

CNIB
DEAFBLIND
COMMUNITY
SERVICES



Reach Higher - Dream Bigger

"Reach Higher - Dream Bigger" in ASL

ANNUAL
REPORT
2021/22



A Limitless Future for Canadians Who Are Deafblind

Letter from the Board Chair and Vice President

"A Limitless Future for Canadians Who Are Deafblind - Letter from the Board Chair and Vice President" in ASL

This year has been filled with both new beginnings and promise.

In such a short time, we have accomplished so much together. Every day, our incredible staff team goes above and beyond to deliver exceptional service and support to our clients. From developing educational resources for community partners to working with external organizations to develop accessible and inclusive content for our communities - our teams across the country have truly outdone themselves.

In early 2022, the Government of British Columbia announced that they will be providing dedicated funding for intervenor services, representing a monumental step for Canada's Deafblind community.

This important announcement represents a critical turning point in our organization's history - one that signifies a movement of change.

Over the next year, we will continue our work in lobbying provincial governments across the country to step up and be a part of this wave of positive change.

Together, we will advocate for a limitless future for Deafblind Canadians - one where they can access the services they need no matter where they reside.

None of this would have been possible without our community of champions and stakeholders. We truly cannot thank you enough for your continued support.

Thank you,



Charlie Thompson
Board Chair



Sherry Grabowski
Vice President

Highlights

"Highlights" in ASL

National Deafblind Awareness Month: I Can Choose

This year, for National Deafblind Awareness Month, CNIB Deafblind Community Services (DBCS) embarked on its most ambitious campaign to date – “I Can Choose.” This national marketing campaign focused on amplifying the stories and experiences of members of the Deafblind community through print, broadcast, and social media outreach. The campaign also leveraged the global yarn bombing initiative designed to spark conversations with people around the world about the experiences of and the need for appropriate services for individuals who are Deafblind.



Campaign results

Total reach
3,097,356

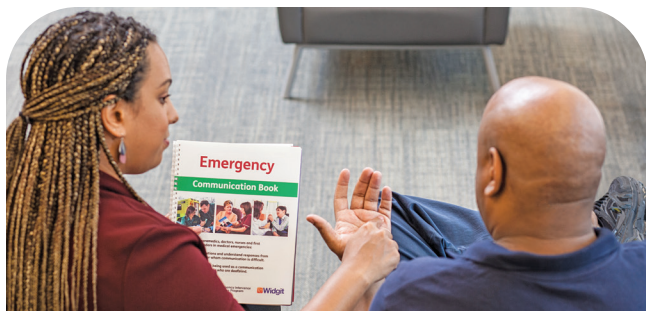
Media Points Rating
100%

Service referral increase
500% MOM*

*Month over Month

Streamlining services during emergencies

In partnership with Canadian Hearing Services (CHS), DBCS developed and presented a new resource, “Emergency Assessments for Triage,” to hospital emergency administrators across Ontario. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with many requests for additional copies of the emergency assessment book.



Alongside developing these new resources, DBCS and CHS co-developed specialized training sessions designed to educate interpreters on how to work with Deafblind clients. With this new training in place, the Emergency Intervenor Program (EIS) will be able to work with CHS to fill emergency assignments that require interpreters and intervenors to work together in urgent situations.

Certification

The Certified Deafblind Intervenor Specialist (CDBIS) certification establishes quality standards of practice for intervenors and is currently the highest level of accreditation in the field of intervention.



DBCS is proud to announce that all intervenors are currently in the process of working towards achieving certification. Over the past year, staff have been training and working diligently to prepare for the upcoming exams with support from subject matter experts.

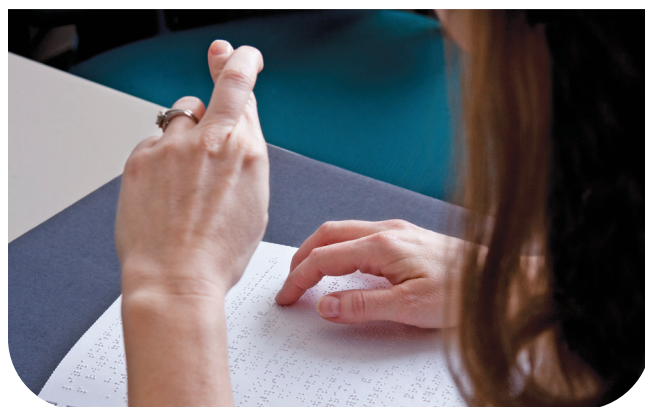
We expect that all staff who are eligible will achieve accreditation within the next few years.

