

November 15, 2023

Sameer Zuberi

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6  
613-992-2689

Dear Parliamentary Secretary Sameer Zuberi,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us as part of your consultation process for the development of the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB). As mentioned, this legislation could well be the most important work any of us ever do in our careers, given the implications for thousands and thousands of Canadians with disabilities living in poverty across our country. As the Hon. Carla Qualtrough said, “in Canada, no person with a disability should live in poverty.”

Inclusion Canada reports that 75% of adults between 18 and 64 with an intellectual disability who live alone live in poverty. These are the people that we work with at Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region. We provide support to over 800 adults and to 1,400 children and their families. This legislation, when enacted effectively, will immediately lift those 800 adults out of poverty, providing them the opportunity to pay their rent and to buy groceries and other basic necessities... in the same month! This legislation will also give hope of a brighter future to the parents of the 1,400 children who use our services.

The priorities we wish to highlight are:

- **Please engage deeply with the disability community as you draft the regulations** for this important and complex legislation, ensuring that the benefit supplements the various provincial and territorial programs such as Ontario’s ODSP without claw backs from any of the government benefits.
- Means testing for eligibility should **consider only the individual’s income** and NOT the family income. Everyone deserves the opportunity to contribute to their household, but when family income negates benefits, such as the CDB, the person receiving them is stripped of the dignity of being able to contribute financially to their household, which is extremely dehumanizing.

- **Include funding for the CDB in the budget for 2024.** People with disabilities who are living in poverty need access to this benefit as soon as possible. A one-year period for the development of the regulations was the commitment. Let's make it happen!

We have also attached the Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming Federal Budget 2024 prepared by Inclusion Canada. Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region fully endorses this submission from our national partners Inclusion Canada.

Thank you again for your investment in Canadians with disabilities and for engaging with the community in the development of this life-changing legislation. We will submit a pre-budget letter regarding this essential spending as well.

Serving the community together,



Allan Mills  
Executive Director  
Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region

Devon Fernandes  
Chair of the Board of Directors  
Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region

CC: Hon. Bardish Chagger  
Brian May  
Hon. Kamal Khera  
Mike Morrice  
Tim Louis  
Valerie Bradford