



**Premier's Council on the Status
of Persons with Disabilities**

Annual Report 2010/11



**THE PREMIER'S
COUNCIL** on the Status of
Persons with Disabilities

Government of Alberta ■

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Vision, Mission and Principles

Vision

Alberta is an inclusive and barrier-free society.

Mission

The mission of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities (Council) is to advise, report to, and make recommendations to the Government of Alberta on matters relating to the opportunity for full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in the life of the province. It does this by listening to the opinions of the disability community, communicating their ideas and concerns to the Government of Alberta and the broader community, and working with governments, community organizations, and other stakeholders towards solutions.

Principles

Council has agreed on the following interrelated principles to guide the pursuit of its vision, mission, key strategic direction, and strategic objectives:

Equal status, personal contribution, and inherent worth

Council promotes activities that recognize the equal status of persons with disabilities as contributing citizens of Alberta.

Equity of opportunity

Council is committed to actions that remove barriers to full inclusion in society and promote full participation in community life.

Individual responsibility and personal control

Council supports systems that provide the opportunity for informed choice and believes that all individuals, including those with disabilities, are responsible, within their individual capacities, for their own lives and their obligations as citizens.

Citizen-centered planning

Council endeavours to represent the disability community to government in order to ensure that the voices of persons with disabilities, as expressed through Council, are included whenever policies or practices that impact their quality of life or status as citizens are being considered.

Letter of Transmittal

September 1, 2011

Honourable Ed Stelmach
Premier of Alberta
307 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

Dear Premier:

I have the privilege of presenting the 22nd annual report of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities (Council). This report covers the activities undertaken by your Council during the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011. It is submitted in accordance with s.7 (1) of the *Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities Act* for your presentation to the legislative assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

MIKE HAMBLY on behalf of
MARLIN STYNER, Chair
Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Letter from the Chair

I have the honour to once again present the annual report of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities (Council). This report highlights the activities Council has been involved in during the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011, and as you will discover, it was another busy year.

Council aimed to improve the lives of persons with disabilities by spending time in the community, listening to what is important to Albertans in regards to disability issues, and communicating this information to the Government of Alberta. When invited by the government to provide a written response on various topics from the perspective of persons with disabilities, Council was pleased to do so.

Council's key strategic direction stated: *Alberta is the model for best practices in universal access*. Council developed a presentation to promote Universal Design in Alberta and presented to various groups with the belief this work benefits not only persons with disabilities, but all Albertans. Council also pursued a range of other activities that support its overall Vision: Alberta is an inclusive and barrier-free society.

I welcomed Genia Leskiw, MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, who joined Council as Deputy Chair in March 2010. Genia replaced MLA Verlyn Olson when MLA Olson took on his new role as the Honourable Minister of Justice and Attorney General. He was a valued member of Council and we wish him well.

I thank Council members and the secretariat for their hard work and commitment over the past year. The team effort has supported our journey on the path to full inclusion for persons with disabilities.

Sincerely,

MARLIN STYNER, Chair
Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Strategic Plan Highlights

Council developed a strategic plan to guide its work, support the government's priorities, and align with its **key strategic direction**:

Alberta is the model for best practices in universal access.

Council focused its work on **four related areas**. The following section provides information about the results in each area.

1 Build stronger connections to the community

PURPOSE:

- To set priorities for Council's future work, identify the community's ideas for best practices, address Council's mandate and functions, and provide a voice for community interests to the government.

ACTIVITIES:

- Developing a framework for identifying key stakeholders and engaging in conversations to learn about community interests.

RESULTS:

- The framework was completed.
- Council members met with several key community stakeholders and participated in 28 community events.

2 Provide better advice to the government

PURPOSE:

- To support government's use of Council as an effective resource and enhance the government's understanding and response to the interests of the community of Albertans with disabilities.

ACTIVITIES:

- Tracking its effectiveness at providing advice for the government.
- Providing advice to the government when requested.
- Identifying and acting on opportunities to improve government's understanding of disability issues.
- Reviewing government's plans to look for possible connections to disability interests.
- Increasing Council's awareness of issues.

