

# BUSINESS PLAN 2016-2019

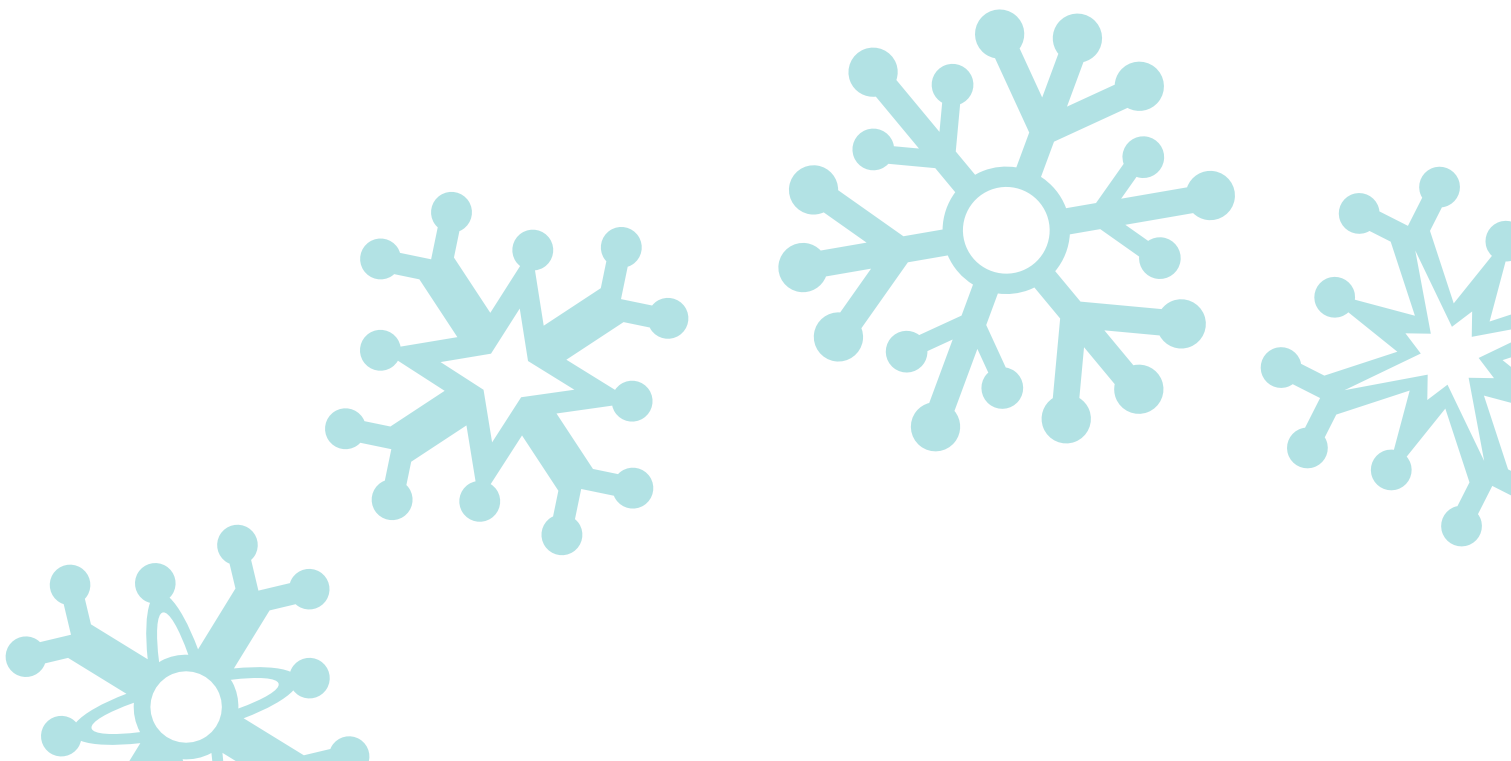


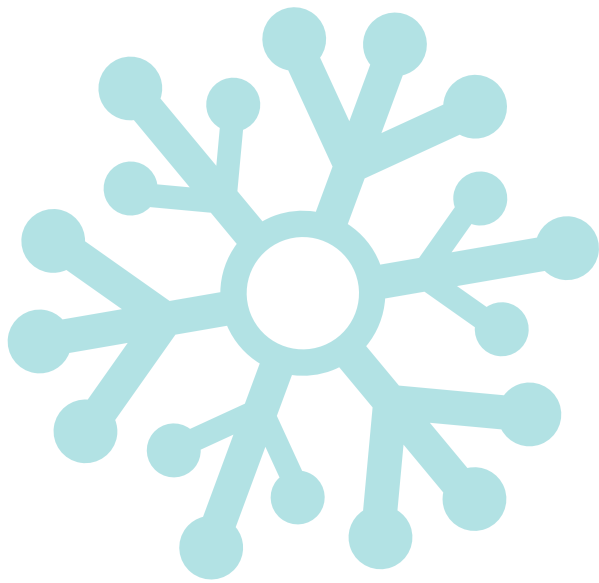
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**NUTAQQANUT INULRAMIRNULLU  
UQAQTIKHAANIK**

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

**REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH**





# MESSAGE FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

I am pleased to present the 2016-2019 Business Plan for the Representative for Children and Youth's office.

The *Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) Act* received assent on September 17, 2013. This day marked the beginning of development for Nunavut's first independent advocacy office for children and youth. Office development was identified as a key priority for 2014-2015 and it is with great pleasure that I report back on our work, as well as set out new priorities for the years 2016-2019.

Our office has accomplished much over the reporting period. The most visible achievement being the official opening of our office on September 30, 2015. The journey to this day speaks to