



October 25, 2023

To the Members of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA).

Thank you for the opportunity to inform you about our recent experiences with the Canada Summer Jobs Program (the “Program”). In past years, this Program has been an excellent way for students to gain invaluable skills to complement their education and for our organization to gain much-needed resources to support our summer programs.

I will comment on two aspects of the Program: (1) the lack of communication and transparency regarding the 2023 Program, and (2) the length of employment approved for subsidy in the past two years.

A. Communication and Transparency

Our organization’s experience with the 2023 Canada Summer Jobs was less than satisfactory.

1. In early January 2023 we submitted applications for ten (10) positions in Calgary Shepard and one (1) position in Calgary Heritage. The number of positions for which we applied was consistent with the prior year.
2. On April 21, 2023, we were notified that the position in Calgary Heritage was approved for funding.
3. It was not until July 13, 2023 – almost three months later – that we received notification that our application for Calgary Shepard was not retained for funding. Because time is of the essence when hiring for the summer, we had previously reached out to the Program Officer assigned to our file but received no response. We eventually contacted the MP for Calgary Shepard, Tom Kmiec, to inform him of the situation; he was, unfortunately, unable to provide us with an update on the status of our application. Mind you, by late spring we had already concluded that “no answer” meant “no funding” and made alternate arrangements to staff our summer programs.

4. Immediately upon receiving notification, I again reached out to the Program Officer. I hoped to garner some information as to why our application had been denied when applications in past years had all been approved. I also asked for any insight as to things we may have missed or that did not compare well to other applications, and how we might do a better job of developing positions for students that would meet the criteria outlined in the Application Guide.
5. On July 20, 2023, I received a reply from a different Program Officer, who informed me that they were unable to provide specific information as to what we can include or change on future applications to be successful in getting approval for funding. I was referred back to the Application Guide for the assessment criteria used to evaluate eligibility requirements and was assured that the assessment process is impartial and transparent. However, without any feedback as to where our application fell short, we are left wondering what caused the denial and also have no way of knowing whether the assessment process was in fact impartial and transparent.

B. Length of Employment Approved for Subsidy

Undoubtedly most students look for work for the entire summer in order to maximize their income to pay for increasingly expensive education costs and associated living expenses. In our opinion, the length of employment approved for subsidy in the past two years fell well short of what students were looking for and what organizations like ours need when investing time and effort into providing quality work experiences and in turn gain some benefit from their employment.

In 2022, we were approved for the following positions at Calgary Shepard:

- 4 positions at 30 hours per week for 8 weeks = 240 hours
- 3 positions at 40 hours per week for 7 weeks = 280 hours
- 2 positions at 37 hours per week for 8 weeks = 296 hours

The one position at Calgary Heritage was approved for both 2022 and 2023 as follows:

- 2022: 35 hours per week for 10 weeks = 350 hours
- 2023: 35 hours per week for 8 weeks = 280 hours

Since a full summer of employment would typically be 12 to 16 weeks, these approvals fell well short of that mark. This leaves the students in the difficult situation of having to look for another very short-term position elsewhere to round out their summer employment – and that partway through the summer when other positions are likely to have already been filled. It also left our organization short of resources for a full slate of summer programs and with limited “return” on the investment needed to bring the students up to speed and fully functioning in

their positions. I recommend that funding be provided for a minimum of 12 weeks – up to 16 weeks would be better.

Again, thank you for providing the opportunity to comment. I trust that my comments will be beneficial to your deliberations.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Neumann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rob Neumann
Financial Controller
First Alliance Church