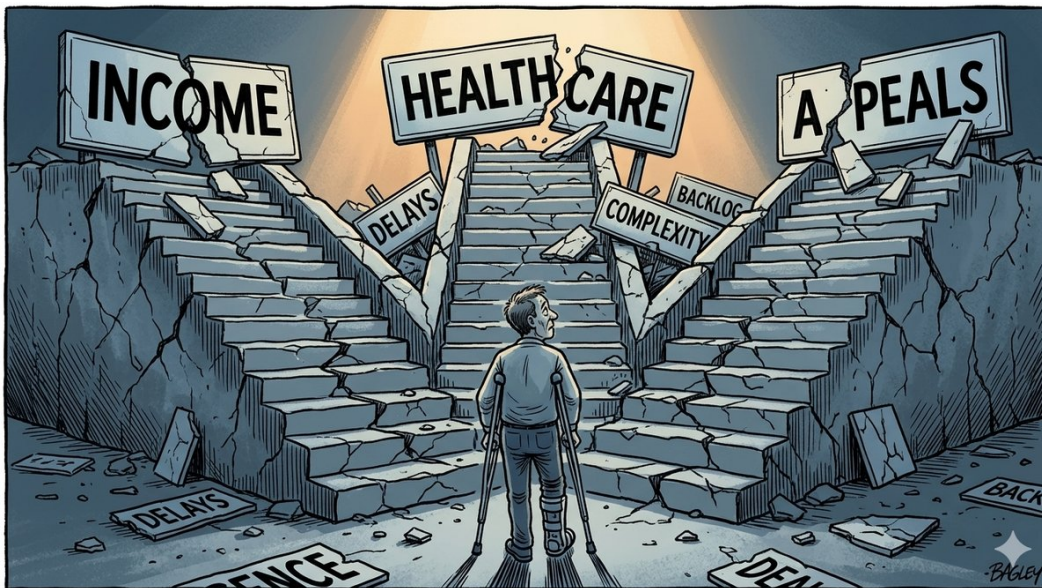


COMPOUND FAILURE

A Plain Language Guide

Three Systems Breaking at Once



This guide is for everyone.

If you live with a disability — this explains how three different systems are failing you at the same time.

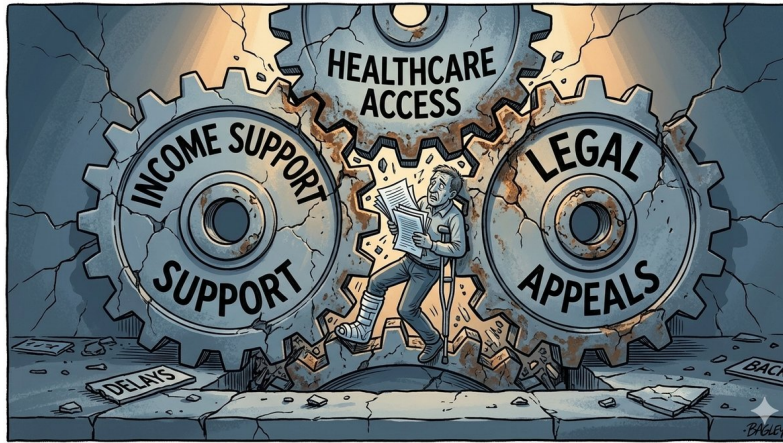
If you support someone with a disability — this shows you the bigger picture.

If you have read the long legal version of this brief — this is the same story in plain words.

Every section has a green box at the bottom. That green box gives you exact words to use.

Alberta Disability System Breakdown — April 2026

PAGE 1 — WHAT IS "COMPOUND FAILURE"?



WHEN THREE SYSTEMS BREAK AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS NOT THREE PROBLEMS. IT IS ONE BIG TRAP.

"Compound" means stacking on top of each other.

"Failure" means not working.

Right now in Alberta, three different systems that are supposed to support people with disabilities are all breaking at the same time:

1. The places where we live — the air, the water, the land.
2. The help we are supposed to get — FSCD, PDD, schools, caseworkers.
3. The money we live on — AISH and the new ADAP program.

