

The North Connect

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 05 / OCTOBER 2026



UNLOCKING TALENT DURING DEAM & SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Welcome to our October edition! October is always an energetic month in the Peace Region, but for us at EmployAbilities, it holds special significance. October marks Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) across Canada, alongside Small Business Week.

If you look around the Peace Region this time of year, you'll notice that no two pumpkins in the patch are identical—some are tall, some are knobby, some are small, and others are vibrant and uniquely shaped. Yet, every single one adds richness, character, and value to the harvest. Inclusive hiring works the exact same way: true strength in a team doesn't come from finding identical copies, but from gathering a diverse patch of talents, perspectives, and strengths that together make your business thrive.

As your Employer Liaisons, our goal this month is simple: to help Grande Prairie employers bridge the talent gap by tapping into an underutilized, highly skilled workforce. Inclusion isn't just a social good—it's a competitive advantage for regional businesses facing local labor shortages.



Community Events

- **Oct 4th, Canadian Cancer Society CIBC Run for the Cure**, a breast cancer fundraiser that brings together communities across the country. Whether you choose to run or walk, your participation helps support all Canadians impacted by breast cancer. Sign up today! Volunteers needed for several roles for this event. Please reach out to Mark.Kahan@cancer.ca for more information.
- **Oct 17th, Winter Clothing Drop & Swap**, 12pm–4pm, Ernie Radbourne Pavilion, share good used clothing with the community and help keep usable items out of the landfill. Giving clothing another life helps make better use of the water, energy and materials that went into producing it while giving someone else the chance to enjoy it.
- **Oct 22, The North Connect Fall Job Fair**, 9am–Set-up, 9:30am Keynote Speaker Carmen Moore, 10am–6pm Doors open to public, 1:30 pm Keynote Speaker Mariah Braun, Location: Montrose Cultural Center 9839 103 Ave. Registration for this event is free, though we are seeking voluntary donations to support our programs little store initiative, contact us to learn more.

Beyond the Accommodation Myth: The True ROI of Inclusive Hiring

When business leaders talk about inclusive hiring, a common misconception often surfaces: "Can our business afford the cost of workplace accommodations?"

It's a fair question for any business owner managing bottom lines and tight budgets. However, extensive workplace research paints a very different picture, one where accommodations are rarely expensive and almost always yield a high return on investment (ROI).

The Reality: Most Accommodations Cost Nothing

Data from the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) shows that over 50% of workplace accommodations cost \$0 to implement. For the minority that do incur a cost, the average one-time expense is under \$500.

In practice, accommodating a candidate or employee rarely involves expensive structural renovations or high-tech overhauls. Instead, it usually looks like small, practical adjustments to how work gets organized:

- **Flexible Scheduling:** Adjusting shift start and end times by 30 minutes to align with transit schedules or stamina needs.
- **Visual Task Checklists:** Replacing oral step by step instructions with a simple printed or digital checklist to streamline workflow.
- **Written Communication:** Providing meeting agendas in advance or offering written follow ups alongside verbal briefings.
- **Ergonomic & Workspace Tweaks:** Reorganizing desk placement to reduce noise distractions or providing a basic screen magnifier.

Accomodation	Benefit to Employee	Spillover Benefit to Team
Visual Checklists & Process Guides	Helps neurodivergent staff track complex tasks	Speeds up onboarding for all new hires and reduces operational errors across the board
Quiet Workspaces / Noise-Canceling	Helps employees with sensory processing needs	Boosts concentration and focus for anyone working on detail-heavy tasks



Partner with EmployAbilities Grande Prairie

You don't have to navigate workplace accessibility alone. At EmployAbilities, our Employer Liaisons are here to help local businesses audit their hiring processes, access wage subsidies, and connect with qualified, pre-screened local job seekers.

Let's use October build an environment where every employee in Grande Prairie can hit the ground running.

Reach out to your Employer Liaison today to schedule a consultation before DEAM kicks off!

Talent Pool Highlights

Cntd.



Candidate A.G.

- Currently an On-call Rural & Suburban Mail Carrier for Canada Post, with previous hands-on experience as a FedEx Package Handler and Bay Attendant in the Clairmont/Sexsmith area.
- bringing strong skills in facility management, cash handling, equipment maintenance, and customer service.
- Reliable & Locally Connected: Holds a Class 5 driver's license, secondary education from Sexsmith, and active local volunteer experience in safety and security for the Bear Creek Folk Festival.



Candidate S.D.

- Versatile Healthcare Experience: Currently working as a Casual MOA at Grande Banks Medical Clinic while serving as a Health Care Aide at Emerald Gardens (since 2023) and holding partial LPN education.
- Certified MOA & Unit Clerk: Formally trained through ABES College with 160 practicum hours, possessing hands-on clinical skills in patient reception, scheduling, chart management, and assisting physicians.
- Core Technical & Personal Strengths: Highly adaptable administrator with a 65+ WPM typing speed, BLS/First Aid certifications, strong medical terminology knowledge, and a commitment to patient confidentiality.



Candidate H.W.

- Hands-On Operations & Equipment Support: Experienced in managing gear, sharpening skates, preparing facility supplies, and maintaining barn and animal care standards across local athletic and recreation environments (Sexsmith Vipers, PARDS, Eastlink Centre).
- Inclusive Client & Student Assistance: Skilled in supporting diverse populations, including individuals with disabilities and youth, by providing attentive side-walking, physical education assistance, and positive customer service.
- Dependable, Safety-Minded Team Player: Certified in First Aid/CPR and Safety in Sport, with a proven track record of punctuality, strict adherence to safety protocols, and fostering a supportive, encouraging atmosphere.

Partner With Us: Streamline Your Staffing

Interested in one of our candidates? Or are you looking to fill a completely different vacancy? The EmployAbilities Grande Prairie Liaison team is here to help at no cost to your business.

What we provide to our employer partners:

- Pre-screened, job-ready candidates tailored to your specific industry.
- Recruitment support
- Information on resources such as grants
- On-site onboarding support and job coaching to ensure long-term retention.
- Guidance on wage subsidies and inclusive workplace modifications.

Connect with the Employer Liaison team today:

Website:

employabilities.ab.ca/grande-prairie

or scan the QR code



Chantel Caza-Roeters:

Ph.(780)882-4127

E. ccaza@employabilities.ab.ca

Leah Stewart:

Ph.(780)933-9914

E. lstewart@employabilities.ab.ca

You're invited to the

North

Connect

Fall

Job Fair

Hosted by: **EMPLOY** *Abilities*  **GRANDE PRAIRIE** and



— **OCTOBER 22, 2026** —

MONTROSE CULTURAL CENTRE 9839 103 AVE, GRANDE PRAIRIE, AB

9:00 - 9:30 AM	Setup
9:30 AM	Keynote Speaker Carmen Moore
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM	Job Fair Open to Public
1:30 PM	Keynote Speaker Mariah Braun
6:00 PM	Tear-Down Begins

Have questions?

Contact the EmployAbilities Grande Prairie Employer Liaison Team:

Chantel Caza | Leah Stewart

 **780-882-4127**  **780-933-9914**

Employers:
Register Your Table Here:



Although registration is **FREE** for this event, EmployAbilities Grande Prairie is seeking voluntary donations of personal care/hygiene items, non-perishable food products, or gift cards to purchase these items to support our program’s Little Store initiative.

The Little Store provides job seekers experiencing financial barriers with basic needs to support their ability to participate, network, and obtain sustainable employment.

The Little Store is operated within our training centre and also offers participants opportunities to build hands-on customer service, stocking, and inventory management skills while also giving back to the community.