

BUSINESS PLAN 2020-2023

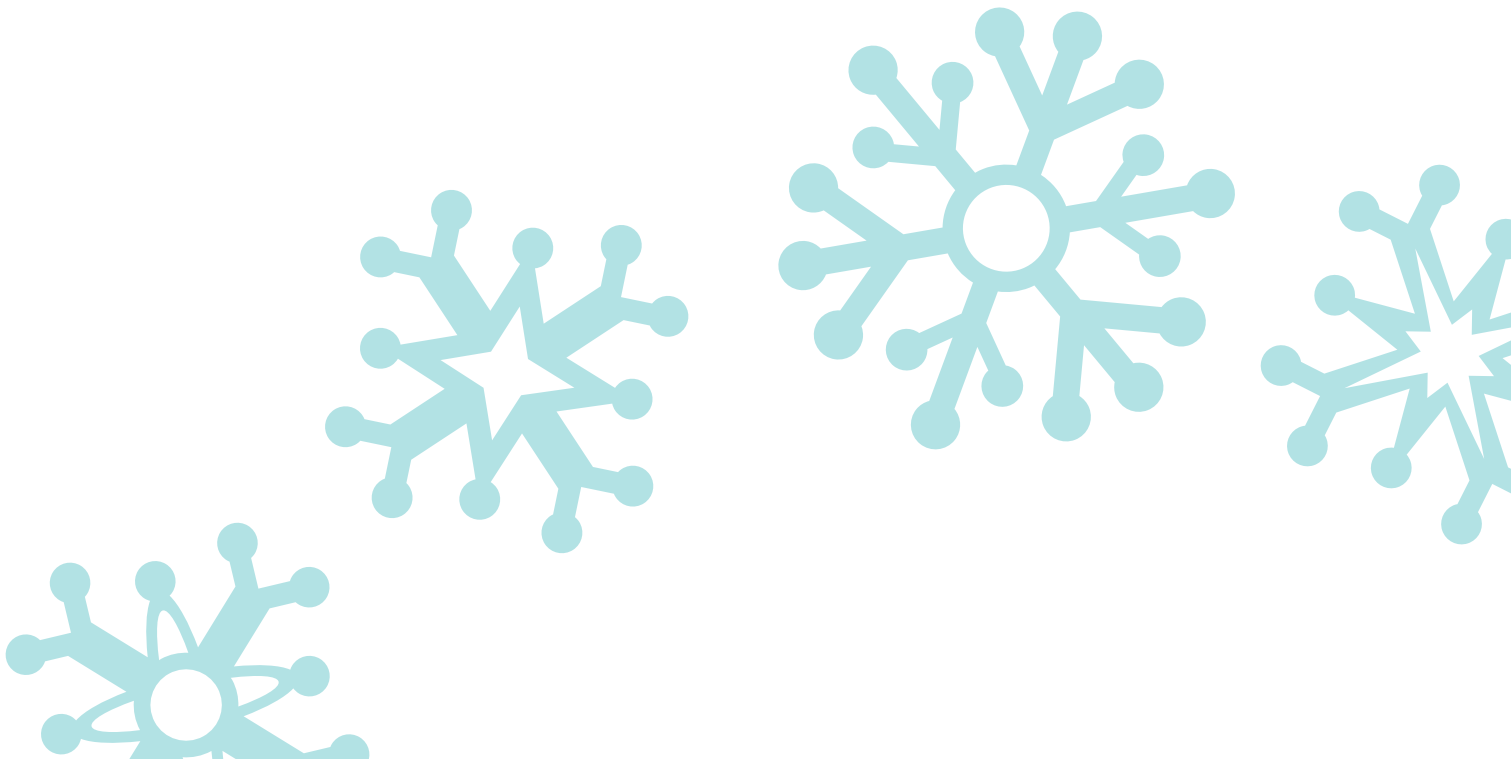


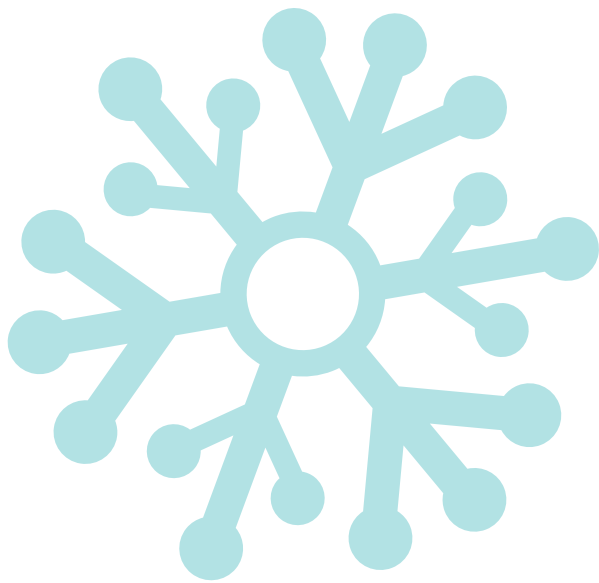
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**NUTAQQANUT INULRAMIRNULLU
UQAQTIKHAANIK**

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

**REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH**





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OVERVIEW

The Representative for Children and Youth (Representative) 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).

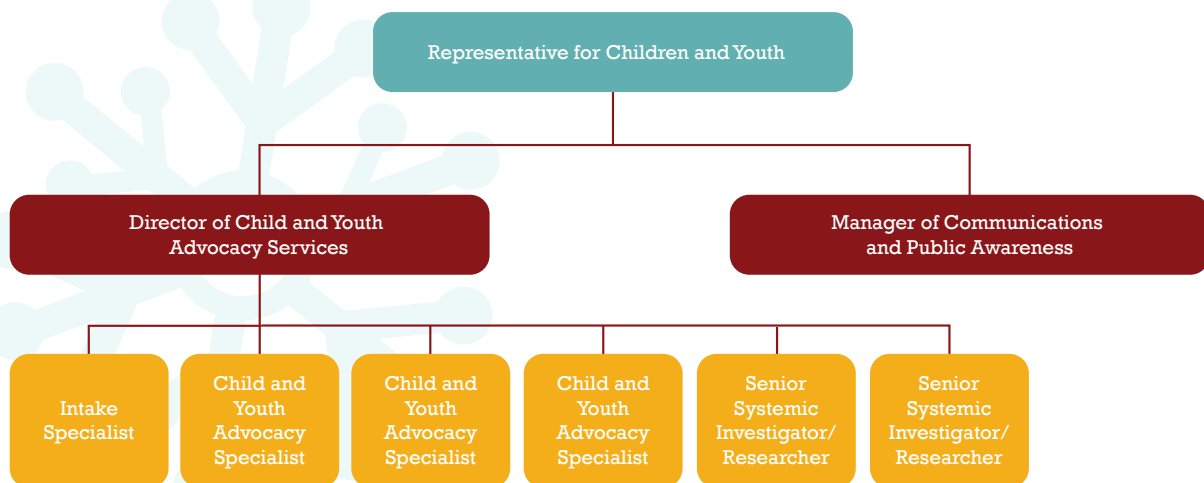
The RCYA states the Representative's mandate is to advocate for the rights and interests of children and youth and to assist the Legislative Assembly and the Government of Nunavut (GN) in ensuring their needs are met. The office largely serves children and youth who are 18 years of age and younger. However, 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 2020-2021. 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, an intake specialist, three child and youth advocacy specialists, and two senior systemic investigators/researchers. With the exception of the Representative, staff are members of the public service as defined in the *Public Service Act*. Figure 1 illustrates 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 (ISV), 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.

Figure 2: Core Business



CORE BUSINESS

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

INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

The GN provides many programs and services to support children and youth. 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 they can't visit a family member. In these types of situations, our office can assist by providing information, coaching in self-advocacy, or providing advocacy support to an individual or group. Every case that is brought to the RCYO's attention is unique and we tailor our response to the situation and needs of the young person involved.

