

Premier's Council on Disabilities

Annual Report
2021-2022



Premier's Council on Disabilities

Conseil du premier ministre pour les
personnes handicapées

2021-2022 Annual Report

Published by:

Premier's Council on Disabilities
Province of New Brunswick
250 King Street, suite 140
PO Box 6000
Fredericton NB
E3B 9M9
Canada

Cover:

Premier's Council on Disabilities

Typesetting:

Premier's Council on Disabilities

Printing and Binding:

GNB Printing Services

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ISBN 978-1-4605-2923-2 (Bilingual print)

ISBN 978-1-4605-2924-9 (English online version)

ISBN 978-1-4605-2925-6 (French online version)

ISSN 0825-8201

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March 2023

The Honourable Blaine Higgs
Premier
Province of New Brunswick
P. O. Box 6000
Fredericton, N.B.
E3B 5H1

Dear Premier:

We are pleased to submit the annual report of the Premier's Council on Disabilities for April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Dickinson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Randy Dickinson
Chairperson

Message from the Chairperson and the Executive Director

We are pleased to submit the 2021-2022 annual report of the Premier's Council on Disabilities.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to provide challenges to overcome, this year has been a busy year for Council. The Council continues to work to achieve our vision for a New Brunswick where all persons are accepted, included, and valued. In pursuit of this goal, Council remains committed to working closely with individuals with disabilities, their families, service professionals, community organizations, and government at all levels to identify and break down the barriers preventing persons with a disability from fully participating in society.

Council members bring with them an abundance of diverse experience, from every corner of the province, and this, along with our network of strong community partners allows Council to continue to provide informed, timely, and actionable advice to the government.

Highlights of this year included Council leadership with the annual Disability Awareness Week in New Brunswick in late May and early June and hosting an event marking the United Nations Day for Persons with a Disability in December. In addition, the Council released the first status report for the Disability Action Plan.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all Council members and staff for their expertise and passion towards the work of the Council and thank all the stakeholders for continuing to be a part of the conversation.



