



**2023-24**

**Annual Report**

## Message from the Board Chair

As we celebrate EmployAbilities 50th anniversary, it is with great pride and gratitude that we reflect on our journey and its remarkable impact over the decades. This milestone is a celebration of the lives transformed and the communities strengthened through EmployAbilities programs.

As we recognize our past and look toward the future, we want to extend our thanks to everyone who has been a part of EmployAbilities journey - the EmployAbilities team, our funders (the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta), donors, employment partners, supporters, and our clients who have accessed our programs.

We welcomed three new board members this year: MaryAnn Everett, Marj Langkamp, and Vivian Lee. Many thanks go to our departing board members Ed Lavallee and Lorenzo Pasutto for their contributions.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thanks and congrats to the Executive Director, management, and staff for their hard work and accomplishments this year.

*Dan Stannard*

### ***Board of Directors 2023-24***



*Dan Stannard*  
Chair



*Jenny Wang*  
Vice-Chair



*Cam Whiting*  
Treasurer



*Edgar Jackson*  
Director



*Brian Sokia*  
Director



*Ken Saunders*  
Director



*Catherine Lee-  
Hannley*  
Director



*Marj Langkamp*  
Director



*Maryann Everett*  
Director



*Vivian Lee*  
Director





## Message from the Executive Director

Ten years ago I started working for EmployAbilities as the Executive Director. One of the first tasks I had was to celebrate the 40th anniversary of EmployAbilities. We put a team together and put on a great open house with speakers, great food and tours of our downtown office. Ten years later, EmployAbilities is now celebrating our 50th anniversary.

EmployAbilities was founded 50 years ago when a group of concerned parents came together concerned about housing, transportation and employment for their sons and daughters that had disabilities. From there discussions EmployAbilities was founded in 1974. We carry on that legacy of those parents fighting for the rights of their children.

EmployAbilities now has over sixty staff working in ten different programs and services with an annual budget of six million dollars in revenue. Our programs have expanded in Edmonton as well as the communities of Grande Prairie, Athabasca, Lac La Biche, St. Paul, Vegreville, Cold Lake and Bonnyville. I encourage you to read the annual report to see how EmployAbilities is impacting change in Albertans with disabilities and barriers to employment.

*Jason Loewer*



## About EmployAbilities

EmployAbilities is where ability meets opportunity. We are a non-profit, charitable organization that, for **fifty years**, has provided skills development, training, and employment services to Albertans with various employment barriers such as medical conditions, mental health challenges, permanent injuries, and disabilities. We believe that providing opportunities for individuals to develop work-related skills gives every client our team serves their best shot to thrive and be self-sufficient in their employment.



### Mission

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



### Vision

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



### Values

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





## Our Impact - by the numbers

*\*Note: not all programs collect all statistics.*

657



Clients accepted into job placement services

379



Clients placed in employment

284



Clients still employed at 3 months

154



Clients accepted into a pre-employment program

57



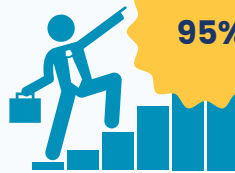
Clients accepted into a 24-week training program

