



An assessment tool for policy
and program developers and
analysts to address the
impact of all initiatives on
persons with disabilities.

Produced by:
Office for Disability Issues

Developed by:
The Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee
on Disability Issues Working Group

Project Coordinator/Writer:
Colleen Farrell Consulting



OFFICE FOR DISABILITY ISSUES P.O. Box 9567, Victoria, BC V8W 9K1
Tel: (250) 387-3813, Fax: (250) 387-3114, TDD: (250) 387-3555
E-mail: EST_ODI@ galaxy.gov.bc.ca

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RATIONALE *and* BACKGROUND FOR THE DISABILITY LENS



THE DISABILITY LENS is a tool for identifying and clarifying issues affecting persons with disabilities. It provides government policy and program developers and analysts with a framework for assessing and addressing the impacts of all initiatives (policies, programs or decisions) on persons with disabilities.

The Disability Lens helps to ensure that legislation, policy, programs and services:

- are inclusive of persons with disabilities;
- respect the rights and needs of persons with disabilities;
- avoid unintended negative outcomes;
- reflect the goals of the BC Government's ongoing *Strategy for Coordinating Disability Issues* which supports equity and fairness for all British Columbians.

Defining Disability

The Disability Lens recognizes that persons with disabilities are not homogeneous and that there is a broad range of disabilities and issues to consider. Disabilities may be apparent or hidden, severe or mild, singular or multiple, chronic or intermittent. Types of disabilities include mobility/agility, mental/cognitive, hearing, speaking, and visual impairments.

The Disability Lens accepts, but is not limited to, the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of disability, which defines **disability** as "the loss or reduction of functional ability and activity that is consequent upon impairment", and an **impairment** as "any disturbance or interference with the normal structure and functioning of the body, including the systems of mental function".

Disability and **handicap** are often incorrectly assumed to be interchangeable. A **handicap** is an environmental or attitudinal barrier that limits a person's opportunity to participate fully. Negative attitudes or inaccessible entrances to buildings are examples of handicaps. A person is considered *not* to have a disability, if the use of a technical aid, such as glasses or a hearing aid, completely compensates for it.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Statistics Canada reports that one in six people in British Columbia has a permanent disability. Disabilities cut across all aspects of community life and all sectors of society. They affect every income bracket, age group and region. They impact on more than just the person with the disability: most of us know or interact with persons with disabilities and share, to varying degrees, an awareness of disability issues. Statistics show that as we age, an increasing number of us are directly affected by a disability. Disability issues are important to all of us, as any of us, our family or our friends, could develop a disability at any time.


Barriers: Discrimination, Access and Attitudes

Persons with disabilities are substantially disadvantaged in both British Columbia and Canada. Full participation in society is limited by barriers described as taking three forms: **discrimination, access** to opportunities and **attitudes**.

Discrimination can intentionally marginalize persons or groups, but its more subtle form is indirect or systemic discrimination. Systemic discrimination arises when social, economic, political and legal systems support some groups without considering or understanding the needs of others. Traditionally, persons with disabilities have had little voice in society and have not been included in the development of policies and programs which affect them. As a result, many of the most well meaning initiatives contain barriers that discriminate against persons with disabilities.

Legal Obligations: Human rights legislation affirms access as a right of every member of society and also ensures that all members of society enjoy equal rights and are not subject to discrimination. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, gender, age or mental or physical disability. The Supreme Court of Canada affirmed that Equality, provided in Section 15 of the Charter, does not necessarily mean identical treatment since "identical treatment may frequently produce serious inequalities" in terms of benefits derived (*Andrews vs. Law Society of British Columbia*). The implication of this ruling is that governments must ensure that legislation, policies and programs are fully accessible and do not exclude persons with disabilities or perpetuate inequitable outcomes.

Access to the mainstream was previously limited by individual ability to conform to society's standards. Persons with disabilities who were unable to meet societal expectations were segregated and isolated. The degree of access or handicap which a person with a disability experiences is influenced by environment and practices. As environments and practices can be altered, the courts have given clear guidance and legal authority to make



accommodations, remove existing barriers to eliminate handicapping conditions, and revise all discriminatory requirements and restrictions to facilitate full participation of persons with disabilities.

