



Alberta Ability Network Human Rights Table

Date/Time:
January 30th, 2023 - 1:00 PM – 3:00PM

Location: Zoom

Chairs: Mezaun Lakha-Evin, Sean Crump

In Attendance:

Alison Stutz (Alberta Deaf and Hear)
Brandy Gassner (ATB)
Cal Schuler (Calgary Alternative Support Services)
Cam Stewart (Alberta Human Rights Commission)
Chris Ryan (Community Advocate)
Claire Plamondon (WICS)
Dan Pederson (Community Advocate)
Deborah Abiola ((Alberta Human Rights Commission)
Ryan Popplestone (Office of the Advocate for Persons with Disabilities)

Meri Topchieva (Alberta Ability Network)
Mezaun Lakha-Evin (Alberta Ability Network)
Rebecca Neels (Community Advocate)
Phillip Ney (Inclusion Alberta)
Stella Varvis (Alberta Law Reform Counsel)
Taylor Bauer (CNIB)
Teneille Bradley (Accessible Housing)
Tessa Turner (ACT Alberta)
Tonia LaRiviere (City of Edmonton)
Tony Flores (Community Advocate)
Valeria Palladino (Edmonton Epilepsy Association)

Meeting Minutes

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

Acknowledgment of Alberta Ability Network's members and stakeholders for 2022

- Number of participants on all AAN tables - 235
- Number of volunteer hours - 5985
- Thank you everyone for your efforts and continued support.

Human Rights Commission update

- Met with the new Alberta Human Rights Commissioner, Katheryn Oviatt, to provide information and updates on AAN tables and progress on Accessibility Legislation in Alberta.
- If there's a human rights issue that the Alberta Human Rights Commission needs to take back to the Chief Commissioner, please contact Cam at cam.stewart@gov.ab.ca and Deborah at deborah.abiola@gov.ab.ca.
- The briefing note on accessibility legislation will be reviewed by the Commission.
- Director of Communication, Education & Engagement with the Human Rights Commission connected AAN with Public Policy Advocate to assist in our next steps.

Communications Subcommittee: Barrier-Free Alberta

- Barrier-Free Alberta is creating a social media campaign for the election to influence candidates to bring forward accessibility legislation.

- Created two different versions of posters for the campaign. One is aimed at the public with issues such as isolation, and the labor market, while the poster for candidates is focused more on GDP.
- We discussed printing off these posters and sending them to candidates and for other agencies to print them off and give them to their clients. We will decide whether we do it or not during our next communications meeting.
- The statistics for our posters do not include the 0-15 age demographic as statistics Canada isn't polling them. Currently, those numbers are being gathered from FCSD and the schools, which aren't always accurate.
- BFA's strategy for the next 6 months is to present to community partners by engaging with the identified sectors and stakeholders. We have created an extensive list of sectors to advocate such as the non-disability non-profit sector, corporate sector, government, and academia. This outreach will begin in February.
- BFA has been successful at providing its presentation to municipalities throughout 2022, and we will continue presenting to the rest of identified stakeholders in 2023.
- The BFA strategic plan for 2023 has been entirely updated apart from the activities for the next 6 months.
- Rebecca will join the Barrier-Free Alberta subcommittee.
- Deaf and Hear Alberta have been funded to do focus groups with the deaf and hard-of-hearing community in Calgary. Alison is inviting BFA to present to the focus group.
- In hope that the Government supports our advocacy to make Alberta a 'Barrier Free' Alberta (for persons with disabilities), prior to drawing up a proposed bill, it is critical that the government ensures that AAN is part of the process and that the government do the following:
 - o Consult with stakeholders as to what does 'Barrier Free' means to Albertans.
 - o Reflect on the approach and processes of the development of 'Canada Accessible Act'.
 - o Do research and investigate whether or not similar accessible legislations of other provinces have really made a positive difference in the lives of persons with disabilities such in employment, easier access to built environment, easier access to supports and services, easier access to communications and information, etc. Are those legislations effective? What can we learn from their processes leading up to implementation and/or what can we learn from the legislations themselves to ensure Alberta Barrier Free legislation will be robust and effective?
- Please note that consultation processes, research and investigation is not the responsibility of AAN but rather government's responsibility as the government has the resources and capacity to do so.

Deaf and Hear Alberta Update

- Deaf and Hear Alberta had a contract with AHS to send in-person interpretation. In previous years they averaged about 1000 appointments per year, whereas now they have 100 a year. This is due to AHS outsourcing interpreting services to a company based in the US.
- In December, they were informed that they would no longer have an exclusive contract with AHS and that their first choice for ASL interpreting would be a new



company based in the US. No previous consultation was had before AHS announced this.

- Alison is planning to write an advocacy letter which ANN will support to advocate to the government for the rights of a hard-of-hearing person to request interpreting services themselves instead of a third party requesting it for them.
- There have been clients who have been in the hospital for weeks before receiving their interpretation services, and some who are still waiting for interpretation.

CBC: "What's your ballot-box question? Be an opinion writer for CBC for the 2023 Alberta election."

- CBC is looking for 12 people to bring their views to the CBC for the spring provincial election campaign.
- This is a paid writing opportunity where you don't have to be a professional writer. There will be a half-day online writing shop with a CBC editor who will help you write your piece.
- The deadline is January 31, 2023.
- Chris, Rebecca, and Dan will put their names forward for the writing opportunity.
- Link: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/alberta-election-community-opinion-project-1.6711043>

Disability Advocate office update

- Currently no significant update.
- There will be an update provided to the accessibility legislation working group in the next 7-10 working days. After connecting with the working group, the update will also be provided to the Human Rights table.
- Currently figuring out logistics for the engagement piece and will be working with Alberta Ability Network and the working group.

Action items:

- Another BFA meeting will be held next Monday, if anyone is interested in this subcommittee, please contact Meri at mtopchieva@cpalberta.com
- The table will support Alison's advocacy letter.

Wrap-Up/Adjournment

Next meeting:

Date: February 27th, 2023

Time: 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Location: Zoom