

# BUSINESS PLAN 2018-2021

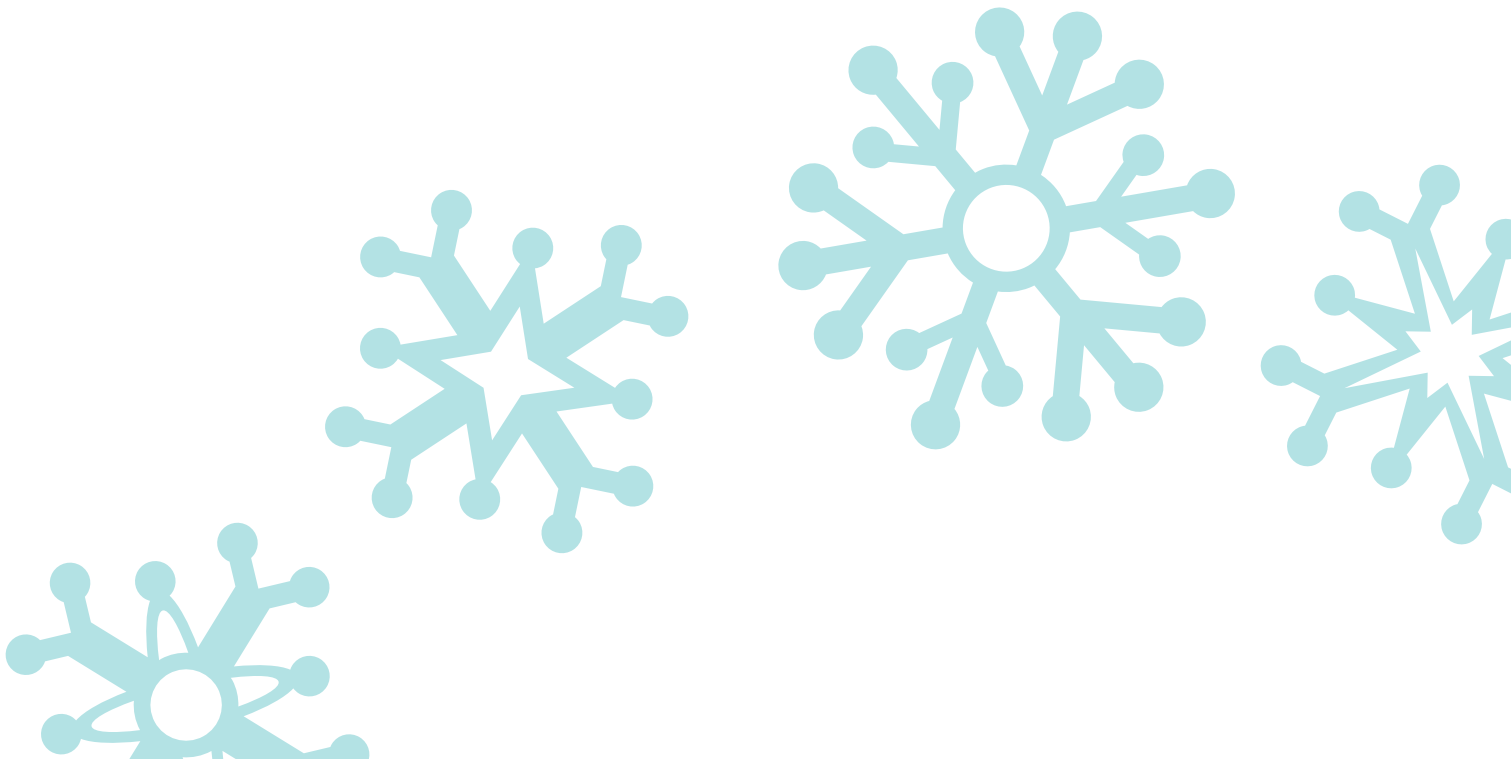


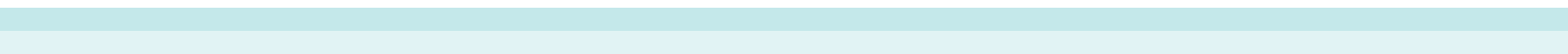
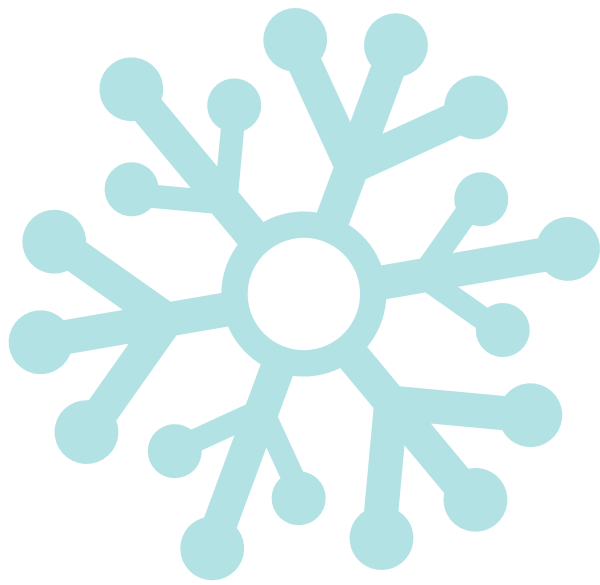
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**NUTAQQANUT INULRAMIRNULLU  
UQAQTIKHAANIK**

