

## KBHN-DiPo ADVANCE Network Fellows: Call for Applicants

The Disability Policy Research Program (DiPo) and Kids Brain Health Network (KBHN) invite you to apply to the **2025-2026 ADVANCE Network Fellowship** competition.

### Background

This fellowship is an opportunity to support the work of the Alliance for Disability Voices, Advocacy, and National Community Empowerment (ADVANCE) Network, a newly formed network comprised of researchers, community partners, and persons with lived and living experience (PWLLE) with a shared goal to improve access to provincial and territorial disability programs for Canadian neurodiverse youth and their families through participatory action research and community-led knowledge mobilization. The ADVANCE Network is supported by the lead partner KBHN and co-lead by Dr. Jennifer Zwicker, Dr. Lucy Lach, Dr. Keiko Shikako and Sharon McCarry.

The 2025-2026 ADVANCE Fellowship provides a unique opportunity for **trainees (graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, or research associates)** to contribute to the early stages of the ADVANCE Network while also developing a firm understanding of disability policy and program design across Canadian provinces and territories.

### The Fellowship

Four ADVANCE Network Fellows will support the work of the ADVANCE Network by systematically compiling information on existing disability-related policy and programs, building on a [report](#) previously published by our team. Each fellow will focus on one region in Canada (comprised of three to four provinces and territories - see below). This work will lay the foundation for future ADVANCE Network research projects, set to start in mid-2026. The four regions for the fellowship are as follows:

1. Western: BC, Yukon, Northwest Territories
2. Prairies: Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba
3. Central: Ontario, Quebec, Nunavut
4. Atlantic: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador

Under the mentorship of the ADVANCE Network co-directors and research team (comprised of leading researchers in disability policy across Canada), fellows will work to develop the 2026 version of this report, which will include updates to the 2025 version of the report, and more comprehensive information about specific design aspects (such as eligibility criteria and income cut-offs, among others) of disability programs in different provinces and territories. Fellows will also work collaboratively to compare findings across provinces and territories and co-develop a section of the report comparing policy across Canada. Fellows will also have the opportunity to work with ADVANCE community partners and PWLLE to develop policy briefs with recommendations for changes to disability policy and programs across Canada based on their findings.



Reports and briefs developed by fellows will be published by KBHN. Fellows will also have the opportunity to present their findings internally during ADVANCE Network meetings and an external conference.

## Fellowship Parameters

- **Stipend Amount:** \$15,000 per fellow
- **Allocation:** Four fellowship positions are available
- **Location:** Remote
- **Term:** June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025-May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026
- **Hours:** 6-8 hours per week
- **Application Deadline:** May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025
- **Notification Date:** May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Please note that funding can be used to supplement existing graduate funding, awards, and stipends.

## Who Should Apply?

Applicants are eligible to apply if they:

- Are a graduate student, postdoctoral fellow, or research associate interested in social policy and disability program and service design.
- Reside in any Canadian province or territory.
- Possess strong written and verbal communication skills and ability to work in a dynamic team environment with different types of stakeholders.
- Demonstrate strong academic excellence.
- Are able to commit 6-8 hours per week over the one-year term.
- Speak English fluently. Bilingualism is considered an asset for the fellowship as we will be hiring at least one fully bilingual (French/English) candidate.

**Note:** Applications from all disciplines and all Canadian institutions are welcome. Applicants do not need to have completed a policy-focused degree program or have worked in a policy-focused role. We especially encourage applicants from historically underrepresented groups, including those marginalized by gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, and Indigenous status, to apply.

## Why Apply?

As a fellow, you will be part of a transformative initiative that will directly influence the lives of neurodiverse youth and their families, advocating for more accessible and equitable disability policies across Canada. In addition, fellows will:

- **Gain a greater understanding of disability policy and program design:** This fellowship offers the unique opportunity to directly contribute to the improvement of disability-related policies and programs across Canada by providing key insights into provincial and territorial disability programs.
- **Collaborate with Leading Experts and Community Partners:** Fellows will work closely with a team of experienced researchers, community partners, and PWLLE throughout their fellowship. This collaborative environment will offer invaluable professional development and opportunities for mentorship, while



enhancing capabilities in engaging with stakeholders with differing personal and professional experiences.

- **Develop Skills Related to Policy Research and Communication:** This role will enhance skills in data collection, policy analysis, and policy writing. Embedded knowledge mobilization opportunities (development of policy briefs, reports, and presentations) will strengthen fellows' capabilities in communicating policy information to a wide range of audiences.

## Application Process

If you are interested in this opportunity, please fill out the [application form](#). You will be required to upload the following documents in the application form:

1. Your curriculum vitae
2. A cover letter (maximum two pages) that highlights your relevant experiences and expertise (including any experiences or expertise related to any of the regions highlighted above) and describes how your skills align with the requirements of the position.
3. A letter of reference (maximum two pages) from a current or previous supervisor who can speak to your qualifications and potential for the fellowship.

If you have any questions about this call or the application process, please do not hesitate to reach out to the ADVANCE Network Operations Manager Brittany Finlay at [brittany.finlay1@ucalgary.ca](mailto:brittany.finlay1@ucalgary.ca).