

Understanding the proposed changes to AISH, the new Alberta Disability Assistance Program (ADAP), and how to respond to the ADAP survey

On August 13, 2025, the Alberta Government released the [ADAP Discussion Guide](#), proposing that all current AISH recipients be moved to the new Alberta Disability Assistance Program (ADAP) effective July 1, 2026, with a benefit that will be \$200 per month lower.

This change will result in many Albertans currently on AISH being in a more desperate situation than they already are, even further below Canada's poverty line.

Inclusion Alberta has responded with a media release, [Alberta Disability Assistance Program \(ADAP\) Could Leave Thousands with Disabilities in Deeper Poverty](#).

The following information is to inform you about what we know about ADAP and then to help you voice any concerns to the Government of Alberta by the September 12 deadline in the [ADAP survey](#) or with a written submission to adapengagement@gov.ab.ca. Telephone town halls will be advertised [here](#) in early September.

Information of three types is found below, organized under the topics presented in the ADAP Discussion Guide:

- Information from government – The Ministry of Assisted Living and Social Services' (ALSS) description of the proposed changes to AISH, and the design of both ADAP and the Disability Employment Services available to ADAP clients.
- Analysis by Inclusion Alberta of these proposals.
- Survey questions – Inclusion Alberta's suggestions on how to express concerns about the proposals within the constraints of the survey. These are only suggestions to help you engage with this survey. In completing the survey, it's most important that the government hears your individual reactions.

Read further on our webpage, click [here](#).

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What do we know about ADAP?

Information from government – Background and context

ADAP is scheduled to launch in July 2026. The government says ADAP will be an improvement on AISH in that it will:

- Empower Albertans with severe disabilities to pursue fulfilling job opportunities while continuing to receive the supports they need.
- Support Albertans with severe disabilities with the health benefits they need, regardless of their employment income.
- Offer enhanced employment services so Albertans with severe disabilities have the resources they need to gain new skills and be empowered to work to their full potential.

Analysis – Background:

In January 2025, two weeks before announcing ADAP, the Ministry of Assisted Living and Social Services (ALSS) met with disability services stakeholders. The ministry says these meetings showed ‘overwhelming support’ for the changes, but they were primarily a means to share plans to launch ADAP in July 2026. People had only a short time to ask questions, and the meetings came too late to be genuine consultations.

ALSS also says that “Albertans with disabilities and the organizations that support them have made it clear they want supports that meet their unique needs and abilities, rather than the one-size-fits-all approach currently offered by the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program. While the goal of increasing employment is widely supported, we are unaware of anyone in the disability community who requested this package of changes.

The [February 4, 2025 release](#) framed ADAP as ensuring “people with disabilities should not be punished for getting a job.” But [analysis by Gillian Petit](#) shows the proposal undermines empowerment and reduces earnings exemptions. ADAP increases administrative burdens, reduces choice, lowers base benefits, and cuts exemptions—leaving many financially worse off than under AISH.

In practice, individuals on ADAP will be worse off than under the existing AISH program unless their employment earnings exceed \$2,114 per month. If individuals moved to ADAP are successful in reapplying to AISH, they will be worse off if they previously earned more than \$350 per month from employment work or if their spouse/partner earns over \$1,500 monthly.

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Topic #1: Eligibility

Information from government - Eligibility:

Based on the public information so far, it appears that general and financial eligibility criteria for AISH and ADAP after July 1, 2026, will be the same as the criteria for AISH today. Medical eligibility will change.

Financial and general eligibility criteria

Based on the information available now, it does not appear that the financial and general eligibility for AISH and ADAP will differ from AISH's [current eligibility](#).

