

2020-2025

Strategic Plan Progress Report

Measuring progress, renewing purpose

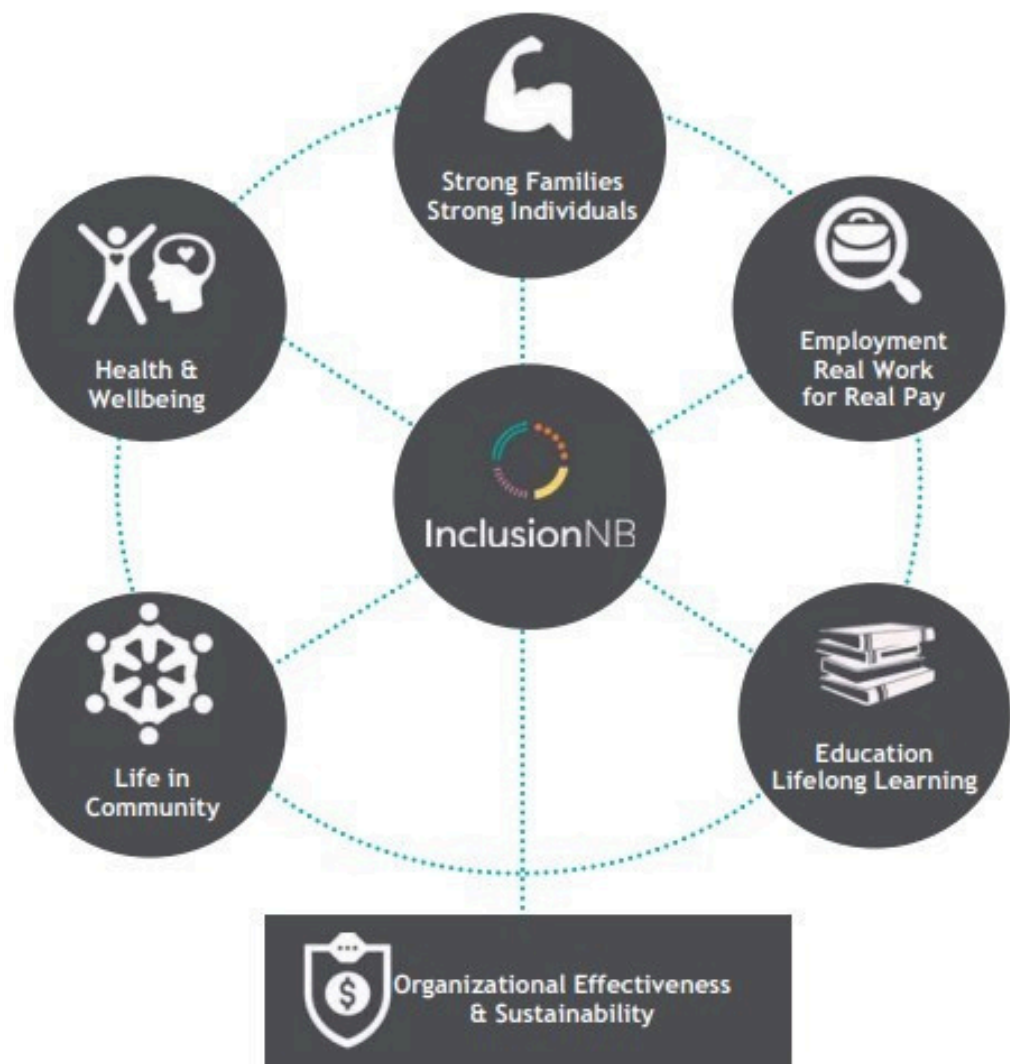


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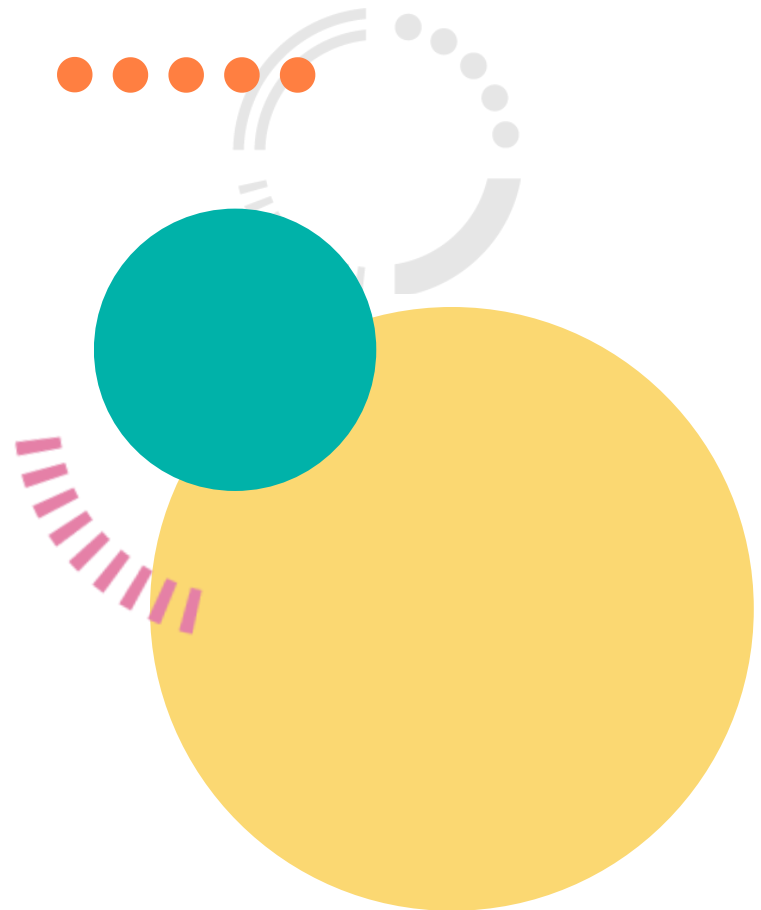
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ABOUT INCLUSION NB

Inclusion NB (formerly, the New Brunswick Association for Community Living) was formed in 1957 for the purpose of improving the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families.

In 2020, a new 5-year strategic plan was created to direct the work of the association as well as assist us in measuring the impact our support has on individuals, families, and communities. 2025 marked the end of our strategic plan. In an effort to demonstrate how we are accomplishing our goals, we have compiled data on the activities and progress we have completed over the past 5 years.

Our Vision

All individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability live full and valued lives in all aspects of society.

Our Mission

Leading the creation of opportunities for individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability and their families to live full and valued lives in all aspects of society.

Our Values

- All people have equal rights to opportunity in the manner and extent of their choosing.
- All people can contribute and bring value to our society.
- Communities must be open and inclusive.
- People deserve their own voice and the support to exercise their rights.

INCLUSIVE MINDSET

Everyone should have the same access to opportunities to lead a fulfilled life: grow up at home with your family; be included in school with friends and peers; have a hobby or sport and a career; travel; make friends; find a soulmate; have a home of your own; make life choices and contribute to your community. These are the common building blocks for life, and the dreams and aspirations of people with an intellectual or developmental disability are no different.

