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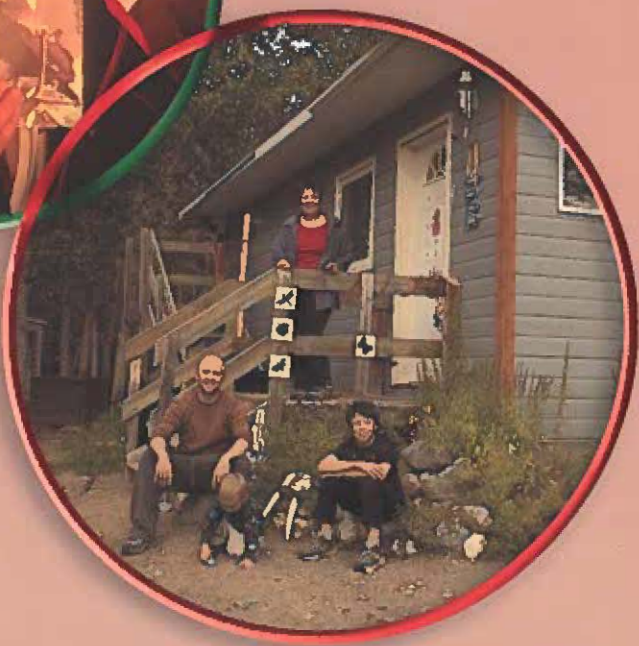
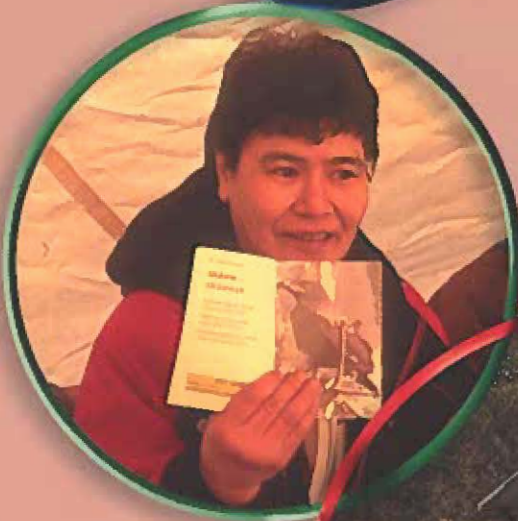


Goal 5

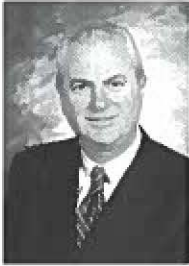
Income Security

People Participating Fully in Society

One of Five Goal Summaries of
Building on Our Success – Strategic Plan 2005-2015



Minister's Message



I am very pleased to introduce *Building on Our Success*, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's third Strategic Plan. This plan provides a framework for our activities over the next decade until 2015, and sets out a series of goals that reflect the concerns of the people of the Northwest Territories.

Our Territory is changing quickly. More than ever, it is clear that a solid education is essential for all Northerners. Effective early learning and school programs are needed to give children opportunities to grow and develop. Further education and training must be a priority for adults, so all Northerners can take advantage of employment opportunities.

At the same time, it is critical to nurture and protect our cultural heritage so that we do not lose the knowledge, skills and history that make us unique. Given the rate of change in the North, our languages and traditions are under considerable pressure. We must work together to celebrate and strengthen the cultures that have served generations of Northerners.

The goals in this Strategic Plan are the result of extensive consultation with Northerners. Over the past few years, you have told us what you want and need through survey responses, focus groups, public meetings and other correspondence. I appreciate your response. You will see in this plan that we have heard what you had to say.

This plan builds on two previous plans. The recommendations of our first plan in 1984, *Learning: Tradition and Change in the Northwest Territories*, led to the creation of our divisional boards of education and Aurora College, both essential parts of our education system today. Our second plan, *People: Our Focus for the Future*, was developed in 1994 when the Department of Education had expanded to become the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Goals set out in that plan led to extension of culture, education and career development services in Northern communities.

This 2005 Plan recognizes both the strengths and weaknesses of our past actions. It celebrates the success enjoyed by many who have accessed our programs and services, and proposes ways to build on that success.

We are looking forward to working with our partners and the citizens of the Northwest Territories to address the challenges and celebrate the successes that the next decade will bring.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles Dent". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles Dent

Minister of Education, Culture and Employment

2005



Income Security

Introduction

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment recently released a strategic plan titled, *Building on Our Success*. The plan describes the goals and actions that the Department plans to undertake during the period 2005 through 2015. To support the release of the Plan a series of five booklets have been prepared – one on each of the key areas of Departmental responsibility.

This booklet, *Income Security – People Participating Fully in Society*, lays out the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment's goal, objectives, priorities and actions related to People Participating Fully in Society.

A summary of the goals and objectives for the complete plan is provided on the following page. This summary illustrates how the activities of the Department are linked together.