Each one alone would be hard.

All three together creates a trap that is very hard to get out of on your own.

That is what "compound failure" means.

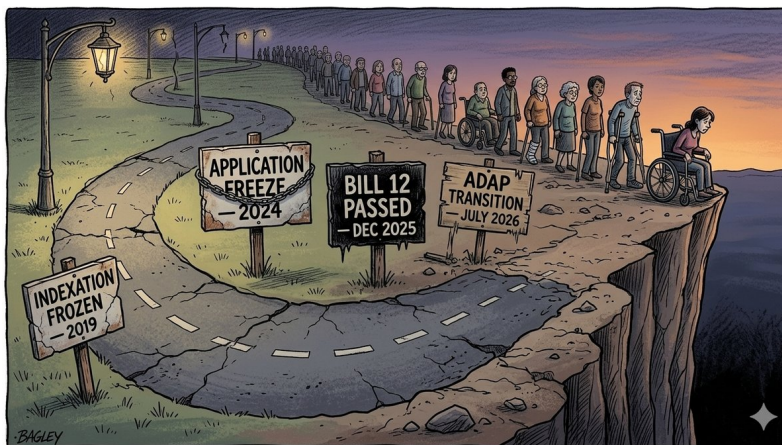
Why does this matter?

If you only look at one system, you only see one problem. You might think "the AISH cuts are unfair." That is true. But the same person being cut from AISH may also be drinking unsafe water, may have a child waiting three years for FSCD, and may have lost their caseworker. All at the same time. From the same government. In the same year.

■ HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS

Try saying this: "It is not just the AISH cuts. The same family is also waiting years for help with their kids and dealing with unsafe water. All these systems are connected. They are all failing on the same people, at the same time."

PAGE 2 — PILLAR I: THE SETUP



SOME OF WHAT MAKES PEOPLE DISABLED IS THE PLACES WE LIVE IN.

The first part of compound failure is what is in our environment.

Things in the air, water, and land can make people sick or disabled. For example:

- **PFAS chemicals** in drinking water (linked to thyroid problems, immune problems, developmental delays)
- **Pesticides** in the food chain in farming areas
- **Asbestos and lead** at old industrial sites
- **Pollution** leaking from old landfills

In several Alberta communities, levels of these things are above what Canada says is safe.

The places where this is worst? Indigenous communities are being hit the hardest. (There is a separate 195-page guide on Indigenous Disability that explains why.)

What are PFAS?

PFAS are chemicals used in things like waterproof coatings and firefighting foam. They build up in the human body. They have been linked to thyroid problems, weakened immune systems, developmental delays in children, and some cancers. In several Alberta communities, PFAS levels in drinking water are above the current Canadian safe limits.

■ HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS

Try saying this: "Some of what makes people sick or disabled is the place they live. Bad water, bad air, old pollution. Alberta has all of these things — and they are not being cleaned up."

PAGE 3 — PILLAR I CONTINUED: WHO IS WATCHING?



THE GROUPS THAT WATCHED THE WATER AND AIR — THE GOVERNMENT JUST DEFUNDED THEM.

You might think someone is in charge of fixing this.

The **Alberta Water Council** was. They watched water quality and recommended changes.

The **Clean Air Strategic Alliance** was. They did the same thing for air pollution.

In February 2026, the Government of Alberta cut the funding for both. On the same day.

So now there is even less protection than there was before.

The pollution did not go away. The watchdogs did.

That is part of compound failure: the problem keeps growing, and the systems that watched the problem are being shut down.