True Inclusion only happens when the lives of children and adults with an intellectual disability unfold no differently – immersed together with their peers without a disability in the same pathways and experiences of life.



Strong Families, Strong Individuals

Inclusion NB empowers families and individuals by providing the information, tools, and training needed to advocate for themselves and others. . Inclusion NB fosters family connections and peer networks, while promoting awareness and understanding of human rights, relevant policies, and support services. By strengthening partnerships with community and advocating for laws that align with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Inclusion NB supports a vibrant network of family leaders and inclusive communities across New Brunswick.



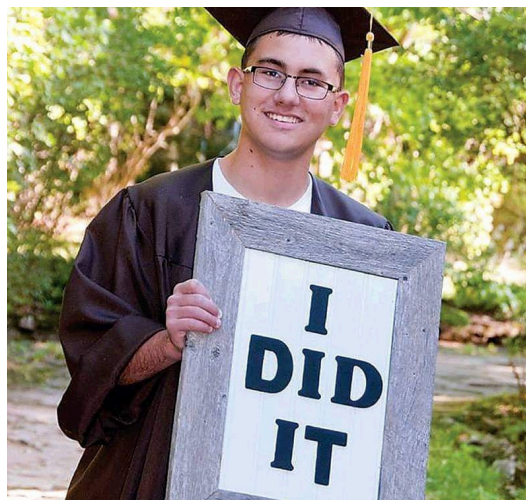
Employment: Real Work for Real Pay

Inclusion NB is dedicated to advancing inclusive employment by ensuring individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities in New Brunswick have access to real work for real pay. Inclusion NB works to increase employment rates, expand access to transition planning and work readiness programs in all high schools, and equip families with the tools to support their children's path to employment. Inclusion NB is helping to build a workforce where everyone has the opportunity to contribute and succeed.



Education: Lifelong Learning

Inclusion NB champions lifelong learning by promoting access to inclusive, high-quality education from early childhood to adulthood. We support positive, seamless transitions for children and youth at all ages and stages of life. We advocate for inclusive policies in Early Learning and Childcare Centres, reforms in public education that uphold the right of all students to learn in a common environment, and comprehensive training for Educational Assistants and others. By influencing university education programs to embrace inclusive philosophies, Inclusion NB is helping to ensure that educators and systems are fully equipped to support all learners.



Life in Community

Inclusion NB is committed to ensuring that individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities can lead full and valued lives in their communities. We support people in accessing a home of their own, engaging in inclusive community activities, and obtaining essential resources such as transportation, financial planning tools, and disability income supports. By promoting the Supported Living Model, increasing access to rent subsidies, training support workers, and fostering inclusion in sports and recreation, Inclusion NB works with community partners to build more welcoming communities.



Health & Wellbeing

Inclusion NB is dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability by ensuring access to the knowledge, services, and support they need to thrive. We empower individuals in mental wellness, healthy living, and healthy relationships, while also working to enhance access to appropriate mental health services. By collaborating with health professionals and strengthening the capacity of service providers, Inclusion NB is advancing a best support standard across New Brunswick's mental health system to better meet the needs of those we support.



Organizational Effectiveness & Sustainability

Inclusion NB is focused on strengthening its organizational effectiveness and long-term sustainability to ensure continued impact in advancing inclusion across New Brunswick. By implementing a comprehensive plan to fund core operations, building capacity through the Inclusive Communities Institute, and developing strong communications and branding strategies, the organization is positioning itself for lasting success. Regular engagement with local and national partners, a robust human resources strategy, and a commitment to measuring and reporting program impact further support Inclusion NB's mission.



ADVOCACY & SYSTEMS CHANGE

Advancing the Employment First model within New Brunswick's Employment and Support Services Program (ESSP)

In 2019, new provincial standards were introduced to align with the principles of Employment First. These standards prioritize paid employment as a key outcome for individuals receiving services and call for a shift from group-based programs to individualized supported employment services.

Recognizing the transformative potential of these standards, Inclusion NB actively advocated for their full implementation. This included consistent engagement with provincial partners to reinforce the importance of moving away from segregated, group-based employment programs toward individualized supported employment services that reflect the unique strengths, interests, and goals of each job seeker.

As a member of the ESSP Implementation Committee, Inclusion NB worked alongside government and community stakeholders to ensure that the shift to the Employment First model was meaningful and achievable across all 38 ESSP-funded agencies.

This included:

- ✓ Providing expertise and training to help agencies adopt best practices in supported employment;
- ✓ Sharing tools and resources to support person-centered planning and employer engagement;
- ✓ Highlighting success stories and evidence from Inclusion NB's own employment programs to demonstrate the effectiveness of the model;
- ✓ Identifying systemic barriers and proposing policy-level solutions to strengthen the infrastructure required for sustainable change.

60
training
sessions
delivered to

1,400
participants



Over the past five years, Inclusion NB has collaborated closely with the New Brunswick Association for Supported Services and Employment (NBASSE) to enhance the capacity of employment service providers across the province.

Through this collaborative effort, Inclusion NB helped position New Brunswick as a national leader in Employment First implementation, ensuring that individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability have equitable access to employment opportunities in their communities.

Amendments to *Employment Standards Act* – Minimum Wage Equality

In April 2021, Inclusion NB took a leadership role in advocating for minimum wage equality by submitting a formal policy brief to the Government of New Brunswick. This called for the elimination of discriminatory wage practices that allowed individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be paid below the provincial minimum wage under the guise of “work experience.” These arrangements, often facilitated by community agencies, enabled employers to offer stipends that fell far short of fair compensation—despite the fact that individuals were contributing real labour and value in workplace settings.

Following the submission of the brief, Inclusion NB met directly with the Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training, and Labour to present a clear and compelling case for reform. Our recommendations were grounded in human rights principles and reinforced by national standards, emphasizing that all individuals, regardless of disability, have the fundamental right to equal pay for equal work. We underscored the ethical, social, and economic rationale for change—highlighting how existing practices not only devalued workers with disabilities, but also undermined their inclusion and independence.

This advocacy contributed to the development and introduction of landmark legislation in the fall of 2022 that proposed to eliminate the practice of paying below minimum wage for work performed by individuals with disabilities. The legislation marked a significant turning point in the province’s employment standards and signaled a shift toward greater equity in the workplace.

Inclusion NB remained engaged throughout the legislative process, providing feedback, participating in consultations, and continuing to raise public and stakeholder awareness about the importance of this change. In 2024, the new legislation was officially proclaimed into law, marking the culmination of years of persistent advocacy. This critical reform now ensures that all workers with disabilities in New Brunswick must be paid at least minimum wage, ending the use of sub-minimum stipends and affirming the value of their time, effort, and contributions. It represents a major step forward in the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market and in the broader movement for economic justice.

A delegation from Inclusion NB visited the New Brunswick Legislature in December 2024 to witness this historic day.



