



# BI-ANNUAL REPORT

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JANUARY 1, 2011 – JUNE 30, 2011

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## ABOUT THE ALBERTA DISABILITIES FORUM

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The *Alberta Disabilities Forum* (ADF) is a partnership of 42 non-profit provincial disability organizations that have come together to share information and ideas and to speak with a unified voice on issues of importance to Albertans with disabilities.

ADF influences policies and services through a number of activities including

- Creating strategies to improve services for Albertans with disabilities
- Working with government to develop and improve policies and programs that affect people with disabilities
- Building partnerships
- Developing information packages
- Informing voters during elections
- Helping people with disabilities be heard - Nothing About Us; Without Us
- Promoting International Day of Persons with Disabilities

ADF also provides services for its membership including

- Providing educational and networking opportunities
- Providing workshops on specific areas of interest
- Providing disability-related information and resources

Decisions made by ADF members reflect the needs of people with disabilities in Alberta, and, through the combined efforts of its members, ADF works to ensure these needs are met. Key issues are determined by the ADF membership, which makes its decisions by consensus.

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## ADF CORE BUSINESS AREAS

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ADF has identified the following core business areas:

- Influencing Policies and Services
- Member Services
- Operational Excellence

### INFLUENCING POLICIES & SERVICES

By *Influencing Policies & Services*, ADF creates positive change by connecting persons with disabilities to policy makers and presenting positions on issues taken by persons with disabilities and their community organizations. Public education is targeted not only towards legislators, but also towards citizens, who have the rights and responsibilities to make their voices heard.

**Objectives within *Influencing Policies & Services*:**

- Creating Strategies to Improve Services for Albertans with Disabilities
- Working with Government to Develop and Improve Policies and Programs that Affect Persons with Disabilities
- Building Partnerships

### MEMBER SERVICES

Organizations that join the Alberta Disabilities Forum benefit from Member Services that ensure, as has regularly been recognized by our provincial government, that issues of consensus are organized, coordinated, and disseminated to key government officials and disability organizations. Community agencies often lack the capacity to collect, review, and analyze the information available. ADF provides these services to assist in raising awareness of issues facing Albertans with disabilities.

**Objectives within Member Services:**

- Developing Information Packages
- Informing Voters during Elections
- Helping People with Disabilities Be Heard, “Nothing About Us, Without Us!”
- Promoting International Day of Persons with Disabilities

## OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

ADF exists to enhance and support the capacities of disability organizations by establishing standards of Operational Excellence – opportunities through which agencies may learn and collect the tools that are required for survival in today’s voluntary sector. Collectively, and for the benefit of the sector as a whole, ADF organizes opportunities for enrichment that agencies, on their own, would have neither the time nor the resources to organize. Additionally, ADF provides opportunities to support community organizations to connect, communicate, and collaborate in an environment where it is necessary and often difficult to accomplish.

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## OBJECTIVE: CREATING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE SERVICES FOR ALBERTANS WITH DISABILITIES

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Along with ongoing ADF activities, including responding to member requests and keeping ADF members abreast of disability-related information and events, each year ADF takes on a number of initiatives deemed important to ADF member organizations and ADF working groups. Listed below are some activities that ADF participated in from January 1, 2011 – June 30, 2011.

### ADF EMPLOYMENT WORKING GROUP

The ADF Employment Working Group, which has 6 members, met 4 times from January 1, 2011 – June 30, 2011.

#### ACTIVITY COMPLETED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD:

Members of the ADF Employment Working Group completed a position paper *Access to Employment Supports and Services* during the previous reporting period. Members of the Employment Working Group are now working on a position paper *Hiring of People with Disabilities*.

People with disabilities demand equal access to employment and career opportunities to make contributions to their communities. However, many people with disabilities face challenges when seeking employment opportunities. These challenges include misconceptions about hiring people with disabilities and accessing supports necessary to maintain long-term employment.

#### *Outcome:*

The working group members met with Minister Thomas Lukaszuk on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011. During this meeting, the Minister asked that the membership develop strategies to increase the number of people with disabilities being employed.

#### *Performance Indicator for the ADF Employment Working Group during the reporting period:*

Members of the Employment Working Group are developing position papers that will reflect the perspectives of ADF member organizations regarding employment improvements needed in Alberta for people with disabilities.

## ADF CONTINUING CARE WORKING GROUP

The ADF Continuing Care Working Group, which has 11 members, met 5 times from January 1, 2011 – June 30, 2011.

