DISABILITY ACTION PLAN
THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW
STATUS UPDATE 2014
PREMIER'S COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF DISABLED PERSONS
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Published by:
Province of New Brunswick
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton
New Brunswick

Printed in New Brunswick

ISBN 978-1-4605-0659-2 (PDF: English)

9982
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December 3, 2014

Premier Brian Gallant,

As Chairperson of the Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons I am pleased to present the status report #2 on the Disability Action Plan - The Time for Action is now (May 2012).

The report includes the most recent status updates of 41 recommendations which focuses on removing barriers and improving access in key areas for persons with disabilities in New Brunswick communities.

The Premier’s Council will continue to report annually to government and to all stakeholders to monitor the actions being taken as well as identify gaps on the barriers for persons with disabilities.

The Premier’s Council is committed to working with people with disabilities, their families, disability agencies, government departments and other stakeholders to create a more inclusive society for everyone.

Sincerely,

Jeff Sparks
Chairperson, Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons
Telephone: 1-800-442-4412
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www.gnb.ca/council
International Day Of Persons With Disabilities

2014 Theme: “Sustainable Development: The Promise of Technology”

December 3rd marks the annual observance of International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This day aims to promote an understanding of disability related issues, the rights of persons with a disability, and to highlight the gains to be derived from the full inclusion of persons with a disability in every aspect of the political, social, economic, and cultural life of their communities.

It is a day to celebrate and an opportunity for people, organisations governments, and societies all over the world to focus on issues related to the inclusion of persons with a disability and measures to support greater equality.

Celebrations are planned and organized annually all over the World to showcase the contributions made by persons with a disability as agents of change and development in the communities in which they live. (www.un.org/disabilities)

Disability Rate in Canada
13.7% of the general population have a disability
(Statistics Canada - 2012)

Disability Rate in New Brunswick
16.4% of the general population have a disability This is the second highest rate per capita in Canada
(Statistics Canada - 2012)

The census survey in 2012 showed clearly that the rate and severity of disability increases with age. This is especially important considering the demographics of the general population of New Brunswick showing a higher percentage of older adults. The census survey did not include First Nations living on Reserve or individuals residing in residential facilities.
Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons

History

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons which provided a focus for some important efforts to take place in New Brunswick.

During a provincial conference in the fall of 1981, involving many consumers with a disability, parents, organizations serving persons with a disability and government representatives, it was decided that a permanent body was needed to maintain the momentum generated by the International Year of Disabled Persons.

The unanimous resolution of the conference prompted provincial legislation that created the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons in 1982. The Premier's Council is a body for consultation, study and information sharing, which was created to advise the provincial government on matters relating to the status of persons with a disability.

The Premier’s Council encourages and monitors government’s compliance with the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Council’s partnerships with government and not-for-profit sectors continue to collectively move the agenda for persons with disabilities and their families in New Brunswick forward.

Structure

The Premier’s Council consists of a Chairperson and twelve members appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

Mandate

The Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons Legislative Act states that the Council shall:

- Advise the Minister on matters relating to the status of persons with a disability;
- Bring before the government and the public matters of interest and concern to persons with a disability;
- Promote the prevention of disabling conditions;
- Promote employment opportunities of persons with a disability; and
- Promote access by persons with a disability to all services offered to the citizens of New Brunswick.

In addition, Council in carrying out its functions may:

- Receive and hear requests and suggestions from individuals and groups concerning the status of persons with a disability;
- Undertake research on matters relevant to the status of persons with a disability and recommend research areas that can be studied by governments, voluntary associations, private business and universities;
- Recommend programs concerning the status of persons with a disability;
- Make referrals to, and consult and collaborate with, government agencies; voluntary associations, private business, universities and individuals on matters which affect the status of persons with a disability;
• Appoint committees consisting of members and other persons who are not members of the Council;
• Propose legislation, policies and practices to improve the status of persons with a disability; and
• Publish the reports, studies and recommendations that the Council considers necessary.
• Launched Strategic Planning to set priorities for next three years (2014-2017).

**Information & Resources**

The Premier’s Council produces a number of Information Directories including:

- The Directory of Services Offered to Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick;
- Transportation Directory for Persons with Disabilities and Seniors in New Brunswick;
- Career Counseling, Job Placement Services and Training Opportunities.
- Financial Aid for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick;
  - Sources for funding assistance for rehabilitation equipment,
  - barrier free access,
  - income assistance,
  - medical expenses,
  - housing,
  - funding for community and non-profit organizations,
  - recreation.

**Premier’s Council Strategic Plan**

The Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons launched its first ever, strategic planning process to set priorities for the next three years.

In preparation for the planning session, a number of stakeholders were engaged through a public survey, focus groups and interviews. The goal was to gather feedback on the council’s mandate, services, activities, strengths, gaps, opportunities, threats and vision for the future.

The council met for a retreat in Shediac on the weekend of May 30 2014 to review the information and feedback gathered by an independent consultant. During the retreat, the council developed a new vision and mission statement and identified five goals. The council is looking forward to present the strategic plan to the premier.

**Role in The Disability Action Plan**

- Acts to deliver on the recommendations in the DAP for which it is the lead;
- Works very closely in collaboration with departments, community groups and persons with disabilities around the province on recommendations and actions within the plan; and requests and collects updates from lead Departments for preparation of the annual status reports.
Disability Action Plans

The first Disability Action Plan – *Action Plan for the Decade of Disabled Persons* was released by the Premier’s Council in 1985 as a result of a major provincial conference. Since then six editions of the DAP for New Brunswick containing more than 400 recommendations have been submitted, delivered upon, and have had leadership from seven Premiers and their Governments.

