



Media Kit



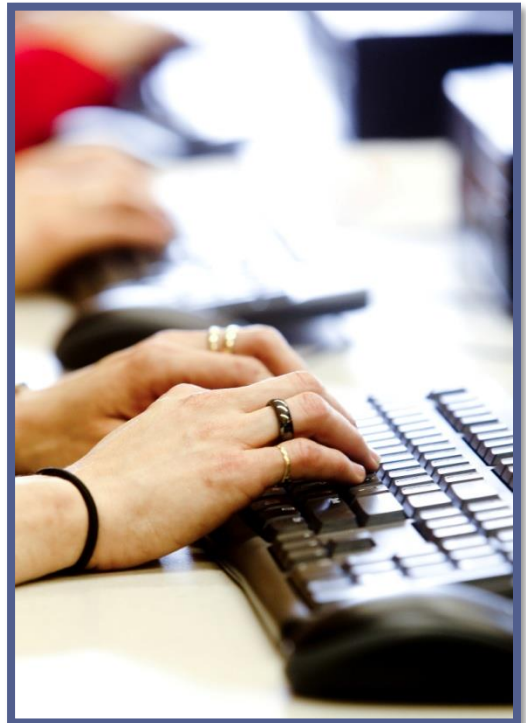
We empower people

Distinctive Employment Counselling Services of Alberta (DECSA) empowers people to break through barriers that stand in the way of success. We are a community-based non-profit organization, and have supported individuals in their efforts to find and maintain employment and education since 1977.

“Through acceptance, support, and skill-building, all individuals can meet their full potential,” says Deborah Rose, CEO.

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Thank you for taking the time to learn about our organization. We look forward to working with you.



About DECSA

DECSA is a highly innovative and creative community-based non-profit charitable organization, incorporated under the Societies Act in 1977. It is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and a Chief Executive Officer. Since 1977 DECSA has been providing support, services, and programming to those with barriers to employment, education, and entrepreneurship residing in greater Edmonton. DECSA has become recognized as a leader in providing supports to reduce barriers and increase the labour force participation of our clients. Our individualized and specialized supports, programs and services are specifically designed to meet the educational and employment-related needs for those who have a disability, are survivors of family violence and/or are sexually exploited. Our clients have little or no labour market attachment for a variety of reasons including poverty, low literacy, and other high-risk social economic barriers.

- DECSA provides employment supports and advocacy for many vulnerable and marginalized populations including those who are Aboriginal, ethnically diverse, LGBTQ+, between 15 and 30, senior, and/or disabled.
- DECSA supports marginalized communities in reducing social isolation, improving health and wellness, strengthening self-esteem, increasing self-confidence, and enhancing personal safety.
- DECSA assists clients in the following areas: employment skill development, coping strategies, personal empowerment, business skills, financial literacy, career development, health and wellness. DECSA also provides secondary supports including transportation, addiction therapy, and community referral services.

Vision	We envision a society where all people are valued, respected and have the opportunity to work to fulfill their potential.
Mission	DECSA's mandate is to contribute to the greater Edmonton area by collaborating with a wide range of agencies, non-profits, community members, local businesses and partners in order to advocate innovative and creative ways to create successful social, employment and educational programs and services for those with barriers to full employment.
Building	DECSA is <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a fully accessible facility that includes outdoor wheelchair accessibility and free parking• located close to the LRT and a block and a half from Edmonton Transit Service
Team Members	DECSA's dynamic team of individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none">• are from a variety of cultural, educational, and experiential backgrounds• work together to serve and support a diverse population• provide a safe and inclusive environment
Participants	DECSA assists both adults and youth with disabilities, sexually exploited men and women (including those who are transgender) and those affected by family violence, addictions, concurrent disorders, and complex issues. DECSA is a place where clients are valued and respected from the moment they walk in the door to the moment they leave to embark upon their new-found journey—with new skills, new direction, and confidence to achieve their full potential.

Programs and Services Chart

Program/Service	Participants	Goal	Start Date	Duration
Assets for Success	Youth with disabilities aged 15 to 30	Support participants in their efforts to find and maintain suitable employment or education	Continuous intake	Up to one year
Transitions	Individuals who have experienced sexual exploitation	Support individuals holistically to establish a healthy lifestyle and self esteem, obtain education or main-stream employment	Continuous intake	Up to one year
Ventures	Entrepreneurs with disabilities	Support individuals seeking to start or expand their own business	Continuous intake	Six-weeks of workshops/ quarterly and post-care for up to three years
Time for Change	Youth with disabilities and post-secondary education aged 15 to 30	Connecting educated youth and employers in order to build long-term careers	Continuous intake	Six months
Down to Earth	Youth at risk aged 15 to 30	Teaches youth responsibility and independence through gardening.	June 2017	Six months
Community Hub	Job seekers	Provide free access to employment or education resources, assistive technology and other services. Staff offers résumé cover letter writing support.	Ongoing Monday to Friday 8:00am to 4:00pm	As long as necessary



Programs and Services

Through **Assets for Success** youth aged 15 to 30 who identify themselves as having a disability receive support in their efforts to secure and maintain suitable employment. Once they are individually assessed, we help them develop career plans, learn life management skills, participate in employment preparation, and search and apply for work. Participants can have up to one year of wage subsidy. This program provides continuous intake to individuals who are ready to enter the employment market.