Introduction of the *Supported Decision Making and Representation Act*

The 2022 Fall session of the legislature was a busy time for our team. The government also passed new legislation to replace the incredibly outdated Infirm Persons Act. The Supported Decision-Making and Representation Act demonstrates a human rights approach to decision-making. This supports the right of people with a disability to make decisions based on their wishes and preferences, even if they need some support to make these decisions. The Supported Decision-Making and Representation Act represents a significant shift in adult decision-making laws in New Brunswick and is deeply rooted in a human rights approach.

Adoption of this new adult decision-making legislation ensures that individuals (including older adults as well as adults with a disability) can make decisions – big and small – about their lives, with support, if needed, and have those decisions recognized under the law.



Introduction of the *Accessibility Act*

Accessibility legislation is fundamental to building an inclusive and barrier-free New Brunswick, and until recently, it did not exist in our province. Inclusion NB played an integral part in the advocacy efforts of the New Brunswick Disability Executive's Network (NBDEN), which included an appearance before the Select Committee on Accessibility. We also led NBDEN's response to Achieving Greater Accessibility: New Brunswick's Framework for Accessibility Legislation. This included 11 recommendations to ensure a more robust piece of legislation.

In May 2024, the Government of New Brunswick introduced the Accessibility Act. As a result of our advocacy, the Act contained a broader definition of 'disability'. The adoption of this modernized definition reflects a better understanding of disability and recognizes the role of society in creating barriers that people with a disability experience.

Inclusion NB continues its work to ensure that individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability are respected and recognized in the development of accessibility standards through partnerships with initiatives like Ready, Willing, and Able.

Ken Pike, the previous Director of Social Policy, presented to the Select Committee on Accessibility in New Brunswick in February 2024 on behalf of NBDEN. A tireless champion of inclusion, Ken retired from Inclusion NB in April 2024 after over 35 years of dedicated service to our organization and movement.



Championing Inclusive Education in Policy and Practice

In 2021, the Government of New Brunswick introduced Bill 35: An Act Respecting Empowering the School System, which proposed several amendments that would have significantly undermined inclusive education and the rights of students with disabilities.

These changes included a revised definition of the common learning environment and the expansion of alternative education to all grade levels. Inclusion NB strongly opposed these amendments. As a result of sustained advocacy, the bill was passed with critical revisions that preserved the rights of students with disabilities.

In 2022, Inclusion NB submitted comprehensive feedback on the government's draft revision of Policy 322 (New Brunswick's Inclusive Education Policy), which also posed serious risks to inclusive education in the province. Due to widespread concern and ongoing advocacy, the proposed changes were paused, and the policy remains unchanged. Inclusion NB continues to push for a more informed and effective implementation of inclusive education policy.

In 2023, the government introduced Bill 46, which proposed relocating the definition of the common learning environment, raising new concerns about the future of inclusion in schools. Once again, Inclusion NB and others advocated firmly against the bill. These efforts led to the bill being paused, and advocacy continues to ensure that New Brunswick moves forward in advancing inclusive education, not backwards.

Consultation on DSS Model: Modernizing Disability Services

The Department of Social Development is proposing to introduce new legislation that will govern the design and delivery of disability services and income support benefits for New Brunswickers with a disability. The current legislation governing these services is more than 40 years old.

In October 2023, Inclusion NB led the advocacy efforts of NBDEN in writing a brief entitled Modernizing Disability Services and Income Support Legislation in New Brunswick. We proposed a new legal framework for disability services and income support that would set the course for the coming decades.

Guidance on EAS Redesign and Formation of avenueNB Cooperative

As an active member of the EAS Redesign Working Group, Inclusion NB brought forward over 40 years of experience in inclusive employment to inform the design of a more responsive and inclusive provincial model. Our contributions helped ensure that the voices and needs of people with an intellectual or developmental disability were central to the conversation.

A major outcome of this collaborative effort was the creation of the avenueNB Cooperative, officially launched in 2022. This groundbreaking new structure now serves as the coordinating body for the delivery of inclusive employment services across the province. AvenueNB functions as a shared platform, bringing together community-based agencies to deliver high-quality, person-directed services through a unified and collaborative approach.

Inclusion NB has been a foundational partner in establishing the Cooperative and continues to play a leadership role in its governance and strategic direction. We currently hold a seat on the Board of Directors, where we advocate for consistent quality standards, equitable access to services, and ongoing innovation in inclusive employment practices.

Our Director of Social Policy was also a key contributor to Phase 2 of the EAS Redesign, which concluded in March 2023. This phase focused on the implementation and enhancement of specialized employment supports, including:

- ✓ Job coaching and on-the-job support;
- ✓ Job development and employer engagement strategies;
- ✓ Streamlined referral and intake processes;
- ✓ Increased alignment between service providers to avoid duplication and service gaps.

Through this work, Inclusion NB helped shape a service delivery model that better reflects the needs of job seekers with a disability. The redesigned EAS system is now better positioned to support more individuals with disabilities in achieving their employment goals. This has led to increased collaboration across agencies, improved service quality, and the expansion of inclusive hiring practices province-wide.



ORGANIZATIONAL MILESTONES & LEADERSHIP

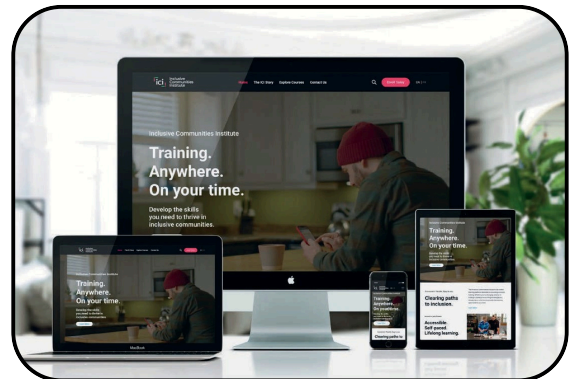


Honouring Our Past, Embracing Our Future

Over the past five years, a major milestone for our organization was the renaming and rebranding from the New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NBACL) to Inclusion NB in 2022. While our new name reflects a clearer, modern expression of our vision, mission, and principles – all rooted in the pioneering advocacy work that began decades ago – it also positions us to better connect with communities today. To support the launch of the Inclusion NB brand, we secured funding from an external partner to deliver a province-wide digital brand campaign, redesigned and launched a new, accessible website, and undertook a comprehensive update of our document and resource library to align with our refreshed identity.

Launch of Inclusive Communities Institute (ICI)

In Spring 2022, we launched the Inclusive Communities Institute (ICI) – a bilingual, accessible online learning platform designed to build capacity in inclusive practices across sectors, including education, employment, health, and community supports. ICI offers practical, learner-centered training developed in collaboration with self-advocates, families, and sector partners.



Since the launch of the Inclusive Communities Institute (ICI), significant strides have been made in advancing training and capacity building across New Brunswick.

Family Stream – Inclusion 101:

50 learners have completed courses within the Family Stream, gaining foundational knowledge on inclusion and how to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

4

Learning
streams

32

courses

2

webinar series

124

modules

214

users

1

SDM course

Inclusion Webinar Series for Early Learning Professionals:

A total of 3,492 learners (1,068 in French and 2,424 in English) have completed our webinar series tailored for inclusion support workers and early childhood educators.

