

Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

Activity Report
2011-12

Honourable Joan Burke
Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
P. O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

September 16, 2012

Dear Minister Burke:

On behalf of the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, I am pleased to submit our Activity Report for 2011-12.

The mandate of the Council is to advise and inform the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities on matters concerning persons with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Council brings knowledge and understanding of disability-related issues to the Provincial Government. The Council advises the Provincial Government as it develops policies, programs, strategies and recommendations to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities. The Council also promotes awareness to the Provincial Government of barriers faced by individuals with disabilities.

In the development of this report, consideration was given to the strategic directions as communicated in the departmental strategic plan of Advanced Education and Skills. While the Council supports the spirit and the intent of these strategic directions, its work focuses on the Provincial Government's broader commitment to full inclusion across all aspects of society.

This report covers the period of April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012. My signature below is on behalf of the Council and indicates the Council is accountable for the results reported.

Respectfully submitted,



Joanne MacDonald, O.C., O.N.L.
Chairperson

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Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

Overview

In the 2008 Speech from the Throne, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced it would appoint a Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. Council members were appointed in 2009.

Mandate

The Council's mandate is to advise and inform the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities on matters concerning persons with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Vision

Newfoundland and Labrador will be a province where individuals with disabilities have the same opportunities as individuals without disabilities - a society that is accessible and inclusive of everyone.

Representation

The Council is comprised of 12 to 18 volunteer members appointed by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities (the Minister Responsible). The members of the Council have cross-disability representation, come from all regions of the province and have demonstrated leadership in the advancement of inclusion of individuals with disabilities. The Council's membership reflects a balance of women and men who live in rural and urban locations throughout the province.

From among the members, the Minister Responsible appoints the Chair of the Council to serve a three-year term. Council members are appointed for two years. The Council meets up to four times a year (For more information, see Appendix A: Terms of Reference and Appendix B: Council Membership 2011-12).

Physical Location

The Council does not have an office or physical location. The Council can be contacted through the Disability Policy Office, which is located within the Department of Advanced Education and Skills, 3rd Floor, West Block, Confederation Building, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. The Disability Policy Office provides secretariat and administrative support to the Council.

Primary Clients

The Council brings knowledge and understanding of disability issues to the Provincial Government and advises government on initiatives to advance the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of society. In this capacity, the Council serves its primary client, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, by providing advice to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

Description of Expenditures

Council members are appointed from the general public and receive remuneration in accordance with Level 3 of the Treasury Board Guidelines for Boards, Commissions, and Agencies. Remuneration is for expenses and travel costs only, and Council members are not paid for their work. The travel expenses and costs associated with the work of the Council are covered by the Department of Advanced Education and Skills and are included in its departmental budget.

Shared Commitments

The work of the Council is influenced by the work of departments and agencies of the Provincial Government. Council shares government's commitment to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society, a commitment first stated in 2008. The Council also shares the Provincial Government's commitment to continued engagement of persons with disabilities.

The Provincial Government plays a vital role in supporting the Council through provision of secretariat support from the Disability Policy Office. The Council finds this support critical to meeting its mandate.

Highlights and Accomplishments

This past year has been a rewarding one for the Council as it worked with the Provincial Government to provide input on the development of a provincial strategy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

In addition, the Council met with a number of government departments and agencies to advance inclusion within their respective mandates.

For example, the Council met and worked with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation on principles of access and inclusion, particularly as it relates to universal design in social housing initiatives. The Council is pleased this work contributed to a new requirement that universal design and accessibility standards be applied in the design and construction of all new affordable housing units. Newfoundland and Labrador Housing is to be commended for this significant step forward.

Other examples include meeting with Service NL to advise on issues related to the **Buildings Accessibility Act and Regulations**, and the Department of Child Youth and Family Services, to advise on issues of importance to children with disabilities. The Council also provided advice to the Chief Electoral Officer on ways to enhance accessibility of the provincial voting process.

The Council also held discussions about how to best address issues of stigma, discrimination and awareness. As a common practice in holding its deliberations and developing advice, the Council sought views and perspectives of specific expertise. At the invitation of the Council, presentations were received from:

- Consumers' Health Awareness Network Newfoundland and Labrador (CHANNAL)
- Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council

The Council is appreciative of the many individuals, organizations and departments that provided presentations during the past year; sharing information, knowledge and experiences.

