

BUSINESS PLAN 2017-2020

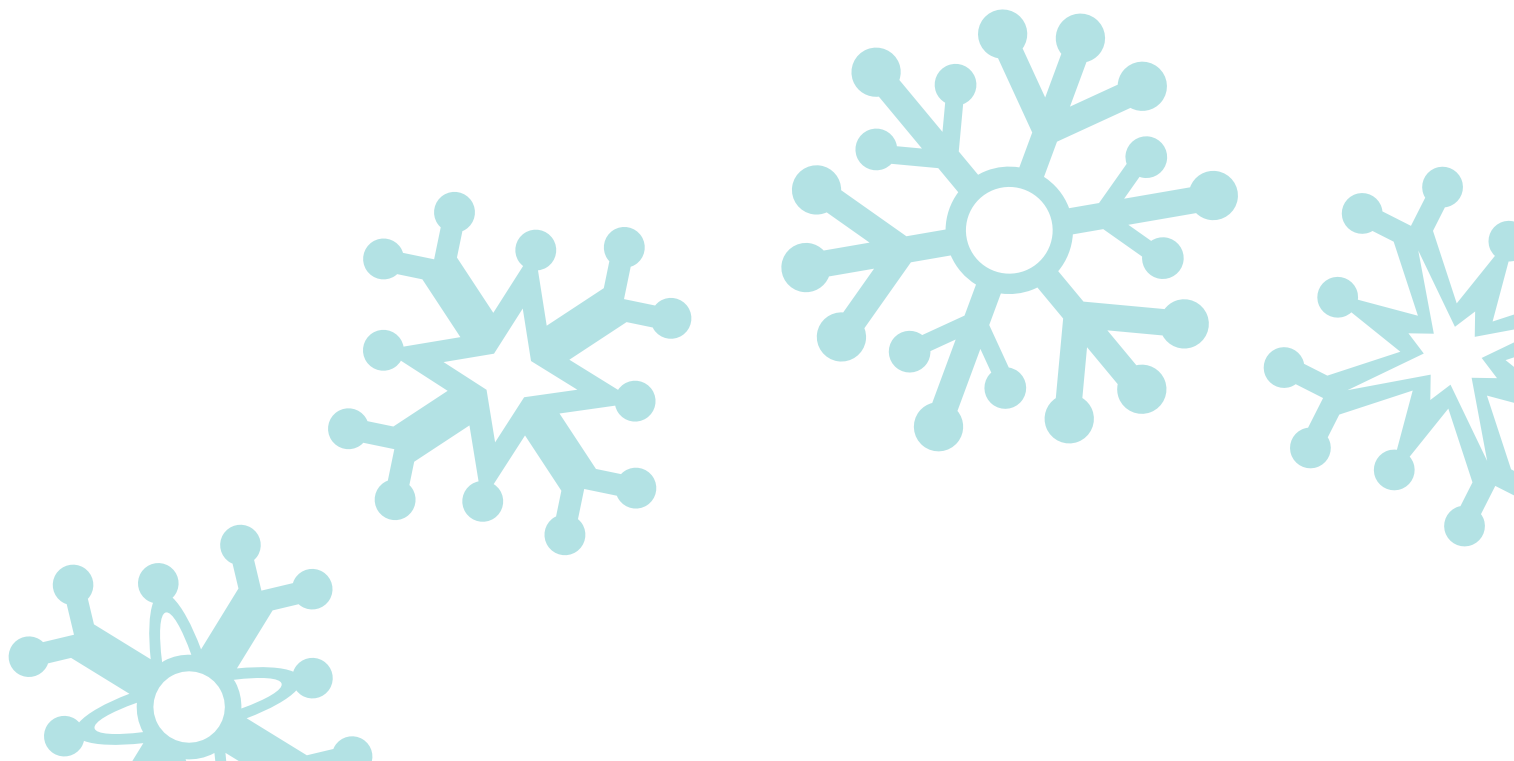


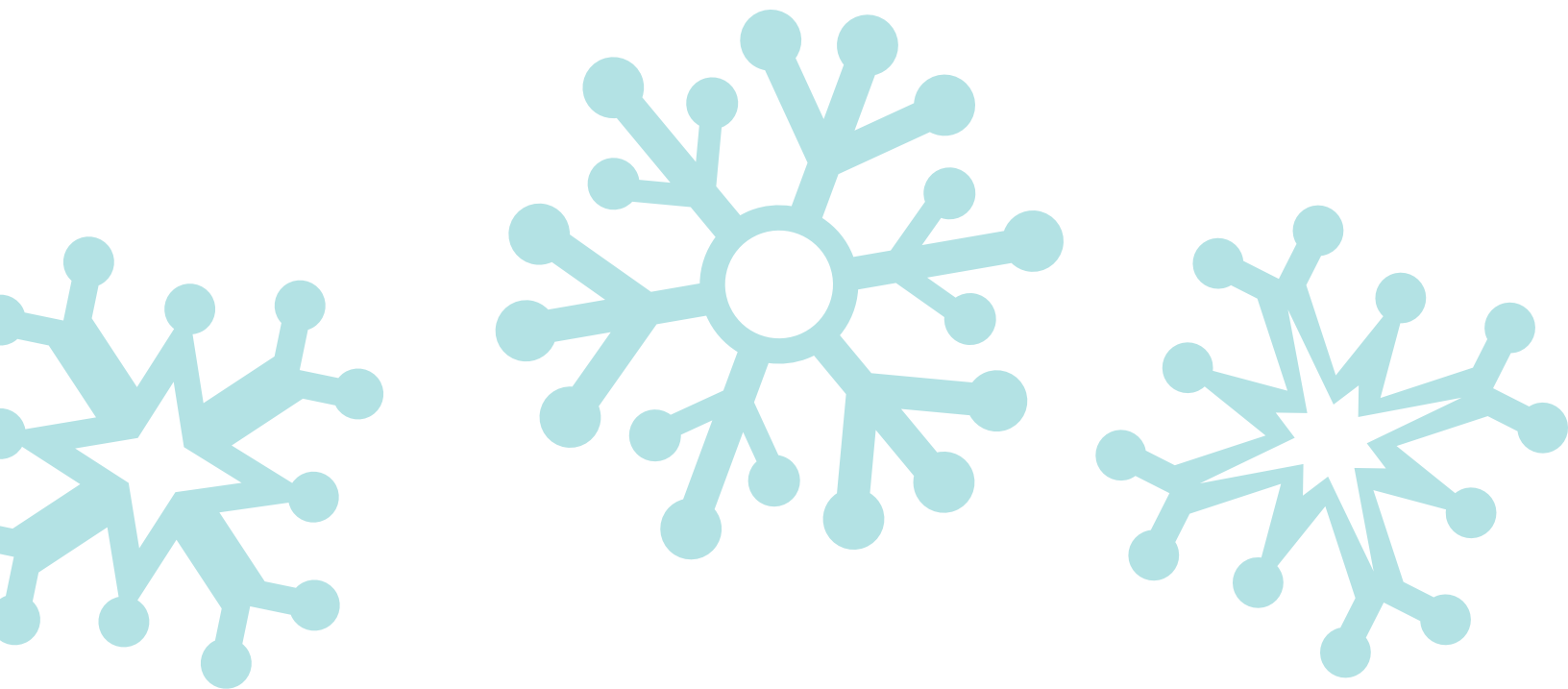
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**NUTAQQANUT INULRAMIRNULLU
UQAQTIKHAANIK**

**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 (RCY) Act*.

The *RCY Act* 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 *RCY Act* 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 in ensuring their needs are met. The office largely serves children and youth who are 18 years of age and younger. However, the *RCY Act* 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 RCY’s office has a budget of \$2.13 million for 2017-18. 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 Sivuliqtiksat 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: RCY BUDGET

	BUDGET (\$000)			
	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Representative for Children and Youth’s Office	2,130	2,130	2,130	2,130
TOTAL	2,130	2,130	2,130	2,130