RESULTS:

- Council provided written input for the Alberta Health Act and the Active Alberta Policy.
- Council participated in consultation sessions on remuneration for the Agency Governance Secretariat, considerations for the Alberta Health Act and issues related to the non-profit voluntary sector.
- Council presented about the joint interests of seniors and people with disabilities and the value of Universal Design.
- Council provided disability awareness training for several MLAs.
- Council met with MLAs for a Meet and Greet function.
- Implications from ministries' business plans were discussed as opportunities presented themselves.
- Council participated in conferences to learn about issues relating to care-giving, ethics, self advocacy, and education.

3 Promote inclusive government services and communities

PURPOSE:

- To connect the interests of people with disabilities to their communities and their government leaders.

ACTIVITIES:

- Coordinating International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) celebrations in select communities.
- Managing presentations of the Premier's Council Awards in conjunction with these celebrations.
- Continuing to enhance Council's awareness of Universal Design.
- Creating and using materials for presentations on Universal Design.
- Updating the *Disability Lens* that was created as an appendix in Council's 2002 *Alberta Disability Strategy*.

RESULTS:

- Council sponsored IDPD celebrations in seven municipalities and participated in several additional local events.
- Council recognized efforts across Alberta to build inclusive communities by selecting and presenting its four Premier's Council Awards of Excellence and Gary McPherson Leadership Award.
- Council members received additional training on Universal Design and Council provided six presentations on the topic.
- Council members participated on relevant committees such as the Inclusion Edmonton initiative, the Alberta Committee for Citizens with Disabilities' accessible medical facilities project, and the Promoting Universal Design Committee.
- Council published and distributed two newsletters about topics of interest for people with disabilities to key stakeholders in the community and government.
- The *Disability Lens* was renamed the *Inclusion Lens* and other revisions were initiated.

4 Enhance council's effectiveness

PURPOSE:

- To ensure Council is as effective as possible in order to support the interests of Albertans with disabilities in making their communities accessible and inclusive.

ACTIVITIES:

- Participating in the review of Council.
- Increasing the number of ways feedback is provided to Council.
- Building on Council's self evaluation.
- Developing and using a peer evaluation.

RESULTS:

- Council's input was provided to the review.
- All Council products were monitored, evaluated and strategies for improvement were identified.
- Team and peer evaluations were also conducted and improvement strategies were identified and used.
- Improvements included reducing the number of Council meetings so more time could be spent in the community, striking efficient working groups to complete Council tasks, and updating operational terms of reference and procedures.

In summary, Council completed all the activities it had intended to complete within expected timelines, results and available resources. Several of the activities carry into the next fiscal year and Council is anticipating continued progress.

Council's Activities

The following points highlight several of the major events Council members participated in during the year.

Consultations and Presentations

- In April 2010, the Chair and manager from the secretariat were asked to deliver a presentation on Universal Design at an architects' conference in Banff, Alberta. The presentation was well received and provided cross-disability information for consideration in architectural designs.
- Council provided speakers on topics related to disability issues such as Universal Design at events ranging from inclusion workshops, accessible parks and arts celebrations, and caregivers' conferences throughout the year.
- Council members participated in their local municipal planning discussions about inclusive communities.
- In August 2010, members of Council contributed to a discussion about remuneration organized by the Agency Governance Secretariat.

Tours and Conferences

- Council helped plan and provided a keynote speaker for an employment workshop in Medicine Hat in April 2010. Attendees indicated their awareness of disability barriers increased as a result of the event.
- Council members attended conferences on human rights, ethics, and accessible housing and shared their learning with colleagues. Conferences also resulted in opportunities to share ideas and interests with key stakeholders.
- In January 2011, Council accepted an invitation to tour the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital. Several Council members were able to participate in this tour. The Glenrose's vice-president, Isabel Henderson, provided an introduction to several different units, and members were able to observe state-of-the-art

rehabilitation equipment and practices. The tour ended with an opportunity to attend a roundtable with the department's representatives. The discussion provided insight into different policies and procedures that were directly related to Council's business plan and mandate.

