

The NWT Disability Framework



EDUCATION



EMPLOYMENT



INCOME



HOUSING



DISABILITY SUPPORTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In May of 2001, the Premier of the Northwest Territories tasked the *Disability Steering Committee Partnership* (the Partnership) with developing an interdisciplinary and multi-dimensional framework which will guide the development of effective programs and services, and promote the full inclusion of persons with disabilities throughout the NWT.

Framework Development Process

The Partnership has representation from the Government of the Northwest Territories, non-governmental organizations and Aboriginal organizations, including: Health and Social Services; Education, Culture and Employment; Municipal and Community Affairs; the NWT Housing Corporation; the NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities; the Yellowknife Association for Community Living; and the YWCA of Yellowknife. Other participants included the Dene Nation and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, who monitored discussions but were not actively able to participate.

The Partnership held regular workshop meetings between the fall of 2001 and the spring of 2002 to develop the Framework. The Partnership started with over 100 needs/concerns and, over the course of the eight months of collaboration, developed those concerns into five building blocks. The Framework relied heavily on previous national and territorial disability research reports as well as on similar disability initiatives which had recently been developed in other Canadian jurisdictions, including Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Saskatchewan.

Vision, Values and Principles

The Framework was guided by:

- the vision of *full citizenship*;
- the values of *equality, inclusion, and accessibility and participation*; and
- the following principles: all programs and services for person with disabilities in the NWT must be *culturally appropriate* and *build community capacity*, and every individual has the right to *self-determination, autonomy, dignity, respect, participation, and independence*.

The outcome of achieving the vision, values and principles would be an enhanced quality of life for persons with disabilities in the NWT.

Priority Areas (Core Building Blocks)

The five priority areas identified under the Framework include:

- education;
- employment;
- income;
- disability supports; and
- housing.

All of these building blocks are inter-connected and together support a comprehensive view of the provision of programs and services for persons with disabilities in the NWT. For example, there are obvious links between employment supports (such as access to training programs) and disability supports (such as adequate transportation to take part in those training programs), employment supports and income support (so that as persons with disabilities earn more from employment, they can rely less on income support), and housing and disability supports (such as independent living supports, so that the person with the disability can remain in their home as long as possible and remain independent).

Education

Goal

Ensure that barrier-free lifelong learning opportunities that maximize the potential of individuals with disabilities are realized.

Objectives

- education programming (curriculum, activities) at the elementary and secondary school level will be adapted to better serve students with disabilities;
- teachers, education assistants and student support staff will have training and will be aware of how to best teach students with a variety of disabilities and needs;
- the reduction in pupil-teacher ratio will continue;
- the increase in student support funding will continue;
- early childhood programs will be enhanced;
- a variety of educational opportunities for adult students who have or who have not completed their secondary school education will be provided; and
- a coordinated, integrated, client-centred case management system that is responsive to the individual needs of persons with disabilities will be designed and implemented.

Employment

Goal

Enhance the employability of persons with disabilities, encourage (re)entry into the labour market and support more work opportunities.

Objectives

- the Government of the Northwest Territories will continue to negotiate with the Government of Canada to obtain

cost-shared funding for employment support for persons with disabilities;

- training and networking on disability issues will be available for those working in the area of career development;
- assistive aids/devices and vocational and employment assessments will be provided to alleviate barriers to employment;
- career development programs (such as workplace based training, the *Public Service Career Training Program*, *Youth Works*, and targeted wage subsidies) will be promoted;
- employment support for persons with disabilities will be provided throughout the communities of the NWT (not just in Yellowknife);
- employers in the NWT will be made aware of the benefits of including persons with disabilities in the workforce; and
- a coordinated, integrated, client-centred case management system that is responsive to the individual needs of persons with disabilities will be designed and implemented.

Income

Goal

Design a system that is responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities and provides for an income safety net which rewards individual work efforts to the greatest extent possible, but which provides financial assistance if self-support is impossible or insufficient to meet basic needs.

Objectives

- disincentives to employment in income programs will be removed;
- a disability income support program that separates the entitlement for income supports from the entitlement for

health and disability-related supports will be designed and implemented;

- the payrolling of clients will be continued; and
- a coordinated, integrated, client-centred case management system that is responsive to the individual needs of persons with disabilities will be designed and implemented.

Disability Supports

Goal

Ensure that disability supports provide for active participation at home, at school and in the community, and that they maximize personal and economic independence.

Objectives

- an appropriate screening tool will be in place to identify children with developmental delays, and follow-up processes will be developed to facilitate diagnosis and assessment;
- the respite care program will be expanded to include persons with disabilities;
- supported independent living options will be implemented throughout the NWT;
- accessible, affordable transportation services within NWT communities will be provided;
- access for persons with disabilities to public buildings, services and programs which serve everyone will be increased;
- social, cultural and recreational activities will be developed and enhanced to include persons with disabilities;
- access to therapeutic services for children and adults with disabilities will be increased;
- a coordinated, integrated, client-centred case management system that is responsive to the individual needs of persons with disabilities will be designed and implemented;

- training opportunities in the area of disability supports in the NWT will be made more attractive and available, and will be more widely promoted to provide for a qualified, professional workforce;
- persons with disabilities will have access to appropriate assessments and diagnosis about the nature of their disabilities;
- group home and supported independent living standards and policies will be designed and implemented; and
- a disability supports program based on the needs of persons with disabilities will be designed and implemented.

Housing

Goal

Ensure that persons with disabilities will be provided with a range of housing options that are affordable and accessible, and that maximize independence.

Objectives

- sufficient funding will be available for renovations to existing homes and for new homes, to accommodate specific needs of persons with disabilities;
- existing income exemption levels will be examined so that assistance provided for fixing and modifying homes can be maximized;
- caregivers and persons with disabilities will have access to housing referral and housing program information;
- aspects of barrier-free housing in public rental housing units in the NWT will be addressed; and
- a coordinated and integrated case management system that is responsive to the individual needs of persons with disabilities will be designed and implemented.

Next Steps

An action plan will be developed outlining recommended priorities and future developments in each of the building blocks identified in this framework. Additionally, the Partnership recognizes the need to evaluate the progress made on the provision of programs and services for persons with disabilities at least once during the lifetime of this Framework.

This Framework also represents the development of a productive partnership between government, non-government and Aboriginal organizations in the NWT.

INTRODUCTION

In May of 2001, the Premier of the Northwest Territories tasked the Disability Steering Committee Partnership (the Partnership) with developing an interdisciplinary and multi-dimensional framework that would guide the development of effective programs and services, and promote the full inclusion of persons with disabilities throughout the NWT.

The Partnership has representation from the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Aboriginal organizations. Partners include:

- Department of Health and Social Services (HSS);
- Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE);
- Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA);
- NWT Housing Corporation (NWT HC);
- NWT Council for Persons with Disabilities (the Council);
- Yellowknife Association for Community Living (YK-ACL);
- and
- YWCA of Yellowknife.

Other participants who monitored discussion, but were not actively able to participate, include:

- Dene Nation; and
- Inuvialuit Regional Corporation.

Regular meetings were held between the fall of 2001 and the spring of 2002 to develop a shared vision. This report, *The NWT Disability Framework*, is the result of that collaborative partnership, and sets the strategic direction for the programs and services provided to persons with disabilities.¹ This report also forms the foundation for an action plan.

¹ A draft Framework was publicly released in November 2002. That document provided interim direction to the Partnership on improvements to programs and services while the action plan was being developed. The final Framework (this document) has been updated, but has changed little in setting strategic direction for service delivery for persons with disabilities in the NWT.

BACKGROUND

This section sets the context for this report. Specifically, three areas are outlined:

- the rationale for a disability Framework in the NWT;
- national disability initiatives; and
- NWT disability initiatives.

