

FUTURE DIRECTIONS



FUTURE DIRECTIONS
to Address Disability Issues
for the Government of Canada:
*Working Together for
Full Citizenship*

Introduction

Disability touches all Canadians. It does not distinguish between age, gender or socio-economic class. Persons with disabilities are our parents, our brothers, our sisters, our colleagues, our friends, our neighbours and ourselves.

Approximately 4.2 million of us — one in six Canadians of all ages — have a disability. In many communities the rate is even higher. For example, approximately 30 per cent of Aboriginal adults report a disability, more than double the national rate.

The reality today is that persons with disabilities still face barriers that prevent them from participating fully in Canadian society.

This is an issue that confronts us within families, in educational and training institutions, in the workplace, in community groups and in every other aspect of Canadian life.

The social and economic development of our country depends on all Canadians having an equal chance to contribute their gifts and abilities.

The Government of Canada and the provinces and territories recognize that removing the barriers to full participation faced by persons with disabilities is vital to that development.

Indeed, governments have worked to remove the barriers that prevent full participation. They have done so individually, but also in partnership with other orders of government and with interested groups and individuals in all parts of Canada.

The purpose of this document is to outline the future directions the Government of Canada believes it must take to move towards full citizenship for all Canadians who are living with disabilities. These directions are consistent with the joint work begun with provinces and territories.

Working in Partnership

It is clear that addressing the entire range of disability issues requires the co-operation and hard work of everyone — governments, communities, and organizations representing persons with disabilities, educational and training institutions, the private sector and persons with disabilities and their families.

In 1996, First Ministers agreed to make addressing the needs of people with disabilities a priority. Federal, provincial, and territorial governments have been working together to better co-ordinate their efforts

in addressing disability-related issues. In the fall of 1998, the Government of Canada and the provinces and territories¹ jointly released *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues*. This framework document provides a shared vision, principles and objectives to guide future action on disability. The Social Union Framework Agreement, signed in February 1999, now provides us with shared principles and approaches to advance social policies for all Canadians, including Canadians with disabilities.

The Challenges Facing Persons with Disabilities

In order to design a new approach to disability issues, it is important to understand the types of challenges that confront persons with disabilities.

There are three main categories of issues that persons with disabilities must deal with on a daily basis, despite the efforts already deployed by governments and other partners. The first is the personal challenge of living with a disability and the individual barriers to full participation one must overcome.

¹ Quebec shares the concerns raised in the *In Unison* report. However, the Government of Quebec did not take part in the development of this document because it wishes to assume control over programs for persons with disabilities for Quebec. Consequently, any references to joint federal/provincial/territorial positions do not include the Government of Quebec.

There are barriers not only to finding and keeping a job such as accessible transportation, physical access to buildings and facilities or access to training necessary for a job, but also in gaining access to the technologies that assist persons with disabilities to participate not only in the workplace but also in the wider society.

The second is the attitudinal barriers that still exist among many people who do not understand that persons with disabilities can and do make a positive and meaningful contribution to our economy and our society. Too many people see the disability, and not the person.

The third category is what is referred to as 'systemic' challenges in many different areas, including employment, education, transportation and many others. In many ways, these are the difficulties that persons with disabilities face because government policies and support programs originally created to respond to specific needs have become complex and even confusing. These can present a real impediment or disincentive to persons making, or attempting to make, transitions from home to school to work.

Many supports are not portable, and do not necessarily follow people as they move from home to school to work. This type of inflexibility often discourages or prevents people with disabilities from joining the workforce or taking training because they fear the loss of essential disability supports and services.

These barriers too often prevent persons with disabilities from participating fully in their communities and in the workplace. As a result, persons with disabilities face much higher rates of unemployment than do other Canadians, even with the same levels of education. The situation is particularly difficult for persons with disabilities who are doubly affected because they are also members of other groups facing systemic barriers in our society. For example, women and Aboriginal Canadians with disabilities currently face the highest levels of unemployment in Canada.

Young people with disabilities also face high unemployment rates and are more often forced to work part-time and for lower pay than other young Canadians.

The result is that there is a concentration of persons with disabilities at the bottom of the income scale. More than half of persons living with disabilities, have an individual income of less than \$15,000 a year. This income disparity marginalizes this group and adds yet another challenge to individuals who are overcoming barriers to participate in the labour force.

