

**Nunavut Income Support
Review Panel**

**Nunavut Income Support
Policy Review**

**IKAJUQATIGIIT - SHARING
KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORT**

December 2000

Income Support Policy Review

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Foreword

The Bathurst Mandate identifies many activities that the Government of Nunavut must undertake over the next several years. In particular, it states that the Government of Nunavut will:

Conduct a review of Income Support and related issues to find common commitments, and then implement a revised program, putting in place incentives for individuals and families to achieve self-reliance.

In the fall of 1999, the Minister of Education asked that a Terms of Reference be developed for the express purpose of conducting a formal review of the Income Support Program for the territory of Nunavut. The Terms of Reference that were developed and, ultimately, approved by Cabinet identified several reasons for undertaking a policy review.

Among the most critical reasons were the growing numbers of Nunavummiut receiving Income Support and the need for coordinating and integrating the Income Support program with other government initiatives. Another major driving force behind the review was the importance of developing and implementing a program that meets the needs of the people of Nunavut and encourages self-reliance.

Following a formal announcement of the review and a recruitment process, four citizens from across Nunavut were selected from over 40 nominations. In early March 2000, Minister Arvaluk appointed three individuals to the Nunavut Income Support Review Panel. The Panel chose Mr. Frank Ipakohak, of Kugluktuk, as the Chair during an orientation session held in Iqaluit in March 2000. Other Panel members are Ms. Joan Scottie of Baker Lake, Mr. David Arnatsiaq of Igloolik, and Mrs. Vivienne Aknavigak of

Cambridge Bay. Mrs. Aknavigak was appointed as a representative of the Nunavut Social Development Council.

During the March orientation session in Iqaluit, Minister Arvaluk met with the Panel to provide more information about what the review should look at. During the March 2000 orientation meetings, the Panel adopted the following Mission Statement:

We, as a Panel, will advise the Minister how to reform the Income Support program to ensure all recipients are supported to become as self-reliant as possible, by:

- **Talking to the people (clients, families, Hamlet councils, and other concerned citizens and organizations) and**
- **Making recommendations to the Minister;**

To achieve:

- **A flexible program that meets the needs of clients in communities**
- **Fairness**
- **Integration with existing support programs**
- **And the removal of the welfare stigma**

To accomplish our mission, the Panel traveled to seven communities throughout Nunavut. Although the Panel was not able to visit all communities, contributions to the review from other communities were received. Our journey began with a visit to Kugluktuk in early May 2000, and concluded in Iqaluit in late June 2000. Between the two communities, panel members traveled to and talked with the people of Kugaaruk, Arviat, Coral Harbour, Igloolik and Arctic Bay. The Panel also received several written submissions

as well as studied information about similar programs in places like Greenland and Alaska.

Guiding Principles for Future Program Development

The Panel also believes that the following principles should guide the development of the Income Support program and all programs associated with it:

- The program must focus on Youth
- The program must recognize that self reliance can only be achieved through Education, Training and ongoing support
- Program development must focus on the client
- The program should support those who are attempting to better their lives
- The program must be simple and understood by all
- All government and non-government agencies must work together to provide a holistic support service to clients

Executive Summary

The Income Support Policy Review Report provides 46 (forty six) recommendations. The recommendations are provided within 5 (five) major themes heard by the Panel during its tour of several communities across Nunavut on behalf of the Minister of Education.

The five major theme areas are: Youth; Adults; Elders; Community; and Government. In each area, the Panel has made specific recommendations to the Minister about what areas need to be looked at, what rules need to be changed or what other strategies could be used. The Panel feels strongly that all of its recommendations should be given serious consideration and that it will be up to Government of Nunavut to determine which recommendations are actually implemented.

The Report is separated into the following sections: Acknowledgement; Introduction; What We Heard; Conclusion; and Appendices. The Acknowledgement section is in the form of a letter from the Panel members to the Minister while the Introduction section provides an entry into the body of the report. What We Heard reviews the comments the panel heard throughout its journey and provides the panel's recommendations on the five themes. The Conclusion provides the panel's final thoughts on the review and challenges the Government of Nunavut to action. There are four appendices; the first provides a copy of the original Terms of Reference for the review; the second lists the individuals or groups that provided formal written submissions to the review; the third is a summary of a survey conducted with Income Support Workers; and the fourth is a sample of the information handout made available during the public meetings in each community (specific community information was used for each visit).

Acknowledgement

The Income Support Policy Review panel members would like to thank the Minister of Education for the chance to hear the views of the people of Nunavut regarding Income Support programs. We welcome the opportunity to provide recommendations to better the lives of those who rely on this program.

We thank the people who came to the meetings and those who made written submissions for sharing their considerate and thought-provoking ideas and comments. We hope we have represented their comments fairly and accurately.

The panel appreciates the importance of this challenge and believes the report is true to what we heard. The task of writing this report was made easier by the heartfelt concern, the commitment to change and the shared vision of healthy and happy communities expressed by those who spoke to us.

Thank you

Frank Ipakohak, Chair, Kugluktuk

David Arnatsiaq, Igloolik

Joan Scottie, Baker Lake

Vivienne Aknavigak, Nunavut Social Development Council, Cambridge Bay

Introduction

This report follows community consultations in seven Nunavut communities and 12 written submissions. Although not specifically singled out, it was obvious that many of the presenters were current or former Income Support clients. It was also made apparent by the emotional and heartfelt presentations to the panel that this program is very important to the well being of individuals, families and communities.