Examples of important outcomes generated and/or supported by various Disability Action Plans include:

- Support for a provincial mental health services strategy (1987, 1988, 1991)
- Increased opportunities for participation in sport and recreation (1986, 1987)
- Inclusion in Education (1986)
- Provincial implementation of the new Disability Support Program for Adults with Disabilities developed through two regional pilot projects (2010)
- Increasing the priority for housing support services within NB Housing.
- Drawing attention to gaps in services for specific disability.
- Raising the profile of disability issues at the municipal, provincial and federal level of government.
Disability Action Plan. The time for action is now

May 2012 marked the submission by the Premier’s Council of the new Disability Action Plan – the time for action is now (7th Edition, May 2012) containing recommendations rooted firmly in stakeholder engagement and addressing priority issues that pertain to persons with a disability in New Brunswick.

The action plan resulted from an extensive consultation and engagement processes including a stakeholder’s summit, public dialogue session, and meetings with community organizations as well as consideration for close to 400 individually completed questionnaires. The first update of the action plan was released on December 3rd, 2013.

The report outlines 41 recommendations for action by the Government of New Brunswick. Recommendations are led by 11 Departments and by the Office of the Premier and the Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons. The recommendations are focused in eight specific categories of action:

- Poverty
- Housing
- Disability Supports
- Universal Design
- Transportation
- Full Citizenship
- Education
- Recreation/Wellness

Previous Disability Action Plans have included Employment as a category, which led to the development of a separate action plan focused on employment for persons with a disability.

Note: Employment Action Plan for Persons with a Disability in New Brunswick 38 recommendations specific to employment are located in the Employment Action Plan for Persons with a Disability (EAP, May 2012). The EAP is a multi-faceted collaborative effort among community, employers, and government which includes recommendations to change and build policies, enhance services, build a culture of true collaboration, engage employers and fundamentally shift how disability and employment is addressed. The EAP is being monitored and evaluated through a mechanism led by the Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities.
Disability Action Plan Status Report
#2 May 2012 to December 2014

In the two and a half years since the report was presented many actions have been accomplished, several remain in progress and others will require more time, further consultation, engagement, and/or additional resources in order to be achieved.

**General Objectives:**
- To ensure that persons with different types of disabilities will have equitable access to needed services.
- To promote the awareness and enforcement of basic human rights for persons with disabilities in a timely and cost effective manner.
- To ensure that service providers are held accountable for the quality assurance and fair delivery of all programs and services to be available to persons with disabilities.

The report outlines 41 recommendations for action by the Government of New Brunswick. Recommendations are led by 11 Departments and by the Office of the Premier and the Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons. The recommendations are focused in eight specific areas.

**Full Citizenship Objectives:**
- To make all communities in New Brunswick inclusive places for persons with disabilities.
- To educate the public at large about the vision and principles of full citizenship for all persons and to understand the positive potential and abilities of citizens with disabilities.
- To involve consumers in all aspects of the planning and delivery of public services and facilities.

**Recommendation #1**


**Lead:** Office of the Premier

**Support:** Executive Council Office; Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons; Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities

**Status:** Complete

- Working with the Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons to find opportunities for the implementation of the Disability Action Plan and the
- *Employment Plan for Persons with a Disability (2014 NB Liberal platform)*
- The Premier’s Council works through the Healthy and Inclusive interdepartmental working group for persons with a disability and directly with Departments to manage, monitor and formally report on the DAP.
- December 2014 the Premier’s Council submitted a formal status report #2 for the DAP.

**Next Steps:**

The Premier’s Council will release an annual update to the Disability Action Plan.
Recommendation #2

The Government of New Brunswick and other stakeholders will continue to support and promote an annual public New Brunswick Disability Awareness Week (DAW) and United Nations International Day of Disabled Persons through financial support and participation. These events will draw public attention to issues of interest to persons with disabilities and to recognize positive outcomes throughout New Brunswick.

**Lead:** Office of the Premier

**Support:** Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons

**Status:** Complete

- June 1–7, 2014- The Premier’s Council partnered with the DAW Executive Committee and Neil Squire Society to delivered the 27th edition of DAW.
- December 3rd 2013 and 2014- The Premier’s Council hosted a public event to celebrate the UN Day for disabled persons.

**Next Steps:**

- 2015 Disability Awareness Week- the Premier’s Council will partner with the DAW Executive Committee and Neil Squire Society to deliver the awareness campaign.
- 2014 and annually the Premier’s Council will host a public event to celebrate the UN Day for Persons with Disabilities.

Recommendation #3

In the absence of the long-form census survey from Statistics Canada, the Province will work with federal government agencies in the development of a new data collection system for persons with disabilities, to ensure that New Brunswick specific data can be developed and delivered to better inform disability policy and programs in New Brunswick.

**Lead:** Department of Finance

**Status:** In Progress

- Statistics Canada released the first results from the new 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability on December 3, 2013. Four tables show results for New Brunswick on prevalence of disability by
age and gender, as well as type and severity. On June 30, 2014 the tables were made available via CANSIM (an online database available at no charge). This allows the data user to focus on specific data components.

- On April 15, 2014, Statistics Canada announced the format of the 2016 Census program. “As in 2011, there will be a short, mandatory census for all Canadians and a voluntary household survey for 1 in 3 households.”

- Finance with other GNB departments participated in the 2016 Census Program Content Consultation and supported the need for information on the disabled population. The 2016 Census Consultation Report was released September 10, 2014 – http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/consultation/ContentReport-RapportContenu/index-eng.cfm

- Statistics Canada is working to improve the coverage of the disabled population, including mental/psychological and cognitive disabilities.