Medical eligibility criteria

AISH until June 30, 2026	AISH as of July 1, 2026	ADAP (start July 1, 2026)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals with an impairment of mental and or/physical functioning This impairment causes a <u>substantial limitation in the person's ability to earn a livelihood</u>. Impairment's effects are likely to be permanent because no remedial therapy is available that would materially improve the person's ability to earn a livelihood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals with a severe disability that results in them being <u>permanently unable to work</u> For example, people receiving palliative care, those residing in a continuing care home due to a severe and progressive medical condition, and those with a severe and profound disability that require ongoing care or support. Other than the examples of individuals in palliative care or continuing care, it's unclear what other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals with a severe disability who is assessed as having <u>some ability to work</u> The severe disability must be determined to either continuously or episodically restrict, but not prevent a person from being gainfully employed at the current time or in the future Includes people who are not currently employed but are deemed to have the potential to be employed in the future, with appropriate supports

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required to look for, accept or maintain reasonable employment, and Make use of suitable training or rehabilitation. 	<p>circumstances or diagnoses would lead to someone assessed as being unable to work and thereby to qualify for AISH.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes those who are currently employed but deemed to have the capacity for greater employment Includes those with episodic or recurrent disabilities who were recently employed but it is unknown when they might be able to work again ADAP clients will be able to apply for an AISH assessment if their medical condition or ability to work changes.
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Analysis – Eligibility:

The binary categorization of adults with disabilities as either employable or unemployable is not supported by evidence. These subjective labels can restrict opportunities, reinforce isolation, and deepen financial insecurity. Almost every person, regardless of diagnosis or severity of impairment, has the potential to contribute meaningfully through work with appropriate support and accommodation.

Survey questions – Eligibility:

6. Is there anything else you feel should be considered in determining medical eligibility for ADAP?

Things to consider in your response:

While the survey is only asking about ADAP eligibility, the Discussion Guide also proposes that AISH eligibility be changed. Currently the AISH eligibility requirement related to ability to work is that the disability causes a substantial limitation in ability to earn a livelihood. The proposal is to change this to be a disability that results in being permanently unable to work. The binary classification of disabled adults into “able to work” and “unable to work” is not supported by evidence. Research consistently shows that employment—however limited—improves outcomes for people with disabilities, including those with severe disabilities. Policies that deprive AISH recipients of employment earnings reduces social

inclusion, increases isolation, and freezes their income at the level of AISH plus \$350 should they obtain employment. The AISH eligibility and ADAP eligibility criteria should remain as “a substantial limitation in ability to earn a livelihood”. The determination of having some ability to work is not equal to being able to find and secure a livelihood.

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Topic #2: Applications, adjudications and appeals

Information from government – Application process:

The government says that starting in July 2026, there will be a single combined application for AISH and ADAP. The disability assistance application will have two parts:

1. Disability Assistance Application (completed by the applicant): collects information to determine general (age and residency) and financial eligibility.
 - An online application will guide applicants through the process.
 - A family member, guardian, community support worker or other trusted individual can assist the applicant to complete the application.
2. Disability Assistance Medical Report (completed by a medical professional): collects information about the individual’s disability (medical conditions, diagnoses, prognosis and impact on ability to work).
 - The Disability Assistance Medical Report must be completed by a medical professional registered in Alberta.
 - Medical professionals who can complete the Medical Report are expected to include physicians, nurse practitioners, psychologists, occupational therapists and others.
 - Medical professionals will be invited to join a pre-qualified roster to complete medical assessments, which will increase access for Albertans and ensure quality of assessments.
 - Applicants will have the option of accessing a medical professional on the pre-qualified list, or their primary care provider, to complete the Disability Assistance Medical Report.

Analysis – Application process:

We don't know yet whether applicants will need to pay for assessments by medical professionals from the pre-qualified medical roster or how the roster will be structured to ensure independence and neutrality.

Survey questions – Application process:

13. Is there anything else that could help simplify the process of applying for ADAP?

Things to consider in your response:

- There should be one eligibility criteria and application for both programs. Individuals who qualify should have the choice to select the program that best meets their needs.
- Community agencies should be funded to support individuals in completing applications.

