



Disability Policy
Research Program

kids
brain health
network



réseau pour
la santé du cerveau
des enfants

Disability Policy in Canada: Provincial and Territorial Report

January 2025

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Disability Policy in Canada Provincial and Territorial Report was commissioned by Kids Brain Health Network (KBHN), and developed in collaboration with researchers from the Disability Policy Research Program (DiPo) and McGill University. The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of disability policy across Canadian provinces and territories. This report can serve as a baseline against which future progress in policy changes can be assessed, or at least understood.

In this report series, we aim to be as comprehensive as possible by including all policy related to persons with disabilities in each province and territory. We acknowledge that this report reflects a point in time assessment of disability policy. As such, information and links will likely change over time as governments and policy change. All information included in this report is accurate as of the date of publication. To maximize the accuracy of this report, it has been reviewed and verified by individuals with expertise in and/or lived experience with disability policy across Canada.

In an effort to be comprehensive while also succinct, we chose to apply a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria to the disability policy tools included in this report. The focus in this report series is to include legislation, plans of action, advocacy/awareness initiatives, tax programs, and services that support children and adults who have disabilities that are permanent and present from birth or that develop in early childhood. This includes neurodevelopmental disabilities and physical disabilities, deafness and hearing impairments, and blindness and vision impairment. We do not include policy tools that exclusively provide support to individuals that develop disabilities later in life, for example due to accidents or workplace injury. In some cases, there are policy tools that are accessible to all citizens and so are not explicitly designed for persons with disabilities and their families. We refer to these programs as 'blended' and include them in our analysis as they may be relevant to persons with disabilities and/or have unique

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eligibility criteria for them. This is particularly important in provinces and territories that do not have policy tools and programs specifically designed for persons with disabilities to highlight other avenues through which they can receive support.

We chose to focus this report on children and adults with disabilities, and do not include programs that support seniors (65 years of age or older) with disabilities. The caveat to this is that we do include programs that support seniors if they also support adults under the age of 65 years with disabilities. This report is also focused on current government-funded or administered programs. We include some non-profit and community organizations that administer programs on behalf of government, but acknowledge that there are many more that we do not mention that are instrumental to the provision of support for individuals with disabilities across the country.

With respect to education, this report includes legislation and government directives relating to inclusive education, as well as outlines the bodies that are responsible for administering inclusive education, when available. We also include specific government funding streams or government-funded programs that support inclusive education. We do not include specific programs administered by school boards or other entities.

Measuring Up

In this report, we provide information about the experiences of parents and caregivers when applying for and accessing disability programs, as well as information that emerged during the research process or from our peer reviewers. This information is provided in “Measuring Up” boxes throughout the report. Our intent in including this information is to provide additional context regarding the realities of accessing the policy tools outlined in this report and to give a voice to those with lived experience. It is important to note that these perspectives reflect opinions and experiences of a select group of individuals and may not align with the experiences of all individuals within a given province or territory.

Parent and caregiver experiences were sourced from a [study](#) completed by our team, which involved conducting an online survey and follow-up interviews with participants across Canada. We provide more information about the individuals we spoke with during this study on the following page.

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499 Survey Participants **81** Interview Participants

