

---

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2019SDPR0050-001335  
June 27, 2019

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

### **Supporting successful lives through independent communication**

VANCOUVER – Adults with severe communication disabilities will be supported in living with independence and as full participants in their communities through \$9.3 million for augmentative communication technology and professional support.

The Province will provide the funding over three years to Communication Assistance for Youth and Adults (CAYA) to update aging equipment and client systems, and to continue helping people with severe communication disabilities.

“Speaking aids help people with communication disabilities to overcome barriers to full participation in their communities,” said Shane Simpson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. “This funding supports CAYA’s important role in providing services and technologies that help hundreds of British Columbians to communicate and participate equally in all aspects of their own lives.”

CAYA gives a voice to people through a provincewide program that supports adults aged 19 years and older who require an augmentative alternative communication system due to speech that is not functional for daily communication. Over the past three years, CAYA has provided new or replacement communications technology to about 820 clients annually.

“This new funding ensures that adults in B.C. living with communication disabilities, as a result of conditions ranging from autism to ALS, will continue to have the supports and technology to communicate independently with their families, co-workers, friends and neighbours,” said Jeff Riley, program manager, CAYA.

“Communication assistance is more than just handing out devices,” said Glenda Hyatt Watson, a CAYA client. “It is also equipping people with specialized strategies and supports to deal with challenging situations, such as when you find yourself in a serious health-care situation without access to your communication system.”

The funding was announced at a CAYA demonstration and information session for alternative and augmentative communication technology, highlighting B.C.’s diversity and the importance of accessibility for everyone in the province.

#### **Learn More:**

B.C. government accessibility: [www.gov.bc.ca/accessibility](http://www.gov.bc.ca/accessibility)

Communication Assistance for Youth and Adults (CAYA): <https://cayabc.org/>

CAYA client stories: <https://www.cayabc.org/client-stories/>

**Contact:**

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty  
Reduction  
Media Relations  
778 677-0870

---

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [news.gov.bc.ca/connect](https://news.gov.bc.ca/connect)