

ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared By:
Voice of Albertans with Disabilities

www.vadsociety.ca

2024-2025



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Land Acknowledgement

Voice of Albertans with Disabilities acknowledges the importance of the land that we call Alberta, where we are on today, and which we call home. We do this to reaffirm our commitment and responsibility to improving relationships between indigenous communities and their cultures.

We acknowledge the ancestral territories of all the Inuit, Metis, and First Nations that call this land home. We are called to reflect and acknowledge the effects of colonialism on indigenous families and communities. We consider how we are and can each, in our own way, move forward in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

Mission and Guiding Principles

Mission Statement

Voice of Albertans with Disabilities Society advocates for the rights, needs, and opportunities of Albertans with disabilities, fostering empowerment and inclusion in all aspects of life.

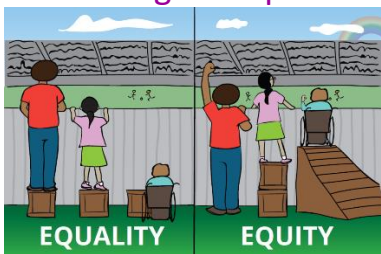
Vision Statement

To create an inclusive Alberta where all individuals with disabilities are empowered to fully participate in society, embracing diversity and achieving their goals.

Core Values

- *Inclusion*: Fostering a society where everyone has equal opportunities.
- *Advocacy*: Championing the rights and needs of individuals with disabilities.
- *Empowerment*: Supporting individuals with disabilities achieve their fullest potential.
- *Collaboration*: Building partnerships with stakeholders to advance shared goals.
- *Integrity*: Acting with transparency, accountability, and respect.

VAD's Guiding Principles

1.  **Equity**
- We will be vigilant to ensure that our rights and freedoms are upheld.
 - We claim our right to be equal while maintaining our individuality.



2.

Accessibility

- All buildings and facilities must be accessible.
- Transportation, information, and communication services must meet our diverse needs.



3.

Full Participation

- We are committed to breaking down barriers which prevent society from seeing beyond our disabilities so that we are included in all aspects of life.
- We will take charge of the social, political, and economic decisions that affect our lives.
- We must be accountable for our actions.
- We must have a choice in the services and support we require.
- We acknowledge and accept the dignity of risk.

VAD Objectives

- **Object 1:** Through educational workshops, presentations, and accessibility assessments, we will advance knowledge and greater understanding of the attributes, abilities, and the barriers to full participation in society faced by people with disabilities.
- **Object 2:** Through partnerships, consultation and sharing of information, we will assist in the development and initiation of programs and services by collaborating with service providers, various levels of government and disability related organizations.
- **Object 3:** Through support, referral, and bursaries, we will foster self-reliance amongst people with disabilities which will lead to their personal participation in resolving social and physical barriers in society.
- **Object 4:** By informing all levels of government about the abilities, concerns and needs of people with disabilities and responding to requests to educate, collaborate and advise on legislation and other government initiatives, persons with disabilities will be contributing members of society, with equal rights and responsibilities.
- **Object 5:** By undertaking research on disability issues, we will educate and bring about institutional change.

AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

The Society document outlines the following aims:

1. Provide information to our members and listen to issues during office visits or local forums.
2. Gather and study data on the issues our members identify.

3. Assess relevant provincial and national policies.
4. Provide information to members and other potential stakeholders.
5. Clarify the consumer perspective to be presented to our members.
6. Provide a draft of all relevant information for members for final input and contributions.
7. Publish and distribute documents.

VAD History



Founded in August of 1973, Voice of Albertans with Disabilities was formed to foster an attitude amongst people with disabilities that would encourage their personal involvement in overcoming social and physical barriers to their full participation in society. For 52 years, VAD has been a consumer-directed organization that speaks from the perspective of individuals with disabilities.