PROVIDING INFORMATION

Nunavummiut can always 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 always try to help connect the client to the person or resource that can provide the necessary information or supports.

SELF-ADVOCACY COACHING

It is not always easy for a young person or a concerned parent or guardian to express their views to government service providers. At any point in the advocacy process, our staff can help an individual learn the skills required to self-advocate, so they feel more empowered to express their views.

ADVOCACY SUPPORT

Most of the cases that come to our office require advocacy support. This is when one of our advocacy specialists works directly with a young person, or on behalf of a group of young people, and with a government service provider(s) to resolve an issue. A government service provider is any individual who works for the GN and provides a government service or program to children and youth, such as a teacher, nurse, mental health worker, community social services worker (CSSW) or probation officer. Advocacy support can be basic or comprehensive, depending on the complexity of the issue and the level of RCYO involvement required to resolve the matter. Typically, advocacy support includes working directly with service providers, meetings with the child or youth and their parent(s) or caregiver(s), and case conferences. Whenever possible, the voice of the young person leads the advocacy work.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

Typically, systemic issues affect many children or youth; happen when government policies or services aren't working as intended; have a good chance of reoccurring if not addressed; and may require government to change its policies, practices, or laws.

Systemic issues can come to our office's attention in many ways. Our staff might see the same issue repeatedly in different individual cases and then flag it for further investigation. Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) or youth parliamentarians might raise an issue in the Legislative Assembly. 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 to our attention.

When our office becomes aware of a systemic issue, we can then choose to investigate it. We can do this 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 ISV, particularly the values of *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. Informal systemic advocacy work may or may not result in a public report outlining recommendations.

Formal systemic reviews generally focus on more complex issues. Considerations that may elevate a matter from informal to formal review status 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.

Systemic issues that require formal review tend to be comprised of many layers. For this reason, formal reviews require interviews, requests for and the review of documentation, and significant research and analysis to formulate well-informed conclusions and recommendations. Formal systemic advocacy typically results in recommendations issued to government departments targeting system improvements. Often these recommendations are shared through a public report.

REVIEWS OF CRITICAL INJURIES AND DEATHS

This area of our work involves conducting a review when a child or youth receiving government services experiences a serious injury or dies. These reviews provide meaningful opportunities to learn from mistakes. They are not about placing blame. 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 the proper knowledge and capacity to conduct thoroughly. As a result, we continue to develop this program with particular attention and care. The section of the RCYA related to reviews of critical injuries and deaths is not yet in force.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

The RCYO has a legal duty to raise Nunavummiut's awareness of child rights and to share information about how our team can work with young people to support their rights. 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: presentations, information sessions, community outreach, contests, developing promotional material, attending public events, and maintaining our office's website (www.rcynu.ca). All of these activities share one goal which is to build and strengthen relationships with our many stakeholders including; children, youth, families, the GN and other designated authorities, and the public.

OFFICE OBJECTIVES

The key objectives for the 2020-2023 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 United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 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: 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 their 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 *piliriqatigiinni/ikajuqtigiinni* 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.

² 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 CCCYA, the advocates identify areas of mutual concern and work to develop ways to address issues at the national level.

REPORTING ON PRIORITIES 2019-2020

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 of the Act.

STATUS:

- The RCYO completed a review of the provisions and operations of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*.

Explore additional ways to engage parents and families in the office's work.

STATUS:

- The development of a family advocacy workshop is ongoing and other ways to engage parents and families have been identified.

Evaluate the level of general awareness of the office and its mandate.

STATUS:

- We have received input from various stakeholders regarding the level of general awareness of the office and its mandate. We will evaluate this input and work to identify the next steps required to continue increasing awareness of the RCYO in a culturally appropriate and relatable way.

Evaluate the effectiveness of the office's promotional materials.

STATUS:

- As we work to determine the next steps required to address the input received regarding the level of general awareness of the office and its mandate, input received regarding the office's promotional materials will be considered as well.

