



June 21, 2001

Reference No. 49407

Dear Stakeholder:

As you may be aware, the Women's Services Division of the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (formerly the Ministry of Women's Equality), has been reviewing the Bridging Program to ensure that it meets the needs of women and to ensure that limited financial resources are being used appropriately and efficiently. The program review has been guided by a steering committee with representation from the Women's Services Division, Ministry of Human Resources (formerly the Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security), current program service providers, and past participants.

For stage one of the review, the committee directed an independent contractor to prepare a discussion paper with recommendations. This work included reviewing program materials and previous evaluations, and conducting a survey of a small sample of service providers and program participants. The result is "*A Discussion Paper for the Bridging Program*" that addresses:

- recommended "core components" (curriculum);
- best practices for an employability program for women who have survived abuse; and,
- characteristics of clients, service providers and communities that impact the program's outcomes and materials.

The *Discussion Paper* is available on the Internet at <http://www.weq.gov.bc.ca/bridging-employability/report.stm>

The Women's Services Division has considered these recommendations and has prepared a response document (attached). For stage two of our review, we are seeking stakeholder feedback on our division's responses to the recommendations. We want to hear from individuals, agencies, current and past service providers, agencies interested in delivering the Bridging Program, program participants, and referral agencies. We welcome broad input. Please feel free to share this information with past bridging participants or other interested individuals.

Please return your feedback to the division by **July 6, 2001**. Although the division will not be acknowledging receipt of individual submissions, your response is important and will be used to ensure the Bridging Program meets the needs of women and limited financial resources are utilized appropriately and efficiently. The next steps are the development of an action plan by August 31, 2001, to implement recommendations.

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THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA IS AN "EMPLOYMENT EQUITY EMPLOYER"

Ministry of Community,  
Aboriginal and  
Women's Services

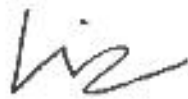
Women's Services Division  
Assistant Deputy Minister Office

PO Box 9899 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9T9

If you have questions or require a copy of the *Discussion Paper* or the division response document, please contact the Regional Program Coordinator for your area. Contact information is enclosed for your convenience.

Thank you for participating in this consultation process.

Sincerely,



Liz Gilliland  
Assistant Deputy Minister

Enclosures

pc: Regional Program Coordinators

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MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY, ABORIGINAL AND WOMEN'S SERVICES  
WOMEN'S SERVICES DIVISION  
CONSULTATION ON  
"A DISCUSSION PAPER FOR THE BRIDGING EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAM"

INTRODUCTION

Effective June 5, 2001, the Women's Services Division of the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services was established and assumed responsibilities of the former Ministry of Women's Equality, including the Bridging Program. The Ministry of Women's Equality held this program responsibility since 1999. This paper reflects the new ministry structure with the exception of references to the 'Ministry' contained in the recommendations. The language in the recommendations remains intact from the *Discussion Document* that was produced prior to June 5, 2001.

The Bridging Program was established in 1988 to assist women who have experienced abuse and face barriers to employment as a result. The program is not intended to be a general employment program for women, nor to duplicate existing programs provided through other sources. The Women's Services Division funds other programs to meet the needs of women who are victims or survivors of abuse or violence, including transition houses and counselling.

The Women's Services Division is reviewing the program to ensure that it meets the needs of women and to ensure that limited financial resources are being used appropriately and efficiently. A program review was guided by a steering committee including members from the Women's Services Division and the Ministry of Human Resources, current Bridging Program service providers and past participants. The process included a review of background materials and consultation with eighteen service providers and fourteen program participants. The result was a Discussion Paper with recommendations.

At this time, the Women's Services Division wishes to obtain feedback on recommended core components and best practices for the Bridging Program as well as how to best consider the characteristics of clients, service providers, and communities, and how they affect the Bridging Program.

PROCESS and TIME FRAME

A series of recommendations have been provided in the Discussion Document. The Women's Services Division has prepared responses to the recommendations and is seeking feedback on them. Following each of the responses to the recommendations is a feedback section for the reviewer to complete and return to the division by **July 6, 2001**.

