

Welcome to ISTAR!

Since 1986, ISTAR has been helping children, teens and adults who struggle with stuttering to speak clearly and with confidence. With offices in both Edmonton and Calgary, ISTAR is the only institute of its kind in North America. The information contained in this package will help answer some of your questions and introduce you to our programs. We look forward to working with you!

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*ISTAR operates as a self-
supporting, non-profit
organization. Our charitable
number is BN 10810 2831 RR0001*

ISTAR Application Process

1. Complete the application form and mail, fax or email it to ISTAR Edmonton. The application form contains the contact information.
 2. An ISTAR speech-language pathologist will call you to schedule an assessment appointment.
 3. At the end of the assessment appointment you will discuss therapy recommendations and options with your clinician.
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Frequently Asked Questions

Is it possible for my child to recover without treatment?

It depends. Some children between the ages of 2-5 may have a normal dysfluency and may stop stuttering on their own. Unfortunately, we cannot predict which children will outgrow it and which will not. Stuttering tends to increase in complexity and severity over time. Early intervention is important – we encourage you to contact ISTAR if your child is stuttering regardless of age.

How long do I have to go for speech therapy?

The answer is complex and can only be answered with a speech assessment. Some factors that affect the length of a speech therapy program include age of individual, severity of stutter, readiness for treatment and family support.

Is there funding available to help offset the cost of the assessment or therapy?

There are several options for funding depending on the individual's age, their province of residence, and the level of financial need. See page 6 for funding options that we are aware of.

Can I apply for funding before the assessment to see if I am eligible?

Most funding agencies require an assessment to be completed before they will review an application for funding. If you are applying for financial assistance, advise your clinician and she will prepare a letter based on the findings of the speech assessment to attach to your application.

Does my work insurance plan cover speech therapy?

Many insurance plans cover a portion of therapy fees. As insurance plans vary in coverage, check with your plan administrator to determine the type and extent of coverage. Fees are paid to ISTAR and then you apply for reimbursement from your insurance company. We provide a detailed statement to attach to your payment receipt.

Do I need a doctor's referral?

A referral is not required; you can contact ISTAR directly. If you want to claim speech therapy fees as a tax deduction for medical expenses, a letter from your family doctor is needed to attach to your taxes.

How can I help my child who stutters?

Your child's speech-language pathologist will have specific suggestions for you. It may be helpful to:

- reduce competition for speaking time and encourage turn taking
- slow your own speaking rate
- maintain eye contact and be a good listener when your child is speaking

What if I can't come to ISTAR for an assessment?

ISTAR has many years of experience in providing quality speech therapy via distance. Assessments may be done in-person or via virtual care. In some cases, in-person assessments are preferred. Please speak with our administrative or clinical team to determine the most appropriate option. Individuals not residing in Alberta should speak with ISTAR about your specific needs as there are several provinces that have regulatory restrictions.

Can I schedule an appointment and then complete the application form?

Your assessment appointment will be booked after we have received a completed application form.

Can I get speech therapy without an assessment?

An assessment is a critical part of the therapy process, as it helps us determine the type of therapy that would best suit your needs. We base therapy recommendations and treatment plans on our observations and findings.

Is there a waiting list?

You can typically expect to schedule an assessment appointment within two months of receipt of the completed application form. Speech therapy is then scheduled to fit around your schedule and that of the clinician's. During peak periods, there may be a longer waiting time depending upon existing client case load.

Do I send my application form to Calgary or Edmonton?

Application forms are sent to the Edmonton office; we will then determine what office will take the application.

Can I speak with a speech-language pathologist (SLP)?

Certainly! There are SLPs at both the Edmonton and Calgary offices. Contact the Edmonton office and we will arrange for someone to return your call and discuss your specific questions and concerns.

Is a formal report included in the assessment fee?