It is clear that most Nunavummiut do not understand the Income Support program. People do not know what the intent of the program is, what to expect when making an application or what is expected of them if they receive the support. The lack of information or the presence of misinformation about the program has created unsettled feelings among clients, the workers, and the public. The panel feels that the government must take responsibility for ensuring that all people of Nunavut understand the intent of the Income Support program.

Although the productive choice and productive activity model was generally viewed as an acceptable approach, the foundation of the program needs to change to better meet cultural realities of Nunavut consistent with Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. The panel heard the Income Support program should follow the Inuit tradition of sharing. The panel believes that the sharing of resources, knowledge, and wealth is the appropriate basis from which to rebuild the Income Support program. People should be taught what the program could do to support them in bettering their lives. The workers and community must be willing to share their knowledge, expertise and support. Reflecting this, principles to guide program development have been made along with a recommendation to change the name of the program to ***Ikayuqatigiit***.

Many of the recommendations that follow are based in the knowledge that working together must become an organizational standard and priority. The panel heard, and agrees, that there is no one action that can be taken that will ensure a future of self reliance - rather it will be a combination of steps that must be aligned to ensure success.

An ongoing message was the need for training, workshops and education. People who spoke were eloquent in their desire not to be reliant on Income Support. They were also adamant that the focus of the program should be on youth and providing the youth of Nunavut with a future that does not include Income Support. Youth need to recapture the pride, self-esteem and self-reliance that have been lost. Training, education and support for youth should be the focus of any program rebuilding.

The support for Income Support clients must be a community wide initiative. People realize that support for a person to move beyond “welfare” is not only an Income Support issue and that support must be provided in a holistic and positive manner employing all community agencies and programs. Some speakers talked about a “welfare system” that has taken 50 years to bring us to our current state and that it will take years to erase the damage that it has done.

The panel recommends the establishment of a *Circle of Support* in communities to develop and monitor the progress of a long-term social plan. The panel believes a plan detailing long and short-term community goals with a focus on youth is necessary for real and meaningful change.

The panel recognizes many of the mechanisms to achieve this vision are already available at the community level. Co-ordination of the programs and the will to work together are keys to breaking the welfare cycle.

We believe our report is true to what we heard. We believe that the programs and activities needed to improve clients' lives are already in the communities. It is the access to these programs and the co-ordinated effort on the part of all agencies to achieve community, social, family and individual well being that will ensure a bright future for Nunavummiut.

The panel challenges the Nunavut Government to implement the recommendations in this report.

What We Heard

YOUTH - Assessment and Training

Many youth have dropped out of school and are not able or ready to compete in the emerging Nunavut job market. There is an urgency to emphasize the need for skill development, especially for youth. Many people believed that real skills development would lead youth out of the welfare cycle.

A network of training and incentives is needed to encourage youth to acquire needed skills. The skills identified include literacy, numeracy, life skills, budgeting skills, job search skills and traditional land skills. This skill development is seen as an important way to access and succeed in technical and academic training.

Training on the job programs are essential for the development of skills. This training on the job should include an incentive from the Income Support program and a salary from the employer. The panel agrees with this assessment and feels the government, being the largest employer in Nunavut, should lead the field in Training on the Job opportunities.

Training should not be done for training's sake. Adult Education programs, although valuable, need to be seen as a program with a goal and an end point. People enter the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program and do not progress into other programs. This is not only an issue with ABE but with many training programs offered in the community. The panel feels that all training should be part of a career plan and that clients must continue to demonstrate progress towards their goals to be eligible for continuing support.

Each Youth should have access to Career Counseling in order to explore the full range of training available and suitable to meet their goals, aspirations and abilities. The youth, with assistance and support from the Career Counselor, should develop a long-term plan that includes defining all support required from other agencies.

Some presenters saw single parents as being in need of additional, coordinated support. The panel heard too often that the lack of childcare support was the reason many young people have dropped out of programs.

The panel believes home visits made by a health professional and the Income Support worker will allow for personal and career planning by the single parent. The panel firmly believes that a coordinated effort is necessary for the young parent to adequately plan for their future. Single parents also require access to childcare support to allow for socialization of their children and to allow for the parent to explore community opportunities that may be beneficial to the parent. This coordinated effort of home visits, respite childcare and access to training will, in the panel's opinion, prevent the birth of a child becoming the end of a person's career goal.

Communities supported the notion of focusing the program on youth. The appropriate role for the Income Support program is seen to be supporting training, education and incentives.

Recommendations: *Youth*

Assessment

1. Career Counseling capacity should be established in all communities.
2. The focus of the Income Support Worker should be on the assessment and appropriate referral for training of Youth.
3. All youth receiving Income Support should be required to develop and make progress in fulfilling a Career action plan.

Training

4. Training should be based on client need and offered in a progressive fashion.
5. The Department should institute a 'Training on the Job' program for Income Support clients.
6. Clients should demonstrate success and progression for continued support.
7. The Department should develop training incentives within the Income Support program.
8. Foundational workshops should be provided that focus on parenting, budgeting, literacy, numeracy and life skills.
9. The Department should lead the co-ordination of training efforts by all government and non-government agencies.

