

Access. Inclusion. Equality.



Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion
of Persons with Disabilities in
Newfoundland and Labrador


Newfoundland
Labrador

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Message from the Premier

As Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, it is my pleasure to present Access. Inclusion. Equality. A Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

This strategy is a landmark in our efforts to achieve full inclusion for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I consider it to be one of the most important and transformative initiatives we have ever undertaken.



Building prosperity for our province means building prosperity for all citizens. Developing a more inclusive society ensures prosperity for everyone. As a province, we are setting a national example for excellence on many fronts – this strategy is another clear example of balancing fiscal responsibility with smart, strategic investments in people and infrastructure.

Economically, socially and culturally, we are in a position few have ever imagined. Now is the time to move forward, in full collaboration with the community of persons with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador, to ensure the implementation of this strategy in the coming years.

Guided by this strategy, we will advance inclusion to ensure everyone in Newfoundland and Labrador participates fully in the bright future that lies ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Dunderdale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kathy" and last name "Dunderdale" clearly distinguishable.

Kathy Dunderdale
Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador

Message from the Minister

As Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities, I present Access. Inclusion. Equality. A Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

This strategy is a broad framework that will guide actions to remove and prevent barriers, resulting in the improved status of persons with disabilities. This means access to economic, cultural and social opportunities on an equal basis with other citizens. It also means supporting individuals with disabilities to contribute to all aspects of society.



The strategy was developed from consultations involving over 600 individuals and organizations who provided their expertise, experiences and ideas in a fully accessible process. Continued public engagement will be vital to the successful implementation of the strategy. It is essential that initiatives implemented through this strategy make a real and positive difference in people's lives. Through this strategy, the Provincial Government will lead by example, progressively moving towards the vision of equal opportunity and choice.

Working together, with community organizations, businesses, and key partners such as the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, we will turn identified solutions into action. We will ensure we live in an inclusive and dynamic province where opportunities exist for all.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Joan Burke'.

Joan Burke

Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Message from Provincial Advisory Council

The Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities is excited about the release of the Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. We believe it lays a solid foundation for a long-term, holistic and sustainable approach to achieving access and inclusion for individuals with disabilities. It sets a clear direction toward equality for all in our province.



With this strategy, we are embarking on a new era in our province; an era of collaboration and cooperation where we all do our part to make inclusion happen; an era where access and inclusion are at the forefront of our planning and development. This strategy will guide us as we move forward together toward this new reality.

We commend the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's commitment to inclusion and equality. We applaud its actions to involve individuals with disabilities, community and the council in the development of this strategy. The council looks forward, indeed, to its continued role in helping achieve the vision of inclusion for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. MacDonald', written over a thin horizontal line.

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

Chairperson, Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

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Introduction

Overview

The Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador is a framework that will guide and support actions to advance inclusion of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who have disabilities.

Inclusion is when individuals have access and choices about participating in all aspects of life in Newfoundland and Labrador such as: going to school, getting a job, getting to a doctor's appointment, picking up groceries, going to a movie and participating in community events.

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This framework will support a long-term and integrated approach to inclusion. It provides a blueprint for government departments, community groups and private businesses. It provides strategic directions for reaching a common goal that will benefit everyone.

The foundation of the strategy reflects ideas and solutions from people with disabilities, their families, friends and organizations. Consultations were held throughout the province in the fall of 2010 and resulted in a wealth of rich and creative ideas. These consultations focused on solutions needed to address barriers rather than concentrating on the barriers themselves. It is these solutions that will guide actions to move the strategy from vision to reality.

The strategy brings together directions and goals which are grounded in the principles and priorities of the community. As recommended by the community, the strategy is based on a social model of disability; a model that reflects human rights, respect and fairness.

The strategy is aligned with the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Act, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It seeks to ensure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians with disabilities have the same opportunities and choices on an equal basis with other citizens.

Introduction

Who is Included in the Strategy?

The strategy is developed from a cross-disability perspective. This means it is designed to achieve inclusion for all persons with disabilities. This includes people with various forms of disability, such as physical, mental, intellectual, developmental or sensory disabilities and whose participation in



society is hindered by barriers. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities does not define disability but, rather, describes it as an “evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and active participation in society on an equal basis with others”¹. More information about how disability is defined is included in Appendix A.

Disability occurs in all communities and regions of the province, within all age groups, income brackets and professions.

¹ United Nations. (December 13, 2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

Research shows that almost 75,000 citizens in this province report that their participation in society is limited because of a disability.² When family members and friends are added along with unreported and temporary disabilities, almost everyone in the province is impacted by disability at some point in their lives. Research also demonstrates that the number of people directly affected will increase dramatically over the next few years³, especially because of the link between getting older and having a disability⁴. In this province, the percentage of people who are older is increasing at a faster rate than any other province in Canada⁵.

The strategy is designed to remove and prevent barriers that people experience so that all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can take part in the economic, cultural, social, recreational and civic life of their communities. It will guide actions to ensure policies, services and attitudes are inclusive.

² Statistics Canada. (2008). Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006: Analytical Report. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-628-x/89-628-x2007002-eng.htm>

³ Royal Bank of Canada. (2000). Outlook for People with Disabilities in Current Analysis.

