



Disability Policy in Canada: Provincial and Territorial Report

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Prepared by: Brittany Finlay, Samuel Ragot, Lucyna M. Lach, and
Jennifer D. Zwicker

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Disability Policy in Canada Provincial and Territorial Report was commissioned by Kids Brain Health Network (KBHN), and developed in collaboration with researchers from the Disability Policy Research Program (DiPo) and McGill University. The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of disability policy across Canadian provinces and territories. This report can serve as a baseline against which future progress in policy changes can be assessed, or at least understood.

In this report series, we aim to be as comprehensive as possible by including all policy related to persons with disabilities in each province and territory. We acknowledge that this report reflects a point in time assessment of disability policy. As such, information and links will likely change over time as governments and policy change. All information included in this report is accurate as of the date of publication. To maximize the accuracy of this report, it has been reviewed and verified by individuals with expertise in and/or lived experience with disability policy across Canada.

In an effort to be comprehensive while also succinct, we chose to apply a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria to the disability policy tools included in this report. The focus in this report series is to include legislation, plans of action, advocacy/awareness initiatives, tax programs, and services that support children and adults who have disabilities that are permanent and present from birth or that develop in early childhood. This includes neurodevelopmental disabilities and physical disabilities, deafness and hearing impairments, and blindness and vision impairment. We do not include policy tools that exclusively provide support to individuals that develop disabilities later in life, for example due to accidents or workplace injury. In some cases, there are policy tools that are accessible to all citizens and so are not explicitly designed for persons with disabilities and their families. We refer to these programs as 'blended' and include them in our analysis as they may be relevant to persons with disabilities and/or have unique

ABOUT THIS REPORT

eligibility criteria for them. This is particularly important in provinces and territories that do not have policy tools and programs specifically designed for persons with disabilities to highlight other avenues through which they can receive support.

We chose to focus this report on children and adults with disabilities, and do not include programs that support seniors (65 years of age or older) with disabilities. The caveat to this is that we do include programs that support seniors if they also support adults under the age of 65 years with disabilities. This report is also focused on current government-funded or administered programs. We include some non-profit and community organizations that administer programs on behalf of government, but acknowledge that there are many more that we do not mention that are instrumental to the provision of support for individuals with disabilities across the country.

With respect to education, this report includes legislation and government directives relating to inclusive education, as well as outlines the bodies that are responsible for administering inclusive education, when available. We also include specific government funding streams or government-funded programs that support inclusive education. We do not include specific programs administered by school boards or other entities.

Measuring Up

In this report, we provide information about the experiences of parents and caregivers when applying for and accessing disability programs, as well as information that emerged during the research process or from our peer reviewers. This information is provided in “Measuring Up” boxes throughout the report. Our intent in including this information is to provide additional context regarding the realities of accessing the policy tools outlined in this report and to give a voice to those with lived experience. It is important to note that these perspectives reflect opinions and experiences of a select group of individuals and may not align with the experiences of all individuals within a given province or territory.

Parent and caregiver experiences were sourced from a [study](#) completed by our team, which involved conducting an online survey and follow-up interviews with participants across Canada. We provide more information about the individuals we spoke with during this study on the following page.

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499 Survey Participants **81** Interview Participants

English Speakers: 93%
French Speakers: 7%

14% Spoke more than one language in their home

Average age: 42 years
Range: 22-70 years

Average age: 11 years
Range: 0-30 years

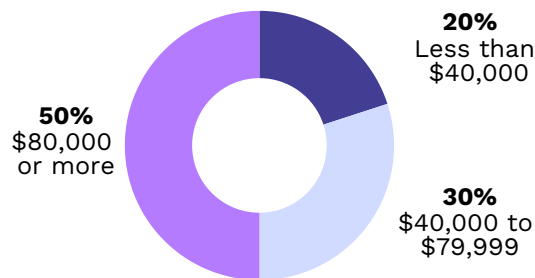
Males: 8%
Females: 91%
Non-binary: 1%

Males: 68%
Females: 31%
Non-binary or other: 1%

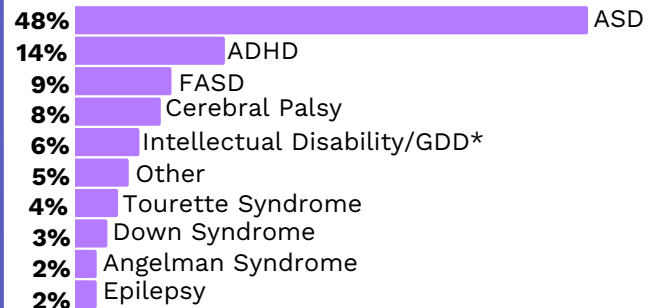
Participants

Youth

Household Income



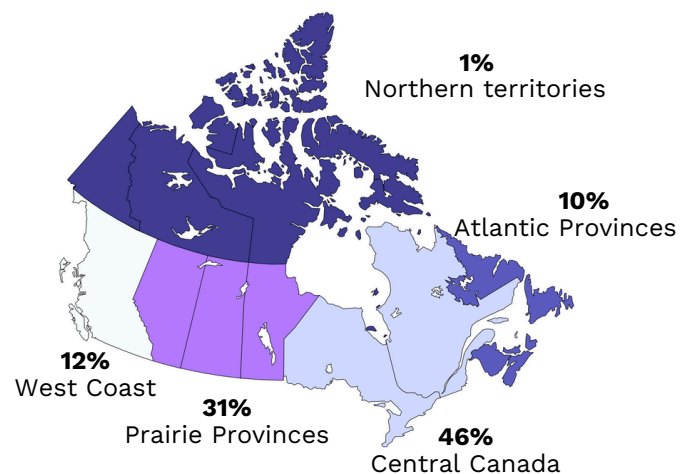
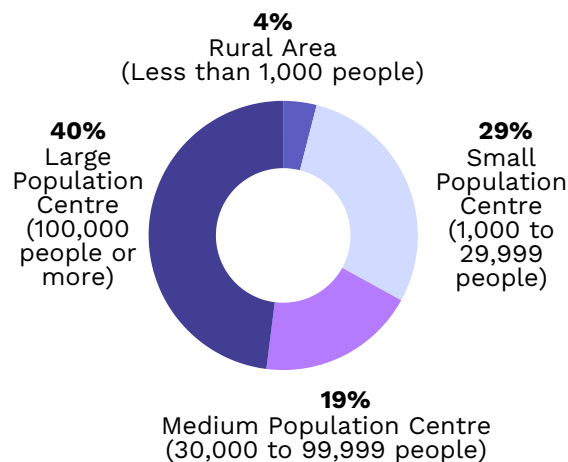
Primary Diagnosis



40% Have more than one diagnosis

*GDD = Global Developmental Delay

Location



ABOUT THIS REPORT

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of the families that shared their experiences with our team and all of the community peer reviewers that provided insightful feedback on this report. The creation of this report would not have been possible without their contributions.

Peer Reviewers

- Kathleen O’Grady, QUOI Media and Concordia University
- Hajer Chalghoumi, Kids Brain Health Network
- Logan Wong, IDEAA Perspectives Training & Consulting
- Philip Ney, Inclusion Alberta
- Nilima Sonpal-Valias, Alberta Council of Disability Services
- Shino Nakane and team, Autism Society Alberta
- Erika Cedillo, Inclusion BC
- Michelle Hewitt, Disability Without Poverty
- Michael Prince, University of Victoria
- Tim Stainton, University of British Columbia
- Brenda Lenahan, BC Complex Kids Society
- Melissa Graham, Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities
- Leanne Fenez, Abilities Manitoba
- Ken Pike, Inclusion New Brunswick
- Haley Flaro, Ability New Brunswick
- Ntibabaza Nigene and Colleagues, Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society
- Denise McKee, NWT Disabilities Council
- Guillaume Parent, Finautonome
- Keiko Shikako, McGill University
- Natasha Rumsey, Rumsey Consulting
- Cynthia Anaba, University of Regina
- Haley Jones, parent and advocate
- Marli Robertson, parent and advocate

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BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY POLICY

“Public policy can be generally defined as a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives.”

-Kilpatrick, 2016

“A set of interrelated decision taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where these decisions should, in principle, be within the power of these actors to achieve”

-Jenkins, 1978

What is Disability Policy?

There are many different ways to conceptualize and define public policy, and by extension, disability policy. For the purposes of this report, disability policy is broadly defined as what governments and other decision-making entities chose to do or not do that impacts persons with disabilities and their families.

Provincial and Territorial Disability Policy

In Canada, disability policy is delivered by all levels of government in many different sectors, including health, education, finance, and social services. Our previous [report](#) provides an overview of disability policy at the federal level in Canada. This report series focuses on disability policy provided by provincial and territorial governments. For the purposes of this report, we provide information about disability policy for all provinces and territories in alignment with the following five categories:

1) [Income Supports](#) are programs that provide financial assistance to individuals with a low-income so they are able to afford basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, and other daily needs. Persons with disabilities in Canada at a lower income level or who experience barriers to employment can access financial assistance from income support programs. Some provinces and territories provide income support programs specifically designed for persons with disabilities, while others provide an additional allowance for persons with disabilities within their general income support program. Others still offer one income support program that all individuals with a low income who meet eligibility criteria can access, with no additional supports for persons with disabilities, specifically.

2) Laws and Policies include laws and policy documents that allow systems to be put in place to help governments carry out changes they want to make to systems and structures. Laws are created from bills that are introduced in the provincial or territorial legislature. To become law, bills must pass through a specific legislative process. Policy documents are often published by ministries and can provide guidelines with respect to a specific topic. Legislation may stipulate that ministers can publish policy documents related to the topic of the piece of legislation (for example, education-related legislation often gives ministers the power to publish policy guidelines related to inclusive education).

3) Advocacy, Awareness, and Action Plans include councils, offices or events funded by provincial and territorial governments that can serve a variety of purposes, such as advocating to government on behalf of individuals with disabilities, advising on the development of government programs or policies, connecting individuals with disabilities with programs in their community, awareness building and education, support for mistreatment and discrimination, and, in some cases, direct service provision. This category also includes provincial and territorial action plans related to persons with disabilities that outline policy priorities and recommendations for government action.

4) Programs Provided through the Tax System include refundable and non-refundable tax credits, as well as tax deductions, that aim to offset the additional costs associated with having a disability by reducing the amount of income taxes an individual owes each year. Non-refundable tax credits reduce the amount of income tax owed but do not produce a tax refund if the amount of the credit exceeds the income tax owed, whereas refundable tax credits reduce the amount of tax owed and will create a tax refund if the amount of the credit exceeds the income tax owed. Tax deductions allow for certain expenses to be deducted from taxable income to lower the amount of taxes owed. In Canada, provincial and territorial governments develop their own tax law and policies; however, the Canada Revenue Agency collects and administers individual income taxes on behalf of provincial and territorial governments (except for the province of Quebec, where taxes are administered by Revenu Quebec).

5) Services and Supports for Basic Needs and Activities of Daily Living are services, supports, and programs that provide assistance to persons with disabilities in their day-to-day lives. This can include community-based support, employment programs, home and housing support, respite, early intervention, transportation support, and rehabilitation, among others. For each province and territory, we provide sub-categories within this section for added clarity.

Disability Policy Outside Government

In many provinces and territories, disability policy is delivered by entities outside of government, such as Crown Corporations, non-profit organizations and registered charities. In some cases, these organizations are funded and/or contracted by the provincial or territorial government to provide these services. We specify these cases whenever possible throughout the report. We also provide a list of these organizations at the end of the section on each province and territory as a resource for individuals and families looking for support.

UN CRPD

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) is an international treaty that upholds and protects the rights of persons with disabilities worldwide. Canada, along with 183 other states parties, has adopted the UN CRPD, which means that they accept the legal obligations contained in the UN CRPD. These obligations include ensuring that there are national laws to prevent discrimination, eliminating barriers to accessibility, and working to promote the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities. Associated with the creation of laws are the provision of disability programs that have the purpose of providing support to persons with disabilities to ensure they are able to fully participate in society.

Contained in the UN CRPD are processes that help to ensure that states parties are meeting the obligations outlined in the UN CRPD. For example, states parties must regularly report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to explain what actions they are taking to implement the UN CRPD. In Canada, the Canadian Human Rights Commission is also tasked with monitoring how well Canada is implementing the obligations outlined in the UN CRPD.

Canada and 99 other states parties have also signed on to the Optional Protocol to the UN CRPD. The Optional Protocol creates a process for people to make complaints directly to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities if they have exhausted all other legal options within Canada.

While the UN CRPD is ratified federally, many of the obligations contained in the UN CRPD can be met by policy and programs delivered at the provincial and territorial level. In fact, due to the federalist nature of Canada, many articles, such as Health (Article 25), Habilitation and Rehabilitation (Article 26), and Education (Article 24) are met to a greater extent by programs provided by provincial and territorial governments, rather than the federal government.

To demonstrate how government actions can fulfill requirements under the UN CRPD, we link UN CRPD articles with the various disability policy tools we include in this report. For the purposes of this report, we have sorted the 50 articles of the UN CRPD with similar aims into 10 categories (outlined below). Articles that are not included in this report are administrative in nature, related to reporting requirements, or are outside the scope of government action in this context. The icons used on the following pages will be used throughout the report to demonstrate how provincial and territorial disability policy is aligned with the UN CRPD articles.



Equality

Description

This category includes articles that promote equality for persons with disabilities both before and under the law, and ensure that persons with disabilities do not face discrimination.

Relevant Articles

Article 4: General obligations

Article 5: Equality and non-discrimination

Article 6: Children with disabilities

Article 7: Women with disabilities

Article 10: Right to life

Article 14: Liberty and security of person

Article 17: Protecting the integrity of the person

Article 22: Respect for privacy



Accessibility

Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities can access public spaces, systems, and facilities, such as the physical environment, transportation and communication technologies.

Relevant Article

Article 9 – Accessibility



Social Participation

Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities are able to participate in society fully and on an equal basis with others.

Relevant Articles

Article 18: Liberty of movement and nationality

Article 20: Personal mobility

Article 21: Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

Article 29: Participation in political and public life

Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport



Employment and Financial Security

Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to work, and have access to inclusive and accessible workplaces. It also includes articles that outline the responsibility of states parties to alleviate poverty and promote financial security of persons with disabilities.

Relevant Articles

[Article 27](#): Work and employment

[Article 28](#): Adequate standard of living and social protection



Health and Social Services

Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to healthcare and social services that allows them to have the highest attainable standard of health and well-being, achieve inclusion and maintain maximum independence.

Relevant Articles

[Article 25](#): Health

[Article 26](#): Habilitation and rehabilitation



Public Education and Information

Description

This category includes articles that require states parties to provide public information about persons with disabilities to foster respect and combat stereotypes.

Relevant Article

[Article 8](#): Awareness-raising



Legal Capacity and Justice

Description

This category includes articles that ensure persons with disabilities have equality with respect to legal capacity and access to justice.

Relevant Articles

[Article 12](#): Equal recognition before the law

[Article 13](#): Access to justice



Caregiving and Family

Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have equal rights with respect to family life.

Relevant Articles

[Article 23](#): Respect for home and the family



Education

Description

This category includes articles that maintain the right to education for persons with disabilities through the provision of inclusive and quality education, accommodations, and support.

Relevant Articles

[Article 24](#): Education



Housing and Related Supports

Description



This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have equality in their ability to choose where they would like to live and are able to live as independently as possible in the community through the provision of in-home and community supports.

Relevant Articles

[Article 19](#): Living independently and being included in the community

BRITISH COLUMBIA

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Assistance 	
Laws and Policies 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessible British Columbia Act Special Education Policy K-12 Funding – Special Needs Policy Individual Education Plan Order M638/95 Special Needs Students Order M150/89 Support Services for Schools Order M149/89. Special Education Programs and Funding - Independent Schools Policy Individual Education Plan Order M638/95 Special Needs Students Order M150/89 Support Services for Schools Order M149/89 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Rights Code Adult Guardianship Act (AGA) School Act
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial Accessibility Committee (PAC) Accessibility Directorate Technical Committees Office of the Advocate for Service Quality BC Disability Employment Month Indigenous Disability Awareness Month AccessAbility Week Community Inclusion Month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representative for Children and Youth BC Human Rights Tribunal BC Human Rights Commissioner BC Human Rights Clinic

Programs Provided by the Tax System



Disability-Specific

- Disability amount for self
- Disability amount transferred from a dependent

Blended

- Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later
- Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents
- Caregiver amount
- British Columbia home renovation tax credit for seniors and persons with disabilities
- Training tax credit

Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



Disability-Specific

- Early Childhood Intervention Programs
- Children and Youth with Support Needs – Includes:
 - Autism Funding
 - FASD Key Worker Program
 - Family Support Services
 - The At Home Program
- Complex Developmental Behavioral Conditions (CDBC) Network
- BC Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN)
- Community Living BC
- Developmental Disabilities Mental Health Services
- Communication Assistance for Youth and Adults (CAYA)
- Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD)
- Provincial Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (PDHHS)
- Provincial Resource Programs (PRPs)
- School-Aged Therapy
- Work-Able Graduate Internship Program
- WorkBC Assistive Technology Services

Blended

- Supportive Housing
- BC Rebate for Accessible Home Adaptations
- Independent Living BC Program
- Subsidized Housing
- Home and Community Care Publicly Funded Programs
- Property Tax Deferral Program
- Fair Pharmacare plan
- Rental Assistance Program (RAP)
- Complex-Care Housing
- Nursing Support Services
- Parking Permit Program for People with Disabilities



Disability-Specific

Blended

- B.C. Access Grant for Students with Disabilities
- B.C. Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities
- B.C. Supplemental Bursary for Students with Disabilities
- Learning Disability Assessment Bursary
- B.C. Access Grant for Deaf Students
- Assistive Technology Resources provided by Assistive Technology BC, CAPER-BC, and SetBC
- Home owner grant for people with disabilities
- Low income grant supplement for people with disabilities
- Fuel tax refund program for persons with disabilities

ACRONYMS

AGA	Adult Guardianship Act
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
ASL	American Sign Language
BCANDS	British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society
BCANN	BC Autism Assessment Network
CAYA	Communication Assistance for Youth and Adults
CDBC	Complex Developmental Behavioral Conditions
CLBC	Community Living BC
CSIL	Choice in Supports for Independent Living
CYSN	Children and Youth with Support Needs
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
IDC	Indigenous Disability Canada
PAC	Provincial Accessibility Committee
PDHHS	Provincial Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
PRP	Provincial Resource Programs
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RAP	Rental Assistance Program
RDSP	Registered Disability Savings Plan
STADD	Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities

INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

 Employment & Financial Security  Health & Social Services  Equality
 Social Participation  Accessibility

Individuals with a severe physical or mental impairment that is expected to continue for more than two years with significant restriction in their ability to perform daily-living activities under a certain income level are able to access financial and health benefits, as well as other benefits (outlined below), through the Disability Assistance program. This program requires an individual to apply for a Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Designation, which requires a medical professional and prescribed professional to fill out portions of the form. A shortened application process is available to those who are already accessing certain government programs, such as Community Living BC and the At Home Program. In some cases, transportation and health benefits provided under this program may continue even if an individual leaves the program.

Individuals are able to earn up to a certain amount of employment income per year before their benefits are reduced. This amount differs depending on family size – for example, the income exemption for a single person with a PWD designation is \$16,200 per year as of January 1, 2024. Individuals that receive assistance are also eligible for supplements that provide money or services to cover extra costs. Examples of supplements available under this program include the following:

- **Transportation support:** Individuals with a PWD designation are able to receive a bus pass (BC Bus Pass program) or additional funds added to monthly disability assistance payment.
- **Camp fees:** Individuals with a child or an adult with a disability may receive funds to support camp fees for their child.
- **Guide dog/service dog:** Provides funds to help with costs for a guide dog team.
- **Travel:** Individuals with a developmental disability can receive funds for travel to attend a self-help skill or work-placement program approved by Community Living British Columbia.
- **Health supplements:** Various health supplements, such as dental and optical coverage, are available to eligible assistance clients. Disability assistance clients may be able to receive a monthly nutritional supplement.
- **Social Services Camping Fee Exemption:** People with disabilities on assistance do not have to pay base camping fees. Individuals accessing the At Home Program (see more information below) can also access this exemption.

LAWS AND POLICIES

 Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice  Education  Health & Social Services
 Accessibility  Public Education & Information

In 2021, the Accessible British Columbia Act became law. The Government of British Columbia has a plan to implement this Act for years one through ten, which involves key actions in four different areas:

- Culture change: This includes ongoing awareness and working with stakeholders and the public to increase accessibility.
- Requirements for B.C government: This includes building a tool to provide feedback for government, developing the government’s accessibility plan (and publishing on an annual basis), establishing the Provincial Accessibility Committee (see below), and developing initiative regulations for organizations.
- Monitoring and evaluation: The government will report each year on progress and success, with the first independent review occurring after five years.
- Standards development: Standards will be developed two at a time and will be implemented in a phased approach. As implementation begins for a standard, work will begin on developing the next one. In 2024, the Government of British Columbia started developing standards for Accessible Service Delivery and Employment Accessibility. Public engagement processes for these standards is ongoing at the time of publication.






In addition, the following pieces of legislation include information that mentions or is relevant to persons with disabilities in British Columbia:

- The British Columbia Human Rights Code protects the rights of individuals, including those with physical and mental disabilities, against discrimination and harassment.
- The Adult Guardianship Act (AGA) protects vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, or self-neglect.
- Section 11 of the School Act states that “if a decision of an employee of a board significantly affects the education, health or safety of a student, the parent of the student or the student may, within a reasonable time from the date that the parent or student was informed of the decision, appeal that decision to the board.” These appeals can be related to a decision not to provide a student with an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

The Government of British Columbia has published a number of ministerial orders, legal and administrative documents that support the day-to-day operations of the ministry, relating to inclusive education: Individual Education Plan Order M638/95, Special Needs Students Order M150/89, and Support Services for Schools Order M149/89.

Additionally, the Government of British Columbia has published a number of policies that provide regulated learning standards that promote student success and achievement in B.C. These policies come from legislation or from decisions made by elected officials. Policies relevant to students with disabilities include the public school Special Education Policy and K-12 Funding – Special Needs Policy, and the Special Education Programs and Funding - Independent Schools Policy.

ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality  Public Education & Information  Health & Social Services
 Legal Capacity & Justice  Accessibility

The Government of British Columbia, as part of the implementation of the Accessible British Columbia Act, established the Provincial Accessibility Committee (PAC) to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. The PAC is comprised of persons with disabilities, individuals from organizations that support persons with disabilities, and Indigenous Peoples. The PAC has 11 members who are appointed by, and report to, the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. The PAC achieves its goals through the following actions:

- Developing and recommending accessibility standards to the Government of British Columbia.
- Engaging with the public on accessibility standards.
- Providing general advice to the Minister about the province's efforts to promote accessibility.

The PAC receives support from and provides direction to technical committees to develop recommendations for accessibility standards. Currently, there are two technical committees that align with the two standards currently in development: employment accessibility and accessible service delivery.

The Accessibility Directorate is a branch within the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction that provides administrative support for the PAC, supports the government's implementation of the Accessible British Columbia Act, works across government and with the disability and business communities to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities, and tracks and reports on progress addressing and removing barriers to accessibility. The Directorate also provides support to many advisory committees. Currently, the Directorate supports the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) Action Group, which brings together leaders from the financial sector and disability organizations to provide advice to government and promote use of the RDSP.

Adults and teenagers with a developmental disability and their family members can also access the Office of the Advocate for Service Quality, a neutral third party that aims to ensure that high quality services are available throughout the province. This Office can provide individuals with information and advice, support service navigation, review complaints and concerns with services, track and raise awareness about systemic issues, and make recommendations to decision makers to improve policies and practices.

The Government of British Columbia also has four main awareness-building initiatives throughout the year:

- BC Disability Employment Month: Celebrated in September, this month highlights the significant role people with disabilities play in British Columbia's workforce. During this month, employers can learn about resources to reduce barriers to inclusion and people with disabilities can discover supportive services to help build their careers.
- Indigenous Disability Awareness Month: Recognized in November, this month highlights and celebrates the unique contributions First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples with disabilities make to communities throughout the province.
- AccessAbility Week: The last week of May is AccessAbility Week, which promotes inclusion and accessibility by highlighting individuals and organizations that are working towards removing barriers for people with disabilities, as well as celebrating people in the disability community.
- Community Inclusion Month: Observed in October, this month honours the dedication of individuals, families, and community members who tirelessly work towards creating more inclusive communities and opportunities for all British Columbians, especially those with developmental disabilities.







Did you know?

Indigenous Disability Canada (IDC)/British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) created Indigenous Disability Awareness month in 2015 to highlight and celebrate the unique contributions First Nations, Métis and Inuit people with disabilities make to communities throughout the province.

Other initiatives in British Columbia related to persons with disabilities include the following:

- Representative for Children and Youth: A non-partisan, independent officer of the Legislature that supports children and youth and their families in dealing with the provincial child and youth welfare system. This office also provides oversight to the system and makes recommendations for improvement.
- BC Human Rights Tribunal: An independent entity that is responsible for dealing with complaints under the Human Rights Code.
- BC Human Rights Commissioner: An independent office of the Legislature that is responsible for promoting and protecting human rights in British Columbia through shifting laws, policies, practice, and culture.
- BC Human Rights Clinic: Provides free legal services to people who need help with a provincial human rights complaint.

PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

 Equality
  Caregiving & Family
  Health & Social Services
 Housing & Related Supports
  Employment & Financial Security

Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of British Columbia that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. More information about all British Columbia taxes for the 2023 tax year can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

Tax Credit	Description and Eligibility
Disability amount for self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces tax payable for persons with disabilities. • Individuals can claim this on their taxes if they have been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit. • Adults 18 years of age or older can claim \$8,986 on their tax return.
Disability amount transferred from a dependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can claim this on their taxes if their dependent has been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit and does not need to claim all or part of the disability amount on their tax return.
Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit. • Dependents must be under the age of 18 years.
Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit for their other dependents 18 years of age or older.
British Columbia caregiver amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can claim this amount (up to \$5,243 for each dependent) for a spouse or common-law partner or an eligible relative who was dependent on them because of an impairment in physical or mental functions at any time in the year. • Dependents must be 18 years of age or older and have a net income below \$22,985.

British Columbia home renovation tax credit for seniors and persons with disabilities

- Seniors or Disability Tax Credit-eligible individuals (or members of their family) can claim this credit if they paid or incurred eligible expenses for improvements to their principal residence or the land that their principal residence is situated on.
- Eligible expenses include expenses that allow the senior or person with a disability to gain access to, or to be more mobile or functional within, the home or on the land, or reduce the risk of harm to a senior or a person with a disability within the home or on the land or in gaining access to the home or the land.
- Individuals can claim \$10,000 or the amount of eligible expenses incurred, whichever is less.

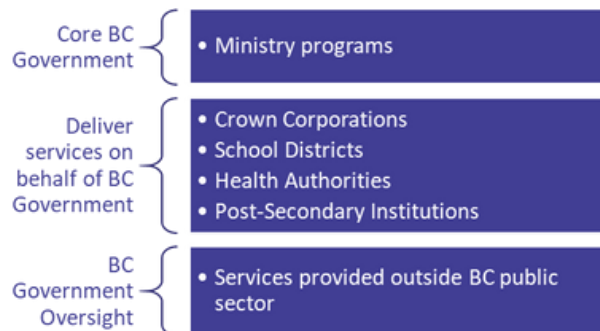
Training tax credit

- The training tax credit is for employers and apprentices who take part in eligible apprenticeship programs administered through SkilledTradesBC.
- An enhanced credit is available for persons with disabilities.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

- 🏠 Caregiving & Family
- 🤝 Health & Social Services
- ⚙️ Employment & Financial Security
- ♿️ Accessibility
- 👏 Social Participation
- 🎓 Education
- 🏠 Housing & Related Supports
- ⚖️ Equality

The Government of British Columbia contracts service providers, non-profits/community organizations, and Indigenous organizations to provide services for persons with disabilities throughout the province. These organizations can be reached through government offices, Crown corporations, referrals from health professionals, or directly by individuals looking to access services. The intention behind structuring the system in this way is to allow individuals and families to access services locally that are tailored to their specific needs. In addition to contracting services out to other providers, the government does administer some services directly. Other organizations, such as school districts, post-secondary institutions, and Health Authorities, also provide services to persons with disabilities and their families. The figure below provides a summary of disability service delivery in British Columbia.



Modified from [Government of BC](#)

Services for Children

There are two main service lines funded by the Government of British Columbia that provide services and support for children with disabilities. The first is Early Childhood Intervention Programs, which provides community-based support for infants and young children who show signs of or who are at risk of developing a developmental delay or disability. Referrals to supports can be provided by public health nurses, family physicians, or by Child Development Centres. Examples of specific programs within this service line include the Infant Development Program, the Aboriginal Infant Development Program, Supported Child Development, Aboriginal Supported Child Development, and Early Intervention Therapy.

The second service line is Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN). There are many CYSN offices across the province that families can contact to learn about the services and supports in their community that are available to them. Examples of programs administered specifically by CYSN include the following:

- Autism Funding: provides families with funding to pay for approved services and therapies that promote communication, social-emotional, academic, and life skills development for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Families can receive up to \$22,000 per year for children under the age of six years and \$6,000 per year for children aged 6-18 years.
- FASD Key Worker Program: provides support to families with a child with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and can provide referrals to services in the community. This support is provided free of charge and prior to an assessment.
- Family Support Services: provides respite services and support services to families with children with intellectual disabilities.
- The At Home Program: provides support to children and teenagers with a severe disability or complex health care needs. Enrolled families can receive respite benefits, medical benefits, and in-school support.

Children and youth in British Columbia can also access publicly-funded diagnostic assessments through the Complex Developmental Behavioural Conditions (CDBC) Network and the BC Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN). Both programs require a referral from a physician and can be accessed in various regions across the province. Both program websites also note long wait times for accessing assessments, with the BCANN wait times listed as 80.6 weeks as of December 2022.

