

Ask Your Town To Carry This

The plain-language version

The Alberta Disability System Breakdown · St. Albert, Alberta · 2026

The date to work to: Saturday, September 26, 2026. And in practice, earlier than that, because a council has to agree before the paperwork can be sent. Details below. After that, we wait a year.

The short version

There is a meeting in November where towns across Alberta vote on things they want the government to change.

We want disability income on that list.

We cannot put it there ourselves. Only a town council or a local FCSS board can, and only if that town is a paid-up member of the provincial association.

So the job is to ask them. That is the whole thing.

What is FCSS?

FCSS stands for Family and Community Support Services.

Nearly every town in Alberta has one. They run the programs that help people before things fall apart. Parenting programs. Seniors' support. Volunteer services. Help getting to appointments. Things like that.

Their whole reason for existing is to stop a problem early, before it turns into a crisis.

What is a resolution?

It is a formal request.

Once a year, all the FCSS programs in Alberta meet. Any member program or council can put forward a request. The delegates vote. If two thirds of them say yes, the whole association takes it to the government.

It is one town's idea becoming the position of nearly two hundred.

This has happened before with things like ours. In 2022, Lac La Biche County put forward a resolution about people on income support not being able to reach Alberta Supports by phone or online. It passed. The association now uses it as the sample resolution it hands out to everybody else.

Why would FCSS care about disability income?

Because when your income drops, the need does not go away. It moves.

It shows up at the food bank. At the housing office. On the crisis line. At the FCSS desk.

So this is not us asking them to do us a favour. It is us pointing out that this is already landing on them, and that fixing the income is cheaper than cleaning up after it.

That is their own logic. We are just saying it back to them.

And it is about to reach further. On January 1, 2027, child benefits start being counted as income when rent is worked out for the Rent Assistance Benefit. On January 1, 2028, the same change reaches everyone in community housing. Families with children will pay more rent and be left with less, and that shortfall lands on the same food banks and FCSS desks too.

What we are asking them to say

The full wording is in the main package. In plain terms, the request asks the government to make sure disability income:

- Is enough to live on, measured against Canada's official poverty line, plus what a disability costs on top
- Does not get reduced when the federal disability benefit arrives
- Does not cost you your health benefits if you work
- Stops problems instead of pushing them onto towns

About the date

The association's own rule is that a resolution has to be in their hands at least 60 days before the November meeting. That puts the last safe day at Saturday, September 26.

But there is a second step people miss. The association can send a resolution back if there is no sign the town council agreed to it. So an FCSS board saying yes is usually not enough on its own. It has to get in front of council.

Councils meet about twice a month, and the agenda closes about a week before the meeting. So the useful deadline for your email is the first week of September, not the last week. Sooner is better. If you are reading this in August, this is the week.

If September 26 goes by, it is not over. There is a second route called an emergent resolution, which can go in up to three days before the November meeting if the association agrees the issue could not wait. It is harder and it is not guaranteed. But the door does not slam on September 26.

What you do

Step one. Find your council. Search your town's name and the word council. Then search your town's name and FCSS. You want an email address for a councillor, and one for whoever runs your local FCSS. If you

cannot find them, message me and I will look for you.

Step two. Send the email. There is one written for you in the main package. Copy it, put your name at the bottom, send it. You do not have to write anything yourself. You do not have to explain the policy. It is all in there.

Step three. Tell me. Message me who you wrote to. I want to know which doors we have knocked on, so nobody gets missed and nobody gets three emails from three people while the next town gets none.

What to say, if you would rather use your own words

Keep it short. Three things.

You live there. You are asking them to sponsor a resolution on disability income at the FCSSAA meeting, and to have council endorse it. It has to be filed by September 26.

Then, if you want, one line about what this has meant for you.

That last part is the strongest thing in the email. Not because it is sad. Because it is real, and it is from someone who lives in their town.

Questions people have asked

Do I have to be on AISH or ADAP? No. Anyone who lives in the town can write.

What if my council already wrote to the Minister? Even better. Say so in your email. “Our council has already written to the Minister about this. I am asking you to take the next step.”

What if they say no? Then they say no, and nothing is lost. Ask them why, in writing, and send me the answer.

What if my town is not a member of the association? Then they cannot file it, but a neighbouring town can. Tell me and I will find you the nearest one that can.

What if I do not know who my councillor is? Message me. I have the lists.

Do I need to understand all of it? No. You are asking a question, not arguing a case. If they want detail, the full package has it and you can send that too.

What happens if it passes? It goes to a committee, then to the association’s board, then to the Minister as the association’s official position. The association publishes what came back. It stays in force for five years.

Is this going to take long? About fifteen minutes.

One thing before you go

Most of what I ask of you is defensive. Write this letter because something went wrong. Keep that record in case they say you did not report. Appeal that decision before the clock runs out.

This one is different.

This is us putting something forward, in a room where towns talk to each other, before anything has gone wrong.

It might not pass. But somebody has to put it on the table, and we cannot do it ourselves. One councillor saying yes is all it takes.

Ask in writing. Keep the answer. And this time, ask them to carry it for us.

The Alberta Disability System Breakdown — Advocate

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