- In 2014-2015, progress is being made in the development of administrative data as a source of statistical information via the New Brunswick Institute for Research, Data and Training – http://www.unb.ca/fredericton/arts/nbirdt/. The social policy departments, including Health, Social Development, Education and Early Childhood Development, and Postsecondary Education, Training and Labour are involved in this initiative. This could be another source of information on persons with disabilities.

What is the Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD)
The purpose of the CSD is to provide information about Canadians whose everyday activities may be limited because of a condition or health-related problem. This information is used to plan and evaluate services, programs and policies for Canadians with disabilities to help enable their full participation in society. Information collected on disabilities is used by various levels of government to evaluate and develop policies and programs designed for people with disabilities throughout Canada. This information is also essential for the effective development and operation of national employment equity programs. Internationally, data on disabilities are used to fulfill various commitments, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

www.statcan.gc.ca

Disability Supports

Objectives:

i) To improve access to disability supports.

ii) To ensure that consumers are actively involved in the development and Delivery of disability support programs.

iii) To ensure that the type of disability involved, the age of the person, personal or household income, or where they happen to live will not be barriers to obtaining necessary disability supports.

Recommendation #4

The Department of Health and the Department of Social Development will develop a joint committee on acquired brain injuries to determine what policies and services are needed to better respond to the needs of persons with acquired brain injuries.

Lead: Department of Health (Rehabilitation Services, Community and Institutional Services Division)

Support: Department of Social Development; Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons

Status: Not yet started
Recommendation #5

The Department of Social Development will develop a target for approval of eligible equipment requests of 10 working days for non-urgent requests.

Lead: Department of Social Development

Status: In progress.

A comprehensive review of the Health Services program was completed by an external consultant and provincial stakeholder groups, suppliers, and service providers were consulted as part of this review.

The analysis to date suggests that a target of 15 working days could be met for most non-urgent requests within the current budget allocation for the Health Services Program.

Additional staff resources would likely be required in order to achieve a target of 10 working days.

Recommendation #6

The Department of Social Development will work with disability organizations to identify the equipment needs of different populations with the goal of providing adequate support to an expanded list of disabilities.

Lead: Department of Social Development

Status: Complete

The Department of Social Development’s 2014/15 budget includes new funding of $1 million for the Health Services Program.

Recommendation #7

The Department of Social Development, in cooperation with community service providers and stakeholders, will undertake a home support review. The review will include the current level of funding for attendant care, for those living at home with highly specialized needs (ie. ventilated individuals and those using complex breathing aids) and would also address the pressing issue of recruitment and retention of personal care attendants, the need for investment in quality services, the implementation of a regulated system, opportunities for proper and specialized training and an adequate hourly wage formula for trained home support workers.

Lead: Department of Social Development

Status: In progress

A working group of representatives from the New Brunswick Home Support Association, the Department of Social Development and the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour developed a standardized training curriculum for home support employees.

The province’s new Home First strategy includes $150,000 for the completion of a Tier III of the standardized curriculum and the implementation of competency-based training for senior care workers.

In addition, the New Brunswick Home Support Association and l’Association Francophonie des Establissaments de Soins Speciaux are currently working with the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour on Workplace Essential Skills (WES) training for their workers. Under Home First, the special care home sector was provided additional funding for WES training.
Home First will also provide for the development of a new comprehensive human service model to recognize the various levels of training and competency of senior care workers, including home support workers. This will help the training level and capacity of the senior care sector to deliver quality services to those with very high needs and will allow workers to make a career in the field of senior care, with opportunities for career advancement.

Poverty

Objectives:

i) To reduce the overall level of poverty among persons/families with disability.

ii) To create a new income program for persons with disabilities.

iii) To ensure that persons with disabilities have enough income to meet their basic needs and reasonable standards of living in the community.

Recommendation #8

Part A: The province of New Brunswick will establish a separate and distinct income support program for persons with long term disabilities recognizing that this population often incurs additional costs currently not supported through social assistance benefits.

Part B: The disability supplement should be indexed to inflation so that persons with disabilities do not fall further behind.

Lead: Department of Social Development

Status: In progress

Part A: On October 1, 2013, a broad number of rate and policy changes were implemented to the provincial social assistance system. Social assistance clients with a certified disability received a 4% rate increase in October 2013 and an additional 3% rate increase in April 2014.

A number of additional changes to the provincial social assistance system were also implemented on October 1, 2014 that will support persons with a disability, including:

- The disability supplement will be further increased by an additional 5% for a total overall increase of 20%;
- Life insurance policies and prepaid funerals for clients and applicants will no longer be restricted, allowing them to qualify for social assistance without needing to liquidate these assets;
- Self-employed clients or applicants will see the existing business asset exemption period increase from the current period of 90 days to a period of up to 12 months;
- Single clients with a disability and families will be able to retain liquid assets of $10,000, which is an increase from the current amounts of $3,000 for single disabled clients and $4,000 for families;
- An exemption of $50,000 in RRSPs will also be offered to persons with disabilities to allow those requiring social assistance to qualify without liquidating accumulated assets and incurring a penalty.

Part B: There were increases to the monthly disability supplement in October 2011, 2012 and 2013. The last increase was implemented on October 1, 2014, which translates into an overall increase of 20% over a four year period. With the latest increase, the monthly disability supplement is now $100.
**Recommendation #9**

The Department of Social Development will introduce new wage exemption policies for persons with disabilities that will encourage people to work and allow people to earn income from employment so that their combined income from disability income benefits and employment approximates recognized poverty measures.