Most people do not require a formal report so we have priced it separately to keep our assessment prices lower for everyone. The assessment does include a free assessment summary, which is a discussion of your results and therapy recommendations at the end of your session and that can be sent to you in a simple email if you like. If you want a formal report (usually needed if you need to apply for other government supports, for example for more severe cases) then we are happy to provide one. We will schedule a 1-hour report writing time and the charge will be \$145 for most reports. Multiple reports or complex external reports can also be provided at our hourly rate, as requested.

Fee Schedule – Effective January 1, 2023

Assessment

ISTAR all ages	\$330
CIP	range from \$210 to \$360 depending on need
Review	\$145 per hour
Consultation or report preparation for parents or other professionals	\$145 per report, plus \$145 per hour after the first hour
Long distance evaluation (includes processing and analyzing tapes, forms, reports and phone interview when in-person assessment is not possible)	\$330
Out-of-province application review where a long distance evaluation is not possible (several provinces and states have regulatory restrictions)	\$145 for all ages
*Assessment time beyond that indicated above	\$145 per hour

Treatment

Individual sessions	\$145 per hour
Small group sessions	\$115 per hour per client
Monitoring calls	\$145 per hour
Consultation or report preparation for parents or other professionals	\$145 per report, plus \$145 per hour after the first hour
Intensive Clinic	
Adult/Teen (12+), 3 weeks	\$5,050.00*
Children (7 - 11), 3 weeks	\$3,750.00**

* *Adult/teen clinics include 90 hours of direct therapy plus two family meetings, manual and handouts, final treatment report and a small maintenance credit.*

** *Child clinics include 18 hours of individual therapy, 16 hours of group therapy, plus a series of family meetings, a teasing and bullying workshop, workbooks and handouts, and final treatment report. In this specific program, the first 2 weeks of individual therapy may be done any time during the year in Edmonton or Calgary.*

Maintenance Therapy

Maintenance is a critical part of therapy. Patients who complete an intensive clinic (or the equivalent amount of extended therapy) and pay the full fee are also given a small maintenance credit to be used within two years. Individual maintenance therapy is also available, billed at the current hourly rate.

Speech Therapy as a Tax Deduction

Private speech therapy is tax deductible as a medical expense. A medical referral is needed. Keep your invoices and receipts as evidence of payment. Consult your tax adviser.

Disability Tax Credit (DTC) for People Who Stutter

In certain circumstances, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, recognizes stuttering as a disability entitling people to apply for a tax credit of \$8,113 (2017). Individuals wanting to apply are charged a fee from ISTAR to complete the form (billed at the hourly rate). Information and the T2201 form can be downloaded from their website: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pbg/tf/t2201/README.html> - Revenue Canada Form T2201. Additional information about who is eligible and other FAQs can be found at www.canada.ca/disability-tax-credit

Policy on Fee Payment and Deposits

ISTAR relies on clinic fees and donations to cover provision of treatment services. ISTAR accepts cheques (on approval), money order, debit, Visa, American Express, and MasterCard for fee payments. Wire transfers are available for international clients.

ISTAR is a not-for-profit institute in the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine at the University of Alberta. With the support of community partnerships, we strive to provide the best possible speech and language therapy to people of all ages. We are not government funded. Our fees are set at a level that allows us to recover our costs and provide accessible and quality treatment. As such, we charge an hourly rate for speech and language services. These services include: face to face time with your speech-language pathologist, preparation and analysis of your case, report and IPP writing, caregiver training, team meetings, phone/email discussions with other professionals, and in certain circumstances travel (including kilometers).

At ISTAR, our clients are our number one priority. As a result of our widely recognized excellence in speech-language pathology, appointments at ISTAR/CIP are in very high demand. If you cannot attend your appointment, please cancel it as soon as possible so that we can offer your session time to another client waiting for services. In order to book another client, we require a minimum of 2 business days' notice prior to your scheduled appointment time. You can contact us by email at istar@ualberta.ca or by phone 780-492-2619 (Edmonton) and 403-201-7285 (Calgary).

Not cancelling your appointment or cancelling your appointment without sufficient notice prevents us from helping others who are waiting for our services. Missed appointments or late cancellations will be charged at 50% of the appointment fee.