Achieving Equal Access – Department of Health:

56 learners from the Department of Health participated in Achieving Equal Access, a training designed to build confidence in recognizing and positively responding to mental health concerns.

Sexcess - Healthy Relationships & Sexuality Training:

40 learners completed our Sexcess training, which focuses on supporting individuals as they navigate relationships, boundaries, and consent.

Employment Hub for Employers:

The Employment Hub offers practical tools and resources to increase employer awareness of inclusive hiring practices.

Mental Health and Autism Training:

In partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Health, ICI delivered a day-long training session on mental health and autism to 20 in-person learners, including Counsellors, Autism Leads, and Educational Support Staff. An additional 20 Educational Assistants from four different school districts joined the training virtually.

Training for Support Workers:

ICI offers a range of trainings for Support Workers in New Brunswick, including Person-Centered Approaches and Supporting Opportunities, which emphasize autonomy and high-quality support for individuals accessing services. A pilot of Supporting Opportunities, delivered in partnership with Social Development, was completed by 10 Support Workers.

Physical Activity Strategy:

The ICI team actively participated in the development of New Brunswick's Provincial Physical Activity Strategy through monthly committee meetings and roundtable consultations. Our input on inclusive practices helped shape the draft framework and inform the next steps in creating an action plan that supports inclusive physical activity across the province.

Family Leadership Development & Movement Series

In the fall of 2021, in partnership with Inclusion Canada, Inclusion NB hosted the province's first Family Leadership Development & Movement Series. This five-part series brought together individuals with an intellectual disability, families, and allies from across New Brunswick to deepen their understanding of leadership in the pursuit of inclusive lives and communities. Through interactive sessions, personal storytelling, and guided exercises, participants developed clear, personal visions for their loved ones and gained practical tools to advocate for systemic and community change. This initiative marked a significant step in fostering family leadership in New Brunswick and served as a valuable pilot for adapting and expanding this nationally recognized leadership model within the province.

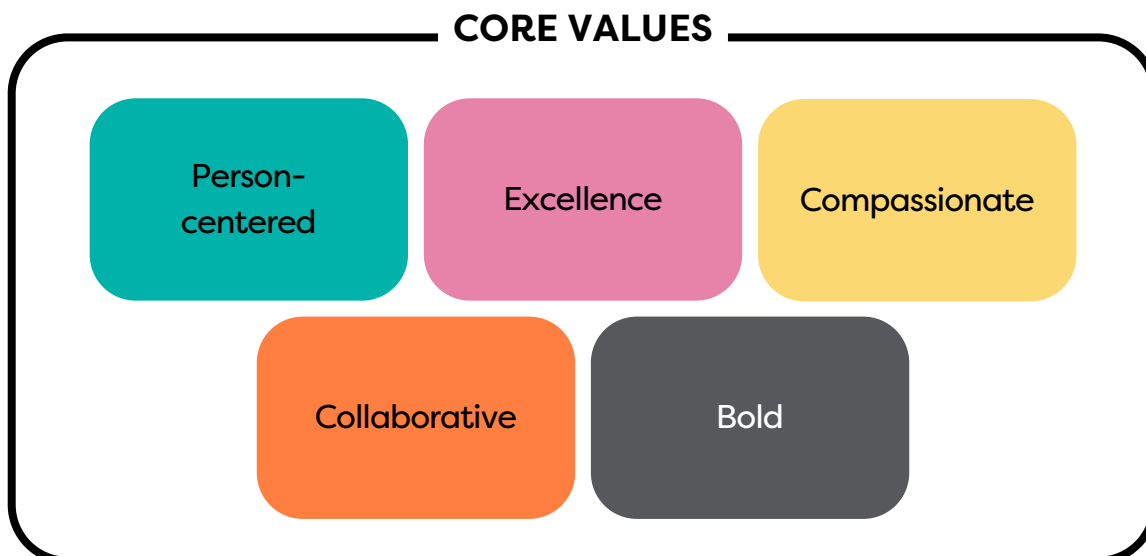


People & Culture Strategy

At Inclusion NB, we recognize that every organization possesses a unique culture – an environment shaped by the collective values, beliefs, principles, and conversations of its members. A healthy, high-performance organizational culture has a direct and measurable impact on an organization's success, resilience, and ability to deliver on its mission.

In 2020, Inclusion NB formally embarked on a journey to intentionally define and nurture a high-performance organizational culture. A leadership development workshop engaged the Senior Management Team in building a blueprint for organizational culture transformation. During this session, leadership was tasked with identifying and articulating the internal core values they believed embodied the heart of Inclusion NB's work and workplace community

Drawing from the Senior Management Team's initial work, the group proposed five core cultural values:



This set of values reflects both the heritage and the future aspirations of Inclusion NB – a culture built on shared commitment to inclusion, human rights, and community-based leadership.

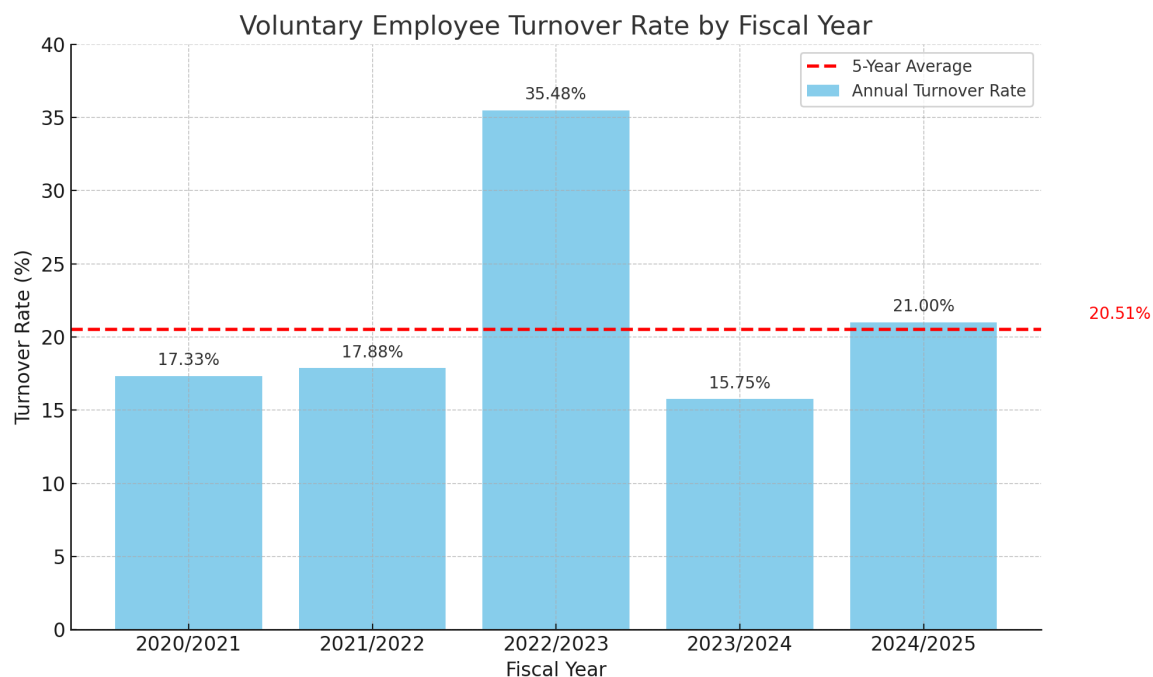
People & Culture Strategy

Over the course of this strategic plan, Inclusion NB's Human Resources strategy has been instrumental in fostering an organizational culture that emphasizes community, inclusion, and employee well-being. Key achievements include:

1. Enhanced Recruitment and Onboarding: Implemented targeted recruitment processes aligned with Inclusion NB's core values, ensuring candidates not only meet technical qualifications but also demonstrate a commitment to inclusion. Job postings were refreshed periodically, utilizing branding tools such as testimonials to attract a diverse applicant pool.

