Government of Northwest Territories
Gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest

Indigenous Recruitment AND Retention Framework

A whole-of-government approach

Cadre de recrutement ET DE rétention des Autochtones

Une approche pangouvernementale

Le présent document contient la traduction française du sommaire exécutif et du message de la ministre.

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Minister's Message

As Minister responsible for the Public Service, I am pleased to present the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework.

A representative Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) public service ensures that underrepresented groups, including Indigenous people of the Northwest Territories, are genuinely included, celebrated and given opportunities to succeed. It is a public service that is welcoming, culturally competent, and free of discrimination; one that serves in a way that respects and includes the Indigenous peoples and communities of this territory.

The Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework is designed to help the GNWT improve Indigenous representation among its public servants with the ultimate goal of a public service that is representative of the population it serves. As we move toward achieving this goal, we will become more engaged, more responsive, more aware of residents' needs, and more flexible in our responses to those needs.

Over the years, the GNWT has implemented several programs with the intent of increasing Indigenous representation within the GNWT. The Indigenous Career Gateway Program, the Regional Recruitment Program, the Internship Program, and the Summer Student Employment Program each take a different approach to bringing Indigenous northerners into the public service. Living Well Together: Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training helps to support an inclusive workplace culture and the Indigenous Management Development and Training Program help Indigenous employees access funds for professional development. Each program has its own benefits, but there is room for improvement to ensure these programs are used to their full capacity and are effective.

This Framework, and accompanying Action Plan, take a whole-of-government approach to tackling barriers to a representative workforce and will serve as a blueprint as we set our sights on new levels of leadership in Indigenous representation.

Mársı, Kinanāskomitin, Hąį', Quana, Quyanainni, Quajannamiik, Máhsı, Máhsı, Mahsì, Thank you, and Merci

Honourable Caroline Wawzonek
Minister Responsible for the Public Service

Message de **la ministre**

En tant que ministre responsable de la fonction publique, c'est avec plaisir que je vous présente le cadre de recrutement et de rétention des Autochtones.

Une fonction publique du gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (GTNO) représentative se doit de veiller à ce que les groupes sousreprésentés, y compris les Autochtones des Territoires du Nord-Ouest, sont réellement inclus et reconnus et qu'ils ont l'occasion de réussir. Il s'agit d'une fonction publique accueillante, adaptée sur le plan culturel et exempte de discrimination qui sert la population en respectant et en incluant les peuples et les communautés autochtones de ce territoire.

Le cadre de recrutement et de rétention des Autochtones est conçu pour aider le GTNO à améliorer la représentation des Autochtones parmi ses fonctionnaires, avec pour objectif ultime d'avoir une fonction publique représentative de la population qu'elle sert. En nous efforçant d'atteindre cet objectif, nous deviendrons plus motivés, réactifs, à l'écoute des besoins des résidents et souples dans nos réponses à ces besoins.

Au cours des années, le GTNO a mis en œuvre plusieurs programmes qui visent à augmenter la représentation des Autochtones en son sein. Le programme d'accès aux carrières pour les Autochtones, le programme de recrutement régional, le programme de stages et le programme d'emplois d'été des étudiants ont chacun adopté une approche différente pour embaucher davantage d'Autochtones du Nord dans la fonction publique. La formation de sensibilisation aux réalités culturelles autochtones Bien vivre ensemble permet de favoriser une culture d'inclusion en milieu de travail, et le programme de formation et de perfectionnement des gestionnaires autochtones aide les employés autochtones à accéder à des fonds pour le perfectionnement professionnel. Chaque programme présente des avantages, mais on peut faire mieux pour s'assurer que ces programmes sont utilisés à leur pleine capacité et qu'ils sont efficaces.

Ce cadre, comme le plan d'action qui l'accompagne, est fondé sur une approche pangouvernementale pour s'attaquer aux obstacles à la représentativité et servira de modèle à mesure que nous visons de nouveaux niveaux de leadership en matière de représentation autochtone.

Mársı, Kinanāskomitin, Hąį', Quana, Quyanainni, Quajannamiik, Máhsı, Máhsı, Mahsì, Thank you et Merci

Caroline Wawzonek
Ministre responsable de la fonction publique

Eighty One Images

Executive **Summary**

The Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework (Framework) will help support GNWT efforts of building a workforce that is representative of the population it serves. By developing business practices that include recruitment and retention strategies, the Framework will empower departments to recognize the importance of Indigenous perspectives within their policies, programs, and services. By providing the tools to develop detailed implementation plans, this Framework will support departments as they incorporate these invaluable Indigenous perspectives into their teams at all levels.