Randy Dickinson
Chairperson

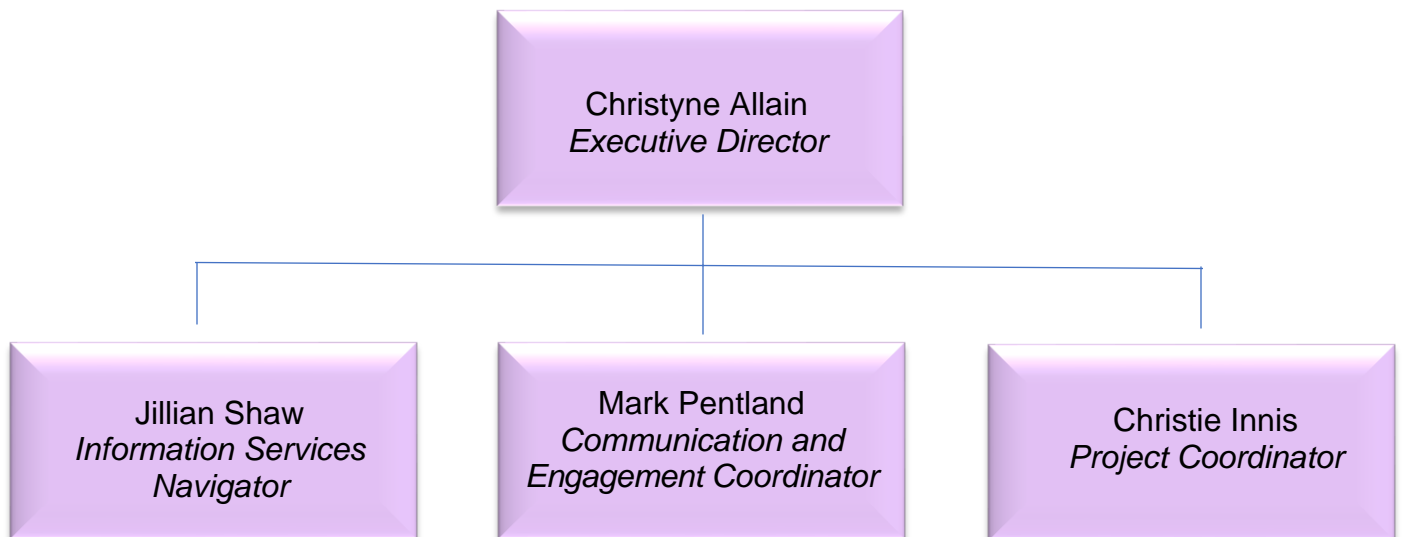


Christyne Allain,
Executive Director

Council Members 2021-2022

Randy Dickinson	Chairperson
Connie Melanson-Savoy	Public-at-Large Representative
Kailah Winter-Smith	Regional Representative
Patrick Losier	Public-at-Large Representative
Christine Evans	Regional Representative (Saint John Region) – term end May 25, 2021
Nick Taggart	Regional Representative (Fredericton Region)
Linda Ferrier	Public-at-Large Representative – term end September 15, 2021
Marc LeBlanc	Regional Representative (Bathurst Region)
Michael George	Regional Representative (Saint John Region) – term end September 15, 2021
Angèle Collette	Regional Representative (Moncton Region) – term end September 15, 2021
Michèle Ouellette	Regional Representative (Edmundston Region)
Annie Chiasson Doiron	Regional Representative
Gregory Zed	Regional Representative (Rothesay Region)
Brigitte Lapointe	Provincial Association Representative
Kanza Hashmat	Public-at-Large Representative
Cassie Hall	Regional Representative (Kent Region)
Heather Chandler	Provincial Association Representative

PCD Personnel 2021-2022



In addition, please note that the following persons served on the staff of the PCD during some portion of 2021-2022:

Vanessa Douthwright Project Coordinator

Emma Mackenzie-Ballard Information Services Navigator

Vision: A New Brunswick where all persons are accepted, included, and valued.

Mission: We provide dynamic leadership to improve the quality of life for all persons affected by disability in New Brunswick.

We accomplish this by:

- Being a strong voice and role model for full community participation;
- Providing research, advice, and direction to the Premier and Government;
- Educating and increasing public awareness and the profile of individual rights, abilities, and values;
- Building strategic partnerships and networks;
- Facilitating support for individuals, families, caregivers, professionals, and communities.

The Council's five (5) goals are based on increasing capacity, role clarity, and increased awareness of PCD. Working on these goals will allow PCD to enact positive change that will improve the quality of life for persons living with a disability, meet their mandate, mission, and vision in NB. The Council has been working towards identifying required resources to fulfill our new vision and mission as well as identifying strategies that we can start to implement right away.

Mandate

The Premier's Council on Disabilities is a body for consultation, study, and information sharing, which was created to advise the provincial government on matters relating to the status of persons with disabilities. The Council reports directly to the Premier of New Brunswick.

During a large provincial conference in the fall of 1981, which involved many persons with disabilities, parents, organizations serving persons with disabilities and government representatives, it was decided that a permanent body was needed to maintain the momentum generated by the International Year of Disabled Persons. The unanimous resolution of the conference prompted provincial legislation to be drafted and passed that created the Premier's Council in 1982.

The Premier's Council on Disabilities Act states that the Council shall:

- Advise the Minister on matters relating to the status of disabled persons;
- Bring before the government and the public matters of interest and concern to disabled persons;
- Promote:
 - prevention of disabling conditions,
 - employment opportunities of disabled persons, and
 - access by persons with disabilities to all services offered to the citizens of New Brunswick.