No matter what the challenge or barrier, the end result is still the same. Persons with disabilities often lose the opportunity to fully participate in society and the economy. And Canada loses the benefit of the creativity and contribution of persons with disabilities that would otherwise enrich all of our lives.



Government of Canada Action

As mentioned, the Government of Canada has been working with provincial and territorial governments to advance work on disability issues. Provinces and territories are important partners as they have a lead role in the direct delivery of numerous programs and services in the area of disability.

A number of Royal Commissions and Parliamentary Task Forces have examined the challenges facing persons with disabilities. Several pieces of federal legislation have created different measures that help protect the rights of persons with disabilities. Protection for persons with disabilities is also specifically included under the equality rights section of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* of our Constitution. It guarantees persons with disabilities the right to equality before and under the law and to equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination.

More recently, a Federal Task Force on Disability Issues was created to hold public consultations with Canadians with disabilities to seek their advice and guidance on future government action.

Using the ideas and suggestions of the disability community, the Task Force made a number of recommendations in its report: *Equal Citizenship for Canadians with Disabilities: The Will to Act*, covering such issues as citizenship, employment, income support and taxation.

The Government of Canada responded by directly addressing a number of the recommendations within its responsibility. For instance:

- The *Canadian Human Rights Act* has been amended to add a "duty to accommodate". This amendment ensures that federal employers and service providers are supportive of, and accessible to, persons with disabilities.
- New agreements have been negotiated with the provinces under the Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) initiative. These agreements reflect an increased focus on helping people with disabilities prepare for, find and keep jobs. The Government of Canada is contributing \$193 million per year to these agreements.

- Support is being provided to national disability organizations under the Social Development Partnership Program. This program recognizes the important role these organizations play in helping identify and address issues of concern to people with disabilities.
- The Opportunities Fund has been introduced as a three-year, \$90 million federal initiative to explore new, innovative ways of helping people with disabilities integrate into the workforce.
- Tax assistance measures for disability and medical expenses have been increased, to better recognize the extra costs faced by people with disabilities.

Much progress has been made, but the Government of Canada realizes that more work needs to be done to achieve the goal of full participation for persons with disabilities.

These are important new initiatives, which build on the range of programs and activities that the Government of Canada offers in the disability area. Over 30 Government of Canada departments, agencies and commissions have ongoing programs and services to help address a variety of disability issues. (Please see [Appendix](#) for an overview)



An Approach to Disability Issues: Toward Full Citizenship

The future directions for the Government of Canada are premised on the vision of full citizenship for all Canadians — including persons with disabilities — as set out in the *In Unison* framework document published jointly by the Federal/ Provincial/ Territorial (F/P/T) Ministers responsible for Social Services.² These governments agreed that they needed to take action to improve inclusion and participation by persons with disabilities in the economic and social mainstream. To achieve this, some examples of the objectives include:

- improving access and enhancing portability of disability supports;
- improving access to government programs and services;
- promoting environments that are barrier free — for all people, of all abilities;

- promoting better access to educational and training opportunities;
- encouraging greater participation in disability issues by communities and the voluntary sector;
- encouraging greater labour force participation rates by persons with disabilities; and
- promoting greater income equality for persons with disabilities.

For the Government of Canada and for provincial and territorial governments, implementing actions relating to *In Unison* represents a shift toward a new and more inclusive approach to disability issues. It means full and equal participation. It means that our programs and services will be modernized to reflect the changed and changing needs of the disability community.

THE FOLLOWING TABLE IS A 'SNAPSHOT' OF THE NEW APPROACH OF GOVERNMENTS OUTLINED IN *IN UNISON*:

OLD CONCEPTS	NEW APPROACH
Recipients	Participants
Passive Income support	Active measures to promote employment
Dependence	Independence
Government Responsibility	Shared Responsibility
Label as 'unemployable'	Identification of Work skills
Disincentives to leave income support	Incentives to seek employment
Inadequate employment supports	Opportunities to develop skills and experience
Program-centered approach	Person-centered approach
Insufficient portability of benefits and services that are <u>not portable</u>	Portable benefits and services
Multiple access requirements	Integrated access requirements

The Policy Directions To Guide Future Action

The future directions for the Government of Canada will build on the framework contained in *In Unison* to which provinces and territories have subscribed as well. The directions reflect the building blocks of disability supports, income and employment. They also recognize the need for action on overarching priorities that will lay the foundation for sustained progress towards the vision of full citizenship for people with disabilities. To succeed, the importance of building on joint work with provinces and territories is recognized.

