



The VOICE of Albertans with Disabilities

August 1, 2023

Voice of Albertans with Disabilities mourns the sudden loss of our Executive Director

Today we on the team of VAD are saddened to inform everyone that our team has suffered a great loss unexpectedly. Our Executive Director, Margot Campbell Brunner, passed away on July 27th, 2023, after a sudden health issue. We understand this message may be difficult to process for everyone, including our staff team. Margot was a true gift to Voice of Albertans with Disabilities; she was always transferring Her positivity on to everyone around the office and our community. Margot was a unicorn of unlimited hidden talents with a vast toolbox at her side with which she always utilized to smooth out the challenges our members faced. She was a beloved friend and co-worker who strived to work hard to meet extreme expectations while sending out positive ripples daily to us all.

The Voice of Albertans with Disabilities would have liked to provide this news in person to you all, but sadly, this is not possible at this time. We know many of our members and clients had a strong relationship with Margot and she will be greatly missed. Please remember to keep Margot's family and loved ones in your thoughts as they deal with the challenges of her loss. Our office will continue to offer services and supports to clients during this time of grief with assistance from our staff and board members.

We will forward information regarding services in the near future.

Respectfully,

Katrina Breau
Voice of Albertans with Disabilities President





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Alberta Local Food Week happens August 13 - 20, 2023

Alberta Local Food Week gives you a chance to meet local farmers and entrepreneurs who work to put nutritious food on our plates, and to show support for all things grown, made and harvested in Alberta.

Get involved: Alberta Local Food Week is a great opportunity to enjoy some delicious local food:

- Visit an Alberta Approved Farmers' Market in your area
- Pick your own fresh fruit and vegetables at a u-pick farm
- Check the coming events calendar to attend events near you
- Plan your ultimate local food experience at Open Farm Days
- Promote and follow the local food conversation to see events, activities and celebrations using **#AB-LocalFood**



Staying Healthy on a Budget

Adapted from <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/healthy-eating-budget.html>

Eating healthy when money is tight can be challenging, especially if you are living with a medical condition, these tips can help.

A diet that includes plenty of vegetables, fruits, and lean proteins is important for good health, especially if you have a medical condition. Healthy eating is key to maintaining good health but the cost of nutritious foods can quickly add up.

Eating on a budget doesn't mean you have to sacrifice nutrition. With a little know-how and planning, you can enjoy nutritious foods without breaking the bank. By following these tips, you may be surprised at how much you can stretch your grocery budget.

#1: Plan Your Recipes

Planning ahead allows you to think about your food needs, tastes, and budget. If you know you have to stretch your money for the week, meal planning can really pay off.



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Adapt recipes to fit your needs. Choosing meals that help manage your health is a key component to managing medical conditions. For example, if you love pasta dishes, but your diabetes meal plan has you following a low-carb diet, you can search recipes that use veggie noodles instead of traditional noodles. These are great alternatives to increase your vegetable intake and keep your blood sugar from spiking.

Use recipes with common ingredients. Using the same ingredients for multiple meals doesn't mean they all have to taste the same. Using different herbs and spices can turn common ingredients into meals with different flavors. If your favorite protein is chicken, cook one whole chicken and use it for several different dishes. You can have chicken and vegetable stir fry one night and chicken fajitas another night and make soup from the bones by adding some vegetables and seasonings.

Find ways to stretch a recipe. You can stretch meals by making dishes that freeze well. Search online for delicious healthy recipes like soups and casseroles that are budget-friendly and easy meals to stretch. For example, make a large batch of vegetable soup or white bean chicken chili that can last throughout the week, or freeze the leftovers to have later. You'll also spend less time in the kitchen than if you make a different meal every night.

Planning your weekly menu also increases the chance that your pantry and refrigerator are stocked with healthy ingredients to make balanced meals that help you maintain your medical conditions.

#2: Shop With a List

Once you've planned your meals for the week, create a shopping list with the ingredients you need. Having a shopping list makes shopping easier and faster, which helps you reduce impulse buys and take home only the items you need. It also helps you avoid extra trips to the grocery store to buy forgotten items.

If your shopping list includes nuts, beans, or grains, consider buying in bulk to save money and keep your pantry well-stocked for future meal planning.

#3: Buy Frozen or Canned

When it comes to fruits and vegetables, frozen and canned options can be healthy alternatives to fresh produce. What's more, they cost less and last longer. Many frozen veggies and fruits even have resealable packaging that allows you to use what you need and store the rest. This way you can enjoy your favorites even when they aren't in

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season.

When choosing canned options, it's best to select those that come in water, not syrup. Be sure to read the label for any added sugar or salt. You'll want to avoid those. And skip frozen options that have added butter or cream sauces. Choose options without sauce or look for packaging that reads "lightly sauced" to avoid extra sugar, salt, and empty calories.