Information from government – Adjudication process:

The government says that a new medical adjudication process will determine if an individual with a severe disability is eligible for AISH or ADAP. Eligible applicants will be placed in the program that best meets their unique circumstances and needs.

A publicly available Disability Assistance Guide will share information on program eligibility and the adjudication process.

Once general and financial eligibility is confirmed, disability assistance adjudicators will review the medical evidence presented in the Disability Assistance Medical Report to determine if the applicant meets the medical eligibility criteria for AISH or ADAP.

Individuals assessed as not having a severe disability will be determined ineligible for AISH or ADAP. They may be eligible for other support programs, such as Income Support.

Individuals assessed as having a severe disability and some ability to work, or requiring further verification of ability to work, will be approved for ADAP.

Individuals assessed as having a severe disability that results in them being permanently unable to work will be referred to a medical review panel to confirm or deny eligibility for AISH.

Survey questions – Adjudication process:

14. The adjudication process proposed for AISH and ADAP is reasonable.

Suggested response:

Strongly disagree

15. Eligibility for AISH should be determined by a disability assistance adjudicator (not a medical review panel).

In our opinion, this question is unclear.

Information from government – Medical Review Panel:

The government says that a new AISH Medical Review Panel will be established to determine eligibility for AISH. The panel will include doctors and other medical professionals.

All clients awaiting an AISH decision from the AISH Medical Review Panel will be placed in the ADAP program in the interim. If approved for AISH, clients will receive a retroactive payment to account for the difference in benefits from the date they started ADAP.

Applicants denied for AISH by the medical review panel will be approved for ADAP, if all other eligibility requirements are met.

Analysis – Medical Review Panel:

Key questions remain: How will neutrality be ensured? Will the opinions of panel medical professionals who have never treated the applicant have more weight than professionals who know and have treated the applicant?

Information from government – Appeals:

The following compares current AISH policy with information in government's Discussion Guide.

AISH until June 30, 2026	AISH as of July 1, 2026	ADAP (start July 1, 2026)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albertans can appeal most decisions,	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The first stage of approval before an	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Decisions by the disability assistance

including eligibility decisions, to a Citizen's Appeal Panel. The Citizen's Appeal Panel provides fair, impartial and independent hearings for Albertans who are appealing government decisions about services they receive or applied for, including.	<p>individual is deemed eligible for AISH is a disability assistance adjudicator's decision to deny eligibility or to move the application to the final stage of approval. Adjudicator's decisions are appealable to the new ADAP Medical Review Panel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final stage of approval before being deemed eligible for AISH is a decision by the new AISH Medical Review Panel. The AISH Medical Review Panel's decisions are not appealable. • The Citizen's Appeal Panel will continue to hear non-medical appeals. 	<p>adjudicator to determine an applicant is not eligible for ADAP can be appealed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Citizen's Appeal Panel will continue to hear non-medical appeals.
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Analysis – Appeals:

Limiting the right to appeal eligibility is concerning. Adjudicators only refer files to the Medical Review Panel, which then makes binding a decision. It appears that applicants do not get to present their case to the panel.

Survey questions – Adjudication process:

17. Is there anything else that could help improve the adjudication process for AISH and ADAP?

Things to consider in your response:

- Individuals should be free to choose to access either program, depending on what best meets their needs.
- The appointment process for the Medical Review Panel must ensure impartiality and neutrality.

- The adjudication process must not give greater weight to the opinions of the medical professionals on the review panel than to the opinions of the medical professionals who have a history treating the applicant and who complete the Disability Assistance Application form.
- Individuals should either have the opportunity for a hearing with Medical Review Panel before it makes a final decision or the Medical Review Panel's decisions should be appealable to the Citizens Appeal Panel. Too many errors would occur and there would be no way to review them in the proposed process since the Medical Review Panel would review the medical information without ever hearing from the applicant and make a single decision that cannot be appealed.