⁴ Public Health Agency of Canada. (2006). Healthy Aging in Canada. http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/publications/pro/healthy-sante/haging_newvision/vision-rpt/index-eng.php

⁵ Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Finance, Economic and Statistics Branch. (Oct 2006). Demographic Change: Issues and Implications. <http://www.fin.gov.nl.ca/fin/demographyupdate.pdf>

Introduction

Social Model

The strategy follows a social model for understanding disability. This model is reflected in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and, most importantly, is supported and promoted by citizens with disabilities.

The social model looks at disability as being about the relationship between the person and their environment. In contrast to earlier models, the social model does not focus on medical diagnosis or ‘fixing a person’, nor does it focus on ‘taking care of people’ or acting out of charity. Rather, the social model seeks to understand barriers that limit participation and to develop ways to remove existing barriers and prevent future ones.

A major difficulty with earlier models is that they have fed into stereotypes and myths about disability. Medical models seek to ‘fix’ or change the person and charity models see the individual as someone in need of care. These perspectives do not see people with disabilities in a way that is respectful or that understands people’s needs, contributions and potential. The strategy seeks to change these attitudes and approaches.

Respecting Rights

Provincial, national and international laws are put in place to protect the rights of all, including people with disabilities, and to ensure people are free from discrimination.

Introduction

Like all Canadian provinces and territories, Newfoundland and Labrador has human rights legislation that protects against discrimination, including discrimination based on disability. This legislation applies to all Provincial Government departments and agencies and private businesses. It can be viewed at: <http://assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/h13-1.htm>.

Nationally, there is a Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It also protects against discrimination on various grounds, including race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. The Charter can be viewed at: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/charter/page-1.html>.

At the international level, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is designed to ensure that people with disabilities experience the same rights and freedoms as others and to ensure that their dignity is respected.

With provincial and territorial support, Canada signed the convention agreeing to meet the obligations contained within its articles. These articles include: raising awareness, accessibility of the built environment, legal capacity, transportation, disability-related supports,



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communications and access to public services such as education and health care. The convention, clear-language versions and other related information can be found at: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?navid=14&pid=150>.

“...to ensure and promote the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities without discrimination based on disability.”

(United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,
Article 4, General Obligations)

Community Knowledge

People with disabilities, community groups and agencies have extensive knowledge of barriers to inclusion that people with disabilities experience in Newfoundland and Labrador.

A **barrier** is anything that gets in the way of people with disabilities participating in day-to-day activities, or taking part in opportunities that are available to all citizens.

Introduction

Various reports based on community and government research have identified barriers in the areas of education, employment, transportation, health care, housing, home support, information and communications. Four different types of barriers have been identified:



- Attitudinal barriers, such as stereotypes and negative perceptions;
- Systemic barriers, such as programs and policies that do not accommodate disability-related requirements;
- Physical barriers, such as stairs, poor lighting, lack of visual alarms; and,
- Technological barriers, such as inaccessible websites.

These barriers have severe impacts for individuals, families, communities and Newfoundland and Labrador as a whole. They can prevent full participation in the economic, cultural, social, recreational and civic life of communities throughout the province.



Consultation

Consultations to Build Solutions

The Provincial Government built on existing research and community knowledge by inviting ideas about solutions that would remove and prevent barriers in policies, programs and services as well as throughout all aspects of society.

During the fall of 2010, a broad consultation process took place that engaged over 600 individuals and organizations in identifying solutions to barriers experienced by people with disabilities.

A wealth of creative and well thought-out ideas were offered at the public consultation sessions, focus groups and interviews, along with email, phone / TTY and written submissions.

The consultation process respected and promoted the motto of the international community of people with disabilities: “Nothing

Consultation

About Us Without Us”. People with disabilities, their families, friends and organizations, as well as the general public, were actively invited to share knowledge and expertise gained through personal experience. All components of the consultation process were fully accessible to ensure people could provide input with dignity. Physical access, sign language interpretation, captioning, alternate formats, scent-free environments and accessible websites were important to making sure the consultation process was fully accessible.

An “Inclusive Consultation Toolkit” was developed and tested during the consultation process. This toolkit has now become a guide to ensure future Provincial Government consultations are accessible to all citizens. Already, positive changes are taking place due to the development of the strategy.



Consultation

What People Said

The summary below provides an overview of what was heard during consultations. Several themes emerged during the consultation process. These have been captured in the strategy and include:

Theme	Sample solutions
Accessibility	Access with dignity to public buildings and places
Disability-related supports	Access to assistive technology and personal supports based on individual need
Education	Individual student supports in classrooms
Transportation	Accessible taxis and personal vehicles, accessible public transportation systems
Housing	Houses and apartments built with Universal Design principles, accessible and visitable neighbourhoods

Consultation

Theme	Sample solutions
Health care	Service models that support Independent Living (consumer) principles, accessible health care facilities and offices
Service information and coordination	First-stop access for information and connection to services
Information and communication	Information in clear language, available American Sign Language (ASL); televised messages captioned
Employment	Accessible work places and application processes, targeted programs
Knowledge building	Positive attitudes, free of stereotypes

Consultation

Participants also identified key areas for consideration, including:

Key area	Sample considerations
Aboriginal people	Further consultations with Aboriginal people to determine best approaches
Labrador	Incorporating unique needs of Labrador within initiatives
Rural	Identifying and working from assets within rural communities
Women	Gender and disability lens to address multiple layers of barriers and discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities

Primarily, the ideas and solutions brought forward by participants focused on three areas for change:

Consultation

Area	What it includes
Attitudes	Societal attitudes and knowledge base
Policies	Procedures, regulations and legislation
Services	Eligibility, scope, delivery models and accountability

A summary of what was heard during the public consultations is posted on the Provincial Government website with a video link to an American Sign Language translation (www.gov.nl.ca/DisabilityPolicy). It is also available in alternate formats upon request.