Services for Adults

Community Living BC (CLBC) is a crown corporation funded by the Government of British Columbia, which in turn funds supports and services for adults (19 years of age or older) with developmental disabilities, as well as individuals who have a diagnosis of ASD or FASD. Services are also provided through contracts with community agencies. CLBC facilitators work with individuals and families to understand their goals and needs and ensure they are supported through activities, services, and supports in their communities. Facilitators can do this by connecting individuals with activities in their community and to funded



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Program Spotlight: Autism Funding

In British Columbia, 61 parents and caregivers completed our online survey and 10 parents and caregivers participated in an in-depth, follow-up interview. This Autism Funding program was most frequently discussed by survey and interview participants was the Autism Funding program. Below we highlight successes of the program, as well as opportunities for positive changes. We also provide quotes from our participants to provide additional information.

Successes



Information Provided at Diagnosis

Many participants were provided with information about this program at the time of diagnosis, which streamlined and simplified the application process. This is an important contrast to other programs, where difficulties finding information about applying and accessing was a significant barrier to access.

“The moment that you get your diagnosis, you’re encouraged to submit the clinician’s report, the OT report, the speech report and all the pediatricians’ reports, all of those documents to the Ministry of Child and Family Development.”



Flexibility

Participants appreciated the flexibility to use program funding on services and supports that best met their child’s needs.

“I don’t want ABA therapy for my children, so I don’t have to have ABA therapy for my children. We focus mostly on speech.”

Opportunities



Insufficient Financial Support

Financial support provided through this program was not always sufficient, particularly when considering the cost of services and supports.

“I think sometimes people say oh, you have all this autism funding, you don’t need other help. But I don’t think they always realize that how little that funding is.”



Service Availability a Barrier to Access

Some individuals expressed challenges accessing services that they were funded for because of a lack of availability in their region.

“In the region that we live we don’t have a music therapist, which is a funded service. But they won’t cover music lessons because we don’t have a music therapist. Whereas my son is extremely, extremely musical and he really does find it to be a great release for him and he’s calmer after playing music, and it’s quite relaxing for him, it’s unfortunate that they won’t cover music lessons because we don’t have a licensed therapist.”

services and support. Examples of support provided by CLBC and associated community agencies include community inclusion, employment support, skills training and development, home-based support, psychological support, and service coordination, among others.

Youth and adults (12 to 14 years of age, depending on the region, and older) with developmental disabilities can also access Developmental Disabilities Mental Health Services through their local health authority. Examples of services provided through this program are assessments, treatment, counselling, music, art or behavioural therapy, and education, among others.

Adults aged 19 years and older who require an augmentative/alternative communication system due to a severe communication disability can receive services from the Communication Assistance for Youth and Adults (CAYA). This province-wide service program is funded by the Government of British Columbia and ensures that individuals are able to access the communication tools and professional support that they need.



Did you know?

A crown corporation is an interesting type of organization, as it is wholly owned by the federal or provincial/territorial governments but operated like a private company. Examples of crown corporations are the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and Canada Post. The use of a Crown Corporation to deliver disability services, as is the case with Community Living BC, is unique to British Columbia.

Services for Adults and Children

Youth between the ages of 16 and 24 years of age with developmental disabilities, ASD, or FASD transitioning into adulthood can access the Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD) program. This program is a collaboration between many government ministries, school boards, Crown corporations, health authorities, and other community organizations, and is designed to help young people and their families plan for adulthood. Individuals in this program are provided with a Navigator, who helps individuals and their support system create a plan outlining goals and services and supports needed to achieve these goals. Navigators can also help to connect individuals and families with services that meet their needs. This program is available in many communities in British Columbia but not all.

Provincial Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (PDHHS) provide a range of support for individuals and families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. This includes American Sign Language (ASL) Services, support for dorm students attending B.C. School for the Deaf, connection to community partners and family networks, and family navigation support. PDHHS, in collaboration with the

Ministry of Children, also offers services in an ASL environment for Indigenous Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, youth, and young adults to connect with each other and support cultural awareness.

Education and Employment

In British Columbia, specialized education services and programs that support the needs of K-12 students with disabilities, called Provincial Resource Programs (PRPs), are delivered and operated by school districts. The Ministry of Education and Child Care provides funding to school boards for this program, in addition to setting educational standards for inclusive education and overseeing governance of the system as a whole.

Children and youth in the K-12 education system can also access the School-Aged Therapy program, which provides occupational therapy and physiotherapy services to school-aged children and youth with disabilities to allow them to be independent and reach educational goals while at school. This program is funded by the Government of British Columbia and administered in partnership with board of education and independent school authorities.

WorkBC provides a wide variety of resources and services for people with disabilities to support them in pursuing post-secondary education, getting funding or assistive adaptations for education, gaining work experience and job skills, and creating or expanding a business. WorkBC also provides information about community-based and charity organizations that provide education and employment support for persons with disabilities in BC. Examples of programs administered by WorkBC include the following:

- Work-Able Graduate Internship Program - Coordinated paid, 12-month internships across the BC public service for recent post-secondary graduates self-identifying as having a disability.
- WorkBC Assistive Technology Services - Provides equipment and devices to help individuals overcome barriers in the workplace.

Post-secondary students with disabilities are able to access many different grants and bursaries to help support them through their education:

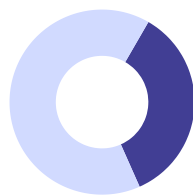
- B.C. Access Grant for Students with Disabilities - Supports full-time students with a permanent disability, or a persistent or prolonged disability with the cost of education by replacing a portion of student loan funding (up to \$1,560 per program year).
- B.C. Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities - Helps students with disabilities pay for exceptional education-related services and adaptive equipment (up to \$12,000 per year).
- B.C. Supplemental Bursary for Students with Disabilities - Provides a bursary for full-time or part-time students that are eligible for the Canada Student Grant for Students with Disabilities (up to \$800 per year).
- Learning Disability Assessment Bursary - Helps part-time or full-time students with the up-front costs of the learning disabilities assessment, which is needed to determine eligibility for services and/or equipment (up to \$3,500).



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Barrier to Access: Lack of Information

Among survey and interview participants in our study, one of the main barriers to accessing programs was a lack of information about services and supports. Many participants found it difficult to find information about the programs that they could apply to for their child. Many participants shared that they did not know where to find support after their child received a diagnosis. Participants reported most frequently that they found out about programs through other parents or through parent-led social media groups. Many expressed a desire to access support navigating a complicated system from a professional that is knowledgeable about available disability programs and application processes.



35% of the time, survey participants did not know about the existence of various BC disability programs

"Yeah, I think from access standpoint, you know, I was well educated about the system and how it works and what to do. But for the average family, they're just like floating around in the dark, trying to figure out what's next, there's not anybody telling them or giving them a roadmap or explaining it to them."

- B.C. Access Grant for Deaf Students – Helps deaf and hard of hearing students with financial need with the additional costs associated with attending a specialized post-secondary institution where the curriculum is delivered in ASL.

Finally, the Government of British Columbia partners with many organizations, such as Assistive Technology BC, CAPER-BC, and SetBC, to provide assistive technology resources to primary, secondary, and post-secondary students across the province.

Housing and Transportation

The home owner grant for people with disabilities, which reduces the amount of property taxes paid annually for properties that are valued under a certain amount. Low-income individuals with an assessed property value that is higher than the threshold for receiving the grant can access the low income grant supplement for people with disabilities.

People with disabilities can receive help reducing their transportation costs through the [fuel tax refund program for persons with disabilities](#). Individuals 16 years of age or older with a disability that own or lease a vehicle are able to access a fuel tax refund of up to \$500 per calendar year and a 25 percent discount on the basic Autoplan car insurance provided by the Insurance Corporation of BC.

Blended Programs

Blended programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- [Supportive Housing](#). This program provides subsidized housing with on-site supports for single adults, seniors and people with disabilities at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- [BC Rebate for Accessible Home Adaptations](#). This program provides rebates to low- and moderate-income families to complete home adaptations for seniors and individuals with permanent disabilities.
- [Independent Living BC Program](#). This program is a subsidized, assisted-living program that provides housing with support services to seniors and people with disabilities.
- [Subsidized Housing](#). This program provides long-term housing to people with low incomes that can live independently (including individuals with disabilities). Rental fees for housing provided under this program are calculated based on income level.
- [Home and Community Care Publicly Funded Programs](#). There are a number of programs under the banner of Home and Community Care. Some tend to be delivered to disabled people, some to seniors, and some to people with other needs. Examples include [Adult Day Services](#), [Choice in Supports for Independent Living \(CSIL\)](#), [Group Homes](#), and [Long-Term Care Services](#).
- [Property Tax Deferment Program](#). This program allows individuals (including persons with disabilities) to defer their property tax payment in a given year if they are unable to pay.
- [Fair PharmaCare plan](#). This program helps low-income families with the cost of prescription drugs, dispensing fees and some medical devices/supplies.
- [Rental Assistance Program \(RAP\)](#). This program provides eligible low-income working families with monthly assistance to help with their monthly rent payments. To qualify, families must have a before-tax household income of \$40,000 or less, have been working at some point in the previous year, and have at least one dependent child under a certain age. Notably, the age requirement is removed if the child has a mental or physical disability.
- [Complex-Care Housing](#). Complex care housing supports adults 19 years and over who have significant mental health, addictions, or concurrent issues, as well as functional needs related to acquired brain injury, chronic illness, or physical, intellectual or developmental disabilities.
- [Nursing Support Services](#). A team of community-based registered nurses provides support to parents and caregivers of children and youth (under the age of 20 years) with medical complexities to help them live active, healthier lives in their communities.

- Parking Permit Program for People with Disabilities allows people to receive parking permits to park in designated parking stalls if they need the extra width of designated spaces to get in and out of the vehicles in a wheelchair, use mobility aids or need to park close to a building due to their health. Individuals are able to apply for a permit if they do not have a vehicle. Two types of permits are available: permanent permits, valid for three years and renewable, and temporary permits, valid for one to 12 months and non-renewable.



















Support for Individuals and Families

There are many non-profits, charities, and other organizations that advocate for and provide support to persons with disabilities and their families in British Columbia. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- Indigenous Disability Canada (IDC)/British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS)
- Disability Alliance BC
- Family Support Institute of BC
- Inclusion BC
- Autism BC
- Cerebral Palsy Association of British Columbia

ALBERTA

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support   	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) 	
Laws and Policies     	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blind Persons' Rights Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alberta Human Rights Act Education Act Adult Guardianship & Trusteeship Act (AGTA) The Protection for Persons in Care Act
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans    	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities Advocate for Persons with Disabilities Disability Employment Awareness Month International Day of Persons with Disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Alberta Human Rights Commission Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Alberta Ombudsman
Programs Provided by the Tax System    	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability amount for self Disability amount transferred from a dependent Amount for infirm dependents age 18 and older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents Caregiver amount

Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



Disability-Specific

- Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD)
- Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD)
- FASD Service Networks
- Supports for Students with Visual Impairments (SSVI)
- Alberta Grant for Students with Disabilities
- Disability-Related Employment Supports
- Internship for Persons with Disabilities

Blended

- Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL)
- Alberta Child Health Benefit
- Alberta Adult Health Benefit
- Residential Access Modification Program (RAMP)
- Community Access for People in Continuing Care
- Home Care
- Parking Placard for People with Disabilities

ACRONYMS

AADL	Alberta Aids to Daily Living
AGTA	Adult Guardianship & Trusteeship Act
AISH	Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped
DRES	Disability-Related Employment Supports
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
FMS	Family Managed Services
FSCD	Family Support for Children with Disabilities
PDD	Persons with Developmental Disabilities
RAMP	Residential Access Modification Program
SSVI	Supports for Students with Visual Impairments

INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Employment & Financial Security Health & Social Services Equality






Alberta provides an income support program specifically for persons with disabilities. The Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program provides financial and health benefits for low-income adults with a permanent medical condition that substantially limits their capacity to earn a living.

Through this program, individuals may receive the following:

- A monthly living allowance (\$1,863 per month) or a modified living allowance for those living in a facility (\$357 per month).
- A monthly child benefit (\$222 for first child, \$111 for each additional child);
- Health benefits, which include coverage for prescription drugs, dental care, optical care, and diabetes supplies.
- Personal benefits for specific needs, such as specific dietary requirements, child care, transportation, and moving, among others.

When determining AISH eligibility, a certain amount of employment income is exempt depending on an applicants' family situation, meaning that the income is not counted when determining eligibility and will not reduce AISH benefits. For example, for a single individual, the first \$1,072 of monthly employment income is fully exempt.

LAWS AND POLICIES





 Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice  Accessibility  Caregiving & Family
 Education

At the time of publication, Alberta does not have accessibility legislation. The only piece of legislation specific to persons with disabilities is the Blind Persons' Rights Act, which recognizes the rights of Albertans who are blind and permits individuals that require the use of guide dogs to access all public places within the province.

The following pieces of legislation include information that mentions or is relevant to persons with disabilities in Alberta:

- The Alberta Human Rights Act recognizes “as a fundamental principle and as a matter of public policy that all persons are equal in dignity, rights and responsibilities without regard to...physical disability [and] mental disability,” among many other characteristics.
- The Education Act stipulates that “a student who is determined by a board to be in need of specialized supports and services is entitled to have access to those supports and services in an education program provided in accordance with this Act that will give the student the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister.”
- The Adult Guardianship & Trusteeship Act (AGTA) provides a range of options for adults that require support making health care, personal, and financial decisions.
- The Protection for Persons in Care Act applies to adults receiving government-funded care or support services, and ensures that they are protected from abuse.

ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality  Public Education & Information  Social Participation
 Legal Capacity & Justice

The Government of Alberta receives advice and information about persons with disabilities through two main entities: The Premier’s Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities and the Advocate for Persons with Disabilities.

The Premier’s Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities is comprised of up to 15 volunteer members and is responsible for engaging with and listening to the disability community in Alberta, communicating what they have learned to the government, and working with governments, community organizations and other stakeholders to implement changes as needed to better meet the needs of the community. Their vision is to ensure “Alberta is an inclusive and barrier-free society.”

Similarly, the role of the Advocate for Persons with Disabilities’ Office is to represent the rights, interests, and well-being of persons with disabilities through relationship building with members of the disability community. The Advocate’s Office can also provide assistance with questions about disability programs and services. In its 2022-2025 strategic plan, the Advocate’s Office outlined five priority focus areas:

- Expand employment for persons with disabilities.
- Improve social inclusion and supports.
- Champion and mobilize stakeholder outreach work towards Accessibility Legislation.
- Champion efforts to increase access to justice.
- Champion efforts to increase and expand affordable and accessible housing and in-home supports.





In support of awareness building, the Government of Alberta recognizes October as Disability Employment Awareness Month, which promotes inclusion and increased participation of workers with disabilities in Alberta’s economy. The government partners with community stakeholders to deliver activities and events that increase employment opportunities for Albertans with disabilities, raise awareness regarding recruiting, hiring and retaining workers with disabilities, and highlight employers that show a strong commitment to inclusion and diversity.

The Government of Alberta also recognizes December 3 as International Day of Persons with Disabilities through community-based events that promote inclusion for persons with disabilities in Alberta.

Other initiatives in Alberta related to persons with disabilities include the following:

- The [Alberta Human Rights Commission](#) is responsible for protecting the human rights outlined in the Alberta Human Rights Act and can accept complaints from those that feel their human rights have been violated.
- [Office of the Child and Youth Advocate](#) represents the rights, interests, and viewpoints of children and youth in Alberta who receive intervention services or are involved with the justice system.
- [Alberta Ombudsman](#) is an independent and impartial office that promotes fairness and accountability in the public sector. The Ombudsman Office achieves this through investigations, making recommendations, and provision of education.

PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

 Equality
  Caregiving & Family
  Health & Social Services
 Employment & Financial Security

Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of Alberta that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. More information about all Alberta taxes for the 2023 tax year can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

Tax Credit	Description and Eligibility
Disability amount for self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces tax payable for persons with disabilities. • Individuals can claim this on their taxes if they have been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit. • Adults 18 years of age or older can claim \$16,201 on their tax return.
Disability amount transferred from a dependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can claim this on their taxes if their dependent has been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit and does not need to claim all or part of the disability amount on their tax return.
Amount for infirm dependents age 18 and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This amount (up to \$12,158 for each dependent) can be claimed for dependents over the age of 17 years with an impairment in physical or mental functions. • The dependent must have a net income under \$20,190.
Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit. • Dependents must be under the age of 18 years.

Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents

- Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit for their other dependents 18 years of age or older.

Caregiver amount

- Individuals caring for a dependent over the age of 17 years with a net income under \$31,489 and with an impairment in physical or mental functions can claim this amount (up to \$12,158 for each dependent).
- This amount can also be claimed for an eligible parent or grandparent.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS



Support for Children

The Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) program provides support to children under the age of 18 years and their families, where the child has a diagnosis or is awaiting a diagnosis for a chronic developmental, physical, sensory, mental, or neurological condition or impairment. Conditions for which the primary need is for medical care or health services to treat or manage the condition are excluded unless it is a chronic condition that significantly limits their daily living activities such as eating, grooming, walking, interacting with others, playing and problem solving. Families enrolled in this program may receive help coordinating and accessing services, help with the extraordinary costs related to their child’s disability, respite, specialized services, and planning for adulthood, among others.

Support for Adults

The Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program provides support to adults 18 years of age and older with a significant limitation in both intellectual capacity and adaptive skills. Individuals must be diagnosed as having a developmental disability (as defined by the PDD regulations) with onset before age 18 years. Once admitted into the program, individuals meet with their PDD worker to develop an Outcome Plan, which outlines the individual’s vision and plan for their life, their needs, services that will help them meet their needs, and where to find services in their communities. This Plan is then used to create an Individual Support Plan, which outlines the individual’s yearly goals and their plan for achieving these goals, including the support they need. From there, individuals are connected to services that align with their Support Plan, which can include the following: home living supports, respite, community access supports, employment supports, and other supports.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Program Spotlight: FSCD

In Alberta, 75 parents and caregivers completed our online survey and nine parents and caregivers participated in an in-depth, follow-up interview.

Of all the programs we discussed during the interview, the most commonly discussed program among our participants in the open-ended portion of the survey and interview was the FSCD program. We share our key learnings about this program below.



FSCD Workers are key determinants of access to support

Our participants shared their FSCD worker was instrumental to the level of support they received through the FSCD program. Participants emphasized the importance of having a worker that understood both the disability support system and their child's needs.

“So, if, if you get the right worker, the processes are very straightforward and supportive, if you get a worker who doesn't know the system very well and doesn't understand, your children's challenges it can be really awful.”

“To me, the most critical thing for parents with children with disabilities is getting a referral through FSCD. Because that worker has then the education and the knowledge to lead parents to apply for more support.”

“When they came around for the visit they didn't mention any of these services to apply for, they didn't help with any of it ... I felt like they were in the business of just not helping.”



Families experienced challenges discussing disability

Some participants found it overwhelming, intimidating, and demoralizing to discuss their child's disability in front of workers to justify the need for support, especially with their children present.

“They want to see the children, which is fine, but I do my best to not talk about the really hard struggles with my children listening. I don't think that they need to hear about that part of themselves, talked about with strangers. And, so that tends to downplay the struggles, and then FSCD doesn't see the need as great as it really is.”

Supports through the PDD program are provided in three ways:

1. By the ministry, in government managed and operated facilities.
2. By contracted community-based service providers.
3. Through PDD's Family Managed Services (FMS), where funding is provided directly to the individuals/families who hire and manage their own staff or contract independently with a PDD-approved community-based service provider.

The Government of Alberta also works with a number of community agencies, that provide various services and supports for adults with disabilities.

Support for Children and Adults

To support individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), the Government of Alberta partners with community agencies and organizations through FASD Service Networks that connect Albertans with services in their communities. The agencies involved in this Network provide assessment and diagnosis, targeted prevention, and support services for individuals with FASD and their caregivers.

Education

Implementation of inclusive education-related services and supports is carried out by individual schools and school boards in Alberta. The Government of Alberta's role in inclusive education is to provide funding, resources, and guidelines to help schools create an inclusive learning environment for all children, including those with disabilities.

Blind or visually impaired students in the K-12 education system can access support through Supports for Students with Visual Impairments (SSVI), which allows eligible students to borrow alternate format resources or equipment to help support their learning. To be eligible for this program, students must be assessed and registered with SSVI by a qualified specialist.

Additionally, post-secondary students with a persistent or prolonged disability can access the Alberta Grant for Students with Disabilities, which can help with the cost of assistive services, equipment or specialized transportation.

Employment

The Disability-Related Employment Supports (DRES) program provides funding to individuals aged 16 years and older with a disability that creates a barrier to employment, training, and/or education. This funding can pay for supports in the following three categories:

- Job search supports, which help individuals seek and obtain employment.
- Workplace supports, which help individuals successfully transition into the workplace and maintain employment.
- Educational supports, which prepare individuals outside the K-12 school system for employment through post-secondary education, skill training, academic upgrading, or labour market programs.

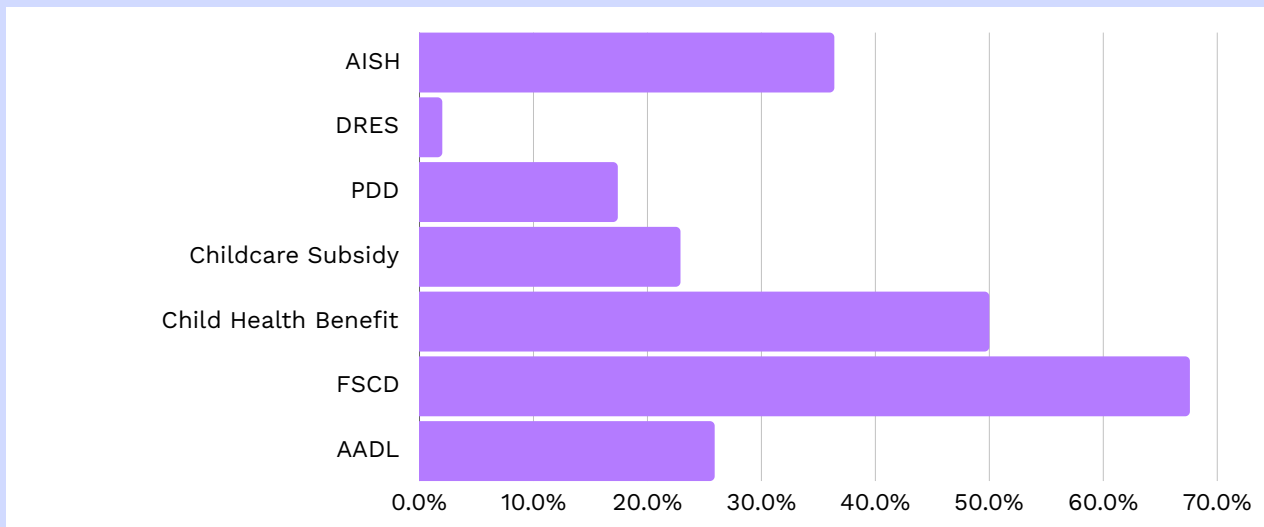
Recent high school and post-secondary graduates with disabilities can also apply for a one-year internship with the Government of Alberta to obtain work experience and access opportunities for professional development and networking.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Experiences Accessing Programs in Alberta

The chart below shows the percentage of Alberta-based study participants that were accessing or had previously accessed each program, of those that indicated that they were eligible for each program.



Individuals not accessing programs to which they were entitled noted that they either did not know that the program existed or that they had not yet had a chance to apply to the program, potentially highlighting issues within Alberta related to knowledge of available programs and a lack of capacity to initiate a program application.

79%

of participants experienced some level of difficulty applying for disability programs, with 41% finding the process of applying to be very difficult and challenging.

Blended Programs

Programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL). This program provides funding for medical equipment and supplies for individuals with long-term disabilities, chronic illness or terminal illness so they are able to live independently at home and within their communities.

- Alberta Child Health Benefit. The benefit provides health coverage for children in low-income households. Applicants are not eligible if they receive health benefits from other programs, such as AISH and Income Support. Only medications on the Alberta Drug List are covered.
- Alberta Adult Health Benefit. This program covers health benefits for low-income adults with high, ongoing prescription drug needs. This program is intended to support individuals leaving the AISH or Income Support programs. Only medications on the Alberta Drug List are covered.
- Residential Access Modification Program (RAMP). This program provides grants to low-income homeowners or tenants with mobility challenges to enable them to modify their homes. Eligible individuals can receive up to \$7,500 per person each benefit year and up to \$15,000 per person within 10 years.
- Continuing Care. Continuing care homes are publicly funded, facility-based accommodations that provide a range of health and support services that can meet the needs of residents, including those with disabilities. Adults under the age of 65 years living in a continuing care facility can receive support through the Community Access for People in Continuing Care program to help reduce social and cultural isolation.
- Home Care. Alberta Health Services provides Home Care to people with disabilities or other health conditions to ensure they are able to remain in their homes, safely. Support can be provided by an Alberta Health Services funded home care provider or through self-managed care. Of note, Home Care can be difficult to access for those accessing supports through PDD.
- Parking Placard for People with Disabilities: Individuals who cannot walk 50 metres can apply for this program to allow them to use disabled parking stalls. To receive a placard, individuals must provide proof that they meet program requirements. Temporary, long-term, and permanent placards are available depending on the applicants' circumstances.



Support for Individuals and Families


Individuals with disabilities and their families who manage their own services through PDD or FSCD programs can access tools, resources, and information through Family Resource Centres. Albertans can also receive support with accessing services through Alberta Supports.

There are also many non-profits, charities, and other organizations that advocate for and provide support to Albertans with disabilities and their families. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- Deaf and Hear Alberta
- Inclusion Alberta
- Autism Society Alberta
- Canadian Council for the Blind, Calgary and Edmonton Chapters
- Easter Seals Alberta
- Gateway Association

SASKATCHEWAN

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability 	
Laws and Policies 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessible Saskatchewan Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Education Act
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of Disability Issues Saskatchewan Disability Strategy Disability Employment Awareness Month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the provincial Ombudsman Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission
Programs Provided by the Tax System 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability amount for self Disability amount transferred from a dependent Amount for infirm dependents age 18 or older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents Caregiver Amount Active Families Benefit

Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



Disability-Specific

- Early Childhood Intervention Program
- Autism Spectrum Disorder Individualized Funding Program
- Community Living Service Delivery (CLSD)
- Cognitive Disability Strategy (CDS)
- Canada-Saskatchewan Grant for Services and Equipment
- Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities
- Saskatchewan Home Repair Program - Adaptation for Independence
- Early Childhood Intervention Program
- Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities
- Canada-Saskatchewan Grant for Services and Equipment
- ASD Individualized Funding Program
- Saskatchewan Home Repair Program - Adaptation for Independence
- Community Living Service Delivery

Blended

- Services provided by Saskatchewan Health Authority
- Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living
- Individualized Funding for Home Care
- Family Health Benefits
- Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement (SRHS)
- Social Housing Program
- Special Care Homes
- Special Support Program
- Supplementary Health Benefits:
- Accessible Parking Program

ACRONYMS

CDS	Cognitive Disability Strategy
CLSD	Community Living Service Delivery
ECIP	Early Childhood Intervention Program
SAID	Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability
SRHS	Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement

INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

 Employment & Financial Security
  Social Participation
  Equality
  Housing & Related Supports








The province of Saskatchewan provides an income support program specifically for persons with disabilities: The Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program. Individuals 18 years of age and older with a significant, enduring, and permanent disability that impacts their activities of daily living can receive benefits under this program. A Disability Impact Assessment, which helps to identify the presence of a significant and enduring disability is required to apply for this program.

There are three main types of benefits provided under this program:

- The Living Income Benefit: A fixed amount of monthly income that varies based on where the recipient resides within the province. For a single adult, this amount ranges between \$991 and \$1,129.
- The Disability Income Benefit: Benefits to provide support for costs related to an individual's disability (\$70 per month).
- The Exceptional Need Income Benefit: Provides support to individuals for specific needs. For example, additional income can be provided to cover specific clothing items, special food items, and home care, among others.

Program recipients can earn up to a certain amount per year through employment without their SAID benefits being reduced. As of May 1, 2024, this amount is \$6,500 for single individuals, \$7,700 for couples and \$8,500 for families. Other financial benefits, such as the Northern Living Supplement, Household Task Benefit, and Activity Benefit, among others, are also provided to eligible individuals through this program.

LAWS AND POLICIES

 Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice  Accessibility  Social Participation
 Health & Social Services  Public Education & Information  Education

The Accessible Saskatchewan Act came into force in December 2023 with the purpose of making the government and other organizations more accessible by removing barriers faced by persons with disabilities. The Act promotes accessibility by requiring that:






- The Minister promote accessibility by raising awareness of how barriers keep people with disabilities from participating in their communities.
- Accessibility plans are prepared describing how barriers will be eliminated.
- An annual progress report be made public.
- The Saskatchewan Accessibility Office be created. This Office will be responsible for providing education on accessibility, increasing public awareness, and monitoring compliance and enforcement.

The following pieces of legislation include information that mentions or is relevant to persons with disabilities in Saskatchewan:

- Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act. When a person lacks the capacity to make their own health care decisions, this Act authorizes someone else to make the decision on their behalf.
- The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code has the purpose of promoting the “recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal inalienable rights of all members of the human family, and to further public policy in Saskatchewan that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights and to discourage and eliminate discrimination.” This includes individuals with disabilities, among many other characteristics.

- The Education Act outlines in detail the requirements of the board of education to undergo assessments of students with intensive or potentially intensive needs, the right of the student and their family to reasonable accommodation, and an appeal or review process for families that disagree with the school board's decision based on an assessment or requirement of an assessment.

ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality
  Public Education & Information
  Accessibility
  Social Participation
 Legal Capacity & Justice

The Office of Disability Issues aims to make Saskatchewan a more inclusive province and to create opportunities for people with disabilities within their communities. The Office works towards this goal by connecting Government of Saskatchewan ministries, municipal governments, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, school divisions, the private sector, and persons with disabilities to advance initiatives relating to changing disability policy.

The Office was also the developer and lead for the Saskatchewan Disability Strategy, which provides the framework and vision for improving disability services and programs to meet the government's goal of making Saskatchewan the best place in Canada to live for persons with disabilities. Released in June 2015, the 12 recommendations included in the strategy were developed by the Citizen Consultation Team in collaboration with the ministries of Social Services, Advanced Education, Economy, Education, Government Relations, Health, and Justice and Corrections. These recommendations were informed by public consultations (which occurred through public meetings, social media, an online survey, and written submissions) and research into best practices and disability strategies in other jurisdictions. Recommendations are sorted into six priority areas:






- Putting People Before Systems
- Safeguarding Rights and Safety
- Increasing Economic and Social Inclusion
- Building Personal and Community Capacity
- Creating Accessible Communities
- Becoming an Inclusive Province

The Government of Saskatchewan proclaimed October as Disability Employment Awareness Month in 2023. During the month of October, the Government of Saskatchewan demonstrates the importance of and positive outcomes associated with employing persons with disabilities by acknowledging and highlighting organizations in Saskatchewan that have actively promoted disability inclusion.

Other offices in Saskatchewan related to persons with disabilities include the following:

- Office of the Provincial Ombudsman: This Office accepts complaints from people who think they have been treated unfairly by a provincial or municipal service.
- Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth: An independent officer of the Legislative Assembly that advocates for the rights, interests, and well-being of children and youth in Saskatchewan.
- Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission: Receives complaints from individuals who believe they have faced discrimination in accordance with the Human Rights Code.

PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

 Equality
  Caregiving & Family
  Health & Social Services
  Social Participation
 Employment & Financial Security

Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of Saskatchewan that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. More information about Saskatchewan taxes for the 2023 tax year can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

Tax Credit	Description and Eligibility
Disability amount for self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces tax payable for persons with disabilities. • Individuals can claim this on their taxes if they have been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit. • Adults 18 years of age or older can claim \$10,405 on their tax return.
Disability amount transferred from a dependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can claim this on their taxes if their dependent has been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit and does not need to claim all or part of the disability amount on their tax return.
Amount for infirm dependents age 18 and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This amount (up to \$10,405 for each dependent) can be claimed for dependents over the age of 17 years with an impairment in physical or mental functions. • The dependent must have a net income under \$17,788.
Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit. • Dependents must be under the age of 18 years.

Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents

- Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit for their other dependents 18 years of age or older.


Caregiver amount

- Individuals caring for a dependent over the age of 17 years with a net income under \$28,175 and with an impairment in physical or mental functions can claim this amount (up to \$10,405 for each dependent).
- This amount can also be claimed for an eligible parent or grandparent.

Active Families Benefit

- Families with an adjusted annual income less than \$60,000 can claim up to \$150 per child born 2005 or later for costs that relate registering that child in an eligible activity (including sporting activities, cultural activities and recreational activities).
- Children eligible for the Disability Tax Credit are able to claim up to an additional \$50, for a maximum of \$200.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

-  Caregiving & Family
-  Health & Social Services
-  Employment & Financial Security
-  Accessibility
-  Social Participation
-  Education
-  Housing & Related Supports
-  Equality

Services for Children

For families of children under the age of six years who experience developmental delay or are at risk of developmental delay, the Government of Saskatchewan provides the Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECIP). This program is available to children without a diagnosis and families are encouraged to contact their local ECIP to apply. Consultants provided by ECIP are able to support families in addressing their child’s delay, use assessment tools to identify areas of delay, connect families to resources within their community, and assist with the transition to school.

Children under the age of 12 years with an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis can access the Autism Spectrum Disorder Individualized Funding Program, which provides parents with funding to pay for services and supports that best support their child’s needs. Funding must be used to purchase services or supports that are on the Ministry of Health’s registry.

Services for Children and Adults

Community Living Service Delivery (CLSD) is a branch of the Ministry of Social Services that supports people with intellectual disabilities in accessing a variety of community-based services. Individuals can apply for this program through their local Community Living Service Delivery Office. Children and adults with a



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Parent Experiences: Program Rejection

In Saskatchewan, 45 parents and caregivers completed our online survey and 11 parents and caregivers participated in an in-depth, follow-up interview. During both phases of the study, we asked participants about their experiences with rejection from disability programs.

50% *of survey participants reported that their applications for disability programs had been rejected*

When asked why they were rejected from programs, the most common reason shared by participants was that their income level prevented them from accessing programs. Often, participants reported that income cut-offs for various programs failed to adequately take into account the true cost of expenses associated with their child's disability. Many participants shared that they struggled to afford the cost of their child's disability-related expenses but did not qualify for government support at their current income level.

"Our income limits how much help we can access, yet due to medical expenses we're working non stop to pay for his expenses"

"Income testing often unfairly excludes us from being eligible for many programs. There have been occasions where we have applied and met all criteria only to be told our income is 'too high'."

Quotes from Parent Research Participants

diagnosis of intellectual disability with an onset before age 18 years are eligible for this program. Applicants require assessment documentation from a qualified professional to apply. Program recipients are assigned a Community Services Worker who helps connect the individual with services and support based on their needs. CLSD has partnerships with many service providers in Saskatchewan to which they can connect clients, including:

- Approved Private Service Homes – Provide a supportive family-living environment in a community setting for adults with intellectual disabilities.
- Group Homes – Staffed to provide personal care, supervision, and support for adults. They are located in residential neighbourhoods throughout Saskatchewan.
- Group Living Homes – People share a group living home and are responsible for paying basic shelter costs. CLSD provides funding for support staff as needed.

- Supported Living Programs – Provide adults living in their own homes with limited support and supervision so they can live as independently as possible.
- Day Programs – Support people to participate in work and leisure activities and develop life skills. Programs include job training, supported employment opportunities, life skills development, socialization and recreation.
- Family Respite Benefit - A monthly financial benefit for parents or guardians of a child with an intellectual disability under the age of 18 years to allow them to pay for short-term alternative or additional supervision and care of their child. Benefit amounts are based on family income level and the level of the impact of the child’s disability, as assessed by CLSD.
- Self-Directed Funding - Allows adults with intellectual disabilities to manage their own funding for residential supports, community inclusion supports and/or day programming with the support of the representative of their choice.

Additionally, the Cognitive Disability Strategy (CDS) provides services to address the unmet needs of individuals with cognitive disabilities and their families. To be eligible, individuals must have an unmet need related to their disability that can be addressed by an evidence-based intervention and cannot be supported by another system. Through CDS, individuals and their families can access Cognitive Disability Consultants, who support families with the development of behavioural support plans, and the Cognitive Disability Benefit, a financial benefit calculated based on the impact of disability and financial need.

Employment and Education

Inclusive education is delivered by school boards and individual schools in Saskatchewan. The Ministry of Education provides resources for teachers, parents, and guardians to help them meet student learning needs. Students with additional needs are supported by a collaborative, in-school team that includes their parents and guardians, education professionals, and other individuals who can help students reach their goals.

Post-secondary students with disabilities can access the Canada-Saskatchewan Grant for Services and Equipment, which provides an annual grant for specialized education-related services and assistive equipment. Services covered under this program include the following: tutors, note-takers, interpreters, readers, assistive technology, and specialized transportation, among others. Individuals can receive a grant up to a total of \$22,000 (up to \$20,000 for the Canada Grant and up to \$2,000 for the Saskatchewan grant).

With respect to employment, the Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities program provides funding for services for adults with disabilities (16 years of age and older) to help them participate in training or education that is needed to prepare for employment or to obtain and maintain employment. As part of this program, individuals are required to develop a career action plan or services plan that outlines career goals and the steps needed to achieve these

goals, and supports needed to overcome barriers to participation in education or employment. Employers hiring a person with a disability may receive support for disability-related accommodations through this program.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Parent Perspectives: Impacts on Employment

As discussed above, many participants of our study reported that they had been rejected from various disability programs in Saskatchewan. This resulted in impacts on many parents' ability to work. Many parents and caregivers had to take on extra work to pay for their child's expenses. Others had to leave their job to care for their child because they were unable to get support from government programs. This places additional burden and stress on parents and caregivers. To demonstrate this, we share the story of one participant below.

“There is not enough financial help for single parents of special needs children who cannot work, due to their children’s high demand of needs. I tried to have a job, but was told my son was an inconvenience to the company with all of his appointments and bad days. The government needs to understand that this is not a life we chose, if we could be working, I’m sure we would be, but unfortunately, some of us are unable to. I feel like I am being treated like I am just lazy and choosing to sit at home and collect welfare. Caring for my son is literally a full time job. I only get \$250 to live off of myself per month, and that has to cover food, hygiene products, license plates, gas to get my son to his appointments, and more. The child care benefit and disability benefit don’t cover much, when you constantly are making trips to see specialists and for tests at the children’s hospital, and buying diapers, and other necessities. All in all, I barely get by, and it is very hard, and does not seem fair.”

Home Modifications

Low-income individuals that require accessibility modifications to the home they own or rent can access the [Saskatchewan Home Repair Program - Adaptation for Independence](#). This program provides a forgivable loan to make a home accessible for an individual with a housing-related disability. Needed home modifications must be identified by a qualified health professional and the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation must provide written approval before repairs are completed.

Blended Programs

The Ministry of Health in Saskatchewan provides global funding to the [Saskatchewan Health Authority](#) for the delivery of health programs and services, including those for individuals with disabilities. For example, therapy services

such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language pathology services, hearing services, and specialized audiology services are all provided through the Health Authority. The Saskatchewan Health Authority, in turn, also provides some funding to community organizations that can provide support for individuals with disabilities (for example, the [Autism Resource Centre](#)).



Did you know?

The Autism Resource Centre, located in Regina, provides a variety of programs for autistic adults aged 18 to 36 years, summer programs for children and teenagers, and year-round programming for teens. They also participate in community engagement initiatives and support autistic-led initiatives in the community.

Additional blended programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- [Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living](#). This program provides people with physical disabilities and certain chronic conditions a basic level of coverage for disability-related equipment, devices, products, and supplies.
- [Individualized Funding for Home Care](#). This program provides funding to individuals or their guardians to arrange and manage support services for home care.
- [Family Health Benefits](#). This program provides health benefits for low-income working families. It includes coverage for hearing tests and hearing aids, dental services, eye exams, prescription drugs included in the Saskatchewan Formulary, medical supplies, and emergency ambulance services, among others.
- [Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement \(SRHS\)](#). Provides a monthly payment that helps families with low-to-moderate income access quality and affordable rental housing. Two benefits are available through this program – the Family Rental Housing Supplement, which support families with a child under the age of 18 years, and the Disability Rental Housing Supplement, which provides supports to single individuals, families, and couples without children who have supports in their household to accommodate a physical or cognitive disability-related need.
- [Social Housing Program](#). Provides housing and subsidizes the cost of rent for individuals based on their level of financial need. Priority is given to seniors (55 years of age and older), families with children or dependents, and individuals with disabilities who are in greatest housing need.
- [Special Care Homes](#). Provides long-term care services to individuals when their needs can no longer be met at home or in the community. Special care homes are run by the Saskatchewan Health Authority or operated by a provider that has a contract with the health authority.
- [Special Support Program](#). Provides support with the cost of prescription drugs for individuals with low incomes.

- Supplementary Health Benefits. This program is available to a range of individuals in various circumstances (including SAID clients) and provides assistance with non-insured health services. This can include support for medical supplies and appliances, prescription drugs, hearing services, dental services, emergency services, and medical transportation, among other services.
- Accessible Parking Program. Administered by SaskAbilities, this program provides a parking permit to allow individuals to park in designated stalls if they are unable to walk unassisted for more than 50 metres without great difficulty or danger to their health and safety. The application form must be authorized by a physician, occupational therapist, physical therapist, nurse practitioner, or chiropractor. Short term and long term permits are available based on information provided in the application.



Support for Individuals and Families

There are many non-profits, charities, and other organizations that advocate for and provide support to individuals living in Saskatchewan with disabilities and their families. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- SaskAbilities
- Saskatchewan Voice of People with Disabilities
- Inclusion Saskatchewan
- FASD Network

MANITOBA

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) - Medical Barriers to Full Employment • Manitoba Support for Persons with Disabilities 	
Laws and Policies 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility for Manitobans Act • Adults Living with an Intellectual Disability Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights Code • Public Schools Act • Protection of Persons in Care Act
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manitoba Accessibility Office • Manitoba Access Awareness Week • Disability Employment Awareness Month • Indigenous Disability Awareness Month • International Day of Persons with Disabilities • Accessibility Compliance Secretariat • Office of the Commissioner for Adults Living with an Intellectual Disability • Intellectual Disability Issues Advisory (IDIA) Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair Practices Office • Manitoba Human Rights Commission • Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth • Manitoba Ombudsman • Social Services Appeal Board

Programs Provided by the Tax System



Disability-Specific

- Disability amount for self
- Disability amount transferred from a dependent
- Amount for infirm dependents age 18 or older
- Manitoba Primary Caregiver Tax Credit

Blended

- Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner, and your dependent children born in 2006 or later
- Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents
- Caregiver amount
- Children's arts amount
- Fitness amount

Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



Disability-Specific

- Children's disABILITY Services (CDS)
- Child Care Inclusion Support Program
- Community Living disABILITY Services
- Consultants for the Blind and Visually Impaired (BVI)
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consultant Team (DHHCT)
- Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities
- Manitoba Wheelchair Program
- Manitoba Key Worker Program

Blended

- Home Care Services
- Subsidized Housing
- Personal Care Homes
- Parking Permit Program

ACRONYMS

BVI	Blind and Visually Impaired
CDS	Children's disABILITY Services
DHHCT	Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consultant Team
EIA	Employment and Income Assistance
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
IDIA	Intellectual Disability Issues Advisory
IEP	Individual Education Plan

INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

 Employment & Financial Security  Health & Social Services  Equality
 Social Participation  Housing & Related Supports

The Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) - Medical Barriers to Full Employment (formerly EIA Disability category) provides financial support to individuals 18 years of age or older in financial need with a mental or physical disability that is likely to last more than 90 days and that prevents the individual from earning enough income to support their or their family's basic needs. EIA recipients can also receive Rent Assist if they need help with shelter and utility costs. The first \$200 of net monthly earnings from employment and 30 percent of any amount earned over \$200 is able to be kept by the EIA recipient before EIA benefits are reduced.

Financial assistance provided under this program varies with family size and age of children (for example single adults with a disability receive \$1,166 per month, whereas single adults with a disability and a child between the ages of 12 and 17 years receive \$1,666 per month). Individuals and families that do not need help with their basic living costs but that cannot afford to pay for their health needs may be eligible for grants for medical equipment and supplies through this program.

EIA also provides employment services to help support those in the EIA program prepare for, find, and maintain employment. This can include employment and training programs, and extra funding for expenses related to child care, transportation, work expenses, and phone costs, among others. People with disabilities in the EIA program are not required to look for work to receive benefits under the program, although they are able to utilize employment services if willing and able.

In 2023, Manitoba also launched the Manitoba Support for Persons with Disabilities program. This program is separate from EIA and aims to provide income support specifically to low-income individuals with severe and prolonged disabilities. Individuals that are already accessing Community Living disABILITY Services, living in a personal care home, or receiving Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefits are automatically eligible for this program. Through this program, recipients are able to receive income support for living expenses, housing, and other supports, determined by living situation and financial resources. The amount received through this program is based on an individual's living situation and financial resources.

LAWS AND POLICIES

 Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice  Accessibility  Social Participation
 Public Education & Information  Education

In December 2013, the Accessibility for Manitobans Act became law. The purpose of this Act is to provide a process to remove barriers for people with disabilities. The Act consists of five accessibility standards (three of which are passed and in force currently):

- Customer Service – Focuses on business practices and training requirements to provide better customer services to persons with disabilities.
- Employment – Includes practices related to employee recruitment, hiring, and retention.
- Information and Communication – Related to removal of barriers associated with accessing and providing information (for example: information in print, in-person, or online).
- Transportation – Address barriers related to all aspects of daily transportation (for example: going to work, school, socializing, or other activities).
- Design of Outdoor Public Spaces – This standard applies to areas outside the jurisdiction of the Manitoba Building Code, such as sidewalks, pathways, parks, and other aspects of the outdoor environment.

Each standard outlines specific requirements and timelines for organizations that have a responsibility to comply with the Act.

Additionally, the Adults Living with an Intellectual Disability Act (formerly the Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act) came into force in October 1996, with the purpose of promoting and protecting the rights of adults living with an intellectual disability. This Act is based on five guiding principles:

- Adults with intellectual disabilities are presumed to have decision-making capacity, unless otherwise demonstrated.
- Adults with intellectual disabilities should be encouraged to make their own decisions.
- The support network of adults with intellectual disabilities should be encouraged to assist them in making decisions to enhance their independence and self-determination.
- The privacy and dignity of adults with intellectual disabilities should be respected when receiving assistance with decision making.
- Substitute decision making should be invoked only as a last resort.







Did you know?

Manitoba was the second province/territory in Canada, after Ontario, to introduce accessibility legislation.

The following pieces of legislation include information that mentions or is relevant to persons with disabilities in Manitoba:

- The Human Rights Code is Manitoba’s human rights law. It protects individuals from unreasonable discrimination based on many different characteristics, including “physical or mental disability or related characteristics or circumstances, including reliance on a service animal, a wheelchair, or any other remedial appliance or device.”
- The Appropriate Educational Programming Regulation established under the Public Schools Act outlines requirements for students to receive specialized assessments at school and to have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) prepared based on the results of the assessment.
- The Protection for Persons in Care Act helps protect adults from abuse and neglect while receiving care in personal care homes, hospitals or any other designated health facility.

ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality  Public Education & Information  Legal Capacity & Justice
 Accessibility

There are two main offices in Manitoba that were created as a result of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act. The first is the Manitoba Accessibility Office, which is responsible for developing and conducting public education initiatives to increase awareness of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act. As standards of the Act are introduced and regulations become law, this office will provide tools and other resources to help local businesses, non-profits, and public sector organizations understand and comply with accessibility regulations. As part of its mandate, the Accessibility Office recognizes several disability awareness events throughout the year:

- Manitoba Access Awareness Week: Celebrated in June, this week promotes accessibility and inclusion, raises awareness about accessibility issues, and highlights people who are working to remove barriers to accessibility.
- Disability Employment Awareness Month: During the month of October, disability inclusion in the workforce is highlighted and celebrated.
- Indigenous Disability Awareness Month: During the month of November, the Office promotes awareness of the barriers experienced by Indigenous Peoples with disabilities.
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities: Celebrated annually on December 3, this day promotes an understanding of disability issues and calls for supporting the dignity, rights, and well-being of persons with disabilities.

The second is the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat, which is responsible for ensuring that private, nonprofit, and public sectors are complying with the

Accessibility for Manitobans Act. The secretariat also works with organizations to raise awareness about accessibility, and receives and reviews complaints from the public about organizations that are not meeting legal requirements under the Act.






There are two bodies in Manitoba related to the Adults Living with an Intellectual Disability Act. The first is the Office of the Commissioner for Adults Living with an Intellectual Disability, which has the main purpose of determining whether substitute decision makers are necessary, and legally appointing substitute decision makers. The second is the Intellectual Disability Issues Advisory (IDIA) Council, which was launched in February 2023. Its mandate is to advise the Minister of Families on matters relating to programs and services for adults living with an intellectual disability and to oversee the recommendations developed and published in November 2021 by the Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Task Force.

Individuals applying for or accessing Employment and Income Assistance, Children's disABILITY Services, Community Living disABILITY Services and/or the Early Learning and Child Care Program who feel they have been treated unfairly are able to access confidential and impartial assistance from the Fair Practices Office. This Office provides information to program applicants and recipients, investigates complaints, mediates disputes, and can provide recommendations on individual cases to program staff. The Office also makes recommendations to the Government of Manitoba on changes to service design and delivery based on complaint patterns.

Other initiatives and offices in Manitoba related to persons with disabilities include the following:

- The Manitoba Human Rights Commission administers the Human Rights Code, and is authorized to mediate and investigate complaints of discrimination. Complaints with sufficient evidence may go through adjudication, which involved an independent public hearing to determine if the Human Rights Code has been contravened. The Commission is also responsible for promoting human rights and educating the public.
- Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth is an independent office of the Legislative Assembly that advises children, youth, and young adults of their rights and about services that are available to them, as well as conducting research, investigations, and issuing recommendations to improve public services.
- Manitoba Ombudsman is an independent office of the Legislative Assembly that investigates complaints about access to information and privacy, fairness of government actions or decisions, or serious wrongdoings that citizens believe have occurred.
- Social Services Appeal Board provides individuals with a fair, impartial, and informal appeal process of decisions relating to various social programs, including EIA, eligibility for Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities, and eligibility for Community Living disABILITY Services.

PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

 Equality
  Caregiving & Family
  Health & Social Services
  Social Participation
 Employment & Financial Security

Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of Manitoba that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. More information about all Manitoba taxes for the 2023 tax year can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

Tax Credit	Description and Eligibility
Disability amount for self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces tax payable for persons with disabilities Individuals can claim this on their taxes if they have been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit. Adults 18 years of age or older can claim \$6,180 on their tax return.
Disability amount transferred from a dependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim this on their taxes if their dependent has been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit and does not need to claim all or part of the disability amount on their tax return.
Amount for infirm dependents age 18 and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This amount (up to \$3,605 for each dependent) can be claimed for dependents over the age of 17 years with an impairment in physical or mental functions. The dependent must have a net income under \$8,720.
Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit. Dependents must be under the age of 18 years.
Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit for their other dependents 18 years of age or older.
Caregiver amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals caring for a dependent over the age of 17 years with a net income under \$15,917 and with an impairment in physical or mental functions can claim this amount (up to \$3,605 for each dependent). This amount can also be claimed for an eligible parent or grandparent.

Children's arts amount

- Parents of children under the age of 16 years of age are able to claim registration or membership fees (up to \$500) for a prescribed program of artistic, cultural, recreational, or developmental activity.
- Children with Disability Tax Credit eligibility are able to claim this amount until they are 17 years of age and are able to claim an additional amount of \$500.

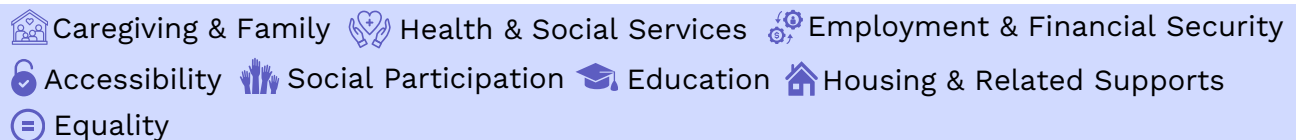
Fitness amount

- Young adults (age 18-24 years) and parents of children under 18 years of age can claim fees for a prescribed program of physical activity (up to \$500).
- Children and young adults that are eligible for the Disability Tax Credit can claim an additional amount of \$500.

Manitoba Primary Caregiver Tax Credit

- This refundable tax credit can be claimed by the primary caregiver of a person with a disability or illness.
- This tax credit helps cover the caregiver's expenses for time and money spent caring for people who need support. Eligible expenses may include bathing, shopping, doing laundry, going to medical appointments or attending recreational outings.
- Caregivers can claim \$1,400 on their tax return.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS



Services for Children

The main program that supports children under the age of 18 years with developmental and physical disabilities and their families administered by the Government of Manitoba is Children's disABILITY Services (CDS). Families accepted into the program are paired with a case worker, who assesses the needs and goals of the child and family, and provides information about and helps to coordinate services available through CDS and other agencies (such as child care facilities, schools and volunteer organizations). The amount of services a family receives is based on eligibility, assessed need, and program resources available. Some examples of the types of services and supports available through the CDS program include the following:

- Respite
- Therapy
- Child Development Services for Pre-School Children
- Autism Services (including Autism Outreach which teaches intervention methods to parents and caregivers and Applied Behaviour Analysis)

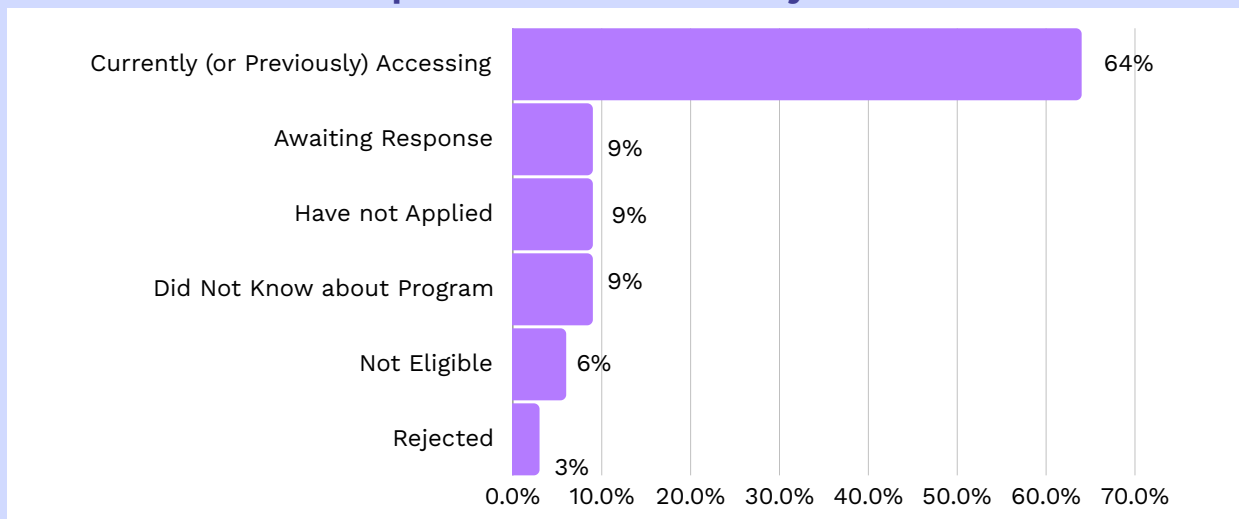


MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Program Spotlight: Children's disABILITY Services

In Manitoba, 33 parents and caregivers completed our online survey and 10 parents and caregivers participated in an in-depth, follow-up interview. Participants shared their experiences applying for and accessing Children's disABILITY Services (CDS). As highlighted in the chart below, the majority of survey participants (64%) were currently or had previously accessed CDS.

Participant's Level of Familiarity with CDS



While CDS provided needed support (such as occupational therapy, before/after school programs, and respite) to our participants, many shared that long waitlists and challenges with capacity of program staff precluded access to timely support. Many shared that once an application was submitted, it could take up to two to three years to hear whether the application was approved, delaying access to services. Some participants also shared that, at times, they had difficulties getting in touch with their CDS worker to coordinate services. Additionally, many found that they had difficulties accessing the services and supports they needed, either due to lack of availability of service providers or long waitlists. We highlight quotes from our participants that exemplify these challenges below.

“The waitlists are way too long currently to make support helpful when it is needed. By the time we get to the top of the list, either the support is no longer needed or the situation has gotten worse.”

“Workers are overloaded with clients and often have too many clients...it's hard to connect with [our] CDS worker.”

“We filled out all the stuff, I provided all the assessments and documents that I had, and then sent it off, and then within a couple years, they finally got back to me.”

- Behavioural Services
- Summer Skills Programming
- After-School Care for Adolescents
- Supplies, Equipment, and Home and Vehicle Modifications
- Transportation

Additionally, children with disabilities can benefit from the [Child Care Inclusion Support Program](#), which provides funding for child care centres, nursery schools, and family and group child care homes to reduce or eliminate barriers to allow a child with additional support needs to fully participate in an early learning and child care program.



Did you know?

In Spring 2023, CDS established a partnership with [St. Amant Inc.](#) to deliver case management services to families raising Autistic children, in an effort to reduce the case management waitlist. St. Amant Inc., a non-profit organization located in Winnipeg, also provides many supports for children and adults with developmental disabilities, autism, and acquired brain injury and their families.

Services for Adults

The Government of Manitoba administers one main programs for adults with disabilities: [Community Living disABILITY Services](#). The Community Living disABILITY Services program supports eligible adults with intellectual disabilities. Community Services Workers work with individuals to develop a person-centered plan and connect them with services and supports provided by Community Living disABILITY Services or in the community. Examples of services provided by this program include the following:

- Respite
- In-Home Services
- Day Services
- Residential Services
- Clinical Services
- Crisis Intervention

Employment and Education

In Manitoba, supports for students in the K-12 system with disabilities are funded by Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning, and delivered and coordinated by school boards and in-school teams (which can include students, parents, teachers, principals, resource teachers, counsellors, and educational assistants). In-school teams have the option of obtaining support from specialized Manitoba Education and Early Child Learning staff members, specifically [Consultants for the Blind and Visually Impaired \(BVI\)](#) and the [Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consultant Team \(DHHCT\)](#).

The Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities program offers a wide range of employment focused services to assist adults (over the age of 15 years) with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining and maintaining employment. Services available through this program include the following: vocational counselling, vocational assessments, vocational training, vocational planning, support services (such as funding for interpreters and technical equipment), direct employment services (such as support with job search, resume building, and on the job training), and funding for vehicle modifications needed to be able to get to a training or employment site.

Assistive Devices and Equipment

The Government of Manitoba provides funding to the non-profit organization Manitoba Possible to administer the Manitoba Wheelchair Program. This program offers long-term loans of recycled or new manual and motorized wheelchairs. This program also provides wheelchair repair and maintenance services. To be eligible for this program, individuals are required to have a form filled out by a healthcare provider and must require the use of a wheelchair for at least six months.