Before we examine these, however, we must first define what we mean when we refer to “disability”. The definition of disability used in this Framework is the same one adopted for *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues* (1998):

In 1980, the World Health Organization issued the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH) in accordance with Resolution (WHA29.35) of the World Health Assembly. This has appeared in 15 languages and further versions are in preparation. ICIDH terminology refers to three concepts: impairments, disabilities and handicaps defined as follows:

Impairment: "Any loss or abnormality of a psychological or anatomical structure or function." Impairments are disturbances at the level of the organ.

Disability: "Any restriction or inability (resulting from an impairment) to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being." This describes a functional limitation or activity restriction caused by an impairment. Disabilities are descriptions of disturbances in function at the level of the person.

Handicap: "Any disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability, that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal for that individual."
The classification of handicap is a classification of circumstances that place individuals "at a disadvantage relative to their peers when viewed from the norms of society".

The classification of handicap deals with the relationship that evolves between society, culture and people who have impairments or disabilities, as reflected in people's life roles.

(In Unison, page 33)

Rationale for a Disability Framework

Research has already been done with regards to the needs of persons with disabilities in the NWT. The *Living with Disability... Living with Dignity: 2000 Needs Assessment*, the *2001 Count Me In Conference* and the *2000 Student Support Needs Assessment* list a multitude of needs for persons with disabilities in the NWT.

While these various reports are all important in their own right, collectively they point towards the need for an integrated approach to providing programs and services for persons with disabilities. This integrated, collaborative approach between the GNWT, NGOs and Aboriginal organizations in setting strategic direction for programs and services is in keeping with the GNWT's vision (as outlined in *Self-reliant People, Communities and Northwest Territories – A Shared Responsibility: Government of the Northwest Territories Strategic Plan*) of “self-reliant individuals and families sharing the rewards and responsibilities of healthy communities and a prosperous and unified Northwest Territories.” This approach has similarly been used in the review of seniors' programs and the development of a social agenda for the NWT.

National Disability Initiatives

At the national level, there has been a great deal of activity dating back to the early 1980s. The following timeline highlights events related to the provision of government programs and services to persons with disabilities in Canada.

1981

The *International Year of Disabled Persons* was a catalyst in launching federal government cooperation with Canada's disability community and with the voluntary sector on disability issues. Since then the federal government has shared a common commitment with the disability community to achieve full access to social and economic opportunities for persons with disabilities as a matter of citizenship.

1982

The inclusion of physical and mental disability under *Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* marked the first time that any national constitution in the world referred specifically to persons with disabilities. This has become an internationally-respected model because it framed disability as a citizenship and human rights issue. It has led to a much greater understanding that equalizing participation adds to the strength and cohesiveness of a society.

1985

The addition of physical and mental disability as prohibited grounds of discrimination in the *Canadian Human Rights Act* was enacted.

1987

The *Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons* (a permanent body that consults with persons with disabilities and makes recommendations to Parliament) and what is now the *Office for Disability Issues in Human Resources Development Canada* (as a focal point for federal disability action) were created.

1992

The Conference of Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Ministers of Social Services initiated the *Mainstream Review* of the federal/provincial/territorial programs for persons with disabilities in consultation with the disability community.

1996

The federal government realized the need for an up-to-date agenda for action on disability issues. That led to the creation of the *Task Force on Disability Issues* (the Scott Task Force). Four members of Parliament and three observers from the disability community began their work in May 1996, consulting Canadians from coast to coast. The task force released their report in October of that year, *Equal Citizenship for Canadians with Disabilities: The Will to Act*.

1998

In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues was released by the FPT Ministers Responsible for Social Services. The document sets out a blueprint for promoting the integration of persons with disabilities in Canada and makes it a priority in the pursuit of social policy renewal.

2000

In Unison 2000: Persons with Disabilities in Canada was released by the FPT Ministers Responsible for Social Services. This report builds on the Framework developed in the 1998 report, and sets the stage for governments, persons with disabilities, disability advocates, communities, employers, labour and the non-profit sector to jointly focus on disability issues.

Examples of Territorial Disability Initiatives

At the territorial level, there has been activity dating back to the 1960s. The following timeline highlights events related to the provision of programs and services to persons with disabilities in the NWT.

1960s and 1970s

This period saw the establishment of various NGOs whose mission was to work on disability issues and provide supports to persons with disabilities. The YWCA of Yellowknife was started in 1966, the Canadian Mental Health Association (NWT Branch) was established in 1971, and the NWT Council for the Disabled (as it was then called) was established in 1978. The YK-ACL began in 1961 by a group of parents seeking supports for their children with intellectual disabilities; in 1965 the Abe Miller Memorial School opened offering an education for children with special needs. In 1974, as children with intellectual disabilities were included in the classrooms of the regular schools in Yellowknife, the focus of the YK-ACL shifted to pre-employment training for adults with intellectual disabilities.

1986

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) opened a regional office in Yellowknife.

1985

The first group home for adults with intellectual disabilities was opened on Rycon Drive in Yellowknife. This was an eight-bed group home funded by the GNWT Department of Social Services and operated by the YWCA.

1988

The Council began a cross-disability employment support program.

1989

With widespread government and community support the YK-ACL was able to build the Abe Miller Centre in Yellowknife where adults with disabilities access pre-employment training as well as paid employment at the Summer Café and Catering, and at a variety of community jobs performing courier, janitorial, paper shredding, and landscaping services.

Early to Mid-1990s

An accessible parking placard program for persons with mobility impairments in the NWT was created by the Council in 1990.

A second eight-bed group home for adults with intellectual disabilities was opened on Forrest Drive in Yellowknife in 1991.

Fort Smith received an *Accessible Community Award* from the Canadian Association of Municipalities. The Fort Smith Society for the Disabled (as it was then called) had spent many years advocating for improved accessibility in the community.

The vision of an education system which includes and endeavours to serve the needs of all students evolved from the report *Learning, Tradition and Change* (1992). *Educating All Our Children: Departmental Directive on Inclusive Schooling* was developed in 1993. The directive recognized the importance of allowing all children equal access to education programs in their home communities with their peers. It also recognized the importance of school/home/community partnerships that are required to offer relevant education programs. In 1996, the

Education Act was enacted. Inclusive schooling was mandated in the new act. It is a process that involves recognizing students' strengths and needs and, through support and best practice, providing relevant education programming.

1995

The GNWT provided funding for the first ever pre-vocational training support centre in the eastern portion of the territories, in Rankin Inlet.

The *Living and Learning with FAS* project began, managed by the YK-ACL and funded by Health Canada. The project promotes understanding, education and community action on the prevention of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and support to families living with FAS in Yellowknife. Two videos are produced, *Helping Families – Helping Children* (parts 1 and 2) and are widely distributed across Canada.

1996

The Rae-Edzo Disability Committee became incorporated as a non-profit society to support persons with disabilities and their families in Rae-Edzo. The Dogrib-Rae Band supports the work of the committee.

The GNWT developed a plan to support people who have been placed in southern institutions and placements to return to the Northwest Territories.

Inclusive schooling was adopted in the NWT.

1997

The Independent Clubhouse was established for adults with emotional and/or mental illness to address members' physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs, and includes self-help groups/meetings.

1998

The Disabilities Needs Assessment project began its assessment of the needs of persons with disabilities in the NWT. The working group which coordinated the project consisted of representation from both the federal and territorial governments, NGOs and Aboriginal organizations. Their report, *Living with Disability... Living with Dignity*, was released in 2000 and was the first major needs assessment targeted specifically at persons with disabilities in the NWT. This report provides valuable, NWT-specific information on the needs of persons with disabilities.

Aurora College and the YK-ACL form a partnership to open the Literacy Outreach Centre providing a basic literacy education to persons with and without disabilities.

ECE and HSS begin the *Healthy Children Initiative*.

ECE and HSS begin development of the *Early Childhood Development Framework for Action and Action Plan*.

