



Department of Family Services

Ilagiitsiarniq: Family Wellness Strategic Framework 2023-2028

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2023-2028

Progress Update Report

May 1, 2024



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1. Introduction

The Department of Family Services was created in 2013 when the larger Department of Health and Social Services was split. The overall mission of the Department of Family Services is to enhance the well-being and self-reliance of Nunavummiut through integrated and innovative services. The Department plays a vital role in supporting individuals and families across the territory, striving to create caring communities where all Nunavummiut thrive.

In May 2023, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) of Canada released a performance report on Nunavut's child and family services describing shortcomings of the current system to protect children. The report called for changes in how the Department of Family Services carries out its child protection responsibilities under the *Child and Family Services Act*. Particular areas noted in the OAG's report include the way the Department conducts investigations, as well as how it carries-out prevention and non-crisis intervention to support families. Gaps were uncovered in how the Department of Family Services develops and carries-out plans of care for children and youth who are under the care of the Department. The OAG report also mentioned other concerns related to a lack of orientation and training for new staff, gaps in following Department standards and procedures, training on the job, and incomplete record keeping.

A Family Wellness Strategic Framework has been developed in direct response to the 2023 Office of the Auditor General of Canada Report. This Framework represents the Department of Family Service's commitment to accountability and to fostering positive change for community and family well-being. Going forward, the Department of Family Services will be developing an Action Plan, Implementation Plan and Change Management Plan to support implementation of the Framework. The Department of Family Services is currently in the engagement and consultation phase of developing a Strategic Action Plan for the Framework. Because consultations are on-going and because the Department of Family Services remains committed to meaningful engagement with key partners and stakeholders, this Progress Report does not provide an update on all deliverables outlined in the Strategic Framework. Once engagements have concluded and the Strategic Action Plan has been finalized based on stakeholder input, a Progress Report outlining updates on deliverables will be provided.

This Progress Report has been compiled to detail the actions undertaken from the tabling of the Family Wellness Strategic Framework on February 23, 2024, through April 11, 2024. The department is eager to provide an update on our progress and offer an overview of forthcoming initiatives. This report provides a comprehensive summary of the progress made during this time, offering both a broad overview of achievements and updates on specific actions taken across key areas of focus. Building upon endeavors initiated since the tabling of the OAG's audit report in April 2023, significant efforts have been made since to address pressing gaps. These include securing additional financial resources, launching a new online management system to enhance data collection, case management, and reporting, initiating a counseling and support service for frontline workers, commencing the review and update of Family Wellness Division Standards and Procedures in collaboration with the Representative for Children and Youth (RCYO), and embracing partnerships with Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the Regional Inuit Associations through the Child Welfare Working Group, established to support the Nunavut Partnership Committee.

2. Strategic Framework Update

The Government of Nunavut's Department of Family Services created a Strategic Framework for Family Wellness. This Framework provides the Department with a decision-making structure, and outlines steps to align operations with the *Child and Families Services Act* (CFSA) while delivering high-quality support to children, youth, and families.

As depicted in Figure 1 below, the Framework is grounded in the following five guiding principles:

- Inuit Engagement
- Partnerships and Integration
- Whole of Government Approach
- Accountability to Nunavummiut
- Inuit Societal Values

The Framework is organized according to seven priority areas as follows:

Organizational Effectiveness

This priority area was listed as the foremost priority with a commitment to substantially reduce risks and ensure the safety of children, youth, and families in need.

Adoption, Foster Care and Kinship Services

This priority area includes a focus on providing a nurturing family environment for children requiring out-of-home care in Nunavut. This priority area underscores the importance of maintaining cultural and community connections and emphasizes the provision of local care to keep children connected to their ancestral lands and traditions.

Inuit-Specific Services

This priority area is rooted in the understanding that Inuit children, youth, and families possess distinct cultural, social, and historical identities that significantly shape their needs and interactions with child and family services.

Investigations

This has been identified as a priority area as investigations are recognized as a cornerstone in safeguarding the welfare and rights of children and families. This priority is shaped by the necessity to protect those most vulnerable from abuse, neglect, or other harm.

