



1610 29 Street North
Lethbridge, AB
T1H 5L3

March 30, 2022

Re: Essential but Forgotten Campaign

To All Employees, People in Services, Guardians & Families,

Ability Resource Association has provided essential services for people with disabilities in Lethbridge since 1953. The disability services provided by our organization are funded in part by the Alberta Government, with the most significant portion being through Alberta Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD). The Alberta government has not provided increased funding to service providers for operations or to raise staff wages since 2014.

Individuals who receive PDD funded supports rely on these essential services and require stable, qualified staff to support them in their lives. Staff providing these essential and valuable services require skills, training, education and experience and deserve to be fairly paid for this important work.

As a charitable non-profit organization, we have always worked collaboratively and cooperatively with other service providers in our city, region and province. Our organization is a member of ADWA (Alberta Disability Workers Association) and ACDS (Alberta Council of Disability Services). ADWA has released the '*Essential but Forgotten*' campaign (www.adwa.ca) and we strongly support this campaign advocating for the Alberta Government to provide organizations supporting people with disabilities with the critically necessary funding increase necessary to allow organizations, such as ours, to raise the wages of the Community Disability Service Workforce. Having received no funded wage increases in 8 years, during a period in which inflation alone has increased by 14%, the Community Disability Service Workforce is significantly under paid. Combined with a highly competitive job market in the Lethbridge area, it is becoming increasingly difficult for organizations to attract and retain skilled workers.

The Management and Board of Directors of Ability Resource Association ask that our employees, people in services, their guardians and families write your MLA to bring attention to this issue and the *Essential but Forgotten* campaign. Information can be found at www.adwa.ca, on the *Essential but Forgotten* page, including a Press Release, Tips on Letter Writing and Sample

Letters, How to Find Your MLA, as well as Resources providing data and information. ADWA is hosting virtual Community Conversations to talk about the campaign and answer questions. We encourage people to register at <https://adwa.ca/about-us/essential-but-forgotten-campaign/> for one of the following Community Conversations:

- People employed in Community Disability Services: Tuesday, April 5, 2022, 10am, 2pm or 7pm
- Self-Advocates/People in Services: Monday, April 11, 2022, 7pm
- Families/Guardians: Tuesday, April 19, 2022, 7pm

Our Board and Management greatly value the work of our employees and know the essential and valuable difference they make in the lives of people in our services. The Board has written our MLAs and the Minister of Community and Social Services, requesting a meeting to provide more information about this important issue.

Sincerely,



Nikki van Mulligen
Board Chair



Paige McCann Sauter
Executive Director



p 403-329-3911 f 403-329-3581
1610 29 St N • Lethbridge AB • T1H 5L3
www.abilityresource.ca