1999

The Rycon Group Home in Yellowknife was closed and the individuals moved into their own apartments in the community, which they rented and maintained with support from the YWCA Community Support Services staff and the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority.

2000

Committee Motion 9-14(3) was passed by the Committee of the Whole of the NWT Legislative Assembly on June 28, 2000:

This committee recommends that the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, in cooperation with the Minister of the Department of Health and Social Services, develop a model that ensures a minimum level of income for permanently disabled residents and an assured level of health care benefits.

A response to this motion comprised one element of the overall work of this partnership. Additionally, the YK-ACL completed extensive work on recommending improvements to improve the Income Support Program in the NWT to make it more responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities.

2001

The first major conference on disability issues in the NWT, the *Count Me In Conference*, was convened by the council and held in Yellowknife in January of that year. The conference served as a forum for persons with disabilities and parents/caregivers to contribute to an action plan addressing the needs of persons with disabilities in the NWT.

The first "Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities" was named in the NWT.

The Partnership was formed for the development of this Framework. This Partnership is, in reality, a continuation of the partnership formed for the Disability Needs Assessment, albeit with an extended membership and a broader mandate. The first partnership was struck to oversee a needs assessment of persons with disabilities, while this second partnership was formed to develop a framework of programs and services for persons with disabilities.

FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This Framework was developed collaboratively by the Partnership group, which included representation from the major stakeholders in the NWT who have an interest in programs and services for persons with disabilities. The terms of reference for the Partnership are included as Appendix I.

It should be noted that this Framework relies heavily on four previous reports in developing the vision, values, principles, and building blocks (or core components) for programs and services for persons with disabilities in the NWT. These four reports include:

- the 1998 *In-Unison report* (national);
- the 2000 *NWT Disability Needs Assessment* (NWT);
- the 2000 *Student Support Needs Assessment* (NWT); and
- the 2001 *Count Me In Conference* (NWT).

Other territorial reports provided additional insights into the needs and issues of persons with disabilities in the NWT, including:

- The *Early Childhood Development Framework for Action and Action Plan*;
- The *Minister's Forum on Education*;
- The *Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services*;
- The *NWT Labour Force Development Plan*;
- The *Draft Strategy for Addiction, Mental Health and Family Violence in the NWT*;
- The *Mental Health Needs Assessment*;
- The *NWT Literacy Strategy*;
- The *Report to the NWT Department of Health and Social Services on Child Welfare Services in the NWT*;
- *Solving the Income Support Puzzle*; and
- *Keeping Women and Communities Strong: Women, Substance Abuse and FAS/FAE* (An NWT Needs Assessment).

This use of both national and territorial research ensures that the NWT Disability Framework is in keeping with national initiatives, yet is based on local and territorial needs.

Additionally, the partnership consulted similar disability initiatives which had recently been developed in other Canadian jurisdictions, including Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Saskatchewan. A full listing of all research consulted in the preparation of this Framework is included in Appendix II (Bibliography).

The Partnership held regular workshop meetings between the fall of 2001 and the spring of 2002 to develop the Framework. The Partnership started with over 100 needs/concerns (as outlined in the NWT-based research reports noted above), and over the course of the eight months of collaboration, distilled those concerns into the priority areas outlined in the “Building Blocks” section of this Framework. It should be noted that these priority areas encompass only those needs that can be addressed during the time-span of this Framework; the full list of needs that these priority areas were culled from is included in Appendix III.

The completion of this Framework led the Department of Health and Social Services to take an active leadership role on the Disability Steering Committee Partnership in developing the *NWT Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities*.

The *NWT Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities* represents the commitment of the Disability Steering Committee Partnership in implementing a plan that represents the recommended objectives from this Framework.

VISION, VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The vision of this Framework is that of *full citizenship* (as outlined in *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues*) for all residents of the NWT:

Citizenship refers to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of Canadian society. It is the overarching theme that shapes the vision and the building blocks. Full inclusion means that the needs of persons with disabilities are met through universal programs, while additional essential supports are provided to those individuals whose needs cannot be met through generic programs and services. Future reforms will need to ensure that the policies and programs in each building block are consistent with this concept.

The achievement of full citizenship is not limited to any one building block. The needs of persons with disabilities are complex and multifaceted, and transcend all five areas. As a result, measures to reduce barriers, and to ensure access to programs and services enjoyed by other Canadians, need to be adopted in each of the building blocks.

Citizenship also refers to rights and responsibilities. It implies participation in and contribution to the systems and the 'core' services in which all Canadians can participate and to which most Canadians have access. These include schools, training programs, post-secondary education institutes, health care, workplaces, recreation facilities, cultural programs, transportation, parks, and other forms of public space. In Unison seeks to expand the boundaries of the core services to make them as inclusive as possible. The needs of persons with disabilities would be incorporated in the initial design of all programs and activities in every domain of society. Persons with disabilities will achieve full citizenship as systemic discrimination and barriers are eliminated.

While governments acknowledge their role in providing leadership, the achievement of full citizenship requires more than the involvement of governments alone. Persons with disabilities should be able to make their own choices, take risks and set their own goals, and society should facilitate their participation and contribution. Efforts from all sectors of society are required to contribute to the overall goal of full citizenship. Government departments and agencies, private enterprises and voluntary organizations can all take steps to make various forms of accommodation within their respective spheres of activity. Community development, including all sectors, must take place to provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate fully in Canadian society. A healthy infrastructure of disability organizations can also help to interpret and implement the concept of full inclusion. The first step in this process is to change attitudes and to provide information as to how to make core programs and services more inclusive.

(In Unison, page 17/18)

The *NWT Disability Framework* is guided by three overarching **values**:

- equality;
- inclusion; and
- accessibility and participation.

Equality is a right guaranteed to all Canadian citizens. The values inherent in the concept of equality include self-determination, autonomy, dignity, respect, integration, participation, and independent living. These values are consistent with those that shape the social union: compassion, dignity, sharing, fairness, equity, equal opportunity, and independence. The values that underlie Canadian federalism provide for mutual respect among jurisdictions and an acceptance of diversity, flexibility to respond to local priorities and circumstances, and citizen engagement and public accountability (*In Unison*, page 15).

The value of inclusion seeks to enhance the full participation of persons with disabilities in all domains of Canadian society. Inclusion embodies the following concepts:

- **Rights and responsibilities:** Persons with disabilities have the same rights and the same responsibilities as other Canadians. They are entitled, as others are, to the equal protection and the equal benefit of the law, and require measures for achieving equality.
- **Empowerment:** Persons with disabilities require the means to maximize their independence and enhance their mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being.

Additionally, persons with disabilities require full access to the social, economic and physical infrastructure which supports our society so that they can participate fully and equally in their communities (*In Unison*, page 16).

The *NWT Disability Framework* was developed within a set of **principles** that recognizes that all programs and services for person with disabilities in the NWT must be *culturally appropriate* and *build community capacity*. These are:

- self-determination;
- autonomy;
- dignity;
- respect;
- participation; and
- independence.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Five building blocks form the core of *The NWT Disability Framework*:

- education;
- employment;
- income;
- disability supports; and
- housing.

Education refers to barrier-free lifelong learning opportunities that maximize the potential of individuals with disabilities. Educational opportunities include both formal and informal learning opportunities.

Employment refers to work at an appropriate level of payment that enhances economic independence and community participation. Persons with disabilities may require support to enter or re-enter the labour market, such as training and education information, access to career development, employment assessments, adaptations to the workplace, and ongoing support once employment has been obtained. Employers also benefit from information about employing persons with disabilities.

Income refers to the resources available to the household to meet its financial needs, which include income from employment, from unearned sources (pensions, maintenance), income in-kind, and government assistance when self-support is impossible or insufficient to meet basic needs.

