

**Provincial Advisory Council for the
Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities
Annual Report 2019-20**



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- **Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines** (Canadian National Institute for the Blind). Italics or upper-case letters have not been used for the titles of acts, titles, subtitles or for emphasis. Bold fonts of medium heaviness are used instead.
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Chairperson's Message

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

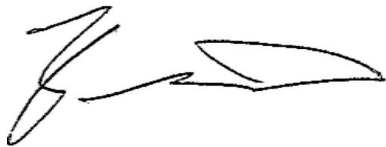
Dear Hon. Minister Warr:

On behalf of the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, I am pleased to submit our Annual Report 2019-2020.

This report covers the period April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020, and compares actual results to those anticipated in the third and final year of the Council's Activity Plan 2017-20. The Council would like to acknowledge the outgoing chairperson and members for their work and time to advise the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities (Minster Responsible) on important issues related to persons with disabilities. The newly appointed Council will continue its mandate and strengthen commitment for an inclusive society in our province, including the development of the provincial accessibility legislation.

The Council is a Category III entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. As chairperson, my signature below is on behalf of the Council and indicative of the Council's accountability for the actual results reported herein.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fraser Piccott', written in a cursive style.

Fraser Piccott

Chairperson

Overview

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

- Advise 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.
- Secure and strengthen 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 Council is currently comprised of 13 members including the chairperson. Members are appointed for two or three-year terms and represent various regions of the province, gender, age and urban-rural balance. Members have diverse backgrounds, cultures and perspectives, bringing a wealth of knowledge and cross-disability experience. The Council meets three to four times a year; however, the Council met only once this year as a result of turn over in membership and COVID-19 pandemic public health measures. Please refer to the Council's webpage for more information (www.gov.nl.ca/cssd/disabilities/advisory-council).

Costs of the Advisory Council are covered by the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD). The Disability Policy Office (DPO) of CSSD provides secretariat and administrative support to the Council.

The Council is mandated to advise and inform the Provincial Government, through the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities, on matters concerning persons with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Specifically, through the Minister Responsible, the 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; and
- Promote awareness to the Provincial Government of barriers experienced by persons with disabilities.

The 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.

The Council’s vision is that 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 Council can be contacted through the DPO, which is located within CSSD, 3rd Floor, Confederation Building, West Block, St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Representation

The Council can have between 12 to 18 volunteer members (currently there are 13 members) who are appointed through the merit based process with the Independent

Appointment Commission. The Council meets three to four times a year (see Appendix A: Terms of Reference and Appendix B: Council Biographies).

Membership List

Fraser Piccott (chair)

Paula Corcoran-Jacobs

Pauline Duffy

Patricia Lorraine Dwyer

Erika Breen Hearn

Bruce Oldford

Kimberley Maich

Wendy Monk

Nancy Reid

Jennifer Rimmer

Katarina Roxon

Debbie Ryan

Rose Wilson

Primary Clients

The 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 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 serve in a volunteer capacity and are reimbursed for expenses to attend meetings as per Provincial Government policy. The travel expenses and costs associated with the work of the Council are covered by CSSD and are included in the CSSD departmental budget.

Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2019-20

Area of Expenditures	Amount
Travel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flights, hotels, mileage, per diems, incidentals, taxi, disability-related supports 	\$3,391.94
Purchased Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venue rental and catering • Reservationless conference line • Disability-related supports (real time captioning, sign language interpreters, audio support) 	\$3,954.38
Total	\$7,346.32*

***Note: During 2019-20 there was only one in-person meeting. As a result, travel costs in 2019-20 were lower than previous years.**

Highlights and Partnerships

In 2019-20, the Council provided advice to the Provincial Government on inclusion of persons with disabilities, including: inclusive education; disability-related supports; mental health; inclusive employment; and Supported Decision-Making. This advice strengthened government’s understanding of the requirements and gaps that need to be addressed in creating an inclusive province for everyone.

A primary focus in 2019-20 was providing input on the development of accessibility legislation. Following the completion of the public engagement process, DPO partnered with the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities Newfoundland and Labrador to develop a report on the results of the engagement process. The Council reviewed the report, providing further feedback and insight. A **What We Heard** report was released in December 2019.

Responding to a finding in the **What We Heard** document, the Council provided preliminary input on draft information sheets designed using plain language to be used to support future understanding of the legislation: its scope, purpose and impact, as well as understanding how the new legislation will interact with existing provincial and federal legislation.