President's Message – Doug Manderville

Since joining the Board of Directors in November 2024 as the Interim President, I have been honoured to work alongside such a passionate and dedicated group of individuals. I want to sincerely thank our members, donors, staff, volunteers, and community stakeholders for your ongoing commitment to supporting and driving the mission of Voice of Albertans with Disabilities (VAD). Your dedication makes our work possible.

I am excited and proud to be part of such a vital organization that advocates for the rights, needs, and opportunities of all Albertans with disabilities. Our shared commitment to creating an inclusive Alberta — where all individuals with disabilities are empowered to fully participate in society, embrace diversity, and achieve their goals — continues to inspire me every day.

Since joining the board, I have witnessed incredible work by our staff team, who's outreach across Alberta promotes VAD's services, often working with individuals who might not otherwise be able to access support. Their efforts embody VAD's mission to bring services and advocacy directly to communities throughout the province.

I would like to share a few highlights since November that we are particularly proud of:

- **New Board Members:** We welcomed several new board members, bringing together over 100 years of combined experience in the disability service sector. Each board member brings a unique perspective through their lived experience or professional expertise in advocating for persons with disabilities.
- **New Strategic Plan:** We have worked closely with staff to develop a new three-year strategic plan, which will serve as our roadmap through 2028. This plan focuses on strengthening financial sustainability, expanding awareness, outreach and advocacy, improving services and accessibility throughout Alberta, and strengthening our organizational capacity and governance.

- **New Board Member Training Manual:** We have developed a comprehensive guide designed to support new and existing board members in understanding their roles, responsibilities, and best practices in nonprofit governance. This manual serves as both an orientation tool and an ongoing reference to help board members fulfill their duties with confidence, accountability, and effectiveness.

Over the past year, Alberta has experienced significant changes in funding structures that impact individuals with disabilities. Shifts in provincial priorities have resulted in reduced core funding for community-based organizations, stricter grant application processes, and greater expectations to demonstrate outcomes and cost-efficiency. Programs that once provided stable, long-term support are now increasingly competitive and short-term, creating uncertainty for many service providers and those they serve.

VAD recognizes the challenges these changes have created for individuals and families across the province. As funding models evolve, we remain steadfast in our commitment to:

- Expanding partnerships to strengthen advocacy efforts at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels.
- Diversifying funding sources to ensure sustainability and reduce reliance on any single funder.
- Delivering innovative services and resources that meet the emerging needs of the disability community.
- Amplifying the voices of persons with disabilities to ensure they are central to public policy decisions.

In addition, with the introduction of a new governance training model developed by the Board, we are committed to supporting strong, strategic, and sustainable leadership for the future.

In closing, I would once again like to thank our staff, volunteers, donors, and community stakeholders for their continued support, passion, and belief in the importance of VAD's work. Through resilience, collaboration, and a renewed focus on strategic growth, VAD will continue to serve and empower Albertans with disabilities — today and into the future.

Doug Manderville

Interim President

Executive Directors' Message – Leslie Lambert

This is our time each year to pause, reflect, and recognize the work we've done together — and to recommit to the work still ahead. **Our Mission Matters More Than Ever** at VAD, our mission is clear: **To support Albertans with disabilities in having full access, full participation, and full inclusion.**

This year, that mission has continued to guide every conversation, every challenge, and every win. In a world that is still not fully accessible, **we are the voice pushing for change.** We are

educators, advocates, partners — and above all, listeners. Because we know that change must come from the people it affects most.

We're proud of the impact we've made over the past year:

- We delivered presentations on disability awareness, and VAD Services, to over 500 people this fiscal year.
- We supported 2636 of individuals navigating systems like AISH, DTC, and CPPD.
- We engaged with schools, businesses, and governments to promote Barrier-free design and attitudinal change in society.
- During National AccessAbility Week, we brought communities together to celebrate inclusion.
- We hosted a Resource Fair for IDPD (International Day of Persons with Disabilities) 2024 and created a buzz about the resources available in the community.
- Accessible Driver Appreciation Week in November was a success with engagement from patrons thanking drivers and dispatchers.

