



Income Support

A New Vision A New Direction

Report Prepared by the
Department of Education
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Introduction

The importance of the Income Support Program in Nunavut cannot be overstated.

Income Support affects all people who live in Nunavut. Over half of all Nunavummiut are in a household that receives an Income Support cheque during the year; every month 3,100 adults and 5,000 of their dependents receive support through the program.

The Income Support Worker's role is to administer a financial benefit program while providing career counseling and support. Income Support provides financial assistance for adult education and upgrading classes; for those developing skills to get a job; to hunters and trappers; to those working in low paying jobs who have high expenses; to those who provide volunteer services within a community; and to elders and for those who are disabled.

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

As part of meeting the challenge put forward by the Bathurst Mandate, in March 2000, the Minister of Education appointed the Income Support Policy Review Panel consisting of Mr. Frank Ipakohak of Kugluktuk, Ms. Joan Scottie of Baker Lake, Mr. David Arnatsiaq of Igloolik and Ms. Vivienne Aknavigak of Cambridge Bay. The Panel members traveled to seven Nunavut communities. They produced a report detailing their community consultation and made forty-six recommendations.¹

The report was made public and sent to all Hamlets, Designated Inuit Organizations, all Nunavut Government departments with a request for comment on the appropriateness of the panel recommendations and to provide direction and feedback on how to achieve them. The Department of Education received responses back from the Departments' of Public Works and Services, Justice, Sustainable Development, Health and Social Services, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs and Human Resources, the Nunavut Housing Corporation, and a letter from the Nunavut Social Development Council. Feedback from these groups has been incorporated into the Department's response.

There were several challenges faced by the Department in formulating a plan of action to address the Panel recommendations.

- Many of the recommendations involved issues beyond income support and some are outside of the mandate of the Department of Education;
- The Income Support Program is not well understood, as some of the recommendations are already addressed in the current program.
- Some new initiatives recommended involve significant cost;

¹ Appendix 1

- Because the Department's case management system is just being implemented, it is difficult to do full cost estimates.

Following a process that listened to individual experiences with Income Support, community voices, Inuit organizations and other government departments, the Department of Education presents in this document an action plan for consideration by the Government.

If accepted, the Department's plan will move Income Support from a program that focuses its attention on cheques and administrative processes to one that allows clients to develop skills and abilities to become as self-reliant or self-sufficient as possible.

Consistent with the emphasis on self-reliance in the Bathurst Mandate the proposed revitalized program provides incentives for clients to explore career options and access training to achieve their potential in Nunavut's mixed economy.

- Gone in this proposed new design for Income Support are the punitive measures that "cut clients off" immediately if they do not participate in Productive Choices - replaced by appropriate interventions being initiated by Income Support Worker's and Career Development Officers as well as incentives to encourage maximum participation in training and transition to work initiatives.
- Gone will be the degrading process of going to the Income Support office every month asking for money - replaced by a self-reporting payroll system.
- Gone will be much of the administrative burden for the Community – replaced by workers who can now focus attention on career counseling and offering training and support to clients.
- Gone will be client confusion and uncertainty about where to get service - replaced by a well-informed public that has knowledge of the Department's programs.

A number of improvements can be accomplished within the Department's existing budget, as the costs are minimal. However accomplishing all of the improvements will require additional funding and some minor changes to legislation or regulations.

Background

Before the Second World War, northern administrators tried to ensure the Inuit remained on the land as self-sufficient hunters. This was an administrative goal designed to keep Aboriginal people on the land as much as possible and thus off the relief rolls, since cutting costs was an important concern for a cash-strapped federal government during the Great depression.²

Programs that provided a basic standard of living were introduced following WWII. In the Nunavut area, the Government of Canada provided support in the form of food and clothing vouchers usually administered by the Hudson Bay Company. An Inuit could be eligible for a food voucher when game was in short supply, when a hunter was too ill to hunt or when the market for furs was depressed. The term 'voucher' survives today, and is synonymous with the Income Support cheque.

By the end of the Second World War, however, "the government was torn between those who continued to advocate minimalist or residual approaches to dealing with welfare concerns and others who actively sought to intervene in the growing social and economic problems faced by Inuit."³

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples characterizes the move from camps to larger settlements as creating a welfare dependency overnight; as the population of the settlements grew, so did the dependence on government. Natural resources were no longer as accessible, and the independence of a hunting and gathering, fishing and trading economy dissipated with the end of nomadic, decentralized life. Cash was now needed to support the hunt for country food or to shop for imported food. Jobs were scarce and Inuit soon discovered that their traditional skills were irrelevant in the few wage-earning positions available.⁴

The Royal Commission report further states: "The government of the day was unprepared for the economic and psychological dependency, which would be created alongside the increases in Inuit general standard of living. This dependency is evident in high rates of unemployment, social assistance or welfare payments, low levels of educational attainment, low rates of cultural persistence including traditional patterns of hunting and fishing, and high rates of crime and deviant behaviors."⁵

The role in the relocation of Inuit people that welfare played is significant. The promise of housing, education, and food was the carrot used to lure people from the land and into the settlements. The belief that the welfare voucher was somehow part of the compensation for the loss of land and access to hunting resources was perpetuated and entrenched on a monthly basis.

² Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples – Final Report, Vol 1 sec. 2.2, p 199

³ Ibid

⁴ Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples – Final Report, Vol 1 sec. 4 p 286

⁵ Allan L. Patenaude, PH.D., <http://www.ualr.edu/~alpatenaude/page 3. htm>

Social Assistance / Welfare remained relatively unchanged and unchangeable under the Canada Assistance Plan until 1995 and the introduction of the Canada Health and Social Transfer. Until 1995, to qualify for a Social Assistance cheque or voucher, a person was only required to prove a need. To continuously be eligible for a payment a person needed to be continually in need. Inuit leaders of the day expressed a frustration with the government for not being able or willing to change the program to better meet the needs of people in the communities.

The Income Support reform started by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) in 1995 and implemented in 1997 ostensibly moved the passive Social Assistance program to an active system whereby a client is supported to achieve educational/training or employment goals. This move to a career and employment focused Income Support program was supported by moving the program from the Department of Health and Social Services into the Department of Education (responsible for training and career services).

The program administered by the Department of Education in Nunavut today is the Income Support program inherited from the Northwest Territories. The current focus of the Nunavut Income Support program is to compel recipients to make Productive Choices from community opportunities in wellness, education, training and work experience to gain a greater degree of financial independence.

The program provides temporary financial support for two months allowing recipients to develop productive activity. Once the two months have elapsed the recipient must become involved in a productive activity or risk losing financial support from the program for the entire family. People older than 60 years of age and people with disabilities are not required to participate in the Productive Choice scheme.

Productive activities can be in the areas of upgrading, career supports, employment, training, and harvesting or community work activities. Wellness activities can be in the areas of alcohol or drug treatment, mental health, family support, medical treatment, aged and handicapped support and community justice. All income support recipients considered employable must participate in Productive Choices. If participants refuse a Productive Choice or do not follow through on an agreed choice, their benefits are suspended for a two-month period. Any applicant or recipient who is aggrieved by a decision of an officer respecting the granting, refusal, suspension, reduction or amount of social assistance has the right to appeal.

Another feature of this program is that, under the current legislation, communities have the authority to design and deliver local social programs, including income support programs, subject to full compliance with legislation and policy requirements. The Nunavut Government has committed to continue the work that has been done with communities to create more local options and additional opportunities for governance.

Communities taking on the responsibility for the program can direct support toward programs that strengthen traditional activities, motivate youth to make Productive Choices, create jobs, further education and training through expanded child care and incentives, provide healing for communities and families and ensure secure income for those most in need. As a general principle, services are offered in accordance with need, but there is an emphasis on programs and services for youth.

If communities decide to take on responsibility for the program an evaluation is an essential part of Productive Choices. Each community must establish a long-term strategic plan and a results evaluation framework and ensure that an annual audit will be conducted. Every three or four years, longitudinal surveys will be conducted to determine who is in the program and to measure the program's impact on participants.

The Panel Report observed the Productive Choice Model was generally viewed as an acceptable approach. However, the foundation of the program needs to change to better meet cultural realities of Nunavut consistent with Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. Language, hunting, trapping, sewing, carving and fishing must continue to be recognized as cornerstones of the Inuit lifestyle and incorporated into Departmental programs. Communities are frustrated with all the rules and regulations in the program that do not reflect culture or community priorities.

A Proposed Plan of Action

The forty-six recommendations proposed by the Income Support Policy Review Panel called for action in three broad areas: client services, program administration and community development.

Client Services

The panel report called for a change in the way the Income Support program interacts with clients. The report indicated that all clients needed to have easy access to career counseling and training programs within their home community.

Program Administration

The panel recommended that procedures / policies / benefits and delivery of the Income Support program need to be reviewed and changed to better service its clientele by making the program easier to understand.

Community Development

The Panel report indicated that many of the services that are needed in the community are already there but access is confusing and they need to be integrated to provide a comprehensive and supportive network to clients.

The plan of action that follows addresses these concerns and proposes a “made in Nunavut” solution that responds to the Income Support Review Panel’s forty-six recommendations and better meets the needs of clients, communities and the Nunavut Government.

Client Services

Key to reorganizing the Income Support Program and achieving a program that emphasizes Career Counseling is the refocusing of the Income Support Worker's role in the community as well as moving to a "payroll style" program.

A payroll system is best described as being similar to the Employment Insurance cheque system. Once the client's personal and financial information are recorded, a cheque is generated monthly. The dollar amount of the Income Support cheque varies from month to month depending on utility costs, family size, income or changes in rent costs. The successful implementation of a proposed pay-roll system will require clients to disclose this information monthly. A payroll system could provide a regular cheque on a pre-determined day to clients.

A payroll system for those eligible and returning clients is seen as the method to:

- Free the worker from the administrative burden of assessing and verifying information each month for each client. The removal of the administrative burden will then allow for the worker to concentrate on the career counseling, personal support and community capacity building aspects of the program,
- Allow the worker to visit elders and new mothers in the home,
- Free the clients from continually attending the Income Support Worker's office even though their circumstances have not changed,
- Streamline the financial process allowing for better tracking, reconciliation and recovery,
- Recognize that in some communities the Productive Choices are limited,
- Recognize that in some communities the work opportunities are seasonal or limited,
- Recognize the key role Income Support plays in the mixed economy.

Currently the client has access to a system that can provide assistance immediately once eligibility is established. The process proposed for pay-rolling clients will ensure the community worker has the ability to respond in emergencies. Communities and the panel report both spoke to a desire to have the flexibility to direct the cheque to a supplier within the community. The pay rolling of clients will not affect this community choice.

