



AAN POVERTY REDUCTION

Date/Time:

June 21st, 2022 / 1:30pm – 3:30pm

Location: Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/811762804>

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Chairs: Allyson Dann

In Attendance:

Mezaun Lakha-Evin (AAN)
Allyson Dann (Calgary Fetal Alcohol Network)
Julia Gonsalves (Calgary Homeless Foundation)
Sam Mason (VAD)
Patti DesJardine (U of C)

Meri Topchieva (AAN)
Margot Brunner (VAD)
Colleen Huston (Disability Action Hall)
Greg McMeekin (Advocate for Persons with Disabilities)
Brad Robertson (Community Advocate)

Meeting Minutes

Land Acknowledgement
Welcome and Introductions

Review/Approval of previous meeting's minutes

Topics of Discussion:

Update on Cost-of-Living Survey

- We currently have 11 responses to the survey.
- VAD has a distribution list of 451 people and will share our survey with their stakeholders on Monday.
- 10/11 respondents have enough money to cover their rent.
- 9/11 respondents can cover their groceries and transportation.
- 5/11 respondents can cover their medical supplies.
- 4/11 can cover their fitness classes and recreational activities
- 2/11 can cover their medical cannabis.
- Most respondents cannot afford their recreational activities, healthy food, medical devices, and dental care.
- They address these problems by asking for financial help from their family and budgeting their finances closely.
- Please distribute the cost of living survey with your network. Please note that **anyone** can participate in this survey, it is not restricted to people with disabilities.
- Link to the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/aancostofliving>

Opinion piece – Discussion

- We will write a 300–500-word opinion piece about how people with disabilities and people in poverty are handling the current increased cost of living.
- Distributing this letter online will increase general awareness.
- The current rental market in Calgary has increased by 21% compared to previous years.
- We will distribute the article through Calgary Citizen and other online newspapers.
- The potential title of the article is “Poverty in the Disability Community”.
- We will include a small summary of what the Poverty Reduction table does and what AAN's initiative is within the article.

Upcoming UCP Leadership Race

- UCP Leadership Candidates have until September to decide whether they are running or not. There are currently 8 Candidates.
- An online all-candidates forum will be held by AAN in the near future.
- We will wait until the leadership race is closer to start planning the event. In the meantime, we will ask our network what potential questions they would like to ask the candidates.
- The questions will be provided to the candidates beforehand.
- We will make our questions for the candidates based on the feedback from the cost of living survey once the results are collected in the fall.
- Some questions might be “What is your plan to address the daily cost of living for people using social assistance as they are falling through the cracks?” “If you are elected as Premier, how would you address poverty concerns?”
- Please submit your questions for the all-candidates forum to mtopchieva@cpalberta.com or adann@mycfan.ca.
- We will pick a total of 2-4 questions that all candidates should answer. The number of questions will be dependent on the time we have available.

Making the Month United Way – Mezaun

- Make the Month is a United Way Federal initiative with the purpose of providing more information about what it's like not to make the (financial) month
- Example shared included -living as a single person, single parent, and a family of four within the poverty line.
- United Way has requested us to create a scenario about a person living with a disability currently on AISH. The ideal person for this project must be contactable so United Way can confirm/promote their story.
- Make the Month has a poverty simulation where it gives you the option of simulating the life of a single person, single parent, or family of four. The poverty simulation can be found on the following link: <https://www.makethemonthwb.ca/>
- The simulation is far from the reality of how people in poverty actually live. It does not include options such as rationing prescription medicine so it can last longer, sneaking onto transit, freezing at home because utilities went up, and so on.

Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) – Julia Gonsalves

- Julia Gonsalves is a Policy Analyst for the Calgary Homeless Foundation and our newest member of the Poverty Reduction table.
- CHF has 3 main aspects:



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- 1) Allocating resources for high-impact outcomes as they get funded by the provincial and federal governments. They are currently funding 29 agencies in Calgary.
- 2) Building knowledge and understanding
- 3) Has public and political will by advocating with different levels of government.

Disability Action Hall

- Asking the City of Calgary for an appeal for the historical designation of buildings as the preservation of historical stairs is inaccessible.
- Created a 2-page infographic with plain language detailing the 7 principles of the Right to Housing legislation.
- To view the infographic, click here: <https://www.actionhall.ca/2022/06/city-council-agrees-to-try-right-2.html>. Julia will review the content and send some feedback.

Agency Updates for the Summer.

VAD

- Survey service providers to find out what agencies are offering and who can get trained to help with CPP, disability, AISH, and DTC applications.
- Many MPs, MLAs, and librarians are getting asked to help with these applications. VAD wants to create a small course for agencies to learn how to assist their clients.

Action Items:

- Mezaun and Meri will start a draft of the article and send it out to anyone who wants to participate over our summer break. Please contact Meri at mtopchieva@cpalberta.com if you would like to participate.
- Margot will contact 3 of her clients living on AISH that can participate in the Make the Month poverty simulation.

Wrap-Up/Adjournment

Next meeting:

Date: September 20, 2022

Time: 1:30pm – 3:30pm

Location: Zoom

Happy Summer