Vibrations: DBCS's first client newsletter

This year, DBCS developed our first ever client newsletter, "Vibrations." The name, which was chosen in consultation with key members of the community, was suggested by a local Deafblind author and poet, John Lee Clark.

"Vibrations are an important part of the Deafblind experience. We can feel it when someone is approaching, or when we celebrate, we would stomp on the floor to create huge vibrations," says John. "But there are other meanings, too. Energy, mood, and what lingers with us long after the event - things that we experienced living on in our minds for a long time afterwards."

Since its initial launch in Spring 2021, the newsletter has covered topics from health and wellness to the latest in accessible technology to client stories and more.



Boundless Dreams:

Kevin's Story

"Kevin's Story" in ASL

Kevin Frost has always had a passion for sport. Growing up, Kevin discovered his love of hockey and began refereeing at the age of 10. By sixth grade, Kevin was diagnosed with hearing loss – but that didn't stop him from pursuing his passion.

Kevin spent many years working as a referee before the early 2000s when he was diagnosed with Type 2 Usher Syndrome. Usher Syndrome is a rare genetic disorder that first causes a person to lose their hearing in childhood and then their vision later in life.

"I could still referee hockey, but my driver's license was immediately taken away, and for liability reasons, my employer could no longer have me working there. I thought I had hit a cement wall in my life."

While Kevin knew that his dreams might have to change a little, he was determined to not let his disability prevent him from pursuing his passions. Knowing that he would need some support, Kevin reached out to CNIB Deafblind Community Services (DBCS) for help.

"DBCS has been my guiding light and helped me get back on my feet after being diagnosed with Usher Syndrome," he says.

"Having an intervenor under my wings has given me more freedom to live independently."

Having an intervenor offers Kevin consistent, ongoing support for activities like grocery shopping, banking, and medical appointments so he can feel empowered to live his life with confidence and independence.

Before long, Kevin was back on the ice – but not in the way he originally expected.

Kevin's friend and now coach, Mike Rivet, asked if he would be interested in speed skating – and with some coaching and practice, Kevin reignited his passion for sport. Today, Kevin is a three-time World Champion Canadian speed skater with dreams of winning an Olympic medal for Canada.

"My dream of being a winning Olympic speed skater is not just for me. It doesn't stop at coming home with a gold medal. It goes on to supporting others in accomplishing their dreams," says Kevin. "I want to be a mentor and a role model to future goal achievers."

"To be successful as a person with a disability, we all have to learn to educate, listen, and be positive. The barriers will always be challenging as a Deafblind person, but I believe that positive energy will always win in the end."



Expanding Our Reach

Working to Deliver Services From Coast to Coast to Coast

"Expanding Our Reach" in ASL

As of today, it's estimated that there are approximately 466,000 Canadians over the age of 15 living with some degree of dual sensory loss. Unfortunately, in many parts of the country, these individuals don't have access to critical supports and services. When supports like intervenor services are absent, it can take a heavy and ongoing toll on a person's health, both physically and mentally.

CNIB Deafblind Community Services has been working hard to liaise with government officials and changemakers from across the country to ensure Canadians who are Deafblind can access services from coast to coast to coast.

Our efforts are working. This year, the province of British Columbia announced it would be providing dedicated funding for intervenor services to support the more than 1,000 British Columbians who are Deafblind.



Sherry Grabowski, Vice President of CNIB Deafblind Community Services, poses with **Dan Coulter**, MLA for Chilliwack and Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility, **Nicholas Simons**, MLA for Powell River-Sunshine Coast and Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and **Theresa Tancock**, Family Services Coordinator, British Columbia Chapter of the Canadian Deafblind Association.

Mapping Our Impact

British Columbia

Funding from the Government of British Columbia was announced in early 2022, ensuring that the more than 1,000 British Columbians who are Deafblind can access intervenor services.

Saskatchewan

Funding for services was announced in early 2020.