The future directions for the Government of Canada are designed to:

- a) Increase accountability and improve policy and program coherence;
- b) Build a comprehensive base of knowledge;
- c) Build the capacity of the disability community;
- d) Address the acute needs of Aboriginal people with disabilities;
- e) Improve access and remove barriers to disability supports and income;
- f) Enhance the employability of persons with disabilities;
- g) Reduce injury and disability rates by prevention and health promotion.

These directions will build on the actions the government has already undertaken within its own responsibility and with other partners and set the framework for sustainable action in the long term.

A) INCREASE ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPROVE POLICY AND PROGRAM COHERENCE

The Government of Canada is already working with provinces and territories to better measure progress. At the same time, co-ordination between departments and agencies and policy and program coherence at the federal level needs to be strengthened. The Minister of Human Resources Development has the lead role on disability for the Government of Canada, however, action on disability is shared across many departments and agencies. To achieve concerted and sustained action on disability, the Government of Canada recognizes the need to increase public accountability and improve the ability to measure progress on disability issues.

The Government of Canada also recognizes the need for legislative measures to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, and the need to examine its current legislative framework and determine its adequacy. Measures are also required to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are addressed in all new Government of Canada legislation, policies and programs.

The Government of Canada will:

- continue to work with provincial and territorial governments on development of a joint federal/provincial/territorial accountability framework to measure progress made toward the *In Unison* vision. This could include regular reports, outcome measures and a disability lens to be developed in consultation with the disability community. In addition, the Government of Canada will develop an accountability framework for federal departments and agencies consistent with that developed at the F/P/T level. This will include regular reports that will tell Canadians what progress is being made by the Government of Canada on disability issues and what challenges remain.

- use the recently announced review of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* as the first step in assessing whether the existing legal protections are adequate to protect the rights of people with disabilities within its jurisdiction.

As part of its initiative to improve policy and program coherence, the Government of Canada will also continue to improve access to its programs, information and services by people with disabilities, including:

- expanding the Depository Services Program to include sites providing alternative formats;
- strengthening access policies through the introduction of standards on alternate formats and universal access; and
- ensuring service delivery staff are aware of best practices and are equipped to meet access requirements of their clients with disabilities.

B) BUILD A COMPREHENSIVE BASE OF KNOWLEDGE

Gaps in data on persons with disabilities make it difficult to draw a comprehensive profile of clear-cut trends and develop policies.

Gaps also make it difficult to measure our progress on addressing disability issues. To resolve this concern, the Government of Canada will contribute to building a comprehensive base of knowledge on disability by:

- funding the preliminary developmental work of the 2001 Health and Activity Limitations Survey (HALS), a post-censal survey last published in 1991;
- improving disability supplements to existing longitudinal surveys; and
- working with other orders of government, the research, disability and Aboriginal communities to launch a research agenda to ensure there is an accurate picture of the living and working conditions faced by persons with disabilities in Canada, including research on Aboriginal people.

C) BUILD THE CAPACITY OF THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY

The disability community already plays an important role in identifying disability issues. The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of continuing to work with the disability community as well as the need to increase its policy and research capacity.

To help the disability community increase its capacity to contribute to policy and program development and participate as full partners toward the vision of full citizenship, the Government of Canada will:

- continue to provide funding through the Social Development Partnership Program and to encourage community input and collaboration;
- promote and foster partnerships among disability organizations, voluntary groups and the private sector;
- provide and support events and mechanisms which encourage greater engagement, community deliberation and consultation; and
- encourage the flow of information and knowledge through improved research networks and enhanced research capacities by non-governmental organizations.

D) ADDRESS THE ACUTE NEEDS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Aboriginal Peoples on and off reserve have a higher incidence of disability than other groups. Based on 1991 data, Aboriginal adults have double the national rate (30 per cent) and for those aged 15-34 years old, the rate is three times the national rate. Given the unique circumstances and the high rate of disability of this community, the Government of Canada will:

- ensure that the needs of Aboriginal persons with disabilities are addressed across all components of policy and program development of these future directions for the Government of Canada;
- further assess the impact of the high rate of disability among Aboriginal populations; and
- develop a longer-term action plan to identify gaps in federal programs and services.