**Lead:** Department of Social Development  
**Status:** Complete

On October 1, 2014, the wage exemption policy was further enhanced so that social assistance clients with a disability can now retain $500 of their monthly earnings with no impact on their social assistance while also keeping 30% of each additional $1 of earnings.

**Recommendation #10**

Pending the introduction of a new income support program for persons with disabilities, the application process and eligibility criteria will be improved so that more persons with serious long term chronic health conditions or disabilities would qualify for the Extended Benefits category of social assistance. The department will identify a process for re-evaluating individuals who are currently designated as having long term disability needs under the Transitional Assistance Program to determine if they should qualify for disability benefits.

**Lead:** Department of Social Development  
**Status:** In progress

A working group of government and community stakeholders has been collaborating on the development of a proposal for a new definition, application process, and appeal process for persons applying for disability certification.

**Housing**

**Objectives:**

i) To increase the number of accessible and affordable housing units in the province.

ii) To promote the concept of universal barrier free design concepts in all new housing projects including renovations of existing housing stocks where feasible.

**Recommendation #11**

The Department of Social Development will revise the rent subsidy program to make it more responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities in New Brunswick. The development of the portable rent subsidy program for persons with disabilities in the provincial housing strategy should be a priority housing initiative for people with disabilities.

**Lead:** Department of Social Development  
**Status:** Complete

In 2013/14, an additional $225,000 was invested in 30 new portable rent subsidies specifically for persons with disability under the new Portable Rent Supplement program.
**Recommendation #12**

When N.B. Housing is completing accessibility-related renovations, it should consult with professionals knowledgeable in barrier-free universal design accessibility to ensure that renovations will meet the needs of the homeowners.

**Lead:** Social Development

**Support:** Public Safety

* Recommended that Social Development be the lead Department as NB Housing falls within the mandate of Social Development

**Status:** Ongoing

Social Development currently follows the following standards and policy:

- Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Standard B651-04 Accessible Design for the Built Environment;
- National Building Code of Canada (NBC), NBC 2010;
- Occupational Health and Safety Act for New Brunswick, 91-191;
- Social Development Policies & Procedures Manual, F/P Affordable Rental Housing Program, Guide to Regional Technical Staff, Tab 901-1, pages 7-9 of 9

Notes: In cases where the accessibility-related renovation is too complex, the professional services of consultants with knowledge in this field may be sought.

**Recommendation #13**

Part A: The government of NB will continue to work with the federal government to ensure the development of a national housing strategy that includes long-term federal funding and engagement in housing and homelessness.

Part B: The Affordable Housing Initiative suite of renovation programs will be renewed and the funding must be increased to better meet current needs.

**Lead:** Department of Social Development

**Status:** Complete

Part A: Social Development continues to represent New Brunswick on the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Deputy Ministers and Ministers’ Forum(s) on Housing.

Social Development will continue to reinforce – in collaboration with our provincial and territorial colleagues – the following key messages to our federal partners:

- the importance of stable, accessible, affordable housing as a foundation for the social and economic inclusion of citizens - and by extension - for broader economic growth and productivity;
- the importance of a full and continued partnership of federal, provincial, territorial, business and community partners working together to increase the availability of safe, affordable housing for low-income families and individuals across the country;
- the importance of sustained federal investments in affordable housing as a way in which to foster personal and broader economic productivity; reduce expenditures on health care, policing and the justice system; help support increased educational attainment; and support labour market participation.
Part B: The CMHC-New Brunswick Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) Extension Agreement (2014-2019) was signed on April 28, 2014. This agreement represents a 5 year commitment from the federal government compared to the 3 year commitment made in the previous IAH agreement.

The federal funding under this agreement will help the province to continue to support the development of safe, affordable and energy-efficient housing for low-income families, non-elderly singles, seniors and persons with disability.

The combined $78M in federal and provincial funding will be strategically invested to:

- increase the supply of affordable housing through new construction;
- improve housing affordability through rental subsidies;
- improve and preserve existing housing stock occupied by low-income homeowners and rental households; and foster safe and independent living for seniors and persons with disability.

**Universal Design & Barrier Free Design**

**Objectives:**

i) To enhance the mandatory provisions under the legislation and regulations of the provincial building code to require consistent minimum universal design-barrier free access standards in all public facilities and buildings open to the public.

ii) To promote awareness of the population demographics to create more support for the business case that justifies expenses related to renovations or new construction to address barrier free access concerns.

**Recommendation #14**

The Government of New Brunswick will develop an enhanced mandatory barrier-free regulation replacing the National Building Code – section 3.8 Barrier-Free Design. The enhanced regulation will exceed those contained in section 3.8 and apply province-wide.

**Lead:** Department of Public Safety

**Support:** Department of Environment and Local Government

**Status:** Complete

Enhanced accessibility standards have been developed. Standards coming into force January 1, 2015 and will apply province-wide.

**Recommendation #15**

The Department of Public Safety will create the position of “Chief Building Inspector”.

**Lead:** Department of Public Safety

**Status:** Ongoing review

A position or office of a “Chief Building Inspector,” may not be required in order to implement and enforce enhanced accessibility standards, however this recommendation is currently being reviewed.
Recommendation #16

The Government of New Brunswick should develop incentives, including tax incentives, for individuals/developers who incorporate Visitability standards into newly constructed single family homes. Visitability helps create inclusive communities and responds to the increasing populations of persons with disabilities and seniors and the desire to live as independently as possible and age in place.

