

**NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR  
YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**ACTIVITY PLAN**

**FISCAL YEAR  
2008/2011**

## COMMITTEE MESSAGE

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 government. Additionally, the YAC is frequently consulted by government departments on pertinent youth programs and policies.

Each year the YAC: highlights its priorities; determines the degree to which these priorities are met through 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 government departments, to the legislature and to the public.

Through regular meetings held six times a year, through ongoing consultations, guest speakers and working groups, the YAC sets its priorities and thus develops its activity plan. This plan is the responsibility of the 15 committee members, YAC mentors and the HRLE 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 can contribute to the Minister's strategic direction on Youth (see Appendix for more information), in light of YAC's mandate.

The YAC is considered a category 3 entity in compliance with the Transparency and Accountability Act and is accountable for the preparations for this plan and the achievement of its objectives.

Decisions of meetings are regularly recorded and an annual report is presented to officials as well as to the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment (HRLE). HRLE 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 freely give of their 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 HRLE.



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Erika Breen  
Committee Member

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# 1.0 OVERVIEW

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

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

The YAC is comprised of 15 youth members aged 15-29 and 4 adult mentors over the age of 29. All members and mentors are appointed by the Minister of HRLE in consultation with staff responsible for committee operations. The selection criteria include gender, regional location, ethnic representation, educational levels and other areas.

#### **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 (6) months per year must resign their position; and
6. a one-time leave of absence may be granted for up to six (6) 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;
4. advise and direct the discussions and recommendations of the YAC.

The finances of the YAC are administered by HRLE and each year the YAC budget is determined by the department's budget process. The YAC budget is carefully monitored by the staff persons responsible for the YAC and by the Finance Division of the department. Expenditures include travelling expenses for members to attend meetings. All spending adheres to government's financial guidelines. Members and mentors volunteer their time and efforts. Further details can be provided by contacting the Manager, Career, Employment and Youth Services at 709-729-6890.

The YAC has repeatedly given solid recommendations to government. Their dedicated commitment as volunteers has heightened awareness of government's obligation to the province's youth and the policies and programs by which they are governed. The YAC continues to provide a reliable avenue for the voice of youth to be heard.

## 2.0 MANDATE

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The YAC received authority to operate on May 17, 2001. The YAC was established because government placed greater focus on youth and was looking for ways to give youth a stronger voice. Initially, it was created within a new department (Youth Services and Post-Secondary Education) and was part of an effort to coordinate youth services and provide youth with a single contact point. While the responsible department may change, the purpose of the YAC does not. 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 departments responsible for youth services and education on government's youth-related policies and programs.

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

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The YAC developed its own set of values and behavioural statements in its initial meetings. The key values are respect for all and equal opportunity. From the beginning, based on these values, the YAC determined that its organization 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". The behaviours of the YAC are constantly confident, dependable and competent and treat each other and any guest or groups consulted with respect.

HRLE provides the administrative support that facilitates the YAC's actions in accordance with its Code of Conduct.

**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
- 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 government and partnering programs.

## 4.0 PRIMARY CLIENTS

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

It is intended that our youth be served through the advice and guidance given to government on their behalf. When government is advised and acts on YAC recommendations, youth and those who serve them benefit.

# 5.0 VISION

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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 MISSION

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The mission of the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Advisory Committee represents two cycles of planning. It identifies the priority focus of the committee and includes performance measures to facilitate the evaluation of the committee’s success. This area is where the YAC feels, if improved upon, will lead to a better understanding and acceptance by government of the recommendations put forth by the YAC.

**Mission:** By 2011, the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Advisory Committee will have improved the comprehensiveness of the recommendations it provides to the government.

**Measure:**  
Improved comprehensiveness of recommendations

**Indicators:**

- Enhanced consultations to improve the committee's consideration of stakeholder points of view, interests and opinions
- Improved recruitment process to ensure a comprehensive perspective is reflected in the committee's recommendations
- Improved communications with the interdepartmental liaison committee

## 7.0 ISSUES

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The Youth Advisory Committee functions as a flat structure with no executive responsibilities and works closely with government line departments and agencies along with non-government 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 government's youth-related policies and programs.

The objectives identified in this plan contribute to the strategic directions identified by the Minister as being relevant to the YAC. The enhancement of public consultations and the YAC website will encourage leadership development and facilitate enhanced community participation and input into policy development.

The following objectives apply to the 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 fiscal years and will be reported on in the relevant annual reports.

### **Issue 1: Public Consultations**

In the past there have been attempts at public consultations with various groups to gather information to make better informed recommendations to government. It is felt that this process could be enhanced.

**Objective 1:** The YAC will have continued to enhance its consultation process with various public stakeholders.

**Measure:** Enhanced consultation process.

**Indicator:** Increased number of roundtable consultations.

### **Issue 2: Website**

The YAC have been working with the OCIO to establish an active website. This has been completed and will enhance the ability to link to a broad range of programs and services.

**Objective 2:** The YAC will have modified its website to be more user-friendly and interactive, which will give more access to YAC-related information to the general public.

**Measure:** Enhanced user friendliness.

**Indicator:** Increased number of issue-related postings.



## 8.0 APPENDIX

Strategic directions are the articulation of the desired physical, social or economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one 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 comprised of a number of components, or focus areas. Those focus areas that are relevant to the Youth Advisory Committee will be addressed through various planning processes, which are indicated in the table provided.

### 1. Youth

**Outcome Statement:** Enhanced youth engagement.

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

Strategic Direction Component (Focus Area)	Not Applicable – to be addressed by other entities reporting to the Minister	This strategic direction component is addressed in the ...		
		Activity Plan	Operational Plan	Work Plans of Divisions / Sections within the Organization
Leadership development		√		
Policy development		√		
Community participation		√		