



The VOICE of Albertans with Disabilities

October 1, 2023

October is DEAM Month

Disability Employment Awareness Month

<https://www.alberta.ca/disability-employment-awareness-month>

Celebrating people with disabilities in the workplace. Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) promotes the inclusion of workers with disabilities in Alberta's economy. Every October, community stakeholders and the Government of Alberta partner to deliver activities and events around the province to:

- increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities within Alberta's business community
- increase employer engagement and raise awareness around the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities
- increase inclusion through collaboration by connecting service providers, Indigenous organizations, government and businesses
- highlight employers who demonstrate a strong commitment to inclusion and diversity

There are many ways to celebrate DEAM, such as:

- celebrating the skills, successes and achievements of Albertans with disabilities in the workforce by attending DEAM events
- volunteering your time to help promote and advocate for the participation of people with disabilities in the workforce
- sharing your event photos and experiences to social media, using the hashtag **#DEAM**, and retweeting other related posts

The training and employment services (<https://www.alberta.ca/training-and-employment-services-directory>) directory offers programs and services to help individuals find and keep jobs, get training and adapt to a changing

labour market.

Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES)

(<https://www.alberta.ca/disability-related-employment-supports>) is funding for disability-related services, supports or technologies to help individuals with permanent disabilities succeed in their employment as well as in post-secondary school-based training and education.

Albertans wanting to apply for DRES can contact Alberta Supports at 1-877-644-9992 to enquire about applying in their region. Employers can work with DRES-eligible employees to help them address any disability-related barriers of the job.

Alis (<https://alis.alberta.ca/tools-and-resources/resources-for-people-with-disabilities/>) – Careers, Learning and Employment has several resources to help people with disabilities with career planning, post-secondary education and training, educational funding, work search, labour market trends, and workplace issues.

Regional Jobs Facebook pages highlight local employment events, job postings and career services. Find out what's happening in your area:

Edmonton: <https://www.facebook.com/EdmontonJobs/>

Central: <https://www.facebook.com/CentralAlbertaJobs/>

Lethbridge: <https://www.facebook.com/Lethbridgejobs/>

Medicine Hat: <https://www.facebook.com/MedicineHatJobs/>

Calgary: <https://www.facebook.com/CalgaryJobsFeed>

Calgary: <https://www.facebook.com/CalgaryJobsFeed>

Boyle Street Community Services

Starting October 3rd, we're in new locations across downtown Edmonton! If you need to access

Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM)



Taking place each October, Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) is a campaign that promotes inclusion within the job market for people with disabilities. DEAM Alberta showcases events and activities that run throughout the month of October celebrating, promoting and bringing awareness to inclusive employment practices for people with disabilities who face barriers to employment.



#DEAM

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780-488-9088

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our vital programs and services, here's a quick guide (for more details and a comprehensive guide to our new locations, please visit our blog: <https://www.boylestreet.org/post/our-new-locations>):

- Boyle Street triage services: Bissell East (10527 96 St. NW) for mail, ID, intake, housing, youth services, the pet food bank, and more.

- Four Directions Financial (the bank) & Hiregood: temporarily at okimaw peyesew kamik (10010-107A Ave) in trailers.

- Cultural Services/IRS Programs and community spaces: located in the Mercer building (10363 104 St NW).

- New Community Space: located at CO*LAB (9641 102A Ave NW).

Our dedicated staff will be stationed around our old community centre to guide you. We're grateful for the overwhelming support shown by our entire community that made sure these lifesaving, critical programs and services are continuing without interruption.

BLOG SERIES: Online Accessible Communications

By Sam Mason, VAD Accessibility Coordinator

As our day-to-day communications, news, social interactions, events and more take place online we must take into account all users and how they navigate our social media and websites. This is meant to be a changeable, adaptable guide to online communications as more tools, best practices and information becomes available.

Accessible Media

Below are General Best Practices for media across all social media platforms, websites, documents, emails, newsletters etc.

Best Practices for Images

When posting an image on social media you want to include Alternative Text (ALT text) and Image Descriptions where possible.

