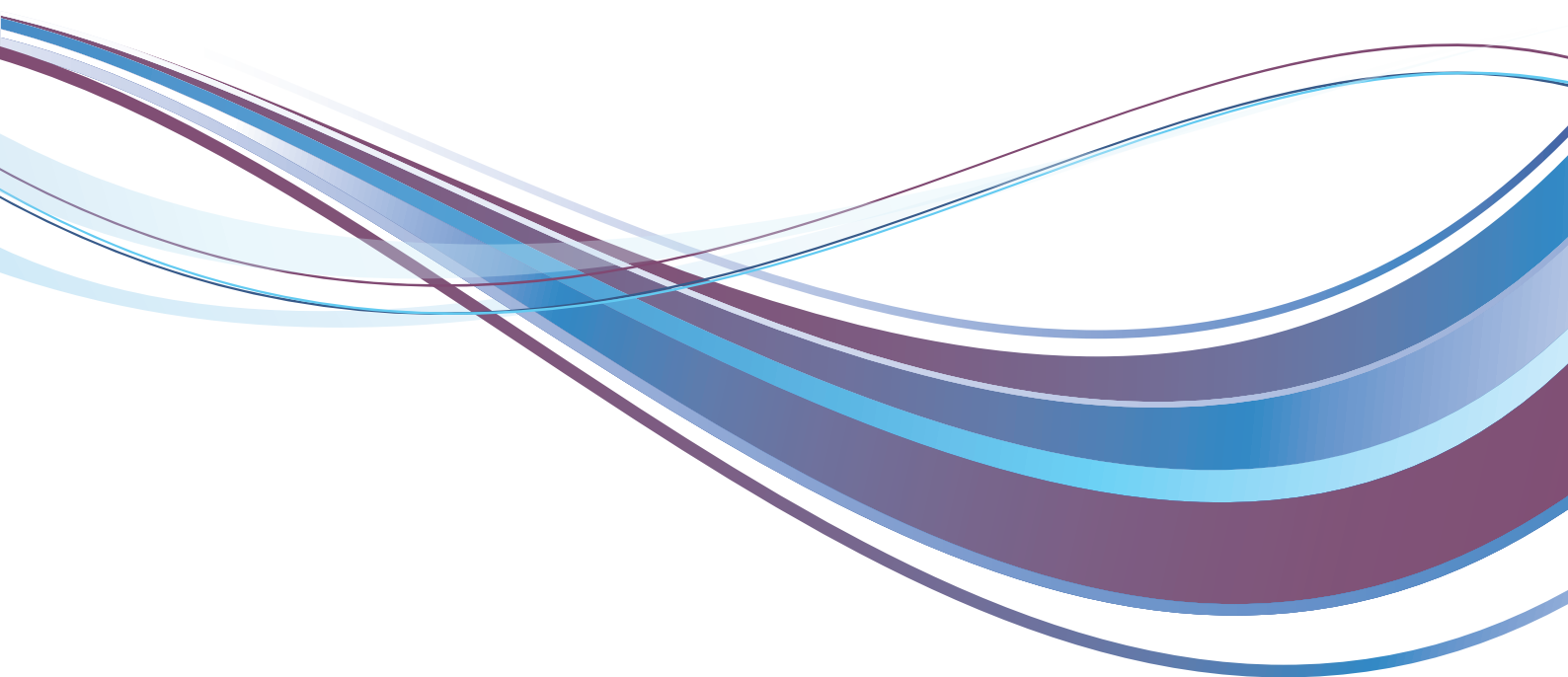


OFFICE OF THE REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

# **BUSINESS PLAN 2015-2018**

October 21 | 2014



# MESSAGE FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

I am pleased to present the 2015-2018 Business Plan for the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth (ORCY).

When the *Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) Act* received assent on September 17, 2013 it represented a major step forward for the children and youth of Nunavut. As the first Representative, I will work diligently to establish the office and build capacity so that we can begin to fulfill our legislative mandate on a solid foundation. Our goal is to build an advocacy program that ensures children, youth and their families have access to timely advice, information and assistance as they navigate government systems designed to support them. Accordingly, the 2015-18 business planning cycle reflects activities that support office development such as planning, staff recruitment and system and process development.