“A strategy that has as its ultimate goal the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society must be solution focused, built on the positive features of our current system, and be grounded in the advice and recommendations of people with disabilities.”

(“Life Without Barriers”, written submission, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities – Newfoundland and Labrador in partnership with organizations of and for individuals with disabilities.)



Commitment to Action

The Provincial Government has made a commitment to inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of society. This commitment was strengthened in 2011 with the promise to implement a strategy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

“My Government believes a person’s path to opportunity should not be barred because of a disability...we can help ensure persons with disabilities have access to equitable participation in the economic and social life of our province.”

(Speech from the Throne, 2011)

Commitment to Action

The 2012 Speech from the Throne further affirmed the Provincial Government's commitment to the inclusion of persons with disabilities by moving forward with a provincial strategy. To realize this goal, a multi-year, comprehensive and integrated approach is required. It is important to make sure that as barriers are removed new ones are not created. This requires the collaboration and dedication of all departments and agencies across the Provincial Government, as well as the continued engagement of people with disabilities, communities and businesses.

A high level of Provincial Government leadership is necessary. To lead and oversee the realization of this commitment, the Provincial Government established a Ministers' Committee for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. The members include:

- Minister of Advanced Education and Skills
- Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services
- Minister of Education
- Minister of Finance
- Minister of Health and Community Services
- Minister for Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs
- Minister of Justice
- Minister of Service NL
- Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation
- Minister of Transportation and Works
- Minister Responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation
- Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat
- Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities (Chair)

Commitment to Action

- Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
- Minister Responsible for the Volunteer and Non-Profit Sector

The Provincial Government also designated a Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities, established a Disability Policy Office and appointed a Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. The Minister Responsible and each of these groups have a distinct and important role to play in the realization of inclusion.

The Disability Policy Office (DPO) is a central point within the Provincial Government that helps all departments and agencies to identify, remove and prevent barriers. The office partners with people with disabilities and community agencies to find solutions that address barriers. It assists Provincial Government departments in



applying a disability perspective to make sure policies, programs and services are inclusive. It also increases knowledge throughout the Provincial Government of disability-related issues and experiences.

The Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities advises the Minister Responsible for the

Commitment to Action

Status of Persons with Disabilities on matters of importance to people with disabilities, including all aspects of the strategy.

The Ministers' Committee will guide the work of the strategy, supported by a Deputy Ministers' committee and an interdepartmental working group. This will be done in consultation with the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

Implementation of the strategy will be co-ordinated and integrated throughout all departments and agencies, as well as with other strategies that are particularly relevant to persons with disabilities. These include: strategies and initiatives that address long-term care, poverty reduction, inclusive education, recreation and sport and housing.

By working closely with the Women's Policy Office, Rural Secretariat and the Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, the unique perspectives of Aboriginal people, women and people living in rural communities and Labrador will be incorporated into initiatives and actions arising from the strategy.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to taking action in accordance with this strategy and to providing leadership for the broader community towards the shared vision of an inclusive province.

Commitment to Action

Benefits of Inclusion and Accessibility

Everyone benefits when we increase accessibility and inclusion. The impact of barrier-free environments, inclusive systems and positive attitudes filter throughout all aspects of society. Significant benefits are experienced both socially and economically.

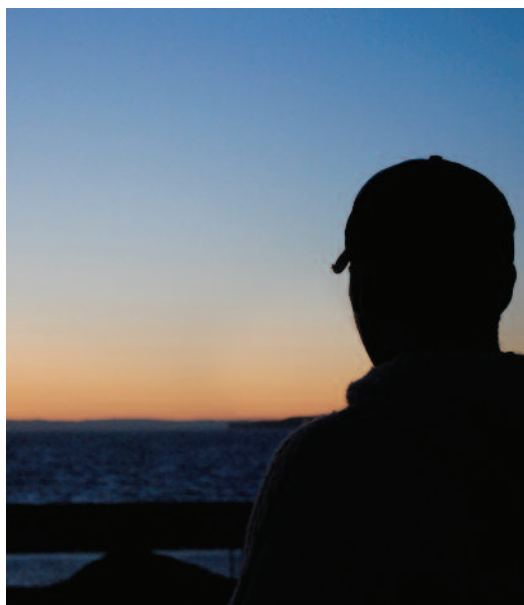
From a social perspective, communities that include everyone are more successful as they draw on the combined assets of their citizens. They are stronger and more connected. Inclusion positively affects creativity and volunteerism within a community and provides increased diversity of opinions. In addition, increased accessibility enhances quality of life for everyone.