The panel report and experience delivering the Income Support program demonstrate that a number of concerns have to be attended to prior to moving a payroll system. To achieve the pay rolling of clients will require the following initiatives:

➤ **Increase career counseling training to the current Income Support Workers**

This training will allow all clients local community access to career counseling services. This training will enable the Income Support Workers to assist the client in identifying issues that have prevented a successful transition to work in the past and enable them to develop and make referrals to training / educational opportunities currently available.

A shift in work responsibilities will encourage and support the building of a positive relationship with the community and the clients. It is expected that this shift will increase the appeal of the Income Support job and thereby increase the retention of Income Support Workers within the communities.

The department has already undertaken a policy of cross training between Income Support Workers and Career Development Officers. Within the department, this means training staff in different positions on the same knowledge and skills. It is anticipated that this training can be continued through training development funding currently available under the Labour Market Development Agreement.

Training needs in this area were also identified in a Consulting and Audit Canada report completed in December 1998 for the Department of Education entitled, "*Nunavut Profile*."⁶ This report also detailed the need to review pay levels for Income Support Workers.

➤ **Increase training opportunities for clients**

Under the current Labour Market Development Agreement, the Department develops localized training to support local needs. The program suffers from a lack of capacity in many communities for the development of the training programs and ongoing support of the clients attending the programs.

The refocusing of the Income Support Worker's responsibilities and increased training for the worker will allow for the on-the-ground support necessary for the successful development of training programs in Nunavut communities.

Income Support programs for work experience and skills development have already been piloted as demonstration projects in several communities, and must now be fully incorporated as a vital part of the Income Support delivery system. This will create employment preparation and training services for participants not eligible under the labor market program training courses.

⁶ For a synopsis of this report see appendix 2

➤ **Develop a cheque processing 1-800 call in center.**

The proposed 1-800 in center will be developed to answer all Income Support / Seniors Pension / Federal benefit⁷ questions from community members as well as perform the cheque administration duties associated with the Income Support program. Those wishing to access the various income support programs or seek information about federal programs will have the ability to call toll free either from their home phone or from the Income Support office located in the community. Trained, bilingual staff will be hired to field questions from 8:30 am until 7:00 pm Monday to Friday. It is anticipated that an on-call emergency plan will be put in place to deal with after hour situations should they arise. The call center staff will have the ability to track financial expenditures, perform the necessary cheque reconciliation and perform verification duties electronically.

Removing many of the administrative duties from the local Income Support Worker will enhance the role, duties and community acceptance of the Worker. The current role of the Income Support Worker includes career counseling, however the administrative pressure to deliver the cheque prevents the worker from delivering a career counseling service. This initiative will relieve the administrative burden and enhance the career counseling aspects of the job.

This call center approach is being researched in other parts of Canada. It is anticipated that client service will improve, as will the efficiency of the cheque process. The call center will provide the following services to the public:

- Information on Income Support related programs and services,
- Cheque processing and distribution
- Accuracy and timeliness of tax reporting for clients
- Allow the Community Worker the time to interact more effectively with the public.

➤ **Change the current practice of discontinuing benefits for those who refuse or fail to attend a productive activity without appropriate interventions.**

This practice was instituted to “push” clients into a training, work experience or volunteer work. Although the productive activities have benefited those that were motivated and supported to achieve success it was seen as ineffectual for those that lacked the motivation or incentive to enter into the programs. It is proposed the opportunities for productive activities remain but the current practice of forcing individuals to attend be discontinued without the appropriate interventions being carried out first.

⁷ Federal Benefits questions are seen as a future development following negotiations with the Government of Canada for partial funding of the Call Centre.

This shift from a punitive scheme that penalizes nonparticipation to a positive scheme that encourages participation is seen to be in line with Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and the concept of Ikajuqtigiit. The shift also should reduce much of the client / staff dissatisfaction with the program lessening the confrontational relationship as well as continuing to promote the safety and health of Nunavut's children.

➤ **Institute incentives that encourage individuals to attend training, education, harvesting work and or work experience programs**

This initiative will replace the current “forced to attend” practice and increase the benefit levels and support for those that choose to attend. This practice recognizes that the opportunities for training and educational opportunities are limited in many communities. There have also been concerns raised by educators and trainers that many programs are partially filled with unmotivated students who are forced to attend.

Although enshrined in policy and legislation the Productive Choice model was never accepted well or done consistently in Nunavut communities. Workers had neither the time to develop the choices nor the inclination to force clients into financial hardship for not attending.

The following incentives will be introduced to encourage participation in training, education or work experience activities:

- **Monthly training allowance**

A training allowance will be introduced for clients successfully attending approved training programs.

- **Transition to work supports**

Clients who choose to attend a training/educational or work experience program will receive coverage for work related items including work boots, appropriate office attire, uniforms, tools as well as assistance in obtaining Nunavut recognized certifications (for example a Nunavut driver's license).

People who leave the Income Support system to take a fulltime job report that the first months are the hardest due to increasing rent payments, work related needs and additional stress on the family financially and personally. The program will support those in this transition.