Case Management

Case management is another priority area centered around continuously enhancing standards and procedures, integrating Inuit Societal Values and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, and ensuring robust training and support for staff.

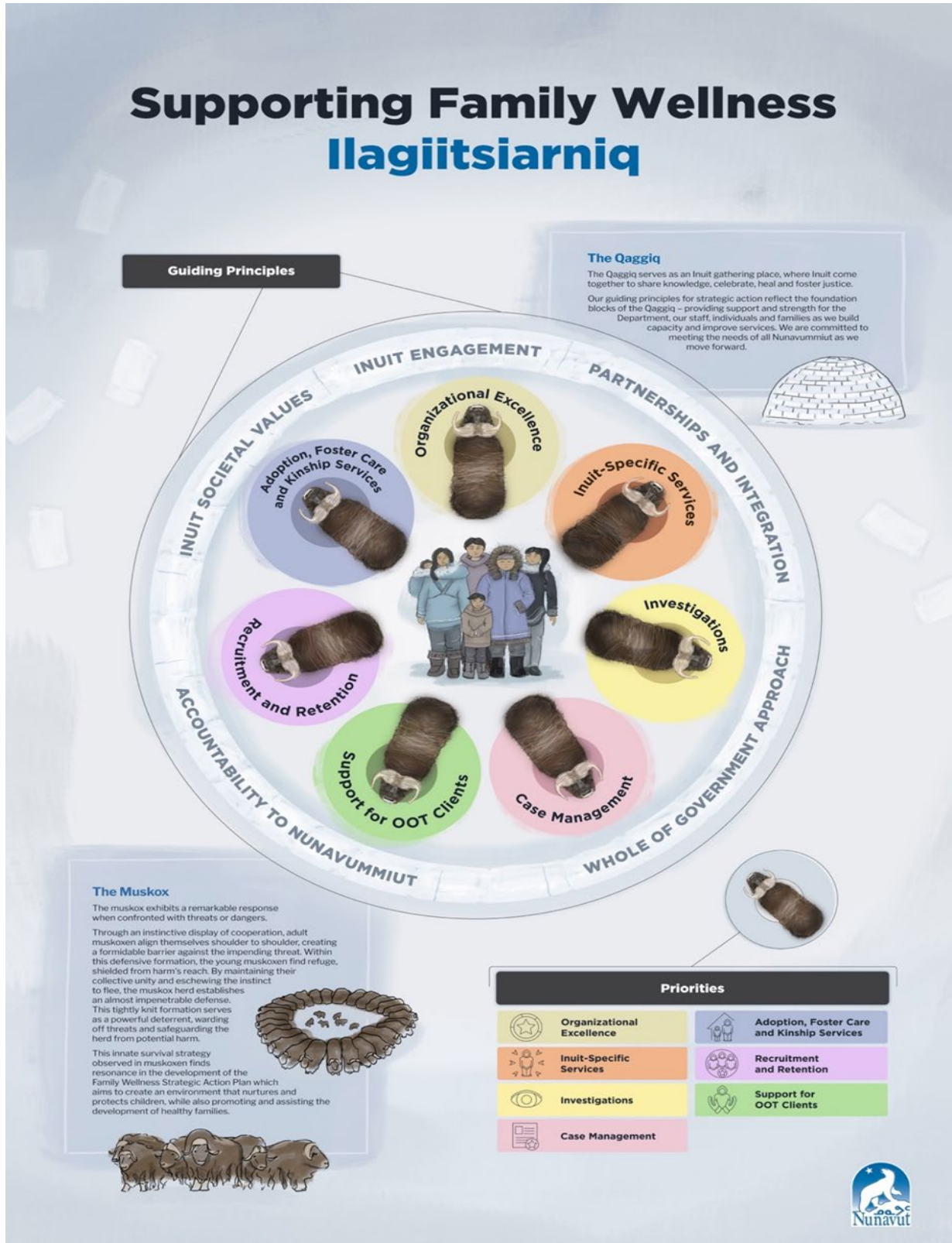
Support for Out-of-Territory (OOT) Children and Youth

Providing support for OOT children and youth is identified as an important strategic priority. This acknowledges the unique needs of children and youth from Nunavut receiving care in other territories and provinces.

