

The Policy Internships and Fellowships (PIAF) Pilot Program has already had tremendous impact on bridging government and the voluntary sector

PIAF was initiated by the Joint Capacity Table of the Voluntary Sector Initiative:

- **To develop policy knowledge, experience and skills in both the voluntary sector and federal government and**
- **To enable the voluntary sector to become a more viable partner in the development of public policy.**

Launched in May 2002, PIAF is managed by the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development of Carleton University and the University of Ottawa, and is being carried out in partnership with the University of Victoria's Centre for Public Sector Studies.

After completing a two-week intensive summer institute at Dunsmuir Lodge at the University of Victoria, three public servants and six practitioners from the voluntary sector have been in their placements since the fall of 2002.

"I am learning to appreciate that things may seem like they are on hold but they are actually moving forward behind the scenes" (Reflections of an intern)

Participating federal departments include **Oceans and Fisheries, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Environment Canada, Health Canada, Solicitor General Canada, Human Resource Development Canada, and Correctional Service Canada.**

A diverse group of voluntary organizations are involved:

- **The Canadian and African Business Women's Alliance**
- **First Call: BC Child & Youth Advocacy Coalition**
- **Human Development Council of Saint John**
- **Volunteer Hamilton**
- **Wildlife Habitat Canada**
- **The John Howard Society of Ontario**
- **The John Howard Society of Moncton**
- **Canadian Criminal Justice Association**
- **Canadian Public Health Association**

"Sometimes I feel like I am straddling between two worlds with great respect for those in both sectors who are dedicated to making the lives of Canadians better."
(Reflections of a Fellow)

Each intern and fellow has been matched with a mentor who has demonstrated leadership and experience in a related field to help them through the transition to a new culture and to provide expertise and support as they expertise their policy areas.

Students have been recruited from a variety of disciplines to serve as research assistants. We hope that by involving university students, we are helping to recruit the next generation of leaders in the voluntary sector and in government.

"It was exciting to have the opportunity to prepare a brief that was actually presented to a standing committee for the House of Commons. I am so taken by the organization that I have recruited a friend for their Policy Review Committee."
(Reflections of a Research Assistant)

The interns and fellows get together monthly by teleconference to share their experiences and support one another through their transitions and work. They came together for an in-person get together following their participation in the larger international conference, ARNOVA (Association of Research in Non-Profit Organizations and Voluntary Action) which met for only the second time in Canada in Montreal in November 2002.

Each of the interns and fellows is preparing a paper on his or her experience which they will be presenting at the *PIAF Showcase* as part of the Canadian Social Welfare Policy Conference in Ottawa June 15-17th, 2003. Translated and published in a consolidated volume, you will hear about innovative action research in:

- **Understanding The Policy Cycle and various Intervention Options**
- **Community Engagement Strategies**
- **Best Practices in Public Sector - Voluntary Sector Collaboration**
- **Moving Beyond Consultation**

Current Interns & Fellows:

Allan Bentley, Manager of the TOTAL Non-Profit Resources web-site at **Volunteer Hamilton**, is doing a fellowship with **Human Resources Development Canada – Greater Hamilton Regional Office**, has been focusing on the issue of homelessness and how to bring various levels of government together.

Dorothée Gizenga: Policy Development Consultant for the **Canadian and African Business Women's Alliance**, is interning with the **Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade** on Canada's policies for the New Partnerships for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Karen Hill, Senior Policy Analyst, Program Policy, **Health Canada**, is carrying out a fellowship with the **Canadian Public Health Association** to create a policy analysis framework for the organization and is researching asset-based mapping as a community engagement tool.

Barbara Hill, Director of Policy Development of the **John Howard Society of Ontario**, is doing her internship with **Solicitor General Canada** to work on the reforms to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. She is researching models on voluntary sector-public sector collaboration.

Helen Friel, Director of Citizen Engagement, **Correctional Service Canada**, is doing her internship with The **Canadian Criminal Justice Association** to broaden its membership base and strengthen stakeholder participation in public policy. She has been instrumental in revitalizing their Policy Review Committee.

Joanne Murray, Executive Director of John Howard Society of Moncton, is doing a fellowship with **Correctional Service Canada**. She is conducting research on the effectiveness of the mechanisms for "strengthening and maintaining family and social connections" for inmates.

Janice Nelson, External and Governmental Affairs Consultant, **Human Resources Development Canada**, BC Yukon Region, is placed with **First Call – BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition** to provide assistance to communities around the province of BC to mobilize for the improvement of the health and well-being of children and youth.

Amy Seabrooke, Manager of the Land & Water Stewardship Project at **Wildlife Habitat Canada**, is doing her internship with **Environment Canada and Oceans and Fisheries** to further the work of Canada's Stewardship Program

Cathy Wright, Executive Director of the **Human Development Council of St. John**, will be doing an internship with **Human Resources Development Canada**, New Brunswick Region, in the Strategic Services Branch, working on the skills development agenda and forging closer links between government and community.

The program was originally funded as a one-year pilot, and we are currently exploring ways to continue this program. We hope to have application information available on our web-sites in early spring at www.cvsrd.org and CPSS or by calling 613-520-7444.