

DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE

TO

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

ON

DRAFT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

MARCH 2008

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Executive Summary

This report presents the Departmental response to community focus group findings that are described in the companion document 'Community Engagement Framework - Focus Group Thematic Analysis'. As explained in the companion document, the purpose of conducting the focus groups was to engage a sample of key community stakeholders of Manitoba Family Services and Housing (FSH) in the process of finalizing a draft Community Engagement Framework and to inform the future development of other FSH community engagement tools and processes. The analysis of community feedback and input from across these focus groups revealed categories of issues and community suggestions within three broad themes: community engagement processes, power, and communication. The present report focuses on the Department's responses to the community suggestions within each of the three theme areas, but first provides a brief background and summary of the draft Community Engagement Framework. In particular, the intent for the framework to specifically support community engagement as part of the Department's integrated service delivery system is highlighted. The thematic analysis together with this response report fulfils the commitment made by the Department to report back on consultation outcomes to participants of the focus groups.

The first theme presented, "Community Engagement Processes", includes key community suggestions of committing to a community engagement approach that is ongoing / long-term and embedded in strategic planning, providing better civil servant training, using flexible engagement approaches that build on existing community structures and that are suited to needs of communities engaged, and ensuring transparency and follow-up in engagement processes. The Department responses within this theme include acknowledgement that the framework already addresses most of these community suggestions, areas where the framework will be enhanced, and that other Departmental tools and processes (e.g., Community Engagement Lens, Workbook, Inventory, Steering Committee) are being established and will address many suggestions. Also included are specific suggestions to which the Department currently is not prepared to act upon.

The second theme of "Power" highlights key community suggestions for inclusion, outreach and needs assessment of vulnerable citizens and diverse communities and for including a discussion in the framework about the political context for engagement. Also highlighted is the suggestion to improve the presentation of community capacity to not focus only on building community capacity but to acknowledge and use existing community capacities in engagement processes. The Department responses within this theme include acknowledgement that the framework and Community Engagement Workbook both address the need for inclusion of vulnerable and diverse populations and that the formalized engagement process presented in the framework support Department-initiated engagement of community that is informed through FSH strategic and business planning processes. Also included in the response is a commitment to enhance the framework by adding a discussion of the political context (e.g., the framework is not a political initiative) and by improving the presentation of fostering community capacity.

The third theme of "Communication" consists of community suggestions to keep language and information simple, and to share information more readily with community so they are more aware of available services, benefits, and various processes of the Department. Department responses indicate the various steps being taken to address language and information / information sharing needs.

Introduction

Purpose of Report

This report presents the Departmental response to community focus group findings that are described in the companion document 'Community Engagement Framework - Focus Group Thematic Analysis'. As explained in the companion document, the overall purpose of conducting the focus groups was to engage a sample of key community stakeholders of Manitoba Family Services and Housing (FSH) in the process of finalizing a draft Community Engagement Framework and to inform the future development of other FSH community engagement tools and processes (see the thematic analysis report for a list of stakeholder groups). Appendix A provides the specific objectives and desired outcomes of the community consultations that were shared with focus group participants.

The analysis of community feedback and input from across the focus groups revealed categories of issues and community suggestions within three broad themes: community engagement processes, power, and communication. The present report focuses on the Department's responses to the community suggestions within each of these three theme areas. A review of the thematic analysis is recommended to better understand the themes and community suggestions, which are only highlighted in this report to provide some context for the Department's responses. A review of the draft Community Engagement Framework is also recommended for context; a brief background and summary is offered below. The thematic analysis together with this response report fulfils the commitment made by the Department to report back on consultation outcomes to participants of the focus groups.

Background and Summary of (Draft) Community Engagement Framework

In 2001, FSH began reorganizing its structure and service delivery systems to make it easier to focus on the citizens it serves. This system, called integrated service delivery (ISD), features regional delivery of services. The Department established six regions for service delivery in rural and northern Manitoba and, in Winnipeg, partnered with Winnipeg Regional Health Authority to integrate community-based health and social services in various Winnipeg community areas. This partnership is called Winnipeg Integrated Services (WIS) and is part of the broader ISD system.

