

Conference Backgrounder

IMPACT 2023

Alberta Council of Disability Services Annual Conference

Dates: May 31 to June 1, 2023

Venue: Deerfoot Inn & Casino, Calgary, Alberta

New conference name: In recognition of the 35th anniversary of the ACDS annual conference, we have a new conference name: “Impact” is the new and permanent title of the ACDS annual conference. The new conference name reflects the enduring goal of the ACDS annual conference: to positively and profoundly impact the work of community disability service providers to support individuals with developmental disabilities. The new conference logo will be launched alongside registration in February 2023.

Impact 2023: Following the success of the 2022 in-person conference in September, we are excited to bring our sector and our supporters back together in May 2023 to connect, network, and learn, and we will build on our successes at the recently held conference.

With engaging and inspiring presentations and activities, the 2023 conference will facilitate sharing of innovative ideas, knowledge, and expertise to strengthen the impact of disability-serving organizations and their capacities to support the individuals they serve.

Conference Value Statement: Impact 2023 will build on the energy and momentum gained at the 2022 conference and allow disability-serving organizations to move forward with even greater Impact.

Our conference goal is to provide a strong learning experience that focuses on sharing knowledge and expertise from a range of speakers and presenters with presentations designed for leadership (executives and senior management), middle-management and front-line staff.

Conference Participants: Up to 450 delegates are expected to attend, including front-line staff, managers, and executives from the CDS sector, primarily in Alberta.

Conference Format: The conference will include plenary and concurrent sessions. This will include interactive sessions to engage attendees, with an emphasis on shared learning, including sharing of innovative practices.



Impact 2023 builds on some of the themes and topics addressed at the 2022 conference including:

The sector's capacity to innovate and transform: Despite the pandemic's ongoing impacts and other significant challenges, from underfunding to supporting individuals with increasingly complex needs, through innovation and adaptation, service providers have maintained effective service delivery. By adapting programs to creative ways to address staffing challenges, the CDS sector continues to demonstrate that we have the will and the capacity to renew and transform. The conference will address topics such as:

- Re-thinking organizational structure and capacity
- Innovation in service provision
- New ways of generating revenue
- Digital transformation

The opportunities to advance the sector's workforce: Whilst human resource challenges remain a top concern of CDS sector service providers; the sector is advancing the workforce at an organizational and sector-wide level. The pandemic brought significant attention to the workforce issues impacting our sector, and service providers alongside ACDS are advocating fiercely for changes to advance our workforce. ACDS is now entering phase 2 of Project Blueprint CDS, a landmark workforce initiative towards a robust, sector-led strategy for a sustainable CDS sector workforce. Organizationally, the sector has many examples of promising strategies and initiatives that address workforce issues systemically. The conference will provide an opportunity to explore strategies to advance our workforce, including:

- Developing future leaders
- Creating an engaged and inspired workforce
 - Training and development
 - Developing leadership capacity
 - Developing strategic thinking

The sector's capacity to support individuals, particularly individuals with complex needs: More than ever before, agencies are supporting individuals with complex needs. CDS sector staff have been active in pursuing the required training and development to support individuals. The 2023 conference will address topics to assist organizations and staff in support individuals, including:

- Promising practices to support individuals with complex needs
- Addressing and recovering from trauma; trauma-informed care
- Promising practices to support individuals' mental health challenges
- Learning related to safety (including legal changes around safety)

In addition, the conference will address topics related to:

- Supporting diverse clients, including individuals who are part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community
- Supports and interventions for aging individuals
- Supporting healthy relationships
- New models of support
- Safe overnight supports

Further reading: [Latest ACDS reports and research](#)