Services Provided by Health Authorities

The five health authorities in Manitoba provide many services and supports for Manitobans, including those with disabilities. There is one program provided by the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority that warrants specific mention. The Manitoba Key Worker Program provides support and information to families of children and youth (aged 0-21 years) with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) or confirmed prenatal alcohol exposure. Key Workers assist families in accessing supports, community resources, and health and education information that reflects the specific needs of the family.

Blended Programs

Blended programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- Home Care Services. Home care is provided to Manitobans of all ages based on assessed need and in consideration of other resources available to the individual, including families, community resources, and other programs. These services are operated and delivered by regional health authorities. Individuals can choose to have home care services managed by the regional health authority or to self-manage their services.
- Manitoba Housing provides a wide range of subsidized housing options throughout the province of Manitoba. Options that specify that they are able to accommodate individuals with disabilities (among other individuals) include Private Non-Profit Housing, Sponsor Managed Social Housing, and Urban Native Non-Profit Housing.
- Personal Care Homes. Provides personal care services to individuals who can no longer manage independently at home with family support and community services.

- Parking Permit Program. Administered by Manitoba Possible and regulated by Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure, this program ensures that a person who has difficulty walking more than 50 metres can park in a specially designated parking spot. To be eligible, individuals are required to have a health condition that meets eligibility requirements and authorization from a regulated healthcare practitioner. Individuals are eligible for a pass if they do not have a vehicle. Individuals with a permanent disability can receive a permanent permit valid for up to three years before it needs to be renewed.



Support for Individuals and Families

The Family Advocacy Network (FAN) of Manitoba is a network of parents, family members, and caregivers of people, both children and adults, with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This network provides opportunities for families to get together, to share experiences and resources, to be empowered, to advocate, and to have a united voice across the province.





Get Your Benefits! is also a great resource to learn about the various federal, provincial, and regional benefits and programs available to Manitobans.

There are many non-profits, charities, and other organizations that advocate for and provide support to Manitobans with disabilities and their families. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- Manitoba Possible
- Barrier-Free Manitoba
- Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities
- Abilities Manitoba
- Inclusion Winnipeg
- Community Living Manitoba

ONTARIO

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) 	
Laws and Policies 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ontario Human Rights Code Education Act Special Education Policy and Program Memorandum Substitute Decisions Act Health Care Consent Act
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Path to 2025: Ontario's Accessibility Action Plan Accessibility Compliance Action Plan An Accessible Ontario Disability Employment Awareness Month United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ontario Human Rights Commission Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario Ontario Ombudsman Patient Ombudsman Social Benefits Tribunal
Programs Provided by the Tax System 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability amount for self Disability amount transferred from a dependent Amount for infirm dependents age 18 or older Ontario caregiver amount Reduction for dependents with a mental or physical impairment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents

Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



Disability-Specific

- Infant Child Development Program
- Preschool Speech and Language Program
- Infant Hearing Program
- Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention program
- Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD)
- Children's Treatment Centres and Surrey Place in Toronto
- Ontario Autism Program
- Special Services at Home (SSAH) program
- Enhanced Respite for Medically Fragile and/or Technology Dependent Children Program
- Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) – includes:
 - Passport Program
 - Housing Supports
 - Community Networks of Specialized Care (referral needed)
- Ontario Bursary for Students with Disabilities (BSWD)
- Ontario Home & Vehicle Modification Program



Blended

- Assistive Devices Program
- Home and Community Care Support Services
- Trillium Drug Program
- Long-term care
- Accessible Parking Permits

ACRONYMS

ACSD	Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities
AODA	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
APSW	Adult protective service workers
BSWD	Ontario Bursary for Students with Disabilities
CPD	Council for Persons with Disabilities
CWDO	Citizens With Disabilities – Ontario
DSO	Developmental Services Ontario
MCCSS	Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
OADD	Ontario Association on Developmental Disabilities
ODSP	Ontario Disability Support Program
OSAP	Ontario Student Assistance Program
SSAH	Special Services at Home

INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

 Employment & Financial Security  Health & Social Services  Equality
 Social Participation

At the age of 18 years, the key financial and employment support program for persons with disabilities is the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). The ODSP is an income-dependent support for those who qualify. Determining eligibility for the ODSP is contingent on the following (and in this order):

- Age - Applicants must be at least 18 years of age, although individuals are able and recommended to start applying at age 17.5 years.
- Residency - Applicants must be an Ontario resident.
- Finances - Applicants must have demonstrated financial need.
- Disability - Applicants must meet criteria for being a person with a disability or demonstrate membership in the prescribed class.

To demonstrate financial need, household expenses must exceed income. If the person with a disability is living with their parent(s), parental income information is gathered, but is not considered when determining eligibility.






To be considered a person with a disability, the following criteria must be met:

- The applicant must have a substantial mental or physical impairment that is continuous or recurrent, and it is expected to last one year or more.
- The applicant's impairment must directly result in a substantial restriction in their ability to work, care for themselves, or take part in community life.
- The impairment, its duration, and restrictions have been verified by an approved health care professional.

The amount that a person with a disability will receive depends on several factors: who they are living with (e.g., living with their parents vs. renting or owning their own home), whether they have dependents, income from other sources, and assets. If the person with a disability is living with their parent(s), they will receive between \$1108 and \$1308 per month. If the person with a disability is also employed, they are only able to earn \$200 per month before ODSP benefits are clawed back.

Once eligibility for ODSP is established, persons with disabilities are eligible for prescription drug (through the Ontario Drug Benefit Program), dental, and vision care coverage. They are also eligible to receive 75 percent coverage of equipment, such as feeding tubes and mobility aids, among others, from the Assistive Devices Program (see more below). Employment supports such as job coaching, assistance with locating and keeping a job, or interpreter services are also available through an ODSP community service provider.

LAWS AND POLICIES

 Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice  Accessibility  Social Participation
 Public Education & Information

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) became law in June 2005, and applies to all levels of government, non-profit organizations, and private sector businesses in Ontario that have one or more employees (full-time, part-time, seasonal, or contract). It sets out specific standards that address employment, information and communication, transportation, customer service, and the design of public space. Health care and education standards are still under construction at the time of publication.

The following pieces of legislation include information that mentions or is relevant to persons with disabilities in Ontario:

- The Ontario Human Rights Code prohibits actions that discriminate against people based on a protected ground (which includes disability, among others) in a protected social area (which includes housing, contracts, employment, goods, services, facilities, and membership in unions, trade or professional associations). “Disability” covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and some not visible. A disability may have been present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time.
- The Education Act (and amendments relating to special education) in Ontario has regulations that specify what each school board must have in place to address the special education needs of children and youth with disabilities. Among these regulations is the requirement for School Boards to have a mechanism for identifying, placing, and reviewing the performance of students with disabilities, the parameters of an individualized education plan for students with disabilities, how special education programs and services will be delivered, and procedures for addressing the needs of blind and deaf students. There are also a number of Policy and Program Memorandum that relate to special education, such as Policy/Program Memorandum 8: Identification of and Program Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities and Policy/Program Memorandum 140: Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).
- If there is some question about capacity of an adult (anyone who is 18 years of age and older), the Substitute Decisions Act is the guiding legislation that establishes rules for who can be a substitute decision maker, what the substitute decision maker has authority over, and how that authority can be established. It works together with the Health Care Consent Act, which sets the rules for determining capacity and substitute consent related to treatment decisions, admission to long-term care facilities, and assistance with activities of daily living.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Review

As part of the implementation of the AODA, the Government of Ontario is required to appoint an expert to conduct a review of the AODA to assess its effectiveness. The review process involves consultations with the public, including persons with disabilities and other stakeholders. The most recent review was published in 2023 and deemed the AODA to be a “failure” and “missed opportunity.” The report included five key themes from consultation feedback, which we summarize below.



Outcomes are Poor

There is a near unanimous consensus that the AODA is currently failing persons with disabilities - experience design (physical and digital experiences of products and services) does not consider the functional needs of persons with disabilities, resulting in poorer experiences in sectors like health and education relative to peers.



Lack of Data and Research

AODA stakeholders noted that a lack of data creates difficulties in improving the experiences of persons with disabilities in Ontario.



Lack of Basic Leadership

Stakeholders noted that there is a lack of urgency on “getting accessibility right” within the Ontario government. Legislative and staff turnover have also created challenges in developing effective leadership on the issue.



Lack of Accountability

Consultations revealed that there is a lack of accountability for implementing the AODA within the private and public sector. There is also a lack of public knowledge of the AODA, making it difficult to hold organizations responsible for implementing the AODA.



Lack of Enforcement

There is a lack of meaningful enforcement of the AODA, due in part to the understaffing of the Compliance and Enforcement Branch of the AODA.

ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

Equality Public Education & Information Accessibility Social Participation
 Health & Social Services Legal Capacity & Justice






The Government of Ontario does not have a body or office that relates specifically to accessibility or the rights of persons with disabilities. The AODA outlines the vision for an accessible Ontario by 2025. To this end, a number of action plans related to achieving this vision were published in 2015: The Path to 2025: Ontario's Accessibility Action Plan; Accessibility compliance action plan; and, An Accessible Ontario. At the time of publication, no more recent plans of action have been published.

Ontario recognizes Disability Employment Awareness Month in October. This month promotes the benefits of creating inclusive workplaces and hiring individuals with disabilities. The Government of Ontario also recognizes the United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities annually on December 3. Recognizing this day is meant to bring awareness to issues that impact people with disabilities and highlight the ways the Government of Ontario is creating a more accessible and inclusive Ontario.

Offices in Ontario that relate to persons with disabilities include the following:

- The Ontario Human Rights Commission is an arm's length agency of the government that protects human rights and aims to prevent discrimination.
- The Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario accepts discrimination and harassment complaints.
- The Human Rights Legal Support Centre provides legal advice or assistance with respect to matters covered by the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- The Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario addresses issues that arise related to access to confidential information. There are rules that govern how Ontario's public institutions, health care providers, children's aid societies, and other child and family service providers may collect, use, and disclose personal information. They also provide the public with the right to access government-held information and access to their own personal information while ensuring that any personal information held by public institutions, health care providers, and child and family service providers remains private and secure.
- The Ontario Ombudsman investigates complaints that involve Ontario government organizations and municipalities, universities, and school boards, as well as French language services and child protection services. They have the right to investigate and in doing so, help complainants navigate and resolve challenging issues that take place in these settings. They will respond to individual issues and more systemic ones.
- The Patient Ombudsman accepts complaints about hospitals and long-term care homes. These complaints only go to the Ontario Ombudsman if the Patient Ombudsman's office is not able to resolve them, or if there are systemic issues in these settings.
- The Social Benefits Tribunal hears appeals from people who have either been refused social assistance or who receive social assistance but disagree with a decision that affects their eligibility for assistance, the amount of assistance they receive, and the benefits they receive.

PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

 Equality
  Caregiving & Family
  Health & Social Services
  Social Participation
 Employment & Financial Security

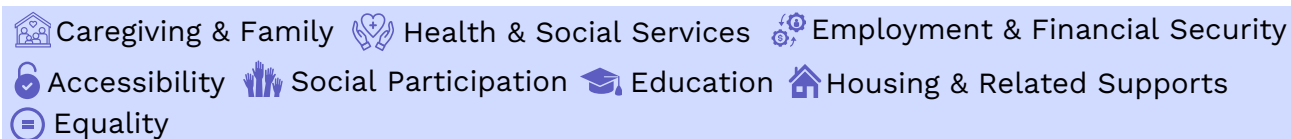
Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of Ontario that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. More information about all Ontario taxes for the 2023 tax year can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

Tax Credit	Description and Eligibility
Disability amount for self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces tax payable for persons with disabilities. Individuals can claim this on their taxes if they have been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit. Adults 18 years of age or older can claim \$9,586 on their tax return.
Disability amount transferred from a dependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim this on their taxes if their dependent has been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit and does not need to claim all or part of the disability amount on their tax return.
Amount for infirm dependents age 18 and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This amount (up to \$2,798 for each dependent) can be claimed for dependents over the age of 17 years with an impairment in physical or mental functions. The dependent must have a net income under \$8,481.
Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit. Dependents must be under the age of 18 years.
Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit for their other dependents 18 years of age or older. Individuals can claim a maximum of \$14,476 for each dependent.
Ontario caregiver amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals caring for an eligible relative over the age of 17 years with a net income under \$24,726 and with an impairment in physical or mental functions can claim this amount (up to \$5,593 per dependent).

Reduction for dependents with a mental or physical impairment

- Parents can claim a reduction of \$506 on their tax return for each of their children under the age of 19 years with a mental or physical impairment.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS



Early Childhood Programs

Families that have concerns about their child’s early development can access many programs before their child enters school.

The Infant Child Development Program, which provides home-based intervention support for children with a developmental disability or at risk of developmental delay, is funded by the Government of Ontario and delivered by community-based agencies. Examples of services provided by this program include assessments, early intervention, information, parenting support, and collaborative provision of support with local providers.

Families concerned about their child’s speech or language development can access the Preschool Speech and Language Program, through which speech-language pathologists assess children and provide support for their speech and language development. Support can be provided through parent education workshops, small group sessions, consultations, and home programs.

The Infant Hearing Program provides hearing screening for all newborns, assessments to identify permanent hearing loss, monitoring of children at risk of developing hearing loss, and language development services.

Finally, the Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention program is available to provide support to families with children who have a visual impairment from birth to



Did you know?

In 2022, the Ontario Government created 22 SmartStart Hubs across the province as a point of entry for families with concerns about their child’s development. These Hubs are located within Children’s Treatment Centres (and Surrey Place in Toronto) and bring together local professionals in early intervention and child development services to help connect families to local services based on their child’s needs.

school entry, both in the home and in the community. Supports provided by this program include family support from social workers, and intervention services and consultation services from specially trained early childhood vision consultants. These programs can be accessed without a referral from a doctor or a formal diagnosis.

Programs for Children

The main program for families who have a child with a disability in Ontario is the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) program, which provides financial support to families with a child with a severe disability under the age of 18 years. This is an income-based program, which means that total household income must be \$74,760 or less to be eligible for the program. The amount that families are eligible to receive ranges from \$25 to \$618 per month and is contingent on the size of the family, the severity of the child's disability, and the nature of the extraordinary costs related to the child's disability. Extraordinary costs may include respite, transportation costs to attend doctor's appointments, and specialized clothing or shoes. If eligible for the ACSD program, children may also receive coverage for specialized equipment or supplies (not covered by other programs such as the Assistive Device Program – see more below), prescription drug coverage, dental care (children in this program are automatically enrolled in Healthy Smiles Ontario), hearing aids and vision care, and batteries and repairs for mobility devices.

Children and youth with a physical disability, developmental disability or communication difficulties/disorders under the age of 19 years (or 21 years if they are in school) can access rehabilitation services through Children's Treatment Centres and Surrey Place in Toronto. Through these treatment centres, children and families can access physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language therapy.

The Ontario Autism Program provides support to children under the age of 18 years that have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Services provided by this program include parent and caregiver education and mentoring, early years play-based programs (available from 12 months to four years of age), clinical services (such as applied behaviour analysis, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, mental health services, and technology), the entry to school program, and urgent response services.

Funding to cover the cost of respite for families with a child with a disability are provided by three programs: ACSD, the Special Services at Home (SSAH) program and the Enhanced Respite for Medically Fragile and/or Technology Dependent Children Program.

SSAH program funding can be used to pay for both in-home or out-of-home respite expenses. Unlike the ACSD program, the SSAH program is not income dependent. Eligibility criteria require caregivers to have a child with a developmental and/or physical disability who lives with them in Ontario, is



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Parent Experiences: Barriers to Access

In Ontario, 177 parents and caregivers completed our online survey and 13 parents and caregivers participated in an in-depth, follow-up interview. When asked about their experiences accessing programs disability programs, two main barriers to access emerged across participants. We describe the first main barrier below.



Complex and Lengthy Application Process

Many participants shared that the application processes for Ontario disability programs were time-consuming and involved a large amount of paperwork that needed to be filled out with the support of program staff and medical professionals. Many participants also shared how emotionally taxing it was to have to continually repeat their child's deficits in order to receive needed support from multiple programs.

"I had somebody refer me, then I had somebody come to my house and talk to me about it, then they had to come back a second time, then they had to bring somebody else with them to say yeah, okay, you're qualified, then somebody came here yesterday and spent two hours reading the paperwork that I had read to make sure I understood, then she has to go back and send it to somebody who has to then send an email, who has to then come and see me again, then I have to have another person come in and give me all the documentation for how I have to fill it out to make sure that I'm on time, and then after that back to the manager, then she releases the money to me and then I can get start getting extra services. Like, it's surreal."

"The paperwork is long and complicated. It is both technically specifically but also emotionally taxing to fill out, because you have to be very honest about the hardest parts of your life and your child's life - the parts you mostly try to ignore. The fact that you have to fill out answers to basically the same questions over and over and over again for each source of funding is also difficult."

82%

of survey participants experienced some level of difficulty applying for disability programs, with over half finding the process of applying to be very difficult and challenging.

under the age of 18 years, and who needs more support than caregivers can provide. Funding can be self-administered or administered by a specialized agency. The funding can also be used for items such as mainstream or specialized camps, support workers for personal development, routine

homemaking tasks, membership fees, nursing, and technology.

The Enhanced Respite for Medically Fragile and/or Technology Dependent Children program provides families with up to \$4,130 per year to spend on respite. To be eligible for funding, the child must be under 18 years of age, live at home, need intensive care and constant monitoring on a 24-hour basis, and be medically fragile and/or technology dependent. The latter is specified by meeting any one of the following criteria:

- The child relies on medical and technological equipment, such as mechanical ventilators, apnea monitors, renal dialysis, urinary catheters, colostomy bags.
- The child is administered drugs intravenously.
- The child relies on tracheotomy tube care, suctioning, oxygen support, or tube feeding.

Programs for Adults

Adults over the age of 17 years with developmental disabilities primarily receive support through Developmental Services Ontario (DSO), which is the access point for adult developmental services funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) in Ontario. There are nine DSO locations across the province that serve different counties and regions. Individuals can contact their local DSO office as early as age 16 years to begin the DSO application process, determine services and supports that align with their individual needs, and access these services and supports.

The main program provided by DSO is the Passport Program, which helps adults with a developmental disability be involved in their communities and live as independently as possible by providing funding for community participation services and supports, activities of daily living, and person-directed planning. The reimbursement program also provides funding for caregiver respite services and supports for primary caregivers of an adult with a developmental disability. Recipients are currently eligible for up to \$2,000 per year for social, leisure, and cultural activities, and up to \$3,000 per year for technology. The typical maximum a person with a disability can receive per year, across all categories of services and supports, is \$5,500. However, if the required services and supports exceed that amount, a special application process can be made to receive up to a maximum of \$44,275 per year. Categories of services and supports available through the Passport Program include the following:

- Community Participation Supports (e.g., membership fees to fitness centres and camps).
- Activities of Daily Living (e.g., programs, classes, and supports to learn life skills).
- Employment Supports (e.g., pre-employment skills development and training).
- Caregiver Respite (e.g., any time of day, in-home or out-of-home). Indirect respite expenses (e.g., short term arrangements for up to 6 months) may be considered for reimbursement with prior pre-approval and in extenuating circumstances.
- Support Worker Hours and Expenses (e.g., wage, benefits, and activity-related expenses).

- Transportation (to/from employment, community activities, or respite).
- Technology (e.g., laptops, internet provider fees, and cell phones).
- Community Participation Support Supplies and Equipment (e.g., fitness equipment, helmets, and arts and crafts supplies).
- Person-Directed Planning (helps people with a developmental disability prepare life plans that lay out their distinct needs and goals).
- Administrative Supports (e.g., bookkeeping, and bank fees).

DSO also provides housing supports, which are funded by MCCSS and provided by local agencies. These housing supports can include group homes, group living supports, supported independent living, and associate living support. Other professionals that provide support through DSO include the following:

- Adult protective service workers (APSW), who can help persons with disabilities and their caregivers learn about supports and services that are available to them and develop important life skills.
- Behavioural consultants, who can assist with the development of a behaviour support plan.
- Case managers, who work with families to support them in coordinating formal and informal services and supports that meet the goals of individuals and families (often on a short-term basis).

Additionally, DSO staff can refer individuals to the Community Networks of Specialized Care, which provides direct complex coordination to adults with developmental disabilities with high supports and complex care needs. This program brings together an interdisciplinary team to shed light on the various ways of understanding the presenting problem, and to come up with an integrated support plan for each individual. This program is particularly relevant for those who have a disability and co-morbid mental health issues, or for those with multiple and complex medical conditions.

Education

Schools and school boards provide special education supports for children and youth in the K-12 system. The Ministry of Education sets standards for special education supports that all school boards are required to follow.

Full time and part time post-secondary students with disabilities can access the Ontario Bursary for Students with Disabilities (BSWD) to help them pay for eligible disability-related services and equipment needed to participate in their studies. The maximum funding an individual can receive through this bursary is \$2,000 per year, with eligible items subject to individual funding maximums. Information from a health care provider and/or from the school's office for students with disabilities or accessibility services office is used to determine what is eligible to be funded through this program. To be eligible for this program, students must be eligible for funding from Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) for full-time students, OSAP for part-time students, or an Institution-Funded Special Bursary.

Housing and Transportation

Individuals that require modifications to their homes and/or vehicles can receive funding from the Ontario Home & Vehicle Modification Program. This program is funded by the Ontario Government Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility and administered by the March of Dimes. Through this program, individuals may receive up to \$15,000 (lifetime maximum) for home modifications, adaptations, and devices, and up to \$15,000 for vehicle modifications every 10 years.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Parent Experiences: Barriers to Access

When participants were asked about their experiences accessing disability programs in Ontario, two main barriers to access emerged across participants. We describe the second main barrier below.



Long Waitlists Delay Access to Support

Nearly all interview participants and the majority of survey participants discussed delays in accessing disability programs in Ontario due to long waitlists. In some cases, participants spent years on waitlists for disability programs and, in some cases, participants aged out of programs before support was received. Many participants also shared that they did not always receive information about the status of their application, making it unclear when they will be able to start receiving needed support.

“Special Services at Home waitlisted us and basically said there was nothing they could do. The wait for respite through regular channels in our area is 7-10 years.”

“We were on the waitlist for ADA programming. [My daughter] was diagnosed at two and a half [years] and she finally got funding when she was five [years].”

Over **60,000** children are currently on the waitlist for the Ontario Autism Program, according to advocates.

Blended Programs

Blended programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- Assistive Devices Program. Provides financial assistance to help with the cost of equipment and supplies for individuals with disabilities and chronic conditions, including mobility aids such as wheelchairs.
- Home and Community Care Support Services. Funded by the Ministry of Health, this program provides nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and specialized services such as social work, nutrition, personal support services, and intravenous therapy at home.
- Trillium Drug Program. Provides support with the cost of prescription drugs for individuals with high prescription drug costs that are not currently receiving benefits from Ontario Works or ODSP.
- Long-term care. Long-term care facilities are residential options that provide help with most or all daily activities and provide access to around the clock nursing and personal care.
- Accessible Parking Permits. Individuals with an eligible health condition and authorization from a regulated healthcare professional can apply for an accessible parking permit that will allow them to park in designated stalls. Five types of permits are available: permanent permit, subject to change permit, temporary permit, traveler's permit, and company permit.



Support for Individuals and Families





Those living in the Ottawa and Eastern regions can access support from Service Coordination Support, which helps individuals with a developmental disability or autism find available resources in their community.

Additionally, there are many non-profits, charities, and other organizations that advocate for and provide support to individuals in Ontario with disabilities and their families. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- Ability Online
- Autism Ontario
- Community Living Ontario
- ConnectABILITY.ca
- Canadian Hearing Services
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- Ontario Association on Developmental Disabilities (OADD)
- Citizens With Disabilities – Ontario (CWDO)
- Council for Persons with Disabilities (CPD)
- Easter Seals Ontario
- March of Dimes Canada
- Voice for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Ontario Federation For Cerebral Palsy (OFCP)
- Ontario Para Network (ONPARA)

QUEBEC

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Solidarity Program (SSP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Income Program (BIP)
Laws and Policies 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act to secure handicapped persons in the exercise of their rights with a view to achieving social, school and workplace integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Act Act to recognize and support caregivers Act respecting health services and social services Building Act Act to combat maltreatment of seniors and other persons of full age in vulnerable situations Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office des personnes handicapées du Québec Semaine québécoise des personnes handicapées 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecteur du citoyen Human Rights Tribunal of Quebec Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse Vérificateur général du Québec
Programs Provided by the Tax System 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount for a Severe and Prolonged Impairment in Mental or Physical Functions Disability Supports Deduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenses for Medical Services Not Available in Your Area Amount for Medical Expenses Refundable Tax Credit for Medical Expenses

Programs Provided by the Tax System



Disability-Specific

- Tax rebates for persons with disabilities

Blended

- Tax Credit for Childcare Expenses
- Work Premium Tax Credits
- Tax credit for an on-the-job training period

Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



Disability-Specific

- Programs provided through integrated health and social services centres (CISSS) and integrated university health and social services centres (CIUSSS):
 - Assistive devices programs
 - Services for persons with a physical or intellectual disability or an autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
 - Family Support Program
 - Daily living and domestic assistance program
 - Travel Expense Program
 - Adapted Tricycles and Bicycles Program
 - Agir tôt program
- Supplement for Handicapped Children
- Supplement for Handicapped Children Requiring Exceptional Care
- Programs provided by Service externe de main d'oeuvre (SEMO)
- Contrat d'intégration au travail
- Quebec Pension Plan (QPP) Disability Component
- Allowance for Special Needs Program – Adult
- Allowance for Special Needs Program – Youth
- Programme ministériel des aides techniques à la communication
- Visual Devices Program
- Hearing Devices Program

Blended

- Technical Walking Aid Program
- Mobility scooter program
- Long-Term Care Centre
- Accessible Parking Permit

Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



Disability-Specific

Blended

- Devices that compensate for a physical deficiency program
- Programme d'adaptation de véhicule pour les personnes handicapées (PAV)
- Residential Adaptation Assistance Program (RAAP)

ACRONYMS

AQLPH	Association québécoise pour le loisir des personnes handicapées
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
BIP	Basic Income Program
CHSLD	Long-term care centre
CISSS	Integrated health and social services centres
CIUSSS	Integrated university health and social services centres
CPP	Canada Pension Plan
PAV	Programme d'adaptation de véhicule pour les personnes handicapées
PMATCOM	Programme ministériel des aides techniques à la communication
QPP	Quebec Pension Plan
RAAP	Residential Adaptation Assistance Program
SEMO	Service externe de main d'oeuvre
SSP	Social Solidarity Program

INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS







 Employment & Financial Security  Equality  Social Participation

The Social Solidarity Program (SSP) provides financial support to individuals with a severely limited capacity for employment, meaning that these individuals encounter barriers, either personal or in their environment, that make it impossible for them to work full time and support themselves financially. The goal of this program is to provide financial assistance and promote integration and social participation. Access to this program is dependent on an evaluation by the Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity. The amount of financial

support received depends on family composition, type of accommodation, and income or assets. A single adult currently receives a maximum of \$1,205 per month through this program.

The Basic Income Program (BIP) is for people who have participated in the SSP on a long-term basis and have a persistent, severely limited capacity for employment. This program came into effect on January 1, 2023. Individuals who have been receiving benefits under SSP and had severely limited capacity for employment for at least 66 months over the previous 72 months are automatically admitted into this program. Through this program, individuals can receive a basic benefit of \$1,211 per month, which is indexed each year. Single individuals can receive an additional adjustment of \$337 per month, individuals with a dependent child under the age of 18 years can receive an additional adjustment of \$20 per month (in addition to the \$337 per month for an individual), and individuals with a dependent child over the age of 17 years attending a postsecondary institution can receive an additional adjustment of \$345 per month. These adjustment amounts are also indexed each year. The amount of the basic benefit is dependent on an individual's income for the year. Program recipients can earn up to \$14,532 per year without decreasing the basic benefit amount. Every dollar that an individual earns over \$14,532 will decrease their annual benefit by \$0.55.

LAWS AND POLICIES

 Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice  Accessibility  Social Participation
 Health & Social Services  Caregiving & Family  Education






The Act to secure handicapped persons in the exercise of their rights with a view to achieving social, school and workplace integration is the provincial law governing the rights of persons with disabilities and the obligations for governments and municipalities. The Act provides a series of measures to “secure handicapped persons in the exercise of their rights” and to improve the social participation of people with disabilities, in particular by asking Government of Quebec departments and agencies to produce action plans and annual reports about measures for people with disabilities. The Act also created the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec (see more information below).

Other laws in Quebec that include information relevant to persons with disabilities include the following:

- Education Act, which mentions that all students have a right to education. In the case of students with disabilities, this right extends to age 21 years (compared to 16 years for those without disabilities).
- Act to recognize and support caregivers, which serves to recognize family caregivers and provide them with support through a national policy for caregivers.

- Act respecting health services and social services, which states that all individuals, regardless of their condition, have the right to be informed of services to which they are entitled and to receive those services.
- Building Act, which requires the adoption of a construction code containing accessibility standards for new construction of buildings or equipment for public use. Obligations under the construction code do not apply to old buildings or smaller housing infrastructure.
- Act to combat maltreatment of seniors and other persons of full age in vulnerable situations, provides measures to prevent maltreatment of seniors and other persons of full age in vulnerable situations (including those with disabilities).
- Quebec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms guarantees the right to equality for persons with disabilities. The Charter is a quasi-constitutional law, meaning that, while the Charter is not part of the Constitution of Canada, all Quebec laws have to respect its content. It also means that the courts give it more importance over other provincial laws (but not over federal law or the Constitution of Canada). The Charter lays out a set of rights for Quebec citizens and prevents discrimination on the bases of many characteristics including disability.

ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality
  Public Education & Information
  Accessibility
  Social Participation
  Legal Capacity & Justice

The Office des personnes handicapées du Québec is a government organization that helps increase the social participation of people with disabilities. The main actions of the Office are as follows:

- Provide information and some services to persons with disabilities and their families.
- Conduct research and evaluation work on social participation of persons with disabilities in Quebec.
- Support and advise the government, ministries and their networks, public and private organizations as well as municipalities.
- Works with relevant organizations to find effective and applicable solutions to make society more inclusive.

Semaine québécoise des personnes handicapées occurs every year from June 1st-7th. The purpose of this week is to highlight the importance of taking action to improve the social participation of people with disabilities, as well as the successes achieved and obstacles still present. This week also includes the DuoEmploi event, where businesses in various sectors provide one week internships to persons with disabilities.

Other entities that are related to persons with disabilities in Quebec include the following:

- The Protecteur du citoyen ensures that the rights of citizens are respected when dealing with Quebec’s public services. Individuals with complaints concerning public services can bring them to this office for investigation. This office can also provide recommendations to improve the quality of public services based on citizen complaints.
- The Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms created the Human Rights Tribunal of Quebec and the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse. The purpose of the Tribunal is to hear cases brought forward by the Commission, who represents citizens who feel their rights as outlined by the Charter have been violated or they have faced discrimination.
- Vérificateur général du Québec has a mission to contribute, through audits and other work, to better management of resources as well as parliamentary control, for the benefit of the citizens of Quebec.

PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

 Equality
  Caregiving & Family
  Health & Social Services
  Education
 Employment & Financial Security
  Social Participation

Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of Quebec that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. Information about all tax programs provided in Quebec can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

Tax Credit

Description and Eligibility

Amount for a Severe and Prolonged Impairment in Mental or Physical Functions

- This non-refundable tax credit reduces income tax payable for adults 18 years of age and older with a severe and prolonged impairment in mental or physical functions. This impairment must be certified by a professional.
- The federal Disability Tax Credit certificate can be used to verify eligibility for this tax credit.
- Adults can claim \$3,815 on their taxes for this amount.

Expenses for Medical Services Not Available in Your Area

- This non-refundable tax credit allows individuals to claim expenses for themselves, their spouse or their dependent to receive medical services not available in their area.
- To claim this credit, individuals must have travel and lodging expenses to obtain medical services in Quebec not available within 200 kilometers of their home or moving expenses to move within 80 kilometres of a health establishment in Quebec located 200 kilometres or more from their former home.

Amount for Medical Expenses

- This non-refundable tax credit can be claimed for individuals that paid for medical expenses that exceeded 3 percent of their net income for themselves, their spouse or their dependent.

Refundable Tax Credit for Medical Expenses

- This refundable tax credit can be claimed for medical expenses if the following conditions are met: resident in Quebec, 18 years of age or older, income was \$3,470 or more, and either the amount for medical expenses or disability supports deduction was claimed.

Tax Credit for Childcare Expenses

- This refundable tax credit can be claimed by parents/caregivers for a dependent child if the following conditions are met: resident in Quebec, child care expenses were incurred to allow parents/caregivers to seek employment, work or study, and the child lived with the claimant.
- This credit also requires the child attending child care to be under the age of 16 years. The age requirement is removed for children with a mental or physical impairment.
- The amount claimed on an individual's income tax return is the product of qualifying child care expenses and a tax credit rate, which is based on family income level.

Work Premium Tax Credits

- A refundable tax credit that can be claimed by individuals 18 years or older with lower income levels in a certain range that is determined based on family situation.
- For example, single adults living alone must have an income between \$2,400 and \$22,794.72 to claim this credit.
- Individuals receiving benefits through SSP, BIP or who are entitled to the amount for a severe and prolonged impairment in mental or physical functions are able to claim an additional amount on their taxes called the Adapted Work Premium.

Disability Supports Deduction

- Allows individuals with a disability to deduct the expenses paid for goods and services that allowed them to carry out employment duties, actively carry on a business, do research for which they received a grant, take a course offered by a designated educational institution, or attend a secondary school.

Tax rebates for persons with disabilities

- QST rebates are available on goods and services specifically for people with disabilities, including vehicles, automatic door openers, certain medical services, health care services, and recreational programs, among others.

Tax credit for an on-the-job training period

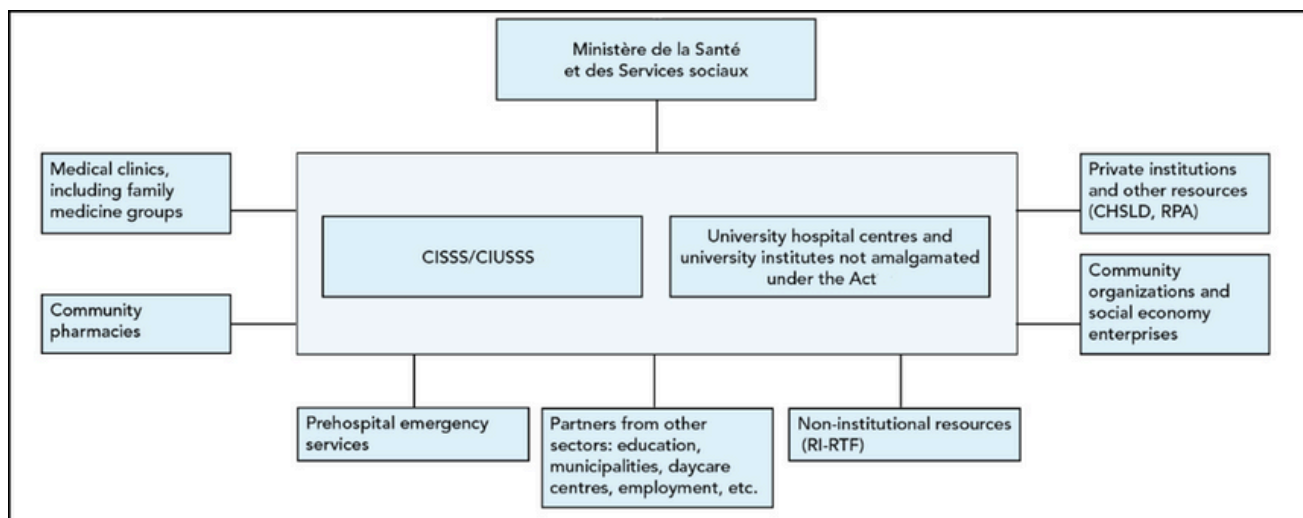
- This refundable tax credit can be claimed by individuals that run a business in Quebec for expenses related to an eligible trainee.
- A supplement is available for trainees with disabilities.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Caregiving & Family
 Health & Social Services
 Employment & Financial Security
 Accessibility
 Social Participation
 Education
 Housing & Related Supports
 Equality

Services for Children and Adults

In Quebec, most services and supports for persons with disabilities and their families are provided through integrated health and social services centres (CISSS) and integrated university health and social services centres (CIUSSS). These centres act as reference points where people can go to receive services, get information about other services available in their area or be directed to other institutions and organizations that can provide the services and supports that they need. The diagram below provides an overview of the organizational structure of health and social services in Quebec.



Source: <https://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/en/reseau/systeme-de-sante-et-de-services-sociaux-en-bref/gouvernance-et-organisation-des-services/>

Abbreviations: CHSLD: residential and long-term care centre; RPA: private residence for seniors; RI et RTF: intermediate and family-type resource

Examples of programs that individuals can access after they contact their CISSS or CIUSSS include the following:

- Assistive devices programs. This program allows individuals with a physical or intellectual disability or autism spectrum disorder to obtain specialized assistive devices based on their needs. Assistive devices are lent and provided by institutions in the health and social services network.

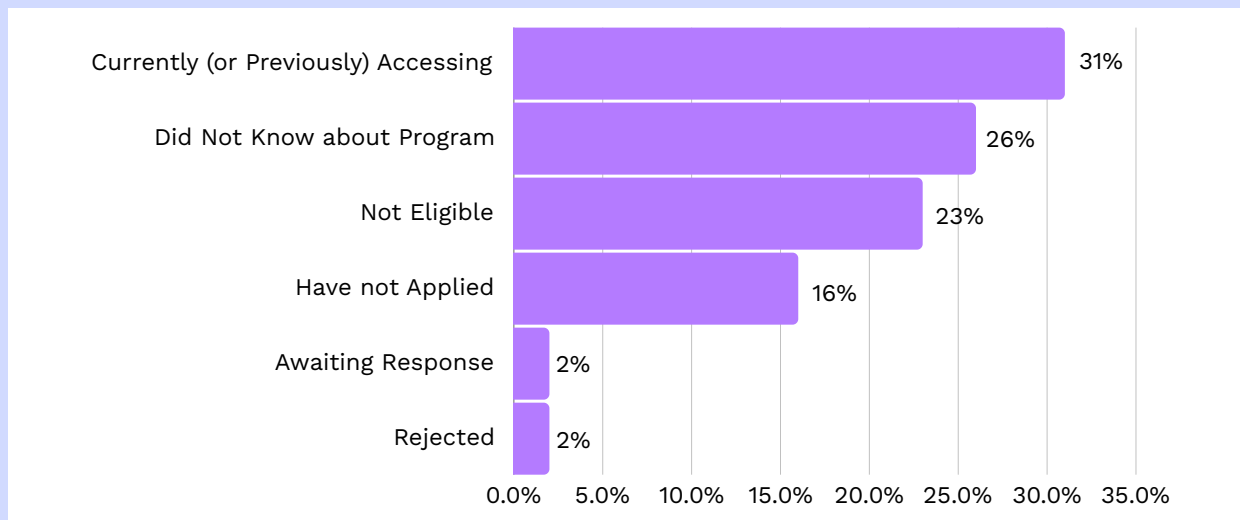


MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Barrier to Access: Lack of Information about Programs

In Quebec, 55 parents and caregivers completed our online survey and 15 parents and caregivers participated in an in-depth, follow-up interview. During the survey, we asked participants about their level of familiarity with 10 of the disability programs discussed in this report. Below we show their responses aggregated across programs.

Participant's Level of Familiarity with Quebec Disability Programs



Interestingly, just over one quarter of survey participants did not know about the disability programs we asked about in our survey. In line with this, many participants shared in short answer survey questions and during their follow-up interview that they had a lot of difficulty finding out about the programs that they could access. We provide quotes from participants below that demonstrate this challenge.

“Resources are not readily available. While a social worker should be able to guide families, they are not aware of all programs and often do not volunteer information unless asked about specific program you may have heard of.”

“There are few guides about what avenues are available to pursue. It is very much on the shoulders of the caregiver to explore options and application processes. Often the physicians we spoke to were also unfamiliar with the application/approval process.”

“It is extremely difficult to navigate through all of the information. Receiving a new diagnosis is extremely difficult and stressful on a parent and then having to figure out what support, be it financial or services, we are entitled to is near impossible.”

- Services for persons with a physical or intellectual disability or an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This program provides support to individuals with physical or intellectual disability or autism spectrum disorder and their families. Three categories of services are available:
 - Support and guidance for carrying out life habits, which includes home support and residential services.
 - Development or recovery of life habits, which includes child development, personal autonomy, and community/leisure integration services.
 - Partner and community support, which provides support to agencies and municipalities to support them in creating facilitators and removing barriers for persons with a disability or autism spectrum disorder.
- Family Support Program. This program includes various measures in the form of direct benefits, particularly to pay for respite services, child care, occasional assistance, and support with parenting through assistance with daily activities. Support is given to families and loved ones who reside with one or more people who have a physical or intellectual disability or autism spectrum disorder and take care of them on a daily basis.
- Daily living and domestic assistance program. This program allows people with a disability or autism spectrum disorder to obtain the equipment they need to carry out their daily and domestic activities in their home.
- Travel Expense Program. This program provides financial assistance to people with disabilities to reimburse expenses related to travel to access health and social services.
- Adapted Tricycles and Bicycles Program. This program allows for the allocation of adapted tricycles and bicycles to individuals age 18 years and under with disabilities.
- Agir tôt program. This program is for children aged 0 to 5 years and their families. It aims to identify indicators of developmental difficulties in children so that they can be directed to the right services quickly. The objective of the program is to support children in reaching their full potential and facilitating their start in kindergarten. This program includes screening and early intervention services. In some cases, this program can be accessed directly by families through referrals from a family doctor.

Support for Children and Families

Outside of the CISSS and CIUSSS, the Government of Quebec provides other services for persons with disabilities and their families. Families with children under the age of 18 years can receive the Supplement for Handicapped Children, which provides \$229 per month to families with a child with an impairment in mental functions or a disability that significantly limits them in the accomplishment of life habits for a period expected to last for at least one year. An additional financial benefit, the Supplement for Handicapped Children Requiring Exceptional Care, is available for families with a child under the age of 18 years with severe and multiple disabilities or that require complex medical care. A monthly payment of either \$1,158 or \$770 is available through this program based on the severity of the child's condition and their age. Eligibility for the both of these programs is determined by Retraite Quebec's team of physicians and health professionals.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Program Spotlight: Quebec Supplement for Handicapped Children

The Quebec Supplement for Handicapped Children was one of the most used and most discussed programs that we asked about in our survey and follow-up interviews.

71%

of survey participants reported that are currently accessing or previously accessed the Quebec Supplement for Handicapped Children.

When asked about their experiences applying for and accessing this program, many parents and caregivers discussed that they found it challenging to complete the application. Many noted that it was lengthy and required coordination of several visits to healthcare professionals and educators (both of which are required to fill out a portion of the application form). Waitlists to see medical professionals to help fill out the form lengthened the application time and some participants shared that professionals were not always familiar with how to fill out the application form. Many recommended that the process be simplified and streamlined so it is easier for families to access the program.

“Being able to have the paperwork filled out by the right medical professional can be a long wait. For us, we waited over a year.”

“The documents needed to apply for financial aid from the Quebec government is very lengthy and not enough guidance is provided.”

Quotes from Parent Research Participants

Employment

For adults with disabilities, employment programs and services are provided primarily by Service externe de main d’oeuvre (SEMO) (example [here](#)). SEMOs are specialized non-profit organizations that receive funding from the government and that help persons with disabilities access employment opportunities in their communities. Additionally, the Government of Quebec subsidizes salaries for some persons with disabilities through the Contrat d’intégration au travail (Employment integration contract), offering these individuals a chance to participate in competitive employment.

Additionally, much like the Canada Pension Plan (CCP), the Quebec Pension Plan (QPP) has a disability component. To access it, applicants must have

contributed to the QPP enough, earn less than \$20,746 before taxes per year, be under the age of 65 years, and prove they have a disability or limitation making it impossible to work. The QPP is administered by Retraite Quebec.



Did you know?

Individuals with disabilities can access is the Companion Leisure Card (CAL) (“Carte accompagnement loisir”). This card “grants free admission to the accompanying party of a disabled person and is recognized by leisure, cultural and tourist organizations.” In September 2023, about 450 organizations participated in this program. Individuals can apply for a Companion Leisure Card directly at <https://www.carteloisir.ca/en/>.

Education

With respect to education, individuals with disabilities are able to access the Allowance for Special Needs Program – Adults and Allowance for Special Needs Program – Youth. The adult version of this program provides support for specialized services (readers, note-takers, transcribers, etc.), paratransit services, housing expenses, and material resources (adaptive equipment and devices) necessary for pursuing studies in secondary school, college, or university. The youth version of this program provides an allowance so families can purchase equipment and devices for their child to be able to pursue studies in preschool, elementary school or secondary school. Resources purchased through this program must be recommended by a health care professional.

Aids and Devices

The Programme ministériel des aides techniques à la communication (PMATCOM) is a program of the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services that lends equipment and technical aids to persons with disabilities. Equipment provided by this program is divided into five categories: speech aids, augmentative and alternative communication aids, adapted telephones, computer access devices, and environmental control systems.

The Régie de l’assurance maladie also provides visual devices and funding for guide dogs through the Visual Devices Program, hearing aids and assistive listening devices through the Hearing Devices Program, and funding to cover the cost of purchase, replacement and repair of certain technical aids for individuals with a physical disability, including wheelchairs through the devices that compensate for a physical deficiency program.

Housing and Transportation

Individuals with disabilities that need to make modifications to their vehicle can receive support through the Programme d’adaptation de véhicule pour les personnes handicapées (PAV). This program is administered by the Société de

de l'assurance automobile du Québec and funded by the Ministère des Transports, and provides financial assistance for vehicle modification and training so the individuals can drive the modified vehicle.

Individuals with disabilities that need to make adaptation modifications to their homes can receive financial assistance through the Residential Adaptation Assistance Program (RAAP). This program is provided by the Société d'Habitation du Québec and the goal of the program is to ensure individuals with disabilities can modify their homes to ensure they can enter and leave their home, access the essential rooms of their home, and perform activities of everyday life, safely.



Did you know?

Persons with disabilities can apply for a free Accompanying Card, which grants free passage to anyone accompanying them throughout the intercity bus system in Québec. This program is administered by the La Bus Carriers Federation, in collaboration with the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec and the Ministère des Transports du Québec.

Blended Programs

Blended programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- Technical Walking Aid Program. Provides a loaner walker to adults with physical impairments or a severe respiratory or cardiovascular impairment. This program can be accessed through a CISSS or CIUSSS.
- Mobility scooter program. Provides a loaner scooter to individuals with motor or a severe respiratory or cardiovascular impairment living at home or in a family-type residential setting. This program can be accessed through a CISSS or CIUSSS.
- Long-Term Care Centre. The long-term care centre (CHSLD) is a residential service offered to adults (including those with severe physical or cognitive limitations) and to seniors who, due to a severe loss of autonomy, can no longer remain in their natural living environment, despite the support of services in the community and those around them.
- Accessible Parking Permit. The program provides parking permits to individuals to allow them to park in designated parking stalls. To be entitled to an accessible parking permit, a person must have a disability resulting in a loss of independence or risk to health and safety with respect to travelling short distances that do not require the use of a vehicle.



Support for Individuals and Families





L'accompagnateur platform provides information about resources that are available in Quebec for children, youth and young adults with disabilities in Quebec.

Additionally, there are many non-profits, charities, and other organizations that advocate for and provide support to individuals with disabilities and their families living in Quebec. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- The C.A.R.E. Centre
- Action main d'oeuvre inc
- Association québécoise pour le loisir des personnes handicapées (AQLPH)
- Quebec Intellectual Disability Society
- L'Appui pour les proches aidants

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income Support
Laws and Policies 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility Act Buildings Accessibility Act Service Animal Act Mentally Disabled Persons' Estates Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Rights Act Adult Protection Act
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Policy Office Learning Disabilities Awareness Month International Day of Persons with Disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the Citizens' Representative Office of the Child and Youth Advocate The Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission
Programs Provided by the Tax System 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability amount for self Disability amount transferred from a dependent Amount for infirm dependents age 18 or older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born 2006 or later Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents Caregiver amount

Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



Disability-Specific

- Intervention Services (includes Direct Home Services Program, Intensive Applied Behavioural Analysis Program and Community Behavioural Services)
- Special Child Welfare Allowance Program
- Summer Camp Inclusion Grant
- Cooperative Apartment Program
- Alternative Family Care Home Program
- Board and Lodging Supplement
- Individualized Living Arrangements
- Shared Living Arrangements
- Home Modification Program (HMP)
- Assistive Technologies Program
- Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA)
- Provincial Grant for High Need Students with Disabilities
- Office of Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities (OEEPD)
- Opening Doors Program
- Accessible Vehicle Funding







Blended

- NL Health Services
- Provincial Home Support Program
- JobsNL Wage Subsidy
- Special Assistance Program – Medical equipment and supplies
- Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program
- Long-Term Care
- Accessible Parking Permit

ACRONYMS

APSEA	Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority
CBSP	Community Behavioural Services Program
CNIB	Canadian National Institute for the Blind
COD NL	Coalition of Persons with Disabilities – Newfoundland and Labrador
HMP	Home Modification Program
LDANL	Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador
OEEPD	Office of Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities

INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

 Employment & Financial Security  Health & Social Services  Caregiving & Family
 Equality  Social Participation  Housing & Related Supports

The Income Support program provides financial support for low-income adults (18 years of age or older) living in Newfoundland and Labrador. Individuals and families can receive two types of benefits under this program. Basic benefits include the family and individual benefit to assist with food, clothing, personal care, household maintenance and utility costs, and the shelter benefit to assist with rent and mortgage costs. Fuel supplements and cost of living allowances are also available for clients. The amount of financial assistance each month depends on family income, family size, living arrangement, types of benefits needed based on an individual's circumstances, and employment-related expenses (such as transportation or child care). For example, in 2024, single adults living with relatives can receive \$339 per month, whereas a couple with dependent children living with relatives can receive \$779 per month.

Income Support clients are also eligible for non-basic benefits, based on their personal circumstances. Non-basic benefits include municipal tax payments, private child care (related to employment or training), expenses for burials, and health-related expenses (such as vision care, prescription drug coverage, dental care, and costs related to special diets).

Additionally, income support clients are also able to receive benefits and services from other government departments and agencies including the following (which we describe in greater detail below):






- Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program
- Special Assistance Program - Medical Equipment and Supplies
- Medical Transportation Assistance



Did you know?

In June 2024, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced a new income top-up program for persons with disabilities called the Newfoundland and Labrador Disability Benefit. Eligibility for this benefit will be based on income level and age (individuals aged 18 to 64 years will be eligible). This Benefit will come into effect in July 2025 and will provide up to \$400 per month to persons with disabilities. Additionally, starting in January 2025, this program will provide \$1,200 per year for an individual's Registered Disability Savings Plan. The government has also noted that this program will have zero clawbacks; the benefit will be provided on top of any other benefits a person with a disability is already receiving. The government suspects that around 5,000 people will receive this new benefit.

LAWS AND POLICIES

 Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice  Accessibility  Social Participation
 Education

The central piece of legislation specifically related to the rights of persons with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador is the [Accessibility Act](#). This Act became law in December 2021 with the goal of improving accessibility by identifying, preventing, and removing barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from full participation in society. Key [actions](#) required as part of implementation of this Act are the development of an Accessibility Standards Advisory Board, which is responsible for advising and making recommendations to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities, and the creation of accessibility plans by public bodies.

The [Buildings Accessibility Act](#) came into effect in 1981 with the purpose of providing people with physical and sensory disabilities access to public buildings, apartment buildings, and hotels, and to ensure compliance with buildings accessibility standards. In 2018, amendments were made to the regulations with the purpose of addressing issues with building accessibility. Amendments included requirements to increase the number of accessible rental units in an apartment building, improve accessibility of public washrooms, increase the number of accessible parking spaces, and increase fines for illegally parking in accessible parking spaces.






Additionally, the [Service Animal Act](#) provides persons with disabilities with the right to access public accommodations, facilities, and services when accompanied by a service animal. Prior to this Act, the Blind Persons' Rights Act outlined the rights of individuals with visual impairments to use service animals. The Service Animal Act built on this legislation by expanding both the variety of animals recognized as service animals and the variety of disabilities that may require the use of a service animal.

The [Mentally Disabled Persons' Estates Act](#) provides information on appointment of guardians for persons with intellectual disabilities in the management and custody of their estate.

Other pieces of legislation related to persons with disabilities include the following:

- [Human Rights Act](#) protects individuals against discrimination on the basis of many characteristics, including disability.
- [Adult Protection Act](#) provides protection to adults that do not understand or appreciate the risk of abuse or neglect, including those with disabilities.
- The [Schools Act](#) requires that all school boards follow all policies and guidelines issued by the minister relating to special education for students.

ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality  Public Education & Information  Accessibility  Social Participation
 Legal Capacity & Justice






The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has a Disability Policy Office, which works with all government departments and agencies, in addition to community organizations and businesses, to support the development of policies and programs that support persons with disabilities and that actively try to remove the barriers that they face. The Disability Policy Office also provides grants through the Accessibility Taxi Program to help cover the cost of retrofitting a passenger vehicle to meet accessibility standards or to assist with the purchase of a new vehicle, which can accommodate passengers with mobility devices such as wheelchairs and scooters.

In 2021, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador proclaimed October as Learning Disabilities Awareness Month, as a reminder of the need to spread awareness, remove barriers, and provide services and support to individuals with learning disabilities to allow them to reach their full potential. Additionally, in line with the United Nations, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador acknowledges the International Day of Persons with Disabilities annually on December 3, which aims to celebrate and recognize all persons with disabilities and their important contributions to society.

Other offices in Newfoundland and Labrador related to persons with disabilities include the following:

- The Office of the Citizens' Representative accepts and mediates general complaints related to contacting and/or accessing services from government offices and agencies. If a complaint is unable to be resolved through an investigation, a report with recommendations is generated and sent to the House of Assembly. The Office can also accept systemic complaints that outline how government policies, procedures, and actions can affect a large number of people.
- The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate is an independent office of the House of Assembly that protects and represents the rights of children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador. The four primary responsibilities of this office are advocacy on behalf of individuals, advocacy for systematic changes, reviews and investigations of concerns raised by children and youth, and education and outreach relating to the rights of children and youth.
- The Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission is a free service that is responsible for investigating human rights violation complaints. The Commission also promotes human rights throughout the province by providing information to individuals, organizations, and community partners.

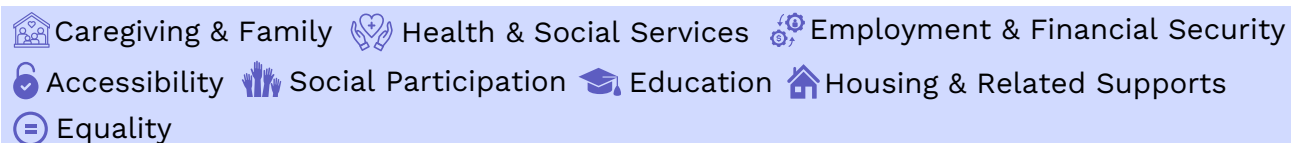
PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

 Equality
  Caregiving & Family
  Health & Social Services
  Social Participation
 Employment & Financial Security

Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. More information about Newfoundland and Labrador taxes for the 2023 tax year can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

Tax Credit	Description and Eligibility
Disability amount for self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces tax payable for persons with disabilities. Individuals can claim this on their taxes if they have been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit. Adults 18 years of age or older can claim \$7,005 on their tax return.
Disability amount transferred from a dependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim this on their taxes if their dependent has been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit and does not need to claim all or part of the disability amount on their tax return.
Amount for infirm dependents age 18 and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This amount (up to \$3,297) can be claimed for dependents over the age of 17 years with an impairment in physical or mental functions. The dependent must have a net income under \$10,382.
Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit. Dependents must be under the age of 18 years.
Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit for their other dependents 18 years of age or older.
Caregiver amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals caring for a dependent over the age of 17 years with a net income under \$19,409 and with an impairment in physical or mental functions can claim this amount (up to \$3,297 for each dependent). This amount can also be claimed for an eligible parent or grandparent.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS



Programs for Children and Adults

The primary program for persons with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador is Intervention Services, which consists of two main programs. The Direct Home Services Program is delivered by NL Health Services and is a home-based early intervention program provided to families with infants and preschool-aged children that display or are at risk of significant developmental delay. The goal of this program is to implement skill teaching and behavioural strategies personalized to each child and family that will help support the child's development. After a referral is made to a regional health authority by a family or service provider, child management specialists will first visit the family home to assess eligibility, and, when space becomes available, provide services within the family home. A component of this program is the Intensive Applied Behavioural Analysis Program, which provides applied behavior analysis services in the family home to children in Grade 2 or younger with a formal diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.

The second program included under Intervention Services is the Community Behavioural Services Program (CBSP). Delivered by the regional health authorities, this program is available to individuals school-aged and older with a developmental disability and significant behavioural concerns. Intervention and support provided through this program is administered in the home and in the community environments in which behavioural difficulties occur. Referrals to this program can be made by the individual themselves (if they are an adult), families, or service providers. Once admitted into the program, behaviour management specialists visit beneficiaries regularly to complete a functional analysis/assessment and to develop and monitor a suitable approach to address behavioural concerns. Family and caregiver involvement in this program is encouraged whenever applicable or possible.

Children with disabilities, specifically, can receive support from the Special Child Welfare Allowance Program, which provides assistance with the cost of services and supports to families with a child under the age of 18 years with a physical or intellectual disability living at home. The amount families can receive each month is determined based on a financial needs test. Families can also receive a Summer Camp Inclusion Grant to help cover the cost of a support person that can facilitate participation of a child with a disability in summer camp.



Did you know?

For children with disabilities, several departments within the Government of Newfoundland have implemented a coordinated service model, which recognizes the need for children to receive services across sectors at different points of their lives. This model involves the creation of an Individual Support Services Plan by professionals, which outlines services and supports needed across sectors and in different environments.

Housing

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador provides several residential options and housing supports for adults with disabilities. These options include:

- Cooperative Apartment Program. Private residences shared by up to three adults with intellectual disabilities with staff that provide skill teaching and support to enable more independent living in the future.
- Alternative Family Care Home Program. Private, staffed homes for up to two adults with intellectual disabilities. Services and supports are available as needed.
- Board and Lodging Supplement. Funding supplement available to adults in financial need, with psychiatric, physical, and/or intellectual disabilities, who are 18 years of age and older, and who reside with relatives or non-relatives.
- Individualized Living Arrangements. These arrangements are established when no other service option is available or appropriate for an adult with an intellectual disability, meeting home support criteria and unable to reside with their natural family. Housing-related costs are covered by the income support program and supplemented by NL Health Services.
- Shared Living Arrangements: Individuals with disabilities who require a high level of home support may choose to share the cost of a living arrangement and home support staff. Housing-related costs are covered by the Income Support program and supplemented by NL Health Services.

Additionally, the Home Modification Program (HMP) provides funding to assist homeowners with low-to-moderate income (\$46,500 or less, or \$65,000 or less in Labrador West and the North Coast of Labrador) who require accessibility changes to their residences, to enable individuals to remain in their own homes for a longer period. Persons with accessibility needs may receive a forgivable loan of up to \$7,500. Repairs exceeding these levels may be addressed under a repayable loan of up to \$10,000 (or \$13,000 in Labrador).

