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Speaker: The Honourable George Qulaut, M.L.A.

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

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Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk
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Bills

Bill 16 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2015-2016 – Family Services –

 Consideration in Committee2116

**Iqaluit, Nunavut
Friday, March 6, 2015**

Members Present:

Mr. Tony Akoak, Ms. Pat Angnakak, Hon. Monica Ell, Mr. Joe Enook, Mr. George Hickes, Mr. David Joanasie, Mr. Pauloosie Keyootak, Hon. George Kuksuk, Mr. Steve Mapsalak, Hon. Johnny Mike, Mr. Simeon Mikkungwak, Hon. Paul Okalik, Hon. Keith Peterson, Hon. Paul Quassa, Hon. George Qulaut, Mr. Allan Rumbolt, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Hon. Tom Sammurtok, Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Mr. Isaac Shooyook, Hon. Peter Taptuna, Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk.

>>*House commenced at 9:00*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. George Qulaut)

(interpretation): Can you say the opening prayer, please, (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister Sammurtok.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good morning, my fellow Nunavummiut and welcome to the House, members, ministers, (interpretation ends) Premier, (interpretation) staff, and interpreters. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Allan Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, everybody. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to proceed directly to Item 19 on the order paper. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The member is seeking unanimous consent to proceed directly to Item 19 on the order paper.

Are there any nays? There are none. We will proceed to Item 19. Item 19. Consideration in [Committee] of the Whole on Bills and Other Matters. Bills 14, 15, 16, and 18 with Mr. Mikkungwak in the Chair.

In accordance with the authority provided to me by Motion 19 – 4(2), the committee will stay in session until it reports itself out.

I ask the members to remain at their desks so that they can immediately proceed to the Committee of the Whole.

(interpretation) Sergeant-at-Arms.

**Item 19: Consideration in Committee
of the Whole of Bills and Other
Matters**

Chairman (Mr. Mikkungwak)

(interpretation): Good morning to the people of Baker Lake and Nunavut.

(interpretation ends) I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following items to deal with: Bills 14, 15, 16, and 18. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to continue with the review of the 2015-16 main estimates, commencing with the Department of Family Services, followed by the Department of Justice and, if time permits, the Department of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Are we in agreement that we deal with the main estimates for the Department of Family Services?

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 16 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2015-2016 – Family Services – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: Thank you. Is the committee agreed that the minister's staff go to the witness table?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman (interpretation): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the minister's officials in.

Thank you very much. (interpretation ends) Minister, please introduce your staff.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My (interpretation ends) Deputy Minister Rebekah Williams (interpretation) and Brandon Grant, Comptroller. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Please feel welcome. You may now proceed with your opening comments, (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Overview

I am happy to appear before the Committee of the Whole this morning to present the proposed 2015-16 main estimates and business plan for the Department of Family Services.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Family Services has been allocated a budget of \$127,359,000 for the 2015-16 fiscal year, which represents an increase of 4 percent, or \$4,522,000, over last year's main estimates. The staff complement for the Department of Family Services increased from 196.1 PYs to 205.1 PYs in the 2015-16 main estimates as a result of new approved positions. This budget reflects:

- (interpretation ends) Overall increase of \$605,000 in compensation and benefits
- Additional funding of \$4,563,000 for grants and contributions
- Additional funding in the amount of \$1,528,000 for purchased services
- A decrease in funding for contract services in the amount of \$2,320,000 for residential care placement contracts
- An overall increase in funding of \$146,000 in other operations and maintenance (O&M) expenditures

Mr. Chairman, this additional funding will assist the Department of Family Services to make progress in improving program and service delivery for Nunavummiut.

Corporate Management

The Corporate Management Division is strengthening its overall management role by ensuring that the department implements and achieves its mandate objectives. Over the past year, the division has secured additional resources

to strengthen the department's capacity of program and service delivery.

Children and Family Services

The Children and Family Services Division has been allocated 42 percent of the department's 2015-16 budget.

The division is currently working on the implementation of the Quality Protects Action Plan, which addresses the recommendations from the Auditor General of Canada's report. We have made progress in some areas, including updating and monitoring our programs, developing a children-in-care tracking system, and revising the regional file auditing process to ensure greater oversight.

Our department recognizes that some timelines identified in the Quality Protects Action Plan were too ambitious, which has led to delays in the implementation of some items, including the development of a client information system, monitoring of workload standards, supporting child safety through parental engagement and community development, and the development of a comprehensive human resource strategy to recruit social workers in Nunavut. The department is currently reviewing the action plan and is in the process of developing timelines for the outstanding issues that are realistic and achievable.

Income Assistance

Mr. Chairman, the Income Assistance Division has been allotted 37 percent of the department's 2015-16 budget.

Sivumut Abluqta requires that the division review and reform our approach to social assistance in order to promote self-reliance and provide help to those who need it the most.

The division has deployed the Income Support Delivery System (ISDS) in seven communities, including Iqaluit, Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet, Rankin Inlet, Baker Lake, Arviat, and Cambridge Bay. The division plans to deploy to Igloolik before March 31 before deploying to the rest of Nunavut's communities in the next two years. This system allows income assistance staff to improve case management, financial controls, and program compliance.

Career Development

Mr. Chairman, the Career Development Division has been allocated 16 percent of the department's 2015-16 budget.

The division is funding training opportunities under the Adult Learning and Training Supports (ALTS) program to promote skills development and employment opportunities for Nunavummiut. The division has so far funded 196 people in the 2014-15 fiscal year compared to 161 during the 2013-14 fiscal year.

The division is requesting \$3,442,000 in additional grants and contributions funding to increase the tuition benefit for Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students (FANS).

In addition, the division successfully negotiated the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities with the federal government. This

program will support job opportunities for persons with disabilities in Nunavut.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, we continue to make progress in the delivery of effective programs and services to benefit Nunavummiut. However, we recognize that more work still needs to be done.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be pleased to answer any questions. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. (interpretation ends) Does the Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Wellness have opening comments? Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members of the Standing Committee on Social Wellness have reviewed the 2015-16 main estimates and business plan of the Department of Family Services.

The 2015-16 operations and maintenance budget for the Department of Family Services is approximately \$127 million, which is just over \$4.5 million more than the budget for 2014-15. This will be the third year of the department's existence after being established in April of 2013 with the transfer of various divisions and programs from other GN departments.

Members encourage Department of Family Services officials to continue working closely with their counterparts in other departments, especially the departments of Education and Health, to ensure that no Nunavut resident

encounters problems while accessing services and opportunities.

For example, the issue of food security is an ongoing and public concern across Nunavut. During the minister's appearance before the committee to discuss her department's draft budget for 2015-16, members had a number of questions about the department's role in implementing the government's Food Security Action Plan. At the time, members were given the understanding that the Department of Health was the lead department on this initiative. However, this was not confirmed by the Minister of Health.

Given the serious impact of social issues such as poverty and food insecurity and the growing demand on programs such as income assistance, the standing committee urges the minister to work closely with her cabinet counterparts to ensure that this critical initiative does not falter through a lack of coordination and leadership.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Family Services coordinates and delivers Nunavut's income assistance programs, which are directed towards assisting families, adult individuals, and seniors to meet their basic needs. Committee members look forward to reviewing any proposed reforms to policies or legislation that may be brought forward as a result of the department's review of its income assistance programs, and especially any reforms which could provide additional support for low-income families who face increasingly high costs of living.

Concerns continue to be raised with respect to policies in such areas as social

assistance assessment and eligibility, the abuse of benefits received, and support for income assistance clients facing housing issues.

Members further urge the minister and her officials to work to improve upon the incentives that are available to income assistance clients to access career development opportunities and to be more creative in its efforts to promote self-reliance across the territory.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Family Services, in conjunction with the Department of Education and Nunavut Arctic College, administers a number of programs and resources related to adult and post-secondary learning, including the provision of financial assistance under such programs as FANS, Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students.

Members were very pleased to note the proposed increase in tuition benefits for students supported under the FANS program. Members were also pleased with the ongoing funding and success of the Adult Learning and Training Supports Program.

In October of 2014, the minister announced over \$1 million in federal funding to assist persons with disabilities to enter the labour market. Members look forward to updates on this initiative.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Family Services faces many challenges in delivering services to children, youth, and adults in vulnerable situations and committee members support the proposed increases in funding for child welfare and protection in the department's 2015-16 budget. Following

the Auditor General's 2011 and 2014 reports on child, youth and family services in Nunavut, the department developed action plans which included a number of commitments to address the recommendations contained in the Auditor General's reports.

While members recognize that there may be delays in achieving certain proposed timelines or objectives, especially given capacity issues, competing demands for resources, and the department's ongoing efforts to staff critical positions, the committee encourages the minister to table an updated action plan in the House at the earliest opportunity to show what progress has been made in key areas of concern raised by the Auditor General. Members support the minister's efforts in ensuring ongoing training for community social services workers and that efforts are being made to strengthen the department's case management practices. However, it is clear that much work still needs to be done.

Mr. Chairman, members of the standing committee have expressed concerns regarding the number of clients requiring specialized care and support who are sent south to other jurisdictions for residential care. Standing committee members stress the importance of making greater efforts to keep Nunavummiut in Nunavut and closer to their families and communities and urge the minister to work towards this goal.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks. I anticipate that individual members will also have questions and comments as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. General comments.

(interpretation ends) I just want to remind members that the contents of the opening comments are covered in the different branches of the department. If you have detailed questions, please ask them under the appropriate branches. Thank you.

(interpretation) General comments. No one has their hand up. (interpretation ends) I have no members on my list for general comments. We will now proceed to the page-by-page review of the main estimates starting on page D-4. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to start off with some information that was provided in the business plan on page 119. The third bullet down speaks to “Continue to work closely with Nunavut Arctic College to develop career path training for various professions within...Family Services that align with departmental position qualifications and lead to successful employment.”

In the status, it talks to, that it is working with NAC “through working groups such as the social services diploma and degree granting program.” So that covers one profession, but in the priority, it talks about various professions. What other professions are being looked at to partner up with Arctic College to develop career path planning? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for asking about that issue. This is for the professional courses within the Human Resources Strategy. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe if she could just elaborate on some specific other professions that they’re looking at developing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The (interpretation ends) career development office (interpretation) deals with the career path training. Hopefully my response is understandable. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My apologies if I’m not being clear.

In the priorities, it talks about career path training, but it says, “...for various professions...” To me, if it is listed in the business plan, those professions would have been identified. That’s kind of where I’m getting at. In addition to a social services diploma, are there any other professions that are being looked at to partner up with Nunavut Arctic College for career path training? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Brandon Grant can respond to that question. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To answer the member, the career development officers are working with Nunavut Arctic College on certification of their profession. As well, there are some conversations with Nunavut Arctic College about whether or not income assistant workers would benefit from the training that the career development officers are currently going through. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll let that one lie.

Mr. Chairman, under the grants and contributions section on page D-9 of the main estimates, it shows that contributions for homelessness initiatives will remain unchanged from 2014-15. How will this money be allocated in 2015-16? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The money for homelessness initiatives will be used for three issues. I will refer this question to Rebekah Williams. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to homelessness, these monies are going to be used for Iqaluit men and women who are homeless and the shelters that are provided to them. However, also in there is \$122,000 that will be used for planning some other initiatives in town and it can be utilized for other communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This leads me right into my next question. It also speaks in the business plan that one of the priorities from 2014-15 was to "Prepare the Homelessness Action Plan" and that in 2014, a homelessness study was conducted and it was to be followed up with a validation study. What were the results of that validation study and how will those results impact the implementation of the Homelessness Action Plan in this fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the homelessness study that was done, we wanted to find out more about homelessness, the numbers, and other issues. I will refer this question to Rebekah. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is regarding staff undertaking visits to communities that have requested this assistance.

Additionally, they have researched various topics that require further delineation, such as the homelessness issue for people inhabiting tents, cabins, shacks, or any other type of accommodation. Here we aren't talking about people staying with their relatives overnight, as that is another issue. There are quite a number of homelessness people within Nunavut.

This is part of our strategy to determine our next course of action and I will just elaborate on some of issues within the plan. There are different situations faced by communities, such as in the Baffin, Kivalliq, and the Kitikmeot regions overall. There are homeless shelters in each region. The support doesn't end with just providing a place to sleep, as we want to assist them to get further training, job training, and these are some of the issues we are trying to incorporate into the plan.

