

*Stronger
Together*

EMPLOY
Abilities



2020-2021

ANNUAL REPORT



KEN SAUNDERS
Chair

The Chair's Annual Message

2020 / 2021 was a challenging year in our agency's existence. The emergence of COVID-19 - and now the variants - has created several hurdles for our staff, clients and board members and I am proud to say that we have all stepped up, both as individuals and as a team, to face this global threat. We are fortunate to have an Executive Director and supportive management group who have taken charge in this area by coordinating our staff across the province, including locations in Cold Lake, Bonnyville, Lac La Biche, St. Albert, Hinton, St. Paul, Vegreville, Grande Prairie, Westlock, Barrhead, Athabasca and Edmonton. Providing these essential services to our clients during a pandemic is extremely difficult but also so important to their well-being.

In addition to our services, ensuring personal safety for everyone is also an important goal. The fact that our agency is able to complete this task is a commendation to the dedication they all have to our overall mission.

Additionally, our Board has also stepped up by moving our monthly meetings online. This helps us to ensure that we can continue to deliver our services to our client community that is faced with additional obstacles during these times.

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, I applaud the work and dedication of the Executive Director, management and staff for all their wonderful accomplishments.

We look forward to getting back to a full office work environment soon!

Board of Directors 2020-2021



Board of Directors 2020-21 (From left to right)

Back row:

Dan Stannard, Ken Saunders, Andrea Szabo,
Sue McGregor, Lorenzo Pasutto, Simon Rowe

Front row:

Logan Sawchuk, Edgar Jackson, Ed Lavallee

Message from the Executive Director

The theme of this year's annual report for EmployAbilities Society of Alberta is "stronger together". 2020 and 2021 will long be remembered as some of the most difficult circumstances due to the pandemic. The challenge was faced head on by our staff at EmployAbilities. Staff in their respective EmployAbilities' programs worked together to continue to support Albertans with disabilities and barriers in finding employment. EmployAbilities supported over 400 Albertans with skills training and were able to help support 293 Albertans to find employment. The only way this could be accomplished in a recession with limited job opportunities, during a pandemic, is through teamwork. "Stronger together" is a statement of just two words but means so much. Thank you to the EmployAbilities board and staff for your dedication and teamwork. We could not have accomplished so much this past year without a strong team.

I am equally impressed that during a pandemic when many businesses were declining in revenue, EmployAbilities has increased its revenue through the expansion of programs. EmployAbilities in 2020/21 has added new locations for service, and is now serving the communities of Barrhead, Athabasca and Westlock. EmployAbilities also began offering a new program called Virtual Connections. The new program provided laptops, assistive technology, and skills training to Albertans with disabilities to help them find employment.

EmployAbilities' programs and services are stronger together. We will get through this pandemic and continue to provide services to Albertans with disabilities and barriers to employment.



JASON LOEWER
Executive Director

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide specialized services to individuals with disabilities or barriers to employment by creating opportunities for skill development, education and employment.



VISION

We envision an inclusive society where all people are valued, respected and have the opportunity to work to their full potential.



VALUES

We collaborate and innovate to provide inclusive services with compassion and integrity to all Albertans.



EMPLOY *Abilities*

Program Statistics July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

444 clients accepted into job placement services

293 clients placed into employment

123 clients still employed at 3 months
(not all programs compile this statistic)

42 clients accepted into a 24-week training program

38 clients accepted into a pre-employment program

Audited financial statements for the fiscal year from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 are available by contacting EmployAbilities at 780.423.4106 or by emailing employ@employabilities.ab.ca.

CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2021

92% of EmployAbilities' clients are satisfied or very satisfied with EmployAbilities' programs and services.

89% of EmployAbilities' clients indicated that they have seen improvement in their skills and abilities since attending EmployAbilities.

92% of EmployAbilities' clients would recommend EmployAbilities' services to friends and people they know.

What are clients saying about EmployAbilities?

"You taught me skills for future jobs."