In addition, the Department's move to an integrated service delivery system included the need to develop a formalized approach to community engagement at these regional and Winnipeg community area service delivery levels. This approach would involve and be supported by the FSH policy / programs level and be embedded in departmental decision-making and planning processes. FSH decided to start developing this formalized approach in the Fall of 2006 and placed initial priority on the development of a Community Engagement Framework that supports the integrated service delivery system.

A draft Community Engagement Framework was developed. The framework aligns the vision, mission, principles and goals of FSH, ISD, and WIS with principles and processes of community engagement. It presents trends in government-community relations as well as benefits and challenges of community engagement. It also presents concepts and

definitions for community engagement, community and community capacity. The core feature of the framework is a conceptual model of community engagement for the Department. This model presents five levels of community engagement on a continuum of community participation and empowerment. The continuum ranges from the first level of 'Sharing Information' to the fifth level of 'Community Directed' engagement. Each of the successive engagement levels enables communities to be more active and empowered participants, having a greater voice and greater influence in FSH decision-making.

In order for the Department to know when, where and how to best use community engagement, a process to apply the conceptual model is presented in the framework. The process highlights the need for ensuring that planning, implementing, and evaluating individual engagement activities are embedded in the Department's strategic planning and annual business planning processes, risk and issues management processes, communications processes, and decision-making processes. The need for a macro level community engagement evaluation and reporting component is also presented. Further, the framework document presents key challenges that influence implementation of this formalized process and recommends strategies that respond to these challenges. The challenges and strategies relate to organizational capacity, collaboration with health authorities, and aligning additional opportunities for community engagement with the formalized approach to support integrated service delivery.

Although FSH has been participating for many years in a range of community engagement activities, the framework ultimately is intended to serve as a first step in equipping FSH staff with a common understanding and approach to community engagement and is *intended particularly for use by the Department's service delivery staff working within Rural and Northern Regions and Winnipeg's Community Areas*. In other words, while the framework's principles and processes are comprehensive enough to be applied in broader contexts e.g., political contexts, the framework was specifically developed to guide community engagement at the Department's regional and community area levels, with support by FSH policy / programs level. To this end, the ISD and WIS-specific commitments to working with communities that are presented in the framework reflect the need for service delivery regions and community areas to move beyond consultation and toward a more inclusive approach to decision making; one that emphasizes collaboration across all sectors and repositions itself as a partner with communities.

Departmental Responses to Community Focus Group Findings

Theme 1: Community Engagement Processes

Suggestion: Strategic Planning and Long-Term Engagement

Examples:

- incorporating community engagement with strategic planning and long-term goals
- community engagement should "emphasize outcomes" / improve "accountability and outcomes."
- ensuring government articulates the goals of community engagement
- a "process or mechanism to show [the framework] is embedded and on-going..."/ community engagement as a long-term strategy

Department Response:

The Community Engagement Framework already is explicit about addressing these important needs.

- The framework acknowledges that the document itself represents a priority step in the commitment made by FSH for a formalized community engagement process that will be phased in as part of its integrated service delivery system. In other words, projects that follow the formalized engagement process will be phased in across service delivery regions and community areas and supported by the policy / programs level.
- This formalized process, as described in the framework, involves proactive, strategic planning of community engagement and promotes the use of a Community Engagement Lens for use within FSH strategic and business planning processes. In other words, the lens will be used as a tool during strategic and business planning to identify community engagement project priorities.
- The importance of tailoring engagement level and their respective methods to engagement purpose (goal) is emphasized throughout the framework document, and is included as a guiding principle.
- It includes as one of its guiding principles for engagement the need for Departmental accountability in reporting engagement outcomes.
- It includes evaluation as a guiding principle; for measuring both the process of engagement and achievement of engagement objectives.
- It highlights the sharing of best practices to support continuous organizational learning and refinement of community engagement processes.
- It identifies the need for a Community Engagement Team to support the implementation of the formalized process for the Department.