Although the division will not be acknowledging receipt of individual submissions, your response is important and will be used to help us develop an action plan by August 31, 2001.

**WOMEN'S SERVICES DIVISION RESPONSES**

**PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

<p><b>Discussion Paper Recommendations 1 - 3</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The ministry clearly defines the objectives of the Bridging Program, within the context of long-term goals, and measurable performance indicators.</li> <li>2. These objectives be developed in consultation with service providers, program participants and ministry field staff.</li> <li>3. The objectives be reflected in program brochures, staff training, contract negotiations with new and existing service providers, and funding requests within the ministry's budget-building process.</li> </ol>
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**Division Response**

*and understanding of women's oppression*

The Bridging Program is for women who have experienced abuse and face barriers to employment as a result. The government's objectives for the Bridging Program have been developed through consultation with service providers, participants and Women's Services Division field staff. The objectives of the Bridging Program are to promote women's self-confidence, to succeed at achieving an optimal standard of living by providing personal development skills, job readiness skills and ensuring advocacy, referral and coordination of services provided by other agencies that serve women. These objectives are supported by providing women with the opportunity to explore the effects of abuse; ways to break the patterns of abuse and to improve their lives; to support women to gain the knowledge and skills to actively move toward being independent and self-directed; and providing a safe, supportive environment for women to gain or increase their self-esteem and confidence necessary to participate effectively in education, training and/or employment.

Program changes will be reflected in related materials and staff training.

**Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

**Comments:**

*What are the performance indicators and how will they be measured? What does this mean for women? For service providers? The objectives should include an acknowledgment of feminist analysis or at least "women-centred"*

**CORE PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

<p><b>Discussion Paper Recommendation 4</b></p>	<p>The ministry's service contracts for the Bridging Program identify the following core components for the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personal development (understanding the links between mind and body, the dynamics of abuse, power and control, thought-stopping and reframing, connecting thoughts, feelings and behaviours, goal setting, understanding group dynamics, culture, spirituality, defining healthy relationships); <i>child hood sexual abuse/other abuse</i></li> <li>personal management skills (self-esteem, communication, anger management, assertiveness, conflict resolution, substance abuse, problem solving, stress management, building trust); <i>negotiating with angry people, wen-li-do, parenting</i></li> <li>learning how to build skills for future education and employment (inventory of skills, understanding ways of thinking and learning, "brain stretching"; certificate programs such as First Aid, WHMIS, Super Host, Serving It Right, Class 5 driver, Foodsafe, flagging, basic computer programs); <i>will there be funding for certif. program</i></li> <li>career planning (education assessment, support in work search, networking, labour market information, resume writing, interview skills, math, English, keyboarding and general introduction to computers); <i>economic gender discrimination, sexual harassment, labour rights, women + poverty</i></li> <li>referrals to related employment services; and</li> <li>a work experience component.</li> </ul>
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**Division Response**

The Women's Services Division supports the recommendation on core components.

Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

**Comments:**

*Will the "success" of the program be measured by women completing all core components? Sometimes it's more important that women get mental health support or to focus on custody issues etc., rather than work. Also, it's more difficult to place women in work placements during/after a program in areas of high unemployment (also a backlash against women-leaving employment gaps in these areas). The core components focus on "personal" - there needs to be more social analysis that gives women an understanding of why they were abused + unemployed - much bigger than personal.*

*Are the activities suggestions or required?  
 I'm assuming examples only.*

<b>Discussion Paper Recommendation</b> <b>5</b>	<p>The ministry add the following as core program components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• counselling; and</li> <li>• follow-up services.</li> </ul> <p>In implementing this recommendation, consideration be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•how these components may be delivered (e.g. on-site or off-site);</li> <li>•possible sources of funding for these components; and</li> <li>•the impact of adding these core components to existing contracts.</li> </ul>
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**Division Response**

The Women's Services Division supports the inclusion of counselling and post-program support as core components of the Bridging Program. The manner in which counselling is provided, i.e., on-site or off-site, will be determined locally based on need and availability of community resources. Currently, all Bridging Program contracts contain a post-program support component. Some contracts do not include the timeframe associated with the support, i.e., six months, or the component is not funded. The Women's Services Division considers it necessary for post-program support to be delivered on-site by the service provider to provide program participants with continuity in a safe and familiar environment.

