



Calgary Alternative Employment Services

Inspired Work, Inspired People

Calgary Alternative Employment Services (CAES) started assisting the local business community with talent matching, inclusive recruitment and diversity management in October of 1998. Since then we've helped employers and job-seekers with disabilities to generate hundreds of success stories. Our work has steadily progressed; with each employer, job-seeker, and CAES staff member teaching us new lessons around inclusion and workplace culture.

CAES prides itself on maintaining a culture of learning and improvement in order to better meet the needs of everyone we serve. Although we're operating in one of the worst economic downturns of the last 30 years, employer engagement is higher than ever. The CAES team continues to generate and support dozens of inclusive employment success stories each year, while building the capacity of employers to leverage the benefits of diversity in the workplace. CAES is fortunate to have so many inclusive employers, inspired job-seekers, and dedicated team members in our network.

Thanks Calgary,

Sean McEwen
CAES Program Director



Featured Employer: Nikki King, Iron Mountain Secure Shred

Through her experience working with CAES Nikki stated that "The hiring and on-boarding process went perfectly, I wish that it could go like this with all new hires." Nikki has also said that (CAES Candidate) "Devon is a wonderful addition to our team and has exceeded our expectations in every way imaginable!" Iron Mountain has embodied the practice of 'business as usual' and has since developed new policies, implementing regular 'Diversity Minutes' into their team meetings. While they had many of the same concerns we often hear from other employers, Nikki has never felt a task too daunting to take on and has stepped up to the challenge. While still managing to uphold their commitment to safety and security, Iron Mountain has paved the path to an inclusive workplace. Utilizing company diversity strategies and policies, executed by exceptional management and supported by employees on every level, this team has showcased to the Calgary Business community what it truly means to be a Diversity Champion.

New #CAES team Member



Ashton Bennett
Career Consultant

Since receiving my BA Degree in Psychology from Mount Royal University, I have worked with a number of different mental health organizations throughout the city. For the past 5 years, I have had the privilege of being a part of the Calgary Alternative Supportive Services team, first as part of the Day Options Program and now with the Employment Program. As Calgary has been my home for over 15 years, I am passionate about the city's artistic talent, cultural richness, its eclectic individuals, and giving back to the community in any way I can.

CAES Candidate Success Story



Success Story: Alex and Re:Grub

“Alex always has a smile on his face!” says Emily Pederson, a fellow co-worker at Re:Grub. Re:Grub, just soaring past its first year in existence, is a local burger bar that not only pushes the envelope in what their burgers (and now Instagram famous milkshakes) taste and look like, but also with their inclusive hiring practices. Jose Azares, the owner and creator of Re:Grub, encourages all employers to be open minded when hiring individuals. “You have to try to open opportunities for anyone. It’s easier for me because I have a son who was born with Down Syndrome, but you have to be open.” Jose makes sure that Alex, who works part-time at Re:Grub, rotates with the staff who support him so his coworkers are conscious and aware of working with diverse staff. Read the full story on our [Blog here](#).

New #CAESteam Member



Cal Schuler

Diversity and Engagement Consultant

I have been an active leader and participant on numerous boards and committees on local and provincial levels. My career began and flourished following my injury in 1975, but my personal experience with a spinal cord injury has fueled my true passion – to assist others who also live with various disabilities, and to promote disability awareness and barrier-free environments.

National Supported Employment Conference



In June of 2016 the CAES Team had the pleasure of partnering with Gateway Association to host the Canadian Association for Supported Employment National Annual Supported Employment Conference. Held in Edmonton, this conference focused on 'Moving the Needle: Collective Impact' and featured a unique agenda including international speakers such as Rich Donovan, as well as Impact Labs facilitated by Alberta Culture and the Tamarack Institute. Impact Lab and Conference findings have been compiled and summarized into a Collective Impact Report, found on the [CASE website](#).

New #CAESteam Member



Jasmine Pettigrew
Career Consultant

I began working in the non profit sector in 2012 and have always been passionate about empowering those around me in both my professional and personal life. Working with marginalized populations to encourage engagement with the communities around them has been a theme in my interactions and work. I am excited to be here at CAES, helping clients find and foster their own rewarding experiences in the workplace and community.

CAES Candidate Success Story



Success Story: Finding Value at Pet Valu

Amanda came to CAES with previous fast food experience and expressed having lots of anxiety in those types of positions. Amanda approached CAES to help her find something more suitable. Amanda talked a lot about her love and passion for the well-being of pets/animals and her desire to work with them. It was also important for Amanda to work in her community, so that she could take care of her family and pets at home.

