, the Government of British Columbia enacted the *Accessible British Columbia Act*. The Act enables the provincial government to take actions that improve accessibility for all residents and visitors of the province alongside the British Columbia Human Rights Code. The province will now:

- Set standards and regulations related to accessibility.
- Promote accessibility across the province (e.g., AccessAbility Week).
- Recognize American Sign Language (ASL) as a form of communication with the province.

#### 4.1.3. Requirements for Prescribed Organizations

As per the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, prescribed organizations such as the Village of Cumberland must:

- Establish an Accessibility Committee.
- Develop an Accessibility Plan and regularly update it every three years.
- Establish a public feedback mechanism to receive comments from the public on the Accessibility Plan and other barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization.

*The Village's committee under the Act is the regional Accessibility Committee. As of the publication of this document, the Village of Cumberland complies with all three requirements. The Village will continue to stay updated on new accessibility requirements as the Province develops accessibility standards.*

More information about Accessibility and Inclusion at the Village can be found here:  
<https://cumberland.ca/accessibility-and-inclusion/>

## 5. OUR APPROACH

The Accessibility and Inclusion Plan was developed through a combination of background research, collaboration, and targeted engagement. This work included a review of existing Village policies, plans, and actions, ongoing collaboration with the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee, and focused engagement with staff and community members with lived and living experience related to disability and inclusion.



The following section summarizes the approach taken and key insights gathered through each of these steps

### 5.1. Foundations For This Work

The Village has been working to incorporate accessibility and inclusion into municipal practices and has made significant progress to-date. Existing areas of strength include:

- **Collaborating with the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee** – such as embedding insight from members’ lived experience into documents and resources, including the creation of this Accessibility and Inclusion Plan.
- **Addressing barriers in the built environment** – such as planning to remove physical barriers, and design spaces for improved mobility, in our parks, facilities, sidewalks, public parking spaces, and recreation spaces.
- **Changing attitudes and understanding** – Village staff are invested in learning and removing barriers to Village services and practices with guidance and education from those with lived experience.
- **Improving inclusive communications** – such as developing more accessible governance and providing advice for inclusive event and engagement opportunities.
- **Providing leading practice guidance for accessible design** – such as using universal design in transportation and facilities planning.

This Plan is positioned to build on this existing work, by continuing to identify areas for future action to remove or prevent barriers to inclusion and accessibility.

## 5.2. Community Engagement

This Plan was designed to reflect the voices of community members with lived and living experiences of disability, as well as those who support them, and those with under-represented voices who experience barriers to inclusion. This included Indigenous peoples, seniors, LGBTQ2S+ community members, people from visible minority groups, diverse language and cultural backgrounds, and people experiencing social, economic, or literacy barriers. Input was gathered from staff, members of the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee, and members of the public to identify key opportunities for future action, within current capacity and resourcing realities.

Engagement occurred from the fall through early winter 2025 and included the following activities:

- **Meetings with the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee** – The Committee played an advisory role in the development of this Plan as well as the approach to community engagement, ensuring materials were accessible and reflective of issues facing Cumberland’s community. The regional Comox Valley Accessibility Committee was also consulted during plan creation to hear feedback on this Action Plan.
- **Public Survey** – A survey with both hard copy and online versions was developed. Questions were designed to develop an understanding of the types of actions that are working in community, where there are opportunities to adjust and do things differently, and the types of barriers that are creating challenges within the Village. Responses were received primarily from community members with lived experience of disability and by people involved in caretaking or service support roles.
- **Staff Workshop** – A staff workshop was held with representatives from Village departments to give staff insight into how programs, services, communications, events, and engagement can be made more accessible and welcoming, including ways to reduce sensory, communication, and technological barriers. Staff were then asked to provide feedback and details about work plans in their departments and to help refine the action plan.

Feedback from these activities helped develop the Accessibility and Inclusion Plan into a document that addresses community priorities through achievable actions, across five focus areas. Lived experience insight is embedded into high-level guidance and potential solutions and will continue to underpin implementation activities throughout the life of the Plan.

### 5.2.1. Engagement Snapshot

Community engagement, and findings from the document review, were influential to the development of an overarching community Vision, plan focus areas, and action items. In general, people value feeling part of community life and are looking for ways to remove challenges to getting around and participating in programs, services, Village-processes, and other areas.

While individual engagement responses varied, overall, feedback reveals clear and consistent themes about where barriers exist and where Village action could make significant change to peoples' experiences in community. The following high-level themes are shared to illustrate key influences on this Plan. Additional details can be found in [Appendix B](#).

**We heard people want clear, accessible information:**

Some people shared that they have difficulty knowing where to find and access information. These challenges include navigating Village communication systems (such as the website) and finding up-to-date information as programs and services change.

**We heard it is important to consider diverse needs across our programs and services:**

Most residents participate in a Village service or program, and many people shared that fitness and recreation options are especially important to them. We heard suggestions related to our facilities, staff supports, program options, and other areas to ensure our programs address the needs of people of different abilities, ages, and life stages.

**We heard the Built Environment continues to need improvements.**

The Village has taken numerous steps to improve physical infrastructure such as facilities and transportation networks. Residents emphasised the importance of continuing these efforts, from seasonal snow clearing, and gaps in mobility networks, to building access.

**We heard that people are wanting to be engaged and involved in decision-making.**

Residents with lived experience of disability and inclusion challenges shared a desire to better contribute their perspectives such as by providing feedback, gaining Village employment, and participating in leadership positions. Meaningful contributions can be supported by offering flexible participation options, accommodations, and clearly sharing information related to decision-making.

**We heard that Village interactions shape feelings of belonging:**

Interactions with Village staff and representatives were frequently highlighted as shaping people's sense of belonging. Across residents' responses, there is a clear desire for respectful and well-informed interactions, supported by training, to ensure day-to-day interactions address resident needs, provide access to opportunities, and re-enforce a welcoming culture.

## 6. PLAN FOCUS AREAS

The six Focus Areas at the centre of this Plan emerge from community engagement insight, lived experience expertise from the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee, and high-level guidance from the Accessible BC Act while using a greater equity, diversity and inclusion lens. The Act outlines areas where future accessibility standards will be developed that will have implications for local government and other prescribed organizations; it is strategic to align the Village's Focus Areas with these legislated areas.

The six Focus Areas are:

1. **Village Services, Programs and Practices** – Ensures that services and programs are delivered without barriers to equity, diversity and inclusion
2. **Attitudes and Understanding** - Ensures key personnel are aware of a diversity of needs to best serve people with accessibility and inclusion experiences in daily life.
3. **Built Environment and Transportation Networks** – responds to barriers people face navigating physical public infrastructure across a range of scales, from buildings and site design, to washrooms, sidewalks, and signage.
4. **Communications, Engagement, and Technology** – responds to barriers people face feeling meaningfully engaged in Village activities and governance and receiving and accessing information.
5. **Employment** – ensures the Village has a strong workplace culture that welcomes and supports individuals with a range of accessibility and inclusion experiences.
6. **Governance and Capacity** – ensures Village processes enable diverse voices being involved in decision-making and that relationships are developed or strengthened to support these efforts.

# PART 2: ACTION PLAN

## 7. VISION

The Village of Cumberland is an accessible and inclusive community where people of all abilities, backgrounds, and identities feel safe, respected, and welcomed. Our community is a place where:

- all residents experience barrier-free access to Village programs and services,
- can freely move through public spaces, and
- feel connected and engaged in local decision-making.

## 8. GOALS

The following goals flow through the action items listed throughout the remainder of this section:

- Ensure information, communication, and engagement processes and systems are accessible to all residents.
- Support inclusive employment opportunities for people with varying abilities and from diverse backgrounds.
- Build staff and municipal capacity to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to inclusion.
- Increase and enhance accessibility and inclusion practices for service and program delivery.
- Improve the accessibility of our buildings, public spaces, and infrastructure within our community.
- Improve awareness and supports for people with disabilities and equity deserving groups to prepare for emergencies.

## 9. ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan translates the Vision and Goals into a set of practical, achievable actions across Village departments.

Training opportunities, tools, external resources, and leading practices will be identified and pursued as part of individual actions, based on relevance, availability, and staff capacity.

Progress on the Action Plan will be informed by ongoing staff work planning, advice from the Regional Accessibility Committee, public feedback, and will be monitored and reported on as outlined in Section 10.

### Interpreting the Action Plan

**Actions** are designed to support steady progress over time, while allowing flexibility to respond to emerging needs, lived experience insight, changes in legislation, and organization capacity.

**Approach** provides guidance on when an action may be initiated. Four categories have been identified to support implementation and provide guidance on when steps may need to be taken to help an action move forward:

1. **Create guidance** (tools & resources) - Actions that focus on developing internal tools, standards, or guidance to support consistent, accessible practices and enable future implementation. These actions may need additional prioritization based on staff time and budget, and support from external consultants and/or partners.
2. **Apply guidance** – Actions that apply or implement established tools, standards, or guidance within day-to-day programs, services, or operations.
3. **Build capacity** (training and learning) - Actions that build staff and organizational knowledge, skills, and awareness to support effective and sustainable implementation.
4. **Event-triggered** – Actions that are activated when routine municipal activities occur, such as hiring, elections, capital projects, service changes, or emergency events.

**Lead department** identifies the responsible department at the Village of Cumberland that will be responsible for actions as they are developed, planned, and executed.

## A Note on Training and Capacity Building

Ongoing professional development is a critical tool to shift awareness and provide staff with concrete tools and skills to effectively implement strategies such as this Action Plan. Several ways to build this skillset involve training Village staff, seeking qualified staff during hiring, and hiring external consultants\*.

The exact type of training or knowledge development should match the needs of the Village of Cumberland staff team. Not all staff need to be trained on all information—training should be offered based on roles, responsibilities, and in response to specific Action Plan actions.

Where applicable, the Action Plan identifies specific training recommendations. Where general references to additional training are made in the Action Plan, the following approach to training should apply (see [Appendix A](#) for greater detail):

- **IDEA Awareness Training** – Applies to all Village staff and elected officials, to support shared understanding of accessibility, inclusion, and equitable service delivery across the organization.
- **Standards and Practices Training** - Applies to staff and managers responsible for developing, interpreting, or applying policies, programs, services, or procedures, including leadership and public-facing roles, where accessibility standards must be consistently applied.
- **Technical Skills Training** – Applies to staff whose roles require specialized accessibility skills, such as document production, digital content, design, procurement, communications, human resources, or infrastructure planning.

*\* Where external training or facilitation is used, the Village should prioritize working with trainers and organizations with lived experience related to the course content.*

## 9.1. Goal 1 – Ensure Information, Communication, and Engagement Processes and Systems are accessible to all residents.

### 9.1.1. Focus Area - Communications, Engagement, and Technology

#### a) Digital Services

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Review and update website and digital communications tools to meet recognized accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG 2.1 Level AA), ensuring content is accessible to users with a range of visual, hearing, cognitive, and mobility needs.	Apply Guidance	Corporate Services
ii. Ensure all digital application forms and commonly used public facing documents are accessible to screen readers and other assistive technologies, using built-in accessibility checking tools and recognized accessibility guidance (e.g., WCAG document-related criteria; MS Office Accessibility Checker).	Apply Guidance	Corporate Services
iii. Support staff training for web and communications accessibility, including producing accessible documents and digital content, by drawing on appropriate external resources and training providers (e.g., CNIB, Accessibility Hub BC, and others).	Build Capacity	Corporate Services

#### b) Communication Guidelines

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Update the Visual Identity Guidelines for accessibility	Create Guidance	Corporate Services
ii. Create Communication Guidelines for Village communications that include tangible guidance on providing accessible formatting, inclusive language, and a welcoming tone. The guideline should include a 'checklist' for communications to help assess whether a communication tool has addressed accessibility adequately.	Create Guidance	Corporate Services

iii.	Ensure Communication Guidelines provide direction on using imagery, graphic content, and other visual media in public facing communications. This guidance should address procurement considerations such as sourcing from individuals with disabilities, representing demographic diversity, and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence.	Create Guidance	Corporate Services
iv.	Support staff training to enable production of accessible documents, including plain language and basic document design for readability.	Build Capacity	Corporate Services

### c) Engagement Approach

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Develop a Village engagement checklist for Village-held engagements that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicable sections from the Communications Guidelines (see subsection b) above)</li> <li>• Methods to remove common barriers to participating in events and community engagement such as access to information, use of technology, sensory overstimulation, and provision of care for dependents on site during engagements.</li> <li>• <b>Considerations</b> for in-person, online, and hybrid engagement, as applicable.</li> </ul>	Create Guidance	Corporate Services
ii. Use the Village engagement checklist for Village-held engagement.	Apply Guidance	Corporate Services
iii. Explore developing an approach to honoraria to value insight provided by people with lived and living experiences of systemic exclusion that could be applied to some engagements and committee activities.	Create Guidance	Corporate Services

