



Abortion Rights
Coalition of Canada

Coalition pour le droit à
l'avortement au Canada

Alberta
Prochoice
Coalition

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Pro-choice Groups Call on Alberta Government to Stop Funding Anti-Abortion Organizations

ALBERTA – The Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada (ARCC) and the Alberta Prochoice Coalition (APC) welcome the news that the pro-choice Canadian Federal Government will take steps to prohibit future Canada Summer Jobs funding for anti-abortion groups.¹ The Liberal government's announcement came after ARCC revealed on April 10 that four anti-choice political groups had received Canada Summer Jobs funding from various ridings since 2011.²

“Our pro-choice Liberal government will be protecting the rights of women, trans men, and non-binary people when it implements changes to the Canada Summer Jobs program that will make anti-choice organizations ineligible,” said Kathy Dawson, a Board member with Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada and Alberta Prochoice Coalition. “Now we must ensure that the Alberta provincial government makes the same commitment to abortion rights through the implementation of pro-choice policy that will immediately and permanently stop all provincial funding to these anti-choice organizations.”

Alberta Government Ministries have been funding various anti-choice groups since 2011, as follows:

1. Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (reporting to Treasury Board): Bingo and (pending) casino license for Lethbridge and District Birthright Society (\$16K+ annual).
2. Community and Social Services: Central Alberta Pregnancy Care Centre (\$72K+ annual)
3. Provincial/Municipal FCSS funding: Total unknown (Medicine Hat, Mountainview, Greenview and Cremona have all funded anti-abortion groups with FCSS). Anti-abortion groups should be ineligible under the FCSS Program Handbook section 2.1(1), as these organizations do not have prevention programs, and they oppose abortion and common pregnancy prevention methods such as the pill, IUD, and emergency contraception.
4. Alberta Labour: Summer Temp Employment, CA Job Grants Training (\$21K, 2016-17).
5. Alberta Culture: Current amounts unknown (\$128K, 2010-14)

Full details at this table, which includes federal and municipal funding of Alberta anti-choice groups, totalling over \$1 million since 2011: <http://www.arcc-cdac.ca/CPC-study/Alberta-antichoice-grants-vs-CRA.pdf>

Dawson said: “Most Albertans would be surprised to learn that many pregnancy care centres are religious missions created to undermine contraceptive use and interfere with abortion access. Most do not have medical staff available to assist pregnant clients or counsellors that are accountable to any professional standards or organizations”.

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Anti-abortion organizations promote a conservative religious view of sexual and reproductive health.³ Many of these centres are in Alberta schools teaching purity culture and undermining responsible sexual health education. This can lead to dangerous medical misinformation being provided to vulnerable people.

Albertans expect that charities will be honest and transparent about government funding, but a review of Canada Revenue Agency charity returns revealed that most crisis pregnancy centres are NOT doing this.⁴ (Examples: The Lethbridge and District Birthright Society reported no provincial support in 2015 or 2016 despite newsletters identifying bingo funds. The Medicine Hat Pregnancy Support Society reported \$0 in government funding from 2011-2015 despite receiving \$3,000 in FCSS in 2013, and \$20,113 in Community Spirit provincial funding 2011-2013.)

Additionally, ARCC completed a study of pregnancy care centres across Canada in May 2016⁵ and found the majority to do one or both of the following on their websites:

- Spread misleading or inaccurate information about abortion, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, sexual activity, and/or adoption; and/or
- Present themselves deceptively, such as by not disclosing that they won't refer for abortion, or hiding their religious stance from prospective clients.

Government funding legitimizes these unprofessional and medically dangerous pregnancy centres, enabling them to divert patients from legitimate health clinics and undermine responsible sexual health education in Alberta schools. In the interest of patient safety, respect for Charter rights, and compliance with inclusive and evidence-based policy, funding and support must be stopped immediately and permanently. The failure of these groups to respect Charter rights and to report accurately to the Canada Revenue Agency should be of concern to all Members of the Legislative Assembly.

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¹ iPolitics, April 13, 2017. Amanda Connolly. "Government looking to shut down summer job grants for anti-abortion groups". <https://ipolitics.ca/2017/04/13/government-shutting-down-summer-job-grants-for-anti-abortion-groups-source/>

² Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada, April 10, 2017. "Grants from Canada Summer Jobs Program Support Political Attacks on Human Rights." <http://www.arcc-cdac.ca/press/ARCC-CDAC-release-apr-10-17-english.pdf>

³ Canadian Association of Pregnancy Support Services Core Documents, 2012. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7twzwJxG8BeYmgzZEPOcm1rVUK/view?usp=sharing>

⁴ Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada, "Anti-Abortion Agencies Get Millions in Government Funding", January 2017. <http://www.arcc-cdac.ca/press/ARCC-CDAC-release-jan-11-17-english.pdf>

⁵ Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada, "Study: Review of 'Crisis Pregnancy Centre' Websites in Canada", May 18, 2016. <http://www.arcc-cdac.ca/CPC-study/cpc.html>