



ᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ ᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ
Building *Nunavut* Together
Nunavut liuqatigiingniq
Bâtir le *Nunavut* ensemble

Aging With Dignity *Elders and Seniors Strategy*



Government of Nunavut
2024

Table of Contents

Message from the Premier	1
Acknowledgements	2
Aging with Dignity in Nunavut	4
What We Heard from Elders	5
Information about the Aging Population in Nunavut	10
Programs and Supports for Elders	13
Strategic Goals and Objectives	26
Path Forward	43



Message from the Premier

When it comes to our Elders, time is running out. That sense of urgency is something that our government has heard loud and clear from Elders. We need to act now to make the lives of Nunavut Elders better.

It was with this urgency in mind that our government took on the work of developing an Elder Strategy that addresses the needs of aging Nunavummiut. This strategy is fully informed by the voices of Elders from every community in our territory; their stories and lived experiences have given structure to our work.

As always, our work is informed by Inuit Qaujimaqatigiit principles, the societal value of Inuuqatigiitsiarniq, respecting others, relationships, and caring for people. As well as Tunnganarniq, fostering good spirits by being open, welcoming, and inclusive.

From the onset of the Sixth Assembly, we were conscious that our mandate needed to reflect the needs of Elders and our societal values of honouring

them and their experiences. As such, the Katujjiluta mandate released in 2022 included five key priorities including aging with dignity in Nunavut.

However, our aim to better serve our Elders informs all our work, including our efforts to build more homes, faster through the Nunavut 3000 strategy. From expanding the housing continuum to enabling health and healing, Elders and their needs have been at the forefront of our efforts.

I strongly believe that to empower our youth and build a better future for our territory we need to protect our Elders so they can continue to guide us through the next chapter in our history.

With that in mind, I look forward to implementing the whole-of-government approach outlined in this strategy. It will take working across all departments to meet the urgent needs of our Elders.

Qujannamiik



Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Elders who participated in the Regional Elders' Gatherings that took place between February and May 2023. They contributed their thoughts and concerns during the gatherings, validated the summary documents, and provided input into this strategy.

We also appreciate the work of Mary Wilman (EKho Inuit Originals) and Robyn Campbell (Lichen Consulting) for facilitating the gatherings and providing sound advice for this strategy.

Kivalliq Elders Gathering Participants



Elders: Ayowna Emiktowt (Coral Harbour), Annie P. Eetuk (Coral Harbour), Noel Kaludjak (Rankin Inlet), Cecilia Ayaruaq (Rankin Inlet), Susan Nuluk (Naujaat), David Nuluk (Naujaat), Gerard Maktar (Whale Cove), Eva Voisey (Whale Cove), Mark Amarok (Chesterfield Inlet), Philippa Aagarrk (Chesterfield Inlet), Mike Gibbons (Arviat), Lisa Gibbons (Arviat), Martin Kreelak (Baker Lake), Joan Scottie (Baker Lake).

Support team: Verna Strickland, Bernadette Dean.

Kitikmeot Elders Gathering Participants

Elders: Mary Ann Agnahiak (Kugluktuk), Jayko Palongayak (Kugluktuk), Anaoyok Alookey (Taloyoak), Simon Oleekatalik (Taloyoak), Miriam Aglukkaq (Gjoa Haven), David Siksik (Gjoa Haven), Celine Ningark (Kugaaruk), Christian Nalungiak (Kugaaruk), Jimmy Haniliak Sr. (Cambridge Bay), Jessie Lyall (Cambridge Bay).

Support team: Navalik Tologanak, Joseph Quqqiaq and Helen Klengenber.



North Qikiqtani Elders Gathering Participants



Elders: Kigutikakjuk Shappa (Arctic Bay) Tagoona Qavavauq (Arctic Bay), Boazie Ootoova (Pond Inlet), Mary Mucpa (Pond Inlet), Liza Ningiuk (Grise Fiord), Annie Audlaluk (Grise Fiord), Mary Kalluk (Resolute Bay), Kataisie Idlout (Resolute Bay), Joseph Iqquk Angutirjuaq (Clyde River).

Support team: Nina Kautuq, Elijah Tigullaraq, Jeannie Maktar, Silas Takalugark.

South Qikiqtani Elders Gathering Participants

Elders: George Auksaq (Igloolik), Charlie Uttak (Igloolik), Jimmy Manning (Kinngait), Kumaarjuk Pii (Kinngait), Itee Temela (Kimmirut), Sandy Akavak (Kimmirut), May Lonsdale (Iqaluit), Hanna Kilabuk (Iqaluit), Lew Philips (Iqaluit), Igah Kooneeliusie (Qikiqtarjuaq), Rachel Kakka (Qikiqtarjuaq), Nancy Anilniliak (Pangnirtung), Meeka Alivaktuk (Pangnirtung), Dinah Kittosuk (Sanikiluaq), Lucy Appaaq (Sanikiluaq), Jobie Kaernerik (Sanirajak), Valerie Curley (Sanirajak).

Support team: Shuvinai Mike, Innirvik Support Services.



Ottawa Elders Gathering Participants



Elders: Aigah Attagutsiak, Eta Kanayuk, Rebecca Manning, Jeanie Okalik, Eelee Higgins, Mimi Akeeagok, Reepa Evic-Carleton, Sytukie Joamie, Sipporah Enuaraq, Ruth Kadlutsiak, Elisapee Birmingham, David Erkloo, Therese Okkumaluk, Rosalie Alaralak, Deborah Tagoonak, Jeanie Kanayuk, Pitsiulala Lyta, Koomoo McLister, Mary Alainga-Fraser, Barb Sevigny, Sanija Padluq, John Angnaluak.

Support team: Joan Cunha, Zippie Nochasak, Johnny Takawgak, Martha Flaherty.

Supporters of the Regional Elders Gatherings

Elder Advisors: Miriam Aglukkak, Ilisapi Aningmiuq-Davidee, Rosemary Sandy

Gathering Facilitator: Mary Wilman

Aging with Dignity in Nunavut

Through the Katujjiluta Mandate, under Aging with Dignity in Nunavut, the Government of Nunavut committed to:

- Develop a comprehensive Elder and senior care strategy and implementation plan;
- Expedite the construction of long-term care facilities in each region of Nunavut;
- Expand and/or renovate existing continuing care facilities;
- Provide culturally and linguistically relevant training for staff working in continuing care facilities;
- Enhance supports to improve daily life in continuing care facilities;
- Encourage community initiatives to provide programs and supports for Elders and seniors for independent or assisted living; and
- Provide Elders with access to more country food.

“ We will invest in providing care for aging Nunavummiut so our grandparents and parents can live their last years in dignity, closer to family in our territory.

- Katujjiluta Mandate

These initiatives are intended to improve everyday life for Nunavummiut as they age; enhance long-term care facilities and support for Elders living independently; reduce the number of Elders who have to leave their home communities for care; employ more trained Inuit care workers for Elders; improve the mental health, physical health, and well-being of aging Nunavummiut; and develop enduring partnerships within is organizations, communities, and the non-profit sector to enable Nunavummiut to age with dignity in Nunavut.

This Elders and Seniors Strategy builds upon the What We Heard Report which summarizes the Elders discussions at the five Regional Elders' Gatherings. This strategy also takes into account research and data gathered from Government of Nunavut departments and other sources.

What We Heard from Elders

As an essential step in the development of the comprehensive Elders and Seniors Strategy, the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs initiated consultations with Elders from every community in Nunavut. Through these consultations, Elders were invited to advise the government what they would need to be able to Age with Dignity in Nunavut.

Inuit Elders from every community in Nunavut and Inuit Elders from Nunavut now living in Ottawa participated in the consultations. Seventy-nine Elders, each recommended by their communities, took part in two-day gatherings held in four regions of Nunavut, and in Ottawa for Nunavut Elders living there. Asked to discuss what “Aging with Dignity in Nunavut” meant for them, the Elders spoke freely with each other to give their opinions, make recommendations on the type of programs or support services they would need, comment on existing services or issues that concern them, and identify their needs and priorities.

The consultation process was led by Inuit Elders, conducted in their own language, and focused directly on their experiences in articulating their vision for aging with dignity in Nunavut.

Their words, shared amongst each other during the regional gatherings, have been captured in the What We Heard, Regional Elder Gatherings for the Nunavut Elders Strategy.

The information and ideas the Elders provided through the consultation process provides the foundation for the Strategy.

Topics of discussion for Regional Elders’ Gatherings held in Nunavut were:

- What does aging with dignity in Nunavut mean to you?
- How are you being helped right now? What support services are you getting in your community? What support services are working well, what needs to be increased, and what needs to be improved?
- As people age, what do you think the additional needs are?
- What are ways to help Elders to feel safe and secure in your home communities?

Topics of discussion for the Ottawa Elders’ Gathering were:

- What does aging with dignity mean to you?
- What services or programs are you currently receiving that you could not get in Nunavut?
- Can you share with us your reason for moving to Ottawa?
- If you were to move back to Nunavut, how would it be and do you have special needs?
- What are ways that could help Elders to feel safe and secure in their communities?
- What programs would be helpful for Elders to be more active and mingle in Nunavut?