ALT Text is the text hidden in the image that a screen reader will describe the image to someone using a screen reader. It is typically not visible to the average user but can be seen when images aren't loading. It is also used for SEO (Search Engine Optimization). Check out Accessible Social's Tips for Alternative Text with how to guides for some of the main platforms at the bottom. <https://www.accessible-social.com/alternative-text>

Image Descriptions are included in posts/captions and are accessible for everyone to read. We recommend that these are included alongside ALT text because they benefit people who don't use screen readers or for less advanced screen readers. People who have trouble processing images benefit from reading the description and looking at the image to figure out what they are looking at. These descriptions are expected to be longer and more detailed than alt text and should be included at the bottom of captions or posts. If your image does include a lot of flattened copy (<https://www.accessible-social.com/flattened-copy>) we suggest incorporating the text into your post and describing the image. An example is:



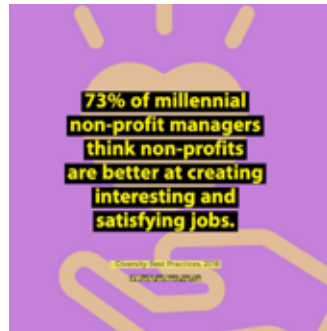
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[Text in image is as follows]
73% of millennial non-profit managers think non-profits are better at creating interesting and satisfying jobs. Diversity best practices, 2018 #WorkForNonProfits [above text is written over a purple background with an illustration of a yellow hand, palm up with a heart hovering above it]



Best Practices for Video/Audio

All video and audio content should be captioned and/or transcribed. There are different types of captions and ways to get your captions/transcripts. We suggest this article “Tips for Creating Digitally Accessible Videos” as additional reading for this section. https://www.accessibility.com/blog/tips-for-creating-digitally-accessible-videos?utm_campaign=AccessibilityPlus2022&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=238684948&_hsenc=p2ANqtz--V1yfDQvJlnI4xynFgsLaASZuEw_DDteHy6ydmAuJbkOXgVucbLAsjCnTo4fX8wvp-FhjCQL2Za-EL007jtMIJtyVmXjzr7_fMbrKeoS_-DplqCbW0&utm_content=238683988&utm_source=hs_email

Open versus Closed Captions

Closed captions can be turned on and off by the user whereas open (or burned captions) are attached to the video and can't be turned off. Generally speaking, https://www.boia.org/blog/how-do-burned-in-captions-affect-accessibility?utm_medium=email&_hsmi=198794987&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-_DNJlvrv6CACWgrHpx4YPb5GY5fjzE_2uBP3Ep0NITDDm52KoViqJp38NGCOE112Lq_5GCbhTaKQzZ82zanKVBoqoo6quMmV9A7a379I9P-iSFGU&utm_content=198794987&utm_source=hs_email

Closed captions are preferred as they are user controlled in many ways including being able to change the contrast, size, language and more. They are also recognized as text so screen readers can access them (learn more in this article How do “Burned In” Caption affect accessibility). However there are benefits to open captions as the video maker has more control. They are consistent and placement can be put so that they aren't obstructing the video.

Generating Captions/Transcripts

- Auto-generated: Many platforms have begun to offer automatically generated captions. These are useful for live videos, temporary videos like Instagram/Facebook Stories. In some cases they can be

used to save time in captioning and transcribing videos that are meant to be posted permanently if they can be edited after the fact. They are often very inaccurate and should be used only in rare cases and as a means to an end.

- Manually typed: These can be done live by a professional CART captioner, an employee or using a professional service (linked below). This can be expensive and/or time consuming but it is the best way to make sure the captions are the most accurate. However there are tips and tricks to use both methods to get accurate captions/transcripts in a cost and time effective way.
- The blended method: Depending on what tools you have available and what platforms you are using you can typically start from an auto generated transcript or caption file and then manually edit to match what is being said and heard. Below we'll offer some of those tools and methods that can be used

Captioning and Transcribing tools:

1. YouTube/Facebook: YouTube and Facebook will auto generate you captions that can then be edited. Turn the auto generated captions on while watching the video and make notes on where they need to be edited and go edit the post and change what is needed. This works best for shorter videos.
2. Microsoft Dictate: On office 365 you can upload an audio document to a Word Document and it will transcribe it for you with time stamps and AI generated speakers (these are often wrong or duplicated but it's a good start). Once your file is prepared, listen to the audio, find who “Speaker 1” is and CTRL+H to find and replace and change the name of speaker 1. Continue this with the other speakers (often there will be more speakers than people in the audio, just do your best to approximate). When you are done, listen to the audio and read the transcript to fix any errors. This is especially useful for podcasts or longer videos
3. Paid Services: There are many paid services you can get that are AI generated like Otter.ai (<https://otter.ai/>) that will learn the words used and improve. Other services will be linked below.

Described Video.