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Topic #3: Benefit rates, income and asset exemption

Information from government – Benefit Rates:

According to the government, benefit amounts will be determined based on several factors, including:

- Income from other sources received by the client or their spouse/cohabiting partner and whether that income is treated as exempt, partially exempt or non-exempt
- Whether the household includes dependent children, and how many
- Whether the client is eligible for additional personal benefits

It is proposed that effective July 2026:

- AISH clients will receive a maximum monthly living allowance of \$1,940.
- ADAP clients will receive a maximum monthly living allowance of \$1,740

The proposed maximum ADAP rate is \$200 lower than the maximum AISH rate, reflecting ADAP clients' greater opportunity to supplement income through employment as compared to AISH clients.

Rates for the AISH and ADAP monthly living allowance and personal benefits would be adjusted annually on January 1.

Analysis – Benefit Rates:

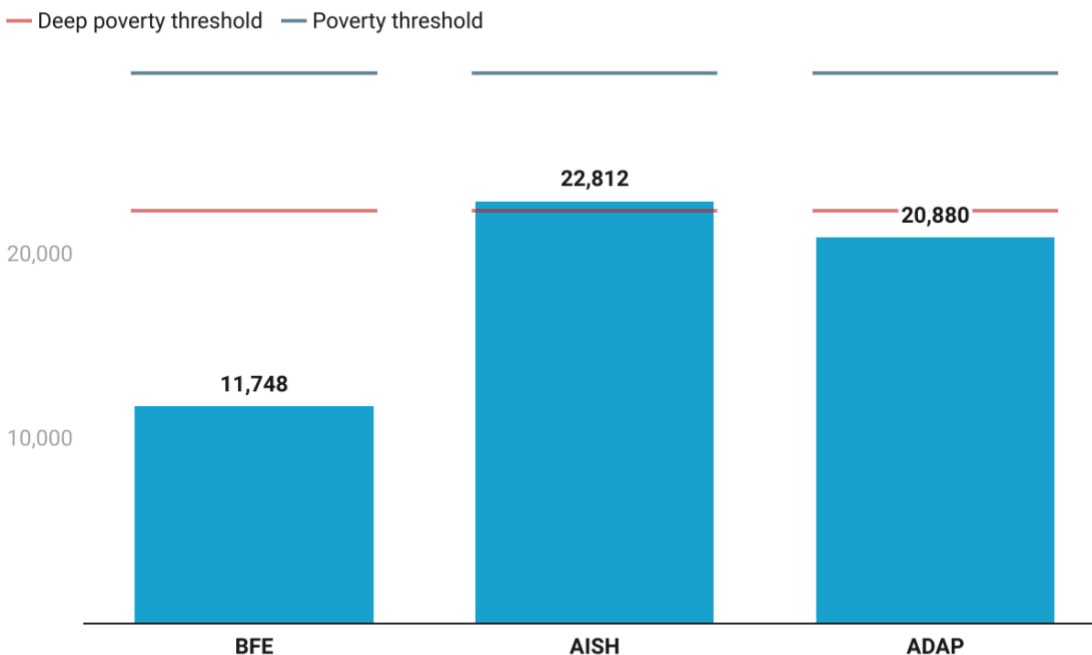
The cut from \$1,940 to \$1,740 for individuals moved from AISH to ADAP will force impossible budget choices. One recipient described \$200 as “the difference between getting uncovered prescriptions paid for or having groceries for the month. The difference between almost living and barely existing.”

Despite the proposed transition benefit of \$200 a month, until December 31, 2027, the assumption that most individuals on ADAP will secure sufficient employment to be better off than on the current AISH program is unrealistic. For people applying after July 1, 2026, the reduced benefit will be in effect immediately.

The [cost of a basic standard of living](#) is higher in Calgary than anywhere in the country outside of Vancouver and the territories. As Lee Stevens has shown in the bar chart below, Calgarians experiencing a cut from \$1,940 to \$1,740 will descend below the [deep-poverty](#) threshold. Disability-related expenses, estimated at 20% above normal living costs, make the impact worse.