The Elders want their vision to be accepted with sincerity and respect, and to be seen as the guiding path for the next generation. Elders were asked what they would like to advise the government. They said:



- We are so grateful to be given this opportunity for us to get together and talk.
- We have repeated our needs many times to the government.
- We are still waiting to hear back from them, and now have repeated ourselves again.
- We are living in fear. We are abused. We are struggling with poverty of every kind. Our health needs are not being met. Our housing is inadequate. We are struggling for the necessities of life. This is not living in dignity.
- We don't know what it will take for the government to hear us.
- There has been no action to date. This is the last chance for action.
- We urgently need to see change.



"We are happy and thankful to be able to meet together to discuss issues like aging with dignity in Nunavut. We have already told people this many times before. When are they going to listen?"

"I want to say how grateful and proud we are that Elders are being asked for their input. We would like to hear back from you, receive updates as to where these discussions are leading and to see which recommendations have been implemented. I would like to meet again to discuss future planning. The lifestyle of Elders will change by the time the strategy is implemented."

"This is the first time I ever attended a gathering like this. It was a sort of gathering that can help us more, I am very proud, I feel a lot better to have come. Thank you. The most useful thing for me in this meeting is that we have been given a timeless opportunity to speak and have been expressing our thoughts at length. This is the first meeting of its kind where we have been able to come together and share our thoughts with no interference. We are able to express ourselves in our own language, it's better to put our thoughts together easily in Inuktitut, and we speak about whatever we want and what matters. Thank you for everything."

"I want to thank you that you didn't forget us, that you came all the way to Ottawa because you didn't forget us. Sometimes we feel we are forgotten in our own home. We sometimes wonder if anyone thinks of us anymore, even though we are Nunavut Land Claim beneficiaries. It feels good to know I am not alone. Each one of us have had very significant experiences and had other issues. Every one of us. Speaking Inuktitut in this meeting has been the greatest thing, because when you are trying to speak in English you forget things. It is a good reminder that we can own our own issues and voice them. They should be dealt with urgently."

"I felt so alone and lonely, but we have the same thoughts. This meeting is crucial and timely. We have someone who knows our thoughts."



Elders' Vision for Aging with Dignity in Nunavut

DIGNITY means having a sense of pride in oneself, and being seen by others as worthy of honour and respect. The Elders want their vision and their knowledge to be the guiding path for the next generations as expressed in this strategy. This will dignify the Elders by showing them that their contribution means something and they are worthy of respect.

The Elders said that to be able to Age with Dignity in Nunavut, they want a future where:



They will be living in a welcoming, safe, and comfortable environment where their physical, mental, spiritual, cultural, and social needs are met, and they are treated with kindness and respect. They will also have enough income to have a good quality of life.

They will be provided with housing that is designed to meet their needs as they age, is safe and secure, where they do not have to live with younger family members, and where they are protected from abuse.

Their medical care and home-care needs are met and appropriate to their physical and mental health. All care and support services they require as they age are available in their home communities, provided by trained support care workers and medical staff, and the special needs of Elders living with disabilities are met.

They contribute to society and the promotion of the Inuit culture through involvement in community affairs and activities, either individually or through a funded community Elders' committee. In each community, the Elders' committee will have permanently funded support staff and a funded gathering place, dedicated to their use, where they can meet regularly for events and activities that they enjoy, and that reduce stress and loneliness. These Elders' gathering places would also be the primary venue for them to meet and interact with youth in their community to provide support, counselling, and pass on Inuit Qaujimagatutqangit.

They are provided with a vehicle in each community designated for their use in getting around the community to attend events and activities, medical appointments, go shopping, and get to and from the airport for flights. This vehicle will be wheelchair equipped to accommodate the needs of Elders living with disabilities. The driver will be paid through the community Elders' Committee.

They will also have access to transportation – boats, snowmobiles, and ATVs – to take them on the land for traditional activities like fishing and berry-picking, and youth will be involved with them in these activities.

They will have a reliable, year-round source for country food for their personal use and for Elders' gatherings; and will be able to maintain Inuit traditions of sharing food, spending time on the land, and working with the younger generations to show them the Inuit way.

They will be actively involved in helping resolve conflict and crime in their communities as members of restorative justice committees, and as advisors to the RCMP, circuit court hearings, and the Department of Justice.

They actively contribute to community wellbeing through involvement in addictions healing programs and the treatment of abusers: ensuring that these programs are based in the Inuit way.



Information about the Aging Population in Nunavut

Increasing population of Elders

According to Statistics Canada, there were 4,415 Elders in Nunavut aged 55 and older in 2021. Of these, 2,805 (52%) Elders were between the ages of 55 and 65, indicating an immediate and urgent need to increase the capacity and availability of existing programs and services for Elders, and to plan for the new infrastructure, especially housing and care facilities, that will be needed to accommodate them.

There has been a rapid increase in the proportion of Elders within the population of Nunavut since 2001. Given the high birth rate in Nunavut, the number of Elders will continue to increase significantly for the foreseeable future. In the years to come, there will be more people aging in Nunavut, and they will have more grandchildren and great grandchildren to support.

In the 2021 Census, Elders aged 55 and older made up 12% of the population of Nunavut: the highest proportion of Elders to population recorded to date.

Implications of the increasing population of Elders

Over the next 20 years, the number of Elders in Nunavut is expected to grow by 5.7%. Many of these Elders will experience limitations in their abilities and long-term health challenges as they age. This will increase pressure on all levels of government to ensure adequate support for housing, health care, home-care, income support, and transportation.

The increase in the number of Elders will also impact younger family members and spouses who often have to take care of their aging family members. Women are predominantly the informal caregivers in their families, so an increasing number of working-age women in Nunavut will find themselves caring for their parents, in addition to their own grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

There may also be continuing and increasing challenges with staffing shortages in the healthcare workforce. To support Elders to age with dignity, suitable measures are required to meet the evolving needs of individuals as they age. Measures need to be in place to protect them physically, emotionally, and financially.

Elders living in poverty

Currently, many Inuit Elders in Nunavut are living in poverty. Many are supporting their families, facing abuse, and have limited health care. Poverty affects people's health and general wellbeing, leads to food insecurity, and can force individuals into unsafe situations.

The Government of Nunavut holds a significant role in poverty reduction. The 2013 Collaboration for Poverty Reduction Act was a collaborative effort involving the Government of Nunavut, Inuit organizations, the private sector, and communities. The Act requires the Government of Nunavut, as part of the Nunavut Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, to produce and implement a 5-year poverty reduction action plan, The Makimaniq Plan, and also produce an annual report on poverty reduction.

For Elders in Nunavut aged 65 and above, the average poverty rates in 2018-2019 ranged between 26.8% and 43.1%, according to the Market Basket Measure for Nunavut.

The Market Basket Measure for Nunavut calculates the poverty line. It provides an illustration of the poverty thresholds of a five-person family in different regions of Nunavut. There are Elders in Nunavut who are actively supporting four or more extended family members. While these calculations were based on a family including parents and children, they could equally apply to Elders supporting their adult children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

According to the Market Basket Measure for Nunavut, in 2018:

- The median income in Nunavut was \$28,270.
- 25% of Nunavummiut earned less than \$10,000.
- 57% of households in the territory were food insecure and experiencing homelessness.

The health and wellbeing of Elders living on pensions and with few other sources of regular income are especially vulnerable when living in such impoverished conditions.

Any claw backs on their benefits and punishing earning thresholds compound the problem for Elders. Action to alleviate, and eventually eliminate, poverty is needed to ensure the current generation of Elders and future generations of Elders in Nunavut can afford the necessities of life.

Housing designed for Elders

In Nunavut, the lack of housing and the level of overcrowding is extremely harmful to the quality of life of many Nunavummiut. Many Elders become obliged to accommodate their extended families in their housing units, resulting in serious overcrowding and household distress that has negative consequences for everyone.

There were fewer than 180 customized Elders' units managed by the Nunavut Housing Corporation in 2022. Fewer than 85 of these were designed and purpose-built for Elders.

Based on the Statistics Canada 2021 Census, there are an additional 6,025 people in Nunavut currently aged 40 to 55 who will become Elders during the next 15 years. This will more than double the current population of Elders.

Elders living with abuse

One of the most serious issues raised by Elders at the Regional Elders' Gatherings was the extreme levels of abuse and intimidation many of them are experiencing. Although the Elders at each Regional Elders' Gathering spoke openly and extensively about this abuse. There are no statistics publicly available to illustrate the severity of this problem in Nunavut today.

Elders said they are living with abuse almost every day, and they feel trapped and unable to escape. Elder abuse is a complex and extremely sensitive problem.

Programs and Supports for Elders

Government of Nunavut Programs and Supports

This section has been organized by Government of Nunavut department or agency. Where a program or policy is joint with another department, it has been listed under the most relevant department.