**Lead:** To be determined

**Support:** Environment and Local Government; Finance (if tax incentives are to be developed); Public Safety; Healthy and Inclusive Communities

### Transportation

**Objectives:**

i) To increase the number of carriers who offer affordable and accessible transportation services for travelling in our communities and across New Brunswick.

ii) To develop programs of financial incentives to enable non-profit community organizations and private taxi companies to acquire and operate accessible vehicles for public transportation for seniors and/or persons with disabilities.

iii) To provide funding for community transportation alternatives.

Recommendation #17

The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure will initiate a working group and/or appoint an individual to investigate best practices within Canada, to consult with various communities to determine the needs, to identify funding sources, and to develop an overall plan to ensure accessible and affordable transportation is available throughout New Brunswick for persons with disabilities.

**Lead:** Department of Transportation and Infrastructure

**Support:** Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities; Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons; Economic and Social Inclusion Cooperation; Executive Council Office

**Status:** In Progress

- June 2013 an internal working Group on Government’s role in public transportation was formed. The Steering Committee included Departmental representation as well as representation from ESIC, Premier’s Council and the NB Social Policy Research Network

- The University of New Brunswick’s Urban and Community Studies Institute was contracted to report on GNB’s involvement in Public Transportation. The Institute’s methodology included an environmental scan of GNB programs and services as well as 14 interviews.

- September 2013 the report titled “Government of New Brunswick public transportation programs needs and gaps analysis” was submitted by the Urban and Community Studies Institute.

- The Department of Transportation has met with the Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities and Economic and Social Inclusion Cooperation regarding the Overcoming Poverty Together 2 strategy.

**Next Steps:**

- It is anticipated that further work regarding accessible and affordable transportation for all, including persons with a disability will be ongoing
**Recommendation #18 and #19**

18 - The Government of New Brunswick will establish a new program to offer partial financial assistance to non-profit community organizations to build capacity for approved community-based transportation services for persons with disabilities and low-income families.

19 - The Government of New Brunswick will provide funding for community transportation alternatives such as Dial-a-Ride.

**Support:** Executive Council Office; Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (#19); Premier’s Council; Department of Transportation and Infrastructure; Social Development

**Status:** In Progress

- Community-based transportation services and alternatives are priority issues within the Overcoming Poverty Together 2 (OPT 2) strategy being led by the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC). Ministerial responsibility for ESIC falls under the purview of the Minister of Government Services. ESIC will have lead responsibility in respect of Recommendations 18 and 19 of the Disability Action Plan”.

**Recommendation #20**

The Government of New Brunswick will ensure that all public and private transportation carriers create and adopt an accessible transportation customer information policy (to include visual and tactile signage, flashing lights, written screens, etc.) to ensure that their vehicles, buses, trains, ferries, stations, etc. are barrier-free to persons with disabilities.

**Lead:** Department of Transportation and Infrastructure

**Status:** Ongoing

- DTI supports and encourages barrier-free transportation
- Accessible transportation is always a consideration when conducting transportation planning studies
- DTI does not fund or subsidize transportation
- The Canadian Transportation Agency is responsible for removing undue obstacles to the mobility of persons with disabilities from federally-regulated (air, rail, marine and interprovincial bus) transportation services and facilities.

**Recommendation #21**

The Government of New Brunswick will develop a mandatory enhanced section 3.8 recommendation of the National Building Code which will include parking standards that will apply throughout New Brunswick.

**Lead:** Department of Public Safety

**Support:** Department of Transportation and Infrastructure; Department of Environment and Local Government

**Status:** Completed

Enhanced accessibility standards have been developed.

Standards will be implemented as of January 1, 2015.
**Recommendation #22**

The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure will continue the NB Vehicle Retrofit Program and ensure adequate funding is allocated for this program.

**Lead:** Department of Transportation and Infrastructure  
**Status:** In Progress / Ongoing  
- DTI continues to manage the VRP.  
- Changes to the program were made following the Oct 2013 review. Specifically the grant formula calculation was simplified and applicants are now permitted to apply every eight years.  
- The grant approval is valid for six months with the provision to request an extension.  
- Funding for the program was increased in the 2014-15 budget from $200000 to $275000.

**Wellness/Recreation**

**Objectives:**

i) To increase the number of persons with disabilities of all types and of all ages to regularly participate in healthy recreation and wellness activities.  

ii) To ensure that all public recreational programs and facilities are doing what is necessary to enable the inclusive participation of persons with disabilities.

**Recommendation #23**

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will ensure that students with disabilities are fully included in all leisure and sporting activities organized by the school. These activities may include, but are not limited to: before school activities, recess times, physical education classes, other leisure classes (library, art & culture, etc.), noon hour activities, intramurals, sport teams, after school activities, school trips, graduation ceremonies, etc.

**Lead:** Department of Education and Early Childhood Development  
**Status:** Ongoing  
- A capital improvement accessibility fund was created to provide greater access to the school building and grounds for children with diverse accessibility needs.  
- The capital improvement accessibility fund has been internalized within the existing facilities budget.  

**Anglophone:**

- EECD has provided a grant to Ability New Brunswick to facilitate the development of a lending library of adaptive equipment for physical education.

**Francophone:**

- In September 2013, policy 322 on inclusive education came into effect and helped schools include students in all recreational and sports activities.
**Recommendation #24**

All recreational facilities should be designed for barrier-free universal design access for persons with disabilities. Financial support will be available to help offset costs related to improving the accessibility and participation rates at these community facilities.

**Lead**: To be determined

**Support**: Environment and Local Government; Public Safety; Healthy and Inclusive Communities

**Note**: When a facility meets the definition of assembly occupancy then DPS would inspect as per the applicable codes in effect at the time.