Recruitment and Retention

This area focuses on implementing innovative staff development strategies to attract and retain skilled professionals and fostering a supportive work environment which contributes to enhanced service quality and team morale.

Figure 1: Family Wellness Strategic Framework Infographic

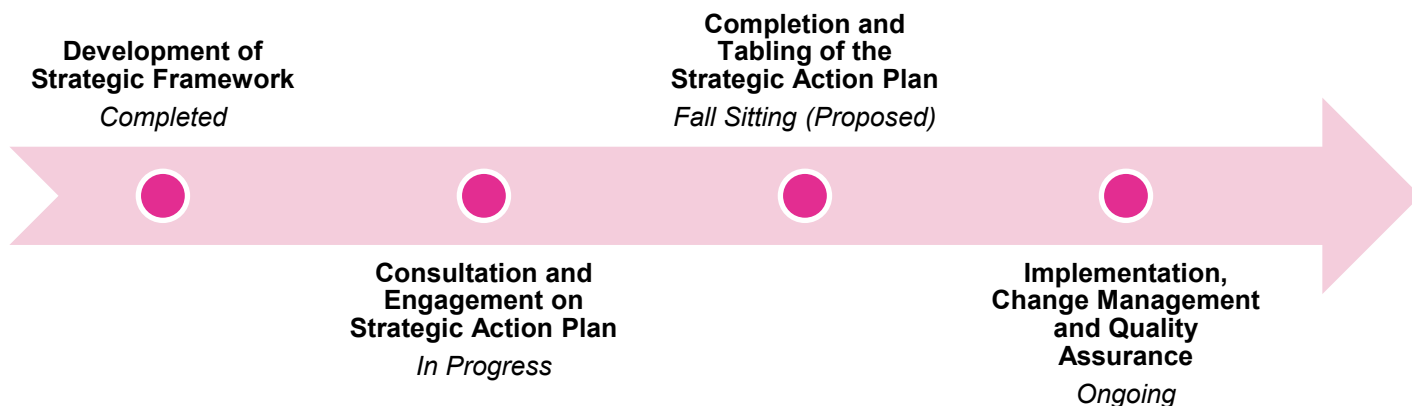


2.1 Implementing the Strategic Framework

To support the implementation of the Family Wellness Strategic Framework, the Department of Family Services is undertaking the development of a Strategic Action Plan, an Implementation Plan and Change Management Plan.

The Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Framework is considered to be a 'living document' and will require consultation with stakeholders and a transformational change for the Department of Family Services that will increase transparency, accountability and communication practices and processes. The timeline presented in Figure 2 displays the next steps for the Department of Family Services to undertake related to the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan upon completion of stakeholder consultations.

Figure 2: Family Wellness Strategic Framework Implementation Timeline 2024/2025



Development of Strategic Framework

As outlined in the timeline above, the development of the Strategic Framework is complete. The Department of Family Services undertook extensive research and analysis to identify the key priorities, goals, and strategies identified in the Framework. As part of the development process, a SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats) analysis was utilized to ensure the Strategic Framework addressed the most pressing needs and reflected the current landscape. The Department of Family Services has also gathered data, reviewed practices, and engaged internally with all regions to support the development of the Strategic Framework.

Consultation and Engagement on Strategic Action Plan

The Department of Family Services has completed the development of a consultation and engagement strategy for the Strategic Action Plan. Pending Cabinet approval, the department anticipates beginning

public consultations in the Summer of 2024.

This is an important step that allows the Department of Family Services to gather feedback, insights, and perspectives from a diverse range of stakeholders, including community members, partner organizations, and government agencies. The Department of Family Services has begun the consultation process to solicit input to ensure that the draft Strategic Action Plan for the Framework resonates with the needs and priorities of stakeholders.

The Department of Family Services is dedicated to fostering meaningful engagement and considering all voices in decision-making processes. The consultation and engagement approach outlined below will support Nunavummiut in providing input and shaping the Strategic Action Plan.