Disability Supports refer to a range of goods, services and supports tailored to the individual requirements for daily living. There will continue to be a need to provide for the availability and accessibility of disability supports (e.g., technical aids and devices; special equipment; support workers; homemaker, attendant or interpreter services; life skills; physiotherapy and occupational therapy; respite care) which respond to individual needs. These goods, services and supports are essential for active participation at home, at school and in the community, and are a key component of maximizing personal and economic independence. In this Framework, the Disability Supports building block includes policies, awareness, activities, and other initiatives which assist persons with disabilities as a group to maximize their independence and participation in society.

Housing refers to housing that is barrier free, affordable, and appropriate for the person with a disability who is living in it. Like all citizens, persons with disabilities require safe and adequate housing that they can afford. Certain types of disabilities require special features in housing, such as a ramp, which can be expensive to build and even more expensive to add on later. Housing also includes having the independent living support in place so the person with the disability can remain in one's home, living as independently as possible.

All of these building blocks are inter-connected and together support a comprehensive view of the provision of programs and services for persons with disabilities in the NWT. For example, there are obvious links between:

- employment supports (such as access to training programs) and disability supports (such as adequate transportation to take part in those training programs);
- employment supports and income support (so that as persons with disabilities earn more from employment, they can rely less on income support); and
- housing and disability supports (such as independent living supports, so that the person with the disability can remain in their home as long as possible and remain independent).

For each building block, the Framework presents:

- what we've heard and what we've learned from previous research and consultations (the challenges posed in that area);
- where we want to go (the main priority areas and future directions for that area); and
- promising practices (both from the NWT and from across Canada) which provide examples of successful disability related practices.

The Building Blocks



The Building Blocks



“A number of teachers expressed the view that there was a need for other, more appropriate programs for their students.”

2000 Student Support Needs Assessment

Education

What We’ve Heard and What We’ve Learned

A number of concerns have been raised with the current education programs for persons with disabilities. There is a need for:

- adaptations to current curriculum and supports for students with disabilities;
- an increase in training for classroom and support staff;
- a lower pupil-teacher ratio;
- an increase in the number of student support services;
- more on-site counselling services at schools;
- a focus on early childhood and early intervention programs;
- accommodations for persons with disabilities at the post-secondary level in the NWT; and
- families, support organizations and the community to be involved in ensuring that students with disabilities are successful in achieving their education.

Where We Want to Go

The goal of this Framework in regards to education for persons with disabilities is to ensure that barrier-free lifelong learning opportunities that maximize the potential of individuals with disabilities are realized. The major objectives which support this goal and which will be undertaken as part of this Framework include:

- education programming (curriculum, activities) at the elementary and secondary school level will be adapted to better serve students with disabilities;
- teachers, education assistants and student support staff will have training and will be aware of how to best teach students with a variety of disabilities and needs;
- the reduction in pupil-teacher ratio will continue;
- the increase in student support funding will continue;
- early childhood programs will be enhanced;
- a variety of educational opportunities for adult students who have or who have not completed their secondary school education will be provided; and
- a coordinated, integrated, client-centred case management system that is responsive to the individual needs of persons with disabilities will be designed and implemented.

Promising Practices

In 1996, the Council initiated its *Early Childhood Intervention Program*. This program was created in response to requests from parents that their preschool children with disabilities have the opportunity to access community early childhood programs.

The program has expanded to provide early childhood intervention to 12 preschool children with disabilities. Funding is received from the *Healthy Children Initiative* from ECE and HSS. Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) workers assist children with their development, for a minimum of five hours per week, in community early childhood programs and/or in their home environment.

Why is this program a promising practice?

- it responds to an identified community need;
- the program has opened doors for preschool children with disabilities to access inclusive early childhood programs and prepare for school;
- it is accessible to all children with disabilities within budget limitations;
- outcomes are measurable (the progress of children is documented through feedback from parents and others, and by using the *Diagnostic Inventory Screening for Children* tool);

- parents with children in the program receive ongoing support with parenting strategies and knowledge regarding child development (and although respite is not a direct goal of our program, often the early intervention sessions are the only break that parents of children with disabilities have);
- collaboration and partnerships are key elements (referrals are received from Yellowknife Public Health, the *Child Development Team* at Stanton Territorial Hospital, and early childhood programs; a team approach, with parents, therapists and ECI workers is used to develop goals and strategies for each child; and ECI workers are part of regular case management meetings for each child);
- regular professional development opportunities are provided for staff to improve service by increasing skills and knowledge about various disabilities and strategies for working with children and families.
- staff work with schools, families and children to ensure comfortable transitioning of children into kindergarten;
- two independent evaluations of the program have been conducted and acted on; and
- accountability of the program is through community representation on a program steering committee and the Council's board of directors.

The Building Blocks



The Building Blocks



“We need more workplace awareness of disabilities and we should subsidize employment suitable to persons with disabilities.”

2001 Count Me In Conference

Employment

What We’ve Heard and What We’ve Learned

A number of concerns have been raised regarding employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. There is a need for:

- a mechanism whereby the GNWT is able to access Government of Canada contributions to programs that provide employment support such as the *Employment Assistance for Persons with Disabilities*;
- more training and awareness for career development professionals that work within generic programs so that they are better able to provide career information, employment assessments and develop career plans for persons with disabilities;
- more information, vocational assessments, and access to aids and assistive devices which effectively attract and maintain employment for persons with disabilities;
- more programs within the regions to support persons with disabilities to find and keep employment;
- more awareness by employers in the NWT of the benefits of including persons with disabilities in the workforce; and
- better coordination/integration of employment programs with other programs and services for persons with disabilities.

Where We Want to Go

The goal of this Framework in regards to employment for persons with disabilities is to enhance the employability of persons with disabilities, encourage (re)entry into the labour market and support more work opportunities. The major objectives which support this goal and which will be undertaken as part of this Framework include:

- the GNWT will continue to negotiate with the Government of Canada to obtain cost-shared funding for employment support for persons with disabilities;
- training and networking on disability issues will be available for those working in the area of career development;
- assistive aids/devices and vocational and employment assessments will be provided to alleviate barriers to employment;
- career development programs (such as workplace-based training, the *Public Service Career Training Program*, *Youth Employment Program*, and targeted wage subsidies) will be promoted;
- employment support for persons with disabilities will be provided throughout the communities of the NWT (not just in Yellowknife);
- employers in the NWT will be made aware of the benefits of including persons with disabilities in the workforce; and
- a coordinated, integrated, client-centred case management system that is responsive to the individual needs of persons with disabilities will be designed and implemented.

Promising Practices

The YK-ACL is operating a cross-disability support program providing a variety of services for persons with disabilities to support them to obtain and be successful in employment. The program provides individuals who self-identify as having a disability with a number of career development programs. These include:

- information about training opportunities and career planning;
- preparation of resumes;
- posting of potential employment opportunities;
- liaison with other employment-related services offered in Yellowknife;
- support to people as they proceed through job applications;
- job coaching, if required, once employment is secured; and
- access to funding for workplace adaptations that may be required in the employment of a person with a disability.

Why is this program a promising practice?

- it involves persons with disabilities in its decisions (persons with disabilities named the program, they serve on the advisory committee and they are employed in the program);
- it has a prominent storefront presence in downtown Yellowknife with identifiable signage (it is a well furnished and cheery place to visit);
- successful employment for persons with disabilities remains clearly as the primary goal (the degree of success of employment is determined by the individual);

- networking and partnerships with other employment support and disability support programs is a priority (referrals are made when appropriate and representatives from government and non-profit organizations serve on the advisory committee);
- employers of persons with disabilities are recognized on an annual basis at a *Business After Hours* event;
- recognition of the wide spectrum of support needs of persons with disabilities ensures that the program is flexible and adaptive to individual needs for employment support; and
- community awareness of the contribution that persons with disabilities can make to the workforce is a goal of the program (well-designed pamphlets, an open house, and presentations at the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club are some ways that this awareness is increased).

The Building Blocks



The Building Blocks



“Being blind, it’s hard because there’s not enough money to take care of myself. How come there’s no funding for people with disabilities?”