the determination of many Nunavummiut. Between 1999 and 2015, many government leaders, employees and members of the public contributed their passion and support to the creation of our office. As staff, we respect the responsibility we now hold and we feel privileged to bring life to the hard work of those that came before us.

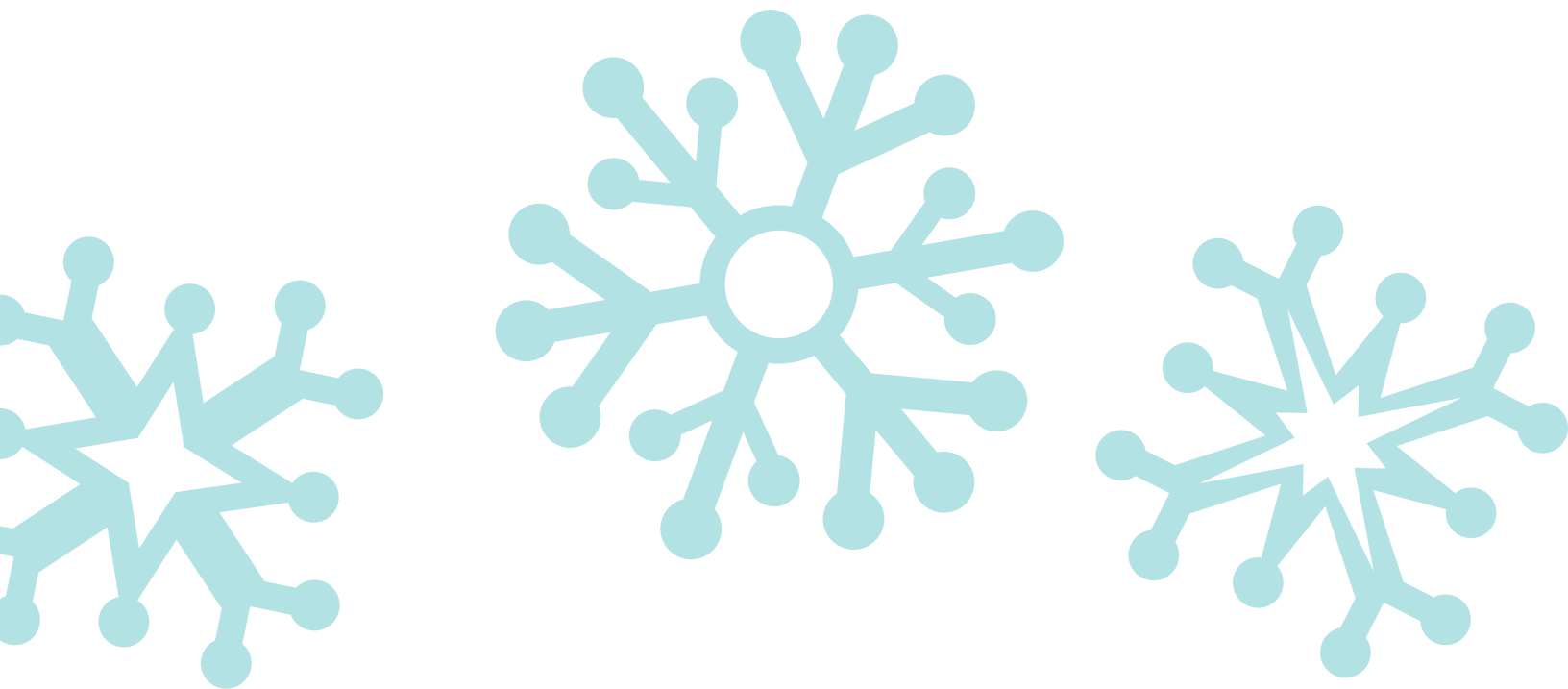
We also recognize much development work still remains and we will continue to build on the foundation we have established. In moving forward in our first year of operation, we will apply a measured approach to achieving our mandate. Our first year will focus largely on individual advocacy and public awareness, which over time will help shape and inform our office's systemic work. We have entered our first year recognizing the importance of working in a cooperative and collaborative manner with stakeholders. We understand that more can be accomplished by working together. Moreover, we approach our work understanding and respecting the role of family in a child's life. We will endeavour to include families in the work that we do.