Education and Employment

While the Department of Education outlines a vision of inclusive education for K-12 schools across the province, the administration of special education-related services and supports is largely the responsibility of teachers, in-school specialists, schools, and school boards. School-aged children can receive



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Parent Perspective: Challenges Associated with Living Outside of Large Cities

In Newfoundland and Labrador, six individuals completed the survey and only one individual was able to participate in a follow-up interview. Our interview participant provided a unique perspective about the challenges accessing services when living outside of one of the larger cities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

“We had to leave here and go to St. John’s and it’s sad because the Janeway is fantastic, we’ve dealt with the Janeway in the past but it’s really difficult when you’re a parent and you have to travel by air. To fly in province for us cost more than if we flew out of province. It’s, like \$1200 for a return for one person to fly to St. John’s which is an hour flight. So, we either have to travel by highway which is eight to nine hours depending on time of year to take him into the Janeway or we have to fly which costs us way too much money, and we have nothing here on the west coast which is sad.”

assistive technology that supports their learning through the [Assistive Technologies Program](#).

Students under the age of 21 years with low incidence sensory impairments (including those who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, blind, or visually impaired) can access educational services, programs, and opportunities through the [Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority \(APSEA\)](#).

The [NL Coordinating Council on Deafness](#) provides educational support services to eligible persons, such as vocational counselling, assistance in gaining access to post-secondary education and transitional supports, provision and maintenance of personal Assistive Listening Devices, and accessories and provision of supportive documentation for adaptive technologies and accommodations.

Post-secondary students with disabilities can access the [Provincial Grant for High Need Students with Disabilities](#). This grant provides financial assistance to assist with the cost of education-related services and supports needed by individuals with disabilities to support their learning. Examples of services covered under this program include tutors, note-takers, interpreters, and technical aids, among others.

Individuals with disabilities can also receive employment-related supports through the [Office of Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities \(OEEPD\)](#).

The OEEPD offers many employment programs and career development services to assist persons with disabilities in finding, obtaining, and maintaining employment. The OEEPD also provides the Opening Doors Program, which provides job experience to persons with disabilities in the Provincial Public Service. The positions available through this program are designated to only be filled by persons with disabilities, and are protected to ensure they are not removed through periods of workplace adjustments.

Adults with disabilities can also receive support (up to \$5,000 in 2024) for workplace accommodations, adaptations, assistive technology, and technical equipment through the Work-Related Supports for Persons with Disabilities program.

Transportation

The Accessible Vehicle Funding program supports individuals and families to acquire or adapt personal vehicles for accessibility. This can include installation of hand controls, or modifying vans to be equipped with lifts and ramps. This program is provided based on financial need of individuals and families.

Blended Programs

Beyond the specific programs outlined above, a range of therapeutic and professional services that support persons with disabilities can be accessed through NL Health Services. This includes social workers, nurses, behavioural and child management specialists, dietitians, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and laboratory technicians. Eligibility criteria (including the need for a referral) vary for each service provided.

Blended programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- Provincial Home Support Program. Provides personal and behavioural supports, household management, and respite services to individuals and families that require support to live in their home.
- JobsNL Wage Subsidy. Provides funding to employers to create employment opportunities. Notably, persons with disabilities and Income Support clients (among other groups) are given priority under this program.
- Special Assistance Program – Medical equipment and supplies. Provides basic medical supplies and equipment to assist with activities of daily living.
- Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program. Provides financial assistance for the purchase of eligible prescription medication.
- Long-Term Care. Delivered in both long term care facilities and in some hospital/health centres with combined long term and acute care services across Newfoundland and Labrador. All facilities provide 24 hour nursing care, as well as varying degrees of medical, rehabilitative, social work, pastoral care, dietetic, pharmaceutical, palliative care, respite, and recreation programs.

- Accessible Parking Permit. Allows individuals with conditions or health issues that impede their ability to walk long distances to park in zones marked with a blue international wheelchair logo. Temporary permits valid for six months or permanent passes valid for five years are available.



Support for Individuals and Families

Empower, the Disability Resource Centre, provides resources and services to persons with disabilities and their families in Newfoundland and Labrador. This organization receives funding from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Canada.

Additionally, there are many non-profits, charities, and other organizations that advocate for and provide support to individuals with disabilities and their families in Newfoundland and Labrador. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
- Coalition of Persons with Disabilities – Newfoundland and Labrador (COD NL)
- Inclusion Canada Newfoundland and Labrador
- Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (LDANL)

NEW BRUNSWICK

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Assistance (Extended Benefits Program) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Assistance (Transitional Assistance Program)
Laws and Policies 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility Act • Policy 322 – Inclusive Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights Act • Supported Decision-Making and Representation Act • Education Act
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premier’s Council on Disabilities • Disability Action Plan • Disability Awareness Week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ombud NB • New Brunswick Child and Youth Advocate • New Brunswick Human Rights Commission
Programs Provided by the Tax System 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability amount for self • Disability amount transferred from a dependent • Amount for infirm dependents age 18 or older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later • Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents • Caregiver amount

Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living

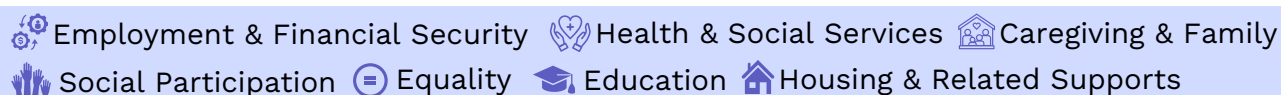


Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Supports for Children with Disabilities Program • Inclusion Support Program • Preschool Autism Program • Disability Support Program • Vision Loss Rehabilitation • Employment and Support Services Program (ESSP) • Training and Employment Support Services (TESS) • avenueNB Cooperative • Student Services • Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) • Community Residences • Portable Rent Supplement Program • Housing Assistance for Persons with Disabilities • Vehicle Retrofit Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Services Programs • Special Care Homes • New Brunswick Prescription Drug Program • Disabled Parking Permit

ACRONYMS

APSEA	Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority
EBP	Extended Benefit Program
EECD	Education and Early Childhood Development
ESSP	Employment and Support Services Program
FSCD	Family Supports for Children with Disabilities Program
HELP	Health Equipment Loan Program
PLP	Personalized Learning Plan
TESS	Training and Employment Support Services

INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS



The Social Assistance program provides financial support to individuals over the age of 18 years (or over the age of 17 years for the Extended Benefit Program (EBP), described below) who are unable to meet their basic needs. To receive

support, individuals must earn an income under the income threshold for their family size. In addition to financial supports, this program provides many other types of supports that individuals may be eligible for based on their needs and situation. For example, those looking to transition into the workforce can access Career Development Opportunities, which provides training and employment opportunities, as well as financial support to pay for employment-related expenses such as child care, textbooks, and work clothes. Other benefits include support for the following:

- Day care
- Emergencies
- Funerals
- Health
- Prenatal and postnatal care
- Special benefits/supplements
- Fuel
- Household furnishings
- Treatment program transportation

The Social Assistance Program is comprised of two individual programs: the Transitional Assistance Program and the EBP. The Transitional Assistance Program provides short-term financial support for adults over the age of 18 years that are willing and able to re-enter the workforce. The EBP provides support for adults 18 years of age and older who have been assessed as blind, deaf, or disabled by the medical advisory board.



Did you know?

According to Statistics Canada data, 35 percent of New Brunswickers are living with a disability - the second highest rate in Canada. The rate of disability in New Brunswick is also increasing faster than anywhere else in Canada, rising 8.6 percentage points between 2017 and 2022.

LAWS AND POLICIES

Equality Legal Capacity & Justice Education Social Participation
 Accessibility

The Accessibility Act was introduced in the legislature in May 2024 and received Royal Assent on June 7, 2024. The purpose of this legislation is to affirm New Brunswick's commitment to implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and with the aim of creating a more accessible and inclusive New Brunswick. The Act outlines the following actions for the province:

- Establish a governance model through an Accessibility Office in the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour.

- Establish accessibility standards in regulations relating to government services, transportation, education, employment, built environment, housing, information and communications, and sports and recreation.
- Establish requirements to adopt accessibility plans that identify, remove, and prevent barriers to government programs and services.
- Enforce compliance with standards.
- Establish mechanisms to evaluate progress, including reviews of regulations.






At the time of publication, the Accessibility Office has been established and the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour is in the process of increasing staff resources within the Office. Additionally, the Government has committed to publishing a minister’s five-year strategic plan by spring 2025, and public sector accessibility plans by the end of 2025.

With respect to education, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) released Policy 322 – Inclusive Education in 2013 to outline requirements to ensure that all New Brunswick public schools and school boards are inclusive. Information is provided in this Policy regarding goals for inclusive public education, requirements and standards with respect to inclusive education, and regarding Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs).

The following other pieces of legislation include information that mentions or is relevant to persons with disabilities in New Brunswick:

- The Human Rights Act protects all individuals in New Brunswick against discrimination based on a variety of personal characteristics, including disability, and promotes equal dignity and human rights for all people.
- Supported Decision-Making and Representation Act “protects and promotes the autonomy and dignity of persons who require support in relation to decision-making” by ensuring that individuals “receive the support they need to make or to participate in the decisions about their lives to the greatest extent possible.”
- Education Act outlines requirements to develop a PLP when needed by students to support their learning, and to provide services and programs aligning with the PLP in the common learning environment to the fullest extent practical, while still respecting the rights and needs of other students.

ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality  Public Education & Information  Legal Capacity & Justice
 Accessibility  Social Participation

The Premier’s Council on Disabilities was created to advise the provincial government on matters relating to the status of persons with disabilities in the province of New Brunswick. This Council aims to provide leadership to improve

the quality of life for all persons with disabilities in the province. The Council published their Disability Action Plan in 2020 for consideration by the Government of New Brunswick. This multi-year action plan contained 43 recommendations that were developed based on consultation and engagement with the disability community. Recommendations focused on employment, education, poverty, housing, disability, supports, accessibility, transportation, and recreation and wellness. The overall goal of this Action Plan is to ensure all persons with disabilities are able to reach their full potential.

The Council also hosts several events annually as part of Disability Awareness Week, with the aim of raising awareness of existing barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from fully and equally participating in society and ways to overcome these barriers, and celebrating best practices and advancements made towards full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the province.

Other offices in New Brunswick that can provide support to persons with disabilities include the following:






- Ombud NB is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly that investigates public complaints relating to government departments, other public sector organizations, and organizations that hold personal health information in an impartial manner. The services provided by this Office are free to use and confidential, and include responding to inquires by citizens, resolving issues, and conducting investigations.
- The New Brunswick Child and Youth Advocate works to uphold the rights and protect the interests of children and youth aged 19 years old and under. This includes investigating complaints a person has about how situations are handled by government agencies.
- The New Brunswick Human Rights Commission is the government agency that is responsible for administering the Human Rights Act. This means that they are responsible for promoting awareness of the Act through education, promoting compliance with the Act, and receiving and resolving human rights complaints by New Brunswick residents.



Did you know?

Access Awareness Week has been celebrated in New Brunswick since 1988 to promote better community access for people with disabilities. In 1998, New Brunswick changed the name of this week to Disability Awareness Week to “ensure that all issues related to persons with a disability could be promoted.”

PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

 Equality
  Caregiving & Family
  Health & Social Services
  Social Participation
 Employment & Financial Security

Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of New Brunswick that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. More information about New Brunswick taxes for the 2023 tax year can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

Tax Credit	Description and Eligibility
Disability amount for self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces tax payable for persons with disabilities. Individuals can claim this on their taxes if they have been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit. Adults 18 years of age or older can claim \$9,309 on their tax return.
Disability amount transferred from a dependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim this on their taxes if their dependent has been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit and does not need to claim all or part of the disability amount on their tax return.
Amount for infirm dependents age 18 and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This amount (up to \$5,431 for each dependent) can be claimed for dependents over the age of 17 years with an impairment in physical or mental functions. The dependent must have a net income under \$13,136.
Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit. Dependents must be under the age of 18 years.
Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit for their other dependents 18 years of age or older.
Caregiver amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals caring for a dependent over the age of 17 years with a net income under \$23,976 and with an impairment in physical or mental functions can claim this amount (up to \$5,430 for each dependent). This amount can also be claimed for an eligible parent or grandparent.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS



Services for Children

The primary program for children with disabilities in New Brunswick is the Family Supports for Children with Disabilities Program (FSCD). This program provides financial support to help cover the costs associated with a child's disability. Children under the age of 19 years with a disability and a written letter of support or assessment from a professional that indicates the nature of their disability are eligible to access this program. Examples of support provided by this program include the following:

- Medical equipment
- Medical transportation
- Incontinence supplies
- Day-care or after-school program aid
- Relief care
- Home support services
- Family support workers for social inclusion activities and skill-building
- Support for therapeutic-based recreation activities
- A health card (for families without health insurance)

This program can be accessed by families directly through a self-referral or through a third-party referral from a professional. The application process involves a screening call and a home visit to complete a Determination of Needs Assessment, which determines whether a family is eligible for the program. Eligible families will work with a social worker to create a Family Support Plan, which outlines the needs of the child and family, and the services required to meet those needs. Families enrolled in this program are expected to work with a social workers, and, families that are able, are expected to contribute financially towards services utilized by their child. Children and families that are eligible for this program are able to choose between two options for case management:

- Social worker managed, where an FSCD worker provides ongoing support and service coordination.
- Family managed, where the family will coordinate and manage services. Funds are provided to families directly to manage and direct services.

Additionally, young children under the age of five years of age with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder can access the Preschool Autism Program before they enter school. Services are provided by VIVA Therapeutic Services, which has a contract with the Department of EECD and delivers services across all seven school districts in the province. Two types of intervention are delivered through this program: comprehensive Intervention (higher intensity intervention targeting multiple developmental/behaviour goals and ongoing intervention),

and consultative intervention (lower intensity intervention that focuses on addressing a specific challenge of the child/family). Intervention received is based on a personalized learning plan developed in collaboration with families

Services for Adults

The primary program for adults (19 to 64 years of age) with disabilities in New Brunswick is the Disability Support Program, which provides personalized and flexible supports. The types of supports provided by this program include the following:

- Home Support Worker
- Respite
- Personal supports and assistance within and outside the home
- Supports for community involvement and participation
- Personal living skills training
- Transportation supports that are disability specific
- Technical supports and assistive devices not covered under other programs
- Medical services or prescription drugs
- Residential facility services

Part of the application process for this program is a financial assessment, which determines how much program recipients will contribute towards the cost of supports based on an individual's income level. Recipients of this program are able to self-manage their services or request the supports of a social worker to coordinate the supports they need. In both cases, program recipients are required to meet with department staff to discuss their unmet needs and create a case plan to address these needs.

Services for Children and Adults

Residents of New Brunswick with vision loss that create challenges in daily activities can receive support from the Vision Loss Rehabilitation program. Vision Loss Rehabilitation specialists can help program recipients create a personalized rehabilitation plan, coordinate services and support, provide information, resources, and emotional support, and provide mobility and technology training. Individuals can self-refer for this program or receive a referral from an educator, employer, or a health professional.

Employment

Individuals receiving support from the Disability Support program are able to access the Employment and Support Services Program (ESSP), which provides services to help people with disabilities find and maintain employment or volunteer opportunities, develop skills that help promote independence, and make connections in their community through social and recreation-related opportunities. This program is delivered by 38 different non-profit agencies that are funded by the Department of Social Development.

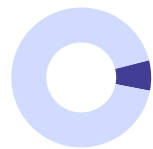
Additionally, Training and Employment Support Services (TESS) provides supports to New Brunswickers receiving case management services who have a



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Barriers to Program Access in New Brunswick

In New Brunswick, 23 parents and caregivers completed our online survey and seven parents and caregivers participated in an in-depth, follow-up interview. During the survey, we asked participants about their level of familiarity with nine of the programs discussed in this report.



7%

of the time, survey participants were currently accessing or had previously accessed disability-related programs in New Brunswick

Considering such a low number of participants were accessing programs, we looked deeper into survey and interview data to determine underlying reasons. We found two main barriers to access and highlight these below.



Lack of Information

Fifty-eight percent of participants did not know about the existence of the various disability programs we asked about in our survey. Many participants shared that they did not know where to go to find information about programs and many shared that they relied on word of mouth from other parents and caregivers to learn about programs.



Waitlists and Delays

Many participants discussed that a shortage in physicians resulted in long waitlists to receive a diagnosis and help filling out forms to access programs. The waitlists often continued when applying for programs, with many sharing that they did not hear back for an extended period of time after submitting an application or had to send supplemental information to government staff multiple times.

“First it's hard to find programs and then when you do it's hard to find the right person, you get the paperwork and it's the wrong one. Takes ages to hear back and when you do, they say there is nothing in our province available.”

“Anytime you go through government, you wait weeks and weeks and weeks and you gotta call them back and it's, you know, telephone tag and, ‘Oh, we didn't get this form, so you gotta send this back.’ It seems like the government is just letting the paperwork, like, fall under the desk.”

permanent physical, intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, or sensory disability to participate in training and/or employment opportunities. Specifically, this

program works collaboratively with persons with disabilities to determine their needs and abilities with respect to developing the skills they need to enter the labour force, and provides services in line with these needs and abilities. To be eligible for this program, an individual must:

- Have an active Employment Action Plan.
- Be a resident of New Brunswick or a First Nation Community in New Brunswick.
- Be a high school graduate; or a high school student during part time or summer employment; or be at least 18 years of age; or be enrolled into an adult learning program.
- Have a documented permanent physical, intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, or sensory disability.

Individuals with disabilities can also receive support from [avenueNB Cooperative](#), a non-profit organization that manages the delivery of employment services for persons with a disability in New Brunswick through third-party specialized organizations. This organization receives long-term funding from the Government of New Brunswick through the Canada-New Brunswick Workforce Development Agreement. At the time of publication, there are 22 member agencies within the cooperative that provide the training, tools, support, and opportunities to ensure persons with disabilities are able to succeed in the New Brunswick labour market.

Education

[Student Services](#), which is part of the Department of EECD, is responsible for the development, implementation, and coordination of special education programming. They provide consultative services to schools, school districts, other government departments, and non-government agencies that provide services to schools. Personnel from Student Services work with School District personnel to ensure that students are provided with support services for learning, which include speech and language therapy, social work, and psychology and health supports, among others.

Students under the age of 21 years with low incidence sensory impairments (including those who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, blind, or visually impaired) can access educational services, programs, and opportunities through the [Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority \(APSEA\)](#).

Housing and Transportation

Individuals receiving support from the Disability Support program are also able to access other programs provided by the Department of Social Development. [Community Residences](#) provides 24-hour care and supervision to individuals who require assistance with daily living tasks and personal care. There are 88 privately owned Community Residences across the province that are required to follow the standards and procedures determined by the Department of Social Development.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Parent Perspectives: Challenges Accessing Support in Schools

Most of our interview participants discussed difficulties accessing adequate support for their children in the K-12 school system in New Brunswick. Some mentioned that they were not able to access an educational assistant at their child's school, while others discussed the challenges associated with having an educational assistant that is shared between many students, such as the lack of needed one-on-one support. Some parents also discussed that there was a lack of awareness of disability and the needs of students with disabilities within schools. Many suggested that more resources were needed to support their children in school.

“Since my daughter has autism, she's high functioning, she goes to school. They, they have an [educational assistant] EA in the classroom, but they might have one or two EA's and six or seven or eight students and the ones that are, that, that have behaviour problems, um, get more attention than the quiet ones. And my daughter needs a lot of one-on-one help and she can't get it because it's a shared EA. And because of that, she's delayed in school by, like, she's in grade five, but really she would be more, or sorry, she's in grade six. She'd be more like a grade four level. She's not getting the one-on-one that she really, really needs.”

Renters with disabilities can receive support through the [Portable Rent Supplement Program](#), which provides a subsidy to renters with disabilities to help with their rent payments each month.

Individuals who need to make accessibility modifications to their homes for a person with a disability can access funding through the [Housing Assistance for Persons with Disabilities](#) program. Forgivable loans of varying amounts are available depending on the type of modification needed. For example, landlords and homeowners making accessible modifications to their household are able to receive a forgivable loan up to \$10,000, whereas a maximum forgivable loan of \$24,000 is available to those looking to build a secondary or garden suite for a person with a disability.

Individuals with physical disabilities that need to modify their vehicle to add accessibility features can access financial assistance through the [Vehicle Retrofit Program](#). This program can cover up to 80 percent of the cost of eligible accessibility features, up to a maximum of \$8,000. Examples of costs that can be covered through this program include wheelchair or scooter lifts and ramps, changes to the roof, floor, and doors, special-needs seating, hand controls, and wheelchair tie-downs and passenger-restraint systems. Items not included in this list may also be considered for coverage on a case-by-case basis.

Blended Programs

Blended programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- Health Services Programs. Provides support to Social Development clients that need help paying for health services or medical supplies. Includes support for mobility aids through the Mobility and Adaptive Equipment Program, and hearing aids through the Health Aid Program, among other types of support.
- Special Care Homes. Provides homes with 24-hour support services (including support with personal care, medications, housekeeping, and social/recreational programming) for clients of the Disability Support Program and seniors in the Long Term Care program.
- New Brunswick Prescription Drug Program. Provides coverage for prescription drugs to eligible individuals. Social Development clients are one group of individuals eligible for coverage under this program.
- Disabled Parking Permit. Individuals with a disability or a condition that impedes their ability to walk more than 50 metres can apply for a parking permit to allow them to park in designated parking stalls. Temporary permits, valid for up to five years, and permanent permits, renewable after five years, are available. A healthcare professional is required to fill out a portion of the application form for this program.







Support for Individuals and Families

Parents and professionals can access courses and resources through the Autism Learning Partnership, a branch of the Department of EECD. This branch delivers training that promotes a common understanding of autism and skill development to help learners with autism reach their full potential. Additionally, there are many non-profits, charities, and other organizations that advocate for and provide support to New Brunswickers with disabilities and their families. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- The Canadian Red Cross (specifically, Health Equipment Loan Program (HELP))
- Easter Seals New Brunswick
- Learning Disabilities Association of New Brunswick
- Ability New Brunswick
- Canadian Deafblind Association-New Brunswick Inc.
- Inclusion NB
- New Brunswick Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
- New Brunswick Coalition of Persons with Disabilities
- Urban/Rural Rides

NOVA SCOTIA

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income Assistance Disability Supplement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment Support and Income Assistance
Laws and Policies 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility Act Inclusive Education Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Adult Protection Act Education Act Human Rights Act
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility Directorate Accessibility Advisory Board Access Awareness Week Access includes everyone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission Nova Scotia Ombudsman
Programs Provided by the Tax System 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability amount for self Disability amount transferred from a dependent Amount for infirm dependents age 18 or older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents Caregiver amount



Disability-Specific

- Disability Support Program – Includes:
 - Home for Special Care
 - Flex Program
 - Independent Living Support (ILS)
 - Alternative Family Support (AFS)
 - Direct Family Support Program for Children and Enhanced Family Support for Children
 - Adult Service Centres
 - Wheelchair Recycling Program
 - Approved Community-based Homes
- Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA)
- Tuition Support Program (TSP)
- Nova Scotia Grant for Services and Equipment
- Nova Scotia Student Loan Forgiveness Program
- Workplace Support Program
- Disabled Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program
- Access-A-Home Program
- HST Rebate on a computer for a person with disabilities







Blended

- Continuing Care
- SchoolsPlus
- Pharmacare Benefits
- Family Pharmacare
- Accessible Parking Identification Permits

ACRONYMS

AFS	Alternative Family Support
APSEA	Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority
HST	Harmonized Sales Tax
ILS	Independent Living Support
TSP	Tuition Support Program

INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

 Employment & Financial Security  Health & Social Services  Caregiving & Family
 Equality  Social Participation  Housing & Related Supports






The Employment Support and Income Assistance program is available to residents of Nova Scotia 19 years of age or older (or between 16 and 18 years in certain situations) that need financial support to cover their basic needs. There are three main types of support provided under this program. The first is Basic Needs Assistance, which provides financial assistance to cover basic needs such as clothing, shelter, fuel, utilities, and personal items. The amount of financial support an individual receives is based on their family size and living situation (whether an individual rents, owns, or boards). For example, single individuals with no dependent children that rent or own their home receive \$686 per month, whereas couples with a dependent child that rent or own their home receive \$1,393 per month. An enhanced rate is available for individuals that have a disability or chronic conditions, are age 16 to 18 years (inclusive) or over the ages of 54 years, or are fleeing an abusive situation.

The second type of support is Special Needs Assistance, which provides financial support for things that support an individual's health, safety, and work or training. The amount received is based on each individual's personal situation. Examples of special needs that can be covered include the following: ambulance costs, child care, furniture, hearing aids, guide or service dogs, medical equipment, prescription drug coverage, and respite, among many others.

The third type of support provided is Employment Support Services, which provides support to allow individuals to become more self-sufficient (as defined by each individual accessing the program). Recipients of this program meet with a caseworker to determine goals and create an employment action plan, which outlines the types of supports they will access under the program. Examples of supports provided by this program include support with education, job- and training-related costs, finding and maintaining employment, and employment-related expenses (which can include assistive equipment and technology).

In November 2023, the Government of Nova Scotia announced a new Income Assistance Disability Supplement, which provides an additional \$300 per month to people on income assistance who are not currently accessing the Disability Support Program (see more information below) and who cannot work. The rollout of this program began in April 2024.

LAWS AND POLICIES

 Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice  Accessibility  Social Participation
 Public Education & Information

The [Accessibility Act](#) was passed in 2017 and has the primary goal of making Nova Scotia inclusive and barrier-free by 2030. As a result of the passing of this Act, the Government of Nova Scotia is required to develop accessibility plans to help meet the goals set out in the Act. To date, the government has published [two, three-year accessibility plans](#). The Government of Nova Scotia is also responsible for making accessibility standards in the following six areas:

- Built environment, which focuses on making buildings and outdoor spaces accessible.
- Education, which aims to make all levels of the education system accessible to all students.
- Employment, which aims ensure persons with disabilities are supported when looking for work and in the workplace.
- Goods and services, which aims to ensure persons with disabilities have equitable access to goods and services.
- Information and communication, which aims to ensure all forms of public information and communication are accessible.
- Transportation, which focuses on providing access to accessible transportation options.



Did you know?






The Government of Nova Scotia recently [announced](#) that it will not be barrier-free by 2030, as outlined in the Accessibility Act. All six standards and associated enforcement are set to be completed by 2030 but the goal of being barrier-free will not be met. Notably, the first two standards were supposed to be enacted in 2021, with the rest to follow in 2023 and 2026. Estimates now suggest that the built environment standards will be enacted in 2024, with other standards to follow in 2025 and 2029.

With respect to education, the Government of Nova Scotia published an [Inclusive Education Policy](#) (effective September 2020) that applies to all K-12 students and employees of the Nova Scotia public education system. The Policy provides principles, directives, and roles and responsibilities relating to inclusive education in Nova Scotia. Roles and responsibilities are specified in this Policy for students, parents and guardians, employees of the public education system, teachers, school administrators, teaching support teams, regional centres for education, and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The following other pieces of legislation include information that mentions or is relevant to persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia:

- The Adult Protection Act deals with protecting adults over the age of 16 from significant risk of self-neglect and/or abuse when they are unable to protect themselves from that risk.
- Education Act: Outlines the requirement for regional centres for education to “develop and implement educational programs for students with special needs within regular instructional settings with their peers,” for teachers to “participate in individual-program planning and implement individual program plans, as required, for students with special needs,” and for parents to have the “opportunity to participate in the development of an individualized program for the child.”
- The Nova Scotia Human Rights Act protects all individuals in Nova Scotia from discrimination based on personal characteristics, including but not limited to physical and mental disability.

ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality  Public Education & Information  Accessibility  Social Participation
 Legal Capacity & Justice

The Accessibility Act (see above) resulted in the creation of two main bodies that support the implementation of the Act. The Accessibility Directorate is responsible for administering and working towards the goals outlined in the Accessibility Act and advancing disability issues with government, through collaborations with persons with disabilities, municipalities, businesses, post-secondary institutions, and other entities. Responsibilities of the Directorate include the following:

- Providing policy, programming, communication, and administrative support on all aspects of the Act.
- Enhancing awareness of the Act through public education initiatives.
- Finding areas of improvement within current policies and practices to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Gaining an understanding of the concerns of the disability community and recommending government action as needed.

Further, the Act also established the Accessibility Advisory Board, which makes recommendations and provides advice to the Minister of Justice about ways to improve accessibility in the province. The board has up to 12 members and has the following responsibilities:

- Developing standards in the six areas outlined above (with the support of sub-committees).
- Evaluating the alignment of existing measures, policies or practices with the Act.
- Setting long-term goals related to accessibility.

Nova Scotia recognizes Access Awareness Week annually to bring attention to the importance of removing barriers for people with disabilities through public awareness, community partnerships, educational events, and dialogues. Additionally, the Government of Nova Scotia launched a public awareness campaign, Access includes everyone, to demonstrate how accessibility fosters inclusion for Nova Scotians with disabilities. The campaign aims to increase awareness regarding the fact that accessibility is a human right and about the barriers that make it difficult for Nova Scotians with disabilities to participate in everyday life.



Did you know?

Disability Employment Awareness month is recognized annually in October by the city of Halifax. Initiatives scheduled throughout this month aim to bring awareness to the barriers experienced by persons with disabilities and encourages the creation of more inclusive and accessible workplaces.