For example, features of Universal Design include the use of lever handles instead of knobs, lowered light switches and wider entrances. These are things that can benefit all people under varied circumstances.

Universal Design is the design of products and environments to be useable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialization.

Commitment to Action

Documents provided in clear language are easier for everyone to read and accessible websites are easier to navigate. Universal Design in Learning supports flexible learning environments and accessible curriculum for all students. Ramps and curb-cuts are helpful for people pushing strollers and pulling suitcases and automatic door openers are helpful to all. These accessible solutions benefit families, businesses and communities and increase the quality of life in Newfoundland and Labrador.



The benefits of inclusion also extend to policies and government participation. People with disabilities offer a wide variety of perspectives in decision-making and planning opportunities; this can only be achieved when barriers to participation are removed and people with disabilities are included on an equal basis with others.

Looking at inclusion from an economic viewpoint, having more people employed means a stronger economy. Breaking down employment barriers for persons with disabilities is a logical and important step to ensuring the province has an adequate labour pool to meet future needs. Changing attitudes and removing myths about accessibility will result in positive outcomes for everyone.

Commitment to Action

Data shows that many persons with disabilities are skilled and eager to work, yet many are unemployed. Throughout the rest of the country, 51.3 per cent of people with disabilities are employed. Yet, only 31 per cent of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians with disabilities are working⁶. Contrary to popular belief, workplace accommodations for people with disabilities are not a financial obstacle for employers. Studies indicate that more than half of workplace accommodations for employees with disabilities cost less than \$500⁷ and often cost nothing at all⁸. As the province enters periods of



⁶ Statistics Canada. (2008). Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006: Analytical Report. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-628-x/89-628-x2007002-eng.htm>

⁷ Job Accommodation Network. (2011). Workplace Accommodations: Low Cost, High Impact. <http://AskJAN.org/media/LowCostHighImpact.doc>

⁸ Government of Manitoba. (2012). Hiring someone with a disability. http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/pwd_work/help.html

Commitment to Action

unprecedented growth, people with disabilities are ideally positioned to respond to increased labour market opportunities.

The Royal Bank of Canada estimates that the national purchasing power of people with disabilities is \$25 billion a year⁹. As accessibility is increased and as more people enter the work force, businesses will have more customers and clients. Increased employment also means more tax revenue and less dependency on social programs and services. As demonstrated in other jurisdictions, accessibility can contribute to the economy through growth in tourism as people seek accessible locations for travel¹⁰.

Social and economic benefits of inclusion are far-reaching. It is important for everyone to understand and appreciate these impacts, as inclusion is essential to the continued prosperity of our province.

⁹ Royal Bank of Canada. (2000). Outlook for People with Disabilities in Current Analysis. http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/pwd_work/help.html

¹⁰ Explore Chicago: The City of Chicago's Official Tourism Site. (2012). Accessible Chicago. http://explorechicago.org/city/en/travel_tools/accessible_chicago.html



The Strategy

The strategy will remove and prevent barriers so that people can take part in opportunities and choices available throughout the province. This includes barriers that are attitudinal, systemic, physical and technological.

The strategy provides a framework to guide Provincial Government planning, policies and actions in the removal and prevention of barriers. As well, this framework will provide guidance to other stakeholders in taking action toward inclusion.

The strategy articulates a clear vision, endorses guiding principles and identifies five strategic directions for moving forward. The goals developed for each strategic direction are measurable and practical. Reaching these goals will advance inclusion, access and meaningful participation in all aspects of society.

What Inclusion Means

Inclusion is essential for creating a dynamic and strong province. Inclusion means having access and choices on an equal basis with others. This includes access to opportunities or events that happen within any community, such as educational, employment, civic, recreational, cultural and political opportunities.

The Vision

Newfoundland and Labrador will be a fully inclusive province where people with disabilities have the same opportunities and choices on an equal basis with others.

Guiding Principles

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to following the principles found in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to guide all aspects of the strategy, including its development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. The convention principles¹¹ are:

- Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices and independence of persons;

¹¹ United Nations. (December 13, 2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

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- Non-discrimination;
- Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- Equality of opportunity;
- Accessibility;
- Equality between men and women;
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities; and,
- Respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.



Strategic Directions and Goals

Ideas and solutions gathered from individuals and organizations throughout the consultation process were used to develop strategic directions and goals for the strategy. These strategic directions and goals provide a framework to support the vision of full inclusion becoming a reality for Newfoundland and Labrador.

There are five strategic directions. They address attitudes, engagement, accessibility, supports and services. Goals are identified for each strategic direction.

Initiatives to support the goals will be developed through the strategy's Action Plans. These initiatives will create change within:

- attitudes (public knowledge as well as knowledge base within private, non-profit and public sectors);
- policies (including procedures, regulations and legislation); and
- services and programs (eligibility, scope, delivery models and accountability).

The Strategy

Strategic Direction #1

Creating a Positive Image of Disability

The way society views and understands disability has a direct impact on how people with disabilities are treated and included. Historically, society has focused on limitations associated with disability and not on what people can do. The strategy seeks to change this by promoting positive attitudes, helping communities understand barriers as experienced by persons with disabilities and promoting the benefits of including people in all aspects of society. It is important that communities understand and accept the shared responsibilities needed to achieve this.

