

Youth Transitions



Implementation Paper

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Ministry of
Children and Family
Development

Acknowledgements

The Ministry of Children and Family Development and staff, who do their work throughout the province, would like to acknowledge that we are living and working with gratitude and respect on the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples throughout British Columbia. We specifically acknowledge and express our gratitude to the keepers of the lands and acknowledge the 204 First Nations communities and the 39 Métis chartered communities in the province. We would also like to acknowledge our Inuit partners and friends living in these beautiful territories.

The ministry would like to acknowledge with gratitude all those who shared their perspectives and made this implementation paper possible, including youth and young adults, the First Nations, Métis, and Urban Indigenous Advisory Circles, community organizations, First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous leadership and partners.

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Summary: Youth Transitions Implementation

Youth who are transitioning from government care, like all young adults, need social supports, tools, resources, and relationships to transition successfully to adulthood. Through many years of engagement and calls to action, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD/ the ministry) has heard that youth and young adults need wrap-around supports to give them greater agency and choice over decisions that impact their lives and to reach their full potential.

Youth transitions include youth in care from age 14 up to their 19th birthday and young adults formerly in care from age 19 up to their 27th birthday. To better support youth and young adults in and from government care, the Government of British Columbia is introducing new and improved youth transitions supports.

The new and improved youth transitions supports focus on key 'domains of need' identified through the voices of youth and young adults, Indigenous partners, leaders, sector partners, communities across British Columbia, staff, and many others. These youth transitions supports build on existing supports and also create new ones, particularly for those young adults over the age of 19 years. Six of these domains are led by the ministry's work and are covered in this paper:

- Expanded eligibility
- Financial support
- Navigation and transition planning
- Life-skills, training, and culture
- Housing
- Health and wellness

This paper maps out a pathway for the ministry to implement these new and improved youth transitions supports and **we want to hear directly from you!**

The ministry is committed to support and uphold Indigenous inherent and human rights and to implement and meet the objectives of [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UN Declaration). In recognition of this commitment and that the new and improved youth transition supports must be rooted in Indigenous values and go further to end the over-representation of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and urban Indigenous youth in government care, a dedicated series of Indigenous Advisory Circle discussions were held. The perspectives, knowledge and ideas shared by Advisory Circle participants focused on supporting Indigenous young adults over the age of 19 years – yet their wisdom and stories reflect universal outcomes that apply to all youth and young adults in and formerly in care from any culture.

To support the unique needs of each youth and young adult in all their diversity – inclusive of culture, race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other intersecting identity factors – a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens will inform the implementation and delivery of the new and improved supports.

Since 2018, the ministry has engaged with over 2,500 British Columbians, including youth and young adults, caregivers, Indigenous and community partners, and Ministry and Indigenous Child and Family Services' staff. Through these engagements and Advisory Circles discussions, six core themes have been identified to guide the implementation of the youth transitions supports across each of the domains of need:

Culture, Identity and Connection: Connection to culture and identity are at the heart of a youth and young adult's being. When they are ready, supports need to connect youth and young adults in all their diversity to their culture, identity, and history.

Community: It is key for supports to be connected in community, and to connect youth and young adults to their community.

Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being: Supports should see each youth and young adult as a whole person that is connected to the land and in relationship with others.

Young Adult Voices: Youth and young adults must be listened to at every step of the process because they know what works best for them and what supports they need the most.

Relationships: Since relationships are what connects youth and young adults to supports and services, relationships must be meaningful, be built on trust and be long-lasting.

Meeting Youth and Young Adults Where They Are: Young people should be free to choose their own journey or path - without judgement.

Youth Transitions: Implementation Paper

Introduction: Youth Transitions Transformation

As part of [Budget 2022](#), the Government of British Columbia introduced new and improved supports for youth and young adults in and from care.

These new and improved supports respond to what we have heard for many years, that youth and young adults transitioning into adulthood from government care need a holistic approach and wrap-around supports to reach their full potential. The new and improved supports place youth and young adults in all their diversity at the centre and offer them greater agency to choose the support they need to transition into adulthood.

It has been a long journey to get to where we are today - and hearing directly from Indigenous voices and British Columbians has been the most important step in developing the new and improved youth transitions supports. We continue to engage and listen to our partners, including youth, young adults, and Indigenous Peoples, to help inform and guide the implementation process.

This implementation paper builds on the many years, voices, and guiding documents (like the UN Declaration, the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) and the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action*) that have provided ideas, guidance, and advocated for change - and maps out a pathway for the ministry to move forward.

Past Engagement and Domains of Need

The ministry is working towards new and improved youth transitions supports that will give youth and young adults greater agency and choice over decisions that impact their lives. To help do this, over 2,500 British Columbians provided feedback since 2018, inclusive of youth and young adults, Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies (formerly known as Delegated Aboriginal Agencies), Indigenous leadership and partners, community partners, partner ministries and agencies, and ministry staff.

From these voices, nine domains of need were identified to support young people transitioning into adulthood. Most of these domains of need were brought forward by MCFD for further engagement as part of the implementation design process except for two - Education & Employment, and Information Technology. MCFD is working closely with our partner ministries including the Ministry of Education and Child Care, the Ministry of Advanced



Image Description: The visual shows the nine domains of need identified by youth and young adults. The domains of need are: expanded eligibility, financial support, navigation and transition planning, life-skills and training, housing, mental health and wellness, education and employment, information technology and relationships, identity and culture.