No Strategy Established (2020-2022)	Strategy Implemented (2023-2025)
78 Days / Vacancy	39 Days / Vacancy

2. Strengthened Retention Initiatives: Focused on employee well-being through wellness programs, flexible work arrangements, and recognition practices. The organization also implemented stay interviews, satisfaction surveys, and exit interviews to monitor and respond to retention needs proactively.



Note: Prior to the implementation of Inclusion NB's Human Resources strategy in 2020, as part of the five-year strategic plan, annual staff turnover averaged between 35% and 40%. Since then, turnover has significantly decreased, allowing for more consistent staffing and ensuring the delivery of high-quality, uninterrupted services.

People & Culture Strategy

3. Organizational Culture & Staff Satisfaction: We prioritized the assessment of organizational culture and staff satisfaction throughout the strategic planning cycle. A working group was established to examine our internal culture, identify strengths, and address areas for growth. This process led to the development of clearly defined internal core values, reinforcing a shared commitment to inclusion and organizational well-being. To measure overall staff engagement and satisfaction, the organization tracked its annual Net Promoter Score (NPS), with results ranging from a high of 82 in 2020/2021 to 53 in 2024/2025, averaging 70 over the five-year period. These metrics have provided valuable insights, guiding continuous improvement efforts and informing future priorities in employee engagement and workplace culture initiatives.

Net Promoter Score					
2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Average
82	74	67	74	53	70

Note: While the score did decline from 82 to 53 over the period, the overall average of 70 still reflects strong staff satisfaction and loyalty. The downward trend, however, suggests areas to monitor and address proactively.



People & Culture Strategy

4. Leadership and Development: Fostered growth opportunities, including timely training and coaching, to support career advancement and skill development, thereby increasing employee engagement and reducing turnover.

As outlined below, Inclusion New Brunswick average length of service remained consistent during the 5-year strategic plan.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Contract	4.08	4.07	4.18	4.94	4.05

Departure of Executive Director and Introduction of New Leadership



Midway through the implementation of our 2020–2025 Strategic Plan, Inclusion New Brunswick experienced a leadership transition. In 2023, long-serving Executive Director Sarah Wagner departed the organization to pursue a new professional opportunity. Sarah's leadership, vision, and unwavering commitment to advancing inclusion in New Brunswick have left a lasting impact.



In January 2024, Jake Reid joined Inclusion NB as the new Executive Director. He brings extensive experience in the non-profit sector, supporting a smooth leadership transition. This change reflects Inclusion NB's commitment to continuity and organizational renewal, while strengthening our capacity to respond to the evolving needs of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities and their families across New Brunswick.

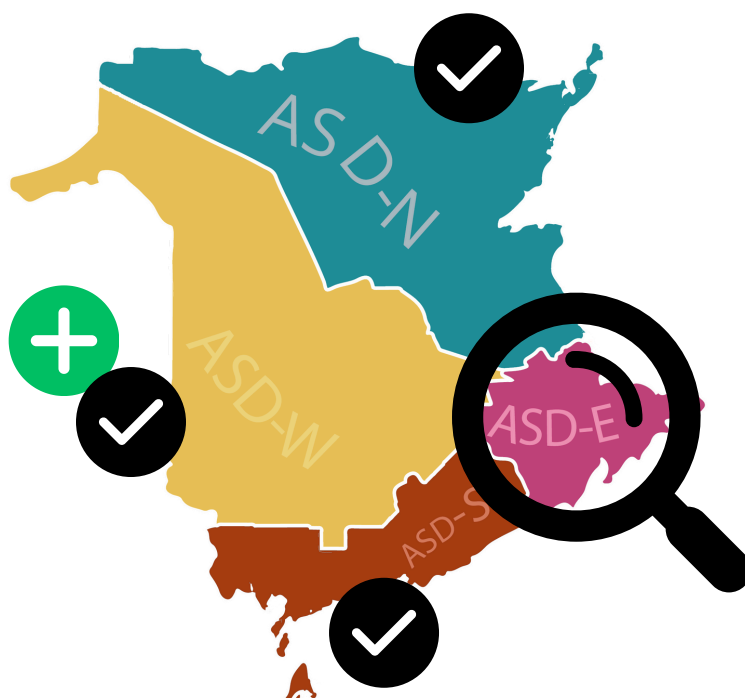
While leadership transitions inherently bring both challenges and opportunities, Inclusion NB demonstrated resilience and a clear focus on its mission throughout this period. The organization remained steadfast in delivering essential services, advancing advocacy efforts, and pursuing the strategic priorities laid out in the plan.

ENHANCING PROGRAM REACH & IMPACT

From Pilot to Program: Transition to Adult Life Initiative

From 2019 to 2023, Inclusion NB partnered with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to pilot a new process to support students with intellectual and developmental disabilities as they transitioned from school to community. The pilot was developed in response to a growing number of students remaining in the education system until age 21, due to limited community-based transition supports. Initially launched in two school districts – ASD North and ASD South – the project focused on helping students graduate with their peers and successfully plan for adult life. Based on the positive outcomes and learnings from the pilot, Inclusion NB submitted a proposal to expand the initiative.

As of July 1, 2023, the newly established Transition to Adult Life Program has extended its reach to include ASD West and expanded services within ASD South. As part of this growth, the program expanded to eight additional schools, reaching a total of 24 high schools, increasing opportunities for students to access individualized transition planning and supports. While not yet province-wide, this growing program represents a significant step forward in addressing transition needs for youth with an intellectual or developmental disability and supporting inclusive futures across more regions of New Brunswick.



Advancing Inclusive Employment through Post-Secondary Access

Recognizing that post-secondary education is a critical stepping stone to meaningful employment, financial independence, and social inclusion, Inclusion NB launched its dedicated Post-Secondary Case Management Program in April 2022. This initiative was created in response to a clear gap in services for students with an intellectual or developmental disability who were pursuing advanced education and training opportunities.

Originally provided to students attending New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) and Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB), the program has since expanded significantly in both scope and reach. Today, it supports young adults aged 18–30 enrolled in public and private universities, colleges, trade schools, and training institutes across the province.

Since 2020, the Post-Secondary Case Management Program has supported 163 students, with an impressive 85% employment rate in the students' field of study. This outcome reflects both the program's effectiveness and the growing recognition among employers of the value of inclusive hiring practices.