We are striving to establish an office that is welcoming and safe; one that offers children, youth and their families support, rather than frustration or complication; one that supports Inuit societal values and adheres to the advocacy standards established by the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates. We seek to ensure our office provides children, youth and their families the assistance they need to navigate government systems designed to support them.

To that end, our office will work diligently for the children and youth of this territory. We will advocate for improvement in the services they receive, often through very challenging circumstances in their young lives. We eagerly embark on this journey, holding much confidence and hope for young Nunavummiut and their future.

As the Representative for Children and Youth in Nunavut, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and the achievement of the identified priorities set forth. As the Representative for Children and Youth in Nunavut, I am accountable to the young people of this territory. I will listen to their voice, follow their lead and support them accordingly.

Sherry McNeil-Mulak  
**Representative for Children and Youth**



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# 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 (RCY) 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. Ms. McNeil-Mulak assumed her role on June 16, 2014. The office officially opened on September 30, 2015.

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.

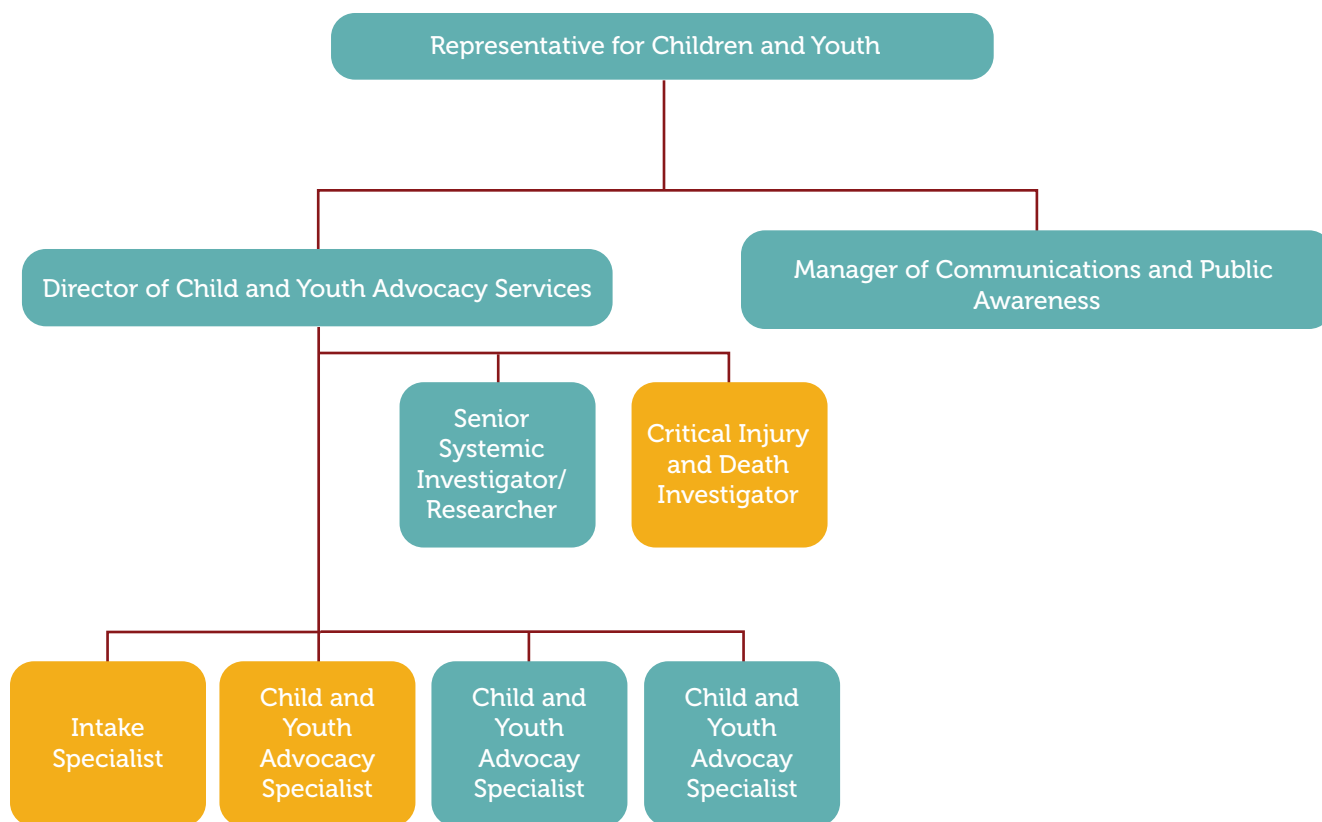
The Representative is required to prepare an annual report on the office's conduct and fulfilment of its mandate for the preceding year. The annual report is tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The Representative is also required to appear before a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly to account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