Education and Skills Training, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and the Ministry of Citizens' Services on these two domains.

The domains of need covered in this implementation paper are:

- Expanded eligibility
- Financial support (Income supplements)
- Navigation and transition planning (Transitions workers)
- Life-skills, training and relationships, identity, and culture (two domains grouped together)
- Housing
- Health and Wellness

Themes that emerged from the engagements were also used to form the new and improved supports which will be implemented over the next three years. These supports include:

Effective April 1, 2022: Emergency Measures

- An indefinite extension of the Temporary Housing Agreements and Temporary Support Agreements so that youth and young adults can stay in their homes.
- Permanently maintaining the flexibility to the Agreements with Young Adults life-skills, rehabilitative and mental health program options.

Coming in 2022: New Programs & Supports

- A no-limit **earnings exemption** so that financial supplements paid to young adults formerly in care are not reduced based on their work.
- A new **rent supplement** program to help eligible young adults with their rent.
- New **transitions workers** to support youth and young adults navigate their transition from care successfully, starting as early as age 14.

Coming in 2023: Transition Support Enhancements

- Funding for young people to access **life-skills, cultural, and skills training** programs.
- Enhanced **dental and medical benefits, including counselling**.
- Priority access to **subsidized housing** with support services through BC Housing.

Coming in 2024: Additional Improvements

- More young adults will qualify for support through **expanded program eligibility**.
- An **unconditional income supplement** for young adults between ages 19-20.
- The post-19 youth transitions program duration will be **extended** to support young adults until age 27 for those who choose to participate in eligible programming.
- **Housing Agreements and Support Agreements** are permanent options, where young adults can stay in their homes until age 21.

* Note: Words in bold correspond to a domain of need

First Nation, Métis, and Urban Indigenous Voices

The ministry held a series of First Nation, Métis, and urban Indigenous consultations to make sure supports are rooted in Indigenous values. Three distinct Advisory Circles were formed to hear and listen to the voices of First Nations, Métis, and Urban Indigenous communities.

Led by Reciprocal Consulting and guided by the [UN Declaration](#) and the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#), each Advisory Circle met for three half-day sessions. Participants used a semi-structured sharing circle approach to share their perspectives, advice, and ideas on how the new and improved youth transitions supports can be implemented, keeping the needs of youth and young adults at the centre.

Main themes and principles shared by Advisory Circles include:

- Culture and identity are core to a young person's being and cannot be separated out.
- Supports need to be culturally safe and trauma-informed.
- Supports should include genealogy work to help youth and young adults find their identity and connect with their culture.
- For young people to succeed, the goal should be for them to be connected to community, relationships, families/natural supports, and culture must be at the centre of service.
- It is important for services to be provided to Indigenous young people by Indigenous communities.
- Capacity funding and capacity building is needed for Indigenous communities to support youth and young adults.
- The system needs to find ways to be more flexible in providing supports to youth and young adults.
- Indigenous ways of knowing and being see youth and young adults as a whole person and that their well-being is interconnected with community, culture, spirituality, the land, and relationships.
- Supports should place Indigenous values first and be practical, realistic, holistic, and integrated to support youth and young adults.
- Supports should have a youth and young adult-centred philosophy and a youth-led practice where the young people inform every step of the process.
- The developmental needs of youth and young adults should always be top of mind.
- Young people need more mentorship opportunities with elders who can share cultural knowledge, experience and advice when needed.
- It is important to recognize the diversity in Indigenous communities across British Columbia and to avoid one cultural umbrella.

If you are interested in learning more about the Advisory Circle consultations and distinction-based considerations please see [Appendix A: What We Heard from First Nation, Métis, and Urban Indigenous Advisory Circles](#).