These numbers matter. But the real impact is in the **stories**:

- The job seekers who found support.
- The individuals with a disability who felt seen, heard and advocated for.
- The businesses that took their first step toward inclusion.

I want to recognize the **incredible staff, volunteers, and board members** who fuel this organization with heart and grit. Your dedication keeps VAD strong. Thank you to our funders and partners for believing in our vision. And thank you to our members — the people at the core of this society — for keeping us grounded and accountable.

The road to full accessibility is long — but we are not walking it alone. In the coming year, we'll focus on:

- Strengthening our advocacy voice,
- Expanding outreach in rural and underserved communities,
- And building partnerships that lead to **real, systemic change**.

Together, we can build a province where **disability is not an afterthought — it's the starting point**.

Thank you for your trust, your time, and your belief in what we do. Let's keep raising our voices — and raising the bar for accessibility — in Alberta and beyond.

Here's to another year of progress, purpose, and possibility. Together, We HOLD the Power!

Thank you.

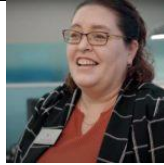
Leslie Lambert

Executive Director

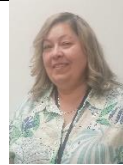
2024-25 VAD Staff



**Executive
Director**
Leslie Lambert



**Program & Services
Manager**
Teresa Makarewich



**Community Support
Worker**
Chantelle Samoridny



**Education
Coordinator**
Michelle Bissell



2024-25 VAD Board of Directors

 <p>ACTING PRESIDENT <i>Doug Manderville</i></p> <p>Doug became a member of the Voice of Albertans with Disabilities Board in 2024</p>	 <p>ACTING VICE PRESIDENT <i>Koryn Krekoski</i></p> <p>Koryn became a member of the Voice of Albertans with Disabilities Board in 2021</p>	 <p>ACTING TREASURER <i>Scott Douglas</i></p> <p>Scott became a member of the Voice of Albertans with Disabilities Board in 2024</p>
 <p>ACTING DIRECTOR <i>Don Slater</i></p> <p>Don became a member of the Voice of Albertans with Disabilities Board in 2024</p>	 <p>ACTING DIRECTOR <i>Ali A Khalil</i></p> <p>Ali became a member of the Voice of Albertans with Disabilities Board in 2025.</p>	 <p>ACTING DIRECTOR <i>Armany Amiri</i></p> <p>Arman became a member of the Voice of Albertans with Disabilities Board in 2025.</p>
 <p>ACTING DIRECTOR <i>Marilyn Erho</i></p> <p>Marilyn became a member of the Voice of Albertans with Disabilities Board in 2025</p>	 <p>DIRECTOR <i>Dominic Shaw</i></p> <p>Dominic became a member of the Voice of Albertans with Disabilities Board in 2022.</p>	 <p>ACTING DIRECTOR <i>James MacPhail</i></p> <p>James became a member of the Voice of Albertans with Disabilities Board in 2025.</p>

VAD Volunteer Shout Outs

Voice of Albertans with Disabilities would also like to thank the following volunteers for their countless time and energy spent supporting VAD in disability awareness presentations.

- Lisa Bennett
- Donna Bulger
- Tara Mitrovic
- Roxanne Ulanicki
- Michelle Exton

Voice of Albertans with Disabilities sends their thanks and appreciation to our volunteers for all the hard work these volunteers do to support VAD's fundraising through Bingos & Casinos.

- Barb Koziak - Coordinator
- Barb Anderson
- Crystal Komarnicki
- Harriet Komarnicki
- Patrick Komarnicki
- Thomas Tinworth
- Doris Astill
- Marian Cartier
- Nancy Radomsky
- Ellen May Smith
- Nancy Doherty
- David Stang
- Helga Wheeler
- Rhona Ivan
- Neil Ivan
- Savanna Ivan
- Cory Gurnsey
- Rachel Wilson
- William Danyliuk
- Ruth Kozlowski
- Clinton Anderson

Voice of Albertans with Disabilities serves its members and the disability community through core programs and services.

