


Neighbourhood Information Post Energy Assistance






Neighbourhood Information Post

- Launched the pilot phase of the Winter Warmth Program in Toronto in the winter of 2003.
 - Has assumed the duo role of both Central Administration site and an intake centre in Toronto for 6 years.
 - Has designed and developed an effective web-based software which conducts intake, processes applications and tracks clients' data.
 - In 2006, became an official partner with the City of Toronto's Social Services and began delivering Toronto's Emergency Energy Fund.
 - Provincial Role: Training & support; compilation of provincial reports.
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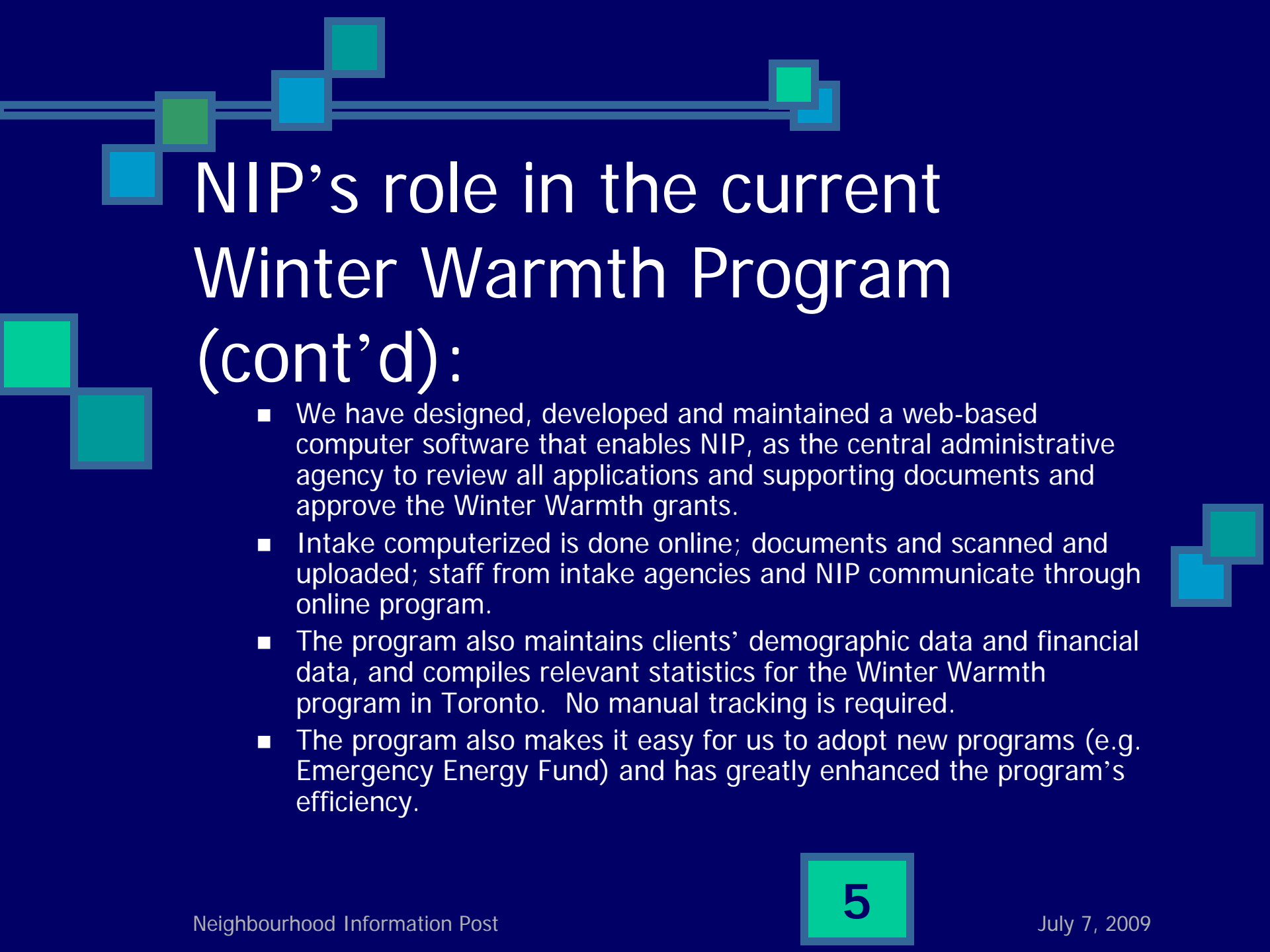
NIP's role in the current Winter Warmth Program:

- 1) Lead/central co-ordinating agency in Toronto for Winter Warmth
 - Winter Warmth in Toronto is delivered by a network of 8 local intake agencies.
 - Local intake agencies: provide intake and support for clients; connect with utilities to confirm applicants' arrears and place holds on their accounts.
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NIP's role in the current Winter Warmth Program (cont'd):

- NIP reviews all applications; ensures that all applications are completed accurately and issues payments to utility companies.
 - This service delivery model is successful since:
 - It provides clients with convenient access points to apply for Winter Warmth and receive a variety of other services.
 - Only one agency manages the funding and issues the payments to utility companies.
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NIP's role in the current Winter Warmth Program (cont'd):

- We have designed, developed and maintained a web-based computer software that enables NIP, as the central administrative agency to review all applications and supporting documents and approve the Winter Warmth grants.
- Intake computerized is done online; documents are scanned and uploaded; staff from intake agencies and NIP communicate through the online program.
- The program also maintains clients' demographic data and financial data, and compiles relevant statistics for the Winter Warmth program in Toronto. No manual tracking is required.
- The program also makes it easy for us to adopt new programs (e.g. Emergency Energy Fund) and has greatly enhanced the program's efficiency.




NIP's role in the current Winter Warmth Program (cont'd):

- 2) Development of procedural guidelines and forms
 - With years of experience in operating the first Rent Bank in Canada, NIP helped develop some of the key procedures and forms in the pilot phase of the program.
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NIP's role in the current Winter Warmth Program (cont'd):

- 3) Providing training and support for other Winter Warmth sites
 - Conducting training sessions at the start of each Winter Warmth season and ongoing telephone support to other Winter Warmth sites (assisting them in resolving issues/problems in relation to the day-to-day operation of the Winter Warmth program).
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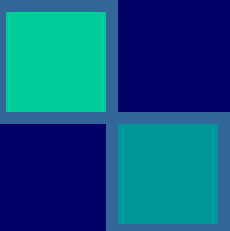



NIP's role in the current Winter Warmth Program (cont'd):

- 4) Compilation of statistical reports for utility companies
 - With our online web-based program, we compile local statistical reports for utility companies in Toronto.
 - We also assemble provincial semi-monthly and yearly reports for province-wide utility companies.
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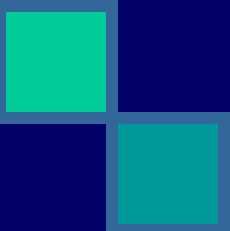



Issues/Lessons learned:

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- Web-based program has played a key role in the program's success in Toronto.
 - Important that Winter Warmth services remain with local Housing Help Centres (geographically convenient and access to other services).
 - Staff have been over-extended; sufficient compensation is needed to maintain good quality of services.
 - Urban centres require a network of service-delivery agencies.
 - Easier for utility companies and service-delivery agencies to have one lead agency in a municipality that manages the funding.
 - Flexibility is needed on eligibility criteria and the amount of assistance.
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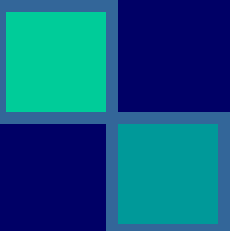


Suggestions:

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- Current Winter Warmth service-delivery agencies continue with their role in LEAP (LEAP does not reduce the current number of intake agencies).
 - Each service delivery agency receives sufficient funding to operate the program year-round.
 - Consider the use of a web-based computerized software to enhance efficiency.
 - Allow some flexibility in eligibility criteria (e.g. sub-committee to consider special cases).
 - Training be provided by staff who have direct experience in service-delivery.
 - Urban centres (e.g. Toronto)—to address the high number of applications, and the size of the municipality, services should be delivered by a network of agencies, with one agency as lead.
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Assistance NIP can offer:

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- Development and maintenance of a web-based program.
 - Development of a manual and forms.
 - Training and ongoing support for frontline staff.
 - Share experience on the operation on financial assistance programs.
 - Compilation of statistics.
 - Continue to act as a service-delivery agency (both as a central admin. Agency and intake agency).
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