- **Productive Choice Support**

When clients are having difficulty beginning Productive Choices and increasing their level of self-reliance, they can refer them to the Career Development Officer. The Officer will provide increased levels of

assessment, assistance, support and direction in developing and following through with a plan of action that enables clients rather than penalizes them by denying Income Support for two months.

- **Entrepreneurship/Continuation of Supports**

Clients will be offered an opportunity to explore entrepreneurship as a way of becoming self-sufficient. Clients and Income Support Workers will work with existing programs and various other government resources to assist with business start up. Policies will be revised to allow clients with approved business plans to remain in receipt of assistance for a maximum of 12 months during the start up of their business venture. It is hoped that this change in policy will foster an entrepreneurial attitude that can be used in either self or traditional employment situations.

- **Adjust the current Income Exemption to allow for a continuation of benefits once full time work is obtained.**

A disincentive is inherent in the current Income Support program that discourages people from entering the work force. This benefit is seen as the bridge between Income Support and full time work. The basic rationale for this bridge will lessen the disincentives to obtain full time employment.

Table 1 - Summary Of Client Services	
ACTION ITEM	LEGISLATION CHANGE
Increase career counseling training to the current Income Support Workers	None required
Increase training opportunities for clients	None required
Monthly training allowance plus transition to work supports	None required
Productive choice support / Appropriate Intervention	Legislation Change Social Assistance Regulation 16(1)(a)(b)
Entrepreneurship continued support	Social Assistance Regulation Change (Schedule A)
Adjust current income exemption to allow for a continuation of benefits once full time work is obtained	Social Assistance Regulation Change (Schedule A)
Develop a cheque processing call-in center	None required

Program Administration

Program changes refer to the administration of benefits or how the program interacts with the client. The panel's recommendations in this area referred to reviewing the benefits and making the program more understandable to the people it is intended to service.

It is notable that recommendations focus on developing a supportive program that people can understand. It challenges the government to reorient the relationship between the worker and client. A change for the Income Support Worker from a financial administrator to a supportive career counselor will make a positive change in the Worker/Client relationship. The Panel saw the Worker's role changing to providing support and insight on becoming self reliant and less on the role of being the Income Support benefits administrator.

Initiatives the Department proposes to undertake in this area are:

➤ **Change the name of the program to Ikajuqtigiit**

Changing the current name of Income Support goes beyond merely changing the name to an Inuit word. The Panel recommended that the Income Support program move from the current system of financial checks and balances to a system that sees workers becoming far more supportive to the clients. Recommendations for increased support range from visiting elders and new mothers in their homes and increasing support for hunters to coordinating departmental efforts for school age children.

The panel's vision of Income Support Workers sharing their knowledge and access to financial support is supported by the move to a payroll system of benefits while recognizing that financial accountability cannot be disregarded.

➤ **Develop peoples' understanding of the program and services offered by the Department**

Providing the time and training to work with clients and explain the program will reduce the misunderstanding of the programs.

The Department has already commenced the development of a handbook for those accessing Income Support Programs and a series of one-page information posters to increase the understanding of the programs.

➤ **Adjust Benefit levels**

A review of the costs of food items is underway in conjunction with the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics. Once the review and analysis is completed, the Department will return to the Financial Management Board and Cabinet with a

proposal to adjust the benefit levels. Current child care subsidy rates will also be reviewed as a part of this process.

➤ **Review the current income exemptions within the program**

The Department is currently developing changes to the Income Exemption levels that will encourage clients to enter training, educational or work experience programs and eases the transition from Income Support to full time work.

➤ **Provide Day Care User Subsidies in a timely manner.**

Through the development of the call center the Department can speed the administration and delivery of the Day Care Subsidy benefit.

➤ **Enhance client accountability and reporting.**

There are two areas of client accountability / responsibility that need to be enhanced and supported by Departmental and program changes.

The first area of accountability is the client's accountability to themselves, their family and their community. The time freed up by the introduction of a payroll system will allow the Income Support Worker to support and nurture clients who are having difficulties achieving educational/personal success. This increased accountability will also help to build self-esteem and foster a more positive attitude among clients.

The second area of responsibility is the client's responsibility to fellow citizens and the government. Clients are responsible to declare all income and personal circumstances to the government to ensure the proper administration of benefits. The self-declaration of income and expenses will place the responsibility of the declaration in the hands of the client. This self-declaration process will remove the worker from the often-confrontational relationship that currently exists.

The Department received approval in September 2001 to hire a Compliance Officer for the Income Support Program. A Compliance Officer will help ensure that those clients who are receiving assistance are those who are legitimately in need by performing random file audits. The position will also deal with overpayments to clients and recommend courses of action for recovery of funds and assist in dealing with collections in a timelier manner. This process is similar to those established by all other jurisdictions. The development of a call in center will enhance the electronic verification process and ensure the consistent and accurate administration of benefits to the client.

➤ **Enhance Departmental accountability**

The Department is responsible for the programs and services it offers to each community, elected officials and citizens of Nunavut for programs and services it offers within the community.

The Department commits to meeting with each community on a yearly basis to disclose:

- Financial and other statistical information from the Income Support program.
- A listing of programs and services it will be offering in the community in the upcoming year.
- An evaluation of the success of the previous year's programs and services in meeting community objectives.