English Speakers: 93%
French Speakers: 7%

14% Spoke more than one language in their home

Average age: 42 years
Range: 22-70 years

Average age: 11 years
Range: 0-30 years

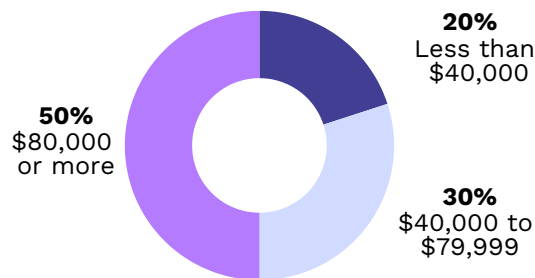
Males: 8%
Females: 91%
Non-binary: 1%

Males: 68%
Females: 31%
Non-binary or other: 1%

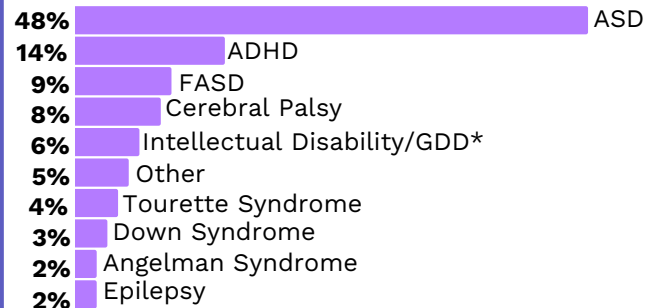
Participants

Youth

Household Income



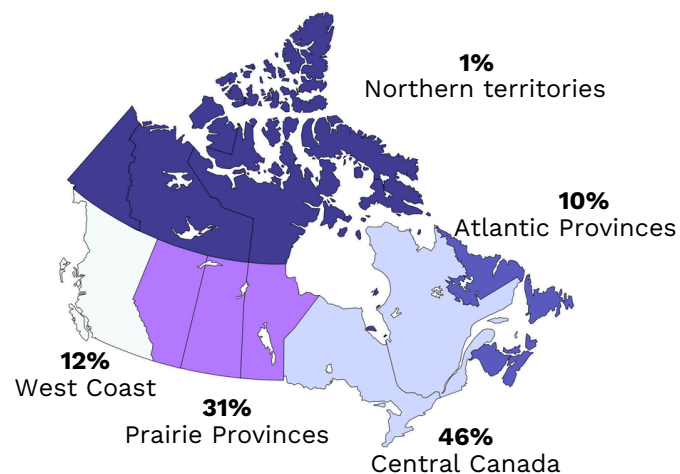
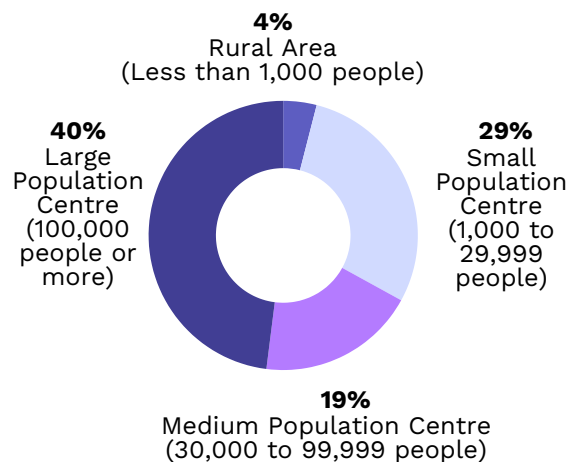
Primary Diagnosis



40% Have more than one diagnosis

*GDD = Global Developmental Delay

Location



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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of the families that shared their experiences with our team and all of the community peer reviewers that provided insightful feedback on this report. The creation of this report would not have been possible without their contributions.

Peer Reviewers

- Kathleen O’Grady, QUOI Media and Concordia University
- Hajer Chalghoumi, Kids Brain Health Network
- Logan Wong, IDEAA Perspectives Training & Consulting
- Philip Ney, Inclusion Alberta
- Nilima Sonpal-Valias, Alberta Council of Disability Services
- Shino Nakane and team, Autism Society Alberta
- Erika Cedillo, Inclusion BC
- Michelle Hewitt, Disability Without Poverty
- Michael Prince, University of Victoria
- Tim Stainton, University of British Columbia
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- Melissa Graham, Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities
- Leanne Fenez, Abilities Manitoba
- Ken Pike, Inclusion New Brunswick
- Haley Flaro, Ability New Brunswick
- Ntibabaza Nigene and Colleagues, Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society
- Denise McKee, NWT Disabilities Council
- Guillaume Parent, Finautonome
- Keiko Shikako, McGill University
- Natasha Rumsey, Rumsey Consulting
- Cynthia Anaba, University of Regina
- Haley Jones, parent and advocate
- Marli Robertson, parent and advocate

Suggested Citation

Finlay, B., Ragot, S., Lach, L.M., and Zwicker, J.D. (2024). Disability Policy in Canada Provincial and Territorial Report. Kids Brain Health Network.

BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY POLICY

“Public policy can be generally defined as a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives.”