"The programs and services have helped me understand different aspects of the work environment and how to deal with different situations."

"I have learned the importance of having resumes specific to the job I am applying for."

"Helped me be a better person. Look at ways to do and see things differently."

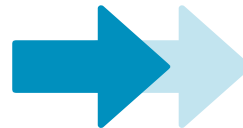
"Helped me to boost my resume. Helped me to boost and strengthen my network."

"I am truly grateful to the EmployAbilities staff that truly care."

Strive 4 Work

STRIVE 4 WORK

Strive 4 Work is an employment focused program for Albertans in the St. Albert area who have a disability. The program includes eight weeks of classroom skills training and 10 weeks of work experience.



**41 Clients accepted into
job placement services**

**18 Clients placed
in employment**



Malyki

STRIVE 4 WORK

Share in the Success

Malyki came to Strive 4 Work with an excellent attitude and a desire to see himself succeed. Malyki came with barriers including limited education (grade 10 completed), and an ADHD diagnosis. When Malyki started the program he actively jumped into the learning process and demonstrated his motivation and work ethic to staff on a continuous basis. Program staff worked closely with Malyki to help him develop the confidence and skills to create compelling resumes and cover letters for positions identified as being a good fit. With the assistance of program staff Malyki was able to secure a placement

with Roseridge Waste Management. The staff have expressed their enthusiasm for working with such a dedicated and hardworking individual like Malyki. Malyki feels confident and comfortable in his work and enjoys the team he is working with!

EmployAbilities North is a program providing skills training and employment supports to individuals with disabilities to assist them in finding, obtaining, and retaining employment. The program serves the communities of Cold Lake, Athabasca, Bonnyville, St. Paul, Lac La Biche, Westlock, Barrhead and Vegreville.



Share in the Success

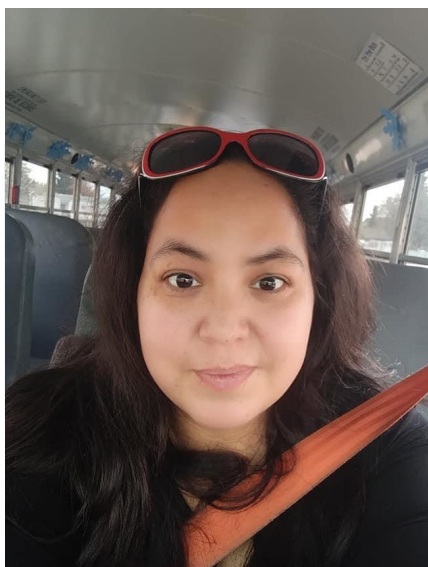
David was referred to EmployAbilities North in February 2021. He had a solid work history but was laid off due to COVID-19. He wanted help finding work but struggled as he had significant barriers to employment including cognitive delays and low literacy. David was eager to find stable employment to provide for his family. The Employment Facilitator worked with David to build his resume and cover letter, sent him weekly job leads, discussed each lead with him and helped him apply for jobs online. David contacted the Facilitator, stating that he had a job interview for a maintenance position at Alberta Parks. The Facilitator helped David with practice interview questions and after his interview he was offered a full-time seasonal position with Alberta Parks at Long Lake Provincial Park. David has achieved his 90 days of employment and is loving his job. He says he has plans to find a winter seasonal job so that he can return to the Parks position again next year.

David

EMPLOYABILITIES NORTH



Lakeland Employment Services provides one on one assistance to clients experiencing barriers to employment. Through Job Club activities, this contract also provides Albertans assistance with resume development, job search, online applications and computer skills. Lakeland Employment Services serves the communities of Cold Lake, Bonnyville and Lac La Biche.



Share in the Success

Gabrielle was referred to Lakeland Employment Services in June 2020. At that time, she was really struggling with the idea of going back to work because she had a child who was just a year old. She was afraid to send her child to daycare due to COVID and because she didn't want to be away from him. The Facilitator worked with Gabrielle on her self-esteem and assertiveness first. Then they developed a resume that would work for Gabrielle. After that, the Facilitator worked with Gabrielle on job searching, communication and interview skills. Gabrielle had four interviews but was not successful in attaining these positions. The Facilitator encouraged her and told her not to give up.