Advice from Council

- Council responded to a request to share its views on the new Alberta Health Act with the Minister's Advisory Committee on Health (MACH). Council provided a written response addressing the perspective and interests of persons with disabilities.
- Council provided a written response to the Active Alberta policy that encouraged opportunities for persons with disabilities to engage in active lifestyles.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities events

The United Nations first declared December 3 the International Day of Disabled Persons in 1992. In 2007, the name was changed to the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD). This day helps increase awareness and education about the rights and abilities of people with disabilities.

IDPD is recognized in communities across Alberta. The theme, "Nothing About Us Without Us," reminds people that individuals with disabilities need to be part of the decision-making process for programs and policies, and whenever decisions affect them.

Council worked with a committee of community representatives to organize events in Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat. A Council member was present at each of these events to bring a message from Council and to present a Council Award if there was an award recipient in that region.

Council lead the provincial coordination of events and provided promotional support such as media kits and newspaper ads. IDPD events encouraged Albertans to celebrate the achievements of persons with disabilities and to make full citizenship a reality for all.

Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities Awards

The Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities Awards were presented by Council members to recipients around the province. The Awards honoured Albertans whose outstanding leadership contributed to improvements in the lives of people with disabilities.

RECIPIENTS OF THE 2010 AWARDS:

Gary McPherson Leadership Award

The Gary McPherson Leadership Award is presented to individual Albertans who have demonstrated outstanding leadership or achievement in enhancing or enriching the lives of persons with disabilities.

Dr. Robert Steadward has dedicated more than 37 years to pioneering and advancing sports for persons with disabilities and inclusion for all. He was instrumental in creating the International Paralympics Committee (IPC), which has contributed to the empowerment of persons with disabilities around the world. In 1978, he founded the Canadian Research and Training Centre for Athletes with a Disability. Most recently, Robert received the highest honour the Province of Alberta can bestow on a citizen, being inducted into the Alberta Order of Excellence. His outstanding career, vision, and extensive volunteer work reflect his passion for raising awareness of disability issues.

Award of Excellence in Public Awareness

The Award of Excellence in Public Awareness is presented to a person, team, or organization that has increased the public's awareness of the benefits and value of a barrier-free, inclusive environment.

Cal Schuler is a disability consultant with his own Calgary company, Spectra Alternative Solutions. He has raised public awareness and reduced barriers for people with disabilities through networking with government, educational institutions, and community organizations. Cal demonstrates his commitment and leadership skills by delivering community presentations on diversity and sensitivity awareness, accessibility, education, and employment for persons with disabilities.

Award of Excellence in Education

The Award of Excellence in Education is presented to a person, team, or organization that has made a significant contribution to a barrier-free, inclusive program, classroom, or facility.

The Keyano College Learner Assistance Program (LAP) is located in Fort McMurray. The LAP program provides supports and services to students with disabilities. The goal of the program is to help individuals develop skills and become independent learners. The difference LAP has made is evidenced by positive and enthusiastic feedback from all stakeholders involved, as well as the successful movement of graduates to advanced education and employment.

Award of Excellence in Employment

The Award of Excellence in Employment is presented to a person, team, or organization that has helped create a barrier-free, inclusive environment within the workplace.

Viable Calgary has developed a successful employment initiative. It includes an advertising campaign and a highly accessible website to provide information, services, and resources for employers, and connections to people with disabilities looking for employment. The initiative's work to strengthen relationships with the business community has resulted in more persons with disabilities securing meaningful employment.

Award of Excellence in Community

The Award of Excellence in Community is presented to a person, team, or organization that has made a significant contribution to a barrier-free, inclusive environment within the community.

Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village Mobility Impaired Onsite Driving Tours provides an accessible on-site driving tour that brings 80 acres of cultural landscape and an outdoor living history museum to people with disabilities. The museum developed a way to ensure that all visitors are included and able to access and experience everything the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village has to offer.

Main Council meetings

Council wanted to spend more time in the community and eliminated monthly teleconferences in favour of working in smaller groups on specific business plan activities.