The 90 people I mentioned are under abject poverty or as they are described in English, (interpretation ends) absolute homelessness. I hope I was understandable. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response. Also in the business plan on page 119, it speaks to the Makimaniq Five-year Poverty Reduction Action Plan. In the status, it is working with NTI and other stakeholders to finalize this plan and processes to meet the requirements of the *Collaboration for Poverty Reduction Act*. It stated that "This work is

anticipated to be completed by end of the 2014-15 fiscal year."

I would just like to get confirmation, one, if that work has been completed, and how that will result in moving forward with the Poverty Reduction Action Plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A meeting was held on this issue last fall and the minutes of the meeting are being compiled with staff confirming particular statements from the communities to check the veracity of the information to ensure the minutes are error-free prior to disseminating them.

This spring, we will start discussion on the (interpretation ends) Makimaniq Plan (interpretation) to ensure we have clear direction on this issue. The fall meeting minutes are still being developed at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Along those same lines, when you're talking about working with NTI and other stakeholders, how often is that working group getting together and how close are they to the completion of that data being included into the action plan? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps this upcoming spring or even this summer,

we plan to hold a secondary meeting on this issue. When the meeting does occur, these are the issues we want discuss that have been recommended for inclusion into the plan. The stakeholders who attend the meeting will obviously be pushing for their recommendations under this plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll let that one lie as well.

If the Chair will indulge me, this question is regarding FANS, but I believe it's directly related to the Policy and Planning Division. I recently received some correspondence from the minister speaking that the department is looking at ways to assist students in having their funding earlier and ahead of the start of the second term, as it is recognized that monthly rent and other expenses are due before the funding is provided. What work has been done on that specific topic regarding FANS? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Brandon Grant will respond to the question. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our staff have ongoing meetings with NAC on issues related to FANS as well as ALTS deadlines. It's an area in which we are seeking to not only work with

NAC, but get the word out to students on our application processes and the deadlines so that people are able to meet those deadlines and receive the funding that they need. Those discussions are ongoing.

After session here, we're going to be working on highlighting our programs, getting good communications out, updating our website, and getting more information out there on our deadlines and our programs so that we are encouraging more people in Nunavut to apply. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I realize that a number of Nunavut students participate in their education through Nunavut Arctic College, but a number of students go on to other post-secondary institutions. In your analysis, I'm just wondering if the department has considered speaking to some existing or even past students on their experiences and identifying ways to streamline these processes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the FANS program, it's an ongoing process and we're also looking at the concerns, but again there are also rules that are applied with the usage of the FANS program. I believe you're talking about some of the concerns and talking to the former students. I'll refer this to Brandon.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the member brings up a good point.

I think one of the areas in which we are making improvements is around the development of our integrated system for adult client services tracking tool for what we use now for our labour market programs around adults. Very soon in the new year, we are going to be integrating FANS into that process, so it will help us case manage our clients more effectively.

I think the member's idea of engaging with more students is a good idea and something we will definitely take into consideration. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just have two more questions regarding this topic.

Also in that correspondence, it spoke that the minister's staff is looking into ways to ensure that the process for a student to receive their funding is easy and efficient. I think most members have probably heard from constituents over time that there are some gaps and there are some challenges on occasion. Although maybe they are not frequent, they can be very challenging for a student who is sometimes away from home for the first time and not really clear on what policies and procedures are available to them. Hence they contact their MLA in some circumstances.

I'm just wondering: how is that progressing with easing the access to funding for students? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have to follow the calendar and follow the rules where they can start applying for the FANS program and also the deadline. Students applying for financial assistance usually have deadlines that they have to make sure that they know about. Brandon can explain that more. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the minister said, the deadlines are an important piece in getting the word out about our deadlines and I think also as well, I know our staff are finalizing the testing for the FANS module for the ISAAC system. Having better information and client management within the new database will be a helpful tool to allow our staff to better serve the students in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I noted with interest that during the review, there is a business case that has been prepared for review by the Financial Management Board to increase the level of FANS grants, and I applaud that measure. I've had a number of people contact me that in certain programs, that money just hasn't been enough.

In addition to that, I would like to ask whether a review of the book allocation is being looked at increasing for some courses. The \$200, in some courses, buys one book whereas sometimes the billing can come into well over \$1,000 in some courses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The number of applicants to the Arctic College courses keeps increasing and the requests for funding application are also increasing. This includes information such as the course syllabus in a calendar format, and we are seeing more requests for the information.

With regard to the actual question the member asked regarding course material and textbook costs, we are trying to increase the budget line item as that is part of the overall budget and this will be one of our larger expenditures. I believe we are trying to increase that for the 2015-16 fiscal year. Brandon can explain that further. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As a former student, I definitely relay the member's statement on the cost of books. We are pleased to say in our main estimates that the FANS increases for the basic grant, so it will allow for tuition fees and books to cover under the basic grant. What we're proposing is the FANS increase will go to \$6,855 from the current \$3,700. We think it's going to break down the barriers, as the minister said, to allow more students to

take the opportunity to go for post-secondary education. We appreciate the member's comments on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I keep an ear on the floor channel and my earlier comment wasn't interpreted properly by staff. I would ask that Rebekah Williams be allowed to clarify that passage. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister was talking about the numbers increasing for student enrolment in Inuktitut, but the English was misinterpreted. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): I think that has been clarified. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that clarification. I have just one final question. To me, it's under Income Assistance, but again, it's related to the Directorate.

In May of last year, I had asked the minister what kind of discussions she has had with the federal government regarding federal programs administered to the residents of Nunavut to recognize the higher cost of living here. At that time, she had said that they were looking at whether they could set up a meeting with the federal government that provides funding. I was wondering if the minister could update me on any

progress under that section. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We haven't met with the federal government about that yet. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again I realize that you have been looking at making an increase to some of the senior assistance benefit program. At the same time, there are federal programs that assist Nunavummiut, especially our seniors, who are on a very fixed income. I would like to really strongly recommend that the minister find an opportunity to speak with her federal counterparts and look at exploring ways to help our disadvantaged populace live a healthier lifestyle. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank my colleague for asking about the assistance for elders. I believe it was about a week ago when the Premier spoke about elders, elder support, and options related to impacts on their livelihoods due to financial limitations or insecurity. Our Premier will be speaking on behalf of Nunavut and the departments of Health and Family Services will collaborate with his department on providing the details relevant to this meeting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We are on Family Services. Branch Summary. Corporate Management. Following the list of names, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Welcome. (interpretation ends) What I would like to get at now is in the business plan, 118, when you talk about the vision of the department. Being that it is a new department, what kind of challenges has that posed to you to try and get your clients and other people to understand, really, what Family Services is all about, and which key stakeholders did you approach? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will have Rebekah Williams respond to that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are dealing with people's lives and sometimes it's not easy, but it is a task we need to do and we must support, help, and encourage people in Nunavut. We have a lot of stakeholders. Most of the departments are involved in different programs that we work with. I appreciate the understanding of the member on how challenging this department is with the few staff that we have, particularly in the area of communities and the frontlines.

If you're talking about stakeholders, we do work with other departments like Health, Justice, Housing, Community and Government Services, depending on

what the issue is. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What has been the feedback from the communities about the department? Are there services that people are looking for that you don't currently offer? Are you delivering services that people have said, "Man, we really appreciate this very much"? What kind of feedback are you getting from your clients and maybe some community members who don't necessarily use the department's services, but are impacted by it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for requesting clarification on this issue. I think it was April 2013 when they started that and we moved in 2015. We are now all in one building in the (interpretation ends) old courthouse.

(interpretation) Based on the operational progression, we will start to communicate with the communities. We are trying to enhance our cooperation with the communities through the poverty reduction initiative and community representatives have been involved from the outset.

The other aspect to this is that all communities provide income support programming and we can hear directly from them as we enact changes. The lines of communication are set and we expect their feedback, and obviously any

impact on their clients will result in feedback from the communities.

These are our current expectations on this file. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason why I'm asking, if you look on page 118 of your business plan, it says that "Senior Management engaged and obtained staff input, and is now in the process of engaging with the public and partners" and "A draft vision has been developed for consideration..." That's why I'm asking those kinds of questions. I'm wondering: if you are already consulting with the public, what are you hearing in regard to your department? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The contents on page 118 of the business plan speak to the departmental vision. If I recall correctly, the key staff are already part of the working group and they have completed the initial vision. That is what I can respond with. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to go on from there. In regard to prioritizing the work that needs to be done within Family Services in regard to the legislative work, the department recently met, I think, and an inventory of legislative work has been developed. Can you just

elaborate here and perhaps give us an idea of what kind of legislation has been prioritized? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are reviewing the regulations and policies for income support, including the (interpretation ends) Apprenticeship Act. (interpretation) We are reviewing those. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to go to something totally different here.

I would like to touch on what my colleague touched on in regard to homelessness. Perhaps what we could do is start off by asking Family Services: what role, what kind of engagement, and what responsibility does the department have when it comes to Nunavummiut who are homeless and who have to be in a shelter because they have nowhere else to go? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the homeless people's shelters, the communities develop a society to administer those shelters. Through grants and contributions, we develop an agreement with them. They maintain the homeless shelters through our grants and contributions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the minister explain and perhaps go into a little bit more detail about the interaction between the shelters and the department? In terms of the contribution agreement, what kind of criteria, what kind of targets...? What is in that contribution agreement that will help to steer the shelter a little bit more in what we're looking for?

I'm bringing this up because I was actually working with one of my constituents who unfortunately wasn't allowed to be in the homeless shelter because of a social problem that she had. It really opened my eyes to the fact that there are really some people falling between the gaps. It made me think how many more people are suffering like this where they really don't have anywhere... I feel like, in a way, we have missed some people.

What I'm trying to get at is: how much say do you have over shelters? When you provide them with contribution dollars of quite considerable amounts, in my mind, I'm thinking you probably have a lot more say than perhaps what you have done so far. Maybe what needs to happen is to really sit down with the boards of the shelters, because I understand they have individual boards, and to really discuss in reality what are we facing here in Nunavut.

We have a lot of people who are homeless, jobless, and many times, it is because of addictions. Their families don't want them in their homes. Their friends don't want them in their homes. Now the shelters don't want them in their homes. They say, "No, we have zero tolerance for anybody under any kind of influence." These people are

really vulnerable. They are still people. We should still consider them as priorities too, especially because we don't have the services that can help them get over their addictions. I think this is an area that we all have to work on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All the homeless shelters are under grants and contributions. I have instructed the DM and the staff to meet with the boards on what the agreements are and to review the services.

In the national roundtable on murdered and missing women, I talked briefly with the premier (interpretation) in Yellowknife, NWT. There were apparently four areas that have been identified for this study or review.

The shelters are open for the homeless people. In English, they are called (interpretation ends) wet shelters. (interpretation) We will be also looking at other areas of this issue for Nunavut because we want to ensure we provide the best services possible for the people living in abject poverty.

In the case of homeless people, they can't get accommodations, employment, income, and there are no employment options. That was what I was trying to clarify here. The deputy minister will be meeting with the committee overlooking this issue to determine the next course of action. We expect some results. We also sign off the contribution agreements when they request funding. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. That is a step in the right direction. I look forward to hearing the results of those discussions. I think we're going to be more in reality when we start addressing the fact that many people who use the government's services or shelters have addictions that need to be addressed.

I'm looking at my own list here. I just have one more question and that's really to do with anti-poverty. I know that my colleague touched on this a little bit, but you had mentioned that there have been quite a few meetings over the last few years when it comes to addressing poverty in Nunavut and that the strategy is not finalized.

I am wondering if you can tell us, in all the meetings that have happened over the last, I think it's four years or maybe more, I'm not sure... . What message are you hearing? Poverty has many reasons why it's in place. You have your addiction. You've got your homelessness and people are not employed or maybe they're not educated. What are people from the community actually saying that the government should be doing? What should the government be doing to address... ?

Even though I know that you don't have your strategy yet and there are some things I think that could come to mind, obviously, what could be done, but I'm just interested in just hearing what you have heard from the meetings coming back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) From the meetings that I have personally attended, the strong voices were from elders and that parenting and being self-reliant was the number one issue for people to get out of poverty. In following traditional *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, we were taught right from a young age to take care of ourselves right into adulthood, helping each other.

From that, they picked *Inunnguiniq*, parenting. That's the one of the stronger ones that we receive from the round tables. The other one was social assistance. How can we help people who are on social assistance? I think, from the round tables, the voice was how to better manage your money. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. I went to one of the meetings and yes, I heard that as well. I think some people had some very good advice, but when I think about the facts, if a family is hungry right now, which I'm sure there are a lot of families that are hungry, even people that we might be surprised to find out that that family is hungry.