Ideally all videos should have described video as an option, but this hasn't been made as easy as the other accessibility measures outlined here. Described video best practices vary depending on the content and length of the video. Short videos can usually be described like an image description in the post/caption/description. Longer videos might require a voice over. However, if it's a video



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primarily with people talking with the imagery not changing too much or being too relevant to the content of the video you may, again, put a short description in the post/caption/description. Here are a few examples:

Calgary Mayoral Forum:

<https://youtu.be/Wb3zW-X18Xc>

[Video Description: Online webinar with several 2021 Calgary Mayoral candidates. Staff from Alberta Ability Network is moderating, Candidates Present: Emile Gabriel, Jan Damery, Jeff Davison, Jyoti Gondek, Mizanur Rahman, Shaoli Wang, Zane Novak.]

Non-Profit Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EX5_-dJwYg

[Video Description: A young woman approaches a table at what looks like a job fair and shakes the hand of a man behind the table. Scene cuts to the same woman unpacking a box onto a desk in an office, she spins in her chair with a big smile on her face, quick cuts show various scenes of her working at the desk, taking a phone call etc. Cut to the same woman walking past a graffiti wall, into a gym with a trainer sitting at work out equipment and shaking the hand of another

young woman in a wheelchair who was talking with the trainer, the two women move off screen. Cut to elevator doors opening on the sign that reads "EmployAbilities" and the same woman walks into an office filled with people sitting at tables arranged in a circle, they pass around a bucket of lego. Cut to a white background with black text that reads "Consider a career in the non-profit sector."

Lion king described video example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jT5AsjzIC4>

That's the first part of our Blog Series on Online Accessible Communications! Next Month we'll discuss Writing and Design Tips! For any more information don't hesitate to reach out to accessibility@vadsociety.ca.

Margot Brunner's VAD Legacy Award 2023

VAD is pleased to announce a legacy award in Margot Brunner's name that will be presented annually. Criteria for the award will be based upon what Margot stood for as an advocate in the disability sector. The criteria will be made publicly available, and persons will be free



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to nominate those they believe are worthy of this award. The award will be given annually at the AGM. Watch for news of the award in the VAD newsletter and on our website in the near future.

Margot Brunner Advocacy Award

This award is presented to an individual who demonstrates leadership in advocacy for the rights of individuals with disabilities. The winner of this award will demonstrate the characteristics and values of inclusion, equity, and mentorship. This award is named after Margot Brunner, a longtime advocate for the disability community and Executive Director of a pan-disability organization. Premier's Council has created this annual award to honour Margot's passing July 2023.



President's Message

Over my lifetime and throughout the decades, I have experienced many challenges with employers or employment opportunities due to my disabilities and limitations. Looking back over the many positions and roles I have had that all contributed to the vast toolbox of understanding accessibility when it comes to my career and employment history. When I think back to my first employment opportunities over 40 years ago, I would love to thank the Courtney Recreation Centre (CRA) where I was an Inclusion worker for Down Syndrome children and the Comox Valley Child Development Centre where I participated as a Physio Aid for children with Cerebral Palsy. These community organizations allowed me to realize that although I myself lived with disabilities, I still had a lot of potential as an employee. The encouragement I received, moti-

vated my desire to gain higher education to build my resume and self-confidence which positively pivot my life forward. Over the years I have worked for the Canadian National Defence, National, Provincial and Municipal governments, Businesses and Non-profit organizations. Open communication between employers and myself allowed growth and understanding to occur. Advocating for myself was not always win-win, as challenges arose, I would reach out for assistance from organizations like VAD, Unions I belonged to, and best of all speaking with others living with similar situations who surrounded me with mentorship and advice. A supportive community is always a win-win, when we help each other.

Together across Alberta we are grateful for our members and community partners that work together to shine the light on the benefits of engaging employers, job seekers experiencing disability and the public to promote the benefits of inclusive hiring. This month we can all celebrate the tremendous contributions persons who experience disability make to our workplaces and communities. We invite everyone to reach out to create connections and awareness and to help eliminate the barriers that prevents Albertans experiencing disabilities from participating fully in our workforces and society.

"Despite the considerable efforts that have been made to diversify the Albertan labour force, Statistics Canada reported in 2017, 3.7 million working-age Canadians identified as having a disability. Only three in five Canadians experiencing disability (59%) were employed. Also, the COVID-19 pandemic has substantially intensified the situation. Currently, approximately 1 million Canadian job seekers experiencing disability are unemployed or underemployed."