Resources approved to support phase-in plan for 2008/09

- In August 2007, the Department's executive committed new resources for 2008/09 to support the phase-in of community engagement projects in community areas and regions. This represents Departmental commitment to the processes proposed in the framework. The benefit of phasing in is to focus available resources on testing the formalized process in a few projects, learn from them and improve processes as more projects are resourced and rolled out across the Department.

Implementation of Community Engagement Lens

- The lens was developed in February 2008 and commitment has been confirmed for embedding it within the Strategic Management System of the Department. In future it may be integrated with other important lenses e.g., disability, gender.
- Commitment is confirmed for implementation of the Community Engagement Lens during the Spring 2008 business planning sessions of all service delivery regions and community areas. This lens will identify opportunities and priorities for community engagement and will help inform selection of projects that will be phased in during 2008/09 with the support of new Departmental resources.
- By using this lens, input that has been gathered is linked to specific decisions and actions in the Department and within service delivery regions and community areas.

Development of Community Engagement Workbook

- A Community Engagement Workbook (note: the framework draft called it a 'Guide') is currently being developed for use by Department staff undertaking community

engagement. This workbook is a practical resource that ‘walks through’ the basic planning steps for when the Department engages community. Some of the planning steps included in the workbook address the community suggestions above i.e., articulating the goal and objectives of specific projects in which FSH will engage community, performance measurement (evaluation) of engagement outcomes and processes, and reporting back on outcomes of engagement.

Establishment of a Steering Committee for Community Engagement Phase-In

- An eight-person steering committee with management-level representation from across the Department and Chaired by Mr. Peter Dubiński, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Community Service Delivery division, has been established and had its first meeting January 17/08. This committee’s role is to champion, support and advise on the phase-in strategy of the formalized community engagement approach for integrated service delivery over a minimum two-year period. A workplan for phase-in has been approved by this committee. This represents a commitment to a long-term, strategic approach of community engagement for the integrated service delivery system of the Department.

Suggestion: Better Civil Servant Training

Examples:

- the community engagement guide for government staff should include how to listen to community groups and citizens when they vent their frustrations, and learn to move forward in spite of them. Additionally, communication training could lead to better information sharing and increased trust.
- organizing joint training for government staff and community members
- providing training to all civil servants (including senior-level) because “if everyone gets core [sensitivity] training it becomes culturally embedded; that is huge and valuable.”
- incorporate community engagement competencies in job descriptions and hiring practices

Department Response:

The Community Engagement Framework already is explicit about the need for staff training.

- The framework discusses the challenge to increase its capacities related to staff knowledge, attitudes and skills in community engagement.
- Staff training is identified as a required strategy in the framework.

Staff Training Plan

- Staff orientation plans specific to community engagement are currently being developed. These sessions would be open to any FSH staff and may be embedded within broader corporate staff orientation sessions / refreshers or done on a stand-alone basis. This core level training is included in the approved workplan.
- Also approved is a project-specific level of staff training. This training will be customized and phased in according to community engagement projects in service delivery regions and community areas.

- Effective communication with community and the importance of building trust and relationships for effective engagement will be included in these training activities.
- Joint training for both the Department and community are not being considered in the immediate workplan. It, however, may be explored in future, after the Department has assessed the outcomes of its own orientation and training activities.

Community Engagement Workbook

- The Community Engagement Workbook is currently being developed as noted earlier. Various planning steps will be designed to facilitate effective communications with community e.g., clear objectives, key messages, plain language, building trust and relationships, the Department's requirement by law to actively offer services and engagement in the French language, etc. Also, appendices will include tips on engaging with diverse and hard to reach communities.

Community Engagement Competencies for Staff

- Incorporating community engagement competencies in job descriptions and hiring practices across the entire Department is not being explored in the immediate workplan. This is a huge strategic undertaking that requires much time and many parties. Building staff competencies for community engagement, however, will be facilitated through Departmental staff orientations and training, as noted above.
- Persons recruited to assist with implementing the immediate community engagement workplan will require appropriate competencies and these will be identified and considered in immediate hiring practices and job descriptions.