I know that people have their own responsibilities to put food on their table, but for those that really seem to fall in the cracks and not really being able to meet the needs of their family, do you

feel or what is the department's stand on whether or not or how much of an intervention Family Services can do?

I know that you have income support, but is that meeting the needs of some families? I understand that we have families who could be working and aren't working, and I understand all of that. I think what I'm really trying to get at is the families that really can't work. Maybe there is a disability issue or maybe there is a child care issue. I don't know what. Those kinds of families, do you feel you can address their needs through the door of income support or through the door of career counselling?

Do you know what I'm trying to get at? I'm trying to get at what more can you do. When someone is really hungry, what kind of intervention does the department do other than income support, if any? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just trying to get an answer.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank my colleague for that question. The Department of Family Services is working with human resources to work on the income support clientele capacity building related to enhancing their job readiness and preparation. In that manner, the income support clients will be encouraged to take courses related to job readiness training.

If you look at the overall financial picture, income support comprises a large portion of our expenditures. The possible training courses that we have looked at would decrease the amount

spent on income support and increase the training funds. That is our future objective to improve the lives of our residents and to wean them off income support.

Income support isn't meant to be used solely for provision of foodstuffs, as one can't survive on the minimum amounts. As far as I am aware, many clients on income support suffer from food insecurity, our fellow Nunavummiut. That is why with food insecurity abounding in Nunavut, groups like (interpretation ends) Feeding My Family (interpretation) have been created to voice common concerns about the realities we face here in Nunavut.

With the objectives laid out in *Sivumut Abluqta*, the government wants to lay a better foundation for residents related to food security through gainful employment, just like the Department of Family Services wants to see a future where past clients hold permanent jobs after taking job skills training as part of the income support programming. That is our long-term vision. I hope I answered the question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. (interpretation ends) We are on Family Services. Branch Summary. Corporate Management. (interpretation) Following my list of names, Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, witnesses, and staff, welcome to the proceedings.

I want to start off with page 117 within your business plan. I have a generic question to clarify some of the issues in my own mind.

Yesterday, our esteemed colleague walked out in protestation and I believe we all know his reasons. The reason was due to the government's unwillingness to incorporate *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* in a meaningful manner, and that there aren't enough plans written to implement them throughout the departments. Many members agreed with that assessment.

If you look at 117 of business plan, there is an objective laid out in the first bullet stating, "To use Inuit Societal Values as guiding principles for operating the department." (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, (interpretation) can you provide the context or meaning behind this particular objective? Can you provide one concrete example that illustrates the meaning behind this objective? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for raising that issue. The traditional Inuit knowledge or in this case, (interpretation ends) Inuit societal values (interpretation) have been written into the directive aimed at government operations. I can't recall how many there are, but these principles are what the Department of Family Services tries to implement, specifically dialogue, harmonious relations, skills training, and there are more, but these are some of the principles we try to follow in Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps a friendly reminder to the minister is there are eight guiding principles. If I can reiterate my question, can you provide an example? I am aware your past career was in social work, and I know you are very familiar with social services.

Can you provide an example where Inuit societal values are required? For example, “The outcome that would have resulted has changed due to *Inuit Qaujimagangat* and values being incorporated.” Can the minister provide any examples of cases where the departmental policies were changed due to incorporating Inuit societal values? This is for my own comprehension. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member for the question. With respect to social services and the member’s request for examples, since there are different areas within this field, they also have separate regulations they have to abide by in fulfilling those duties.

With respect to Inuit traditional knowledge, although the principles are there, they have to follow the legislation applicable to that field of work. They aren’t written here. When talking about social services, some clients are quite distraught when they approach the social worker. Based on the client’s incident, they have to apply the specific regulations. We have to follow the legislation and the process to change it,

if the member is able to understand my response. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I could possibly understand only if my question is responded to in an understandable way, and I don’t think it was answered at all.

(interpretation ends) I’m just looking for an example where your department would have done something in particular on an issue, but because you have to take into consideration Inuit societal values, you have done it this way. Just give me an example where you use real Inuit societal values in a real situation. That is all I’m asking. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I’ll ask my deputy minister to respond to that question. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The practice we use within all government departments, whenever legislation has to be drafted or amended, the request has to go through the (interpretation ends) cabinet (interpretation) for the changes requested. We submit the request through the Department of Culture and Heritage by enquiring about the Inuktitut language specific to the request and if it is properly written and understandable. This is just an example. We also are

apprised by the department on their recommendations on the language corrections.

Another example I can provide here is the Income Assistance Program. If I went for assistance to buy food and presented myself to the income support worker, they conduct an interview in Inuktitut and provide advice on financial management to preserve funds.

Back in the old days, as I am no longer so young as well, our fathers and grandfathers used to advise us never to destroy anything. This principle is used by the Department of Family Services.

If we are dealing with children and proper rearing techniques, another example I can use is which of the extended family is able to provide assistance. How can we work with the relatives to resolve the issue? This is part of consensus building.

I can provide many examples of where Inuit culture is applied within the family services department.

If any person wants to go to a shelter and they have reached the end of their rope, whether it is a man or woman, whether it is physical abuse or mental abuse, whether it is related to alcohol or substance abuse, then the person would receive counselling on the options they may have.

I wanted these to be understandable and I used them as examples of the use of Inuit culture in our operations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the examples she provided requires a response, as it illustrates perfectly the confusion I am faced with in this area. As an example, if a person were to go the income support worker, they are properly advised to preserve their money and to try to extend it for the month.

Currency has never been part of the traditional Inuit culture, as Inuit had no money of any kind. It is a global practice to use currency. This is a modern concept that (interpretation ends) every culture (interpretation) pushes for proper financial management. I believe every culture is steeped in proper usage of resources, regardless of whether it is money or some other resource. That is what confuses the issue in my mind.

Modern Inuit are also very adamant about proper financial management, as Inuit we want our constituents to be fiscally responsible. Nonetheless, I believe the white culture pushes that principle, like the Chinese or Japanese or any other culture. I don't think this principle is specific towards Inuit traditional knowledge.

The other example that leads to my confusion requires another response. She used an example of a spouse who has to go to a shelter. Many times we hear from the spouse left in the community that all of a sudden, their spouse has taken shelter in another community. Is this an example of using Inuit traditional knowledge? Is it used in these cases? I personally am not well versed in *Inuit Qaujimagat* and have no clue about this knowledge, although I have heard snippets of IQ on occasion.

If you cite these examples, then we have to consider these issues as well. On a personal level, I don't believe that to be the case. However, if the government uses these examples, then so be it.

I want to move on, Mr. Chairman. On page 117, on the second bullet from the bottom, mind you I am reading the English wording and apologize for my lack of interpretation skills as I am trying to put them into Inuktitut, but it seems to be stating the following, "To improve the coordination of new and existing services to reduce homelessness in Nunavut." I want to understand the reasoning behind this.

The (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister (interpretation) has publicly announced that there are only 90 homeless people in Nunavut. Is this wording specific only to the 90 homeless people in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are shelters used by the homeless here in Iqaluit and the shelters are designed for them. The Iqaluk homeless shelter was (interpretation ends) designated (interpretation) as the recipient of funding locally, which I can use as an example. They are funded to operate the homeless shelter.

With respect to improving the operations, as per my earlier comments, meetings have been set up with the organization on improving operations. Even with this process here in Iqaluit, we still see people occupying shacks,

tents, and other inappropriate shelters. We are deliberating on this issue.

If communities want to create shelters, we would meet with the community and work with them. That is our plan for the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me clarify my question. In your study on this subject, your statement was that there are 90 homeless people in Nunavut. My only follow-up question on that is: this number you have written down is specifically for homeless people, this number of 90, yes or no? Just to make it simpler. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The study was undertaken and the people who declared themselves homeless were counted. Generally, these are the people who use the shelter less during the spring and summer seasons, so that number may not be static. The number changes depending on the season. Some people who have lost their units aren't included. This figure can certainly increase or decrease and the numbers can change from what we read here as it includes the (interpretation ends) shelters. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I doubt I will ever get an answer on this topic, so let me move to another. On page 118 of your business plan, there is a section related to food insecurity and abject poverty that is written here.

I want to ask a question related to one of my colleagues' question. If I am correct in recalling the member, I believe it was Mr. Mikkungwak. Last fall, I believe he raised the question on the timing of the meetings as he asked, "When will you stop discussing this in meetings and planning?" When will you start implementing the recommendations that have been raised and stop this continuous round of meetings?

In our eyes, all you are doing is spending money on endless meetings. My question is: when will the funds be released and available to assist the people experiencing food insecurity or living in poverty and not expend it on meetings? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This spring or this summer is when we have targeted to end these meetings on the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Nonetheless, I want my colleague to know that we have partners such as Nunavut Tunngavik on this issue. If there are contentious issues, we can only resolve them through meetings, but the family services department has identified the summer as the deadline. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 120 of your business plan, under Priorities (2016-17), it speaks about homeless people.

Mr. Chairman, I know that the Nunavut government refers to these people as being homeless, yet there is no mention of relatives constantly boarding with family or friends, including people who sleep on floors. According to the government definition of homeless people, they have homes since they are boarding in someone's home and therefore not a matter of concern.

The government is so proud of this small number seemingly, as they always spout those numbers from the study conducted, which is 90 homeless people. This is absolutely erroneous to call the other people boarding at homes as being in another category. They are sleeping in porches and the maintenance rooms of these units.

I had tried to ask this question and I'm going to ask it again. Madam Minister, in your eyes, what constitutes people under this term "homelessness"? Is it the same thing as the federal government's definition of homelessness? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue my colleague raises regarding the people who board in other people's homes have been counted by the Nunavut Housing Corporation and they have that information.

With the federal legislation, there is a definition included and I would ask that Brandon Grant respond to the definition of homelessness. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To answer the member's question directly, there is no universal definition of homelessness. The study that our department focused on was absolute homelessness. The federal government provides funding through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy with a housing-first focus as their priority for homelessness through their funding.

As well, the minister stated that through our grants and contributions, we provide funding to homeless shelters here in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will leave it at that.

I have one more question as my time allowance is ticking away, prior to it running out. I believe we can talk about employees under this page and new employees especially. I would like further clarification on this issue, which I imagine is spoken to in your business plan.

In your opening comments, Madam Minister, on page 2 in English, perhaps I skipped over it, but it seems to state that your department will be increasing its staff complement from 196.1 PYs to 205.1 PYs. I just want further clarification on this or alternatively, if that information is available elsewhere,

you can just direct me to the source explaining their roles. I'll stop here for now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Yes, they are new positions being created and perhaps I can get Brandon Grant to provide the details on this question. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The new positions within the Department and Family Services are two positions within corporate management, which are a manager of financial operations for income assistance as well as a position for a finance officer for income assistance. This is to build capacity within our department to help with the financial oversight of the Income Assistance Program. This is one of the measures.

In children and family services, we have created four new CSSW positions. This again is to create better capacity within our program areas for frontline social workers in the community. Two will be located in Iqaluit, one in Kugluktuk, and one in Rankin Inlet.

As well, we have put forward a business case for three new positions within the Career Development Branch. Those positions, again, are to build capacity within this branch by promoting our apprenticeship program. We have two apprenticeship training officer positions that will be promoting our programs to employers and multiple stakeholders so

that people know more about our programs for apprenticeship and recruiting apprentices and employers, as well as one certification and examination specialist position that will work within the apprenticeship unit here in headquarters. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. (interpretation ends) We are on Family Services. Branch Summary. Corporate Management. (interpretation) Following my list of names on page D-4, Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The questions I had prepared have largely been asked by my colleagues, but I want to ask the (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister (interpretation) this question about the Income Assistance Program provided in Nunavut.

When the new fiscal year arrives, let's say, is the number of recipients trending upwards this year due to the lack of employment opportunities in Nunavut? I would like to know what your understanding of the numbers is. If you have the information, can you clarify that for my understanding? That is my first question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for asking for information about the numbers of recipients. Yes, income support recipients have continued to increase primarily due to the number of young people reaching the age of eligibility, as that generation is much more numerous than adults.

Now, with the opportunities provided by the mining companies, they provide a lot of support. However, the number of people working in the mines isn't very large. With the young people reaching eligibility, due to their higher numbers, they are adding to the numbers and with the lack of employment opportunities, this number continues to increase. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't linger on the questions related to homelessness, although this is a very big challenge.

This issue seems to have two categories. One category is where homeless people can sleep at their relatives, much like couch surfing and they bounce around between relatives and this is faced by anyone who is homeless. The other category is the absolute homeless people, who either live in tents or shacks and in the wintertime, they are faced with very harsh conditions, as the cold temperature doesn't allow a person to sleep outside. It also isn't very visually pleasant to see people in that situation.