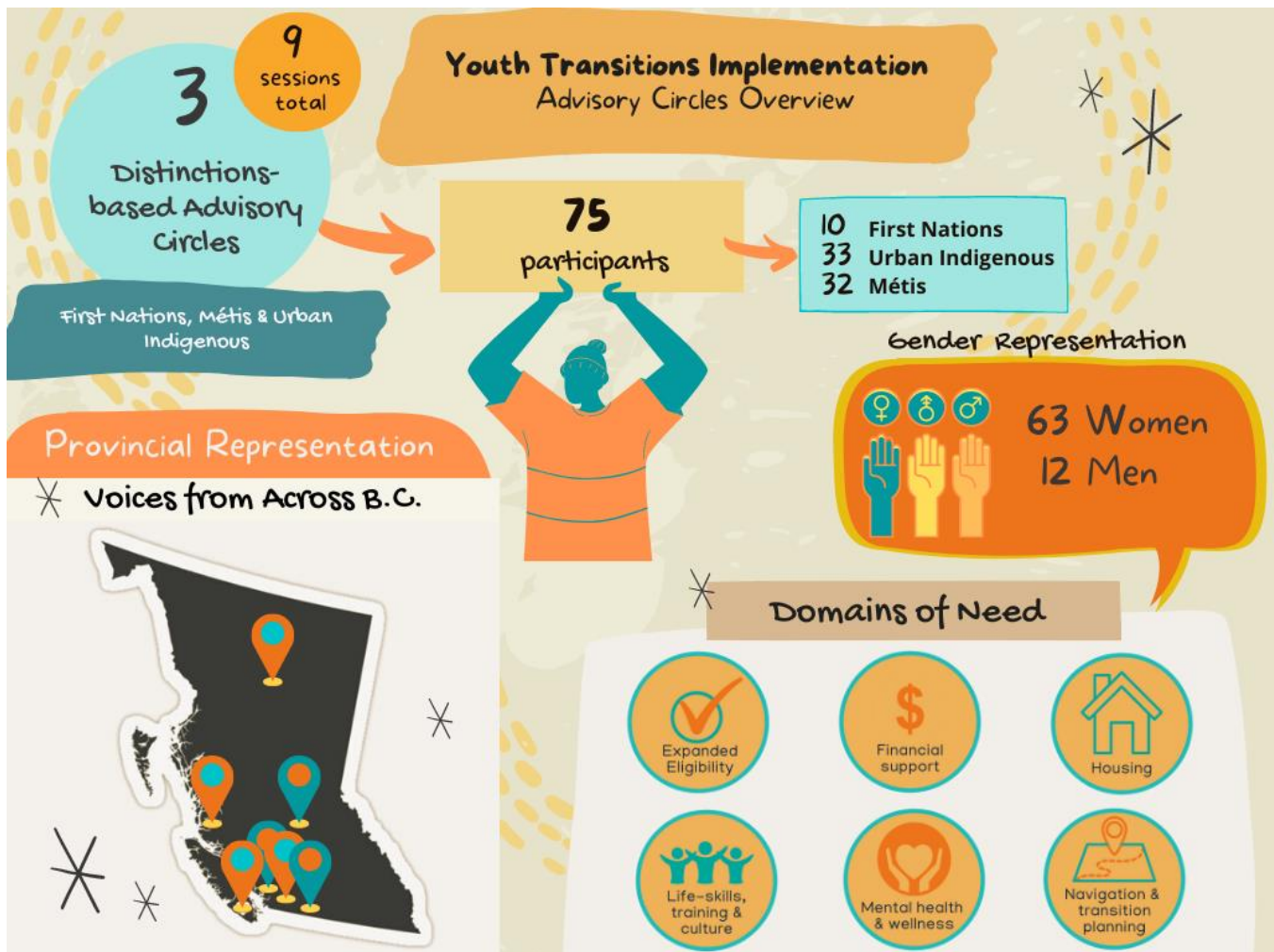


Image Description: The visual above provides an overview of the Advisory Circle sessions. A total of 75 participants, 63 women and 12 men, attended 9 sessions – including 10 participants from First Nations communities, 33 from Urban Indigenous communities and 32 from Métis communities. Participants joined from various regions in the province.

Core Themes for Implementation

A key learning from the previous public engagement sessions and Advisory Circles is that youth and young adults in all their diversity must be the focus of the new and improved youth transitions supports. Youth and young adults know best what they need in their unique transition to adulthood and want greater agency and choice over decisions that impact their lives.

Youth and young adults will be at the centre of all youth transitions supports with six core areas to support them in reaching their full potential. These six core areas include:

- **Connection to culture and identity**
- **Community**
- **Indigenous ways of knowing and being**
- **Relationships**
- **Meeting youth and young adults where they are**
- **Listening to youth and young adults**



Youth and Young Adults - Culture, Identity & Connection

- Connection to culture and identity are at the heart of a youth and young adult's being.
- When youth and young adults are ready to connect with their culture and identity, supports need to help young people build their own identity that is grounded in community and culture, to find their place, and determine their purpose in life – wherever they are in their journey.
- Supports and services must acknowledge and appreciate Indigenous culture and history, be culturally safe, trauma-informed, and recognize the diversity across distinct cultures in British Columbia and Canada.



Community

- Communities offer a range of caring, holistic, and culturally relevant supports to youth and young adults. Where possible, community resources should support young people directly.
- Supports should connect or reunify youth and young adults with their community – in a way that young people choose. It is also key to build strong relationships with community partners and actively work in a youth and young adult's cultural community.



Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being

- Indigenous ways of knowing and being sees each youth and young adult as a whole person (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual) that is connected to the land and in relationship to others (family/natural supports, community, and nations).
- By honouring Indigenous ways of knowing and being, different supports can work together in a more holistic way to better support a youth and young adult's well-being.



Youth and Young Adult Voices

- The voices of youth and young adults need to guide the youth transitions supports and how they are implemented. Young people know what works best for them and what supports they need the most.
- Supports must take time to connect and listen to youth and young adults and to build trusting relationships with young people.



Relationships

- Since relationships are what connects youth and young adults to supports and services, relationships with youth and young adults must be meaningful, be built on trust and be long-lasting.
- Relationships and partnerships with communities need to be continuously nurtured to improve the wrap-around supports to youth and young adults. This includes making sure that communities have enough resources to directly support young people on their own.