2000 NWT Disability Needs Assessment

Income

What We’ve Heard and What We’ve Learned

A number of concerns have been raised regarding the existing income support program for persons with disabilities. There is a need for:

- employment incentives that encourage greater workforce participation;
- a greater program focus on the needs of all persons with disabilities (not just on employability and people in transition);
- a separation of disability supports from the “welfare system”;
- more effective case management;
- benefit types and levels that are appropriate for clients;
- benefits that distinguish between persons with differing levels of need;
- financial assistance for persons who have dependents with disabilities; and
- a more streamlined administrative process (in some instances, there is a need for monthly income verification, which can be a burden on the person).

Where We Want to Go

The goal of this Framework in regards to income support for persons with disabilities is to design a system that is responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities and provides for an income safety net which rewards individual work efforts to the greatest extent possible, but which provides financial assistance if self-support is impossible or insufficient to meet basic needs. The major objectives which support this goal and which will be undertaken as part of this Framework include:

- disincentives to employment in income programs will be removed;
- a disability income support program that separates the entitlement for income supports from the entitlement for health and disability-related supports will be designed and implemented;
- the payrolling of clients will be continued; and
- a coordinated, integrated, client-centred case management system that is responsive to the individual needs of persons with disabilities will be designed and implemented.

Promising Practices

A promising practice which some provinces offer is a monthly fixed income exemption plus some percentage of earnings above that amount for persons with disabilities.

Why is this a promising practice?

- this is in recognition that persons with disabilities may only be able to work part-time, sporadically, seasonally, or intermittently, thus limiting their ability to earn and retain the income exemption on a regular basis; and
- more flexibility with respect to earnings may be required in recognition of these limiting factors and to encourage persons with disabilities to participate in the labour force.

Disability Supports

What We've Heard and What We've Learned

A number of concerns have been raised regarding existing disability supports for persons with disabilities. There is a need for:

- an FAS/FAE diagnosis process;
- an expanded respite care program;
- supported independent living options throughout the NWT;
- better transportation services within NWT communities that will support and enable persons with disabilities to get to events, medical appointments, and visit with family and friends;
- development/enhancement of social, cultural and recreational activities for persons with disabilities;
- an increase in the access to therapeutic services for children and adults with disabilities;
- better integration/coordination of disability support programs across government departments;
- more resources/funding for programs;
- more skilled, trained workers and more potential trainees;
- better information and understanding around disability issues and the supports that currently exist;
- comprehensive legislation regarding persons with disabilities; and
- standards for service providers.

Where We Want to Go

The goal of this Framework in regards to disability supports for persons with disabilities is to ensure that these supports provide for active participation at home, at school and in the community, and that they maximize personal and economic independence. The major objectives which support this goal and which will be undertaken as part of this Framework include:

- an appropriate screening tool will be in place to identify children with developmental delays, and follow-up processes will be developed to facilitate diagnosis and assessment;
- the respite care program will be expanded to include persons with disabilities;
- supported independent living options will be implemented throughout the NWT;
- accessible, affordable transportation services within NWT communities will be provided;
- access for persons with disabilities to public buildings, services and programs which serve everyone will be increased;
- social, cultural and recreational activities will be developed and enhanced to include persons with disabilities;
- access to therapeutic services for children and adults with disabilities will be increased;
- a coordinated, integrated, client-centred case management system that is responsive to the individual needs of persons with disabilities will be designed and implemented;
- training opportunities in the area of disability supports in the NWT will be made more attractive and available, and will be more widely promoted to provide for a qualified, professional workforce;

The Building Blocks



“There are a lot of people in my community who would help us with home care and respite care if they knew what to do. As it is, they’re afraid of making a mistake or doing it wrong, so they are too shy to offer help. We want to keep our daughter at home, but we need more help.”

2001 Count Me In Conference

The Building Blocks



- persons with disabilities will have access to appropriate assessments and diagnosis about the nature of their disabilities;
- group home and supported independent living standards and policies will be designed and implemented; and
- a disability supports program based on the needs of persons with disabilities will be designed and implemented.

Promising Practices

The PEI Disability Support Program

The government of Prince Edward Island (PEI), in consultation with the disability community in that province, has redesigned its disability support program for persons with disabilities. The *PEI Disability Support Program* was designed to help residents with disabilities overcome physical and systemic barriers, to attain a satisfactory quality of life, and to achieve financial independence. The program is delivered through regional disability support units in each of the five health regions of the province. The three primary program components include:

- 1) employment and vocational supports (such as counselling, assessment, training, skills development, and pre-employment through individually focused programs to help the individual gain competitive, long-term employment, or supported employment);
- 2) child disability supports (to assist families with extraordinary child-rearing needs directly related to their disability); and
- 3) adult disability supports (to help people with qualifying disabilities achieve their desired level of independence).

Why is this a promising practice?

- In the past, PEI residents received disability supports through several programs. The level of support was sometimes different from program to program or region to region. People who received support through the *Welfare Assistance Program* could receive less support if they became employed. And often, there was not enough flexibility in the programs to respond to a person's individual needs and help them reach their full potential.
- The new program is *person-centred* to meet the unique needs of each individual or family. Together with their disability support worker, they develop a *case plan* which identifies needs, resources, goals, and actions to help the individual become as independent as possible.
- The new disability support program is a social program with a financial component. It offers equal access to disability supports to all PEI residents, no matter what their disability or where they live (it is *needs-based*, rather than *entitlement-based*).
- It encourages economic independence by removing disincentives to work and to earn income. It also enables people to receive supports who could not do so in the past because they weren't eligible for welfare assistance (through the separation of the entitlement for income supports from the entitlement for other disability-related supports).

Supported Independent Living

In 1996, the YWCA of Yellowknife began a transition in its delivery of support services for adults with developmental disabilities. One of two eight-bed group homes in Yellowknife

closed and residents of that home rented their own shared apartments. They continued to receive support services from the YWCA, funded by the Department of Health and Social Services, in their homes.

This allowed people to move into the community in smaller units that are more socially normal and provided more options for living arrangements. Moving out of a government-owned and funded facility, the people were able to move into their own homes or apartments, which they themselves rented and furnished. Adults now have the choice to personalize their living spaces and to control access to their own homes by guests, friends and workers.

Adults with disabilities are now truly living in their community. With a more flexible funding agreement, the YWCA is able to provide support staff that better meet the support needs of each individual. This transition to supported independent living allows persons with developmental disabilities to make choices and decisions about their lives, where they live and with whom they live as well as daily life decisions that promote personal growth and increased independence.

By late 1997, the second group home was also closed and residents rented their own apartments with in-home support.

Why is this a promising practice?

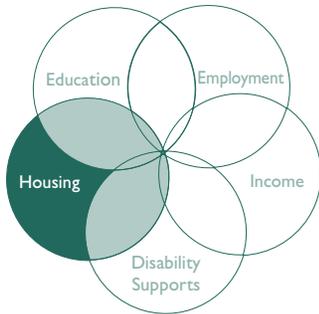
- increased flexibility to support individual needs rather than program needs;
- funding maintains people, not buildings;
- increased opportunity for individual growth and independence;

- smaller living units with roommates are more socially 'normal';
- persons with disabilities have increased opportunity to integrate and participate more fully in their community;
- persons with disabilities have more options in regards to lifestyle, roommates, etc.;
- individuals rent their own accommodation and control their own space;
- the YWCA provides the staff support that individuals require to live in the community with adequate supports; and
- these living arrangements respect the dignity and rights of persons with developmental disabilities.

The Building Blocks



The Building Blocks



“A lot of families would keep their children at home if they had the support they need... financial, respite, home renovations.”