E) IMPROVE ACCESS AND REMOVE BARRIERS TO DISABILITY SUPPORTS AND INCOME

The current system of disability supports and services is often complex and supports do not always follow the individual from school to work to the community. Disability supports include both the technical aids/devices and human assistance that people with disabilities need to assist with daily living. There are many players involved in the provision of supports and services, and provinces and territories in particular play a major role in their development, funding and delivery. The key income security program for persons with disabilities at the federal level is provided through the Canada Pension Plan (CPP-Disability Program). Recently, a number of changes have been made to improve work incentives, vocational rehabilitation, information sharing, and client service.

In addition, the Government of Canada will:

- discuss with provincial and territorial governments, and Aboriginal representatives, the possibility of national, provincial and territorial studies aimed at testing innovative methods to ensure disability supports are available through life transition stages;
- as referenced in the 1999 Budget, set up an enhanced First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care program, over the next three years, that will support the development of home and community care services on-reserve and in Inuit communities.

It will build on and link with current Health Canada home care nursing services, as well as Adult Care homemaking and other related programs offered by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada; and

- continue to improve the administration of the CPP disability program, including better and more frequent communication with clients and stakeholders, as well as building on previous work to increase return to work opportunities.

F) ENHANCE THE EMPLOYABILITY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Having a job is an important part of participating and contributing fully to society. Yet, people with disabilities often face obstacles that keep them from participating in the labour force. In fact, for many people with disabilities, getting a job is one of their greatest challenges. The Government of Canada and the provinces and territories have a number of initiatives in place to help people with disabilities prepare for, find and keep jobs.

There is also a high degree of collaboration among the orders of government, such as the federal/provincial/territorial agreements signed on Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD). Nonetheless, it is recognized that further action may be required to improve the labour force participation of people with disabilities.

- In partnership with provinces and territories as well as relevant groups with expertise in this area, the Government of Canada will work to develop a labour market strategy to help persons with disabilities participate in the labour force.

This will include a comprehensive assessment of the employment situation of persons with disabilities — including a review of the range of current labour market programs, services and supports such as the Opportunities Fund, EAPD, Labour Market Development Agreements, Employment Insurance — Part II, and the Youth Employment Strategy. The intent would be to report on evidence-based best practices and to recommend whether existing mechanisms could be better coordinated.

- Encourage private and public sector partnerships in order to remove barriers to employment and self-employment. The goal is to achieve broader collaboration among governments, the private sector and disability organizations on job creation.

Special attention will be paid to promoting work experience opportunities for youth with disabilities within existing programs and fostering entrepreneurship for people with disabilities. Emphasis will also be placed on enhancing the Government of Canada's role as an employer of people with disabilities, to promote best practices within the Federal Public Service and with private sector employers.

- Increase efforts to allow better access for Aboriginal persons with disabilities to the labour market. This will involve working with Aboriginal groups to develop culturally sensitive interventions that address gaps in services for Aboriginal peoples provided by the Government of Canada. Through *Gathering Strength*, First Nations are beginning to take steps to address the special learning needs of First Nations' children with disabilities living on reserve.
- Continue to improve access to information and technology to ensure that people with disabilities can participate in the growing knowledge-based

economy. New technologies can also help persons with disabilities participate fully in all aspects of society. The Government of Canada will continue to support the assistive device industry and encourage technology transfer to assist the growth of these industry sectors.

- Recognize the need for access to a broad range of supports and services – transportation, housing, goods and services. The Government of Canada

will seek further ways to improve access to the federally regulated transportation system, through research on accessible transportation, information to transportation providers and consumers and through its regulatory role. It will also examine how it can use its procurement activities to promote accessible goods, services and systems.



- Seek ways to promote universal design, recognizing that products, services and environments designed to be accessible by all Canadians enable the full participation of all members of society, including persons with disabilities. For example, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's FlexHousing promotes housing that is easily adaptable, across the lifecycle and to meet differing accessibility needs. The feasibility of applying universal design to federal buildings will also be explored.

G) REDUCE INJURY AND DISABILITY RATES BY PREVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION

The above directions address the challenges facing persons with disabilities. The Government of Canada also recognizes the importance of prevention measures designed to reduce disability rates and improve the health of persons with disabilities.

- Injuries are a leading cause of disability in Canada. The Government of Canada manages several initiatives aimed at reducing the incidence of injury in children, youth and seniors.

Through consultation with the provinces and territories, and non-governmental organizations, the Government of Canada plans to expand its prevention activities regarding unintentional and intentional injuries, in all age groups, as part of a National Strategy for Injury Prevention and Control. The Strategy will provide policy and program coherence, integrating injury prevention initiatives and encouraging collaborative efforts among injury groups.