Alberta Annual Welfare Incomes and Poverty Thresholds

A comparison of incomes for AISH and income support in Alberta to the 2024 MBM poverty threshold for Calgary.



Barriers to Full Employment (BFE), Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), and the Alberta Disability Assistance Program (ADAP). All amounts have been adjusted for a single person.

Chart: Lee Stevens • Source: Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0066-01 Market Basket Measure (MBM) thresholds for the reference family by Market Basket Measure region, component and base year. Government of Alberta. (2025). AISH and Income Support, Financial Benefits Summary • Created with Datawrapper

The AISH allowance of \$1,940 is a 2.05% increase (\$39) above the 2024 benefit. The annual increases are decided by government and may be less than the rate of inflation. Another reason the adequacy of benefits erodes over time is because inflation for the necessities of life, such as food and the cost of electricity, remains consistently higher than the general inflation rate.

Information from government – Health benefits and Personal benefits

The government says that ADAP clients will receive the same comprehensive health benefits (prescription drugs, ambulance, dental and optometry) as those provided under the AISH program.

ADAP clients who are no longer eligible for a monthly financial benefit due to excess employment income will continue to receive health benefits until age 65.

Both AISH and ADAP will provide personal benefits to help offset costs associated with dependent children, and to assist clients with specific one-time or ongoing expenses over and above the monthly living allowance.

Personal benefits include assistance with costs such as childcare, children's school expenses, emergencies, employment and training, escaping abuse, establishing a new residence, funeral costs, infant care, moving, prenatal needs and travel.

Health and personal benefits are worth, on average, over \$400 per month for AISH clients.

Survey questions – Benefit rates, Health benefits and Personal benefits:

18. The suite of proposed benefits (financial, health, and personal benefits) available to ADAP clients is reasonable.

Suggested response:

Strongly disagree

Information from government – Income exemptions:

The government says that as with the AISH program, ADAP clients and their spouse/cohabiting partners will be required to access all sources of income they are eligible to receive.

Depending on the source of income and whether the client or spouse/cohabiting partner receives the income, it can be fully exempt, partially exempt or non-exempt (see table below).

Treatment of income will be aligned between the AISH program and ADAP, with the exception of employment or self-employment income.

- Effective July 1, 2026, employment income exemptions will be reduced for AISH clients, reflecting the program's focus on supporting individuals with severe and permanent disabilities who are unable to work.
- ADAP clients would receive significant employment income exemptions that are designed to encourage continued growth in earnings.

TABLE 2: PROPOSED AISH AND ADAP TREATMENT OF INCOME

Income Type	AISH	ADAP
Employment and self-employment income ¹	<p>Client: Partially exempt. First \$350/month fully exempt, remaining amounts deducted at 100%.</p> <p>Spouse/Cohabiting Partner: Partially exempt. First \$1,500/month fully exempt, remaining amounts gradually deducted at increasing levels until full deduction at approximately \$74,000 annual income.</p>	<p>Client (single, no dependents): Partially exempt. First \$350/month fully exempt, remaining amounts gradually deducted at increasing levels until full deduction at approximately \$45,000 annual income.</p> <p>Client (with dependents): Partially exempt. First \$525/month fully exempt, remaining amounts gradually deducted at increasing levels until full deduction at approximately \$50,000 annual income.</p> <p>Spouse/Cohabiting Partner: Partially exempt. First \$1,500/month fully exempt, remaining amounts gradually deducted at increasing levels until full deduction at approximately \$70,000 annual income.</p>
Passive business income (e.g. interest, trust and rental income)	<p>Client (single, no dependents): Partially exempt. First \$300/month fully exempt, remaining amounts deducted at 75%.</p> <p>Client (single parent) and Couples: Partially exempt. First \$600/month fully exempt, remaining amounts deducted at 75%.</p>	
Pension income (e.g. CPP, OAS, GIS, EI, WCB)	<p>Client: Non-exempt (deducted at 100%)</p> <p>Spouse/Cohabiting Partner: Partially exempt. First \$1,200/month fully exempt, remaining amounts deducted at 75%.²</p>	

¹ The fully exempt employment income exemptions for AISH and ADAP will be adjusted in line with adjustments to the minimum wage

² Exemptions for spousal pension income will be adjusted annually in line with core benefit adjustments to help keep pace with inflation.