Government Stakeholders

The Department's Family Wellness Division has initiated a consultation and engagement process with government stakeholders. Through a series of inter-departmental meetings, they will identify areas for collaboration and innovation. From these discussions, immediate goals that have been identified include hiring, housing and providing adequate office space for Department of Family Services staff, aligning financial resources with community needs, and improving working relationships between social services and health service providers.

The Representative for Children and Youth Office (RCYO) has also been engaged on an ongoing basis on a variety of initiatives. Since the tabling of the Strategic Framework, the Department has engaged the RCYO for input on the Strategic Framework and proposed list of action items for the Strategic Action Plan. These action items reflect actions that have been identified by the RCYO in systemic reviews. Meetings have been scheduled with the RCYO to seek input and feedback to support the development of the Strategic Action Plan.

In March 2024, the Department of Family Services also established a government wide working group to discuss the Strategic Framework and will continue hosting regular weekly meetings to implement a "whole of government" approach as we develop the Family Wellness Strategic Action Plan. Stakeholders included in this group include representatives from the Departments of Health, Education, Culture and Heritage, Community and Government Services, Human Resources, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, and Nunavut Housing Corporation. Representatives will be able to discuss concerns, share feedback and brainstorm new ideas to support the development of the Strategic Action Plan.

Designated Inuit Organizations

The Department of Family Services has also engaged with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) through the government wide working group discussed above. The department is pleased to update on our continuous dialogues with NTI, actively seeking their valuable input on the Strategic Framework and initiating discussions on the development of the Strategic Action Plan.

In addition, the Department of Family Services intends to engage with the Regional Inuit Associations and seek input starting in the summer of 2024.

Community Members

To ensure all stakeholders have an opportunity to provide feedback, the Department of Family Services anticipates initiating public engagements in summer 2024. This will involve directly contacting community organizations and disseminating an electronic survey via social media. Additionally, in-person community engagements will be conducted in various communities, along with consultations with current clients.

Development of Strategic Action Plan

Following the consultation and engagement step, the Department of Family Services will consolidate feedback and incorporate input into a Strategic Action Plan. The Strategic Action Plan is intended to be developed by Fall 2024.

The Strategic Action Plan will translate the strategic goals and priorities outlined in the Strategic Framework into action items with associated timelines and responsibilities. The Department of Family Services will work collaboratively to define specific strategies, allocate resources, and establish metrics for monitoring and evaluating the Strategic Action Plan.

Implementation, Change Management and Quality Assurance

Following the completion of the Strategic Action Plan, the Department of Family Services will develop an Implementation Plan and Change Management Plan to implement the actions outlined in the Strategic Action Plan. To maintain accountability, the Department of Family Services will conduct regular evaluations to monitor progress and identify challenges. The effectiveness of strategies will be addressed and adjustments will be made as required. This step will occur throughout the duration of the Strategic Action Plan.

2.2 Communications Plan

As the Strategic Action Plan will evolve based on feedback from stakeholders, the Department of Family Services outlined a need for a Communications Plan. This plan aims to support extensive engagement and consultation with stakeholders and audiences to break down barriers and foster more collaboration, ensuring the department fully grasps what stakeholders and the community require and desire. In addition, it also serves as a basis for development of internal and external communications material that supports extensive engagement and consultation with stakeholders and audiences, so that messages are culturally safe, informed by Inuit Societal Values, meaningful and accessible and provide the relevant information to clients and stakeholders.

To inform the development a Communications Plan, the Department of Family Services underwent an internal communication needs and priorities assessment to identify gaps, challenges and areas for improvement. This assessment revealed that the Department of Family Services lacked effective communication channels which hindered collaboration and coordination internally and negatively impacted relationships with other government Departments and key stakeholders.

The assessment identified the following weaknesses and threats to the Department of Family Services' communication practices:

- Lack of internal and external communication processes, systems and resources
- Lack of strategic communications capacity and support
- Negative reputation of Department
- Insufficient collaboration and communication between divisions and with other government Departments
- Insufficient collaboration and communication between key stakeholders
- Lack of training for new staff
- Lack of capacity overall throughout the Department
- Unmanageable workloads for frontline staff
- Lack of Inuit staff and inadequate resources for Inuktitut language training
- Limited recognition and promotion of positive stories and achievements

The Department of Family Services is developing a Communications Plan that addresses these findings and outlines proposed communications objectives, communications activities, persons accountable, timelines, and indicators of success. The plan also includes a list of key stakeholders, partners, and audiences.