Initiate the development of a Nunavut-specific version of the Child Rights Impact Assessment tool.

STATUS:

- Development of a Nunavut-specific Child Rights Impact Assessment tool is ongoing. The RCYO will continue to work with senior government officials to finalize the tool.

Conduct a quality assurance file audit on the individual advocacy program.

STATUS:

- A quality assurance file audit was completed on the individual advocacy program in February 2020.

Develop a system for monitoring recommendations resulting from systemic reviews.

STATUS:

- Development of a database for monitoring the status of all systemic issues is ongoing.

Complete a second round of community visits and start the third round of visits.

STATUS:

- RCYO staff conducted 12 community visits, completing the second round of community visits and starting a third. We gave presentations and delivered self-advocacy workshops to over 500 young Nunavummiut across all regions.

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.

STATUS:

- *Annie and Uqi Play Out*, the second book in our *Tamatta Pijunnautiqqutugut Reading Series* has been completed. This book was developed for a grade two reading level focusing on personal wellness, coping strategies, and being community-minded. Extension activities, to assist educators with the subject matter and provide classroom activity ideas, are being developed and will accompany the book, which is expected to arrive in schools across the territory during the 2020-2021 school year.

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.

STATUS:

- Senior management and the systemic team completed the *Coroner's Act* training.
- RCYO participated in numerous educational sessions through the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates, including one on Indigenous ways of knowing and being in advocacy, investigations, and critical injuries and death programs.

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

STATUS:

- The RCYO attended CCCYA meetings in September 2019 and in January 2020.
- The RCYO contributed to the development and release of the *National Paper on Youth Suicide* that was released in September 2019.
- At the September meeting, the RCYO presented on its systemic review of mental health services.



PRIORITY INITIATIVES 2020-2023

PRIORITIES 2020-2021

- Develop resources to engage parents and families in the office's work.
- Initiate changes to the office's public awareness and communications strategy, based on the results of the evaluation of the general awareness of the office and its mandate, and the office's promotional materials.
- Continue development of a Nunavut-specific version of the Child Rights Impact Assessment tool.
- Analyse the results and implement any required action from the individual advocacy file audit.
- Continue to engage with communities and explore enhancing the office's presence across the territory.
- Continue to develop child rights resources.
- Launch the critical injury and death review program.
- Provide individually tailored training and development opportunities for office staff.
- Participate in meetings of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates and contribute to Council initiatives.

PRIORITIES 2021-2022

- Implement parent and family engagement resources.
- Explore ways to increase the office's presence across the territory.
- Explore opportunities for youth to collectively share their views with government leaders.
- Continue to develop child rights resources.
- Provide individually tailored training and development opportunities for office staff.
- Conduct a 5-year retrospective data analysis of individual advocacy case data to identify trends and themes affecting children and youth.
- Develop and administer an office staff satisfaction survey.
- Develop a quality assurance audit cycle for all office program areas.
- Participate in meetings of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates and contribute to Council initiatives.

PRIORITIES 2022-2023

- Continue to develop child rights resources.
- Provide individually tailored training and development opportunities for office staff.
- Analyse the results and implement any required action from the staff satisfaction survey.
- Participate in meetings of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates and contribute to Council initiatives.



APPENDIX A: Financial Summary

Business Summary	2019 – 2020 Main Estimates		2020 – 2021 Main Estimates		2021 – 2022 Planned		2022 – 2023 Planned	
	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs
Salary	1,426	9	1,441	9	1,441	9	1,441	9
Grants and Contributions	–		–		–		–	
Other O & M								
Travel and Transportation	195		180		180		180	
Materials and Supplies	145		145		145		145	
Purchased Services	65		65		65		65	
Contract Services	250		250		250		250	
Fees and Payments	20		20		20		20	
Tangible Assets	19		15		15		15	
Computer Hardware and Software	10		14		14		14	
Other O & M – Subtotal	704		689		689		689	
TOTAL	2,130	9	2,130	9	2,130	9	2,130	9