Suggestion: Flexibility

Examples:

- rural needs are unique and government cannot assume that the approach they use with urban communities is the right approach for rural communities. "It's really important to be flexible, and not territorial, and that you can work with other agencies in a different way than you would maybe in Winnipeg."
- flexibility will result in government participating in engagement that fits the needs of the specific community with whom they are working
- part of being flexible involves government working on "building on existing resources and networks" and use this knowledge and expertise as a springboard to successful engagement.
- including community at the start of any community engagement process

Department Response:

The Community Engagement Framework already is explicit about the need for flexibility and building on existing structures.

- The framework emphasizes that effective engagement is non-prescriptive; that it is both an art and a science. It indicates that the methods used must fit the purpose of engagement and must consider community needs.
- The framework includes as a strategy the need to build on existing structures. It provides examples of some of the opportunities and networks that may be considered in planning and implementation of community engagement.

- It also indicates the Department will develop a Community Engagement Inventory of existing opportunities and structures for engagement (e.g., networks, coalitions, committees). This inventory will serve as a planning tool for staff who undertake engagement; encouraging coordination of engagement efforts / use of existing structures rather than duplicating efforts.

Enhancing the Community Engagement Framework

- While the framework already acknowledges the need for flexibility and building on existing structures, it will enhance these discussions by noting relevant differences between rural and urban communities i.e., that urban engagement models do not necessarily work in rural settings and vice versa.
- It also will encourage using and building on the strengths of an engagement model that works in one community to develop a model that meets specific needs in another community. This best practices discussion will be facilitated through the organizational learning event that is included in the Department's current workplan for phasing in community engagement.
- It will highlight the Department's obligation and opportunity to engage with the existing rural and urban structures of the Conseil communauté en santé du Manitoba (CCS) on various issues and particularly those related to accessing quality French language services (FLS) in the areas of health and social services. The Government of Manitoba has granted to the CCS the status of official representative of the francophone community in the areas of health and social services and a variety of effective engagement structures already have been established to facilitate various levels of francophone community involvement with health authorities and FSH. This relationship is considered a partnership model.
- The draft framework does not specify that the Department will always and as a rule involve community at the start of any community engagement process. The formalized process for community engagement as part of integrated service delivery reflects Department-initiated engagement that is informed through strategic and business planning processes. The framework will be enhanced to clarify that once the Department identifies its engagement priorities and then frames the goal (purpose) of each selected engagement project, there can be opportunity to involve stakeholders in further planning needs of those projects and particularly in the higher levels of engagement. Also it will reinforce the government policies that require the Department to involve francophone and aboriginal communities in earlier planning.
- It is a premise of the conceptual model that higher levels of engagement (Planning Together, Acting Together, Community Directed) involve community earlier, and that attempts to involve the community earlier in the planning of each activity will foster more effective engagement. While this is noted or implied in the table that explains each of the levels (types) of engagement, it will be specifically added to the supporting discussion about the conceptual model.

Community Engagement Workbook

- The workbook currently being developed includes a step that requires doing a stakeholder analysis / community profile so that the engagement process (methods) will fit the needs or circumstances of the community.
- The workbook includes a step that requires a review of the Community Engagement Inventory in order to explore opportunities to use existing engagement structures.

- The workbook includes a step that requires consideration of involving various stakeholders in commenting on or developing the community engagement plan. This ensures consideration is given to involving community earlier in the Department-initiated engagement processes. Particular emphasis is indicated for early involvement of the CCS for engagement with the francophone community and also when consulting with aboriginal communities as per existing government policies.

Development of Community Engagement Inventory

- As noted earlier, the development of the inventory planning tool (to encourage building on existing structures) is currently underway.

Suggestion: Transparency and Follow-up

Examples:

- clearer expectations outlined at the beginning of all engagement. One commented community wants “more parameters set out very clearly, [with] expectation levels” set out.
- improve upon follow-up procedures, to report back on community engagement outcomes, and letting the community know how the information they have provided is being used.

Department Response:

The Community Engagement Framework already is explicit about the need for transparency and follow-up.