#3 Saving money on food

Coupons are a great way to save on your grocery bill. You can clip coupons from newspapers and ads or search online for digital coupons. You can search for online coupons for the ingredients on your list.

With over a billion coupons available each year, you will likely find a coupon that you can use. If you can't find a coupon for those blueberries on your list but find one for strawberries, consider making the swap to save money. Even low-value cents-off coupons can really add up. Just by using five 50-cents-off coupons a week, you can end up saving over \$100 each year.

Make sure to ask about cost matching at your local grocery store, many stores will price match an item if the brands are the same, this saves you going to multiple stores.

#5: Buy Store Brands

Buying generic or store brand items can save you 20% to 30% on your food bill. Items like canned tomatoes, milk, olive oil, and frozen fruits and vegetables are usually available in a cheaper store brand version.

Just be sure to compare the ingredients list and nutrition facts panel to make sure you're not getting a product with added ingredients. Learning which store brands your grocery store carries can help you reduce your total at the cash register.

#6: Try Growing a Garden

If you can, growing your own fruits and vegetables is a great way to save money and have fresh produce at your fingertips. Even if you don't have a yard to grow a garden, many fruits, vegetables, and herbs can grow in pots on patios, balconies or windowsills.

Having a constant supply of fresh produce at home can save you money at the store. You may not be able to grow a "money tree" in your garden, but it'll feel like you did with the extra money you'll be saving. Many vegetables can be regrown, look up on the internet how to start vegetables indoors from scraps!

Back to Post Secondary School with a Disability

Education that's right for you ~ alis.alberta.ca

Inclusive post-secondary and transitional vocational programs are open to every student with a developmental disability.

You're welcome in the same classes and the same activities as every other student, with the same opportunities to learn, meet people and socialize, and work toward your career. Post-secondary inclusive education helps you make the move from high school into adult life, as you:

- Learn about subjects that interest you and will help you in your career
- Hang out with new people and meet new friends
- Explore new interests outside of class by joining a club, a student association, or another activity
- Learn life skills such as how to look after your home and build healthy relationships
- Co-op programs give you hands-on experience so that part of your education happens on the job. And you'll have help finding work in the summer and after you graduate.

All of these experiences will help you feel confident, knowing you can make decisions for yourself, learn from your mistakes, and live more independently.

What makes an education program inclusive?

In Alberta, inclusive post-secondary and vocational programs follow the same principles, which are like guidelines for how the programs work:

- You and your family feel that you're welcome, respected, safe, and that you belong.
- You can get the education you want and need, and what you learn matters to you. There are high expectations for your success if you have the right supports.
- Everyone who works with you understands your



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strengths and your needs, so you can succeed and feel like you belong to your school community.

- The people who support you—your family, teachers, school staff, government, or other organizations—work together to help you succeed.

Schools, families, governments, and other organizations involved in inclusive education:

- Remove barriers so every learner can be part of the school community and feel successful
- Have opportunities to keep learning about how to provide the best educational experiences

What you can expect

An advisor works with you and your family throughout your post-secondary program to help you set learning, career, and life goals. Every decision is guided by your choices and what you feel will work best. Together, you decide on your classes and activities, and the supports you need to set yourself up for success, such as:

- Modified course materials, homework, or class schedules to fit your learning style. For example, you may want all your course materials in electronic format so you can read textbooks with text-to-speech software.
- Other assistive technologies and devices, like a digital voice recorder, note-taking software, or an app that helps you study, be organized, and get your assignments done.
- A tutor to help with your classes and assignments.
- A peer mentor—another student who can help with things like taking notes in class, introducing you to other students, or learning how to get around the campus and city.

Career options you might want to explore.

Sometimes the supports that work for you in one class might not work in another. That's no problem. Inclusive education is flexible—how and what you learn can change to meet your needs.

Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES) from the

Government of Alberta may be available to assist eligible students with documented and permanent or long-term disabilities. DRES funding pays for supports or services to reduce, alleviate, or remove barriers for education, training, work search, and employment. Examples include assistive technologies, worksite modifications, sign language interpreters, and specific disability-related software.

<https://alis.alberta.ca/tools-and-resources/resources-for-people-with-disabilities/explore-education/learning-after-high-school-inclusive-options-for-people-with-developmental-disabilities/#:~:text=Inclusive%20post%2Dsecondary%20and%20transitional,and%20work%20toward%20your%20career.>

Accommodating students with disabilities in the post-secondary context

Accommodating students with disabilities involves making adjustments or alternative arrangements in both the physical environment and the educational environment to ensure that it does not create learning or physical barriers that would prevent students with disabilities from accessing educational or other services provided by post-secondary institutions. The educational environment includes but is not limited to:

- The people who provide services, for example, faculty members
- The courses provided by the post-secondary institution
- Institutional policies related to matters such as admissions, attendance, course load, or graduation requirements
- Campus facilities, such as classrooms and laboratories
- Equipment, such as computers

In educational environments, the goal of accommodating students with disabilities is to ensure that they are able to fully participate in all aspects of their educational experience, using methods such as:

- Administrators and faculty who are knowledgeable about and supportive of accommodation
- Policies and standards that include the responsibility for accommodation
- Accessible facilities
- Flexible course delivery formats

The purpose of **World Humanitarian Day** is to raise awareness of the plight of civilians around the world who have become caught up in conflicts, and also honour and raise support for the humanitarian workers who risk, and sometimes lose, their lives to help.