Support and Referral



Since **1973**, the **Voice of Albertans with Disabilities (VAD)** has provided **support, referral, and advocacy services** to individuals with disabilities and their families across the province. The organization's long-standing commitment to **navigation support** reflects the ongoing challenges that many face when accessing or understanding government programs and services.

Core Services and Access Points

Support requests are received via **telephone calls, emails, and in-person visits**. VAD's dedicated staff offer **one-on-one assistance**, helping clients complete complex forms, understand eligibility requirements, and access available resources.

Key areas of support include:

- **Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH)**
- **Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD)**
- **Disability Tax Credit (DTC)**
- **Edmonton Leisure Access Pass**
- Additional **municipal, provincial, and federal benefit applications**

Most inquiries involve **form completion, program explanation**, or referrals to **partner agencies** whose services are aligned with client needs. This hands-on approach helps prevent individuals from falling through the cracks due to inaccessible or overwhelming application processes.

Filling a Critical Gap in Services

VAD continues to be recognized as one of the few organizations in Alberta providing this level of free, personalized disability form support. Many individuals express deep relief and gratitude when they receive help navigating overwhelming paperwork that they may have otherwise abandoned. This hands-on guidance often represents a turning point in their ability to access life-changing programs and services.

By maintaining this high-demand program, VAD continues to fill a vital gap in community supports, ensuring that Albertans with disabilities are not left behind due to systemic barriers or lack of access to application assistance.

Areas of Support for individuals

One-on-One Consultations

VAD offers support in the following areas:

- *AISH Application forms*
- *CPPD forms*
- *Leisure Access Pass forms*
- *Personal Taxes (Low Income Individuals)*
- *Disability Tax Credit Application forms*
- *Old Age Security forms*
- *Alberta Adult Health Benefit forms*
- *Referrals for RDSPs*
- *Support Service & Program Referrals*
- *Self Advocacy Supports*

Collaborations and Partnerships

The **Voice of Albertans with Disabilities (VAD)** plays an active and influential role in shaping accessibility and inclusion policy through **strategic partnerships, board and committee participation, and project collaborations** across Alberta.

Committee and Working Group Engagement

VAD staff and board members regularly participate in **working groups, advisory committees, and consultations** with a variety of stakeholders. These engagements occur monthly and provide platforms to represent the lived experiences and perspectives of people with disabilities. VAD contributes a **responsible, experienced, and effective voice** to conversations that impact accessibility, equity, and social inclusion.

Cross-Sector Collaboration and Information Sharing

Through our partnerships, VAD shares insights on **accessibility, disability-related challenges, and innovative solutions** with:

- Government departments at all levels
- Public servants and policymakers
- Nonprofit organizations and service providers
- The general public

VAD serves as a conduit between individuals with disabilities and the systems that shape their daily lives—translating real-world experiences into advocacy for structural and policy improvements.

Government Relations and Policy Influence

VAD collaborates continuously with various **departments within the Government of Alberta** to:

- Elevate disability-related issues
- Identify service gaps
- Work toward **shared goals** that respond to the needs of individuals with disabilities across the province

These meetings with **elected officials and government employees**—both past and present—have been characterized by cooperation and mutual respect, resulting in productive discussions and forward momentum on key advocacy issues.

Guiding Philosophy

VAD’s approach to collaboration is rooted in our organizational slogan:

“Together, We Hold the Power!”

This reflects a deep commitment to building **effective, inclusive, and dynamic partnerships** with individuals and organizations who share our vision of a more accessible Alberta.

VAD Annual Membership

The Voice of Albertans with Disabilities (VAD) fosters a strong, province-wide membership base committed to promoting accessibility, equity, and inclusion. Membership is open to individuals, organizations, and businesses who support VAD’s mission and wish to contribute to building a more inclusive Alberta.