There are numerous ways access for persons with disabilities can be improved, and each improvement removes another barrier to full participation. We can alter the physical access to a building, provide technical and adaptive aids, provide individual support, provide interpreters, be flexible about hours and timelines, communicate in alternative formats, and use accessible transportation. Access can not simply be thought of as physical alterations and accommodations; economic and social access must also be considered.

Attitudes can either remove or create barriers and can be the most difficult barrier persons with disabilities face in gaining full access, integration and participation in society. Attitudes can affect the social and economic status of persons with disabilities.

The impact of attitudes on persons with disabilities can be better understood by considering the results of changing those attitudes. For example, historically, for many individuals with disabilities formal education was not an option. This did not reflect individual inability but a predominant social attitude. There was an expectation that everyone must conform to specific standards in education, restricting or eliminating opportunities for persons with disabilities. Equating 'disability' with 'inability' is a common attitudinal barrier. Doing things differently should not be considered an indicator of ability. Technological advances have created more opportunities for persons with disabilities and have fostered a greater willingness to accommodate different needs. This demonstrates that given equal access to education and opportunity, students with disabilities can succeed.

Language not only reflects our thoughts and opinions, it also shapes ideas, perceptions and ultimately social attitudes. Thoughtful presentation of information regarding persons with disabilities can eliminate stereotyping.

British Columbia's Commitment to Equity

BC demonstrates its commitment to the principles of equality through numerous equity initiatives, such as the **BC Public Service Act** and the **Employment Equity Directive**. The BC Government has established a **Provincial Strategy for Coordinating Disability Issues**, as a result of extensive consultation with the communities of persons with disabilities. As part of this **Strategy**, the Assistance Deputy Ministers' Committee on Disability Issues established a working group to develop a **Disability Lens**. The Disability Lens is an integral part of the **Office for Disability Issues'** (ODI) mission: to champion equality by creating a comprehensive, coordinated provincial system, where disability is not a barrier to full participation.

THE DISABILITY LENS

Defining Disability:

The Disability Lens accepts, but is not limited to, the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of disability, which defines **disability** as "the loss or reduction of functional ability and activity that is consequent upon impairment", and **impairment** as "any disturbance of or interference with the normal structure and functioning of the body, including the systems of mental function".

The words **disability** and **handicap** are often incorrectly assumed to be interchangeable. A **handicap** is an environmental or attitudinal barrier that limits the opportunity for a person to participate fully. Negative attitudes or inaccessible entrances to buildings are examples of handicaps. A person is considered *not* to have a disability, if the use of a technical aid, such as glasses or a hearing aid, completely compensates for it.

The Disability Lens recognizes that people with disabilities are not homogeneous and that there is a broad range of disabilities and issues. Disabilities may be: apparent or hidden, severe or mild, singular or multiple, chronic or intermittent. Types of disabilities include mobility/agility, mental/cognitive, hearing, speaking, and visual impairments. Life experiences of persons with disabilities are not only influenced by the nature of the disability; factors such as gender, age, geographic location, ethnicity, culture and social values, and sexual orientation also have a pervasive effect on individual experience. Diverse life experiences create distinct needs, expectations, and life choices.

The Disability Lens is:

- a tool for identifying and clarifying issues affecting persons with disabilities;
- for policy and program developers and analysts to assess and address the impacts of all initiatives (policies, programs or decisions) on persons with disabilities;
- a resource for all ministries to assist in creating policies and programs reflective of the rights and needs of persons with disabilities.

The Disability Lens is guided by the following principles:

- respect for individual diversity and experience
- equal access to opportunity and to pursue one's full potential
- self-determination, independence and dignity
- community partnership and joint decision-making
- ongoing communication and continual progress.

Why Do We Need A Disability Lens?

Given that persons with disabilities are present in all social environments (home, work, community), all legislation, policies, programs and services will impact on persons with disabilities. Legislation, policy, programs and services that do not consider the unique life experiences and needs of persons with disabilities may inadvertently discriminate and create systemic barriers. In order for initiatives to be truly reflective of, and useful to all persons, we must continue to ask ourselves questions which challenge us to think outside of our own experience. The Disability Lens helps bring focus to issues affecting persons with disabilities. Integrating diverse perspectives and experiences into an initiative not only helps to ensure equity, but also fosters partnerships and builds support.

The Goal of the Disability Lens is to ensure that all government initiatives are equitable in that they are: accessible and inclusive, respect the rights and needs of persons with disabilities, promote positive attitudes, and raise awareness.