The first step of the Framework creation was through engagement with internal and external partners, including GNWT subject matter experts in human resources and Indigenous Governments throughout the territory, which identified barriers within the GNWT for recruitment and retention of Indigenous people. The Framework is intended to address these barriers, to support Indigenous people in obtaining employment, training and development opportunities with the GNWT, and to feel they are valued as integral team members.

The Framework encompasses and supports existing GNWT programs designed to recruit and retain Indigenous employees. In addition to enhancing current programs, the Framework has two main goals:

- to increase Indigenous representation, and
- to support Indigenous leadership opportunities.

Sommaire exécutif

Le cadre de recrutement et de rétention des Autochtones contribuera à appuyer les efforts du GTNO pour bâtir un effectif représentatif de la population qu'il sert. En développant des pratiques commerciales qui comprennent des stratégies de recrutement et de rétention, le cadre permettra aux ministères de reconnaître l'importance d'intégrer les visions autochtones à leurs politiques, programmes et services. En fournissant les outils nécessaires pour élaborer des plans de mise en œuvre détaillés, ce cadre appuiera les ministères tandis qu'ils intègrent ces visions autochtones inestimables à leurs équipes à tous les niveaux.

La première étape de la création du cadre a eu lieu grâce à des consultations avec des partenaires internes et externes, y compris des experts en ressources humaines du GTNO et des gouvernements autochtones de tout le territoire qui ont relevé les obstacles au sein du GTNO en matière de recrutement et de rétention des Autochtones. Le cadre vise à surmonter ces obstacles, à aider les peuples autochtones à trouver un emploi ainsi que des occasions de formation et de perfectionnement professionnel au sein du GTNO et à se sentir valorisés en tant que membres de l'équipe à part entière.

Il englobe et appuie les programmes existants du GTNO conçus pour recruter et maintenir en poste les employés autochtones. En plus de renforcer les programmes actuels, le cadre a deux objectifs principaux :

- Accroître la représentation des Autochtones
- Appuyer les occasions de leadership autochtone

Jason van Bruggen/NWTT

Setting the **Context**

What does Indigenous Aboriginal Persons mean?

According to the Affirmative Action Policy, Indigenous Aboriginal refers to persons who are descendants of the Dene, Inuit or Metis people, indigenous to the present boundaries of the Northwest Territories and includes any aboriginal persons resident at birth pursuant to Section 23 of the *Vital Statistics Act* and any Canadian aboriginal persons who have lived more than half of their life in the Northwest Territories.

Background

Recruitment of Indigenous persons

In 1989, the GNWT established the Affirmative Action Policy which provides priority hiring to candidates belonging to eligible designated groups underrepresented within the public service, including *Indigenous Aboriginal Persons*.

In 2009 the Indigenous Employee Advisory Committee was formed to provide Indigenous employees with an opportunity to advise on strategies and approaches to Indigenous recruitment and advancement within the GNWT.

In 2014, the Regional Recruitment Program was developed to target potential employees by creating on-the-job training opportunities in their region.

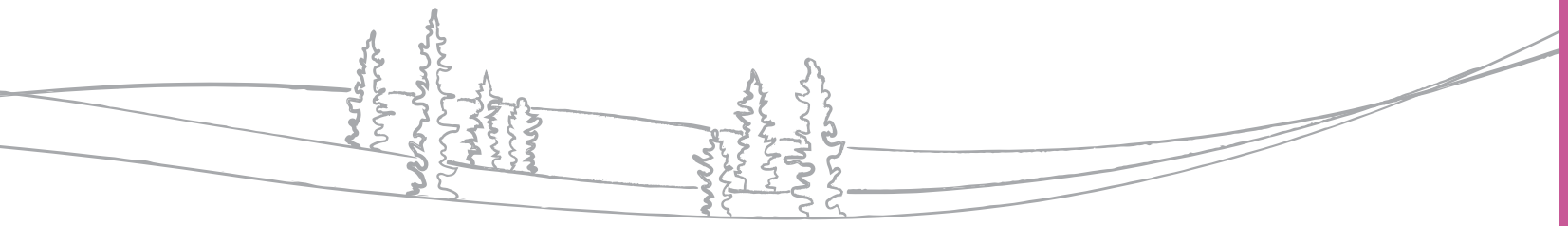
In October 2018 the Indigenous Career Gateway Program was created to target external Indigenous Aboriginal candidates for entry-level positions with the GNWT.