### ACTIVITY COMPLETED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD:

Members of the ADF Continuing Care Working Group completed a position paper that addressed the continuum of care system in Alberta. In creating this document, ADF recognized that “one size does not fit all” and that different groups and people may perceive priorities differently depending on their circumstances. Central to this is the need for people to direct their own care; to have choices in their care, and how they live. The position papers addressed issues within Home Living, Supportive Living, and Facility Living setting.

#### *Outcome:*

Members of the working groups met with the following MLA’s to discuss the position paper produced by ADF:

- MLA Wayne Cao on April 20, 2011
- MLA Ken Allred on April 26, 2011
- MLA Teresa Woo-Paw on April 27, 2011
- MLA Dave Taylor on May 10, 2011

Each MLA expressed concerns about Alberta’s continuing care system, and it was acknowledged that improvements are crucial.

#### *Performance Indicator for the ADF Continuing Care Working Group during the reporting period:*

Members of the Continuing Care Working Group developed solutions to be implemented by the Government of Alberta for many of the challenges experienced by people with disabilities.

## ADF ALBERTA AIDS TO DAILY LIVING (AADL) WORKING GROUP

The ADF Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL) Working Group, which has 17 members, met 6 times from January 1, 2011 – June 30, 2011.

### ACTIVITY COMPLETED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD:

The ADF AADL Working Group was established to address issues with the Alberta Aids to Daily Living program that are of concern to ADF member organizations. The purpose of the AADL Working Group is to work for streamlined access to disability-related supports under the Alberta Aids to Daily Living program that maximize health, functional capacity, and independence.

The goals of the AADL Working Group are

- To identify and articulate four to six significant issues with the AADL program
- To articulate each issue on a one-pager issue paper.
- To create a strategic campaign to raise awareness with elected officials, bureaucrats, and the disability community about the AADL Working Group's articulated issues.

Members of the ADF AADL Working Group decided to address the following issues within the AADL program:

- The Application Process
- Coordination and Communication with Clients, Vendors, and Others
- Additions, Deletions, Changes and Paperwork to the Supplies on the Program
- The Appeal Process

### *Outcome:*

Members of the working group are conducting research and planning to meet with various officials and stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the issues affecting Albertans with disabilities within the AADL program.

### *Performance Indicator for the ADF Continuing Care Working Group during the reporting period:*

Members of the AADL Working Group are developing solutions to be recommended to the Government of Alberta for many of the challenges that are experienced by people with disabilities.

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## OBJECTIVE FOR THE PERIOD: WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP AND IMPROVE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS THAT AFFECT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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One of the main objectives of ADF is to work with different government ministries to assist with the development of policies and initiatives that affect Albertans with disabilities.

*Activity completed during the reporting period:*

Members of the Alberta Disabilities Forum have sent letters requesting inclusion in different stakeholder committees sponsored by various ministries.

*Outcome:*

Through ADF requests, these delegates hold/have held positions on the following Government of Alberta committees that are working to improve services for Albertans:

- Bev Matthiessen, Stakeholder Working Group, Setting the Direction for Special Education in Alberta, Alberta Education
- Melita Avdagovska, Supportive Living Framework Review Team, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports

*Performance Indicator during the reporting period:*

Ongoing invitations to participate on various government stakeholder review teams.

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## **OBJECTIVE FOR THE PERIOD: BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**

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ADF builds partnerships with government, community organizations, and businesses to provide information about and support inclusion of Albertans with disabilities.

During this reporting period, ADF has been establishing partnerships with Alberta Health Services, Alberta Health and Wellness, and Alberta Seniors and Community Supports. In addition, ADF has been working on establishing partnerships with Alberta Employment and Immigration.

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## **OBJECTIVE FOR THE PERIOD: DEVELOPING INFORMATION PACKAGES**

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ADF creates information packages on topics important to Albertans with disabilities (e.g. AISH, healthcare homecare, employment). These packages are used by member organizations and people with disabilities to raise awareness about problems and potential solutions.

Member organizations are encouraged to promote ADF position papers and educate their Members of the Legislative Assembly about issues facing people with disabilities in their communities.

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## **OBJECTIVE FOR THE PERIOD: INFORMING VOTERS DURING ELECTIONS**

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During municipal, provincial, and federal elections, ADF distributes information packages outlining key issues for persons with disabilities. By educating the public and candidates about key disability issues, people with disabilities are encouraged to get involved in the democratic process.

