

BUSINESS PLAN 2025-2028



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NUTAQGANUT INULRAMIRNULLU
UQAQTIKHAANIK

REPRÉSENTANT DE
L'ENFANCE ET DE LA JEUNESSE

REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH



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REPRÉSENTANT DE
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REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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Representative for Children and Youth Office

BUSINESS PLAN 2025-2028

MISSION

Establish our office as the conscience of child- and youth-serving Government of Nunavut departments.

VISION

A territory in which children and youth are healthy and safe, their interests and opinions are heard, acted upon, and supported through the delivery of ethical, equitable, and consistent government services.

OVERVIEW

The Representative for Children and Youth (Representative) is an independent officer who reports to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut (Legislative Assembly) and the public. Independent offices are part of the Public Service but not part of the Government of Nunavut (GN).

It is the mandate of the Representative for Children and Youth's Office (RCYO) to review legislation, policies, procedures, programs, and services established by GN departments and designated authorities.

Designated authorities under the *Representative for Children and Youth Act (RCYA)* include:

- Apprenticeship, Trade, and Occupations Certification Board;
- District Education Authorities and governing bodies of schools;
- Labour Standards Board;
- Legal Services Board;
- Nunavut Arctic College;
- Nunavut Housing Corporation (housing authorities and housing associations);
- Operators of licensed child daycare facilities; and
- Victims Assistance Committee.

The RCYO makes recommendations to departments to ensure their services provide ethical, equitable, and consistent outcomes that meet the needs and support the rights of young Nunavummiut, and the families, who rely on them.

These recommendations are informed by the complaints we receive about services or services that should be provided by departments, which are brought to our attention for advocacy support.

All information reported to our office is confidential and can be reported anonymously. RCYO staff take an oath of confidentiality and must not disclose information received in the performance of their duties unless a specific exception in the *RCYA* applies.

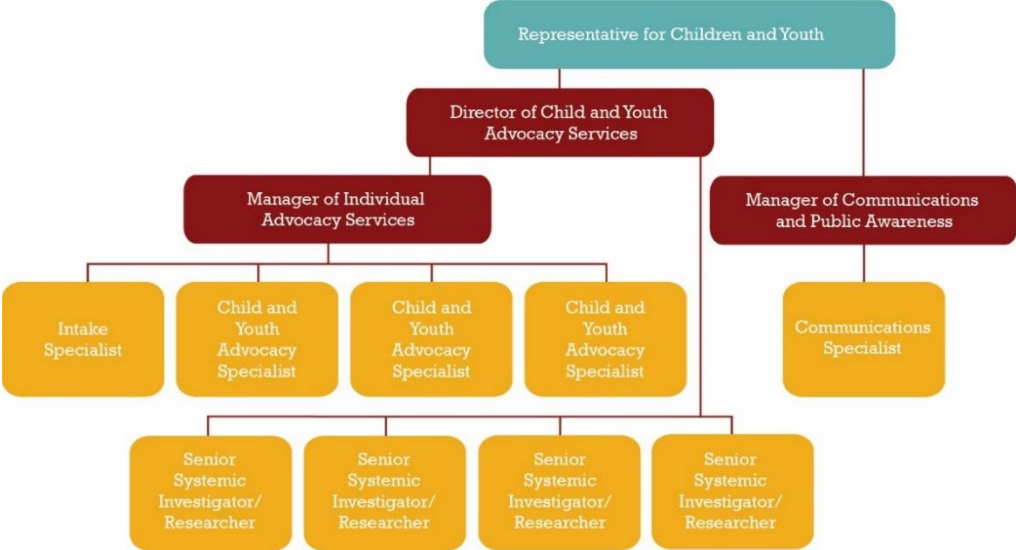
If anyone has a complaint about a department's services or is unable to receive a service for a young person or their family, they can bring it to the attention of our office for review.

The RCYO does not replace service providers. We review complaints about government services or services that should be provided by GN departments and advocate for improved services to benefit children and youth.

RCYO staff provide advocacy services in Inuktitut and English. Services in Inuinnaqtun and French are available with interpretation support.

For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the RCYO has a budget of 2.963 million, as outlined in Appendix A. The RCYO includes the Representative and 12 staff, as outlined in Figure 1. The Office’s 2025 Nunavut Inuit Employment Plan is provided in Appendix B.