Organizational Members

VAD is a collaboration of non-profit, Alberta-based organizations who leverage their collective voice to advocate for inclusive policies and practices. These members work together to influence systemic change and ensure the rights and needs of people with disabilities are represented at all levels of decision-making.

iVAD Members

The iVAD (Inclusive Voice of Albertans with Disabilities) network is a pan-disability group of individuals with lived experience who are passionate about:

- Raising awareness of barriers to inclusion
- Developing community-driven solutions around:
 - Accessibility
 - Affordable housing
 - Employment
 - Transportation
 - Reducing social isolation

iVAD members play an active role in informing VAD's advocacy efforts and ensuring services reflect the realities of people with disabilities across Alberta.

Corporate Members

Corporate membership includes a network of businesses and retailers who provide goods and services to the public, with a special focus on accessibility and disability inclusion. These businesses align with VAD's values and contribute to a more inclusive economy.

Supporting One Another

VAD encourages all members—whether individuals, organizations, or businesses—to support one another by choosing to engage with fellow VAD members first when seeking products or services. This strengthens the disability community and promotes a culture of mutual support and collaboration.

CORPORATE MEMBERS

1. Red Plaid Developments
2. Redi Enterprises Society
3. Civida
4. Bird Creatives Ltd
5. Canadian Accreditation Council
6. Gateway Holistic Care Group
7. Tina Coulombe - Registered Disability Savings Plan - Primerica
8. Qualicare
9. Urban Life Solutions
10. Preferred Client Services Group Ltd
11. Brightvoie Care Services Inc
12. Congdon's Aids to Daily Living

OPERATIONAL MEMBERS

1. Blue Heron Vocational Training Centre
2. Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre of Calgary
3. Drumheller and Region Transition Society (DARTS)
4. PROS Providing Residential Options & Services
5. Southern Alberta Individualized Planning Association (SAIPA)
6. Canadian Mental Health Association, the (AB East Central Region)
7. Alberta Community Crime Prevention Association (ACCPA)
8. Chrysalis Society
9. Lakeland Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Society
10. Skills Society - Supporting the Citizenship of People with Disabilities
11. Foothills Advocacy in Motions Society
12. Spina Bifida And Hydrocephalus Association of Northern Alberta (SBHANA)
13. Edmonton Epilepsy Association
14. Inclusion Alberta

15. Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - Calgary Branch
16. Friends of Medicare
17. AdaptAbilities
18. Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society

Benefits of membership:

Membership with the Voice of Albertans with Disabilities (VAD) provides individuals, organizations, and businesses with a unique opportunity to **engage, collaborate, and promote accessibility** across Alberta. Members benefit from increased visibility, access to VAD's network, and the ability to contribute to meaningful change in the disability sector.

Benefits of VAD Membership Include:

- **Attendance and participation** in VAD-hosted events, including the Annual General Meeting
- **Feature opportunities** for projects, research initiatives, and committee participation
- **Access to VAD's monthly newsletter**, *The Voice* (email or printed)
- **Distribution of member information** upon request through VAD's social media channels
- **Advertising opportunities** in VAD's printed materials and publications

Website visibility, including:

- A direct **web link** on the VAD website for the duration of the membership year
- Option to be a **monthly spotlight sponsor** on VAD's homepage

Directory listings:

- Inclusion in a **printed organizational member directory**
- Listing in VAD's **online resource directory** for corporate and organizational members
- **Promotion of member services** through a community-first approach—VAD encourages all members to **support fellow members** when seeking products and services
- These benefits reflect VAD's commitment to **connection, collaboration, and community-driven support** throughout Alberta.

Education and Awareness

Presentations & Consultations

The **Voice of Albertans with Disabilities (VAD)** continues to advance public understanding of disability through its **Disability Awareness Presentation Program**, reaching diverse audiences across Alberta.