In April 2019, the Provincial Government released the **Autism Action Plan 2019-22**. The Plan aligns with the overarching principles contained within the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (the UN Convention). It is part of the province's vision for an inclusive province. The DPO provided an overview of the **Autism Action Plan** to the Council (DPO has representation on the the Autism Action Plan Council). Council will provide ongoing feedback when required.

The commitment to enhance inclusion in the province is shared among all levels of government, the Council, communities and businesses. The Council continues to engage, discuss and provide advice to the Provincial Government. This commitment also adheres to the principles and spirit of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; a vision of inclusion for everyone in all aspects of daily living including access to disability-related supports, the built environment and universal design, transportation, mental health, community, healthcare, education and employment.

Report on Performance

The Activity Plan 2017-20 includes four key activities with objectives and indicators for three fiscal years (2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20):

- Issues Critical to the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

- Advice and Feedback on the Action Plan 2015-18
- Accessibility Legislation
- Individualized Funding

These four activities are used to accomplish the Council's activity plan goals. In order for indicators to be achieved, the Council developed a work plan to identify priority areas. Priority areas in the 2017-20 work plan are:

- Accessibility of the built environment
- Accessible elections
- Individualized Funding
- Accessibility legislation
- Inclusive education
- Inclusive employment
- Medical assistance in Dying (MAiD)
- Mental health
- Supported decision-making
- Text 911
- Universal Design

Activity 1: Issues Critical to the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

The Council’s main role is to advise the Provincial Government through the Minister Responsible on issues related to persons with disabilities. Efforts continued to strengthen government’s commitment to enhance inclusion for persons with disabilities in the province.

Objective:

By March 31, 2020, the Council provided advice on issues critical to the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Indicators	Results
Identified, prioritized and advised on issues critical to the inclusion of persons with disabilities.	Identified and prioritized primary focus to advise on the development of new provincial accessibility legislation. Issues included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualized funding • Supported decision-making and legal capacity • Inclusive education • Ways to engage with communities to promote inclusion and accessibility • Medical assistance in dying • Home support • Mental health • Supportive living and housing • Inclusive and supportive employment
Provided advice via correspondence, position statements, advice papers and	Engaged in dialogue and provided insight on issues critical to the inclusion of persons with disabilities including:

Indicators	Results
<p>presentations to the Minister Responsible and other Provincial Government officials on systemic issues critical to the inclusion of persons with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility legislation development – What We Heard report and information documents to explain and provide clarity around accessibility issues. • Autism Action Plan – the importance of having a cross-disability perspective. • Met with the Minister Responsible to share the Council's advice.

Summary:

As of March 31, 2020, the Council continued to identify and provide advice to the Minister Responsible and Provincial Government officials on issues critical to persons with disabilities.

Activity 2: Advice and Feedback on the Action Plan 2015-2018

[Access. Equality. Inclusion](#) is a broad policy framework to further government’s commitment to enhance inclusion for persons with disabilities in the province. This framework was created in 2012 and its [Action Plan for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities](#) was launched in June 2015. We are seeing results that show greater inclusion and accessibility in our communities. The strength of the Action Plan came from our collaborative approach in its creation: the advice and feedback from the Council, integrating the knowledge and experience of persons with disabilities; and the work with community experts, businesses, municipalities and departments and agencies throughout government.

Objective:

By March 31, 2020, the Council advised on the action plan and provided feedback on its evaluation report.

Indicators	Results
Provided feedback on the action plan's final evaluation report.	Numerous community organizations presented expert work to advance inclusion and accessibility throughout the province, as well as removing and preventing barriers, which included attitudinal, systemic, physical and technological barriers. The Council provided feedback on the final highlights/evaluation report.

Summary:

As of March 31, 2020, the Council advised on the action plan and provided feedback on evaluation.

Activity 3: Accessibility Legislation

The Minister Responsible's mandate letter included working with advocacy groups and community stakeholders to promote a more inclusive province. There is also a specific reference to lead a review of existing provincial legislation and regulations with the goal of enacting new inclusion-based legislation. It was recommended by the Council that accessibility legislation is a preferred term to more accurately reflect a strength-based focus. Aligned with the feedback from community consultations, the Council advised government to delay the implementation of legislation so that further work with community could take place. The Council provided input on the development of

information sheets to support knowledge and understanding on the legislation and continued to advise and share expertise on further development of the legislation.

Objective:

By March 31, 2020, the Council advised on the review of legislation and the development of new accessibility legislation.