Support

10. The Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education should ensure that each new parent be visited at home to assist in the planning for the future of the parent.
11. Childcare User Subsidies should be available in a timely fashion.
12. Day Homes providing childcare should be encouraged to get licensed and supported in doing so by the Childcare program.
13. The Department should co-ordinate its efforts within Income Support and a “Stay In School Program”.

ADULTS - Support and Training

Adults (25 - 54) have needs and aspirations that go beyond the youth populations need for training. Key issues presented to the panel involving adults centred on a need for support in achieving their life vision. The panel firmly believes that no one wants to be on Income Support. We heard that the former “Investing in People” program¹ provided a good model for future training program development. People would be happy to leave assistance in favour of a self-supporting lifestyle if they had the opportunity and disincentives to work were removed.

1. The “Investing in People,” was an initiative cost-shared by the territorial and federal governments. This initiative supported the delivery of adult basic education through the public colleges and life skills/ work activity projects via community sponsored contracts. Programs were based on need and focused on communities that did not have adult basic education services, and communities that required additional services to meet demand. This program was evaluated by a joint federal and territorial committee and was seen as a successful program. A noted strength of the program was the community sponsored contracting arrangements.

Valid roles for the Income Support program can include providing support to hunters, other traditional occupations and the self-employed entrepreneur.

A crucial role for the Income Support program is the provision of day to day living assistance. People questioned the adequacy of the food scale, given the differences in the cost of living between communities and sizes of families. The panel also heard that the clothing allowance was not adequate to properly clothe a family and certainly was not adequate if special clothes were needed for work.

The issue of how social assistance payments were made was raised again and again. There was no clear consensus within or across communities to resolve the issue of whether clients should be issued cheques directly or whether cheques should be made out to a store. The panel recognizes that a voucher (cheque to the store) system does not teach self-reliance skills. However, the panel also recognizes the voucher system ensures rents are paid, power/heat is not cut off and food is bought for the family.

The panel heard that the current 2-month assistance in advance policy was not adequate to support hunters who desired to be on the land longer than two months. The panel appreciates the concerns raised that some recipients could get the money in advance and then not go on the land. Other situations could include a client going on the land with the support money for six months and leaving part of the family at home without any support. The panel firmly believes that the hunter, the local Hunters and Trappers Associations, and the Hunter Support Program should work together to resolve these issues.

Recommendations: *Adults*

Assessment

14. Adults should have access to all the career development and career counseling opportunities within their community.
15. Income Support, the Department of Sustainable Development, Designated Inuit Organizations and other organizations need to work together to ensure the self-employed and entrepreneurs have access to all potential support programs.

Training

16. Labour Market statistics concerning the potential types and numbers of jobs in a community should be made available to the local community to ensure that training programs can be developed that are focused on preparing people for actual jobs.
17. Adults should continue to be supported through the Income Support while in training.
18. The Department should reinstate the “Investing in People Program”.

Support

19. The current practice of hamlet counsels making the determination of whether a client is paid directly or through a voucher system should be continued. This should be done in consultation with those involved in the *Circle of Support* discussed later in this report.
20. The client should have the opportunity to choose which store they will use to accept the voucher cheque.
21. The Department of Education should work with the Hunter Support program to extend support to 6 months rather than the present 2 months. The Department should work with Hunters and Trappers associations to ensure all recipients of the advance are truly hunters and have made arrangements for family not traveling with them.
22. The Department of Education should review its food scale and rates, including:
 - Community placement on the food scale;
 - The amount paid for the first and each subsequent member of the household; and
 - The amount and nature of the benefits for clothing, both basic and seasonal.

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23. The Department should ask the Department of Finance and Administration to review the Food Mail program (Air Stage Program) in cooperation with the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada with a view towards considering linking the subsidy with the Income Support program.²
 24. The Department should expand its current short-term support for self-employed or entrepreneurs.
 25. The current Income Exemption policy should be changed to a sliding scale that promotes work and recognizes family size.

2. To make nutritious, perishable food more affordable in isolated communities, the federal government set up the Northern Air Stage Program. For 1999-2000, the program's budget was \$15.6 million. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development administer the program also known as the Food Mail Program. The Department provides funding to Canada Post for transporting nutritious, perishable foods to isolated communities by air. This funding helps keep the cost of food down.

In 1998-1999, approximately half of the funding provided to Canada Post for this Program was used to provide Food Mail service to communities that are now in the new territory of Nunavut and about a third was used in northern Quebec.

ELDERS - Security and Support

The panel heard many heartfelt stories of Elders still supporting grown children and therefore not having enough monies to live on. This issue touched the panel in a profound way. The panel searched for a solution to this issue and feel that it cannot be addressed through the context of Income Support. However the panel is adamant that the issue be discussed in this report. The panel understands and appreciated the fact that elders want and will help family members with whatever they can. However these actions often place the elder in a situation where they cannot feed themselves or pay bills. This is not right. Other family members must be encouraged to support their elders.

The panel heard that those persons older than 55 should not be required to access training or productive activities to continue to benefit from the Income Support program. Given the recommended focus of the program on youth and training and training in general the panel agrees with this. Elders should have access to all training or other programs the government may offer but this participation should be voluntary.

The panel heard that the additional benefit of \$175 per elder receiving Income Support is only sufficient if there are two elders in the home. The panel heard from single elders that the \$175 benefit is too low.