94%



*Are "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with our services*

95%

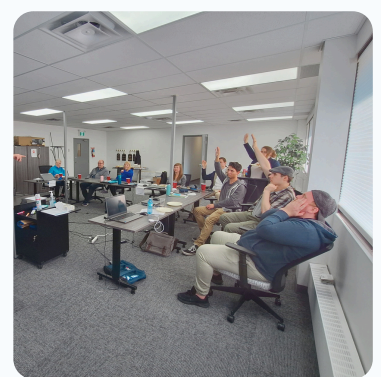


*Have seen improvement in their lives*

95%



*Would recommend EmployAbilities*

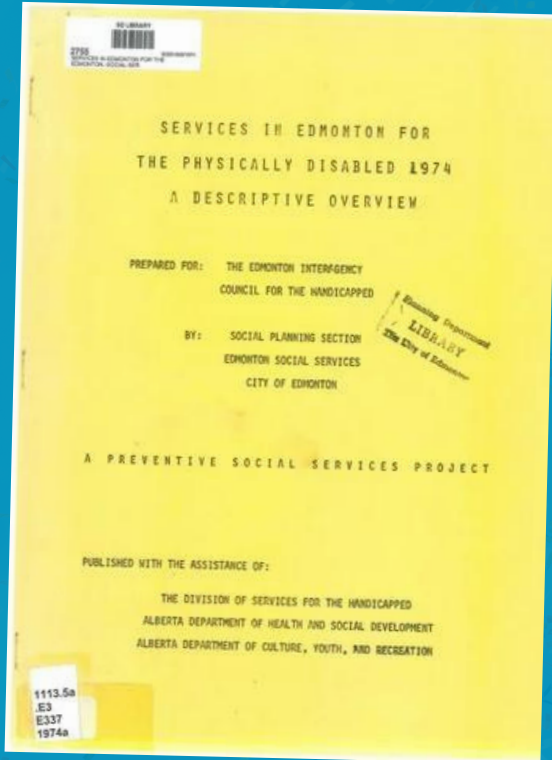


# EmployAbilities -

70's

80's

90's



1974

1977

1988

1992

1993

1995

1996

1998

Incorporated as a Society (Employment Services for the Physically Disabled)

Received Registered Charity status

Iris. M Saunders hired as Executive Director

Held Bridges Conference - "Diversity in the Workplace"

Name changed to EmployAbilities

Relocated Edmonton offices to current location on Jasper Avenue

Restart Your Career program begins

Call Centre Training begins



# Celebrating 50 years!

photo album

2000s

2010s

2020s

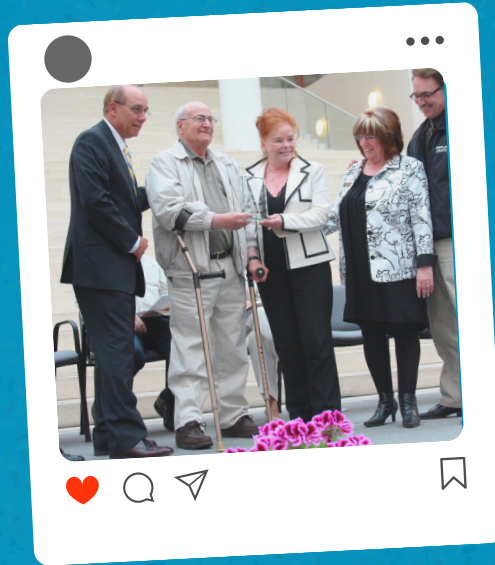


Photo courtesy of Jason Gillis photography

2003

EmployAbilities North program initiated in Bonnyville and Cold Lake

2013

October declared Disability Employment Awareness month

2014

Jason Loewer hired as Executive Director

2016

Learn 2 Earn begins

2017

Lakeland Employment Services begins

2018

Career Evolution North begins

2019

Strive 4 Work begins

2020

EmployAbilities Grande Prairie, EmployAbilities for Newcomers begins

2024

Celebrates 50th anniversary

## Career Evolution North



Serving the communities of Cold Lake and Bonnyville, Career Evolution North provides client-centered services to help Albertans on EI and EI Reachback gain employment by utilizing their skills and qualifications.



“

*T.B., who was recently widowed, is the sole provider for three children. She came to CEN through word of mouth looking for support to get back to the workforce. T.B. required resume revision, cover letter development and upgrading in bookkeeping. The Employment Facilitator requested she do some research on an all-encompassing course that she could complete in two weeks. T.B. did the research, found a course, and started applying for positions in her field. She applied for, interviewed with and was accepted for a position with Flint working in camp four days a week and home every Thursday. She is loving being back to work!*

”