2020-2025

163

Students
supported

85%

Employment
rate in field of
study

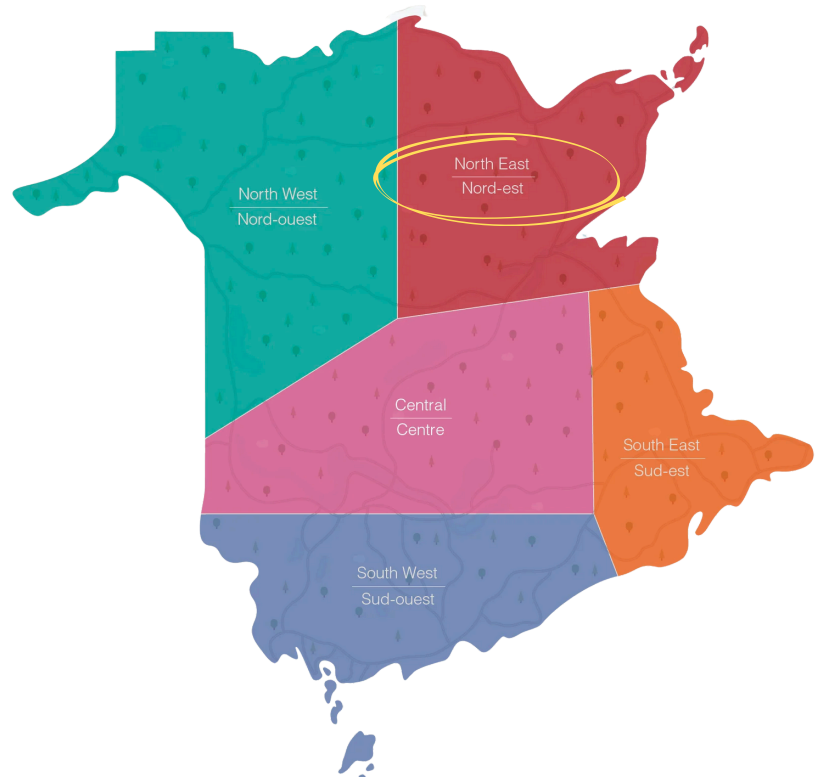
Job Development: Expanding Employment Services in the Northeast

In 2024, Inclusion NB was selected by avenueNB Cooperative to hold the Job Developer contract for the Northeast region of New Brunswick—a region that has historically faced a significant gap in dedicated employment services for individuals with a disability.

While other areas of the province have benefited from coordinated supported employment efforts, the Northeast has lacked sustained, specialized resources. Through this new role, Inclusion NB is embedding a dedicated Job Developer in the region to:

- ✓ Proactively engage with local employers to raise awareness about inclusive hiring practices;
- ✓ Identify and develop customized employment opportunities that align with the strengths and interests of job seekers with a disability;
- ✓ Support employers with onboarding and retention strategies to ensure successful long-term employment outcomes;
- ✓ Collaborate with local employment service providers and community partners to ensure a coordinated, person-centered approach to employment supports;
- ✓ Advance employer capacity-building efforts through training, education, and sharing of inclusive workplace tools and resources.

This opportunity not only strengthens the service ecosystem in the Northeast but also reflects Inclusion NB's broader commitment to ensuring that no region or population is left behind in the movement toward inclusive employment.



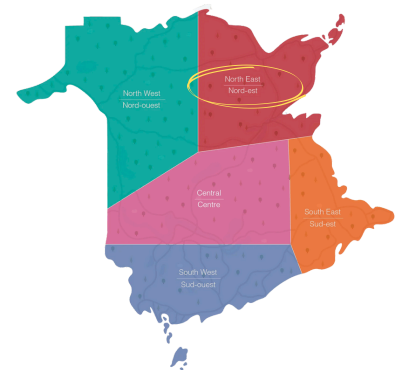
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Piloting a Community Developer Role in Social Inclusion

Since 2023, Inclusion NB has piloted a Community Developer position in Social Inclusion in the Saint John region, aimed at strengthening inclusive practices across sport, recreation, volunteerism, and housing. This role was created to intentionally build community capacity and foster environments where individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities can fully participate and thrive.

The Community Developer works directly with local partners and government stakeholders to promote inclusive opportunities, break down barriers to participation, and support the development of welcoming, accessible spaces.

BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

Over the past five years, and alongside the launch of our Inclusive Communities Institute (ICI), Inclusion NB has developed, updated, distributed, and delivered a wide range of resources, training, and webinars. These tools and resources are designed to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities—and their families—in navigating systems, advocating for their rights, and accessing opportunities for a fully inclusive life.

1. Empowering Families & Self-Advocates



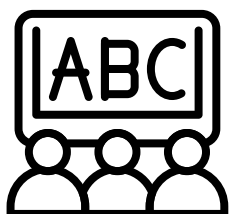
- “Strong Voice, Strong Self” – skills-based advocacy webinar for families.
- “How to Advocate for My Family” – plain-language webinar on effective self-advocacy.
- Family Leadership Development & Movement Series – a five-weekend series delivered with Inclusion Canada to strengthen family leadership.

2. Transition Planning



- “Building Bridges” Workshop – in-person sessions for students (Grade 8+) and families.
- Ongoing collaboration with the Premier’s Council on Disability: contributed to the updated Transition Planning Action Plan.
- Professional Development for Educators – best practices in transition planning.

3. Early Learning & Childcare



- Supported 350+ early learning centres to create and implement inclusive policies.
- Three-part webinar series on inclusive early learning and childcare practices.
- Family webinar on transitions into, within, and out of early learning settings.

4. K-12 & Post-Secondary Supports



- Resource & presentation for Anglophone/Francophone high-school students preparing for NBCC/CCNB.
- “Moving On: Best Practices to Support Transitions within the Public School System.”
- Reader’s Guide to Bill 35 – plain-language overview of key education legislation.

5. Educator & Support-Staff Training



- Sexuality and interdependence training for Educational Assistants (Anglophone districts).
- “Supporting Opportunity” resource training for Educational Assistants.
- Sexcess and PATH training delivered to 80+ Behaviour Intervention Workers.

6. Transportation & Community Access



- Provincial and regional transportation guide for individuals and families.
- Guidance for Addressing the Needs of People with IDD Through Regional Transportation Plans – technical document for planners.

7. Financial Security



Three easy-read/plain-language guides:

- Making Decisions – Family & Caregiver Guide
- Making Decisions – Power of Attorney
- Making Decisions – Taking Care of Your Money & Making Plans

8. Health, Relationships & Well-Being



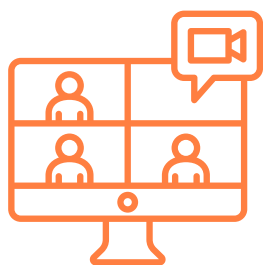
- Training sessions on “Not Just Talk” and “Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, Healthy Life” for families and community partners.
- “Right Relationships” – plain-language guides on healthy relationships.

LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic presented significant challenges for Inclusion New Brunswick, requiring a rapid and flexible response to meet the evolving needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. With the closure of schools, community spaces, and essential services, the organization quickly adapted its operations to ensure continued support.