Figure 1: Organizational Chart



MANDATE

Our mandate includes the following specific duties as outlined in the *RCYA*:

- Ensure the rights and interests of children and youth, individually and collectively, are protected and advanced;
- Ensure departments hear and consider the opinions of children and youth on matters that affect them;
- Ensure children and youth can access departments' services and that the departments consider their concerns and opinions about those services;
- Help children, youth, and their families communicate with department service providers to improve understanding between them;
- Inform the public about the rights and interests of children and youth, and the roles and responsibilities of the RCYO; and
- Provide advice and recommendations to departments on how to make laws, policies, programs, and services better for children and youth in Nunavut.

Our mandate allows us to work on behalf of children and youth when all of the following apply.

- The young person involved is a child or youth as defined by the *RCYA*:
 - A child is less than 16 years of age;
 - A youth is 16 to 18 years of age;
 - 19-25 years of age and is part of an agreement with the Director of Child and Family Services appointed under the *Child and Family Services Act*;
 - 19-21 years of age and has requested or is receiving services under the *Education Act*;
 - 19-21 and has been charged under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* or the *Young Offenders Act* and there has been no final disposition of their charge, or they have not completed their sentence or disposition; or
 - 19-21 years of age and has a long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment that, in interaction with environmental and attitudinal barriers, hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
 - A department(s) is involved; and
 - A department is not upholding the rights of the child, as described in the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* or other relevant legislation, policies, or procedures.

Our mandate does not allow us to:

- Work on problems with personal relationships, such as when a young person is not listening to their parents;
- Conduct investigations of child abuse or neglect; or
- Work on complaints involving businesses or private organizations. For example, if a young person does not receive proper payment from their employer.

In addition to the *RCYA*, our work is also guided by the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Inuit societal values, the voice of the child, the best interests of the child, and National Advocacy Standards established by the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA). The CCCYA is an alliance of child advocates from across Canada that identify areas of mutual concern and work to develop ways to address issues at the national level.

Elders also offer invaluable wisdom and perspective based on lived experiences. We work with Elder Advisors from across the territory to incorporate this knowledge into our advocacy.

PROGRAM AREAS

The RCYO currently works in four different program areas; Individual Advocacy, Systemic Advocacy, Reviews of Critical Injuries and Deaths, and Communications and Public Awareness.

INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

When government services for young Nunavummiut are not ethical, equitable, or consistent, or when a child, youth, or their family are unable to access a service, the complaint can be brought to our attention for review. These complaints are our individual advocacy cases.

Our office can get involved to figure out what happened or, more often, what did not happen. Our Child Advocates work with those involved, such as the young person, their family, and the service providers to find a solution. We may also seek advice from our Elder Advisors.

After reviewing the situation, and hearing and considering the voice and best interests of the young person involved, our Child Advocates suggest actions to the service providers involved to resolve the problem. Every individual advocacy case is unique, and our Child Advocates customize their response to fit each situation.

Our cases require varying levels of support from our staff, which result in varying lengths of time for different problems to be resolved. We categorize our individual advocacy cases as either basic or comprehensive.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

When a concern is identified that could impact multiple young people and the delivery of ethical, equitable and consistent services, the RCYO reviews the concern to determine if it is a systemic issue.

Systemic issues, if not identified and addressed, have the potential to have a negative impact on multiple young people. Systemic issues are related to a department's practices, policies or standards, procedures, legislation, or their absence.

Systemic issues are primarily brought to our attention through our individual advocacy casework. We may also learn about systemic issues from young people, families, community members, Members of the Legislative Assembly, Youth Parliamentarians, departments, and the media.

For each systemic issue, responsible department(s) are identified. Addressing some issues may require multiple departments to work collaboratively to change practices, policies or standards, procedures, or legislation.

Systemic issues are addressed with recommendations made by the Representative. The RCYO can make systemic recommendations:

- as the result of a brief or comprehensive review;
- through a submission when departments invite us to do so or there is a public call for submissions;
- or through a practice letter when adequate evidence is discovered through individual advocacy casework that a problem has the potential to occur again.

Recommendations are evidence-based and suggest improvements to existing legislation, policies, procedures, programs, and services or the creation of policies, procedures and practices. As systemic issues are usually complex and multifaceted, RCYO generally makes multiple recommendations to address one systemic issue.

REVIEWS OF CRITICAL INJURIES AND DEATHS

The Reviews of Critical Injuries and Deaths program examines the circumstances leading up to and the response of departments, to a critical injury or death of a young Nunavummiut.

In Nunavut, critical injuries of young people are only independently reviewed by the RCYO. We do not conduct reviews of every critical injury or death but carefully select incidents where there is evidence that government services, or the lack of services, may have contributed to the critical injury or death.

