

**Provincial Advisory Council for the
Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities
Annual Report 2016-17**



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Chairperson's Message

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

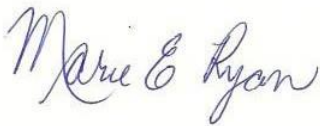
Dear Minister Dempster:

On behalf of the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, I am pleased to submit the Annual Report for 2016-17. This is the third and final annual report for the Activity Plan 2014-17.

With the March 2017 appointment of new members and returning members, the Advisory Council is looking forward to building on the good work of its predecessors. The current Advisory Council will strive for ongoing change and continue reporting on its efforts to strengthen the government's commitment on inclusion of persons with disabilities.

My signature below is indicative of the Board's accountability for the actual results reported within this document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marie E. Ryan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Marie Ryan
Chairperson

Overview

The Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Advisory Council) was established in November 2009. The Advisory Council's role continues to be:

- Advising the Provincial Government on ways to remove and prevent barriers to ensure persons with disabilities can participate in society and access policies, programs and services on an equitable basis with others.
- Securing and strengthening relationships with communities and businesses, to be informed of current issues, innovative ideas, new priorities and best practices to advise the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

The Advisory Council has twelve members who were appointed on March 16, 2017 by the Government of Newfoundland Labrador. The chairperson of the Advisory Council is appointed for a three year term (March 16, 2017 to March 15, 2020) and members are appointed for two-year terms (March 16, 2017 to March 15, 2019). The members are from various regions of the province and bring cross-disability representation, as well as gender, age and urban-rural balance. These members are leaders in inclusion for persons with disabilities and have a wealth of knowledge and related experience. The Advisory Council meets up to four times a year.

Advisory Council members serve in a volunteer capacity and are reimbursed for expenses to attend meetings as per government policy. Costs of the Advisory Council are covered by the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD). The departments of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development and Child, Youth and Family Services were restructured into a new department of Children, Seniors and Social Development on August 17, 2016.

The Disability Policy Office (DPO), located within CSSD, provides secretariat and administrative support to the Advisory Council.

Mandate

The Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities is mandated 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 Advisory Council is mandated to:

- Bring knowledge and understanding of disability-related issues to the Provincial Government.
- Advise the Provincial Government as it develops policies, programs, strategies and recommendations to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- Promote awareness to the Provincial Government of barriers experienced by persons with disabilities.

Values

The Advisory Council supports the following values:

- Access – providing equitable access to the same opportunities, on an equal basis with others.
- Respect – understanding that everyone is different, valuing everyone's contribution and treating everyone with dignity.
- Inclusion - full and effective participation in all aspects of society.
- Choice – having choice on an equal basis as others.
- Self Determination – the right to have full control of one's own life; making informed choices that are free of persuasion and based on one's own personal beliefs, values, interests and goals.
- Privacy – maintaining the confidentiality of personal information that is important and sensitive.

Vision

Newfoundland and Labrador will be a province where persons with disabilities have the same opportunities as persons without disabilities – a province that is accessible and inclusive.

Physical Location

The Advisory Council does not have a physical office or location. The Advisory Council can be contacted through the Disability Policy Office, which is located within the CSSD, 3rd Floor, Confederation Building, West Block, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Representation

The Advisory Council has 12 to 18 volunteer members who are appointed by the Provincial Government. The chair of the Advisory Council is appointed to serve a three-year term and the members are appointed for two-year terms. The Advisory Council meets four times a year (see Appendix A: Terms of Reference and Appendix B: Advisory Council Biographies).

Membership List

Cyril Peach
Paula Gillis
Katarina Roxon
Dennis Gill
Bruce Oldford
Paula Corcoran-Jacobs

Vikas Khaladkar
Nicole Marsh
Patricia Moores
Fraser Piccott
Nancy Reid
Marie Ryan (chair)

Primary Clients

The Advisory Council brings knowledge and understanding of disability-related issues to the Provincial Government and advances the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society. In this capacity, the Advisory 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

Advisory Council members are appointed from the public and do not receive remuneration. Advisory Council members are reimbursed for expenses and travel costs. The travel expenses and costs associated with the work of the Advisory Council are covered by CSSD and are included in its departmental budget.