The following communication goals and objectives are outlined in the draft plan:

- To shift the perception of Family Wellness and its role in child welfare
- To support the success of the Family Wellness Strategic Action Plan
- To establish employees as ambassadors for Family Wellness and its programs and services
- To improve transparency and accountability for Family Wellness

A list of internal and external communications tools to improve information sharing are also listed in the draft communications plan. These include town halls, employee intranet, newsletters, news releases, paid advertising, and social media campaigns.

The Communications Plan will be updated following the finalization of the Strategic Action Plan.

2.3 Implementation Plan and Change Management Plan

The Strategic Framework and Strategic Action Plan represent a significant transition for the Department of Family Services. An Implementation Plan and Change Management Plan will be required to outline the steps to implement action items, address the readiness for change, and evaluate the current state of the child and family system, focusing on policies, procedures, practice standards, and workforce capacity.

This work is identified as part of the Implementation, Change Management and Quality Assurance phase which will follow the development of the Strategic Action Plan. To support this work, the Department of Family Services has taken steps that will inform the development of a Change Management Plan. This includes the assessment outlined above that identified weaknesses and threats to the Department of Family Services' communication practices, as well as the finalization of the Communications Plan.

In addition, the Department of Family Services is also reviewing its structure and is undergoing a strategic evaluation focused on optimizing operational efficiency and enhancing leadership capabilities. As part of this work, Regional Directors have been identified as leads or champions for change management within their regions.

The Implementation Plan and Change Management Plan will continue to be developed as the Strategic Action Plan is finalized.

3. Current Actions Completed or Underway

While the Department of Family Services is consulting and engaging on the Strategic Action Plan, there are a number of initiatives that the Department has been working on to support the Strategic Framework. These initiatives have been organized below according to a number of key areas, including:

- Additional Financial Resources
- Staffing, Recruitment, Retention and Facilities
- Staff Wellness
- Case Management
- Information Management and Technological Solutions
- Quality Assurance
- Training

Additional Financial Resources

One of the pressing issues identified by the Auditor General was the insufficient funding allocated to the Department, despite the youthful demographic trend in Nunavut. Recognizing this critical need, the Department is pleased to announce a significant boost in funding, totaling \$15.6 million for the fiscal year 2024-25. This allocation is strategically earmarked for initiatives aimed at bolstering the operations of the Family Wellness division, aligning closely with the ongoing systemic review and transformation efforts within the department.

The breakdown of the additional funding includes:

- \$7.5 million for increased funding for Residential Care Contracts, covering various essential facilities such as group homes, supported living homes, and alternative family care homes, both within and beyond the territory.
- \$3.1 million designated for the creation of 31 new positions, directly addressing concerns highlighted by the Auditor General regarding the Department's responsiveness in safeguarding children at risk.
- \$1.9 million designated for Poverty Reduction Homeless Shelter Funding, aiming to address homelessness issues and provide shelter solutions.
- \$1.6 million allocated for Poverty Reduction Food Security Strengthening Supports, focusing on initiatives to address food insecurity issues within Nunavut.
- \$625,000 allocated for Food Security programming specifically tailored for Family Wellness initiatives, ensuring holistic support for vulnerable families.
- \$490,000 allocated for salary increases in compliance with changes to the collective agreement, ensuring fair compensation for departmental staff.
- \$200,000 allocated for two Corporate Services positions: Grants & Contribution Coordinator and Capital Planner, aimed at enhancing administrative efficiency and resource allocation.

- \$92,000 for the establishment of an Income Assistance Compliance Officer position, reinforcing adherence to regulations and standards.

These substantial resources are instrumental in addressing both immediate and long-term capacity needs, ultimately contributing to the improvement of outcomes for Nunavut's children, youth, and families. The Department remains devoted in its commitment to fortifying its support framework, enhancing staff retention, and fostering greater Inuit representation in the workforce. By investing in these crucial areas, the Department aims to provide comprehensive support to Nunavummiut, promote health and healing, and lay a robust foundation for the Territory's future prosperity.