**Next Steps:**
- HIC and PCSDP to initiate discussions and recommend a lead Department

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**Recommendation #25**

The province will provide funding to continue the full time Para NB-Sport and Recreation manager position in New Brunswick.

**Lead**: Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities

**Status**: Complete

- **Para NB Program**: The Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities contributed $75,000 in the 2014/15 fiscal year to continue the full time Para NB Sport and Recreation Manager position.
- Over three years, the Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities contributed $180,000, through a bilateral agreement with Sport Canada to purchase sport equipment for persons with a disability.
- **Equipment Loan Service**: The current bilateral agreement with Sport Canada concludes on March 31, 2015. The Department anticipates entering into a renewed bilateral agreement with Sport Canada starting in 2015-2016.

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**Mental Health**

**Recommendation #26**

The Department of Health in partnership with the Department of Culture, Tourism & Healthy Living will fully implement the plan of action for Mental Health in New Brunswick for 2011-2018, in an effort to develop and promote coordinated mental health & wellness services for the prevention and/or treatment of persons with mental illness. In addition, special attention should be placed on the unique mental health needs faced by persons with disabilities and their families, such as children and youth, brain injury survivors, those with fetal alcohol syndrome, spinal cord injuries, degenerative neurological disorders, chronic diseases, etc.

**Lead**: Department of Health (Addiction and Mental Health Services Branch)

**Support**: Department Healthy and Inclusive Communities

**Status**: In Progress

- The Department of Health provides funding to VON to operate the NB Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Centre of Excellence.
- VON provides provincial services related to prevention, diagnosis and intervention of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FASD). Regional coordinators work throughout the province with individuals with FASD, their caregivers and professionals working to ensure services meet the need of the individuals diagnosed with FASD.
Mental Health Action Plan update – First 3 years

Introduce models of treatment in each health zone, in the form of Assertive Community Treatment Teams and Flexible Assertive Community Treatment Teams that will provide community interventions consistent with the recovery model to those suffering from serious mental illness. Such teams, which will include peer support, will respond to individual needs by identifying barriers and ensuring that housing, employment and treatment are provided. Work is ongoing to complete an environmental scan and an implementation plan will be developed for the whole province.

Local Recovery teams have been created across the province. Additional training will be provided in the coming year to help implement change management relative to the recovery model.

The Department of Health continues to work and have dialogue with the New Brunswick Mental Health and Consumer Network and the New Brunswick Mental Health Activity Centre Association to support them at the community level.

**Next Steps:**

Continue implementing the MH Action Plan 2011-2018

**Recommendation #27**

The existing and newly constructed Restigouche Hospital Centre will provide safe, healthy, and therapeutic acute care for all patients using newly adopted holistic care model. That same standard of therapeutic care will be extended to those patients under psychiatric assessment as well as those found “Not Criminally Responsible”.

**Lead:** Department of Health (Addiction and Mental Health Services Branch)

**Status:** In Progress

- Restigouche Hospital Centre has implemented a new model of care which is based on Recovery Process Model. The Mental health recovery model enables the person with a mental health issue to live a meaningful life in a community of their choice while striving to achieve their fullest potential
- Justice and Attorney General and Social Development are among the regularly consulted departmental stakeholders.

**Next Steps:**

Continue the roll out of the Action Plan for Mental Health in New Brunswick 2011-2018. The action plan is in year 4 and places the person at the centre of their treatment; including new targets; and incorporates a plan to increase access to specialized services across the province. It will serve as a roadmap towards building a system that is centered on the needs of New Brunswickers

**Other:** The Restigouche Hospital Centre is a tertiary facility

**Recommendation #28**

Efforts will continue to discharge patients who have the capacity to live in supported community housing with automatic case management and follow up through the formal Community Mental Health Services system. Patients will not be discharged until a complete, comprehensive community plan has been prepared.

**Lead:** Department of Health (Addiction and Mental Health Services Branch)

**Status:** In Progress

Mental Health Action Plan - Currently in year 4 of the 7 year plan
• Through the Action Plan for Mental Health in New Brunswick, Government has supported the addiction and mental health system to move towards a recovery approach to care. DOH is moving towards this goal in collaboration with the two Regional Health Authorities (RHA’s).
• This recovery approach will be implemented within all Community Addiction and Mental Health Centers, psychiatric units and 2 tertiary hospitals. There will be continued collaboration and partnership with other departments as well as stakeholders in promoting this recovery approach.
• Work is currently being done to promote continuity of care when a client is discharged to their community
• Guidelines for discharge planning are currently being elaborated on.

Next Steps:
• Guidelines for discharge planning will be presented to the Leadership forum (senior management from both RHA’s and DOH).

Education
Objectives:

i) To ensure that the inclusive public school system continues to evolve so that all students with any disability are supported to reach their full potential.

ii) To increase the number of students with disabilities who go on to successfully complete post-secondary education options.

iii) To ensure that teachers and other staff in the education system are properly trained and supported to enable all students to enjoy an inclusive education.

Recommendation #29

Lead: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Status: Complete


Next Steps:
• In total, a minimum of $62.07 million will be invested over three years (2012-2013, 2013-2014 and 2014-2015) to support the inclusion action plans

Recommendation #30
The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development must have a strategy to develop coordinated services for the prevention of mental illness for children and youth.

Lead: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Status: In Progress

• The Department is currently implementing the Mental Health Action Plan (led by the Department of Health) and participates in an inter-departmental working group also led by the Department of Health.
• There are many initiatives relating to Mental Health at EECD which are captured through the implementation of the Mental Health Action Plan, moreover, the government is committed to implementing the Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) model province-wide by 2018 in order to ensure timely, coordinated and interdepartmental interventions for youth mental health.