After completing a review of a critical injury or death, the Representative makes recommendations that suggest improvements to services, procedures or standards, practice, and legislation to prevent similar critical injuries or deaths from occurring in the future. The RCYO may also issue a public report of findings and recommendations.

Section 4(1)(b) of the *RCYA* gives the Representative the power to review any matter related to the death or critical injury of any child or youth. There is no requirement for the child or youth to be receiving services from a department at the time of the death or critical injury.

Under sections 19, 20, and 21 of the *RCYA*, the Director of Child and Family Services and the Coroner have been required to report critical injuries and deaths to the RCYO since 2015. These reports are to be made as soon as is reasonably possible after learning of a young person's injury or death. We may also learn about critical injuries and deaths from service providers, community members, and through the media. All critical injuries and deaths brought to RCYO's attention are reviewed and logged into our database.

The RCYO classifies critical injuries into six categories:

- **Emotional harm:** An injury that can reasonably be seen as having the potential to cause serious or long-term emotional or psychological harm to the child or youth.
- **Physical harm:** A self-inflicted or accidental injury that caused physical harm to a child or youth. A physical harm injury is more than minor soft tissue damage.
- **Physical Assault:** An injury inflicted by another person that caused physical injury to a child or youth.
- **Sexualized Violence:** A sexualized act committed on a child or youth. This may be a physical act, but it may also include non-contact unwanted sexual experiences (such as an invitation to touch, luring, or threats). Sexualized violence is non-consensual when the child or youth did not or could not consent due to age, mental capacity, or other factors.
- **Substance-Related Harm:** The use of drugs, alcohol, or other substances by a child or youth that causes or could cause a critical injury.
- **Suicide Attempt, Suicidal Ideation:** A suicide attempt is defined as a non-fatal attempt to take one's life. Suicidal ideation refers to thinking about, considering, or planning suicide.

In Nunavut, when a young person dies, the Office of the Chief Coroner (Coroner) conducts a review to determine the identity and when, where, by what means, and the circumstances surrounding the death. The Coroner determines the manner of each death, classifying them into five categories: Natural, Accidental, Suicide, Homicide, or Undetermined.

The purpose of a RCYO review is to determine if the young person received the services they were entitled to and if these services, or the lack thereof, contributed in any way to the injury or death. The purpose is to identify deficiencies and gaps in services, standards, procedures, practice, and legislation.

Our reviews are not about placing blame or determining criminal or civil liability. Our reviews do highlight areas of concern and ask departments to be accountable for them.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

Our Communications and Public Awareness initiatives build and strengthen relationships with our many stakeholders including children, youth, families, community members, departments, the Legislative Assembly, and the media.

The RCYO works to increase awareness of child rights and the responsibilities that adults and governments have to support the rights of children and youth. We carry out this responsibility through presentations; development of child-rights resources and information materials; hosting contests; and sharing information about our work through the media, social media, and the Office's website.

Although our office is in Iqaluit, we work on behalf of all Nunavummiut. Our most comprehensive public awareness initiative are community engagement visits. It is important that we visit communities to hear directly from Nunavummiut and to see, first-hand, the current challenges affecting child, youth, and their families in each community.

Every year we strategically plan public awareness initiatives while continually looking for new opportunities to engage with our stakeholders.

UPDATE ON OFFICE OBJECTIVES AND REPORTING ON PRIORITIES FOR 2024 - 2025

OBJECTIVE 1: Establish our office as a trusted ally for young people and their families by building and strengthening our relationship with Nunavummiut.

Priorities that support Objective 1:

Continue to engage with communities, to enhance the office's presence across the territory.

Status

- Two RCYO staff visited Kinngait March 25- 27 2024.
- While in Kinngait the RCYO staff met with the following Service Providers
 - Departments of Education, Justice and Family Services
 - RCMP
 - Hamlet Staff Members
- Two RCYO staff visited Arctic Bay May 20-24, 2024
- While in Arctic Bay the RCYO staff met with the following Service Providers
 - Departments of Education, Justice and Health.
- National Child Day - rights-based activity sent out to schools across the Territory.

Continue to develop child rights resources.

Status

- RCYO continues to work with Inhabit Media and Department of Education to finalize a child rights curriculum and teaching guide.

OBJECTIVE 2: Respond to individual complaints regarding services for young people and their families provided by Government of Nunavut departments and hold departments accountable for ensuring services provided are ethical, equitable, consistent, and considerate of the best interests of the young person(s) involved.

