

BUSINESS PLAN 2019-2022

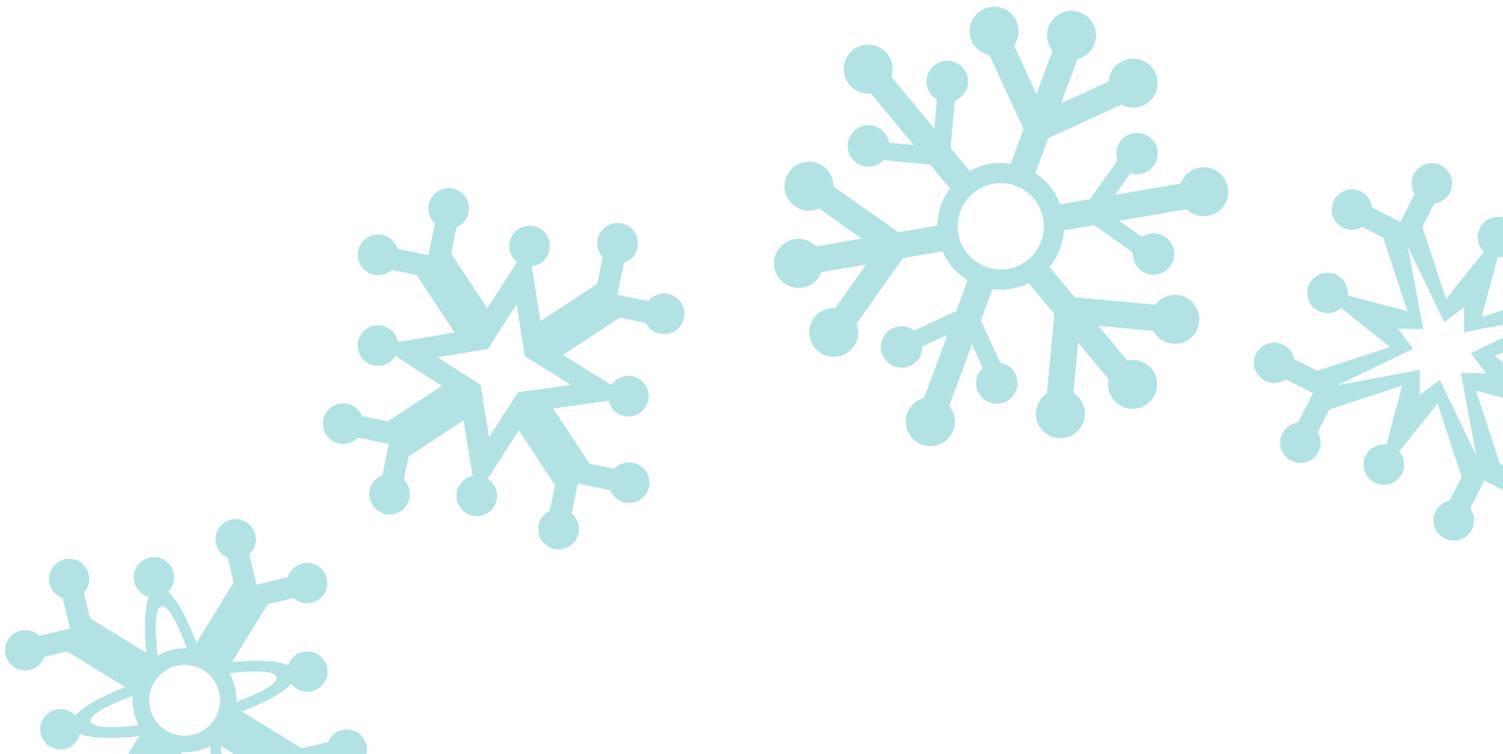


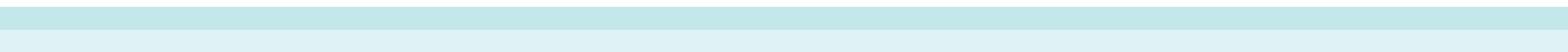
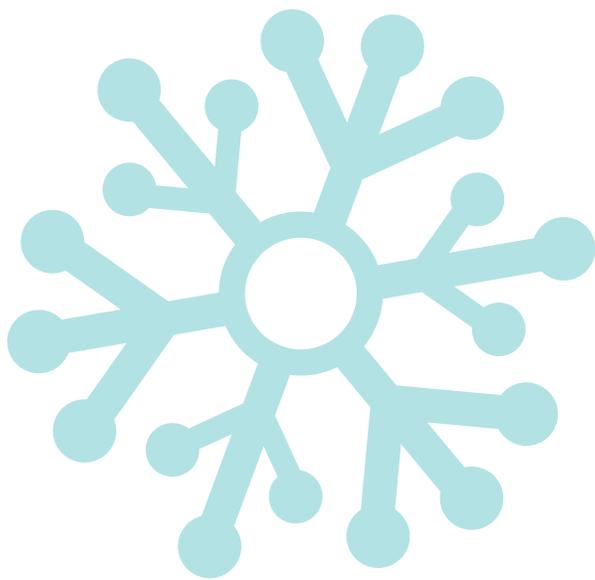
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**NUTAQQANUT INULRAMIRNULLU
UQAQTIKHAANIK**

**REPRÉSENTANT DE
L'ENFANCE ET DE LA JEUNESSE**

**REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH**





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OVERVIEW

The Representative for Children and Youth is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut (Legislative Assembly). The Representative is appointed for a five-year term by the Commissioner of Nunavut on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly. The position of Representative for Children and Youth is established under the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* (RCYA).

The RCYA received assent on September 17, 2013, and on June 2, 2014, the Legislative Assembly approved the five-year appointment of Sherry McNeil-Mulak as Nunavut’s first Representative. Ms. McNeil-Mulak assumed her role on June 16, 2014. The office officially opened on September 30, 2015.

The RCYA states the Representative’s mandate is to advocate for the rights and interests of children and youth and to assist the Legislative Assembly and the Government of Nunavut (GN) in ensuring their needs are met. The office largely serves children and youth who are 18 years of age and younger. However, the RCYA identifies some circumstances where staff can work with young people up to 25 years of age.

The Representative is required to prepare an annual report on the office’s conduct and fulfilment of its mandate for the preceding year. The annual report is tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The Representative is also required to appear before a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly to account for this annual report.

As outlined in Appendix A, the Representative for Children and Youth’s Office (RCYO) has a budget of \$2.130 million for 2019-20. Office staff includes the Representative and the following eight positions: a director of child and youth advocacy services, a manager of communications and public awareness, two senior systemic investigators/researchers, an intake specialist, and three child and youth advocacy specialists. With the exception of the Representative, staff are members of the public service as defined in the *Public Service Act*. Figure 1 presents the office’s organizational chart.

The office is physically located in Iqaluit and staff build relationships with children, youth, families, and service providers across the territory through ongoing outreach, including regular community visits.