Other offices in Nova Scotia related to persons with disabilities include the following:






- The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission is an independent government agency that administers the Human Rights Act. The mandate of the Commission is to help build inclusive communities and protect human rights in Nova Scotia. Under this mandate, the central responsibilities of the Commission are to resolve allegations of discrimination at the individual and systemic level, and to eliminate barriers and prevent discrimination through education, training, public engagement, and policy development.
- Nova Scotia Ombudsman is an independent Officer of the Legislature that investigates complaints involving provincial and municipal governing bodies.



Did you know?

In March 2024, legislation was tabled to establish an Office for Children and Youth, which will provide an official advocate and voice for children and youth throughout Nova Scotia.

PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

 Equality
  Caregiving & Family
  Health & Social Services
  Social Participation
 Employment & Financial Security

Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of Nova Scotia that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. More information about Nova Scotia taxes for the 2023 tax year can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

Tax Credit	Description and Eligibility
Disability amount for self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces tax payable for persons with disabilities. Individuals can claim this on their taxes if they have been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit. Adults 18 years of age or older can claim \$7,341 on their tax return.
Disability amount transferred from a dependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim this on their taxes if their dependent has been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit and does not need to claim all or part of the disability amount on their tax return.
Amount for infirm dependents age 18 and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This amount (up to \$2,798 for each dependent) can be claimed for dependents over the age of 17 years with an impairment in physical or mental functions. The dependent must have a net income under \$8,481.
Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit. Dependents must be under the age of 18 years.
Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit for their other dependents 18 years of age or older.
Caregiver amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals caring for a dependent over the age of 17 years with a net income under \$18,575 and with an impairment in physical or mental functions can claim this amount (up to \$4,898 for each dependent). This amount can also be claimed for an eligible parent or grandparent.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS



Programs for Children and Adults

The main program supporting children, youth, and adults with intellectual disabilities, long-term mental illness, and physical disabilities is the Disability Support Program. This program provides a range of community-based, residential, and vocational/day programs based on the needs and goals of each individual in the program. Care coordinators work with recipients of the program and support them in choosing programs that best suit their needs. Supports provided under this program include the following:

- Home for Special Care. Includes a continuum of residential supports for persons with disabilities with varying support needs. Options include Small Option Homes, Group Homes, Residential Care Facilities, Adult Residential Centres, and Regional Rehabilitation Centres.
- Flex Program. Provides funding to individuals to help them purchase supports that can promote their independence, self-reliance, and social inclusion.
- Independent Living Support (ILS). Provides funding for support services from a Service Provider for individuals that require support to live on their own.
- Alternative Family Support (AFS). Provides support to individuals with disabilities in an approved, private family home.
- Direct Family Support Program for Children and Enhanced Family Support for Children. Provides financial support for families to help them support their child at home and to purchase respite services.
- Adult Service Centres. Provides day programming for youth and adults with a range of disabilities in their communities. Types of day programs that may be available include, but are not limited to, the following: skills development and training, employment programs, and social and recreational activities.
- Wheelchair Recycling Program. Provides wheelchairs to children and adults with a net family income that falls within program guidelines. This program is funded by the Department of Community Services and administered by the Abilities Foundation of Nova Scotia (housed within Easter Seals Nova Scotia).
- Approved Community-based Homes. Residences that offer programs designed to meet the support needs of people with disabilities.

Education

While The Department of Education and Early Childhood provides guidelines, oversight, monitoring, and funding for special education initiatives and programming throughout the province, the bulk of service delivery and student support is coordinated by regional centres of education and within individual public schools.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Nova Scotia Remedy Report

Disability programs and services in Nova Scotia are experiencing a time of significant change resulting from a finding of systemic discrimination against persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia detailed in the 2023 [Remedy Report](#). This report stemmed from a complaint filed in 2014 against the Province of Nova Scotia for the “discriminatory failure to provide persons with disabilities the supports and services they need to live in the community.” On October 6, 2021, the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal agreed with the allegations of discrimination outlined in the complaint. In their decision, the Court of Appeal found that “there is systemic discrimination in Nova Scotia against persons with disabilities in the provision of social assistance.”

As a result of this, an independent review process was initiated by the Disability Rights Coalition and the Department of Community Services through the Disability Support Program, with the goal of developing and recommending a Remedy that will end discrimination and change the way that supports are provided in Nova Scotia. The Remedy Report contains six key directions, each containing specific recommendations, to address the discrimination highlighted in the complaint. Below, we list the key directions outlined in this report.



A new system of Individual Planning and Support Coordination to drive more person directed and local community-based supports and services.



Closing Institutions



Building a broader system of community-based supports and services – a home and life in the local community.



Province wide multidisciplinary support program with regional hubs including other clinical supports to support local options.



Individualized Funding as the basis of the transformed system with “backbone” support functions.



Strengthening whole Disability System capacity to enable transformation to a human rights approach.

At the time of publication, the Government of Nova Scotia is in the early stages of implementation of recommendations contained in the report.

Students under the age of 21 years with low incidence sensory impairments (including those who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, blind, or visually impaired) can access educational services, programs, and opportunities through the [Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority \(APSEA\)](#). Additionally, students with a diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, or a learning disability that have secured a placement in a special education private school are able to receive funding to partially cover the cost of their tuition through the [Tuition Support Program \(TSP\)](#).

Post-secondary students with disabilities may be able to access the [Nova Scotia Grant for Services and Equipment](#), a non-repayable grant for services or equipment an individual needs to support their education. Examples of services and equipment that grant funding can help cover include tutors, note-takers, voice dictation software, and technical aids. Additionally, post-secondary students that require more time to complete their program of study may be able to have their student loans forgiven through the [Nova Scotia Student Loan Forgiveness Program](#). Through this program, students with disabilities that take a reduced course load because of their disability do not have to incur larger student debt than their peers without disabilities.

Employment

The [Workplace Support Program](#) provides support for persons with disabilities to help them participate in the labor force. This program is funded by the Government of Nova Scotia and administered by TEAM Work Cooperative. This program can provide funding for workplace attendants or technical aids and devices that support individuals with disabilities in their workplace.

Housing

Individuals with disabilities are also able to access support from the Government of Nova Scotia to help them make modifications to their home. The [Disabled Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program](#) provides financial assistance to landlords and homeowners to help make their homes more accessible. Landlords are able to receive a maximum loan of \$24,000 (depending on rental type) that are completely forgivable if the accessibility modifications are made for low-income tenants. Homeowners can receive a maximum, forgivable loan of \$16,000. Additionally, wheelchair users can receive a non-repayable grant of up to \$7,000 to make the home they occupy wheelchair accessible through the [Access-A-Home Program](#).

Technology

Finally, individuals with disabilities are able to access an [HST Rebate on a computer for a person with disabilities](#). A rebate of up to \$375 is available to individuals that need to purchase or modify a computer for use by a person with physical, vision, or hearing impairments or mental challenges. The rebate is equal to the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) paid on the computer.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Parent Experiences: Program Rejection

In Nova Scotia, 17 parents and caregivers completed our online survey and two parents and caregivers participated in an in-depth, follow-up interview. During both phases of the study, we asked participants about their experiences with rejection from disability programs.

75% of survey participants reported that they experienced rejection from disability programs in Nova Scotia

Similarly to participants in Saskatchewan, the most common reason shared by participants for program application rejection was that their income level prevented them from accessing programs. Often, participants reported that income cut-offs for various programs failed to adequately take into account the true cost of expenses associated with their child's disability. Many participants shared that they struggled to afford the cost of their child's disability-related expenses but did not qualify for government support at their current income level.

"It's based on income. All those therapies costs what they cost and I guess I understand their thinking that you might, if you make more, you, you have more of a cushion before, you know, you're starving and homeless to provide for your child, but I wish it wasn't so tied to income, I wish there was a little leeway because I don't qualify for some of the things that if I made less money, I would qualify for.

-Parent Research Participant

Blended Programs

Blended programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- Continuing Care. Provides support to individuals that need care outside of a hospital setting in their homes or in their community on a short-term or long-term basis. Many different supports are provided through this program, two of which provide support specifically to individuals with disabilities and their families:
 - Caregiver Benefit, which provides financial support (\$400 to month) to individuals caring for an adult over the age of 18 years assessed as having a high level of impairment or disability that requires significant care over time and as having an income under a certain level.

- Self-Managed Care, which provides funding to individuals with physical disabilities for a care provider, who can provide support with activities of daily living.
- SchoolsPlus. A collaborative interagency approach supporting the whole child and their family with the school as the center of service delivery. The services provided at each SchoolsPlus site respect and address the unique needs of the community. All children and youth can receive support through this program, particularly those with additional needs.
- Pharmacare Benefits. Provides prescription drug coverage to certain groups of individuals, including Disability Support Program clients.
- Family Pharmacare. Provides support with the cost of prescription drugs for families who have no drug coverage or who have high prescription drug costs that become a financial burden.
- Accessible Parking Identification Permits. License plates or Identification Permits are available for vehicles regularly used for the transportation of persons with disabilities. To be eligible, applicants must have a medical practitioner certify that they have limited mobility as a result of permanent severe physical disability caused by paralysis, lower limb amputation, heart or lung disease or another debilitating impairment.



Support for Individuals and Families


















Family Resource Centres throughout the province provide community-based programs and services that support the health and well-being of children and youth and their families. Specifically, these centres offer programs in parent education and learning, family support, child and youth development, and community linkages.

Additionally, there are many non-profits, charities, and other organizations that advocate for and provide support to individuals living in Nova Scotia with disabilities and their families. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- Easter Seals Nova Scotia
- Inclusion NS
- Diverse Abilities NS
- Independent Living Nova Scotia
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support      	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assured Income (part of AccessAbility Supports) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Assistance Program
Laws and Policies  	
Disability-Specific	Blended
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PEI Human Rights Act Adult Protection Act Education Act
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans    	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AccessAbility Advisory Council National AccessAbility Week International Day of Persons with Disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OmbudsPEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Prince Edward Island PEI Human Rights Commission
Programs Provided by the Tax System     	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability amount for self Disability amount transferred from a dependent Amount for infirm dependents age 18 or older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregiver amount Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents

Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



Disability-Specific

- Early Years Autism Service
- Preschool Autism Funding
- AccessAbility Supports
- School-age Autism Funding
- Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority

Blended

- PEI Home Renovation Program
- Employment Assistance Services
- Seniors Housing Program
- Long-term Care
- Family Health Benefit Drug Program
- Designated Parking Permit

ACRONYMS

APSEA	Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority
CNIB	Canadian National Institute of the Blind
CSLF	Commission scolaire de langue française
IBI	Intensive Behavioural Intervention

INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Employment & Financial Security
 Health & Social Services
 Caregiving & Family
 Social Participation
 Equality
 Housing & Related Supports

PEI residents aged 18 years and older in financial need are able to access the Social Assistance Program, which provides financial support to pay for basic necessities, such as food, clothing, and shelter. Individuals with greater financial need may also receive funding to assist with the cost of childcare, medications (including hearing aids and eyeglasses), transportation costs, and security deposit for rent or utilities. To apply for the program, individuals are required to make an intake appointment, where a social supports coordinator will review documentation (including identity and financial documents), assess eligibility, and provide information about the program. Individuals accepted into this program are automatically enrolled in:

- The Financial Assistance Drug Program, which provides coverage for approved medication costs.
- The Provincial Dental Care Program, which provides dental coverage.

Persons with disabilities who are accessing AccessAbility Supports (described in further detail below) can receive financial assistance through the Assured Income program. Notably, individuals cannot access both the Assured Income program and Social Assistance program. This program provides financial support for individuals and families with disabilities enrolled in the AccessAbility

program that may not be able to afford their basic needs. Monthly benefit levels are calculated on a case-by-case basis and determined by the applicant's needs, expenses, and income. The Assured Income program provides funds specifically for the following:

- Essentials
- Food Allowance
- Shelter Supports
- Communication Supports
- Special Needs
- Medical Supports
- Transportation
- Community Living Expense



Did you know?

In February 2024, the Government of Prince Edward Island announced an increased investment of \$2.7 million into social program rates, resulting in modest increases to monthly rates for clients accessing Social Assistance and Assured Income programs.

LAWS AND POLICIES





⊖ Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice

At the time of publication, Prince Edward Island does not have accessibility legislation or other legislation and policies specifically related to persons with disabilities.

The following pieces of legislation include information that mentions or is relevant to persons with disabilities in Prince Edward Island:

- The PEI Human Rights Act prevents unequal or prejudicial treatment on the basis of personal characteristics, including disability.
- The Adult Protection Act protects and assists vulnerable individuals who may be in immediate and significant danger, and do not understand or are unaware of the danger they are in; do not have the physical ability to get out of a dangerous situation; or are unable to protect themselves because of physical or cognitive limitations.
- The Education Act outlines requirements for the Minister to “establish policies for the provision of special education services,” for education authorities to “provide a continuum of specialized supports and services to students that is consistent with the principles of inclusive education,” and parents to “co-operate and collaborate with school staff to support the delivery of specialized supports and services to the student.”

ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality  Public Education & Information  Social Participation
 Legal Capacity & Justice

The AccessAbility Advisory Council is comprised of a maximum of eight individuals with a range of views, knowledge, and community awareness related to disability. The purpose of this council is to provide input, consultation, and advice to the minister on issues affecting individuals with disabilities.

Specifically, the Council has the following responsibilities:






- Provide advice to the minister on disability-related issues.
- Provide input into the development of policy, programs, and services.
- Identify and discuss issues impacting the disability community.
- Champion research to inform policy and practice.
- Foster partnerships among persons with disabilities, government, and community.
- Enhance public awareness and education.

Prince Edward Island recognizes National AccessAbility Week at the end of May. This week is an opportunity to celebrate the contribution of Islanders with a disability, while also recognizing the efforts of individuals, businesses, and organizations who are actively removing barriers to ensure persons living with disabilities have an equal chance to participate in all aspects of society. The Government of Prince Edward Island also recognizes the International Day of Persons with Disabilities annually on December 3.

Other offices and initiatives in Prince Edward Island related to persons with disabilities include the following:

- OmbudsPEI is an independent office of the Legislature that responds to and helps resolve complaints about fairness in government programs and services.
- Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Prince Edward Island has the responsibilities of advocating for children and youth, connecting children, youth and their families to programs and services, working with families, professionals, communities, and government to protect and promote the rights of children and youth, and making recommendations and reports about important matters for children and youth.
- The PEI Human Rights Commission is an independent agency that administers the PEI Human Rights Act. The main roles of the Commission are to receive human rights complaints from individuals, investigate complaints as needed, resolve complaints, and advise government to make changes based on complaints as needed. The Commission reports annually to the Legislature through the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

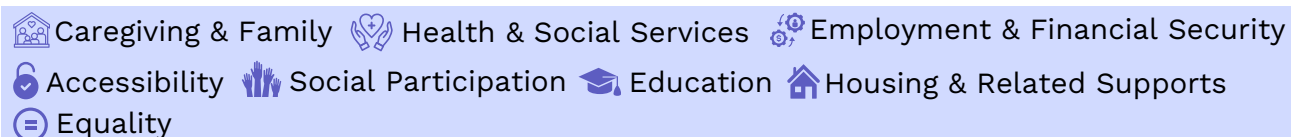
PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

 Equality
  Caregiving & Family
  Health & Social Services
  Social Participation
  Employment & Financial Security

Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of Prince Edward Island that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. More information about all Prince Edward Island taxes for the 2023 tax year can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

Tax Credit	Description and Eligibility
Disability amount for self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces tax payable for persons with disabilities. Individuals can claim this on their taxes if they have been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit. Adults 18 years of age or older can claim \$6,890 on their tax return.
Disability amount transferred from a dependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim this on their taxes if their dependent has been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit and does not need to claim all or part of the disability amount on their tax return.
Amount for infirm dependents age 18 and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This amount (up to \$2,446) can be claimed for dependents over the age of 17 years with an impairment in physical or mental functions. The dependent must have a net income under \$7,412.
Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit. Dependents must be under the age of 18 years.
Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit for their other dependents 18 years of age or older.
Caregiver amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals caring for a dependent over the age of 17 years with a net income under \$14,399 and with an impairment in physical or mental functions can claim this amount (up to \$2,446 for each dependent). This amount can also be claimed for an eligible parent or grandparent.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS



Services for Children

Preschool and school-age children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder can also access the [Early Years Autism Services](#) program. In this program, Early Years Autism Specialists provide services to young children before entering school. The primary service provided at this stage of the program is Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI), which takes place in the child's natural daily routines and environments. Families receiving IBI can also receive [Preschool Autism Funding](#), which provides financial support for hiring an Autism Assistant. Children entering school can receive Intensive Kindergarten Support for the first year of school, where an Early Years Autism Specialist can provide regular support for both the child and the school staff. As the child moves into Grade 1, they will begin to receive support from school-based Autism Consultants.

Services for Children and Adults

The central program that supports persons with disabilities in Prince Edward Island is [AccessAbility Supports](#). This program is available to residents of Prince Edward Island under the age of 65 years with a physical, intellectual, neurological, sensory, and/or mental disability diagnosis from a medical practitioner. There are five main types of support provided by this program:

- Personal Supports, which includes life skills training, technical aids and assistive devices (such as wheelchairs), in-home supports, personal care workers, and specialized care supports.
- Housing Supports, which includes Vehicle Modifications Funding, Residential Supports for paid caregivers, and Home Modifications Funding.
- Community Supports, which supports active participation in the community. This can include supporting involvement in peer connection groups, day programs, personal support workers, and support for specialized transportation.
- Caregiver Supports, which includes supervision funding, respite funding (maximum of \$430 per month), and behavioural supports.
- Financial Supports, which includes assistance for basic needs through Assured Income (see above).

AccessAbility Supports also provides the [School-Aged Autism Funding](#) program, which provides funding to school-aged children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder who require the support of an adult to access community-based activities and/or tutoring outside of school hours.

To get support from this program, individuals are required to meet with a staff person who assesses the applicant, and determines how their disability affects their daily life and how AccessAbility Supports can help them meet their needs.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Parent Perspective: Extreme Lengths to Receive Needed Support

In Prince Edward Island, we had a relatively small sample size for our study, with three individuals completing the survey and only one individual participating in a follow-up interview.

Our interview participant shared a story with our team regarding the extreme lengths they had to go to to receive the support they needed for their child. This story emphasizes how difficult it can be for individuals and families to get the support they need.

“We put [my son] in daycare full-time in September. And he went without a special needs assistant for about a month because the province was short of money to- to have a funded special needs assistant in that center. It was frustrating to be told no, we couldn't have a one-on-one for our son who was a flight risk and who has limited language skills, that he was going into a center without that support. At one point, I called the Department of Early Childhood Education. And they had the, like, the director on the phone, and I was, like, crying and she was like, “Well, there's nothing I can do.”

The daycare supervisor and I just pushed. We met with MLAs. We met with, um, someone that was running for, uh, the federal election last fall. We were just trying to get the funding pushed through because there are kids in centers, like my son, who didn't have that one-on-one that they needed. And one day, we just got a call that, you know, someone had heard about it and called the Department of Early Childhood Education and pushed it through. So that was frustrating process, to say the least.”

Education

Services for students with special education needs are provided by the Public Schools Branch and La Commission scolaire de langue française (CSLF). These entities supply inclusive education consultants, who provide consultation to principals, resource teachers, and classroom teachers to support students with disabilities.

Students under the age of 21 years with low incidence sensory impairments (including those who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, blind, or visually impaired) can also access educational services, programs, and opportunities through the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA).



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Accessing Healthcare Services in Prince Edward Island

A recent survey by [Health PEI](#) asked 1,860 individuals who care for children and youth with complex needs, including those with disabilities, about their experiences accessing health services in Prince Edward Island. We highlight their survey findings below to supplement our study data.

84%

shared that they have difficulties accessing health service over the past year.

97%

of caregivers want services to help them navigate the system.

Blended Programs

Blended programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- [PEI Home Renovation Program](#). Provides financial assistance to low-income homeowners (with a property valued under \$300,000) to renovate their homes. Renovations made to increase accessibility of a home are eligible for grant funding of \$16,000, an increase from the \$12,000 grant available for non-accessibility-related renovations.
- [Employment Assistance Services](#). The Government of Prince Edward Island, through the SkillsPEI division, has partnerships with a number of external service providers that assist unemployed individuals to prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment. One external provider, [ResourceAbilities](#), provides support specifically for persons with disabilities.
- [Seniors Housing Program](#). Provides housing for seniors (60 years or older) without housing or who have difficulties maintaining their home. Notably, individuals with disabilities can access this program at a younger age (55 years) than those without disabilities. Some units are also specifically designed to accommodate individuals with a disability.
- [Long-term Care](#). Provides specialized nursing and personal care services to individuals who can no longer live on their own with family or home care supports.
- [Family Health Benefit Drug Program](#). Helps cover the cost of approved prescription medications for families with children under the age of 19 years (or under the age of 25 years if they are a full time student).

- Designated Parking Permit. Parking permits are for those "unable to walk more than 75 metres without serious difficulty or danger to safety or health" and allow permit holders to park in specially designated parking spots. This program is administered by ResourceAbilities.







Support for Individuals and Families

There are many non-profits, charities, and other organizations that advocate for and provide support to Islanders with disabilities and their families. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- Canadian National Institute of the Blind (CNIB)
- The Learning Disability Association of Prince Edward Island (LDAPEI)
- Community Connections Inc.
- Prince Edward Island Association for Community Living (PEIACL)
- Easter Seals Prince Edward Island

YUKON

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Assistance • Yukon Supplementary Allowance
Laws and Policies 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yukon Human Rights Act • Adult Protection and Decision Making Act • Care Consent Act • Education Act
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yukon Human Rights Commission • Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office • Yukon Ombudsman • Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC) • A Better Yukon for All: Government of Yukon's Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy • Putting People First
Programs Provided by the Tax System 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregiver amount for infirm children under 18 years of age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner, and your dependent children born in 2006 or later

Programs Provided by the Tax System



Disability-Specific

- Caregiver amount for infirm children under 18 years of age

Blended

- Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner, and your dependent children born in 2006 or later
- Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents
- Children's arts amount
- Children's fitness tax credit

Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



Disability-Specific

- Children's Disability Services
- Supported Child Care Program
- Adult Disability Services
- Developmental Diagnostic and Support Clinic (DDSC)
- Student Support Services

Blended

- Home Care Program
- Home Repair Program
- Chronic Disease and Disability Benefits Program
- Labor Market Development
- Long-Term Care
- Accessible Parking Permit

ACRONYMS

ATIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
DDSC	Developmental Diagnostic and Support Clinic
HIPMA	Health Information Privacy and Management Act
IPC	Information and Privacy Commissioner

INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Employment & Financial Security
 Health & Social Services
 Social Participation
 Equality
 Housing & Related Supports

At the time of publication, Yukon does not have an income assistance program specifically for persons with disabilities.

The Social Assistance program provides financial support for adults (19 years of age or older) that need help covering the cost of their basic needs. When applying for this program, applicants must make an intake appointment with a

social worker, who will determine whether an applicant is approved to receive assistance. Individuals that are approved to receive assistance are assessed on a monthly basis to determine the amount of assistance they are able to receive. The social worker provided through this program can also support clients in finding housing and looking for employment. Recipients of this program are able to receive a shelter allowance (the amount of this allowance is based on family size and community the recipient lives in) to help cover the cost of housing, and funding for prescription drugs, in some cases.

Social Assistance clients that are assessed as unemployed because of a severe long-term disability or at the age that they can receive Old Age Security can access the [Yukon Supplementary Allowance](#), which provides an additional \$250 per month.




LAWS AND POLICIES

 Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice  Health & Social Services  Education

At the time of publication, Yukon does not have legislation specific to persons with disabilities and their families. However, other pieces of legislation related to persons with disabilities in Yukon are as follows:

- The [Yukon Human Rights Act](#) prohibits treating “an individual or group unfavourably” on the basis of physical or mental disability, among other grounds. Additionally, this Act outlines the duty for all individuals in the territory to make reasonable provisions in connection with employment, accommodations, and services for the needs of those with physical disabilities.
- The [Adult Protection and Decision Making Act](#) provides a framework for responding to abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults.
- The [Care Consent Act](#) provides information about giving consent for health care and substitute decision-making.
- The [Education Act](#) Part 3 Division 2 provides rules and regulations relating to the provision of special education in Yukon. Specifically, it states that “students who, because of intellectual, communicative, behavioural, physical, or multiple exceptionalities, are in need of special education programs are entitled to receive a program outlined in an Individualized Education Plan.” It also states that “a student who is entitled to an Individualized Education Plan shall have the program delivered in the least restrictive and most enabling environment to the extent that is considered practicable [...] having due regard for the educational needs and rights of all students.”

ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality  Public Education & Information  Legal Capacity & Justice

At the time of publication, the Government of Yukon does not have any advocacy or awareness initiatives related to persons with disabilities, specifically. However, there are other strategic plans, offices, and entities that are relevant to persons with disabilities in Yukon, as outlined below:





- The Yukon Human Rights Commission enforces the Yukon Human Rights Act and has the following functions:
 - Conduct research and share information about equality, harassment, discrimination, and human rights.
 - Provide educational resources and training on human rights issues.
 - Host conferences and events to bring awareness to human rights issues.
 - Receive human rights complaints and determine whether complaints warrant a hearing in front of the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators.
- Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office is an independent office of the Yukon Legislative Assembly that represents the rights, views and preferences of children and youth who are eligible for or currently receiving government services and programs.
- Yukon Ombudsman is an independent and impartial Officer of the Legislative Assembly who accepts complaints of unfairness in territorial government services.
- Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC) is responsible for investigating complaints about non-compliance of public bodies and health sector custodians with the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPPA) and the Health Information Privacy and Management Act (HIPMA). The IPC also provides public education about these laws.
- A Better Yukon for All: Government of Yukon's Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy outlines the future direction of social policy development in Yukon, and the Government of Yukon's commitment to improve outcomes for those most vulnerable, including those with disabilities.
- Putting People First report was the result of a comprehensive review of health and social services in Yukon. This report contains several recommendations related to improving services for people with disabilities.



Did you know?

The Whitehorse City Council has a Disability Advisory Committee, an appointed volunteer committee that guides City Council's approach and commitment to people with disability in the community.








PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

 Equality
  Caregiving & Family
  Health & Social Services
  Social Participation

Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of Yukon that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. More information about all Yukon taxes for the 2023 tax year can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

Tax Credit	Description and Eligibility
Caregiver amount for infirm children under 18 years of age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents and caregivers of children under the age of 18 years that has an impairment in physical or mental functions that is dependent on others and needs more help with personal needs and care than other children of the same age can claim this amount.
Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit. Dependents must be under the age of 18 years.
Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit for their other dependents 18 years of age or older.
Children's arts amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents of children under the age of 16 years of age are able to claim registration or membership fees (up to \$500) for a prescribed program of artistic, cultural, recreational, or developmental activity. Parents of children with Disability Tax Credit eligibility are able to claim this amount until they are 17 years of age and are able to claim an additional amount of \$500.
Children's fitness tax credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents of children under 16 years of age can claim fees for a prescribed program of physical activity (up to \$1,000). Parents of children with Disability Tax Credit eligibility are able to claim this amount until they are 17 years of age and are able to claim an additional amount of \$500.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

 Caregiving & Family  Health & Social Services  Employment & Financial Security
 Accessibility  Social Participation  Education  Housing & Related Supports

Services for Children

Children with disabilities (under the age of 19 years) and their families can receive funding for support from [Children's Disability Services](#). To access this program, families need a referral from a professional that works with their child, such as a doctor or a teacher. Referred families will meet with a social worker to discuss their needs and share information about services and supports that are available through this program. Applicants will need to share an assessment or report that identifies how their child's disability limits their ability to function in daily life. Specific services and supports offered through this program include the following:

- An inclusion worker
- Respite care
- A behavioural consultant and applied behaviour analysis therapy
- Occupational therapy and physical therapy
- Speech-language pathology therapy
- Hearing screening and supports

Additionally, children with disabilities can receive support indirectly through the [Supported Child Care Program](#), which provides funding to licensed early learning and child care programs to provide an inclusive environment that adequately supports children with diverse developmental needs. Funding through this program can be used for staff training, transportation, reduced staff ratios, additional child care educators, assistance with renovations, specialized equipment, and educational materials.

Services for Adults

Adults (19 years of age or older) with intellectual or developmental disabilities can receive support through [Adult Disability Services](#), which offers the following services and supports:

- Case management that focuses on promoting inclusion in the community
- Respite funding
- Support in the community, such as day programs
- Supported living services

Education

Yukon Education provides the framework, policies, guidelines, and funding for special education programs and services. They also provide [Student Support Services consultants](#), who support schools and families in the delivery of services to students with special education needs. Special education services



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Parent Perspective: Experience with Children's Disability Services

We only spoke to one parent in Yukon for our study. This parent shared their experience accessing the Children's Disability Services program, which was an overall positive experience. We provide their story below to highlight an example of a process that worked well.

“The best application process has been the Children with Disability. Um, it worked well because you can refer yourself and can also be referred by somebody. They don't have application forms that you have to fill out on your own and mail it off and just wait and wait and wait and wait. The way it works for them is that they invite you in and you're working with a person through their application process and it makes it easier because if you have a question about the application, it's answered immediately because there's a person right in front of you working through it with you. They're not requiring reports and referrals from pediatricians or anything. When we went to them, my friend hadn't had the assessment yet for autism and they, they didn't restrict her from any of their services. If there is, with their program if there is a query of autism, you automatically are approved to use all of the services for autistic children. And then, um, it's, like later down the line you do the assessment and it turns out the child doesn't have autism, the services will stop and there will be no punishment. So it's great because you're automatically approved and they get the services started right away. Yeah, and their staff is just really great. They have a really, really supportive staff in that building.”

are delivered to students at the school-level by school-based teams, which include teachers, principals, learning assistant or specialist teachers, school counselors, parents or guardians, students, consultants from Student Support Services, and representatives from other community services.

Blended Programs

Blended programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- Home Care Program. This program provides rehabilitation services, respite care, care coordination, nursing, and home support services to individuals with an assessed need for home care.