## 9.1.2. Focus Area - Governance and Capacity

### d) Inclusion and Feedback

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Approach</b>	<b>Lead</b>
i. Provide information on Cumberland webpages about inclusion progress, features, and available services.	Apply Guidance	Corporate Services
ii. Develop a responsive, closed loop, process to receive public feedback on inclusion and accessibility related to Village services and infrastructure, to address concerns where possible, and respond in a timely manner to inquiries, ensuring clear and transparent sharing of information.	Create Guidance	Corporate Services
iii. Share progress on initiatives in this Action Plan in the annual report.	Event- Triggered	Corporate Services

### e) Procurement

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Approach</b>	<b>Lead</b>
i. Review Village procurement policies and purchasing practices through an equity and accessibility lens to ensure that new equipment, infrastructure, furniture, technologies, grant-funded items, and other purchases support access by people with disabilities and other members of systematically excluded communities.	Create Guidance	Corporate Services
ii. Continue to consider organizations for service contracts that represent groups of systematically excluded community members for service contracts with the Village, including organizations such as Immigrant Welcome Center, Lifelong Learning Center, Vancouver Island Vocational and Rehabilitation Services, Bridges, Beaufort, Journeys, Riverside Inclusion, and others.	Apply Guidance	Corporate Services

### f) Council Meetings

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Approach</b>	<b>Lead</b>
i. Continue to improve sharing of governance processes and outcomes across Cumberland communication channels including how residents can stay engaged and informed.	Apply Guidance	Corporate Services
ii. For Council staff reports, add a summary section at the beginning of reports that is a plain language summary for the public.	Create Guidance	Corporate Services

iii.	Continue to examine opportunities to increase accessibility of Council meetings including virtual options, recordings, and transcripts.	Create Guidance	Corporate Services
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## g) Candidates

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Explore options to reduce barriers to elected officials and meetings, such as considering a policy to reimburse dependent care costs.	Create Guidance	Corporate Services
ii. Review policies related to in-person council member attendance for meetings. Ensure that virtual attendance accommodations include personal health reasons (such as autoimmune conditions) or lack of available care for dependants.	Create Guidance	Corporate Services
iii. Offer technological supports for candidates elected to office.	Apply Guidance	Corporate Services

## h) Voting and Elections

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Ensure at least one voting place with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An election worker who can provide ASL interpretation.</li> </ul> Continue to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistive voting technology and appropriately trained election worker.</li> </ul>	Create Guidance	Corporate Services
ii. Provide clear, accessible, wayfinding and signage to support navigation to each voting place.	Create Guidance	Corporate Services
iii. Train election workers on serving a diversity of voters and using available resources.	Build Capacity	Corporate Services
iv. Train elections workers on technologies that can support diverse voters.	Build Capacity	Corporate Services

## 9.2. Goal 2 - Support inclusive employment opportunities for people with varying abilities and from diverse backgrounds.

### 9.2.1. Focus Area - Employment

#### a) Employment Advertising

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Develop and regularly update a community partner distribution list to share communications with service providers who work with new Canadians, people who have disabilities, and other groups of systematically excluded community members across Cumberland and the Island. Partners could include WorkBC, Immigrant Welcome Center, Lifelong Learning Center, Vancouver Island Vocational and Rehabilitation Services, Bridges, Beaufort, Journeys, Riverside Inclusion, and others.	Create Guidance	Corporate Services
ii. Promote Village job opportunities with service providers included on the distribution list, sharing postings as they are published.	Event- Triggered	Corporate Services and Human Resources
iii. Identify roles that may be completed as part time positions or undertaken in partnership with service providers (see action i. above) to improve the diversity of, and access to, jobs at the Village.	Event- Triggered	Corporate Services and Human Resources
iv. Review and revise job description postings for elements such as required qualifications, skills, and duties. Identify elements that should remain as requirements necessary for the role, and remove any unnecessary requirements (e.g., need for a drivers license when job duties do not require use of a vehicle).	Create Guidance	Human Resources

## b) Employment Supports

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Approach</b>	<b>Lead</b>
i. Update Village recruitment materials to explicitly state how accommodations are provided and to welcome diverse applicants.	Create Guidance	Corporate Services
ii. Explore a framework to improve Village recruitment, retention, and promotion processes with an effort to improve representation of people (staff and contractors) with disabilities and from diverse backgrounds. Consider opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide work experience for people with disabilities</li> <li>• Collaborate with external partners.</li> </ul>	Create Guidance	Corporate Services
iii. Train hiring staff on reducing bias in evaluation of job applications.	Build Capacity	Corporate Services
iv. Review the current Cumberland staff recruitment and onboarding process to identify and remove barriers.	Apply Guidance	Corporate Services

## c) Workplace Enhancement

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Approach</b>	<b>Lead</b>
i. Ensure staff accommodation requests are responded to promptly, and access to assistive and adaptive technologies are available.	Event- Triggered	Corporate Services
ii. Establish a system and/or internal champion network to stay up to date and ensure compliance with Provincial accessibility employment standards.	Build Capacity	Corporate Services
iii. Provide staff resources to support staff accommodations and address diverse needs of employees.	Build Capacity	Corporate Services

## 9.3. Goal 3 - Build staff and municipal capacity to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to inclusion.

### 9.3.1. Focus Area - Attitudes and Understanding

#### a) Staff and Council Training

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Update Village onboarding offerings to include learning processes about Village expectations of respectful workplace and customer service standards.	Build Capacity	Corporate Services
ii. Continue training in ableism, accessibility, cultural awareness and inclusivity for staff and Council. Training may include CNIB courses, Cultivating Safe Spaces, Rick Hansen Foundation Inclusion and Accessibility Training (Corporate Group Training available), Accessibility Hub BC, and others.	Build Capacity	Corporate Services
iii. Explore opportunities to increase collaboration with external partners (see distribution list, under “Employment Advertising”, action i) to provide training, engage in volunteer and recreation programs, and involve in other opportunities that may arise.	Build Capacity	Corporate Services

#### b) Customer Services

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Train customer service staff on diversity and inclusion and how to assist customers with diverse needs in person and over the phone.	Build Capacity	Corporate Services

## 9.4. Goal 4 - Increase and enhance accessibility and inclusion practices for service and program delivery.

### 9.4.1. Focus Area – Programs, Services, and Practices

#### a) Recreation Programs and Cultural Services

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Review recreation program offerings for gaps in demographics, accessibility, and registration and ensure future programming addresses the gaps. Use annual departmental reporting to track progress.	Create Guidance	Community Services
ii. Identify adaptive programming in recreation guide.	Event- Triggered	Community Services
iii. Explore grant and funding opportunities to provide subsidized recreation programming and services for residents with disabilities, including potential integration with FAIR and LEAP programs.	Event- Triggered	Community Services
iv. Seek recreation program leaders with specialized training and train recreation staff in working with diverse individuals.	Build Capacity	Community Services
v. Identify potential barriers to registration for recreation programs and explore solutions to provide additional support.	Create Guidance	Community Services
vi. Continue to ensure the Checklist for Accessible and Inclusive Events is regularly shared with third parties responsible for hosting community events and is regularly updated as accessibility standards evolve	Event- Triggered	Community Services

#### b) Parks, Trails, and Recreation Facilities

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Provide information on accessible and inclusive features in parks, trails and recreation facilities so people can plan their activities accordingly.	Apply Guidance	Community Services

### c) Enhancing Inclusion Opportunities in Economic Development

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Update and promote the Accessibility Brochure for Businesses. The Brochure update should include guidance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining clear pedestrian paths of travel, free of potential obstacles such as street furnishings advertising materials, landscaping, and other potential hazards like seasonal snow clearance.</li> <li>• Resources for accessible short-term rentals</li> </ul>	Create Guidance	Economic Development
ii. Explore adding a free, or reduced fee, for business operated by youth and Indigenous people with disabilities.	Create Guidance	Economic Development

## 9.5. Goal 5 - Improve the accessibility of our buildings, public spaces, and infrastructure within our community.

### 9.5.1. Focus Area - Built Environment

#### a) Village Buildings and Facilities

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. For renovations of existing facilities, identify and implement achievable leading practices and universal design standards beyond requirements of the BC Building Code.	Create Guidance	Community Services
ii. Ensure future audit outputs and other accessibility assessments identify priority upgrades to existing facilities.	Create Guidance	Community Services
iii. When renovating Village facilities and other public spaces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess cognitive and sensory barriers.</li> <li>• Assess communication barriers such as signage, wayfinding, and audio features to support access for a variety of ages, cultural backgrounds, and identities.</li> <li>• Assess washrooms to support cultural, gender, and family diversity needs are met.</li> </ul>	Apply Guidance	Community Services
iv. Add welcoming signage that reflects community diversity. Seek opportunities to consult with the K'ómoks Nation.	Apply Guidance, Build Capacity	Community Services
v. Establish centralized resource for sharing accessibility-related information about the Village's public facilities in both digital and physical (e.g. paper) formats. Tools to share information could include listing accessibility features on facility websites, virtual tours to prepare people before they visit, and guides on accessible and inclusive programming.	Create Guidance	Corporate Services

### c) Parks and Trails

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. For existing park landscape improvements, identify achievable best practices and universal design standards, where applicable	Create Guidance	Community Services
i. Identify priority parks and trails upgrades in completed accessibility plans and audits.	Apply Guidance	Community Services
ii. For parks and trails improvement projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess public spaces for cognitive and sensory barriers.</li> <li>Assess parks and trails for communication barriers such as signage, wayfinding, and audio features to support access for a variety of ages, cultural backgrounds, and identities.</li> </ul>	Apply Guidance	Community Services

## 9.5.2. Focus Area - Transportation Networks

### a) Sidewalks

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Use universal design principles when designing transportation facilities and other infrastructure improvements. Identify and apply accessibility standards for curb ramps, crosswalks and intersections, placement and type of street furniture, tactile paving, and shade and overhead protection.	Create Guidance	Engineering and Public Works
ii. Develop standards for safe and accessible pedestrian paths of travel when sidewalk areas are being used for construction.	Create Guidance	Development and Bylaw
iii. Review Village design standards for municipal street corridors to ensure they include leading practices in accessibility.	Create Guidance	Development and Bylaw
iv. Communicate with residents to ensure fronting sidewalks provide a clear pedestrian path of travel such as by maintaining private landscaping so it does not overhang or encroach public sidewalks and pathways (e.g., low hanging branches, hanging baskets at head-height, thorny bushes, windfall fruit, etc.,)	Apply Guidance	Development and Bylaw

v.	Explore prioritizing accessible sidewalks through the enforcement of landscaping obstructions in the Bylaw Compliance Policy or increasing Village service levels to trim plantings that overhang sidewalks.	Build Capacity	Development and Bylaw Engineering and Public Works
vi.	Explore opportunities to prioritize accessible paths of travel to enable safe navigation through all seasons such as through service level increases, additional staff training, and Bylaw Compliance Policy enforcement. Example of seasonal challenges include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snow clearing of parking lots, sidewalks, bus stop loading areas and intersections, as applicable.</li> <li>• Vegetation management to ensure branches, fruit, and leaf fall do not pose potential tripping / slipping /snag hazards.</li> <li>• Repair of potholes and any significant surface issues.</li> </ul>	Build Capacity	Development and Bylaw; Engineering and Public Works
vii.	Explore establishing a Snow Angels volunteer program for residential area sidewalks and private property	Build Capacity	Engineering and Public Works

## b) Solid Waste Collection

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Explore a program to assist getting solid waste containers to the curb on collection day.	Create Guidance	Engineering and Public Works

## 9.6. Goal 6 - Improve awareness and supports for people with disabilities and systematically excluded groups to prepare for emergencies.

### 9.6.1. Focus Area - Protective Services

#### c) Training

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Train fire rescue responders on strategies for supporting the diversity of residents and residents with disabilities, including an understanding of the different technologies used to support them	Build Capacity	Fire Rescue Services
ii. As a member of Comox Valley Emergency Management, seek training opportunities with Emergency Management BC for emergency support services for diverse community and accessibility needs.	Build Capacity	Community Services

#### d) Fire Rescue

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Acquire specialized equipment to better support a diverse population of residents, including those with disabilities and specific needs.	Event-Triggered	Fire Rescue Services
ii. Maintain a registry of residents with disabilities to support pre-planning and improve emergency response.	Create Guidance	Fire Rescue Services

#### e) Emergency Services

Actions	Approach	Lead
i. Liaise with regional service providers to ensure diverse members of the community are planned for and supported during an evacuation.	Event-Triggered	Fire Rescue Services Community Services
ii. Promote and partner with regional service providers to host emergency preparedness workshops for people facing barriers. Support awareness of these workshops and related resources.	Build Capacity	Fire Rescue Services

# 10. IMPLEMENTATION, FEEDBACK, AND MONITORING

Continuing to do a good job with accessibility and inclusion requires staying up-to-date on changing community priorities, understandings of barrier types, leading practices, and legislated requirements. Lived experience insight, feedback, and monitoring are key pieces that will help the Village continue to meet community needs, make informed decisions, and advance accessibility and inclusion work.