Retention of Indigenous employees

In October 2018, the Indigenous Management Development and Training Program was launched to retain and advance Indigenous employees within the GNWT. This program supports the professional development of Indigenous employees by providing partial funding for the employee to obtain skills, training and/or work experience necessary for career advancement.

In June 2021, the Building Capacity in Indigenous Governments (BCIG) program was launched. Designed to help Indigenous governments enhance their human resource potential while providing opportunities for their employees and the GNWT to gain experience and impart knowledge, BCIG supports secondment arrangements between the GNWT and Indigenous governments. This collaboration is intended to be more than a transfer of knowledge and skills between different organizations; It is another way to two organizations to share experiences and learn from each other's point of view.

The Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework and Indigenous Employment Implementation plans will ensure each department will review recruitment and retention practices to ensure barriers to employment for Indigenous peoples are identified and addressed. This will allow each department to set targets that are achievable based on the unique employment factors for their workforce.



Identifying **the Gaps**

"Residential schools are a tragic part of Canada's history. But they cannot simply be consigned to history. The legacy from the schools and the political and legal policies and mechanisms surrounding their history continue to this day. This is reflected in the significant educational, income, health, and social disparities between Aboriginal people and other Canadians. It is reflected in the intense racism some people harbour against Aboriginal people and in the systemic and other forms of discrimination Aboriginal people regularly experience in this country. It is reflected too in the critically endangered status of most Aboriginal languages."

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report

Analyzing external factors

An external analysis was completed in 2021, which indicated that the GNWT operates within a challenging external environment, with political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors impacting the GNWT's ability to recruit and retain a public service that is representative of the population it serves. The analysis results show that education and employment rates are linked to the health and well-being of the Indigenous population and their participation in the economy. Socio-economic conditions often have a direct impact on political priorities in the territory[1]. With technological advancement increasing uptake in digital literacy programs, this may lead to increased labor participation in communities outside the regional centers. The constantly evolving external environment will continue to present opportunities and challenges as the GNWT implements the Framework's strategic direction.

The external analysis will be updated regularly to maintain a pulse on the external environment.

1 For example, in its initial 2019 response to R*eclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, the GNWT outlined its engagement to address fundamental social and economic needs.

Labour Force Statistical Analysis

The Department of Finance conducted a Labour Force Statistical Analysis, which will be used to guide GNWT departments and agencies as they prepare their Indigenous Employment Plans. The Labour Force Statistical Analysis will help departments and agencies to identify gaps in their Indigenous representation and to better understand the existing NWT labour force, so that they identify areas where they can support Indigenous persons finding employment within their department or agency. The analysis compares the NWT labour force to the GNWT work force based on demographic information, occupation and education levels. The analysis also compares the available labour force to existing GNWT vacancies, which will be an important part of the discussion as we identify gaps between the NWT Indigenous population and the GNWT workforce.

Weiland/NWTT

Key Findings

NWT and GNWT Demographics

- The largest segment of the Indigenous labour force in the NWT is also the youngest, with Indigenous persons aged 18 to 29 accounting for 29% of the Indigenous labour force. Population growth is expected to be relatively stagnant over the next 10 years.
- In the North Slave region, where 53% of GNWT employees are located[2], Indigenous persons make up only 22% of the population[3]. Indigenous persons account for between 53% and 92% of the population[4] in each of the five other regions. 21% Indigenous women to 9% men[5].
- Within the GNWT, all middle and senior management positions are required to have a university level education or equivalency. Indigenous Aboriginal employees who meet this requirement are more likely to attain a management role than their non-Indigenous Aboriginal counterparts. 57% of senior management positions are held by women and 43% are held by men[6].
- Indigenous persons in the NWT are less likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to have completed post-secondary education. However, the NWT has seen a 2% increase since 2014 in the Indigenous population with a university degree. During the same period, the non-Indigenous population maintained a stable rate of university education.
- 24% of Indigenous labour force in the NWT are employed in trades and transportation. However, the GNWT accounts for only 5.8% of the total labour force in this sector, as these positions are atypical in the public sector. The next three sectors—sales and services, social sciences and education, and finance and administration—account for over half of the Indigenous labour force.
- The GNWT has an overrepresentation of Indigenous Aboriginal employees in both the finance and administration and the health sectors, when compared to the NWT Indigenous Labour Force. In finance and administration, the GNWT's Indigenous Aboriginal representation is 10% higher than the NWT Indigenous labour force employed in that sector, and in the health sector, it is 7% higher[7].
- The Dehcho and Tłı̨chǫ Regions both have over 25% unemployment rates among Indigenous persons[8].