Priority that supports Objective 2:

Complete reviews of individual complaints and make recommendations to departments.

Status

- As of February 2025, the RCYO has opened 64 Individual Advocacy Files.
- 1 individual advocacy case was referred to the systemic program for a complex file review, the Department responsible was notified in October 2024.

OBJECTIVE 3: Bring awareness of systemic issues that impact young Nunavummiut and their families, to the attention of the responsible Government of Nunavut department(s) and suggest changes to legislation, policies, procedures, programs, and services to prevent issues from arising again.

Priorities that support Objective 3:

Review the Systemic Advocacy Program and make adjustments to improve its efficacy.

Status

- The systemic advocacy program continues to be under review which includes finalizing changes to the policy and procedure manual.
- The systemic program continued to review an individual advocacy file pertaining to adoptions, the limited amount of documentation available has impeded the completion of the review.
- The review relating to the use of out of territory placements and case management by the Department of Health is ongoing.
- In September 2024, a Senior Researcher and Investigator was hired, two positions remain to be filled.
- In February 2025, a new Director of Child and Youth Advocacy Services started.

Continue to improve and enhance collaboration with Government of Nunavut departments to address systemic issues affecting young Nunavummiut.

Status

- In July 2024, the RCYO presented findings of a critical injury review to the Department of Family Services. The RCYO presented proposed recommendations based on the findings requesting discussion and feedback prior to finalizing the report. To date, the department has not provided feedback on the recommendations.
- Fall proactive meetings occurred in November and December with Departments of Education Family Services, Health, and Justice. It is the responsibility of GN Departments to facilitate the spring proactive meetings.
- The RCYO and the Department of Family Services have agreed to meet monthly at the Director level.

Continue to address systemic issues through child- and youth- centered recommendations.

Status

- In September 2024, the RCYO made 16 recommendations to departments in the Representative for Children and Youth 2023-2024 Annual Report, Status of Young Nunavummiut section.

Monitor and report publicly on Government of Nunavut departments' progress to address recommendations made.

Status

- The RCYO reported on progress made on recommendations made in the Representative for Children and Youth 2023-2024 Annual Report.

Advance the Reviews of Critical Injuries and Deaths program.

Status

- In February 2024, the RCYO began its first review of a critical injury.
 - In July 2024, the review was completed, the findings were presented to the Department of Family Services. The RCYO presented 37 proposed recommendations for discussion.
 - The RCYO has been unable to finalize the review as the department has not provided any feedback on the proposed recommendations.
 - As a result of the review, four individual advocacy cases were opened.
 - On November 21, 2024, the department was provided 3 more proposed recommendations for their review and feedback. Bringing the total proposed recommendations to 40.
 - To date the department has not provided any feedback on the proposed recommendations.
 - In December 2024 new information was provided to the RCYO. The new information was reviewed and considered in relation to the findings and recommendations made in July 2024.
- In May 2024, the RCYO notified the Department of Health and the Department of Family Services of a review of a critical injury.
- In October 2024, the RCYO notified the Department of Family Services of a review of a critical injury review.
- In February 2025, the RCYO notified the Department of Family Services of a critical injury review.

OBJECTIVE 4: The best interest of young Nunavummiut, families, and communities are reflected in all aspects of our work.

Priorities that support Objective 4:

Ensure the opinions and lives of young Nunavummiut and their families are reflected in our work.

Continue to look for and implement ways to engage our Elder Advisors and establish working relationships with Inuit organizations.

OBJECTIVE 5: Ensure our staff have the comprehensive knowledge required to provide quality advocacy services that meet the evolving needs of young Nunavummiut and their families.

Priorities that support Objective 5:

Provide individually tailored training and development opportunities for office staff.

Status

In September 2024, the RCYO staff attended the Canadian Council for Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA) two-day conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

OBJECTIVE 6: Operationalize the Critical Injury and Death Review Program.

Priorities that support Objective 6:

Finalize the Policies and Procedures Manual

Status

- Following a year of operations, the Policies and Procedures for critical injury and death are being reviewed and updated.

Hire an additional Systemic Investigator to monitor critical injuries and death and conduct reviews

Status

- In September 2024, a Senior Researcher and Investigator was hired, two positions remain to be filled. The new staff was assisting in covering the Manager of Communications position which limited their ability to fully engage in the systemic program.

Work with Family Services to ensure that reports of critical injuries and death are accurate and received in a timely manner as per the RCYA.