Department of Family Services

Income Assistance Program

- The income assistance program provides financial support to those ages 18 and older.
- The Income Assistance Program is a last resort intended to help Nunavut families and individuals meet their basic needs. It is intended to cover basic allowance, such as money for food, clothing, rent and utilities.
- For seniors (ages 60 and older) or people with disabilities, the program can also help to cover extended allowances. The extended allowances include money to cover costs of specific items, such as furniture, a damage/security deposit, education expenses, and emergency assistance.
- Eligibility requirements include: the individual must have a monthly financial assessment completed with an Income Assistance Worker. Seniors or individuals who have a disability or are over the age of 60 are exempt from engaging in productive choice.

Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit

- This program is delivered under the Senior Citizens Benefit Act.
- The program is administered through the federal government on behalf of Nunavut, so that eligible seniors receive one payment that includes the senior citizen supplementary benefit, guaranteed income supplement, and old age security.
- The Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit is a monthly payment of \$300 made to low-income seniors in Nunavut.
- Nunavummiut who are 60 years of age or older and are receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement or the Spouse's Allowance from the federal government are eligible. Individuals are automatically enrolled when they file their taxes.

Senior Fuel Subsidy (Family Services/Community and Government Services)

- The program helps to offset the high cost of heating fuel for seniors (ages 60 and older) who own and live in their homes. Up to 4,000 L of heating fuel per year can be offset based on an income assessment.
- Homeowners with a total net income up to and including \$75,000 may be eligible for a 100% fuel subsidy.

- Homeowners with a total net income greater than \$75,000 and less than or equal to \$100,000 may be eligible for a 50% fuel subsidy.
- Other eligibility criteria include that applicants must permanently live in Nunavut, be over 60 years old, own their home, not receive social assistance, and apply each year.
- Seniors will not need to pay for fuel and be reimbursed afterwards; they will receive the fuel at no cost.

Seniors Burial Benefit

- This benefit is intended to relieve some of the costs related to losing a family member (over the age of 60).
- This benefit was established September 1, 2021.
- There is no set amount but covers expenses related to funeral arrangements.

Grants and Contributions Policy

- The Department of Family Services offers various grants and contributions, including assistance for the Rebekah Uqi Williams Scholarship to support Nunavummiut who aspire to pursue a career in Social Work, Poverty Reduction and Food Security Initiatives, Community Capacity Building initiatives, Family Violence Shelter Program, and Homelessness Initiatives. Additionally, the department provides contribution funding to the Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society to advocate for individuals with disabilities in Nunavut. Support is also extended to the Rick Hansen Institute to assist Nunavummiut with spinal cord injuries and other disabilities.

Department of Health

Home and Continuing Care Program

- The home care program is available to all Nunavummiut who need extra support due to illness, surgery, health, disabilities, or age.
- A caregiver can provide homemaking, personal care, nursing care, respite care, or rehabilitation support.
- This program is run by the GN, with GN staff who provide care services (e.g., nurses, PSWs, etc.)
- An individual needing extra care or support can be self-referred, or referred by a family member, friend, or medical professional.
- The home and continuing care program operates in all Nunavut communities. Program hours are currently limited to weekdays during normal business hours.

Elders Care Homes and Long-Term Care Facilities

There are three main clinical care centre types available to seniors and Elders: Elder Care Homes, Continuing Care Centres, and out-of-territory care at Embassy West. In Nunavut, prior to the upcoming Rankin Inlet Long-Term Care facility opening, there are up to 44 beds dedicated for Elder care, spread across five facilities (three Continuing Care Centres and two Elders Homes). At each Nunavut facility, one bed is reserved for those needing respite or palliative care. Other departments and partner organizations may be involved as different care models are explored. There are roles and responsibilities for multiple departments, agencies and partners in an all of government approach to the continuum of Elder care.

Nunavummiut with higher care needs or those requiring dementia care currently must leave Nunavut to access appropriate services.

- Elder Homes – one in Iqaluit and one in Arviat. Each home has 8 care beds available. Admission is based on assessed care needs, and only can support care levels 2-3. These are currently operated by a third-party company, but are owned by the GN.
- Continuing Care Centres – there are currently 3 centres operating in Nunavut (Cambridge Bay, Igloolik, Gjoa Haven) with 28 beds total. Provides care level 4. These are owned and operated by the GN under the responsibility of the Department of Health.
- Embassy West Senior Living – Nunavummiut with more complex care needs (levels 4-5) may be sent to Embassy West in Ottawa, ON. At the time of research, there were officially 44 beds available, however anecdotally there are more beds allocated. There is currently no waitlist. It is able to provide care for individuals with more complex care needs, such as dementia.
- Eligibility is restricted to Nunavummiut ages 55 and older who have a valid Nunavut Health Care Card. Individuals must have been formally assessed as needing a specific level of care by representatives of the Department of Health.
- There is no cost to Nunavummiut to access any long-term care services. Nunavut is the only jurisdiction in Canada that does not charge patients or their families a deductible (i.e., there is no cost to individuals).
- Three programs are available to help pay for medical travel: Nunavut Health Care Plan, Non-Insured Health Benefits, and the Extended Health Benefits (for 65 and older). If these cannot cover medical travel expenses, the GN can cover the additional costs.
- Eligibility includes having a valid Nunavut health care card, and a valid reason for medical travel outlined by a medical professional.
- This policy also outlines the Client Escort policy, and eligibility. It states that if a client is unilingual Inuktitut-speaking, they are entitled to an escort.

Grants and Contributions Policy

- The Department of Health provides the following grants and contributions for nursing scholarships and bursaries, addiction and trauma treatment, suicide prevention, education and training programs, community wellness programs, cancer screening, alcohol and drug treatment program, and Kamatsiaqtut Help Line.

Medical Travel Program

- The Department of Health provides medical travel benefits so that Nunavummiut can access specific services that are not available in their home community.
- People who are not eligible for funding assistance under other sources of funding can apply for help from the GN.

Department of Culture and Heritage

Grants and Contributions Policy – Elders and Youth

- The funding is available for supporting Elders initiatives, as well as Elder and youth facilities, and Elder and youth committees.
- Eligible organizations include non-profit organizations, individuals, and municipal corporations.
- Schedule A-5 is for grants for Elders initiatives. This grant is for addressing the needs of Elders and promoting Elders activities in Nunavut. It has a maximum value of \$50,000.
- Schedule A-6, Youth and Elders Committees, is a \$15,000 grant to support Elders committees and cultural activities that encourage the interaction and relationship-building between Elders and youth.
- Schedule B-4 is for Inuit Societal Values initiatives with up to \$100,000 available. This contribution supports the strengthening the role of Elders in the planning and delivery of projects that promote community healing and wellness through Inuit Inuusilirijjusingit.
- Schedule B-5 Elder and Youth Facilities helps to ensure that communities across Nunavut have access to well-maintained facilities that enable Elders and youth to participate in social and cultural activities. Contributions up to \$200,000 is available subject to available funding.
- Most activities and initiatives funded through this program are ones that promote knowledge transfer and sharing, particularly between Elders and younger generations. Examples include on-the-land programs, sewing classes, and toolmaking or harvesting workshops.

Department of Justice

Family Abuse Intervention Act

- The legislation provides Nunavummiut with the tools to intervene and prevent family abuse outside of the criminal justice system by focusing on the immediate need for safety and options for repairing the harm.
- Family abuse includes many forms that Elders may face, including threats and physical violence, mental and verbal abuse, and financial abuse.
- Two remedies that protect individuals under Family Abuse Intervention Act (FAIA) are:
 - › Emergency Protection Orders - protects a person who is experiencing abuse and is fearful for their safety.
 - › Community Intervention Orders - intended to help families develop healthier relationships through community-based counselling.
- Delivered through the Community Justice Division, these two remedies are available in all communities. A Community Justice Outreach Worker can assist and support an individual through this process.
- Additional options available under FAIA include assistance orders and compensation orders.

Restorative Justice Program / Community Justice Committees

- Each community in Nunavut has a Community Justice Committee. Committee members are trained and supported by the Community Justice Division. Special regard is given to including Elders on the committees as their wisdom and skills are vital to the functioning of restorative justice.

-
- As committee members, Elders help address the Restorative justice offers Nunavummiut the opportunity to repair relationships affected by criminal activity as an alternative within the criminal justice system.

Therapeutic Justice Program

- The Therapeutic Justice program based in Cambridge Bay and Arviat involves Elders in the treatment and support of its clients through traditional Inuit counselling and cultural skills development, such as toolmaking, on-the-land hunting trips, and sewing traditional clothing. These activities help clients address the root causes of their criminal behaviour and rehabilitate.

Correctional Programming

- The Department of Justice involves Elders in several Correctional Programs. In addition to counselling services to inmates in correctional facilities, Elders also provide guidance and skills development through Corrections division's on-the-land programs. These services are essential to supporting inmates and helping with their rehabilitation.