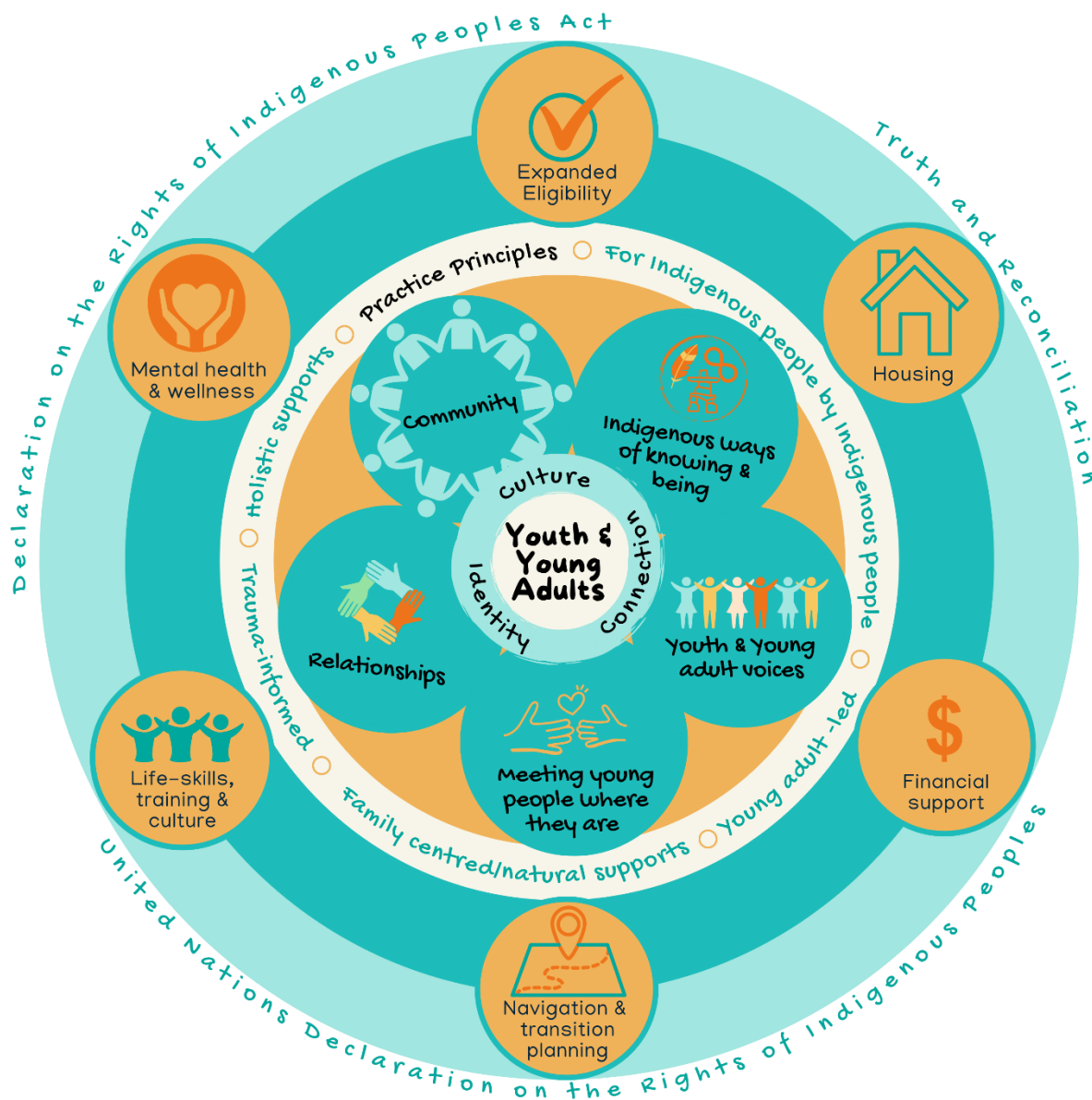


Meeting Youth and Young Adults Where They Are

- It is ok for youth and young adults to choose a path that is different from one that society often prescribes. Young people should be free to decide their own journey.
- It is important that the wrap-around supports meet youth and young adults where they are - without judgement. Supports need to be provided regardless of some of the choices young people are making, or the life changes they might be working through.

These six core themes reinforce each other, cut across each of the domains of need, and will be considered throughout all the youth transitions work.

The image below is a visual representation of the implementation approach with youth and young adults at the centre of youth transitions supports, and supported by the core themes across each of the domains of need:



Core Themes and Implementing the Domains of Need

By applying the core themes to implementing each of the domains of need, youth and young adults transitioning to adulthood will have more stability and support, better access to the services they need, stronger relationships, be more connected to their community, culture, and identity, and have more agency and choice to decide over decisions that impact their lives.

Below is a high-level summary of recommendations for implementation from the previous public engagements and Advisory Circles in applying the core themes to the domains of need.



Expanded Eligibility

- Changes to who is eligible for supports should be broadly shared with youth and young adults, support workers, organizations, sector partners and Indigenous networks. Information should tell youth and young adults what support they can access and how to access them, and be available online, through social media, in-person, and in community.
- Hearing directly from youth and young adults throughout the process is one of the best ways to determine whether the new and improved youth transitions supports and services are working for them.



Financial Support (Income Supplements)

- The application process should be easy with plain language and in a variety of formats (digital, through transitions workers, built into programs etc.). Youth and young adults would like the process to be less transactional by removing paperwork and bureaucracy.
- Youth transition supports should help youth and young adults prepare before their programming ends to lessen the impact that their supplement ending will have on them.
- Reports and data collection should focus on wellness and quality of life, success stories, and should also point to areas where youth and young adults are facing challenges.



Navigation and Transition Planning (Transitions Workers)

- A young person's relationship with their transitions worker is one of the most important because it connects young people to supports. The strength of this relationship relates to their success.
- Transition Workers have the skills, ability, and experience to help them build and foster meaningful connection and relationships with youth and young adults. This includes cultural safety and trauma awareness training; experience working with young people and may include having lived experience with the child welfare system.
- Transition Workers should support youth and young adults where they are at in their journey in a culturally safe, trauma-informed, and community-centred way.
- Transitions workers should build strong and trusting relationships with youth and young adults, be connected and integrated into communities, and have knowledge and understanding of Indigenous culture, history, and identity.