Furthermore, additional funding resources were secured in the previous fiscal year through multi-year funding agreements for specialized training programs. These initiatives, totaling \$660,413 for 2023/24, encompass a range of essential training opportunities such as Inuit Mental Health First Aid Training, Foster Care Coordinator Training, Family Resource Worker Training, and Manager and Supervisor training. These investments ensure that frontline staff are equipped with the necessary tools and expertise to effectively serve clients across the Territory, aligning seamlessly with the overarching goals of the Family Wellness Strategic Framework.

Staffing, Recruitment, Retention and Facilities

The Department of Family Services has undertaken an organizational review to identify opportunities for improvement, such as through program development and redundancies in current positions. In addition, the Department has hired a firm to review job descriptions and organizational charts to identify redundancies in the Family Wellness division. Family Wellness is utilizing internal resources to develop our Family Resource program which will focus on preventative practice, we are currently at the needs assessment stage of this development. Other programs to be developed include those focused on training, development, quality assurance, and occupational health and safety.

The Department is also implementing a new CSSW model which includes in-depth onboarding for new staff. The first phase of onboarding material is complete, and the Department is now creating division-specific onboarding materials. The Department is also working with the Department of Human Resources to ensure onboarding is available for staff beginning work at the end of April 2024.

In addition, the Department of Family Services is collaborating with the Department of Human Resources to expedite recruitment overall and has filled 20 positions and submitted Job Action Requests for 32 positions. Discussions between both Departments will be taking place in April 2024 to identify strategies on how to efficiently hire for these remaining positions. Staff from the Department of Family Services are also collaborating with the Department of Community and Government Services and Nunavut Housing Corporation to increase housing and office space for new positions.

The Department of Family Services has also committed a dedicated full-time staff member to the Inter-Provincial Desk to case manage relationships and issues in other jurisdictions while children are under care. Due to the high volume of out of territory placements, a second position will be required.

The Department has also engaged the Department of Community and Government Services to advertise a Request for Proposals (RFP) for in-territory services which is at the assessment stage, as well as another RFP being drafted for a Naja Isabelle facility.

Staff Wellness

The Department of Family Services has introduced extensive strategies for workplace violence prevention and is developing a comprehensive health and safety framework. A draft Workplace Violence Policy and Working Alone Policy have also been drafted and are currently being reviewed.

The Department has hired external resources to support the completion of human resources environmental scans to understand the training landscape and concerns front line staff are facing, including any workplace harassment-related issues. The Department is also committed to ensuring that staff have received Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission supervisory training and will be providing training on respect in the workplace. Human resources practices have been implemented to ensure that suitable mechanisms are available for staff members to raise complaints for the attention of the executive team. Furthermore, in March 2024, we welcomed a new Regional Director for the South Baffin region, and we have initiated the process of recruiting a Health and Safety Officer. Their primary role will be to prioritize the health and safety of both employees and the public engaged in the department's activities, ensuring a safe workplace environment.

The Department has also launched a counselling and support service for front-line workers through Northern Counselling and Therapeutic Services (NCTS). This will provide support to Family Wellness teams through monthly check ins, individual counselling, and critical incident debriefing. Monthly wellness check-ins have been established for front line staff, without managers and supervisors to support creating safe spaces for everyone to discuss wellness.

In addition, the Department has created a newsletter dedicated to promoting health and well-being. This newsletter will serve as a platform to share quality health, safety and wellness topics with all Department staff. The Department of Family Services is currently conducting jurisdictional reviews and research to explore the possibility of licensing Nunavut social workers within the territory. This includes considering the establishment of a professional body dedicated to advancing regulated practice and governing professional conduct. Positive discussions have also been held, and collaboration with the Manitoba Association of Social Workers regarding this matter is under exploration.

Case Management

With the support of external resources, the Department of Family Services is currently modernizing its Standards of Practice and Procedures Manual. Additionally, efforts are underway to establish a Quality Assurance framework to facilitate file audits. We have appointed a Manager of Quality Assurance tasked with researching best practices and frameworks, as well as conducting necessary file audits.