**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. 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.

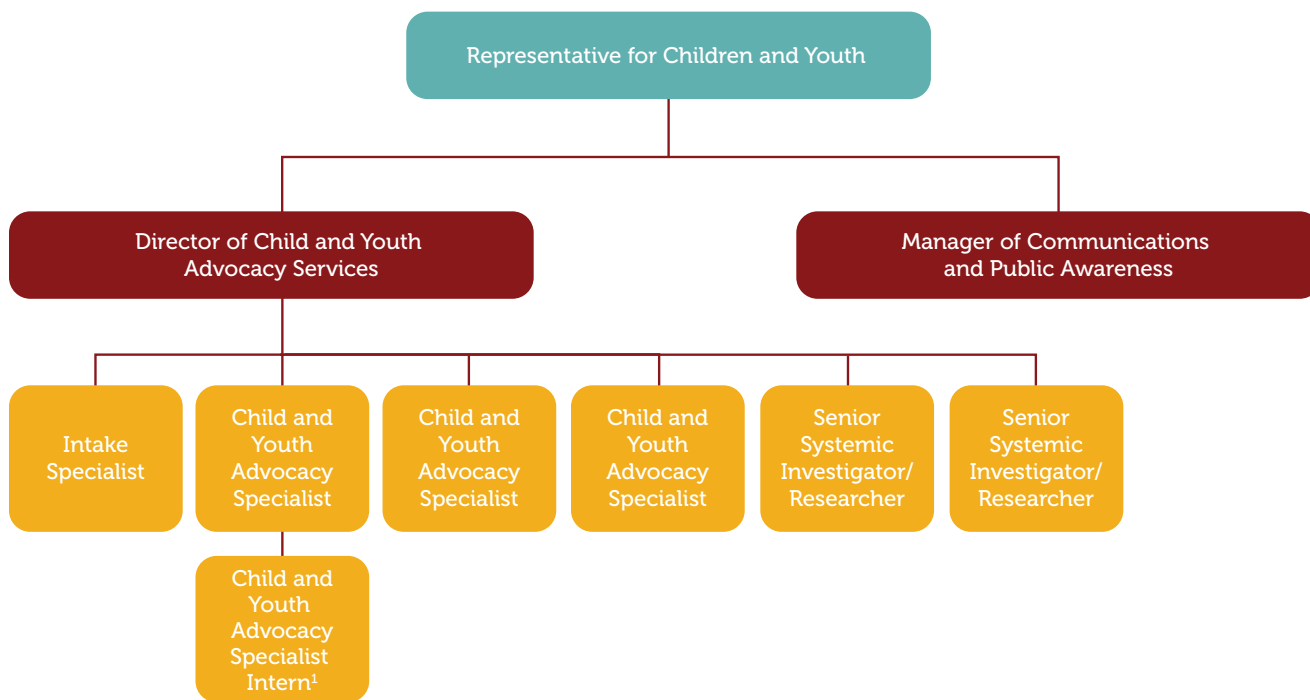
The Representative is required to prepare an annual report on the office’s conduct and fulfilment of its mandate for the preceding year. The annual report is tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The Representative is also required to appear before a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly to account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

As outlined in Table 1, the Representative for Children and Youth’s Office (RCYO) has a budget of \$2.130 million for 2018-19. Office staff includes the Representative and the following nine positions: a Director of Child and Youth Advocacy Services, a Manager of Communications and Public Awareness, two Senior Systemic Investigators/Researchers, an Intake Specialist, three Child and Youth Advocacy Specialists, as well as a two-year Child and Youth Advocacy Specialist Intern through the Sivuliqtiksats Internship Program. 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.

**TABLE 1: RCYO BUDGET**

	BUDGET (\$000)			
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Representative for Children and Youth’s Office	2,137	<b>2,130</b>	2,130	2,130
<b>TOTAL</b>	2,137	<b>2,130</b>	2,130	2,130



**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<sup>2</sup>, 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;

<sup>1</sup> Two-year position under the Sivuliqtiqsat Internship Program ending November 2018.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

- 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.