- Support the mental health and wellness of those working with youth and young adults.



Life-skills, Training, and Culture

- Life-skills training should help youth and young adults thrive and not 'just survive'. It would be beneficial if services are more collaborative and consider the whole youth and young adult, place Indigenous values first, and is less about transactional skills that 'feed the system'.
- Life-skills training should always be youth-driven, with the goal of helping young people with finding their place, finding purpose, finding culture, building identity, connecting to community, and establishing relationships with other people.
- Youth and young adults need a range of cultural supports available, for example participating in cultural ceremonies, learning Indigenous languages, connecting with Elders, learning about medicine, creating cultural art, connecting to the land, and learning hunting and fishing skills.



Housing

- The rent supplement should be tailored to a young adult's individual circumstances, be low-barrier and easily accessible, and align with the current realities of the housing crisis and high living costs.
- Looking at good examples of existing housing models can help make the new supports more holistic. Some elements to consider include having multigenerational living spaces where Elders in residence can share cultural knowledge, experience and advice when needed.
- Supports should offer life-skills training for independent living, for example, budgeting, meal planning, and helping young people understand their rights as renters.



Health and Wellness

- To help improve their health and wellness youth and young adults need ways to connect to their culture, community, and identity. For example, traditional medicine, ceremonies, and meeting with Elders can help support a young person's overall well-being and reduce anxiety.
- Youth and young adults need easy-to-understand information on what benefits are available to them, how to access services and get a health card, and how to navigate the health system.
- Creating a list of Indigenous practitioners/providers that use culturally safe approaches and value the medicine wheel would be useful. It is important to recognize that racism is still prevalent in the healthcare system, and this limits access to culturally safe care.

Importance of Intersectionality

Woven throughout all three Advisory Circle discussions was a recognition that each youth and young adult is not one-dimensional but a complex person with often intersecting identities facing different challenges. It was suggested that this intersectionality needs to always be considered and incorporated into the implementation and delivery of the services and supports to help meet the unique need of each young person.

Advisory Circles Feedback

Key feedback from Advisory Circles participants on considering intersectionality throughout implementation included:

- Addressing systemic barriers and colonialism in the current system and promoting a way forward that is centred around Indigenous values first.
- Taking an intersectional lens¹ to supports in each domain of need and ensuring that special consideration is given across different geographical areas (urban, rural, remote, on or off-reserve²), and to young adults with young children, young Indigenous adults that may have a developmental need or disability, and young people that use substances.
- Culture has a different meaning to different people. Supports need to recognize the diverse cultural traditions across Indigenous communities in British Columbia and Canada, and that these should not be all lumped under one 'cultural umbrella.'
- Two-spirit people need unique supports, and it is important that they have other Two-spirit people who they can talk to or rely on for support.
- When youth and young adults are ready, support them to seek their identity/genealogy.
- Elders are central to how Indigenous people internalize their cultural knowledge, and they have a key role to play in Youth Transitions. Youth and young adults could benefit from more multi-generational connections and multi-generational housing.
- Taking a trauma-informed approach to help youth and young adults understand how colonialism and racism have perpetuated harm to Indigenous peoples, including through residential schools, missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, the sixties scoop, and the trauma created by the state of the present foster care system.

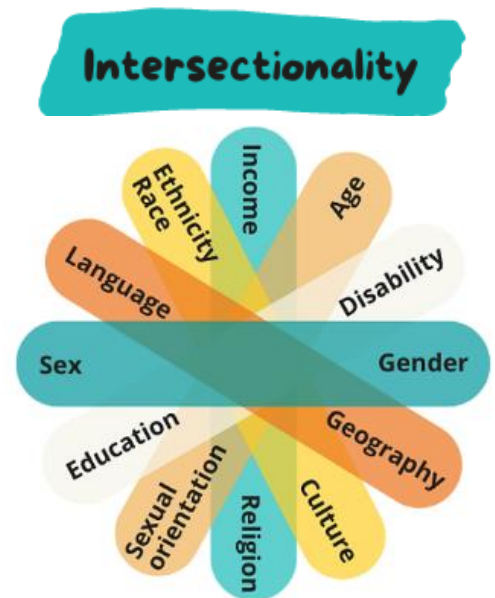


Image Description: The visual represents intersectionality and shows how a person can have intersecting identities. The visual is overlapping lines and includes concepts like sex, gender, education, disability, sexual orientation, age, income, religion, ethnicity/race, culture, language and geography.

Youth Transitions Implementation

- The ministry will keep Intersectionality at the centre to guide and inform the implementation of the new and improved Youth Transitions supports by:

¹ Intersectionality Image adapted from Women and Gender Equality Canada (2022), see: https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/gbaplus-course-cours-acspplus/eng/mod02/mod02_03_02.html

² It is important to recognize that there are historical colonial terms such as 'Reserve' and 'Residential School' that have been retained because of the legal context.

- Keeping a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens at the centre of the development and rollout of programs and services in each of the domains of need, to promote equitability, inclusiveness of all cultures, anti-racism, and accessibility.
- Considering the unique experiences of diverse youth and young adults, especially Indigenous youth and young adults, to understand the complexity of different aspects of identity and different socio-economic factors.
- Where possible, collecting disaggregated sex, age, disability, and race data to identify gaps, inform policy and tailor supports to certain demographics.
- Finding innovative ways to reach vulnerable and marginalized youth and young adults that can benefit most from the services.

