



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

Prepared by: Brittany Finlay, Samuel Ragot, Lucyna M. Lach, and  
Jennifer D. Zwicker

# 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

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

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.

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

**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

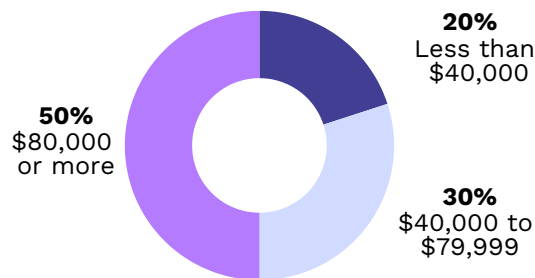
Males: 8%  
Females: 91%  
Non-binary: 1%

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

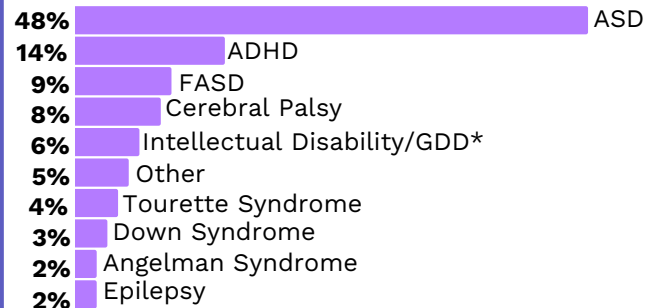
Participants

Youth

## Household Income



## Primary Diagnosis



**40%** Have more than one diagnosis

\*GDD = Global Developmental Delay

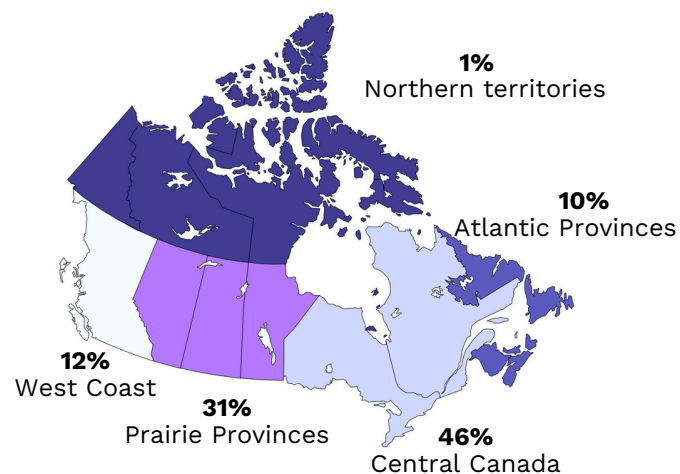
## Location

**4%** Rural Area  
(Less than 1,000 people)

**40%** Large Population Centre  
(100,000 people or more)

**29%** Small Population Centre  
(1,000 to 29,999 people)

**19%** Medium Population Centre  
(30,000 to 99,999 people)



# ABOUT THIS REPORT

## **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
- Brenda Lenahan, BC Complex Kids Society
- 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

# NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

## PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support 	
<b>Disability-Specific</b>	<b>Blended</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income Assistance Program</li> </ul>
Laws and Policies 	
<b>Disability-Specific</b>	<b>Blended</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human Rights Act</li> <li>Education Act</li> </ul>
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans 	
<b>Disability-Specific</b>	<b>Blended</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NWT Disabilities Council</li> <li>Disability Action Plan 2018/19-2021/22 Final Report</li> <li>NWT Disability Awareness Week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Office of the Northwest Territories Ombud</li> <li>The NWT Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>
Programs Provided by the Tax System 	
<b>Disability-Specific</b>	<b>Blended</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disability amount for self</li> <li>Disability amount transferred from a dependent</li> <li>Amount for infirm dependents age 18 or older</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caregiver amount</li> <li>Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner, and your dependent children born in 2006 or later</li> <li>Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents</li> </ul>
Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living 	
<b>Disability-Specific</b>	<b>Blended</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (SCIP) program</li> <li>Rehabilitation Services</li> <li>Supported Living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extended Health Benefits for Specified Disease Conditions Program</li> <li>Home and Community Care</li> </ul>

## Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



### Disability-Specific

- Mobility Modifications Program
- Support Assistants
- Student Financial Assistance – Grants for Students with Disabilities

### Blended

- Seniors and Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief
- Workforce Development Agreement
- Long Term Care
- Accessible Parking Permit

## ACRONYMS

SCIP Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation

## INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Employment & Financial Security Equality Social Participation

The Income Assistance Program provides financial assistance to residents of the Northwest Territories over the age of 19 years to help them with the cost of their basic needs. The amount received depends on the applicant’s level of financial need, community of residence, type of housing, and family size. This program includes an Earned Income Exemption, allowing recipients to keep additional income earned through working over their monthly Income Assistance payment.

Notably, individuals with disabilities receiving support through this program can also access an additional disability allowance. To access this allowance, applicants will need to have a medical practitioner fill out a Disability Assessment form.

## LAWS AND POLICIES





Equality Legal Capacity & Justice Education

At the time of publication, Northwest Territories does not have accessibility legislation or other legislation specifically related to persons with disabilities. However, there are two pieces of legislation that contain relevant information that is important for persons with disabilities.

The Northwest Territories [Human Rights Act](#) protects the equality of human rights for everyone in Northwest Territories. It prevents discrimination in the following areas: employment and job searching, membership in professional organizations, access to public services and facilities, tenancy/leasing, and published materials. The Act also outlines many grounds, or characteristics, of individuals that are protected – disability is one such ground that is protected by the Act.

Additionally, the [Education Act](#) outlines the requirement that every student has access to inclusive education in a regular instructional setting in the community in which they live, and that an education body provide students with the support services necessary to support their learning. It also outlines that the Minister is able to provide direction to education bodies on inclusive schooling. To this end, the Government of Northwest Territories published a [Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling](#) in 2017, which provides direction to education bodies to ensure that schools across the territory are implementing inclusive schooling.

## ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality  Public Education & Information  Social Participation  
 Legal Capacity & Justice

While the Government of Northwest Territories does not have an advocacy or awareness organization or body for persons with disabilities within government, it does provide funding to the [NWT Disabilities Council](#), a non-governmental organization that provides services and supports for and advocates on behalf of persons with disabilities across Northwest Territories. Examples of programs provided by this organization include early childhood intervention, learning support, community respite, and support with service coordination, among others.

In October 2023, the Government of Northwest Territories released their [Disability Action Plan 2018/19-2021/22 Final Report](#), which outlines their progress on implementing the [Government of the Northwest Territories Disability Action Plan 2018/19-2021/2022](#). This action plan contained 50 activities in five priority areas:

- Increase income security and reduce poverty.
- Build awareness and knowledge through education and training.
- Improve transition planning and options.
- Encourage universal design and living options.
- Improve access and quality of caregiver supports.






The Government of Northwest Territories indicated in their report that of the 50 activities outlined in the Action Plan, 13 were completed, 32 are underway, four are delayed and one is not proceeding. At the time of publication, additional information regarding progress on the Action Plan or the development of a new action plan to replace the expired plan is not available.

With respect to awareness building initiatives, the Government of Northwest Territories recognizes NWT Disability Awareness Week, which is held in late May or early June to coincide with the National AccessAbility Week. This week celebrates the contributions of Canadians with disabilities, promotes awareness, and recognizes and encourages efforts to advance a more accessible and inclusive Canada.

Other offices and organizations in the Northwest Territories that are relevant to persons with disabilities and their families include the following:

- The Office of the Northwest Territories Ombud has a mandate to look into and attempt to resolve concerns about administrative unfairness in territorial public authorities. The mandate also includes public education about the principles of administrative fairness and the Ombud’s role.
- The NWT Human Rights Commission accepts complaints of discrimination and harassment based on the areas and grounds included in the Human Rights Act.