Indicators	Results
<p>Provided input on the review of existing provincial legislation and input on the preliminary stages of developing new Accessibility Legislation.</p>	<p>Provided input on components related to accessibility, readability (plain language) and content in the public consultation, What We Heard report such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format and layout of the document . • Clear concise content with plain language. • Inclusion of ‘what we learned’ section to explain the limitations of engagement on rural perspective and shared responsibility. <p>Identified components related to accessibility, readability (plain language) and content for the accessibility legislation information sheets including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure clear and concise layout. • Use of plain language and positive language. • Recommend information sheets re: purpose of the accessibility legislation and difference between the proposed

Indicators	Results
	<p>Accessibility Act and other legislations and how they complement each other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide reference to the UN Convention and Provincial Government commitment. • Include information about authority and process, i.e., who has the authority to change legislation, who enforces it. • Provide examples of the difference between legislation and standards • Provide an introduction on how accessibility legislation will work and how it will interact with existing legislation, i.e., Buildings Accessibility Act. • Provide clarification that it will not replace existing provincial acts. <p>Recommended the What We Heard report and information sheets about the accessibility legislation be available in alternate formats, distributed to stakeholders (i.e., Network of Disability Organizations) on government’s social media, and include American Sign Language videos of the documents on the Provincial Government website.</p>

Indicators	Results
<p>Identified and advised on the comprehensive consultation process for new accessibility legislation.</p>	<p>This was completed in 2018-19. The province-wide consultation happened in January 2019 and the What We Heard report was developed and posted online on the engageNL website (https://www.engagenl.ca/engagement-initiatives/accessibility-legislation).</p> <p>Advised to delay the implementation of the accessibility legislation after a review of information gathered during the consultations and symposium workshop.</p>

Summary:

As of March 31, 2020, the Council advised on the review of legislations and the development of new accessibility legislation.

Activity 4: Individualized Funding

The Council guided and advised on the progress of developing and implementing an individualized funding (IF) model. This is a self-managed model of care that provides a single point of access and supports the creation of individualized support plans. This is a Government commitment to advance support for better services. IF is a person-centered model that supports the UN Convention by providing individuals with choice and control over their supports and services, promoting the rights of all individuals to live in community, accessing a range of supports, which are reasonable, necessary and promote community inclusion.

Objective:

By March 31, 2020, the Council advised on the development and implementation of an individualized funding model for government programs and services.

Indicators	Results
Advised on the development of a new IF Model.	Council's advice on the development of IF included continual updates on the progress of IF.
Provided feedback on the progress of IF.	Due to priority work during COVID-19 and a change in Council members, this is deferred to next fiscal year.

Summary:

As of March 31, 2020, the Council advised on the development and implementation of an individualized funding model for government programs and services.

Opportunities and Challenges

The commitment and work to enhance a more inclusive province for persons with disabilities continues in the next year and going forward. The Council continues to advise and provide its shared insight to the Provincial Government, paving the way for opportunities to improve accessibility for all Newfoundlander and Labradorians.

Opportunities

- Advising on a made in NL approach to accessibility legislation that will best meet the needs of Newfoundland and Labrador citizens;
- Providing ongoing advice on the progress of Individualized Funding;

- Sharing innovative approaches on accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities with government, stakeholders and businesses during and after COVID-19 public health policies and citizens' experiences;
- Continuing to build and maintain relationships with government and stakeholders to strengthen the common goal of a fully inclusive province; and
- Building on the government and community relationships created during the COVID-19 pandemic with the network of organizations of and for persons with disabilities to integrate lessons learned in creating inclusive social policy.

Challenges

- Addressing social isolation and economic impacts of COVID-19;
- Addressing the presence of ableism and discriminatory attitudes that still exist in our communities.

Appendix A: Terms of Reference

Mandate

The Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities advises and informs the Provincial Government through 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 the Provincial Government through the Minister Responsible;
- Advises Provincial Government through the Minister Responsible as it develops policies, programs, strategies and recommendations to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities;
- Promotes awareness to the Provincial Government through the Minister Responsible of barriers experienced by persons with disabilities and how to remove and prevent them.

Membership and Structure

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

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 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 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 (<https://www.iacnl.ca/>).
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 are of interest.

Please contact Public Service Commission for alternate format of form.

Accountability

The Council reports to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, the 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 plan.