The Council in carrying out its functions may:

- Receive and hear petitions and suggestions from individuals and groups concerning the status of disabled persons;
- Undertake research on matters relevant to the status of disabled persons and recommend research areas that can be studied by governments, voluntary associations, private business, and universities;
- Recommend programs concerning the status of disabled persons;
- Make referrals to, consult, and collaborate with government agencies, voluntary associations, private businesses, universities and individuals on matters which affect the status of disabled persons;
- Appoint committees consisting of members and other persons who are not members of the Council;
- Propose legislation, policies, and practices to improve the status of disabled persons; and,
- Publish the reports, studies, and recommendations that the Council considers necessary.

Highlights from 2021-2022

Disability Action Plan Status Report

This year, the Premier's Council on Disabilities released the first status report for **New Brunswick's Disability Action Plan for Persons with a Disability: Accountable Path Forward to an Equal Opportunity!**

Released in July 2020, the Disability Action Plan (DAP) is a multi-year strategy that includes 43 recommendations with a focus on: employment, education, poverty, housing, disability supports, accessibility, transportation, and recreation and wellness.

Despite the additional challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council is pleased to report that significant progress has been made to address many of the DAP recommendations. The Council was especially encouraged by steps taken to explore the possible development of comprehensive provincial accessibility legislation for New Brunswick.

The status report highlights several actions that have been taken, including:

- A Select Committee on Accessibility in New Brunswick has been established. It is charged with consulting with stakeholders and government departments involved with the disability community and reporting to the legislative assembly with recommendations.
- As part of Social Assistance Reform 2021, a task force to review disability support services and programs offered has been established by the Premier's Council on Disabilities, and the New Brunswick Disability Executives Network, as well as individuals and family members who have had first-hand experience with disability support services and programs.

- The provincial government, through the Equal Employment Opportunity Program, has received approval for a federal grant of about \$190,000. This will go toward a one-year project aimed at creating more provincial government employment opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Premier's Council will continue to work closely with the Office of the Premier and GNB departments on implementing the recommendations of the Disability Action Plan. Stakeholders will also be consulted for ways to fulfill all recommendations put forth, to improve the lives of persons with a disability.

Disability Awareness Week May 30th - June 5th, 2021– “Let’s Talk Ability!”

Disability Awareness week is held annually to conduct a strategic public awareness campaign to promote enhanced supports for persons with disabilities of all types and of all ages. The campaign this year included virtual events, in-person events, contests, and activities, as well as social media, radio, public service announcements, news releases, and posters to promote DAW.

Disability Awareness Week relies heavily on collaboration of staff and volunteers from the Neil Squire Society who work with the Premier's Council to stage the many activities during this week. The activities this year included a kick-off event on May 29th in Fredericton co-hosted by Opal Family Services, a virtual presentation from Robert Hampson to public schools and to residents of New Brunswick, Red Shirt Day, and the annual provincial Walk and Roll event. Many of our events were hosted with reduced attendance or virtually due to the ongoing challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

During DAW 2021, Cassandra Mazariegos was named recipient of the Randy Dickinson Scholarship. This \$2000 scholarship is awarded annually to a New Brunswick student with a disability studying in a recognized program at a New Brunswick post-secondary education institution.

Zein and Rosita Elabdin, owners of Choco Zein in Saint John, received the Council's Employer Recognition Award for their continued work in the area of employment for persons with a disability. Deb McDonald, Executive Director of Community Autism Centre Inc. in Saint John, received the Provincial Award in recognition of their outstanding service to the community and their involvement in bettering the lives of families with children with disabilities. Lastly, Dr. Colleen O'Connell, Research Chief at the Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation, received the Honourable Andy Scott Award for championing the improvement of rehabilitation treatments and the development of effective supports for persons with disabilities across New Brunswick.

United Nations International Day for Persons with a Disability – December 3, 2021

Annually, the Premier's Council hosts an event on December 3rd in recognition of the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The theme in 2021 was ***Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an***

inclusive, accessible, and sustainable post-COVID-19 world

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities was first proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1992. Over the years, UN day events have been organized around the world to encourage people, organizations, governments, and societies to focus on issues related to the inclusion of persons with a disability and the measures needed to support greater equity.