As the addition of these components must be accommodated within the existing budget for Bridging Programs, it is anticipated that the adoption of this recommendation will result in a reduction in the number of program offerings across the province.

**Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

**Comments:**

*Absolutely critical. Needs to be properly funded.*

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<b>Discussion Paper Recommendations</b> 6 - 8	6. The language in the ministry's contracts with program service providers support the optimal balance among all of the components.  7. The contracts reflect the most effective use of available community resources to meet client needs; and avoid duplication of local services.  8. As financial resources become available, the ministry consider negotiating extra funds in each contract to allow for additional program components, such as those required to enhance accessibility to the program.
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**Division Response**

The Women's Services Division will develop new contracting materials reflecting the recommended core components and expected outcomes. The division and service providers will determine the balance of components and negotiate these elements based on participants' needs and available community resources. The Women's Services Division supports in principle the addition of program components dependant on increased program resources.

Future tendering processes will request proponents to demonstrate how their proposed program meets participants' needs, maximizes available community resources and how the objectives of each of the program components will be met, regardless of whether a component is delivered on-site or available through an alternative community resource. Contract documents will reflect this information.

The Women's Services Division is assessing the opportunity to enhance accessibility. Steps being considered are expansion of eligibility criteria beyond Income Assistance and implementing pilot projects for northern and rural communities to address additional barriers experienced in these areas.

**Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

**Comments:**

*Women who have no income (not on EI or IA) can't participate unless service providers are willing to take them on at extra cost.*

*In assuming item 6 addresses some of my concerns with item 4. There needs to be less emphasis on employment and more on helping women feel strong and positive about themselves in the world. Focusing on employment can set them up for failure in a town with no employment opportunities.*

## BEST PRACTICES

<p>Discussion Paper Recommendations 9 and 10</p>	<p>9. The ministry consider the following list as a summary of best practices to be used to assist program development, act as guiding principles for other aspects of the program, and to clarify eligibility criteria for service providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand and apply a client-centred approach to facilitating the program</li> <li>• Empower participants by providing encouragement and choices</li> <li>• While being proficient at providing emotional support, understand and apply professional boundaries with participants</li> <li>• Be "self aware" of one's assumptions, biases and vulnerabilities and take measures to address any deficient practices that may result</li> <li>• Thoroughly understand the dynamics of abuse, poverty and addictions, and their effects on the lives of women (and their children)</li> <li>• Know and practice positive group dynamics</li> <li>• Know and refer to ancillary services in the community, taking into accounts the unique needs of participants</li> <li>• Know and practice critical incident de-briefing policy and skills</li> <li>• Understand and model healthy relationships and communications styles</li> <li>• Promote pride in cultural identity /sexual orientation/class etc.</li> </ul> <p>10. The ministry consult with service providers and program participants to determine best practice(s) with respect to the provision of follow-up services.</p>
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*\* and "women-centred"/feminist  
↑ Key point*

*believing them, and*

*and advocacy*

*roots and*

### Division Response

The Women's Services Division concurs with these recommendations. The Division will consider the best practices listed in Recommendation 9 when implementing Program changes. The following are considered best practices in the provision of post-program support (follow-up) services:

- Available and accessible;
- Provides continuity;
- Supports integration/referral with other community services;
- Provides familiar personal support with planning and implementing goals;
- Provides a place where learned skills can be maintained and enhanced;
- A place for participants to de-brief while managing new training, education and/or work experiences; and
- A safe, secure environment.



Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

Comments:

*Essential*

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**CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS**

<b>Discussion Paper Recommendations 11 and 12</b>	The ministry, in consultation with service providers and participants: 11. identify how the characteristics of participants affect the content, delivery approach and outcomes of local bridging programs. 12. develop policy with respect to screening criteria and referral practices.
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**Division Response**

The Bridging Program curriculum and delivery approach have been identified and developed in consideration of participants and are being addressed by the Women's Services Division (refer to Recommendations 4-9; 15-16).

In relation to the program objectives, the division presents the following program outcomes:

- Participants have an increased understanding of the link between abuse and the additional barriers they face in developing and practicing employability skills
- Participants view themselves as capable learners
- Participants have demonstrable behavioural changes
- Participants continue with further training and/or education, or find employment *if appropriate/available*
- Participants have established personal, educational and/or employment-related goals
- Participants have an increased knowledge about the resources available to them
- Participants have increased self-esteem/confidence - *measurement?*

The following are considered indicators of program outcomes:

- Women attend and complete the program;
- Goal plans are developed outlining a woman's progress towards independence;
- Participants enter into healthy relationships; *measurement?*
- Women access the resources they need to assist them to reach their goals such as volunteer work, job shadowing and entering further education and/or training; and,
- Women practice new patterns of behaviour, establish healthy boundaries and effectively problem-solve *measurement?*

In future tendering processes, proponents will be requested to submit information regarding their screening and referral criteria, procedures and policies.

Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

**Comments:**

*in small towns*  
 Many women who go through programs end up having to choose between moving away from town, taking out huge student loans to get the education they want or trying to scrounge for the few minimum wage jobs which keeps them poor & depressed. Many women do find work but the expectation that they do it can lead to frustration and 'undo' all the confidence-building, especially for women of colour, lesbians, single parents etc. who have additional barriers.

Discussion Paper Recommendations 13 and 14	13. The ministry and service providers coordinate services with other agencies to assist interested women who are screened out of the program. 14. The ministry, in consultation with participants and service providers, develop a complaint mechanism related to admissions to the program.
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**Division Response**

The Women's Services Division supports these recommendations and, as noted above, will request proponents in future tendering processes to submit policies/procedures regarding referrals.

The Women's Services Division supports the use of a complaints process, however it is the responsibility of the service provider to establish internal complaint mechanisms. In the future, service providers will be required to submit documentation of their complaint policy and procedures.

Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

**Comments:**

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**CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVICE PROVIDERS**

<p>Discussion Paper Recommendation 15</p> <p><i>could be more strongly worded.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition to the provincial government’s standard contracting guidelines to ensure program accountability, the ministry refer to the following agency attributes – unique to the Bridging Program - within service contracts, and when tendering the program:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ability to adjust program curriculum to best suit the needs of the participants taking part in each offering;</li> <li>• consistency of staff approach to program participants;</li> <li>• provision of advocacy to support the participants’ needs for services; e.g. for people with disabilities, housing, medical and dental attention, school counselling for the children, income assistance programs, English as a second language, dealing with landlords and similar legal situations;</li> <li>• close connection with other service providers and the public at large, to ensure a solid understanding of the community’s needs, of women’s needs;</li> <li>* • sensitivity about women’s issues, including the issues of abuse;</li> <li>• ability to provide a safe environment;</li> <li>• if possible, on-site child care;</li> <li>• a policy of having board and management composed of at least 50% women;</li> <li>• a policy of open board meetings, where staff and clients can attend; and</li> <li>• payment of equitable wages and benefits.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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**Division Response**

The Women’s Services Division supports this recommendation, however, regarding “a policy of having board and management composed of at least 50% women”, the division is unable to control an organization’s structure. However, the division will request, as part of the tendering process, that organizations demonstrate how their organizational policies and practices support equality for women.

In the provision of services to women, the division’s approach and philosophy takes into consideration such factors as women’s individual situations and needs; a woman’s right to make her own decisions/choices; the impacts of violence/abuse; accessibility of services and personal and physical safety. *Good*

The Women’s Services Division’s perspective on contracting for services to women includes continuity of service, consultation, community-based and equitable wages and benefits. These perspectives and approaches, along with the above characteristics, will be considered when developing contract, tendering and program materials.

Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

**Comments:**

*Bridging programs are often best delivered by community groups and organizations rather than by large institutions which tend not to be feminist. While they can have feminist staff, staff change and as a result, program philosophy changes. Community groups only have more commitment to a feminist philosophy. Until funding is stabilized, it will be difficult for any agency to maintain good professional staff.*

<p>Discussion Paper Recommendation 16</p>	<p>The ministry, in consultation with service providers and other stakeholders as appropriate, develop core competencies for program facilitators, using the following list as a possible guideline for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• counselling background (to be defined) with a clear understanding of abuse issues;</li> <li>• personal processing of life experiences;</li> <li>• sound knowledge of the dynamics of abuse in relationships and the impact of abuse on women's lives;</li> <li>• understanding of women's realities (poverty, equity, survival, etc.); <i>and analysis</i></li> <li>• facilitation experience using a learner-centred approach;</li> <li>• clearly developed and demonstrated professional boundaries in terms of facilitator/participant relationship and personal self-care;</li> <li>• administrative skills;</li> <li>• understanding of employment issues from the employer's world as well as the participant's;</li> <li>• information, referral and advocacy skills;</li> <li>• knowledge of community resources or ability to quickly acquire knowledge;</li> <li>• initiative and ability to work within a team.</li> </ul>
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**Division Response**

The Women's Services Division supports the recommendation of service providers having skilled and knowledgeable program facilitators to deliver the Bridging Program. The development of core competencies is a longer-term process requiring consultation with stakeholders.

Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

Comments:

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<b>Discussion Paper Recommendation 17</b>	The ministry explore the feasibility and utility of developing program and organizational standards for the Bridging Program that would take into account the program characteristics noted above.
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**Division Response**

Employability, skills and training services, such as the Bridging Program, are covered by government's Continuing Agreement Policy. Services delivered under a Continuing Agreement must comply with government-approved Organizational Standards, as well as any program standards developed by the responsible ministry. The Women's Services Division has identified the need to develop program standards for all of its funded services, including the Bridging program. Standards development is a longer term process that will include consultation with stakeholders.

Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

Comments:

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**CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITIES**

<p><b>Discussion Paper Recommendation 18</b></p>	<p>The ministry establish a working group made up of contract managers, service providers and participants to determine and set priorities regarding “ancillary community services” criteria for the funding of new programs and the assessment of current ones. This working group should make recommendations with respect to optional ways of providing these services if not all of them exist in the same location as the Bridging Program.</p>
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**Division Response**

The Women’s Services Division concurs with this recommendation.

**Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

**Comments:**

*Key for smaller communities*

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**BEST PRACTICES FOR PROGRAM FUNDERS**

<p><b>Discussion Paper Recommendations 19 and 20</b></p>	<p>19. The ministry establish the Bridging Program as one of its core programs.</p> <p>20. The ministry establish an annualized budget to provide core funding to approved service providers</p>
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**Division Response**

The Women’s Services Division supports, in principle, establishing the Bridging Program as a core program and establishing core funding. Theoretically, longer term, ongoing programs are more effective, cost-efficient and achieve greater results than short-term, rotating programs. However, not all communities have the capacity to sustain long-term, ongoing programs, but may be able to provide a short-term program to support access to women from within their own communities when demand arises.

We believe that the Bridging Program should have a hybrid funding model - one that features the flexibility to meet some communities' short-term needs as well as providing the stability of core funding in communities that have the capacity to sustain ongoing services. The division's next steps will be the development of a funding allocation model that addresses these varying needs.

**Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

**Comments:**

*There are women who are ready for and wanting Bridges who get put on a waiting list somewhere in the community. When a program finally gets rolling the women have moved or are back with their partners or drinking, etc. It's critical for women, facilitators, community agencies, employers, & everyone to have knowledge of a stable program with a consistent delivery agency (preferably community-based, not institutionalized).*

<b>Discussion Paper Recommendation 21</b>	The ministry consult with northern contract managers and service providers to determine how best to meet the unique needs of women in their rural and remote communities.
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**Division Response**

The Women's Services Division concurs with this recommendation. Rural and northern communities experience additional barriers to service provision and applying urban delivery models in these communities may not meet women's needs. The following strategies are being considered:

- Initiate a tendering process requesting innovative service delivery models which address the unique needs and barriers of small, rural, northern, and/or isolated communities; the successful proponent(s) would receive a contract for a pilot project.
- Create a service delivery model establishing one consistent service provider with the capacity to deliver the program in several communities over a specified period of time; the successful proponent(s) would receive a contract for a pilot project.
- Develop a long-term (three-year) plan which outlines what community the program will be delivered in and when. This may address issues of capacity for some communities which cannot sustain a long-term, ongoing program, as well as the concern that communities are unable to plan adequately to deliver a program because they don't know when/if the program will be available within their communities.

Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

Comments:

*I hope southern communities will be included as well. Nelson is totally unlike any other town in BC, especially northern B.C.*

Discussion Paper Recommendation 22	The ministry provide regular networking and information sharing opportunities for service providers.
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**Division Response**

Based on availability of resources and in consultation with service providers, the Women's Services Division will consider the range of approaches in place for other division-funded programs that support regular networking and information sharing such as facilitating conference calls and providing support for meetings.

Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

Comments:

*Great idea.*

Discussion Paper Recommendation 23	The ministry, in partnership with other funding partners (e.g. Human Resources Development Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security) eliminate the current income assistance admission criterion to allow greater accessibility to the program by women in need.
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**Division Response**

The Women's Services Division supports this recommendation and has referred to the expansion of eligibility criteria in response to Recommendation 8. Expanded eligibility could include Band Assistance, low-income, spousal support, disability benefits and pension income. The development of further criteria is required.

**Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

**Comments:**

*yes! And MSDES (or MHR or whatever it is now) should cover 100% of child care costs for women participating in the program. Its outrageous that they don't. And not just for Budgets for all "post-employment" programs they force single parents to endure.*

<b>Discussion Paper Recommendation 24</b>	The ministry employ longer timeframes and a flexible range of post-program outcomes to determine program effectiveness.
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**Division Response**

This recommendation may be considered further in conjunction with Recommendation 19 regarding establishing the Bridging Program as a core program. If long-term, ongoing programs are established, then long-term post-program support would naturally be included. The flexibility of post-program outcomes has been addressed in the response to Recommendation 10.

**Instructions: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the Division Response by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

**Comments:**

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 \_\_\_\_\_  
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## NEXT STEPS

### Discussion Paper Recommendations 25 - 29

25. The ministry distribute the report to as many past, present and potential service providers and participants as possible, along with other provincial and federal government funders and institutions such as community colleges.
26. The consultation process be facilitated by an independent contractor, assisted by the ministry's regional staff with respect to names of contacts and methods of collecting feedback.
27. A "discussion guide"(i.e. list of standardized questions) accompany the document, in order to assist the analysis and summary of findings.
28. The contractor document the findings from the consultation and incorporate commonly identified themes into a draft report for review by an advisory committee representing participants and service providers. This committee would also consider the implications of implementing the report's recommendations.  
  
The feedback obtained through the consultation and the deliberations of the advisory committee be incorporated into a final report, including recommendations, to the ministry, and be made publicly available.
29. All of the above occur between May and July, 2001.

### Division Response

This Response Document will be forwarded to numerous stakeholders. In addition, the "*Discussion Paper for the Bridging Program*" will be accessible through the Women's Services Division's website for stakeholders to review and use for reference to the Response Document. The website address is:

<http://www.weq.gov.bc.ca/bridging-employability/report.stm>

The Women's Services Division will utilize internal resources to facilitate the feedback process.

The Women's Services Division will implement changes based on input to this Response Document. Where possible, implications of changes have been identified within the responses. It is not considered necessary at this time to establish an advisory committee.