Analysis – Income exemptions:

Single individuals: fully exempt job earnings fall from \$1,072 under AISH today to only \$350 under ADAP/AISH.

Spouses/partners: employment exemption drops from \$2,612 to \$1,500.

Parents on AISH: employment exemption falls from \$2,612 to \$350 (AISH) or \$525 (ADAP).

We clawback rates for earned income have not been disclosed, but economist Gillian Petit has modeled clawback rates that align with the numbers in the Discussion Guide's case studies.

Modeled employment earning clawbacks:

- Up to \$350: exempt
- \$350–\$1,500: 15% clawback
- \$1,500–\$2,500: 41% clawback
- \$2,500–\$3,000: 82% clawback
- \$3,000–\$3,750: 100% clawback

Above \$3,750, individuals have no remaining ADAP income support but retain health benefits.

We don't know that this exactly represents ADAP's design, but it is our best understanding based on public information. To understand what is proposed for ADAP and AISH, we recommend reading what Gillian Petit has written on [earning exemptions](#).

Information from government – Asset exemptions:

The government says that to be eligible for AISH or ADAP, the total value of all non-exempt assets owned by an applicant or client, and their spouse/cohabiting partner must not exceed \$100,000.

Clients who receive assets are provided a temporary asset exemption and have 365 days to invest the asset in an exempt asset or it will be counted as a non-exempt asset and may impact ongoing program eligibility. The money may include an inheritance, a gift, funds from selling a primary residence, vehicle, or insurance payout.

Information from government – Case study #1

The government's Discussion Guide illustrates how ADAP would work by providing the hypothetical example of Jasmine who is single and has been on AISH since 2017 due to an injury. She has no other sources of exempt income. She hopes to work again, but employers are reluctant to hire her due to her disability.

Analysis – Case Study #1:

The Discussion Guide’s example assumes “Jasmine” has no employment income on AISH but, once on ADAP, finds a 24-hour/week minimum-wage job. This creates a false comparison (column 1 and 3): Jasmine could already access employment support and begin working under AISH using existing exemptions. When comparing her actual working income under AISH to ADAP (columns 2 and 3), she ends up worse off — earning **\$164 less per month on ADAP** than she would have with AISH’s current exemption.

	Current AISH Policy		Future ADAP Policy
	1. Receives AISH – Assumed unemployed	2. Receives AISH – Assumed to be working	3. Receives ADAP – Assumed to be working
Employment earnings	0	\$1,492.00	\$1,492.00
Fully exempt employment income	0	\$1,072.00	\$350.00
Partially exempt employment income	0	\$420.00	\$1,142.00
ADAP or AISH benefit (after employment income deductions)	\$1,940.00	\$1,730.00	\$1,566.00
ADAP or AISH benefit (before employment income deductions)	\$1,940.00	\$1,940.00	\$1,740.00
Employment income deductions	0	\$210.00	\$174.00
Total take home income	\$1,940.00	\$3,222.00	\$3,058.00

Looking at the numbers, the critical finding is this: anyone earning less than \$25,368 annually (roughly 33 hours/week at minimum wage) from employment will have lower income on ADAP than on the existing AISH program.

If placed on ADAP individuals who reapply and get back on the newly proposed AISH program, will be worse off:

- if they previously were able to make more in employment than \$350/month, or
- if they have a spouse/cohabiting partner who earns over \$1500/month from employment

While a few individuals with disabilities who can keep full-time employment will not be hurt, the vast majority of adults with disabilities will be worse off than if AISH was to remain unchanged. Some will experience an even greater hit because of other changes such as decreased exemptions for spousal income.