Elder Advisors during Court Proceedings

- The courts involve Elders as advisors in some communities where they sit on the bench with the judge and offer invaluable advice to offenders, especially during sentencing. It's a significant part of our process.

Public Trustee / Administration of Estates

- The Public Trustee manages estates of Nunavummiut who die without a will and also for those that have become incapable of handling their financial affairs in the absence of next-of-kin who are willing and able to act as trustees.

Public Guardianship

- Under Nunavut's Guardianship and Trusteeship Act, the Court of Justice can appoint a person to make decisions on behalf of a person who is no longer able to take care of their daily needs on their own.
- The person may be put under public guardianship, or under the care of a family member or friend.
- The purpose is to make sure health care, legal issues, shelter, and personal care is properly maintained for the person who is no longer able to make decisions (e.g., if a senior has dementia).
- Entering public guardianship requires an assessment by an Adult Services Specialist.

Department of Finance

Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities Property Tax Relief Program

- People with disabilities and senior citizens are eligible to apply for property tax relief. The amounts can be up to a full exemption of paying property taxes.
- Homeowners who are 65 and older may qualify.
- Eligibility is based on an individual assessment. Individuals must apply.

Nunavut Arctic College

Senior Citizen Tuition Fees

- Nunavut Arctic College provides tuition-free opportunities for senior citizens to enroll in courses at the College part-time.
- Seniors 60 years and older are eligible.

Health Related Training Programs

- Nunavut Arctic College delivers a Practical Nurse Program, graduates take a national exam to become licensed.
- Nunavut Arctic College provides medical interpreting courses and modules as part of NAC's Interpreter-Translator Program: Anatomy, Physiology, Diseases, Ailments, and Mental Health.
- NAC has developed a Personal Support Worker Program.

Nunavut Housing Corporation

Public Housing Program

- NHC owns and maintains public housing units designed for seniors and Elders in 18 communities.
- There are a number of Elders public housing 4-plexes across the territory.
- The Elder-specific housing units are for those ages 60 and older.
- For individuals who make less than \$33,280 per year, monthly rent is \$60.
- Elders who have low income can be assessed for \$0 rent for living in public housing. This is assessed under the Core Need Income Threshold.

Senior and Persons with Disabilities Preventative Maintenance Program

- The Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Preventative Maintenance Program is available to eligible homeowners to assist with the carrying out preventative maintenance and minor repairs on their homes.
- NHC provides a grant to cover materials, freight, and labour associated with maintaining or repairing an individual's home to a maximum amount of \$3,000 annually.

-
- The purpose of this program is to help:
 - › Ensure the client's continued safe occupancy
 - › Extend the life of building systems
 - › Reduce the number of emergency repairs required due to lack of preventative maintenance
 - › Assist seniors and persons with a disability in overcoming obstacles to continued homeownership
 - To be eligible, one of the homeowners must be 60 years of age or over, or a recipient of a Disability Benefit.

Senior Citizens Home Repair Program

- The Senior Citizen Home Repair Program (SCHRP) provides financial assistance to seniors who need to repair and/or adapt to their homes. The purpose is to ensure their continued safe occupancy, and/or to assist with difficulties they encounter with daily living activities.
- This program is available to seniors in Nunavut ages 60 and older. Other eligibility criteria include that the individual must have resided in Nunavut for at least two years and meet this income threshold for eligibility.
- The assistance comes in the form of a grant, to a maximum amount of \$15,000. Freight is not included in this amount but is covered. The grant is forgiven upon completion of the repairs.

Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Housing Options Program

- The Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Housing Options Program allows Elders and persons with disabilities to transfer their home ownership to another person or sell it to NHC. This program is intended for individuals who can no longer maintain their home.
- Through this program, an individual's home can be transferred to someone in public housing or on the public housing waitlist that can afford the ongoing costs of homeownership. When no transferee can be identified, clients may sell their home to the NHC.
- This program is available to Nunavut homeowners over 60 years old, or individuals with disabilities.

Other Nunavut organizations – Programs and supports

There is one Elder-specific non-profit in Nunavut at this time: Pairijait Tigummiagtikkut (the Iqaluit Elders Society). Many community organizations broadly support the community in areas such as food security, cultural programming, and workshops.

Some organizations have Elder-specific programming or events, in addition to their other programs. Programming often focuses on including Elders in knowledge exchange, learning, or in committee or leadership roles. For example, every community is eligible for funding for an Elders committee.

Pairijait Tigummiagtikkut – Iqaluit Elders Society

Pairijait Tigummiagtikkut (the Iqaluit Elders Society) is currently one of the most prominent and vocal organizations supporting Elders in the territory. Though based in Iqaluit, the society has been a strong advocate for seniors across Nunavut. Much of their current work is focused on advocacy, with their March 2022 letter to the Minister of Health being widely picked up by news outlets. The organization has been vocal at advocating for the needs of Elders, in particular for Elders to receive appropriate cultural care at Embassy West in Ottawa, and the need for Elders to be able to remain in their communities as they age.

The society organizes activities for Elders, like group excursions on the land to go clam digging, as well as transportation services, such as an accessible bus to pick up individuals in Iqaluit.

Pairijait Tigummiagtikkut operated the Iqaluit Elders Home from the 1980s until it was temporarily closed in May 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Announced recently in October 2022, Pairijait secured \$250,000.00 in funding to build new Elders housing in Iqaluit. The funding will help start development of the project. Pairijait is working with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

(CMHC) and has already secured the land and location for the building. At the time of writing, Pairijait is still working out some details, such as how many units will be built and what the exact design will look like.

Other non-profit organizations

Through the GN Department of Culture and Heritage, a number of organizations are eligible to apply for grants and contributions for Elders and youth programming. The focus of this funding program is on knowledge exchange between Elders and the younger generations, fostering the transmission of traditional knowledge, and including Elders in programming. Examples of such projects include a parka-making program for youth to learn from Elders, or a language learning program. As such, non-profits may focus programming on what financial support is available.

Aqqiumavvik Society (Arviat)

Aqqiumavvik, formerly the Arviat Wellness Centre, the society focuses on health and wellness projects in Arviat. These projects range from environment, family and community. All projects are guided by Elders and the community. Aqqiumavvik regularly convenes with an Elders' committee to explore Inuit methodologies, philosophies, and research practices.

Ilisaqsivik society (Clyde River)

Ilisaqsivik is a community-run not-for-profit based in Clyde River. They offer Inuit-led, culturally relevant programs and provide counselling services. Through the organization, counselling is offered locally in Clyde River, Pangnirtung, Iqaluit, Igloodik, and Pond Inlet. There are core wellness programs at Ilisaqsivik intended for community members of all ages, as well as an Elders program that includes sewing, etc. Ilisaqsivik is also the host of the Clyde River Elders Committee, which is funded through the Department of Culture and Heritage. Many programs at Ilisaqsivik include Elders in their design and delivery, such as in the 28-day on the land program.

Kamatsiaqtut Help Line (Nunavut)

This is a help line accessible to all Nunavummiut. Though not focused only on Elders, it offers support all day, whether a person needs someone to talk to or is in crisis.

Service is available by phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The help line is toll-free, anonymous, confidential, and staffed by trained volunteers. Phone: 1-800-265-3333

Kitikmeot Friendship Society (Cambridge Bay)

KFS is a relatively new society, launching in 2021. Its mandate is to foster community well-being and social justice through positive action and leadership. In 2021-22, KFS received \$25,000 from the Department of Culture and Heritage for a Youth and Elders Hunt Heal Program. Though not specific to Elders, programming at KFS is intended for Inuit of all ages, through inclusiveness and support.

Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society

Founded in 2005, NDMS is based in Iqaluit, and serves all of Nunavut. The society provides support to people in Nunavut across their lifespan, from infants to Elders.

The main focus of NDMS is advocating for people with disabilities, so that all people living with disabilities in Nunavut can achieve independence, self-determination and full citizenship. The Nunavut Solutions Grant is a joint project with NDMS, the Rick Hansen Foundation, and the Government of Nunavut. The grant provides funding for those living with a mobility-related disability to access equipment or services that will improve their quality of life. Assistive devices include mobility aids, hearing and communication aids, and more.

Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre (Rankin Inlet)

The Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre, based in Rankin Inlet, provides Inuit-led healing and wellness programming in the Kivalliq. Pulaarvik opened in 1979. It offers cultural and mental health programming for all ages and is continuing to expand its programming. In 2021-22 Pulaarvik

Kablu received \$15,000 from the Department of Culture and Heritage for a project to connect Elders and youth.

Tukisigiarvik Society (Iqaluit)

Located in Iqaluit, Tukisigiarvik operates drop-in programming, counselling, healing, support, and skill development. Programming is for everyone across all stages of life. A key objective of the Tukisigiarvik Society is to ensure that Inuit societal values, beliefs and practices form the basis of the programs offered. Elders are central to program planning and delivery.