2001 Count Me In Conference

Housing

What We’ve Heard and What We’ve Learned

A number of concerns have been raised regarding the current housing programs available for persons with disabilities. There is a need for:

- increased resources/funding for programs;
- an examination of income exemption levels so that assistance provided for the fixing and modifying of homes can be maximized;
- better information and understanding around disability issues;
- an examination of aspects of barrier-free housing in public rental housing units in the NWT; and
- improved coordination between infrastructure needs and service needs.

Where We Want to Go

The goal of this Framework in regards to housing programs for persons with disabilities is to ensure that persons with disabilities will be provided with a range of housing options that are affordable and accessible, and that maximize independence. The major objectives which support this goal and which will be undertaken as part of this Framework include:

- sufficient funding will be available for renovations to existing homes and funding for new homes, to accommodate specific needs of persons with disabilities;
- existing income exemption levels will be examined so that assistance provided for fixing and modifying homes can be maximized;

- caregivers and persons with disabilities will have access to housing referral and housing program information;
- aspects of barrier-free housing in public rental housing units in the NWT will be addressed; and
- a coordinated and integrated case management system that is responsive to the individual needs of persons with disabilities will be designed and implemented.

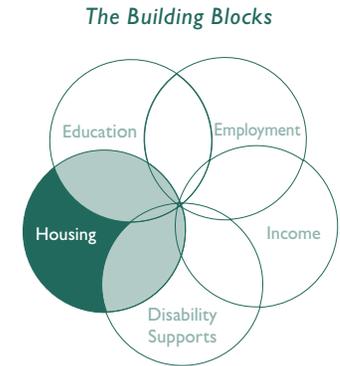
Promising Practices

Yellowknife Housing Authority (YHA) now has public housing units set aside for persons with disabilities. The YHA has set up a separate waiting list for persons with disabilities. Previously, there was no separate consideration given to applicants with disabilities because the housing needs of families were given priority over single people and the YHA did not have accessible housing units in its inventory. Access to public housing is still based on need and availability.

Why is this program a promising practice?

- it addresses an identified need (as stated in the 2000 NWT Needs Assessment of Persons with Disabilities, the 2001 Count Me In Conference and the Housing Forum of May 2001, which was co-sponsored by the NWTHC and the Council);
- the YHA is working in partnership with the Council in administering this new program (through the partnership persons with disabilities are given information and help to complete applications; the partnership also helps YHA to understand disabilities and the requirements of persons with disabilities);

- people with any kind of disability are eligible (some units have physical modifications made to them to reduce housing barriers for persons with physical disabilities – by involving persons with disabilities and the Council early in setting up this program, some modifications were made during renovations already underway to meet some specific needs, such as some units were designed without carpeting for persons who suffer from asthma);
- independence is increased for some people who can better manage their finances or reduce reliance on income support through rents geared to income within public housing; and
- the program has had very positive quality-of-life impacts on the persons with disabilities who have been able to access it.



NEXT STEPS

The next step is to turn the recommended priorities (“Where We Want to Go”) for each building block into an action plan so they can be implemented. All programs and services which will be developed under the action plan must first meet the following five criteria:

- 1) funding-based/best value – what can be done within existing resources?
- 2) evidence-based – programs should consider promising practices from the NWT and other Canadian jurisdictions;
- 3) results-based – what will do the most good for the highest number of persons with disabilities?
- 4) needs-based – programs must be based on the needs identified in previous studies, such as the *2000 NWT Disability Needs Assessment*, the *2000 Student Needs Assessment*, the *2001 Count Me In Conference*, etc.; and
- 5) additional criteria, including: outcome measures; planning obstacles; whether the benefits are territorial, regional or local; the level of community interest; how quickly the program can be implemented; how the program affects quality of life for persons with disabilities; and the legal rights of persons with disabilities.

Additionally, the Partnership recognizes the need to evaluate the progress made on the programs and services provided to persons with disabilities at least once during the lifetime of this Framework.

CONCLUSION

This Framework outlines an interdisciplinary and multi-dimensional approach which will guide the development of effective programs and services for persons with disabilities throughout the NWT. Highlights include:

- research that points towards the need for an integrated approach to providing programs and services for persons with disabilities;
- an overview of both national and territorial disability initiatives over the past 20 to 30 years that has set the context for the Framework;
- the fact that the Framework was developed collaboratively by governmental, non-governmental and Aboriginal organizations;
- the fact that the Framework was guided by the vision of *full citizenship*; was informed by the values of *equality, inclusion, and accessibility and participation*; and was developed with the following principles in mind: all programs and services for person with disabilities in the NWT must be *culturally appropriate* and *build community capacity*, and every individual has the right to *self-determination, autonomy, dignity, respect, participation, and independence*;
- the Framework's of five core building blocks: education, employment, income, disability supports, and housing;
- the major needs, the goals, priority action areas (core building blocks), and promising practices for each building block;
- the next step in the process is the development of the action plan which will implement the Framework recommendations; and
- the Partnership's recognition of the need to evaluate the progress made on the provision of programs and services for persons with disabilities at least once during the lifetime of this Framework.

APPENDIX I: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE DISABILITY STEERING COMMITTEE PARTNERSHIP

Purpose

The Disability Steering Committee Partnership is responsible for the development and implementation of a multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary framework to guide the development of effective programs and services to support full inclusion of persons with disabilities throughout the NWT.

Scope of the Project

The scope of the project will develop a framework that is representative of the stakeholders to guide future development of programs and services for persons with disabilities and their families, and includes:

- the vision;
- values;
- principles; and
- building blocks (core components).

by reviewing and revising current programs, services, and policy and legislation for effectiveness, cultural appropriateness, and gaps.

Membership

The Partnership will include:

- The ADM, Department of Health and Social Services;
- The ADM, Department of Education, Culture and Employment;

The Partnership will also include representation from the following:

- The NWT Housing Corporation;
- The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs;
- The NWT Council for Persons with Disabilities;

- The Yellowknife Association for Community Living;
- The YWCA of Yellowknife;
- The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation; and
- The Dene Nation.

Other parties, including the Department of Justice and focus groups, will be invited to participate as required. Each representative may have an alternate, who will be kept informed and able to actively participate.

Co-Chairs

The assistant deputy minister of the Department of Health and Social Services, and the executive director of the NWT Council for Persons with Disabilities will co-chair the meetings of the steering committee.

Partnership Workplan

The tasks of the steering committee will include (but not be limited to):

- mapping/inventory of services;
- research and analysis/effectiveness of services;
- comparisons with other jurisdictions/national initiatives; and
- communications/consultation.

Desired Outcome

A comprehensive framework for achieving full citizenship for persons with disabilities and clarity of responsibility for proposed actions.

Operations

The partners will:

- liaise through face-to-face meetings, conference calls and e-mail on a regular basis;
- ensure there is the capacity of active involvement among its members; and
- have agendas and background materials, meeting minutes, and communications among members provided by the Department of Health and Social Services.

HSS has agreed to act as secretary to the steering committee.