Many Elders who spoke to the panel are unaware of the many support programs offered by the Nunavut government or the Federal government. When there was awareness of the support programs Elders were unsure how to access these programs or had difficulty making the application. The panel feels this is an injustice to Elders.

The panel is concerned that Elders have to apply for assistance each month when their life circumstances rarely change. We heard that the application process is stressful and demeaning to those in our culture that should be treated with the greatest respect. The panel is concerned that as Nunavut moves to a labour oriented lifestyle, the vital contributions of the Elders and ensuring solid Elder support will be ignored.

Recommendations: *Elders*

26. The definition of an Elder should be changed to age 55 from the age of 60, to be consistent with other program initiatives such as the Elder's Pension funded through the Nunavut Tunngavik Corporation.
27. Elders should be visited in the home to ensure that they are safe and receiving all the care they need.
28. Regular monthly income assistance for Elders should be the rule rather than the exception. The Nunavut Government should review and amalgamate the current financial support it currently provides to seniors to ensure consistency.
29. Income Support should work with the Municipal Liaison Officers to ensure elders receive all benefits they are entitled to from all levels of government.

COMMUNITIES - Circle of Support

People told the panel that community people and Community government need and want to become more involved with the design and delivery of income support programs. Communities, the panel was told, need the flexibility to ensure that the Income Support program is meeting the needs of its residents and helping to fulfill the vision the community has.

The panel heard that many communities have developed a Social Plan for their community but they have yet to be implemented. The panel believes this to be a grave error. The implementation of a Community Social Plan is the single most important recommendation the panel can make. As such, it deserves further elaboration.

Communities have stated they require input into the development of the program. The panel feels that this can only be achieved if the community agencies (government and non-government) work together to develop a long-range social plan that is integrated with other community planning. The panel recommends that a *Circle of Support* be developed which includes all the helping agencies in the community. The circle of support should function along the philosophy of Ikayuqatigiit. (People helping and sharing with people) This philosophy of the circle should be focused on providing the best benefits and service to those who need it and supporting the clients needs and aspirations where ever possible. The sharing of knowledge and resources was seen as an important underpinning of this circle. This *Circle of Support* should be charged with the development of a long-term community social plan that is approved by the hamlet council. The *Circle of Support* members then can be charged with the implementation of the plan, and accounting to the people of the community for achieving the goals of the plan.

Community control through the social planning context presents a considerable challenge for the Nunavut Government and Community Government. The Nunavut government will have to rethink how it manages community programs and the local governments will have to take a greater responsibility for social issues. The Social Plan is foundational for changing the programs within the community to better meet its needs. A key role for the Hamlet would be in supporting the planning process and final approval of the plan.

The panel heard that appeal committees were not well accepted because they felt like a rubber stamp for the workers decision and they had no real power. The committee members who spoke stated they did not like always turning people down when they had real need.

The panel heard from Income Support Workers that they are not all receiving equal salaries and benefits. The workers also stated they require more support from the community at large and additional training.

Recommendations: *Community*

30. Develop a *Circle of Support* composed of all helping professions within the community.
31. Mandate the *Circle of Support* to develop a Social Plan for approval of the Hamlet Council.
32. Mandate the *Circle of Support* to function as the appeal committee.

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33. Require the *Circle of Support* to report to the community on progress towards meeting the goals of the plan.
 34. Community leaders should be encouraged to lead this *Circle of Support*.
 35. The Department needs to provide additional training to the Income Support Workers, their supervisors (both hamlet and Government of Nunavut) and to the *Circle of Support* members.
 36. Community contracts for Income Support mandate the salary and benefits paid to workers. Communities should ensure they are providing these salaries and benefits.

THE NUNAVUT GOVERNMENT - Change

The panel heard many times that most Nunavummiut were unaware of or did not understand the program. The panel believes it is the government's duty to inform all citizens of the programs available. This includes explaining the intent and purpose of the programs available. Our consultation was hampered from people's lack of understanding of the program intent, rules and benefits. It was most obvious when people stated they think the program should have this, or support that, when in fact the program already offers what was requested. The workers, too, often appeared to be unaware of the program rules and benefits. This lack of information has led many people to not receive full support because they did not know what was available to them. It has also led to a situation where it seems each community delivers its own version of the Income Support program. For example, some communities told us that basic support for clothing was unavailable while other communities treat income derived from Bingo and Co-op incentives differently.

The inclusion of co-op incentives and bingo winnings in determining income is a concern in all communities. The panel heard that it was unfair that when these resources were used to purchase land gear or household appliances that the money was still deducted from the Income support cheque. Some communities offset the bingo winnings if the client has purchased household items or land gear. The panel agrees that the treatment of bingo winning and co-op incentives needs to be consistent across Nunavut.

The challenge for the Nunavut Government is to rethink the way in which it manages programs at the community level. The panel heard the Government should provide support and guiding principles to the development of programs and then allow the community to infuse its goals, visions and aspirations.

Recommendations: *Nunavut Government*

Community Impact

37. The Government embarks on a publicity campaign that explains community programs to the people, including:
 - Full disclosure of benefits and programs available in the communities;
 - Application process;
 - Intent, rationale and success of programs; and
 - Labour market statistics
38. Develop a Career Counseling capacity in all communities.
39. Allow Bingo winnings or Co-op incentives to be offset by valid purchases.