Tukisigiarvik offers a variety of cultural and land skill programs. Core programming includes breakfast with fresh Bannock and traditional foods, and same-day counselling appointments. The activities vary according to the season and include parka, amauti, kamik and tent making, qamutiik making, small engine repair, ulu and tool making, hunting, fishing and gathering, wayfinding, weather prediction, and a summer camping program (Nunamiut Care Camp). Other activities include healing workshops on topics such as grief, personal empowerment, types of abuse and ending the cycle of abuse, and training in Inuit cultural skills.

Since opening its doors in 2003, the centre has had more than 5,000 people drop in for more than 96,000 sessions, according to Tukisigiarvik's most recent annual report. Tukisigiarvik has received financial support from Public Safety Canada, other federal government departments, the Government of Nunavut, and the City of Iqaluit.

History of Nunavummi Inutugait Katujjiqatigiingit - Nunavut Seniors Society

The main focus of Nunavummi Inutugait Katujjiqatigiingit, the Nunavut Seniors' Society, was on advocating for seniors and Elders in the territory. The society was the first of its kind in Nunavut, providing a unified and coordinated voice for seniors. It was incorporated as a non-profit society in 2013.

The society's purpose was to serve as a voice for Nunavut's seniors through advocacy and empowerment to enhance their quality of life, and ensure their dignity, respect, and independence. The goal was to improve the lives and living conditions of seniors by promoting health, security, and independence in their community.

In the 2017 Strategic Framework: Addressing the needs of Nunavut Seniors, Nunavummi Inutuqait Katujjiqatigiingit is featured as a key GN partner in advocacy work. The Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs engaged Nunavummi Inutuqait Katujjiqatigiingit, and continued discussions to help provide the group with logistical, administrative, and financial supports, starting in November 2017.

The Government of Nunavut contributed \$75,000 to the Nunavut Seniors' Society in 2019-20 for salaries, professional fees, office expenses and travel. The funding agreement requires the society to provide financial reports to the GN. As of September 2020, the society had become dormant. By this time, many of the society's members had moved on from their positions. There have been no updates about the society since then.

Private corporations

Private corporations play an important role in providing services, supports, and care to seniors and Elders within and outside of Nunavut.

Unlike any other jurisdiction in Canada, Nunavut is the only jurisdiction that does not charge individuals needing long-term or continuing care. Despite private corporations providing care to Nunavut Elders, there is no cost to the individuals or their families (i.e., no monthly charges, no deductibles), even if the care is provided outside the territory.

The GN Department of Health's operational costs for providing long-term care to Nunavut residents is approximately \$21 million per year. This does not include building maintenance costs. Nunavut is the only jurisdiction without a co-payment, the Government of Nunavut currently funds all residential and long-term care.

Levels of Care are relevant in the context of long-term care, as they outline what support(s) an individual may need based on their health and medical conditions. The levels of care range from 1 (low) to 5 (high). Higher levels of care mean an individual's needs are more significant, such as needing 24-hour medical supervision and care. For Nunavut residents, lower levels of care are provided in territory, while those needing the highest levels of care must receive care outside the territory.

Levels of Care for Elders and Seniors		
Level	Detail	Hours of Care
1	The client can live in their own home independently with occasional support from family members and/or the home care program.	0-4
2	The client requires some assistance to be mobile, may display some behavioural issues and require minimal to moderate daily support, all of which can be provided at home with significant support from the home care program or in a facility that provides supportive care.	4-8
3	The client requires care and support that can be provided at home with significant support from the home care program or in a facility that provides supportive care.	8-12
4	The individual requires significant care and support that exceeds what can be provided at home and requires placement in a Long-term Care Centre.	12-16
5	The individual requires 24-hour supervision and care. May include Nunavumiut who have been diagnosed with demential.	24
Respite Care	Services that provide caregivers with temporary relief from tasks associated with caregiving.	

To better understand the landscape of Elder care available to Nunavut residents (i.e., long-term and continuing care), the following breakdown has been provided. In total, there is capacity to serve up to 90 Elders requiring long-term care.

Within Nunavut, up to 44 beds are available, with an additional 46 beds available outside the territory. This care is shared across the following care facilities:

Within Nunavut, Elder care includes:

3 Continuing Care Centres
(serving 28 clients)

2 Elders Homes
(serving 16 clients)

Outside of Nunavut, Elder care includes:

Embassy West Senior Living
(serving up to 46 clients)

Elder Care Facilities for Nunavummiut					
Facility Name	Facility Owner	Facility Operator	Location	Care Level	# of Beds
Andy Aulatjut Centre (Elder Home)	GN	Private corporation	Arviat	2-3	8
Cambridge Bay Continuing Care Centre	GN	GN	Cambridge Bay	4	8
Gjoa Haven Continuing Care Centre	GN	GN	Gjoa Haven	4	10
Igloolik Continuing Care Centre	GN	GN	Igloolik	4	10
Pairijait Tigumivik Centre (Elder Home)	GN	Private corporation	Iqaluit	2-3	8
Embassy West Senior Living	Private corporation	Private corporation	Ottawa, ON	5	46

All the continuing and long-term care home facilities within Nunavut are owned by the Government of Nunavut (GN). Three continuing care homes are operated by the GN using GN staff, and three long-term and Elder care homes are operated by private corporations. The GN Department of Health's Long Term Care division oversees all clients at both types of facilities.

Continuing Care Centres are operated by the GN, with GN staff. There are three Continuing Care Centres in Nunavut, one in each Cambridge Bay, Gjoa Haven, and Igloolik. Continuing Care Centres (CCC) provide care to Elders with complex care needs who require residential long-term care style support (care level 4). Each CCC also has one bed available for patients requiring respite

or palliative care. The cost to operate these three CCCs was slightly over \$10 million in 2022/23 and is forecasted at close to \$11 million for the 2023/24 fiscal year.

There are currently two Elders Homes in Nunavut, located in Arviat and Iqaluit. The Pairijait Tigumivik Elders Home is located in Iqaluit and the Andy Aulatjut Personal Care Centre is located in Arviat. Both of these buildings are owned by the GN (maintained by CGS and were operated by Pimaksirvik Corporation until March 31, 2024). These Elders Homes are able to serve up to 8 clients at each and provide low to mid-levels of care (care levels 2 and 3) in a residential, assisted living home style. In February 2024, there are 7 individuals waitlisted for the Elders' homes.

Pimakslirvik Corporation

Until recently, Pimakslirvik Corporation, a subsidiary of Chesterfield Inlet Development Corporation, had a role of providing continuing and long-term care to Nunavummiut of all ages. The company operated residential care facilities in Chesterfield Inlet, Rankin Inlet, Arviat and Iqaluit. Only the facilities in Arviat and Iqaluit were designated for Elders.

The GN contract to operate the two Elders' homes was \$4,421,887 for the 2022/23 fiscal year. The Iqaluit Elders' Home had a budget of \$2.24M and the Arviat Elders' Home had a budget of \$2.2M for the 2023/24 fiscal year.

Embassy West Senior Living (Embassy West)

Embassy West, located in Ottawa, ON, operates as a long-term care home for Nunavut Elders. It is able to provide care to those with more complex care needs and those needing more specialized nursing care or support (care level 5). As of February 2024, Embassy West serves up to 72 clients from Nunavut. It is the only location outside of Nunavut where Elders receive long-term care through the GN. Due to lack of infrastructure and capacity within Nunavut, Embassy West is also the only place where Elders with dementia can receive the necessary care and support (e.g., specialized nursing care, 24-hour care).

The GN has an ongoing contract with Embassy West. Currently, the approximate cost to the GN for an Elder receiving care at Embassy West is \$16,800 per month. As of January 2024, the Department of Health is spending approximately \$1.1M per month for care provided by Embassy West. It is expected that this number will continue to increase.

Other organizations providing supports

Two additional organizations, The Ottawa Health Services Network Inc. (OHSNI) and Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI) provide supportive services to residents at Embassy West. OHSNI provides additional interpretive services for residents at Embassy West. The Department of Health has a contract with TI to provide counselling and cultural programming to Embassy West residents. TI is a not-for-profit organization.

Future Care Centres

The GN anticipates opening a new long-term care centre in Rankin Inlet in 2024. This will have a capacity of 24 beds and is designed to provide care levels 2-3 in an assisted living style. This facility will allow for the provision of level 4 and 5 care. The GN has also committed to opening long-term care centres in Cambridge Bay and Iqaluit, so there is a long-term care centre in each regional hub.

To address future staffing needs of the Rankin Inlet long-term care centre, Nunavut Arctic College, with funding from the Department of Health, has developed a Licensed Practical Nurse training program in Rankin Inlet as well as a Personal Support Worker Program. The purpose is to train Inuit in health professional roles and be able to fill the new positions that will open at the Rankin Inlet long-term care centre.

These developments may change the landscape and roles of private corporations providing care to Nunavut Elders.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

This Elders and Seniors Strategy identifies fifteen interconnected goals. All these goals require action on the part of the Government of Nunavut, and other agencies, to ensure that Inuit Elders will be able to Age with Dignity in Nunavut.

