

# **55+ Games for NWT Seniors**

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Final Report – December 19, 2008 – for the  
Government of Northwest Territories

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# Overview

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- Approach
- Findings
- Recommendations



# Approach

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- Telephone and in-person interviews with:
  - Executive Director of NWT Seniors Society
  - Board members (2)
  - Focus Group (3)
  - Executive Director Canada 55+ Games Society
- Reviewed documentation from other jurisdictions

# Findings

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# NWT Seniors & Canada 55+ Games

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- 2004 – NWT Seniors attended the Canada 55+ Games in Whitehorse:
  - 32 seniors
  - From Hay River, Yellowknife, Inuvik, Ft. Smith & Ft Simpson
  - \$10,000 grant from Sport North Federation
  - participants paid registration; travel paid through fund-raising
- 2006 – Portage la Prairie, Manitoba:
  - 46 seniors from Hay River, Yellowknife, Inuvik, & Ft. Smith;
  - \$10,000 grant from Sport North Federation, \$50,000 from GNWT Health & Social Services;
  - participants paid registration; travel paid through fund-raising and grants
- 2008 – Dieppe, New Brunswick:
  - 69 seniors from Hay River, Inuvik, Enterprise, Yellowknife & Ft. Smith;
  - \$10,000 grant from Sport North Federation, \$50,000 from GNWT Health & Social Services;
  - participants paid registration; travel through fund-raising, grants & personal cost (est: \$3000-\$4000 each)



# Impact of Games

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- Reported increase in registration in NWT Seniors, reported interest from younger seniors
- Mixed perception amongst interviewees of impact of Canada 55+ Games on physical activity
- Board of NWT SS considering how to increase physical activity participation at community level; concern that “*they should be increasing participation at the community level instead of sending a bunch of elite athletes on a junket across Canada*”—planning session in January



# Current 55+ Games process in NWT

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- NWT SS sends “invitation for expression of interest” to seniors’ associations and recreation coordinators across Territory, posts on website
  - Concern that some recreation coordinators don’t encourage seniors’ participation (bec. of focus on youth), may not pass information along
- Seniors apply to participate in events scheduled at Canada 55+ Games; if more than available spots are interested, then playdowns
- No policy manuals for Games *per se* re: selection, training, appeals, travel—all arranged *ad hoc* in sportsmanlike fashion
- Ability to attend depends on financial means



# Barriers to participation in Games

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- Financial – ability to fund-raise in community, own financial means
- Limited opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity:
  - Recreation coordinators focus on youth
  - Recreation centre programming does not include seniors
  - Schools not open after hours for card games or other recreational activities for seniors
  - Few organized aboriginal sports/games participation opportunities
  - Lack of awareness of 55+ Games, participation opportunities
  - Capacity to coordinate at community level to create participation opportunities



# Other Jurisdictions

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- Provinces hold provincial Games that encourage community participation and volunteer development
  - Examples: British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Ontario
- Province is divided into zones/districts where participation and competition are encouraged
- Winners of zone play-offs attend the provincial Games.



## Other Jurisdictions (Cont'd)

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- ❑ Winners of provincial Games are eligible to represent the province at the Canada 55+ Games, but pay their own way
- ❑ Governments support zone development through funding for zone playoffs and support provincial Games through grants
- ❑ Each province (B.C., Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick) has one staff person provincially, supported by a volunteer Board of Directors of a Games Society, except Manitoba—Committee of Man. Seniors Society

# Policy context: Opportunities for more active seniors in NWT

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- National initiative: 2006, *Healthy Aging in Canada: A New Vision, A Vital Investment* endorsed by F-P/T Ministers Responsible for Seniors—GNWT Seniors' Secretariat is working to achieve Vision which includes physical activity
- Long-Term Athlete Development Model includes “Active for Life” stage; TSOs and Sport North Federation should be working to include older adults

# Recommendations

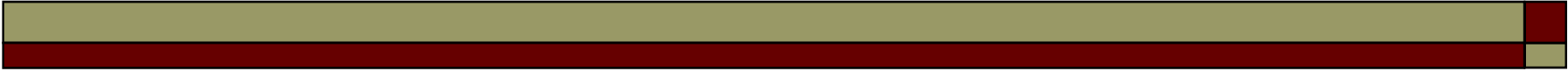
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# Recommendations

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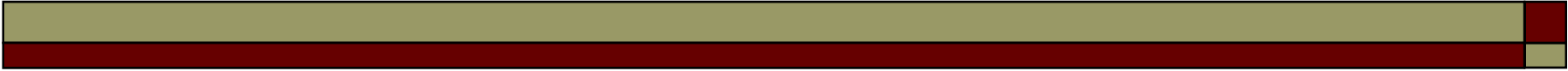
1. MACA should connect with Seniors Secretariat to promote healthy aging through physical activity
2. MACA should engage NWT RPA and, through Sport and Recreation Advisors, Regional Recreation Associations, to work with Recreation Coordinators so Recreation Coordinators understand opportunities for seniors to be physically active; build seniors into their community programming
3. MACA School of Community Government encourage Recreation Leaders Program focus to include seniors' physical activity programming



# Recommendations: Community Support

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4. Regional Recreation Associations should promote volunteer development and community capacity building: form Seniors/Elders Councils in each community with role to encourage recreation and physical activity participation
5. Encourage traditional/cultural Games—dance, drumming, etc—in addition to mainstream sports. Consider both summer and winter sports. Encourage focus on physically active events.



# Recommendations: NWT Seniors Society

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6. Encourage NWT SS to form a Seniors Games Advisory Committee to support development of community-level physical activity and friendly competition



# Recommendations:

## Encourage friendly competition

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7. MACA and HSS (Seniors' Secretariat) should contribute to the funding of 4 regional games for seniors/elders, one in each of 4 regional centres, two each year (each region, every other year)
8. Continue to send seniors to Canada 55+ Games, but allow them to pay their own way
9. As interest develops, consider a Territorial Seniors/Elders (55+) Games