Territorial Impact

40. Change the name to reflect the tradition of sharing - **Ikayuqatigiit**
41. Role models within the Inuit community should be promoted.
42. The Nunavut Government should be held accountable to the community for community programs through a formal yearly public disclosure session.

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43. All community “helping persons” job descriptions should be updated to ensure their active participation in the development of, and ongoing work within, the *Circle of Support*.
 44. The Government should insist that all planning done at the Departmental or Territorial level include initiatives to support the *Circle of Support*.
 45. The Nunavut Government should adopt a policy that would require all contracts let by the government to have a “Training on the Job” component.
 46. The elected leaders of Nunavut must be champions and be vocal supporters of this change.

Conclusion

The panel realizes and heard from the people that change will not happen overnight. The panel also realizes that without Government wide commitment and support no change will occur. The panel wants to be very clear that change is necessary and overdue. Small and immediate steps can be taken that will impact all Nunavummiut immediately.

The panel is very aware of the fiscal realities of the Nunavut Government. This fiscal pressure does not prevent the government from implementing many of the organizational changes we have recommended. The development of a *Circle of Support* in each community does not have a cost but has a real and lasting client impact that in the long run will reduce the welfare dependency and budget. The changing of the Income Support philosophy from a program of last resort to a program of **Ikayuqatigiit** is also cost neutral and will make the program understandable and acceptable to Inuit people.

Those recommendations with financial impact should become a priority of the government to secure money for these changes and be phased in as money becomes available.

The panel challenges to Government to support the development of long-term social action plans within each community and challenges the community governments to take responsibility for the implementation and achievement of their plan.

The Government is aware that it is through **Ikayuqatigiit** that the Inuit have survived and will survive and prosper into the future. We now have to begin sharing the knowledge, resources, skills and wealth.

Appendix A: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

Income Support Policy Review

Preamble

The Income Support program, as inherited from the GNWT is a program that requires new, proactive, thinking on the part of the Nunavut Government.

The Income Support Program historically characterized as a highly politicized program that requires a real and consistent community and government commitment to make changes.

The blunt reality of the Income Support program is that without a major overhaul and investment by the Nunavut government today, program expenditures will continue to grow exponentially. The client caseload will grow. Client dependency on government support will grow. Eventually, the Income Support Program expenditures will erode the governments' ability to fund other social programs.

The Income Support Policy Review will form the basis for developing a new vision of Government support provided to the people of Nunavut through it's Income Support Program.

While Part of the review's objectives will be the affirmation and identification of issues among the greater community, the following highlight some common themes:

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- Initiatives to fund independence, e.g. training, are too low;
 - Dependence is fostered, due to lack of positive intervention, such as training;
 - Program expenditures and client usage of the program increasing as much as 6% per year. This increase is contrary to the NWT and the rest of Canada;
 - Recent evaluation of worker competency revealed those Income Support workers lacked training, support and competency to perform their expected functions;
 - Lack of funding resulting in part time workers has created a staff turnover crisis;
 - Policy is adhered to on an ad hoc basis;
 - Although the program is transferred to half the Nunavut communities for program delivery communities take little responsibility for management;
 - Lack of worker training and community support leads to client fraud and verification of applications;
 - The formula used to fund communities is inadequate to adequately staff positions and expect the worker to counsel the client into training programs;
 - Disincentives in the community funding formula penalize the community for doing a good job.

Public Perception

It is necessary to consider the relationship between people and the reliance on, or need for, government financial support prior to the development of a firm and sustainable policy base for the Nunavut Income Support program.

There are four very general commonly held viewpoints some members of the public believe are the causes of poverty and the reasons for people accessing Income Support. These viewpoints are often cited both within Canada and the world.

- An economic viewpoint/perspective suggests that the poor access Income Support programs as a bridge between other support programs (EI and SFA) or between part time and seasonal work. This perspective holds that the amount of full time work is not sufficient to accommodate the available labour, or the nature of the labour market is part time seasonal employment with other financial support programs being unacceptable or inaccessible. ¹
- A second viewpoint suggests that those that are accessing the Income Support programs are discriminated against in some way from entering the labour market. This viewpoint suggests that barriers to employment create a poor class of people who will always be in need of government financial support regardless of the intervention. ²
- The flawed character viewpoint focuses on a public perception that those who access income support funds are in some way doing so because of a deficit of character. The poor are seen as being too lazy to work, incapable of holding a job, reproduce too often or any of a variety of personal faults. This perception is supported by Social Assistance statistics that show a great majority of Social Assistance clientele is single women, those prone to illness, those repeatedly returning for assistance or the

disabled. The policy /program design resulting from this view is obvious - “fix” the personality fault and consequently fix the program. ³

- A too generous government viewpoint holds that the government itself through disincentives and to high welfare rates encourages the poor to stay poor. The working poor stating “I’d be better off on welfare” often echoes this. ⁴

The Nunavut Income Support program relies heavily on the assumption that training and personal growth will lead to clients becoming self-reliant. It also relies on the notion that services delivered at the community level will be more appropriate for meeting the needs of the client and the community.

For additional reading of the topic of poverty refer to:

Schellenberg, Grant and Ross, David P.

Left poor by the market: A look at family poverty and earnings

(c)1997 by the Canadian Council on Social Development

1 Schiller, *The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination*, 1989

2 Ibid

3 Op cit.

4 George Gilder, *Wealth and Poverty*, 1981:12.

Purpose of the Policy Review

The Ministerial Income Support policy review will solicit the views of Nunavut citizens and provide direction to the Nunavut Government regarding the Income Support Program.

