

**ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS**  
**FIRST NATIONS LABOUR MARKET STRATEGY**  
**DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION – NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION**  
**ISSUE PAPER 19 – Persons with Disabilities**

**DESCRIPTION:**

The strategy includes funds, objectives and reporting requirements for First Nations Persons with Disabilities (PwD). While the prevalence of disabilities among First Nations people is greater than in the Canadian population, the funds available are very small (the core federal program is LMAPwD, agreements signed with provinces and territories, and no funds were included in the strategy to balance this initiative). Programming is flexible but the area is complex and requires specialized expertise and dedicated effort. Complexity arises from the fact that many PwD are consumed by just getting access to the benefits that they need and employment often presents additional burdens rather than being a solution. Moreover, accessing services from outside of urban centres is daunting and costs for disabilities supports are high.

**AFN is currently in the process of developing a distinct approach for persons living with disabilities**

**OPTIONS:**

1. Status quo: what works for PwD is an operational issue that can be dealt with by the Secretariat to share and improve practice
2. Enhance the budget request so that FNLMAAs have sufficient resources to make investments in resources, expertise and partnerships to become effective
3. Note the inclusion of PwD in the scope of the strategy in the cabinet document and hold recommendations for the conclusions of the AFN FN strategy for PwD

**RATIONALE:**

Inclusion of persons with disabilities in the mainstream in all aspects of society is a universally held policy objective. Given the frequency of disabilities among First Nations people, effective program responses must be part of the strategy. Funding needs to exceed a critical mass to make investments in the resources, expertise and partnerships required by effective programming worthwhile. Given the complexity of the issues and number of agencies and regulations involved, a distinct First Nations approach is a pre-requisite to moving ahead.

**CONSIDERATIONS:**

While accessing employment is an obvious goal for many PwD, programming for PwD overlaps with Health and Social Services and great expertise and care is required so as not to “do harm” by inadvertently provoking the loss of benefits or supports.

Many PwD face important barriers to employment but are not in any system and could be effectively targeted as a priority clientele

**RECOMMENDED OPTION:**

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The low level of funding for PwD is a gap and should be addressed in the MC (see annex) while service delivery strategies can await the outcomes of the AFN research and consultation project.

**DECISION:**

**DATE AND VERSION:**

Draft 1, November 23, 2016

Annex – First Nations allocation base on LMA PwD

- Incidence of disability in the Canadian population 15 and over is 16.6%
- Budget for LMA PwD signed with provinces and territories is \$219.11 million
- Based on the Canadian incidence of disabilities, the First Nations allocation should be \$6.02 million
- Based on the incidence of disabilities in the First Nation populations presented in the First Nations Regional Health Survey, 27.9%, the allocation should be \$10.11 million