

ANNUAL REPORT



KEN SAUNDERS Chair, Board of Directors

The Chair's Annual Message

2021-2022 was an exceptional year for the agency. The agency continued to grow, servicing even more Albertans, despite the fact Alberta was dealing with COVID – 19, which led to some staff working from home due to restrictions.

Here are some of the major highlights of the past year:

- 1) A Strategic Planning session was held for the board to determine a path forward for 2022-2025.
- 2) EmployAbilities started 3 new projects in the spring of 2022. These included:
 - GroundWORKS An online pre-employment program that offers the guidance, training, and tools required to participate and thrive when learning or working. The program is offered virtually in 19 communities north of Edmonton.
 - 45+ Works An employment program for mature workers over 45 years of age serving the communities of Cold Lake, Bonnyville, Lac La Biche, St. Paul, Vegreville, Athabasca, Westlock and Barrhead.
 - Steps to Employment- a program providing up to 36 weeks of online training and development built with Edmonton and surrounding area residents in mind.
- 3) Conducted a client and staff satisfaction survey to ensure that EmployAbilities is meeting the needs of our clients and staff.
- 4) Participated in a fundraising Casino in April, 2022.

2021 – 2022 has been a successful year thanks to the Executive Director and his team in all sectors. We are sad to inform our members of the passing of long-time board member Logan Sawchuk, who served on the board in many capacities. Our condolences go out to family and friends. The board continually evolves as unfortunately two other board members had been transferred out of the city and had to resign. Both Sue McGregor and Simon Rowe made major contributions and will be missed.

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, I applaud the exceptional work, dedication and accomplishments of the Executive Director, Management, and staff.

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

Board of Directors 2021-2022



Board of Directors 2021-22

(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 growth. Growth was achieved in two ways over this past year. First, EmployAbilities clients received the skills training and support needed to find employment. Employ-Abilities staff saw so much growth in the clients supported through our programs. I encourage you to read through the annual report and see how EmployAbilities has changed and touched the lives of Albertans with disabilities and barriers to employment.

EmployAbilities also saw tremendous growth in our programs and services offered to Albertans. In the spring of 2022, EmployAbilities added three new programs to our list of programs offered. EmployAbilities is now providing virtual programs in 19 communities north of Edmonton. EmployAbilities now has over 70 staff providing 13 programs in Edmonton and north of Edmonton. I want to thank the Board of Directors for their vision and guidance over this past year. Thank you to staff at EmployAbilities for their excellent support and service provided to Albertans. Thank you to the leadership team at EmployAbilities for leading the programs and providing direction and support. It truly requires a team effort to see growth of this magnitude over the past year.



JASON LOEWER Executive Director

MISSION

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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.





Program Statistics July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

 496 clients accepted into job placement services
383 clients placed into employment
314 clients still employed at 3 months (not all programs collect this statistic)
48 clients accepted into a 24-week training program
108 clients accepted into a pre-employment program

EMPLOYABILITIES CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2022

94% of EmployAbilities' clients are satisfied or very satisfied with EmployAbilities' programs and services.

90% of EmployAbilities' clients indicated that they have seen improvement in their skills and abilities since attending EmployAbilities.

94% of EmployAbilities' clients would recommend EmployAbilities' services to friends and people they know.

What are clients saying about EmployAbilities?



"I feel like my social skills and self-esteem have gotten much better." "It's helping me

with having a routine, keeping a schedule and refreshing my memory." "Helped with my resume and got me employed."

"The program really helped me discover very important life skills and job skills that I did not know I possessed."

"Boosted my confidence and provided me with useful tips and tools I need."

"I have a better outlook on my life and I'm way more confident and self-confident."



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. It includes eight weeks of classroom skills training and 10 weeks of work experience.



Cara STRIVE 4 WORK

Share in the Success

After many years in the same industry a sudden injury put Cara out of work and on long-term disability for her recovery. Unable to go back to the industry she had been in throughout her entire career she came to the Strive 4 Work program with a new disability and in need of a career change.