As the Department of Family Service, is this one of your priorities? This is also happening in our community, with quite a number of homeless individuals over the winter who are homeless and don't have any income, so they continually request heating fuel or other assistance from the community since they don't have any employment.

With that being the situation we face today, has your department ever considered building communal shelters

in the communities specifically for homeless people in the community? Here I refer to absolutely homeless people. I wonder if your department has taken this into consideration to try and alleviate the challenges in the communities by building communal shelters instead of forcing them to live in tents or shacks.

Employment opportunities are quite scarce, so I would like to ask: what kind of plans does your department have to deal with this issue? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to thank my colleague for asking that question. The community has to undertake the initiative locally and to show their support to meet this challenge. If the community requests funding assistance with a detailed proposal, then the Department of Family Services can review the application and work with the community to see how we can meet this challenge. However, the initiative has to come from the community itself and I hope my answer was understandable. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Yes, but you didn't respond to the second question I asked, so let me ask again about the communal shelter idea. As we all know, Nunavut is facing a severe housing shortage, and homeless people end up in tents or shacks in the winter.

Has your department ever considered a local building to shelter homeless people in the smaller communities to house them over the winter? Has your department ever considered this? Perhaps I wasn't clear in asking about that earlier. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I'm sorry for not clearly explaining the situation, so I apologize.

To use this example of Taloyoak, if the community wanted to construct a shelter, then the community of Taloyoak would have to initiate the proposal by first identifying a building locally that could be used for that purpose. They would then apply for funding to convert the building into a shelter from the Department of Family Services. However, the proposal has to be completed and include details, such as operating funds for the shelter they want to convert. The community has to lead the initiative, but our department wouldn't go to Taloyoak to build a shelter nor do we have funds for that.

The community has to apply for this funding, especially if they know that it will alleviate some of the challenges faced by our communities here in Nunavut, particularly to ensure that we don't see residents living in tents or shacks. The community has to make the application for building a local shelter. I hope my answer is clear this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. (interpretation ends) We are

on Family Services. Branch Summary. Corporate Management. D-4. Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday, I raised questions during oral question period. I am sorry if I am out of line with the question, but you can stop me if I am out of line.

During oral question period yesterday, I asked about social service workers and I believe I wasn't very clear in my questioning. In our community, when we say "*inulirijii*," we are talking about counsellors or social service workers. We call the income support services *ajuksaqtulirijiit* and other dialects call them *sukkuaqitittiit*, but we are talking about income support workers here.

I was asking about social service workers who arrive into our communities to provide social services. I wanted to ask the Minister of Family Services a brief question. Perhaps I missed it in your business plan, but I wanted to see if you have a succession plan to hire social workers, as we feel transient social workers can be replaced by a social worker.

Has your department considered replacing the transient social workers who provide counselling in our community with a permanent position? That is my first question, whether plans have been made to hire a full-time social worker in our community or if this issue is not important enough for the department to replace transient social workers in our communities. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for asking if our department has any future plans to that effect. We are working with Nunavut Arctic College to develop curricula to strengthen the program for social worker training programs.

The program is offered in Cambridge Bay for students wishing to take social service worker programming and anyone interested in the training has to fill out a form applying for inclusion into the program through Nunavut Arctic College. A person can take that training if they wish to become a social service worker.

We usually meet with Nunavut Arctic College to discuss how graduates of the Social Services Worker Diploma Program can be prepared for immediate employment.

I would ask that my deputy minister provide more details to supplement my response. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister spoke about social workers in her response about children having to be properly cared for.

The member, I believe, asked about mental health counsellors if I understood him correctly. Mental health counsellors are under the Department of Health. However, we work with that department on these issues and our social service workers cooperate with the department.

The minister was clear in defining the difference between social workers and the other positions, and this was to clarify the differences between our positions and the mental health counsellors who are under the Department of Health. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As members have alluded to in the past, one of our colleagues is very dedicated to ensuring that *Inuit Qaujimanituqangat* is incorporated into government operations. There are different positions that need this.

As most of us are aware, counselling is a large portion of social services. I was one of the Inuit who celebrated the creation of Nunavut and I looked forward to seeing traditional Inuit practices incorporated into government operations. There are many positions within the category of social services that need to incorporate *Inuit Qaujimanituqangat* as part of their overall work.

Social services and other types of life counselling in the communities are very important and our community has transient workers sent up who aren't even aware of Inuit cultural practices. When these workers conduct their work, they use the western style of counselling, which is totally opposite of Inuit counselling. They are not just even facing each other. Due to this fact, I, too, am passionate about incorporating traditional Inuit knowledge integrated into government operations.

In my opinion, the Department of Family Services should be planning to incorporate IQ into government operations. That is why I was asking about this issue as to what kind of plans the Department of Family Services has towards having homegrown counsellors and social workers in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Social workers conduct their duties following the legislation applicable in Nunavut. The legislation is under the Government of Nunavut and they are clear. With respect to traditional Inuit knowledge, if people followed the rules of healthy living, then we wouldn't require social services to provide assistance to our people. We follow the laws applicable towards social services and that is how services are provided to the people of Nunavut.

With respect to traditional Inuit counselling, this was a skill held by our elders and our parents. Our lifestyle today is vastly different from the past, and that is why Inuit want to retain traditional Inuit knowledge as they feel it is missing. I can use that example of the differences in the traditional Inuit knowledge and the legislation. Today, we are dependent on legislation to deal with every facet of government operations. That is where the differences are.

If our residents start utilizing *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangat* for community wellness or healthy living, then we wouldn't need social service workers.

Traditional Inuit knowledge incorporates listening. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just now, the minister stated that Nunavut Arctic College offers a social worker program, which I imagine is for future social service workers or counsellors, as this program is offered through the college.

If an Inuk wanted to take that program, would they require a minimum level of education or be a high school graduate to take the program? Alternatively, can an Inuk who is well versed in traditional Inuit knowledge be included as a student for the social worker program? Can it be integrated into the training program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask my deputy minister to respond to that question. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we offer that training program and we are trying to increase the numbers of local social worker trainees to work in Nunavut. There are quite a number of communities that don't have social workers and some communities need more than one social worker to meet their needs. If there was a program offered on social workers and if they

complete their training, it would be beneficial for the students to know both English and Inuktitut.

Additionally, the students can also receive traditional Inuit knowledge training either in or outside of Nunavut Arctic College, as they too also search for qualified IQ teachers to teach the traditional knowledge applicable to their work. Nunavut Arctic College does that work and that also occurs in the local community learning centres. This is an ongoing process.

The Inuit perspective would be to have the government operations be incorporated into Inuit traditional knowledge, not the other way around, which is to incorporate IQ into government. That is the challenge we face today, as social work includes challenges that traditional Inuit didn't face, such as alcohol or drugs, Mr. Chairman.

The current social work undertaken today is vastly different as today, we have to provide counselling to people with addictions and this is problematic. Perhaps this is one area where traditional Inuit knowledge wouldn't be able to provide assistance in this field. Some people can also become very aggressive, even if they are our relatives, due to their addictions.

These are the types of issues we have to face. There are certain areas that can be improved by incorporating IQ into social workers and counsellors, especially to provide more relevance to clients wanting assistance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank her for a response that is clear and understandable. Now, it was stated that there is a training program for social workers offered in Cambridge Bay.

Yes, part of your response is truthful in that there are certain issues not known traditionally by Inuit and particularly areas that are governed by legislation. Additionally, this shows the other side of the coin, as Inuit also know many things that *Qallunaat* have no ideas about and much of this knowledge is within life skills or life counselling.

There are certainly practices that could be taught. I wonder if these types of lessons will be included for the social worker program or to have another teacher who is an IQ expert. As an example, to be taught traditional Inuit practices by a recognized expert, I wonder if that arrangement could be included in the social worker program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will initiate discussions on this issue with the Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College on this interesting suggestion we can consider related to social worker courses.

When social workers arrive to Nunavut or upon application for a social worker position, we work with the Department of Culture and Heritage to provide

cultural orientation. However, with respect to the contents of this cultural orientation, I would have to meet with the minister responsible for Arctic College to discuss this issue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Keyootak said that he is done. We're on (interpretation ends) Family Services. Branch Summary. Corporate Management. (interpretation) I still have some names on my list, but we will take a 10-minute break.

>>Committee recessed at 10:56 and resumed at 11:12

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. We will now resume our meeting. (interpretation ends) Family Services. Branch Summary. Corporate Management. (interpretation) Page D-4. Following my list of names, Mr. Joanasié.

Mr. Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Firstly, I wish to welcome the minister and her officials.

I would first like clarification about the absolutely homeless people. A question was raised earlier and the response was that there are plans underway, which is understandable. However, to date, what kind of support programming is offered by the Department of Family Services towards these absolutely homeless people?

As an example, are purchases for Coleman stove or camping fuel included in the assistance provided to the homeless people? That is my first question. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would ask that Brandon Grant, who deals with the support programs, be allowed to respond to that question, please. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the minister has stated previously, the grants and contributions within the homelessness program is for homeless shelters here in Iqaluit. Those funds are used to fund operations of the homeless shelters. It would depend on whether or not they are absolutely homeless. There aren't currently programs to address those needs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Joanasié.

Mr. Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you. Further, my colleague, Mr. Shooyook, raised questions about this issue where he related the challenges faced by people in the wintertime, particularly by the absolute homeless residents who live in tents or shacks. This winter was an exceptionally cold winter. I wanted to know what kind of assistance is provided to these clients by the Department of Family Services. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to our business plan, we haven't identified actual assistance towards the

homeless people. The only way would be if the clients received income support, and that is the only support provided currently. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Joanasié.

Mr. Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you. Also, with respect to income support or whatever the program is called, there are different programs for people in different situations. Perhaps I will move on to another matter.

In November 2014, the Office of the Auditor General released a report on the audit of the (interpretation ends) Nutrition North Canada (interpretation) program run by the federal government. Have you had an opportunity to review this report and, if so, will the report's findings have any impact on the government's or your department's efforts to address issues, such as food security and the high cost of living in Nunavut?

If I were to state it in English, (interpretation ends) the cost of living (interpretation) is always rising in Nunavut. Has your department taken these factors into consideration for future plans? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for asking that question. The Department of Family Services works with the Department of Health and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated on how to resolve the challenges listed in the (interpretation ends) Nunavut Food

Security Strategy (interpretation) and of its future status.

During our meetings, we all understood that this can't be resolved by one organization or one department, especially when it's related to poverty reduction and food security issues. One department or organization can't resolve this issue unilaterally. It can only be done in collaboration with many other departments and organizations.

The Department of Family Services and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated meet on these issues within the (interpretation ends) Nunavut Food Security Coalition (interpretation) committee, and they are currently working on plans. We are supporting the Department of Health as they are the lead department on this file. (interpretation ends) Health Canada (interpretation) also provides funding towards this initiative.

(interpretation ends) The Nunavut Food Security [Strategy] and Action Plan was approved by cabinet. Officials are working together on a regular basis. The Nunavut Food Security Coalition holds monthly meetings. The coalition will be holding an in-person meeting from March 17 to 19 to reach consensus on the terms of reference, ways to inform discussions on the Nutrition North Canada program, and to discuss progress in implementing the action plan.

Some of the accomplishments of the Government of Nunavut on the food security action plan include a Nunavut food price survey, research to inform and encourage debate on the Nutrition North Canada program, and support for harvesters and exploratory fisheries. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Joanasié.

Mr. Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another matter relates to the fact that many residents in Nunavut are experiencing hunger, particularly the young children. I have personally looked into this issue. There was something that was produced by the (interpretation ends) Food Bank of Canada (interpretation) about (interpretation ends) hunger in Nunavut. (interpretation) It stated that 62 percent of the children have an inadequate food supply. (interpretation ends) Food insecurity means not having access to enough food or eating lower quality food.

(interpretation) The Department of Family Services has the mandate to provide income support and as an example, the funds allocated towards this program in our future don't incorporate the increasing costs as they haven't changed much. However, the expenses required to be paid, such as the (interpretation ends) cost of living, (interpretation) continue to increase. Why isn't your department adhering to these increases?

As an example, I heard on the radio this morning from people outside of Nunavut who are providing assistance to people in Nunavut by sending care packages to Nunavummiut. How is the government facing this challenge we see today surrounding food insecurity? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank my colleague for his personal research about that information and what he wants to hear about.

The Department of Family Services has hired a lawyer to review the programs to see what is useful, what isn't useful. The lawyer is helping to review the programs. If the programs are changed, we will see the priority being changed to ensuring that children are not hungry.