Conclusion

We are grateful to all the participants who shared their knowledge, time, stories, and ideas, and we acknowledge their dedication to improving Youth Transitions and honour their sharing. The core themes identified by the First Nation, Métis and urban Indigenous Advisory Circles and previous engagements provide a path forward to ensure that every youth transitioning into adulthood has the wrap-around supports they need to achieve their full potential. These core themes include:

Culture, Identity and Connection: Culture and identity are at the heart of a youth and young adult's being. When youth and young adults are ready, supports need to connect them in all their diversity to their culture, identity, and history.

Community: Youth transitions supports should be centred in community and connect youth and young adults to their cultural community – in a way that youth and young adults choose.

Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being: Youth transitions supports must look at the youth and young adult as a whole person and in a more holistic way, with connection to the land and in relationship with others (family/natural supports, community, and nations).

Youth and Young Adult Voices: Youth and young adults must be listened to at every step of the process because they know what works best for them and what supports they need the most. Supports must be provided in a way that meets the unique needs of each young person.

Relationships: Since relationships are what connect youth and young adults to supports, relationships with young people must be meaningful, be built on trust and be long-lasting. Relationships with communities are also key to providing wrap-around supports to youth and young adults.

Meeting Youth and Young Adults Where They Are: Young people need to decide their own journey or path – without judgement. Supports need to be provided in a way that meets them where they are at.

These core themes reinforce one another and will help to inform the ministry's policy development, the legislative drafting process, and the ongoing implementation of youth transitions supports. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and feedback. As we move this work forward, we will continue to engage and listen to our partners, especially youth and young adults, Indigenous partners and leaders, community partners and staff.

Appendix A: What We Heard from First Nation, Métis, and Urban Indigenous Advisory Circles



1. Expanded Eligibility

Advisory Circles Feedback

Participants suggested that information on new program eligibility should be shared widely through:

- In-person information sessions at friendship centres, meeting places, and at schools, colleges, universities, and learning centres;
- Social media, government websites, and partner and community websites; and
- Key workers and locations - such as support workers, service providers, social workers, school Indigenous liaison workers, social assistance offices and social service agencies.

Approaches to see whether expanded eligibility is making a positive difference for young adults from care could include:

- Collecting feedback from young adults through community workshops, information sessions, surveys and focus groups;
- Building a tracking system with relevant indicators to measure and show improvements;
- Asking young adults what success means to them; and
- Focusing on personal success stories.

Additional Considerations for Expanded Eligibility

- The First Nation Advisory Circle shared that it is important to hear from young adults in rural, northern, and remote communities.
- The Métis Advisory Circle shared that alternative/contracted service providers could be used to support young adults, such as Métis Nation BC.
- The urban Indigenous Advisory Circle shared that the developmental phases of young adults need to be recognized and considered. Young adults make many important life decisions during this time requiring guidance and support.

Legislation & Policy Related Feedback

- Legislation should not be overly prescriptive or restrictive to enable flexibility to meet individual needs.
- The number of eligibility criteria should be limited.



2. Financial Support (Income Supplements)

Advisory Circles Feedback

Ideas shared for making income supplements³ more accessible to young adults in the future:

- Supports should be automatic (no application needed) or, if an application is necessary, the application form needs to be easy to use with plain language and available in a variety of formats (e.g., online, telephone, or through transitions workers);
- Financial supports should take into consideration the difference in costs between urban and rural communities and the rising cost of living; and
- Transition supports should prepare young adults for when their income supplement ends to lessen the financial impact on young adults.

Participants shared the following ways to know if the income supplements and earnings exemptions are making a positive difference in the lives of young adults from care:

- Measuring a young adult's quality of life and overall well-being;
- Not requiring another form or report; and
- Measuring social determinants such as employment, health, education level, and housing situation.
- Progress reviews should be built into program implementation, using qualitative and quantitative data, to review and analyze what is working and not working; and
- Data collection should not only focus on successes but also on those who struggle.

Additional Considerations for Income Supplements

- First Nations participants shared the importance of increased wraparound supports for Indigenous young adults.
- Métis participants shared that it is important for key workers to know about the services available to Métis young adults.
- Urban Indigenous participants shared that it is important for the ministry to maintain relationships with community service organizations and to partner with these community agencies to support young adults.

Legislation & Policy Related Feedback

For legislative and policy feedback, participants highlighted the following ideas about the implementation of the income supplement and earnings exemption:

- Special consideration should be given to young adults who are parents.
- The ministry should consider changing its policy on reporting practices and to make reports more accessible.

³ The new income supplement will be available to young adults unconditionally for one year (from ages 19-20) and will afterwards be available to young adults participating in eligible programming up to their 27th birthday, inclusive of 84 months of program support.



3. Navigation and Transition Planning (Transitions Workers)

Advisory Circles Feedback

Consultations with Advisory Circles highlighted that to best serve young adults, transitions workers should:

- Understand Indigenous culture, history, spirituality, and cultural safety, and be able to connect and integrate into community.
- Build trusting and consistent relationships with young adults and provide mentorship and guidance.
- Know all the different supports available to young people, how to access supports, and how these supports apply in real-life situations.
- Have a realistic caseload and be able to access their own supports since this work can be mentally and emotionally difficult.
- Be mindful about language used for supports for young adults - the title 'transitions worker' and other language may not be considered accessible or relevant to young adults and deter them from accessing supports available.
- Begin transition work early with youth and provide ongoing and consistent support over years of development.

