

Community Inclusion - General Information

The information provided is to showcase the services and supports offered by Voice of Albertans with Disabilities (VAD) to individuals with disabilities in the community. This info sheet focuses on adults with disabilities. More disability resources are available on our website: <https://vadsociety.ca/disability-resources>

Introduction

According to Statistics Canada 2012, one in seven adults report having a disability that limits their daily activities. The Accessible Canada Act purpose is to make Canada barrier-free in areas under federal jurisdiction.

The bill outlines how to identify and remove accessibility barriers and prevent new barriers, under federal rule, including in:

- built environments (buildings and public spaces)
- employment (job opportunities and employment policies and practices)
- information and communication technologies (digital content and technologies used to access it)
- procurement of goods and services
- delivering programs and services; and
- transportation (by air as well as by rail, ferry and bus carriers that operate across a provincial or international border)

VAD is here to help individuals and businesses reach their full potential in regards to accessibility and inclusion.

Terminology

The World Health Organization defines disability as an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions.

- An **impairment** is a problem in body function or structure.
- An **activity limitation** is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action.
- A **participation restriction** is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations.

The **social model of disability** says that **disability** is caused by the way society is organized, rather than by a person's impairment or difference. It looks at ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for people with a disability. Impairments or conditions which pose relatively small barriers to full participation in Canada might pose large barriers in a non-English speaking home.

About VAD

VAD offers the following areas of support, and awareness.

- **One-on-One Support**
Individuals arrange an appointment with VAD and work together to fill out government application forms for AISH, CPPD, Leisure Access Pass, Income Support Forms and Individual Taxes. Call the office for more information or to book an appointment: 780-488-9088

- **Disability Awareness Presentations**
Small group setting presentations to businesses and schools outlining the ways to interact with someone with a disability, etiquette, and social norms. Book a presentation for your work today by calling the VAD office 780-488-9088 or visit our website: <https://vadsociety.ca/services/presentations>.
- **Accessibility Assessments**
Book an assessment of your business that does an audit of your property to highlight areas that are currently accessible, areas of opportunity and best practices for being inclusive. <https://vadsociety.ca/services/accessibility-assessments>
- **Bursaries**
VAD offers a bursary program that supports students with a disability to achieve their post-secondary goals. Applications are taken until November 15 of each calendar year. More information is available on our website: <https://vadsociety.ca/support/bursaries>
- **Membership**
VAD offers various types of membership for your engagement in the disability community:
 - **VAD:** A coalition of Alberta-based organizations. Organizations use their collective expertise to influence the creation of an inclusive and accessible Alberta for individuals with disabilities. VAD members are both organizational and corporate.
 - **iVAD:** This network is a pan-disability group of individuals with lived experiences who are interested in increasing awareness of existing barriers to inclusion and developing capacity around solutions to accessibility, accessible and affordable housing, employment, transportation and social isolation.



Barriers to accessing Services

The barriers faced by people with disabilities are as different as the individuals with disabilities are themselves, varying by culture, type of impairment or condition, and the personal characteristics.

Barrier	Definition	Example
Physical Barrier	Feature of building or spaces.	Hallway and doorway that are too narrow to be used with a wheelchair or scooter.
Technology Barrier	Technology that can't be adapted to support assistive devices.	Flashing website graphics may cause seizures.
Communication Barrier	Something that prevents a person from understanding information.	Print size of documents too small to read.
Organizational Barrier	An organizations' policies, practices or procedures.	A policy that prohibits computers in classroom and workshops, with no exception for assistive technology.
Attitudinal Barrier	Attitudes of people involved in the provision of a service.	Assuming that a client with a developmental disability will not be able to find suitable employment.

Physical Barriers

https://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/for_people_with_special_needs/measuring-up-edmonton.aspx

Principles of universal design

- **Equality:** space is useful to people with diverse abilities.
- **Flexibility:** the space accommodates a wide range of abilities.
- **Simplicity:** the space is easy to navigate and understand.
- **Perceptible Information:** the space communicates necessary information effectively regardless of a person's sensory abilities or background conditions.
- **Tolerance:** the space minimizes hazards and safety concerns.
- **Low Physical Effort:** the space can be used easily with minimal effort.
- **Appropriate Size and Space:** the space is sized to accommodate everyone's approach, reach, manipulation and use regardless of body size, posture or mobility.

Technology Barriers

- **Perceivable** – text alternatives for non-text content, dealing with multimedia, creating content that is easy to see and hear
- **Operable** – ensure all interactions can be done via keyboard, allow adequate time to read and use con-



tent and help visitors navigate and find content easily

- **Understandable** – make text readable and understandable, ensure text operates in predictable ways
- **Robust** – can support current and future tools designed to support accessibility

Communication Barriers

- CNIB clear print accessibility guidelines has recommendations for contrast, colour, spacing, font, layout and paper finish of printed materials.
- Public Works and Government Services Canada have the rules to create web content that can be easily found, understood and used. They are based on writing principles and techniques that help make web content clear and adapted to the needs of all people. <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/government-communications/canada-content-style-guide.html#toc6>

Organizational Barriers

- Review organizational policies and procedures through the lens of accessibility. A policy that guides staff who think a client may have an undiagnosed disability will help ensure the client's needs are better met.

Attitudinal Barriers

- Remember that an individual's condition or impairment may have posed much bigger problems for them in their home culture, or it may not have posed any problem at all.