Cara was able to develop new skills and grow her confidence in a number of areas including computer skills, job search, resume and cover letter development, and interview skills. Having little experience with computers prior to participation in the virtual program, Cara demonstrated impressive drive and perseverance as she took on this new challenge. In every aspect of the skills training and work experience Cara was never deterred in the face of a new obstacle. Cara participated in the eight weeks of skills training provided in the Strive 4 Work program. Interventions and supports included:

- Resume/cover letter development
- Interview skills
- Job search and retention skills
- Transferrable skills training
- Computer skills
- CPR/First Aid certification
- Serving It Safe certification
- Service Best certification
- WHMIS certification
- GBA+ certification
- Respect in the Workplace certification
- 10 weeks of work experience
- Follow-up on employment

At the end of the eight weeks of skills training Cara was able to find and secure employment in her community at a local grocery store. In addition, Cara asked the Job Developer for further support in finding secondary employment to further supplement her income.

After the skills training was completed Cara expressed her appreciation of the supports offered by staff of the Strive 4 Work program. Throughout her job search and work experience Cara was thankful for the opportunities offered in the program which led to her developing confidence and attaining employment. Finally, knowing that she would always receive a warm and supportive welcome from staff, she reached out during her work experience for additional support in finding secondary employment to provide her more peace of mind and financial security.

EMPLOYABILITIES NORTH

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



Share in the Success =

NORTH

Jillian was referred in August 2021. Jillian is an AISH recipient and has worked in the past. The majority of her employment has been in the cleaning sector, but she indicated that she wants to find something different. The Employment Facilitator met with Jillian in August 2021 to complete the Employability Assessment and all intake documentation in Vegreville. Jillian indicated she has some minor physical barriers – mild arthritis - and she identified as having a mild learning disability and noted that reading and comprehension are challenges. Jillian had no resume prior to acceptance to the program. She worked with the Employment Facilitator in developing a resume. The Employment Facilitator provided a resume workshop with Jillian. She also expressed interest in researching the requirements of a Porter in a hospital setting. Using the ALIS website and navigating through many related occupations, we determined that no specific requirements are required. During the fall of 2021, Jillian requested assistance in obtaining the Quality Cannabis Worker (QCW) certificate in order to become employed in the cannabis industry in Alberta. The Employment Facilitator assisted JIllian by reading all required material to her, in order for

Jillian Employabilities North



her to obtain the QCW. Jillian successfully passed the AGLC SELLSAFE exam and obtained her QCW in October 2021. Jillian applied for numerous positions posted by AHS. Success came in January 2022 after submitting her resume to the Lamont Health Care Centre for a casual position in the housekeeping department. She attended an interview, and successfully commenced employment in January. The Employment Facilitator followed up with the client over the first month of employment. At the 90 day follow up, Jillian was successfully maintaining employment. Facilitator followed up with Jillian for the 180 day follow up. She was a permanent part-time worker at that time.

Don, Jillian's Supervisor, indicated, "If there were more Jillians out there looking for work, please send them this way!" Jillian thanked EmployAbilities for the employment programming assistance and ongoing support throughout the employment program and said she thoroughly enjoyed working with the Employment Facilitator in Vegreville.



LAKELAND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Lakeland Employment Services provides one on one assistance to those 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. Services are offered in the communities of Cold Lake, Bonnyville and Lac La Biche.





Jeremy LAKELAND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Share in the Success -

Jeremy was referred to Lakeland Employment Services in December 2021. Jeremy came to the program with many barriers, one being mental health. Jeremy was on a two year medical leave prior to being referred and still experiences anxiety. The Facilitator knew it would take some time to build a relationship with Jeremy and get him comfortable with going back to work. The Facilitator worked with Jeremy on self-esteem and assertiveness in order to build a relationship with him. At the beginning of February, Jeremy stated that he thought he was ready to start seeking employment. February 2022 Jeremy gained employment with his old boss as a part-time laborer. This opportunity was great for Jeremy because he was familiar with the work place and it gave him the chance to build up the confidence that comes from being in the work force. By May 2022, Jeremy had hit his three-month employment target. He is still working with Topline Drywall and is working full-time hours now. Jeremy stated that he still has days of anxiety, but he usually can work through it. Jeremy still has work to do, but is slowly overcoming his barriers.

LEARN 2 EARN



Learn 2 Earn Youth Skills Program at EmployAbilities is an innovative endeavor. The youth ages 15-30 who enroll in 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.