Goals

- Goal 1.1** To promote a positive and respectful image of disability.
- Goal 1.2** To build public understanding of barriers experienced by persons with disabilities.
- Goal 1.3** To increase knowledge within private, public and non-profit sectors about creating barrier-free environments.
- Goal 1.4** To increase knowledge and acceptance of the rights of people with disabilities.

Strategic Direction #2

Moving Forward Together: Nothing About Us Without Us

The motto of the international community of people with disabilities is “Nothing About Us Without Us”. This means it is essential for people to be involved in the decisions which most intimately affect them.

Individuals know instinctively what is best for them. All individuals have the right to express their wishes and to have their wishes recognized. Often, persons with disabilities have had decisions made for them, including where to live, with whom and what happens during each day. Individuals often have not been a part of these decisions because of stereotypes, communication barriers or lack of decision-making supports.

When individuals are supported and/or enabled to identify their own needs and best ways to meet those needs, solutions tend to be more successful. Everyone has the right to make their own decisions and use support if they choose. Recognizing legal capacity is the principle by which a person with a disability may be supported by another person that they have chosen and who understands them well. This is also called supported decision-making.

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Making sure that individuals have the opportunity to identify their own needs also enables self-reliance, self-determination and empowerment for the individual. Guesswork is eliminated, misunderstandings are reduced and decisions are less likely to be impacted by the stereotypes and myths that surround having a disability. When decision-making is supported in a dignified and respectful manner, outcomes are more appropriate and meaningful; one's quality of life increases.

Strong and effective public policy relies upon the experiences and knowledge of people who are most impacted. Engaging community organizations of persons with disabilities in the development of public policy is essential to ensure policies are well-informed and successful.

The concept of “Nothing About Us Without Us” was embedded throughout the consultation process and will continue to guide the Provincial Government. The expertise of people with personal experience will inform and strengthen public policy and program directions.



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Goals

- Goal 2.1** To incorporate the expertise and knowledge of people with personal experiences with disability into Provincial Government policies, programs and services.
- Goal 2.2** To incorporate the expertise and knowledge of people who have personal experiences with disability into the development and evaluation of strategy initiatives.
- Goal 2.3** To support the capacity of community organizations of and for people with disabilities to engage with the Provincial Government on policy directions.
- Goal 2.4** To partner with community organizations to respond to individual and community needs.
- Goal 2.5** To support planning processes at local, community, regional and provincial levels to be inclusive of persons with disabilities.
- Goal 2.6** To inform and improve Provincial Government policy, services and programs through the application of a disability lens.

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Strategic Direction #3

Accessibility for All in the Built Environment

People with disabilities frequently experience limited access to community activities, employment, transportation, housing and education because of inaccessible buildings and facilities.

Universal Design was consistently brought forward during the provincial consultations as a solution for making buildings and places where people live, work and play more accessible.

By following Universal Design principles, physical environments, infrastructures, products and programs are, as much as possible, useable by all people without the need for adapted or specialized design. This means that regardless of a disability, people can use buildings, programs and products on an equal basis with others.

Accessible transportation is essential for people to be able to travel within their own communities and throughout the province. Whether for education, work, health care or leisure, transportation can be the key to participation.

There is an obvious link between having accessible homes, work places, community, recreational and educational facilities and having accessible transportation to get there.

Accessible neighbourhoods are equally important. The concept of visitable housing promotes a design that provides a barrier-

The Strategy

free entrance, wider doorways and an accessible washroom – features that enable friends, neighbours and family members to visit.

Accessible websites and information provided in clear language are also examples of how Universal Design makes information available to the greatest number of people.

Goals

- Goal 3.1** To maximize the accessibility of existing buildings and facilities and ensure accessibility of new buildings and facilities where there is public access.
- Goal 3.2** To increase options for accessible housing within private and public sectors and promote the concept of visitability throughout the province.
- Goal 3.3** To increase accessible and affordable transportation options throughout the province.
- Goal 3.4** To ensure all methods for receiving public input into Provincial Government decisions are fully accessible (including public consultations and surveys).
- Goal 3.5** To incorporate Universal Design principles into policy, procedures and legislation.
- Goal 3.6** To maximize accessible options in Provincial Government information and communication.

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Strategic Direction #4

Strengthening Disability-Related Supports

Disability-related supports are essential to inclusion. They represent a key link to participating in education, employment, recreational and community opportunities, as well as day-to-day activities.

Disability-related supports are all supports that meet the specific disability-related need of an individual. These supports enable people to live independently with dignity and choice.

In a recent provincial survey, 71 per cent of respondents indicated difficulties accessing disability-related supports¹².

Assistive technology is one category of disability-related supports and includes a range of devices, equipment and software. It includes screen readers, magnifying devices, visual alarms, hearing aids and mobility devices such as wheelchairs. Access to this technology can be essential to achieving educational and career goals, accessing information, living in one's own home and being part of the community.

¹²Penton, V.M. (2010). Assistive technology provision: An assessment of services and supports for people with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador. Memorial University of Newfoundland (Canada).