The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth has a very important mandate of representing the voice of children and youth and ensuring their rights and interests are protected and advanced. While the creation of this office is a significant achievement for Nunavut, much work remains. Our office will be driven in its efforts by our commitment to do all we can to improve the services children and youth receive, often through very difficult circumstances in their lives. We will also be driven by the confidence we have in young Nunavummiut and the hope we have for their future.

This November marks 25 years since the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is a year to acknowledge all that has been achieved and a year to remind us of the work that remains. Our office wishes to acknowledge this important milestone, which paved the way for the creation of Nunavut's first Office of the Representative for Children and Youth. Nunavut will mark this important anniversary year by opening its own independent office, which will protect the interests and rights of young Nunavummiut. I look forward to beginning this journey in Nunavut and I anticipate continued positive change and progress in the area of child and youth advocacy and rights protection over the next 25 years, both within the territory and abroad.

As the Representative for Children and Youth in Nunavut, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievement of the identified priorities set forth.

Sherry McNeil-Mulak

**Representative for Children and Youth**

## CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	2
MANDATE	3
MISSION AND VISION	4
PRINCIPLES	4
CORE BUSINESS	5
OFFICE OBJECTIVES	7
PRIORITY INITIATIVES 2015-2018	8
APPENDIX A: FINANCIAL SUMMARY	10

# OVERVIEW

The Representative for Children and Youth is an Independent Officer of the 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 pursuant to section 2 of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*.

*The RCY Act* received assent on September 17, 2013 and on June 2, 2014, the Legislative Assembly approved a motion recommending the five-year appointment of Sherry McNeil-Mulak as Nunavut's first Representative. Mrs. McNeil-Mulak assumed her role on June 16, 2014.

The legislation provides that the primary purpose of the Representative is to advocate for the rights and interests of children and youth and to assist the Legislative Assembly and the Government of Nunavut in ensuring their needs are met. The Office largely serves children and youth who are 18 years of age and younger. However, there are circumstances set forth in *the RCY Act* that allow for this age range to be extended.

The Representative is required to prepare an annual report on the Office's conduct and fulfillment 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 the business summary (Table 1), the ORCY has a budget of \$1.57million for 2015/16. Office staff includes the Representative and the following five positions: Director of Child and Youth Advocacy Services, Manager of Communications and Public Awareness, two Child and Youth Advocacy Specialists, and a Systemic Investigator/Researcher. With the exception of the Representative, staff of the ORCY are members of the public service as defined in the Public Service Act. The organizational chart outlined in Figure 1 presents the Office's reporting structure.

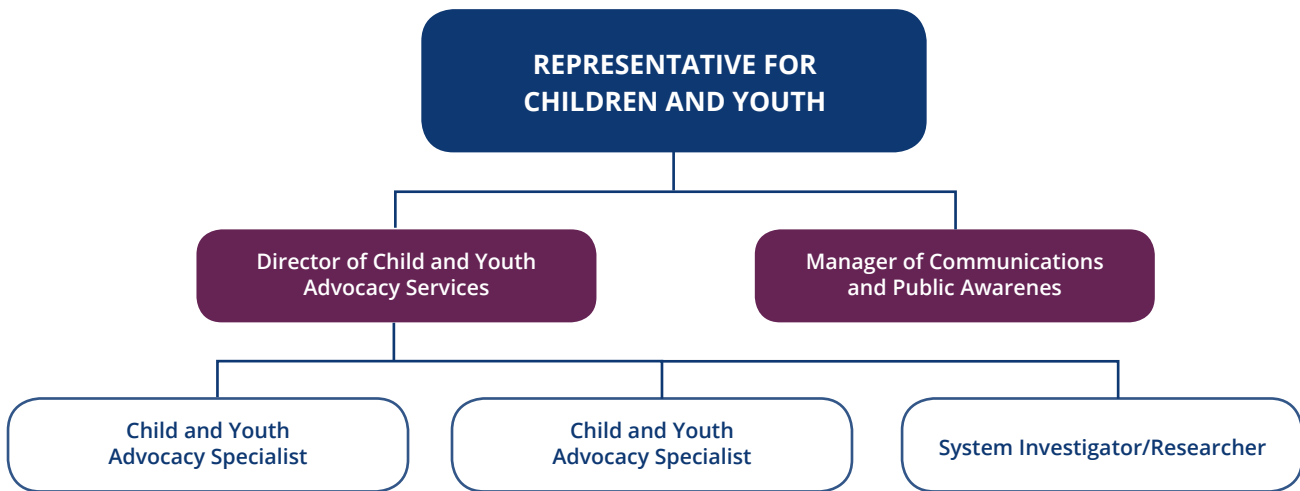
The ORCY is physically located in Iqaluit and occupies a space adjacent to the Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut. The two offices share administrative support.