Table 2 - Summary Of Program Changes	
ACTION ITEM	LEGISLATION CHANGE
Program name change	Possible legislative change required. Will follow -up with the Department of Justice on procedure required to move forward.
Develop “people” understanding of the program (brochures, handbook)	None required
Adjust benefit levels (food scale review)	Social Assistance Regulation - Schedule A
Review current income exemptions	Social Assistance Regulation -Schedule A
Daycare subsidies	None required
Enhance client accountability and reporting	None required
Enhance departmental accountability	None required

Community Development/Capacity Building

The panel report recommended the development of a Circle of Support that would include all of the “helping agencies” within the community. The Circle of Support would have two primary tasks:

- Address client needs in a holistic fashion at the community level, and
- Spearhead the development of a community social action plan.

At the outset of this discussion it is important to note that many community Income Support Workers are Hamlet employees and the Hamlet has the mandate for the development of a social development plan.

Respondents to the concept of the Circle of Support expressed caution. Many felt that the concept needed to be more clearly defined. Some were worried that yet another committee in the community would add to increasing administrative burdens. It is recognized that care must be taken to ensure that existing, efficient and viable community organizations are not negatively impacted by the creation of a Circle of Support.

Any development of a community plan will have to follow the leadership from the community government. As such it is beyond the scope of this submission to address a social development plan. A planning exercise to address social/training needs is sound development practice and is supported by the Department and is within the scope of the community’s role and function.

The concept of community helpers coming together on a formalized basis to address client need on an individual basis is a sound recommendation that is also supported by the responses of other departments. The issue becomes who has the responsibility to lead this initiative? The Department of Education has forwarded the panel recommendations regarding the Circle of Support on to the Department of Community Government and Transportation. Clearly the community must take the lead here and the Department will support and contribute to any development.

Because it is extremely challenging to make personal transitions in communities, which are also facing challenges, Income Support will continue to provide the funding it currently has in place that supports continuing community development. For the past two years the Department of Education has developed various contractual arrangements that will allow community groups and businesses to better link income support recipients to the creation of economic activity. An emphasis on local decision-making encourages the development of interventions that are appropriate to the community, as well as for the individual recipient.

Final Comments

The Bathurst Mandate describes the following priorities for Nunavut:

- **Healthy Communities** - The health of Nunavut depends on the health of each of its physical, social, economic and cultural communities, and the ability of those communities to serve Nunavummiut in the spirit of Inuuqatigiittiarniq; the healthy inter-connection of mind, body, spirit and environment
- **Simplicity and Unity** - Simplicity in the processes of government encourages access by all; makes the tasks more focused and more achievable; and invites participation. As individuals we are each responsible for our own lives and responsible through our own efforts and activities to provide for the needs of our families and communities;
- **Self-Reliance** - As individuals we are each responsible for our own lives and responsible through our own efforts and activities to provide for the needs of our families and communities;
- **Continuing Learning** - To achieve the dreams of Nunavut we all need to listen closely and learn well in order to acquire the skills we need to increase our independence and prosperity

The Department believes the initiatives outlined above significantly shift the Income Support program in support of the priorities of the Nunavut government and the recommendations of the Income Support Review Panel.

The *health* of communities is enhanced through the development of more training options and career counseling within the community. A career counseling focus provides the means for clients to begin to discover their dreams and begin to address issues that have stood in the way of past successes.

A payroll system provides *simplicity* in support not achieved within the previous program.

Self-reporting income and self-referring to *training opportunities* will support client movement towards *self-reliance*. The new focus of the Income Support Workers will allow for the development of community based learning opportunities.

The *Circle of Support*, if adopted by communities' will provide a simple holistic and accessible method for addressing needs.

It is important to recognize that some Nunavummiut will not be in a position to move into employment. The Government will continue to respond in a compassionate and consistent manner by ensuring that they continue to receive assistance. However, we also must build a system that helps people achieve their potential.

The short and long term costs of recommendations to improve Nunavut's Income Support Program must be evaluated to ensure that the costs of change remain within reach.

A number of improvements can be accomplished within the Department's existing budget, as the costs are minimal. These include:

- Changing the practice of discontinuing benefits immediately for those refusing or failing to attend a productive activity without appropriate interventions. Clients will get the full spectrum of career development and guidance assistance.
- Changing the name of the Income Support Program to Ikajuqtigiit. This will move the program from the current system of financial checks and balances to a system that sees workers becoming far more supportive to the clients.
- Provide Day Care Subsidies in a timely manner.
- Develop peoples' understanding of the programs and services offered by the Department. The Department has already commenced the development of a handbook for those accessing Income Support and a series of one-page information posters to increase the understanding of programs.
- Enhance client accountability and reporting. The issue will be addressed once the informational items are produced and distributed to Income Support Offices.

The appendices included at the end of this report give an overview of the Department of Education's current expenditures in the overall delivery of the various Income Support Programs in Nunavut as well as caseload statistics and expenditures by region.

Important initiatives will be pursued with external funding sources in mind. This may include collaboration with other government departments, with federal groups such as Human Resources Development Canada, or through partnerships with the private sector and communities.

The Department of Education's commitment to listening to communities and reporting program success to the communities will continuously shape and reshape the Income Support program to meet the needs of all Nunavummiut.

The following recommendations are outside of the mandate of the Department of Education. These recommendations have been forwarded to the appropriate Department or agency. Appendix 1 provides a brief overview from the responses received back from those named as the possible lead Department as to their reaction to the Income Support Policy Review Panel's recommendations.