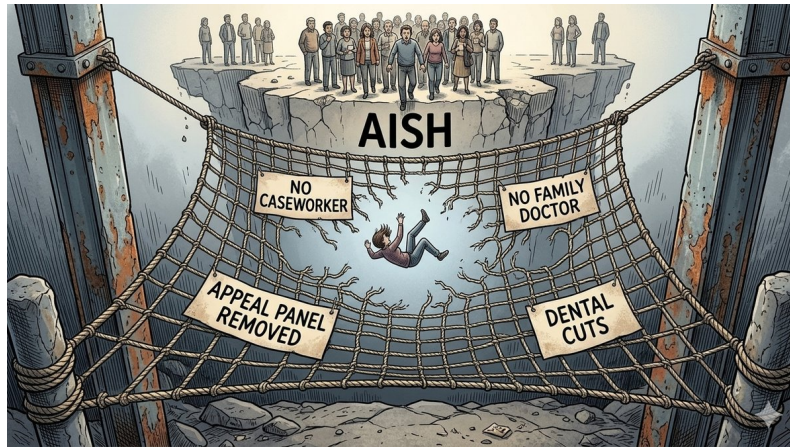
What got cut and when?

On February 26, 2026, the Government of Alberta announced it would no longer fund the Alberta Water Council (a 30-year-old body that monitored water quality across the province) or the Clean Air Strategic Alliance (a parallel body for air quality). Both organizations brought together government, industry, Indigenous communities, environmental groups, and scientists. Both are now defunded.

■ HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS

Try saying this: "There used to be groups whose job was to watch the water and the air. The government just stopped paying them. The pollution is still here. The watchdogs are gone."

PAGE 4 — PILLAR II: THE SAFETY NET HAS HOLES



WHEN YOUR CHILD NEEDS HELP, THE WAIT IS THREE YEARS.

The second part of compound failure is the help systems that are supposed to catch families.

For children with disabilities, that system is **FSCD**.

For adults with developmental disabilities, that system is **PDD**.

For school-age kids, it is supposed to be **inclusive education**.

All three are operating in collapse.

FSCD right now has:

- A **three-year average wait** to get full services
- **85% of families** have no caseworker assigned at the 13.5-month mark
- Some caseworkers carry **400 families each** (the recommended limit is 100)

When you call to ask when help will come, the official response is: "**We cannot provide a timeline at this time.**"

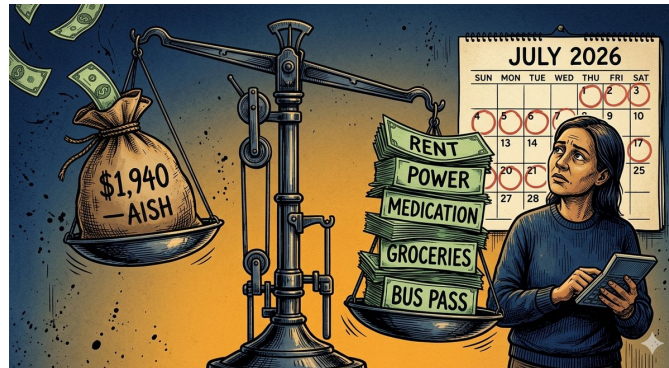
What is FSCD?

FSCD stands for Family Support for Children with Disabilities. It is the Alberta program that is supposed to fund respite care, therapy, equipment, and family support when a child has a serious disability. It was created by law in 2003. It is not a charity — it is a government commitment.

■ HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS

Try saying this: "When a family needs help with their disabled child, FSCD is supposed to help. But the wait is three years. Most families have no caseworker for over a year. The system exists on paper. It does not work in real life."

PAGE 6 — PILLAR III: WHAT IT COSTS YOU



THE AISH CUTS ARE NOT JUST LESS MONEY. THEY ARE THE TOP OF A BIGGER STORY.

The third part of compound failure is the AISH-to-ADAP transition. It takes effect **July 1, 2026**.

Under ADAP:

- You will get **\$200 less per month** after a transition period
- The government will assume you can work — even though only **26.4%** of AISH recipients have any employment income
- You can no longer appeal eligibility decisions to the **Citizens Appeal Panel** (it was removed)
- If you get the federal **Canada Disability Benefit (\$200/month)**, **Alberta takes it back** — so you end up with the same amount of money as before
- Your prior approval for AISH **can be reversed** without any new evidence about your health

Each of these alone is a big change. **All of them together restructure the entire program.**

What is Bill 12?

Bill 12 is the law that created ADAP. It passed on December 9, 2025. It is the legal framework for everything happening on July 1, 2026. As of April 2026 — about 71 days before launch — the government has still not published the operational rules of the new program. People will be transferred to a system whose details are still being written.

■ HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS

Try saying this: "It is not just \$200 less. It is also: no appeal, no caseworker, work expected, federal money clawed back, and decisions reversed without explanation. All on the same day. All on the same person."

PAGE 7 — PILLAR III CONTINUED: ALBERTA HAS THE MONEY



THIS IS NOT ONE FAMILY — THIS IS 79,000 FAMILIES

\$31.9 BILLION IN SAVINGS. STILL CUTTING DISABILITY SUPPORTS. THIS IS A CHOICE.

Right now, the **Alberta Heritage Fund** holds **\$31.9 billion**.

Alberta has had a budget surplus **four years in a row**.

The government says it cannot afford AISH the way it is.

Both of those things cannot be true at the same time.

When a government has billions in savings and is still cutting disability supports, that is not a money problem. **That is a choice about who matters.**

What is the Heritage Fund?

The Heritage Fund is Alberta's public savings account. It is built up from oil and gas royalties. It belongs to the people of Alberta. As of late 2025, it held about \$31.9 billion. The government can spend from it. The government chooses where to put extra money each year. The government has been growing the Heritage Fund while cutting disability supports.

■ HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS

Try saying this: "Alberta has a \$31.9 billion savings account. The government is still saying we cannot afford disability supports. The math does not work. This is not about money. This is about choice."

PAGE 8 — THE LAW SAYS THIS SHOULD NOT HAPPEN



THIS IS NOT JUST UNFAIR. PARTS OF IT MAY BE AGAINST THE LAW.

The **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms** is part of our Constitution. It is the highest law in the country.

The Charter says:

- **Section 7** — Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of the person.
- **Section 15** — Everyone is equal before the law, including people with disabilities.
- **Section 1** — Any limit on rights must be reasonable and justified.

Administrative law also says:

- The government must follow fair procedures when it decides things about you.
- It must give you a real way to appeal.
- It must give you reasons for its decisions.

Compound failure may break all of these things.

That does not mean a court has decided it. It means the questions are real, and they belong in court.

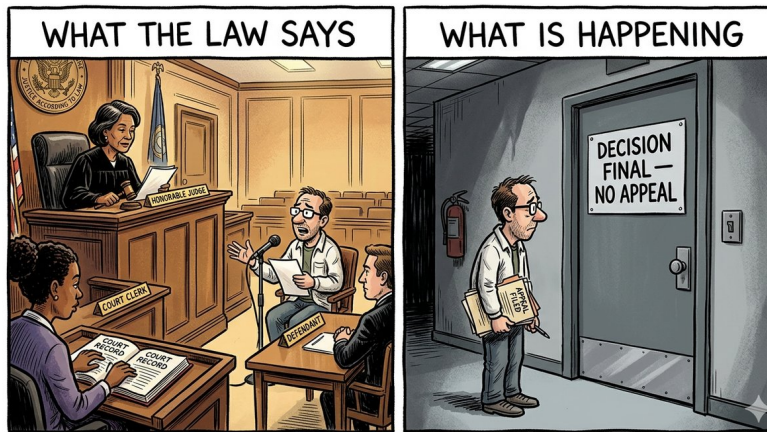
What is the difference between rights and a court ruling?

You have rights all the time. They are written in the Constitution. But for a court to enforce a right, someone has to take a case there. Then a judge decides. This guide is not a court ruling. It is a description of the questions courts will be asked.

■ HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS

Try saying this: "The government is not allowed to do certain things — even if it really wants to. Some of what is happening with AISH and ADAP and the help systems may be against the Charter. That is what lawyers will be asking the courts to decide."

PAGE 9 — WHAT THE LAW ACTUALLY SAYS



THE PROCESS HAS TO BE FAIR. RIGHT NOW, IT IS NOT.

"Procedural fairness" is a fancy phrase. It just means: **the government has to play by the rules.**

The rules are:

1. **Tell you** what is happening to you, in writing.
2. **Give you a chance** to respond.
3. **Make a decision** based on real evidence.
4. **Tell you the reasons** for the decision.
5. **Give you a real way to appeal.**

Bill 12 removed the Citizens Appeal Panel. That used to be the place where people could appeal AISH decisions to a body that did not work for AISH.