Council participated in four teleconferences between April 1, 2010 and March 31, 2011. In addition, Council held two face-to-face meetings in 2010 and met again for business planning in March 2011. The topics discussed at these meetings included the following:

- Updates on Council members' activities
- Requests for Council to attend specific events taking place in the community on disability issues or interests
- Information received from the community involving disability issues such as accessible housing initiatives
- Issues arising from current events (for example, changes in health care)
- Council's response to requests for action from the community on disability issues or interests such as the need for accessible medical facilities
- Development and progress of Council's plans
- Discussions related to communication from and about Council and preparation for presentation and speaking events
- Presentations on emerging government policies and initiatives such as Alberta Supports

Committee meetings

All Council members participated in the Council's standing committees for either Policy and Procedure Review or Communications. Council members were also involved in either the Employment or Universal Design committees based on their interest and knowledge.

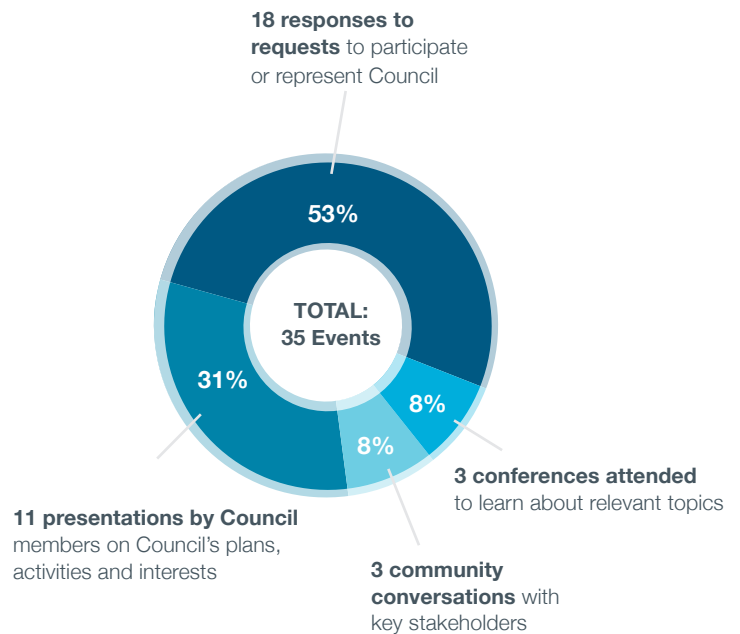
- The Policy and Procedure Review standing committee's purpose is to provide advice and direction to Council in relation to practices and planning so that Council is effective in meeting its mandate. Meetings were scheduled as needed. The tasks accomplished at the meetings included the following:
 - Updating Council's strategic plan
 - Revising the terms of reference
 - Developing a process for Council to respond to requests from Government
 - Updating the *Disability Lens*, now called the *Inclusion Lens*
 - Developing actions to respond to Council's results from self-evaluation and to enhance Council effectiveness
- The Communications standing committee's purpose is to lead Council's activities and products related to effectively sharing and generating awareness about Council's interests, objectives and the successful achievement of its mandate. Committee members participated in ten meetings. Their work included:
 - Developing communication materials for Council, including key messages for Council's strategic plan and fact sheets
 - Developing Council's *Disability in Focus* newsletter
 - Coordinating the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities Awards presentations and IDPD events around the province

- The Employment Committee partnered with key stakeholders to carry out a very successful employment diversity event in Medicine Hat, Alberta, called *Now We're Talking*. The event provided an opportunity for employers, people with disabilities and service providers to share ideas and collaborate to enhance inclusive employment. All participants indicated their awareness increased and employers said they were more interested in hiring people with disabilities.
- The Universal Design Committee developed materials to increase Council's, the government's and the public's awareness about the topic.

Meetings with the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports and the Premier of Alberta

The Minister of Seniors and Community Supports is delegated by the Premier to support the Council. The Chair and Deputy Chair met with the Minister at various times throughout the year. The meetings provided opportunities to present updates on Council's plans, activities, and issues of concern to the disability community, and to receive the Minister's feedback. Summaries from the meetings were discussed with Council members and future actions, if any, were developed at subsequent Council meetings.

In addition, the Chair and Deputy Chair met with the Premier. The meeting included updates on Council's activities and discussions about the benefits of Universal Design for all Albertans. Council's *Inclusion Lens* was highlighted as being of potential usefulness to the government as a resource for policy development.