- The Department should lead the coordination of training efforts by all government and non-government agencies. (9);

- 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. (10);
- Labor 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 is focused on preparing people for actual jobs. (16);
- The Department should ask the Department of Finance and Administration to review the Food Mail program (Air Stage Program) with DIAND with a view towards incorporating the subsidy into the Income Support Program. (23);
- Elders should be visited in the home to ensure that they are safe and receiving all the care they need. (27);
- Develop a Circle of Support composed of all helping professionals within the community. (30);
- Mandate the Circle of Support to develop a Social Plan for approval of the Hamlet Council. (31)
- Require the Circle of Support to report to the community on progress towards the goals of the plan. (33);
- Community leaders should be encouraged to lead this Circle of Support. (34)
- The Nunavut Government should be held accountable to the community for community programs through a formal yearly public disclosure session. (42);
- The Department should insist that all planning done at the Departmental or Territorial level include initiatives to support the Circle of Support. (44);
- The Nunavut Government should adopt a policy that would require all contracts let by the government to have a “Training on the Job” component. (45);
- The elected leaders of Nunavut must be champions and be vocal supporters of this change. (46)

The following recommendations will be developed internally by the Department of Education in conjunction with the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs.

- 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 labor market statistics. (37);
- Role models within the Inuit community should be promoted. (41)

As was stated in the Income Support Panel Final Report, “the Panel feels strongly that all of its recommendations should be given serious consideration and that it will be up to the Government of Nunavut to determine which recommendations are actually implemented.”

Appendices

Appendix 1: Management Response Framework

INCOME SUPPORT POLICY REVIEW:

Recommendation	Lead Department	Response
1) Career counseling capacity should be established in all communities.	Education Income Support Division And Career and Employment Services Division	Education is undertaking the development of initiatives for training workers
2) The focus of the income support worker should be on the assessment and appropriate referral for training of youth.	Education Income Support Division And Career and Employment Services Division	Education is undertaking the development of training and retraining initiatives for clients
3) All youth should be required to develop and make progress in fulfilling a career action plan.	Education Income Support Division And Career and Employment Services Division	Education is addressing this recommendation, both at high schools and through the productive choice requirements of the Income Support program. Culture, Languages, Elders and Youth may have some involvement.
4) Training should be based on client need and offered in a progressive fashion.	Education Income Support Division And Career and Employment Services Division	Education is undertaking the development of training and retraining initiatives for clients that are integrated with those already available
5) The Department should institute a 'Training on the Job' program for Income Support clients.	Education Income Support Division And Career and Employment Services Division	Education has included this in its proposed plan of action
6) Clients should demonstrate success and progression towards self reliance for continued support	Education Income Support Division	There will be an expectation for people to work with the Department to help identify and overcome their barriers to taking training or getting a job.

<p>7) The Department should develop training incentives within the Income Support program.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division</p>	<p>Education has included this in its proposed plan of action</p>
<p>8) Foundational workshops should be provided that focus on parenting, budgeting, literacy, numeracy, and life skills.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division And Career and Employment Services Division</p>	<p>Education continually reviews its offerings in consultation with the college</p>
<p>9) The Department should lead the co-ordination of training efforts by all government and non-government agencies.</p>	<p>Recommendation cannot be supported</p>	<p>This recommendation requires further discussion among all those involved in training initiatives.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Health and Social Services</p>	<p>The Department supports the concept and can collaborate with Education through some reshaping of existing and new programs. Do not have the means to initiate or lead a universal program. Could be a priority for the Children First Secretariat. Health Canada may support proposals coming from community groups. Justice Canada may fund this activity as part of a crime prevention initiative.</p>
<p>11) Childcare User Subsidies should be accessible in a timely fashion.</p>	<p>Education Career and Employment Services Division</p>	<p>Education is addressing this matter.</p>
<p>12) Day Homes providing childcare should be encouraged to get licensed and supported in doing so by the Childcare program.</p>	<p>Education Early Childhood Division</p>	<p>Education is addressing this matter.</p>
<p>13) The Department should co-ordinate its efforts within Income Support and the "Stay in School" program.</p>	<p>Education School Services Division</p>	<p>Education is addressing this matter.</p>

<p>14) Adults should have access to all the career development and career counseling opportunities within their community.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division And Career and Employment Services Division</p>	<p>Education is proposing initiatives in the proposed plan of action</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division And Career and Employment Services Division</p>	<p>The agencies will need to study this further and this should involve other levels of government.</p>
<p>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 is focused on preparing people for actual jobs.</p>	<p>Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs (Communications)</p>	<p>The Decentralization Secretariat has identified GN jobs going into communities. Communications can work on a project to develop and share Nunavut wide job opportunities.</p>
<p>17) Adults should be supported through the Income Support program while in training.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division And Career and Employment Services Division</p>	<p>An incentive, under the present Income Support program, is available. This incentive is the same as the Investing in People program done by the GNWT.</p>
<p>18) The Department should reinstate the "Investing in People" program.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division</p>	<p>An incentive, under the present Income Support program, is available. This incentive is the same as the previous Investing in People program done by the GNWT.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division</p>	<p>This is already the practice in the Department.</p>