THIS ELDERS AND SENIORS STRATEGY SETS OUT THE FOLLOWING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Aging in Nunavut

- Expand Elder-care facilities and services in communities
- Expand and improve home-care and health related services
- Provide adequate and appropriate housing and related support for Elders

Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit

- Grounding in Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit and increase Inuit employment

Healthy Communities

- Support healing in our communities
- Reduce poverty

Protecting our Elders

- Address and prevent Elder abuse
- Ensure safe spaces for Elders
- Provide safe accessibility

Improved Programs and Services to Support Elders

- Establish organizational supports
- Increase support for Elder's committees and programming
- Ensure Elders are provided with safe transportation
- Ensure Elders have access to country food
- Support Elders access to programs, services and benefits
- Improve communications with Elders

The Government of Nunavut will collaborate with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to establish a tripartite table with the Government of Canada to ensure a coordinated approach for the implementation of this strategy.

AGING IN NUNAVUT

To support and enable our Elders to age comfortably in our communities, we must ensure that there are improved Elder-care programs, facilities, and health care services in Nunavut. We must also be responsive to their housing needs.

Strategic priorities and actions intended to support aging in Nunavut include expanding Elder-care facilities in communities, expanding and improving homecare and health related services, and providing adequate and appropriate housing and related support for Elders.

Expand Elder-Care Facilities and Services in Communities



What We Heard:

At each Regional Elders' Gathering, Elders expressed concern about the lack of Elder-care programs and services in their communities. These included the need for Elder-care facilities in each community, home-care services staffed by trained care-workers, trained medical interpreters, and medical escorts when needed.

These support services are required so that Elders can live comfortably in their own communities, feel that they are cared for, and know that their health care needs will be met. They said that there is an urgency to act on these issues now.

Elders want the ultimate choice for what healthcare they get and where. They want to make decisions for themselves, rather than the medical system deciding for them. When they reach the stage they need specialized treatment, they don't want to relocate; instead, they want 24-hour care in their communities. They also want 24-hour palliative care in their communities.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to expanding Elder-care facilities and services in Nunavut communities. To support this commitment, we will:

- Develop a long-term plan to build more Elder-care facilities and spaces in communities with the future population of Elders in mind.
- Complete construction of the Kivalliq Long Term Care facility.
- Expedite construction of Qikiqtaaluk and Kitikmeot Long Term Care facilities.
- Replace health centres at a rate of three new community health centres every 4-5 years in accordance with capital plans for health centres.
- Enhance existing continuing care facilities in Nunavut.
- Continue investments in health infrastructure (virtual care, health information, facilities, and services) and health human resources.
- Explore options for community-based Elders residential care, including non-government operated and built options.
- Explore different models of community long-term care, including non-government run options and supports for aging in place.
- Continue developing palliative care supports, including caregiver supports and where possible with in-community options.

Expand and Improve Homecare and Health Related Services



What We Heard:

Elders want an increased range of home-care services available when they need them. They want to be provided with trained home-care workers who can provide a range of services beyond basic housekeeping. Home-care workers should visit Elders on a regular schedule and should be available on call when needed.

These home-care workers should be trained to provide the services Elders require and should know how to assess Elders' overall wellbeing and needs: hygiene, diet, stress, and loneliness. Home-care workers should also be trained to recognize whether or not an Elder is receiving sufficient services.

Elders said they need regular visits from home-care workers, mental health specialists, social workers, and family members. They want home-care workers and all other care-providers to have sufficient time scheduled to stay and chat with them. They also want people to visit more often.

Elders at every gathering expressed the need for professional medical interpreters who can explain their medical diagnosis, clearly and simply. These interpreters must be trained in professional medical terminology, including human anatomy, and must be able to explain the purpose, dosage, frequency, and effects of prescribed medications.

Elders said they have difficulty travelling alone for medical appointments outside their communities. They need assistance to deal with language barriers, scheduling problems, and accommodation and transportation issues.

They also said they want the freedom to choose their own medical escorts from an approved list of qualified people able to provide good medical escort services. They want to be able to choose someone they are comfortable with and trust to be their escort – someone who knows them and who they know. The escort need not be a family member – it is sometimes better to not have someone closely related at appointments where patients could be receiving bad news about their health.

To increase their understanding of the situation they are facing, Elders and families need information and awareness training about disabilities, Alzheimer's, and dementia.

Families need to be provided with the resources they need to look after people with dementia. Elders and their families need to understand these health challenges and receive training on how to manage them. This will reduce Elders' anxieties, uncertainties and stress, and lead to improved mental health. Families also need more support in caring for people living with disabilities.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to expanding and improving homecare and health related services for Elders, including specialist services in communities. To support this commitment, we will:

- Develop a continuing care services action plan to support Elders to age in place and enhance their wellness and quality of life.
- Establish regular schedules of homecare and other care provider visits.
- Make a wider range of home-care programs and services available, 24 hours a day, when needed.
- Train and hire home-care workers in communities to provide an increased level of programs and support services in Inuktitut.
- Provide terminology training, as requested, to staff involved in providing care and support to Elders.
- Create and maintain a list of approved escorts who are able to help Elders with their travel logistics and appointments.
- Train more Inuit in homecare, mental health, social work, and other care services.
- Increase programming with a new Personal Support Worker program, Practical Nursing Diploma and increased Social Service Worker offerings.
- Deliver an awareness campaign for dementia and Alzheimer's, including printed resource materials in Inuktitut.
- Continue to provide funding to organizations delivering disability awareness training and related services.
- Support the development of disability training for Elders, family members, and all Elder-care providers.
- Provide increased support to Elders and their families who are caring for an individual living with a disability.

Provide Adequate and Appropriate Housing and Related Support for Elders



What We Heard:

Elders said that they need more housing in their communities that is designed to meet their needs as they age. Their housing should be safe and secure, and they should not be pressured to live with younger family members.

Elders want to choose where they live, the type of houses they live in, and who they live with. They want detached homes designed and built specifically for Elders in every community.

Elders will be provided with homes that meet their needs, are comfortable and secure. These homes will provide a restful environment where they can live peacefully. The houses will have spaces for traditional activities and will be regularly maintained.

Elders who have been encouraged by the government to become homeowners need more support to stay in their homes.

They need simpler access to financial support from homeownership programs for recurring costs (utilities, home insurance), and occasional costs (window or fuel tank replacement). Elders also need support with regular maintenance (shoveling snow, fixing leaks).

All housing designed and built for Elders must have access ramps. As standard features, there should be few exterior steps, and no interior steps or stairs. For safety, each unit should have two exterior doors.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to providing adequate and appropriate housing and related support for Elders. To support this commitment, we will:

- Build housing to include options for aging people and for people living with disabilities as part of the Nunavut 3000 Strategy.
- Actively involve Elders in the housing design process.
- Design and build housing for Elders that incorporates universal design standards, including accessibility and safety requirements.
- Ensure that housing designated for an Elder(s) meets accessibility and safety requirements.
- Support regular and preventative maintenance of Elder's homes.
- Streamline application process for Elders to access Nunavut Housing Corporation's homeownership programs.
- Work with Nunavut Arctic College to promote enrolment into the housing maintainer program and expand the delivery of the Skilled Trades Worker Program.

PROTECTING OUR ELDERS

To ensure that our Elders are living comfortably in our communities, we must ensure that we protect our Elders from abuse and ensure that we provide access to services to assist them in dealing with trauma.

Strategic priorities and actions intended to protect our Elders include addressing and preventing Elder abuse, ensuring safe spaces, and providing safe accessibility.

Address and Prevent Elder Abuse



What We Heard:

Addictions are the primary cause of Elder abuse. There is a critical need to provide protection and support services for Elders who are victims of abuse in their communities. Elders are facing aggressive demands that they find very difficult to refuse. Many Elders are intimidated, coerced, and threatened by people needing money to satisfy their addictions. Elders don't want to have abusers in their homes but are still concerned for their wellbeing.

Elders want the public to be made aware that Elder abuse is against the law, that it is illegal in Nunavut, and goes against Inuit Maligangit (Inuit laws).

Elders need a trusted person to talk to, who will quickly intervene on their behalf when they are experiencing abuse or intimidation.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to addressing and preventing abuse towards Elders. To support this commitment, we will:

- Make the public aware of the harm caused by all forms of Elder abuse and its illegality under Nunavut and Inuit laws, including carrying out community level awareness programs.
- Evaluate and implement ways to improve how Elders can report abuse focusing on making the process simpler, faster, and more effective.
- Ensure Elders are aware of the Family Abuse Intervention Act which includes a mechanism for temporarily removing abusers from the Elder's home under an Emergency Protection Order, among other remedies, and provide support for Elders applying for these orders.
- Establish protocols and guidelines among justice stakeholders to refer abusers to appropriate care and supports away from the Elder's home.

Ensure Safe Spaces for Elders



What We Heard:

Elders said they are experiencing fear as a result of theft, threats, and intimidation, often related to demands for their money to feed the abusers' addictions. Elders want a safe community facility to go to when they have to flee their homes. They also want a place for the abusers to go, instead of Elders having to flee their own homes.