Appendix B: Council Biographies

Fraser Piccott works for the Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living; Avalon Region, as both the Solutions Lab Project Coordinator and Development Coordinator. He is a retired Canadian Armed Forces veteran who has professional experience in business and community in supporting and advancing the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Fraser brings vast experiences from work with numerous associations and boards, including: founding Chairperson of the Eastern Residential Support Board, Vice-President of the Canadian Association for Community Living, Past President of the NL Association for Community Living, Past President of the Vera Perlin Society as well as council member of the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities since March 2017. Fraser is currently a board member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation and the Bowring Park Foundation.

Paula Corcoran-Jacobs is the 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 recovery journey in hopes of inspiring hope and affecting change. Paula is involved with the Mental Health Commission of Canada, the Department of Health and Community Services' Recovery Project and Workplace NL.

Pauline Duffy has personal lived experience with disability and has vast professional and volunteer experience with accessibility and inclusion. She was a board member with Epilepsy NL for over 20 years, as well as a treasurer and a tutor with the Laubach Literacy Association for over five years. Pauline is currently an active Rotarian and lives in Stephenville.

Patricia Lorraine Dwyer has personal experience fostering and supporting children with disabilities. Her longtime volunteering in her community includes the Royal Canadian Legion, the Lions Club, the Girl Guides and the Army Cadets and, formerly, the adaptive ski program at Marble Mountain. She has received several awards for her work in the community and provincially. Patricia lives with her husband, Fraser, in Steady Brook and has two grown children.

Erika Breen Hearn lives in Gander with her husband and two small children. Erika has professional experience in law and lived experience in accessibility. She also has a background of advocacy and volunteer work particularly with the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Newfoundland and Labrador.

Kimberly Maich has professional experience and lived experience with disabilities and inclusion. She is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University and works in the field of inclusive education, researching, writing, and teaching on autism spectrum disorders in inclusive classrooms. She has studied, lived, and worked across Canada from Vancouver to St. Anthony. Kimberly has three grown children with disabilities and lives in a four-generation family outside of St. John's.

Wendy Monk has vast professional experience in education in various roles including teacher, Guidance Counsellor and Adult Basic Education instructor. She is an Accessibility Services Coordinator with College of the North Atlantic. Wendy is a parent to two extraordinary children who are hard of hearing.

Bruce Oldford has lived experience with removing barriers in the workplace, in the community and in his personal life. He has passion in finding adaptive ways and solutions to daily barriers in the environment experienced by persons with disabilities

and sharing his learnings with others to strengthen inclusion in his community. Bruce lives in Central Newfoundland.

Nancy Reid 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.

Jennifer Rimmer is a proud user of American Sign Language (ASL) as her primary language. She is committed to Deaf activism and has had lifelong connections with Deaf and women's organizations across Newfoundland and Labrador as well as Canada. Jennifer is committed to Deaf activism as a volunteer, advocate and outreach consultant. She works with the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of the Deaf as a Family Communication Program ASL consultant and has assisted with and co-lead wellness sessions with NLAD Health and Wellness. She is a recipient of 2014 Cecilia Carroll Award for Independent living and has a long-term and extraordinary personal commitment to full inclusion of people with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador, locally and nationally. Jennifer is a proud Memorial University of Newfoundland alumnus with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology/Anthropology and Women Studies. She is also a member of Newfoundland and Labrador Deaf Choir and has worked with Canada Video Relay Service as Community Outreach Specialist.

Katarina Roxon is a recipient of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and is a 2016 Paralympic Gold Medalist. She lives and trains in Kippens-Stephenville, and has successfully represented Canada in major world swimming championships and Paralympic Games for 15 years.

Debbie Ryan has vast lived and professional experience with vision loss and is a strong advocate for persons with disabilities. She has been very active with CNIB, promoting awareness, eye health, self-advocacy, and removing barriers. She is currently a member of the City of St John's Inclusion Advisory Committee and Marine Atlantic's Inclusion Advisory Committee, and works with businesses on the best practices of diversity and accessibility. She is a past Board Member of the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities Newfoundland and Labrador and past president of the International Association of Business Communicators Newfoundland and Labrador (IABCNL). In 2019, Debbie was recognized by IABCNL as the Communications Professional of the Year for her work in inclusion and the prevention of vision loss.

Rose Anna Wilson is a Military veteran who served for 23 years, and has lived experiences with disabilities, mental health and issues related to seniors. She actively volunteers in her community as an Area Director of the Northern Peninsula for the Newfoundland and Labrador 50+ Federation, is a peer supporter for Seniors NL, secretary to local Royal Canadian Legion, and a current member on the Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board. Rose is originally from Buchans Junction and currently lives in Deer Lake.