Appendix A:

Council Members' Biographies

The information included in the following biographies of the 2010–11 Council members was current as of March 31, 2011.

Council would like to thank former Deputy Chair and Honourable Verlyn Olson, MLA, who left Council in February after his appointment to Cabinet. His invaluable contributions were appreciated, and he will be missed.



Mr. Marlin Styner,
Chair

Marlin Styner of Red Deer has volunteered and worked within the disability community since 1981.

He has been a member of several different committees that deal with disability issues. These include the Canadian Paraplegic Association Advocacy Committee, the Provincial Barrier-Free Transportation Committee, the Spinal Cord Injury Collaboration Initiative, the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (National), and the Alberta Disability Coalition.

Marlin has advocated for persons with disabilities and presented on such topics as injury prevention, motivation, universal design, and barrier-free access, transition and living with a disability, and disability and travel.



Mrs. Genia Leskiw,
Deputy Chair

Genia Leskiw was elected to her first term as an MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake on March 3, 2008.

In addition to serving as Council's Deputy Chair, she is also a member of the Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing Committee; the special standing committee on Members' Services; MLA Liaison on Alberta Innovates-Energy and Environment; Chair of the Advisory Council on Alberta-Ukraine Relations; the primary MLA liaison for the Persons with Developmental Disabilities program and the Caucus Policy Committee for Health.

Prior to serving as an MLA, Genia taught for 36 years. In 1995 she was nominated for an Excellence in Teaching Award, and in 2005 she was honoured with an Alberta Centennial Award. Very active in her community, Genia has volunteered with various organizations and associations.



Mr. Dan Bojarski

Dan Bojarski is from St. Brides, near St. Paul. He is a businessman who has demonstrated great capacity for and success in hiring employees with a variety of disabilities.

Dan likes to describe how these employees have also become his friends. As a result of his experiences, Dan promotes inclusive employment practices. He is an industrial engineering technologist and a director of the St. Paul and District Chamber of Commerce.



Mr. Bryce Clarke

Bryce Clarke of Ardrossan has worked as a police officer with the Edmonton Police Service for the past 10 years.

He is proficient at public speaking and conflict resolution, and has been honorary Chair of the Edmonton Rick Hanson Wheels in Motion event.

Bryce is involved in the Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES) program at the University of Alberta's Steadward Centre. This exercise clinic offers assisted physical activity opportunities to individuals with spinal cord injuries.

As a quadriplegic, Bryce brings to Council his experiences of living with a disability in a rural area.



Mr. Mike Hambly

Mike Hambly of Calgary currently works with the Canadian Paraplegic Association. His role is to decrease employment barriers for people with disabilities and to help them find work.

Mike has participated on a number of committees, including the Access Calgary Advisory Committee, the Advisory Committee on Accessibility, and many other related disability committees.

Mike brings a unique perspective to Council. He is blind, has paraplegia, and uses a guide dog that has been trained to support his use of a manual wheelchair. He also operates his own business which converts information into Braille.



Dr. John Letter

John Letter is from Calgary and is currently a professor and the medical director of pediatric rehabilitation at the Alberta Children's Hospital.

John's career includes many years of dedication and special interest in the area of children and youth with physical disabilities.



Mr. Austin Mardon

Austin Mardon of Edmonton has been a member of several committees over the years, including the Edmonton Public Library Board, Alberta Disabilities Forum, Edmonton Clubhouse Society, Schizophrenia Society of Alberta (Edmonton Chapter), and Schizophrenia Society of Alberta (Provincial Chapter).

He lives with a mental illness and believes that including people with mental illnesses in the community is important and can substantially improve their quality of life.

Austin has authored over 200 peer-reviewed articles and several books. He received the Congressional Antarctic Service Medal (U.S.) in 1988, and in October of 2007 was invested with the Order of Canada for Mental Health Advocacy.



Ms. Diane Ridley

Diane Ridley of Thorsby brings a cross-disability perspective to Council. She has a wide range of experience with issues that affect persons with disabilities living in rural areas, such as transportation and isolation.

She has served on several boards at the municipal level and has extensive experience with government programs, including Handicapped Children's Services (currently called Family Support for Children with Disabilities), Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL), and Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH).

