

**Written Responses to the Standing Committee on Public
Accounts
Ministry of Community and Social Services (CSS)**

**MLA Marie Renaud (NDP)
St. Albert**

[Regarding the payment date for AISH and Income and Employment Supports] which stakeholders were consulted? Which bodies within the Ministry of CSS were consulted? There are a number of supportive panels within the agencies, boards, and commissions framework that support the work of CSS. Can you tell me who was consulted before making that change? (Pg PA-500)

- Community and Social Services regularly engages with internal and external stakeholders regarding potential program improvements, including administrative changes where formal consultation is not required, such as the payment date change. Prior to this change in March 2020, CSS worked with stakeholders including AISH and Income Support recipients, self-advocates, civil society organizations, the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, the Alberta Residential Landlord Association and others to ensure they were aware of and understood the upcoming change.
- During the transition period before and after March 2020, caseworkers also worked with clients who needed additional support to coordinate monthly payments and sign up for direct deposit. There were no changes to the structure of the program, or the amount or type of benefits clients received.

I'm wondering if you could tell me how many times your Ministry has met with [The Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities] on policy issues prior to implementation. (Pg PA-502)

- The Department engaged The Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities for feedback on the sustainability of the Persons with Developmental Disabilities program and on the transition of adults receiving AISH to seniors' benefits upon turning 65.

Can you tell me: after completion of each program – some are two years, some are four years, obviously, depending on the institution – the per cent of graduates or the people that completed their program that were employed or found, secured a volunteer position after completion? (Pg PA-504)

- Approximately 70 per cent of the students who completed studies during the 2019-2020 academic year were employed.

Could you tell me when you did that, what date you advised the self-advocates of the change? (Pg PA-504)

- All Albertans were notified of the change on January 28, 2020. Ministry staff engaged self-advocacy groups and disability stakeholders on a number of occasions after that on a variety of issues, including the payment date change and the experiences of Albertans receiving AISH and Income Support.

So I would like to know: in the period covered by this annual report, how much was spent specifically on supplemental benefits? (Pg PA-505)

- In 2019-20, the Ministry spend \$145.3 million on supplemental benefits for the AISH and Income Support (IS) programs combined.

2019-20 Supplemental Benefits - AISH and IS Programs	
AISH	\$20,162,372
BFE	\$54,443,603
ETW	\$70,732,516
IS	\$125,176,119
Total	\$145,338,491

My next question is: from that amount, how much specifically was spent on additional shelter code 1109? (Pg PA-505)

- The Ministry spent \$28.3 million on additional shelter benefits in 2019-20.
 - Additional shelter benefits are only provided under the Income Support (IS) program.

2019-20 Additional Shelter Expenditures - IS Program	
BFE	\$20,874,967
ETW	\$7,466,600
Total	\$28,341,567

Who was involved in the development of this tool? Was the disability advocate involved or consulted? Was the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities consulted in any way? Which other stakeholders were consulted? (Pg PA-506)

- The Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program does not use a standardized assessment tool. The PDD assessment of needs is a process that involves discussion between individuals, their family or supporters and PDD program staff.

My question is that I'd like to know a little bit about the thinking process or the rationale behind having these monster wait-lists. We know that the little children especially – and I'm not downplaying the needs of adults. But when you are losing time in terms of early intervention for children that are waiting for support but we are redirecting \$20 million over three years to this new activity [Civil Society Fund], I'm just wondering what the process and thinking was of prioritizing this work as opposed to dealing with the wait-list. (Pg PA-507)

- Establishing the Civil Society Fund (CSF) was a UCP platform commitment.
- The CSF represents a commitment of \$20 million over three years to help build the capacity of civil society to address pressing social issues across Alberta.

If we were going to use this \$20 million, what would that translate into in terms of children that we could support in FSCD? (Pg PA-507)

- Average cost per family of \$15,000 translates to about 1,300 FSCD families.

What criteria was used to select grant recipients and what information is required to be tabled or shared with the Ministry following the completion of the grant. As well, if you could tell me the percentage breakdown in the grants. What per cent went to for-profit companies, and what per cent went to non-profit providers? (Pg PA-510)

- Organizations applying for funding needed to demonstrate that their proposed project aligned with at least one of the following priority areas:
 - system infrastructure;
 - civil society research and data;
 - organizational transformation; or
 - financial sustainability and resilience.
- Grant recipients are required to submit financial and narrative, interim reports every 6 months, and a final report after the grant has ended.
- 21 funded projects are from non-profits or collectives. For-profit organizations are ineligible to apply for CFA funding.