Report on Performance

In its 2011-14 Activity Plan, the Council identified two key activities that support its mandate and include performance measure information (i.e. measures and indicators). This assists both the Council and the public in monitoring and evaluating the success of the activity plan. The Council was successful in meeting performance objectives in its first year of the 2011-14 Activity Plan.

The key activities of the Council are:

1. Advise the Provincial Government on the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting for the provincial strategy.
2. Advise the Provincial Government on issues of importance to people with disabilities that may include advice on time-sensitive, emergency, individual and/or systemic issues.

Activity 1: Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

The 2011 Speech from the Throne included a commitment to removing barriers so persons with disabilities would have access to equitable participation in the economic and social life of the province. The Speech from the Throne also committed to releasing a provincial strategy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

This strategy was built on the ideas and directions received during extensive consultations throughout the province in 2010.

As described in last year's report, Council advised on best practices to make consultations fully accessible. Council members also promoted and attended consultations held in their regions.

During this past year, the Council advised on strategic directions that were developed for the strategy. Emphasis was placed on ensuring these reflected individuals' input from the consultations. Council also advised on options on how the strategy would be implemented, monitored for progress and publicly reported on. Council reinforced the use of Articles from the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities when setting benchmarks to measure the strategy's progress.

Objective: The Council will have advised the Provincial Government on the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting for a provincial strategy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Measure: The Council advised the Provincial Government on the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting for a provincial strategy.

Indicator 1: Reviewed strategy goals, objectives and actions.

Actual Results:

- The Council conducted a review of draft goals, objectives, and actions of the provincial strategy. The Council also met with the Minister Responsible about the strategy and key considerations for achieving its goals, objectives and actions (April 2011 meeting).
- The Council held discussions on priority areas for the strategy, providing input to the Minister Responsible (February 2012 meeting).
- The Council received presentations from the Disability Policy Office and Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency regarding available data required to measure indicators and progress of the strategy (February 2012 meeting).

Indicator 2: Provided advice on reporting mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of the strategy.

- The Council met with the Minister Responsible and advised on reporting mechanisms for the strategy (July 2011 meeting).
- The Council participated in working groups on strategy initiatives (July 2011 meeting).
- The Council provided input on meaningful indicators and actions that would demonstrate and enable real change in the lives of people with disabilities (October 2011 meeting).
- The Council provided input on early action plans (October 2011 meeting).

Indicator 3: Participated in future opportunities for consultation on strategy design, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

- The Council provided advice to government that helped shape the development of the strategy; specifically the strategic directions within the strategy. Council emphasized the importance of the strategy capturing and reflecting the input from people around the province.
- Council also advised on the importance of implementing the strategy throughout all aspects of government, as well as throughout community, private and other public sectors. Council began work on identifying indicators that could be used to measure progress as the strategy is implemented. Council identified the need for good data in order to set benchmarks for evaluating its success. Council advised on frequency of public reporting.
- The Council will engage in further consultations with various government departments and agencies as the strategy is implemented. Council will review and provide advice on action plans as they are developed.

2012-2013 Looking Forward

Indicators for 2012-13

Activity 1: Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

Objective: By March 31, 2013, the Council will have advised the Provincial Government on the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting for a provincial strategy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Measure: Advised the Provincial Government on the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting for a provincial strategy.

Indicators 2012-2013:

- Provided advice on the implementation, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting mechanisms for the strategy.
- Contributed to the development of an Action Plan to achieve the five strategic directions of the provincial strategy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Activity 2: Issues of importance to people with disabilities

During this past year, Council has had dialogue with the Minister Responsible as well as other departments, Ministers and officials to provide information about current and ongoing issues affecting the lives of people with disabilities. To increase knowledge and inform their advice, Council received presentations from various departments, agencies, groups and individuals about pressing issues. Some of the critical issues that Council advised on during 2011-12 concerned:

- accessibility of the voting process
- accessibility of the built environment
- accessible housing
- supports for students
- promoting a positive image of disability

Objective: By March 31, 2012, the Council will have provided input, advice, and guidance on issues of importance to people with disabilities.