Given the current workforce shortages, Alberta needs the skills, education and experience of the untapped talent we all have to offer. We at VAD encourage all employers to take part in a nationwide campaign that highlights the positive contributions that employees with disabilities make to Canadian workplaces.

It has been said, "Businesses that take diversity seriously and implement effective inclusion strategies have greater success in achieving higher performance and increasing retention of staff.

Diversity in the workforce and inclusion of talented people from the disability talent pool fuels innovation and growth."

Almost 22% of Canadians identify themselves as



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having a disability. That's equal to the combined populations of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. It's the largest minority in the Country. People who have a disability can work, want to work and make a positive contribution to the workplace. We are problem solvers, agile, persistent and willing to experiment.

Companies that hire inclusively grow profits up to 3x faster than their competitors. Inclusion has been found to bring upon increased, innovation, profits, better business outcomes, prepared workforce, consumer loyalty, and increased productivity. Inclusion could provide assistance with worker shortfalls today, be the change and get involved.

Reducing the tragic gap of employment challenges is one way we can work collaboratively to bring change forward. We at VAD would like to say a Big Thank you to these and many other organizations that are working to support the inclusion potential by smoothing out the journey to employment for many of us.

Thank you.

EmployAbilities (Inclusive Career Connections)

<http://employabilities.ab.ca/programs/employabilities-career-and-employment-centre/>

(780) 945-4648

402- 10909 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5J 3L9

susans@employabilities.ab.ca

www.employabilities.ab.ca

Selections Career Support Services

<http://www.selectionscareer.com/>

205 4209 99 Street

Edmonton, AB T6E 5V7

Telephone: (780) 461-5270, Email: contact@selections-career.com

On Site Placement Services Association

<http://www.osp.ab.ca/>

200-10025 106 Street

Edmonton, AB T5J 1G4

Ph: 780-488-8122

Bredin Centre for Learning

<https://bredin.ca/>

5th and 10th Floors,

10004 – 104 Avenue NW

Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0K1

Oteenow Employment & Training Society

<https://oteenow.com/>

13227 – 146 Street

Edmonton, Alberta T5L 4S8

780.444.0911

Prospect: breaking barriers

www.prospectnow.ca

#102 - 9940 106 Street, Edmonton, AB T5K 2N2

Phone: 780-705-9677

Fax: 780.758.9674

Toll Free: 1.877.483.2562

Bent Arrow

Email: employmentresources@bentarrow.ca

Phone: 780-232-2762

Address: 11648 85 Street NW, Edmonton, T5B 3E5

Gateway Association

<https://gatewayassociation.ca/erc/>

10941-120 Street NW, #201

Edmonton, AB T5H 3R3

Tel: 780-454-0701

Bissell Centre https

[//bissellcentre.org/programs/individual/employment-services-casual-labour/](https://bissellcentre.org/programs/individual/employment-services-casual-labour/)

Employment Services, Sarah Higgins, Manager,

780.423.2285 ext. 352, shiggins@bissellcentre.org

Bissell Workforce: 780.424.4385, Monday — Friday,

7:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m

Neil Squire Alberta Wide

T 403 910 5958 attention: Shanelle

Centre for Autism Services Alberta

#1, 9353 - 50 Street NW

Edmonton, AB T6B 2L5

Phone 780-488-6600 Ext. 367

Fax 780-488-6664

www.centreforautism.ab.ca

VAD Welcomes a Work Experience Student

VAD would like to welcome Nikki from MacEwan University. Nikki comes to us in October as a first year social work student who is exploring her educational journey learning about people with disabilities with VAD. We are pleased to assist her in learning about AISH, CPPD and other government forms, while learning the ropes in an office environment.



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EDMONTON EPILEPSY ASSOCIATION

MENTAL HEALTH SESSIONS FOR EPILEPSY

*Psychotherapy sessions (up to 5)
specifically offered to address challenges
of coping with epilepsy.*

- Up to 5 mental health sessions for adults living with epilepsy
- Sessions offered in person, over the phone or online
- EEA members are eligible to apply (we offer FREE MEMBERSHIP)
- Individual applications accepted until January 2024
- Successful applicants pay only \$40 in registration fees - Value of sessions offered up to \$1,200!



FREE MEMBERSHIP



Contact Us
780-488-9600

**PROGRAM VALUE
UP TO**

\$1,200

www.edmontonepilepsy.org

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50th Anniversary Event

Thank you to Guests, Dignitaries, Volunteers, and Staff for joining VAD on September 21, 2023 for our 50th anniversary celebration.



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