Using The Disability Lens

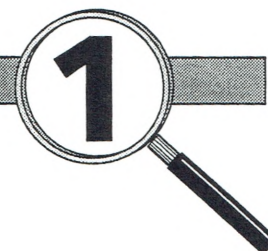
The Disability Lens is applicable to all government initiatives, internal or external, preexisting or under development, and especially those initiatives which are not directed towards or related to disability issues. It assists the user to focus on and identify issues within any initiative which may affect persons with disabilities. The issues have been carefully grouped to focus on seven primary areas of impact so that no aspect of the experience and rights of persons with disabilities is overlooked or minimized. They are as follows:

1. Consultation and Data Collection
2. Accessibility and Appropriate Accommodation
3. Systemic, Indirect Discrimination and Legal Obligations
4. Economic Status, Education, Training, and Employment
5. Communication
6. Safety and Protection from Victimization
7. Health and Well-being

For developers of policies and programs, the Disability Lens Issues Analysis provides a framework of issues to consider and a checklist of general practices and activities to incorporate into the design of an initiative. Analysts can use the Issues Analysis checklist questions to assess if an initiative is equitable for persons with disabilities. The questions also act as a guide for making recommendations and/or necessary changes.

For the Disability Lens to be effective, it is important that all of the questions posed under each issue be fully addressed. This will take time and likely require some research and/or consultation. The Office for Disability Issues is available for consultation.

DISABILITY ISSUES ANALYSIS



CONSULTATION *and* DATA COLLECTION

Consultation, such as focus groups, surveys and anecdotal research, elicits critical information from experts and from those who may be impacted. Research methods and information sources used will affect findings and future decisions. It is essential that all information collected is comprehensive and accurate to ensure equitable outcomes.

Questions to ask of this initiative:	YES	NO	Notations of actions required/taken:
a) Has qualitative as well as quantitative data been used?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

b) Does this initiative consider the varied needs of a wide range of persons with disabilities at different stages of life and development?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

c) Have all stakeholders, and consumers, including relevant organizations, been consulted to collect specific information regarding issues to consider?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

d) Have persons with disabilities of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences been included in all stages of this initiative?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

e) Have all appropriate areas of the province been represented in this consultation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

If necessary, attach or continue additional notations on the back of this page.

ACCESSIBILITY *and* APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION

Persons with disabilities have the right to fully participate in mainstream society and the right to independent access. Environment plays a crucial role in determining the degree of "handicap" which a person experiences. Appropriate accommodations can eliminate handicapping conditions. Such accommodations may include: altering the physical access to a building; providing technical and adaptive aids and human support; allowing flexibility of hours and time lines; using alternative communication formats and alternative transportation options. Attitudes, assumptions, and stereotyping create barriers to access. Promoting positive attitudes and raising awareness can remove barriers.

Questions to ask of this initiative:	YES	NO	Notations of actions required/taken:
a) Have disability related organizations been consulted regarding specific types of accommodations to improve access for persons with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
b) Are accommodations planned for and integrated into systems to the greatest degree possible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
c) Is the environment physically accessible for persons with a broad range of disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
d) Where transportation is concerned are the needs of persons with disabilities and their families provided for?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
e) Is this initiative flexible enough to facilitate individualized service delivery and special accommodations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
f) Does it encourage independence and respect for persons with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

If necessary, attach or continue additional notations on the back of this page.

SYSTEMIC, INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION and LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Systemic discrimination is caused by social, economic, legal and political structures which support the prosperity of some groups and do not consider the different experiences and needs of others. Treating all people as if they are the same may produce inequitable opportunities and outcomes for some groups. Developing true equality may require different treatment and individual accommodation. Discrimination has a compounding effect on persons with disabilities who are also members of other marginalized groups.

Government and the private sector must ensure that legislation, policy, programs and services are equitable and do not discriminate against the rights of persons with disabilities. These rights are enshrined in the following codes and laws which prohibit discrimination and allow for special measures to improve conditions for designated populations: The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Human Rights Codes, and Employment Equity legislation and policy. The British Columbia Public Service Act directive on Employment Equity requires managers to provide Reasonable Accommodation (RA) for persons protected under the Human Rights Act. (RA refers to adjustments or provisions made in the work situation to address special needs determined on a case by case basis. The employer is responsible for making reasonable accommodation after considering factors such as health and safety issues, collective agreement compliance, impact on the rights of other employees, and financial feasibility.)