As outlined in the business summary (Table 1), the office has a budget of \$2.13 million for 2016/17. Office staff includes the Representative and the following eight positions: Director of Child and Youth Advocacy Services, Manager of Communications and Public Awareness, three Child and Youth Advocacy Specialists, an Intake Specialist, a Senior Systemic Investigator/Researcher and a Critical Injury and Death Investigator. With the exception of the Representative, staff of the office 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 office is physically located in Iqaluit and occupies a space adjacent to the Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut.

**TABLE 1: RCY BUDGET**

	<b>BUDGET(\$000)</b>			
	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Representative for Children and Youth Office	1,570	<b>2,130</b>	2,130	2,130
<b>TOTAL</b>	1,570	<b>2,130</b>	2,130	2,130



**Figure 1: Organizational Chart<sup>1</sup>**

## MANDATE

The Representative for Children and Youth’s office 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.

The office’s mandate covers a number of legal duties outlined in the *RCY Act*. As per section 3 of the *RCY Act*, these legal duties include:

- 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.

<sup>1</sup>The six blue boxes in the organizational chart represent the original positions allocated to the office. Three additional positions (yellow boxes) were allocated in March 2014.

- 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.
- 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

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.

## 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 RCY office provides services to children and youth in four main areas. These include individual advocacy, systemic advocacy, reviews of critical injuries and deaths, and communications and public awareness.



Figure 2: Core Business

## 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. Young people may need help to understand their rights and how government departments and designated authorities<sup>2</sup> should be supporting these rights. The Representative’s advocacy team works to ensure the concerns of individual children and youth are heard and addressed.

Individual advocacy offers a range of assistance depending on the specific young 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.

<sup>2</sup>Designated authority is defined as an agency, board, commission, corporation, office or other body named or described in the *RCY Act*. For simplicity, only the words *government department* appear throughout the business plan to represent both terms.

