



NEADS

National Educational
Association of Disabled
Students

ANNUAL REPORT
2024-2025



National Educational Association of Disabled
Students (NEADS)

514 Nideyinàn, Carleton University
K1S 5B6

(613) 380-8065 ext. 201
info@neads.ca

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Note from our Chair of the Board	5
Note from our National Coordinator	6
Meet the NEADS Team	7
Meet the NEADS Team: Board of Directors	8
Building Employment Pathways	9
Financial Assistance Program	11
Virtual Access for All: State of the Schools Tour	12
Virtual Access for All: Webinar Series	13
NEADS Websites	14
Social Media	15
Partnerships	16

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DISABLED STUDENTS

Founded in 1986, the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) is a by-and-for, cross-disability charitable organization that supports full access to education and employment for disabled and neurodivergent post-secondary students and graduates in Canada. NEADS collaborates with post-secondary institutions, employers, community organizations, and funders on research, consultation, and knowledge mobilization initiatives.

We have spent the 2024–2025 working diligently to support disabled post-secondary students and new graduates in both programming and advocacy work. We wrapped up our four-year Virtual Access for All project this past March and continued to expand eligibility to our Building Employment Pathways job coaching program in order to holistically support all self-identified post-secondary students and new graduates with disabilities.

NOTE FROM OUR CHAIR OF THE BOARD

STEPHANIE EVANS

“My adventure as chair kicked off in January 2025, and it’s been a whirlwind of excitement! This year, I’ve had the opportunity to collaborate with some fantastic organizations like Wavemakers, McGill University, Wilfrid Laurier University, and Carleton University. I’ve also ventured into the podcast world, discussing the struggles students face and the fantastic things NEADS offers on an episode with CMS Web Solutions Inc. And I had a blast on Traipsin’ Global On Wheels, sharing insights about being a social worker with a disability. The variety of experiences has been truly engaging and interesting.

I also jet-setted to the Global Disability Summit in Berlin, where I got to shine a light on disability issues from around the globe. And as if that wasn’t enough fun, I was invited to join a panel discussion on youth mental health in PEI. What a fantastic opportunity! To top it all off, I was deeply honored to receive a nomination for the 2025 D-30 Disability Impact List, a recognition of the impact of our collective efforts in the field of disability advocacy.

It’s been a busy and thrilling year so far, and I’m filled with anticipation for what’s next on this incredible journey! I can’t wait to continue making strides in disability advocacy and sharing my experiences with you all.”

NOTE FROM OUR NATIONAL COORDINATOR

FRANK SMITH

“The 2024/2025 fiscal year was extremely impactful for our community. The National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) has supported post-secondary students with disabilities by delivering financial aid, provided vital resources across our websites and social media so students and graduates have the tools they need for success in school and the labour market.

A total of \$1,130,000 in financial assistance was provided to hundreds of disabled students across Canada through the Accessibility Resilience Program, the NEADS Student Awards Program and the NEADS Student Assistance Program since 2021 during the Virtual Access for All project. Students were pursuing college and university education, across fields of study, in diploma, undergraduate and graduate studies.

I am excited that NEADS is now offering a free Job Coaching service. We've built significant partnerships with by and for disability and student groups. We've met with students and graduates with disabilities and service providers in communities across Canada, virtually and in person through our events. We've continued to provide expert advice to federal and provincial governments to ensure students and graduates with disabilities are best supported by government funding and social programs.”