Saskatchewan was the first province outside of Ontario to provide funding for DBCS, jumpstarting a wave of change that will ensure Canadians who are Deafblind will be able to access services - no matter where they reside.



Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Ontario

Funding from the Government of Ontario was announced in the 1980s, representing a landmark victory for people who are Deafblind.



The Future of Deafblind Services

British Columbia represents the third province to provide funding for DBCS - and it certainly won't be the last. We're continuing to have conversations with government officials across the country - and we won't stop advocating for and alongside our community.



As we look to the future, we're focused on ensuring that every Canadian who is Deafblind can have equal and equitable access to services, no matter where they live.

Board of Directors and Executive Leadership

Leading the Way to Service Excellence

"Board of Directors" in ASL

CNIB Deafblind Community Services is made up of a diverse team of passionate and enthusiastic professionals. We are proud to be governed by a board of directors comprised of leaders in the field of Deafblind services and advocacy, including individuals who are living with a loss of both hearing and sight, as well as a talented executive leadership team.

Board of directors

Charlie Thompson
Chair

Penny Leclair
Vice Chair

Jane Ashford

Shari Bancarz

Denise Beaumont

Lindee David

Natasha Gilani

Kelly Kimens

Kim Leclerc

Christy Sebastian

Cheryl Wilson

Executive leadership team

John M. Rafferty
President and CEO

Sherry Grabowski
Vice President

Trevor Hinds
National Director, Program Operations

Our Impact at a Glance

"Our Impact at a Glance" in ASL

Total clients served

200+

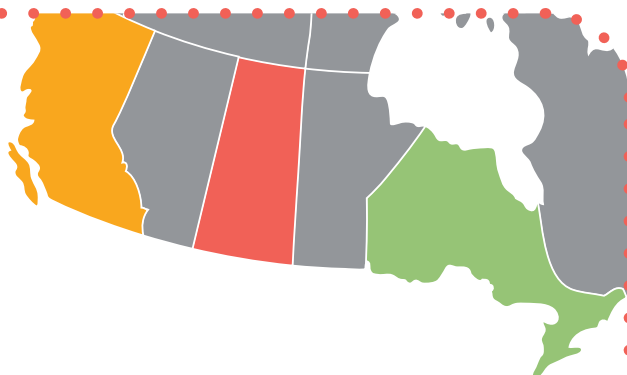
5 per cent increase year over year

Total direct service hours

40,000+

14 per cent increase year over year

Regional Impact



British Columbia

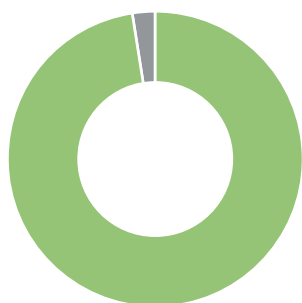
- Funding secured in Spring 2022 to support the estimated **1,033** British Columbians who are Deafblind

Saskatchewan

- **200** per cent increase in clients year over year
- **270** per cent increase in direct service hours year over year

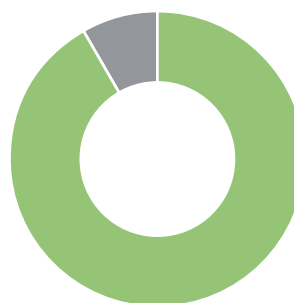
Ontario

- **100+** emergency service requests delivered
- **450+** literacy classes provided to 54 learners



Operating Revenue

- Government funding **97.7%**
- Other **2.3%**



Operating Expenses

- Service **91.9%**
- Administration **8.1%**

CNIB Deafblind Community Services takes pride in upholding the highest standard of ethics and accountability in stewarding the funding we receive from our provincial government partners. Our financial statements for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022 were prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations and were audited by Ernst & Young LLP. Visit deafblindservices.ca for more information.

CNIB DEAFBLIND COMMUNITY SERVICES



"Back Cover" in ASL

CNIB Deafblind Community Services is one of Canada's leading providers of specialized support and emergency services for people who are Deafblind. Our services enable people who are Deafblind to maximize their independence and engagement with the world around them.

Stronger Together



Together, we support and stand by Canadians who are blind, partially sighted, or Deafblind.

- Visit deafblindservices.ca
- Email info@deafblindservices.ca
- Call **1-855-862-6001**



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