Please note that missed appointment and late cancellation fees are your responsibility. Third party funders (e.g., private insurance, ICAP Fund, Bergeron Fund, or Elks and Royal Purple Fund for Children) will not cover missed appointments or late cancellation fees.

Individual Intensive or Group Intensive Programs

Deposit: \$500 to reserve a place in an intensive clinic or individual intensive program.
The deposit will be deducted from the treatment fee.

Payment: Due one month before the first day of therapy.

Cancellation: Six weeks before therapy begins: deposit refunded.
Less than six weeks before therapy begins: deposit is forfeited, plus 25% of the full clinic fee is billed. *Third party funders are not responsible for the cancellation fee; the cancellation fee is payable by the individual.*

Late or missed sessions during an intensive:

Intensive and group programs are designed to build fluency skills within a set schedule. If you are late for or miss sessions, this will adversely affect your progress and alternate times may not be available. Please notify your clinician as soon as possible if you will be late or miss a session. This notice will allow us to make the necessary adjustments to your therapy program. Therapy sessions may be discontinued and alternative arrangements made for your treatment should your clinician deem this necessary. Session fees may still apply due to the significant time that has been reserved for you.

Upcoming group clinics, in Edmonton unless otherwise indicated

September 27-29, 2024 (Adult 3-day Refresher)
 December 2-6, 2024 (Adult 5-day Refresher)
 January 6-17, 2025 (Adult – 2 weeks, plus 10 hours prior to intensive)
 February 7-9, 2025 (Adult – 3-day Refresher)
 March 25-28, 2025 (Children’s Camp aged 7-13)
 April 12-13, 2025 (Adult – 2-day Refresher – **Calgary**)
 May 12-30, 2025 (Adult 3-week Intensive)
 June 7-8, 2025 (Adult – 2-day Refresher)
 July 7-25, 2025 (Teen 3-week Intensive)
 July 28 –August 1, 2025 (Adult/Teen 5-day Refresher)
 August 5-15, 2025 (Child Intensive)
 August 19-22, 2025 (Children’s 4-day Camp #1) **Calgary**
 August 26-29, 2025 (Children’s 4-day Camp #2) **Calgary**
 September 26-28, 2025 (Adult 3-day Refresher)
 December 1-5, 2025 (Adult 5-day Refresher)

Individual or Small Group Sessions

Payment: On day of service.

Cancellation: 2 business days in advance: no charge
 Less than 2 business days’ advance notice: client billed 50% of fee. *Third party funders are not responsible for the cancellation fee; the cancellation fee is payable by the individual.*

Notes: The above cancellation policies will not apply where medical reasons, emergency or accident make attendance impossible. If this is the case, please telephone us as soon as possible. Charges for missed appointments often cannot be submitted for health insurance reimbursement or to third-party funders.

Opportunities for Financial Support

Fees for speech therapy at ISTAR are not covered by Alberta Health Care. However, other financial opportunities may be available as listed below.

Private Group Insurance

Many insurance plans cover portions of speech therapy fees. Check with your plan administrator to determine the type and amount of coverage you have. It may help to know if you have an annual maximum and per visit maximum that can be applied towards your session cost. **NOTE: Fees are paid to ISTAR and then you apply for reimbursement from your insurance company.**

The Elks and Royal Purple Fund for Children

The Elks and Royal Purple Fund for Children may provide financial assistance for children under 19 with limited financial resources. Applications for funding will be accepted by this organization **after** the speech assessment is completed. Contact ISTAR or your local Elks or Royal Purple Lodge for more details.

List of Elks Lodges www.elksofcanada.ca/lodges/

List of Royal Purple Lodges www.canadianroyalpurplesociety.org/directory.html

Government

Social Services have covered fees for some low-income families. Contact your regional office of Social Services if you think you may qualify. Health and Welfare Canada may pay for First Nations Children of pre-school age. Alberta Human Resources and Employment / Disability Related Employment Supports Program may fund adults who are having difficulty finding employment.