The report resulting from the review will be used as the foundation for the development of a responsive and effective Income Support program in Nunavut.

The consultation will be based on exploring the principles that;

- The Government of Nunavut will afford every client, every reasonable opportunity to undertake training and other productive activities so as to move toward independence;
- Every client has an obligation to work with the Government of Nunavut in an attempt to move toward independence;
- Every client has the right to expect reasonable access to the program in each and every community within Nunavut;
- Every client will be assisted to negotiate the maze of programming which is available from a host of different government and community agencies;
- Every client will be provided with on-going support as they work toward self-sufficiency.

Leadership

The Minister responsible for Income Support Programming will provide leadership for the review.

The community consultation process will be lead by a forum of Nunavut citizens appointed by the Minister.

Process and Timing

Action	Date
Terms of Reference approved by Minister	December 15, 1999
Three Forum members recruited	February 2000
Three Forum members appointed by Minister	February 2000
Forum Orientation/Training	March 2000
Preparation of consultation documents	December - January 2000
Public relations/Media Campaign	January 2000
Community Meeting held in six locations across Nunavut	March - April 2000
Review Written Submissions	April 2000
Interim Status Report to Minister	March 31, 2000
Final Report to Minister	June 30, 2000
Presentation to Minister	July 15, 2000
Presentation by Minister to Standing Committee	August 1, 2000

Scope

The review:

- 1) Will identify the nature and effectiveness of the current program paying particular attention to the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities that exist;
- 2) Will determine the current role of all levels government in the provision of this service;
- 3) Will identify related policy and legislation that impacts on the effective and efficient delivery of this service;
- 4) Will broaden the understanding of Income Support programs within Nunavut;
- 5) Will lead focus groups in a maximum of six Nunavut communities that are consistent with the Program Principles listed above; Recommended communities to be visited during this review are as follows:

Baffin	Keewatin	Kitikmeot
Iqaluit	Baker Lake	Kugluktuk
Igloolik	Coral Harbor	Kuqaaruk (Pelly Bay)

- 6) Will hear the views of Nunavut citizens with regard to effective and appropriateness of the income support programs;
- 7) Will provide a report to the Minister of Education that is consistent with the Program Principles listed above and also within the parameters of existing budgetary authority.

Possible Lines of Enquiry

- 1) Is the intent and purpose Income Support program understandable to the people of Nunavut?
- 2) Does the program offer what is needed to the right people?
- 3) Should communities manage the program? Should it be delivered centrally like Employment Insurance?
- 4) Should the program treat youth differently than Adults, Seniors, Single Mothers?
- 5) Are there disincentives in the program that prevent people from moving off income support to work?
- 6) Should Income support be combined with other programs that offer a similar service i.e.: Student Financial Assistance and Adult Training Allowances
- 7) Should people be made to do work, school or counselling before the government supports them?
- 8) Does the current Income Support Program require change in focus or should the focus be more enforcement of the current rules/regulations by Income Support Staff?

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- 9) Should benefits be issued in a different manner?
 - 10) Should we provide single access for this program and federal income security programs?
 - 11) Examine all barriers to successful transition from welfare to work i.e.: public housing rent structures, “earned and unearned” income exemptions and supports to ABE students.

Appendix B: List of Submissions

List of Submissions

Town of Iqaluit
Wellness Committee, Town of Iqaluit
Simona Arnatsiaq, Iqaluit
Hamlet of Kugaaruk
Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Sister Edith Grenier, Kugluktuk
Doug Workman, Nunavut Employees Union
Arctic Co-operatives Ltd., Winnipeg, Manitoba
Hamlet of Whale Cove
Noah Kautaq, Clyde River
Manasa Evic, Pangnirtung
Simon Siegareak, Arviat
Hunter Tootoo, MLA - Iqaluit Centre, Nunavut Housing Task Force

Community Meetings

Kugluktuk	May 10, 2000,
Kugaaruk (Pelly Bay)	May 12, 2000,
Arviat	May 13, 2000,
Coral Harbour	May 15, 2000,
Igloolik	June 13, 2000
Arctic Bay	June 15, 2000
Iqaluit	June 19-20, 2000

Appendix C: Summary of Income Support Worker Survey

Survey of Income Support Workers and Regional Income Support Supervisors, January 2000

Summary

In January 2000, nearly three dozen questionnaires were mailed to income support workers and regional supervisors across Nunavut. The questionnaire was intended to solicit responses to six questions about Nunavut's Income Support Program with a view to presenting this information as background to the Nunavut Income Support Policy Review. The Policy Review is scheduled to take place in the spring of 2000.

This summary provides a listing of the questions contained in the questionnaire and a summary of the responses to each question. Ten questionnaires (of 32 sent or 31%) were returned as of February 15, 2000.

Question 1: What do you see as the most important issues facing the income support program over the next five years? Why are these important?

- **Communications.** Respondents identified concerns about the level and quality of communications between the client and workers, between the workers and other care givers in the community, between the workers and Income Support senior staff, and in information provided to clients about the program.
- **Partnerships and Cooperation.** Respondents suggested that there should be better partnerships between public and private agencies in order to provide better services to clients.
- **Productive Choices.** Respondents said there needs to be more work on providing productive choices, especially employment, for clients.