When Elders need to escape from abuse, they must have a safe place to take shelter where they are secure from abusers.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to ensuring safe spaces for Elders. To support this commitment, we will:

- Enhance funding support for the operation of safe shelters for Elders in communities.
- Provide an enhanced Safe Homes program for Elders in communities.

Provide Safe Accessibility



What We Heard:

Elders said they have difficulty accessing many homes and community buildings because they have too many steps and no ramps, blocked or uncleared access, and there are few elevators. They are also concerned about access for Elders with mobility issues and people living with physical disabilities, including wheelchair users.

Elders are very concerned about the condition of the roads in their communities because there are no sidewalks, the surfaces are uneven, and the roads are not well maintained. This affects their ability to walk safely and their physical comfort when travelling in vehicles.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to ensuring safe accessibility for Elders. To support this commitment, we will:

- Ensure housing and community buildings are accessible. This includes requiring ramps for buildings, and elevators for non-residential multi-storey buildings, including hotels.
- Ensure community roads are accessible and safe. This includes road grading, clearing snow and ice, and adding sidewalks.

IMPROVED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO SUPPORT ELDERS

To ensure our Elders are provided with coordinated delivery of improved programs and services, we must ensure there are dedicated resources to support Elder’s programming and services in our communities.

Strategic priorities and actions intended to provide improved programs and services to support Elders include establishing organizational supports, increasing support for Elders committees and programming, ensuring Elders are provided with safe transportation, ensuring access to country food, support Elder’s access to programs, services and benefits, and improving communications with Elders.

Establish Organizational Supports



What We Heard:

Elders want a new Secretariat for Elders established within the Government of Nunavut. Reporting to the Premier, this Secretariat will be dedicated to ensuring that the Katujjiluta Mandate commitments to Elders are met. It will work cross-departmentally and will be funded like a Government of Nunavut department. The Secretariat for Elders will be the Government of Nunavut’s point of contact with Elders for communications, accountability, and coordination.

Many Inuit Elders are still deferential to government authorities because it was the way they grew up. Elders want an organization to represent them and advocate on their behalf, make recommendations, and to follow up on their growing and changing needs. Elders want the Government of Canada, Government of Nunavut, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the other Inuit support organizations outside of Nunavut to actively pursue the directions and guidance they provide. They want permanent core funding allocated for this non-profit organization.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to creating a dedicated Elders Secretariat and support the establishment of an independent advocacy organization. To support this commitment, we will:

- Create an Elders Secretariat in the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs that will be responsible for leading and coordinating Government of Nunavut efforts to serve Elders.
- Establish partnerships with Inuit organizations, non-profit organizations, and municipalities to ensure effective implementation of strategic actions.
- Support a core-funded non-profit organization for Inuit Elders in Nunavut, where Elders have their own advisors outside of government.

Increase Support for Elders Committees and Programming



What We Heard:

Elders want to have a gathering place that is dedicated to their use, and they can call their own. They will use this facility for regular social events, teaching cultural activities, mingling and socializing, community feasts, and simply being together. This Elders facility will be the centre for their engagement with the youth and the community. The facility will help to reduce their loneliness and isolation, and Elders will become a focal point in unifying the community.

Elders said that there must be an Elders' committee in every community. For sustainability, these committees must be core-funded and properly organized by a full-time coordinator and administrator who works for them. The coordinator will also be the Elders' contact person in the community – to connect them with the help they need and communicate with government officials and agencies on their behalf. Through the Elders' committees, the government will have a way to easily reach Elders for advice. The coordinator will organize regular activities for Elders: on the land or in the community, special community events, and projects with youth.

Elders said that getting away from the stress of their communities is very therapeutic. It enhances their wellbeing. Being on the land provides ideal opportunities for Elders to pass on important aspects of Inuit traditional life to the younger generations, because that is where it occurred. This is empowerment for all.

Elders want to continue to be involved in traditional activities on the land, but many have no transportation. They need a means of access to get out onto the land. This could be younger people taking them out or having suitable equipment available for Elders' use in each community.

Elders said they need regional Elders gatherings every two years for knowledge sharing, discussion, and learning. They want to stay in touch regularly with Elders from other communities.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to providing increased support for Elders committees and programming. To support this commitment, we will:

- Enhance support for an Elders' gathering place in every community. Explore options to secure gathering space or facilities in communities in the long term.
- Provide permanent, multi-year core funding for Elders' committees.
- Enhance administrative support available to assist Elders' committees.
- Provide funding to operate regular on-the-land programs for Elders in each community.
- In collaboration with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, provide funding for regional Elders' gatherings every two years.

Ensure Elders are Provided with Safe Transportation



What We Heard:

Elders said that they need a dedicated van or bus with drivers in every community, to ensure that they can participate in essential daily activities that contribute to their independence, mental and physical health, and wellbeing. The Elders' vehicle should be available when needed and should be wheelchair accessible. Guided by the local Elders' committee, the Elders' vehicle would be available for airport runs, health appointments, grocery shopping, and Elders' activities.

Elders said they cannot afford to visit family in other communities because airline tickets are too expensive. They want discounted Elders' rates on all airlines serving Nunavut.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to ensuring Elders are provided with safe transportation. To support this commitment, we will:

- Ensure that a wheelchair accessible Elders bus with drivers is available in every community.
- In collaboration with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, work towards providing reduced rates for Elders on all airlines serving Nunavut communities.

Ensure Elders Have Access to Country Food



What We Heard:

Elders said that they need a regular supply of traditional Inuit food. At present, it is simpler for Elders to obtain very expensive and less nutritious store-bought food, but increasingly difficult to obtain country food.

The health benefits of traditional food are particularly important for Elders. To maintain their health, Elders need a regular diet of country food.

Food harvesting and sharing is central to Inuit culture. Many Elders are no longer able to hunt for themselves. Support programs where experienced Elders hunt together with youth to maintain traditional harvesting practices and share their catch with Elders and the community.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to ensuring Elders have access to country food. To support this commitment, we will:

- Provide funding for community level hunting and food distribution programs to promote availability of country food.
- Support the delivery of country food to Elders. Continue to distribute food vouchers for stores.
- Invest in hunters and local food systems in every community, including salaried hunters and processing infrastructure.
- Invest in local country food stores run by hunters so country food is accessible to Elders and everyone in the community.
- Collect and promote the transfer of traditional knowledge on country food (harvesting practices, preparation, customs and terminology).

Support Elder Access to Programs, Services and Benefits



What We Heard:

Elders said that the current system is not working for them because it is too complicated. Elders cannot communicate with Government of Nunavut office workers in their own language, so they cannot understand the systems and processes, or the full range of financial support they are entitled to. Elders said they have difficulty completing the required application forms for their financial benefits.

Elders have difficulties paying their bills, and usually have to wait a long time before they receive their allowable reimbursements. They are also having difficulty in paying routine bills because banking and bill paying services are not available in Inuktitut.

Elders want to better understand the importance of having and updating a legal will, to avoid confusion and possible family conflict in settling their estates. Wills have not been part of Inuit traditions but are becoming essential because Inuit now have more valuable property, assets, and liabilities.

Elders said they don't always file taxes because they don't know where to get help. Many Elders cannot understand the Canada Revenue Agency forms or regulations because they are not available in Inuktitut, and therefore some have difficulties filing their taxes.

Today, most tax returns are submitted electronically. This creates another barrier to communication with Canada Revenue Agency and makes their programs and services inaccessible to Elders. Many Elders do not have computers, internet access,

cellphones, or knowledge of how to use these to communicate with the Canada Revenue Agency.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to supporting Elder access to important programs, services and benefits. To support this commitment, we will:

- Provide Elders with an Inuktitut-speaking contact person in their community, so they know who to contact for direct assistance.
- Simplify the rules and paperwork and make information about the simplified systems available in Inuktitut.
- Arrange automatic payments of the Senior Fuel Subsidy to Elders, as well as other Family Services program entitlements.
- Develop tools and resources available in the community to help all interested Elders to write and update their wills.
- Encourage Canada Revenue Agency to better promote its automatic tax filing service to all Nunavut Elders and provide support where needed.
- Ensure Canada Revenue Agency and Service Canada have an Inuktitut-speaking officer assigned to Nunavut whose primary responsibility is helping Inuit with tax-related issues.

Improve Communications with Elders



What We Heard:

Elders want government employees to speak Inuktitut. This means all government employees must learn Inuktitut as a condition of employment.

Elders want the Government of Nunavut to use Inuktitut consistently, with conviction and commitment. They want Inuktitut to be the primary language of operations. This includes using Inuktitut in the development of policy, program planning, and delivery. In order for programs and policies to be in tune with Inuit ways of thinking, the primary language used in their development must be Inuktitut.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to improving communications with Elders. To support this commitment, we will:

- Enhance efforts to use Inuktitut as the primary language of operations in all Government of Nunavut offices and in all programs and services through implementation of the Language Implementation Plan.
- Invest in significant Inuktitut language training at every level, for all Government of Nunavut employees and implement an Inuktitut language training strategy.
- Ensure enhanced interdepartmental coordination of government support services and communications at the community level.
- As a condition of employment, require all Government of Nunavut employees to learn Inuktitut.
- Increase support for community radio initiatives that promote Inuktitut language to improve communications with Elders.