Share in the Success

My name is Eli, I was one among the 12 participants that were selected for the Learn 2 Earn program at EmployAbilities. During my time in the program, I learned so many things about jobs, job searching, workplace behavior and so much more. I also met many new friends, instructors, and mentors. Every class helped us in a certain way. All the certified courses gave us the tools to help us find jobs, and to be prepared for the work force. Life skills, such as the Building Blocks team building course, provided us with the skills to create a strong relationship with our coworkers and employers. The program was very interactive. We always felt included and felt like we always had the right to participate. Some of my favorite courses were Building Blocks, Color Spectrum, Standard First Aid, and Forklift Training. Every course was a privilege and pleasure to participate in; these were just the ones that stuck with me most. I have nothing but positive comments about the program and I will strongly recommend it to anyone that will benefit from the program. The program was extremely educational and informative and it helped me with my job.

My time at EmployAbilities in the Learn 2 Earn program was enjoyable, I will miss this program very much and I will miss interacting with the facilitators, instructors, and classmates. I work at Expo Centre, as a Parking Lot Attendant. I enjoy my work and meet different people every single day. That makes my job exciting and I look forward to going to work every single day. Once again, I would like to say thank you for giving me this opportunity, I will be recommending the program Learn 2 Earn at EmployAbilities for everyone.



Eli LEARN 2 EARN



RESTART YOUR CAREER

Restart Your Career is a 24-week skills training program 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.





Natasha RESTART YOUR CAREER

Share in the Success =

Natasha says she overcame her shyness and got confidence from the Restart Your Career program.

"I was an immigrant and never worked in Canada so I was afraid of speaking in front of someone and being interviewed while applying for a job. With the help of my teachers I was able to speak in front of an audience. At the end of this program, I was so practiced in giving interviews that I was selected in my first interview and now I am working at home as a customer services representative with Shaw. It is a permanent job and I am satisfied. Now I am speaking with a lot of customers but this confidence, I only gained due to this program."

"This program helped me in resume writing, cover letter, and job search techniques. They taught us how to apply for a job and what to speak about in an interview," she adds.

"What I am today is because of this program. I appreciate the people working in this program giving support to people like me and creating our confidence, helping us finding a job."

INCLUSIVE CAREER CONNECTIONS

Serving clients in Edmonton, we 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.





INCLUSIVE CAREER CONNECTIONS

Tammy INCLUSIVE CAREER CONNECTIONS

Share in the Success =

Tammy struggles with Anxiety and Panic Disorder. She finds virtual interviews especially challenging. Tammy's employment coach assisted her with Mock Interviews and followed up with her whenever she had an interview to provide feedback. Although interviews aren't something that Tammy feels very comfortable with, her interviewing skills and her confidence in her interviewing abilities have improved considerably. Tammy's Employment Coach assisted her in updating and better targeting her resume. She found that she was getting way more interviews than she did before. Tammy was able to secure a position at E4C in March 2022 and was able to get off income support.

Here are some ways ICC helped Tammy realize her dreams:

- Significant improvement to Tammy's resume resulting in a much higher call back rate for interviews
- Assistance preparing for and debriefing after interviews
- Provided connections to employers that resulted in interviews (such as Bennett Jones)
- EmployAbilities connected her with Edmonton Public Library to enroll in and complete the following courses to strengthen her professional development:
- Grammar Refresher 1 and 2 May 2022
- Advanced Microsoft Excel 2019/Office 365 April 2022
- Administrative Assistant Fundamentals March 2022
- Intermediate Microsoft Excel 2019/Office 365 March 2022
- Introduction to Microsoft Excel 2019/Office 365 March 2022.

"I recently referred a friend to EmployAbilities, I have been bragging about how supportive you are so that has a bit to do with it. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me in person today, great that we can finally do things like that. And thank you for being such an amazing support in these trying times," Tammy says.



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

20 Clients accepted into job placement services

NORTH

Clients placed in employment

Share in the Success =

Keith was an unemployed Canadian citizen, with grade 10 education, living and being supported with family. He had a Class 1 driving license that was suspended. Keith required revision of his resume and cover letter target to opportunities in the Cold Lake/Bonnyville area, as well as several safety tickets: First Aid, H2S Alive, Confined Space levels 1 & 2, and Fall Protection. Keith was ready, willing, and able to start work immediately and had been actively seeking employment on his own, securing two positions - one with Old School Trucking, Bonnyville and another camp job 2 weeks in/1 week out in Fort McMurray. Keith attended appointments on time and eagerly, and was open to sharing some struggles. Keith was referred to several other service providers for assistance and attended appointments with an Employment Facilitator several times per week for support.