## **INFORMATION**

This kind of advocacy involves providing basic information on such things as child rights and/or government services and programs for children and youth. 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 of the office's 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 works with government to ensure the views and opinions of children and youth 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 government departments. Advocacy staff often assist with initial phone calls to service providers, provide self-advocacy assistance and make required referrals. These cases are generally 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 (i.e. parent or caregiver), 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 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 potential to impact, a group of children or youth. Often, individual cases serve to highlight emerging issues and trends.

By identifying systemic issues, the office can 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.

Systemic advocacy can encompass informal attempts to advance systemic change through collaborative processes with government departments. It can also encompass formal reviews to effect systemic change.

## **REVIEWS OF CRITICAL INJURIES AND DEATHS**

The RCY office can review the critical injury or death of a child or youth. These reviews can provide government departments with recommendations to prevent similar events from reoccurring. These reviews can also provide some healing and information to families. Our office is mindful that such reviews are highly sensitive and require significant resources and time investment in order to be carried out in a thorough manner. For these reasons, we are currently developing this area of our work with particular care and attention. As a result, this component of our office is not currently operational and is not legally in force.

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS**

When children's rights are overlooked, it is often due to a lack of understanding or awareness. Public awareness is an important aspect of the office's work. The RCY office has a very clear duty to educate the public on its role and raise awareness regarding its 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.

Effective communications and public 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 RCY 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' perspectives.



# OFFICE OBJECTIVES

The key objectives for the 2016-2019 business plan term are as follows:

**Objective One:** Establish the RCY office in a manner that supports the provision of quality advocacy services to children, youth and their families.

**What this means:** The Representative for Children and Youth's office is a new entity in Nunavut. Although 2014-15 was a significant year for office development, much work remains in the years ahead. Throughout the office's early years, the development work associated with building a solid foundation for the office will continue. The office recognizes the unique opportunity it has 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 continued evolution of the office over the course of the business plan period will serve as the overarching objective guiding all other elements of this business plan.

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

**What this means:** The Representative for Children and Youth's office 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 development.

**Objective Three:** Increase public awareness of the role and mandate of the RCY office.

**What this means:** Under the *RCY Act*, the office is required to engage in public outreach and education. The focus is to raise awareness and understanding of the role of the RCY office and the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* throughout Nunavut. Being a new organization, there is a lack of understanding about the RCY office 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 RCY 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 office must apply Inuit societal values. Moreover, the *RCY 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 *Piliriqatigiinniġ/Ikajuqtigiinniġ* 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 RCY office fosters collaborative working relationships with Government of Nunavut departments over the business planning period. The office plans to achieve this by continuing to share 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 RCY office believes this upfront investment will support the type of working relationship required to achieve common goals.

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

**What this means:** The RCY 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>5</sup> offers significant professional support, as well as access to resources, best practices and research materials. It also serves 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 office will offer combined with its newness and how often Nunavut youth are sent out of the territory for care, professional support from the Canadian child and youth advocacy community will be instrumental to the office's development and success.

<sup>5</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 the national level in the absence of a Children's Commissioner for Canada.

# REPORTING ON PRIORITY INITIATIVES 2015-2016

## PRIORITIES 2015-16

### **Complete recruitment and staffing for the five office positions.**

**Status:**

- The five positions originally allocated to the RCY office have been successfully filled. The office has subsequently been allocated three additional positions, which will be filled in 2015-16.

### **Develop the individual advocacy program, with a focus on completing a policy and procedure manual.**

**Status:**

- The operational policy and procedure manual to support the individual advocacy program has been completed. Staff training on the manual took place from July 2-6 2015. Additional training will be offered as new staff are hired.

### **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).***

**Status:**

- The first training session on the *RCY Act* was delivered on March 18, 2015. The second training session was delivered on August 23, 2015. Training was delivered by Darlene Jonsson, legal policy support for the RCY office.
- Training related to Inuit societal values took place on April 22, 2015. The training was delivered by Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA). A subsequent staff working session related to these values was carried out as a part of the office's staff retreat, which took place from May 6-8, 2015. A training session related to Inuit history was completed on June 25, 2015. The training was delivered by QIA.
- A training session on Child Rights Impact Assessments was completed on June 24, 2015. The training was delivered by UNICEF Canada.
- In June 2015, all staff registered for an online Child and Human Rights Extension Certificate. The certificate entails the completion of four modules; the first module began in the fall of 2015.
- Child and Youth Advocacy Specialists, the Intake Specialist and the Senior Systemic Investigator/Researcher completed ASIST training prior to joining the office. Refresher courses are on an as needed basis as determined by the employee. Other staff will receive training in the fall of 2015.
- In September 2015, staff participated in the biennial conference of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates.

