

Questions and Answers

Disabilities Internship Program

What is the Disabilities Internship Program?

The Disabilities Internship Program provides persons with disabilities with one-year work experience opportunities, professional development and networks to support them in competing on future vacancies, either within government or with other organizations.

Who is eligible to participate in the program?

A pan-disability approach has been adopted for this program, so individuals with mobility, sensory, developmental, cognitive, behavioural and learning disabilities are eligible. The program is open to recent graduates from high school and recent graduates from post-secondary institutions.

How many internships will be offered?

The government will hire 20 individuals for positions starting January 2018.

What kinds of positions are you looking to fill with this internship program?

The exact positions will be based on the needs of our regional offices as well as Edmonton and Calgary. We're hoping to have a mix of positions in the administrative and professional streams.

Will the internships be available throughout the province, or only in Edmonton and Calgary?

We're confident we'll be able to place interns in positions in Edmonton, Calgary and in a number of smaller centres.

How will people know about the internship positions?

We are using a multi-layered awareness campaign to let Albertans know about the opportunities. Information on the positions will be shared with our community partners to post online and by email to their members. We will also be promoting the internship postings through all disability resource centres within publicly funded post-secondary institutions. Social media will also be used to inform people of the jobs.

As with all provincial positions, there will be information posted at jobs.alberta.ca

What exact role will the community partners/community organizations play in the internship process?

Our community partners will support us to promote the internship opportunities, identify individuals who might be interested and assist with the screening of applications and with interviews. As well, community partners may support us in the areas of staff awareness training, and assistive technology and supports for specific interns based on their needs.

Can any Albertan with a disability be considered for these internship positions?

There are eligibility guidelines for the internships. Candidates must be recent graduates of either high school or post-secondary school, and must have graduated within the last two years. Successful candidates will also have to meet the standard guidelines set out by the Alberta Public Service.

When will the jobs be posted, and when will the selected interns start?

The applications for the internships will be available as of November 1, 2017, with an application deadline of November 17, 2017. Based on the number of applicants, we hope to have these positions filled by January 2018.

How will you make sure that the jobs are filled by persons with disabilities?

The government is partnering with community organizations, including Prospects, EmployAbilities and Calgary Alternative Employment Services, which specialize in disability employment services. These community organizations will assist with promotion, recruitment and advise on the types of workplace supports that the interns might require.

How much are the internships paid? If so, how much are they paid?

Yes, the internships are paid. The compensation for each intern will be determined as per our human resource policy, for example position classification, candidate experience and education.

Is this the first internship program for persons with disabilities?

No, in 2014 we ran a successful pilot internship program for persons with disabilities. This year's internship program builds on the learnings and successes of the pilot program.

How successful was the pilot project?

The pilot project was very successful. Ten of the 20 interns from that cycle were hired by the Government of Alberta on a full-time basis following the completion of their internship.

Are there plans to extend this program beyond 2017-18?

It is our intent to continue this program in future years and to expand its scope to include other ministries within the provincial public service.

How will you vet the interns to make sure they have a disability?

As with any employment competition in the public service, we will rely on the integrity of the applicants. The recruitment advertising will also be clear on the intent of the internships.

Do persons with disabilities have a higher-than-average unemployment rate?

Yes. Albertans with disabilities have a workforce participation rate that is 15% lower than average.

What other government programs can help persons with disabilities in the workplace?

The government offers the Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES) program. DRES is available to help Albertans overcome barriers to education or employment caused by a disability. The program helps with job search supports, workplace supports and educational supports.

We also have the Employment Learning webinar series (csslearningseries.ca/employment-first-series) that offers tips and best practices for Albertans with disabilities.