## Implementation Guidance and Feedback

The Village of Cumberland will regularly seek and incorporate feedback from the public to ensure the Action Plan evolves to meet community needs. Two important sources of feedback are:

### 1) The Regional Accessibility Committee

The Accessibility Committee plays a key role in supporting the ongoing implementation of this Action Plan. The Committee provides lived and living experience insight, identifies emerging accessibility and inclusion issues, and offers advice on priorities, approaches, and potential adjustments to actions over time.

The Committee will help the Village:

- Monitor progress and reflect on what is working well.
- Identify barriers or unintended impacts that may arise during implementation.
- Support refinement of actions and priorities as community needs, legislation, and capacity evolve.

The Committee's role is advisory in nature. Involvement in specific initiatives will vary depending on scope, timing, and resourcing, and will be guided by the Committee's terms of reference and Village procedures.

### 2) Public Feedback:

Public comments received through the Village's accessibility feedback phone number and email address will continue to inform implementation and future updates to the Plan. Members of the public are invited to share experiences with barriers found in the Village of Cumberland, as well as their ideas on actions that could be included in future updates to the Plan.

## Monitoring Progress

Understandings of accessibility and inclusion are constantly changing as additional barriers are identified, and better solutions are developed. Monitoring this changing context related to accessibility and inclusion will help the Village of Cumberland make decisions in keeping with promising practices and industry-standards.

In addition to staying on top of industry progress, the Village of Cumberland will monitor and report on internal progress related to the Action Plan and any other accessibility and inclusion work that is undertaken. Village monitoring will happen through:

- Municipal service area reporting – Individual departments will collect and track progress on key Action Plan “wins” and other steps underway.
- Village Annual Report - A summary of progress will be included in the Village’s Annual Report in alignment with Council strategic priorities.
- Accessibility and Inclusion Committee meeting minutes – Meeting discussions will capture advice and lived experience insight from participating members.

*This continuous approach to feedback and monitoring will support the Village as it reviews and updates this Accessibility and Inclusion Plan every three years, in keeping with Provincial legislation.*

# APPENDIX A: TRAINING & CAPACITY-BUILDING APPROACH

This appendix provides additional context to support the “A Note on Training and Capacity-Building” included in the Action Plan. It is intended as an implementation resource to guide internal planning, professional development, and resourcing decisions over the life of the Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan.

## Purpose of Training and Capacity-Building

Ongoing professional development is a critical tool to shift awareness, build skills, and support staff in effectively implementing accessibility and inclusion strategies. Training and capacity-building activities help accessibility considerations become embedded into day-to-day municipal operations, rather than treated as one-off requirements.

Capacity-building may be supported through a combination of:

- **Training current Village staff**
- **Seeking qualified staff in future hires** such as by incorporating accessibility and inclusion competencies into job descriptions and hiring requirements to build internal expertise over time.
- **Engaging external consultants** or facilitators to support specialized or one-time actions (such as the development of internal guidelines or tools).

Additional capacity-building may also be achieved through:

- Partnerships with other local governments, community organizations, or institutions to share learning opportunities or take training together, such as attending courses at the Community Justice Center.
- Encouraging professional development by individual staff or teams such as through online, self-directed, or asynchronous courses.

## Training Types and Application

The following training types are intended to support different levels of organizational capacity and skill development. Together, they provide a flexible framework that can be adapted over time.

### 1. IDEA Awareness Training

#### **Purpose:**

To build a shared baseline understanding of inclusion, disability, accessibility, equity, and anti-ableism across the organization. Information and further resources should be made widely available and, wherever possible, a requirement of employment.

#### **Examples of Topics:**

- Accessibility and disability awareness
- Anti-bias and unconscious bias training
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Anti-stigma and anti-ableism
- Cultural safety and respectful workplace practices

**Primary Audience:**

All staff and Council members.

**Training Approach:**

- External trainers or organizations with lived experience related to the subject matter.
- May include in-person workshops, virtual sessions, or facilitated group learning.

**Frequency:**

- Ideally delivered on a regular basis (e.g., annually).
- At minimum, align training with Council terms or election cycles to ensure new staff and elected officials receive foundational training.

## 2. Standards and Practices Training

**Purpose:**

To support consistent application of accessibility and inclusion standards within policies, programs, services, and operational practices. This training may include staying up-to-date on Provincial standards such as customer service standards.

**Examples of Topics:**

- Procurement and inclusive purchasing practices
- Workplace accommodation requirements and processes
- Inclusive hiring and recruitment practices
- Customer service and public-facing interactions

**Primary Audience:**

- Staff in leadership, supervisory, human resources, procurement, and public-facing roles such as front counter positions.
- Departments and staff responsible for applying specific standards or guidelines.

**Training Approach:**

- External facilitators, sourcing trainers with lived experience where possible.
- Mix of in-person training, virtual sessions, and structured courses.
- May include customized training developed specifically for Village staff.

**Frequency:**

- Managers and relevant staff should complete training upon assuming relevant roles (ideally within one year of being hired).

- Refresher training is recommended every two years, or as standards and legislation evolve.

### 3. Technical Skills Training

**Purpose:**

To build staff capacity to carry out specialized accessibility-related tasks required for implementation.

**Examples of Topics:**

- Plain language writing
- Accessible document design (e.g., Microsoft Word accessibility checker tool)
- Web and digital accessibility (e.g., WCAG application)
- Use of accessibility checking tools in common software platforms

**Primary Audience:**

- Staff whose roles require applying technical accessibility standards (e.g., communications, IT, planning, human resources).

**Training Approach:**

- Independent or self-directed learning (e.g., certification courses, online modules, workshops).
- Targeted training for a limited number of staff to ensure organizational coverage (i.e., it may only be necessary for a couple of staff to be certified to ensure sufficient support is available within the Village).

**Frequency:**

- As needed, based on role requirements and evolving technical standards.

**Training Delivery and Values-Based Considerations**

When selecting training or facilitation support, the Village should prioritize:

- Trainers and organizations led by people with lived experience related to the topic area.

Learning opportunities and formats that are accessible, inclusive, and reflective of diversity.

# APPENDIX B: ENGAGEMENT REPORT

# What We Learned Summary Report

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2025 | Supporting material for the Village of  
Cumberland Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This What We Learned Report summarizes engagement findings from a public survey that was disseminated to Village of Cumberland residents in Fall / Winter 2025.

The Village of Cumberland survey asked respondents to share insight into a range of barriers relating to accessibility and inclusion. Survey categories were designed to address Accessible BC Act legislated standard areas and include:

- Attitudes & Understanding
- Communication, Engagement, and Technology
- Employment
- Programs and Services

This What We Learned Report reflects the perspectives of people with disability and other equity-seeking groups: approximately half of respondents have a disability, while one third belong to a visible minority. However, findings across the survey are broadly consistent regardless of ability or identity. There is widespread benefit to addressing the barriers and challenges identified by survey respondents.

## 2.0 EMERGING THEMES SUMMARY

The following table lists emerging themes that are consolidated from the survey findings. Several of these themes consistently appear across multiple domains and will likely need to be addressed by several policies across Action Plan focus areas. Themes present desired outcomes based on respondent suggestions to address current challenges. **Blue font** is used to indicate focus areas that have not yet been identified, but that could be developed to respond to emerging themes.

An effort has been made to organize emerging themes by priority – with “Frequently Identified Challenges” including those most identified across survey content, followed by “Occasionally Identified Challenges” and lastly “Other Challenges” that were identified less frequently but are non-the-less important to address.

Frequently Identified Challenges		
Emerging Themes	Desired Outcome	Village of Cumberland Focus Area
<b>Programing suitability</b>	A range of program options are provided to meet a diversity of ages, needs, and schedule availabilities.	• Programs and Services
<b>Welcoming and informed staff</b>	Interactions contribute to a welcoming environment both externally through front counter experiences and internally through workplace culture. Staff are aware of available supports and can knowledgeably and respectfully interact with people from a range of backgrounds, helping connect them to the information they need.	• Programs and Services • Employment • Communications, Engagement, and Technology

Occasionally Identified Challenges		
Emerging Themes	Desired Outcome	Village of Cumberland Focus Area
<b>Knowing where to find and access information</b>	Information about employment opportunities, programs, and available supports is easy to find and up-to-date. A variety of formats can be made available on request to support different needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications, Engagement, and Technology</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Programs and Services</li> </ul>
<b>Participating in Village activities</b>	<i>*Attending in-person activities was a commonly identified barrier, but specific factors contributing to this challenge need to be further identified.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications, Engagement, and Technology</li> </ul>
<b>Involved and represented in decision making</b>	People with a diverse range of identities, abilities, and backgrounds are reflected in Village leadership, staff, governance bodies and committees. The insight of people with lived experience is sought out and listened to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• <a href="#">Governance and Capacity</a></li> </ul>
Other Challenges		
Emerging Themes	Desired Outcome	Village of Cumberland Focus Area
<b>Visibility of diversity</b>	Public imagery such as that used in communications materials, and community activities such as events and festivals, reflect diversity of Village residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications, Engagement, and Technology</li> <li>• <a href="#">Procurement</a></li> </ul>
<b>Built environment access</b>	Improvements are made to physical infrastructure such as sidewalks, facilities, and recreational trails to identify and remove obstacles to access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Built Environment and Transportation Networks</a></li> </ul>
<b>Active transportation network improvements</b>	Infrastructure such as sidewalks and cycle routes are connected to key areas and help people reliably get around.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Built Environment and Transportation Networks</a></li> </ul>
<b>Seasonal maintenance</b>	High traffic pedestrian routes are navigable in all seasons and weathers, especially with consideration for snow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Built Environment and Transportation Networks</a></li> </ul>
<b>Transparency and accountability</b>	Civic processes are clearly outlined and expectations are communicated relating to how feedback is being received and addressed. Response timelines are standardized and communicated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs and Services</li> <li>• Communications, Engagement, and Technology</li> <li>• <a href="#">Governance and Capacity</a></li> </ul>
<b>Workplace accommodations</b>	Access is a core consideration in the design and decision of employment considerations, ensuring applications are aware of available supports, accommodations, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• <a href="#">Procurement</a></li> </ul>

processes to access employment with the Village. Requirements like certificates and experience are thoughtfully considered, and when included, crucial to job responsibilities.

<b>Collaboration with external partners</b>	Potential community partners are identified and engaged to extend available resources.	• <a href="#">Governance and Capacity</a>
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### 3.0 PUBLIC SURVEY FINDINGS

The Village of Cumberland Action Plan to Remove Barriers from Village Services was designed to seek insight primarily from Village residents with life experiences of disability, either personally or indirectly as in a caregiver role or service-based career.

In total, 41 surveys were received across online submissions, but nearly half of these were not filled out leading to a relatively small number of respondents—approximately 20 people per question. Of the completed submissions, response rates were high for all questions, meaning both open-ended and checkbox-style questions received similar levels of input. Hardcopy surveys were also provided but none were completed.

The following summary of survey responses presents an analysis of findings and contains the following:

- **Demographics** – Who participated in the survey and were a diversity of perspectives included?
- **Accessibility Vision** – What do respondents think a future Village of Cumberland looks like that is inclusive and accessible for all?
- **Focus Area Barriers** – What challenges to accessibility and inclusion are respondents commonly experiencing in their daily lives in the Village? Findings are organized according to focus area type to support input into the Village’s Action Plan.
  - Attitudes and Understanding
  - Communications, Engagement, and Technology
  - Employment
  - Programs and Services
- **Other Identified Challenges** – What other barrier types have been identified beyond the focus areas identified in the survey? This section includes Built Environment related feedback.

Further detail and figures relating to participant responses are presented in [Appendix A](#).

**A note on survey analysis** – The following considerations informed the approach to analyzing survey findings:

- **Drawing conclusions from a small data set** – Given the small number of surveys received (41 total), it is important to be cautious about drawing large conclusions as the results can easily be skewed by one or two people. However, it is important to not dismiss findings, as survey responses generally align with issues and gaps identified in previous high level strategic work, as well as with common challenges experienced in other communities.
- **Cross analyzing findings by demographic characteristics** – Survey results were examined to determine if respondent’s identities or disabilities contributed to different types of challenges being identified. In general, respondents identified the same top challenges regardless of identity or disability.
- **Handling negative feedback** – Some survey responses indicated dissatisfaction with Village processes. For all responses, an effort was made to sift through feedback to identify constructive insight relevant to accessibility and inclusion work. Other elements that were not applicable were filtered out.