-Kilpatrick, 2016

“A set of interrelated decision taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where these decisions should, in principle, be within the power of these actors to achieve”

-Jenkins, 1978

What is Disability Policy?

There are many different ways to conceptualize and define public policy, and by extension, disability policy. For the purposes of this report, disability policy is broadly defined as what governments and other decision-making entities chose to do or not do that impacts persons with disabilities and their families.

Provincial and Territorial Disability Policy

In Canada, disability policy is delivered by all levels of government in many different sectors, including health, education, finance, and social services. Our previous [report](#) provides an overview of disability policy at the federal level in Canada. This report series focuses on disability policy provided by provincial and territorial governments. For the purposes of this report, we provide information about disability policy for all provinces and territories in alignment with the following five categories:

1) [Income Supports](#) are programs that provide financial assistance to individuals with a low-income so they are able to afford basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, and other daily needs. Persons with disabilities in Canada at a lower income level or who experience barriers to employment can access financial assistance from income support programs. Some provinces and territories provide income support programs specifically designed for persons with disabilities, while others provide an additional allowance for persons with disabilities within their general income support program. Others still offer one income support program that all individuals with a low income who meet eligibility criteria can access, with no additional supports for persons with disabilities, specifically.

2) Laws and Policies include laws and policy documents that allow systems to be put in place to help governments carry out changes they want to make to systems and structures. Laws are created from bills that are introduced in the provincial or territorial legislature. To become law, bills must pass through a specific legislative process. Policy documents are often published by ministries and can provide guidelines with respect to a specific topic. Legislation may stipulate that ministers can publish policy documents related to the topic of the piece of legislation (for example, education-related legislation often gives ministers the power to publish policy guidelines related to inclusive education).

3) Advocacy, Awareness, and Action Plans include councils, offices or events funded by provincial and territorial governments that can serve a variety of purposes, such as advocating to government on behalf of individuals with disabilities, advising on the development of government programs or policies, connecting individuals with disabilities with programs in their community, awareness building and education, support for mistreatment and discrimination, and, in some cases, direct service provision. This category also includes provincial and territorial action plans related to persons with disabilities that outline policy priorities and recommendations for government action.

4) Programs Provided through the Tax System include refundable and non-refundable tax credits, as well as tax deductions, that aim to offset the additional costs associated with having a disability by reducing the amount of income taxes an individual owes each year. Non-refundable tax credits reduce the amount of income tax owed but do not produce a tax refund if the amount of the credit exceeds the income tax owed, whereas refundable tax credits reduce the amount of tax owed and will create a tax refund if the amount of the credit exceeds the income tax owed. Tax deductions allow for certain expenses to be deducted from taxable income to lower the amount of taxes owed. In Canada, provincial and territorial governments develop their own tax law and policies; however, the Canada Revenue Agency collects and administers individual income taxes on behalf of provincial and territorial governments (except for the province of Quebec, where taxes are administered by Revenu Quebec).

5) Services and Supports for Basic Needs and Activities of Daily Living are services, supports, and programs that provide assistance to persons with disabilities in their day-to-day lives. This can include community-based support, employment programs, home and housing support, respite, early intervention, transportation support, and rehabilitation, among others. For each province and territory, we provide sub-categories within this section for added clarity.

Disability Policy Outside Government

In many provinces and territories, disability policy is delivered by entities outside of government, such as Crown Corporations, non-profit organizations and registered charities. In some cases, these organizations are funded and/or contracted by the provincial or territorial government to provide these services. We specify these cases whenever possible throughout the report. We also provide a list of these organizations at the end of the section on each province and territory as a resource for individuals and families looking for support.

UN CRPD

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) is an international treaty that upholds and protects the rights of persons with disabilities worldwide. Canada, along with 183 other states parties, has adopted the UN CRPD, which means that they accept the legal obligations contained in the UN CRPD. These obligations include ensuring that there are national laws to prevent discrimination, eliminating barriers to accessibility, and working to promote the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities. Associated with the creation of laws are the provision of disability programs that have the purpose of providing support to persons with disabilities to ensure they are able to fully participate in society.