**Francophone:**

• A team of DEECD employees is also conducting a study on the needs in the schools to better meet their needs.

**Recommendation #31**

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development must make investments to hire and assign Educational Assistants to students with disabilities who need them to ensure that they are receiving the support required. Investments should also be made in resource support, professional development for educators and paraprofessionals, and leadership for inclusive education at the Department, district and school levels.

**Lead:** Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

**Status:** In Progress

• Fall 2012 - the Department launched the first round of training under the new internalized Autism Training Framework
• Eighteen inclusion coordinators have been hired to strengthen instructional practices and ensure excellence and equity for students. Ten will work in the four anglophone school districts, while eight will work in the three francophone districts.
• A corporate Vesta Project focusing on Education Assistants is currently underway.

**Francophone:**

• In collaboration with Égale Canada, the Francophone sector is developing a guide on sexual and gender diversity for school staff. This will be distributed to all Francophone schools and the online version will be available to all school staff. In addition, high school staff will receive two days of training to help them create healthy and inclusive environments for these young people.
• The Department will define the role of educational assistant in the Francophone schools.
• The Department and the school districts will work together to offer non-violent crisis intervention training.

**Recommendation #32**

Due to the changes to the Special Education Plan (SEPs), the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will track the progress of the individuals from whom the SEPs were eliminated and report the results.

**Lead:** Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

**Status:** Ongoing

• The data generated from this quality assurance initiative is shared with schools and districts. Additionally, an RFP to purchase a new PLP system has been prepared.

**Anglophone:**

• The Special Education Plan (SEP) has been re-named Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). A PLP review process has been established in collaboration with the School Improvement Service.
**Recommendation #33**

As Universal Design for Learning is being introduced in NB schools resulting in a more inclusive approach by classroom teachers, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will ensure all classroom teachers have the necessary training and tools to ensure a successful transition.

**Lead:** Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

**Status:** Ongoing

**Anglophone sector:**
- A cross-divisional team worked collaboratively to complete five modules related to various aspects of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Fourteen teams of educators participated in investigating Universal Design for Learning principles related to their teaching through action research projects. In collaboration with the University of New Brunswick, papers outlining the research findings will be published in a monograph and shared with every school in New Brunswick.

**Next Steps:**
- In November 2015 a conference highlighting UDL will be held in Fredericton in partnership with the University of New Brunswick.

**Francophone sector:**
- School staff continue to receive guidance on inclusive instruction (e.g. UDL, differentiation, and role of the resource teacher) from the district inclusion coordinators, who receive guidance from the Department. Training on the role of the Educational Support Services Team and universal educational activities will also be offered in the schools in 2014-2015.

**Recommendation #34**

As Universal Design for Learning is being introduced in NB schools, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will offer introductory information to parents and guardians to enable them to fully participate in their child’s learning.

**Lead:** Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

**Status:** Not formally started

**Note:** The Francophone sector is starting the learning phase with respect to UDL. In fact, along with a few staff from the Department, staff members from each district received training in UDL with CAST in July 2014. The districts are now able to develop a UDL training plan.

**Recommendation #35**

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will increase the number of children leaving Grade 2 with an appropriate reading level.

**Lead:** Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

**Status:** Ongoing

**Anglophone:**
- The government is committed to the implementation of a comprehensive literacy strategy. A key component of this initiative will involve offering high-quality, universally accessible early interventions to children who score at-risk on the Early Years Evaluation (EYE) at age 4.
### Francophone:

- If a child is having trouble reading or has a learning disability, the schools call on the combined expertise of their literacy teachers, resource teachers, and homeroom teachers. This group of teachers targets specific interventions for the student in question over a determined period of time in order to work on specific elements in reading so the student can make progress.
- Moreover, early childhood assessments, i.e. EYE-DA and EYE-TA, allow for early interventions with children who are potentially at risk in literacy as early as preschool or kindergarten.

### Other

#### Recommendation #36

The Government of New Brunswick will work in conjunction with the aboriginal community and other stakeholders to address the specific issues around access to services for aboriginals with disabilities wherever they live in the province.

**Lead:** Aboriginal Affairs

**Support:** Executive Council Office, Department of Social Development; Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, Department of Health, Premier’s Council

**Status:** Not Yet Started

#### Recommendation #37

The Minister of Government Services will insure that standards exist with respect to procurement of government services and equipment, computer software and internet technology. Only systems which are certified to enable universal access by persons with cognitive, visual, perceptual or hearing disabilities will be acquired by government. Government will undertake an audit of all emerging technology being deployed by crown corporations or government departments. Web resources which do not at least meet W3 accessibility standards will be brought into compliance within a reasonable period of time.

No Status Update

**Next Steps:** Premier’s Council to coordinate among Department of Government Services, ECO and NBISA the department lead and support roles on this recommendation

#### Recommendation #38

The Government of New Brunswick will move forward with the creation of New Brunswick’s first centre of excellence for children and youth with complex needs.

**Lead:** Department of Social Development

**Support:** Department of Health, Department of Public Safety and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

**Status:** In progress

A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued for the supply and operation of a 15-bed treatment centre for children and youth with complex needs.

The departments of Social Development, Health, Education and Early Childhood Development as well as Public Safety would deliver integrated support services to children, youth and their families through the network of excellence for children and youth with complex needs.

That RFP was intended to identify private sector organizations with the capital and expertise to construct and operate the facility, while the provincial government would provide clinical services and teaching resources.
**Recommendation #39**

Continued support of the NB STAGES NB initiative to increase the number of qualified sign language interpreters in New Brunswick is imperative for Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers to have equal access to all government programs, services, education, training and employment.