MEET THE NEADS TEAM



Frank Smith
National
Coordinator



Katja Newman
Director, Student Financial
Assistance Program



Aliyah Petzak-Grant
Director, Website
Content and Digital
Engagement



**Chloée C. Godin-
Jacques**
Educational
Programming
Director & Research
Manager



Isabella Fiore
Director,
Partnerships and
Communications



Eniola Akisanmi
NEADS Student
Awards Program
Officer



Jason Thompson
Director, Web
Platforms and
Infrastructure



Mohamed Behi
Advisor



Lauren Gravis
Advisor, NEADS
Student Awards
Programs



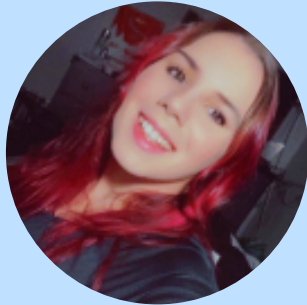
Alan Bridgeman
Technology
Consultant



**Jérôme
Archambault**
Advisor

MEET THE NEADS TEAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Stephanie Evans

Chairperson, Newfoundland
and Labrador Director



Elizabeth Doherty

Vice Chair, New
Brunswick Director



Selali Tettevi

Treasurer,
Saskatchewan Director



Avesta Alani

Ontario Director



Adam David

Past Chair,
Alberta Director



Antonia Francis

Director-at-Large



Monique Sangha

British Columbia
Director



Paige Cox

Nova Scotia
Director



Vanessa Aase

Director-at-Large

BUILDING EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

NEADS' Building Employment Pathways provides free virtual job coaching to post-secondary students and new graduates with disabilities in across Canada!

Coaching is delivered through the Sustainable Livelihoods model. This is a holistic, strengths-based approach exploring six key areas supporting a variety of employment journeys with individualized strategies. Participants shared goals such as:

Get a job as soon as possible

Build new skills to make me more work-ready

Career change or progression

Transition from school to work

Removing barriers at work

We've partnered with Sustainable Livelihoods Canada, Council of Canadians with Disabilities, the Quebec Association for Equity and Inclusion in Post-Secondary Education, and the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities in this project.

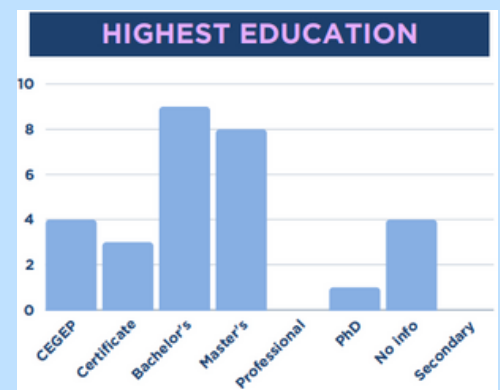
We thank Employment and Social Development Canada for their generous support via the Workplace Opportunities: Removing Barriers to Equity program.

BUILDING EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

Building Employment Pathways experienced lots of growth in the last year!

The program expanded in August 2024 to include participants interested in any sector to be more responsive to a wider range of employment pathways. We served 46 community members throughout the year!

PROGRAM STATS:



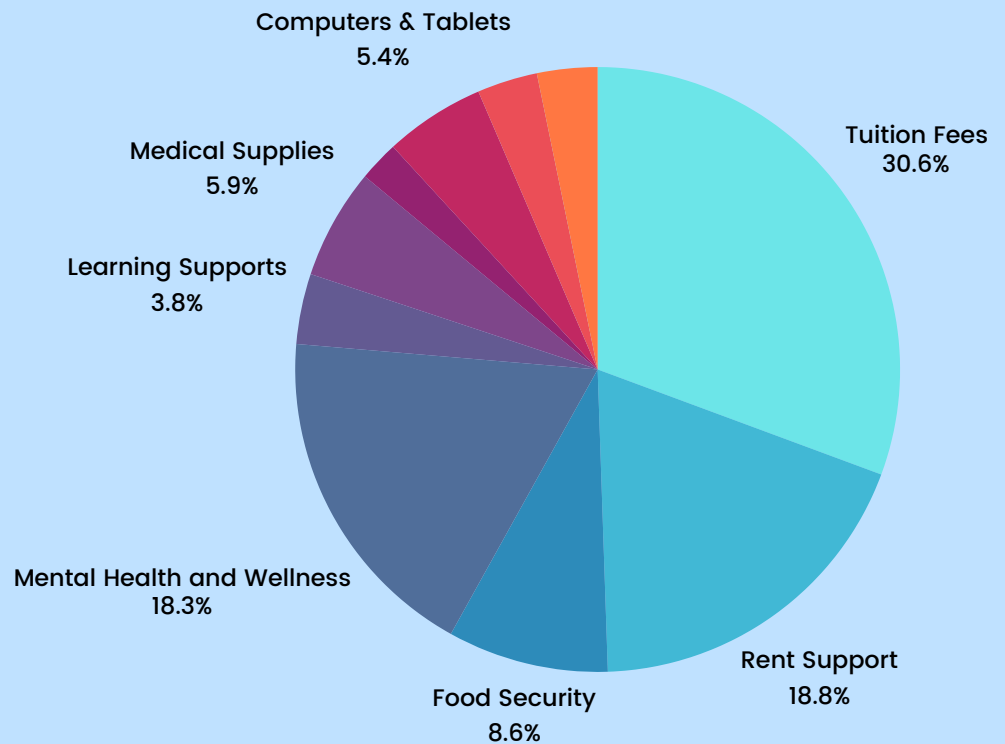
Want to try a free coaching session?
Scan this code to register for a
session today!



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Between April 2024 and March 2025, NEADS provided \$378,000 to 186 students across Canada!

We offered grants valued at \$2,000 in a variety of areas, including:



In March 2025, NEADS surveyed 68 students who received our financial assistance to assess the program's impact on their academic and personal lives & here's what they reported:

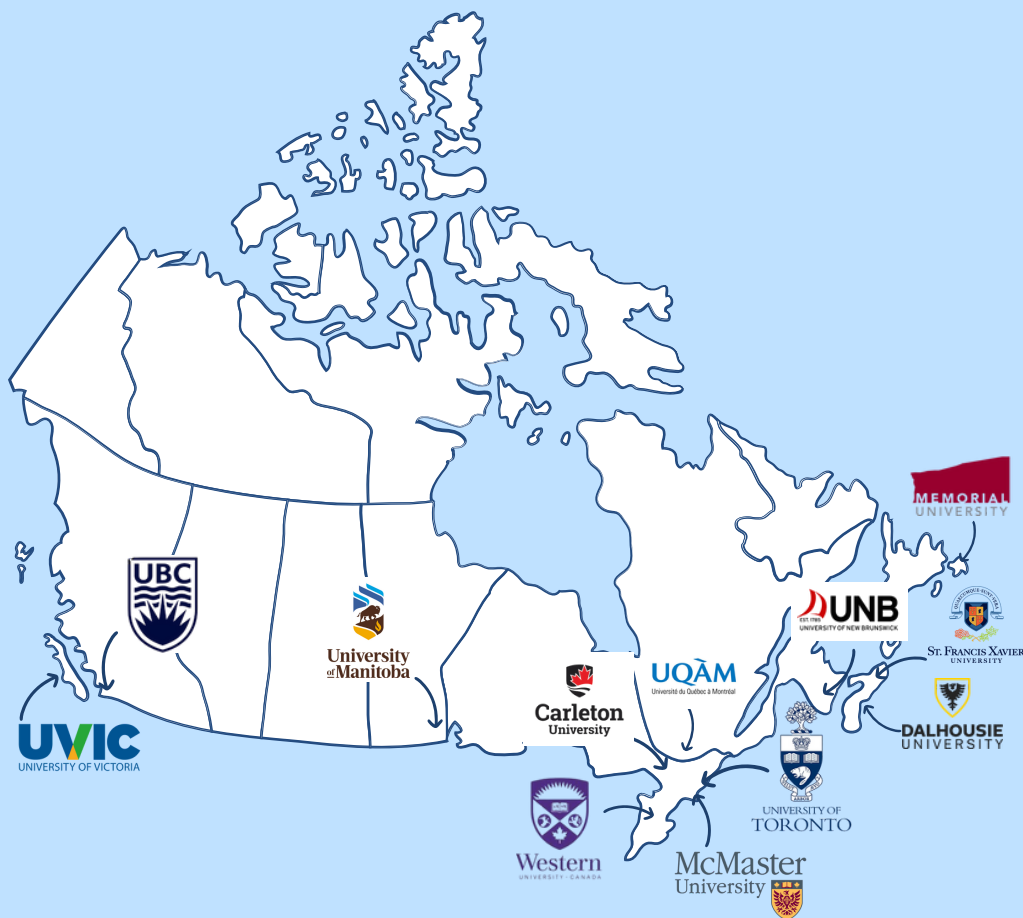
- 90% said it helped reduce their financial stress!
- 76% said the assistance helped them stay enrolled!
- 85% reported improvements in mental health and well-being!

