



# The VOICE of Albertans with Disabilities

May 1, 2020

## **An Update on NNELS Services**

With the impact of COVID-19, the reading needs of people are high, and National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS) is committed to their mission of providing reading opportunities for people with print disabilities during this difficult time. They are also taking steps to create and collect resources which will help inform people with print disabilities, as well as enrich their day-to-day lives during this unprecedented time, and beyond. Expanded services currently include:

- Creating a list of online sources for reading, leisure activities, education, exercise, and more, all reviewed by NNELS' team of Accessibility Testers
- Opening up NNELS' repository to be available to all Canadians with print disabilities
- Accepting applications for volunteer audiobook readers, to help us fulfill user requests

## **Freely Available Reading and Other Resources During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

NNELS has gathered together a list of resources that might be useful to people with print disabilities, during the COVID-19 pandemic (and beyond)! The resources include:

- Freely Available Ebooks and Audiobooks
- Streaming Read-Aloud Stories
- Education
- Exercise and Wellness
- Museums and Galleries

Each resource has been tested and reviewed by NNELS' team of Accessibility Testers, and they have provided some helpful tips on using several of these resources. <https://nnels.ca/>



## **NNELS Repository**

In recognition of the needs of people with print disabilities in Canada during this time, we have opened up NNELS to all library sites across Canada allowing people from non-funding jurisdictions to register and make use of NNELS' collections. If you would like to register for an account, please begin by searching for your library on the NNELS site, contacting your nearest librarian, or dropping them a line.

They have seen an increase in usage with more people at home and are doing their best to answer all of your questions, but there may be a delay in services as they adjust to the new demand.

## **Production**

Due to the COVID-19 shutdowns of some of our human-narrated audiobook providers, there may be a delay on the creation of books that have requested human narration. They are looking into alternatives on how best to resume this service, including our volunteer opportunity below. They are still able to produce titles in EPUB or DAISY format using synthetic voice.

## **Audiobook Recording Volunteer Opportunity**

Are you looking for a way to volunteer in your own home during COVID-19? Do you enjoy reading out loud? Have access to a basic home recording set up? Want to help provide access to books for people with print disabilities? If yes, then they would love to hear from you! Apply to volunteer as an audiobook narrator to help them fulfill user requests.

## **Understanding the Mental Health Impacts of COVID-19 on Albertans**

For more than 60 years in Alberta, Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta Division (CMHA AB) has focused on community-based recovery and support for Albertans impacted by mental illness. We stand with people living in their community as they achieve their wellness goals.

As Albertans navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, CMHA AB would like to better understand the impact of the pandemic on the lives and mental health of Albertans.

We ask that you take a few moments to complete a survey to provide your insight and experiences.

CMHA AB works at the intersection of clinical, community-based and local mental health care.





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This survey will enable CMHA AB and our partners to align our strategies, activities and advocacy with the mental health realities of Albertans to support better mental health for all. Survey closes May 20, 2020.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/survey-taken/?sm=AWPVrOZksoVjlvY4cS1tZ3jmGeOwNN2wPU78touzprAfzNgYBqmKxq73hIW7oqVFH68EwZTy\\_2FX0bRVtEiSYLoYtHfn\\_2BM8EeuC4EBYwr7do\\_3D](https://www.surveymonkey.com/survey-taken/?sm=AWPVrOZksoVjlvY4cS1tZ3jmGeOwNN2wPU78touzprAfzNgYBqmKxq73hIW7oqVFH68EwZTy_2FX0bRVtEiSYLoYtHfn_2BM8EeuC4EBYwr7do_3D)

## Family Violence during Covid-19

Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women Leela Sharon Aheer, Minister of Community and Social Services Rajan Sawhney, Minister of Children's Services



Rebecca Schulz, and Minister of Seniors and Housing Josephine Pon issued the following joint statement on continued support for those experiencing domestic and family violence during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- "Every Albertan – regardless of age, gender or sexual orientation – deserves to feel safe. While we are encouraging those who can to stay home to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, we recognize that home may not be the safest place for everyone. We hear you and we want you to know you are supported and resources are available to help you stay safe."

Leela Sharon Aheer, Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women

- "Please know that if you or a loved one is experiencing family violence, supports and safe spaces are available. You are not alone. If you are dealing with abuse or know someone who is, I encourage you to reach out for help. We need to support one another to keep our communities safe."

Rajan Sawhney, Minister of Community and Social Services

- "During this time of unprecedented stress on families, children and youth who are at risk need to know there is help available. If you, or children you know are being neglected, abused or sexually exploited, call the Child Abuse Hotline. Assistance is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in multiple languages. We need to

look out for one another, now more than ever."

Rebecca Schulz, Minister of Children's Services

- "There is heightened concern with the spread of COVID-19 for the potential increase of elder abuse. We define elder abuse as any action or inaction to self or others that jeopardizes the health or well-being of any older adult. Forms of elder abuse include financial, emotional, physical, sexual, medication and neglect. We know that rates of abuse of all types, including elder abuse, increase significantly during crises and disasters. If you suspect someone you know is experiencing elder abuse, please take action."

Josephine Pon, Minister of Seniors and Housing

### Resources

- Always call 911 in an emergency.
- Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence  
1-866-402-8000 (toll-free, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., 170-plus languages)  
Online chat: [aasas.ca](http://aasas.ca)
- Family Violence Info Line  
310-1818 (24-7, 170-plus languages)  
Online chat: [alberta.ca/SafetyChat](http://alberta.ca/SafetyChat) (8 a.m. to 8 p.m. in English only)
- Alberta Provincial Abuse Helpline  
1-855-4HELPAB (43-5722) (toll-free, 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday to Friday, 170-plus languages)
- Child Abuse Hotline  
1-800-387-KIDS (5437) (toll-free, 24-7)
- Mental Health Helpline  
1-877-303-2642 (toll-free, 24-7)
- Elder Abuse  
[alberta.ca/get-help-elder-abuse.aspx](http://alberta.ca/get-help-elder-abuse.aspx)
- 211 Alberta  
Call or text 211 for further community and government supports throughout the province in multiple languages.