**TABLE 1: ORCY BUDGET<sup>1</sup>**

	<b>BUDGET(\$000)</b>			
	<b>2014-2015</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
Office of the Representative for Children and Youth	1,570	<b>1,570</b>	1,570	1,570
<b>TOTAL</b>	1,570	<b>1,570</b>	1,570	1,570

<sup>1</sup> As lines of business and programs are developed, the business summary may be broadened.

Figure 1: ORCY Organizational Chart



## MANDATE

The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth is guided by both the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Inuit societal values. The Office advocates for the rights and interests of children and youth in the territory and assists the Legislative Assembly and the Government of Nunavut in ensuring the needs of children and youth are met.

This mandate covers a number of legal duties outlined in *the RCY Act*. As per section 3 of *the Act*, these include the following:

- Ensure that the rights and interests of children and youth, individually and collectively, are protected and advanced and that their views are heard and considered in matters affecting them and that government departments and designated authorities hear and consider their views on matters that affect them;
- Ensure that children and youth have access to the services of government departments and designated authorities and that their concerns related to those services receive appropriate attention;
- Facilitate communication and understanding between children, youth and their families, and those who provide them with services;
- Inform the public respecting the rights and interests of children and youth and the role of the Representative;
- Provide advice and recommendations to government departments and designated authorities on the effectiveness, responsiveness and relevance of legislation and policies related to children and youth; and
- Provide advice and recommendations to government departments and designated authorities on the availability, effectiveness, responsiveness and relevance of programs and services related to children and youth.

# MISSION AND VISION

The ORCY is currently developing mission and vision statements that will reflect the Office's principles and mandate, and define the Office and its work.

## PRINCIPLES

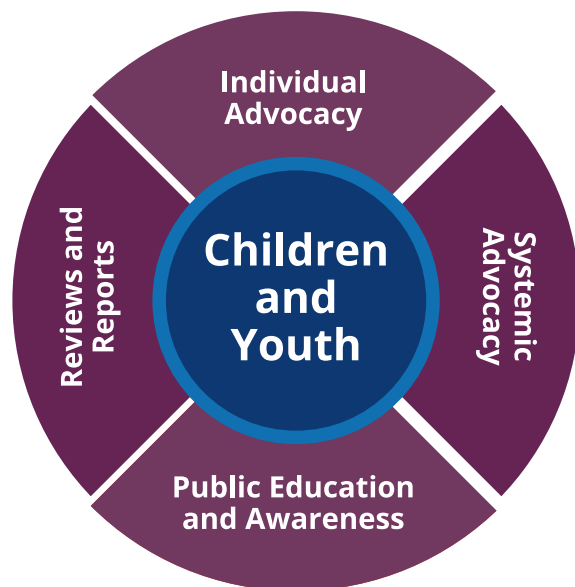
As outlined in *the Representative for Children and Youth Act*, the Office's work is based on the following key principles:

- 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 and 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 Office of the Representative for Children and Youth will provide services to children and youth in four main areas. These include individual advocacy, systemic advocacy, reviews and reports, as well as public education and awareness.

Figure 2: Core Business of the ORCY



## INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES

Children, youth and their families can find understanding and navigating the system of supports available to them overwhelming. Questions and concerns often arise and people may need help to understand their rights and how the system of supports should work for them. The Representative's advocacy team plays a key role in this area by ensuring individual concerns are heard and addressed.

Individual advocacy offers a range of assistance depending on the specific person's needs. It can include providing information, helping a young person learn to advocate for his or herself, as well as basic and/or comprehensive advocacy intervention.

### Information

This kind of advocacy involves providing basic information. These types of cases are typically opened and closed on the same day and involve very little action by the advocacy team. The Office anticipates it will receive queries from individuals who are seeking help with issues that are sometimes outside its mandate. When this happens, the advocacy team will support children, youth and their families by providing information and referrals to the appropriate resources.

### Self-Advocacy Support

The advocacy team encourages and supports children and youth to speak for themselves and work with child and youth-serving organizations to ensure that their views and opinions are sought, heard and considered on issues that affect them. This type of assistance can include more extensive provision of information as well as coaching by the advocacy team.