<p>20) The client should have the opportunity to choose the store where the voucher cheque is written.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division</p>	<p>This is already the practice in the Department.</p>
<p>21) The Department should work with the Hunter Support Program to extend (on the land) support to 6 months rather than the present 2 months. The Department should work with Hunters and Trappers Organizations to ensure all recipients of the advance are truly hunters and have made arrangements for family not traveling with them.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division</p>	<p>The Harvester Support Program will need to be coordinated with Sustainable Development and NTI. Discussions on these matters may be planned. The lead should be Sustainable Development and NTI.</p>
<p>22) The Department of Education should review its food scale and rates including the 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.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division</p>	<p>A review of the food scale and other costs is underway by the Bureau of Statistics. Education is reviewing some of the amounts as part of the proposed plan of action and may forward a request to FMB.</p>
<p>23) The Department should ask the Department of Finance and Administration to review the Food Mail program (Air Stage Program) with DIAND with a view towards incorporating the subsidy into the Income Support program.</p>	<p>Recommendation cannot be supported</p>	<p>A pilot project is being planned for Kugaaruk, to be conducted by DIAND, Health Canada, and the Department of Health and Social Services. This project is for the benefit of the entire community and not just for Income Support recipients.</p>
<p>24) The Department should expand its current short-term support for self-employed or entrepreneurs.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division And Career and Employment Services Division</p>	<p>Sustainable Development has proposed that Income Support work with their department in developing common economic development oriented approaches.</p>

<p>25) The current Income Exemption policy should be changed to a sliding scale that promotes work and recognizes family size.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division</p>	<p>Education has included this initiative as an item in its proposed plan of action.</p>
<p>26) The definition of an Elder should be changed to 55 from the age of 60, to be consistent with other program initiatives such as the Elder's Pension.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division</p>	<p>Nunavut Housing supports the idea, but as elders receive free public housing, this would increase the numbers of eligible persons and increase cost. This would also affect Education in terms of increasing the number of persons eligible for some Income Support benefits.</p>
<p>27) Elders should be visited in the home to ensure that they are safe and receiving all the care they need.</p>	<p>Health and Social Services and Culture, Language, Elders and Youth</p>	<p>Health and Social Services' new Home and Community Care Program, commencing in October 2001, will support routine visits to elders and identification of basic service needs. The Department of CLEY will continue to be advocates for Nunavut seniors.</p>
<p>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 provides to seniors to ensure consistency</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division</p>	<p>The proposed call-in center would include these functions as part of its role.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division</p>	<p>Education supports this idea. This issue will be discussed with the Department of Community Government and Transportation.</p>

<p>30) Develop a Circle of Support composed of all helping professions within the community.</p>	<p>Community Government and Transportation</p>	<p>Concerns have been raised about the role of the Circle of Support given that there is no expressed vision for it. There would need to be full inter-agency commitments and be consistent with initiatives such as the health and social issues committees on hamlet councils.</p>
<p>31) Mandate the Circle of Support to develop a Social Plan for approval of the Hamlet Council.</p>	<p>Community Government and Transportation</p>	<p>Concerns have been raised about the role of the Circle of Support given that there is no expressed vision for it.</p>
<p>32) Mandate the Circle of Support to function as the appeal committee.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division</p>	<p>Concerns have been raised about the role of the Circle of Support given that there is no expressed vision for it.</p>
<p>33) Require the Circle of Support to report to the community on progress towards the goals of the plan.</p>	<p>Community Government and Transportation</p>	<p>Concerns have been raised about the role of the Circle of Support given that there is no expressed vision for it.</p>
<p>34) Community leaders should be encouraged to lead this Circle of Support.</p>	<p>Hamlets</p>	<p>Concerns have been raised about the role of the Circle of Support given that there is no expressed vision for it.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division</p>	<p>Education is addressing the training of staff in its proposed plan of action. Concerns have been raised about the role of the Circle of Support given that there is no expressed vision for it.</p>

<p>36) Community contracts for Income Support mandate the salary and benefits paid to workers. Communities should ensure they are providing these salaries and benefits.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division</p>	<p>The department has community service contracts with nearly one half of the communities and is continually looking at increasing the number of contracts.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs</p>	<p>Each department will need to examine what information it provides to communities and, as a government, provide information in a consistent manner. The Department of Education will develop this concept internally.</p>
<p>38) Develop a Career Counseling capacity in all communities.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division and Career and Employment Services Division</p>	<p>Education is undertaking the development of initiatives for training workers</p>
<p>39) Allow bingo winnings or co-op incentives to be offset by valid purchases.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division</p>	<p>Education is reviewing this matter to determine possible costs.</p>
<p>40) Change the name to reflect the tradition of sharing –Ikayuqatigiit.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division</p>	<p>Education is recommending the more inclusive term: Ikajuqtigiit</p>
<p>41) Role models within the Inuit community should be promoted.</p>	<p>Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs (Communications)</p>	<p>The Department of Education will develop an internal role model concept and use EIA Communications resources to distribute.</p>
<p>42) The Nunavut Government should be held accountable to the community for community programs through a formal yearly public disclosure session.</p>	<p>Community Government and Transportation</p>	<p>The Department of Education will lend its support to this yearly public disclosure.</p>