Children have parents who have to undertake everything they can to rear their children properly. As a government, we are not the stewards of these children as we aren't the parents. This has to be a priority of the parents to ensure that their children aren't hungry or malnourished.

Hunger stems from many factors, such as the issues my deputy minister alluded to, such as drug and alcohol addictions, as well as gambling problems that eat up the funds. The parents have to hold the responsibility to ensure that their children are not going hungry. Let's keep that in mind, people of Nunavut.

We wish to provide assistance to people facing poverty and we provide that assistance. We hold round-table meetings to try to find solutions and to mitigate poverty by providing assistance through income support, through food price subsidies in the stores, as well as working with the federal government.

This issue can only be resolved by collaboration between the different levels of government and private organizations. We are currently working on a plan as a department.

I would ask that Brandon Grant be allowed to explain this further. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I would add to the minister's response is that, as she stated, we are reviewing the social assistance program as well as all the programs under the income assistance umbrella, including the Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit, the daycare user subsidy, and the Senior Fuel Subsidy Program as well. We are looking within our current budget framework to see if we can make increases without asking for additional resources.

As well, we are working on looking at how our benefit programs interact with federal benefit programs, including the National Child Benefit Supplement. Any changes that we make to social assistance in granting an increased income could potentially also change what they would be eligible for federal benefits. We are trying to be as responsible as possible in reviewing how these changes and benefit increases will interact with federal programs.

It is under review, we are making small adjustments now, and we will be preparing business cases into the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you. Indeed, I think most members are getting tired of waiting for progress. As my colleague, Mr. Enook, stated earlier,

we hear about all of these different plans and continuous meetings that take place without any seeming progression forward and when we see any changes, they are very slow and minimal related to this issue.

However, I want to urge our government to make progress on this issue, as we are seeing fellow Canadians start up assistance programs to assist Nunavummiut. They are contributing their own funds to send care packages to Nunavummiut. This stems from their wanting to help from the bottom of their hearts and due to this wish to provide assistance, they have started to send up packages. They have started something. I would like our government to start their own assistance programs towards this goal.

I wanted to ensure that the department is fully aware of these figures, so I will probably read the information. This is from 2012, but it states that in Nunavut, we pay prices that are double compared to other Canadians. (interpretation ends) Residents spent two times more on food versus the rest of Canada, \$14,800 per year versus \$7,300 per year. (interpretation) The differences in these numbers (interpretation ends) speak for themselves. (interpretation) Let's move forward.

I just wanted to advise you of that. I'll stop here for now. I would appreciate any kind of response to that. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I understand that members are tired of

waiting for progress. However, we have no choice because Family Services isn't the only department involved in this process of poverty reduction. NTI is heavily involved in this initiative. We have to hold round tables and meetings with other Inuit organizations. Holding meetings is expensive. As the Department of Family Services, we pay for all of these meeting expenses ourselves.

From what I know, food prices are very high in Nunavut. We had a food price survey done and we saw the different prices. There was never a food price survey done before through the Department of Family Services. We initiated that in Nunavut. We are progressing slowly.

As I stated, we are trying to have this summer or late spring as a deadline for the round-table meetings. We are still compiling the information from last fall's meeting. We have to make sure that we confirm all the things that were voiced at the meetings. We are verifying them with the communities. I would like my colleague to understand that.

That is what we are doing in our efforts to reduce poverty. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. (interpretation ends) We are on Family Services. Branch Summary. Corporate Management. Following the list of names, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Most of the questions that I had have been touched on already, but I would just like to touch a bit on poverty reduction. According to the business

plan there, you are requesting \$2,185,000 for 2015-16. Just reading from it, it appears that this slightly over \$2 million is going to be used only for administration and none of it will actually be used to reduce poverty. Is that correct? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My deputy minister will respond to that question. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's true. A division had to be created from the secretariat when it started as the Poverty Reduction Secretariat. Now it is an actual division in the Department of Family Services. \$837,000 of this is for the homelessness part of the budget.

As you have probably heard, there have been many, maybe too many, round tables and meetings. This government, this department has been funding that 100 percent, even though we had NTI, Inuit organizations, different business, and the public. When we ask them to come for meetings, we fund it 100 percent, so it is coming out of this budget.

Again, \$837,000 of it will be for homeless that we are supporting. The Uquutaq Shelter here in Iqaluit, sometimes they have 30 people sleeping in there and there are about 12 beds in the women's shelter up by... I don't know what you call that road, but it's a

two-storey building and we also fund that. Those are the two that we fund.

There is \$122,000. I mentioned earlier that a few communities are asking for shelters, so we are discussing the ideas with them. I know we are taking a very long time, but we have to spend the money wisely; it is public money. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In last year's budget, there was \$2,179,000 and then for the next three years, it is slightly over \$2 million. If we are looking at this, in a four-year span, \$9 million is possibly going to be spent mainly on administration, except for \$800,000 a year for the homeless shelter, which comes out to roughly \$3 million. In four years, it seems like \$5 million is going to be spent on administration and meetings. If that is, in fact, true, are we going to be spending \$5 million in a four-year period for meetings to talk about poverty and actually doing nothing about it? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member referred to the latter amount which he believes won't be the actual amount we would spend on this initiative. There is no budget foundation for the poverty reduction initiative.

We can't resolve all the issues singularly as a department. Our communities also

have to be involved, as well as other organizations that can assist with the poverty reduction initiative, and we can only understand each other via these meetings.

Nonetheless, I would ask that Brandon Grant be allowed to respond with further details, as that would be helpful. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the minister and our deputy minister stated, we are reviewing how we are providing grants and contributions and we are getting requests from communities in terms of establishing shelters there. As those community requests come in, then the priorities could change towards supporting more community initiatives. We are in the process and as our deputy minister said, we've got money within our grants and contributions as well to look at homelessness issues. As these requests come in, we will work with communities in implementing programming areas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the minister just stated, they have to meet and plan to make sure the money is well spent, but the money to actually make shelters and all that is in a different budget.

If we take off the \$800,000 every year that is being spent for the homeless shelter, that leaves about \$1.4 million that could easily build a shelter, yet it's being used to plan to build shelters. This budget is going to be requested for the

same amount for the next three years, which is slightly over \$2 million.

Are there any plans or can the department use some of this leftover \$1.4 million to actually do something instead of just talking about it? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The funds the member asked about are specifically for staff working on the poverty reduction initiative. The funds are also specific to our goals and what we feel is the priority. Once I was placed in this portfolio, there were several issues that required clarification within poverty reduction before we could move forward.

As it looks rather big on paper with the various departments and organizations involved, since it seems rather large, we want to provide clear directions to staff to ensure that the people in need are being provided assistance. That is one of our priorities. I expect that we will have a better future, as we now have funds specific to this poverty reduction initiative.

We now also require a large map now within our office to outline which department or organization is responsible for which action items within our meetings. However, we are trying to have clear guidelines and to have a long-term plan to reduce poverty faced by our residents either by organizations or our department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to thank the minister for clarifying that some of this money is used for workers, if that's my understanding. I guess that is one way to stop poverty because if that person is working, they are not in poverty. At least some of the money is being used for actual anti-poverty. I'll just leave that, but I just want to go on this.

At all the anti-poverty meetings, I assume they discuss about how to fix it and what the problems are. I know they discuss about the symptoms of poverty a lot, but in all these meetings they have, are there any discussions about the cause of poverty?

For example, when you have a medical problem, they treat the symptoms, but they also treat the cause because if you don't treat the cause, the symptoms won't go away. You can patch up the symptoms of a problem, but until you fix the cause, the symptoms will just keep coming back.

I would just like to ask the minister if they're dealing with the cause of poverty as well. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that is a very good question, as they meet on these issues. *Inunnguiniq* is part of teaching Inuit culture and defined as capability or self-sufficiency and in looking after our fellow Inuit.

The committee members who meet on these issues speak about this problem. We have a committee member from Arviat who is ardent about this issue. Another committee member from Cambridge Bay, Julia Ogina, speaks to these issues. There is a subcommittee that also deals with some of the issues we face and *Inunnguiniq* is an important aspect of the work they undertake. I want my official, Rebekah Williams, to speak to this. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I can say that the current programs the government has today, the whole government spends \$254,490,112 a year to reduce poverty in Nunavut today. If you look at four staff, it's in our division, but if you're looking at what the government is doing to try to reduce poverty, it's close to \$300 million. I think it is good to hear that this government is supporting and putting in quite a bit of money. This is for each department, housing and income support being the largest. I think that's good information for you.

Also in poverty reduction, there have been a lot of meetings. From the Poverty Reduction Secretariat, what that one was supposed to do is to put everybody together who could try to reduce poverty in Nunavut. There you had NTI, Inuit organizations, all the departments, businesses, anybody, moms and dads out there, and young people. They were put together at different times to try to tackle this issue of poverty in Nunavut. A very much southern term is poverty. Some of

us who are little bit older, we know what poverty is, not like today.

I just want make sure that you understand there are many committees that have worked together. The staff of four in my division is putting that together to be actioned. As you know, we have to follow the budget cycle and once you approve that, we're going to get to work again. A lot of things are connected together. I think it is good news. It's good to know that this government spends close to \$300 million per year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Ms. Williams for that explanation. I don't have any more questions, just still a comment. I think all the people who meet about anti-poverty or whatever you want to call it, they have to get root of the cause.

Ms. Williams is right. Poverty is different now than it was in the old days. People actually starved and died in the old days, but we have to get to the cause because we can treat the symptoms all we want. I know that her department alone can't do it and the whole government is doing it. She said that this government spends almost \$300 million on anti-poverty. I would imagine that a good portion of that is probably providing subsidized public housing. Some of the people in public housing, yes, are in poverty, but some aren't.

I just want to emphasize that when they have these anti-poverty meetings or whatever you want to call them, they have to concentrate on the cause. They

still have to deal with the symptoms, but if you don't go after the root cause, then the symptoms will never go away.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: I take that as a comment. If the minister wants to respond, Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The people facing poverty are our fellow human beings and we can't view them as "undesirables," as we have to provide assistance. Further, the representatives who attend these meetings speak about *Inunnguiniq* and of the need to support that initiative.

If they use this principle, then the parent can provide proper lessons to their children if they feel they don't have the knowledge. Once a child is taught properly, they can learn to live within their capacity and to survive by being self-reliant. These are the topics generally discussed at these meetings. If we don't assist our children properly from early on, then the child will become confused about certain issues.

I am just using this example of the proper type of managing the factors that lead to poverty during these meetings. During these meetings, they also talk about the former residential school students who lost parenting skills. These are just examples. I clearly understood what the member said and it is included in these meetings. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. (interpretation ends) We are on Family Services. Branch Summary. Corporate Management. (interpretation)

Following my list of names, Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister (interpretation) and his officials, my sister, welcome. I would like to raise another question related to Inuit traditional knowledge which I am working on and I am ardent in trying to incorporate this into government in our future.

I seem to understand when my sister (paternal cousin) responded to a question earlier that counselling is quite different as well as addictions counselling amongst other things. I wanted to know if perhaps your plan isn't being drafted too fast, as we have to have a proper plan outlining our issues. When you hurriedly draft up a plan, you may miss some issues that would displease many Nunavummiut and that seems obvious. We would not approve of the plan.

Social work is such an important matter that the Inuit traditional counselling methods related to what Inuit are fully familiar with have been set aside, as we are no longer allowed to practise them.

In your business plan, does part of the long-term future include incorporating real Inuit elder counsellors? I'm not trying to take away from the social worker roles, but some of the elders have a lot of knowledge related to healthy living. With your department dealing with issues such as spousal clashes not related to addictions, but only due to personality clashes, I am using that as an example.

Do you have any plans included that the parents should try to be involved within

the planning stage? Hopefully I am clear in my question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are working on it. My (interpretation ends) deputy minister (interpretation) will respond to that.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Today, this practice is already in use, Mr. Chairman. Whenever a problem arises requiring a social worker, we try to search for a local elder to assist us in the counselling, but this is subject to the clients agreeing to include the elders. If the clients don't agree with the additional services, then we have to respect their wishes. This is already included in the process if there is an elder available and we have to have a list of names for the communities. This is ongoing work.

Again, it is up to the clients to be counselled by the parties they want assistance from. Perhaps it would also be beneficial since every community has local radios where people with that expertise can go on and advertise their availability. This would allow clients to work with those local counsellors or via traditional Inuit counselling or in being taught the proper way to live healthily. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Indeed, I have seen this personally, although I understood your response about couples who have problems. The department isn't the only avenue as we also have the RCMP who also becomes involved.