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**APPENDIX III:
OVERALL LIST OF NEEDS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Area	Identified Need
2000 NWT Needs Assessment	
Medical/Physical Health Services	Referral services Occupational therapy Physiotherapy Audiology/Ophthalmology Speech language pathology Health counselling or promotion Home/Personal care Alternative therapy/treatment
Social and Mental Health Services	Personal supports Specialized intervention program Special equipment, aids, tools Personal or family counselling Addictions counselling or treatment Psychological or psychiatric help Referral or information Parenting support
Accommodation/Housing Services	Housing referral or information Help fixing/changing the home Accommodation/housing subsidy Special accommodation/group home
Financial Assistance	Budgeting or money management help Financial information advice
Life Skills, Employment and Residential Supports	Paid residential support Life skills training In-home support/assistance Personal/family/emotional support Employment or job coaching

Area	Identified Need
2000 NWT Needs Assessment (continued)	
Education and Training Services – Adults	Job skill development Job training Education programming/academic upgrading Individualized education training service Specialized speech or language services Personal or special needs assistance
Education and Training Services – Children/Youth	School readiness/other preschool programs Individualized education plan Specialized speech or language services Personal or special help in classroom Personal counselling Special equipment, aids, tools in school
Legal Services	Probation supervision Placement services Community justice/local supports Legal aid Mediation, negotiation, advocacy
Protection Services	Emergency care or shelter Placement services Victims' services
Other Programs and Services	Respite Mobility supports (e.g. seeing eye dog) Transportation services Special parking program Advocacy to get services General information/referral/support Recreation/social activities Translation/interpretation Guardian/trusteeship/support and decision making
2001 Student Support Needs Assessment	
Specialized Rehab and Medical Services	Services for hard of hearing/deaf Services for visually impaired/blind Homecare

Area	Identified Need
2001 Student Support Needs Assessment (continued)	
Personal Assistance and Special Equipment	Assistance with personal care Assistance with mobility Mobility aid (wheelchair) Mobility aid (braces, crutches, walker) Alternative communication (sign) Communication aid (hearing aid) Communication aid (FM system) Alternative and augmented communication
Personal Assistance and Special Equipment (continued)	Alternative communication (Braille) Adapted furniture Special materials Monitoring/administration of medication Alternative activities for medical conditions
2001 Count Me In Conference	
General	Better information and access to information for caregivers and persons with disabilities Development of policies and legislation regarding persons with disabilities Better public awareness/public education of disability issues Disability conferences on a yearly or biennial basis.
Income	Higher income levels Removal of disincentives to employment Person's accessing be treated with respect
Disability Supports	Greater access to assessment diagnostic, remedial services, equipment, and other supports
A Report on Progress: Our Focus For the Future	
Adult Learning and Employment	Negotiate a revised Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (VRPD) program with Canada
Early Childhood Development – Action Plan	
Early Childhood Development	Home visitation program to support families at risk
Early Childhood Development	Universal screening tool for early identification of children at risk
Early Childhood Development	Language support worker to train community para-professionals
Minister's Forum on Education	
Inclusive Schooling	Determine number of children with special needs and gain better understanding of their needs

Area	Identified Need
Minister's Forum on Education (continued)	
Inclusive Schooling	Increase the number of special needs assistants, program support teachers, reading specialists, and other support services
Inclusive Schooling	Training for teachers, program support teachers, and special needs assistants to better prepare them to meet the needs of all students
Inclusive Schooling	Reduce the pupil-teacher ratio
Financing	Review current funding formula to ensure distribution of funding to support schools is provided in a fair and equitable manner, and in a way that reflects the diversity of needs within the educational system
NWT Labour Development Plan	
Income Support Services	Negotiate a revised Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (VRPD) program with Canada
It Takes A Community	
Child Welfare	Improve case management
Mental Health Needs Assessment	
Education	Education about mental health, mental illness and mental disabilities is needed at the community level
Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services	
Involve NGOs in Health and Social Services System	Adjust income assistance requirements to permit persons with disabilities to maintain dignity and control over their lives
Draft Strategy on Addictions, Mental Health and Family Violence (March 2001)	
Prevention and Promotion	Northern early intervention program for high-risk children
Prevention and Promotion	Awareness campaigns – mental illness stigma, FAS
Community-based Services	For persons with complex needs – case management and outreach, supported housing
Crisis Services	Emergency psychiatric housing
Integrated Services	For persons with complex needs – case management and outreach
Community and Family Development	Respite program for families caring for persons with disabilities
Solving the Income Support Puzzle	
Income	There should be a disability pension rather than accessing funding through Income Support
Employment	Need employment training, life-skills courses
Communications	Increased awareness of disability issues
Keeping Women and Communities Strong	
FAS/FAE	Strategies and action plans needed
FAS/FAE	Prevention and awareness needed Training for frontline workers

APPENDIX IV: INVENTORY OF PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND INITIATIVES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE NWT

Education

Department of Education, Culture and Employment

Inclusive Schooling

This approach involves diverse instructional strategies, including differentiated curriculum, cooperative learning and multi-level instruction, and emphasizes equal educational opportunities for all students. Teachers and support assistants are provided with professional development and specialized resources, and the program supports the modification of existing facilities to meet the students needs. Inclusive schooling is intended to ensure equal access for all students to educational programs offered in regular classroom settings.

Eligibility: School-aged children and youth

Learning Support for Persons with Disabilities

This program provides the opportunity for persons with disabilities to improve their literacy skills. Supports may include assessment and counselling, assistive devices, books, personal care, tutors, tuition, travel, and transportation.

Eligibility: Adults and youth 16 years and older

NWT Study Grant for Students with Disabilities

The NWT Study Grant assists post-secondary students with permanent disabilities that cause limitation of full participation in post-secondary studies. Based on an assessment of need, eligible students may receive up to \$8,000 per academic year.

Eligibility: Post-secondary students

Northern Parenting and Literacy Program

This program increases an awareness of the importance of culture and language in parenting to build positive relationships between parents and children, and to increase literacy levels.

Eligibility: Birth to 6 years old

Department of Health and Social Services

Child Development Resource Kits

Development materials are used to stimulate parent/child interaction and support early childhood skills which addresses environmental stimulation and developmental delays before school entry.

Eligibility: Children aged 0 to 6 years with identified developmental delays

Nipissing Screening Tool

Children are screened for developmental milestones through observation of physical, social and intellectual skills. This helps to determine developmental delays and ensure that appropriate follow-up is initiated for children at risk.

Eligibility: Children aged 0 to 6 years (all children)

Learning Centre

Learning Centre

Provides an opportunity for private schooling for children with learning disabilities.

Eligibility: Children kindergarten to grade 8

Employment

Human Resources Development Canada

Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy

This program ensures that access to training and employment opportunities is increased for Aboriginal persons with disabilities. This is complemented by targets being set for access to broader labour market funding under the Human Resources Development Strategy.

Eligibility: Aboriginal persons

Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities

To assist persons with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining and keeping employment or self-employment. Works in partnership with organizations for persons with disabilities to support innovative approaches to integrate individuals with disabilities into employment or self-employment and address barriers to an individual's labour market participation.

Eligibility: General disability population

Income

Department of Education, Culture and Employment

Disability Allowance

The disability allowance (\$300/month) compensates persons with disabilities for not being able to substantially supplement their income assistance by working.

Eligibility: Must be eligible for income support and be between the ages of 19 and 60

Rent to Parents (for disabled adults living at home)

Rental assistance (to a maximum of \$750/month) for single

clients to parents who own their own home or are in market rental accommodations.

Eligibility: Must be eligible for income support and be 19 years of age or older

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs

Disabled Persons Property Relief Program

The *Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief Program*, administered by MACA and NWT tax-based communities, provides 100% relief from property taxes for persons with a disability.

Eligibility: All disabled homeowners in NWT tax-based communities

Human Resources Development Canada

Income Security

The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) pays a monthly benefit to people who have contributed to the plan and who are disabled according to CPP legislation. It also pays monthly benefits for their dependant children.

Eligibility: Must have previously contributed to CPP and be between the ages of 18 and 65

Tax Programs

Credits for persons with disabilities include Disability Tax Credit, Supplement to the Disability Tax Credit for Children, Medical Expenses, Attendant Care Expenses, Federal Excise Gasoline Tax Refund, and Federal Excise Medical/Assistive Devices Tax Refund. There are also various tax credits available for individuals supporting persons with disabilities.

Eligibility: Varies for each program

Disability Supports

Active Living Alliance

Active Living Alliance Partnership

This program promotes inclusion and active living lifestyles of persons with disabilities by facilitating communication and collaboration among organizations, agencies and individuals.

Eligibility: General disability population

Autism NWT

Awareness and Education

Provides peer support, awareness and advocacy.

Eligibility: General disability population

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

Awareness and Education

Provides peer support, awareness and advocacy.

Eligibility: General disability population

Canadian Mental Health Association

Crisis Line (1-800)

Information, referrals and support promoting mental health within the NWT (Help Line and HIV/AIDS Info Line).