**Lead:** Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour

**Community Partner:** Saint John Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services; South-East Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services

**Status:** In Progress

- PETL (Employment) supports this recommendation where there is an identified business case for the need of additional interpreters.
- PETL (Employment) has funded the development of a mentoring model to support the skill development of novice interpreters and address anticipated requirements. When a need is identified, PETL (Employment) will provide training and support to obtain interpreters.
- Investment has been made in “NB STAGES NB”, a collaborative mentorship program that is leading the way in the development of autonomous interpreters.
- The “NB Stages NB” Mentorship Program will help to increase the number of qualified sign language interpreters in the province (ASL), and ensure that Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers have equal access to all government programs, services, education, training and employment.

**Next Steps:**

PETL is exploring what can also be done in relation to LSQ.

**Recommendation #40**

The Department of Social Development will engage in a public consultation process to determine how the Community Based Services for Children with Special Needs Program can be improved to better serve children with disabilities and their families.

**Lead:** Department of Social Development

**Status:** Complete

This modernized *Family Supports for Children with Disabilities* program was announced in March 2014 and it includes new eligibility criteria, a streamlined application process, and an expanded range of available services to families supporting a child with a disability.

Social Development's 2014/15 budget included funding of $1.5M for this modernized program.

**Notes:** Additional details can be found at [http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/social_development/promos/community.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/social_development/promos/community.html)
Recommendation #41

The Government of New Brunswick will develop a strategy to better assess, recommend, recycle and fund assistive technology.

Lead: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Support: PETL

Status: In Progress

Anglophone:

- A home use protocol for assistive technology was developed and shared with schools in spring 2014. Data will be collected this school year to determine its use and effectiveness.
- A working group was created to involve a demonstration school to collectively examine ongoing, new or emerging transitioning processes for students with diverse needs, to post-secondary education and/or employment and to articulate a protocol that other high schools could emulate.
- Data will be examined in winter 2015 and a process for expansion across the Anglophone sector will be articulated.
- A series of assistive technology modules are being developed for schools, parents and students. The first two will be available in December 2014.

Francophone:

- The Francophone sector reviews the distribution process for assistive technologies to improve effectiveness.
Disability Action Plan - Next Steps

A significant amount of progress has been made to date. As government continues to work collaboratively with one another to show leadership in a coordinated and complimentary approach, New Brunswick will continue to step closer to full citizenship for all.

Actions:

The Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons will take responsibility to follow up with each Department individually and with the government collectively to hold everyone accountable for action on these recommendations.

We will report annually to the public and review and update the plan as required.

The Premier’s Council will continue to work in partnership with the inter-departmental working group related to persons with a disability led by the Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities (HIC). In addition, direct communication with lead Departments in the ongoing clarification, monitoring and evaluation of recommendations in the DAP will continue.

Lead departments and agencies are invited to include in their annual reports specific descriptions of investment, programs and services that were made available to persons with a disability in New Brunswick.

Government and departments continue to show leadership and make significant efforts to function in a coordinated and complimentary approach regarding decisions and allocation of resources related specifically to persons with a disability.

Relevant departmental policies are reviewed as needed to align with Action Plan recommendations and actions.

The Premier’s Council will work closely with the Premier’s Office, HIC, Government Departments and stakeholders to renew the Disability Action Plan.

Conclusion

The Province of New Brunswick has made great strides since the inaugural Disability Action Plan of 1985. Many, many individuals, communities, agencies, departments and others have provided necessary leadership and have worked tirelessly to raise the bar for persons with a disability in New Brunswick.

Disability issues are often complex and solutions will require more coordinated partnerships by stakeholders in all aspects of the economic, social and political sectors of the province if we are truly going to be able to create inclusive communities across the province. We should also be aware of the principles contained in the United Nations’ Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Canadian Charters of Rights and Freedoms.

Disability issues touch the lives of all citizens in the province due to family members and consumers who are already disabled and the reality that everyone will require some level of support at some point in their lives and that we have an increased rate of disability with the aging population.

Together we will create a New Brunswick and a system of disability supports that ensures self-sufficient and an inclusive society for all!
Appendix A: Overview of Objectives, Values or Principles

Disability Supports - address service needs for personal assistance in daily living so as to enable individuals with a disability to facilitate their personal development and their participation and inclusion in their communities. Disability supports need to be personalized and flexible and based on the needs of the individual in order to be effective in achieving desirable outcomes.

Poverty - Persons with a disability often have other expenses beyond traditional living expenses directly related to their disability. This could be for prescription medications, mobility equipment, technical aids, home renovations, accessible transportation, testing supplies, home care supports, etc. Persons with disabilities may also have extra expenses to hire people to perform work for them like shoveling the driveway, house cleaning, lawn care, etc.

Housing - For persons with certain disabilities, barrier free access can be a significant factor in determining where they are able to live. The amount of housing choices must be adequate to meet the huge demand from low income consumers and families across the province.

Universal Design/Barrier Free Access - Many citizens of all ages face barriers to their participation. This includes those who may have difficulty seeing or hearing or reading as well as the more obvious barriers faced by those with various types of mobility disabilities. Barrier free access is related to the physical design and construction of public facilities and housing options as well as to the delivery of programs that create an environment that is accommodating and welcoming for persons with a disability.

Transportation - Very few communities in New Brunswick currently operate public transit services and some communities do not have private taxis available to the general public. We must develop a system that provides more consistent and more affordable and accessible transportation options for persons with a disability in New Brunswick.
## Appendix B: Summary – Status of Recommendations

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