### 3.1 RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic questions were asked relating to identity, experiences with disability, and level of education. The responses support that the survey was primarily answered by residents with disabilities or caregivers of people with disabilities.

- **Disability** - Most respondents have a disability (47%) with many having more than one disability (64% of respondents with disabilities have more than one).
- **Information processing** – Most respondents do not face challenges reading, writing, or understanding information (67%) but several respondents identified they have this difficulty (20%).
- **Invisible conditions** – Combined, the number of respondents with invisible disabilities like mental health, neurodivergence, or chronic pain, is greater than the number of respondents with visible disabilities like mobility, hearing, and vision impairments (63% visible, 95% invisible).
- **Identity** - Some members belong to a visible minority (32%), but no respondents were Indigenous.
- **Education** – Most respondents have a level of higher education with most having gone to post secondary school and completing a bachelors degree (39%) or higher (28%).

“I think accessibility is seen as only physical and many barriers are not addressed- especially for marginalized groups.”  
- Respondent

**Most common disabilities:**

<p><b>1. Mobility (37%)</b> Conditions such as balance challenges, difficulty walking, and use of a wheelchair.</p>	<p><b>2. Mental Health (32%)</b> Conditions such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD.</p>	<p><b>3. Neurodivergence (32%)</b> Conditions such as ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorder.</p>
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These demographics were used to cross analyze responses to see if people with disabilities or marginalized identities experience specific challenges that differ from other respondents. Due to the number of survey

responses, it is not possible to identify statistically significant differences across responses, but areas where trends are indicated have been included.

The above insight emerged from responses to questions 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 included in [Appendix A](#).

### 3.2 ACCESSIBILITY VISION

The survey sought an understanding of how accessibility and inclusion is important to community members. We asked three questions: “Making the Village more accessible means...?” “Making the Village more inclusive means...?” and “Making the Village more welcoming to diverse people means...?”

Survey responses highlight that making accessibility improvements not only benefits people with disabilities, but other community members as well, such as families, youth, older adults and people with different identities and from diverse backgrounds. Responses generally describe how an accessible community would not have barriers across a comprehensive range of focus areas: programs and services, communications, engagement, and other civic processes. A vision for a community without barriers emerges:

- **Safe and welcome in community** – People feel comfortable in their community, can safely navigate and get around, and interactions with community members and staff reinforce a sense of belonging.
- **Able to get around and participate** – People have access to the infrastructure, supports, and information to participate in public programming, community events, and live meaningful lives in their communities.
- **Involved in decision-making** – People with disabilities and diverse identities are included in civic engagement opportunities and can share their insights at decision-making tables.
- **Educated and understanding attitudes** – People are compassionate towards other individuals’ needs, there is space for equity-seeking voices to share insight, there is awareness of both physical and invisible disabilities, and diversity is embraced.

**“All of Cumberland values that diversity exists in our community, that we all belong, and that there are benefits for everyone if this is a value at the core of our community.”**

- Respondent

**“That accessibility and inclusion are at the foundations of all we do. That we don't just focus on the obvious needs but also non-obvious ones such as aging brains or mental health and supports they will need, neurodivergent needs and how these individuals communicate with the community and how they are supported, and how we address safety of these other needs so everyone feels safe and included.”**

- Respondent

**“Education - drawing on the members of our village who hold knowledge in this area (lived experience and professionals) and being open to their knowledge and ways of doing.”**

- Respondent

The above themes emerged from responses to questions 2,3, 4, and 22 included in [Appendix A](#).

### 3.3 ATTITUDES & UNDERSTANDING

We asked questions about community experiences with Village staff to seek insight into attitudes toward people with disabilities and understandings of disability issues. In general, responses indicate there is a need for improvement.

- Inconsistent experiences with staff interactions** – Some respondents shared that they have polite interactions with staff and find staff generally helpful. However, most respondents shared that they have *neutral* (31%) or negative experiences with staff making them feel welcome (36%).
 

**“I don't believe that all Village staff share values around diversity and inclusion.”**  
- Respondent
- Desire for action to advance accessibility improvements** – Few respondents feel welcome to provide feedback with Village staff (27%) compared to the number of respondents who feel *neutral* about their ability to provide feedback (41%). Some respondents share the feeling that their feedback is not being listened to as accessibility issues continue to persist.
 

**“Having an awareness that there are people like me in this community, that would like to participate but most of the time physically can't do so, would go a long way.”**  
- Respondent
- Customer service recommendations** – Several suggestions were provided across open-ended survey responses to improve interactions with frontline staff and support the creation of a more welcoming environment where community members feel comfortable and able to participate. Suggestions include:
  - Set clear expectations for communication and response times.
  - Training on the appropriate treatment of traditionally marginalized groups.
  - Ensuring staff can inform residents, and make them aware of opportunities and supports suitable to their needs.

The above themes emerged from responses to questions 5,6, 7, and 8 included in [Appendix A](#).

### 3.4 COMMUNICATION, ENGAGEMENT, AND TECHNOLOGY

We asked questions about the challenges community members with accessibility needs face accessing information, participating in Village-run engagement activities, and municipal governance processes.

**Most common ways to access information:**

- |                          |                               |                     |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Village Website (63%) | 2. Village Social Media (53%) | 3. Email News (42%) |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|

- Inconsistent experiences accessing information** – Some respondents have an easy time accessing information (37%) while others have a *difficult* time (32%). The most common challenge respondents identified with accessing information is *knowing where to find it*, including navigating websites (54%).
 

**“Finding information is difficult as programs continue to change.”**  
- Respondent
- Emergency management awareness opportunity** – No respondents identified that they receive *Emergency Alerts* from the Village of Cumberland, which reflects the infrequent use of the Village’s emergency alert system. However, as people with disabilities are frequently among the most vulnerable community members, and rates of natural disasters are increasing, there could be an opportunity to better consider how to communicate with individuals with disabilities as part of emergency management planning.

- **Online engagements are easier to participate in than in-person ones** – Respondents shared a higher degree of difficulty joining in-person events (54%) compared to online (23%). Additional insight is needed to determine what factors are creating barriers to participation. Common barriers such as *assistive device compatibility* and range of *communication formats* did not emerge as significant barriers in respondent’s answers (less than 8% of responses selected these as challenges).
- **More accommodations would support governance involvement** – Some respondents shared an interest in *joining a Council Committee* (26%) or *running for Council* (5%). Accessibility barriers that commonly prevent these respondents from participating are broadly related to needing accommodations such as different forms of information, different experience requirements, and changes to the workplace culture.
  - Suggestions were also provided to improve the Council meeting process to support greater participation, such as incorporating more plain language into proceedings. A suggestion was also made to record Council meetings, yet these are already live streamed and available through the Village of Cumberland website and YouTube channel. There could be opportunity to explore if public members are generally aware of these options.

**“Acknowledging the need for this work to be done is a great first step. It won’t be easy work but there are great resources in our community who can help.”**  
- Respondent

The above themes emerged from responses to questions 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15, shared in [Appendix A](#).

### 3.5 EMPLOYMENT

We asked questions about the challenges community members face in accessing local employment with the Village.

- **People are interested in working with the Village, but may not apply** – Some respondents shared that they would like to work at the Village but have not applied (24%) compared to a smaller number of residents who have applied (13%). Challenges faced applying (or wanting to apply) to the Village vary but include the following:
  - Not being adequately informed about employment opportunities.
  - Not having the required experience listed in the application.
  - Not feeling like someone with their identity would be welcome at the Village.

**“The village doesn’t have strong enough protection against bullying and harassment for marginalized groups. This is well known.”**  
- Respondent

Answers were cross-analyzed for differences among respondents with disabilities and diverse identities. The challenges listed above were identified by respondents with disabilities and those who identify as belonging to a visible minority.

The above themes emerged from responses to questions 16 and 17, shared in [Appendix A](#).

### 3.6 PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

We asked respondents to share their experiences accessing Village-operated programming and services. In general, responses indicate that this is an area for improvement.

**Most commonly accessed Village services and programs:**

**1. Tied: Paying Taxes / Utility Bills and Solid Waste Collection (63%)**

**2. Fitness and Recreation Programming (53%)**

**3. Tied: Voting in Local Elections and Emergency Services (47%)**

Although numerous services were identified by respondents as elements they interact with in their daily life, respondents primarily focused on fitness and recreation related programming as areas with opportunities for improvement.

Over half of respondents think Cumberland is doing a *Poor* (47%) or *Very Poor* (5%) job of providing accessible, equitable, and inclusive programming and services. Remaining respondents think Cumberland is doing *Alright* (26%) or *Well* (21%). The **top areas identified for improvement** are:

- 1) Tied: Addressing program scheduling and availability (42%) and providing programs and services that meet diverse needs (42%).
- 2) Ensuring staff have training to provide support as needed and make residents feel welcome (25%).
- 3) Addressing high program costs (17%).

Additional insight into challenges and potential solutions emerged from responses tied to other survey questions:

- **Programming that meets diverse needs** – Older teens and children with diverse needs were two groups identified as needing additional programming options.
- **Awareness and availability of support staff** – There is a desire to access trained support staff to enable youth participation in programming.
- **Explore opportunities to collaborate with service providers** – The Canadian Autism Network was provided as an example that operates a range of programs that could address programming gaps.
- **Better awareness of financial supports** – More respondents identified that they face financial barriers to participating in Village programs and services (17%) than are accessing financial assistance for recreation programs (5%). Although the numbers are small, this finding indicates a lack of awareness or ability to access the available supports, and there may be a benefit to exploring the Village’s FAIR program further.

**“I feel like ideas are not being listened to and programs [are not] up to their full potential. I feel there needs to be a shift to support our community.”**  
- Respondent

**“Be open to suggestions from the community, show the community you are listening to suggestions. Train more and hire more staff to work with people who need support.”**  
- Respondent

The above themes emerged from responses to questions 18, 19, 20, and 21, shared in [Appendix A](#).

### 3.7 OTHER IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES

#### Built Environment

The Built Environment was not an explicit theme of the survey; questions were not included relating to public infrastructure or transportation, as the Village has facilities and built environment plans in place that speak to this. However, numerous comments relating to the built environment were identified by respondents across open-ended answers. These comments have been grouped into the following themes:

- **Physical infrastructure improvements** – such as implementing power-operated door openings, ensuring level thresholds, providing ramps for building access, and having accessible recreational trails.

- **Network connectivity improvements** – such as addressing gaps in the cycling and sidewalk network, ensuring access routes to facilities from parking lots are accessible, improving challenging intersections and road crossings, and exploring opportunities to improve public transit frequency.
- **Snow clearing** – ensuring high traffic access routes are safe to navigate regardless of season.

### Collaboration and Partnership Networks

Several respondents, including those with disabilities and those belonging to visible minorities, shared a desire to better integrate the insight of people with lived experience into civic processes. Respondents want lived experience to be valued and responded to, and an opportunity to be involved in decision-making processes.

Other challenges identified by respondents are beyond the direct authority of the Village. For example, addressing challenges to accessing private businesses. Suggestions such as these indicate two things: firstly, that there could be a need to explore establishing networks with external service providers, community members, and other government bodies to address some of the challenges facing community members; and secondly, that there may be a need to more broadly educate residents on areas that are within the Village’s control.

## 4.0 IMPLICATIONS & NEXT STEPS

The emerging themes and challenges identified by survey respondents will be used to frame focus areas and action items for the Village’s Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan. The table listed in [section 2.0](#) will be a strong foundation for this work. Findings should be reviewed with the Village’s Accessibility Committee to ground truth the suggestions and identify any other gaps that may not have been included.

Beyond the elements identified in the survey, it will be important for the Village’s Action Plan to address other areas that will advance the Village’s commitment to accessibility and integrate with other planning processes. Examples of these areas include procurement and emergency response planning.

## APPENDIX A – SURVEY RESPONSES

Responses have been included for questions asked in the survey. Questions have been grouped by category to align with sections in the analysis and are not in numerical order. In the case of open-ended responses, spelling and grammar has not been edited but negative and unrelated comments have been removed.