- Home Repair Program. This program provides funding to low- to moderate-income homeowners to repair or address housing needs in their principal residence. Loans and grants are available to support emergency repairs, improve accessibility, improve air quality due to wildfire smoke, and support the cost of home repairs and upgrades.
- Chronic Disease and Disability Benefits Program. This program can help to cover the cost of prescription drugs, surgical supplies, medical equipment (including wheelchairs), food supplements, and prostheses for individuals with a chronic disease or disability. This program also provides support for the cost of hearing aids for children under the age of 16 years.
- Labour Market Development. This program connects individuals to community-based agencies that can provide employment and training services for people who experience barriers to employment.
- Long-Term Care. Yukon has four long-term care homes that provide support to individuals with an assessed need for long-term care.
- Accessible Parking Permit. The City of Whitehorse supplies Accessible Parking Permits to individuals who cannot walk more than 50 metres without assistance or due to a medical or health condition. Applications must be completed by a regulated health professional.








Support for Individuals and Families

There are many non-profits, charities, and other organizations that advocate for and provide support to individuals in Yukon with disabilities and their families. These organizations often receive most of their funding from the Government of Yukon. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- Autism Yukon
- Child Development Centre
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon
- Learning Disabilities Association Yukon Centre for Learning
- Inclusion Yukon
- Opportunities Yukon

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income Assistance Program
Laws and Policies 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Rights Act Education Act
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NWT Disabilities Council Disability Action Plan 2018/19-2021/22 Final Report NWT Disability Awareness Week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Office of the Northwest Territories Ombud The NWT Human Rights Commission
Programs Provided by the Tax System 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability amount for self Disability amount transferred from a dependent Amount for infirm dependents age 18 or older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregiver amount Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner, and your dependent children born in 2006 or later Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents
Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (SCIP) program Rehabilitation Services Supported Living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended Health Benefits for Specified Disease Conditions Program Home and Community Care

Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



Disability-Specific

- Mobility Modifications Program
- Support Assistants
- Student Financial Assistance – Grants for Students with Disabilities

Blended

- Seniors and Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief
- Workforce Development Agreement
- Long Term Care
- Accessible Parking Permit

ACRONYMS

SCIP Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation




INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

 Employment & Financial Security  Equality  Social Participation

The Income Assistance Program provides financial assistance to residents of the Northwest Territories over the age of 19 years to help them with the cost of their basic needs. The amount received depends on the applicant's level of financial need, community of residence, type of housing, and family size. This program includes an Earned Income Exemption, allowing recipients to keep additional income earned through working over their monthly Income Assistance payment.

Notably, individuals with disabilities receiving support through this program can also access an additional disability allowance. To access this allowance, applicants will need to have a medical practitioner fill out a Disability Assessment form.

LAWS AND POLICIES





 Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice  Education

At the time of publication, Northwest Territories does not have accessibility legislation or other legislation specifically related to persons with disabilities. However, there are two pieces of legislation that contain relevant information that is important for persons with disabilities.

The Northwest Territories [Human Rights Act](#) protects the equality of human rights for everyone in Northwest Territories. It prevents discrimination in the following areas: employment and job searching, membership in professional organizations, access to public services and facilities, tenancy/leasing, and published materials. The Act also outlines many grounds, or characteristics, of individuals that are protected – disability is one such ground that is protected by the Act.

Additionally, the [Education Act](#) outlines the requirement that every student has access to inclusive education in a regular instructional setting in the community in which they live, and that an education body provide students with the support services necessary to support their learning. It also outlines that the Minister is able to provide direction to education bodies on inclusive schooling. To this end, the Government of Northwest Territories published a [Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling](#) in 2017, which provides direction to education bodies to ensure that schools across the territory are implementing inclusive schooling.

ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality  Public Education & Information  Social Participation
 Legal Capacity & Justice

While the Government of Northwest Territories does not have an advocacy or awareness organization or body for persons with disabilities within government, it does provide funding to the [NWT Disabilities Council](#), a non-governmental organization that provides services and supports for and advocates on behalf of persons with disabilities across Northwest Territories. Examples of programs provided by this organization include early childhood intervention, learning support, community respite, and support with service coordination, among others.

In October 2023, the Government of Northwest Territories released their [Disability Action Plan 2018/19-2021/22 Final Report](#), which outlines their progress on implementing the [Government of the Northwest Territories Disability Action Plan 2018/19-2021/2022](#). This action plan contained 50 activities in five priority areas:

- Increase income security and reduce poverty.
- Build awareness and knowledge through education and training.
- Improve transition planning and options.
- Encourage universal design and living options.
- Improve access and quality of caregiver supports.






The Government of Northwest Territories indicated in their report that of the 50 activities outlined in the Action Plan, 13 were completed, 32 are underway, four are delayed and one is not proceeding. At the time of publication, additional information regarding progress on the Action Plan or the development of a new action plan to replace the expired plan is not available.

With respect to awareness building initiatives, the Government of Northwest Territories recognizes NWT Disability Awareness Week, which is held in late May or early June to coincide with the National AccessAbility Week. This week celebrates the contributions of Canadians with disabilities, promotes awareness, and recognizes and encourages efforts to advance a more accessible and inclusive Canada.

Other offices and organizations in the Northwest Territories that are relevant to persons with disabilities and their families include the following:

- The Office of the Northwest Territories Ombud has a mandate to look into and attempt to resolve concerns about administrative unfairness in territorial public authorities. The mandate also includes public education about the principles of administrative fairness and the Ombud’s role.
- The NWT Human Rights Commission accepts complaints of discrimination and harassment based on the areas and grounds included in the Human Rights Act.

PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

 Equality
  Caregiving & Family
  Health & Social Services
  Social Participation
  Employment & Financial Security

Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of Northwest Territories that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. More information about all Northwest Territories taxes for the 2023 tax year can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

Tax Credit	Description and Eligibility
Disability amount for self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces tax payable for persons with disabilities. • Individuals can claim this on their taxes if they have been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit. • Adults 18 years of age or older can claim \$13,456 on their tax return.

Disability amount transferred from a dependent

- Individuals can claim this on their taxes if their dependent has been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit and does not need to claim all or part of the disability amount on their tax return.

Caregiver amount

- Individuals caring for a dependent over the age of 17 years with a net income under \$24,283 and with an impairment in physical or mental functions can claim this amount (up to \$5,500 for each dependent).
- This amount can also be claimed for an eligible parent or grandparent.

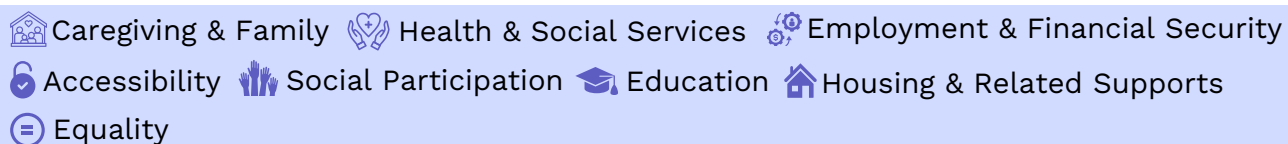
Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later

- Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit.
- Dependents must be under the age of 18 years.

Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents

- Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit for their other dependents 18 years of age or older.
- The maximum amount individuals can claim is \$5,000 for each dependent.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS



At the time of publication, there were few programs that specifically provide support for persons with disabilities and their families, although many blended programs exist and are outlined below. It is important to note that many organizations outside government, such as NWT Disabilities Council (as discussed above) and Inclusion NWT, provide services and supports for persons with disabilities and their families. Services and supports provided by these organizations may receive government funding to support the administration of their programs. In this section of the report, we highlight six programs and services funded and administered by the Government of Northwest Territories designed specifically for persons with disabilities and their families.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Parent Perspective: Differences in Service Delivery across Northwest Territories

In Northwest Territories, two parents completed our online survey and one parent completed a follow-up interview. Our interview participant provided interesting perspectives regarding challenges with access to services that are specific to Northwest Territories. Below, our participant describes how access to respite services varies across the territory and how access can depend on what entity is delivering respite services.

“Well first of all, there is a funding shortage. [Respite] just isn't guaranteed to anyone. But it's delivered differently in different parts of the territory, so two different agencies carry the administration of respite and the operation. There's a model that is for Yellowknife and then there's another model for the rest of the territory. Certain communities receive no respite so they don't have access at all, and some communities have a higher degree of access. It's also administered differently - in some communities where there's no respite, they tack it onto Home Care, which make it become a very medical type of model. [Access to respite] is driven by a medical model. Whereas the focus needs to be more broad when an NGO or subcontractor is delivering [respite], allowing social or other needs to factor into consideration for services.”

Programs for Children

Children with disabilities can receive support indirectly through the Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (SCIP) program, which provides funding to eligible organizations to create early childhood programs and provide support to children with developmental needs to ensure they are able to fully participate in early learning. Three funding streams are available through this program: additional staffing funding, program consultation funding, and community program funding.

Programs for Children and Adults

Rehabilitation Services are health care services that support children and adults with disabilities in meeting their goals and promoting their functional independence. Individuals that require support can self-refer to all of the services provided through this program. Examples of services provided include audiology services, physiotherapy, speech language pathology, occupational therapy, and the persistent pain program. To access these services, individuals can submit their completed self-referral form via email or in-person at their local hospital or health centre.

Housing and Home Supports

Individuals with a physical and/or mental health challenge that do not need nursing care can receive 24-hour support and supervision through the Supported Living program. The goal of this program is to provide services in a home-like setting while ensuring the recipient is able to maintain as much independence as possible.

The Mobility Modifications Program provides funding to homeowners to help improve the accessibility of homes for people with disabilities and support modifications that will promote independent living. Forgivable loans of up to \$50,000 are available through this program and can cover costs related to materials, labour, permits, inspections, certificates, drawings, specifications, legal fees, and any applicable taxes.



Did you know?

In 2010, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) initiated a pilot project establishing Single Window Service Centres. Each office is staffed with a Government Service Officer, who provides assistance to residents in small communities to help them access Government of Northwest Territories and Government of Canada programs and services.

Education

The Government of Northwest Territories provides funding for Support Assistants, who work in classrooms to help implement aspects of instructional and behavioural plans, assist with personal needs of students, provide classroom management and student supervision, and provide other support as needed. Support Assistants may work with specific students to support their diverse needs, while also being a resource for the entire class.

Post-secondary students with disabilities are able to access funding through Grants for Students with Disabilities to assist with education-related expenses. Specifically, students are able to receive up to \$4,000 per academic year for assistance with tuition, books, travel, and accommodation, and up to \$20,000 per academic year to assist with the cost of tutors, interpreters, and special equipment.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Parent Perspective: Discrimination in Service Access and Delivery

As discussed in the previous Measuring Up, our interview participant provided interesting perspectives regarding challenges with access to services that are specific to the Northwest Territories. Below, our participant describes how systemic discrimination against Indigenous Peoples impacts their ability to access services.

“There’s an inherent discrimination within the system from the application to access to services. Even though it's supposed to be progressed it's still very much a colonial system. Indigenous peoples are overwhelmingly, disproportionately represented in people that are taken from their homes and people that don't receive services, even though they have a higher level of especially mental health and trauma. Service providers are predominantly non-Indigenous people, so there there's a lot of embedded systemic discrimination. For example, we see kind of on a regular basis that when a child presents with a developmental disability, if they're not Indigenous, there's a full and comprehensive kind of investigation into that if that child is connected with pediatric services and of what that child has, and [they ensure that the child gets] a proper diagnosis. When an Indigenous child presents in the same way, the immediate analysis or kind of bridge diagnosis is FASD. We've had parents come in like literally come in crying and saying that I'm pretty sure my son has autism but they keep saying it's FASD. It prevents people all through the community from coming forward and getting support because they have that fear that they're going to get judged within the system and then as well, as they start to get older, that they'll be removed from their homes or be put into a situation that they don't want to be put into.”

Blended Programs

Blended programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- Extended Health Benefits for Specified Disease Conditions Program. This program provides individuals with certain conditions with benefits not covered by hospital and medical care insurance. Coverage for prescription drugs, medical supplies, equipment, and expenses related to medical travel may be provided by this program.

- Medical Travel. This program provides a medical travel benefit to eligible individuals who must travel in order to access necessary and appropriate insured health services that are not provided within their community.
- Home and Community Care. This program provides individuals, including those with disabilities, with nursing care and support for personal care and daily living activities when they are no longer able to perform these activities on their own. These services help people to stay in their own homes rather than go to a hospital or long-term care facility.
- Seniors and Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief. This program reduces property tax for seniors or persons with disabilities. Taxes are reduced based on type of property owned or occupied. Individuals are required to reapply for this program every year.
- Workforce Development Agreement. This is a funding agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of Northwest Territories that provides employment and training supports to eligible residents, including persons with disabilities.
- Long Term Care. Long Term Care is a home-like facility that provides care and services for people who no longer are able to live independently or who require onsite nursing care, 24-hour supervision, or personal support.
- Accessible Parking Permit. Provides individuals with disabilities and other conditions with a parking pass to park in designated parking stalls. The application must be filled out with a doctor or nurse practitioner. This program is administered by the NWT Disabilities Council.



Support for Individuals and Families

There are many non-profits, charities, and other organizations that advocate for and provide support to individuals living in the Northwest Territories with disabilities and their families. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- Hay River Committee for Persons with Disabilities
- Inclusion NWT
- NWT Association of Communities
- NWT Disabilities Council

NUNAVUT

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income Assistance
Laws and Policies 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Act Nunavut Human Rights Act
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society National Disability Employment Awareness Month International Day of Persons with Disabilities International FASD Awareness Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal Early Learning and Child Care Strategic Action Plan for Inclusion and Equity Representative for Children and Youth Public Trustee and Guardian
Programs Provided by the Tax System 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability amount for self Disability amount transferred from a dependent Amount for infirm dependents age 18 or older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregiver amount Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner, and your dependent children born in 2006 or later Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents

Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



Disability-Specific

- Community-Based Services – Includes:
 - Support Groups and Workshops
 - Job Coaching and Employment Services
 - Nunavut Solutions Grant
 - Assistive Devices and Technology

Blended

- Community Health Centres
- Healthy Children Initiative
- Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities Property Tax Relief
- Home and Community Care
- Home Renovation Program
- Targeted Labour Market Program (TLMP)
- Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students (FANS)

ACRONYMS

FANS	Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
NDMS	Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society
TLMP	Targeted Labour Market Program

INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS




Employment & Financial Security
 Caregiving & Family
 Social Participation
 Equality
 Education
 Housing & Related Supports

At the time of publication, Nunavut does not have an income assistance program specifically for persons with disabilities.

The Income Assistance program provides financial assistance to individuals 18 years of age and older that cannot meet their basic needs for various reasons, including disability, illness, and periods of unemployment. This is a program of last resort – applicants are expected to apply to all other programs that they may be entitled to (such as employment insurance, various pension programs, workers’ compensation, etc.) prior to applying for Income Assistance. To receive Income Assistance, applicants will be required to meet with an Income Assistance worker to have a monthly financial assessment and develop a Productive Choice Agreement to support them in becoming more self-sufficient. This Agreement can include school upgrading, training, and seeking employment or community work, among others. Notably, individuals with a disability are exempt from needing to create a Productive Choice Agreement. The amount received each month is determined based on the monthly financial assessment.

Basic Benefits that provide financial assistance for rent, utilities, accommodation, and fuel, as well as Extended Benefits that provide financial assistance for incidentals, education and training, household furnishings, damage deposits, and emergency assistance, are both available through this program. Income Assistance clients pursuing education or training opportunities can also access a [Daycare Subsidy](#), which provides financial assistance towards the cost of child care for children under the age of 12 years.

LAWS AND POLICIES







 Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice  Education

At the time of publication, Nunavut does not have any legislation or policies specific to individuals with disabilities and their families.

However, the following pieces of legislation include information that mentions or is relevant to persons with disabilities in Nunavut:

- [Education Act](#), which states that “if the school team decides, with the agreement of the Minister, that specialized services or assessments are required in order to ensure that a student is provided with the adjustments or supports to which they are entitled, the Minister shall ensure that the services or assessments are provided.”
- [Nunavut Human Rights Act](#) protects the equality rights of Nunavummiut and safeguards an equal opportunity to enjoy a full and productive life free from discrimination and harassment. The Act outlines several prohibited grounds of discrimination, including mental or physical disability.

ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality  Public Education & Information  Accessibility  Social Participation
 Caregiving & Family  Legal Capacity & Justice

At the time of publication, the Government of Nunavut does not have any advocacy bodies representing the interests and rights of persons with disabilities and their families. However, the independent, territory-wide, non-profit [Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society \(NDMS\)](#) steps in to fill this gap. NDMS represents the needs of persons with disabilities in Nunavut and collaborates with government departments to address these needs.

NDMS provides comprehensive advocacy services to support individuals with disabilities. This includes self-advocacy, where individuals are empowered to communicate their needs and rights effectively, and systems advocacy, which aims to change policies and systems that negatively impact persons with disabilities. NDMS also offers individual advocacy, assisting people in standing

up for their rights through formal and informal initiatives. NDMS promotes awareness, opportunities, and choices, ensuring that individuals can participate in society without barriers.






With respect to awareness building, the Government of Nunavut recognizes the following:

- National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, which aims to reduce barriers and to help individuals learn more about inclusive employment and workplace accommodations.
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3.
- International FASD Awareness Day on September 9, which is devoted to improving Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) prevention, diagnosis, and support.

Other initiatives and offices in Nunavut that relate to persons with disabilities and their families include the following:

- The Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal accepts complaints from individuals that feel they have been discriminated against on the basis of the Human Rights Act.
- The Early Learning and Child Care Strategic Action Plan for Inclusion and Equity provides guidance and direction on inclusion and equity to all early learning and child care stakeholders in Nunavut from 2023-2026. Its scope includes enhancing inclusion and equity for children with disabilities, children needing enhanced or individual supports, Indigenous – in particular Inuit – children, Black and other racialized children, children in foster care, and official language minority children.
- Representative for Children and Youth has a mandate to make sure legislation, policies, procedures, programs, and services put in place by Government of Nunavut departments and designated authorities provide ethical, equitable, and consistent outcomes that meet the needs and support the rights of young Nunavummiut and their families.
- Public Trustee and Guardian has a mandate to administer trusts on behalf of minors and estates and trusts of Nunavummiut who die without a will or are in need of protection because of disability.

PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

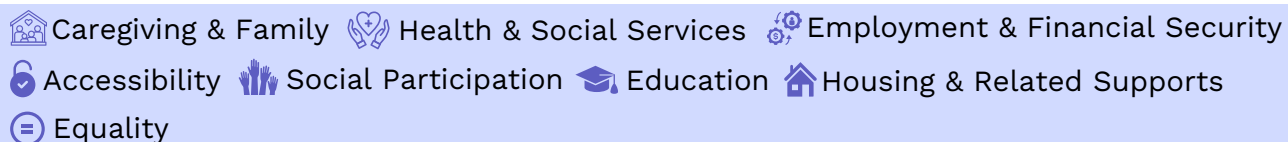
 Equality  Caregiving & Family  Health & Social Services  Social Participation
 Employment & Financial Security

Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of Nunavut that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families.

More information about all Nunavut taxes for the 2023 tax year can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

Tax Credit	Description and Eligibility
Disability amount for self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces tax payable for persons with disabilities. • Individuals can claim this on their taxes if they have been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit. • Adults 18 years of age or older can claim \$15,256 on their tax return.
Disability amount transferred from a dependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can claim this on their taxes if their dependent has been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit and does not need to claim all or part of the disability amount on their tax return.
Amount for infirm dependents age 18 and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This amount (up to \$5,499 for each dependent) can be claimed for dependents over the age of 17 years with an impairment in physical or mental functions. • The dependent must have a net income under \$13,303. • A signed statement from a medical practitioner may be required to access this program. Individuals with federal Disability Tax Credit eligibility do not need to provide a statement.
Caregiver amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals caring for a dependent over the age of 17 years with a net income under \$24,283 and with an impairment in physical or mental functions can claim this amount (up to \$5,500 for each dependent). • This amount can also be claimed for an eligible parent or grandparent.
Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit. • Dependents must be under the age of 18 years.
Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit for their other dependents 18 years of age or older.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS



Disability-Specific Programs

At the time of publication, there were limited services provided by the Government of Nunavut that support individuals with disabilities, specifically. Many programs and services for persons with disabilities in Nunavut are provided by various organizations in the community, with the NDMS having a central role in program delivery. Some programs are also funded in part by the Government of Nunavut but are delivered by other organizations. We highlight some of these programs below:

- **Support Groups and Workshops:** Regular support groups and workshops are facilitated by NDMS to provide community members with information and peer support. These sessions cover a range of topics, including resume building, inclusive hiring practices, and the use of accessibility devices and technology.
- **Job Coaching and Employment Services:** NDMS offers job coaching services and employment-related services to help individuals with disabilities integrate into the workforce. This includes personalized coaching to develop skills and abilities, as well as support for employers to create more inclusive workplaces. NDMS also provides various training programs aimed at enhancing employability and self-sufficiency.
- **Nunavut Solutions Grant:** In collaboration with the Rick Hanson Foundation and the Government of Nunavut, NDMS administers the Nunavut Solutions Grant. This grant provides financial assistance for individuals with mobility-related disabilities to access necessary equipment and services, such as wheelchairs, home renovations for accessibility, and respite care services.
- **Assistive Devices and Technology:** NDMS supports the provision of assistive devices and technology to help individuals with disabilities lead more independent lives. This includes devices that aid mobility, communication, and daily living activities.

Blended Programs

Blended programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- **Community Health Centres.** Located across Nunavut, these centres provide medical, public health, and social services to individuals, including those with disabilities, in various communities. Services that are offered can include physician consultations, physical therapy and rehabilitations services, and counselling, among others.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Distinct Challenges Faced by Persons with Disabilities in Nunavut

After reviewing our report for accuracy, the Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society provided us with some information regarding the unique challenges faced by persons with disabilities in Nunavut compared to other provinces and territories in Canada. These challenges underscore the need for responsive policies and programs that take into account the unique circumstances faced by persons with disabilities in Nunavut. Increased support and targeted interventions are essential to improve the quality of life and ensure equal opportunity for Nunavummiut with disabilities.

We summarize specific challenges highlighted by the Society below and thank them for their generous contribution to our report.



Geographic and Environmental Challenges

Nunavut's vast and remote geography makes transportation difficult and expensive. Many communities are only accessible by air or water, resulting in challenges in accessing necessary services and support. Limited infrastructure, including a lack of public transit and accessible buildings, further complicates mobility for people with disabilities.



Limited Access to Health and Support Services

There is a significant shortage of healthcare professionals, particularly those who specialize in disability-related services. Residents often have to travel long distances to receive specialized care, which can be physically and financially burdensome. Access to mental health services is particularly limited. Additionally, obtaining assistive devices and technology can be challenging due to supply chain issues and the high costs associated with shipping items to remote areas.



Limited Ability for Labour Force Participation

The labour market in Nunavut is small and there are fewer employment opportunities, particularly for persons with disabilities. This contributes to higher rates of unemployment and underemployment among people with disabilities. Many workplaces are also not equipped to accommodate employees with disabilities, further limiting their employment options.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Distinct Challenges Faced by Persons with Disabilities in Nunavut (Continued)



Barriers to Education

Educational institutions often lack the resources and support services needed to meet the needs of students with disabilities. This includes a shortage of special educators and accessible learning materials. While remote learning can be a solution, it is often hampered by unreliable internet connectivity and a lack of appropriate technology in many communities.



Cultural Factors

There may be cultural barriers and a lack of understanding or awareness of disabilities within some communities. This can lead to stigma and inadequate support for people with disabilities. Language differences can also pose challenges, as many Nunavummiut speak Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun as their first language, and resources for people with disabilities are often available primarily in English or French.



Inadequate Housing and Overcrowding

Many housing units in Nunavut are not designed with accessibility in mind, making it difficult for people with disabilities to live independently. The harsh climate also exacerbates the need for adequate housing. Overcrowded housing conditions are common, which can further complicate housing conditions for people with disabilities who require additional space and accessibility features.

Our only study participant in Nunavut confirms many of the above challenges in the following quote from their survey responses:

“It takes a long time to be able to access services for my child. The wait lists are very long. There are limited supportive programs offered in Nunavut. There is limited information shared regarding programs that we as parents can access or that my son can access and/or is entitled to.”

- Healthy Children Initiative. Provides funding to communities to help them develop or grow programs for children up to age six years, with an emphasis on early intervention programs and supportive services. There are two main funding streams through this program: Community Initiatives, which fund early childhood programs such as family resource centres, parenting workshops, and parent and child groups, and Supportive Child Services, which provide funding on an individual basis for children requiring intensive support or specific assistance.
- Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities Property Tax Relief. Seniors and persons with disabilities that own their home and occupy it at least 184 days per year can receive property tax relief equivalent to their current-year levy. Applicants must re-apply every year to continue to access this program.
- Home and Community Care. Provides health care and support services, based on an assessment, in the comfort of an individual's home when they need extra attention due to illness, poor health, or disability.
- Home Renovation Program. Assists Nunavummiut who own and occupy their home to undertake major repairs and/or renovations, including modifications that improve accessibility for occupants with disabilities.
- Targeted Labour Market Program (TLMP). Provides funding up to one year in duration to eligible employers, institutions, or training providers to enable Nunavut-based education and/or training for occupations or skills that either are or will be in demand in the near future. Priority is provided to Nunavut-based organizations that target marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities.
- Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students (FANS). Provides financial assistance to full-time students enrolled in a Nunavut Arctic College or another designated post-secondary institution to provide support for the costs associated with their education. Through this program, students with disabilities can access the Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities, which provides up to \$8,000 for equipment and services directly related to training or up to \$1,000 for each full credit distance or correspondence course. A certified medical professional needs to provide a medical or learning ability assessment for individuals to be able to access this grant.



Support for Individuals and Families

There are a couple of other organizations that advocate for and provide support to individuals in Nunavut with disabilities and their families. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society (NDMS)
- March of Dimes - Nunavut

CONCLUSION

In this report, we provide an overview of the disability policy tools used by provincial and territorial governments across Canada. We also link these policy tools to the articles in the UN CRPD to demonstrate how disability policy can meet commitments under the various articles. We want to emphasize that the extent to which policy meets these articles is not provided in this report. In some cases, as evidenced by the Measuring Up sections throughout this report, disability policy implemented by provinces and territories may be falling short of fully meeting UN CRPD commitments and, in turn, providing the support that individuals with disabilities and their families require.

As shown in this report, there are many similarities and differences in the way provinces and territories choose to support persons with disabilities and their families. One of the most evident differences is the extent to which governments provide services directly (administered by various ministries) or through contracts with external organizations, such as non-profits and non-governmental organizations. A particularly unique arrangement is the use of a crown corporation in British Columbia to deliver services to adults with developmental disabilities. At the time of publication, this approach is unique in the Canadian context. The structure of disability programs also differs across Canada, with some governments choosing to deliver one main program that provides many different types of supports to people of a variety of ages, while others choose to split up programs by age (for example, offer separate programs for children and adults) or by type of support provided (for example, many governments provide employment programs separately from other types of disability programs).

Another major difference between provinces and territories is whether they have an income support program specifically for persons with disabilities. At the time of publication, none of the territories have an income support program specific to persons with disabilities. Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province without either an income support program for persons with disabilities or financial benefit/income top-up for persons with disabilities. However, as discussed in the report, the Newfoundland and Labrador Disability Benefit has been announced and will be launched in 2025. Unique aspects of this benefit, relative to other programs already in place across Canada, are that the benefit has zero clawbacks and will include a Registered Disability Savings Plan contribution. Observing the rollout of this benefit will be an interesting case study for other disability income support programs across Canada.

With respect to legislation, the majority of provinces have enacted accessibility legislation, with the notable exceptions being Alberta, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec. At the time of publication, none of the territories had accessibility legislation. While having accessibility legislation is an important step to

achieving equality for persons with disabilities, we highlight throughout this report examples of how legislation is not always fully implemented and enforced, and how targets and timelines included in legislation are not always met as intended.

Finally, there are a few differences in the tax system across provinces and territories that warrant mention. In general, the tax credits offered are largely consistent between provinces and territories. Quebec is the notable exception to this, due to the separation of its tax system from the Canada Revenue Agency. As a result, the number of tax credits in Quebec related to persons with disabilities is much larger than other provinces and territories. Further, Manitoba and Quebec are the only two provinces and territories that provide refundable tax credits for persons with disabilities and their supporting family members. This is important to highlight, as non-refundable tax credits are much more common in Canada, particularly for credits related to persons with disabilities. Disability scholars and advocates have heavily criticized non-refundable credits for persons with disabilities, as individuals with a lower income level have little incentive to apply for and access these credits.

Moving forward, we recommend a deeper investigation into the impact of differences in disability policy design and implementation across Canada on the level of support persons with disabilities and their families receive. Understanding what systems and structures work well (and do not work well) and applying lessons learned across provinces and territories is imperative to ensuring that persons with disabilities and their families are supported and have the opportunity to thrive.



Disability Policy Research Program

School of Public Policy, University of Calgary
906 8th Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 1H9
www.dipo.ca

The Disability Policy Research program is a multi-disciplinary group of researchers with the mission to provide and use evidence based information to shape public policy and improve the lives of persons with disabilities.



Discovery 2 – Room 204, Simon Fraser University
8900 Nelson Way, Burnaby BC, V5A 4W9
www.kidsbrainhealth.ca

Kids Brain Health Network is a national network that develops and harnesses scientific advances in technologies, interventions and supports with the goal of helping children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families live the best lives. The science of children's brain health is making advancements and KBHN is bridging the gaps between these scientific advances and implementing solutions that directly address the needs of children and families. In delivering on its mission, KBHN is advancing federal responsibilities and priorities aimed at building a healthier future for all kids.