Contained in the UN CRPD are processes that help to ensure that states parties are meeting the obligations outlined in the UN CRPD. For example, states parties must regularly report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to explain what actions they are taking to implement the UN CRPD. In Canada, the Canadian Human Rights Commission is also tasked with monitoring how well Canada is implementing the obligations outlined in the UN CRPD.

Canada and 99 other states parties have also signed on to the Optional Protocol to the UN CRPD. The Optional Protocol creates a process for people to make complaints directly to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities if they have exhausted all other legal options within Canada.

While the UN CRPD is ratified federally, many of the obligations contained in the UN CRPD can be met by policy and programs delivered at the provincial and territorial level. In fact, due to the federalist nature of Canada, many articles, such as Health (Article 25), Habilitation and Rehabilitation (Article 26), and Education (Article 24) are met to a greater extent by programs provided by provincial and territorial governments, rather than the federal government.

To demonstrate how government actions can fulfill requirements under the UN CRPD, we link UN CRPD articles with the various disability policy tools we include in this report. For the purposes of this report, we have sorted the 50 articles of the UN CRPD with similar aims into 10 categories (outlined below). Articles that are not included in this report are administrative in nature, related to reporting requirements, or are outside the scope of government action in this context. The icons used on the following pages will be used throughout the report to demonstrate how provincial and territorial disability policy is aligned with the UN CRPD articles.



Equality

Description

This category includes articles that promote equality for persons with disabilities both before and under the law, and ensure that persons with disabilities do not face discrimination.

Relevant Articles

Article 4: General obligations

Article 5: Equality and non-discrimination

Article 6: Children with disabilities

Article 7: Women with disabilities

Article 10: Right to life

Article 14: Liberty and security of person

Article 17: Protecting the integrity of the person

Article 22: Respect for privacy



Accessibility

Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities can access public spaces, systems, and facilities, such as the physical environment, transportation and communication technologies.

Relevant Article

Article 9 – Accessibility



Social Participation

Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities are able to participate in society fully and on an equal basis with others.

Relevant Articles

Article 18: Liberty of movement and nationality

Article 20: Personal mobility

Article 21: Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

Article 29: Participation in political and public life

Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport



Employment and Financial Security

Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to work, and have access to inclusive and accessible workplaces. It also includes articles that outline the responsibility of states parties to alleviate poverty and promote financial security of persons with disabilities.

Relevant Articles

[Article 27](#): Work and employment

[Article 28](#): Adequate standard of living and social protection



Health and Social Services

Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to healthcare and social services that allows them to have the highest attainable standard of health and well-being, achieve inclusion and maintain maximum independence.

Relevant Articles

[Article 25](#): Health

[Article 26](#): Habilitation and rehabilitation



Public Education and Information

Description

This category includes articles that require states parties to provide public information about persons with disabilities to foster respect and combat stereotypes.

Relevant Article

[Article 8](#): Awareness-raising



Legal Capacity and Justice

Description

This category includes articles that ensure persons with disabilities have equality with respect to legal capacity and access to justice.

Relevant Articles

[Article 12](#): Equal recognition before the law

[Article 13](#): Access to justice



Caregiving and Family

Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have equal rights with respect to family life.

Relevant Articles

[Article 23](#): Respect for home and the family



Education

Description

This category includes articles that maintain the right to education for persons with disabilities through the provision of inclusive and quality education, accommodations, and support.

Relevant Articles

[Article 24](#): Education



Housing and Related Supports

Description



This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have equality in their ability to choose where they would like to live and are able to live as independently as possible in the community through the provision of in-home and community supports.

Relevant Articles

[Article 19](#): Living independently and being included in the community

NUNAVUT

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income Assistance
Laws and Policies 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Act Nunavut Human Rights Act
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society National Disability Employment Awareness Month International Day of Persons with Disabilities International FASD Awareness Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal Early Learning and Child Care Strategic Action Plan for Inclusion and Equity Representative for Children and Youth Public Trustee and Guardian
Programs Provided by the Tax System 	
Disability-Specific	Blended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability amount for self Disability amount transferred from a dependent Amount for infirm dependents age 18 or older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregiver amount Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner, and your dependent children born in 2006 or later Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents

Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



Disability-Specific

- Community-Based Services – Includes:
 - Support Groups and Workshops
 - Job Coaching and Employment Services
 - Nunavut Solutions Grant
 - Assistive Devices and Technology

Blended

- Community Health Centres
- Healthy Children Initiative
- Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities Property Tax Relief
- Home and Community Care
- Home Renovation Program
- Targeted Labour Market Program (TLMP)
- Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students (FANS)

ACRONYMS

FANS	Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
NDMS	Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society
TLMP	Targeted Labour Market Program

INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS




Employment & Financial Security
 Caregiving & Family
 Social Participation
 Equality
 Education
 Housing & Related Supports

At the time of publication, Nunavut does not have an income assistance program specifically for persons with disabilities.