### OPEN-ENDED VISIONING QUESTIONS

#### Question 2. Making the Village more accessible means...?

- having trails that are accessible
- Making physical spaces accessible to all. Making information easy to access and understand. Less jargon, more plain language.
- No idea
- Both ease of moving and access to council meetings and CRACs.
- Removing barriers to experience the village - both for physical and mental barriers
- Wider door entrances, ramps, and snow removal
- That accessibility and inclusion are at the foundations of all we do. That we don't just focus on the obvious needs but also non-obvious ones, such as aging brains or mental health and supports they will need, neurodivergent needs and how these individuals communicate with the community and how they are supported, and how we address the safety of these other needs so everyone feels safe and included.
- It means removing systemic and physical barriers
- Better roads in and out for driving (fixing potholes); dedicated and safe bike lanes; more frequent transit
- Removing barriers to services, creating programs and services with the perspective of who they are for in mind
- All ages and body types can access amenities with ease (physically)
- Ensuring all who have any physical or mental limitations are able to access the services they require.
- More handicap doors on businesses in the Village and better streets, as I have a disability and use a walker.
- Everyone included
- Sidewalks
- Providing information on how to access services in different formats, online, print mailers in mail boxes
- Safe for all users
- better and open communication with planning services
- Making sure that everyone can access services, including people with disabilities

#### Question 3. Making the Village more inclusive means....?

- side walks that allow easy entry to the crosswalk or roadway.
- Acknowledging people's differences without judgement. Making spaces and information accessible.
- No idea
- Being allowed to w comments and questions without being reprimanded
- Making everyone feel welcome and valued, not excluding anyone from any activities
- More adaptive programs at the CRI for youth and children, have support people trained to support these people, connect with CAN: Canucks Autism Network

- "Acceptance- that all of Cumberland values that diversity exists in our community, that we all belong, and that there are benefits for everyone if this is a value at the core of our community.
- Education - drawing on the members of our village who hold knowledge in this area (lived experience and professionals) and being open to their knowledge and ways of doing. "
- Everyone is safe and represented in how services are provided
- More diversity in celebrations and family programming. I.e. There are a lot of arts and music festivals, but less cultural celebrations that showcase diversity and inclusivity.
- Cultural inclusion. Listening to what people need and are saying
- All ages and body types can access amenities with ease (mentally)
- Creating a space where all feel welcome and that their voices and perspectives can be heard.
- More handicap doors on businesses in the Village and better streets, as I have a disability and use a walker.
- All opinions ok
- Some of us aren't mountain bikers! Some of us are chronically ill or have disabilities and are living under the poverty line. It's really hard to find supports that might exist here, that I don't know about.
- Welcoming for all
- Recognizing all sections of previous residents and future ones regardless of origin

**Question 4. Making the Village more welcoming to diverse people means...?**

- Having amenities that allows them to be a part of what the village has to offer.
- Ensuring the Village is a safe place.
- Treating all people equally
- Making the village accessible, having training for public services staff in place to know how to address people of different backgrounds
- More programming for children/youth
- Beautify the downtown core with trees, garden boxes, have children/youth be part of this process"
- I think we need to do work on our values- we need to develop cognitive flexibility so that we can have curiosity and compassion for our community, as individuals and as a community.
- Having inclusive programs and services where village staff are trained to be respectful and understanding of intersectionality
- A tourist centre or booth in town
- More cultural representation of Village staff and council
- Display of signs and symbols that include all groups. Creating space where these groups may gather. Showing clearly that all groups are welcomed.
- More handicap doors on businesses in the Village and better streets, as I have a disability and use a walker.
- Treat equally
- Better open meetings

**Question 22: What else would you like us to know to help us develop this action plan?**

- have staff respond timely and appropriately to emails etc.
- I would like to see a handrail at the two steps leading from the barrier free parking stall to the village office. I would like to see more Council and committee meetings on line and to hear more discussions about the topics at these meetings. I would like to see the presentation screen when presentations are being made

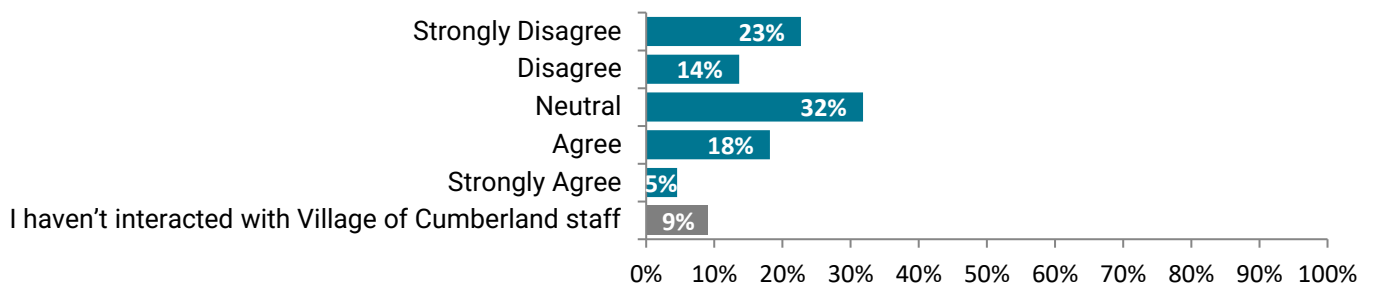
so I can follow along. Looking at Council members when staff are talking about "changes to map D" for example, isn't helpful.

- Discuss in a council meeting
- Look at models of other rec centers are doing in BC or Canada or globally and try it out! Be open to suggestions from the community, show the community you are listening to suggestions. Train more and hire more staff to work with people who need support
- I think accessibility is seen as only physical and many barriers are not addressed- especially for marginalized groups.
- More inclusive and interesting programming for youth and teens in the community. There is a lack of support, programming, resources for older kids in Cumberland.
- subdividing plan needs to be based on Gantt style format to prevent inconsistent decisions

## ATTITUDES & UNDERSTANDING

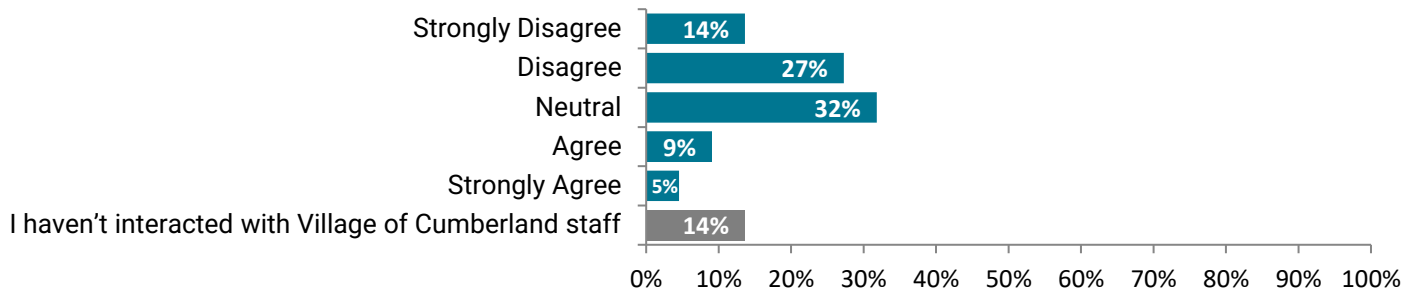
### Question 5:

In interactions with Village of Cumberland staff, I have felt welcome.



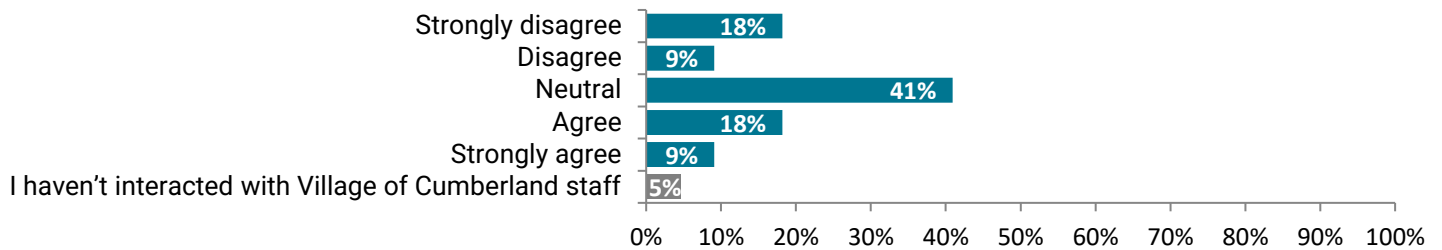
### Question 6:

In interactions with Village of Cumberland Staff, I have felt that my needs are being considered.



### Question 7:

I have felt welcome to provide feedback to the Village of Cumberland.



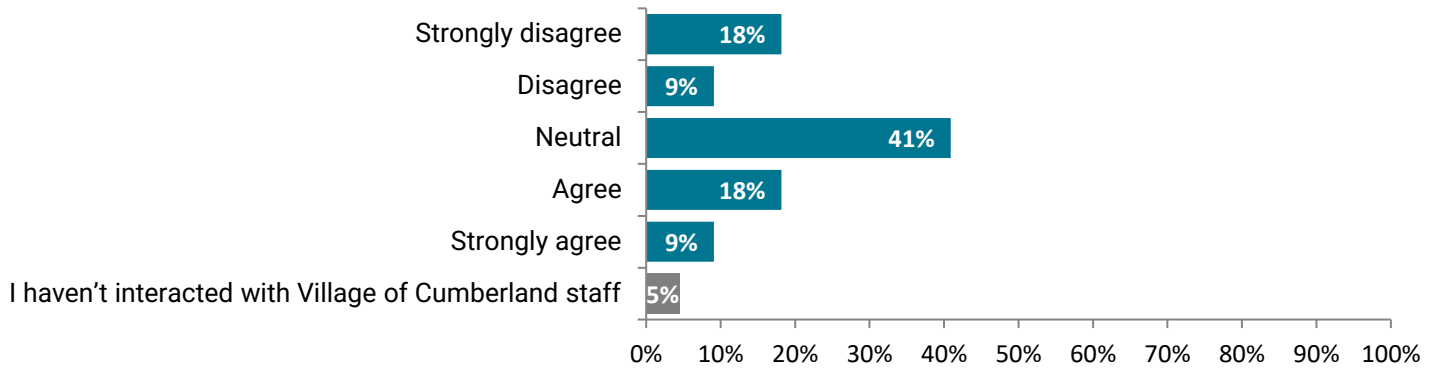
**Question 8: Please share anything that contributed to your answers about Attitudes and Understanding**

- the making trails wheelchair and stroller friendly has not been dealt with for years
- I have physical limitations. When I tried to go to the Village office in the winter I couldn't get there. The barrier free parking stall is at the top of two steps with no handrail. The steps were icy and covered in snow. I left without going into the office. When I've called the Village, staff are always helpful and polite. Finding information on or about the Village, like this survey, is hard. I want to delete my Facebook account but feel Facebook is the only way for me to find out about village news.
- Better communication from staff connected to the CRI and programming. I feel like ideas are not being listened to and programs up to their full potential. I feel there needs to be a shift to support our community.
- I think there are people at the VOC who are curious and understanding, but I think there are others who have predetermined ideas and are less openminded.
- I don't believe that all village staff share values around diversity and inclusion
- Was faced with A very rude staff person at the front counter. And another staff had to step in
- The staff was rude when I was trying to help a person with issues they where having.
- Overall, people are welcoming and helpful.
- I have very limited interactions with Cumberland staff
- lack of understanding any issues with VoC. There is no independent dispute system.

**COMMUNICATION, ENGAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY:**

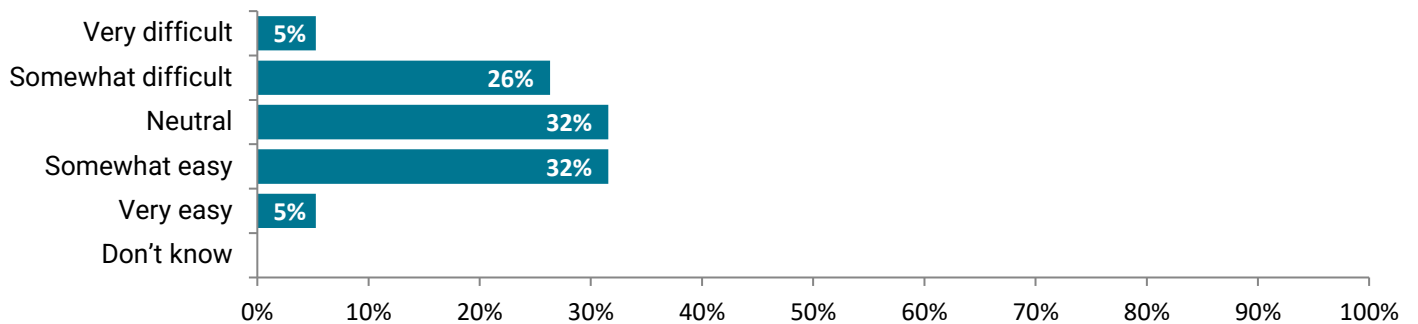
**Question 9:**

I have felt welcome to provide feedback to the Village of Cumberland.