Program Reach and Delivery:

- During this reporting period, VAD conducted **32 Disability Awareness presentations** for **schools and businesses**, engaging a total of **512 participants**. These sessions were delivered

through a **hybrid format**—either in-person or via virtual platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet—to maximize accessibility and reach.

Presentation Content and Objectives:

- The presentations are tailored to meet the needs of **students, educators, professionals, and employers**, and typically run **30 to 60 minutes** depending on audience age and organizational requirements. Key features of the sessions include:
- **PowerPoint visuals, props, and live demonstrations**
- Engaging, interactive delivery by knowledgeable presenters with lived or professional experience
- Discussion and Q&A components to foster understanding and dispel misconceptions

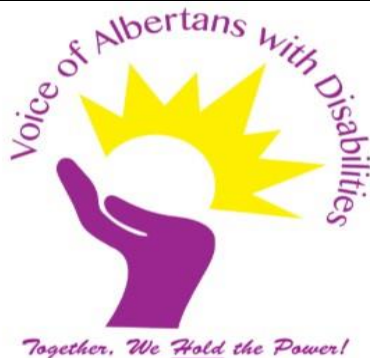
Topics Covered:

- The **meaning of disability and impairment**
- Appropriate **etiquette and behavior** around individuals with disabilities
- The **importance of language** and respectful communication
- Differentiating between **myths and facts**
- The **attitudes and barriers** faced by people with disabilities in daily life

Community Impact:

- Feedback from schools and businesses remains overwhelmingly positive. Participants frequently express increased understanding and empathy, along with a desire to implement inclusive practices in their organizations or classrooms.
- By delivering these presentations, VAD continues to provide **essential education that fosters a more inclusive and respectful society** for Albertans with disabilities.

Information Services



The **Voice of Albertans with Disabilities (VAD)** maintains active and transparent communication with its members, stakeholders, and the public through its monthly newsletter and website blog.

Newsletter – *The Voice*

VAD's official newsletter, *The Voice*, is a key tool for sharing:

- Program and service updates
- Upcoming events and initiatives
- Accessibility-related news and resources
- Advocacy efforts and community impact stories

Distributed monthly, the newsletter reaches a wide audience through both **digital and print channels**:

- **Digital distribution** to over **2,000 contacts**
- **76 readers** receive a **printed copy** by mail
- **Average email open rate: 1,093 readers per month**
- **Highest monthly readership: 1,288**
- **Lowest monthly readership: 512**
- **Total readership in 2024: 13,108**

These statistics reflect a **strong and engaged readership**, demonstrating VAD's role as a trusted information source in the disability community.

Website Blog

VAD's website also features a regularly updated **blog** that complements the newsletter by providing:

- In-depth features on accessibility topics
- Highlights from community collaborations
- Information on grants, consultations, and resources

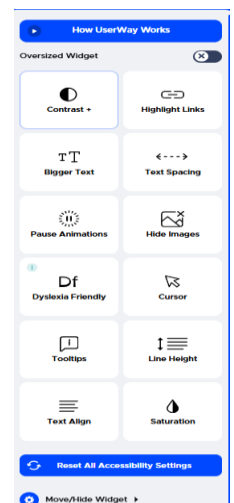
Together, *The Voice* and the blog serve to inform, educate, and connect communities across Alberta—ensuring that VAD's impact and advocacy efforts remain visible and accessible.

Website

Our website has been redeveloped to be fully accessible and inclusive in the creation of pages and content. VAD's website provides information about VAD activities and the programs and services available to people with disabilities in Alberta. We now have an interactive accessibility menu that allows the website user to change or modify the site for:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| ○ Contrast | ○ Cursor Highlight |
| ○ Highlight links. | ○ Tooltips |
| ○ Bigger text | ○ Line height Text |
| ○ Text spacing | Align |
| ○ Pause animations. | ○ And graphic |
| ○ Dyslexia friendly | saturation |

- VAD had a high of 3753 website sessions during this reporting year.
- VAD's website is inclusive and accessible; our analytics have shown an increase in website usage. We also have seen an increase in contacts from the website, including online bookings for appointments, presentation requests and accessibility coordination.