<p>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.</p>	<p>Education Income Support Division and Career and Employment Services Division</p>	<p>Education is addressing the training of staff in its proposed plan of action. Concerns have been raised about the role of the Circle of Support given that there is no expressed vision for it.</p>
<p>44) The Government should insist that all planning done at the Departmental or Territorial level include initiatives to support the Circle of Support.</p>	<p>Community Government and Transportation</p>	<p>Concerns have been raised about the role of the Circle of Support given that there is no expressed vision for it.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Public Works and Services and Nunavut Housing Corporation</p>	<p>Some contracts are not of sufficient size to warrant such a requirement; however, the NNI policy addresses this already. Initiatives for employers to support Training on the Job need to be developed.</p>
<p>46) The elected leaders of Nunavut must be champions and be vocal supporters of this change.</p>	<p>Members of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly</p>	<p>The Department of Education will lend its support to this concept.</p>

Appendix 2: Income Support Budget Allocation 2001/02

**INCOME SUPPORT BUDGET ALLOCATION
FOR DIRECT CLIENT PROGRAMS & SERVICES 2001/2002**

DESCRIPTION	BUDGET ALLOCATION				
	QIKIQTAALUK	KIVALLIQ	KITIKMEOT	HQ	TOTAL
Social Assistance	12,075,000	5,419,000	4,118,000		21,612,000
Day Care Subsidy	348,000	90,000	89,000		527,000
Senior Fuel Subsidy	20,000	20,000	10,000		50,000
Program Intervention (Pilot Projects)	166,000	49,000	68,000		283,000
Territorial Senior Subsidy (Total Nunavut)				728,000	728,000
TOTALS	12,609,000	5,578,000	4,285,000	728,000	23,200,000

Appendix 3: Case & Expenditure Report 2000/01

2000-2001 Income Support Caseloads and Expenditures									
REGION	Population	% of Population	Caseload	% Case/Pop.	% of Caseload	% of Families	Expenditures	% of Expenditures	Expenditures per Case
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Kivalliq	7,762	27.3%	850	11.0%	26.0%	--	\$5,487,000	25.5%	\$6,455.29
Kitikmeot	5,302	18.7%	640	12.1%	19.6%	--	\$3,481,000	16.2%	\$5,439.06
Qikiqtani	15,346	54.0%	1775	11.6%	54.4%	--	\$12,575,000	58.4%	\$7,084.51
Total	28,410	100.0%	3265	11.5%	100.0%	52.5%	\$21,543,000	100.0%	\$6,598.16

Notes

1. Population estimate for 2001, Nunavut Bureau of Statistics estimate
2. In Nunavut, by region
3. Number of families/households on social assistance each month in 2001.
4. Percentage of population on Social Assistance in each region. Actual recipients are about 2.6 times or approximately 30%. (Column 3 divided by Column 1)
5. The regional distribution of all social assistance cases.
5. The percentage of families/households on social assistance based on 1996 Census data of 6,215 families/households. Regional breakdowns are not available. Does not include other Income Support programs such as Seniors Supplement, Senior Fossil Fuel and Child Care Subsidy.
7. Actual social assistance payments for fiscal year 2000/01 by region.
8. Percentage of total social assistance payment for each region.
9. Average annual expenditures for each case in each region. (Column 7 divided by Column 3)

Appendix 4: Worker Profile

Consulting and Audit Canada Nunavut Income Support Worker Profile

December 1998 Key Findings

- The Income Support Workers have significantly less experience than those performing the function in other parts of Canada (p 6)
- The current level of education is lower than the stated requirements (p 6)
- It was suggested that income is not being verified consistently (p 8)
- Many Income Support Workers do not have sufficient time to do more than deliver the financial assessment portion of the job (p 10)
- The income Support Workers do not have the formal education or necessary training to perform this role (career counseling) (p11)
- The Income Support Workers ...have not been effectively integrated into the community support network (P 12)
- Income Support Workers for the most part are very unhappy with their jobs (p 12)
- Income Support Workers, if they are to function as case managers, require additional training. (P 13)
- Income Support Workers very enthusiastic about receiving more training (p 14)

Appendix 5: Income Support Initiatives and Timelines

Client Services	
Proposed Initiative	Timelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Increased career counseling to s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Can be funded through LMDA and related funding 	April 2002
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Increased training opportunities for clients <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Can be funded from other sources 	Immediately /Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Develop a cheque processing call center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Will need to review further for costs, technical requirements, etc. 	To be determined
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Change the practice of discontinuing benefits for those refusing or failing to attend a productive activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clients get full spectrum of career development and guidance assistance 	Immediately
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Introduce incentives to encourage individuals to attend training or work experience programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Take-up of approximately 200 clients annually. 	Immediately /Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Adjust income exemptions to allow for a continuation of benefits once full-time work is obtained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Should affect self-employed as well but take-up of approximately 200 clients annually. 	Dependent on regulation changes

Program Changes	
Proposed Initiative	Timelines
◆ Change the name of the program to Ikajuqtigiit	Immediately
◆ Develop peoples' understanding of the program and services offered by the Department	Immediately /Ongoing
◆ Adjust Benefit levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ % increase in food and clothing 	Dependent on regulation changes
◆ Review the current income exemptions within the program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase amounts for singles and households. Nearly 1,500 clients report earned income monthly. 	Dependent on regulation changes
◆ Provide Day Care User Subsidies in a timely manner	Immediately
◆ Enhance client accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Expected to reduce errors and non-reporting 	Immediately
◆ Enhance Departmental accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improvements in reporting, tracking, audit trails, etc. 	Immediately

Community Development	
Proposed Initiative	Timelines
◆ Circle of support	Outside of scope