In February the Facilitator asked Gabrielle if she would consider school bus driving. Gabrielle said she was confident with her driving abilities and that she would apply for a bus driver position with Cold Lake Bus Lines. Gabrielle was interviewed by Cold Lake Bus Lines and offered a job. Her employment was conditional on her completing all the required training and passing the Class 2 driver's test. Gabrielle did this, which allowed her to start working as a bus driver at the end of March. Gabrielle was very pleased as the job offered her a child care solution for her son – she could bring him on the bus with her during her runs. Gabrielle was still working as a bus driver after three months, and planned to return to driving this September. She has also started her own event planning and organizing business with a partner. They have two big events planned and lined up to run this fall.

Gabrielle says she was very grateful for everything the Facilitator had done for her. "I don't think I could have done this without your support and help," she told the Facilitator. "Thank you so much!"

LEARN 2 EARN

Learn 2 Earn Youth Skills Program at EmployAbilities in Edmonton is an innovative endeavor. The youth ages 15-30 who attend the program come from diverse backgrounds with multiple barriers to employment. The focus of the program is to deliver services with “person centered” planning, which emphasizes the gifts, abilities, skills, dreams, and desires of the youth. In order to facilitate this process, the program uses interactive methods to keep the youth engaged throughout the program. Youth are given opportunities to demonstrate their skills and are provided with the tools to gain confidence, become motivated, and find meaningful employment. The program serves the Edmonton area.



96 | Clients accepted into job placement services



62 | Clients placed in employment



Share in the Success

My name is Spencer. I was glad that I was one of the participants that was selected to participate in the Learn 2 Earn program at EmployAbilities. I like to do a variety of things to keep me focused and enjoy what I do. The Learn 2 Earn program allowed me to examine various aspects of my personality in a creative and fun learning environment centered on job skills training. This program helped me to re-evaluate a lot of my previous perspectives and made me to grow and become more confident. The instructions were well planned and it made me to be calm under pressure. The staff in Learn 2 Earn at EmployAbilities was very helpful and encouraged me and all of us in the group to express ourselves freely with respect. This program was so helpful to understand aspects of jobs especially during this pandemic.

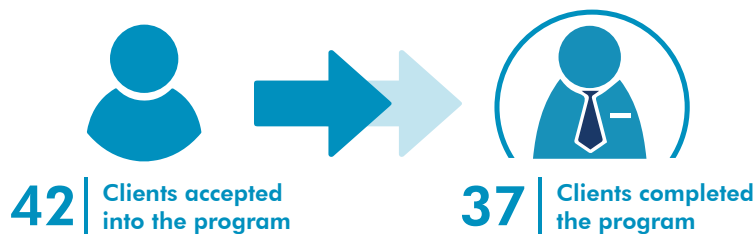
I got a job working at Sobeys Meadow Brook. I have learned to show a higher level of professionalism in me and my work at Sobeys. As a direct result of the training I received in the Learn 2 Earn program, I am able to socialize with others. I work at Sobeys, cleaning the meat kitchen and I am content with my job. Thank you to all staff in the Learn 2 Earn program for guiding and supporting me from the start, through the 10 weeks of skills training, and to the end of the 12 weeks of paid work experience.



Spencer
LEARN 2 EARN

RESTART YOUR CAREER

Restart Your Career is a 24-week skills training program in Edmonton serving individuals with diverse backgrounds and barriers to employment. This program prepares individuals for employment in entry level positions in various industries, such as administration, transportation, customer service, hospitality and data support. Training components include professional development, computer skills, work experience and certification in First Aid, CPR and WHMIS. The program serves the Edmonton area.