Shared Commitments

The Advisory Council shares the government commitment for a more inclusive province for persons with disabilities through removing and preventing barriers people encounter and experience. This is reflected in the Inclusion Strategy and its Action Plan. This commitment is aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention). The Convention promotes and protects all rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities, so that individuals have full participation, dignity and respect to live in society on an equal basis with others. The commitment to an inclusive society is expanding to all sectors including private businesses, community groups and other public organizations.

The Advisory Council engages and collaborates with government departments, agencies, boards, businesses and community organizations to ensure full participation of individuals with disabilities in all areas of life: home, work, recreation, education, community, services and programs.

Highlights and Accomplishments

During the 2016-17 fiscal year, the Advisory Council continued its work on enhancing inclusion. The advice, engagement and discussions shone a spotlight on issues important to persons with disabilities. Some highlights and accomplishments include:

- Accessibility in the built environment
 - Provided advice to the English School District on accessibility of the built environment as priority when considering school closures and building new schools
 - Engaged with the Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board on accessibility legislation and continued to inform and support their work

- Access to disability-related supports
 - Discussion with Advanced Education, Skills and Labour (AESL) on improving access for supports in programs and services
 - Advised CSSD on the importance of access to mental health supports access for parents and guardians
 - Dialogued with Health and Community Services (HCS) on equitable access to supports, programs and services; access to counselling services the Deaf community; and medical aid in dying
 - Discussion with Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) on inclusive education policy making, guidelines and improving student access to supports
 - Advised Municipal Affairs and Environment on equitable access in relation to the Hunters and Anglers with Disabilities Program

- Equity in Employment
 - Dialogued with the NL Human Rights Commission on equity in employment and inclusion-based legislation
 - Dialogued with AESL on expanding supported employment to all provincial regions

The Advisory Council received presentations from government officials that related to disability and inclusion, including:

- Assistant Deputy Minister of HCS on the proposed federal legislation for Medical Aid in Dying
- Officials from the Poverty Reduction division on impact of Budget 2016 on poverty reduction initiatives;
- Disability Policy Office on current trends and best practices in inclusion and an overview of the Convention's Optional Protocol and Canada's consultation in relation to their intention to sign it.

The Advisory Council also participated in many events including:

- Community Sector Council - Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon
- Medical Aid in Dying consultations
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities Proclamation
- Human Rights Award event
- Independent Living Award / Government House
- Women Against Violence - Flag Raising Ceremony
- Building Your Disability Confidence sessions
- Federal consultation on "Accessible Canada"
- NL Association for Community Living - 60th Anniversary Conference
- Empower NL - Inclusive Communities Summit
- NL Housing - accessibility consult of a new housing development in Harbour Grace Riverhead
- Teleconference among Advisory Council members to prepare disability-related supports advice to government officials

Report on Performance

The Activity Plan 2014-17 includes two key activities with objectives and measures:

- Advise the Provincial Government on the Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.
- Advise the Provincial Government on issues of importance to persons with disabilities.

These activities are used to accomplish the Advisory Council's activity plan goals. In order for objectives to be achieved, the Advisory Council developed a work plan to identify priority areas.

Priority areas in the 2016-17 work plan included:

- Access to assistive technology;
- Engaging with community and Government to promote accessibility and inclusion;
- Ensuring disability-related supports are needs based, portable, individualized, flexible and responsive;
- Promoting and improving effectiveness of building accessibility legislation; and,
- Equitable access to employment opportunities, including access to relevant supports and Government/community programs.

The work plan is a living document which is regularly updated by the Advisory Council.

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

Activity 1 involves the Advisory Council advising the Provincial Government on implementation of the Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Inclusion Strategy). This activity is reflected in the Activity Plan 2014-2017. The Advisory Council reports on objectives, measures and indicators as identified in Activity Plan 2014-2017.