- The framework includes in its guiding principles the need for:
 - transparency in its communications of objectives and setting parameters;
 - responsiveness in how it uses community input in its decision-making;
 - accountability in reporting back to community on the outcomes of engagement; and
 - evaluating community engagement processes and outcomes.

Community Engagement Workbook

- The workbook currently being developed includes planning steps that address each of these guiding principles.

Community Engagement Evaluation Framework

- An evaluation / continuous quality improvement framework is currently being developed to support project-level evaluation and evaluation across all projects.

Other Suggestions to Improve Engagement Processes

Examples:

- government leaders need to be more involved and supportive of engagement; be at the table with them. ...“if community is going to attend a [community engagement] meeting, we want key decision makers there, or we won’t attend.”

- want to be engaged at higher levels (levels 4 or 5) from the framework / hopeful for community directed engagement and joint decision making
- including other departments in community engagement and being more explicit in the framework about involving other government departments and sectors in engagement initiatives

Department Response:

- The Community Engagement Workbook will encourage involvement of Department leaders / decision-makers in engagement initiatives.
- The Community Engagement Framework already is explicit about the need to engage at higher levels (3, 4, and 5) in order to achieve the objectives approved for integrated service delivery. Accordingly, the projects that will be considered to receive new resources during the phase-in period will require commitment to engage at level 3, 4, or 5, where collaborative relationships / partnerships are facilitated between community and Department stakeholders.
- The FSH Community Engagement Inventory will include relevant engagement opportunities and structures that are outside of the Department.
- The framework already indicates the need for collaborating with regional health authorities and for supporting inter-sectoral networking as a strategy within Winnipeg Integrated Services, but it will be more explicit about the need for involving any other departments and sectors in engagement initiatives.
- The Community Engagement Workbook includes a step on conducting a stakeholder analysis. This analysis prompts consideration of all relevant stakeholders required for a particular engagement project, including its own Department leaders and staff as well as stakeholders from other departments and sectors.

Theme 2: Power

Suggestion: Inclusion, Outreach, Needs Assessment

Examples:

- want to be engaged by government at the very start of planning for programs or projects. This demonstrates good faith on the part of government and sends the message to community that their input is valuable.
- a way for government to include the most vulnerable citizens is to prioritize outreach through partnerships with organizations that already have relationships /trust with them
- take the needs of community members into consideration / a thorough analysis of these stakeholders will lead to a greater understanding of their needs
- provide reimbursements for child care and transportation help to engage the most vulnerable and disenfranchised
- using varying lenses such as gender, disability, ethnicity, age, and others, to examine issues of importance and determine what work needs to be done to encourage engagement

Department Response:

- As already noted in the Departmental response under the theme of “Flexibility”, the draft framework does not specify that the Department will always and as a rule involve community at the start of any community engagement process. The formalized process for community engagement as part of integrated service delivery reflects Department-initiated engagement that is informed through strategic and business planning processes. It is important, however, that community input gained through various means is considered during these strategic and business planning processes. In other words, the Department should be aware of and consider community interests and priorities when developing their strategic and annual business plans.
- Also noted earlier, the framework will be enhanced to clarify that once the Department identifies its engagement priorities and then frames the goal (purpose) of each selected engagement project, there can be opportunity to involve the community in further planning needs of those projects and particularly in the higher levels of engagement.

Community Engagement Workbook

- As noted earlier, the workbook will include a step that requires consideration of involving various stakeholders in commenting on or developing the community engagement plan. This ensures consideration is given to involving community earlier in the Department-initiated engagement processes. Particular emphasis is indicated for early involvement of the CCS for engagement with the francophone community and also when consulting with aboriginal communities as per existing government policies.
- The workbook will include a thorough stakeholder analysis that requires consideration of stakeholder issues and interests, and assets and needs.
- A workbook appendix on engaging with diverse and hard to reach communities is being developed. It will encourage outreach to vulnerable citizens through partnerships with organizations that already have relationships / trust with them.
- The workbook will include a planning step for developing a project budget. An estimate of reasonable accommodation needs of participants, including child care and transportation will be included in this budget planning step.

Community Engagement Lens

- As already mentioned, in future the Community Engagement Lens may be integrated with gender and disability lenses for use during strategic planning processes.