Inclusion NB prioritized wellness, conducting hundreds of weekly check-ins with individuals and families to provide public health updates, reassurance, and emotional support during a time of uncertainty and isolation.



Program delivery shifted from in-person to virtual formats, ensuring that engagement, networking, and family support continued without interruption. New initiatives, such as care package distribution in partnership with United Way Central, helped maintain social connection and community spirit.

This experience ultimately strengthened Inclusion NB's resilience and capacity to build more inclusive communities across New Brunswick.

Ongoing Advocacy of Policy 322 (Inclusive Education)

Despite New Brunswick's longstanding policy commitment to inclusive education, significant challenges remain in its effective implementation across the province. While inclusive education is widely recognized as a human right and a cornerstone of equitable schooling, persistent misconceptions continue to undermine its success.

One common misunderstanding is the belief that inclusion simply means placing students with disabilities in general education classrooms. In reality, true inclusion requires intentional planning, individualized supports, accessible instruction, and a school culture that values diversity and belonging. Another prevailing misconception is that inclusion is solely a "disability issue," rather than a broader approach to creating learning environments where all students—regardless of ability, background, or learning style—can thrive.

These misunderstandings often contribute to inadequate resourcing and inconsistent support for educators, educational assistants, and students themselves. When schools are not equipped with the training, staffing, and tools needed to implement inclusive practices effectively, it can result in unmet student needs, teacher frustration, and educator burnout.

Our work includes:



Raising Public and Professional Awareness: We work to shift public discourse and professional understanding of inclusive education by emphasizing that inclusion is not just a location or label—but a set of values, strategies, and supports that benefit all students.



Supporting Educators and Schools: Through professional development sessions, resource development, and one-on-one consultation, Inclusion NB equips educators and educational assistants with practical tools and evidence-informed practices to support diverse learners in inclusive classrooms.



Policy Advocacy and Systems Engagement: Inclusion NB regularly engages with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and other provincial partners to ensure that policies reflect best practices and that implementation is monitored and supported. We provide feedback on key policy documents, advocate for increased investment in inclusive education, and contribute to strategic working groups and advisory bodies.



Challenging Regressive Proposals: Inclusion NB has consistently spoken out against legislative or policy changes that risk undermining inclusive education—such as proposed redefinitions of the common learning environment—and has helped ensure that the rights of students with disabilities remain protected in law and practice.

Advancing Community Living: Moving Beyond Institutional Models

A significant number of adults with disabilities in New Brunswick continue to reside in special care homes—congregate living settings that, while providing basic care, often limit personal autonomy, restrict choices, and hinder meaningful participation in community life. These institutional models, originally intended as protective environments, frequently stand in contrast to contemporary, person-centered approaches that emphasize dignity, self-determination, and social inclusion.

The over-reliance on special care homes reflects both systemic gaps in housing options and outdated assumptions about the support needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Too often, adults are placed in these settings due to a lack of individualized supports, accessible housing, or proper transition planning—rather than as a result of informed personal choice.

Transitioning from institutional care to supported, community-based living remains a pressing need in New Brunswick. This shift requires a reimagining of what it means to live well and be included, and it cannot happen without sustained advocacy, policy change, and the creation of viable alternatives, such as:

- ✓ **Advocating for Policy Change and Investment:** Inclusion NB is positioned to lead advocacy efforts urging the provincial government to prioritize the development of inclusive housing strategies and redirect funding toward supported living models. This includes advocating for increased investment in individualized support services, housing subsidies, and interdepartmental collaboration across Health, Social Development, and Housing.
- ✓ **Promoting Person-Centered Planning:** We continue to support individuals and families in envisioning and planning for lives in community—not in congregate care. Through person-centered planning, we help individuals identify their goals, needs, and preferences, and work to build individualized supports around those visions.
- ✓ **Demonstrating What's Possible:** Inclusion NB can play a leadership role in piloting or partnering on innovative supported living models that demonstrate what community-based inclusion can look like in practice. This includes shared living arrangements, supported independent living, or Micro board/governance structures that give individuals and their chosen supporters control over their living arrangements.
- ✓ **Building Capacity Within Communities:** We work with community partners—landlords, municipalities, service providers, and employers—to foster welcoming, inclusive environments where people with disabilities can live, work, and belong. This work includes addressing stigma, supporting accessibility, and building awareness about the benefits of inclusion.
- ✓ **Monitoring and Amplifying Lived Experience:** Inclusion NB can strengthen its role in documenting the lived realities of individuals in special care homes—through stories, interviews, and case studies—to shine a light on the limitations of the current system and push for change that reflects the values of dignity, autonomy, and inclusion.

While some steps have been taken provincially to explore alternative housing models, a coordinated, cross-sector strategy is urgently needed to make supported community living a reality for all New Brunswickers with disabilities. Systemic Underfunding and Resource Constraints

Inclusive practices cannot thrive without the foundational support of adequate, stable, and equitable funding. Yet, across sectors—education, employment, housing, health care, and social services—systemic underfunding continues to undermine the quality, accessibility, and consistency of supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Inclusion NB plays a critical and ongoing role in challenging this status quo and working to close these gaps:

- ✓ **Policy Advocacy and Government Relations:** Inclusion NB actively engages with government at all levels to advocate for sustained and increased investment in inclusive systems and services. Through policy submissions, briefings, and consultations, we bring forward evidence, best practices, and lived experiences that highlight the consequences of underfunding—and the transformative impact of properly resourced supports.
- ✓ **Equity-Focused Budget Recommendations:** We advocate for disability-inclusive budgeting and call for targeted funding streams that support inclusive education, supported employment, accessible housing, and person-centered planning. This includes pushing for flexible funding mechanisms that can be tailored to individual needs and reduce reliance on institutional models of care.
- ✓ **Partnership Development to Extend Reach:** In the face of funding limitations, there is an opportunity to work more collaboratively with schools, employers, service providers, and other community organizations to stretch available resources and co-develop solutions that advance inclusion. By sharing tools, training, and best practices, Inclusion NB can continue to build capacity across systems while advocating for the systemic change needed to sustain progress.
- ✓ **Piloting and Scaling Innovative Models:** When government funding is limited or delayed, Inclusion NB has often stepped in to pilot initiatives that demonstrate what's possible—whether in transition planning, family support, employment pathways, or inclusive community development. These models can then be leveraged to secure broader public investment and long-term adoption.

Navigating Policy Changes and Legislative Advancements

The introduction of the Supported Decision-Making and Representation Act marked a transformative step forward in recognizing and promoting the rights, dignity, and autonomy of individuals with disabilities in New Brunswick. By shifting away from substitute decision-making models toward supported decision-making, the Act affirms that all individuals—regardless of perceived capacity—have the right to make decisions about their own lives, with appropriate supports.

Inclusion NB played a key role in advocating for the development and passage of this legislation. It now requires robust implementation, accessible information, and cultural shifts in how decision-making is understood and supported across systems.