Objective

By March 31, 2017, the Advisory Council will have advised the Provincial Government on the Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

Measure

Advised the Provincial Government on the Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

Indicators	Results
Reviewed Inclusion Strategy goals, objectives and actions to identify and prioritize actions that may still require implementation.	Created a work plan identifying ongoing priority areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistive technology • Disability-related supports • Buildings accessibility • Engagement with government and community on inclusion • Employment
Identified tools that the Advisory Council requires to address priority issues.	Tools identified to support addressing the priority areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing engagement and communication with government and community on inclusion, accessibility, removal and prevention of barriers and application of disability lens • Annual meetings with Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board and NL Human Rights Commission • Dialogue and presentations with government departments on specific topics • Participation in events and consultations (provincial, federal, community) that are related to inclusion • Provide advice by correspondence, presentations, discussion papers and position statements

Indicators	Results
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on current standards and best practices (by Disability Policy Office) for discussion papers and advice.
<p>Advised the Provincial Government in the development of the Inclusion Strategy Action Plan.</p>	<p>Provided advice related to the five objectives in the action plan:</p> <p>Build a positive image of disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended community events promoting inclusion such as Building your Disability Confidence event. <p>Engage persons with disabilities in decision-making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary discussion on development of inclusion-based legislation • Expanding supported employment to all regions • Including Supported Decision-Making as an accommodation under NL Human Rights Act <p>Achieve accessibility in the built environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advised on amendments and a full review of the Buildings Accessibility Act and regulations • Consideration of accessibility priorities for decisions on school closures and new schools • Advocated for universal design principles <p>Strengthen disability-related supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that access to assistive technology for students with disabilities is flexible, timely, and available lifelong • Promoting strong collaboration among Department, school districts, boards and schools as it relates to inclusive education policy to ensure consistent, continuous implementation. <p>Deliver services with dignity, fairness and respect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring access to mental health supports and services for persons who are deaf

Indicators	Results
	<p>including access to American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and psychologists/counselling professionals who are fluent in ASL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing supports for communicating with healthcare professionals, access to palliative care, early intervention, peer supports and mental health services • Enhancing access to supports, programs and services in community living • Providing supports for individuals with disabilities whose caregivers are aging • Providing transitional planning in community to support youth with disabilities
<p>Provided advice on the implementation and effectiveness of the Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued dialogue on the status of the strategy's action plan with the Minister Responsible

As of March 31, 2017, the Advisory Council had identified priority actions and tools to address issues and provided advice on the Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and its Action Plan.

Activity 2: Issues of Importance to Persons with Disabilities

The Advisory Council engaged the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities and other government officials in discussions and communications on numerous disability-related issues including:

- NL Human Rights Commission director and chair on inclusion-based legislation and employment equity;
- Municipal Affairs and Environment Minister on Hunters and Anglers with Disabilities Program/legislation;
- Advanced Education, Skills and Labour assistant deputy minister on access to supports and services for employment and post-secondary students;
- Education and Early Childhood Development deputy minister on inclusive education policy and disability-related supports for students;
- Health and Community Services officials on the access to supports and services, medical aid in dying.

Objective

By March 31, 2017, the Advisory Council will have advised on issues of importance to persons with disabilities.

Measure

Advised on issues of importance to persons with disabilities.