Survey questions – Income and asset exemptions:

18. The suite of proposed benefits (financial, health, and personal benefits) available to ADAP clients is reasonable.

Suggested response:

Strongly disagree

19. The proposed income and asset exemptions for ADAP are reasonable.

Suggested response:

Strongly disagree

20. Is there anything else you feel should be considered when designing the ADAP benefits, income and asset exemptions?

Things to consider in your response:

- Benefits and exemptions should be designed such that whether they receive ADAP or AISH, no individual's total income falls below \$1,940 per month.
- Individuals receiving AISH must have a higher earning exemption than \$350 and a lower clawback rate than 100% so that working is not penalized.
- The spousal employment income exemption should be maintained at the current level.
- Rather than reducing the employment exemption for parent's employment to \$350 (AISH) or \$525 (ADAP), the exemption should be maintained at \$2,612. Failing to maintain the exemption could contribute to child poverty.
- Benefits should be fully indexed to inflation, not capped at 2% by the Alberta escalator.

- AISH's asset exemptions should be maintained for both programs.

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Topic #4: Employment services and expectations

Information from government – Employment services:

The government says that work is underway to design new ADAP employment services model that will provide customized one-on-one support to assist individuals with severe disabilities with the resources and tools they need to gain new skills and be empowered to work to their full potential.

Services will include:

- assessments
- referral services
- service navigation (including wraparound supports)
- career planning
- assistive technology
- education supports
- resume assistance
- case management
- digital services
- in-person support at employment centers
- interview preparation
- short-term training
- supported job placements
- job retention and sustainment
- simulated worksites

Target clients for the Disability Employment Services program will initially be limited to include job seekers who are referred from ADAP. To ensure responsive support for these job seekers, a coordinated and centralized approach will facilitate the provision of disability employment services through a network of community-based organizations and service providers.

Analysis – Employment services:

Even if the new employment services approach and funding which are being launched together with ADAP help some secure work, it is highly unlikely that jobs will be secured before January 1, 2028, for even half of the approximately 66,000 AISH recipients who currently have no employment. For individuals receiving employment supports from the PDD program, our understanding is that employment services will remain unchanged for at least two years.

Information from government – Employment expectations:

The government says that through active and supported case management, ADAP clients will have access to a range of supports to assist them to prepare for employment, find a job and work to their full potential.

A comprehensive assessment of each client's circumstances will be completed to understand their needs, employment aspirations, experience, skills and education. Based on this assessment, an action plan will be developed to outline key activities and goals.

If an ADAP client is unable to find a job after receiving employment services, they will continue to receive financial and health benefits. If their medical condition progresses to the point that they are unable to work, they can apply for the AISH program.

Analysis – Employment expectations:

That 83.6% of AISH recipients had no employment in 2023–24 reflects societal ableism and prejudices, barriers in systems like transportation and job markets, and policy choices to fund segregated education and disability supports rather than committing to inclusive education and employment models shown by decades of research to result in better outcomes of real work for real pay.

Even if someone is incapable of finding employment after having relied on the employment training/services provided with ADAP the person is still not eligible for AISH on that basis. Only a deterioration of medical conditions to the point where they cannot work would qualify the person for AISH.

ADAP eligibility hinges on only on the ability to work, not the ability to secure and retain sufficient employment. Some will be denied AISH because they can technically work, yet unable to find jobs—forcing them onto ADAP and deeper poverty.

The announced increased investment in employment supports may help some individuals to obtain work, and ADAP's lower earning clawback rates and health benefits that continue no matter how much is earned will help those who have jobs. These limited changes will not be enough to help adults with disabilities earn their way out of the deep poverty this government is about to plunge them into, not at a time when Alberta has its highest unemployment rate since the pandemic. The 20.4% youth unemployment rate is the highest ever outside of the pandemic.