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Personal supports are an essential component to living within the community and participating in all aspects of society.

It is important that physical environments, such as public buildings, are accommodating as well as accessible. This means that people can use the facilities and services on an equal basis with others.



People who do not have access to disability-related supports are more likely to live in poverty and experience social exclusion. Persons with disabilities and their families experience economic disparity from their peers as a direct result of costs associated with disability. These additional costs can be significant.

The Strategy

The community of persons with disabilities has identified a set of principles that are relevant to the effective delivery of disability-related supports. These principles are flexible, comprehensive,

individualized, timely, responsive, portable, universal, consistent and fair. They have also recommended that supports be linked directly to the individual and eligibility be based on need.



Participants also encouraged the Provincial Government to work with the community of persons with disabilities to establish a supported decision-making model to ensure individuals are supported in guiding the decisions that affect their lives.

Goals

- Goal 4.1** To reduce the financial costs associated with having a disability for individuals and/or their families.
- Goal 4.2** To improve access to disability-related supports, including personal supports and assistive technologies.
- Goal 4.3** To incorporate flexibility into programs and services in order to accommodate individuals and their families.
- Goal 4.4** To build knowledge of disability-related supports within communities and throughout the province.

Strategic Direction #5

Delivering Services with Dignity, Fairness and Respect

Services with dignity are made available by increasing choice and control for individuals. New service delivery models developed and demonstrated within community agencies are good examples of how to deliver services in ways that are respectful. These models follow service principles of consumer control, choice, inclusiveness and removal of barriers.

Technology, especially in the areas of information and communication, has contributed to making services fair and respectful. For example, text-reading software enables individuals who have vision or learning disabilities to navigate the web and access information and e-services on an equal basis with others. From environmental control systems to communication aids, technology is supporting independence and inclusion. Access to this technology is important to achieving inclusion, as is ensuring websites and communication systems are compatible with such technology.

Physical and electronic accessibility, knowledgeable staff and barrier-free policies are all important ingredients of this strategic direction.

As the province grows and flourishes with new opportunities, it will be important to incorporate disability issues into social and economic strategies. Inclusion with dignity should be a guiding

The Strategy

principle of new strategies and developments. This will require thought at the planning stage to avoid creating new barriers. The inclusion of gender and diversity considerations within recent oil and gas industry agreements gives evidence to the importance and benefits of early actions.

Goals

- Goal 5.1** To facilitate the public and private sector providing services to persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.
- Goal 5.2** To increase knowledge of disability-related supports and ways to remove barriers amongst service providers.
- Goal 5.3** To deliver timely provision of complete and accurate information about Provincial Government programs and services.
- Goal 5.4** To incorporate inclusion and disability perspectives into existing and future strategies.



What the Provincial Government is Doing Now

The Provincial Government recognizes that barriers continue to exist throughout the province and has already made strides toward their removal. Here are some examples:

Chronic Disease Management Framework: This is a policy framework that outlines a long-term approach for addressing chronic disease prevention and management in Newfoundland and Labrador. The framework document lays the foundation for actions to be developed and implemented over several years. It is guided by core policies that focus on self-management, prevention and awareness, health care delivery, practice guidelines, information systems and research and community action.

Disability Accommodation Policy, Public Service Secretariat:

A new Disability Accommodation Policy was approved by Treasury Board effective January 1, 2012 that supports the

What the Provincial Government is Doing Now

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's commitment to having a diverse and inclusive workforce where employees have equal and fair opportunity to participate, contribute and advance in the workplace. Providing workplace accommodations to employees with disabilities can enable them to participate in the workplace. Workplace accommodations attempt to provide equal opportunities to individuals who may otherwise face barriers in entering, re-entering or maintaining employment.

Early Childhood Learning Strategy: A universal strategy that will include accessible programs for children from birth to six years of age and their families; its focus is on language and literacy development.

Early Learning and Child Care Plan: The Early Learning and Child Care Plan includes an inclusion component that supports full participation of children enrolled in regulated centre-based and family home child care services.



Healthy Aging Policy Framework: The Healthy Aging Policy Framework supports the Provincial Government's vision to have a supportive, age-friendly province where seniors can make a contribution to their communities and, in turn, communities support all residents in living as independently as possible.

What the Provincial Government is Doing Now

Immigration Strategy: Launched in 2007, this strategy has 18 goals and outlines activities and initiatives to achieve them. Goal 11 seeks to ensure that existing government policies and programs do not create barriers for immigrants in the province.

Inclusive Education Initiative: This initiative is currently being phased in within school districts throughout the province and embodies a more collaborative approach to teaching and learning. Within a school community, all members are encouraged to share responsibility for the learning and well-being of all students. The focus is on providing a classroom environment where responsive teaching is the norm and where strategies, materials and resources used are tailored to student profiles. The Service Delivery Model for Students with Exceptionalities supports the Inclusive Education Initiative. This model provides an inclusive framework for program delivery in provincial schools and identifies prescribed, modified and alternate curriculum, accommodations, programs and courses.

Long-Term Care and Community Support Services Strategy: A strategy is currently being developed to strengthen the long-term care and community supports services system.