## 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](http://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 2018-21 business plan term are as follows:

1

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

**What this means:** 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 increasing youth involvement in our office.

2

**Objective Two:** Operate the RCYO 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 fairly new entity in Nunavut. Although 2014-16 were significant years for office development, we recognize that much work remains in the years ahead. Throughout the office's early years of operation, we will continue to strengthen our foundation. This commitment to ongoing development and improvement will ensure the office 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 RCYO.

**What this means:** Our organization is in its infancy and there is still much work to do to increase awareness and understanding of our role, the RCYA, and the CRC. As such, our office continues to focus on public awareness. We are working to ensure children, youth, and their families who want our support feel comfortable accessing it. 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 GN departments to improve programs and services for the children and youth of Nunavut.

**What this means:** The RCYA states the Representative must apply Inuit societal values in performing her duties and powers. Moreover, the RCYA identifies 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 for young Nunavummiut that we wish to achieve.

With this in mind, it is of the utmost importance that the RCYO fosters effective working relationships with GN departments. The office plans to achieve this by continuing to share information regarding its 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 relationship required to achieve common goals.

**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. This is fairly new and uncharted territory for Nunavut. As a result, the office is making considerable investment in building its capacity by identifying and delivering staff training and development initiatives on an ongoing basis. Such an investment ensures staff can provide expert advice to all stakeholder groups.

**6 Objective Six:** Engage on an ongoing basis 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)<sup>3</sup>, 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 on inter-jurisdictional agreements between advocacy offices throughout Canada.

Considering the degree of specialty the office offers, 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 is integral to the office's development and success.

<sup>3</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.

# REPORTING ON PRIORITY INITIATIVES 2017-18

## PRIORITIES 2017-18

**Assess the effectiveness of the individual advocacy program using the office's customized survey tool.**

### STATUS:

- In 2017-18, the RCYO began administering surveys to young Nunavummiut, parents, and service providers who had worked with the office. Of those service providers surveyed, 69% were satisfied with their experience working with the RCYO, 28% were neutral, and 3% were dissatisfied. Of those surveyed, 91% said they would recommend the RCYO to others. There was not sufficient data to report on feedback from young Nunavummiut or parents. The RCYO will continue to request and assess feedback from all three groups on an ongoing basis.

**Explore effective ways to engage young Nunavummiut in the office's work, with a focus on further developing the youth advisor program.**

### STATUS:

- The RCYO developed a made-in-Nunavut self-advocacy workshop for young people in grades 7-12. The workshop has been delivered to more than 400 young Nunavummiut from across the territory.
- RCYO staff travelled to 12 communities and visited 17 schools across the territory. In most schools, RCYO staff gave classroom presentations, as well as, school staff presentations.
- As part of the RCYO's formal systemic review on child and youth mental health services in Nunavut, the office developed a youth-specific survey to ensure the voice of young people is reflected in the review.
- The RCYO launched its third annual, Your Story, Your Voice contest. This contest aligns with National Child Day and is designed to raise awareness of the RCYO and child rights among young Nunavummiut. Contest winners were announced on November 20, 2017.
- In collaboration with CJRU at Ryerson University, young Nunavummiut with the support of the RCYO developed a national radio broadcast in support of child rights. The broadcast aired on November 20, 2017, National Child Day.
- The office continues to research additional ways to meaningfully engage young people in the office's work. This includes examining best practices related to youth engagement in other jurisdictions in Canada.

## **Develop a child and youth friendly made-in-Nunavut resource on child rights.**

### **STATUS:**

- The RCYO is working with the Department of Education and Inhabit Education to develop a grade three child rights guided reading book, under the department's Balanced Literacy program. The scope and sequencing component of the project was completed in November 2017. The book is currently under developed and is anticipated to be distributed to Nunavut schools in the 2018-19 school year.

## **Continue to conduct proactive/information sharing meetings with the main child and youth serving GN departments: Department of Family Services, Department of Health, Department of Justice, and the Department of Education.**

### **STATUS:**

- The office completed its fall proactive/information sharing meetings with Deputy Ministers and senior officials from the Departments of Health, Education, Justice, and Family Services.
- Draft protocols have been developed and provided to the Departments of Health, Education, Justice, and Family Services for their review and input. The protocols are intended to provide a framework for collaboration, cooperation, and communication in the implementation of the RCYA.

## **Continue the development of the office's critical injury and death review program.**

### **STATUS:**

- RCYO staff continued preliminary development work on the critical injury and death review program. Specific activities related to this work included:
  - Completed a review of literature and a jurisdictional scan of legislation for other Canadian advocacy offices pertaining to critical injury and death reviews.
  - Worked with key critical injury and death contacts from other Canadian advocacy offices to gather information related to the development and operation of their programs.
  - Began compiling information related to critical injury and death work in Nunavut and conducted preliminary meetings with select key stakeholders.
  - Initiated the development of program material, including a fact sheet and death reporting forms.