Question 2: What are the strengths of the current income support program?

- **Productive Choices.** Respondents identified productive choice as strength but did not elaborate as well as the guidelines and regulations.
- **Helping those in Need.** Some respondents indicated that the fact of being able to issue to those in need was strength, in and of itself.
- **Teamwork.** A respondent commented that the only strength was teamwork among colleagues while another commented that they thought their supervisors were good support.

Question 3: What are the weaknesses of the current income support program?

- **Communications.** Respondents identified several concerns about the current income support program including lack of information about program to pass on to clients, insufficient in-person meetings between workers and Headquarters staff, and insufficient cross-cultural sensitivity.
- **Administrative Support.** Respondents expressed concerns with the lack of clerical support, lack of up to date training, lack of full time Career Development Officers, and a non-operating Income Support computer program.
- **Community Support.** One respondent felt there was a lack of community support.

Question 4: What changes would you like to see put in place in terms of delivery of the income support program?

- **Community Involvement.** Respondents commented that more support from other agencies, private sector employers and the community was needed.
- **Productive Choices.** Respondents suggested courses or workshops in job search, parenting, money management /budgeting, life skills and out-reach. It was also suggested that clients be allowed to purchase gas and supplies that are not provided through other programs in order to take advantage of productive choices such as hunting/trapping and clothing manufacture. One respondent also stated that Career Development Officers should be more pro-active when working with Income Support clients.
- **Flexibility.** A respondent suggested that there should be more flexibility in the Income Support program for issuing to separated families.
- **Administrative Process.** One respondent suggested using previous year's income tax return information to determine income and eligibility. The respondent felt that this would give more accurate income information, reduce the possibility of fraud, and pay the client a regular amount each month.

Question 5: How would you suggest putting these changes in place?

- **Administrative Process.** Respondents suggested making changes to the treatment of separated families, allowing clients to order clothes and child care products through COD, and working more with Revenue Canada on client's income information as ways of improving the administrative processes of Income Support. It was also suggested that more funding is needed.

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- **Program Promotion.** Respondents suggested that Nunavut Education should be involved in more activities with communities, agencies and businesses by promoting productive choices for income support clients.
 - **Community Involvement.** Respondents suggested that hamlets and Inuit organizations as well as businesses should be encouraged to be more involved in finding productive choices for clients.

Question 6: Do you have any other comments you would like to add? Do you have any questions you would like to see asked during the upcoming policy review? Please provide them.

As this question was quite general in nature, the following provides highlights of the specific responses received.

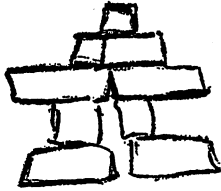
Administrative Process

- Questioned whether one-time winnings should be recorded.
- Questioned whether income tax refunds could be used for purchasing equipment, etc. for hunting/trapping/fishing productive choices.
- It was suggested that all forms should be in syllabics.
- Income Support clients should not be allowed to adopt.
- Need for a better delivery system, as there always will be poor people.
- Income Support Workers should be covered off when they go on leave. Preparations for this should be made.

Funding

- It was suggested that more funding should be made available to cover high food costs.
- It was suggested that Income Support Appeal Committees should be given a small honorarium.

Appendix D: Example of Handouts Available at Public Meetings



Nunavut Income Support Review Panel

Kugaaruk

What should the Income Support program look like? Tell us what your vision is for the future of the Nunavut Income Support Program.

How do we make a program that fulfills the promise of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement by encouraging self-reliance and the cultural and social well being of Inuit?

The purpose of the Income Support Program is to assist individuals make decisions and choices about their futures in order to maintain or achieve their independence.

- The Income Support Program helps people to assess their financial, personal and social needs.
- The Income Support Program provides financial assistance to people to help them become independent.
- The Income Support Program also helps individuals to make Productive Choices and to gain more independence.

What types of training and other productive choices do you believe could be developed?

How can monies from Employment Insurance be used?

What types of community partnerships and involvement are needed?

How to Contact Us

If you would like, you may send us your comments. Our mailing address is:
 Nunavut Income Support Review Panel
 C/o Income Support Division
 Education Nunavut, 2nd Floor, Brown Building
 PO Box 800
 Iqaluit, Nunavut
 X0A 0H0
 Fax: 1-867-975-5690

We also have a toll-free line for leaving your message at:

1-877-722-4922 OR

E-mail us at: ISReview@gov.nu.ca

Kugaaruk Statistics

Kugaaruk Population Estimates

1998 526

1999 568

Kugaaruk Unemployment Rates (National Criteria)

1994 40.1%

1999 22.5%

Nunavut Unemployment Rate (By Highest Level of Schooling)

Grade 0-8	34.1%
Grade 9 to 11	31.0%
High School Diploma	9.5%
Diploma/Certificate	12.2%
University	2.0%

Kugaaruk Social Assistance Payments per Year

1992	\$92,757
1993	\$479,327
1994	\$475,318
1995	\$547,182
1996	\$644,143
1997	\$601,667
1998	\$722,039
1999	\$569,497

Kugaaruk Social Assistance Cases and Beneficiaries

1992	47	135
1993	63	177
1994	64	178
1995	86	249
1996	80	241
1997	76	233
1998	86	244

Appendix E: Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations: *Youth*

Assessment

1. Career Counseling capacity should be established in all communities.
2. The focus of the Income Support Worker should be on the assessment and appropriate referral for training of Youth.
3. All youth receiving Income Support should be required to develop and make progress in fulfilling a Career action plan.

