



The VOICE of Albertans with Disabilities

September 1, 2022

Talking About Your Invisible Disability

<https://alis.alberta.ca/plan-your-career/additional-resources-for-specific-audiences/for-persons-with-disabilities/talking-about-your-invisible-disability/>

If you live with an invisible disability, people can't see it from the outside. But it might affect how you move, how you feel, or how you think.

The list of invisible disabilities is long. It includes things like epilepsy, heart disease, and a brain injury.

Many people with an invisible disability do well at school and at their job. But sometimes a disability shapes what career path is best for you, or how you do your job.

You might worry that it will be hard to find a job. You might feel that many people don't understand disabilities, and that some employers might not hire you if they know about your disability.

So it's hard to know if, and when, to talk about your invisible disability. Here are some ideas and information that can help you decide.

Do you want to tell people?

If your disability could be a safety issue for you or another person, you will need to tell your employer about it before putting anyone at risk. If it doesn't affect safety, it's your choice whether to talk about it.

What could go wrong:

- You may not be hired.
- People may think about or treat you differently.
- People may be unhappy if you receive special treatment.
- Your employer may be unhappy that you didn't tell them earlier.

Why it might work well for you:

- Your employer may value how open you are.
- Changes can be made in your job to help you do your work.
- You can teach people about disabilities and help them understand how a diverse workplace is better for everyone.

Answer these questions to help you decide:

- If your disability is under control, why do you want

to tell people about it?

- Will it help or hurt your chance to get a job or keep your job?
- What do people need to understand about your disability and how it affects your work?
- If there are things you know you can't do at work, will your employer make job changes or provide supports to help you?

Under Alberta law an employer:

- Can't ask about your disability in a job interview or when you apply for a job
- Must be clear about everything you will have to do at that job, so you will know if it's the right job for you
- Can ask that you pass a medical exam or other tests that relate to the job after you're hired
- Get support for training
- Many post-secondary institutions in Alberta, including all publicly funded schools, have a disability services office that can offer information, accommodations, services, and supports in accessing funding. Just like employers, training providers can access funding to help give you additional supports.



To access these services, you'll need to talk to someone about your disability. School offers a safe place to begin doing this. You can try different approaches and experiment with what supports are most helpful to you. Choosing to talk about your disability now, in a learning environment, doesn't mean you have to talk about it later, to an employer.

Find the right job

If you plan your career and work search carefully, you may not need to talk about your disability:

- Look for work that will meet your needs. For example, an accommodation manager with chronic fatigue syndrome may need to look for a job with clear hours of work, and no shift work or overtime.
- Think about what you can handle. For example, a heavy equipment operator with arthritis might look for a training role and oversee an apprentice who can help with tasks that need more physical strength.
- Play to your strengths. For example, a computer service technician with trouble hearing might look for a job where the work is done through text and email, not in person or by phone.



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Your resumé

Only talk about your disability on your resumé if you know the employer wants to hire diverse people. It's also important to use the right kind of resumé. A resumé that lists your jobs year by year will show any gaps you've had between work. If you have gaps, use a resumé that gives a summary of your work history and shows your skills. Or choose a type that just talks about your skills. Be sure to include your education, training, and any volunteer work.

When and How to Talk About Your Disability

There are many good reasons to tell your employer about your disability. But disclosure also has risks. In the end, you get to choose when and how you'll talk about it.

Your job interview

If you decide to talk about your disability in a job interview:

- Be clear, be confident, and don't use too many words. Say something like: "For the last 3 years I've been dealing with a medical issue. But it's under control now and I'm ready to work." You could also say this to talk about gaps in your resumé.
- Describe how you cope with your disability, to show you deal with it well.
- Stay positive. Talk again about your skills, past work, and how you can help the employer.

If you get a job offer

- If your disability could be a safety concern for you or for others, now is a good time to talk about it with your employer. They can take the right steps to keep everyone safe. For example, if you live with epilepsy and might have a seizure, they can make sure a co-worker who knows first aid is there when you're at work.

If you must pass a medical exam, chances are your employer will learn about your disability. You can also tell a person in human resources about it.

If you say yes to a job offer and don't tell the employer about your disability, get a letter from your doctor that says you were fit for work when you started the job. Keep this letter for your records.

Focus on what you do well

You have skills that help you live with your disability, such as being determined, flexible, and creative when you solve problems.

Anybody can develop a disability at any time in life. You

are not being dishonest if you don't talk about it. You can work because it's under control.

Plan before you look for a job. Know the kind of work you want and can do. Then you can talk to employers who see all you have to offer.

If you have an invisible disability and need help in your work search or on the job, you can talk to the Alberta Supports Contact Centre. Call toll-free in Alberta: 1-877-644-9992.

<https://alis.alberta.ca/occinfo/>

Occupations

Need help finding a job that fits who you are? You've come to the right place—you'll find more than 550 occupations to choose from. Learn what education and certification you'll need and whether you're a good fit for the job. Discover how much you can earn and what your duties will be. It is your path to plan. Get started now.

New VAD Website Features

VAD is pleased to announce our new inclusive and accessible website is up and running!