The Income Assistance program provides financial assistance to individuals 18 years of age and older that cannot meet their basic needs for various reasons, including disability, illness, and periods of unemployment. This is a program of last resort – applicants are expected to apply to all other programs that they may be entitled to (such as employment insurance, various pension programs, workers’ compensation, etc.) prior to applying for Income Assistance. To receive Income Assistance, applicants will be required to meet with an Income Assistance worker to have a monthly financial assessment and develop a Productive Choice Agreement to support them in becoming more self-sufficient. This Agreement can include school upgrading, training, and seeking employment or community work, among others. Notably, individuals with a disability are exempt from needing to create a Productive Choice Agreement. The amount received each month is determined based on the monthly financial assessment.

Basic Benefits that provide financial assistance for rent, utilities, accommodation, and fuel, as well as Extended Benefits that provide financial assistance for incidentals, education and training, household furnishings, damage deposits, and emergency assistance, are both available through this program. Income Assistance clients pursuing education or training opportunities can also access a [Daycare Subsidy](#), which provides financial assistance towards the cost of child care for children under the age of 12 years.

LAWS AND POLICIES







 Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice  Education

At the time of publication, Nunavut does not have any legislation or policies specific to individuals with disabilities and their families.

However, the following pieces of legislation include information that mentions or is relevant to persons with disabilities in Nunavut:

- [Education Act](#), which states that “if the school team decides, with the agreement of the Minister, that specialized services or assessments are required in order to ensure that a student is provided with the adjustments or supports to which they are entitled, the Minister shall ensure that the services or assessments are provided.”
- [Nunavut Human Rights Act](#) protects the equality rights of Nunavummiut and safeguards an equal opportunity to enjoy a full and productive life free from discrimination and harassment. The Act outlines several prohibited grounds of discrimination, including mental or physical disability.

ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality  Public Education & Information  Accessibility  Social Participation
 Caregiving & Family  Legal Capacity & Justice

At the time of publication, the Government of Nunavut does not have any advocacy bodies representing the interests and rights of persons with disabilities and their families. However, the independent, territory-wide, non-profit [Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society \(NDMS\)](#) steps in to fill this gap. NDMS represents the needs of persons with disabilities in Nunavut and collaborates with government departments to address these needs.

NDMS provides comprehensive advocacy services to support individuals with disabilities. This includes self-advocacy, where individuals are empowered to communicate their needs and rights effectively, and systems advocacy, which aims to change policies and systems that negatively impact persons with disabilities. NDMS also offers individual advocacy, assisting people in standing

up for their rights through formal and informal initiatives. NDMS promotes awareness, opportunities, and choices, ensuring that individuals can participate in society without barriers.






With respect to awareness building, the Government of Nunavut recognizes the following:

- National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, which aims to reduce barriers and to help individuals learn more about inclusive employment and workplace accommodations.
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3.
- International FASD Awareness Day on September 9, which is devoted to improving Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) prevention, diagnosis, and support.

Other initiatives and offices in Nunavut that relate to persons with disabilities and their families include the following:

- The Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal accepts complaints from individuals that feel they have been discriminated against on the basis of the Human Rights Act.
- The Early Learning and Child Care Strategic Action Plan for Inclusion and Equity provides guidance and direction on inclusion and equity to all early learning and child care stakeholders in Nunavut from 2023-2026. Its scope includes enhancing inclusion and equity for children with disabilities, children needing enhanced or individual supports, Indigenous – in particular Inuit – children, Black and other racialized children, children in foster care, and official language minority children.
- Representative for Children and Youth has a mandate to make sure legislation, policies, procedures, programs, and services put in place by Government of Nunavut departments and designated authorities provide ethical, equitable, and consistent outcomes that meet the needs and support the rights of young Nunavummiut and their families.
- Public Trustee and Guardian has a mandate to administer trusts on behalf of minors and estates and trusts of Nunavummiut who die without a will or are in need of protection because of disability.

PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

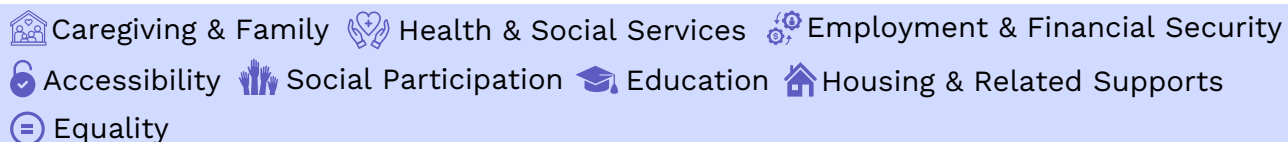
 Equality  Caregiving & Family  Health & Social Services  Social Participation
 Employment & Financial Security

Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of Nunavut that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families.

More information about all Nunavut taxes for the 2023 tax year can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

Tax Credit	Description and Eligibility
Disability amount for self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces tax payable for persons with disabilities. • Individuals can claim this on their taxes if they have been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit. • Adults 18 years of age or older can claim \$15,256 on their tax return.
Disability amount transferred from a dependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can claim this on their taxes if their dependent has been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit and does not need to claim all or part of the disability amount on their tax return.
Amount for infirm dependents age 18 and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This amount (up to \$5,499 for each dependent) can be claimed for dependents over the age of 17 years with an impairment in physical or mental functions. • The dependent must have a net income under \$13,303. • A signed statement from a medical practitioner may be required to access this program. Individuals with federal Disability Tax Credit eligibility do not need to provide a statement.
Caregiver amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals caring for a dependent over the age of 17 years with a net income under \$24,283 and with an impairment in physical or mental functions can claim this amount (up to \$5,500 for each dependent). • This amount can also be claimed for an eligible parent or grandparent.
Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit. • Dependents must be under the age of 18 years.
Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit for their other dependents 18 years of age or older.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS



Disability-Specific Programs

At the time of publication, there were limited services provided by the Government of Nunavut that support individuals with disabilities, specifically. Many programs and services for persons with disabilities in Nunavut are provided by various organizations in the community, with the NMDS having a central role in program delivery. Some programs are also funded in part by the Government of Nunavut but are delivered by other organizations. We highlight some of these programs below:

- **Support Groups and Workshops:** Regular support groups and workshops are facilitated by NDMS to provide community members with information and peer support. These sessions cover a range of topics, including resume building, inclusive hiring practices, and the use of accessibility devices and technology.
- **Job Coaching and Employment Services:** NDMS offers job coaching services and employment-related services to help individuals with disabilities integrate into the workforce. This includes personalized coaching to develop skills and abilities, as well as support for employers to create more inclusive workplaces. NMDS also provides various training programs aimed at enhancing employability and self-sufficiency.
- **Nunavut Solutions Grant:** In collaboration with the Rick Hanson Foundation and the Government of Nunavut, NDMS administers the Nunavut Solutions Grant. This grant provides financial assistance for individuals with mobility-related disabilities to access necessary equipment and services, such as wheelchairs, home renovations for accessibility, and respite care services.
- **Assistive Devices and Technology:** NDMS supports the provision of assistive devices and technology to help individuals with disabilities lead more independent lives. This includes devices that aid mobility, communication, and daily living activities.

Blended Programs

Blended programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- **Community Health Centres.** Located across Nunavut, these centres provide medical, public health, and social services to individuals, including those with disabilities, in various communities. Services that are offered can include physician consultations, physical therapy and rehabilitations services, and counselling, among others.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Distinct Challenges Faced by Persons with Disabilities in Nunavut

After reviewing our report for accuracy, the Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society provided us with some information regarding the unique challenges faced by persons with disabilities in Nunavut compared to other provinces and territories in Canada. These challenges underscore the need for responsive policies and programs that take into account the unique circumstances faced by persons with disabilities in Nunavut. Increased support and targeted interventions are essential to improve the quality of life and ensure equal opportunity for Nunavummiut with disabilities.