Measure: Provided input, advice, and guidance on time-sensitive, emergency, individual and/or systemic issues of importance to people with disabilities.

Indicator 1: Advised the Minister Responsible and other Provincial Government officials on time-sensitive, emergency, individual or systemic issues of importance to people with disabilities.

Actual Results:

- Council discussed issues of building accessibility and universal design principles. This contributed to an announcement that all new housing units within the Affordable Housing Program in Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Commission would incorporate universal design features as well as 1 in every 10 new units will be fully accessible (April 2011).
- Council received a presentation from the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services on the department's mandate and roles and advised on issues of importance to children with disabilities (July 2011).
- The Council provided the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer with recommendations regarding accessibility of the provincial voting process (July 2011).
- Council Chair met with the departmental Deputy Minister to present positions statements on 1) the importance of facilitating positive attitudes about disability and 2) supports for students with disabilities within the K-12 system (September 2011).
- Council received a presentation from Consumers' Health Awareness Network Newfoundland and Labrador (CHANNAL) and the Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council to inform on impacts of stigma and current approaches to building awareness.
- Council met with the Minister's representative to provide information on disability-related issues (October 2011).

- Council Chair met with new Minister to inform on Council's work to date and input on the strategy and Council's availability to provide feedback on the strategy's action plan (November 2011).
- Council presented to officials within the Department of Service NL regarding accessibility of the built environment and other matters related to the **Buildings Accessibility Act** (February 2012).

Indicator 2: Provided correspondence from the Chair of the Council to the Minister Responsible and Provincial Government officials on time-sensitive, emergency, individual and/or systemic issues of importance to people with disabilities.

Actual Results:

- Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities received advice from Council on disability-related issues such as awareness, student supports, and accessibility.
- The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer received recommendations from Council regarding accessibility of the voting process (July 2011).
- The Department of Child, Youth and Family Services received advice from Council on issues of importance to children with disabilities (January 2012).
- The Department of Service NL received advice from Council regarding issues related to the **Buildings Accessibility Act** (March 2012).

2012-2013 Looking Forward

Activity 2: Issues of importance to people with disabilities

Objective: By March 31, 2013, the Provincial Advisory Council will have provided input, advice, and guidance on issues of importance to people with disabilities.

Measure: Provided input, advice and guidance on time-sensitive, emergency, individual and/or systemic issues of importance to people with disabilities.

Indicators:

1. Advised the Minister Responsible and other Provincial Government officials on time-sensitive, emergency, individual or systemic issues of importance to persons with disabilities.
2. Provided correspondence from the Chair of the Council to the Minister Responsible and Provincial Government officials on time-sensitive, emergency, individual and/or systemic issues of importance to persons with disabilities.
3. Received presentations from various government departments and agencies to inform their work of advising the Minister Responsible on issues of importance to persons with disabilities.

Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

The second, full year of the Provincial Advisory Council has been productive as it continued to provide input on the building of a provincial strategy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities. This strategy is a broad policy framework that will support the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the province, providing the opportunity for individuals to participate in all aspects of life on an equal basis with others. The Council looks forward to working with the Provincial Government on the opportunities and challenges of implementing and evaluating this strategy.

Provincial Advisory Council
for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

Terms of Reference

Mandate

The Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities advises and informs the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities on matters concerning persons with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Role and Functions

The Council:

- Brings knowledge and understanding of disability-related issues to government
- Advises government as it develops policies, programs, strategies and recommendations to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities
- Promotes awareness of disabilities and the barriers faced by persons with disabilities

Membership and Structure

The Advisory Council is composed of 12 to 18 members appointed by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities. From among the members, the Minister Responsible appoints the Chair of the Council to serve a three-year term. Council members are appointed for two years.

Provincial Advisory Council
for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

**Council Membership
2011-12**

The Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities is composed of 15 community leaders from across the province. The Council is cross-disability. The current Council appointments include Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who have disabilities, including mobility, sensory (vision, hearing), intellectual, mental health and individuals with multiple disabilities. It also includes family members and others who have expertise in the area of inclusion.

The Council's membership reflects a balance of women and men who live in rural and urban locations throughout the province.