Suggestion: Political Context Discussion

Examples:

- including in the framework a discussion of the political context
- framework seems to be designed only for Departmental staff, so framework has “no teeth” at the political level, emphasizing “a disconnect” between civil servant staff in the Department and political officials.

- FSH is a highly political environment, and the community engagement framework is not a substitute for advocacy; so advocates need to continue their work.

Department Response:

Enhancing the Community Engagement Framework

- The framework already indicates that community engagement is a feature of the integrated service delivery system that was introduced by government in 2001. It also acknowledges that the framework is intended as a tool for use by Department staff (civil servants). This remains accurate. The framework will be enhanced, however, to clarify that implementation of this integrated service delivery system (which includes the community engagement element) is the responsibility of the Department. As such, the Department's executive is responsible for initiating the community engagement pillar of integrated service delivery and the framework therefore is a Department initiative. Although the framework is not targeted for use in the political context, it can be used by elected officials and political staff if they so choose.
- The Department acknowledges that the framework largely reads one way, since it was designed to support Department-initiated engagement that is informed through its strategic and annual business planning processes. The framework will be more explicit by stating the formalized engagement process is designed to facilitate Department-initiated engagement.
- The Department recognizes the power differential that exists between the Department and community. While this power differential may not be completely eliminated in all situations simply by the inherent nature of a government department, it can be reduced or perhaps eliminated in projects with higher levels of engagement where the Department and community work collaboratively as equal partners, or where the Department chooses to fully empower communities through Community Directed activities. This discussion will be added in the framework.
- The framework also will be enhanced to acknowledge that the engagement model and process being implemented as part of integrated service delivery does not replace the role of advocacy work by community; that there is a continued role of community for advocacy particularly at the political level.

Staff Training

- A discussion of the political context as described above also will be included in staff orientation sessions on community engagement.

Suggestion: Improve the Presentation of Community Capacity

Examples:

- change portrayal of community capacity in framework to not just focus on a need for building community capacity, but to recognize, value, and build on existing capacity to engage successfully with the community
- community engagement is a tool for empowering citizens and community organizations to reach their full potential
- recognize and value that many community organizations are effective and efficiently running organizations

- recognize community organizations have varying levels of capacity due to an imbalance of resources (human and financial)
- enhance those community organizations that have limited capacity through the provision of additional resources (human and financial);
- for every comment and note about the need for government resources to support engagement, include an accompanying comment or note about the need for community resources

Department Response:

Enhancing the Community Engagement Framework

- Fostering community capacity is stated as a goal of the Department within its vision, mission, goals and principles. The framework will enhance its discussion of community capacity to include not just building such capacities but also valuing, using and strengthening existing community assets / capacities in its engagement with communities.
- The framework will acknowledge that community organizations have varying levels of capacity due to an imbalance of resources (human and financial), and that additional resources are required to support some organizations in preparing for and participating in effective engagement with the Department. Resourcing such needs within service delivery regions and areas, however, will need to be considered on a project-by-project basis and according to funding that will be available for each community engagement project.
- The framework already indicates that a benefit of community engagement is that it empowers and fosters a fuller sense of citizenship within vulnerable populations. It will be enhanced to also indicate that community engagement is a tool for empowering citizens and community organizations to reach their full potential.

Community Engagement Workbook

- The stakeholder analysis planning step in the workbook will include identification of stakeholder capacity needs and strengths/assets as it relates to their engagement in the project being planned. Planning steps that follow will include consideration of strategies to both build and use stakeholder (community) capacities within the project.
- The workbook will include in its budget planning step an estimate for resourcing community capacity needs that are specific to each engagement project.

Theme 3: Communication

Suggestion: Keeping Language Simple

Examples:

- avoid jargon, acronyms, academic language and instead use clearer definitions and plain language in all types of communication with citizens / ‘keep it simple’ when communicating with the public
- ensuring all documents are translated as required (specifically, Braille and French)

- respect the unique language needs of citizens / be aware of the need for interpreters

Department Response:

Enhancing the Community Engagement Framework

- The framework already indicates a need for objective, clear information in its guiding principle, Information for Participation, but will enhance it to indicate that materials will be provided in appropriate formats as required.