We summarize specific challenges highlighted by the Society below and thank them for their generous contribution to our report.



Geographic and Environmental Challenges

Nunavut's vast and remote geography makes transportation difficult and expensive. Many communities are only accessible by air or water, resulting in challenges in accessing necessary services and support. Limited infrastructure, including a lack of public transit and accessible buildings, further complicates mobility for people with disabilities.



Limited Access to Health and Support Services

There is a significant shortage of healthcare professionals, particularly those who specialize in disability-related services. Residents often have to travel long distances to receive specialized care, which can be physically and financially burdensome. Access to mental health services is particularly limited. Additionally, obtaining assistive devices and technology can be challenging due to supply chain issues and the high costs associated with shipping items to remote areas.



Limited Ability for Labour Force Participation

The labour market in Nunavut is small and there are fewer employment opportunities, particularly for persons with disabilities. This contributes to higher rates of unemployment and underemployment among people with disabilities. Many workplaces are also not equipped to accommodate employees with disabilities, further limiting their employment options.



MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

Distinct Challenges Faced by Persons with Disabilities in Nunavut (Continued)



Barriers to Education

Educational institutions often lack the resources and support services needed to meet the needs of students with disabilities. This includes a shortage of special educators and accessible learning materials. While remote learning can be a solution, it is often hampered by unreliable internet connectivity and a lack of appropriate technology in many communities.



Cultural Factors

There may be cultural barriers and a lack of understanding or awareness of disabilities within some communities. This can lead to stigma and inadequate support for people with disabilities. Language differences can also pose challenges, as many Nunavummiut speak Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun as their first language, and resources for people with disabilities are often available primarily in English or French.



Inadequate Housing and Overcrowding

Many housing units in Nunavut are not designed with accessibility in mind, making it difficult for people with disabilities to live independently. The harsh climate also exacerbates the need for adequate housing. Overcrowded housing conditions are common, which can further complicate housing conditions for people with disabilities who require additional space and accessibility features.

Our only study participant in Nunavut confirms many of the above challenges in the following quote from their survey responses:

“It takes a long time to be able to access services for my child. The wait lists are very long. There are limited supportive programs offered in Nunavut. There is limited information shared regarding programs that we as parents can access or that my son can access and/or is entitled to.”

- Healthy Children Initiative. Provides funding to communities to help them develop or grow programs for children up to age six years, with an emphasis on early intervention programs and supportive services. There are two main funding streams through this program: Community Initiatives, which fund early childhood programs such as family resource centres, parenting workshops, and parent and child groups, and Supportive Child Services, which provide funding on an individual basis for children requiring intensive support or specific assistance.
- Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities Property Tax Relief. Seniors and persons with disabilities that own their home and occupy it at least 184 days per year can receive property tax relief equivalent to their current-year levy. Applicants must re-apply every year to continue to access this program.
- Home and Community Care. Provides health care and support services, based on an assessment, in the comfort of an individual's home when they need extra attention due to illness, poor health, or disability.
- Home Renovation Program. Assists Nunavummiut who own and occupy their home to undertake major repairs and/or renovations, including modifications that improve accessibility for occupants with disabilities.
- Targeted Labour Market Program (TLMP). Provides funding up to one year in duration to eligible employers, institutions, or training providers to enable Nunavut-based education and/or training for occupations or skills that either are or will be in demand in the near future. Priority is provided to Nunavut-based organizations that target marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities.
- Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students (FANS). Provides financial assistance to full-time students enrolled in a Nunavut Arctic College or another designated post-secondary institution to provide support for the costs associated with their education. Through this program, students with disabilities can access the Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities, which provides up to \$8,000 for equipment and services directly related to training or up to \$1,000 for each full credit distance or correspondence course. A certified medical professional needs to provide a medical or learning ability assessment for individuals to be able to access this grant.



Support for Individuals and Families

There are a couple of other organizations that advocate for and provide support to individuals in Nunavut with disabilities and their families. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society (NDMS)
- March of Dimes - Nunavut