Parminder
RESTART YOUR CAREER

Share in the Success

Parminder came to Canada with her family in November 2014. Parminder was a nurse back in her country. She was unable to find employment in Canada as she was required to upgrade her nursing degree before she could work as a nurse in Canada. Parminder also could not find employment in other areas as she only had nursing experience.

Parminder benefited greatly from the program as she was able to upskill her computer and essential work skills. These skills helped her greatly as she chose a new career - to become an Immigration Consultant. Parminder started an immigration consultancy business. Parminder is now a proud owner of her own business.

Parminder received support in identifying employment options other than nursing, enhanced her computer skills, received help with preparing a resume and cover letter as per Canadian job market requirements, learned interview skills, had exposure to Canadian labour market trends, and learned how professional development skills are important in Canadian workplaces. As well, the practicum opportunity gave her a realistic feel of how it is working here in Canada. All of it was made possible with the well-coordinated and ever committed staff members at EmployAbilities who are passionate about helping Albertans with barriers to employment find employment.

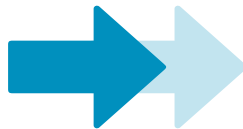
"I can confidently say that EmployAbilities has made my transition to the Canadian work place seamless through the help and support of all staff," Parminder says. "I learnt from EmployAbilities that as long as you are ready, willing and able you can be successful in whichever path you choose!"



EmployAbilities Career & Employment Centre

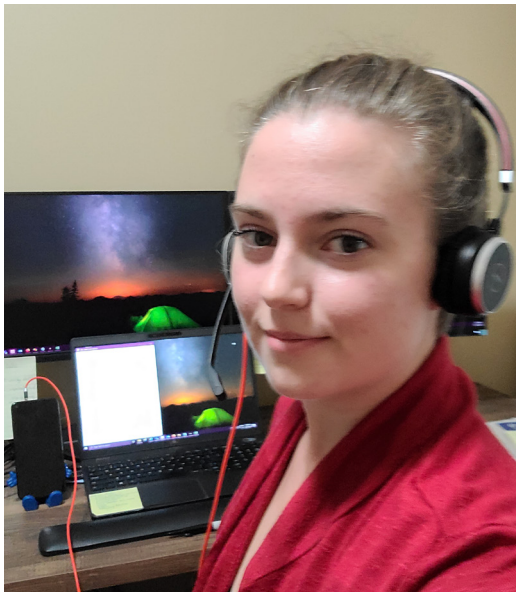
EMPLOYABILITIES CAREER & EMPLOYMENT CENTRE

Serving clients in Edmonton, the EmployAbilities Career and Employment Centre (Ecec) staff work with clients who have a disability or medical condition to help them overcome employment barriers. We provide the support they need to find employment and stay employed.



72 | Clients accepted into job placement services

71 | Clients placed in employment



Rebecca

EMPLOYABILITIES CAREER AND
EMPLOYMENT CENTRE

Share in the Success

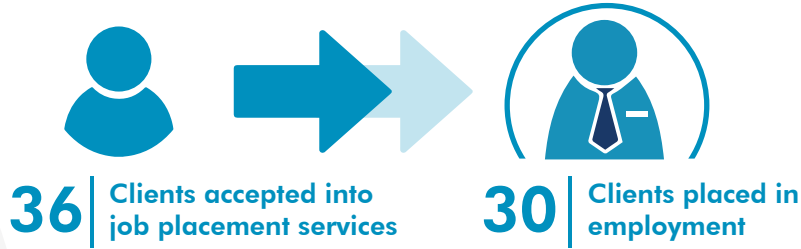
Rebecca lives with chronic pain from a condition called Complex Regional Pain Syndrome in her left leg. This condition greatly impacts her mobility and as such she requires accommodations to fully participate in the work force to the best of her ability. Unfortunately, she had trouble advocating for herself when it came time to start a new job or when tasks would come up that pushed her limitations. As a result, she had difficulty in finding and maintaining employment.

