

June 12, 2020

Letter Writing Campaign – We are moving on to next steps

A campaign to facilitate change requires us to be diligent and keep our stories in the spotlight. This campaign focusses specifically on the need to Disability Support Workers (DSWs) to receive the essential service workers' top-up wages during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Why

As your professional association, ADWA plays a role in advocacy on a broader scale on behalf of the overall workforce in Alberta. On May 7, 2020, the Prime Minister of Canada announced that the Government of Canada would provide up to \$3 billion in support to increase the wages of low-income essential workers. Each province or territory would have to determine which workers would be eligible for support, and how much support they will receive. While the federal government made the money available, it is up to the provincial government (in our case, the UCP government led by Jason Kenney) to decide who receives the money. Once the decision has been made, they also need to determine how the money will be dispersed. For example, they could give it to employers and ask them to decide who to give the money to. Or, they could tell the employers who to give the money to. Either is possible.

To our knowledge at this time, no employer in Alberta's disability services sector has received any money for wage top ups for their workers. Some employers have "unused" money in their contracts (for example, if they had day supports and they were not providing supports due to COVID-19, they would now have money not being used) that they have used to top up wages. Other employers do not have unused money remaining in their contracts, so they are unable to provide top ups. In either case, agencies have **not been given extra money** to provide COVID-19 pay to workers.

The provincial government is still deciding who should receive the top up money. That's why this campaign is focusing on telling our funders in the provincial government why our sector deserves extra compensation at this time. Other sectors will be doing the same about their workers. We think the CSS Ministry now understands the sacrifices our workers are making for relatively low wages (some barely above minimum wage). That's why we are now asking people to send their letters to the party leaders (Jason Kenney and Rachel Notley), as well as to their local MLA, so we can educate the rest of the government about the essential services you provide. Your stories are important because they tell the broader government why you deserve to be paid extra at this time.

It's time to shine the light even brighter. We need to convince this government to give our workforce the emergency top up for our sector. If you are comfortable with sharing your wage and explaining, in detail, the essential work that you do and how it has changed during COVID19, it is time to do so.

Share your story by writing a letter detailing

1. **What you do:** describe in detail the changes in the work you do to ensure individuals you support are continuing to receive quality services. Add the extra challenges that have come into play and you have experienced during the pandemic. **Tell them why and how you are part of the essential services in Alberta.**

2. **Compensation:** share your hourly wage if you are comfortable doing that. Tell them why you deserve the extra top up at this time.

Send your letter to:

Premier Jason Kenney
Office of the Premier
307 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6
Email: premier@gov.ab.ca

Rachel Notley, Official Opposition Leader
Legislature Office
5th Floor
9820 - 107 Street
Edmonton, AB, Canada T5K 1E7
Email: Edmonton.Strathcona@assembly.ab.ca

Your MLA (here's a link to help you find your [MLA](#))

Copy (Cc:) your letter to:

Minister Sawhney
Legislature Office
224 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB, Canada T5K 2B6
Email: Calgary.NorthEast@assembly.ab.ca

Marie Renaud, Opposition Critic
Legislature Office
5th Floor
9820 - 107 Street
Edmonton, AB, Canada T5K 1E7
Email: St.Albert@assembly.ab.ca

ADWA (so we can document and follow the campaign)
Alberta Disability Workers Association
PO Box 83029 Canyon Meadows
Calgary, AB T2W 6G8
Email: info@adwa.ca

Thank you for taking this step and continuing to participate with ADWA in our efforts to recognize you and your colleagues around the province. ADWA belongs to you and becomes a stronger advocate with your participation. We work to give you the opportunities that empower you to raise your voice.

Take care and stay well,

ADWA Board Directors