## **Basic Advocacy Intervention**

This work involves the advocacy team engaging with an individual in problem-solving strategies to resolve an issue. These types of cases often involve consultation with departments. Advocacy staff often assist with initial phone calls to service providers, provide self-advocacy assistance and make required referrals. These cases generally tend to be completed within a short time frame.

## **Comprehensive Advocacy Intervention**

Comprehensive advocacy intervention is intensive and occurs when basic advocacy intervention and self-advocacy support are not sufficient. Typically, comprehensive advocacy involves in-depth self-advocacy coaching, meetings with multiple service providers, meetings with the child or youth and their natural advocate, attending/arranging case conferences and engaging in alternative dispute resolution. By nature, these cases tend to take the longest to complete.

## **SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY**

Helping individual children and youth with their issues is very important, however, it is equally important to identify why these issues exist and to recommend system changes that support improvement.

Systemic issues occur when policies and practices interfere with the delivery of services and programs intended to support children and youth. Systemic files relate to an issue that is impacting, or has the ability to impact, a group of children or youth. Often, individual cases serve to highlight emerging issues and trends.

By identifying systemic issues, the ORCY can inform and make recommendations to government on practices, legislation, policies and/or procedures that would support overall system improvement and result in improved service provision for children, youth and their families.

## **REVIEWS AND REPORTS**

Section 4 (1) subsection (a) of the *RCY Act* grants the RCY the authority to receive and review any matter in relation to the services of any government department or designated authority as the matter relates to any child or to any group of children or youth that come to the Representative's attention. This can range from systemic reviews to reviews related to the critical injury or death of a child or youth. Moreover, in addition to the production of an annual report, the Office may prepare reports related to reviews or other matters considered appropriate and in the best interest of advancing issues affecting the children and youth of Nunavut.

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS**

When children's rights are overlooked, it is often due to a lack of understanding or awareness. Public education will be one of the most important aspects of the ORCY's work. The Office has a very clear duty to educate the public on its role and raise awareness regarding the Office's mandate. By doing so, the Office will also help young people learn to advocate for themselves so that their voices are heard and their needs and interests are respected.

Public education and awareness can be achieved through a variety of mechanisms such as presentations and outreach activities to children, youth and youth-serving organizations, community visits, service-provider information sessions, and the dissemination of material such as brochures and pamphlets. As part of its mandate, the Office will proactively seek opportunities to engage youth and communities across Nunavut. This work will, in turn, help the Office learn about the issues affecting the territory's children and youth from the communities' perspective.



# OFFICE OBJECTIVES

The key objectives for the 2015-2018 business plan term are as follows:

**Objective One:** Establish the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth in a manner that supports the provision of quality advocacy services to children, youth and their families.

**What this means:** The ORCY is a new office in Nunavut. Aside from the *RCY Act*, no other office resources or materials exist. The office is very much being built from the ground up. This presents some challenges, which are largely related to the sheer volume of work that needs to be completed prior to the office opening. It also presents a unique opportunity to design an advocacy program that will serve the distinct needs of young Nunavummiut and deliver it in a manner that supports Inuit societal values and culture. The establishment, opening and evolution of the Office over the course of the business plan period serves as the overarching objective that will guide all other elements of this plan.

**Objective Two:** Build capacity through investment in staff training and development.

**What this means:** The ORCY will serve as the territory's flagship organization specializing in children's advocacy and rights. This is fairly new and uncharted territory for Nunavut. The Office will make considerable investment in building its capacity in this area, thereby ensuring that expert advice is provided by the Office to all stakeholder groups. To accomplish this, staff training and development initiatives will be identified and delivered in a manner that supports staff in their new roles and promotes the Office's growth and evolution.

**Objective Three:** Increase public awareness of the role and mandate of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth.

**What this means:** Under the *RCY Act*, the ORCY is required to engage in public outreach and education. The focus is to raise awareness and understanding of the role of the Office and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child throughout Nunavut. Being a new entity, there may be a lack of understanding about the ORCY and its mandate. As a result, there is a considerable need to undertake initiatives over the course of the business plan period that support establishing the Office's public profile. It is important that early education initiatives focus on key stakeholder groups such as children, youth and their families as well as government departments and service providers.