Office of Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities, Public Service Secretariat: The mandate of the Office of Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities is to increase the number of persons with disabilities employed in the Public Service. To achieve this, the office has a number of programs and services

What the Provincial Government is Doing Now

designed to help persons with disabilities get employment in Provincial Government departments and agencies.

Poverty Reduction Strategy: This strategy guides action designed to reduce poverty in Newfoundland and Labrador. There are over 80 ongoing poverty reduction initiatives underway within Provincial Government departments and agencies. Some examples of initiatives particularly relevant to persons with disabilities include:

- Wage Subsidy for Persons with Disabilities;
- Supports to Employment for Persons with Disabilities;
- School-to-work transition supports for People with Developmental Disabilities;
- Community Partnerships; and,
- Increased earning exemptions for persons with disabilities who receive Income Support.

Provincial Policy Framework for Mental Health and Addictions: This framework was released in October 2005 and guides policy for mental health and addictions in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Provincial Wellness Plan: The Provincial Wellness Plan is focused on several areas including healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco control, injury prevention, mental health promotion, healthy child and youth development and environmental health and is implemented through strengthened partnerships, public awareness, health promotion and evaluation of methods.

What the Provincial Government is Doing Now

Recreation and Sport Strategy:

This strategy is focused on increased participation in recreation and sport throughout the province. A key direction is to “increase the number of citizens who are physically active and who participate in regular recreation and sport activities, especially women and girls and people in under-represented groups; Aboriginal people, senior citizens, low-income persons and people with disabilities”.

Social Housing Plan: The Social Housing Plan addresses the need for more co-ordinated supportive services, providing housing support for persons with complex needs, investing more in social housing infrastructure, extending programs that help with home renovations for accessibility and garnering additional private-sector involvement.



What the Provincial Government is Doing Now

Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI): The Violence Prevention Initiative is a multi-departmental, government-community partnership to find long-term solutions to violence against people at risk in our society, including persons with disabilities.





How the Strategy will Work

The strategy will guide the Provincial Government in its actions to achieve an inclusive province in which Newfoundlanders and Labradorians with disabilities have the same opportunities and benefits as other residents. Implementation of the strategy will be comprehensive and integrated across Provincial Government departments and agencies. The strategy will take a multi-year approach.

Through this strategy, the Provincial Government will lead by example. All Provincial Government departments and agencies will work together and with communities and private businesses to achieve the strategy's vision.

The strategy provides a framework that will guide policies, programs and initiatives throughout the Provincial Government and actions for all communities.

How the Strategy will Work

Action Plans

Action Plans will be developed and implemented. These Action Plans will have specific initiatives for each of the five strategic directions. The initiatives will be designed to remove and prevent barriers; including attitudinal, systemic, physical and technological barriers. Initiatives will apply a variety of approaches, such as using a disability lens to identify barriers within policies and programs, building knowledge of disability-related issues, making structural changes and providing supports that enable inclusion.

Initiatives will be developed within a human rights context as guided by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Initiatives will be measurable and practical.



How the Strategy will Work

Initiatives will be developed for everyone. Input during the consultation process indicated that Aboriginal people, people from diverse cultures, women and people living in rural communities and Labrador can face



additional barriers beyond those related to disability. Care will be taken that initiatives have positive outcomes for people who experience additional barriers. All initiatives will consider these unique perspectives so actions benefit everyone. This involves designing initiatives and monitoring processes with Aboriginal, culturally relevant gender, rural and Labrador perspectives.

The Provincial Government recognizes all levels of government as important partners in the strategy. The Provincial Government would welcome and encourage efforts from municipal, Aboriginal and federal governments in supporting inclusion throughout the province.

Implementation

Implementation of the strategy will be guided by the Ministers' Committee in consultation with the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and the broader community.

How the Strategy will Work

The strategy was built upon the ideas and solutions presented during public consultations. The continued engagement of individuals and community agencies is essential as specific initiatives and key indicators are developed. Collaboration with the community is also important to monitoring and tracking progress to ensure the strategy is effective in removing barriers and having a positive impact on people's lives. The strategy will adhere to the motto "Nothing About Us Without Us" and provide ongoing opportunities for dialogue and collaboration. Through roundtables and focused discussions, the Provincial Government will seek the expertise and experience of people with disabilities to inform specific public policy and initiatives.

The Disability Policy Office will work with all departments and agencies in the development and implementation of actions, as well as with monitoring and reporting on progress within each of the five strategic directions.

Evaluation

It is essential that initiatives implemented through this strategy make a real and positive difference in people's lives. Monitoring and evaluation plans will be developed to show evidence of the degree of social and economic impact of the strategy. Most importantly, the evaluation plan will seek to determine if people experience fewer barriers to their participation in society.

How the Strategy will Work

Community-led research and nationwide census data have provided vital information about the extent and nature of barriers experienced by people with disabilities, as well as general statistics about employment rates, educational levels and income.



Ongoing data gathering and careful analysis will be essential for informing public policy as strategy initiatives are developed and evaluated. A primary source for general statistics has been the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) previously administered by Statistics Canada. This survey has been discontinued. Although PALS is to be replaced by a new Disability Data Strategy, alternative collection approaches and trend tracking processes will be required to produce locally significant data. These will be developed in consultation with the community and departments throughout the Provincial Government. The Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency will play a lead role in developing a plan to identify the data and information that are required to measure and report on impacts from the strategy and progress towards its vision of full inclusion.