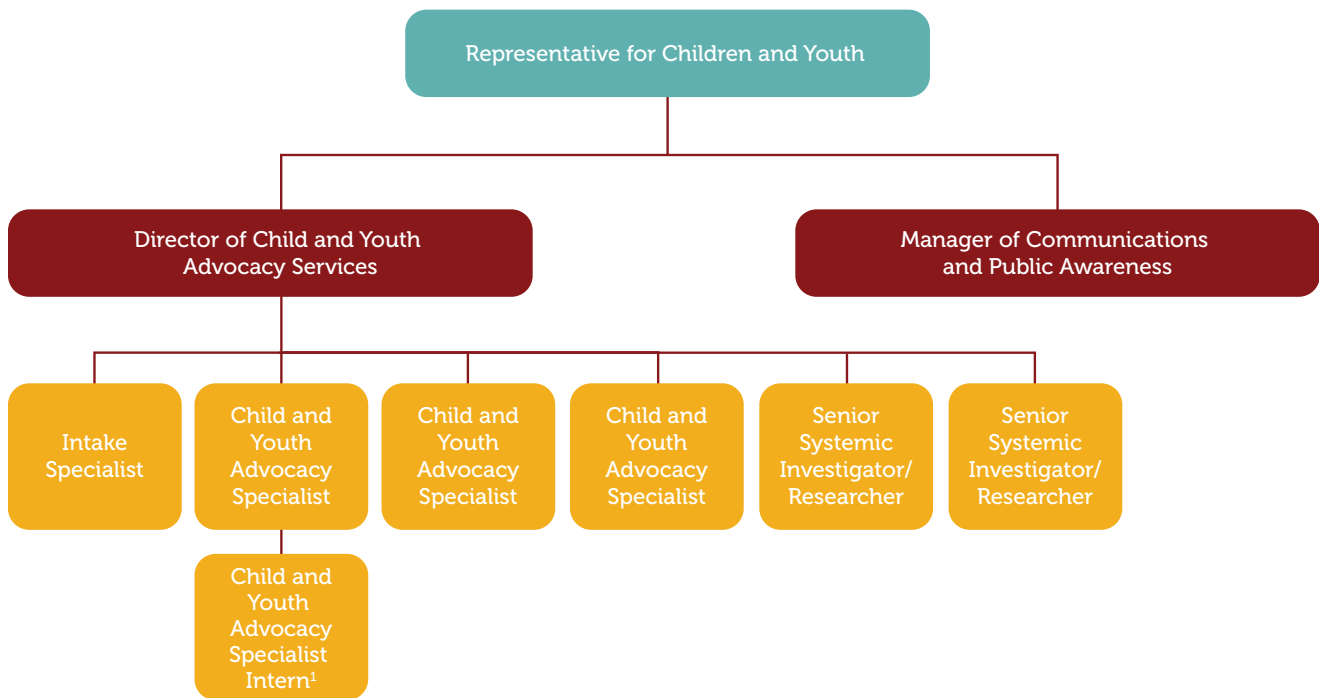


Figure 1: Organizational Chart

MANDATE

The RCY’s 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 RCY’s office is guided by the *RCY Act*, the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Inuit societal values, national advocacy standards and the voice of the child.

The *RCY Act* identifies the office’s legal duties, which include:

- Ensure that the rights and interests of children and youth, individually and collectively, are protected and advanced and that government departments and designated authorities² 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 and youth and their families and those who provide them with services.
- Inform the public about the rights and interests of children and youth and the role of our office.

¹ Two-year position under the Sivuliqtiksats Internship Program

² A 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.

- 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

The office's work is based on the following key principles described in the *RCY Act*:

- 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's office 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 Government of Nunavut provides many programs and services to support children and youth. However, a child, youth or family member may have concerns or questions about a service or program. They may not know who to contact. They may feel uncomfortable raising questions with service providers or departments. Sometimes, despite best intentions, problems occur – particularly when a young person has complex needs that many service providers and/or departments must work together to address. In any of these situations, our office is able to provide a child or youth with individual advocacy support.

The kind of individual advocacy support our office provides depends on a young person's unique needs and situation. We can provide information, coach a young person to advocate for his or herself, and/or work with a child who needs direct advocacy intervention.

INFORMATION

Nunavummiut can contact our office for information on child rights and/or government services and programs that support children and youth. When we receive these requests, we respond by providing the appropriate information. Sometimes, the office receives requests for support that are outside the Representative's mandate. In such cases, we can support a child, youth, family member or service provider by making a referral to the appropriate resource.

SELF-ADVOCACY SUPPORT

It is not always easy for a child or youth to express his or her views to government service providers. At any point in the advocacy process, a Child and Youth Advocacy Specialist can coach a child or youth in self-advocacy, so that 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 Government of Nunavut hears and considers the opinions of children and youth in decisions that affect them.

