



News Release

Government of Nunavut Announces Poverty Reduction Initiatives

IQALUIT, Nunavut (May 9, 2011) – The Government of Nunavut’s commitment to support Nunavummiut in the fight against poverty continues with the announcement of several new initiatives.

Premier Eva Ariak today announced enhancements to the Community Breakfast Program and Parenting Support Programming, increases to the Social Assistance Program’s food and clothing allowances, and a new Country Food Distribution Program to improve the availability of country food in communities.

“To reduce poverty is a strategic priority of the *Tamapta Action Plan 2009-2013*,” said Premier Ariak. “While a Poverty Reduction Action Plan for Nunavut will be completed this year, the government has taken immediate measures to address poverty issues that have been identified as priorities by our communities. These programs total \$6.68 million in new spending, and will bring our partners together to help those who struggle to meet their basic needs.”

“We have heard that improving the availability of affordable, nutritious food, and country food in particular, must be at the centre of our the fight against poverty,” said Minister of Economic Development & Transportation Peter Taptuna, who heads up the public engagement for poverty reduction process for the government.

“With the approval of the new budget in March, we are taking action now with new programs and program enhancements to address these concerns,” Minister Taptuna said. “These are significant changes that will impact many Nunavummiut in need.”

The government has chosen a collaborative approach to poverty reduction, and is working with Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and other partners on the preparation of Nunavut’s Poverty Reduction Action Plan. The plan will be decided at a Poverty Summit scheduled for November 28-30, 2011 in Iqaluit.

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Backgrounder attached.

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Poverty Reduction Initiatives

BACKGROUNDER

On October 18, 2010 the Government of Nunavut, together with Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., launched a public engagement initiative for poverty reduction.

The first stage of the initiative has focused on hearing the views of Nunavummiut on poverty, through community dialogues convened by volunteers in each Nunavut community. During these dialogues one of the major themes has been access to affordable and nutritious food and, in particular, country food.

Independent research supports these community views. The Canadian Medical Association, reporting on the *Qanuippitali International Polar Year Inuit Health Survey, 2007-2008*, has stated that in Nunavut's communities "we observed a high prevalence of household food insecurity, with a substantial proportion of children with severely food insecure status."

The *Inuit Health Survey* has also noted that "addressing the quality and cost of market food while making improvements in access and affordability of country food will be the key to improving food security among Inuit."

The initiatives outlined below were announced as part of the Government of Nunavut's 2011-2012 Budget, approved by the Legislative Assembly March 10, 2011.

Community Breakfast Program Initiative (\$665 thousand)

The Government of Nunavut will enhance funding available for breakfast programs by \$500 thousand dollars in 2011-2012. These funds can be used to help breakfast programs buy equipment such as appliances and storage facilities, as well as country food, other fresh food or food shipped via sea lift.

In addition, \$165 thousand has been allocated for an analysis of the existing breakfast programs, and to develop program guidelines, resources and training materials.

Parenting Support Programming Initiative (\$493.6 thousand)

The Government of Nunavut is contributing \$493.6 thousand to pilot a new parenting program model that incorporates Inuit societal values and food preparation and nutrition skills. The pilot program will be delivered in eight communities this year.

The program will be undertaken in collaboration with the *Qaujigiartiit* Arctic Health Research Network, who will assist with curriculum development, training, and program evaluation.

Social Assistance Program: Increases to Food Allowance and Clothing Allowances (\$3 million)

On April 1, 2011 the Department of Education increased the allowances available from the social assistance program for food by 15 per cent and for clothing by \$50 per month. These measures will help the most vulnerable individuals and families in Nunavut.

The increase to the food allowance is the first since 2005. The majority of social assistance expenditures are used for food allowances.

The clothing allowance is being increased for the first time since before division in 1999.

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Country Food Distribution Program (\$1.145 million)

The Department of Economic Development & Transportation will contribute \$1.145 million to community-based organizations in 2011-2012 to assist with the costs of improvement and new construction of community freezers for local storage and distribution of country food.

It is anticipated that in this first year, three communities will sponsor the construction of a new community freezer through the use of the new program. It is also expected that many other communities will receive funding for repairs and upgrades to existing infrastructure and equipment, and for related activities including community markets, training in “cut and wrap” meat processing, and for purchasing country food for distribution to those in need.

Nunavut Anti-Poverty Secretariat (\$1.312 thousand)

The Department of Economic Development & Transportation will increase the funding for the Nunavut Anti-Poverty Secretariat by \$812 thousand to a total of \$1.312 million in 2011-2012.

The Nunavut Anti-Poverty Secretariat is responsible for the development and implementation of Nunavut’s Poverty Reduction Action Plan through public engagement, and for overseeing the implementation of comprehensive community initiatives to reduce poverty, including the country food distribution program.

The additional funding in 2011 and 2012 will permit the expansion of the secretariat to a full-time staff of four.

For additional information on the Government of Nunavut’s poverty reduction initiatives contact:

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