- ✔ **Public Education & Awareness:** We are actively working to increase awareness and understanding of the Act among individuals with disabilities, families, service providers, legal professionals, and government staff. This includes the development of plain-language resources, community workshops, and informational sessions to demystify supported decision-making and empower individuals to exercise their rights.
- ✔ **Capacity-Building & Training:** Inclusion NB is building capacity across sectors by offering targeted training to service providers, healthcare professionals, and community organizations to help them recognize, respect, and implement supported decision-making practices in their work.
- ✔ **Policy Monitoring & Feedback:** We are closely monitoring the rollout of the legislation and its impact on individuals with disabilities, collecting feedback from communities, and identifying gaps or barriers in implementation.
- ✔ **System Navigation & Support:** Inclusion NB also supports individuals and families in navigating the new legislation, helping them understand their rights, explore available supports, and engage in decision-making processes in ways that reflect their goals and values.
- ✔ **Advancing a Culture of Inclusion and Rights:** At the heart of our work is the ongoing effort to shift attitudes and promote a broader culture of inclusion, where autonomy, choice, and respect are upheld as foundational principles—not just in law, but in practice.

Barriers to Employment for Individuals with Disabilities

More than 70% of working-aged New Brunswickers with an IDD are **unemployed** or **underemployed**.

Despite progress in promoting inclusive values across workplaces, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in New Brunswick continue to face disproportionately high employment barriers, with an estimated unemployment rate of 70%.

90% of employers have a DEI strategy in place, but **only 4%** include disability within the strategy.

Compounding this issue is a stark disconnect between employer intent and action. While approximately 90% of businesses report that they prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in their organizational values or policies, only 4% explicitly include persons with disabilities—particularly those with IDD—in their DEI plans or hiring strategies. These realities underscore the urgent need for targeted employer education, capacity-building, and systemic change. They also present important opportunities for Inclusion NB to expand its leadership and impact in inclusive employment.

THE NEXT STRATEGIC PLAN SHOULD FOCUS ON:

Moving Inclusion into Action

Expand partnerships to non-traditional and private sectors;

Enhancing Capacity Building

- Create formalized regional/community inclusion hubs;

Offer sector-specific inclusion training institutes

- Training within the service delivery sector;

Invest in youth and self-advocate leadership development;

Review of Mission, Vision, and Values

Early Childhood Education

Social Role Valorization

Stewardship

Expand Partnerships



- Corporate and private sector partners – particularly in employment, recreation, and housing.
- Newcomer and multicultural associations – ensuring inclusion work reflects the growing diversity of New Brunswick.
- Post-secondary student groups and youth organizations – to cultivate future advocates and inclusive community leaders.

Enhance Capacity Building



- Create Community Inclusion Hubs (virtual or in-person) where families, service providers, employers, schools, and advocacy groups meet regularly to exchange resources, collaborate on initiatives, and problem-solve.
- Build Capacity Through Sector-Specific Training: The Inclusive Communities Institute was named in the last plan, but it isn't fully elaborated. Expand on this by developing sector-specific training streams (inclusive hiring for employers, inclusive recreation for sports organizations, inclusive education for school districts, inclusive healthcare for clinics and hospitals).
- Incorporate a Youth and Self-Advocate Leadership Strategy – involving advisory groups, mentorship programs, and peer-led training.

Strengthen Policy Leadership



- Host annual Inclusive Policy Summits bringing together decision-makers, service providers, and advocates.
- Publish thought leadership papers on pressing inclusion issues in New Brunswick.
- Develop a community scorecard/report card on inclusive indicators in employment, housing, healthcare, etc.

Mission, Vision & Values Review

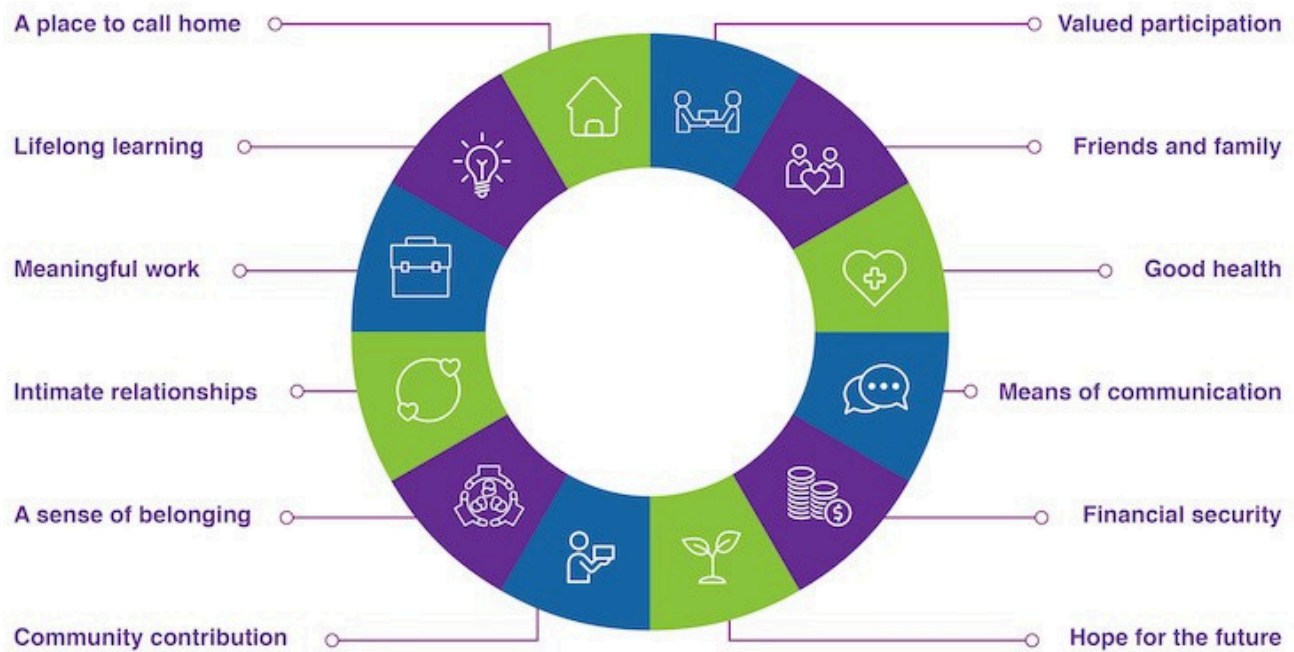


As part of the development of Inclusion NB's next strategic plan, it is recommended that the Board of Directors undertake a thorough review of the organization's mission, vision, and values statements. Given the significant shifts in social policy, community needs, advocacy priorities, and the broader landscape of disability rights in recent years, it is essential to ensure that these foundational statements continue to reflect the current realities and aspirations of the individuals and families we serve.

This review process should be inclusive, engaging individuals with lived experience, families, staff, community partners, and key stakeholders to gather diverse perspectives. The objective will be to affirm the relevance, clarity, and inspirational nature of our mission and vision while ensuring our values remain a strong, guiding foundation for the organization's decisions, advocacy, and community leadership.

AN INCLUSIVE NEW BRUNSWICK

This final graphic displays the hopeful future we have for both individuals and families we get the privilege of supporting.





InclusionNB