The site features accessibility features not seen by VAD before:

- Accessibility icon for features to use
- High contrast graphics
- Interactive forms
- A blog with current information
- And a member only side



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SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL SPINAL CORD INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

As we celebrate SCI Awareness Month, show your support for our community by raising awareness.



<https://sci-ab.ca/>

September is Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month.

According to the World Health Organization, every year, around the world, between 250,000 and 500,000 people suffer a spinal cord injury (SCI).

<https://sci-can.ca/>

Edmonton Christmas Hamper applications start in October!

<https://www.christmasbureau.ca>

There is only approximately 17 weeks until Christmas! Register online starting in mid October by downloading the application and faxing (780.414.7695), scanning and emailing (intake@christmasbureau.ca) or mailing it in to Christmas Bureau of Edmonton, #1, 12122 68 St NW, Edmonton, AB T5B 1R1 or by calling Intake at 780.414.7695 (Starting mid October).



Why sponsor a hamper?

Hundreds of Edmontonians sponsor hampers for local families, seniors and individuals every year. It's one of many ways you can support your community this festive season. It's a great way for businesses to engage their employees and give back during the holiday season. It's an opportunity for teachers to get their students involved in a team activity that gives back to the community. It's an excellent opportunity for those who want to help Edmonton families in a more hands-on way. And, by delivering the hamper, you'll see the impact you have on a family directly.

<https://www.christmasbureau.ca/ways-to-help/hamper-sponsorship/application/>

Free Food in Alberta

https://albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition/Page16163.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1J5oL1YSevInDfzmiNKElr1m_9cg0vxQE8yb7-BxUB2Z1kwpUfUb5B670

<https://foodbanksalberta.ca/food-banks/>

Helping to connect you with emergency food programs including food banks, food hampers, and free meals. Find programs in your community, choose your zone from the maps listed. Call 211 to find information on eligibility and how to apply for federal and provincial income benefit programs to help households afford to buy the food they need.

North Zone: <https://informalberta.ca/public/common/viewComboList.do?comboListId=1004954>

Central Zone: <https://informalberta.ca/public/common/viewComboList.do?comboListId=1004953>

South Zone: <https://informalberta.ca/public/common/viewComboList.do?comboListId=1004951>

Edmonton Zone: <https://informalberta.ca/public/common/viewComboList.do?comboListId=1004952>

Calgary Zone: <https://informalberta.ca/public/common/viewComboList.do?comboListId=1004903>

Alberta Emergency Financial Assistance

Financial assistance for unexpected emergencies is available through the Emergency Needs Allowance.

You can get help when:

- a situation is caused by unforeseeable circumstances beyond your control, and
- it presents a severe health risk, and
- you cannot access other resources or wait until your next pay-cheque or Income Support benefit cheque.

What's covered - This allowance can cover costs for:



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- food
- clothing
- child care*
- transportation
- damage deposit*
- temporary shelter
- utility arrears*



not know how to reach your caseworker, contact your local Alberta Supports Centre, otherwise, call the Income Support Contact Centre at 1-866-644-5135 to request an assessment.

- you must repay this money if you need help with utility arrears more than once
- eviction payments*
you must repay this money if you need help with eviction payments more than once

Note: the Income Support Contact Centre can only issue select emergency benefits including food, medication, temporary shelter, transportation and emergency basic dental services. For all other emergency benefits, call the Alberta Supports Contact Centre at 1-877-644-9992, 7:30 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday, closed statutory holidays.
 Email: css.ascc@gov.ab.ca.

Emergency Needs Allowance rates are published on page two of the Financial Benefits Summary:
<https://cfr.forms.gov.ab.ca/Form/EMP0433.pdf>

Outside of regular business hours

Costs that may be covered, but must be repaid include:

- If you are facing an emergent need for food, medication, temporary shelter or emergency basic dental services, call the Income Support Contact Centre (available 24/7) toll free at 1-866-644-5135 for an assessment. Email: hs.iscc@gov.ab.ca (responses may take 1 to 3 business days)

- essential home repairs*
- essential appliance repairs*
- *If you require these emergency benefits, please call the Alberta Supports Contact Centre at 1-877-644-9992 to request an assessment.

You can now apply online to the Income Support Contact Centre to receive emergency food benefits via Interac e-Transfer. Apply at MyAlberta Emergency Benefits to start the online application process. <https://emergencybenefits.alberta.ca/> Once you have completed your application, you will be asked to call the Income Support Contact Centre to confirm your eligibility.

Proof of need

You must provide proof of need, such as:

- an arrears statement or eviction notice
- a utility bill or statement for utility arrears
- proof from a reliable source that the item is essential, like an unsafe wiring notice from the fire department

VAD has new Blog categories

Check out the information available on our new blog!



Eligibility

You can apply for the Emergency Needs Allowance if:

- you are a current Income Support client, or
- you are an Albertan earning an income, but you do not have enough money to cover this one-time, short-term emergency that will last no longer than a month, and
- you meet the Income Support program eligibility requirements



How to apply

During regular business hours

- If you are currently receiving Income Support or AISH benefits, contact your caseworker. If you do



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