Keith was committed and attended several free courses online, as well as completing all necessary safety tickets, working on his resume and cover letter, and learning how to apply online and build profiles. Keith was offered a position at DCM Group as a labourer, which required an extensive onboarding – he was loaned a laptop from CEN and completed his onboarding over a weekend in order to start work ASAP. His position at DCM started May 17th – he is still there, putting in as many hours as he can and "proving his worth". In July, Keith stopped by the CEN office to tell the Employment Facilitator he had been offered an apprenticeship in Ironwork, and a union job! We are so proud of how far Keith has come.



20 Clients employed at 3 months

Keith CAREER EVOLUTION NORTH

45+WORKS

45+ Works is a 16 week employment program for mature workers in rural north central Alberta offering eight weeks of skills training and eight weeks of supported job search. We provide loaner equipment and work subsidy options to increase employment successes.



Share in the Success =

45+WORKS

Gladys has not worked in several years. She has been taking care of grandchildren and trying to make ends meet. Gladys has a background in oil and gas roles and non-profit services. She has struggled to focus on herself and get motivated to look for work that will complement her family responsibilities. Gladys has made decisions to change careers and move into Security as a job that will allow her to build her savings to eventually become an Addictions Worker and Counselor. Gladys has consistently attended workshops, participating and sharing valuable thoughts and helpful information. She has updated her resume and cover letter, improved her computer skills, and has embraced a growth mindset while learning about employment skills to benefit her in her next role. Her coach has worked one-on-one with Gladys to examine career exploration and assisted with job search in different fields. The 45+ Works program will provide work development support by registering Gladys for the Security Guard Training program so that she can become a licensed security guard and apply for jobs in her community.

Gladys has stated, "This program has sparked the motivation I have been missing in my life. I look forward to joining the classes each day and am learning quite a bit. I really enjoy the program."



Gladys 45+ WORKS



EMPLOYABILITIES GRANDE PRAIRIE

EmployAbilities 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 jobs and stay employed.

43 Clients accepted into job placement services



Share in the Success :

Pearl was referred to EmployAbilities Grande Prairie a month after moving to Grande Prairie to be closer to family; she was recently widowed, struggled with a bad shoulder, and was worried about finding employment that would accommodate her physical barriers. Pearl was also skeptical about finding employment during the COVID pandemic and expressed that she knew nothing about online job search or how to navigate virtual platforms. Pearl had worked in the same industry for years before moving to Grande Prairie and was nervous about changing careers; she was motivated and adapted well, eventually securing employment where she thrived. Pearl managed to find meaningful employment, which accommodated her needs and assisted when she was struggling. Pearl was able to become more financially independent, learn the bus routes, re-engage with the public, and simply allowed herself to become more knowledgeable about new career tasks and the virtual world.

EmployAbilities Grande Prairie assisted Pearl in:

- Revising and updating Pearl's resume and cover letter
- Learning about the virtual labor market and job search platforms
- Completing virtual workshops, interview preparation, and skill-building
- Navigating a virtual Job Club
- Communicating via email and phone call/text message
- Learning the city and bus routes

"I knew absolutely nothing about online job sites or how to deal with it all, I was totally lost until finding EmployAbilities Grande Prairie," Pearl says. "I would have to say the best part was just to know I could reach out to Kassi anytime I needed help with online things or anything really, she was a real lifeline for me for sure," she adds. "With a lot of help from the people at EmployAbilities Grande Prairie I found a job that I love and I'm so thankful to all of you."



Pearl EMPLOYABILITIES GRANDE PRAIRIE

13



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 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 teaches newcomers how to work with employment agencies, cultural communication skills, and information about disabilities and accommodations in the Canadian workplace.



This is what our clients are saying about us.

"It is a pleasure to give my personal feedback to the Newcomer program. I would like to take this opportunity to convey my thanks and appreciation for your kind assistance, your valuable ideas, and useful suggestions during the meetings. I wish you all the best."

Gul EMPLOYABILITIES FOR NEWCOMERS



Michael Farr, Program Coordinator at the Newcomers Day

"I emailed to inform you that finally applying to those jobs endlessly paid off. I got a job with an insurance company as their accountant. It is a permanent full-time position with all benefits covered by the employer. Thank you for all your guidance and support."

Shaheena EMPLOYABILITIES FOR NEWCOMERS

VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS

VIRTUAL CONNECTIပံNS

Virtual Connections allows individuals with disabilities to successfully enter today's virtual world of work! Participants in the program 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.