INUIT QAUJIMAJATUQANGIT

The promise of Nunavut included a territory rooted in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. There must be renewed efforts to ensure that this promise becomes a reality, where government is truly reflective of Inuit culture and practices and is responsive to the needs of Inuit.

Grounding in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Increase Inuit Employment



What We Heard:

All Government of Nunavut policies, programs, and services must be reframed to ensure an Inuit cultural perspective. This will require the involvement of Inuit Elders. Elders said they are dissatisfied with the services provided by the Departments of Family Services, Justice, and Health.

Elders said that the government claims to believe in Elders and in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, but it is not evident in government programs and services. Elders want to see end results that show the government has listened and taken action.

Elders want government programs and services to be based in Inuit ways. For this to happen, Elders must be involved in planning and delivering regular cultural competency training.

For the Government of Nunavut to be truly reflective of Inuit culture and practices, the majority of government employees must be Inuit, especially those in leadership roles. Inuit employees must receive position-specific training when required.

To create change, the government must proactively support Inuit ways of thinking and being in the workplace. Inuit employment is a requirement under Article 23 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to increasing Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit employment in the Government of Nunavut. To support this commitment, we will:

- Update the Iviqtipalliajut framework to strengthen the application of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Societal Values in government workplaces and within policy and legislation. The framework will be updated to include actions developed in collaboration with Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajit.
- Ensure enhanced engagement with Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajit and Tuttarviit in the development of policies, programs, and services.
- Develop a conceptual policy development framework based on Inuit Societal Values.
- Continue to implement Article 32 Policy which requires all GN departments and territorial corporations to engage with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated on social and cultural initiatives.
- In consultation with Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajit, establish service standards for the delivery of government programs and services for Elders.
- Raise the profile of the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajit and its significance within the GN and strengthen public awareness of its influence.
- Produce and table an Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajit Annual Report which includes advice received from Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajit and how the government incorporated that advice; as well as and records Inuit Customary Laws that may be collected.
- Develop and implement a detailed Inuit Employment Plan and Inuit Pre-Employment Training Plan for the Government of Nunavut to meet Article 23 obligations. This includes providing specialized training to develop expertise and competency in the Inuit workforce.
- Enhance efforts to hire Inuit in leadership roles in all government departments through targeted training and mentorship programs.
- Employ Elders in the planning and delivery of cultural competency training for Government of Nunavut employees.
- Engage Elders in activities that support the development and well-being of Nunavut's public service.
- In collaboration with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, develop and implement policy training capacity initiative to train more Inuit in the policy field.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

To ensure that Elder's age with dignity in Nunavut, we need to take concrete steps to improve conditions in our communities.

Strategic priorities and actions intended to support healthy communities include supporting healing in our communities and reducing poverty among Elders.

Support Healing in our Communities



What We Heard:

Elders said that because of the ready availability and excessive misuse of alcohol and drugs in their communities, there is an urgent need for addictions treatment and trauma healing programs.

Addictions are the primary cause of Elder abuse. There is a critical need to provide protection and support services for Elders who are victims of abuse in their communities. Elders are facing aggressive demands that they find very difficult to refuse. Many Elders are intimidated, coerced, and threatened by people needing money to satisfy their addictions.

Elders believe that their communities as a whole also need healing. Before effective healing can occur, justice-related issues such as alcohol and drug abuse, interpersonal violence, and theft must be addressed by the communities themselves with support from the government and other agencies.

Elders will not rest until the younger generations have healing from trauma and addictions because their whole families are affected. Elders want family-focused collective healing, delivered by Inuit, in every Nunavut community. Elders want to learn about the effects of drugs and alcohol on the brain and body, so that they can help.

Today's Elders have had traumatizing experiences throughout their lives that have affected their mental health and wellbeing: colonization, forced resettlement, residential schools, tuberculosis relocations, and the slaughter of their dog teams. These experiences have taken a heavy toll on Elders; impacting their mental, physical, cultural and spiritual wellbeing, and are increasingly evident today as they are passed on to younger generations.

Elders want the courts and the RCMP to follow Inuit methods and practices of conflict resolution and justice. Elders said that the differences in approach between Inuit and non-Inuit ways creates unnecessary stress, fear, and chaos rather than peace. Law officers should be discreet, and respectful of Inuit tradition in all their actions.

Elders often have to deal with younger family members who are experiencing mental health crises. The government is ultimately responsible for providing services and support. Elders want to provide cultural and moral support but want the government to provide the necessary programs and counselling with their input.

Elders want to use traditional Inuit ways of resolving conflict in their communities, including family issues, alcohol and drug

abuse, interpersonal violence, and theft. Elders should hold respected positions in resolving conflicts in the Inuit way, applying the methods and practices of Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit.

Even though they don't want to have abusers in their homes, the Elders are still concerned for their wellbeing. They want abusers to be provided with appropriate care and support for addictions treatment and healing.

Elders believe that wellness, healing, and community justice programs can most effectively be delivered by people who are experienced in Inuit ways and speak Inuktut. To incorporate Inuit knowledge, it is crucial for Inuit to lead and be involved in professional counselling, healing, and wellness programs.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to supporting healing in our communities. To support this commitment, we will:

- Support communities to implement community wellness programs and community-based justice and mediation initiatives.
- Provide trauma-informed and culturally appropriate family counselling and healing programs in every community in Nunavut, using Inuit approaches.
- Provide trauma-informed counselling and healing programs specifically for Elders in Inuktut.
- Provide training and orientation for all law officers in cultural awareness, Inuit communication styles, and Inuit approaches to conflict resolution.
- To ensure cultural relevance, engage Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Katimajit and Tuttarviit in the development of government addictions, healing, and counselling programs.
- Involve Elders and families in Inuit-based community justice to deal with abuse, violence, and theft through Community Justice Committees.
- Involve Elders as active participants and advisors in conflict resolution, and in court hearings in the community.
- Deliver regular courses for Elders and the community on substances and their effects on the brain and body. This training will include how to handle individuals experiencing these effects.
- Provide funding to build, operate and maintain community shelters for people who are abusing drugs and alcohol.
- Train more Inuit counsellors, mental health workers, psychologists, and social workers in programs that include Inuit practices and methods as validated by Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Katimajit and Tuttarviit.
- Establish partnerships on employment pathways for social workers and family resources workers.

Reduce Poverty



What We Heard:

Elders said they can't afford to live on the incomes they are currently receiving. When Elders have sufficient income to meet their needs, they would have a better quality of life, reduced levels of stress, and better general health.

Elders are asking for increases to the current pensions and subsidies they receive including the annual amounts of the Senior Citizen's Supplementary Benefit, the Nunavut Child Tax Benefit, and the Guaranteed Income Supplement to be reflective of Nunavut costs, indexed to inflation. Remove earning thresholds or claw-backs on all income supplements and establish new subsidy programs to support Elders.

Everyone in Nunavut needs to have a level of income that reflects the real costs of living (Market Basket Measure for Nunavut). Elders said that they want all income support programs to be tied to the real cost of living in Nunavut. The level of support needs to be adjusted annually. Elders cannot afford healthy foods on their current incomes.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to reducing poverty among Elders in our communities. To support this commitment, we will:

- Establish guaranteed basic income to reduce poverty.
- Review the Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefits and other eligible Elder's funds to ensure they are proportionate to the cost of living.
- Ensure that financial support provided to Elders reflects cost of living in Nunavut and considers inflation over time.
- Create a new assistance program to help Elders experiencing hardship in paying their electricity bills.

Path Forward

The Government of Nunavut is committed to partnering with organizations in Nunavut to ensure we meet the goals and objectives in this Strategy. We will work with other levels of government, Inuit organizations and non-profit organizations to find ways to collaborate on strategic priorities.

We have taken a whole-of-government approach to develop the Elders and Seniors Strategy and will continue working together to implement joint initiatives. The Government of Nunavut looks forward to greater engagement with Elders along the path forward, through various programs and initiatives planned throughout the Strategy.

The Nunavut Elders and Seniors Strategy will be considered a living document which strives to improve the daily lives of Elders. It will be reviewed and updated at the start of every new government.

Once created, the Elders Secretariat will ensure oversight and coordination of strategic priorities and provide dedicated service and support for Elders into the future.

The Government of Nunavut will collaborate with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to establish a tri-partite table with the Government of Canada to ensure a coordinated approach for the implementation of this strategy.

The Government of Nunavut departments and corporations look forward to receiving any further guidance and advice from Elders to support aging with dignity in Nunavut.





ᓄᓇᓂᓪ ᓂᓴᓴᓂ
Government of Nunavut
Nunavut Kavamanga
Gouvernement du Nunavut

www.gov.nu.ca