



Newcomers With Disabilities - Navigating The System

Date/Time:
February 28th, 2023 / 1:00PM – 3:00PM

Location: Zoom

Chairs: Mezaun Lakha-Evin, Michael Farr

In Attendance:

Ashija Joshi (ASSIST Community Services Centre)
Ben Patmore (Calgary Catholic Immigration Society)
Manisha Dave (Immigrant Services Calgary)
Melinda Noyes (Autism Edmonton)
Mezaun Lakha-Evin (Alberta Ability Network)
Michael Farr (Employabilities)

Omotola Abayomi
Prianka Gill (Immigrant Services Calgary)
Rosslyn Zulla
Sam Mason (Voice of Albertans with Disabilities)
Susan Ma (Calgary Immigrant Women's Association)
Teagan Catingub (Catholic Social Services)

Meeting Minutes

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

Spotlight Agency:

Immigrant Services Calgary

- Gateways were created because many newcomers were not accessing the services, they need because of how challenging to navigate the current system is.
- Gateway acts as a guide to help newcomers through their journey by connecting them to the right service and the right agency.
- Pairs up newcomers with service providers that speak their language if needed.
- Gateway Planners work with families to create personalized plans based on their goals. Each person in the family gets individual support.
- Further their education by collaborating with disability organizations.

- Have a holistic needs assessment, similar to the NARS assessment that other agencies do but with a more holistic approach.
- Serve people under the IRCC umbrella and the people who don't fall into that, to ensure everyone is being supported.
- Currently only located in Calgary and Area.
- Please contact Manisha Dave for further information at manishad@immigrantservicescalgary.ca

Family Resource Center

- Family resource center has been running for 2 years and it is funded by the provincial government.
- There are 6 locations of Family Resource centers throughout Alberta which are: Fort McMurray, St. Paul, Calgary, Crowsnest Pass, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat.
- Gateway Association manages FRC in Edmonton and Calgary, STEPS in Red Deer and Inclusion Alberta in Grande Prairie.
- Representatives answer questions from families/individuals that have disabilities in relation to family-managed contracts, PDD, managing guardianship and more.
- Many resources for people with disabilities are available on <https://autismalberta.ca/family-resource-centres>

Agency Updates:

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

- Clients that applied to FSCD and PDD last year just got a notice back stating they need psychological assessment letters in order for them to receive services.
- Legislation does not mandate a psychological assessment for this process, and it never has. This is a recommendation that must go through and be done by the government.
- Ben has been working together with Mosaic Primary Care Network to find a solution.
- This is a huge barrier as many clients cannot get the services they need.
- Partnered with WinSport and MRU for adaptive recreational activities.

Barrier-Free Alberta Campaign 2023

- Campaign is to encourage the Government of Alberta to enact strong and effective accessibility legislation that will ensure every Albertan living with a disability has the opportunity to participate in all aspects of a complete and meaningful life.



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- Barrier-Free Alberta (BFA) is starting an election campaign to garner public support.
- BFA will be targeting all candidates running for the Provincial election parties, and recommend they put accessibility legislation on their platforms.
- BFA has 2 versions of the Barrier-Free AB in 2023 poster. One is for the public and one is for the candidates.
- For candidates, we included more statistics around the potential GDP increase once we have an inclusive labor market as it is more compelling. Some of the ways candidates can engage with this campaign is to book a 15-minute presentation with Barrier-Free Alberta, join as a supporter on our website and ask their party members to support Accessibility Legislation in Alberta.

Action Items:

- Write an advocacy letter to the Minister of Immigration regarding the cost of psychological assessments for newcomers who need to access FSCD and PDD.

Wrap Up Adjournment

Next Meeting:

Date: March 28th, 2023

Time: 1:30 – 3:30 pm

Location: Zoom