

What they ask: Alberta South

The employment services intake in southern Alberta, what one family was asked, and what happened afterwards. A companion to What they ask: Alberta North.

Nobody publishes what is in these intakes. People go in with no idea what is coming, and the only way anyone finds out is from someone who has been through it.

This is drawn from a written account of an intake in rural southern Alberta in September 2026, recorded by the family member who sat in on it. It was done by telephone and ran about thirty minutes. It is one appointment, one assessor, one day. Yours may be worded differently or ordered differently. Treat this as preparation, not prediction.

Alberta's employment services for ADAP are delivered through two contracted areas. AKG Canada holds Edmonton and the north. Serco Canada holds Calgary and the south. The person who recorded this account chose not to name the business they dealt with, so what we can say is that this was a southern Alberta intake. Whether every provider in the south uses the same questions is not something anyone has told us.

Three things from this account worth knowing before you go in

Nobody mentioned reapplying for AISH. Thirty minutes, with a person who had been on AISH for decades, and the route back was never raised. If you want to be reassessed for AISH, that is a separate process and you have to start it yourself. There is no deadline on it, and the province pays for one medical report if you ask for payment approval before the report is done.

The recommended program does not start until 2027. A person can be assessed now, offered a program that runs next year, and told they will be contacted again in ninety days. If nothing seems to happen after your intake, this may be why.

There is no transportation funding. Asked directly whether the government would provide transportation to a program more than half an hour away, in a community with no buses and no taxis, the answer was no.

Before the day

You can do it by telephone. This one was, because the office was more than half an hour away and the family's computer was too old for a video meeting. In person, by phone and online are all offered. Choose whichever you do best in, not whichever is easiest to arrange.

You can have someone with you. In this account an adult family member sat in throughout, asked questions and raised barriers. If you want support, arrange it beforehand and say so in writing.

Ask for accommodations in writing before you arrive. Breaks, a quiet room, a shorter session, someone to speak on your behalf. Asking in writing puts it on the record whether or not it is granted.

The questions

Grouped roughly as they came. The wording is close to what was recorded on the day.

Housing and stability

- Tell me about your housing situation. Where do you live, and who do you live with?
- What is your rent or mortgage payment?
- Do you feel your housing situation is stable? Are you happy with it?

Support and community

- If you are feeling down and out, where do you go? Who do you talk to?
- Are you part of any groups? Friends, church, other supports?

Getting around, and being reachable

- How do you get around? Do you have a driver's licence? Have you renewed it?
- Is there a reason you do not drive?
- Do you have a mobile phone? Do you have internet access, and is it only at home?

Household and education

- Do you have any children?
- What is the last education you completed, and at what school? Any other education?

Financial literacy

- Do you pay your own bills? Do you physically do the payments yourself?
- Do you know how to budget?
- Do you understand that you have rent and bills to pay? Do you have other monthly bills, or just rent?
- Do you understand how taxes work?

Communication and skills

- How is your communication? Do you speak other languages? Do you struggle to speak in public?
- Are you able to express your needs as they come up? Can you advocate for yourself?
- How are your digital skills? Phones, computers, social media.
- Any other essential skills you want to tell me about?
- Any special talents or hobbies?

Work history and routine

- Do you have any work history? Have you ever worked before?
- When did you start there? How long were you there? How many hours a week? Why did you leave?
- Any work history before that?
- What does your daily routine look like? What about your weekly routine?
- Is there any enjoyable work, volunteering or training you do?

Employment goals

- What would you consider your strengths and skills? Customer service, operating a till, interpersonal or soft skills?
- What is your interest in employment? Do you want to work?
- What is your main employment goal? With accommodations? What accommodations would you need?
- Do you have a resume? Have you ever written one? How do you feel about writing one?
- If you were going to look for work, how would you do it?
- How do you feel about your ability to go for an interview? How many work references do you have?
- What type of work are you looking for?
- Do you have a criminal record?

The criminal record question is in this account and is not in the northern one. We do not know whether it is standard, one provider's practice or one assessor's. If you are asked it, please tell us.

Health and disability

- How is your physical health? What health issues do you have, and how do they affect your daily living?
- Are you being medicated for any of these conditions? Are the medications working for you?
- Do you have access to therapists or specialists?
- Are these diagnoses documented?

Naming your diagnosis

In this account the family said there was a health issue but did not want to discuss it. They were told: “for the purposes of our report, we need to be as well rounded as we can. Give the most honest report we can put forward.”

They named the general kind of condition rather than the exact diagnosis. That was accepted and the intake continued.

In the northern account, the client was told outright that naming her diagnosis was voluntary, declined, and it was recorded that she was medically diagnosed without the official name.

So in both accounts the person gave less than was asked for and the intake went ahead. You can confirm a condition is medically diagnosed without naming it, and you can decline to hand over reports. If you are told otherwise on the day, ask for that to be put in writing.

The consent they read out, and the database

Near the end, a consent statement was read aloud and a yes or no answer asked for. As recorded on the day, it said:

“This is your consent to share data. I understand that my personal information may be disclosed to an authorized employee, agent or contractor of the Government of Alberta, or the federal government, to assist in determining my eligibility for a training employment program and services, to monitor, assess and evaluate the effectiveness of services provided and to evaluate the results of provincial programs.”

Asked what information is shared, the answer recorded was that it goes into a database called Compass, that anyone on EI, AISH, ADAP or Income Support already has a file there, that the whole report from the intake is uploaded to it, and that most of the information is already held.

This is the first account that names the database. It is worth knowing two things about it. You are being asked to consent, which means there is a yes and a no. And nobody has been able to tell us what happens if you say no. If that matters to you, ask before your appointment, in writing, what the consequence of declining is.

The intake also recorded whether the person is a visible minority, Indigenous or an immigrant.

What happens at the end

The intake closes with a set of questions about what you want: whether you want to work, whether you want to take part in a recommended program, or whether you are content as you are. From there an action plan is created and emailed to you.

In this account the recommendation was a program covering job skills and volunteer opportunities, in a group setting, starting in 2027. The follow-up was set at ninety days, with the provider saying their door was open sooner if the person wanted to start looking for work.

Read the action plan when it arrives

The action plan is the document that gets measured later. Read it against what you said on the day.

In this account the barriers were all documented, but the comments kept turning the negative into a positive. If the plan reads as more capable than you are, reply in writing and ask for it to be corrected. Set out the limits in your own words: how long you can stand, what you cannot do on a computer, how long it has been since you worked, and how you would physically get to anything.

If transportation is a barrier, say so in writing and ask them to confirm, in writing, that being unable to travel will not be treated as not participating.

Answering about your days

The questions about routine, motivation, budgeting, problem solving and communication sound like a job interview, and the instinct is to sound capable. Most of us have spent years being told not to make a fuss.

Answer for the day you cannot get out of bed, not the day you are filling in a form. If your days vary, say they vary, say how often the bad ones come and say what they look like from the inside. Unpredictability is the thing that matters most and it is the thing people leave out.

What we still do not know

- What happens if you decline a question, other than the diagnosis one.
- Whether the criminal record question is standard in the south.
- Who reads what goes into Compass, and how long it is kept.
- Whether every southern provider uses the same questions, and whether they match the northern ones.
- What happens between the intake and a program that does not start until 2027.

If you go through one of these, write down what you were asked and send it in. Both of these documents exist because somebody did exactly that.

Built from a member's own record of a southern Alberta employment services intake, September 2026. Identifying details removed. The Alberta Disability System Breakdown is a free community campaign, not a government body, and receives no government funding. General information, not legal advice. Free to read, print and share. albertadisabilitysystembreakdown.netlify.app