



Inclusion New Brunswick Independent Facilitation - 2024 Showcase

What makes this model different?

A brief introduction

Inclusion New Brunswick (NB) was founded in 1957, with the goal of empowering people with an intellectual or developmental disability that live in New Brunswick. Their mission is to “lead in 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”.

Pan-disability support

The Inclusion NB Independent Facilitation Program is unique to the association because it is available to people with any type of disability. This includes people with an intellectual or developmental disability, as well as those with a physical, sensory, or mental health disability.

To access the program, individuals would need to self-identify as having a disability. A formal diagnosis does not need to be provided to an Independent Facilitator to access the program. This low-barrier approach makes sure that everyone is included, no matter what kind of disability they have or whether they have an official diagnosis.

Focus on independence

The Independent Facilitation Program prioritizes empowering people to achieve greater independence rather than fostering reliance on others.

The program is centered around the person, meaning facilitators focus on what the person wants and needs. This allows them to take charge of their own planning. For example, facilitators might help someone fill out forms, but they do it in a way that builds the person's skills and confidence, rather than just doing it for them.

The aim is always to work with the person, not for the person.

“The principle that we really try to follow is “just-enough” support: making sure that we're providing the right amount of support for each individual... to empower them to be as independent as possible.”

Personalized, person-centered support

During their intake sessions with new people, independent facilitators focus on developing a Person-Centered Plan. This plan is tailored to the unique needs of each person. This can either be created during one session, or over multiple sessions. Facilitators get to know and understand the person and what barriers they experience, and help them identify support to address these needs.

For some people, the support might be as simple as having a conversation about available programs, understanding who to talk to, where to apply, and how to go about it. For others, the support may be more in-depth, such as connecting them to a community organization, helping them complete applications, or ensuring they have transportation to access a particular resource. The level of support provided completely depends on each person's needs.

Flexible and easy to access

The Independent Facilitation program is made to be flexible and easy to access, so it can meet the different needs and preferences of the people requesting support. People can get connected to the program in many ways, including:

- phone or email
- connecting with a staff member at an event
- referrals from other nonprofits (such as Ability NB) or the Department of Social Development

Services are offered in many ways, like in-person meetings, phone calls, emails, or virtual sessions, depending on what works best for the person who is accessing the support. The program is available in both English and French, and it partners with local groups to provide interpretation for other languages when needed.

“The real keys that our independent facilitators follow is to support individuals so they can do [things] with the individual, not do for the individual as much as possible.”

An overview

Overview of the navigator program

Inclusion NB's Independent Facilitation Program assists adults aged 19-64 with intellectual, developmental, and other types of disabilities across New Brunswick. The independent facilitation team receives about 150 referrals every year (not including general requests for information), guiding people through available community resources, government programs, and other important services that match their needs and goals.

The Independent Facilitation Team supports individuals to apply for the Disability Support Program (DSP), a provincial program aimed at providing funding to people with a disability who have an unmet need. They also support people who do not qualify for the DSP to access community or other supports and services they need.

Independent Facilitators can assist people to:

- Develop a vision for their future
- Identify their needs for disability-related supports, as well as possible options for meeting those needs
- Apply for provincial government or community programs or services, such as the Disability Support Program or income assistance
- Apply for programs like the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) or the Disability Tax Credit (DTC)
- Make informed choices based on all options available in their community
- Become more connected to their community and grow their social circle.

Independent Facilitators at Inclusion NB have backgrounds in nonprofit or human services work, and must have a Bachelor's degree in a relevant field. Each facilitator typically works with around 10-15 people at any given time. While the facilitators are flexible and there is no formal time limit that people have to adhere to, they do aim to follow a timeline to make sure issues are resolved efficiently. Around 70% of referrals are resolved within three months of a person being connected to the program, but people are always welcome to reach out again in the future if new needs emerge.

Funding

The Inclusion NB Independent Facilitation Program is funded through a combination of government contracts and fundraising efforts. Inclusion NB has a strong relationship with the Department of Social Development, which is where a large portion of their funds come from. However, it isn't enough to cover all the costs, so their fund development team works on more fundraising initiatives to keep the program running.

The Independent Facilitation team consists of three facilitators who work directly with people and one manager who also helps with facilitation. Limited funding does affect how many people the program can help and how widely it can offer services across the province. On occasion, the team may need to prioritize certain areas due to funding, which can lead to waiting lists or less coverage in some regions.

Limitations

One of the main limitations of the Inclusion NB Independent Facilitation Program is the lack of enough staff to meet the growing demand for services. New Brunswick has the second highest rate of disability in Canada, with 35.3% of the population having a disability¹. While the program does a great job helping people, there are still many more who need support. There may be longer waiting times for people living in certain parts of the province where an independent facilitator is not physically present.

The program takes measures to resolve this issue (such as setting up virtual meetings with people that live too far from the nearest facilitator), but an increase in facilitators would help with this problem and allow for more people to get support in a timely manner.



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