Training

4. Training should be based on client need and offered in a progressive fashion.
5. The Department should institute a 'Training on the Job' program for Income Support clients.
6. Clients should demonstrate success and progression for continued support.
7. The Department should develop training incentives within the Income Support program.
8. Foundational workshops should be provided that focus on parenting, budgeting, literacy, numeracy and life skills.
9. The Department should lead the co-ordination of training efforts by all government and non-government agencies.

Support

10. The Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education should ensure that each new parent be visited at home to assist in the planning for the future of the parent.
11. Childcare User Subsidies should be available in a timely fashion.
12. Day Homes providing childcare should be encouraged to get licensed and supported in doing so by the Childcare program.
13. The Department should co-ordinate its efforts within Income Support and a “Stay In School Program”.

Recommendations: *Adults*

Assessment

14. Adults should have access to all the career development and career counseling opportunities within their community.
15. Income Support, the Department of Sustainable Development, Designated Inuit Organizations and other organizations need to work together to ensure the self-employed and entrepreneurs have access to all potential support programs.

Training

16. Labour Market statistics concerning the potential types and numbers of jobs in a community should be made available to the local community to ensure that training programs can be developed that are focused on preparing people for actual jobs.

17. Adults should continue to be supported through the Income Support while in training.

18. The Department should reinstate the “Investing in People Program”.

Support

19. The current practice of hamlet counsels making the determination of whether a client is paid directly or through a voucher system should be continued. This should be done in consultation with those involved in the *Circle of Support* discussed later in this report.

20. The client should have the opportunity to choose which store they will use to accept the voucher cheque.

21. The Department of Education should work with the Hunter Support program to extend support to 6 months rather than the present 2 months. The Department should work with Hunters and Trappers associations to ensure all recipients of the advance are truly hunters and have made arrangements for family not traveling with them.

22. The Department of Education should review its food scale and rates, including:

- Community placement on the food scale;
- The amount paid for the first and each subsequent member of the household; and
- The amount and nature of the benefits for clothing, both basic and seasonal.

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23. The Department should ask the Department of Finance and Administration to review the Food Mail program (Air Stage Program) in cooperation with the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada with a view towards considering linking the subsidy with the Income Support program.²
 24. The Department should expand its current short-term support for self-employed or entrepreneurs.
 25. The current Income Exemption policy should be changed to a sliding scale that promotes work and recognizes family size.

2. To make nutritious, perishable food more affordable in isolated communities, the federal government set up the Northern Air Stage Program. For 1999-2000, the program's budget was \$15.6 million. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development administer the program also known as the Food Mail Program. The Department provides funding to Canada Post for transporting nutritious, perishable foods to isolated communities by air. This funding helps keep the cost of food down.

In 1998-1999, approximately half of the funding provided to Canada Post for this Program was used to provide Food Mail service to communities that are now in the new territory of Nunavut and about a third was used in northern Quebec.

Recommendations: *Elders*

26. The definition of an Elder should be changed to age 55 from the age of 60, to be consistent with other program initiatives such as the Elder's Pension funded through the Nunavut Tunngavik Corporation.
27. Elders should be visited in the home to ensure that they are safe and receiving all the care they need.
28. Regular monthly income assistance for Elders should be the rule rather than the exception. The Nunavut Government should review and amalgamate the current financial support it currently provides to seniors to ensure consistency.
29. Income Support should work with the Municipal Liaison Officers to ensure elders receive all benefits they are entitled to from all levels of government.

Recommendations: *Community*

30. Develop a *Circle of Support* composed of all helping professions within the community.
31. Mandate the *Circle of Support* to develop a Social Plan for approval of the Hamlet Council.
32. Mandate the *Circle of Support* to function as the appeal committee.
33. Require the *Circle of Support* to report to the community on progress towards meeting the goals of the plan.

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34. Community leaders should be encouraged to lead this *Circle of Support*.
 35. The Department needs to provide additional training to the Income Support Workers, their supervisors (both hamlet and Government of Nunavut) and to the *Circle of Support* members.
 36. Community contracts for Income Support mandate the salary and benefits paid to workers. Communities should ensure they are providing these salaries and benefits.

Recommendations: Nunavut Government

Community Impact

37. The Government embarks on a publicity campaign that explains community programs to the people, including:
 - Full disclosure of benefits and programs available in the communities;
 - Application process;
 - Intent, rationale and success of programs; and
 - Labour market statistics
38. Develop a Career Counseling capacity in all communities.
39. Allow Bingo winnings or Co-op incentives to be offset by valid purchases.

Territorial Impact

40. Change the name to reflect the tradition of sharing - **Ikayuqatigiit**
41. Role models within the Inuit community should be promoted.
42. The Nunavut Government should be held accountable to the community for community programs through a formal yearly public disclosure session.
43. All community “helping persons” job descriptions should be updated to ensure their active participation in the development of, and ongoing work within, the *Circle of Support*.
44. The Government should insist that all planning done at the Departmental or Territorial level include initiatives to support the *Circle of Support*.
45. The Nunavut Government should adopt a policy that would require all contracts let by the government to have a “Training on the Job” component.
46. The elected leaders of Nunavut must be champions and be vocal supporters of this change.