Projects

Disability-related research is a key factor in our organization. VAD staff write proposals to acquire project funding dollars, conduct research and produce informed literature on important topics regarding Alberta's disability community.

VAD has worked on many projects this year including:

- VAD Website maintenance
- VAD Podcast project
- 2024 IDPD Provincial event
- 2025 IDPD Provincial planning
- 2024 Accessible Driver Appreciation Week
- 2025 Annual Membership Drive
- 2024 Volunteer appreciation event
- 2025 Volunteer appreciation planning
- Follow up and tracking of clients for AISH and CPPD approvals.
- Grant Writing: ECF, CSS, CIOG
- Fiscal Year End Prep
- 2024 AGM
- 2025 National AccessAbility Week BBQ
- Newsletters and Blogs
- Monthly, Quarterly and Annual reporting
- Indigenous & Multicultural project prep
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion statement
- Monthly podcasts
- BNI meetings
- Disability Awareness Prep and Presentations
- Bursaries marketing and approvals
- Networking at community events

Bursaries

The Education for Life Bursary Program supports Alberta students with disabilities in pursuing their post-secondary education goals. This long-standing initiative reflects VAD's commitment to educational equity, financial accessibility, and empowerment through learning.

Eligibility Criteria. To be considered for the Education for Life Bursary, applicants must:

- Be a resident of Alberta
- Identify as a person with a disability
- Be enrolled in a post-secondary program, with proof of registration for the academic year
- Submit a completed application form by the annual deadline of November 15
- Include one letter of reference from an adult who is not a family member
- Provide a short biography (max 250 words) outlining educational goals

Bursary recipients are selected based on application completeness, demonstrated financial need, and strength of references.

2024 Bursary Distribution

In 2024, VAD received 40 applications. A total of 12 bursaries were awarded, with individual amounts ranging from \$400 to \$1,000.

- Total awarded in 2024:
 - \$5,000 through the VAD Education for Life Bursaries
 - \$1,000 through the Elsa Lodewyk Memorial Bursary
 - \$1,000 through the Wesley United Church Bursary

Program Impact

Over the past 20 years, VAD has disbursed over \$95,000, directly supporting more than 200 Albertans with disabilities in their pursuit of higher education. This initiative continues to reduce financial barriers and promote lifelong learning and inclusion across the province.

VAD extends its congratulations to the 2024 recipients and heartfelt thanks to all applicants for their dedication and ambition. The programs that the post-secondary students who received bursaries are listed below:

- Business Administration Finance Diploma
- Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies
- Education After Degree
- Health Sciences Certificate - Pre-nursing
- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Psych
- Bachelor of Fine Arts
- Bachelor of Kinesiology
- Railway Conductor
- Open Studies
- Business Administration

\$1000 Robertson-Westley United Church Bursary

Trusting in the promise of Jesus that “where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them,” we come together at Robertson-Wesley United Church to worship God, to share each other’s joys and sorrows, to learn and grow in faith, to use God’s gifts wisely, and to lead active Christian lives of service among our neighbours here and in the global community.



\$1000 Elsa Marie Lodewyk Memorial Bursary

Elsa Marie Lodewyk was born on April 18, 1992, with severe Cerebral Palsy and was not expected to live for even a few days. She had a strong will to live, though, and lived a full life for almost 19 years. Elsa’s disabilities meant that she needed help from many people – her parents, siblings,

teachers, schoolmates, caregivers, doctors and nurses. She touched the lives of many people with her gentle spirit and had many friends. Elsa showed that life is not what we accomplish but more about our relationships, listening and being a friend. Even though Elsa could not speak, she was able to contribute to the lives of many people and her life had a positive impact on many.