55



Clients accepted into job placement services

34



Clients placed in employment

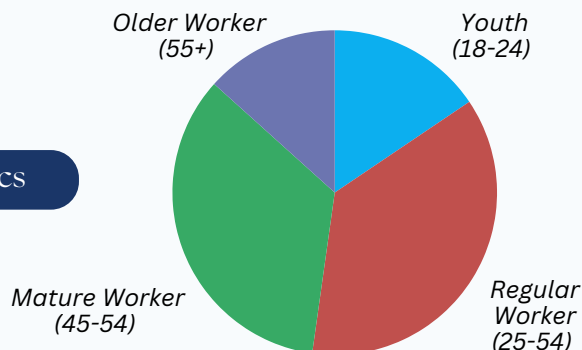
24



Clients still employed at 3 months



CEN demographics





## EmployAbilities Grande Prairie

## EmployAbilities GRANDE PRAIRIE

EmployAbilities Grande Prairie offers comprehensive employment services that help people overcome challenges, find jobs, develop a career path, and build a better future. Residents of Grande Prairie and area can access workplace exposure courses, get funding for job-related supports, and receive short-term job coaching.



“

*Shawna joined the EmployAbilities Grande Prairie program in spring of 2023. She lives with a hearing impairment, and was having a hard time finding an employer who could provide an accommodating work environment. With assistance from EmployAbilities, Shawna secured an interview with Wesco Distribution for a Warehouse Associate role. Shawna quickly impressed her employer with her work performance and quick ability to learn and was offered a temporary role. A couple months later, Shawna became a permanent full-time employee. We at EmployAbilities Grande Prairie are grateful to have been able to watch Shawna grow, thrive, and develop her new career.*

”



-Eddy B.  
General Manager,  
Wesco Distribution

*EmployAbilities Grande Prairie is always my first call when looking for employees. They have supported us with finding 3 new additions to the Wesco Team! Thank you EmployAbilities - we are grateful for our partnership.*

60



Clients accepted into  
job placement  
services

28



Clients placed  
in employment

17



Clients still  
employed at 3  
months

# EmployAbilities For Newcomers



EmployAbilities for Newcomers is a pre-employment program, designed to work alongside employment and settlement service agencies that teaches essential workplace skills to help newcomers to the Edmonton region find success in Canada.

*"Thank you so much for all your support and willingness to help. Your delivery was second to none. I learnt a lot. Keep up the excellent work."*

Jennifer

*"I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for all the support and guidance. Your willingness to lend a helping hand and share your expertise will make a significant difference."*

Richa

*"I just want to echo how incredible you are at what you do."*

Jon

95



Clients accepted into a pre-employment program



We're proud to partner with many social service and settlement agencies, including:





## EmployAbilities North



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



“

*Bill self-referred in February. Having been laid off from his old job and relying on EI, he faced challenges due to ongoing shoulder and neck issues resulting from a work-related accident. The facilitator worked closely with him to enhance his resume while exploring relevant job opportunities. Bill discovered a promising position at Inn Hotels through Indeed and applied right away. When he didn't hear back, the facilitator encouraged Bill to reach out directly, resulting in an interview opportunity. His determination impressed them, and he was offered the position. After starting his new job Bill reached out to us: "thank you so much for all the encouragement & support!"*

”



### COMMENTS FROM THE CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

*"I'm now more confident of my skills and abilities, more knowledgeable on how to search for a job, and reduced some of my barriers to employment."*

100



Clients accepted into  
job placement  
services

60



Clients placed  
in employment

46



Clients still  
employed at 3  
months

41



Clients still  
employed at 6  
months



# GroundWORKS

GroundWORKS was a hybrid online and in-person program designed for people with little or no work experience, those re-entering the workforce after a long break, and those facing barriers to employment. It served the communities of Athabasca, Edson, Grande Prairie, High Level, Hinton, Peace River, and Whitecourt. GroundWORKS ended in February 2024.

“

*\*Jill sought out the GroundWORKS program because she had recently been released from prison, and a requirement of her parole was to find employment or be actively involved in training. Jill and the skills coach focused on updating her resume and researching jobs that she could apply for despite her criminal record. She attended almost every workshop and participated fully. During the last week, she was accepted into an addictions worker program which she began attending right away. Jill was contacted at one month follow up - she informed us that she is still in school and working part-time at the Dollar Store. She is very happy and stated she feels like her life is finally moving forward.*

”

\*name changed to protect identity



Clients accepted into a pre-employment program

## Engaging with Employers

EmployAbilities helps employers with their hiring needs by linking them to qualified, motivated, and able staff. Here are some of the companies that we worked with over the last year - thank you for your commitment to inclusive hiring!