My next question about the service dogs is: in the fiscal year that we're covering today, how many new service dogs or new service dog teams – I'm not sure what the correct word is – began working in Alberta or were licensed to work? Of those service dog teams that were new in this fiscal year, how many are as a direct result of the grants that were awarded, so not the approved list of providers but the grant recipients? (Pg PA-510)

- 135 service dog teams were approved in 2019-20.
- 118 of the 135 approved teams were a direct result of the agency grants.

How many times was the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities consulted regarding inclusive communication during this fiscal period? (Pg PA-510)

- The Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities provided advice to CSS Minister regarding need for sign language interpretation during all COVID-19 updates. Council also advised Ministry staff in Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women on ways to make the Gender Based Analysis Plus in-person training more accessible for participants with disabilities.

I'm wondering if the Ministry could commit to tabling just the cost and benefit or the information that was used to make the decision to fund Hope Mission. That was a significant investment. (Pg PA-510)

- Funding for the capital build is provided through Seniors and Housing.

I would like to ask for the regional differences around the income support additional shelter benefits, that supplemental benefit that you agreed to share with us. (Pg PA-511)

- 2019-20 Additional shelter benefit expenditures by region are shown below.

2019-20 IS Additional Shelter Expenditures by Region	
Calgary	\$1,321,407
Central	\$398,390
CSD	\$835,746
Edmonton	\$25,600,644
Northcentral	\$45,476
Northeast	\$1,835
Northwest	\$57,586
South	\$80,483
Total	\$28,341,567

I'm wondering, for this fiscal, if you could give me the number of people that were employed as a result of this work [with the Rotary] and the total funding for that fiscal period. (Pg PA-511)

- Thirty-six individuals obtained employment through this initiative in the 2020-21 fiscal year. Funding for this initiative for the same period was \$743,204.

I'm wondering: under the service dog section I would like to know if the Ministry monitors costs that are passed on to Albertans. (Pg PA-512)

- The Ministry does not collect or monitor this information.

What is the criterion to add a new provider to be able to increase the spaces [for Women's Shelters]? (Pg PA-512)

- When a community, agency or other stakeholder is interested in building or expanding a shelter service, CSS will complete a thorough assessment of options, to determine client needs in the context of community resources.
- When there has been capital funding made available, the following evaluation criteria for new or renovated shelter spaces were used;
 - A business case demonstrating need, evidence of community engagement and consultation, appropriate municipal approvals and zoning, and approved source of funding to address operating costs;
 - Organizations demonstrating the capacity to deliver women shelter and/or family violence prevention programming in Alberta;
 - Facilities will be safe and appropriate for both the clients served and for staff; and
 - A detailed budget and proponent contribution to the project.

What was the total number of Albertans that participated in inclusive postsecondary in this fiscal? I think I heard you give one number for one investment, but what is the total number for the period covered in this report? And what additional data is collected in terms of whether it's employment following completion or it's securing a volunteer position, or perhaps they're extending their stay in the postsecondary institution? (Pg PA-512)

- There were 158 students supported through Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) at a cost of \$4,235,606.
- Follow up from students completing studies in the 2020-21 school year is ongoing, with data collected to determine if they are continuing their studies, found employment or are exploring further community experience.

**MLA Garth Rowsell (UCP)
Vermillion-Lloydminster-Wainwright**

Following on family support for children with disabilities, just relative to wait-lists, what are historically the size and length of a wait-list relative to this period? (Pg PA-508)

- The FSCD program does not have a formal waiting list as families are in various stages of planning to identify needs and services to meet these needs.
 - The length of time a family is in planning varies based on individual family and child needs. Planning is concluded when a FSCD Agreement is signed or families' needs are met through other services and supports.
- Since 2018, the monthly number of families in planning has averaged between 3,500 to 4,000 families.
- Information about the FSCD caseload is available publicly on the Open Government site.

**MLA Rakhi Pancholi (NDP)
Edmonton-Whitemud**

Would you be willing to table with this committee that performance standard review and how the department performed in 2019-20 with the FSCD program? (Pg PA-509)

- The FSCD program publishes the most recent results from the 2018 Family and Guardian survey on the Open Government site. Families indicated 88 per cent agreement of positive impact on their family. This is a bi-annual survey, but the 2020 survey was deferred due to COVID. A survey is planned for fall 2021.

On FSCD, Deputy, can you tell the committee how many multidisciplinary team panels were heard in the 2019-20 year, those MDT panels? (Pg PA-509)

- The FSCD program completed 647 multi-disciplinary team reviews in 2019-20.