The Elsa Marie Lodewyk Memorial Bursary was established by her family to reflect Elsa's generosity, kindness, and gentleness. She would have been thrilled to know that she was helping another person with a disability. To the Bursary Recipient: *Just like Elsa, your life, too, will have more of an impact on others than you could ever imagine. We hope that this bursary will encourage you to live your life to the fullest and to be all that you can be.*

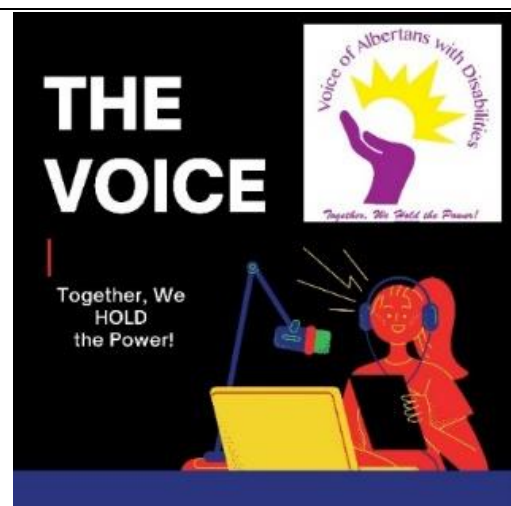
Podcasts

In an effort to expand outreach and promote accessibility education in new and engaging ways, the **Voice of Albertans with Disabilities (VAD)** has launched its own **podcast series**. With in-house video and audio production capabilities, VAD is now able to create, edit, and publish content tailored to the disability community in Alberta.

Purpose and Focus

The **VAD Podcast** serves as an informational platform to:

- Highlight **member stories and lived experiences**
- Share **resources and supports** available to Albertans with disabilities
- Feature **community partners** and advocates
- Provide **accessible education** around issues of inclusion, equity, and support



These podcasts are designed to **educate and inform** a broad audience while amplifying voices from within the disability community.

Reach and Engagement

Since its launch, the podcast has gained momentum, with **over 500 downloads** to date. The growing library of episodes is available to the public and easily accessible online.

Listen to the VAD Podcast: <https://vadsociety.ca/vad-podcasts/>

VAD is excited to continue building this **audio archive**, offering diverse perspectives and creating space for dialogue around accessibility in Alberta.

Cumulative Annual Report					
April 1, 2024-March 31, 2025					
Reporting Requirements					
		Non-Indigenous	Indigenous On Reserve/ Settlement	Indigenous Off Reserve/ Settlement	Total
Total # of received referrals	Accepted	2273	2	88	2363
	Not accepted	0	0	0	0
	Total # of received referrals:				2363
	Number of referred clients with a developmental condition/impairment:				33
	Number of referred clients with a mental condition/impairment:				174
	Number of referred clients with a neurological condition/impairment:				86
	Number of referred clients with a physical condition/impairment:				222
	Number of referred clients with a sensory condition/impairment:				1
Total # of unique clients served	Male	1012	0	23	1035
	Female	1247	0	26	1273
	Other	55	0	0	55
	Total # of clients served:				2363
Total # of new files opened for this reporting period:		1913	0	76	1989
Total # of closed files for this reporting period:		1324	0	64	1388
Waitlist # of clients waiting to receive service after meeting the eligibility requirements	Less than one month	1492	0	76	1568
	1 - 3 months	51	0	0	51
	4 - 6 months	0	0	0	0
	7 - 12 months	0	0	0	0
	12+ months	0	0	0	0
	Total # of clients on waitlist:				1619

Thank You

On behalf of the membership, Board of Directors, and staff, we thank all the funders, volunteers, government departments, organizations, corporations, and individuals who provided VAD with support in 2024-2025. Your contributions are helping make Alberta a more accessible and equitable province for individuals with disabilities. The generous support of our donors is key to the success of Voice of Albertans with Disabilities.

Every donation, large or small, helps us towards achieving our goal of full participation in society by people with disabilities. Thank You



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