



# Newcomers With Disabilities - Navigating The System

Date/Time:

November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022 / 1:00PM – 3:00PM

Location: Zoom

Chairs: Mezaun Lakha-Evin, Michael Farr

In Attendance:

Aisha Siddiqui (ASSIST Community Services Centre)

Alex Montiel (Diversecities)

Angelica Uy (University of Calgary)

Atok Majyan

Christian Ladores (Alberta Association Of Immigrant Serving Agencies)

Ginger Mullen (Providence)

Linn Andersen (Saamis Immigration Services Association)

Margot Brunner (Voice of Albertans with Disabilities)

Mezaun Lakha-Evin (Alberta Ability Network)

Melinda Noyes (Autism Edmonton)

Mikaela Johnson (Children's Link)

Mirzeta Mujanovic (Training Inc)

Nada Starcevic (Alberta Association Of Immigrant Serving Agencies)

Qabas Al-Sammarraie (Care for Newcomers)

Sam Mason (Voice of Albertans with Disabilities)

Samantha Burdett (Calgary Local Immigration Partnership)

Teagan Catingub (Catholic Social Services)

Yasmin Mohamed (Children's Link)

## Meeting Minutes

Land Acknowledgement  
Welcome and Introductions

### Spotlight Presentations:

#### City of Calgary – CEMA (Calgary Emergency Management Agency)

- Coordinate the responses of multiple agency members and partners when a disaster or major event occurs.
- 60 organizations are working with CEMA to reduce risk and strengthen the community.
- There are 4 pillars of call to action: 1) Know the risks 2) Get prepared 3) know what to do during an emergency and 4) Know what to expect after an emergency
- Alberta is surprisingly very prone to tornados and is known as the disaster capital of Canada. Alberta has had more disasters happen within the province than any other. With climate change, the severity and quantity of disasters will only increase.
- For people with disabilities knowing what to expect after an emergency is an important topic because there might be different advice for people who aren't mobile. For example, if someone lives in apartment building, if a fire or

hazard happens, the fire department will recommend people with mobility disabilities stay in place instead of evacuating.

- CEMA is doing a survey in regard to how prepared specific populations (such as newcomers, older adults, racialized communities, people with disabilities, and urban indigenous community members) are in disastrous situations in Calgary.
- The hailstorm that happened in NE Calgary a couple of years ago taught us that there needs to be more education in what is covered under insurance.
- Went to the Calgary Accessibility Committee before launching the survey to ensure accessibility. Meals on Wheels put the survey on their meal tray to get more people that are hard to reach.
- The survey is available in Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, English, Filipino (Tagalog), Punjabi, and Spanish.
- Please fill out the following survey at [www.engage.calgary.ca/readycalgary](http://www.engage.calgary.ca/readycalgary) and if you have any questions please email [readycalgary@calgary.ca](mailto:readycalgary@calgary.ca)
- Over 300 out of 700 people who answered the survey have self-identified as having a disability.
- The deadline is December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022, for the survey collection.

### Children's Link:

- Mission is to connect people with disabilities, those that support them with the resources they need to improve their lives and strengthen our communities.
- Has expanded from Calgary and area to a provincial mandate.
- Families can go through Children's Link to help them get their child's diagnosis and apply for appropriate supports
- Help with the transition from youth to adulthood services.
- Families can contact them by filling out a family profile form here
- Has a new program called love for littles where it is to provide families that have children with newly diagnosed disabilities a source of comfort in the form of a wellness package.
- Access for all resource hub exists to provide accessible information on service and support options to families of loved ones with a disability.
- Resource fair has been renamed to the ACCESS for ALL Kickoff event, these will be happening on February 1, 2023, February 22, and March 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Angelica Uy – University of Calgary Practicum Student

- When newcomers with disabilities try to navigate the system and get services they need, they usually search "disability services Alberta" or "disability programs" where one of the first websites that appear is alberta.ca.
- The government website, which is where most people with disabilities get information about the services and programs available to them, is not accessible.
- While they state they comply with WCAG standards, they do not specify to which level.
- Accessible websites usually have an accessibility toolbar where you can change the colors and size of the information presented and more.
- More than half of the resources that offer public information, do not have clear accessibility tools on their website.



# Newcomers With Disabilities - Navigating The System

- Some recommendations to make websites accessible are: choosing a content management system that supports accessibility, using headings correctly, including proper alt text for images, giving links unique and descriptive names, using color with care, designing forms for accessibility, using tables for tabular data and not for layout, ensure content can be accessed with the keyboard alone, use ARIA roles, make dynamic content accessible and more.

Topics of Discussion:

## **Intersectionality disability and settlement**

- Newcomers are sometimes fearful of accessing services or don't know how to. There's a lot of stigma that comes associated with accessing services and one way to get better associated with the community is by collaborating with other agencies and bridging the gap between settlement and disability.
- Table representatives agree that this table is needed in order to continue to bridge the gap between the settlement and immigration sectors. Collaboration has made recommending clients to the agency they need easier.

## **IDPD Provincial Event**

- Cerebral Palsy Alberta, Easter Seals Alberta, Voice of Albertans with Disabilities, and other community organizers were selected by the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities to host a virtual, province-wide, International Day of Persons with Disabilities event.
- This year's event will showcase the talents, hobbies, skills, and passions of disabled Albertans virtually on Saturday, December 3, 2022.

Wrap Up Adjournment

### **Next Meeting:**

**Date:** January 31, 2023

**Time:** 1:30 – 3:30 pm

**Location:** Zoom