## 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 Northwest Territories that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. More information about all Northwest Territories 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
<b>Disability amount for self</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduces tax payable for persons with disabilities.</li> <li>• Individuals can claim this on their taxes if they have been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit.</li> <li>• Adults 18 years of age or older can claim \$13,456 on their tax return.</li> </ul>

**Disability amount transferred from a dependent**

- 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.

**Caregiver amount**

- 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.

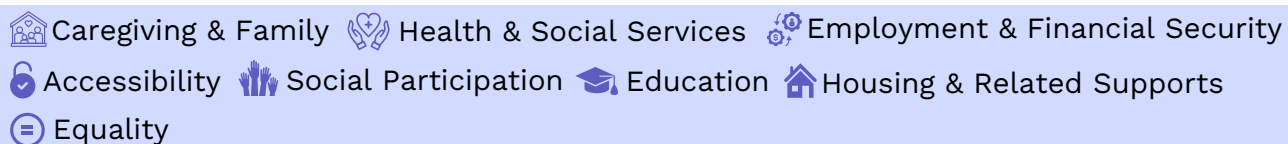
**Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later**

- 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**

- 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.
- The maximum amount individuals can claim is \$5,000 for each dependent.

## SERVICES AND SUPPORTS



At the time of publication, there were few programs that specifically provide support for persons with disabilities and their families, although many blended programs exist and are outlined below. It is important to note that many organizations outside government, such as NWT Disabilities Council (as discussed above) and Inclusion NWT, provide services and supports for persons with disabilities and their families. Services and supports provided by these organizations may receive government funding to support the administration of their programs. In this section of the report, we highlight six programs and services funded and administrated by the Government of Northwest Territories designed specifically for persons with disabilities and their families.





## MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

### Parent Perspective: Differences in Service Delivery across Northwest Territories

In Northwest Territories, two parents completed our online survey and one parent completed a follow-up interview. Our interview participant provided interesting perspectives regarding challenges with access to services that are specific to Northwest Territories. Below, our participant describes how access to respite services varies across the territory and how access can depend on what entity is delivering respite services.

“Well first of all, there is a funding shortage. [Respite] just isn't guaranteed to anyone. But it's delivered differently in different parts of the territory, so two different agencies carry the administration of respite and the operation. There's a model that is for Yellowknife and then there's another model for the rest of the territory. Certain communities receive no respite so they don't have access at all, and some communities have a higher degree of access. It's also administered differently - in some communities where there's no respite, they tack it onto Home Care, which make it become a very medical type of model. [Access to respite] is driven by a medical model. Whereas the focus needs to be more broad when an NGO or subcontractor is delivering [respite], allowing social or other needs to factor into consideration for services.”

#### Programs for Children

Children with disabilities can receive support indirectly through the Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (SCIP) program, which provides funding to eligible organizations to create early childhood programs and provide support to children with developmental needs to ensure they are able to fully participate in early learning. Three funding streams are available through this program: additional staffing funding, program consultation funding, and community program funding.

#### Programs for Children and Adults

Rehabilitation Services are health care services that support children and adults with disabilities in meeting their goals and promoting their functional independence. Individuals that require support can self-refer to all of the services provided through this program. Examples of services provided include audiology services, physiotherapy, speech language pathology, occupational therapy, and the persistent pain program. To access these services, individuals can submit their completed self-referral form via email or in-person at their local hospital or health centre.

## Housing and Home Supports

Individuals with a physical and/or mental health challenge that do not need nursing care can receive 24-hour support and supervision through the Supported Living program. The goal of this program is to provide services in a home-like setting while ensuring the recipient is able to maintain as much independence as possible.