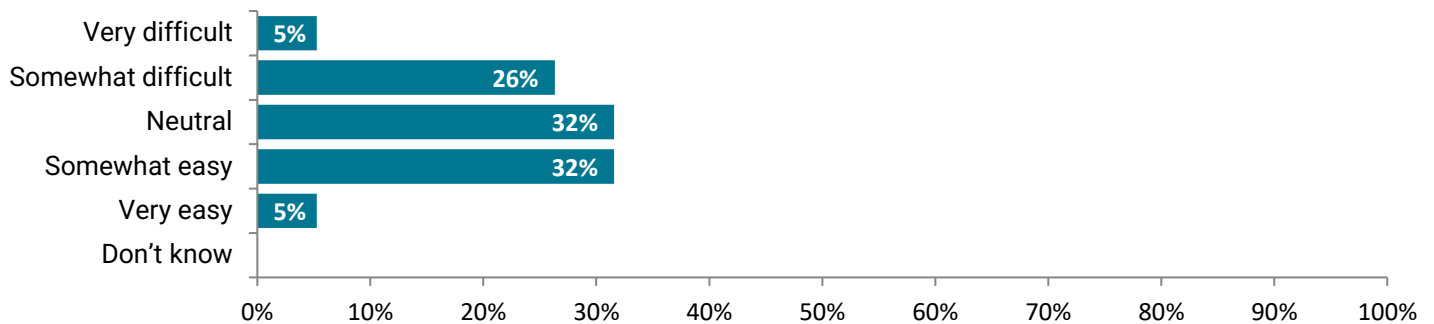
**Question 10:**

How easy do you find accessing information from the Village of Cumberland?



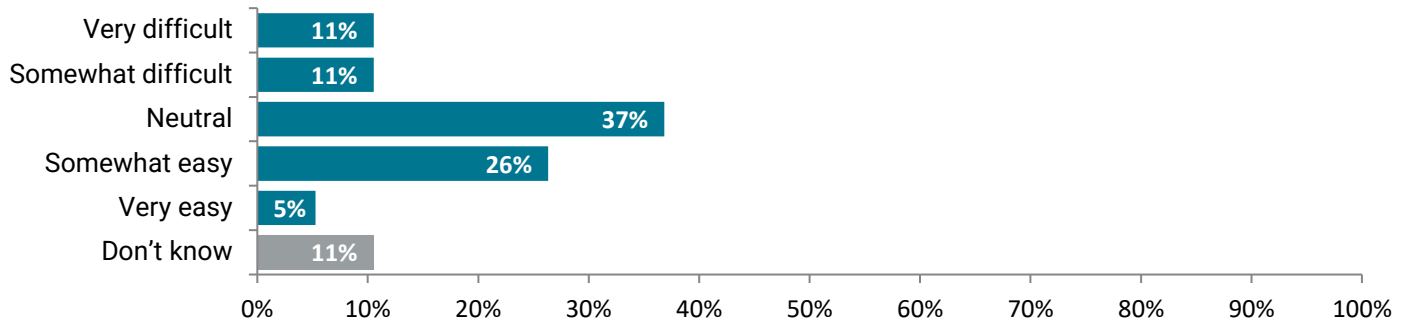
**Question 11:**

How easy do you find accessing information from the Village of Cumberland?



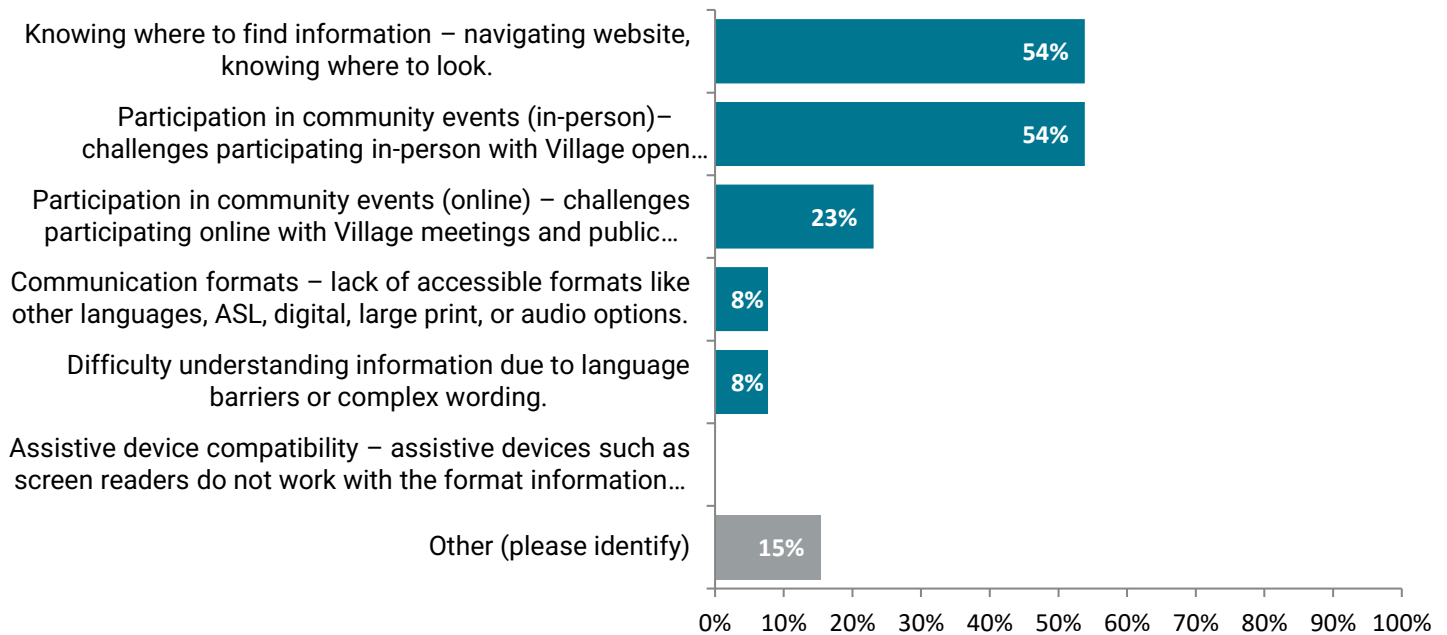
**Question 12:**

How easy is it for you to join online engagements hosted by the Village?



**Question 13:**

Have you had any of the following challenges with accessing information or participating in engagement with the Village of Cumberland? Check all that apply.



**Question 18: Please share any additional information you want the Village of Cumberland to know about improving communication and participation.**

- I watched a Village Council meeting about the budget. At the end, I didn't feel informed. The conversations and discussions by Council seemed to infer all decisions had been made prior to the public portion of the meeting. There was no real discussion or deliberation. There were lots of references to presentations made

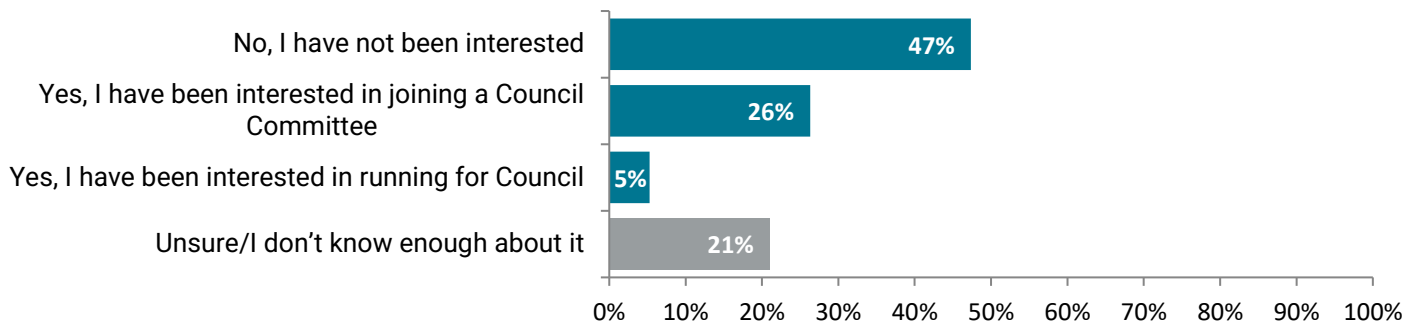
at previous meetings but no discussion about the content of the presentation. Maybe the discussion occurred at the previous meeting, but without watching these previous meetings it all felt superficial. When it came time to discuss the budget it was so high-level it wasn't informative.

- Make surveys that aren't slanted. Have community meetings part of council make sure recorded. Also items go to apc without the public knowing or opportunities for input
- Have community plans visible in a public area like the Market Square or library
- Acknowledging the need for this work to be done is a great first step. It won't be easy work but there are great resources in our community who can help.
- I have applied numerous times in the past to work at the Village office, in the past (over 20 years ago), when my children were young. Since there was lots of competition, I never received an interview, but it would have been an ideal place to work.
- I feel like the baseline resident here is a well off family with kids, that is super active. I am not those people. I have hearing and balance issues, I struggle with having enough to buy groceries and I can't hear well in crowded places and especially during festivals and events. I'm also still masking indoors in crowded spaces. Having an awareness that there are people like me in this community, that would like to participate but most of the time physically can't do so, would go a long way.

## EMPLOYMENT

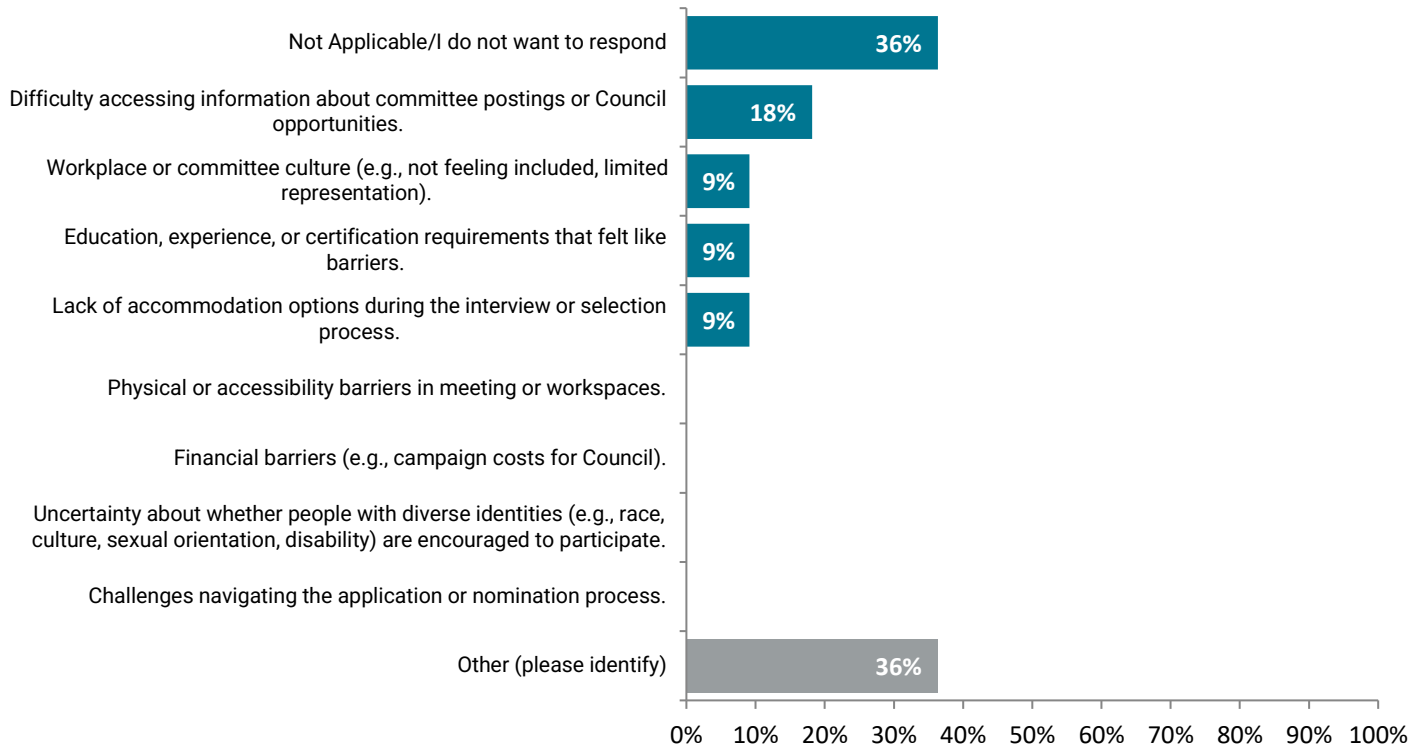
### Question 14:

Have you ever been interested in joining a Council committee or running for Council?