This year the PCD partnered with the Neil Squire Society to execute several events to bring awareness to the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The Neil Squire Society led classes at Monseigneur Martin school in St. Quentin to guide students in building assistive technology (dice spinners and the switches to operate them). This was an in-person event with opening remarks from the Executive Director of the PCD. Neil Squire Society also partnered with *Makers Making Change* to set a Guinness World Record for the most people to take part in an online do-it-yourself assistive technology course within 24 hours. The PCD and NSS also partnered to host a live virtual event with Simon Richard from Parasport NB. Simon shared his thoughts and experiences with accessibility in parasport in his capacity as an athlete and program coordinator.

Council Board Meetings

Throughout 2021-2022 Council held quarterly meetings to address a variety of topics relating to persons with a disability, such as:

- Supports for students with disabilities in the education system
- Supports and services for people with autism
- Service animals
- Challenges associated with poor access to transportation for people with disabilities
- Mental health issues
- Disability Action Plan Status Update
- Provincial Accessibility Act
- Employment standards and wages for persons with disabilities
- Accessible Elections

Clients

During this year, staff responded to over 380 requests from individuals with a disability, parents, teachers, rehabilitation professionals, and advocates. These requests were received mostly through telephone and email, with some in-person meetings at the end of 2022. The largest percentage of inquiries came from persons living with a disability or their immediate family members. Primarily, PCD staff assisted clients in finding the appropriate programs and services to assist in meeting their needs.

The PCD also maintains online information directories that encompass programs and services available to persons with a disability. During 2021-2022, this directory was updated, and work was done to improve the accessibility and ease of access to this service. The many categories featured in the directory include, but are not limited to sports, recreation, and leisure resources; transportation services; vehicle retrofit programs; and financial aid.

PCD Meetings, Presentations, Collaboration with Government

- *Office of the Premier (ED)*
 - Meeting with the Premier's Office and the Chair of the Select Committee to discuss Accessibility Legislation
 - Meeting with the Chief of Staff and Executive Council Office to discuss the Accessibility Act
 - Briefing with the Premier on the Main Estimates
- *Executive Council Office*
 - Worked with ECO on the upcoming council appointments

- Meeting regarding the Disability Policy Lens
- Meeting regarding the Agencies, Boards and Commissions Review
- *Department of Social Development*
 - Meeting with representatives from this department to discuss the Disability Action Plan Status Update
 - Meeting to discuss this department's inclusive lens for a research project pertaining to Disability Benefits
 - Meeting to discuss the definition of persons with a disability
 - Meetings with Disability Support Services Task Force
- *Post-Secondary, Education, Training and Labour*
 - Meeting with PETL and the Executive Director of the New Brunswick Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services regarding the EAS network consultation
 - Many meetings with representatives from this department to discuss the Disability Action Plan, Disability Awareness Week, committees, and for their feedback on programs and services available to persons with disabilities
- *Department of Health*
 - Staff attended multiple Public Health Care Strategy virtual sessions
 - PCD Executive Director and Chairperson participated at the Disability Session as part of the Health Strategy Consultation
 - Prepared a letter to the Minister and Dr. Russell regarding medical exemption for wearing masks
 - Meeting with the Executive Director of Health & Addiction Services
- *Department of Education and Early Childhood Development*
 - Ongoing meetings regarding the Disability Action Plan
 - Meetings regarding Enhanced Support Worker Program redesign
 - Attended the presentation to EECD and PETL on the Transition Guide and Survey from the Renaissance College Students
 - Meeting with department representatives on the Health Strategy Review
 - Meetings with EECD on the Policy 322 review
- *Treasury Board*
 - Meetings regarding Requests to Information and Request to Information training
 - Meetings with Finance to discuss PCD budget
- *New Brunswick Human Rights Commission*
 - Meetings with HRC regarding Service Animal Legislation
- *Federal/Provincial/Territories*