2 Peoplesoft, 2019
3 2019 NWT Community Survey
4 2019 NWT Community Survey
5 Peoplesoft, 2019
6 Government of the Northwest Territories Public Service Annual Report (2019/2020) Who we are
7 2019 NWT Community Survey. Note: the GNWT has a dominant share of the labour force in the health sector, as GNWT employees account for over three-quarters (75.6%) of the labour force in this category. Therefore, the GNWT is likely to over-represent health professions across the spectrum.
8 2019 NWT Community Survey. Note: Unemployed residents are a potentially reliable source of labour as they are actively seeking employment.

GNWT Labour Share

- The GNWT employed 24.0% of the total NWT labour force, amongst regular and casual employees. The GNWT employed a smaller proportion of the Indigenous Aboriginal labour force at 17.2%[9].
- Those with a university degree in the NWT labour force are most likely to be employed with the GNWT, as 48.3% of the labour force were either a regular or casual GNWT employee in 2019. Amongst the Indigenous Aboriginal population holding a university degree, the GNWT employs over half of the labour force (56.4%) as either a regular or casual employee.

GNWT Share of Indigenous Labour Force[10]

Education Level	NWT	Beaufort Delta	Sahtu	Tłı̨chǫ	Dehcho	South Slave	Yellowknife
No Formal Education	3.1%	3.1%	3.1%	3.2%	3.1%	4.3%	0.9%
High School	26.1%	22.7%	16.5%	32.3%	35.2%	34.5%	18.2%
College/Trades	14.7%	11.7%	13.6%	15.8%	16.8%	15.8%	15.5%
University	56.4%	56.9%	42.4%	66.7%	90.6%	69.0%	49.0%
Total	**17.2%**	**13.9%**	**11.5%**	**17.2%**	**16.9%**	**20.7%**	**20.0%**

GNWT Vacancies

- In December 2020, 890 of the GNWT's 5,370 funded positions (16.6%) were vacant and without a casual fill-in. Over half of the GNWT's funded vacancies require a university level education or equivalency and over three-quarters (76.5%) of vacancies require some form of post-secondary education as a minimum requirement[11].
- The occupational categories of social sciences & education, finance & administration and health account for just under two-thirds (64.5%) of all funded vacancies without a casual fill-in. In the GNWT, Indigenous Aboriginal employees are most highly represented in the fields of finance and administration, and sales and services, where the educational requirements are less of a barrier.

9 Peoplesoft, 2019

10 GNWT Indigenous Aboriginal employees as a percentage of the NWT's Indigenous labour force

11 Vacancy Review, December 2019

Labour Supply and Capacity

- In 2019, the total supply of Indigenous labour with a university degree was 230, where 27.8% were active participants in the labour market.

Supply of Indigenous Labour by Skill Level

Education Level	Unemployed	Not in Labour Force	Total Potential Supply
No Formal Education	1,268	3,153	4,421
High School	479	993	1,472
College/Trades	428	934	1,362
University	64	166	230
Total	**2,239**	**5,246**	**7,485**

- There is a labour shortfall between GNWT funded position vacancies and the pool of unemployed Indigenous persons. This is much more significant in Yellowknife than in the smaller regions, as over half (54.5%) of the GNWT's funded vacancies are located in Yellowknife, despite having the lowest regional unemployment rate and one of the lowest total pools of unemployed Indigenous Aboriginal persons.

Next Steps

The Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework and Action Plan focus on using the Labour Force analysis to break down employment activity within the Northwest Territories. This analysis will help to inform the GNWT on the challenges we face and opportunities for improvement as we shift our focus to departmental implementation plans to increase the representation of Indigenous people within the GNWT.

Eighty One Images

"We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians."

Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Calls to Action # 7

Identifying Best Practices

The GNWT reviewed frameworks and Indigenous recruitment and retention practices from different levels of provincial, territorial, and federal governments to identify best practices. Common themes included reviewing these practices to address barriers to Indigenous employment, associating cultural competencies with job descriptions, identifying career pathways and succession planning opportunities. There was also a focus on developing a network strategy with post-secondary institutions and Indigenous governments to target Indigenous students for employment, and developing departmental Indigenous employment plans to increase and maintain the number of Indigenous employees within the public service.

