



May 19, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.M., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Block
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

The Honourable Bill Morneau, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Finance
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Re: Supporting the needs of people with disabilities

Dear Sirs,

During this unprecedented time, we recognize and thank the Government of Canada for providing critical supports to many of its citizens. However, the 22% of Canadians who have a disability and the people who support them have not received federal support, and they are struggling.

Of the over 7.5 million Canadians with a disability, 75% percent are unemployed or underemployed, rendering them ineligible for CERB. Seventy percent live in poverty. Canadians with an intellectual disability who have a job earn less than half of Canadians who do not have a disability. This lack of equality greatly increases barriers to meeting basic needs.

Your government correctly provided income support to seniors, presumably because you identified them as economically and socially vulnerable, especially during the pandemic. This same rationale should apply to citizens who experience disability.

The people and families we support are being squeezed by higher or additional costs for necessities:

- Direct/Personal Support Workers;
- Respite supports;
- food;
- technology to get/stay connected
- mental health supports;
- transportation (not safe on public transit so must resort to costlier options);
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);

We urge you to correct this oversight as soon as possible. Canadians who have disabilities are citizens as are their families who support them. Additional barriers at this point could devastate the quality of life for some of our most vulnerable citizens.

We ask that you provide urgently needed income support that recognizes the extra financial pressures people who have disabilities and their families are experiencing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melodie Cook". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melodie Cook
Executive Director, Community Living Windsor