The RCMP has now twice touched my family without my knowledge, although it turned out to be a simple matter. The social workers weren't aware of the issue either, but I ended up being informed while I was relaxing that one of my daughter-in-laws was already in Iqaluit. This is problematic to hear this after the fact and causes unhappiness amongst families. This has to be resolved in the immediate future.

Further, in accordance with traditional Inuit knowledge, I am in disagreement with the deputy minister's response, as our goals and objectives are to incorporate traditional Inuit practices so that when my sons and their spouses have problems, I want to be able to counsel them because they are my children. Even if they didn't want the counselling and if they chose the social worker route, even if I want to be involved, my parental responsibilities are dissolved and I lose my parental authority since they prefer to follow the legislation. This issue has to respect the parents' authority, especially if the problems don't involve addictive substances and they are only having disagreements.

To share this with you, when a couple first gets together, which I will use as an example, the couple is infatuated with each other and problems rarely arise in the early days. It is when the relationship has matured further, as the couple learns

each other's tendencies, that disagreements arise and it has nothing to do with alcohol. This illustrates a prime example of Inuit today not knowing the traditional knowledge related to healthy living.

We have to repatriate our authority and that is what I feel is missing in this process. According to traditional knowledge, these disagreements are just a symptom of the couple becoming endeared to each other. Once the couple learns each other's tendencies, that source of disagreement will disappear. With that being the case, I feel this aspect of traditional knowledge is missing, where the parents should be involved, even if the clients don't want them involved, so that families can work together to hash out the problems in our future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Within the government, funding is provided when the proposals are detailed with the proposed initiative to assist the community. If the community wishes to be involved in counselling, they can request funding to pay for a counselling course related to social services. If a community wishes to be involved, they can request funding towards this initiative. However, the proposal has to be fully detailed out with the staff and resources required.

The department also tries to get outside counselling as social workers and when there is no alternative available, we have to undertake our work within the communities without it. However, if any

community was to submit a proposal, our department can review the proposal if it is related to the social services counselling.

The other matter the member spoke about, I believe, was specific to certain individuals and I can't respond to specific cases or individuals. That is how I can respond to the question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. (interpretation ends) Family Services. Branch Summary. Corporate Management. D-4. I have no more names on my list. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$6,918,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. (interpretation ends) Moving on. Branch Summary. Family Services. Children and Family Services. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to start off with foster care. Unfortunately, Nunavut continues to require more foster homes across the territory. I know that the department had an ad out a few months ago or last year, some time between last year and now, asking for more people to submit their names to become foster parents. Can the department tell us what kind of strategy they have in place to address this increased demand? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Brandon Grant will respond to that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the member stated, foster homes are a critical resource in Nunavut. There are approximately 230 approved foster homes in Nunavut at the moment. As the member knows, we have done a number of foster home recruitment in communities across Nunavut.

We are interested, as a department, in re-establishing the Foster Parent Association. We think that by providing more supports to our foster parents and getting the word out on this important issue, it is going to help in the recruitment.

As well, we are currently reviewing our per diem rates for foster parents as well to make sure that isn't a barrier to increasing the amount of foster homes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the department explain how they are meeting the needs of disabled children in Nunavut who require 24-hour care, maybe in a group home or residential care? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will have Brandon Grant respond. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our department provides residential care services for children in Nunavut. As well, we have placements outside of the territory depending on the child's needs. In Nunavut, we've got a facility in Chesterfield Inlet that has a total number of ten beds. It provides medical support for adults and children. It currently supports nine children in Chesterfield Inlet. As well, we've got an adolescent girls group home here in Iqaluit as well where it has a total of six beds at that facility. As well, we have recently reopened, under new management, the youth group home for boys in Cambridge Bay, which has a total bed capacity of six. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps the department can tell us the difference between the demand and the capacity of this kind of service. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. (interpretation ends) The minister has noted to defer to the official. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the initiatives that our department has undertaken with the new deputy minister is to examine our current capacity within Nunavut and exploring a responsible transition of more children and adults back into Nunavut and building our capacity there. We have initiated that process with the development of a policy paper that will

inform business cases and capital requests into the future. We're looking as a department to have more of our clients stay in Nunavut as a long-term plan for our department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When you talk about a long-term plan about children coming back to Nunavut, what kind of a timeframe are we talking about here? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I mentioned, we have started the process now. We're hoping to work with our current service providers in communities as well as our partners and stakeholders to look at putting the plan together. We've had initial meetings. We haven't set a timeframe on when we're going to have specific deliverables.

I want to be clear: it started and we hope to update the House soon on our progress there, but that's the long-term vision that our minister and deputy minister has set. They are very clear that they want more capacity within Nunavut so that we can care for our children and adults. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that's definitely a step in the right direction and something that I have always felt very passionate about, keeping Nunavummiut in Nunavut if we can at all costs.

I see from your opening comments that funding has decreased from the residential care placements. Can you elaborate on what actions led to this decrease? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The parents request for support and when those requests are approved to the referral place, the funding line item is for the requests. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. I'm just going to go on to something else. I would like to talk about family violence, which remains very high in Nunavut in comparison to the rest of Canada. What is your department doing to address this issue? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to the (interpretation ends) *Ilagiitsiaqtut* Framework Strategy, (interpretation) there is currently no staff within the department to review the family violence data. Prior to undertaking the position, the staff member will undertake the work that was contracted out to the Qullit Status of Women Council to initiate this service.

We have almost completed the first phase of the *Ilagiitsiaqtut* (interpretation ends) framework. (interpretation) At the end of this month, we will receive a report. There are four phases in this

strategy. The first phase will be completed at the end of the month. That's how I can respond. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the minister tell us, is the status of women [council] also working with the communities when they are developing this strategy? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. According to my understanding, NTI, the RCMP, and other agencies do take part in these meetings. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know. Maybe I just didn't catch it, but when will the four phases be completed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The first phase will be completed at the end of this month. The three phases are expected to be completed by 2017. After the first phase is completed, all the others will follow. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. I'm actually down to my last question on this and I want to just touch on adoption services. What role does your department play when it comes to adoptions in Nunavut? How involved are you and what kind of procedures are in place? I'm thinking more about outside (interpretation) Canadian citizens (interpretation ends) when they want to adopt a child from Nunavut. What happens in those circumstances when you have that kind of request? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Family Services has that role as part of (interpretation ends) departmental adoption (interpretation) and if a non-Inuit family wanted to adopt a child from Nunavut, they have to go through that division to adopt a child. The department conducts an investigation on the prospective parents and they hold meetings with the parents prior to adoption. The child being adopted would be informed about their Inuit culture and where they come from. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there a difference between somebody who may want to adopt within Nunavut who might come from a different culture versus somebody who wants to adopt from outside Nunavut? Is there a difference in how you deal with that request? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't quite understand the member's question. Was she asking about the differences in people wishing to adopt children? Perhaps my deputy minister understood the question and can provide a response. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are three ways to adopt children. The first one that is recognized by the courts is native custom adoption. We have over 25 custom adoption commissioners in Nunavut, and the social services department does not get involved in these areas.

Another adoption is departmental adoption. These are the children that are in care for a very long time and the department will go to family first. If the extended family wants to adopt this child, they can do that. That's one.

The private adoption is I think what MLA Angnakak is talking about. It is anyone who is not Inuk, who doesn't have family up here, and they may find somebody or a friend of somebody that they know in Nunavut, who wants to adopt a child. It's called private adoption. There, the legal documents are done up and the home study is comprehensive.

There are different ways to do adoption. Procedures are quite extensive, particularly for private adoptions. When we do any adoptions or child protection issues, in the Act, it talks about we need to advise Nunavut Tunngavik and Inuit organizations. We let them know about

this issue. We may give names to the Inuit organizations so that they know an Inuk child is being adopted or apprehended.

Since the enactment of the Act in early 2000, we never got any feedback from Inuit organizations about what we do. We are looking at this right now to make sure that the privacy information is being complied with, how they are protecting this information that we give to Inuit organizations.

There are three ways, but private adoption is the one I think Ms. Angnakak is talking about. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope I was clear.

Chairman (interpretation): Yes, it's very clear. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you very much. Thank you for your reply. That was very informative.

I did say I had one last question, but now this is really my last question. I just want to know: when you come up with a comprehensive agreement, who is responsible for the oversight of that agreement for the child's life up until the age of 18? Are there certain things that have to happen? For example, they have to be taught about their culture, you mentioned, I think. Well, who is there to say that that's actually being done? Who does that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's my last question.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I haven't

identified anyone who would do the monitoring. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. We are on Branch Summary. Children and Family Services. D-5. Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question I wanted to ask was already brought up that I wanted clarification on. However, perhaps to make it absolutely clear, my question relates to people who are sent out from Nunavut for mental health issues or other kinds of issues. They are sent south due to the fact that Nunavut has no facilities or institutions that can provide this service. In those cases where residents are sent south for treatment, what is the average annual cost due to the lack of facilities to provide this service here in Nunavut? I hope I was clear, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's close to \$29 million. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you Mr. Chairman. That figure is absolutely exorbitant and in my opinion, we could put that money to better use by setting up a facility or institution and that would be easier to substantiate and accept.

Also another issue that was brought up earlier in another question related to this issue which I understand is being worked on and something members want to see implemented. With the reality

today where clients are sent south for treatment, are the parents or relatives allowed to visit the client a couple of times a year? How many trips are allowed to visit their child? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The parents or the foster parents can go down and see their child twice a year. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. We are on Branch Summary. Family Services. Children and Family Services. Following the list of names, Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want further information about adoptions based on the responses I heard, as I already had a question on the matter. Let me first ask this question as the 2015-16 business plan speaks about the review of the *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act*. What specifically will be the subject of your review and for what reason? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to traditional Inuit adoption practices, the numbers continue to increase every year with children being adopted by family members. We will be looking at these figures with Nunavut Tunngavik. As NTI is responsible for beneficiaries, we will work with them on this file. Just last month in January, the terms of reference for the review will be developed. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When are you going to complete that review and when can we get an update or the result of that review? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): If approved, we can proceed with the review and then at that time, we will identify when the deadline will be. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If it's approved, when would you start and when would you complete the review? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): I will refer this question to Brandon Grant. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the minister stated, we have drafted a draft terms of reference. We still require engagement with our stakeholders. Once they have approved it, we will be able to provide a timeline in which we will be able to complete the review. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You stated that the stakeholders will be included in further discussions on this timeline. Do you have a list of issues or subjects that will be discussed to work towards this timeline? Alternatively, do you have an idea of when you want to complete this review? Here I am asking about the department and not the stakeholders. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At our next meeting, we will be discussing the review process and if the adopted children aren't in dangerous situations where custom adoption following Inuit practices has been done. Also, we will review the Act to see if changes are required and to see if the traditional practice is being followed by the parents and adoptive parents. The traditional Inuit practice is to adopt out children to our close relatives. We will review all of these issues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason for my line of questioning is because the (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister (interpretation) has stated in the past that this would be agreed to by January 2015. We are now in March. What is the issue causing the disagreement over this review? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We haven't reached out to the stakeholders to hear their views on this issue. That is how I can respond at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your opening comments stated that this review would be completed by January. Why hasn't your department undertaken this consultation of the stakeholders yet? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry, but I don't think I understood you. I will refer this to Brandon Grant.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the member stated, we have not engaged yet; we didn't meet the January deadline. We have a draft term of reference. We have a new deputy minister that we wanted to provide the opportunity to review the terms of reference before we proceeded engaging our stakeholders, so that is why we have been delayed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now that the process has been delayed, when is the next date when you would start the review? The statement was made that the stakeholder requiring further clarification is now

available. When is your expected starting date for this process? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My (interpretation ends) deputy minister (interpretation) will respond to that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Mr. Chairman, we have drafted up the terms of reference on this issue. Using the best approach that doesn't make people uncomfortable or stressed out, we will disseminate the information to the Inuit organizations and the general public. This will impact many residents and further, it will have impact their perspectives and their feelings, so we know the possible impacts.

The draft terms of reference I alluded to outlines the approach we want to take and identify the best methods to use. What I can respond with here is that this spring, perhaps in the next two months in 2015, we hope to complete the work required. We will need to work with our stakeholders and we will have to negotiate with the various organizations after the review has been completed, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Based on that response, if this begins in May or June, what timeline do you estimate is required for

completion of this process? Does your department have the position that you can move ahead without speaking to NTI, and what is your estimated timeline to complete this review? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be based on the number of meetings we hold as this will define the direction we will move towards, but we haven't estimated a timeline as of yet. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will wait for developments again.