- Participated on several conference calls with the Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee
- Participated on calls by the Network of Offices for Disability Issues and Premiers' Councils
- Participated in a two-day policy roundtable organized by the Disability and Work Canada Steering Committee
- Staff participation on FPT Access Ability Roundtables, every Wednesday for 4 weeks
- Staff participation on FPT Access Ability Pilot Workshop and Follow-up for Employers
- Participated in multiple calls hosted by the Open Forum on Accessibility NB

PCD Meetings, Presentations, Collaboration with Private and Non-Profit Sectors

- Neil Squire Society
- Autism Resource Centres of New Brunswick
- Various schools in NB
- NB Disability Executives Network
- Ability NB
- Autism Connections NB
- Renaissance College
- NB Community Data Consortium
- ReThink Ability
- Deaf and Blind Association
- Community Business Development Corporations (CBDC)
- L'Arche
- Inclusion Canada
- Trans Canada Trail
- Ontario Association for Learning Disabilities
- AccessNow
- AMI-tv
- NB Association for Supported Services and Employment (NBASSE)
- St. Thomas University
- NB Association for Community Living

Committees and Work Groups 2021-2022

The PCD participates in several committees and work groups to better address issues relating to persons with a disability, including:

- Inter-Departmental Committee on the Disability Action Plan
- Canadian Open Forum on Accessibility
- Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Disability Issues
- Provincial-Territorial Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee

- Place 2000 Joint Health and Safety Committee
- Place 2000 Wellness Committee
- NB Disability Executives Network
- UNB Accessibility Committee

Official Languages

The Premier's Council on Disabilities recognizes its obligations and is committed to actively offering and providing quality services to the public in the public's official language of choice. We are pleased to report that there were no complaints filed with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022.

Premier's Council on Disabilities

Financial Statements

March 31, 2022

Premier's Council on Disabilities

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March 31, 2022

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Independent Auditor's Report

To: The Members of Premier's Council on Disabilities

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Premier's Council on Disabilities, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2022, and the statements of operations and changes in accumulated surplus and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the organization as at March 31, 2022, and its results of operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the organization's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- ◆ Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

Independent Auditor's Report, continued

- ◆ Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the organization's internal control.
- ◆ Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- ◆ Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- ◆ Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Fredericton, New Brunswick
January 17, 2023


Chartered Professional Accountants

Premier's Council on Disabilities

Statement of Financial Position

As at March 31, 2022

	2022	2021
FINANCIAL ASSET		
Due from related party, Province of New Brunswick (note 3)	\$ 204,954	\$ 180,554
LIABILITY		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (note 4)	\$ 23,169	\$ 17,017
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS		
Surplus	181,785	163,537
	<u>\$ 204,954</u>	<u>\$ 180,554</u>

Approved

Members Kailha Winter-Smith

Members Nick Tupper

Premier's Council on Disabilities
Statement of Operations and Changes in Accumulated Surplus
Year ended March 31, 2022

	2022 Budget	2022 Actual	2021 Actual
Revenues			
Province of New Brunswick	\$ 314,693	\$ 314,693	\$ 302,158
Disability Awareness Week	<u>-</u>	<u>48,000</u>	<u>48,000</u>
	<u>314,693</u>	<u>362,693</u>	<u>350,158</u>
Expenditures			
Salaries and related benefits	288,693	281,129	231,790
Disability Awareness Week	-	23,736	18,954
Translation & Interpretation	11,000	14,611	18,959
Council Meetings, Travel and Honoraria	6,500	12,917	11,775
Printing	500	3,449	2,628
Telephone	3,550	3,385	4,063
IT & Web	-	1,583	2,093
Postage	500	1,232	673
Office supplies	1,500	1,125	1,450
Training and professional development	250	784	294
December 3rd UN Day	-	280	-
Staff Meetings & Travel	2,000	214	118
Parking	<u>200</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>174</u>
	<u>314,693</u>	<u>344,445</u>	<u>292,971</u>
Excess of revenues over expenditures	-	18,248	57,187
Accumulated Surplus, opening	<u>-</u>	<u>163,537</u>	<u>106,350</u>
Accumulated Surplus, closing	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 181,785</u>	<u>\$ 163,537</u>