- Recognizing the benefits of an active lifestyle to people with disabilities, the Government of Canada works in collaboration with disability organizations, voluntary groups, provinces and territories, and the private sector to promote opportunities and reduce barriers.

This involves research, promotion, training, and program development targeted at people with disabilities.

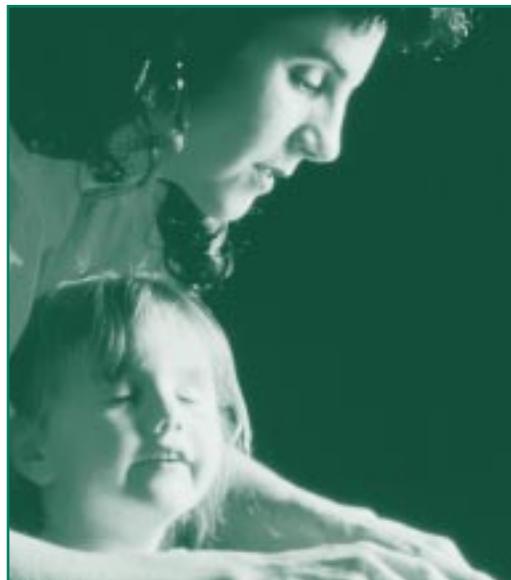
- Also, a number of targeted initiatives are being undertaken and enhanced to prevent and control diseases that may result in disabling conditions, such as diabetes, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome / Fetal Alcohol Effect, Hepatitis C, and HIV/AIDS.

Looking Ahead

These future policy directions for the Government of Canada represent the next steps in a journey which will ultimately take us to a future where all Canadians — including persons with disabilities — can enjoy full citizenship and participate fully in the development of this country.

The directions outlined above, as well as the ongoing work with provinces and territories, will help remove barriers and enhance the opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of Canadian life. They will lead to improvements in the links and connectedness of programs, and enhanced data gathering and reporting to measure progress. However, making this a reality will require the involvement of all Canadians and the support and co-operation of all of the partners - governments at all levels, the private sector, communities, stakeholder and voluntary sector groups, persons with disabilities and their families. While governments at all levels can help by providing leadership, expertise and resources, everyone must get involved if we are to succeed in removing attitudinal barriers and opening up opportunities to all Canadians.

Recognizing that any new investment may be constrained by limited fiscal resources, the Government of Canada in consultation with provinces, territories, Aboriginal representatives, community representatives and persons with disabilities, will determine priorities prior to the introduction of any new federal initiatives in the disabilities area.



Appendix

Government of Canada Disability-related Programs and Services

The Government of Canada offers a broad range of programs and services to address disability issues and enable people with disabilities to participate in the economic and social life of Canada. The following provides examples of the types of programs and activities underway in federal departments and agencies. In addition to these specific initiatives, progress is being made to ensure that **all** federal programs and services are accessible to persons with disabilities.

- **Human Resources Development Canada** (HRDC) has the lead role in the disability area. It has a number of initiatives to help people with disabilities prepare for, find and keep employment including the Opportunities Fund and the federal-provincial Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities initiative. It also helps young people with disabilities gain access to post-secondary education and to the work experience they need to get jobs.

Organizational and project funding is provided to national disability organizations under the Social Development Partnership Program. HRDC also administers federal income support programs, including benefits to contributors under the Canada Pension Plan whose disabilities prevent them from working. Under its Labour Program, HRDC supports activities related to occupational health and safety, and provides training to assist employers in implementing equity in the workplace to meet obligations under the *Employment Equity Act*.

- Through its Canadian Agriculture Safety Program, **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada** is working to prevent disabilities by reducing farm injuries and to help farm families coping with a disability to continue farming.
- **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation** supports research and information on accessible housing. Financial assistance is also available to landlords and low-income homeowners for home modifications.