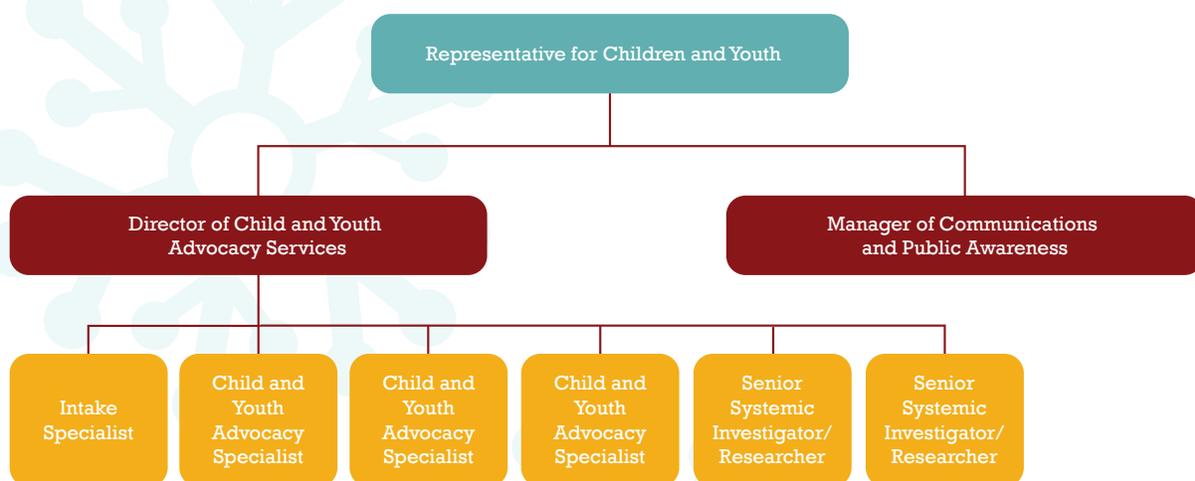


Figure 1: Organizational Chart

MANDATE

The RCYO advocates for the rights and interests of children and youth in the territory and assists the Legislative Assembly and the GN in ensuring the needs of children and youth are met. The RCYO is guided by the RCYA, the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), Inuit societal values, national advocacy standards, and the voice of the child.

The office's mandate includes the following duties outlined in the RCYA:

- Ensure children and youth's rights and interests, individually and collectively, are protected and advanced, and that departments of the GN and its designated authorities,¹ hear and consider the views of children and youth on matters that affect them;
- Ensure children and youth can access GN services and that the GN considers their concerns about those services;
- Help children, youth, and their families communicate with GN service providers to improve understanding between them;
- Inform the public about the rights and interests of children and youth, and the roles and responsibilities of our office;
- Provide advice and recommendations to the GN on how to make its programs, services, laws, and policies better for children and youth in Nunavut.

MISSION

We are an independent child and youth advocacy office that ensures the Government of Nunavut supports and protects the rights and interests of young Nunavummiut.

VISION

All children and youth in Nunavut know their potential, value their identity, and feel supported and empowered to express their views in matters that affect them.

¹ A designated authority is defined as an agency, board, commission, corporation, office or other body named or described in the RCYA. For simplicity, only the words government department appear throughout the business plan to represent both terms.

PRINCIPLES

The office's work is based on the following key principles described in the RCYA:

- Decisions and actions concerning children and youth must be made in accordance with the best interests of children and youth.
- Culture and traditions play a vital role in strengthening the resiliency of children, youth, and families.
- Inuit culture must be respected and supported in decisions and actions involving Inuit children and youth.
- Families are the primary source of care and guidance for children and youth.
- Relationships between children, youth, and their families must be respected and, wherever possible, supported and strengthened.
- Efforts must be made, wherever possible, to involve and obtain family support in decisions and actions concerning children and youth.
- Concerns respecting children and youth must be resolved through processes that demonstrate cooperation and respect.

CORE BUSINESS

The RCYO works in four areas: individual advocacy, systemic advocacy, reviews of critical injuries and deaths, and communications and public awareness.



Figure 2: Core Business

INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

The GN provides many programs and services to support children and youth. However, despite best intentions, problems can occur. A child, youth, or family member may not know who to contact about a problem or they may feel uncomfortable raising questions with service providers. Maybe a service provider hasn't returned a parent's repeated calls or followed-up, as promised. Perhaps a youth-in-care doesn't understand why he or she can't visit a family member. In these types of situations, our office can assist by providing information, coaching in self-advocacy, or providing individual advocacy support. The kind of individual advocacy work our office does depends on a young person's unique needs and situation.

PROVIDING INFORMATION

Nunavummiut can contact our office for information on child rights and/or government services and programs that support children and youth. Even if we receive a request that falls outside of our mandate, we try to always help connect the client to the person or resource that can provide the necessary information.

SELF-ADVOCACY COACHING

It is not always easy for a young person or a concerned parent or guardian to express his or her views to government service providers. At any point in the advocacy process, our staff can coach an individual in self-advocacy, so that he or she feels more empowered to express his or her views.

Self-advocacy coaching is one way our office helps amplify the voice of young Nunavummiut and ensures the GN hears and considers the opinions of children and youth in decisions that affect them.