Additional Considerations for Transitions Workers

- The First Nations Advisory Circle noted the importance of a young adults-centred approach with supports tailored specifically to each young adult.
- The Métis Advisory Circle emphasized a teamwork approach where transitions workers are specialized in a range of areas to collectively support young people. This would prevent a young adult's dependency on a single person and enable transitions workers to support each other.
- The urban Indigenous Advisory Circle indicated the need for targeted and intentional hiring of Indigenous transitions workers.

Legislation & Policy Related Feedback

- The work of transitions workers should be rooted in the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.
- Practice principles should recognize the unconscious biases and authority positions of transitions workers.
- Practice principles should be trauma-informed, young adult-centred, family or natural supports-centred, and teamwork-based.



4. Life-skills, Training, and Culture

Advisory Circles Feedback

In defining life-skills the Advisory Circles suggested that:

- Culture and community should be the foundation, as well as prioritizing Indigenous values.

- Life-skills need to be less about transactional skills and skills that ‘feed the system’ and need to be more holistic and integrated.
- Life skills programming and training should always be young adult-driven, with the goal of helping young adults with finding their place, finding purpose, and establishing cultural connections.
- It is important to recognize the many different customs and traditions across Indigenous communities in BC and Canada, and that these should not be all lumped under one ‘cultural’ umbrella.

Positive and impactful cultural funding described by the Advisory Circles could include:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| • Access to a young adult’s traditional land base | • Participating in cultural practices & ceremonies | • Learning Indigenous languages |
| • Connecting with Elders | • Counselling to understand the impacts of trauma | • Developing other land & sea-based learning skills, like hunting and fishing |
| • Creating cultural art | | |

The Advisory Circles also made strong linkages between life-skills and health and well-being, for example:

- The First Nations Advisory Circle highlighted the need to fund harm reduction initiatives and a range of therapies as part of life-skills and cultural training.
- The Métis Advisory Circle noted that life-skills programs should be based around the medicine wheel and include mental health and wellness.
- The urban Indigenous Advisory Circle identified access to traditional medicine teachings and healing workshops as impactful cultural funding.

Legislation & Policy Related Feedback

- It is important to recognize the distinctions between Indigenous peoples by addressing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples independently and not generalizing under the term Indigenous. (*Applies to all domains of need*)
- In defining life-skills, training, and culture, an effort should be made to take a decolonized approach. The definition should prioritize Indigenous values first and should look holistically at culture and community to meet the needs of young adults.
- Overall, life-skills, training and cultural programming should be flexible, young adult-defined and young adult-driven, and include a range of options that create strong linkages to culture, community, and identity.



5. Housing

Advisory Circles Feedback

No concerns were raised by the Advisory Circles regarding MCFD’s proposal to make changes to the CFCSA to enable housing and support agreements for young adults. Key recommendations from each Advisory Circle included:

- First Nations participants shared that planning must be done throughout the process to ensure that the basic needs of young people are met with support from integrated young adult teams.

- Métis participants shared that Métis Nation BC should co-design legislative changes to the Act to ensure the needs of Métis young adults are met, and legislation should address rights to shelter without being overly restrictive - flexibility is required in policy to meet individual needs.
- Urban Indigenous participants shared that agreements should focus on supporting young adults to move through the housing continuum – from support to independent living, with capacity supports to sustain this.

The Advisory Circles identified key factors for housing supports, including when considering rural, urban, and remote areas:

- Leave behind the colonial housing system and provide culturally safe and supported housing.
- Take an intersectional lens – for example, young adults with young children, young Indigenous women with FASD⁴, and young people that use substances.
- Draw on existing successful housing models, for example, Thunderbird Manor (Vernon) and Tillicum House (Nanaimo).
- Ask young adults what they need and ensure that supports are sufficient to meet their basic needs in the current environment of high living costs and high rental rates.
- Work to reduce homelessness in a way that reduces stigma and discrimination holistically. For example, addressing barriers such as bad credit to sign up for a utility account.
- Take into consideration the lack of privacy in smaller or rural communities which could heighten the vulnerability of some young people.

Participants identified the following considerations for developing the rent supplement program:

- Tailor supports to a young adult's individual needs and circumstances (e.g., single, parent, geography, inflation/prices, etc.). When individual needs are met, the program will be equitable.
- Low barrier, for example, young adults should automatically be enrolled (no application), open to all care statutes, no eligibility criteria or needs-based assessment, no deadlines, and support should not impact other benefits.
- Amounts need to align with the current realities of the housing crisis, high rental rates, and the high cost of living.

The Advisory Circles further highlighted the need for wrap-around supports to sustain housing options. This could include:

- Programming to teach young people the life skills associated with independent living, such as budgeting, financial literacy, and meal planning.
- Helping young people to understand their rights as renters.
- Options for multi-generational housing where young adults can share housing with Elders and/or elderly family members or natural supports. Allowing young people to learn from Elderly Indigenous community members over time is key to internalizing traditional knowledge.
- Providing after-hour transitions worker support and transportation.

