

As our *Essential But Forgotten* campaign continues we have heard from many of you that you have received a reply to a letter you sent to your MLA and/or to others in government. Many of these responses have been in the form of a standardized letter from Minister Luan. We would like to give you some information that you could use if you decide to continue the correspondence in order to receive a proper answer to your original questions. The text that is red in colour is the information from the standardized letter. Following this text is our suggested responses that you could write back with. You may use it as written or re-write it using your own words.

1. *If you asked a specific question to which you feel the Minister did not respond, find a way to repeat the question, such as:*

I asked if your government is going to provide immediate cost-of-living relief and your response did not address this question. **Will you commit to providing an immediate increase of 25% so workers can afford to stay in the sector until some more permanent solutions to the crisis can be found?**

2. *If your letter said this or referenced this:* Since 2021, the ministry has distributed over \$16 million to over 13,000 community disability workers through the Critical Worker Benefit. The Critical Worker Benefit acknowledges the additional challenges and exposure to risks these workers faced to meet the needs of the people they serve during the COVID-19 pandemic. *You could respond by saying something like this:*

We are glad that after extensive efforts on our part you finally recognized most of our workers as essential (although not all positions were included in the CWB). While we appreciated the money from the federal (2/3 portion) and provincial governments (1/3 portion) coming last winter/spring, it is not helping to meet the increasing cost of living expenses now. **What is your government doing to help us now?**

3. *If this reference to the partnership group was included -* Looking into the future, the department is working with the disability services sector and partner ministries, through avenues like the Service Provider Partnership Committee, to improve attraction and retention within the sector. *You could respond by saying something like this:*

You made reference to your government working with the Service Provider Partnership Committee (ACDS) and others to improve attraction and retention of workers in the sector. Efforts to create a sustainable workforce in the longer term are critical. **Can you tell me what specific actions your government is taking immediately to increase the wages to prevent the loss of the current workforce, many of whom cannot wait until long-term solutions are found?**

4. *If your MLA suggested you talk to your employer about your wages or they seem to misunderstand how wages in Community Services are funded and/or this statement was made: As we consider further steps, the government will continue to provide funding to service providers through contracts and grants that support service providers in putting together compensation packages for their front-line staff, **you could respond by saying something like this:***

My MLA suggested I talk to my employer about increasing my wages. I would assume that you are aware that the money (overall funding provided to organizations) for staff wages has not increased since 2013-14 (except for the raise to minimum wage for overnight asleep positions). Monies is provided through contracts that specify an overall amount, which is determined by the GOA. **Has your Ministry made your MLAs aware of how staff wages are determined?**

Then close your letter off with any other comments and/or questions you would like to add and/or request a meeting if you like.

SAMPLE: This is what your response could look like in letter format

Monday, May 2, 2022

Honourable Jason Luan, Minister of Community and Social Services
#29, 735 Ranchlands Blvd NW
Calgary, AB
T3G 3A9
Calgary.Foothills@assembly.ab.ca

Dear Minister Luan:

I am writing to follow on a previous letter sent to my MLA to which your Ministry responded regarding my urge for your government to support an increase in the wages of Community Disability Service Workers, both immediately for cost-of-living relief and permanently by at least 25% in the 2022/23 budget. There are a few points to which I would like a follow-up response from your Ministry.

1. I asked if your government is going to provide immediate cost-of-living relief and your response did not address this question. **Will you commit to providing an immediate increase of 25% so workers can afford to stay in the sector until some more permanent solutions to the crisis can be found?"**

2. In your letter you made reference to the Ministry distributing over \$16 million to over 13,000 Community Disability Workers through the Critical Worker Benefit (CWB). We are glad that after extensive efforts on our part you finally recognized most of our workers as essential (although not all positions were included in the CWB). While we appreciated that money from the federal (2/3) and provincial governments (1/3) coming last winter/spring, it is not helping to meet the increasing cost of living expenses now. **What is your government doing to help us now?**
3. You made reference to your government working with the Service Provider Partnership Committee (ACDS) and others to improve attraction and retention of workers in the sector. Efforts to create a sustainable workforce in the longer term are critical. **Can you tell me what specific actions your government is taking immediately to increase the wages to prevent the loss of the current workforce, many of whom cannot wait until long-term solutions are found?**
4. My MLA suggested I talk to my employer about increasing my wages. I would assume that you are aware that the money (overall funding provided to organizations) for staff wages has not increased since 2013-14 (except for the raise to minimum wage for overnight asleep positions). Monies is provided through contracts that specify an overall amount, which is determined by the GOA. **Has your Ministry made your MLAs aware of how staff wages are determined?**

Community Disability Support Workers are critical in the lives of the people we support. My colleagues and I are educated, trained and skilled, qualities which mean we can take our talents elsewhere. While most of us love our work, we should be able to afford to live and thrive in Alberta if we want to stay working in the sector. Again, I would ask you, **will your government commit to supporting both immediate and long-term increases to the wages of essential Community Disability Services Workers across the province?** I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Doe

Jane Doe
123 First Street SE
Town, Alberta
T2E 6J3

C.C. (Your MLA using [Who's My MLA - Search | Elections Alberta](#))

Cynthia Farmer, Deputy Minister, Community and Social Services, email: Cynthia.farmer@gov.ab.ca

Ms. Marie Renaud, Opposition Critic for Community and Social Services, email: St.Albert@assembly.ab.ca

ADWA, C/O Sue Manery; email: campaign@adwa.ca