While she was searching for employment, Rebecca attended a job fair where she met staff from EmployAbilities. After discussing her challenges with them she decided to come in for an intake and was assigned to work with an Employment Coach in the Ecec program. Rebecca completed skills training and worked one-on-one with an Employment Coach to better prepare her on how to disclose her disability to employers. This equipped her with more knowledge surrounding her rights, what she did and did not need to disclose, and how to advocate for herself effectively. She reported that she also gained tools around improving her job search and many interview tips and tricks.

She was able to use these skills which helped her acquire a full-time, permanent position as a Payment Services Officer with Service Canada. She has successfully maintained her employment and reports that she finally feels like she is in a situation where her employer properly supports her.



Serving the communities of Cold Lake and Bonnyville, Career Evolution North provides client-centred services to help Albertans on EI and EI Reach-back of 10 years gain employment using their existing skills and qualifications.



Share in the Success

Cynthia came to Career Evolution North (CEN) as a new resident of Cold Lake. She moved from Newfoundland to follow her partner. She had worked in a long-term care facility for over 10 years in Newfoundland. She applied for EI and was referred to CEN. Cynthia was initially shy and told us she had no friends here and no contacts to network through. Cynthia needed support and assistance with her resume and cover letter, and was open to learning about Cold Lake and the surrounding area. Cynthia wanted to work and was motivated to learn ways to meet people through volunteering and attending workshops with other participants. Cynthia attended Transition to Employment Services at Career Evolution North in Cold Lake. Cynthia was provided with a First Aid course, resume revision, marketing yourself and interview skills workshops. Cynthia learned of an opportunity at Points West, a long-term care facility in Cold Lake. Cynthia was advised to show up with her resume, ready for an interview and even given a name to ask for. Cynthia did exactly that and was given an appointment for an interview – which led to an orientation. Cynthia is now employed full-time at Points West Living.

“Thank you for all your help, input and guidance along the way. You made this challenging time into an exciting journey, full of encouragement, fun, and laughter,” Cynthia says. “I enjoyed our time together and will be forever grateful. Thank you for helping me start my new career in Cold Lake.”



Cynthia

CAREER EVOLUTION NORTH

Career Evolution West serves Hinton and surrounding area, offering client support services to unemployed or under-employed Albertans, income support clients who have short-term medical reports, and individuals who require supports to overcome employment barriers.



Share in the Success

Danielle was laid off during the pandemic and living with her parents when she first accessed services from Career Evolution West. Danielle has her aesthetics license and tried working in the field in the past but never found a job in her field. She tried working in different industry positions including security and traffic control to get by. The staff at Career Evolution West provided Danielle with supports in virtual job search, resume writing, cover letter writing, labour market research, and mock interviews. The staff at Career Evolution West also arranged for Danielle to meet with a local spa owner who was looking for a front-end person in her beautiful spa. Danielle turned out to be a great fit!

At her 90 day follow up of employment, Danielle confirmed that she is enjoying not only working at the front reception desk but is also starting to provide salon services and work at tradeshow. Not only was she able to quickly work her way up, but she was also able to afford her own apartment working at a job she enjoys. Danielle says her self-esteem has improved greatly because of her new job.



Danielle
CAREER EVOLUTION WEST

EmployAbilities Grande Prairie offers comprehensive employment services to the Grande Prairie community. We work with people with disabilities to overcome employment barriers and we provide the supports they need to get and stay employed.



Share in the Success

Alex entered the program because of difficulties finding employment. He wanted to learn employment skills and find employment that would increase his independence. He had previously been diagnosed with ADHD, Autism, Sensory Processing, Intellectual/Emotional Regulatory, and REM sleep disorder. His only previous work experience was through his parents' business and in completing a practicum for school. Alex wanted to seek and secure employment through his own efforts. Alex completed the entire program with a positive outlook. Alex's resume upon entering the program was bare and had little information. Resume supports focused on including a relevant skills and abilities section. Alex successfully completed workshops in creating a targeted resume, identifying transferrable skills, developing boundaries and assertiveness in the workplace, achieving his Service Best certification and learning interviewing skills. Alex received Job Club services where he received information on Common Employment Standards and Workers' Rights, explored different communication styles, and received job postings that matched his interests and skills.