For further detail, please refer to the complete document *Building on Our Success – Strategic Plan 2005-2015* which can be requested from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment or found on our website at <http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/>.

Goals	Pride in Our Culture	Education of Children and Youth	Education of Adults	A Skilled and Productive Work Environment	People Participating Fully in Society
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preservation and knowledge of our heritage 2. Promotion of the arts 3. Support and promote our official languages 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A strong foundation for learning 2. Students achieving their potential 3. A results-based education system 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access and choice for adult learners 2. A responsive college 3. An integrated adult learning network 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Northerners making informed career choices 2. A skilled workforce 3. A productive work environment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An integrated system of program supports 2. A comprehensive system of financial supports 3. A responsive income security system
Cross-Goal Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong and Effective Partnerships ECE is committed to strengthening local, territorial and federal partnerships, and working collaboratively to address problems and achieve results. 2. High Quality Human Resources ECE is committed to developing a skilled, productive civil service that represents the people it serves. 3. Responsive Information Systems ECE is committed to the collection, analysis and provision of information about its programs and services through systems that are responsive, reliable, available, and serviceable. 4. Facilities that Match Program Delivery Requirements ECE is committed to defining and addressing additional facility requirements. 5. Effective Performance Planning, Monitoring and Measurement ECE is committed to managing itself effectively, ensuring that it spends responsibly, develops transparent decision-making processes, monitors and reports on its progress, and is accountable for results. 				



Income

People Participating Fully in Society



In the NWT, there is strong enthusiasm about the prospects we have for the future. Continuing development in non-renewable resources, local businesses, tourism and people's education and skills will ensure that the NWT is a prosperous and secure place to live and to raise a family in the years to come. The challenge is to ensure that all Northerners share in this opportunity and prosperity regardless of their circumstances.

The majority of Northerners are self-reliant and have sufficient resources to meet their needs. However, there are also a significant number of persons who require either short or long-term supports to meet their needs. ECE is challenged with providing a comprehensive range of financial support programs for NWT residents in need.

These programs must recognize the importance of family and community in the promotion of self-reliance. Their focus is on helping people to make choices that



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are right for them, according to their personal circumstances, efforts, abilities, aspirations and health. We believe that while peoples' circumstances and abilities may vary, their goal is much the same – *participating fully in society.*

Objectives

- 1. An Integrated System of Program Supports*
- 2. A Comprehensive System of Financial Supports*
- 3. A Responsive Income Security System*

Vision

People actively participating in community and society to their fullest potential.



21st Century Challenges

Income Levels

The increase in economic activity since 1998 has led to a higher average income in the Northwest Territories. Between 1995 and 2003, the average employment income in the NWT increased by 23%. The average employment income in small communities increased by 37% during this period. This increase, while remarkable, still places the average employment income in small communities (\$25,274) significantly below the NWT average employment income (\$41,904).

Although income varies by community type, family structure is one of the primary determinants of family income. The overall number of families with low income was 14.1% in the NWT for 2001 – a decline of 4-6% between 1998 and 2001. Lone parent families account for 34.9% of low income families, while 7.0% of two parent families have low incomes.

Social Conditions

The number of people receiving Income Assistance from the GNWT has declined continuously in the NWT in the past eight years as employment opportunities have increased. While we have experienced an overall decrease in income assistance, we have seen a moderate increase in youth (aged 19 to 29 years of age) who are receiving income assistance. This suggests that there is still work to be done to improve the link between leaving school and joining the world of work.

Household and family structures are also changing in the NWT. The percent of households in the NWT with six or more persons has decreased from 9.8% in 1991 to 7.0% in 2004. This shift has been more pronounced in smaller communities where the percentage has decreased from 23% to 12.7% over that same period. The number of lone parent families has increased from 15.% in 1991 to 21% in 2001. Again, this shift is more pronounced in smaller communities where lone parent families formed 18.7% of the population in 1991 and 28.3% in 2001.

The mobility of Northerners is also changing. A total of 24.9% of NWT residents surveyed in 2001 did not live in the same community as they had five years earlier. This compares to 35.2% in 1991, suggesting that the NWT population is becoming more stable. However, there are differences, based on community size. In Yellowknife in 2001, 30.2% of people

did not live in Yellowknife five years earlier, whereas in smaller communities, only 14.2 % did not live in the same community five years earlier.

Government Supports

The NWT income security system covers a wide range of supports. However, it is complex and can be confusing for NWT residents because different programs have different rules that are not easily understandable. There are currently 17 different income security programs being delivered by seven GNWT departments. The development of these different programs to meet different needs at different times has resulted in a situation where programs:

- Have different definitions of an adequate level of income and what would be considered a basic need.
- Exempt income from different sources when determining eligibility and calculating benefit entitlements.
- Treat people differently based on factors that have little to do with financial need.
- Define “family” in different ways and incorporate different levels of family responsibility.
- Provide payments through a complex web of delivery systems.