Joanne MacDonald, Chair

Joanne MacDonald is a member of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador and an Officer of the Order of Canada. She has over 26 years experience as a community activist promoting equality for individuals with disabilities. Joanne is the Chair of the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

Len Baker

Len Baker works with the CNIB in Toronto and is the past Executive Director of the CNIB Newfoundland and Labrador Division and Managing Director of Services and Operations for the CNIB in Atlantic Canada. He has worked with the CNIB for 18 years. (Len resigned from the Council in July 2011 to accept an employment opportunity out of province).

Carmel Casey

Carmel Casey is a family physician in Gander who has over 14 years of experience volunteering with individuals with intellectual disabilities. She is Chairperson of the VON Broadening Horizons and is very involved in the Special Olympics. She has

been Team Doctor for the Canadian National Team at two world games and coach for provincial teams at national games on three occasions. She has a sister who has an intellectual disability.

Elizabeth Chaulk

Elizabeth Chaulk is Associate Vice-President of Learner Services, College of the North Atlantic. She is also Past Chair and current member of both the Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Economic Development Association and the Red Ochre Regional Economic Development Board, as well as a member of the provincial Conservation Corps Board.

Delia Connell

Delia Connell is a social worker and is active with the Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living. She is Vice-President of Children's and Community Services with Labrador Grenfell Health and has close to 30 years experience working with individuals with disabilities, and a variety of community groups.

Sheryl (Sherry) Gambin-Walsh

Sheryl (Sherry) Gambin-Walsh is a registered nurse who works as the Provincial Community Inclusion Coordinator for the Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living. She has a son who is a 16 year old individual with autism and is a member of the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador's Models of Practice Committee. Sherry represents individuals with disabilities, seniors and youth as the human resources representative on the Avalon Gateway Regional Economic Development Board.

Dennis Gill

Dennis Gill is a retired high school administrator. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Newfoundland & Labrador Association for Community Living and is Chair of the Provincial Advisory Committee on Supported Employment, Newfoundland and Labrador. Dennis Gill is a parent of a 31-year old son who has significant intellectual and physical disabilities.

Lynn Green

Lynn Green is Chair of the Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, National Chair of the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, a Board member of the Community Services Council, and a member of the College of the North Atlantic's Advisory Committee for Learners with Disabilities.

Oswald Gould

Oswald Gould is a retired teacher of children with exceptionalities and is active with the Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living.

Raymond McIsaac

Raymond McIsaac is President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living. He has an adult son and an adult daughter with autism and has been extensively involved in the issues connected to the recognition of legal capacity for over 20 years. He is an immediate past board member of the Canadian Association for Community Living and chairs the Working Committee on the Recognition of Legal Capacity and Supported Decision Making. He has an extensive background working on issues in a cross-disability forum and was the representative of 26 national organizations of persons with disabilities on the Canadian Labour Force Development Board in the 1990's.

Leon Mills

Leon Mills has worked in the hard of hearing sector for 16 years. He is the Executive Director of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Newfoundland and Labrador, Co-Chair of Marine Atlantic's Accessibility Committee, Chair of the College of North Atlantic's Advisory Committee for Learners with Disabilities and Co-Chair of the Buildings Accessibility Appeal Tribunal.

Ian Murley

Ian Murley is a recent business graduate and is Vice-President Internal (Newfoundland and Labrador representative) with the National Educational Association of Disabled Students.

Myles Murphy

Myles Murphy is Employment Facilitator with Newfoundland and Labrador Association of the Deaf. Myles has been an active advocate for the Deaf community for more than 30 years. He has held various positions on numerous provincial and national boards.

Karon-Ann Parsons

Karon-Ann Parsons is Executive Director of the Consumers' Health Awareness Network Newfoundland and Labrador. Karon-Ann is active with advisory committees for Western and Eastern Health Boards, as well as other community boards focusing on mental health.

Susan Ralph

Susan Ralph has 17 years experience working in the community of individuals with disabilities. She is the Past President of the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities - Newfoundland and Labrador and member at large with the Council of Canadians with Disabilities. She is also Past Chair of the AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Karen Westcott

Karen Westcott has been active with local, provincial and national organizations including the Independent Living Resource Centre, People First Newfoundland, Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living, and the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities - Newfoundland and Labrador. (Karen was unable to participate as a Council member due to extenuating circumstances.)