Amanda and CAES team Diversity and Engagement Consultant, Jennifer Fournier, approached the Pet Valu in her neighborhood. Amanda had an on-the-spot interview and was offered a position with the Pet Valu team. Amanda was promised only a few hours a week at her position, but she was okay with this. Amanda's boss expressed how impressed she was with Amanda's work dedication and quickly increased her hours, as well as making her a key holder and giving her the responsibilities of opening and closing Pet Valu independently. Amanda always says how happy she is at Pet Valu, and how thankful she is to have found a position that aligns with her values.

Congratulations to both Amanda and Pet Valu on their success with inclusive employment!

New #CAESteam Member



Jacalyn Allison
Career Consultant

My background in psychology, arts and the outdoors has provided me with a combination of skills that I use when supporting folks in the field of human services. My ongoing quest for adventure and lifelong learning is a great fit for my job as a Career Consultant. Assisting people in finding their passion is one of the many joys of my work.



For the second year in a row CAES team members Hayley Richards and Sean McEwen sat on the Calgary Employment First Network DEAM Steering Committee. With a focus this year on community partnerships, we were lucky to partner with Alberta Human Services, Mount Royal University, Bow Valley College, The City of Calgary, Calgary Economic Development, Picture This Film Festival, and the Calgary Chamber of Commerce. The 2016 Disability Employment Awareness Month celebrations saw a wide variety of events from small employer based learning sessions at the "Let's Talk Employment - Inclusive Leadership" event to the "DEAM Film Fest" and "DEAM Employer Awards Gala". The CAES team was thrilled to have several of our employers nominated and was honoured to present DEAM Employer Awards to Iron Mountain Secure Shred and Re:Grub Burger Bar. See our [CEFN DEAM Page](#) for more DEAM highlights.



Hayley: What was your most significant ‘take-away’ from your time at CAES?

Jade: My most significant ‘take-away’ was a change in focus; from compensating to advocating. This influenced a change in my marketing pitch and how I approached employers. I noticed a shift in dialogue- focusing on benefits instead of talking about compensating for barriers or working around accommodations. I really learned that people who are already open to inclusive employment are who we would really want to partner with, and that we shouldn’t be trying to convince people to partner with us. We should really have an expectation for a “foundational buy in” from stakeholders - people who are marginalized should be able to expect the same foundational buy in as everyone else. I have definitely taken this focus on advocacy back to my work with SODA – I’m focusing our projects on the attitude of “let’s showcase the great work you’re already doing.”

Hayley: How would you rate your practicum and who would you recommend for a future CAES practicum?

Jade: I had a great time with the CAES team - the organization is doing great work. It was a great practicum for me as I am a self-directed learner and have experience in the field, other practicum students might need a more traditional structure. I think the best fit would be 4th and 5th year students and self-directed learners who can capitalize on the CAES structure.

Hayley: What would you say to someone considering a practicum at CAES?

Jade: Explore the agency as much as possible beforehand, read as much about truly inclusive employment as possible. I would also recommend that others explore their own biases; your biases reflect on how you learn and critical self-reflection is key. Assessing your biases before and after would be useful, as this critical reflection really helps you get the most out of your practicum experience.

Jade's Guest Blog Posts



The Year Ahead

2017 is proving to be an exciting time for the CAES team with several presentations planned and new developments to CAES Services for Employers in the works. CAES team members Sean McEwen and Hayley Richards are currently working with the Calgary Employment First Network DEAM Steering Committee to plan DEAM 2017 events. There is a coordinated effort on behalf of several networks this year advocating for the Government of Alberta to issue a Provincial Proclamation of Disability Employment Awareness Month; you can show your support by following along and sharing with the #ProclaimDEAM hashtag. On behalf of the Calgary Employment First Network, Sean McEwen and Alexi Davis (Prospect Human Services) will be presenting at the ACDS Spring Conference, hosted in Calgary at the Coast Plaza from April 24-26. CAES will also be presenting at the 1st World Conference for Supported Employment hosted this summer in Belfast, Ireland from June 14-16. In further developing our Services for Employers, we are exploring new ways for employers to engage with CAES and increase their capacity for workplace diversity and inclusion. Be sure to connect with us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to stay up to date on CAES services.

We look forward to another year of collaboration with such a dedicated and passionate network!
Sincerely,

The CAES Team