- Through its Sports Canada program, **Canadian Heritage** promotes the inclusion of athletes with disabilities in mainstream sports, both nationally and internationally and provides funding to athletes with disabilities for training and competitive opportunities. Parks Canada has also taken steps to improve the accessibility of National Parks and sites.
- The **Canadian International Development Agency** integrates disability issues into Canada's international development activities through its focus on equity, poverty, basic human needs, women in development and human rights programming. It also provides programming in support of persons with disabilities, including funding for national and international non-governmental organizations which promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities.
- The **Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission** has introduced a policy requiring 'large' broadcasters to close caption all local news programming including live segments.
- Regulations and codes of practice are being developed by the **Canadian Transportation Agency** to ensure the accessibility of the national transportation system under federal jurisdiction.
- The **Canadian Human Rights Commission** is an independent agency which promotes understanding about human rights in Canada and aims to reduce barriers in the workplace and in access to programs and services. The Commission may investigate complaints of discrimination in employment and services in the federal sector, based on eleven prohibited grounds, including disability. The Commission also promotes educational activities on human rights and conducts research on disability issues.
- The **Department of Finance** works through the tax system to provide deductions or tax credits which recognize the costs associated with disabilities that may be claimed by persons with disabilities. These include the Disability Tax Credit, Medical Expense Tax Credit, the Infirm Dependent Credit and Attendant Care Deduction.
- **Foreign Affairs and International Trade** is working to integrate disability issues into Canada's international human rights and social policy agendas. At the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1992, Canada introduced the first ever resolution on Disability Issues and remains involved in its negotiations. Canada has also been active in the negotiation of the draft Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, which would be the first internationally legally binding instrument on disability.

- **Health Canada** is working to improve the health of Canadians with disabilities as well as working to reduce the incidence of disability. It does so through research and public education on the prevention of disease and the prevention of injury that can lead to disability. It also funds national, provincial and territorial pilot programs and evaluation projects to improve the health care system in areas such as home care.
- **Industry Canada** supports the assistive device industry. It helps set standards that ensure persons with disabilities have access to information technology so they will be able to participate in the growing knowledge economy.
- **Justice Canada** has improved access to the justice system for people with disabilities, through amendments to the *Criminal Code* and the *Canadian Evidence Act*. It also provides grants and contributions for projects, such as training models and education projects, which promote and implement reforms to the justice system.
- **The National Library of Canada** promotes the development and implementation of standards and best practices to make information accessible to Canadians with disabilities. It also supports the sharing of materials in alternate formats across the country through its national database of information on Canadian Library collections.
- **The Public Service Commission**, in partnership with the Treasury Board, is continuing its work to increase the representation of people with disabilities in the Federal Public Service. It does this by approving and delivering employment equity programs, enhancing recruitment and retention, and by providing guidance and services to federal departments to ensure that employees with disabilities are better accommodated in the workplace.
- **Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC)** works with federal departments to ensure that government offices and facilities are accessible to employees and to Canadians utilizing government services, as well as providing advice on barrier-free design. It continues to develop design standards, and contributes to changes in building codes and standards to make government facilities and services accessible.
- **Indian Affairs and Northern Development** provides resources to First Nation communities to enable them to provide home support services for First Nation individuals who are ill, elderly or disabled. It also provides resources for community and/or regional disability-specific activities aimed at improving awareness and access to services. Other departmental programs such as education, housing and youth employment include provisions intended to assist in responding to the special needs of First Nations living on reserve.

PWGSC will also provide sign language interpretation services to enable a person with a disability to communicate with a Member of Parliament, or a federal government official.

- **Revenue Canada** provides information to ensure people with disabilities are aware of the details on tax deductions and credits, Goods and Services Tax / Harmonized Sales Tax and customs tariffs for which they may be eligible. The Customs Tariff provides for duty free entry of certain goods for persons with disabilities. The Federal Excise Gasoline Credit Tax Refund Program is paid to eligible persons suffering from a permanent impairment of locomotion. Revenue Canada has also established a People with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PWDAC) as a forum for persons with disabilities to express their views on the way that Revenue Canada administers disability tax programs.

- **Transport Canada** initiates and participates in the development of standards and practices that make the national transportation systems accessible. It also evaluates the safety and efficiency of automotive adaptive devices as well as boarding equipment and systems for aircraft and inter-city buses. Transport Canada recently released a voluntary inter-city bus Code of Practice, which will be in place for a two-year trial period.

- **Veterans Affairs Canada** provides pensions to persons with disabilities related to wartime or peacetime military services. Disability pensioners may also be provided with an allowance for attendant care, as well as support for health care needs, residential and home care, prosthetics, orthotics, special equipment and home adaptations.

- **Western Economic Diversification** is providing support to entrepreneurs with disabilities in Western Canada through its Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program and its Urban Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Initiative.

- **Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency** is making its services available and accessible to entrepreneurs in Atlantic Canada who have a disability.

More information on the Government of Canada's programs and services of interest to people with disabilities is available in the publication "Bridging the Gap". For a copy, please contact:

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