Status

- The RCYO and the department have started to work collaboratively to address issues with reporting and develop quality assurance mechanisms that benefit both the RCYO and departments. This will be done through quarterly meetings.

PRIORITIES FOR 2025-2028

PRIORITIES 2025-2026

- Develop and implement a communication strategy enhancing the office's presence across the territory.
- Continue to develop child rights resources
- Review and revise the Individual Advocacy program. This includes updating the policy and procedure manual, reevaluating and enhancing the use of the case management system, Penelope.
- Continue to improve and enhance collaboration with Government of Nunavut departments to address systemic issues affecting young Nunavummiut.
- Continue to address systemic issues through child- and youth- centered recommendations.
- Monitor and report publicly on Government of Nunavut departments' progress to address recommendations made.

- Review and monitor the strategic plan of Family Wellness in response to the 2023 OAG report.
- Review and revise the Systemic program, including the critical injury and death program.
- Initiate a review of residential care in-territory.
- Ensure the views of young Nunavummiut and their families are reflected in our work.
- Provide analysis of various data sets published in the Annual Report to identify trends and areas for improvement.
- Take steps to establish a Youth Advisory Council as recommended by the Standing Committee
- Continue to look for and implement ways to engage our Elder Advisors.
- Establish working relationships with Inuit organizations.
- Provide training and development opportunities for office staff.

PRIORITIES 2026-2028

- Continue to engage with communities, enhancing the office's presence across the territory.
- Continue to develop child rights resources.
- Conduct annual file audit of closed individual advocacy cases and implement any updates required.
- Continue to improve and enhance collaboration with Government of Nunavut departments to address systemic issues affecting young Nunavummiut.
- Continue to address systemic issues through child- and youth- centered recommendations.
- Monitor and report publicly on Government of Nunavut departments' progress to address recommendations made.
- Advance the Reviews of Critical Injuries and Deaths program as resources allow.
- Ensure the opinions and lives of young Nunavummiut and their families are reflected in our work.
- Continue to look for and implement ways to engage our Elder Advisors and establish working relationships with Inuit organizations.
- Provide individually tailored training and development opportunities for office staff.

Appendix A: Financial Summary

	2024-2025 Main Estimates		2025-2026 Planned		2026-2027 Planned		2027-2028 Planned	
	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs	\$000	PYs		PYs
Salary	2,142	12	2,229	12	2,229	12	2,229	12
Grants & Contributions	-		-		-		-	
Other O&M								
Travel & Transportation	155		155		155		155	
Materials & Supplies	60		60		60		60	
Purchased Services	50		50		50		50	
Contract Services	434		434		434		434	
Fees & Payments	10		10		10		10	
Tangible Assets	10		10		10		10	
Computer Hardware & Software	15		15		15		15	
Other O&M Subtotal	734		734		734		734	
TOTAL	2,876	11	2,963	12	2,963	12	2,963	12

Appendix B: 2024 Nunavut Inuit Employment Plan

The Representative for Children and Youth's Office (RCYO) is committed to working towards a workforce that is representative of the population of Nunavut as stipulated in Article 23 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

1. RECRUITMENT

- The RCYO is committed to working with the Department of Human Resources to explore alternative ways to prepare job advertisements to attract a larger number of Nunavut Inuit candidates to apply for RCYO positions, such as competitions restricted to Nunavut Inuit only.
- The RCYO is committed to working with the Department of Human Resources to explore innovative and viable Nunavut Inuit recruitment initiatives for RCYO employment positions.
- The RCYO is committed to working with the Department of Human Resources to ensure fair equivalencies are reflected in screening criteria for RCYO positions.
- The RCYO will offer term positions when there is no successful Nunavut Inuit candidate.

2. STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- The RCYO is committed to working with Nunavut Inuit staff to identify short, medium, and long-term career goals.
- The RCYO is committed to providing learning and training opportunities that support Nunavut Inuit staff in successfully fulfilling the responsibilities and duties of their employment positions.
- The RCYO is committed to looking for opportunities to develop Nunavut Inuit staff members' skills, knowledge, and experience to enhance career mobility within the organization.
- The RCYO is committed to pursuing Sivuliqtiksat Internship opportunities to support Nunavut Inuit development when staffing competitions result in hiring on a term basis.
- The RCYO is committed to providing summer student work opportunities for Nunavut Inuit.

3. EMPLOYEE RETENTION

- The RCYO is committed to researching and implementing suitable programs that support on the job training or internship opportunities that support the career development of Nunavut Inuit employees.