Premier's Council on Disabilities

Statement of Cash Flows
Year ended March 31, 2022

	2022	2021
Operating activities		
Cash receipts from Province of New Brunswick	\$ 290,293	\$ 235,337
Cash receipts from others	48,000	48,000
Cash paid to suppliers and employees	<u>(338,293)</u>	<u>(283,337)</u>
Change in cash position	-	-
Cash, opening	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Cash, closing	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

The Council's source of cash is the Province of New Brunswick. The corporation does not maintain a separate bank account and all operating activities are processed through the Province of New Brunswick.

Premier's Council on Disabilities

Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2022

1. Nature of operations

Premier's Council on Disabilities is a body for consultation and study which was created to advise the provincial government and the general public on matters relating to the status of persons with disabilities. The Council reports directly to the Premier of New Brunswick. The council is exempt from income taxes under ITA 149(1)(d).

2. Significant accounting policies

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards. The significant accounting policies are detailed as follows:

(a) Revenue recognition

Revenue is recorded on the accrual basis.

The Council follows the deferral method of accounting for grants received for operations and specific projects. Grants to be used for specific purposes are recognized as revenue in the period in which the related expenditures are incurred. When a portion of a grant relates to a future period, it is deferred and recognized in the appropriate period.

The Council currently receives 99% of their revenue from the Province of New Brunswick and related departments.

(b) Capital assets

The Council records capital expenditures under \$100,000 as current period expenses as incurred.

(c) Pension plans and other retirement benefit plans

Certain employees of the Council are entitled to receive pension benefits under the New Brunswick Public Service Pension Plan (NBPSPP). The NBPSPP is a multi-employer pension plan which targets a retirement benefit and is subject to legislation under the Provincial Pension Benefits Act and is subject to the Federal Income Tax Act. Contributions are made by both the Council and the employees at the rates established by the Board of Trustees. The Council is not responsible for any unfunded liability nor does it have access to any surplus with respect to its employee pensions.

Premier's Council on Disabilities

Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2022

2. Significant accounting policies, continued

(d) Financial instruments

The organization initially measures its financial assets and liabilities at fair value, except for certain non-arm's length transactions. The organization subsequently measures its financial assets and financial liabilities at amortized cost, except for securities quoted in an active market, which are subsequently measured at fair value.

Financial liabilities measured at amortized cost include accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

(e) Measurement uncertainty

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

3. Related party transactions

The Province of New Brunswick pays all costs on behalf of the Council throughout the year.

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Province of New Brunswick	<u>\$ 204,954</u>	<u>\$ 180,554</u>

The amount due from the Province of New Brunswick represents the amount due to the Council for the excess of approved funding over expenditures incurred.

During the year, the Province of New Brunswick authorized funding totaling \$302,158 (2020-\$315,540). Additionally, the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour authorized funding totaling \$46,500 (2020-\$46,500).

The Province of New Brunswick also provides certain support to the Council at no cost, including office space and other support services including IT services, reception services, and records management. The value of these expenses cannot be reasonably determined and are accordingly not reflected in these financial statements.

Premier's Council on Disabilities

Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2022

4. Accounts payable and accrued liabilities

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Vacation accrual	\$ 10,912	\$ 9,204
Salary accrual	<u>12,257</u>	<u>7,813</u>
	<u>\$ 23,169</u>	<u>\$ 17,017</u>

5. Economic dependence

The Premier's Council on Disabilities is economically dependent on the Province of New Brunswick as it receives a significant portion of its funding from the Province.