The first Action Plan will include the development of key indicators, including baselines to measure progress, performance monitoring and evaluation processes. The

How the Strategy will Work

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will be used in the development of the evaluation framework.

Wherever possible, data collection methods and indicators for other strategies from within the Provincial Government will be designed to include specific information relevant to disability.

Reporting

Regular progress reports will be provided to let people know about actions undertaken through the strategy. In addition, each Action Plan will report on the strategy's progress towards realizing its goals and ultimately the vision of full inclusion.

“Many persons with disabilities are living fulfilling and inclusive lives in the community. What we hope is that the proposed Provincial Strategy will enable such a meaningful life not just for some, but for all persons with disabilities.”

(“Life Without Barriers”, written submission, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities – Newfoundland and Labrador in partnership with organizations of and for individuals with disabilities.)

How the Strategy will Work

Opportunities will be provided for stakeholders to periodically review the vision, strategic directions and goals to ensure on-going relevance and appropriateness.

Through its monitoring and reporting process, the strategy provides a mechanism to contribute to national reporting as required by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



Appendices

Appendix A

How Disability is Defined

The question of how to define disability has been debated for many years. In the 1980s, the World Health Organization's definition separated disability from the environment, explaining that the environment becomes disabling when it is not accessible or does not meet people's needs.

This concept has evolved into a social model of understanding disability.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities does not define disability but rather describes it as "...an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and active participation in society on an equal basis with others."¹³ The convention describes people with disabilities as including people with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

¹³United Nations. (December 13, 2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

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The community of people with disabilities agrees with this social model and also supports the self-identification of disability where people determine for themselves whether they have a disability. As much as possible, initiatives and actions designed to fulfill this strategy will support the social model.

Sometimes it is necessary to define disability for specific purposes of a program or legislation. These definitions will be different from each other depending on what the specific program or legislation provides.



Appendices

Appendix B

Glossary of Terms

1. **American Sign Language (ASL)** is a visual language with unique vocabulary, grammar, syntax and social rules of use. Meaning is conveyed through signs that are composed of specific hand shapes, palm orientation, movement and location of the hands and signals on the face and body. Most people who are Deaf in Newfoundland and Labrador use ASL.
2. **Assistive Technology** is also known as assistive devices, or in the case of computer-related software and devices, it is known as adaptive technology. Assistive technology makes environments more accessible by decreasing barriers. Assistive technology includes a range of devices, equipment and software such as mobility devices like wheelchairs, magnifying devices, visual alarms, hearing aids and speech software.
3. **Built Environment** includes all person-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activity such as buildings and facilities, playgrounds, sidewalks and boardwalks.
4. **Clear Language** refers to a set of principles that focuses on the needs of the reader. It presents information in a logical order using familiar, everyday words and expressions. It avoids jargon and uses a minimum of technical language. Clear language principles cover sentence length, sentence structure and the use of headings, fonts and white space.

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5. **Consumer** is a person who self-identifies as having a disability.
6. **Consumer Control** means that more than half of the people in charge have a disability.
7. **Cross-Disability** means including people with any and all types of disabilities and that the various perspective and needs related to various disabilities are considered.
8. **Disability-Related Supports** are any and all supports that meet disability-related needs and enable people to live independently with dignity and choice.
9. **First-Stop Access** means that anyone who is looking for services is quickly directed to the right person for providing accurate and timely information. An important feature of First-Stop Access is the principle that everyone receives the information they are looking for no matter who they reach first. There are multiple ways to reach a First-Stop Access service, including phone, TTY (teletypewriter), email or in person.
10. **Screen Reader** refers to software that reads out loud what is on the computer monitor. For example, JAWS is a screen reader widely used by people who are blind and Kurzweil is used primarily by people with learning disabilities.
11. **Service Providers** are people or organizations that provide services to other people. This includes Provincial Government employees, some community organizations,

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teachers, health care professionals and recreational program staff and volunteers.

12. **Supported Decision-Making** is when individuals get help with making decisions and legal matters (e.g. opening a bank account or signing a lease agreement) from people who know them well. The level of assistance is dependent on the individual's ability to understand choices and communicate his/her wishes.
13. **Universal Design** is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design. Universal design principles can be applied to any product, environment or communications, such as web pages and education curricula.

Universal Design Principles include:

- a. **Equitable Use:** the design is useful and marketable to people with diverse disabilities.
- b. **Flexibility in Use:** the design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
- c. **Simple and Intuitive Use:** use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills or current concentration level.
- d. **Perceptible Information:** the design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
- e. **Tolerance for Error:** the design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

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- f. Low Physical Effort: the design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.
 - g. Size and Space for Appropriate Use: appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation and use regardless of user's body size, posture or mobility.
14. **Visitability** is when homes are designed with a basic level of accessibility so everyone can come into the home and have access to the washroom. This enables home owners (and tenants) to invite visits from family members, friends and neighbours who use mobility devices.





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