**Provide staff training and professional development initiatives in the following key areas: the *Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)* and the *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)*.**

**STATUS:**

- The RCYO developed training material related to the CFSA. Training was completed in January 2018.
- YCJA training was completed in December 2017.
- Additional training included: RCYA, Indigenous Cultural Competence, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), Child and Youth Human Rights extension certificate, vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue, Inunnguiniq Parenting Program, conflict resolution, and client service training. Staff also received individualized training based on their learning needs and role within the organization.

**Participate in meetings of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates and contribute to Council initiatives.**

**STATUS:**

- The Representative attended Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates meetings in June and September 2017 and January 2018.
- The Representative is the lead for the inter-jurisdictional education sessions working group and is also a member of the staff exchange working group.
- Contributed to the development and release of the following joint statements, letters, and releases:
  - Joint statement on Bill C-45, An Act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other Acts. Letter containing the statement sent to the Prime Minister of Canada and Alberta Premier Rachel Notley in her capacity as Chair of the Council of the Federation.
  - Joint letter regarding Bill S-206, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (protection of children against standard child-rearing violence). Letter issued to the Senate of Canada.
  - Joint press release on National Child Day urging an increased awareness of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
  - Joint press release on Indigenous Child Welfare resulting from participation in the emergency meeting on First Nation, Inuit, Metis Nation Child and Family Services.

**As part of the office's systemic advocacy work, monitor the GN's progress on the recommendations from the Auditor General of Canada's (OAG) 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).

**STATUS:**

- The RCYO continues to review status updates, request information, and provide input to GN staff on progress related to these three OAG reports.



# PRIORITY INITIATIVES 2018-2021

## 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.
- Continue to deliver youth-focused self-advocacy workshops targeting grades 7-12 across the territory.
- Complete the office's first formal systemic review.
- Provide staff training and professional development initiatives in the following key areas: Indigenous Cultural Competence and explore the possibility of an advocacy staff exchange.
- Complete a social media strategy in advance of launching RCYO's own social media channel(s).
- Initiate an inter-jurisdictional scan of the Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) tools used in Canada and internationally.
- Continue the development of the office's reviews of critical injuries and deaths program, including identifying necessary resources.
- Participate in meetings of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates and contribute to Council initiatives, including hosting the 2018 spring meeting.
- Continue to develop child and youth friendly made-in-Nunavut resources on child rights.
- Finalize protocols with the Departments of Health, Education, Justice, and Family Services to guide the working relationship with the RCYO.
- Continue to explore effective ways to engage young Nunavummiut in the office's work.
- Provide feedback to the Departments of Education, Community and Government Services, and Family Services on their implementation of OAG 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)



## **PRIORITIES 2019-20**

- Provide input to the Legislative Assembly on the provisions and operations of the RCYA in advance of the mandated five-year review of the Act.
- Explore additional ways to engage parents and families in the RCYO's work.
- Evaluate the level of general awareness of the RCYO and its mandate.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the office's promotional materials.
- Initiate the development of a Nunavut-specific version of the CRIA tool.
- Conduct a quality assurance file audit on the individual advocacy program.
- 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.
- Use the results from the evaluation of office awareness and promotional material to initiate changes to the office's public awareness and communications strategy.
- Collaborate with the GN to explore implementation of a CRIA tool.
- Participate in meetings of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates and contribute to Council initiatives.



## APPENDIX A: Financial Summary<sup>4</sup>

Business Summary	2017 – 2018 Main Estimates		2018 – 2019 Main Estimates		2019 – 2020 Planned		2020 – 2021 Planned	
	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs
Salary	1,388	9	<b>1,381</b>	<b>9</b>	1,381	9	1,381	9
Grants and Contributions	–		–		–		–	
Other O & M								
Travel and Transportation	195		<b>195</b>		195		195	
Materials and Supplies	195		<b>195</b>		195		195	
Purchased Services	65		<b>65</b>		65		65	
Utilities	15		<b>15</b>		15		15	
Contract Services	235		<b>235</b>		235		235	
Fees and 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	749		<b>749</b>		749		749	
<b>Subtotal</b>	2,137		<b>2,130</b>		2,130		2,130	
<b>TOTAL</b>	2,137	9	<b>2,130</b>	9	2,130	9	2,130	9

<sup>4</sup> The financial summary identifies nine RCYO funded positions. The organizational chart on page five of the 2018-21 business plan depicts 10 RCYO positions. The tenth position is the Child and Youth Advocacy Specialist Intern position, which is funded by the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs' Sivuliqtiksats Internship Program.