ADVOCACY INTERVENTION

Advocacy intervention is when a Child and Youth Advocacy Specialist works directly with a government service provider (or providers) to ensure a young person's rights are supported and their opinions are heard. Such advocacy intervention can range from basic to intensive. In some cases, an advocacy specialist works with a single service provider and the case is resolved in a short time frame. In others, an advocacy specialist works with multiple service providers from multiple departments on an ongoing basis over several months.

Typically, advocacy intervention involves: direct work with service providers; holding 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. Wherever possible, the voice of the child leads the advocacy intervention, meaning the views of the child or youth involved guide our work.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

Sometimes many young people face the same broad or 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 advocacy begins when we identify a "big picture" issue. It might be an issue we repeatedly see in our individual advocacy work. It might be an issue raised in Nunavut's legislature or in the media. Concerned young people and adults can also bring issues to our attention.

Systemic advocacy work can be conducted informally or formally. Informal advocacy mainly uses discussion and collaboration to bring about change. Formal systemic work tends to be more in-depth and often results in written reports to government departments. Our office can then choose to issue these reviews as public reports.

REVIEWS OF CRITICAL INJURIES AND DEATHS

The RCY's 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. They 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 to carry 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

The RCY's office has a very clear duty to raise Nunavummiut's awareness of child rights and the office's mandate. Our public awareness work takes many forms. It can include: presentations and other activities with children, youth and youth-serving organizations in communities across Nunavut; the development of contests and resources that help promote child rights and the RCY's office; service-provider information sessions; the distribution of material such as brochures and pamphlets; holding and/or presenting at public events; and the maintenance of the RCY website (www.rcynu.ca).



OFFICE OBJECTIVES

The key objectives for the 2017-20 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: Decision makers don't always seek out the opinions of children and youth. Yet under the *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 18 months of operation, we began helping individual children and youth in raising 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 through systemic investigations into broad issues affecting children and youth and by speaking out publicly on child and youth-related issues.

2

Objective Two: Operate the RCY's office in a manner that supports providing 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 and 2015-16 were significant years for office development, much work remains. Throughout the office's early years of operation, we will continue to reinforce 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 RCY's office.

What this means: Our organization is in its infancy and there is much work still to do to increase awareness and understanding of our role, the *RCY Act* and the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. 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 department heads 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 *RCY Act* states the Representative must apply Inuit societal values in performing her duties and powers. Moreover, the *RCY Act* identifies concerns respecting children and youth must be resolved through processes that demonstrate cooperation and respect. The RCY's office 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 RCY's office fosters effective working relationships with Government of Nunavut departments. The office plans to achieve this by continuing to share information regarding its mandate; describing how the office's work and the Government of Nunavut's work intersect; working together to overcome challenges; and by providing clear information with respect to legal obligations under the *RCY Act*. The RCY's office 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 Representative for Children and Youth's office 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 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)³, 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 *RCY Act* 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.

³ 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 2016-17

PRIORITIES 2016-17

Develop the systemic advocacy program, with a focus on completing a policy and procedure manual.

STATUS:

- The office has completed development of its systemic advocacy program and finalized the section of the policy and procedure manual related to this program.

Initiate the research and development phase for the reviews of critical injuries and deaths program.

STATUS:

- RCY staff have started the initial research and development phase for the reviews of critical injuries and deaths program. Specific activities supporting this work included:
 - Compiling information related to similar programs in Canada.
 - Participating with members of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates in a two-day investigations meeting focusing on critical injury and death reviews.
 - Planning for a site visit to a child and youth advocacy office in another jurisdiction to study a well-established critical injury and death program.

Deliver staff training and professional development initiatives in the following key areas: alternative dispute resolution and media training.

STATUS:

- Media training was delivered to RCY staff on November 25, 2015. Training was delivered ahead of the anticipated training schedule.
- RCY staff completed an Introduction to Conflict Resolution course through Mount Royal University.
- In addition to the two identified key training areas, other training initiatives included: Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA), the *RCY Act*, Elder Advisor orientation and training, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), Advanced Investigative Training for Administrative Watchdogs, and Prevention of Workplace Harassment. RCY staff also completed Mount Royal University's Child and Youth Human Rights Extension Certificate.

Assess mechanisms to support effective working relationships between the RCY's office and Government of Nunavut departments.

STATUS:

- The majority of cases reviewed by the RCY's office in 2015-16 involved the Department of Family Services and the Department of Health. Recognizing this, in 2016-17 the RCY's office worked with officials to develop a courtesy notification process tailored to each department.