ADVOCACY SUPPORT

Most of the cases that come to our office involve advocacy support. This is when one of our child and youth advocacy specialists works directly with a young person and with government service provider(s) to resolve an issue. A government service provider could be a teacher, nurse, mental health worker, social worker, or probation officer, any individual who works for the GN and provides a government service or program to children or youth.

We are able to resolve some issues in a matter of days or weeks, while others may take several months and involve multiple service providers from many departments. Typically, advocacy support includes direct work with service providers, meetings with the child or youth and their parent(s) or caregiver(s), and case conferences. Wherever possible, the voice of the child leads the advocacy work.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

Sometimes many young people face the same problem or issue. This is what the office refers to as a systemic issue. A systemic issue typically affects many children or youth; often happens when government policies and practices are not working as intended or don't meet young people's rights and/or needs; will likely continue if not addressed; and may require government to change its policies, practices, or legislation.

Systemic issues can come to our office's attention in many ways. Our staff might see the same issue present repeatedly in different individual cases and then flag this for further investigation. MLAs or youth parliamentarians might raise an issue in Nunavut's legislature. A media outlet could bring an issue to the public's attention. Young people and adults can also contact our office directly with a systemic issue they would like to raise with us.

Systemic advocacy work can be conducted informally or formally. Informal systemic advocacy mainly uses discussion and collaboration to bring about change. We believe this type of systemic advocacy aligns well with *piliriqatigiinniq*, working together for a common cause, and *aajiqatigiinniq*, decision making through consensus and discussion. Issues that qualify for informal reviews tend to be less complex. They also tend to resolve quickly. An informal review may or may not result in a public report outlining recommendations.

Formal systemic reviews generally focus on more complex issues. Considerations that may raise a matter to a formal review include: severity of the issue; the potential for harm if the issue is not addressed; the urgency of the issue; and the potential benefit to the public resulting from the review.

Formal systemic advocacy typically results in recommendations issued to government departments targeting system improvements. It is not uncommon for such recommendations to be shared through a public report.

REVIEWS OF CRITICAL INJURIES AND DEATHS

The RCYO can review the critical injury or death of a child or youth. These reviews provide meaningful opportunities to learn from mistakes. They are not about placing blame, but rather they are opportunities to understand what went wrong and to initiate changes to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

We recognize these reviews are highly sensitive. They require proper knowledge and capacity to conduct thoroughly. As a result, we continue to develop this area of our work with particular care and attention. This component of our office is not currently operational and the section of the RCYA pertaining to this work is not legally in force.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

The RCYO has a legal duty to raise Nunavummiut's awareness of child rights and the office's mandate. Equally important are the opportunities this area of our work creates to listen to Nunavummiut and learn directly from them about issues affecting young people.

Our public awareness work takes many forms including: presentations, information sessions, community outreach, contests, developing information material, attending public events, and maintaining our office's website (www.rcynu.ca). All of these activities share one goal: to build and strengthen relationships with children, youth, families, and the many Nunavummiut who are invested in our territory's young people.

OFFICE OBJECTIVES

The key objectives for the 2019-22 business plan term are as follows:

1

Objective One: Amplify the voice of children and youth in the territory to ensure the Government of Nunavut hears and considers their opinions and concerns, individually and as a whole.

What this means: Government service providers and decision makers don't always seek out the opinions of children and youth. Yet under the CRC, young people have the right to participate in decisions that affect them. Our office recognizes that young people should not just be the subject of government decisions but also contribute in meaningful ways to shaping decisions, programs, and policies.

In our first several years of operation, we began helping individual children and youth raise their concerns with government service providers. Going forward, we will continue this work. We will also seek to amplify the voice of children and youth by continuing to look for new and innovative ways to involve young people in our work.

2

Objective Two: Operate the office in a manner that supports the provision of quality advocacy services to children, youth, and their families.

What this means: The RCYO is committed to creating a work culture that is focused on continuous, quality improvements. We will continue to build upon and strengthen our foundation by ensuring these mechanisms are in place to assess the quality of our own work. Our office's ongoing development and focus on improvement will help ensure the RCYO delivers a quality advocacy program that serves the needs of young Nunavummiut and their families.