Questions to ask of this initiative:	YES	NO	Notations of actions required/taken:
a) Do any requirements or restrictions contained in this initiative impede the full participation of persons with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
b) Have the legal implications of how this initiative may impact on persons with disabilities been analyzed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
c) Have policies which address the rights and needs of persons with disabilities been developed or put in place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
d) Have organizations representing marginalized people been consulted to ensure the particular needs of persons with disabilities in these populations are considered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

If necessary, attach or continue additional notations on the back of this page.

ECONOMIC STATUS, EDUCATION, TRAINING, *and* EMPLOYMENT

Education (formal and informal), contributes to the well-being and economic independence of an individual. Statistically, persons with disabilities have lower levels of educational attainment, lower employment incomes and higher unemployment rates than the general population. Most live below the poverty line and those who are not working generally must rely on other types of income which usually provide only minimal support, such as disability pensions or income assistance. Often additional disability related expenses consume income and erode the standard of living. There are fewer opportunities for persons with disabilities to improve their economic standing. A lower economic status creates a lower social profile, resulting in further marginalization.

In addition to economic status, physical and attitudinal barriers also prevent access to skill development and learning opportunities within both educational and workplace settings. For persons with disabilities to achieve economic equality and income parity, equal access to education, training, and employment opportunities is a necessity.

Questions to ask of this initiative:	YES	NO	Notations of actions required/taken:
a) Does this initiative facilitate equitable access to education, training, and employment opportunities (including public programs, staff development and learning opportunities) for persons with a broad range of disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

b) Are persons with disabilities included in relevant economic decision-making?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

c) Is this initiative accessible to persons with low incomes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

d) Does the selection process of participants consider the differing needs of persons with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

If necessary, attach or continue additional notations on the back of this page.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is vital to a healthy functioning society. Careful presentation of information about, and to, persons with disabilities can help overcome negative attitudes and shape positive ones. Language as well as the physical location of documents can limit access to information and create barriers to full participation of persons with disabilities.

For communication to be inclusive and therefore effective, the differing needs of persons with disabilities must be considered. Persons with disabilities may have added difficulty in accessing information in standard format. Alternative formats are necessary to communicate information to persons with sensory or cognitive disabilities. (i.e. Braille, TDD/TTY for the deaf, large print, computer disk, bliss symbols, sign language, translators, intervenors, interpreters.)

Questions to ask of this initiative:	YES	NO	Notations of actions required/taken:
a) Does this initiative use inclusive language and images which focus attention on ability rather than disability?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

b) Does it use language that supports self-determination and dignity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

c) Are all documents and communication material written in plain language?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

d) Are communication documents available in alternative formats, (i.e. Braille, audio tape)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

e) Are they located in an environment which is physically accessible and are persons with disabilities informed of the availability of materials in alternative formats?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

If necessary, attach or continue additional notations on the back of this page.

A magnifying glass with a black handle and a silver-colored frame. The lens is focused on a large, bold, black number '6' which is centered within a white circle. This circle is part of a larger, light gray rectangular background that has a horizontal band across its middle. The magnifying glass is tilted slightly to the right.

[illegible]

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HEALTH *and* WELL-BEING

All people have a right to social, recreational and cultural experiences, activities and relationships. Often persons with disabilities are isolated, limiting their access to these experiences. People with supportive social relationships are less susceptible to health problems. The unique physical and emotional needs of persons with disabilities must be considered. The low economic status of some persons with disabilities also affects their ability to maintain good health.

Questions to ask of this initiative:	YES	NO	Notations of actions required/taken:
a) Does this initiative give equal consideration to the health, well-being and independence of persons with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

b) Are all social opportunities, events and activities in the related environment and community accessible and inclusive?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

c) Does this initiative encourage a variety of social and inter-personal relationships, especially those that provide emotional support and social participation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

d) Are all opportunities for personal growth and advancement equally accessible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

If necessary, attach or continue additional notations on the back of this page.