We thank Employment and Social Development Canada for their generous support via the Supports for Student Learning Program.

VIRTUAL ACCESS FOR ALL

STATE OF THE SCHOOLS TOUR

NEADS' State of the Schools Tour travelled across Canada from 2021-2025 and hosted participants at 12 different campuses!



NEADS collaborated with our community at each stop to co-host a hybrid event with discussions, presentations & panels on subjects relevant to disabled post-secondary students & new grads. Check out recordings of the stops on [YouTube!](#)

We thank Employment and Social Development Canada for their generous support via the Supports for Student Learning Program.

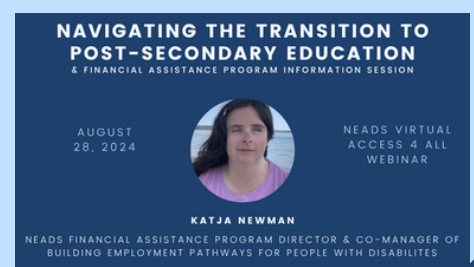
VIRTUAL ACCESS FOR ALL

WEBINAR SERIES

NEADS hosted 41 webinars between September 2021 and March 2025 with ASL interpretation & captioning.

Our webinars provided information to empower and support disabled students navigating post-secondary education while creating spaces to engage in mutual care and collaboration! You can find recorded videos of these webinars on our YouTube channel.

POPULAR VIRTUAL ACCESS FOR ALL WEBINARS:



We thank Employment and Social Development Canada for their generous support via the Supports for Student Learning Program.

NEADS WEBSITES



NEADS.ca

Your one-stop shop to everything you need to know about NEADS!

Our main website saw a 20% increase in traffic and users spent 25% more time on our site than in 2023-2024. Over half of our traffic comes from organic searches!



DisabilityAwards.ca

The hub for financial assistance for students with disabilities in Canada!

Our site views increased by 19% from last year, and users spent 35% more time searching for scholarships!



BreakingItDown.ca

Bridging the employment gap with resources for employers and job-seekers!

This website had a break out year – visitor traffic was up 18% from 2023-2024! Visitors are interested in accessible workplaces & job search tips.