Since 2000, the **Transitions** program has offered prep program workshops, outreach, and 20-week core programming to individuals who have experienced sexual exploitation and wish to further their education or enter mainstream employment. The program accepts men and women, including those who are transgender. The Transitions team members work with participants holistically to develop life skills, improve self-esteem, strengthen social skills, obtain further education and/or enter into mainstream employment. The program spans up to 1 year.

For over 16 years, the **Ventures** program has provided support and mentorship to entrepreneurs with either visible or invisible disabilities who are seeking to establish or expand a business. The program capitalizes on participants' *diversity* while accommodating their physical and mental health challenges. All aspects of the process are designed to ensure short-term and long-term success. DECSA team members provide up to 3 years of post-care support.

The four-month **Down to Earth** program provides at-risk youth with the chance to form friendships and receive mentorship while growing vegetables in plots on DECSA's property. Youth will develop safety and gardening skills, interact with visiting speakers, and take ownership of a community project. The program's completion will be celebrated with a potluck featuring vegetables from participants' plots.

The **Time For Change Program**, funded by the Government of Canada's Career Focus Program, aims to assist postsecondary-educated youth with disabilities to find gainful employment. The DECSA team works with both the youth and the employer to identify barriers and create a joint action plan to address them. The program focuses on finding long-term solutions to labour market problems. Participants receive individualized training covering resume writing, interview skills, work experience, and employer connections. Employers receive incentives in the form of a wage subsidy lasting up to six months.



Our **Community Hub** is available to job seekers wanting to access computers, fax machines, photocopiers, a job board, newspapers, reference materials, and/or Wi-Fi for independent job search. DECSA team members are available to provide help and information, such as résumé and cover letter writing support. Weekly employer connections and an onsite Employment Resource Coordinator are available. The Community Hub is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

All of DECSA's programs and services are free of charge.

Biography of Deborah Rose, DECSA CEO

Ms. Deborah Rose is a university graduate, Life Skills Trainer and Master Instructor with Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. She joined DECSA in 2013. She is experienced in developing community connections and partnerships with governments, stakeholders, service providers, educational institutions and Aboriginal communities; these compliment her vast expertise in disability management and program and leadership development. As the Chief Executive Officer, she oversees the agency and believes in a high standard of ethics in the work environment. She is committed to challenging employees to reach their full potential.



Throughout her career, she has received many awards for going above and beyond, and was recently nominated for the City of Edmonton Mayor's Award for Outstanding Service. She is a committed and community connected Board Member of Edmonton Aboriginal Disability Association (EADA), and member of Private Career Development Contractor Association of Alberta (PCDC), Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities (ACCD), Career Development Association of Alberta (CDAA), and Edmonton Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Rose has been sharing her vast experience and knowledge in the non-profit industry for over 30 years.



Quote Sheet

“DECSA offers a valuable service to help people remove those blocks that hold them back from returning to work or furthering their education. This work has benefitted so many people. I strongly support the work they do.” – Dean Brown, Provincial Lead, Aboriginal Programming Education, Canadian Red Cross

“DECSA’s Assets for Success program has been a fantastic resource for our clients, who struggle with their confidence, to help them prepare for the Edmonton job market. The Assets for Success program provides valuable guidance and assistance for clients who decide it is time to seek a job.” – Fatima Soares, Social Worker with Edmonton North Primary Care Network

“I’m feeling confident, clearheaded, looking forward to applying my new learned skills.” – Assets for Success Program Participant

“I always know the people at DECSA are on my side, which is a great confidence-builder.” – Dave O’Riordan, Ventures Participant

“It is amazing to see entrepreneurs with a disability emerge through barriers to obtain their dreams.” – Velma Bellerose, Program Manager

“Transitions is a place where you’re safe to feel joy and laugh.” – Transitions Participant

“The inclusive atmosphere makes me feel at home.” – Transitions Participant

“If it wasn’t for this program, I wouldn’t be where I am today, and I would still be involved in the sex trade.” – Transitions Participant



Contact

Deborah Rose, CEO

drose@decsa.com

780.471.9626

11515 71 Street NW
Edmonton, AB T5W 1W1

Phone: 1.780.474.2500

Fax: 780.474.7765

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We would like to thank the funders who make our programs and services possible.



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Fund for Persons with Disabilities program

Canada

Thank you for taking time to learn more about DECSA.