Alex secured employment at Freson Bros as a Stocking Associate and successfully completed 30, 60, and 90 day follow ups. The employer reports they are very happy with his performance.

Alex feels more confident in himself for securing employment without his parents' connections, retaining employment and having a source of income.

Alex enjoys the work environment and feels his supervisor is very supportive. Alex expressed thanks for the supports he received with EmployAbilities Grande Prairie. "Thanks for re-doing my resume and helping me get a job," he says.



Alex

EMPLOYABILITIES GRANDE PRAIRIE

EMPLOY *Abilities* FOR NEWCOMERS

EMPLOYABILITIES FOR NEWCOMERS

This pre-employment program teaches essential workplace skills to newcomers and is designed to work alongside settlement service agencies to help newcomers find success in Canada. Newcomers will learn essential employment skills and information on topics such as trends facing newcomers, the Alberta labour market, employer expectations and conflict management. As well, the program will teach newcomers cultural communication skills, how to work with employment agencies, and information about disabilities and accommodations in the Canadian workplace. This program serves newcomers in the Edmonton region.



38 | Clients who received pre-employment services

"It is a pleasure to give my personal feedback to the Newcomer program. I am so glad to take time and effort on the Newcomer program. After the session, I feel confident and resourceful on pursuing the ideal job in Canada. You are so helpful and I know you will always be here to help on my job-hunting process. I never regret for taking this program. Thank you so much for everything you have done and the future assistance."

Wen

EMPLOYABILITIES FOR NEWCOMERS



"Just a word of appreciation for your help during my job search. I know your advice worked well for me. I was hired by the Canadian Tire in May 2021. After taking your advice very seriously, I went and approached the employer direct. Thank you for the time you spent coaching me. In addition, with these few words I recommend EmployAbilities to all newcomers to Canada and to anyone else searching for employment."

Joseph

EMPLOYABILITIES FOR NEWCOMERS

VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS

Virtual Connections

Virtual Connections connects individuals with disabilities with the skills they need to successfully enter today's virtual world of work! Participants get access to computers and digital technology, and develop essential and on-line job search skills. Training along with the support of an employment coach is provided in a virtual classroom setting. This program serves clients in the Bonnyville, Cold Lake, Lac La Biche, St. Paul and Vegreville regions.



Valerie
VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS

Share in the Success

Valerie was referred to Virtual Connections in March 2021. After completing the Virtual Connections assessment, she was accepted into the program starting April 2021. She needed help in searching for work but had barriers to employment including mental health, difficulty in online job searching, difficulty in setting boundaries, difficulty learning to set goals as well as a lack of computer skills. At first Valerie was very shy and reserved, not really participating in much discussion or group events. Eventually she relaxed and over time she improved which included in helping others in the group. Valerie became more confident with herself and shared past experiences with everyone. The Employment Coach worked with Valerie through Virtual Connections by providing various workshops that included computer basics, resume and cover letter building, setting boundaries, and success in the workplace. Valerie did struggle with the computer basics workshops and she was going to quit the program due to the stress of learning but with guidance and encouragement from the Employment Coaches, she decided to stay. Valerie thoroughly enjoyed the Virtual Connections program and found it very beneficial in both her personal and work life.

Valerie acquired full time employment with McDonald's in May 2021. Valerie is enjoying the role as a crew member and, according to McDonald's management, she is doing very well.

LONG TERM SERVICE AWARDS



Congratulations to Therese, Jon and Faye for celebrating significant milestones as long service award recipients at EmployAbilities. Therese celebrated 20 years of service, Jon celebrated 25 years of service and Faye celebrated 25 years of service at EmployAbilities Society of Alberta in 2021.

Pictured from left to right: Jon Garland, Therese Lehoux, Faye Elliott

Contact Us

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