DISABILITY ISSUES ANALYSIS

CONCLUSION

Every "Yes" response reflects positive impacts on persons with disabilities and moves this initiative another step closer towards equity. Positive responses to the following overarching questions affirms that every attempt has been made to ensure this initiative is equitable for persons with disabilities.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS	YES	NO
a) Have all components of this initiative been reviewed using the Disability Lens?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Were the possible impacts of this initiative for persons with agility, mobility, mental/cognitive, hearing, speech, and visual disabilities accounted for?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have the impacts of this initiative been considered according to gender, culture, age, marital status, sexual orientation, geographic location, and income level?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Does this initiative support full participation and independence and reflect positive images of persons with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Have specific actions been taken to remove existing barriers and increase opportunities and choices for persons with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Have accommodations been identified which someone with a disability would need to participate in this initiative?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Have all NO responses to the questions in the Disability Lens Issues Analysis been addressed to reflect positive outcomes and equity for persons with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Was consultation sought from the Office for Disability Issues as well as experts drawn from the communities of persons with disabilities and/or other disability related resources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If necessary, attach notations on the back of this page.

CONTACT INFORMATION:



This document is a publication of the British Columbia Office for Disability Issues. Copies may be obtained from the address below or from the Office for Disability Issues Web Site at <http://indie.ca/strategy>

OFFICE FOR DISABILITY ISSUES

P.O. Box 9567
Victoria, BC V8W 9K1
Tel: (250) 387-3813
Fax: (250) 387-3114
TDD: (250) 387-3555
E-mail: EST_ODI@galaxy.gov.bc.ca

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upon request.



EXPANSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Goal:

We have talked about expanding the PWDAC Committee to better reflect HRDC's mandate as it relates to people with disabilities.

The following is a list of the various programs and services that HRDC offers that are related to PWD. The key questions that need to be answered are: 1) Who should speak to these issues from an external and internal position? (Suggestions have been offered) and 2) If we expand the committee to include those groups and individuals listed below, should invitees attend all meetings, or on an as need basis when issue related to topic area are being discussed?

ISSUES IDENTIFIED TO DATE:

INCOME SUPPORT ISSUES:

- **CPP**
CPP Disability is presently undergoing changes. They have removed some of the disincentives that have prevented people who are on CPP to return to work. However, changes don't go far enough and several pilots are underway to break down some of the significant barriers that still prevent people with disabilities from returning to work

Internal: Gary Goodwin Partnership Coordinator (SSER)

Steve Barnard, CPP Regional Director.

External: B. C. Coalition of People with Disabilities

- **OAS**
A lot of older workers are being laid off and are not able to find work for the few remaining years that they have left before qualifying for various pensions including OAS. As a result many will live their remaining years

in poverty. If the retirement age is increased to 68, then a lot of these people will have longer periods of time where they will be out of work, unable to collect pensions. Therefore a lot of seniors with disabilities could be living in poverty, which could put a larger strain on our Income Assistance Programs.

Internal: Steve Barnard

External: One Voice

- VRDP

Consultations have begun and throughout the rest of this year, this will be a high priority issue for the disability community. Once implementation is underway, the community will continue to monitor how well the new program is assisting people with disabilities return to the workforce.

Internal: Janice Nelson, Program Review Officer, Cost Shared Program.

External: May want to consider adding an educational institution such as the DRC, or Rick Hansen Institute or a group such as the Neurological Society.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PART I ISSUES

Part of the savings to EI Part II will be used to develop additional programs and services to assist people who are not working to return to the labour force. There is some interest in discussing how EI Part 11 funds can be used to expand services provided by disability organizations in B.C.

Internal: Manager of Programs Charles Perrin and/or Maureen Zarzycki, Program Consultant.

External: EAS Third Party contractors i.e., WIDHH and Coast Foundation.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PART II ISSUES:

- Opportunities Fund

Opportunities Fund is presently being implemented. by this fund. The Committee will want to monitor how the fund is used here in B.C.

Internal: Same as above

External: Same as above

RELATED ISSUES:

- Labor Market Agreements

Will continue to monitor the process as the agreement is worked out.

Internal: Shirley Robertson

External: Committee members

- Labour Market Information Services

A lot of what we do here at RHQ is ensuring that the public has a good understanding of labour market information. We put out various publications and collect statistics on labour market trends. However, we need to improve our ability to collect statistics that reflect how People with Disabilities are accessing the labour market, nor are our publications accessible to PWD in alternate formats.

Internal: Larry Warren, Coordinator of Labour Market Information Services and/or Derek Brackley, Economist.

External: Committee as a whole, can respond to this issue don't need additions.

