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Regular Circulation

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March 4, 2015

Information Note
Department of Child, Youth and Family Services

Title: Level 4 Staffed Residential Placement Resources for the Labrador Region

Issue: Engagement of Aboriginal partners in the development of an Expression of Interest (EOI) for Level 4 placement resources in Labrador.

Background:

- In 2012, CYFS received authority to implement a Continuum of Care strategy (the Strategy) to expand and enhance the placement options for children and youth in need of out-of-home care.
- The Strategy is comprised of four levels of care. Levels 1-3 are family based care (kinship and foster care) and Level 4 consists of contracted staffed residential placements including Group Homes (GHs), Individualized Living Arrangements (ILAs), and Emergency Placement Homes (EPHs).
- In February 2013, a request for proposals (RFP) was issued to address Level 4 placement needs on the Island and in Happy Valley Goose-Bay (HVGB).
- There were no bids received for the eleven beds (5 bed GH, 3 bed EPH, and 3 bed ILA) in HVGB, and CYFS continued with the existing service providers. The existing 5 bed GH is operated by a volunteer community board while both the EPH and ILA are operated by a private individual.
- The Aboriginal coastal communities in Labrador were excluded from the RFP. A decision was made to address the existing 6 bed GH in Nain and the 6 bed GH in Sheshatshiu (SSS) through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Planning Circles between the Nunatsiavut Government (NG), the SSS Innu First Nations (SIFN), and CYFS. In Nain, the GH is operated by a volunteer community board while the GH in SSS is operated by the Innu Band Council.
- In March and July, 2014, contracts were awarded to four service providers on the Island (i.e. Blue Sky, Key Assets, Shalom, and Waypoints) for 104 Level 4 beds.
- Through discussions with Aboriginal partners, it has been determined that the current Level 4 capacity is not sufficient to meet the needs of children and youth in Labrador.
- As of September 2014, there were 227 children and youth in care in Labrador, 212 (93 per cent) are Aboriginal. While many of these children and youth are placed in their communities, over 30 per cent children/youth are placed outside Labrador and this is a significant concern for aboriginal leaders.

Current Situation:

- It is anticipated that conducting another RFP for Level 4 for HVGB may result in a similar outcome of no bids. Moreover, in the initial stages of service development in Aboriginal

communities, conducting an RFP may be viewed as inconsistent with the partnership mechanisms currently in place, i.e. current MOU Planning Circles process.

- Consultations were held with the JPS and LAAO regarding alternate approaches, and an EOI was identified as a potential alternative.
- When compared to a RFP, an EOI is more flexible and is a non-binding (i.e. non-contractual) process that will allow Aboriginal groups full input and partnership into options that may be proposed by prospective service providers.
- The EOI will require service providers to engage Aboriginal partners in the development and submission of their EOI proposals.
- There are currently 24 staffed residential placement resources in Labrador with an annual cost of \$3.4M.
- It has been identified that 15 new placements are required for the 2015-16 fiscal year (3 bed EPH in Natuashish, 3 bed EPH in SSS, 3 bed EPH in HVGB, and a 4 bed GH and a 2 bed ILA in Hopedale). It is anticipated that additional resources may be required in the following year.
- There will be no additional cost for the 6 new EPH beds for Natuashish and SSS as residential costs for Innu children/youth are 100 per cent recoverable through a Federal/Provincial Agreement with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. The remaining nine (9) new placements will cost \$2.5M and CYFS has sufficient funding to cover these costs as a number of these children are currently supported by CYFS in other placements.

Next Steps:

- CYFS will schedule meetings with the NG Planning Circle, Mushuau Innu First Nations and the SIFN planning circles, Senior Innu officials, and the Innu Round Table to discuss this approach.
- If our Aboriginal partners are in agreement, CYFS will engage them in the process of drafting the parameters for the EOI.
- It is expected that through this EOI process potential Service Providers will engage our Aboriginal partners and jointly develop proposals to deliver Level 4 placement resources in Labrador. CYFS will determine next steps based on the outcome of this approach to the EOI.

Prepared/approved by: M. Anderson/M. Shallow/R. Healey/R. Cochrane

Reviewed by: H. Khurana/T. King, Cabinet Secretariat

Ministerial approval: Received from Hon. Sandy Collins

March 3, 2015

Cabinet Secretariat Comments:

- Communications Branch advises that CYFS will issue a news release announcing the EOI and highlighting the Continuum of Care Strategy overall. Supporting materials (key messages, QA) will be developed for the Minister and will be shared with the Minister Responsible for LAAO.
- LAAO and JPS have no concerns.