



**ALBERTA DISABILITY WORKERS ASSOCIATION**

## **Essential but Forgotten: A Crisis in Community Disability Services**

### **Who we are**

The Alberta Disability Workers Association (ADWA) is a provincial advocacy organization for all people employed in Community Disability Services (CDS) who provide essential services to Albertans with disabilities. The Association was formed in 2010 to bring awareness to an undervalued and unrecognized professional workforce. We provide a voice and raise awareness of ongoing and unaddressed challenges this workforce continues to face years later.

We are a professional association, not a union. Our members are CDS workers who sign up to be members of ADWA. ADWA does not engage in employee-employer situations, nor does it negotiate with employers regarding wages and working conditions.

### **What we do**

Community Disability Service Workers are multi-skilled and fulfill demanding and often varied roles including that of facilitator, advocate, employment counselor, researcher, social worker, administrator, community developer, personal care provider, emotional and behavioural supporter, and more, in order to carry out their work competently.

### **Where do wages for community disability supports come from?**

Community disability services are provided by local independent community organizations who have funding contracts with Alberta Community & Social Services, Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) and Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD), or with families who have direct funding contracts with the government for Family Managed Services (FMS).

The services provided are not direct Alberta Government services, the staff are not government employees, nor are they part of a provincial government collective bargaining unit.

To raise wages for CDS employees, community organizations require funding increases from PDD, FSCD and FMS.

Community organizations have not received a funding increase to raise wages or to address increasing operational costs since 2014. Many of these employees are earning less than a living wage in today's job market.





It is important to point out that they were already paid significantly less than government or other sector workers doing the same jobs in 2014. Without wage increases, and with an increase in the cost of living of 15%+ over the past eight years, these workers are feeling stressed and undervalued. Many are choosing to leave their jobs; some for other employment where they will be properly compensated for their skills and valuable contributions, and others are so burned out they are not working at all.

In support of Community Disability Service Workers, ADWA's campaign advocates for a 25% increase to current wages. There is an immediate need to increase the wages to attract and retain workers for community disability services. Fair and competitive wages, allows these essential workers to commit long-term and provide continuity in service to Albertans with a disability. ADWA would like the Government of Alberta to commit to sustainable and predictable funding that allows for cost-of-living increases to workers' wages. This would address the current crisis and set the stage for a more stable workforce for the future.

## How can you get involved?

ADWA needs everyone employed in community disability services and their allies to get involved and have their voices heard in support of this campaign.

Go to [www.adwa.ca](http://www.adwa.ca) and click on "Essential but Forgotten". You will find regularly updated information about this campaign: information about the issues; how to write your government MLA; and how to meet with your MLA. For more information, to share actions you are taking, or to connect with us, you can email [campaign@adwa.ca](mailto:campaign@adwa.ca).

We hope that you will join us in this important campaign.

