



Newcomers With Disabilities - Navigating The System

Date/Time:
September 26th, 2023 / 1:00PM – 2:00PM

Location: Zoom

Chairs: Michael Farr,

In Attendance:

Abdullah EMCN
Alison Kernick (UofC)
Anne Eichmann (Airdrie Disability Resource Centre)
Ben Patmore (CCIS)
Byanca Nimijean (ACT Alberta)
Copelan Manzer (UofC)
Dominic Phillip Shaw (Premier’s Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities)
Fiona Lowes Boyd (CIWA)

Joanne Dorn (CP Alberta)
Meri Topchieva (Alberta Ability Network)
Katie Dodd (Children’s Link)
Michael Farr (EmployAbilities)

Meeting Minutes

Welcome
Land Acknowledgement
Breakout Rooms
Meeting considerations
Review of last month’s meeting minutes

Topics of Discussion

Truth and Reconciliation Week 2023

- CP Alberta is launching a social media awareness campaign throughout the week and encouraging their employees to wear orange as a show of dedication.
- Employabilities is commemorating the day by observing the following Monday as a day off.
- CCIS is enhancing their understanding of indigenous culture by inviting indigenous speakers into their workplace to provide valuable insights.



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- Gateway Association is actively participating in lunch and learns hosted by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, furthering their commitment to the cause.

Cerebral Palsy Alberta Update on AAN

- Mezaun, the Director for Government Relations, commenced her leave of absence at the end of April, and there has been no recent communication regarding her return date.
- Despite this, we will continue with the committee meetings as per the established schedule.
- We are actively in the process of recruiting a new Manager for Government Relations to provide support upon Mezaun's return. Interviews are scheduled for the upcoming weeks. Once hired, this individual will offer leadership to this and other tables, providing direction for the upcoming year.
- Chairs and co-chairs are tasked with staying updated on human rights developments within the city and the province. They are responsible for setting agendas prior to table meetings and leading the monthly gatherings.
- Katie has generously volunteered to assume the role of co-chair, assisting Michael in his capacity as the chair of this table. This collaborative effort will contribute to the continued success of our endeavors.

Table timing commitment

- In response to feedback from committee members expressing a preference for shorter meetings, we have decided to convene for one hour and a half instead of the previous two-hour duration each month.
- While table meetings occasionally require only an hour, the inclusion of presentations and spotlights often necessitates additional discussion time. Consequently, the last half hour will be reserved solely if required.
- This adjustment addresses the challenge faced by some stakeholders who may have difficulty committing to the full two hours, potentially resulting in their non-attendance. This change aims to reduce barriers for new participants looking to engage in the table discussions.
- It's worth noting that typically, we manage to address all agenda items within the initial hour of the meeting. Therefore, this modification will not adversely impact the productivity or volume of work accomplished during our sessions.

Summer Agency Updates

Childrens Link

- They are on the brink of the implementation phase for their digital platform, a significant advancement that will enable them to extend support to a greater number of families across Alberta. The official launch is slated for November.
- In collaboration with the Centre for Newcomers, they have established a regular presence by sending a representative to their office once a week to offer support to their clients. Notably, newcomers make up 43% of their clientele.

ACT Alberta

- This summer there was an influx of clients, dealing with housing barriers for their clients and dealing with staff turnover.

Gateway Association

- They have three events scheduled for the upcoming October.
- Among these events is a collaborative effort between Gateway Association and Multicultural Health Brokers. This initiative adopts a comprehensive 360-degree approach to assist individuals in securing well-suited employment, placing emphasis on readiness and building meaningful connections
- If interested please register here:
<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=tdEXXH26tkuAfr-MguZeYrV2N5TljyRjvU5YHBS7c15UNjIwTEszVjk0TTYwNjM4UURZWtBITEUyWS4u>

Airdrie Disability Resource Centre

- Airdrie Disability Resource and Awareness Centre will be hosting a resource fair on October 21st from 10am to 3pm (set up between 9-10am) at Grace Baptist Church in Airdrie. They not charging for this event as they would like to promote the services available to their community.
- If you are interested and would like to participate, please register through the link below:
- <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScdwLjhUTRX60kZa9HJZc3IRy583MZYit1MfqN92j5n-Bak0w/viewform>

CIWA

- They currently offer two classes tailored for individuals with disabilities, both of which are at full capacity.
- Previously, they had a dedicated disability liaison position. However, due to funding constraints, this role is no longer available.

CCIS

- Ben will be directing some of his clients from Airdrie to Anne's resource fair, as they are all residents of Airdrie.
- They have been actively involved in assisting and settling individuals arriving on two charter planes, one from Pakistan and the other from various parts of the world. This has entailed providing them with the necessary services and support.

Status of Persons with Disabilities

- Have been engaging with the public by attending these meetings, going to events and engaging with their members.

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

- ESWIS also provides personalized support to people with disabilities in settings convenient for them.
- To get more information about programs please send an email to eswlcoordinator@emcn.ab.ca



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Cerebral Palsy Alberta

- As of last week, they have initiated programs in Grande Prairie, expanding their services to this area.
- A year ago, Alberta Health Services (AHS) approached them to extend their services to cater to individuals with disabilities in that region.
- The Me N U program, designed for newly diagnosed families, will commence in October. This program is tailored for children up to 3.5 years of age, providing them with a platform to interact and communicate.

EmployAbilities

- Had some grand openings for the new centers in the Northern part of Alberta.

Pathways to Prosperity Discussion

- We might put together a brochure or a poster detailing what this table does to promote it on a national level.
- We currently have a brochure for all the AAN tables but not one for this specific table.
- This conference is in Montreal from November 19th to 23.

Barrier Free Campaign update

- Over the past month, we have witnessed a remarkable increase in our support base. Initially, we began with backing from 90 community stakeholders, 40 organizations, and 12 elected officials.
- Presently, our network has grown substantially, boasting the support of over 217 dedicated community advocates, 101 organizations, and an unwavering commitment from 13 elected officials in favor of Barrier-Free Alberta (BFA). This surge in support underscores the significance and relevance of our cause.

Wrap Up Adjournment

Next Meeting:

Date: October 31st 2023

Time: 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Location: Zoom