Community Engagement Workbook and Staff Training

- As mentioned earlier in the section on Better Civil Servant Training, the workbook and staff training will include the need for effective communications with community, including for example the need for plain and clear language and the obligation of the Department to actively offer French translation and interpreting services in engagement initiatives.
- Also mentioned earlier, the workbook will include an appendix that provide tips on engaging with diverse and hard to reach communities.
- The workbook also will include consideration of communication needs including translation and interpreting services.

Suggestion: Information Sharing

Examples:

- ensure that the staff guide on community engagement be made available to the public, citing it is “so helpful to know the guidelines and processes that Family Services and Housing employees need to follow. It helps in the working together piece.” This improves transparency, builds trust, and fosters successful communication and engagement
- numerous community meetings, sharing and understanding of roles and responsibilities, and taking advantage of networks and expertise that already exists within the community all lead to successful communication.
- using internet technology to encourage participation by those who are unable to attend meetings (suggestions of a web portal and an E-Engagement proposal)

Department Response:

- The Department will make available on its website the Community Engagement Framework, Workbook and other community engagement tools and activities. In this way, the Department can use its information technology capacity to allow for information about engagement and other activities to flow to the community in order to help them feel more aware of what FSH is doing at any given time.
- Overall, the Department will share information with community as permitted, recognizing there remain occasions where some information is not permitted for sharing outside of the Department.
- Web-based e-engagement along with tele-health and satellite facilitated forums will be explored once the Department is ready, but it is not included in the immediate workplan. The framework and workbook will be enhanced to include these methods.

Other Suggestions to Improve Communication

Examples:

- a glossary of terms at the end of framework
- plain language documents summarizing the framework for community feedback
- substituting the word 'level' with 'type' of engagement because it implies a hierarchy, and this may be misused by government
- continue to use the term 'level' of engagement, since it indicates government recognizes hierarchy exists and assigns value to engagement, demonstrating to all involved the level they have been operating at, and sets the stage to strive for higher levels of engagement

Department Response:

- The framework will include a glossary of terms
- The revised framework likely will not be converted into plain language as it is intended as a tool for use by the Department. An abbreviated version of the revised framework, however, is available and will be posted on the website.
- Documents / tools will be translated into French as required by government policy.
- Both terms 'level' and 'type' of engagement will remain in the framework as presented in the draft document. While there is acknowledgement of community concern related to use of the term 'level', there also was strong support by focus group participants for retaining the term 'level'.

Concluding Remarks

This report presented the Departmental response to community focus group findings that are described in the companion document 'Community Engagement Framework - Focus Group Thematic Analysis'. The Department is satisfied that valuable feedback and input has been gained through the community consultations and that this information is being used to both validate and enhance the Community Engagement Framework. The information gained also is being used to inform the development of other FSH community engagement tools and processes.

The finalized Community Engagement Framework along with related tools and processes will be targeted for use by Department staff undertaking community engagement as part of the integrated service delivery system. Service delivery regions and community areas, with support from FSH policy / programs level, will phase in projects that apply the formalized community engagement process. This framework and its related tools and processes are not being targeted for use by the Department outside of this context.

This report was prepared by Audrey McIlraith, FSH Community Development Specialist, with input from FSH management. It was approved by the Executive Management Committee of the Department. Sincere appreciation is extended by the Department to all community focus group participants for sharing their time, interest, and expertise throughout the consultation process. We look forward to implementing the formalized community engagement approach within the integrated service delivery environment and will share with others the tools developed. We also will continue to seek the views of our community stakeholders as we strive to continuously improve these tools and processes.

**Community Consultations
on
Draft Community Engagement Framework**

Purpose: To engage a sample of key community stakeholders of Manitoba Family Services and Housing (FSH) in the process of finalizing a Draft Community Engagement Framework prior to presenting it for approval to Executive Management Committee of FSH. Community stakeholder responses to the draft framework also may be used to inform the future development of other FSH community engagement tools and processes.