**KidsHelpPhone.ca**  
1 800 668 6868

## #MuseumFromHome

For the first time, social media will be used to bring the province's historic sites and museums into Albertans' homes. #MuseumFromHome



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began to trend after museums around the world closed to help slow the spread of COVID-19. From the Louvre to the Museum of Modern Art, curators around the world have been entertaining and educating millions of at-home viewers by uploading virtual tours, interesting and entertaining facts, and never-before-seen content of their collections.

Alberta’s provincial historic sites and museums will be joining the #MuseumFromHome movement with new digital content uploaded every week – from educational content, to crafts for kids, to exclusive tours by museum staff. The campaign kicks off with an interview between Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women Leela Sharon Aheer and the Royal Alberta Museum about their immense bug collection.

“Our historic sites and museums may be temporarily closed for public safety, but our dedicated staff have created new ways to connect with Albertans and museum lovers around the world. We are going to show off what makes Alberta amazing and why everyone should visit Alberta, our sites and museums once they open again.”  
 Leela Sharon Aheer, Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women

Turtle livestreams, prohibition and pysanky ahead! Viewers can check out the social media accounts of their favourite historic sites and museums each week for new content. Here’s a sample of what is available now:

- The Royal Alberta Museum’s livestream features Western Painted Turtles, Peacock Mantis Shrimp and other creatures from the Bug Gallery.
- Follow **#TankLifeTuesday** for extra fun facts and fea-

tures about the critters on the screen.

- Remington Carriage Museum’s latest video is on the province’s connection to Canada Dry and the prohibition era.
- The Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village has posted a video on how you can create your own pysanky (traditional decorated eggs), along with bread recipes.
- In its first video in an exclusive behind-the-scenes series, the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology shares a sneak peek of its collection, which spans the history of life on Earth – from some of the oldest known fossils, to the extinction of the dinosaurs, and beyond.

**Support local artisans through online shopping**

The Royal Alberta Museum is joining thousands of retailers shifting to online shopping in the wake of COVID-19. The museum shop’s online store is now live through the museum’s website. Everything from colouring books, activity kits and locally made products is available for delivery.

Multimedia



- Bug Talk with Dr. Tyler Cobb – Royal Alberta Museum

Media inquiries: Danielle Murray, 780-217-5765, Press Secretary, Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women

**VAD Tax Clinic Closes**

VAD is pleased to say it has helped numerous people over the last 8 weeks with basic taxes. Our tax clinic will be open until the end of May, however space is limited. Call 780-488-9088 to find out if there are any appointment times left for the 2019 tax season. VAD will do taxes again starting in March 2021.



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## Guidance on Outdoor Activities

With the weather warming up, there are many outdoor activities Albertans can do safely while still following all public health orders.

Restrictions on events, gatherings and certain types of businesses are in place to limit situations where COVID-19 could be transmitted through contact with an infected person or through contact with frequently touched surfaces and objects.

### Take precautions

When outdoors in public, take precautions to protect yourself and those around you:

- For now, plan your activities with people from your own household or your “cohort family”.
- Plan your activity in advance to ensure physical distancing is possible. If your activity involves a public place:
- consider going during non-peak hours
- walk along the sides of trails and other public pathways to maintain distance

### Practice good hygiene:

- wash your hands frequently
- refrain from touching your face with unclean hands
- carry and use hand sanitizer
- Wear a mask in public places to help limit the risk of spread to others if you will be within 2 metres of people other than members of your own household.

### Assess risk to determine appropriate activities

To help you plan activities, ask yourself the following questions to determine the risk of particular outdoor activities and whether they’re allowed to proceed.

1. Does the activity violate a public health order?

Under recent health orders, an activity is not allowed to proceed if it involves:

- any event or gathering of 15 or more people. This includes sporting events, concerts, rodeos and other outdoor events, as well as private gatherings such as backyard barbecues and weddings
- a situation where physical distancing isn’t possible. An activity involving fewer than 15 people requires individuals to maintain two metres (6 feet) from

others, unless the individuals are from the same household.

In addition, attending all public recreation facilities and private entertainment facilities remains prohibited, such as:

- golf courses and driving ranges
- swimming pools

2. Does the activity involve contact with frequently touched surfaces or objects?

COVID-19 can be transmitted by touching objects or surfaces the virus has landed on then touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Activities that carry this risk are not recommended, even with physical distancing in place, including:

- Communal meals: backyard barbecues, drinks with friends and neighbours, picnics and other gatherings
- Activities that use shared equipment, such as horse-shoes and bocce ball.

3. Can an activity proceed with physical distancing in place?

Limit outdoor activities to as small a group as possible, to a maximum of 15 people. Outdoor activities with people outside your household or cohort family can proceed as long as people are physically distanced, there is no contact with frequently touched objects or surfaces, and there are fewer than 15 people.

Some examples of activities could include:

- going for walks or bike rides
- flying kites
- gardening in community settings
- visiting parks (note: access to provincial and national parks is limited and not recommended at this time)

Physical distancing is not required if the activity involves only members of a single household, provided they are not required to be isolating.



<https://www.alberta.ca/guidance-on-outdoor-activities.aspx>



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