3

Objective Three: Foster Nunavummiut's understanding of child rights and the role and mandate of the office.

What this means: As a fairly new organization, there is still much work to do to increase awareness and understanding of our role, the RCYA, and the CRC in Nunavut. Through our communication and public awareness work, we will continue to ensure that children, youth, and their families are aware of who we are and what we do and feel comfortable accessing the advocacy supports we offer. We will also continue our efforts to increase other key stakeholders' awareness and understanding of our office, including, but not limited to, front-line service providers, government departments, and community leaders.

4 Objective Four: Foster a collaborative working relationship with Government of Nunavut departments to improve programs and services for the children and youth of Nunavut.

What this means: The RCYA states that the Representative must apply Inuit societal values in performing her duties and powers. Moreover, the RCYA identifies that concerns respecting children and youth must be resolved through processes that demonstrate cooperation and respect. The RCYO firmly believes that the principle of *piliriqatigiinniq/ikajuqtigiinniq* is necessary to achieve the improvements we hope to see for young Nunavummiut.

With this in mind, the RCYO will foster effective working relationships with GN departments by continuing to share information regarding our mandate, describing how the office's work and the GN's work intersect, working together to overcome challenges, and by providing clear information with respect to legal obligations under the RCYA. The RCYO believes ongoing investment in this area will support the type of working relationships required to achieve common goals for young Nunavummiut.

5 Objective Five: Build capacity through investment in staff training and development.

What this means: The RCYO is the territory's lead organization specializing in child rights advocacy. As such, the office is committed to making a considerable investment in building its internal capacity by identifying and delivering professional development initiatives that align with our staffs' needs. Investing in our team helps ensure we can provide expert advice to all stakeholder groups we work with, while also providing high quality advocacy services to young Nunavummiut.

6 Objective Six: Engage with provincial/territorial counterparts to support the office's provision of advocacy services.

What this means: As a member of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA)² our office benefits from significant professional support, as well as access to resources, best practices, and research materials. This membership also serves to support the section of the RCYA related to inter-jurisdictional agreements between advocacy offices throughout Canada.

Considering the degree of specialty the office offers and how often Nunavut youth are sent out of the territory for care, professional support from the Canadian child and youth advocacy community is integral to our office's ongoing success.

²The CCCYA is an alliance of children's advocates from across Canada who have mandates to support the rights of children and youth and to promote their voice. Through the Council, the advocates identify areas of mutual concern and work to develop ways to address issues at the national level.

REPORTING ON PRIORITY INITIATIVES 2018-19

PRIORITIES 2018-19

Review and revise the office's operational policy and procedure manual based on the office's evolving needs and advocacy survey results.

STATUS:

- A comprehensive review was conducted on the RCYO's operational policy and procedure manual. Revisions to the manual are complete.

Continue to deliver youth-focused self-advocacy workshops targeting grades 7-12 across the territory.

STATUS:

- RCYO staff delivered self-advocacy workshops to over 500 young Nunavummiut across all three regions in the territory in 2018-19.

Complete the office's first formal systemic review.

STATUS:

- The RCYO's formal systemic review into mental health services for children and youth was substantively completed in 2018-19. The office plans to release the report publicly in the spring of 2019.

Provide staff training and professional development initiatives in the following key areas: Indigenous Cultural Competence and explore the possibility of an advocacy staff exchange.

STATUS:

- All RCYO staff completed the Indigenous Cultural Competence workshop.
- The RCYO contributed to the development of the CCCYA staff exchange program. The office also submitted an application for the staff exchange program for the Council's consideration.

Complete a social media strategy in advance of launching the office's own social media channel(s).

STATUS:

- The RCYO's social media strategy was completed in 2018-19. The office anticipates launching its social media channel(s) in 2019-20.

Initiate an inter-jurisdictional scan of the Child Rights Impact Assessment tools used in Canada and internationally.

STATUS:

- The inter-jurisdictional scan of the Child Rights Impact Assessment tools used in Canada and internationally was completed. The results from the scan will be used to initiate the development of a Nunavut-specific version of the tool.