⁴ Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder

Legislation & Policy Related Feedback

- Apply an intersectional lens when drafting new legislation or policy to help reduce barriers and discrimination, and to ensure housing supports are equitable, for example, to mitigate rural inequities. *(Applies to all domains of need)*
- Take an inclusive approach to co-designing CFCSA legislative changes with Indigenous partners. *(Applies to all domains of need)*
- Legislation should address rights to shelter without being overly restrictive. Flexibility is required in policy to meet individual needs.
- Special consideration should be given to young adults who are parents.
- Policy should be written by Indigenous people for Indigenous children and the ministry should act as a supporting partner that is responsible for the implementation of policies across the province. *(Applies to all domains of need)*



6. Health and Wellness

Advisory Circles Feedback

Spiritual-cultural approaches to mental health and healing should be considered regarding access to funding and benefits:

- Culturally safe approaches to health/medicine that encompass Indigenous values should be used;
- Supports for unique needs, particularly for two-spirit people should be available; and
- The use of Elders in the provision of supports and services should be encouraged and supported.

Key considerations for young adults when accessing medical benefits include:

- Making communication and information for young adults available and easy to access, so they know what supports and benefits they are eligible for; and
- Teaching young adults how to navigate the health system and how to access services, including having their identity documents such as their benefits card and health cards, and educating young adults on how to follow up on medical appointments.

When young adults have improved health and wellness, it would be evident in:

- Young adults accessing more services and planning for their futures;
- Young adults showing up to appointments and taking their medication regularly/consistently;
- Young adults' social connections and relationships, which are strong and healthy, connect them to their communities, and involve interdependent supports with their peers;
- Young adults' positive behaviours and positive outlooks toward their futures

Additional Considerations for Health & Wellness

- First Nations participants shared that supports are needed to help young adults establish a greater connection to their culture and community, to increase belonging and help with identity.
- Métis participants shared that the use of Métis professionals with culturally safe approaches, who could provide mental health supports that encompass Métis values.
- Urban Indigenous participants shared that MCFD should work to develop and maintain partnerships and relationships with organizations providing cultural healing and support.
- Work is required to address racism in service delivery and replace colonial values with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit values.

Legislation & Policy Related Feedback

In terms of legislative and policy feedback, participants highlighted the following ideas regarding health and wellness:

- Consider legislating access to mental health services to ensure young adults with experience in government care receive the services they require.
- Have a Cultural Advisory Committee to advise on how to build these services and supports and develop these programs;
- Take a broad approach in defining eligible cultural expenses, to help young adults connect to their culture and community; and
- Provide benefits that cover the full costs of dental work and medications.

Appendix B:

Advisory Circles Domains of Need Consultation Questions

The First Nations, Métis and urban Indigenous Advisory Circles met virtually during May 2022 to discuss the six domains of need identified by young adults. The sessions had a total of seventy-five participants across all three Advisory Circles, with the following number of participants per session:

	First Nations	Urban Indigenous	Métis
Session 1	6 Tues. May 3	10 Wed. May 4	8 Wed. May 11
Session 2	3 Thurs. May 12	14 Tues. May 17	15 Thurs. May 19
Session 3	1 Wed. May 25	9 Thurs. May 26	9 Tues. May 31
Total	10	33	32

Of the participants across all the Advisory Circle sessions, 63 women and 12 men attended. The sessions saw the following provincial representation:

Provincial Representation	Number of Participants
Coast/North Shore	1
East Fraser	1
North Central	1
North Fraser	2
North Vancouver Island	3
Northeast	2
Northwest	1
Okanagan	1
South Fraser	12
South Vancouver Island	2
Thompson Cariboo Shuswap	4
Vancouver/Richmond	3

To help support the discussions in the Advisory Circle sessions, the following questions were developed for each domain of need:

Domain of Need - Expanding Eligibility for Programs and Supports (Agreements)

1. Where should eligibility criteria appear?
2. What are ways to determine if expanded eligibility has had an impact on young adults in care as they transition into adulthood?

Domain of Need - Financial Support (Income Supplements)

1. From your perspective, what are the strengths and weaknesses (risks and opportunities) of these income supplements? In particular, the earnings exemption or income supplement?
2. How do we make income supplement more accessible to young adults in the future?
3. What are ways to determine if the income supplement and earnings exemption are improving outcomes for young adults from government care?

Domain of Need - Navigation and Transition Planning (Transitions Workers)

1. What skills, knowledge and experience would transition workers need to best serve young adults?
2. What practice principles would you see as important to guide the work of transitions workers (i.e., centre the young adult, cultural connectivity, early planning, collaboration, etc.)?
3. What will it look like if TWs are having a positive impact in supporting young adults in their transition to adulthood?

Domain of Need - Housing Supports

1. Do you have any concerns with MCFD making changes to CFCSA to enable housing and support agreements for young adults?
2. What are some key considerations for housing supports when considering rural, remote, and urban locations?
3. Are there other considerations that need to be made, more generally, to support Indigenous youth accessing rent supplements?
4. What criteria should we consider when developing the rent supplement program?
 - a. Any caps? Limitations?
5. What would we see if housing supports are having a positive impact and preventing homelessness for Indigenous young adults?

Domain of Need - Life skills, Training, and Culture

1. What would positive and impactful cultural funding look like and be used for?
2. What are your thoughts on the current definition of life-skills?
3. Given the current definition of life-skills, what you would change to support more young adults?
 - a. How could healing and wellness be included in the definition?
4. How will we know if young adults are developing the life-skills they need to transition positively into adulthood?
5. What does it look like for Indigenous young adults to successfully connect to their culture and community?

Domain of Need - Health and Wellness

1. How should spiritual-cultural approaches to mental health and healing be considered regarding access to funding and benefits?
 - a. Credentials, certifications, qualifications, or lived experiences?
2. What are the key considerations for Indigenous young adults when accessing medical benefits?
3. What does it look like when young adults have improved health and wellness?