Jordan's Principle

Jordan's Principle makes sure all First Nations children can access the products, services and supports they need, when they need them. It can help with a wide range of health, social and educational needs including speech therapy. Jordan's Principle is named in memory of Jordan River Anderson. He was a young boy from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba.

From July 2016 to April 2018, more than 75,000 requests were approved under Jordan's Principle. First Nations children living on and off reserve are eligible. Service coordinators are available to ensure children have access to the services they need without delay.

www.canada.ca/jordans-principle

Funding for Students with Disabilities

Students at post-secondary institutions may be eligible for special funding for speech therapy. Please check with your institution's office for Students with Disabilities.

British Columbia Government

The Provincial Voice Care Resource Program (PVCPR) administers a program supporting intensive treatment for British Columbian adults (age 19 and older) who stutter. This program was initiated in 1995 by the British Columbia Ministry of Health, and is in memoriam to the late Fred Gingell, former MLA, Delta-South. The program commences in April and will reimburse participants for tuition expenses incurred to attend an approved intensive stuttering treatment program, upon successful completion of the program (the funding pool is limited each budget year). See <https://www.vch.ca/en/service/fred-gingell-memorial-stuttering-treatment-grant> for more information.

British Columbia Association of People Who Stutter (BCAPS)

BCAPS is a self-help group that may offer funding for BC adults (19+) attending stuttering treatment at ISTAR. Please call 604-469-1282 for the chapter nearest you.

The ICAP Fund (ISTAR Client Assistance Program)

The ICAP Fund may cover up to 90% of therapy, depending on the financial need of the client. This fund does not cover travel or accommodations. Application forms can be obtained by contacting ISTAR. **Note that the ICAP Fund can only be used when all other avenues of funding have been exhausted.**

Other Sources

Clients have had their employer, school or school board (under Early Childhood Services funding) pay part or all of the fees. Some clients have applied successfully to local service clubs such as the Lions, ACT and Rotary Clubs. Financing is available through Medicaid; they offer monthly payments, no down payment and quick turnaround (call ISTAR for details).

We gratefully acknowledge financial assistance from the Alberta Elks Foundation, The Elks and Royal Purple Fund for Children, and many individual and other corporate donors for their operational assistance to ISTAR, and the help they give to clients seeking our services.

ISTAR Staff

Holly Lomheim, MSLP

Clinic Director and Speech-Language Pathologist

Holly Lomheim joined the Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research in 1994 and since then has worked in clinical and administrative roles. She currently serves as Clinic Director.

Together with ISTAR's founders, Dr. Boberg, Deborah Kully and Dr. Langevin, she has contributed to the development of the CSP training and therapy program. She has trained over 250 clinicians in the Comprehensive Stuttering Program.

She has presented her clinical work and her research contributions to students and fellow Speech-Language Pathologists at several conferences and workshops including: the American Speech and Hearing Association, the Canadian Stuttering Association Conference, the Oxford Dysfluency Conference and the International Fluency Association Conference. She has had her work published in Speech-Language Pathology journals and textbooks.

In 2008, she received the award for Clinical Excellence presented by the Alberta Rehabilitation Coordinating Council. She is trained in the Comprehensive Stuttering Program, the Lidcombe Stuttering Treatment, Parent Child Interaction Therapy, Solution Focused Brief Therapy, Camperdown and the Speech Easy® device.

Jessica Harasym O'Byrne, MSLP; Ashley Saunders, M.Sc;

Kiera Hughes, M.Sc; Amanda Strang, R.SLP

Speech-Language Pathologists

With decades of collective experience, our clinicians have special expertise in the treatment of stuttering and bring a committed, personal approach to their work. All have attained a Master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology and completed extensive training in the Comprehensive Stuttering Program as well as other treatment approaches such as Lidcombe, Camperdown and The Hanen Program. All are committed to keeping abreast of the latest research and techniques in their field, and demonstrate a profound concern for their clients' well-being and a determination to offer the best possible therapy available.

Note: Kiera and Amanda work in the Calgary office.

Crystal, Receptionist

Marlo DeVouge, Administrative Assistant