To date, the Out of Territory (OOT) standards have been developed and reflect leading practices within Nunavut. These standards have been reviewed by the RCYO and are now finalized with training scheduled to begin in May-June 2024.

The next set of standards to be drafted concern investigations and case management; these are expected to be complete in May 2024. Following drafting, the next step will include sharing with the RCYO for review and feedback.

Finally, the Death and Critical Injury standards are the next set of standards to be developed.

Information Management and Technological Solutions

The Department of Family Services is currently migrating existing data onto a new online information management system called Matrix. As part of this phase, also involves the completion of data migration from the Department Y-drive, improving the Department's data collection and reporting functions. Additionally, this phase will entail gathering data on staff utilization of the system and providing the staff team with a mechanism to offer feedback on the system and its functionality. Current standards of practice are being developed, through the lens of social work best practices and legislative requirements, ensuring that matrix is the foundation of this case management work and data collection. This system will aid front-line workers by consolidating the data management system, ensuring uniformity and accessibility throughout the territory. Consequently, all pertinent information will be readily accessible for future analysis and decision-making.

Quality Assurance

The Department has recruited a Quality Assurance Manager to establish a continuous quality assurance program and a robust human resources plan for recruitment and retention. The Manager of Quality Assurance has been tasked with developing a comprehensive quality assurance framework work continues in this area.

To conduct regular reviews of investigation requirements and provide senior management with quality assurance reports, the Department of Family Services has assigned managers the responsibility of establishing a quality assurance framework. Once this framework is established, quality assurance reviews will occur. In support of this, the Department has been meeting with a vendor to establish an online quality assurance system with the ability to interface with Matrix.

The Department has established dedicated Inuit client liaison officers to support OOT clients, publishing of RFPs for both in and out of territory services while reviewing existing GN assets, specifically the Naja Isabelle building in Chesterfield Inlet, to explore in territory options for group home residential services. Family Wellness is also developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to increase in-territory placements to help decrease the number of OOT Nunavummiut children and youth. A database has been established for the Inter-Provincial Desk to track and monitor OOT files. To ensure compliance and quality reviews are implemented, the Department of Family Services will assess the OOT team's capacity and consider the addition of social workers to work with Inuit client liaison officers. The Department may hire a contractor to assist with facility and foster placements through a social work lens.

Finally, the Department of Family Services has been focused on recruiting CSSWs and foster care coordinators. CORE and Stepwise Training takes place regularly to ensure that all social workers are adequately trained. The Department also provides training to foster parents on a monthly basis.

Training

The Department is providing staff with extensive training on the new Matrix system. As part of the integration approach, the Department is currently gathering data on staff utilization and identifying staff who have completed training to effectively utilize Matrix.

The Department of Family Services is currently providing specialized training to Child and Family Services staff through Stepwise Training (Forensic Interviewing Techniques) and a comprehensive annual training program is also being developed to ensure training is provided to existing and new staff. A comprehensive core training program has been developed and includes topics related to Inuit cultural competence. This material is currently being reviewed by staff to ensure cultural relevance and alignment with Inuit societal values. The training will be mandatory for all staff. Additionally, the Department of Family Services offers, mental health, first aid training, Matrix (new online information management system), family resource worker training, foster care coordinator training, manager, and supervisor training as well as training for clerk receptionists.

The Department is continuing to enhance onboarding and professional development programs for new and existing staff. The Department has received training funds from the Human Resources Training Fund for various programs. Funding will be sought this year, to develop specialized curricula for Foster Care Coordinators, Family Resource Workers, and Client Liaison Officers.

Training Program	Total Number of participants	Dates Delivered
Manager/Supervisor Training	15	January 16, 2024 February 20,2024 February 26,2024
Mental Health First Aid- Inuit Training	26	October 16, 2023 October 30 2023
StepWise Forensic Interviewing Techniques Training	26	June 26, 2023 Nov 6, 2023 January 29, 2024 March 18, 2024
CSSW Core Training	24	June 18,2023 January 22,2024 February 12,2024

Training Program	Total Number of participants	Dates Delivered
		March 11, 2024
Clerk/Receptionist Training	7	6 February, 2024

The department anticipates providing the following training programs within this fiscal year.