Marie VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS

Share in the Success =

Marie is originally from Calgary and recently moved to the Westlock area to be closer to her son and grandchildren. Marie was referred to the Virtual Connections Program in October 2021. When notified of her acceptance in November 2021, she was ecstatic and hopeful. She needed employment assistance like resume development, networking and employment skills that she was able to acquire from the Virtual Connections program. She had barriers that included transportation and mental and physical health issues.

The employment coach provided various workshops including: boundaries, networking skills, transferable skills and job club. The employment coach shared job openings via email with Marie, and Marie was active in her own job search as well. Marie attended all workshops and was very active in her participation, leading to success. In February 2022, Marie was offered a position as an anhydrous ammonia driver starting April 1, 2022. Our next steps were to find transportation and insurance for her to get back and forth from work. The employment coach sent her a list of insurance companies to obtain quotes. Although she had many bumps and let downs while finding a vehicle and dealing with insurance companies, she was able to pull it all together to start her job on April 1 without a hitch. She is happy and grateful to be working in her field, and doing well at it. Marie stated, "Thank you for all your help, I really appreciate it."

GROUNDWORKS



GroundWORKS is a 16-week skills building program taught entirely online across 19 Northern Alberta Communities. The program provides computer, essential, life and pre-employment skills building to bring individuals closer to considering employment.



This is what three of our clients had to say about GroundWORKS:

"I would like to acknowledge the EmployAbilities team as they have been instrumental, supportive, engaging, fun, inclusive, and professional. I am currently enrolled in the program and I am finding the topics useful and educational. I have been supplied with a laptop that makes attendance and participation seamless. My team leader Lynn has made every effort to go above and beyond to provide me with exceptional service and quality information that I've been able to apply right away. I highly recommend this program to anyone looking to update their skills in both technology and employability. Thank you for this opportunity."

Cara GroundWORKS

"Everything has been really good from my perspective, this is likely the ultimate learning environment for me."

James GroundWORKS "I have enjoyed my whole experience with GroundWORKS - all the Ground-WORKS coaches are fantastic. I love the one on one and how every coach's style is different - some hands-on and other days just are listening."

Angel GroundWORKS

ST**F**PS 2 EMPLOYMENT

STEP 2 EMPLOYMENT

The Steps 2 Employment program provides up to 36 weeks of online training and development built with Edmonton and surrounding area residents in mind. Participants should have minimal to no recent job experience.



Here's what our clients are saying about the program:

"I am really learning a lot, not only about computer skills but about life management as well, I am really glad I got accepted."

"Practicing the technology after so long made me feel less like a deer in the headlights."

"I learned better communication skills, dos and don'ts when trying to communicate with others. The 'Work.. Who Needs It' section was very interesting and informative, I love the assessments. The online job search section was very informative as well, I learned how to make better job searches online."

"I am very pleased with the timing of the topics, I think they are linked very well."

"It was nice to get a refresher on Excel and to learn about different apps on my cell phone I can use to improve my life and job prospects."

"I really liked the Excel budget template. It opened my eyes to how much money I shouldn't be spending. I also really enjoyed the self-esteem presentation, I learned some things I should be applying daily."

"Very essential information for me, teaching me how to further my life more than I could have on my own. THANKS!"

"Learned lots about resumes and cover letters and how there are differing types of each and what the different types are used for."

"First, I thought the resume development session was a bit late but now I realize that it was not, I was able to improve my resume greatly by realizing all the things I did wrong on my previous resume, great session."

"My main takeaway was the very insightful and valuable information regarding resumes and cover letters."

"I learned about setting boundaries, developing more love for myself, setting goals and the importance of preparing for the task of finding a job."

Annual recipients of the Iris Saunders bursary - given to Restart Your Career participants

Listed from left to right. Ken Saunders Jr., Ken Saunders Sr., Alicia Mair, Alexandra Johnson, Paulina Oyetunji



LONG TERM SERVICE AWARDS



Congratulations to Chandra Sigamoney who celebrated 20 years of service at EmployAbilities.

EmployAbilities has recently updated its website! Visit www.employabilities.ab.ca to learn more about our programs.

A few of the clients who have been supported by EmployAbilities.





Staff from North Central gathered in Smoky Lake for team building.

Audited financial statements for the fiscal year from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 are available by contacting EmployAbilities at 780-423-4106 or by emailing employ@employabilities.ab.ca.

Contact Us

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