Continue the development of the office's reviews of critical injuries and deaths program, including identifying necessary resources.

STATUS:

- The RCYO identified the need for a critical injury and death investigator position. A request for this position was submitted in August 2018.
- RCYO staff continued development work related to the critical injury and death review program. Specific activities related to this work included:
 - Continued tracking and recording of critical injuries and deaths reported to the RCYO.
 - A preliminary review of sections of the Children and Family Services Manual that pertain to departmental standards and directives regarding the death of a client and the death of a child in a foster home or residential care.
 - Reviewed legislation from other Canadian advocacy offices with a focus on critical injury and death reporting obligations and definitions used for critical injury. The office also obtained clarification on sections of the RCYA that pertain to requesting and collecting information and reporting critical injuries and deaths to the RCYO.
 - Advanced the development of program material, including fact sheets and critical injury and death reporting forms.

Participate in meetings of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates and contribute to Council initiatives, including hosting the 2018 spring meeting.

STATUS:

- The RCYO attended CCCYA meetings in June and October 2018, and January 2019.
- The RCYO hosted the June 2018 CCCYA meeting in Iqaluit, Nunavut. An extra day was added to the meeting's agenda to focus on Inuit history and culture.
- As a member of CCCYA's staff exchange working group, the RCYO contributed to the development and launch of the Council's staff exchange program.
- The RCYO continued to share its advocacy resources with Council members. Resources shared in 2018-19 included, youth mental health surveys, client satisfaction surveys, youth self-advocacy workshop material, and the RCYO's one page graphic novel.
- The RCYO contributed to the development and release of the following joint statements, letters, and releases:
 - Press release on National Child Day urging increased awareness of children's rights.
 - Statement on the elimination of the Ontario Child Advocate's Office.
 - Letter to Premier Ford conveying the CCCYA's opposition to the Ontario government's decision to repeal the *Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007* and close the Ontario Child Advocate's office.
 - Letter to the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., Minister of Families, Children and Social Development regarding the Council's position on the Canada Pension Plan Surviving Child's Benefit.

Complete the development of a child and youth friendly made-in-Nunavut resource on child rights.

STATUS:

- Working in partnership with the Department of Education and Inhabit Education, the RCYO completed the development of a book on child rights, called *Mosesie Speaks Up*. The book is part of the Department of Education's Balanced Literacy program and was developed for a grade three reading level. The book focuses on positive relationships, effective communication, and self-advocacy skills. Development of extension activities to accompany the book and support educators is underway. The office anticipates that the book and extension activities will be distributed to Nunavut schools in the 2018-19 school year.
- RCYO staff developed and began to deliver a child-friendly rights game for children in grades three to six, called *Sila is Cold: The Igloo Game*. This game introduces the concepts of children's rights and responsibilities through an interactive and fun activity, and discussion.

Finalize protocols which guide the working relationships between the Representative for Children and Youth's Office and with the Government of Nunavut's Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Justice, and Department of Family Services.

STATUS:

- Protocols with the Departments of Health, Education, Justice, and Family Services were finalized and were successfully used throughout the year to guide the working relationship between the RCYO and the departments.

Continue to explore effective ways to engage young Nunavummiut in the office's work.

STATUS:

- RCYO staff continued to execute the office's community travel plan. While visiting communities, RCYO staff prioritized meeting with young Nunavummiut by visiting schools to deliver the RCYO's self-advocacy workshop, and raising awareness of the office and children's rights.
- The RCYO launched its fourth annual Your Story, Your Voice contest in Nunavut schools to raise awareness of child rights and National Child Day. Contest winners were announced on November 20, 2018.
- The RCYO participated in Inuksuk High School's lunch program by preparing, serving, and sponsoring a special National Child Day lunch for approximately 160 students and staff. While at the school, RCYO staff shared information about child rights and the work of the office through a classroom presentation and an information booth. RCYO staff also took part in a bus parade coordinated by Iqaluit's Early Childhood Licensed Facilities in celebration of National Child Day.
- As part of the office's systemic review into mental health services for children and youth in Nunavut, the office analyzed a total of 225 youth surveys that were administered at the end of the 2017-18 fiscal year. Results from the youth survey have been incorporated into the final report on mental health services for children and youth in Nunavut.
- As a result of feedback from young people, preliminary work to make the office's services available via text messaging was completed. The office anticipates implementing this service in the 2019-20 fiscal year.
- The administration of a youth client satisfaction survey for individual advocacy services was initiated. Youth feedback will be used to implement improvements to the RCYO's individual advocacy program.
- Through the Summer Student Employment Equity Program, the RCYO hired a communications coordinator. The student assisted the office in highlighting youth voice in the systemic review into mental health services and assisted with the office's social media strategy.
- The RCYO continues to research additional ways to meaningfully engage young Nunavummiut in the office's work. This included RCYO staff participating in a youth-led conference that explored effective approaches to youth engagement.

Provide feedback to the Government of Nunavut’s Department of Education, Department of Community and Government Services, and Department of Family Services on their implementation of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada’s recommendations from the following reports:

- Children, Youth and Family Programs and Services in Nunavut (March 2011).
- Safety of Schools and Childcare Facilities in Nunavut (November 2013).
- Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut (March 2014).

STATUS:

- The RCYO provided feedback to the three GN departments noted. The deputy head of each department received official correspondence from the RCYO commenting on their respective department’s implementation efforts.



PRIORITY INITIATIVES 2019-2022

PRIORITIES 2019-20

- Provide input to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut on the provisions and operations of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* in advance of the mandated five-year review.
- Explore additional ways to engage parents and families in the office's work.
- Evaluate the level of general awareness of the office and its mandate.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the office's promotional materials.
- Initiate the development of a Nunavut-specific version of the Child Rights Impact Assessment tool.
- Conduct a quality assurance file audit on the individual advocacy program.
- Develop a system for monitoring recommendations resulting from systemic reviews.
- Complete a second round of community visits and start the third round of visits.
- In partnership with the Department of Education and Inhabit Education, initiate the development of a second child rights guided reading book, under the department's Balanced Literacy program.
- Provide staff training and professional development initiatives in the following key areas: the *Coroner's Act* and the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates' advocacy education sessions.
- Participate in meetings of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates and contribute to Council initiatives.

PRIORITIES 2020-21

- Explore ways to increase the office's presence across the territory.
- Initiate changes to the office's public awareness and communications strategy, based on the results of the evaluation on the office promotional materials.
- Provide training related to the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and Child Rights Impact Assessments to Government of Nunavut senior officials and collaborate with the Government of Nunavut to explore implementation of the Child Rights Impact Assessment tool.
- In collaboration with the Government of Nunavut, explore offering United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* training to Government of Nunavut front-line staff.
- Launch the office's critical injury and death review program.
- In partnership with the Department of Education and Inhabit Education, initiate the development of third child rights guided reading book, under the department's Balanced Literacy program.
- Participate in meetings of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates and contribute to Council initiatives.

PRIORITIES 2021-22

- Develop and administer an office staff satisfaction survey.
- Explore opportunities for youth to collectively share their views with government leaders.
- In partnership with the Department of Education and Inhabit Education, initiate the development of fourth child rights guided reading book, under the department's Balanced Literacy program.
- Participate in meetings of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates and contribute to Council initiatives.



APPENDIX A: Financial Summary

Business Summary	2018 – 2019 Main Estimates		2019 – 2020 Main Estimates		2020 – 2021 Planned		2021 – 2022 Planned	
	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs
Salary	1,381	9	1,426	9	1,426	9	1,426	9
Grants and Contributions	–		–		–		–	
Other O & M								
Travel and Transportation	195		195		195		195	
Materials and Supplies	195		145		145		145	
Purchased Services	65		65		65		65	
Contract Services	250		250		250		250	
Fees and Payments	5		20		20		20	
Tangible Assets	19		19		19		19	
Computer Hardware and Software	20		10		10		10	
Other O & M – Subtotal	749		704		704		704	
TOTAL	2,130	9	2,130	9	2,130	9	2,130	9