

**NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ACTIVITY PLAN**

2011-14

COMMITTEE MESSAGE

I am pleased to submit the Activity Plan for the Youth Advisory Committee covering the three-year period April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2014. The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) was established in June 2001. Its main purpose is to be a strong voice for the youth in Newfoundland and Labrador and to be an avenue through which concerns are presented to the Provincial Government. Additionally, the YAC is frequently consulted by Provincial Government departments on programs and policies that are relevant to youth.

Each year the YAC highlights its priorities, determines the degree to which these priorities are met through Provincial Government programs and services, devotes time to obtaining information, and meets with groups and formulates recommendations which are annually presented to the responsible Minister, to other appropriate Provincial Government departments, to the legislature and in the Annual Report, to the general public.

Through regular meetings, consultations, guest speakers and working groups, the YAC sets its priorities and thus develops its activity plan. This plan is the responsibility of the committee members, YAC mentors and the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment staff person(s) assigned this duty.

In developing this plan, the YAC has considered the strategic directions of the Minister of Human Resources, Employment and Labour and determined that it can contribute to the Minister's strategic direction on Youth Engagement (see Appendix for more information).

The Committee has elected not to develop a mission as it is already described in our mandate and objective. The Council also carefully considered adopting the mission of the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment but concluded that the mission is not relevant to the specific work of the Committee.

The YAC is considered a category III entity in compliance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act (2004)* and is accountable for the preparation of this plan and the achievement of its objectives.

Recommendations are developed by the YAC and presented in an annual report to the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment. The Department has developed a process to ensure recommendations are known, actions are taken and feedback from each recommendation is provided by all relevant departments. YAC members and mentors are volunteers who give freely of their time and energy to promote the profile of the youth of our province. This diverse group is a dedicated and committed advocacy group. Their structure works remarkably well and all duties are completed in a timely fashion. The YAC appreciates the recognition it is given and the support that is provided by the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment.

Erika B. Beer

Committee Member

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1.0 OVERVIEW

The YAC was established in June 2001 to serve as a forum for the youth of the province to voice their views and concerns. It was intended to increase youth involvement in the Provincial Government's decision-making process. A key role for the YAC is to advise Provincial Government departments responsible for youth-related programs and policies.

Currently, the sponsoring department, Human Resources, Labour and Employment, is responsible for informing other relevant departments and for seeking their input and reactions to YAC recommendations and for encouraging departments to consult the YAC on youth-related policies.

The YAC is comprised of 15 youth members ages 15-29 and four adult mentors over the age of 29. All members and mentors are appointed by the Minister in consultation with staff responsible for committee operations. A number of selection criterion are used such as gender, regional location, ethnic representation and education levels.

Responsibilities of Youth Members:

1. Attend all meetings (where possible);
2. Prepare for issues to be discussed;
3. Serve as a member of a sub-committee;
4. Participate as an equal member;
5. A member leaving the province for more than six months per year must resign their position; and,
6. A one-time leave of absence may be granted for up to six months by the Minister.

Responsibilities of Mentors:

1. Attend all meetings (where possible);
2. Prepare for issues to be discussed;
3. Serve as a member of a sub-committee; and,
4. Advise and direct the discussions and recommendations of the YAC.

The finances of the YAC are administered by the Department and determined each year by the Department's budgetary process. YAC expenditures are carefully monitored by the staff responsible for the YAC and by the Finance Division of the Department. Expenditures include costs for travel, meals, accommodations and related expenses for members to attend meetings. All spending adheres to the Provincial Government's financial guidelines. Departmental staff provides administrative support that facilitates the YAC's activities.

Members and mentors volunteer their time and efforts. Further details can be made available by contacting the Manager of Career, Employment and Youth Services at (709) 729-6890.

2.0 MANDATE

The mandate of the Youth Advisory Committee is two-fold:

- Provide a forum for the open discussion of key issues affecting the young people of Newfoundland and Labrador; and,
- Advise the Minister on the Provincial Government's youth-related programs and policies.

The YAC, through meetings, consultations, research and guest speakers, is fulfilling its mandate and is respected as a voice for the youth of Newfoundland and Labrador.

3.0 VALUES

The YAC developed its own set of values and behavioral statements in its initial meetings. The key values are (1) respect for all and (2) equal opportunity. From the beginning, based on these values, the YAC determined that its organizational structure would be flat and that the chairing of meetings, recording, preparation, summary and writing reports should be the responsibility and right of each member. The group collectively decides on who will handle each duty. It was also agreed that the YAC did not represent any specific group or privileged individuals but would be considerate of and respectful of all youth regardless of "status". YAC members are confident, dependable and competent and treat each other and any other guest or group consulted with respect.

Respect:

- Each person is given equal opportunity to voice his/her opinion in a supportive environment;
- Each person resolves issues in a timely manner;
- Each person ensures key stakeholders are asked for their opinions;
- Each person considers the geographic differences of the region;
- Each person challenges decisions he or she doesn't agree with in an appropriate manner;
- Each person evaluates how his or her behaviour impacts others;
- Each person provides positive feedback and feedback that supports improvement; and,
- Each person provides and receives feedback in an appropriate manner.

Equal Opportunity:

- Each person recognizes the right of all youth to avail equitably of the programs and services available from the Provincial Government and partnering programs.

4.0 PRIMARY CLIENTS

The YAC advises the Provincial Government on the issues facing the youth of Newfoundland and Labrador. In this capacity, the Provincial Government is the primary client, with our youth and youth-serving agencies being the primary stakeholders.

5.0 VISION

The vision of the YAC is that all youth in the province enjoy the highest level of safety and security, have a high standard of education and health, and are engaged in the economic and social life of the province.

6.0 ACTIVITIES

Activity: Provision of Advice to the Provincial Government

The Youth Advisory Committee functions as a flat structure with no executive responsibilities and works closely with Provincial Government departments and agencies along with non-governmental organizations that have a vested interest in youth issues. The YAC was created to provide a forum for the “open discussion of key issues affecting the young people of Newfoundland and Labrador”, and to advise the department responsible for youth services on the Provincial Government’s youth-related policies and programs. The objective identified in this plan contributes to the strategic directions identified by the Minister as being relevant to the YAC – specifically Youth Engagement.

The following objective applies to the 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 fiscal years and will be reported on in the respective annual reports.

Objective: By March 31, 2012 the YAC will have continued to work with non-governmental organizations, Provincial Government departments and agencies with a vested interest in youth issues and provide recommendations to the Provincial Government

Measure 1: Continued to work with those with a vested interest in youth issues

Indicator: Held meetings with groups that have a vested interest in youth issues

Measure 2: Provided recommendations on issues facing youth to the Provincial Government

Indicator: Tabled an annual report with recommendations

7.0 APPENDIX

Strategic directions are the articulation of the desired physical, social or economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one Provincial Government entity. The *Transparency and Accountability Act* requires departments and public bodies to take into account these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans.

The strategic directions relevant to the entities reporting to the Minister responsible for the Youth Advisory Committee were considered and those relevant to the Youth Advisory Committee are identified below. Each strategic direction is composed of a number of focus areas, indicated in the table provided. These focus areas do not reflect all areas of the Council's activities, as the Council's mandate crosses all Provincial Government departments and agencies.

1. Youth Engagement

Outcome Statement: Youth have opportunities to contribute and participate in society

This outcome supports a policy direction of the Provincial Government and requires systemic intervention in the areas of:

Strategic Direction Component (Focus Area)
• Leadership development
• Policy development and research
• Community participation
• Engagement
• Partnerships
• Attraction and Retention