During this reporting period, ADF encouraged its members to be involved during the federal elections and inform candidates about issues that people with disabilities are facing in their communities.

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## **OBJECTIVE FOR THE PERIOD: HELPING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES BE HEARD, “NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US!”**

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ADF members believe strongly that to ensure the best possible outcomes for people with disabilities, people with disabilities must be involved in the development of policies, supports, and services that affect their lives. ADF finds opportunities for and supports Albertans with disabilities to speak out and become involved with issues of concern to them.

During this reporting period, ADF has been involved in the development of the Alberta Health Act. In addition, we have been monitoring the PDD program review.

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## **OBJECTIVE: PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL, NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES**

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### **ADF PRESENTATIONS**

The ACCD executive director and the ADF provincial coordinator conducted these presentations upon request:

- Alberta Health and Wellness
- Alberta Health Services
- Alberta Housing and Municipal Affairs

### **ADF GENERAL FORUM MEETINGS**

ADF members hold three business meetings per year. These meetings are an opportunity for our members to share information and ideas, and to provide direction on ADF activities.

#### ***Activity completed during the reporting period:***

General forum meetings are also an opportunity for ADF members to learn from guest speakers about various initiatives and projects that are currently taking place. During the reporting period, ADF hosted two general forum meetings during January 1, 2011 – June 30, 2011.

*Outcome:*

Members of ADF had the opportunity to be informed about different ministerial initiatives and policies. Here is a list of the guest speakers during the general forum meetings for the reporting period:

- Honourable Minister Lindsay Blackett, Minister of Culture and Community Spirit
- Alberta Caregiver Association
- Vangelis Nikias, Council of Canadians with Disabilities, Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, Project Manager
- Marianne Baird, Director, Health Related Supports, Alberta Aids to Daily Living, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports
- Cathy Pryce, Vice President, Addiction and Mental Health, Alberta Health Services
- Honourable Minister Gene Zwozdesky, Alberta Health and Wellness

**ADF WORKSHOP**

Currently, ADF is planning a workshop to be offered to our membership during fall 2011. Many issues of interest have been presented; however, there has to be extensive preparation and financial resources when setting up an event of this nature. It has been a challenge to find a topic for a workshop that is of interest for all ADF members.

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## OBJECTIVE: PROVIDING DISABILITY RELATED INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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### ADF WEB SITE

#### *Activity completed during the reporting period:*

In 2007, ADF purchased the Adobe DreamWeaver Program in order for the ADF Coordinator to do web updates. In this way, ADF can save money because it no longer has to contract services for web maintenance. The web site is accessible to those with a variety of disabilities and is much more current with ADF news and publications. ADF's staff member updates the web site and maintains current information.

#### *Outcome:*

Currently, visitors to the web site are able to access findings of the Respite Care Community Consultations and additional information about the ADF Respite Care Demonstration Project. In addition, individuals are able to access the various position papers completed by ADF.

#### *Performance Indicator during the reporting period:*

ADF purchased urchin services for the [www.adforum.ca](http://www.adforum.ca) web site in September, 2009. From January 1, 2011 – June 30, 2011, there have been 36,312 hits on the ADF web site.

### ADF MAILING LIST

ADF members and friends are sent regular, relevant e-mails that include print media, research articles, workshops, current news, upcoming events, government reviews, policy and/or program changes, job postings, and other disability-related information.

Currently there are 148 individuals/organizations that subscribe to the ADF mailing list.

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## ADF IN THE UPCOMING PERIOD

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ADF has already started to plan an ambitious schedule to December 31, 2011. The next General Forum meeting is scheduled for October 2011, and we are working on inviting speakers. Because of the increased number of members attending the general forum meetings, ADF in 2010 applied and was successful in receiving grants from Pfizer and Rx&D to support our expenses for meeting rooms, refreshments, and interpreters. These funds have ended and we are attempting to find other sources to support our General Forum meetings.

In addition, ADF is looking at increasing participation of ADF members at ADF general forum meetings, whose offices are outside of Edmonton. We have been considering videoconferencing as a possible solution; however, the cost for setting up videoconferencing locations has acted as a deterrent.

The current ADF membership stands at forty two member organizations.

ADF has achieved remarkable success for more than a decade working with a large and diverse group of disability organizations, who have many similarities and differences, to speak on issues of united importance. The one core value that holds our members together is the belief that Albertans with disabilities can, should, and will be fully participating members of their communities and all of Alberta's society.