

MEETING HANDOUT

Support people with disabilities by preventing Canada Disability Benefit clawbacks

This meeting handout is intended to serve as a template that can be tailored to your family's experience. Bring your final version to any meetings you have with decision-makers and leave it with them so they have a detailed record of your request.

Summary

Insert your own introduction here – who you are, what your interests are, etc. as a short paragraph

After several years of consultation, the federal government has released design parameters for a new Canada Disability Benefit (CDB). This benefit is intended to address the poverty faced by many people with disabilities and to increase their financial security.¹

We are asking that the Government of Alberta do its part to support people with disabilities by changing AISH and Income Support regulations so that the entire value of the CDB reaches its intended recipients.

If the government takes no action, CDB recipients who also receive AISH or Income Support will experience a dollar-for-dollar reduction in these benefits.

Those who qualify for both CDB and either AISH or Income Support should receive the full amount they are entitled to from both programs in order to address the significant depth of poverty experienced by people with disabilities.

We must address poverty among people with disabilities

Please consider adding your and/or your families' experiences to further support your advocacy in this section.

In 2022, 1,110,000 people – or 12.3 per cent – of people aged 15 and older with disabilities lived below the poverty line in Canada.² The poverty rate rises to 29.4 per cent for single individuals with disabilities.

The Canada Disability Benefit is desperately needed

¹ Justice Laws Website. (May 2024). Canada Disability Benefit Act (S.C. 2023, c. 17). <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-3.45/page-1.html>

² Statistics Canada. (April 26, 2024). Table 11-10-0090-01 Poverty and low-income statistics by disability status. <https://doi.org/10.25318/1110009001-eng>

The federal government recently published a draft regulation containing design details for the new CDB.³ With eligibility tied to receipt of the Disability Tax Credit, the CDB is expected to provide about 600,000 low-income people with disabilities aged 18-64 with up to \$200 per month. The federal government will begin providing payments to eligible Canadians starting in July 2025.⁴

Federal investments into our income security system lead directly to reduced poverty. Seniors experience lower poverty than other groups because of Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, and child poverty has been reduced in recent years thanks in part to the introduction of the Canada Child Benefit.

The evidence is clear: the Canada Disability Benefit will help to alleviate poverty for people with disabilities, but only if they benefit from the full amount for which they qualify.

The Alberta government must act to avoid clawing back the value of the Canada Disability Benefit

If the government takes no action to protect the value of the CDB, recipients who also receive AISH or Income Support will experience a dollar-for-dollar reduction in their AISH or Income Support benefits. A clawback would be contrary to the intended purpose and spirit of the CDB and would come at the expense of already marginalized people.

Several jurisdictions have already agreed not to claw back the CDB, including Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Nunavut. Some have decided to augment the new benefit, such as Newfoundland and Labrador announcing a \$400 per month top-up to the CDB.⁵

Avoiding any clawbacks to the CDB is administratively feasible and would come at no cost to the provincial government. Specifically, the *Alberta Income Support, Training and Health Benefits, Alta Regulation 122/2011* should add the words “a Canada Disability Benefit” in a new sub-section under section 1(1) of Schedule 2 - Exempt Financial Resources⁶. The *Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped General Regulation, Alta Reg 91/2007* should be amended by adding the words “a Canada Disability Benefit”

³ Government of Canada. (June 29, 2024). Canada Gazette, Part I, Volume 158, Number 26: Canada Disability Benefit Regulations. [Canada Gazette, Part 1, Volume 158, Number 26: Canada Disability Benefit Regulations](#)

⁴ Government of Canada. (April 2024). Overview of the Canada Disability Benefit. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/disabilities-benefits.html>

⁵ CBC News. (June 08, 2024). N.L. Announces New Income Top-Up for People with Disabilities. [N.L. announces new income top-up for people with disabilities | CBC News](#)

⁶ Income Support, Training and Health Benefits Regulation, Alta Reg 122/2011, <https://canlii.ca/t/567dv> retrieved on 2024-05-30

in a new sub-section under section (1).⁷ Ultimately, this regulation change would align with the treatment of similar federal benefits, such as the Canada Child Benefit.

Current and future federal governments will not create or enhance benefits like the CDB if provincial benefits are reduced accordingly. If any provincial or territorial governments proceed with clawing back the value of the CDB, it would undermine intergovernmental cooperation to address poverty across Canada for years to come.

In addition, the introduction of the Canada Disability Benefit does not remove the responsibility of provincial governments to provide income security to people with disabilities.

Therefore, we ask that the Government of Alberta prioritize the well-being of people with disabilities and immediately make a public commitment that it will not claw back the CDB benefit amount from AISH and Income Support benefits.

⁷ Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped General Regulation, Alta Reg 91/2007, <https://canlii.ca/t/83d7> retrieved on 2024-08-02