Indicators	Results
<p>The Advisory Council identified, prioritized and advised on issues of importance to persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>Issues that were identified, prioritized and advised on include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to mental health supports for parents/guardians and the Deaf community • Access to assistive technology for students • Buildings accessibility • Support communication between individuals and professionals/front line service providers • Equitable access to programs and services • Impact of Budget 2016 initiatives on persons with disabilities • Inclusion-based legislation process and development • Individualized support funding model • Status of government’s supported decision-making commitment • Medical aid in dying • Supports to community living • Supported employment • Equity in employment <p>Council also flagged for future discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment equity (impact of Gender Equity and Diversity Plans) • Inclusive education (required listening component in public exam).
<p>Provided correspondence from the Chair of the Advisory Council to the Minister</p>	<p>The Advisory Council provided written advice to the Minister Responsible on:</p>

Indicators	Results
<p>Responsible and other Provincial Government officials on time sensitive, emergency, individual and/or systemic issues of importance to persons with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Canada signing the Optional Protocol (Convention) • Input on Children and Youth Care Protection Act review highlighting mental health supports and disability-related supports <p>The Advisory Council provided written advice to other Provincial Government departments and agencies including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSSD on equitable access of mental health supports and services for parents/guardians to prevent stigma and review mandate to ensure well-being of children and their families • HCS on access to counselling services in ASL to Deaf community • Child Youth Advocate on the inclusion of children on waitlists for diagnosis of autism and importance of early intervention • English School District on accessibility priorities when considering school closures and building new schools

In 2016-17, the Minister Responsible and government representatives were advised by the Advisory Council on disability-related supports, accessibility, access to supports and services, education and employment.

Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

The past year has been rich with dialogue and advice-giving related to the inclusion of persons with disabilities. The opportunities ahead for strengthening government’s commitment to inclusion include the individualized support funding model and inclusion-based legislation.

The Advisory Council will embrace these opportunities and engage with government and community to move forward in inclusion for all.

Appendix A: 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 Provincial Government as it develops policies, programs, strategies and recommendations to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities
- Promotes awareness to the Provincial Government of barriers experienced by persons with disabilities and how to remove and prevent them.

Membership and Structure

The Advisory Council is comprised of 12 to 18 members appointed by the Provincial Government. The chair of the Advisory Council is appointed to serve a three year term. Advisory Council members are appointed for two years.

Advisory Council members serve in a volunteer capacity and do not receive remuneration other than reimbursement for expenses to attend meetings.

The Disability Policy Office provides secretariat and administrative support to the Advisory Council.

Application Process

Individuals who have a broad knowledge and understanding of disability-related barriers and issues experienced by people with disabilities in this province, interested in serving on the Advisory Council complete an application form for agencies, boards and commissions, accessed from the Public Service Commission website.

Consideration is given to cross-disability, regional, urban-rural representation and gender balance. Applications are accepted in alternate formats.

Steps in applying online:

1. Go to the [Public Service Commission website](#)
2. In the left menu bar, click on [Apply Online](#), which directly opens to the online form page.
3. Fill out the form and apply to any agencies, boards and commissions that interest you.

Please contact Public Service Commission or Disability Policy Office for alternate format of form.

Accountability

The Advisory Council reports to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Under the Transparency and Accountability Act, the Advisory Council is a Category 3 Public Body and therefore must submit an annual report to be tabled in the House of Assembly. In addition, it must prepare and submit a three year activity report.

Appendix B: Advisory Council Biographies

Paula Corcoran-Jacobs

Paula is the Provincial Executive Director of Consumers' Health Awareness Network Newfoundland and Labrador (CHANNAL). Paula brings both personal and professional experiences in mental health, involved in the Understanding Changes Everything campaign. Paula shares her own amazing story, her fairy tale and powerful recovery journey. Paula is involved with the Mental Health Commission of Canada, the Department of Health and Community Services' Recovery Project and Bell's National Mental Health Advisory Committee.

Dennis Gill

Dennis is a retired high school teacher and administrator who has a son who has disabilities. He is president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living since 2011, participating in meetings of the Canadian Association for Community Living throughout the country. He received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for volunteer work in Pilley's Island, and dedication to various committees and associations throughout Newfoundland and Labrador to help better the lives of people with disabilities. Dennis is a strong advocate for inclusive communities, where everyone belongs and everyone has something to contribute.