Mr. Chairman, this other issue I would like further information on touches upon a question that was raised by one of our colleagues and I didn't quite grasp the response. The issue being discussed was (interpretation ends) adoption (interpretation) and my colleague asked questions about Inuit children who have been adopted out and whether they have to be informed of their Inuit culture and background. Apparently the department wants to have that requirement added.

I really perked my ears when the minister stated that currently there is no one checking to see if this requirement is being complied with. That is where I may have misunderstood, as the department wants this requirement, but nobody in the department is monitoring whether or not this is being followed. Why is that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to children adopted through (interpretation ends) private adoption and departmental adoption, (interpretation) I know for a fact that (interpretation ends) departmental adoption (interpretation) assesses the prospective parents and they have to agree with the legal requirements if they wish to adopt a child from Nunavut. The requirements are part of the assessment done by the court system for prospective adoptive parents.

Although we don't have anyone monitoring this situation, this requirement is still there and the department continues to maintain contact through the (interpretation ends) child protection workers (interpretation) to the parents. That is how I can respond to the question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The adoptive parents have to sign this agreement and upon their agreement, we automatically assume they will follow this requirement once they have signed the agreement. Upon this signing, our government will never monitor this requirement nor will they follow up to see if this requirement was followed as this agreement was signed.

As the minister responsible for this mandate, are you aware of whether or not this requirement is being followed? Does your department know if the agreement is being adhered to by the adopters? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since that question is quite broad, I will have to research it and provide it at a later date. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Mr. Chairman, let me ask for your direction in this area since I seemed to understand that my question, if I were to state it in English, (interpretation ends) was taken as notice. (interpretation) Can the minister take a question as notice in the Committee of the Whole? Mr. Chairman, please advise me on that. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): If I understood properly, (interpretation ends) she didn't take it as notice, but once she has all the details, she will get back to the member. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): I was looking at her when I asked the question whether she took it as notice and it looked like she agreed that (interpretation ends) she is taking it as notice.

Chairman (interpretation): To clarify, (interpretation ends) she cannot take it as notice in Committee of the Whole, only in question period. (interpretation) If you want to respond, Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Whenever any couple adopts children, they are screened by lawyers, but our department doesn't receive that information. Inuit

organizations receive that information because they need to be aware of Inuit children who are being adopted. This is part of the legal requirements listed in the legislation.

With respect to the screening or monitoring, I will provide that information to the member once I have the details that he was asking about related to monitoring of this requirement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you. However, the reason for my misunderstanding perhaps is due to your dialect, as you stated earlier that you haven't identified a monitor to review this. I understood that this hasn't been dealt with yet nor is it being dealt with presently. Now you just mentioned that you will have to conduct some research on this issue.

However, you also stated that the parties have to sign off on an agreement to govern the adoption and that they have to comply with the requirements of that agreement since they have agreed to these requirements. It seems to me that upon agreement with the department, the adoptive parents are now complying with all of these requirements. I think we all know that even when we agree or sign off on an agreement, sometimes not every requirement is met. That is my only source of concern.

Why hasn't the department made the monitor a priority? Let's not just make the assumption that by agreeing to the agreement, the parents will follow the requirements, and not place blind faith on the parents meeting these

requirements. Why hasn't your department ever taken this into consideration on a different tack for this matter? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My (interpretation ends) deputy minister (interpretation) will respond.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was speaking in English when I was replying to MLA Angnakak's questions about private adoption. I used the term "comprehensive." I was talking about we have a comprehensive home study, if you know what that means. If I'm going to be adopting somebody, social service workers will come to my house and look at my house, how big the house is, where the garbage can is, and if the fridge is full of food. They would look at my house and they would talk to me. They would go through my criminal record and everything else about me. That is a comprehensive home study.

Now, we're talking about when the children are adopted to other cultures other than Inuktitut. Is there somebody watching to make sure these people know about their home or anything about them? I have to apologize, but I'm not up on that to see if that is actually in the Act or in any agreement. What I'm trying to say is that we can study that a little bit better and provide the information somehow so that everybody is clear in the House. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Enook

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Indeed, I am aware of the fact that adoptions under your department are in three categories and each category has their own rules pertaining to that specific category. I do know that for a fact.

The one issue I keep returning to in my comments here is the reference to the agreements that adoptive parents have to sign off on, but I am unsure which category has that requirement because when a custom adoption takes place, the adoptee is made fully aware of their Inuit background and culture, etcetera. The only matter I am trying to ask the minister about is the agreements and how your department attempts to monitor whether or not the adopted children are provided with that cultural orientation or background.

I seemed to hear your response earlier that when an agreement is signed off on, according to the department, everything is fine and the assumption is that the parents will fulfill their duties and the department just takes their word for it. That was your response. Nonetheless, you responded afterwards that you will have to check into the actual status and would respond later on. I will leave that for now, as my only query is regarding the agreement monitoring. I will wait for further information to be provided and I expect it in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: I take that as a comment. I have no more names on my list. Branch Summary. Family Services. Children and Family Services. Total Operations

and Maintenance, to be Voted.
\$53,658,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Flipping onto the next page, Family Services. Branch Summary. Income Assistance. Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 126 of the business plan under income support and objectives, it says, "To identify, review and evaluate policy and procedural matters surrounding the delivery and administration of income assistance programs in Nunavut." I wonder if the minister can describe which key areas of income assistance will be reviewed as a priority. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under *Sivumut Abluqta*, there is a requirement to review the legislation to see what requires improvement related to income support programming. As I stated earlier, we get support from government lawyers to try and update some of the old policies and programs. That is where this situation stands at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does the department anticipate bringing forward any proposed legislation to change the *Social Assistance Act* and, if so, when do they anticipate bringing forward such legislation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The three proposed areas of change for social assistance programs are compliance and expenditure control, transitional support for social assistance clients, and a framework for social assistance rates. We are trying to stay away from when we are going to finish things because we are not meeting so many deadlines. As you know, the department is just starting. We are trying to reach full capacity to start working on some of these actions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the Social Assistance Regulations on page 10, it talks about unearned income. On page 11, section I, it says, “gifts and gratuities if received regularly or in the amount in excess of \$40 a month.” I wonder if the minister can explain this particular item and if she could describe exactly what she means by gifts. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like Brandon Grant to answer the question, please. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the minister mentioned, there are three areas where we have drafted a presentation that we have delivered to

the DM of Quality of Life Committee, which is the oversee committee for social assistance reform.

We’re acting on areas, including our compliance area in which we’re delivering the system to more communities this year. We have been able to deploy to Rankin Inlet, Arviat, Cambridge Bay, Baker Lake, as well as we will be completing deployment in Igloolik as well this year.

We will be finalizing some changes to the Act and regulations on needed areas, including updating some of the issues like gifts, but also finding ways in which we can incentivize work and modernize the Act and regulations that haven’t been changed in a while.

The member referenced gifts. That could be anything from possibly honorarium. I would have to review this specific section he is referencing, but it points to the matter that the regulations are in need of updating and there should be changes coming to us from our lawyer by March 31 that we will review with our deputy minister and minister and hopefully, we will be able to share it with the House very soon. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Mr. Chairman, it’s nice to know that this particular area is going to be reviewed because that was going to be a question I was going to ask towards the end of my questioning. Nonetheless, this regulation is still out there at the present time and we’re not quite sure when it will be changed, so I will continue with my questions in this area.

How does your department monitor this aspect of the regulations? Do you have people that actually go out there and check to make sure that people don't get gifts over \$40, or do you rely on the honesty of the clients? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The income support workers who work locally are being provided with further training on these new technologies and computer software. As we switch from paper to digital work, we have made some progress on that front.

However, with respect to the member's question, I would like Brandon Grant to respond, please. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All clients in the system, whether or not they're in the electronic system or in the manual environment, go through an assessment process each month. During the assessment process, all clients must sign a statement of authorization and declaration that they're going to be truthful. We also do a number of checks. We check people's bank statements to verify income. We check for printouts for child benefit supplement. We do income verification each and every month.

I think the member is pointing to an area within the regulations that would be difficult to capture because income verification is a challenging process. That is why our focus in our business plan into the future for our workers is

building their capacity through increased training. That is how I would answer that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is my point: you rely on the honesty of the client to make sure you get all of your information correctly. In the case where people get gifts, if the client reports it, then there is a good chance that the amount of income support they receive will be deducted for that month. Then on the other end, you have clients who don't report it and their income support is not affected. That is exactly the point that I'm trying to make with this particular area.

Again, along the gifts area, in the news lately, there was talk about "Helping our Northern Neighbours" and you have such things as food banks, even soup kitchens that provide services to people who don't have enough to make their ends meet throughout the month. How does your department take this into consideration on a monthly basis if, for example, "Helping our Northern Neighbours" gives a food basket to a particular family and it could have a value of maybe even \$200? Does this affect the income support for that particular month? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a new item. I will look into it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. “Helping our Northern Neighbours” may be a new item, but such items as food banks and soup kitchens are not new in the north and have been around a long time. Again I’ll ask the same question and I’ll use the food bank for an example. If a person on income support goes to a food bank and picks up a bag of groceries that is worth \$60, \$80, or \$100, does this affect the client’s income support for that particular month? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): When they are assisted by someone else, we don’t look at that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess it goes back to the income support client being honest when they’re applying for their income support for the month.

Again, along the same lines, it says, gifts in excess of \$40 a month. A scenario I’ll throw at you is not hypothetical at all. It happens every day. I do it. My wife does it. When you have family members who are on income support and they don’t have enough money to get them through the month, we end up helping them. We give them \$100 to go and buy food or we go to the store and we buy food for them. By them not reporting that I provided that service to them, they’re in violation of their income support or whatever rules you call it there.

Does your income support worker take this into consideration each month too? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Brandon Grant will respond to that question. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I’m glad the member asked. One of the areas in which we are making changes within the regulations is around liquid asset policy and around how we deal with cash gifts because it is an issue in our communities, especially around income tax return lump-sum payments, around bingo, and other lump sums that individuals receive. It’s one of the areas in which our workers have brought up that is an area in need of change. It will be forthcoming.

Our lawyer is scheduled to deliver regulation changes, including a liquid asset exemption rule within the regulations, by March 31. Once our minister and deputy minister have reviewed these changes, hopefully we will be able to update the House soon. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Following the list of names, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don’t have very many questions in this area, but I do want to ask about social assistance. I would like to know what kind of counselling takes place when a client comes into the department and asks to go on social

assistance. What is the process? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In following the legislation for this area, clients become eligible to apply for income support once they turn 18 years old and this is for all Nunavut residents to meet their dietary needs.

We also work with the (interpretation ends) Career Development (interpretation) Division, as they are part of the department, and to try to work with the clients to wean them off income support by offering further education or job training if they are able to take the training courses. This is part of our future plans and that is what we are working towards.

I would ask that my (interpretation ends) deputy minister (interpretation) provide more details. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Whenever a new client applies for income support, they approach the local income support worker. The client is briefed about the purpose of the program and what types of support is available to them. When the discussion takes place, they are informed about potential training courses or upgrading or areas where they can look for job opportunities. That is the practice we use today and we know it needs to be changed.

The client is provided with a job search form where they approach the listed

organizations to see if any opportunities are present and, if not, they would sign the form saying that the client had approached them to enquire about jobs. That is the practice we use. We are also aware that many communities don't have any employment opportunities available. Even with that requirement, we should be aware that 41 percent of residents in Nunavut receive income support. The income support worker works with the client to see if any possibility of self-reliance can be worked towards.

As we heard earlier, it seems the department isn't providing proper assistance to people living on the poverty line. Our expectations are that the Income Assistance Program will be improved. To use Iqaluit as an example, a couple with three children with five people in a household receives \$1,300 a month for income support. We are aware that as Iqaluit residents, this amount is insufficient to meet their needs. It is due to these factors that we have to review the program. The last increase was in 2011 when a 15 percent increase was added to the income support levels, but we are aware that we need to make more improvements.

I hope I responded appropriately, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your reply. I just want to know: when somebody sits down with an 18-year-old who comes into the office saying that he or she wants to go on income support, are they sent to a career counsellor before they

are signed up for income support? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are in the process of reviewing. I would like Brandon Grant to explain it in more detail. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the great advantages of Family Services since its formation is that our CDOs and our income assistant workers, for the most part, are co-located. Any person that comes in for an income assistance assessment needs to go through an initial screening in which we determine need in our regulations. In many cases, before they are able to apply, we will encourage them to apply for employment insurance and other benefits that might be available to them.