Eligibility: General disability population

Canadian National Institute for the Blind – Alberta/NWT/Nunavut Division

Rehabilitation Services

The Yellowknife regional office provides counselling, public education and coordinates all service programs in the NWT and Nunavut. Specialized rehabilitation services available through the Northern Alberta (Edmonton) Service Centre include: low vision assessments (making the most of remaining vision with magnifiers and other equipment); low-tech aids such as talking watches and clocks, large print playing cards, etc.; assessment, consultation and training in the use of high-tech adaptive technologies, speech synthesized computers, closed circuit televisions; independent living skills training; orientation and mobility training (using a white cane, moving around safely); and access to the CNIB National Library for the Blind. Funding is sought on a case by case basis to provide access to these specialized rehabilitation services.

Eligibility: Children, adults and families of persons who are visually impaired, blind or deaf

Department of Health and Social Services

Public Guardian

The public guardian assesses referrals for guardianship and facilitates the court appointment of a family member, friend or public guardian to make decisions for individuals who are unable to make decisions about their personal or health care. The decision making power of the public guardian includes areas of health care, nutrition, shelter, clothing, and safety.

Eligibility: Persons incapable of handling their own affairs

Child Development Team

The child development team at Stanton Territorial Health Authority provides diagnostic services and develops effective intervention plans for children with complex developmental needs and their families through early child intervention, community awareness and education, and direct service and programming. Services provided include assessment for audiology, occupational therapy, pediatric medicine, social work, physiotherapy, and speech language pathology.

Eligibility: Children and their families

Home and Community Care

Individuals are admitted to the program through the Continuing Care Assessment Package (CCAP) and a care plan is developed to address client needs.

Eligibility: Individuals with severe disabilities, frailty, cognitive impairments, medical conditions, early hospital discharges requiring continued treatment and support within the home.

Supported Living

This program promotes services that allow clients to remain living in a home setting, but with increased assistance/supervision allowing for greater independence. (Yellowknife Association for Community Living, YWCA)

Eligibility: Persons 18 years or older with a developmental disability as their primary disability

Adult Group Homes

A care environment provided to a group of people who reside within the home/facility. These persons provide for their own daily activity needs with the assistance of homemakers. (Inuvik Group Home, Judith Fabian Group Home)

Eligibility: Persons 19 years or older who are challenged by a disability or medical condition

Long-term Care Facilities

The provision of a continuum of care and support services for persons having functional limitations that reduce or diminish their independence. (Aven Manor, Charlotte Vehus Home, Deh Cho Long-term Care, Fort Smith Health Centre, HH Williams Memorial Hospital Extended Care Unit, Inuvik Regional Hospital Extended Care Unit, Joe Greenland Centre, Northern Lights Special Care Home, Stanton Regional Hospital Extended Care Unit, Woodland Manor)

Eligibility: General disability population

Outside of Territory Placement

Out of territory placements are provided for specialized services unavailable in the NWT.

Eligibility: Persons in need of services not offered in the NWT

Departments of Health and Social Services/ Education, Culture and Employment

Healthy Children Initiative – Supportive Child Services

Provides funding to early childhood programs and services to provide a range of individual support services to children with developmental delays.

Eligibility: Children identified as having a developmental delay

Department of Justice

Public Trustee

The Public Trustee is a person appointed by the Commissioner of the NWT who, if required, will protect and manage the money, land and other belongings of persons deemed incapable of handling their financial affairs.

Eligibility: Persons incapable of handling their own affairs

Fort Smith Society of Persons with Disabilities

Disability Awareness/Parking Placards

Support, advocacy and awareness for improved access to all public facilities, services and employment, and distribution of parking placards within the community.

Eligibility: General disability population

Hay River Disability Committee

Disability Awareness

Provides peer support, advocacy and awareness.

Eligibility: General disability population

Inuvik Family Counselling Services

Counselling Service

Provides counselling for persons with psychiatric disabilities.

Eligibility: General disability population

Learning Disabilities Association of the NWT

Learning Disability Awareness

Information about learning disabilities and services for persons with disabilities within NWT.

Eligibility: General disability population

NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities

Disability Information Line (1-800-491-8885)

Provides information, referrals and support for persons with disabilities within NWT, including where and how to get help.

Eligibility: General disability population

Parking Placard Program

Provides accessible parking placards for NWT residents with mobility impairments.

Eligibility: Persons with mobility impairments, with physician certification of need

Sign Language Interpretation

Provides sign language interpretation as requested through a part-time employee on a user fee basis. This is not a certified interpreting service.

Eligibility: General disability population

Awareness and Education

Involvement in public policy development and awareness activities promoting opportunities for full citizenship for persons with disabilities.

Eligibility: General disability population

Early Childhood Intervention

This provides assistance to help preschool children with disabilities reach their full potential by providing intervention support to meet developmental goals set in partnership with parents. Provides family support in parenting strategies and child development information, and intervention support is provided in community early childhood programs or in the home.

Eligibility: Children aged 0 to 6 years with a disability who would not be able to access the early childhood program without a support worker (Yellowknife only)

Experience Summer

Support for school age children with disabilities to access summer recreation programs.

Eligibility: School age children and youth with disabilities who would not be able to access recreation programs without a support worker (Yellowknife only)

Rae-Edzo Disability Committee

Disability Awareness

Provides day programming for adults with intellectual disabilities.

Eligibility: General disability population

Special Olympics

Special Olympics

Provides athletic training and competition promoting improved physical fitness to achieve a greater level of self-confidence.

Eligibility: Adults and children 8 years of age and older

YWCA of Yellowknife

Community Support Services

- 1) In home supports: Provides supports to adults living with developmental disabilities to maintain their homes and to live as independently as possible. Training is provided in life skills, social and community inclusion.
- 2) Outreach: This program is designed to provide support to individuals with developmental disabilities who are living on their own (or with others) with community networking, counselling and social connections. The most critical element of support for the individuals in this program is problem solving and the support required to follow through with the decisions made.

Eligibility: Individuals are referred to the YWCA Community Support Services through the Adult Assessment and Placement Committee, chaired by the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority

Yellowknife Association of Community Living

Skills Training

Adults with intellectual disabilities access pre-employment training as well as paid employment at the Summer Café and catering at the Abe Miller Centre, and at a variety of community jobs performing courier, janitorial, paper shredding, and landscaping services.

Eligibility: Adults with intellectual disabilities

Supported Independent Living Program

Provides supports to adults with intellectual disabilities who choose to live in homes of their own to ensure that they are healthy, safe and happy.

Eligibility: Adults with intellectual disabilities

Summer Café and Catering

A summer restaurant that employs persons with and without disabilities and a catering service that operates year round.

Eligibility: Adults with and without disabilities

Living and Learning with FAS/FAE Program

Promotes understanding, education and community action on the prevention of FAS. A family support group provides parenting workshops and home visits.

Eligibility: General disability population

EmployABILITY Support Services

Persons with disabilities are supported to find and maintain employment. Career development services are available.

Eligibility: General disability population

Disability Awareness

Supports the work of the Rae-Edzo Disability Committee through facilitating meetings, providing workshops and developing training.

Eligibility: General disability population

Family Project

Families are welcome to meet, discuss and plan for ways that their family members with disabilities can be more included in community life in Yellowknife.

Eligibility: Families supporting the general disability population

Housing

Northwest Territories Housing Corporation

Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program

Provides funding in the form of a forgivable loan and/or repayable loan for modifications/renovations allowing for barrier-free homes.

Eligibility: Must be in core housing need

Seniors and/or Disabled Preventative Maintenance Initiative

Provides a forgivable loan to seniors and/or disabled citizens who own and occupy their own home to allow for annual maintenance, servicing and minor repairs.

Eligibility: Senior (60 years old or over) or person with a disability (19 years old or over) in core housing need