### **Complete a Nunavut child and youth program and service inventory.**

**Status:**

- An inventory of programs and services was first requested from government departments in September 2014. RCY staff undertook follow-up work with relevant government departments to supplement and complete the inventory, including details on out-of-territory service providers, as well as complaint and appeal processes.

### **Obtain membership with the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA) and participate in its annual meetings.**

**Status:**

- The RCY office joined the CCCYA in September 2014 and actively participates in CCCYA meetings.
- In the spring of 2015, the RCY office participated in the CCCYA working group that developed national child and youth advocacy standards.
- In March 2015, the RCY office signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was developed between CCCYA members. The MOU helps secure the seamless and timely accessibility of advocacy services for children and families moving between provinces and territories.

### **Develop a communications 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 RCY.**

**Status:**

- A draft communications plan focusing on a targeted information campaign for stakeholders who have communication obligations under the *RCY Act* was completed in June 2015. The targeted campaign – including in-person meetings with GN departments, phone calls to child and youth-serving facilities, development of written materials for child and youth-serving facilities, and a mail-out package for these facilities has been completed.
- Content for and design of the RCY's website was has been completed and the website launched in the fall of 2015.

### **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).**

**Status:**

- Recommendations and responses from both reports have been compiled into a single monitoring spreadsheet. Status updates, such as those provided by the Department of Family Services to the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts, will be used to monitor implementation progress in the upcoming years.

**Explore effective ways to engage Elders in consultations on Inuit societal values and the performance of the duties and powers under the *RCY Act*.**

**Status:**

- In May 2015, the RCY office issued a request for nominations for Elder advisors. The office is currently in the process of reviewing submissions and anticipates having Elder advisors selected by winter 2015.

## **PRIORITY INITIATIVES 2016-2019**

### **PRIORITIES 2016-17**

- Develop the systemic advocacy program, with a focus on completing a policy and procedure manual.
- Initiate the research and development phase for the critical injury and death review component of the RCY office.
- Deliver staff training and development initiatives that focus on the following key areas: alternative dispute resolution and media training.
- Assess mechanisms to support effective reporting relationships between the office and Government of Nunavut departments.
- Undertake activities that promote awareness of the role of the RCY office, provide public education, and engage stakeholders.
- Assess the office's needs and identify the additional resources required to fulfil 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 (November 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.
- Assess the effectiveness of the survey for the individual advocacy program.
- Finalize the development of the critical injury and death review component of the office.
- 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 (November 2013).
  - Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut (March 2014).

## **PRIORITIES 2018-19**

- Provide input to the Legislative Assembly on the provisions and operations of the *RCY Act* in advance of the mandated five-year review of the Act.
- 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 (November 2013).
  - Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut (March 2014).



# APPENDIX A: Financial Summary

Business Summary	2015 – 2016		2016 – 2017		2017 – 2018		2018 – 2019	
	Main Estimates		Main Estimates		Planned		Planned	
	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs
Salary	881	9	<b>1,381</b>	9	1,381	9	1,381	9
Grants & Contributions	—		—		—		—	
Other O&M								
Travel and Transportation	175		<b>195</b>		195		195	
Materials and Supplies	175		<b>195</b>		195		195	
Purchased Services	65		<b>65</b>		65		65	
Utilities	15		<b>15</b>		15		15	
Contract Services	215		<b>235</b>		235		235	
Fees & Payments	5		<b>5</b>		5		5	
Tangible Assets	19		<b>19</b>		19		19	
Computer Hardware and Software	20		<b>20</b>		20		20	
Other O&M - Subtotal	689		<b>749</b>		749		749	
<b>Subtotal</b>	1,570		<b>2,130</b>		2,130		2,130	
<b>TOTAL</b>	1,570	9	2,130	9	2,130	9	2,130	9