Paula Gillis

Paula has a lifelong connection for inclusion personally and professionally. She has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Bay St. George Community Employment Corporation for 30 years, ten of which she served as chairperson. Throughout her career and community involvement, Paula promotes the philosophy of inclusion and the importance of disability-related supports for students in school and post-secondary education. She is an accessibility services coordinator at the College of the North Atlantic and a member of the Association for Community Living.

Vikas Khaladkar

Vikas immigrated to Canada in 1962, moving to NL in 2007 to work as a Crown Attorney with Special Prosecutions. Vikas, as Chair of the project management team for the building of the First Nations University of Canada in Regina, Saskatchewan brings professional experiences, an understanding of accessibility and the built environment. Vikas also shares a personal connection within the Deaf community which he feels has broadened his worldview and will be an asset for his work with the Advisory Council.

Nicole Marsh

Nicole is Deaf and proud of it; she runs a successful social media consulting business in Newfoundland and Labrador, and is an active member of numerous deaf advocacy

groups including the Deaf Wireless Canada Committee (DWCC) and the Newfoundland and Labrador Association for the Deaf (NLAD). She studied sociology at Gallaudet, the only Deaf university in the world and has travelled Canada to advocate for Deaf rights. Recently she presented on behalf of the DWCC at a Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) hearing regarding Deaf friendly wireless service plans. She also participated in two CRTC hearings for 9-1-1 accessibility and a review of the Wireless Code. Nicole is also involved with Inclusion NL, a provincial organization that promotes accessible workplaces throughout the province.

Patricia Moores

Patti has over 25 years' experience working as an occupational therapist with people of all ages and has held various positions in health care. She has served as a member of the Board of Directors for Labrador West Association for Community Living and Labrador West Employment Corporation and has volunteered on many professional and community initiatives. Patti is passionate about creating opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate as active members of their communities and is particularly interested in inclusion as it relates to the built environment.

Bruce Oldford

Bruce, a retired superintendent of Regional Operations with Newfoundland Power Inc., has been a Safety Trainer for many years. Bruce maintains a keen interest in worker safety and supports efforts to ensure injured workers and individuals with disabilities have opportunities for rewarding careers and productive lives. Bruce has a long history modifying his own work and personal life environment to remove barriers as the result of a chronic auto-immune disease and uses this learning to support others and advance inclusion in his community. Bruce lives in Grand Falls-Windsor.

Cyril Peach

Cyril is a retired teacher who lives in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and is currently working part-time for 5 Wing Goose Bay teaching English as a Second Language. He is a member on the Board of Directors of the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities and founder/president of the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Branch of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association. Cyril hopes his experience with various organizations that focus on inclusion and accessibility will be an asset to the Advisory Council.

Fraser Piccott

Fraser is retired and a Canadian Armed Forces veteran who has professional experiences in business and community in supporting and advancing the lives of individuals who have intellectual disabilities. Fraser brings vast experiences from work with numerous associations and boards including St. John's Board of Trade, NL Road Builders Association, Eastern Residential Support Board, Canadian Association for Community Living, NL Association for Community Living and Vera Perlin Society. Fraser currently sits as vice-chairperson of Avalon Employment Inc.

Nancy Reid

Nancy has personal lived experience with disability and is a parent of a young adult who has multiple disabilities. She has a passion for advocacy and has worked in various related roles. Today, Nancy uses her professional and personal experience in her work with the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities - Newfoundland and Labrador.

Katarina Roxon

Katarina is a gold medalist of Rio Paralympic Games. She is active in War Amps Canada, Canadian Paralympic Team, Canadian Para Swim Team and Swimming Newfoundland and Labrador-Swimmer with a Disability. Katarina promotes athletes with disabilities through speaking engagements in schools and other organizations.

Marie Ryan, chairperson

Marie, partner with Goss Gilroy Inc., is a long-time advocate of social justice and inclusion. After acquiring her disability, she immersed herself in working with organizations of and for persons with disabilities locally, regionally, provincially and nationally, including eight years as Chairperson of the Council of Canadians with Disabilities.