

TEMPLATE LETTER TO MLA/Minister

[Include MLA/Minister name and address]

[Date]

Dear ,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the exclusion of many disability workers from the Critical Worker Benefit.

[Include your name; organization's name; services provided; staff roles; and the number of individuals served, other information you feel is relevant.]

On February 10, 2021, the Government of Alberta announced the new Critical Worker Benefit to compensate essential workers in a range of public and private sectors, including the disability sector. The initial information provided by the government, and reflected on the government website, indicated that all frontline disability workers, regardless of role, would be eligible for the one-time, lump-sum payment of \$1200. On February 17, 2021, further information about the benefit was made available, and this contradicted the initial information provided: The Critical Worker Benefit is limited to staff working in overnight residences. This is particularly troubling, given that many frontline disability workers, outside 24/7 residential services, were also excluded from the first phase of benefits, covering March – July 2020.

We are extremely disappointed and disheartened for our hardworking staff. They have risked their own safety, as well as that of their family members, to provide critical services to the most vulnerable Albertans throughout the pandemic. This will have enormous impacts on staff morale, staff engagement, and likely retention in a sector that is already experiencing high turnover.

[Share your own examples about the current impact or potential impact of this on your staff, organizations, and the individuals that you serve]

We are reaching out for your support on this issue to help ensure that all disability workers are eligible for the benefit. This is a public policy issue, directly impacting hardworking Albertans and the vulnerable individuals they serve.

All disability workers who have been on the front lines during the pandemic, providing critical support for individuals with developmental disabilities, must be eligible for the Critical Worker Benefit. Regardless of role, they have borne risks throughout the pandemic and must be recognized and compensated for their work.

We thank you for your support to advance this.

Sincerely,

[Your name here and contact info]

cc. Ryan Geake, Chair, ACDS Board of Directors
Andrea Hesse, CEO, ACDS