All income assistance clients must have a productive choice unless they are 60 or older or have a permanent disability. A productive choice could be parenting as well as seeking counselling services, but also to pursue training and education. Clients that have identified, including young people, that that is their productive choice, then they are referred to a CDO to receive career counselling and information on what services and supports are available.

I think one of the areas and opportunities for Family Services as well is strengthening that connection and strengthening that referral process so that we have good information from both the career development system and the

income assistance system, and integrating those two systems so that there is clear information on progress of pursuing the productive choice. It is not just a one-time intervention; it is an ongoing intervention. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a couple of more questions around this. If one comes in and they want to apply to the income assistance and then they go there, like you say, you try and get them to go on other programs or go back to school and that. In the meantime, if they are not on other programs or going back to school, can they access the money while they are trying to figure out what they want to do for the next few years? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to know if we are going to have a lunch break. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: We are meeting until we have reported ourselves out. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to hand it over to Brandon Grant to explain a bit more. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Any client that comes through our doors and demonstrates a need has a right to an

assessment and support, but everybody has a requirement outside those two exceptions to have a productive choice. Our workers will be working with clients on pursuing that productive choice and making progress in those areas, and that includes assisting with the referral to the career development office in tracking their progress. A productive choice is checked from month to month and an updated action plan should be happening month to month with that client. Any client that demonstrates need as a client in need as defined by regulations is entitled to support. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. I always think that was my last question. Just by your comment, it just made me think, my goodness. How many career development officers do you have there in the office where the income support service is provided? How many clients are coming in versus how many career counsellors? Just by what you have said, it sounds like they are very busy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Brandon Grant will give you some figures.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to confirm for you. I believe there are 15 CDOs across the territory, but I will confirm that figure. They are busy and I think it's an area in which we need to really look at strengthening that relationship.

I think one of the areas in which we will be putting forward is a new program, a job readiness program, for our young people and those that want to build skills, that transition piece between being on income assistance and receiving good job readiness training so that they can enter into the workforce.

Our CDOs are working hard. They see a lot of clients. Not every community has CDOs, but our CDOs do travel to communities to assist with that. I think that's one of the areas in which the Career Development Division and the Income Assistance Division need to strengthen that relationship. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Following the list of names, Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the same page, page 123, I have some questions related to income assistance. Mr. Chairman, the minister is aware that I have raised questions on this issue and have conveyed my concerns about income assistance and possible cases of abuse or potential misuse of the funds.

Let me ask this question firstly. Your usual reasoning when responding as the minister is related to confidentiality or privacy concerns that your department can't force the client to expend the income support funds for specific things. I have asked in the past whether or not the department can't have a written set of rules to outline the purchases eligible for this income support, something like a list of goods that can be bought. You have responded in the past and if we were to read the *Blues*, it is due to confidentiality concerns or privacy

matters that this information can't be released.

Nevertheless, I really heard the previous response when you responded to an earlier question. The member was asking about how the workers would determine if the client is earning money on the side. The response I heard was that the workers can check into the client's bank accounts, in English, (interpretation ends) check bank statements.

(interpretation) With your departmental position of confidentiality, why does your department have the ability to access that confidential information, but not the ability to enforce these rules? Isn't this also (interpretation ends) a privacy issue (interpretation) that is a confidential matter? Doesn't this impact on the clients' right to privacy? Why does the department have that authority to access the statements? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Based on my understanding of this issue, there are only a few cases where a client's bank statements can be accessed. The other aspect related to this question is the fact that the majority of clients in Nunavut don't hold a bank account. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Mr. Chairman, I didn't ask about that particular issue. (interpretation ends) That wasn't my question. (interpretation) What I was asking about was based on your prior responses as the minister that

a resident's right to privacy is under the (interpretation ends) Protection of Privacy Act (interpretation) that you can't force clients to use the funds for specific purchases. (interpretation ends) But on the other hand, (interpretation) you stated the opposite that you can access their bank statements. I don't understand this at all and that's why I'm enquiring about this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The (interpretation ends) deputy minister (interpretation) will respond to that question.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The only way we can access the bank statement of the client is because of their approval to access their bank statement, which is part of the form they fill out, allowing the worker to check their bank accounts. Due to their approval, we are able to access the bank statements with written approval.

Nonetheless, if a person is eligible for income assistance, we have to provide that support according to their needs, but we can't tell them they can only purchase certain items or a set number of products. I want to be very clear in my response here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I keep raising this issue

through my queries. The other response we hear often whenever the question is raised is if the department feels that abuse of the program is occurring, you can conduct an investigation. Another issue I have raised and which I have spoken about is that you may have that ability, but there are no rules to govern this area. You stated that you can't force clients to purchase certain products with this income support, but what rules are in place to investigate possible misuse of the Income Assistance Program?

I don't see anything written down to this effect, although we keep hearing that you have to follow the legislation and that your department can conduct investigations, but with no set rules written anywhere. The income support funds can be used for any purpose. We need to have this clarified so that everyone understands. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you. So that you can have a clearer understanding, I will have my (interpretation ends) deputy minister (interpretation) respond to your questions. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are no programs that don't have a policy. We need good policies and regulations to govern them. The reason for the policies is to reduce abuses. Sometimes a client may state that they received this amount or the client redirects the cheque to

another person, which is abuse. Since this is (interpretation ends) public money, (interpretation) we have to account for all of the funds and that is why we have to inform the Minister of Justice if we feel theft of funds or abuses occurred. I am not talking about things like sugar or tea, but for cases where theft occurred or abuse was found.

Let me try to state it in English. (interpretation ends) If there was fraud or misuse, we have guidelines and a structure in place that my department must communicate to the Attorney General, who is the Minister of Justice. In turn, they would turn it over to the RCMP. There are cases and we have a few cases that are in that situation, that is, fraud and a misuse of money for maybe altering cheques or anything like that. I hope I'm clear, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will speak in Inuktitut as the majority of my constituents who use these programs are mainly Inuit residents and their mother tongue is Inuktitut, so they understand it clearly.

Mr. Chairman, as an example, I have brought cases to the minister's attention where I felt abuse may have occurred when I overheard a child stating that since their mother was able to get income support, they received a \$300 iPod. In my opinion, that constitutes abuse. Our government also states continually that they can't force people to purchase specific items since it would violate a person's privacy rights.

As I speak about these issues of potential abuse, the minister has also stated that they would have to discuss the issues I have raised or asked about with the Minister of Justice. Has this discussion taken place? Where are you now on this issue? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask Brandon Grant to respond to the question. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the minister stated, as we deal with issues of fraud, we have a requirement to inform the Attorney General and the Comptroller General. We receive information on when we proceed with RCMP charges.

In terms of abuse and suspension periods, we are putting forward changes to the regulations on how we deal with suspensions when we know of abuse. We have verified abuse and fraud and suspension periods. We have met with officials from the Department of Justice to have discussions with this and once we have drafted those regulation changes and seek approval, we will be sharing them with the House. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That clarifies the issue. Although I hadn't asked about that

matter, they responded with that answer, so I now understand that.

What I was trying to ask about was the past responses of the (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister (interpretation) in this House that she would speak with the Department of Justice regarding this and any perception of fraud that I question and the rights of individuals. I was only asking to see if you have had any dialogue with the department. What is the status of this issue? Where are you now? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like a break; I need to go to the washroom. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. (interpretation ends) We will take a five-minute break.

>>Committee recessed at 13:11 and resumed at 13:20

Chairman: Thank you. I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just when I asked my question, the minister asked for a break when she would have responded. Should I repeat my question or should she respond to my question?

Chairman (interpretation): So that she can remember your question, please repeat your question, Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question earlier was with respect to the line of questions I have raised in the past about possible improvements and in response to my questions, the minister responded and it is also in the *Blues* that the minister has to work with the Department of Justice to see what can be done in this area. I will just repeat the question I asked earlier. Have you discussed these issues with the Department of Justice and where are your discussions at? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member has asked the same question several times and we have tried to respond clearly each time. I can't respond to the member at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't quite understand the response. I have repeated this question since she informed me last fall that her department has to work with the Department of Justice. We haven't met this winter and we are already approaching spring season, so I ask again: has your department initiated discussions with the Department of Justice based on your response that you would need to discuss it with that department? Have these discussions taken place? If discussions have commenced, where are you now? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My (interpretation ends) deputy minister (interpretation) will respond.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had responded to this question earlier, the exact same question. The minister tasks her officials to investigate, as our employees inform the minister if we suspect any cases of fraud or theft. Whenever a case arises, we hold discussions with the departments of Justice and Finance as to what measures will be undertaken for this case. Decisions are made for every case where abuse or fraud is suspected.

I want to be clear on this in my response with respect to abuse of the program. We have the process laid out and which departments are to be involved. We have to inform the ministers of Justice and Finance on these cases to ensure that a decision is made to resolve the issue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The answer I heard is not related to the question I asked about. Perhaps it was one of my colleague's earlier question, but certainly not one of my questions.

The question I keep trying to get a response to is this: (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, (interpretation) you have stated that you will be discussing income support legislation with the Department of Justice regarding amendments, especially when it has an impact on privacy and confidentiality issues. You

have repeatedly made statements in the House regarding privacy issues. Have you discussed this matter with the Department of Justice and where are you at now with this issue? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we have initiated discussions with the department on the income support legislation that is outdated and we want to update the legislation. We also have a lawyer working with our department to review the areas causing problems legislation-wise and what needs amendments.

We also have to be careful about not impacting anyone's personal life and we continue to discuss these issues with the department and that started in the fall. We need to update a lot of old regulations and legislation. When Mr. Rumbolt was asking the question, we responded to those questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps I will ask two questions, but I would like to combine them if you will allow it. This may be my last question if I can ask it.

The issue that is causing misunderstanding is that members feel the Income Assistance Program is specifically only for purchasing foodstuffs from the local stores. I also believe, since you stated that you have

met about these issues, that this could be improved by amending the legislation.

Let me try to ask this last question, which I hope is the last one. Your department has stated, "To identify, review and evaluate policy and procedural matters surrounding the delivery and administration of income assistance programs." When will you be completing this initiative?

I believe I have raised questions on this issue for about three years now. The rote answer is always the same, which is the issue is under review, being reviewed, or is up for review. When are you going to complete the review? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you. The figures are contained in our proposed main estimates and once the budget is approved, we would appreciate it so that the work could commence. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Upon approval of the main estimates, when will this review be started and when do you expect this review to be completed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once our proposed main estimates are approved,

we would commence the work and we could then identify the timeframe for the completion of the review. That is what I can respond with currently. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now with respect to the proposed main estimates, if I were to approve the budget and with the departmental position that you will conduct the review, does your department have any idea of how long the review process would take place? I imagine your department has taken this into consideration since you have already written down the action items. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Minister Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will have Brandon Grant respond if he could estimate when we could complete this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the department, we have put together a document for the oversight committee for social assistance reform under the mandate, which is the deputy minister and Quality of Life [Committee] that will review the scope and size of the public engagement process.

In our *Sivumut Abluqta* implementation document, we stated that we will initiate the reform review starting this year. Once we get approval from the DM and

Quality of Life on the size and scope of the public engagement process, we will start right away with implementation of the changes in 2017 and a review of the effectiveness of those changes within that year as well.

It's important to note too for the member that we're making changes now within the program, including improving our compliance and expenditure controls, by beefing up the deployment of our income assistance deployment system. We're going to be bringing forward, as I stated before, regulatory changes that we're going to be receiving on March 31, as well as to make changes that we know are issues there, some of the issues that the members have brought up, as well as changing our statutory training program and improving training for our staff too.

We're not waiting for the public engagement process to go and we're working now as a department and as a division on making positive changes within income assistance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. Are you done? Thank you. Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make a motion to report progress at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you very much. (interpretation ends) We have a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion. All those opposed. The motion is carried. I

will now rise to report progress.
(interpretation) Thank you.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the minister's officials out.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. (interpretation) My apologies. (interpretation ends) Item 20. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Your committee has been considering Bill 16 and the main estimates, and would like to report progress. Also, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. Savikataaq. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. All those in favour. (interpretation) Thank you. (interpretation ends) Opposed. Thank you. The motion is carried.

Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. Item 22. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a reminder that the Standing Committee on Legislation will meet this afternoon in the Nanuq Boardroom at half past two and that the same standing committee meets

tomorrow morning starting at ten o'clock in the Nanuq Room.

Orders of the Day for March 9:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Responses to Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motions
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 20
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 14
 - Bill 15

- Bill 16
- Bill 18

20. Report of the Committee of the
Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you.
(interpretation ends) The House stands
adjourned until Monday, March 9, 2015,
at 1:30 p.m.

(interpretation) Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 13:36*