The Mobility Modifications Program provides funding to homeowners to help improve the accessibility of homes for people with disabilities and support modifications that will promote independent living. Forgivable loans of up to \$50,000 are available through this program and can cover costs related to materials, labour, permits, inspections, certificates, drawings, specifications, legal fees, and any applicable taxes.



### Did you know?

In 2010, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) initiated a pilot project establishing Single Window Service Centres. Each office is staffed with a Government Service Officer, who provides assistance to residents in small communities to help them access Government of Northwest Territories and Government of Canada programs and services.

## Education

The Government of Northwest Territories provides funding for Support Assistants, who work in classrooms to help implement aspects of instructional and behavioural plans, assist with personal needs of students, provide classroom management and student supervision, and provide other support as needed. Support Assistants may work with specific students to support their diverse needs, while also being a resource for the entire class.

Post-secondary students with disabilities are able to access funding through Grants for Students with Disabilities to assist with education-related expenses. Specifically, students are able to receive up to \$4,000 per academic year for assistance with tuition, books, travel, and accommodation, and up to \$20,000 per academic year to assist with the cost of tutors, interpreters, and special equipment.



## MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

### Parent Perspective: Discrimination in Service Access and Delivery

As discussed in the previous Measuring Up, our interview participant provided interesting perspectives regarding challenges with access to services that are specific to the Northwest Territories. Below, our participant describes how systemic discrimination against Indigenous Peoples impacts their ability to access services.

“There’s an inherent discrimination within the system from the application to access to services. Even though it's supposed to be progressed it's still very much a colonial system. Indigenous peoples are overwhelmingly, disproportionately represented in people that are taken from their homes and people that don't receive services, even though they have a higher level of especially mental health and trauma. Service providers are predominantly non-Indigenous people, so there there's a lot of embedded systemic discrimination. For example, we see kind of on a regular basis that when a child presents with a developmental disability, if they're not Indigenous, there's a full and comprehensive kind of investigation into that if that child is connected with pediatric services and of what that child has, and [they ensure that the child gets] a proper diagnosis. When an Indigenous child presents in the same way, the immediate analysis or kind of bridge diagnosis is FASD. We've had parents come in like literally come in crying and saying that I'm pretty sure my son has autism but they keep saying it's FASD. It prevents people all through the community from coming forward and getting support because they have that fear that they're going to get judged within the system and then as well, as they start to get older, that they'll be removed from their homes or be put into a situation that they don't want to be put into.”

### 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:

- Extended Health Benefits for Specified Disease Conditions Program. This program provides individuals with certain conditions with benefits not covered by hospital and medical care insurance. Coverage for prescription drugs, medical supplies, equipment, and expenses related to medical travel may be provided by this program.

- Medical Travel. This program provides a medical travel benefit to eligible individuals who must travel in order to access necessary and appropriate insured health services that are not provided within their community.
- Home and Community Care. This program provides individuals, including those with disabilities, with nursing care and support for personal care and daily living activities when they are no longer able to perform these activities on their own. These services help people to stay in their own homes rather than go to a hospital or long-term care facility.
- Seniors and Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief. This program reduces property tax for seniors or persons with disabilities. Taxes are reduced based on type of property owned or occupied. Individuals are required to reapply for this program every year.
- Workforce Development Agreement. This is a funding agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of Northwest Territories that provides employment and training supports to eligible residents, including persons with disabilities.
- Long Term Care. Long Term Care is a home-like facility that provides care and services for people who no longer are able to live independently or who require onsite nursing care, 24-hour supervision, or personal support.
- Accessible Parking Permit. Provides individuals with disabilities and other conditions with a parking pass to park in designated parking stalls. The application must be filled out with a doctor or nurse practitioner. This program is administered by the NWT Disabilities Council.



## Support for Individuals and Families

There are many non-profits, charities, and other organizations that advocate for and provide support to individuals living in the Northwest Territories with disabilities and their families. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- Hay River Committee for Persons with Disabilities
- Inclusion NWT
- NWT Association of Communities
- NWT Disabilities Council