Diane also has a personal commitment to advocacy on behalf of persons with disabilities as her daughter, now a young adult, has had a disability since birth.



Mr. Brad Robertson

Brad Robertson of Calgary has been a strong advocate of people with disabilities through Disability Action Hall for the past seven years. He has worked as a self-employed courier in Calgary for the past six years and a courier for a reproduction company in Calgary for nine years.

Brad has a developmental disability / pervasive developmental disorder and an obsessive compulsive disorder. He has been a client advocate for the Calgary Society of Persons with Disabilities and has also been involved with Boy Scouts as a Beaver leader for the past 17 years.

Brad is a very thoughtful person with a great memory, and he is committed to the improvement of services for all Albertans with disabilities.



Ms. Amber Skoog

Amber Skoog of Picture Butte, near Lethbridge, lives with reduced vision. She currently works as an alternate-format editor and learning strategist with Lethbridge College.

Amber has various certifications in health and education. She has considerable experience working with seniors and persons with disabilities.

Amber is dedicated to using her personal experience and substantial knowledge to address disability issues for individuals and communities.



Mrs. Kuen Tang

Kuen Tang of Edmonton currently works as a client services coordinator with the Canadian Paraplegic Association.

Kuen also creates logos, constructs the text for graphic novels, and works with wood. She has taught computer skills to people with disabilities and at-risk youth at the Ability Society of Alberta.

Kuen brings to Council her experience volunteering at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, where she demonstrated life-management skills during Spinal Cord Injury Week and Children's Wheelchair Camp.

Kuen has been recognized for her groundbreaking graduation from the University of Alberta, where she earned a Bachelor of Elementary Education. She continues to demonstrate that it is possible for a person with quadriplegia to achieve great success.



Ms. Pamela Wagner

Pamela Wagner is a registered social worker and certified human resources professional. She has worked for 30 years in not-for-profit disability service organizations, helping people and organizations make a better connection between themselves and their environment.

Pam holds a Master of Educational Psychology degree with a specialization in rehabilitation services. She owns and operates a human relations consultation business in Medicine Hat and serves on the board of the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work.



Ms. Carmen Wyton

Carmen Wyton of St. Albert currently works in stakeholder relations and previously was the president and CEO of Special Olympics Alberta. She has also been the president and executive director of the Multiple Sclerosis Society (Alberta Division), director of development for the Arthritis Society (Alberta and NWT Division), managing director of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, and executive director of the Southeast Edmonton Seniors Association.

Carmen is well known and respected for her knowledge of and commitment to improving the lives of people with disabilities. She is recognized for her ability to apply innovative programming to meet the needs of organizations and clients.

As Carmen herself has Multiple Sclerosis, she also brings the perspective of having a progressive disability.



Mr. Verlyn Olson, Deputy Chair (to February 2011)

Verlyn Olson, QC, was elected to his first term as an MLA for Wetaskiwin-Camrose on March 3, 2008.

In addition to his service as Deputy Chair on Council, he also served as Chair of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Workforce Planning Committee. Verlyn was a member of the standing committees on Public Accounts, Private Bills, and Health.

Prior to serving as an MLA, Verlyn was a partner with the law firm Andreassen Olson Borth, where his practice focused primarily on real estate, wills, and estates, and counselling small businesses, farmers, families, seniors, and dependent adults.

Appendix B:

Financial Information

Council is supported by a secretariat through the Ministry of Seniors and Community Supports. Expenditure officer authority resides with the Ministry. Council is not directly responsible for its budget or expenditures but does have input into decisions that affect how resources are allocated. Council also receives reports on expenditures related to its activities.

Council is allocated a budget each year to cover the expenses associated with meeting its mandate and business plan objectives. For the fiscal year 2010-11, Council was allocated \$226,000 and \$181,613 was expended. Typical expenses include honoraria and expenses for members, meeting costs, International Day of Persons with Disabilities contracts, and production of newsletters and the annual report. Council members are paid honoraria in accordance with rates in the provincial government's Committee Remuneration Orders.

Council's expenditures are included in the Ministry's annual report.



Contact Information:

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**THE PREMIER'S
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