On the 19th August each year we celebrate World Humanitarian Day

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- Flexible evaluation formats, such as exams, papers, and presentations
- Individual services, for example, interpreters and notetakers
- Services to help students negotiate accommodations
- An appeal process to challenge decisions denying accommodation
- Flexible entrance, attendance, course load, and graduation requirements that do not lower academic standards
- Practicum and co-op partners who are knowledgeable about and supportive of accommodating students with disabilities

Accommodation applies to both individual students and groups of students. In relation to individual students, the duty to accommodate has both a substantive and procedural component. The substantive aspect of accommodation refers to the accommodation that was offered to the student. To create an appropriate substantive accommodation, the post-secondary institution must participate in an individualized assessment of a student's needs and try to be flexible and creative in the search for an accommodation that meets that student's needs. If the post-secondary institution cannot provide an appropriate accommodation in the circumstances, it must have a valid reason.

This process of assessing a student's needs and finding an accommodation is part of the procedural aspect of accommodation, which essentially refers to the process used to find a substantive accommodation. A post-secondary institution, including faculty, staff, and student services officials, is obligated to engage with students during the process of finding and implementing an accommodation.

How much accommodation is required?

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that where the educational environment has a discriminatory effect on students with disabilities, the post-secondary institution is required to provide accommodation up to the point of undue hardship. The undue hardship standard places a high standard on service providers, meaning a service provider must show that it would experience

a substantial hardship if it were to accommodate the student. The courts have provided some factors to be used as a guide for determining whether a situation amounts to undue hardship, as well as some examples of situations that amount to undue hardship.

These factors and examples are discussed below in the section How does a post-secondary institution determine that an accommodation is not possible? In all situations, the institution must consider an array of potential methods for accommodating students in a way that will overcome their individual barriers to accessing the learning environment. The accommodation that the post-secondary institution provides must be reasonable. There is no obligation on the post-secondary institution to provide an immediate or perfect accommodation, or to accommodate beyond the point of undue hardship.

https://albertahumanrights.ab.ca/publications/bulletins_sheets_booklets/bulletins/Documents/Duty%20to%20accommodate%20students%20with%20dis-

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[abilities%20in%20post-secondary%20educational%20institutions%20\(April%202021\).pdf](https://albertahumanrights.ab.ca/publications/bulletins_sheets_booklets/bulletins/Documents/Duty%20to%20accommodate%20students%20with%20disabilities%20in%20post-secondary%20educational%20institutions%20(April%202021).pdf)

Rights and responsibilities

Students with disabilities and post-secondary institutions play important roles in the accommodation process.

Making your institution aware of your disability increases your access to related services. Every institution offers different types of services, so it's important to do your research before you apply.

The information you share about your disability is confidential, and managed under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP).

Your rights

You have the right to:



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- receive reasonable accommodations
- access services and environments available to all students in the same course or program
- change your accommodations and resources
- determine your own success

Your responsibilities

Students in Alberta's post-secondary system are adult learners and their own advocates.

This means you choose if you want to:

- disclose your disability to your post-secondary institution or instructors
- request services or accommodations that may be available to you
- use the services offered through your post-secondary institution
- You can choose not to disclose your disability to your post-secondary institution or instructors. However, they are not obligated to accommodate your disability if you don't disclose it.

If you need accommodations, you have the responsibility to:

- make an appointment with the disability service provider at your institution (preferably before classes start)
- make your request in writing, especially if your accommodation needs are extensive
- provide medical information that supports your request for accommodation
- keep track of how your accommodation plan is working

- let the disability services area know if changes to your plan are needed, or if accommodations are no longer required
- learn how the post-secondary system works, including accommodation steps and processes

Your institution's responsibilities

Every post-secondary institution has a policy for reasonable accommodation. The policy outlines their:

- rules
- standards
- processes
- procedures

Policies should also be shared with and understood by:

- faculty
- staff
- students

You can find your institution's policy on their website, or by asking them for a copy.

Institutions must also:

- respond to requests for accommodation in a timely way
- document the accommodation process
- consider evidence from medical and other professionals, and ask for other expert advice as needed
- develop an accommodation plan based on your specific needs
- outline appeal processes for students not satisfied with their accommodations

<https://www.alberta.ca/resources-students-disabilities>.



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