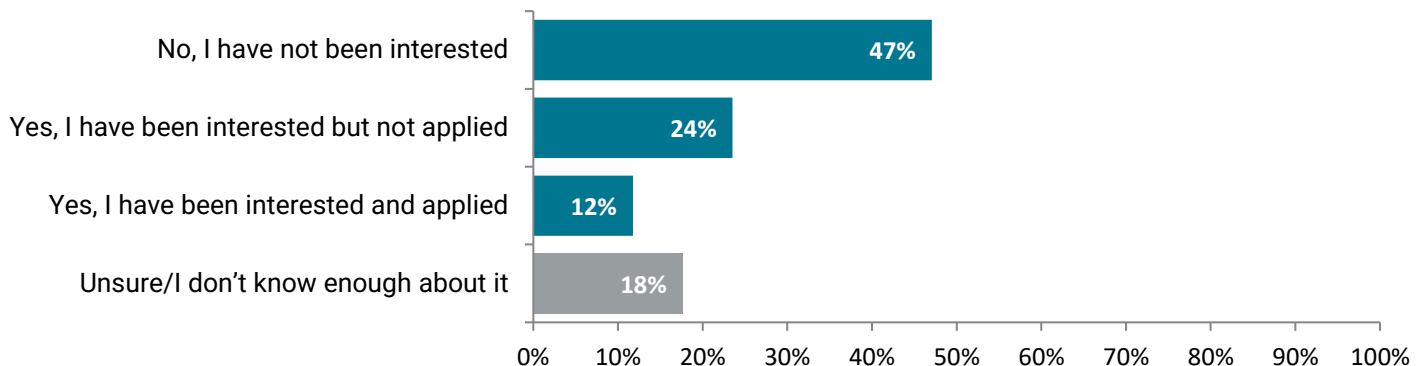
**Question 15:**

If you answered yes to the previous question have you experienced any challenges or barriers that made it difficult for you to take part?



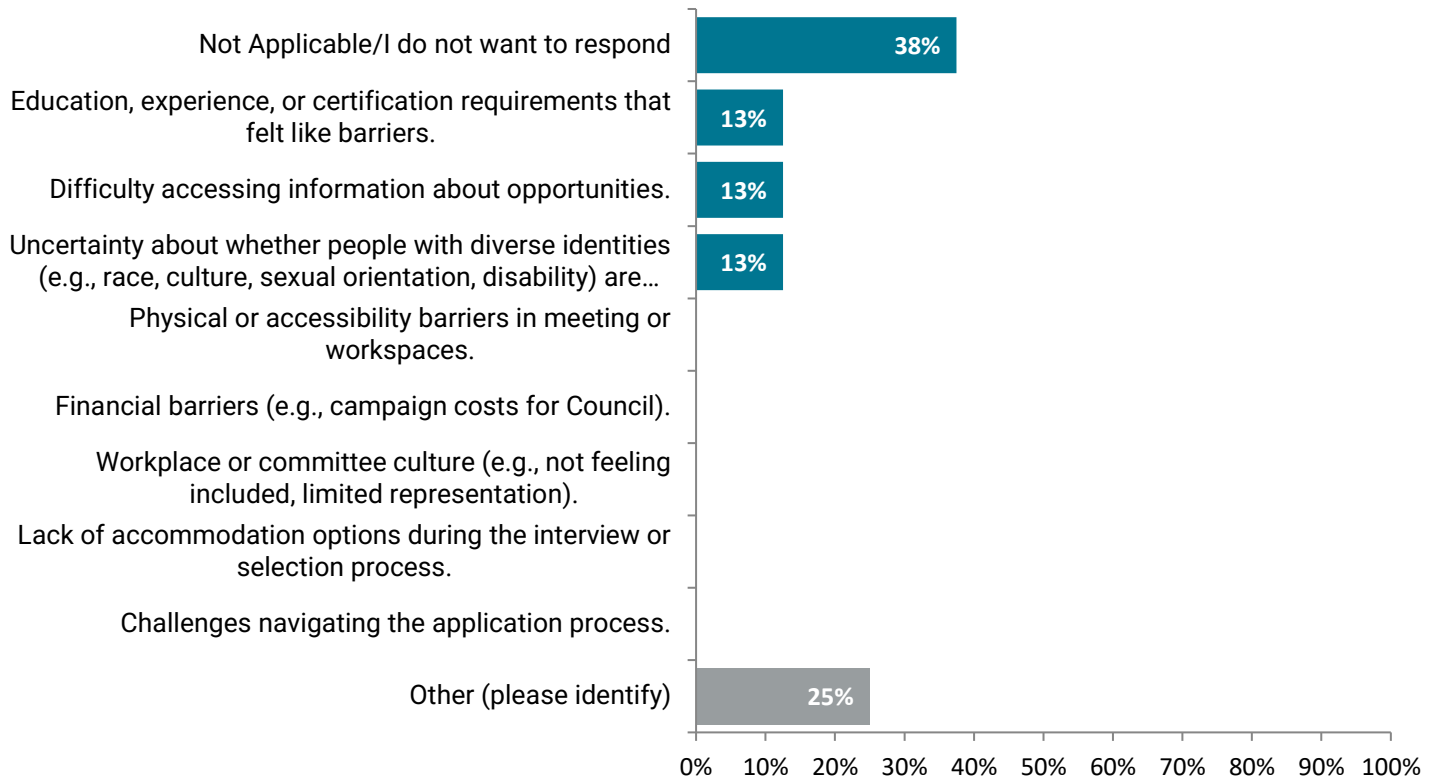
**Question 16:**

Have you ever been interested in working at the Village?



Question 17:

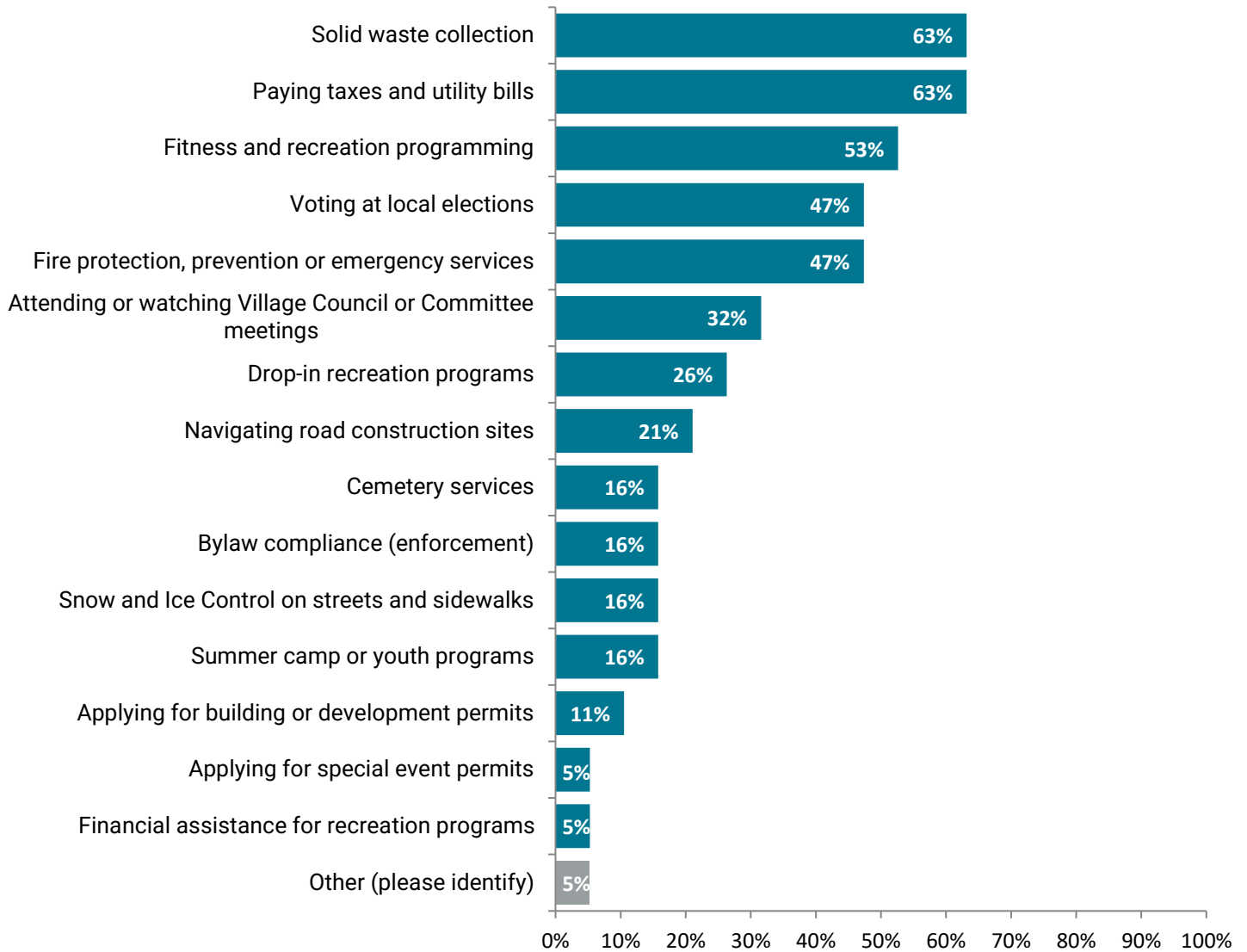
If you answered yes to the previous question, have you experienced any challenges or barriers that made it difficult for you pursue employment with the Village?



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

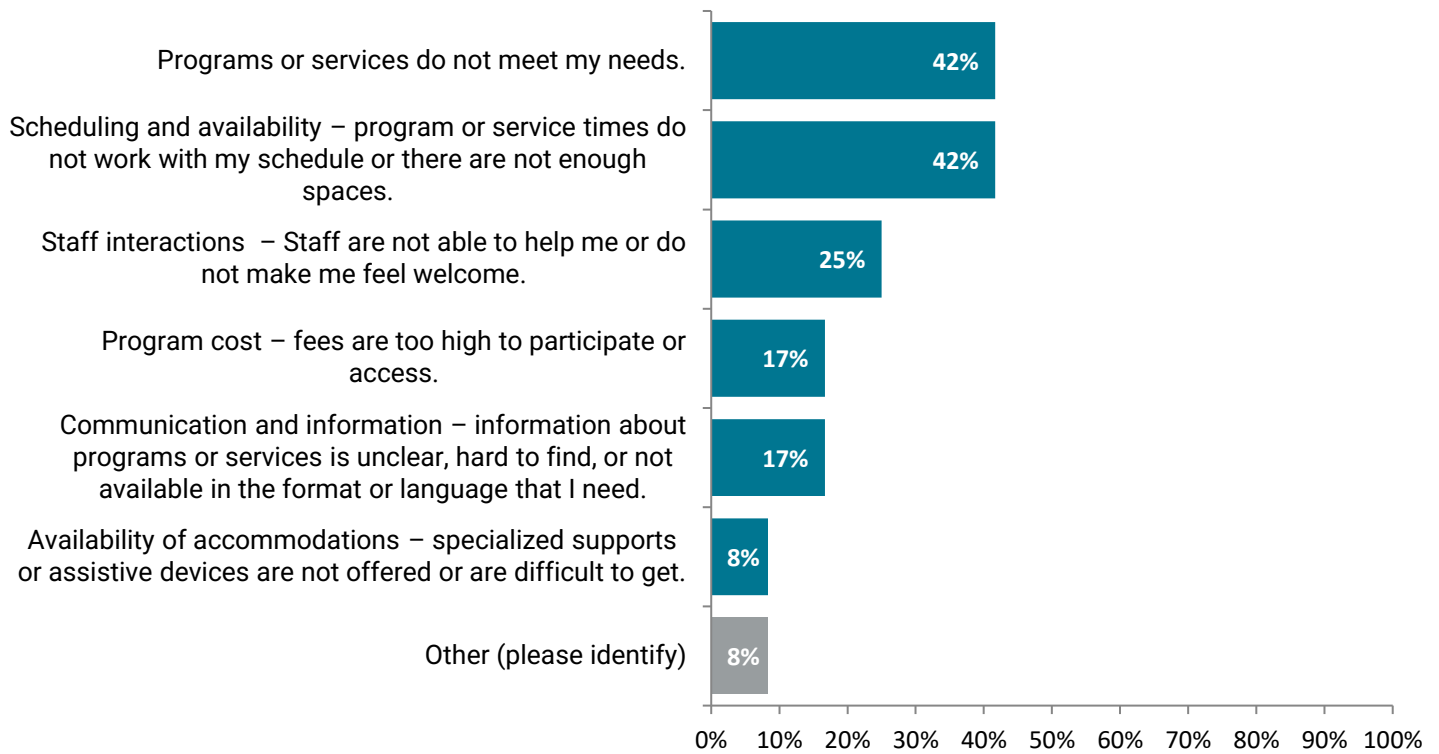
Question 19:

What Village services and programs do you use? Check all that apply.