# Inclusive Career Connections



Inclusive Career Connections assists clients located in the Edmonton Capital region with various disabilities and medical conditions enabling them to overcome employment barriers and receive the support they need to attain and retain work.

“

*With a background in Police and Investigation Studies, Michael faced the challenge of finding a role that not only matched his academic training but also aligned with his personal strengths and needs, especially considering his place on the autism spectrum. Michael turned to EmployAbilities and the ICC team to assist him with updating and tailoring his resumes, developing a more consistent job search strategy, and practicing for interviews. The turning point for Michael came when he secured a position as a Surveillance Operator with a local casino. This role perfectly utilizes his proficiency with technology, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities, developed through his education.*

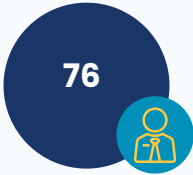
”



Clients accepted into job placement services



Clients placed in employment



Clients still employed at 3 months

*Between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024...*



clients used the mental health supports



Transit tickets were provided to clients



Skills training workshops were offered



People called us or utilized the Resource Centre





## Lakeland Employment Services

Lakeland Employment Services provides one-on-one assistance to clients experiencing challenges finding employment. Through our store front centres in Bonnyville, Cold Lake, Lac La Biche, St. Paul and Vegreville, we provide walk-in personalized resume development, access to computer stations, pre-employment skills workshops, and short term courses.

“

*Skye was referred to Lakeland Employment Services in November 2023. She had no childcare and had not worked for the past several years, which negatively affected her confidence and self-esteem. The facilitator worked with Skye closely doing one-on-one workshops, increasing her self-worth and employment skills. In January 2024, she gained full-time employment as a Youth Monitor. Skye has already overcome many barriers, and we're confident that she will continue to do so as she moves forward in her life and career. As of this writing Skye is still working in her job and loving it.*

”

153



Clients accepted into  
job placement  
services

93



Clients placed  
in employment

60



Clients still  
employed at 3  
months



### FROM OUR GRAND OPENINGS IN FALL, 2023



## Learn 2 Earn



Learn 2 Earn empowers Edmonton-area youth aged 15-30 who face employment barriers by providing job readiness training, certifications, and support,. Additionally, L2E works with local businesses to assist youth in finding employment opportunities.



“

*“I came from Uganda as a refugee to Canada from Eritera. As a new immigrant, I was trying hard to find a job. I dropped my resume in several places, but no one called me. I was getting frustrated and stressed. In the program, I learned many new lessons about working in Canada: how to write a resume, interview skills, First Aid, WHMIS, Forklift, and many others. I am very grateful for all the skills I learnt in the Learn 2 Earn program that helped me to overcome barriers and to find a job and keep it.”*

- Yonatan

”

30



Clients accepted into  
job placement  
services

24



Clients placed  
in employment

24



Clients still  
employed at 3  
months



# Restart Your Career



Restart Your Career is a 24-week training program serving individuals with diverse backgrounds and barriers to employment. The program prepares individuals for entry-level positions in various industries including customer service, admin, hospitality, and technology support.



“

*“The experience at EmployAbility was transformative. It taught me that one can overcome any obstacle with the right support and a determined mindset. The skills I acquired, and the personal growth I experienced have given me a renewed sense of confidence and purpose. I am now better equipped to face the future and pursue my career goals with enthusiasm.”*

-Sylvine

”

57

Clients accepted into a 24-week training program



## In Memorium

On June 24, 2024 RYC Program Assistant Richard Quinn passed away suddenly. Although Richard was only with EmployAbilities for a short time he made an impression through his compassion, intelligence, and decency. We miss Richard, and send our condolences to his family.





## Steps 2 Employment

## STEPS 2 EMPLOYMENT

Steps 2 Employment was an online program serving residents of the Edmonton capital region with little or no job experience looking to enter or re-enter the workforce. The program ended in July 2024.