“Why do you make it so difficult for people to apply for help? People shouldn’t have to fill out so many forms and get the run around from office to office just to get their cheque”

– Survey Respondent

These differences have emerged in spite of the fact that many of these programs started out to accomplish the same goal – to address the needs of lower-income Northerners.

The complexity and inconsistent nature of existing income security programs make it difficult to determine the degree to which these programs are effective. It raises significant questions with respect to their transparency and accountability. It also results in considerable duplication as different offices document much of the same personal information about applicants. This has given rise to longstanding concerns that the NWT’s income security programs as a whole are too complicated.

There is a clear need to rationalize the income security programs under a common policy framework that results in a consistent, fair and respectful method of supporting



those in need. This must be done in a coherent fashion linked to programs and services that provide Northerners with the skills to be self-reliant.

Measuring Success

We will measure our success by the number of Northerners who participate as full citizens in society with limited government support, and by the number of people who successfully move from government support to further education or employment.



Objectives, Priorities and Actions

Objective 1:

An Integrated System of Program Supports

The Departmental focus must provide a range of programs and services to which family and communities can turn for support in time of need.

Priority: Programs linked to expected outcomes

- Actions:**
- Identify and plan programs with an understanding of services provided by the Government of Canada.
 - Identify clear outcomes for GNWT income security programs and services that support people in need.
 - Improve the match of programs and benefits with expected outcomes.
 - Provide individuals with the opportunity to achieve financial independence and move from dependency to self-sufficiency.

Priority: Strengthen case management

- Actions:**
- Develop and introduce an integrated case management approach describing how various service providers will work together.
 - Implement a case management service audit to identify best practices and make improvements where required.



Objective 2:

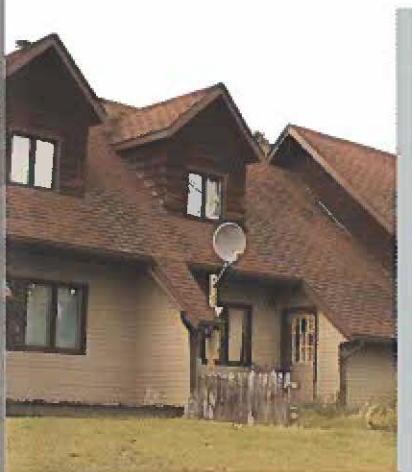
A Comprehensive System of Financial Supports

Priority: Access to programs and services

- Actions:**
- Create one-stop community access centres linked to regional career centres.
 - Make greater use of broadband technology to support program delivery in all communities.
 - Work with communities and Aboriginal governments to coordinate delivery of programs and services.

Priority: Consolidation and simplification of programs

- Actions:**
- Assume responsibility for administering the public housing subsidy program.
 - Reduce complexity of application processes through program consolidation and application simplification.
 - Identify and assume responsibility for other income security programs.
 - Publish information on programs and services in a simple format to improve understanding of the purpose, benefits, processes and expectations.
 - Expand use of the Case Management and Administration System (CMAS) to assess applicants of other programs offered by the GNWT.



Objective 3:

A Responsive Income Security System

Priority: Comprehensive income security policy

- Actions:**
- Develop and introduce a common, comprehensive policy for GNWT income security programs.
 - Ensure the policy is founded on clear principles including individual, community and government responsibility; respect and dignity; fairness and equity; adequacy; efficiency; effectiveness; accountability and fiscal responsibility.

Priority: Assess the income security system

- Actions:**
- Develop an approach for reviewing individual programs against the goals and objectives described in the Income Security Policy.
 - Develop an approach for reviewing the income security system against the goals and objectives described in the Income Security Policy.
 - Develop a process for, and conduct, routine and periodic program compliance audits.
 - Report to the public on a regular basis regarding the activities associated with income security programs and services.





Income Security

Conclusion

This booklet summarizes the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's planned activities related to People Participating Fully in Society. It is one of a series of booklets that have been developed to illustrate the goals, objectives and priorities of the Department during the next ten years. There are similar guides available that review planned actions related to the four other Departmental goals: Education of Children and Youth, Culture, Heritage and Languages, Adult and Postsecondary Education, and Employment and Labour.

The Departmental Strategic Plan was prepared based on broad consultation with the public and various stakeholders. It outlines a framework for Departmental activities that builds upon the successes of the past decade. Within the scope of the Plan, the Department will continue to work closely with a wide range of organizations and individuals to develop detailed actions that will strengthen current programs and services and improve overall results. The Department is committed to reporting on a regular basis to the public on achievements and advances related to the Plan.

The complete document *Building on Our Success – Strategic Plan 2005-2015* also includes five cross-goal strategies. For those interested, the complete Plan can be requested from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment or found on our website at <http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/>.