**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 *RYC Act* states that in performing its duties and powers, the ORCY must apply Inuit societal values. Moreover, *the Act* specifically states that concerns respecting children and youth must be resolved through processes that demonstrate cooperation and respect. The Office firmly believes that the principle of *Piliriqatigiinniqlkajuqtigiinniql* is necessary to achieve the improvements for the children and youth of Nunavut that it wishes to achieve. With this in mind, it is of the utmost importance that the ORCY fosters collaborative working relationships with Government of Nunavut departments over the business planning period. The Office plans to achieve this by sharing information regarding its mandate, describing how its work will impact their work, and providing clear information with respect to legal obligations under the *RCY Act*. The ORCY believes this up-front investment will support the type of working relationship required to achieve common goals.

**Objective Five:** Establish the Office's presence on the national child and youth advocacy stage.

**What this means:** The Office will work to build supportive relationships with other advocacy offices throughout Canada. Establishing ourselves as part of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA)<sup>2</sup> will offer significant professional support, as well as access to resources, best practices and research materials. It will also serve to support provision 18(2) of *the RCY Act*, which focuses on inter-jurisdictional agreements between advocacy offices throughout Canada. Considering the degree of specialty the ORCY will offer combined with its newness, professional support from the Canadian child and youth advocacy community will be instrumental to the Office's development.

## PRIORITY INITIATIVES 2015-2018

### PRIORITIES 2015-16

- Complete recruitment and staffing for the five ORCY positions.
- Develop the Individual Advocacy Program, with a focus on completing a policy and procedure manual.
- Deliver staff training and development initiatives that focus on the following key areas: *RCY Act*, cultural awareness and Inuit societal values, child rights education, and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).
- Complete a Nunavut child and youth program and service inventory.
- Obtain membership with the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA) and participate in its annual meetings.
- Develop a communication plan and begin to implement the following:
  - The communication provisions outlined in *the RCY Act*.
  - Dialogue and education sessions with Government of Nunavut departments regarding the ORCY.
- Monitor the Government of Nunavut's progress on recommendations from the Auditor General of Canada's reports on:
  - Children, Youth and Family Programs and Services in Nunavut (March 2011).
  - Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut (March 2014).
- Explore effective ways to engage Elders in consultations on Inuit societal values and the performance of the duties and powers under *the RCY Act*.

### PRIORITIES 2016-17

- Develop the Systemic Advocacy Program, with a focus on completing a policy and procedure manual.
- Deliver staff training and development initiatives that focus on the following key areas: alternative dispute resolution and media training.
- Develop mechanisms to support effective reporting relationships between the ORCY and Government of Nunavut departments.

<sup>2</sup> The 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 a national level in the absence of a Children's Commissioner for Canada.

- Undertake activities that promote awareness of the role of the ORCY, provide public education, and engage stakeholders.
- Assess the Office's needs and identify the additional resources required to fulfill its mandate.
- Monitor the Government of Nunavut's progress on recommendations from the Auditor General of Canada's reports on:
  - Children, Youth and Family Programs and Services in Nunavut (March 2011).
  - Safety of Schools and Childcare Facilities in Nunavut (2013).
  - Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut (March 2014).

### **PRIORITIES 2017-18**

- Take steps to acquire additional resources identified for the Office's development.
- Develop a survey for the Individual Advocacy Program to assess program effectiveness.
- Explore effective ways to engage young Nunavummiut in the Office's work.
- Monitor the Government of Nunavut's progress on the recommendations from the Auditor General of Canada's reports on:
  - Children, Youth and Family Programs and Services in Nunavut (March 2011).
  - Safety of Schools and Childcare Facilities in Nunavut (2013).
  - Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut (March 2014).

# APPENDIX A: Financial Summary<sup>3</sup>

<b>BUSINESS SUMMARY</b>	2014 – 2015		2015 – 2016		2016 – 2017		2017 – 2018	
	<b>Main Estimates</b>		<b>Main Estimates</b>		<b>Planned</b>		<b>Planned</b>	
	\$0	PYs	\$0	PYs	\$0	PYs	\$0	PYs
Salary	881	6	881	6	881	6	881	6
Grants & Contributions	—		—		—		—	
Other O&M	689		689		689		689	
Subtotal	1,570		1,570		1,570		1,570	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,570</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1,570</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1,570</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1,570</b>	<b>6</b>

<sup>3</sup> As lines of business and programs are developed, the business summary may be broadened.