“

*“I wanted to give you an update since you helped me a ton with getting this job. I’m loving it so far; some days are a little harder than others due to my health but that’ll sort itself out over time. Everyone there is super kind and understanding. It’s good to be working in such a positive work environment and I can’t wait to gain more experience and make my way up through the positions at the restaurant no matter how long it’ll take.”*

-Armand

”

44



Clients accepted into  
job placement  
services

14



Clients placed  
in employment

13



Clients still  
employed at 3  
months



### COMMENTS FROM THE CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

*“[EmployAbilities] completely changed the trajectory of my life... I'm less depressed as I was before and working helps me get my mind off things. I'm less worried about the future because I am doing something.”*

# Strive 4 Work



Located in south Edmonton, Strive 4 Work is an employment-focused program for Edmonton-area residents that have a disability or barrier to employment. Participants engage in 10 weeks of intensive classroom training where they gain essential life-skills and labor market knowledge followed by a 12-week work experience placement, allowing them to apply what they've learned in a real-world setting and enhance their employability.



“

*“Strive 4 Work has been an invaluable ally in my job search journey. This program’s guidance provided by the facilitators Randy and Jessie have given me newfound confidence and clear direction. The resources and outside facilitators not only enhanced my skills but also empowered me to navigate the job market with purpose. I am grateful for the transformative experience that Strive 4 Work has offered in shaping my professional growth.”*

-T.S.

”



Clients accepted into job placement services



Clients placed in employment



Clients still employed at 3 months



## 45+Works



The 45+ Works Program aimed to help older workers connect or reconnect with the job market. Due to economic challenges and the impact of COVID-19, many mature workers faced job displacement. To address this, the program offered personalized services focusing on three key areas: employability skills, digital technology proficiency, and essential life skills designed to equip older workers with the necessary skills to find employment. 45+ Works ended in 2024.

“

*Tony was a Cohort 4 client who participated in every class. Tony has had health concerns that have ended his ability to continue in his chosen work. He faced having to make new decisions about what to do next and what would work with his health challenges.*

*His coach assisted him in defining his skills and interests and researching several options for Tony to consider. They practiced interview skills, updated his resume and discussed job positions as they were posted to find the right fit for Tony. All of their hard work paid off with a job offer with a bussing company. Tony started his training on December 12, 2023 and couldn't be happier!*

”

### Introducing Labour Force Link!

Labour Force Link is a new program which started in April, 2024 that helps employers in Athabasca, Bonnyville, Cold Lake, Lac La Biche, St. Paul, and Vegreville. Designed for small and medium businesses, Labour Force Link is like a one-stop shop, providing everything to help businesses attract and retain a strong workforce. Currently we are in the process of working in partnership with Pivotal Marketing to conduct a labour market needs assessment to address the specific needs of each community. Although the program is just getting off the ground, we have been able to help 12 employers hire 18 new employees.

Visit our website at [www.labourforcelink.ca](http://www.labourforcelink.ca) to learn more.



21



Clients accepted into job placement services

12



Clients placed in employment

12



Clients still employed at 3 months



# EMPLOY *Abilities*

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 780.423.4106

 [employ@employabilities.ab.ca](mailto:employ@employabilities.ab.ca)

 [employabilities.ab.ca](http://employabilities.ab.ca)

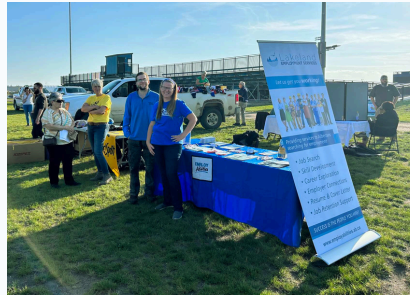
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**DONATE AND  
CONTRIBUTE  
TO THE LIFE-  
CHANGING  
WORK!**



Audited financial statements for the fiscal year from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024 are available by contacting EmployAbilities at 780.423.4106 or by emailing **[employ@employabilities.ab.ca](mailto:employ@employabilities.ab.ca)**.