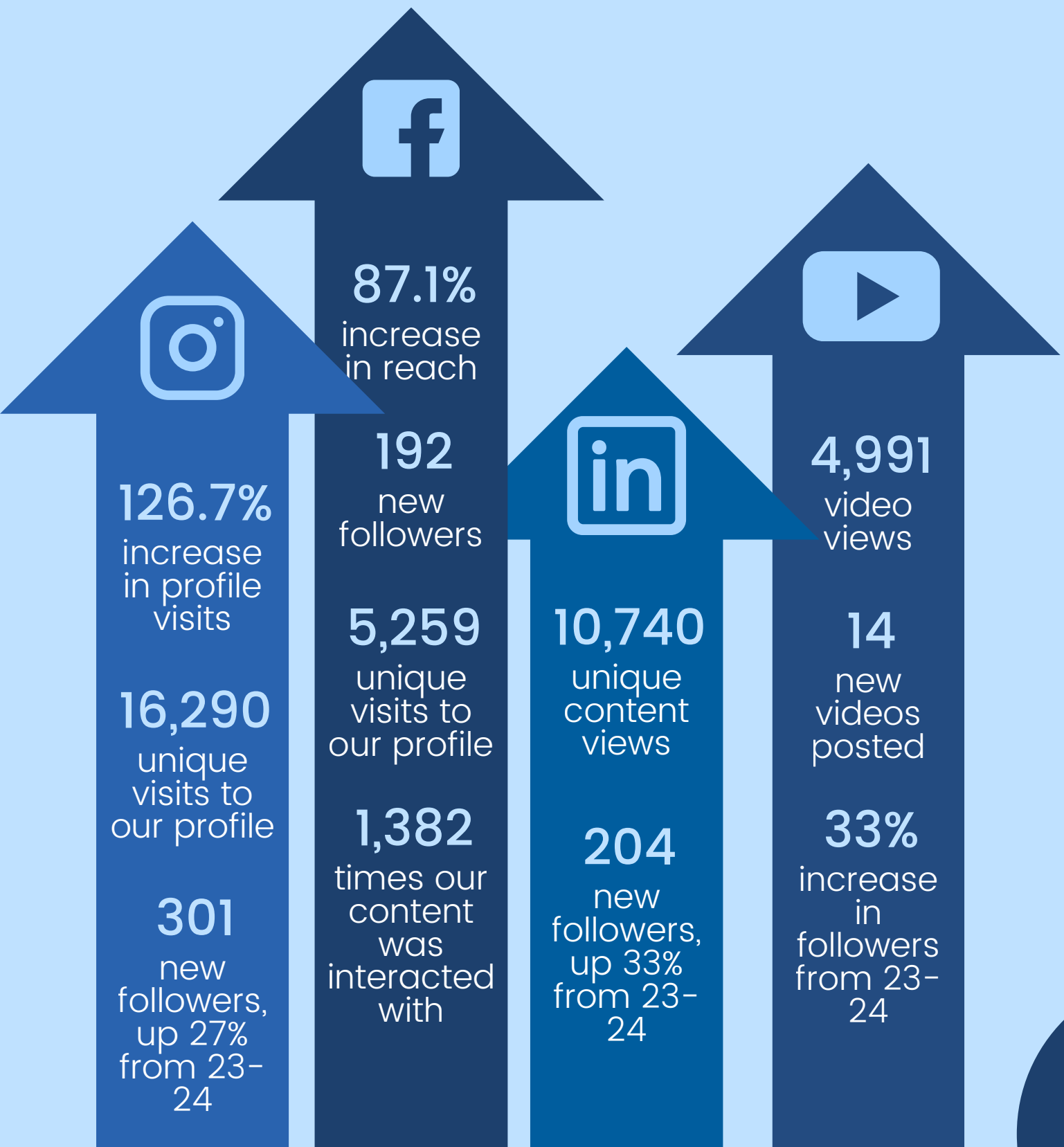


DisabilityRightsOnline.ca

Providing advocacy and awareness resources for people with disabilities!

Last year, we saw stable year-over-year traffic, showing consistent interest in rights-based content despite no changes to the website!

SOCIAL MEDIA



PARTNERSHIPS

NEADS started 2025 by re-engaging with our community and developing organic partnerships to strengthen our networks throughout Canada! We hope to continue to build organic connections to increase access to post-secondary education and employment for people with disabilities.

Our #MyNEADSNetwork represents partners from coast to coast!



24

community partnerships established in 24-25.

Partners include service providers, disabled persons organizations, student unions, on-campus disabled student groups & allies!

Want to join the #MyNEADSNetwork?

Send an email to isabella.fiore@neads.ca to connect & chat about ways we can collaborate!