Training Program	Expected Delivery Date
CSSW Core Training	June 17, 2024
	Aug 12, 2024
	Sept 9, 2024
	Nov 18, 2024
	Jan 15, 2025
	March 10, 2025
StepWise Forensic Interviewing Techniques Training	July 15, 2024
	Sept 23, 2024
	Nov 18, 2024
	Jan 20, 2025
	March 19, 2025
Clerk/Receptionist Training	Aug 5, 2024
	Dec 3, 2024
Client Liaison Officers	May 27, 2024
Manager / Supervisor Training	June 26, 2024
	Aug 21, 2024
	Nov 27, 2024
	Feb 26, 2025
Matrix Training	Spring/ Summer 2024
Family Resource Worker Training	Summer 2024
Foster Parent Training	Summer 2024
Foster Care Coordinator Training	Aug 20, 2024
	Dec 10, 2024
Mental Health First Aid	June 19, 2024

Training	Oct 16, 2024 Feb 19, 2025
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4. Next Steps

Over the next three months, the Department of Family Services will be engaging stakeholders for feedback on the draft Strategic Action Plan. Based on input received, the Strategic Action Plan will be refined and adjusted as needed. The initiatives outlined in section 3 will be presented during engagements and consultations related to the Strategic Action Plan to ensure stakeholders have an opportunity to provide input.

Following the development of the Strategic Action Plan, an Implementation Plan will be created and will include a monitoring and evaluation component with clear and realistic indicators of success based on available data, the audit cycle, and the time frame for change. Different levels of performance indicators will be used to track progress towards short, medium, and long-term outcomes. In the short term, the focus will be on ensuring clear and concise standards of practice and measuring compliance with adherence to these standards.

While the Strategic Action Plan will include a comprehensive set of performance indicators, the following have been identified as key monitoring and data collection areas:

- Metrics for caseload and workload management
- Rates of staff vacancies
- Direct feedback from staff
- Number and effectiveness of staff training programs
- User feedback from services and community input
- Adherence levels to essential practice standards

The Department of Family Services will continue to provide progress reports on the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan to ensure transparency and accountability are upheld. In each sitting of the legislature, a Progress Report will be shared.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Department of Family Services is committed to fostering positive change and enhancing the well-being of Nunavummiut through the implementation of the Family Wellness Strategic Framework. Recognizing the critical need for improvements highlighted by the 2023 Office of the Auditor General of Canada Report, the Department remains dedicated to further strengthening the child and family service system. As evidenced by the considerable progress outlined in this Progress Report, significant milestones have been achieved, yet much work lies ahead. The ongoing engagement and consultation phase for the Strategic Action Plan signifies the Department's commitment to meaningful collaboration with key stakeholders, aimed at addressing findings meaningfully, comprehensively and sustainably.

In addition to the ongoing efforts detailed in this report, the Department remains committed in its dedication to collaborative action, working closely with partners and stakeholders to advance the development of the Family Wellness Strategic Framework and associated workplans, and subordinate materials. This collaborative approach aims to address the findings outlined in the OAG's 2023 Report expansively.

Stakeholder engagement remains pivotal in shaping a comprehensive action plan, complete with metrics and realistic timelines to ensure social worker practice adheres to standards, trauma-informed principles, ethics, and cultural responsiveness. Continued collaboration with the Representative for Children and Youth Office (RCYO) further enhances efforts to bridge existing accountability gaps, minimizing risks for children and families. The Department is committed to advancing social work practice through ongoing professional development and regulation, striving to create pathways for increased Inuit employment both at the frontline and executive levels. Looking ahead, the Department is aiming to present the finalized Strategic Action Plan during the Fall Sitting of 2024, following the completion of the consultation and engagement phase and the development of the Strategic Action Plan.

By working collaboratively and prioritizing the well-being of Nunavummiut, the Department of Family Services remains steadfast in its mission to create caring communities where all individuals and families thrive.