Survey questions – Employment services and expectations:

21. What other potential ADAP employment supports could assist clients to gain and retain employment, based on their individual circumstances?

Things to consider in your response:

Few details are available of the employment services to be offered. Barriers extend beyond the individual to include systemic and societal ableism. Even if employment supports are enhanced and expanded, individuals with disabilities will face greater challenges breaking into an Alberta job market in which unemployment is the highest since the pandemic.

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Topic #5: Client transitions

Information from government – Client transitions:

The government says that starting in July 2026, the new ADAP program is scheduled to launch, and new disability income assistance applicants will be assessed for both AISH and ADAP. All existing AISH clients will be assured a place in either AISH or ADAP.

Transition process

On July 1, 2026, all AISH clients will be transitioned to the ADAP program.

AISH clients who transition to ADAP on July 1, 2026, will receive a monthly transition benefit that will keep their financial benefit amount the same as the AISH rate until December 31, 2027. Their monthly benefit will be cut by \$200 per month on January 1, 2028.

From July 1, 2026, to December 31, 2027, clients can choose to remain in ADAP or be assessed for AISH.

Individuals approved after July 1, 2026—for instance someone turning 18 on July 1—will only receive ADAP's allowance of \$1,740 per month without the \$200 transition benefit.

AISH reassessments

Reassessments for AISH will be prioritized and streamlined for clients with the most severe and profound disabilities, including those with palliative conditions.

- These exceptional cases will be identified by the disability assistance adjudicator and referred to the AISH Medical Review Panel for prioritized reassessment for AISH. These clients will not be required to provide a new Disability Assistance Medical Report.

All other transitioned clients who wish to be assessed for AISH will need to provide a Disability Assistance Medical Report, which may be supplemented with information regarding ability to work (this could include assessments following engagement in ADAP employment services). This information will be reviewed by a disability assistance adjudicator and, if appropriate, referred to the AISH Medical Review Panel for a final AISH eligibility determination.

- If the AISH Medical Review Panel determines that the individual is not eligible for AISH, they will have no right to appeal this decision. They will remain in the ADAP program.

Analysis – Client transitions:

Gillian Petit [describes the administrative burden imposed by this process](#):

“After having to already prove they have a severe and prolonged disability, previously-AISH and-now-ADAP clients will have to *again* prove their inability to work. This increases the administrative burden and is a humiliating choice as it requires people to prove what they cannot do (and a second time no less!). Moreover, this decision cannot be appealed, denying ADAP clients applying for AISH re-assessment due process.

Gillian Petit's full blog is worth reading.

Survey questions – Client transitions:

25. The proposed transition approach for AISH clients is reasonable.

Suggested response:

Strongly disagree

26. What is unreasonable about the proposed transition approach? Select any that apply:

The available responses do not allow you to identify the unreasonable aspects of the proposed transition, only elements that make its negative impacts slightly less severe.

27. Is there anything else that could support the transition to ADAP for current AISH clients?

Things to consider in your response:

- Individuals should decide whether they will remain on AISH or transition to ADAP.
- Ensure that the transition benefit continues until the individual has obtained sufficient employment, or raise the benefit to be consistent with AISH.

Survey Questions – Final thoughts:

28. What do you least like about the new ADAP program?

Things to consider in your response:

- Cutting benefits by \$200 (ADAP)
- The misguided approach of categorizing adults with disabilities as either employable or unemployable
- Restricting employment on AISH through reduced earning exemptions and increased clawbacks
- Loss of appeal rights
- Reduced spouse and parent income exemptions

- Announcement of ADAP that falsely stated that under AISH, “people with disabilities [were] punished for getting a job”, and that ADAP would correct this. In fact, the proposal would reduce AISH’s \$1,072 exemption to only \$350 in both ADAP and AISH.
- Misleading message that people with disabilities have been requested these changes even though no fulsome consultation occurred prior to the announcement in February.

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