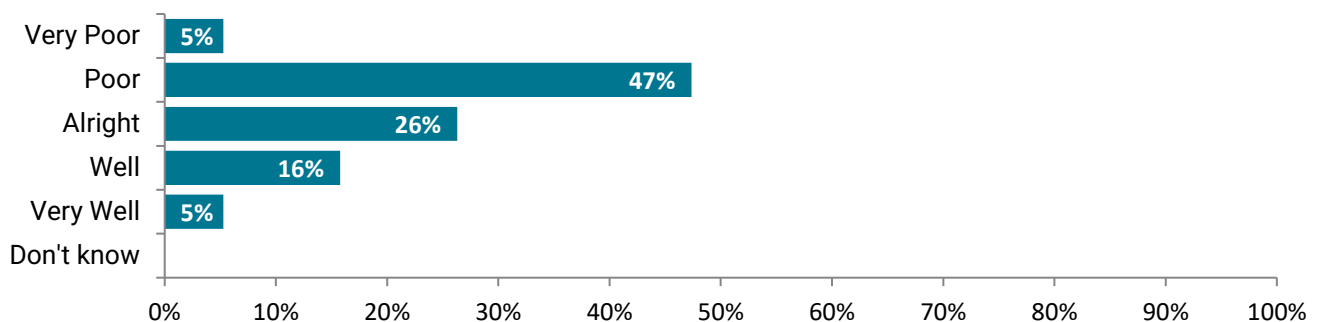
**Question 20:**

Tell us about the types of challenges you, or the person you support, experience accessing Village programs and services. Check all that apply.



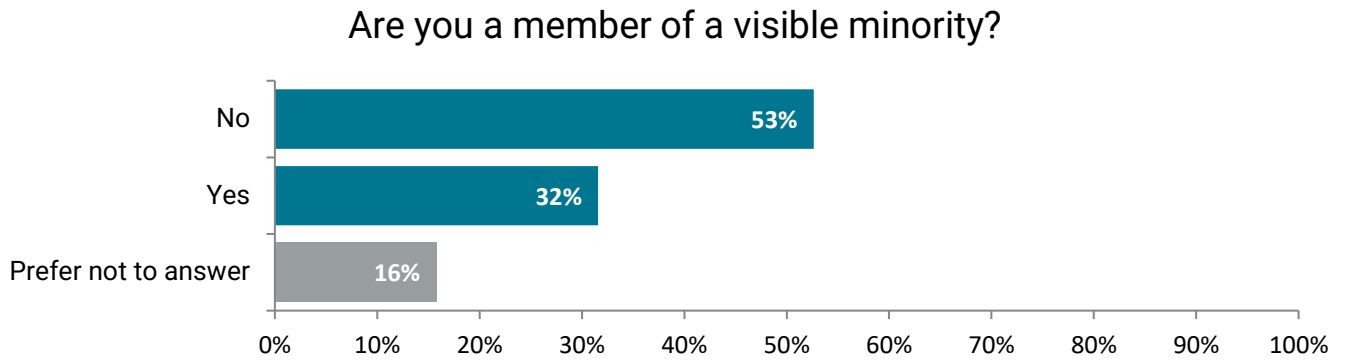
**Question 21:**

Overall, how do you think Cumberland is doing at providing accessible, equitable and inclusive programs and services?

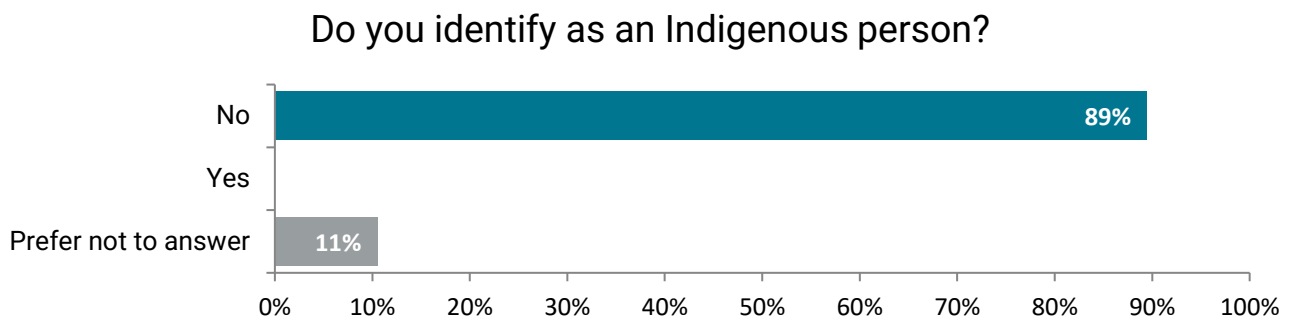


## RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

### Question 23:

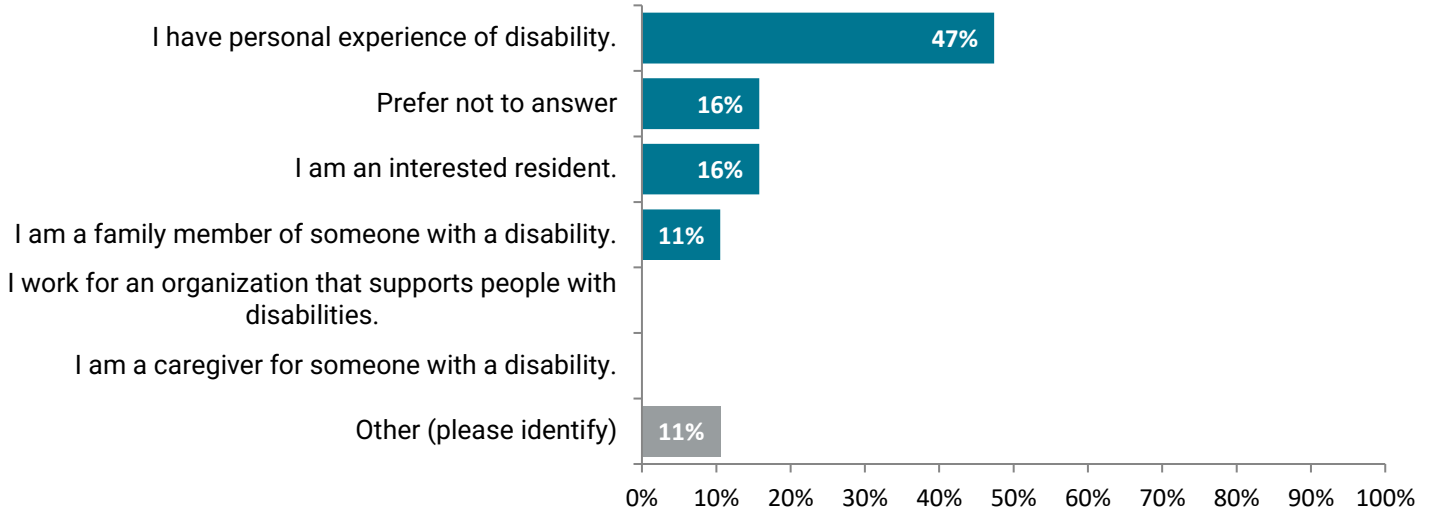


### Question 24:



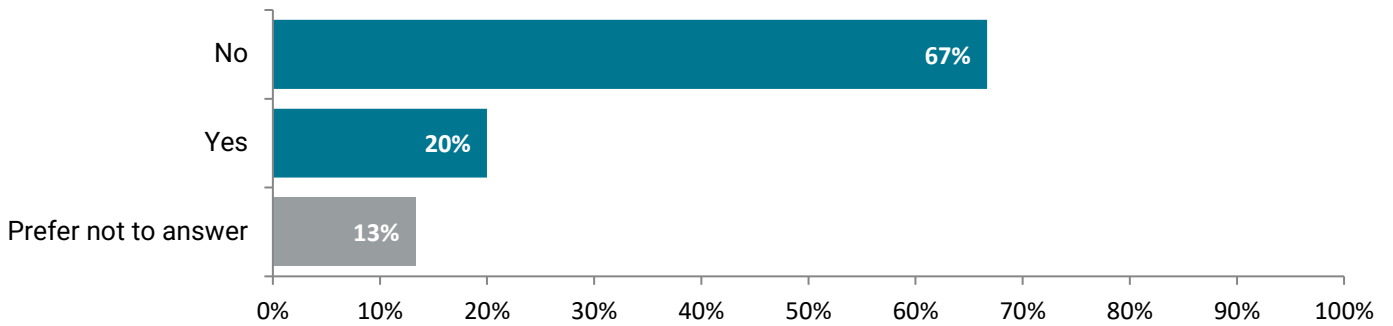
**Question 25:**

What is your primary relationship with disability?



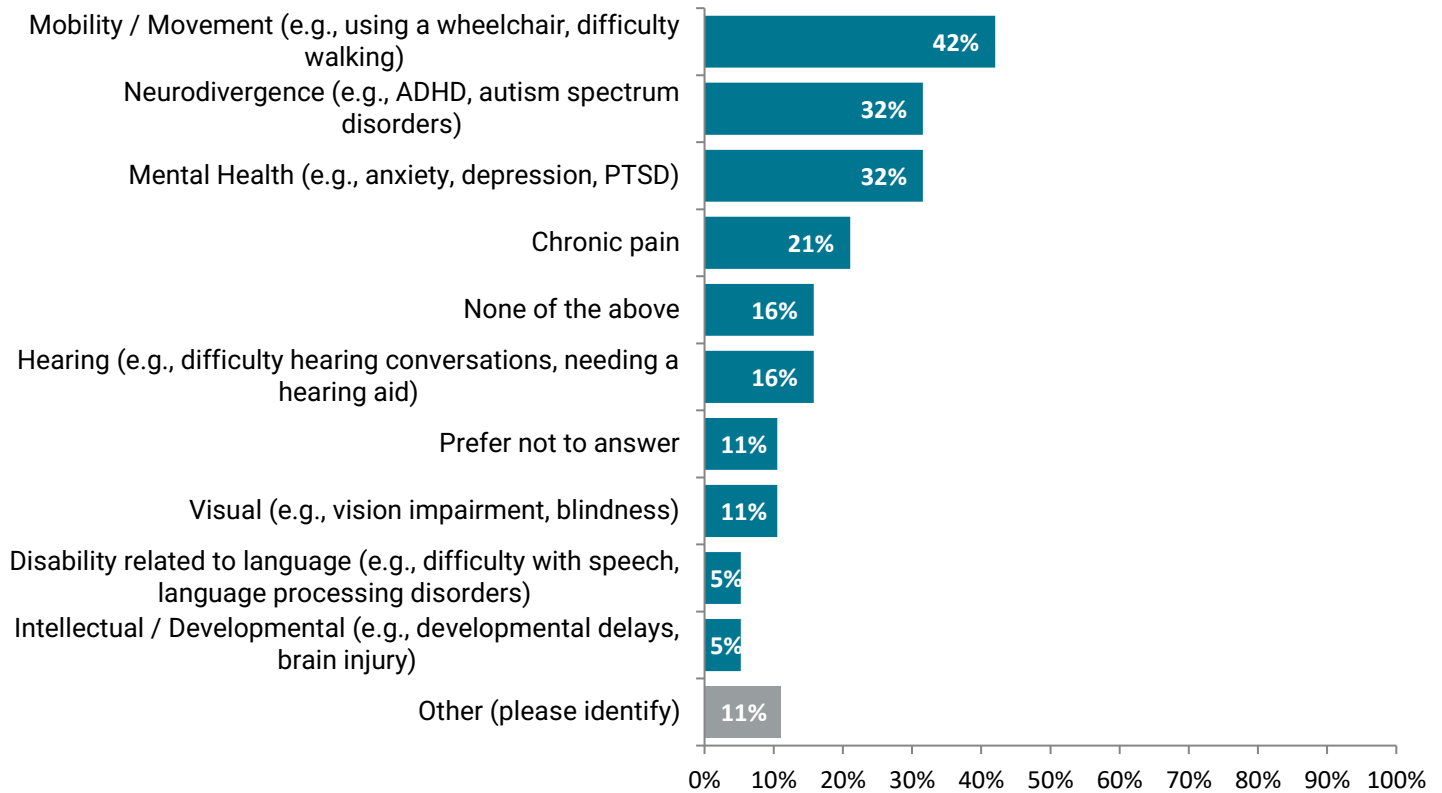
**Question 26:**

Sometimes people face challenges with reading, writing, or understanding information. Do you experience this?



**Question 27:**

What disability-related difficulties do you experience? Select all that apply.



**Question 28:**

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