- NGO's - Funding/Regional Delivery

Discussions are ongoing about National Funding to National Disability Organizations. The Region could be involved in pilot projects.

Internal: Anne can keep in contact with ODI and or Employability and Social Partnerships Branch for details.

External: The committee as a whole.

- Aboriginal Bilaterals

We have one of the most active groups in Canada that advocate for Aboriginal peoples who have disabilities - BCANDS. The HRDC Transition Team is presently in a transition phase where bilateral agreements are being written with various Aboriginal groups and we therefore need to ensure that the needs of Aboriginal peoples with disabilities are taken into consideration

Internal: A rep. from the Transition Team

External: BCANDS

- Partnership Projects:

- ⇒ Community Resource Network

- ⇒ BCPA Project

- ⇒ CPP Disability

- ⇒ Consultation Project

We are involved in a variety of pilot projects. On an as need basis, representatives from these pilots could be involved and attend meetings.

Internal: Individuals who are involved in the pilots i.e. Gary Goodwin.

External: Reps from various projects, i.e. BCPA project - BCPA.

LABOUR

- Labour Market Adjustments

We are developing some pilot project ideas with our Labour Market Adjustment Consultants who work with sectors such as Fisheries and Forestry. Consultants develop programs that assist people in these sectors that are in danger of losing their jobs. Consultants are interested in doing some work with employers to improve the employability of persons with disabilities.

Internal: Consultants such as Richard DeBeck

External: The committee as a whole.

- Employment Equity

We are responsible for the Employment Equity Act. The new legislation has more "teeth" in it and all Federal government departments must comply. The committee may want to take a more active interest in how the B.C. Region will comply internally. We also have the Federal Contractors Program, where companies with over 100 employees must adhere to the Employment Equity Act.

Internal: Joanne Ursino (Federal Contractors Program) Bonnie Smith (Employment Equity internally);

- Occupational Health and Safety

This program ensures that our employees work in safe conditions. This includes making sure that premises are safe and accessible for employees and visitors who have disabilities.

Internal: Representative from Occupational Health and Safety Branch.

External: The committee as a whole.

GENERAL ISSUES:

- Canada Student Loans

HRDC presently operates the Canada Student Loan Program. PWD's can apply for student loans and if they require additional disability related supports, they can apply for grants to cover these costs (Special Opportunities Grants). VRDP rarely pays for University Education and now people with disabilities are carrying large debts that need to be paid off once work is found. If work is not found, the loans are forgivable. However, in many cases, pwd tend to be underemployed end up with huge debts to pay off. This debt loan can be a disincentive for people to take work, particularly entry level positions.

Internal: This is a fund that is operated from Ottawa.

External: BCEADS, DRC? Rick Hansen Institute?

- Child Care

We presently have through Strategic Initiatives a series of pilots are underway that will address the issue of making our child care system more accessible to people with disabilities. Without accessible day care, many PWD could not work.

Internal: Janice Nelson, Child Care Initiatives.

External: DAWN

- Youth

Youth are a priority of this government and the committee should ensure that issues that affect Youth with disabilities are addressed. We have had excellent success with youth internship programs that address the needs of youth with disabilities. But programs such as this need to be increased.

Internal: Irene Lugsdin, Chief Youth Initiatives.
External: Youth Employment Readiness Program

External:

1. ORW
2. CNIB
3. POLARIS
4. NEIL SQUIRE FOUNDATION
5. CPA
6. BCEADS
7. DAWN CANADA
8. IAM CARES
9. GVAD
10. CHHA
11. COAST FOUNDATION
12. BCANDS
13. ONE VOICE
14. BCCPD
15. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT READINESS PROJECT
16. COALITION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
17. CHILD CARE?
18. DRC? RICK HANSEN INSTITUTE?

Internal:

1. Gary Goodwin Partnership Coordinator (SSER)
 2. Steve Barnard, CPP/OAS
 3. Charles Perrin and/or Maureen Zarzycki, Program Unit
 4. Janice Nelson, Cost Shared Programs
 5. Rep from Aboriginal Transition Team
 6. Larry Warren, Planning and Analysis (Labour Market Info Services)
 7. Derek Brackley, Economist, Planning and Analysis
 8. Irene Lugsdin, Youth
 9. Richard DeBeck, Sector Consultant
 10. Joanne Ursino, Employment Equity Act
 11. Bonnie Smith, Regional Employment Equity Coordinator.
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