- The office initiated proactive/information sharing meetings with the main child and youth serving Government of Nunavut departments: the Department of Family Services, the Department of Health, the Department of Justice and the Department of Education, as well as the GN's Quality of Life Committee.

Undertake activities that promote awareness of child rights, the RCY's office and its role.

STATUS:

- As an Iqaluit-based organization, the RCY's office recognizes the importance of community outreach in its work. The office strives to regularly visit each community throughout Nunavut. While in communities, staff make presentations to children, youth and teachers at schools, and meet with government service providers and community members.
- The RCY's office conducted numerous presentations and met with key stakeholder groups and organizations to educate them about the RCY's office and child rights over the 2016-17 fiscal year.
- In 2016-17, the office carried out a follow-up survey with Government of Nunavut service providers on its 2015-16 targeted information campaign. The office will incorporate the survey results into its future communications planning.
- The 2016 Your Story, Your Voice Contest launched in October 2016 and winners were announced on November 18th. The annual contest is designed to promote awareness of National Child Day, child rights and the RCY's office. Results from a spring 2016 contest survey of selected Nunavut principals were used to improve the office's 2016 contest.
- In June 2016, the Speaker tabled the RCY office's 2014-15 annual report in the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.

Assess the office's needs and identify the additional resources required to fulfill its mandate.

STATUS:

- An assessment of the office's human resources resulted in the following:
 - The vacant Critical Injury and Death Investigator position was changed to a second Senior Systemic Investigator/Researcher position on a temporary basis (two-year term) due to growing demand in the area of systemic advocacy. The office will reassess this change before the end of the two-year term.
 - The RCY's office was successful in its application for an intern under the Government of Nunavut's Sivuliqtiksat Internship Program. The intern joined the RCY's office in November 2016.
- Based on feedback from key stakeholders, the office identified developing made-in-Nunavut child rights material as a key educational resource priority.

As part of the office's systemic advocacy work, monitor the Government of Nunavut's progress on recommendations from the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) 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).

STATUS:

- The RCY's office continues to review status updates, request information and meet with and provide input to GN staff on progress related to these three OAG reports.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES 2017-20

PRIORITIES 2017-18

- Assess the effectiveness of the individual advocacy program using the office's customized survey tool.
- Explore effective ways to engage young Nunavummiut in the office's work, with a focus on further developing the youth advisor program.
- Develop a child and youth friendly made-in-Nunavut resource on child rights.
- Continue to conduct proactive/information sharing meetings with the main child and youth serving Government of Nunavut departments: the Department of Family Services, the Department of Health, the Department of Justice and the Department of Education.
- Continue the development of the office's reviews of critical injuries and deaths program.
- Provide staff training and professional development initiatives in the following key areas: the *Child and Family Services Act* and the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.
- Participate in meetings of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA) and contribute to Council initiatives.
- As part of the office's systemic advocacy 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.
- Complete a social media strategy in advance of launching RCY's own social media channel(s).
- Initiate an inter-jurisdictional scan of the Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) tool's use in Canada and internationally.
- As part of the office's systemic advocacy 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 2019-20

- Explore additional ways to engage parents and families in the office's work.
- Measure and evaluate progress on awareness of the RCY's office.
- Begin development of a Nunavut-specific version of the CRIA tool.



APPENDIX A: Financial Summary⁴

Business Summary	2016 – 2017 Main Estimates		2017 – 2018 Main Estimates		2018 – 2019 Planned		2019 – 2020 Planned	
	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs
Salary	1,381	9	1,381	9	1,381	9	1,381	9
Grants and Contributions	–		–		–		–	
Other O & M								
Travel and Transportation	195		195		195		195	
Materials and Supplies	195		195		195		195	
Purchased Services	65		65		65		65	
Utilities	15		15		15		15	
Contract Services	235		235		235		235	
Fees and Payments	5		5		5		5	
Tangible Assets	19		19		19		19	
Computer Hardware and Software	20		20		20		20	
Other O & M – Subtotal	749		749		749		749	
Subtotal	2,130		2,130		2,130		2,130	
TOTAL	2,130	9	2,130	9	2,130	9	2,130	9

⁴ The financial summary identifies nine RCY funded positions. The organizational chart on page five of the 2017-20 business plan depicts 10 RCY 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.