When the government removes your appeal, the decision is final. Even if it is wrong.

What was the Citizens Appeal Panel?

The Citizens Appeal Panel was independent. It was made up of people not employed by the AISH program. They reviewed decisions that recipients said were wrong. Many decisions got reversed by them. Bill 12 removed it. Now if AISH says no, the only place left to challenge it is the courts — which is slow, expensive, and not realistic for most people.

■ HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS

Try saying this: "There used to be a place to appeal if AISH made a wrong decision. The government removed it. Now wrong decisions stay wrong. That is not how a fair system works."

PAGE 10 — ALL THREE TOGETHER: THE TRAP



ONE SYSTEM CRACKING IS A PROBLEM. THREE SYSTEMS CRACKING TOGETHER IS A TRAP.

Imagine a person born today in Alberta.

- They might live near unsafe water. **(Pillar I)**
- They might develop a disability because of that.
- They might need FSCD as a child — and wait three years. **(Pillar II)**
- They might need PDD as an adult — and wait years more. **(Pillar II)**
- They might be moved to ADAP — with \$200 less, no appeal, no caseworker. **(Pillar III)**

Each of those alone would be hard.

All of them — on the same person, in the same lifetime, from the same government — is a trap.

That is the compound failure this guide is about.

The life-course frame

The same person moves through all three pillars across their lifetime. They do not encounter them one at a time. Pillar II's contraction (the FSCD wait) shapes the kind of adult they become — at the same time Pillar III is cutting the income that adult will live on. Each pillar weakens what the others were supposed to provide.

■ HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS

Try saying this: "Each thing the government is doing — alone — would be hard. But the same family is being hit by all three at once. That is the trap. Naming it is the first step in breaking it."

PAGE 11 — WHAT YOU CAN DO



NAMING IT IS THE FIRST STEP. WRITING IT DOWN IS THE SECOND.

You do not have to be a lawyer.

You do not have to wait for permission.

Step 1: Write down your story. One page is enough. Just facts: what happened, when, who said what.

Step 2: Find your MLA at: contact.assembly.ab.ca/mla-finder

Step 3: Send the same letter to all of these people, on the same day:

- Your MLA
- Minister Jason Nixon — alss.minister@gov.ab.ca
- Premier Danielle Smith — premier@gov.ab.ca
- ADAP — adapengagement@gov.ab.ca
- Your federal MP — find at ourcommons.ca

Step 4: Tell other people. Print this guide. Pass it on.

Step 5: Wait three days. No reply? Send it again. Say: "This is my second contact. I am waiting for a written response."

Why writing it down matters

Verbal complaints disappear. Written complaints become a record. A record can be cited. A record can be quoted in court. A record can be read by a journalist. A record outlives the person who wrote it. Your story belongs in a record.

■ HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS

Try saying this: "We are going to write what is happening down. We are going to send it to the people in charge. We are not asking permission. We are putting it on the record. Together."

PAGE 12 — YOU ARE NOT ALONE



79,000 ALBERTANS ARE LIVING THIS. YOU ARE ONE OF MANY.

Right now in Alberta, about **79,000 people are on AISH**.
Every single one of them is being moved to ADAP on July 1, 2026.

Around them: families. Communities. Friends. Co-workers.

The number of people affected by compound failure is much larger than 79,000.

You are not alone. You have never been alone. You just had to find each other.

The Alberta Disability System Breakdown community group (free to join — or read without joining):

facebook.com/share/g/1GShj73sVm/

The campaign website (all reports, flyers, and templates):

albertadisabilitysystembreakdown.netlify.app

Email: albertadisabilitybreakdown@outlook.com

The full Compound Failure brief, the Indigenous Disability collection, and the AISH Plain Language Guide are all available there. They are free. Ready to send. Just ask.

■ HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS

Try saying this: "There are tens of thousands of people going through this same thing. There are groups, there are reports, there are templates. We can do this together. Here is where to start."