

Project Blueprint CDS: Workforce Strategy



Project Update: Stage Two 2026-2028

Building on the work completed by Project Blueprint in 2022-2023 (see page 2), the Alberta Council of Disability Services (ACDS) received funding from Alberta Assisted Living and Social Services in August 2026 to support the implementation of five priority recommendations related to workforce development in the Community Disability Services (CDS) sector. KPMG has been contracted to help ACDS achieve the following:

Build a shared understanding of the CDS sector's evolving scope of practice, resulting in a complete CDS Sector Services and Competencies Inventory

September 2026 - February 2027

Province-wide engagement with service providers, Disability Services, and post-secondary institutions will inform the construction and validation of a Sector Services and Competency Inventory for current and future frontline staff and organizational leadership.

Update the ACDS Workforce Classification System

March 2027 - May 2027

The new Services and Competencies Inventory will shape the development of an updated Workforce Classification System, ensuring that positions and competencies accurately reflect the current and evolving scope of practice within the CDS sector.

Recommend a target credential for new, entry-level frontline workers

June 2027 - August 2027

Credentials currently held by Community Disability Services Workers (CDSW) will be assessed to determine and recommend a baseline credential (or equivalencies) for new CDSW hires, and an implementation plan will be developed that includes a grandfathering approach for existing staff.

Analyse the current training landscape for the CDS sector

September 2027 - October 2027

The existing training landscape will be mapped to identify strengths, gaps, inefficiencies, and opportunities in the CDS sector. Both formal and informal training, including innovative practices, will be assessed to inform the Provincial Training Framework.

Develop a CDS Sector Provincial Training Framework to support current and foreseeable workforce competency needs

November 2027 - February 2028

A cohesive, sector-wide framework will be created to map clear training pathways, reduce duplication, identify equivalencies, lower administrative burden, and improve training access and consistency.

Stage One Summary 2022-2023

In February 2022, ACDS received funding from the Alberta Government to develop a sector-driven strategy for the CDS workforce. This work included research and sector engagement by KPMG to identify workforce challenges and co-create recommendations to strengthen the CDS workforce.

Challenges

Understanding Workforce Context

Lack of visibility and buy-in to the value and complexity of the work of the CDS sector

Duplicate processes to provide supports that should be available from other systems

Increasingly complex service needs among individuals and families

Rural communities experience workforce challenges more severely

Recommendations

A1. Build a shared understanding of the **economic impact** of the CDS sector

A2. Determine **scope of practice** of the sector

A3. Adopt **common workforce classifications**

A4. Adopt a **network model** for cross-ministry coordination

A5. Develop a **forecasting model** to help plan

Stage 2

Stage 2

Recruiting and Retaining the Workforce

Low wages outpaced by increasing cost of living

Competition from other organizations and sectors for better pay and work environment

Workforce has expectations about **work environment** that CDS sector is not able to meet

Leadership gap due to senior leaders retiring

B6. Provide immediate and ongoing **wage relief**

B7. Build a **compensation scale** guide

B8. Co-design a **community of practice**

Developing the Workforce

Barriers to training, including lack of funding and limited opportunities for specialized training

Rigid government contracts limit how services can use funding to support their workforce

Difficulty finding workers with the right skills, as many new workers do not have formal disability services qualifications, and competency criteria are not consistent across the sector

Lack of post-secondary training as many programs have closed due to lack of demand

C9A. Establish a target **credential** requirement

C9B. Establish a **micro-credentialing** system

C9C. Expand **post-secondary** programming

C9D. Identify **current state of training**

C9E. Develop a provincial **training framework**

C9F. Develop a **training catalogue**

C9G. Expand the **suite of training** offered

C10. Increase **flexibility in workforce funding** in PDD contract structures

C11. Implement **innovative workforce fund**

C12. Build a **culture of professionalization**

Stage 2

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