

## PROJECT BLUEPRINT CDS: Towards a Skilled and Sustainable Workforce

### Vision

A professional, skilled, and sustainable community disability services workforce, supporting Albertans with disabilities to live full lives as valued citizens in their communities.

### Goal and Objectives

The goal of this multi-phase, one-year initiative is to develop a collaborative, sector-driven, evidence-based strategy for a skilled and sustainable community disability services (CDS) workforce to support Albertans with disabilities now and in the foreseeable future.

*Blueprint CDS* aims to address the sector's chronic human resource challenges and new pressures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Issues threatening the sector's workforce include: low wages, closure of post-secondary disability programs, high recruitment and training costs, lack of a formal certification system to assess competencies, increased and more complex needs of individuals requiring supports, competing labour markets, and a workforce that is burned out and shrinking due to pandemic pressures.<sup>1</sup>

*Blueprint CDS* will create a multi-prong and cohesive strategy to address these systemic and inter-related challenges. Supported by external professional consultants to advise on approach and provide research and sector engagement services, the project will deliver:

- Labour market intelligence, with trends and forecast of workforce supply and projected changes in individuals' support needs
- Immediate measures to address urgent concerns (actionable in summer 2022)
- Short-term and mid-term measures (actionable within 1 to 3 years)
- Direction for long-term, systemic solutions requiring multi-stakeholder involvement and cross-system resources

The initiative will escalate the post-pandemic recovery of the CDS sector workforce.

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1. For more details on CDS sector workforce data and issues, see [Community Disability Services Workforce: An Essential Foundation for Quality Supports](#).

## Project Phases

1. **Spring 2022:** Research, and recommendations for immediate measures
2. **Summer 2022:** Addressing immediate needs, and proposing high-level recommendations for sector review and refinement
3. **Fall 2022:** Sector engagement in strategy design and development
4. **Winter 2023:** Developing implementation plans for sector-identified priorities

## Building on ACDS Research, Engagement, and Advocacy

This project builds on ongoing activities aligned with ACDS' mission to strengthen the sector by being the collective voice of our members, advancing excellence and best practices, advocating for effective public policy, and championing professional disability services.

**Annual ACDS Workforce Surveys:** Sent to all ACDS member agencies, the survey is the only source of current CDS sector workforce and related data.

**2019 ACDS member engagement on workforce strategy:** Over 80 ACDS member agencies participated in initial (pre-pandemic) conversations to prepare the groundwork to develop a human resource strategy for the sector. The discussion paper synthesizing the learnings from these conversations will provide a base to inform the work of the current project.

**2020/2021 synthesis of pandemic observations:** ACDS documented extensively the systems-level impact of the pandemic, and stories from frontline workers.

**Advocacy:** ACDS has a long track-record of advocating for better wages and improved work conditions. During the pandemic, ACDS led the #CWB4allCDS campaign to advocate for frontline community disability workers to be included in the Critical Worker Benefit.

## Financial Support

This project is supported by:

- Alberta Community and Social Services: \$200,000
- Alberta Council of Disability Services: \$24,000

## Project Lead and Contact

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