Approaching Engagement

The Framework has incorporated feedback from internal and external partners via targeted engagement sessions, using a set of questions focused on gaining insight into existing barriers to recruitment, retention, and advancement of Indigenous Aboriginal applicants and employees.

The Diversity and Inclusion unit met with three divisions and one committee within Human Resources: Management Recruitment Services, Employee Development and Workforce Planning, Job Evaluation, and the Indigenous Employee Advisory Committee. Engagement identified multiple barriers that are recognized cross-jurisdictionally and specific barriers within the GNWT.

Hearing Different Perspectives

In October 2020, the GNWT began engagement with Indigenous Governments. Ongoing collaboration will continue as the department moves forward with implementing departmental Indigenous Employment Plans.

In addition to the themes identified through a jurisdictional scan, our Indigenous partners identified the following barriers and needs to be addressed within the GNWT: over inflation of job descriptions, lack of support throughout the hiring process, recruitment strategies, centralization of positions and opportunities, and lack of cultural awareness and safety within the workplace and hiring practices.

Ensuring Indigenous perspectives are woven into business practices, programs and policies will ensure the unique challenges of each region and department are addressed and the outcomes attainable. On going collaboration with external partnerships will continue as departments develop Indigenous employment plans.

"States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous peoples and all other segments of society."

UNDRIP, Article 15(2)

Seeing the **Path Forward**

Our Shared Vision

We believe in a public service where the Indigenous people of the Northwest Territories are valued team members at all levels of government and across all departments, where they are genuinely included, celebrated, and given opportunities to succeed.

We believe in a public service that promotes anti-racism, where employees are educated to acknowledge their privilege and question their beliefs about why Indigenous people are underrepresented in the public service. We believe in a public service that is diverse and inclusive, that continues to learn and grow, and that collaborates both internally and externally with Indigenous peoples.

We believe in a public service that advocates for the rights of our Indigenous peoples and that strives to include underrepresented groups at all levels of decision-making.

Our Shared Goals

Indigenous Representation

The GNWT Public Service is representative of the population it serves. Departments and Agencies recognize and incorporate Indigenous perspectives into their policies, programs, and services.

Indigenous employees view the Public Service as an organization that accepts, supports and provides opportunities for advancement.

Efforts to increase Indigenous representation in the GNWT are largely focused on recruitment strategies. Equally as important is fostering an environment and culture that is welcoming and inclusive of Indigenous employees. There are many barriers that have been identified that contribute to lower Indigenous recruitment and retention, and different approaches to Indigenous representation must be considered to begin to address them all. This means that blanket statements cannot be made about how Indigenous representation should be achieved.

Indigenous Leadership

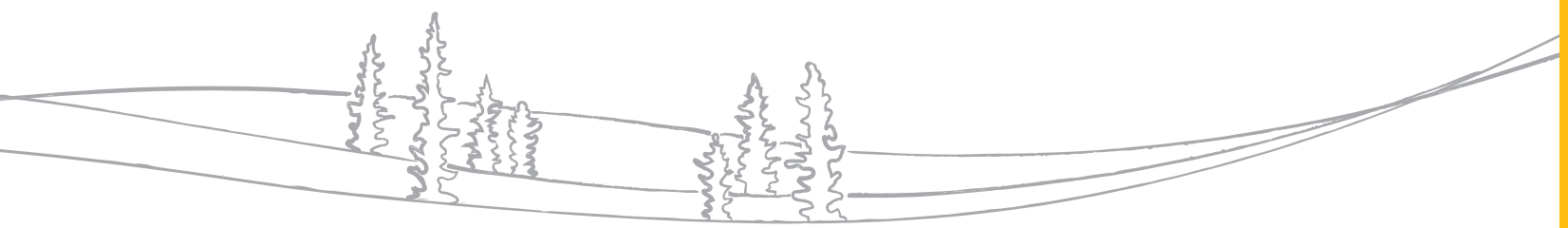
Indigenous representation in the GNWT Public Service is achieved at all levels of government and across all Departments and Agencies.

Indigenous employees have access and are part of the decision-making process that impact the Public Service and the population of the NWT.

It is not enough for the GNWT to recruit and retain Indigenous employees, we must also commit to developing and promoting Indigenous employees into positions of leadership, so that their voices are heard at decision-making tables at all levels of the Public Service. A one-size-fits-all approach will not work for improving Indigenous leadership in the public service. Rather, ever-evolving approaches to changing Indigenous employee development and succession planning will be necessary.

All Departments and Agencies and employees at all levels need to embrace the goals of representativity and Indigenous leadership. We all share the responsibility to contribute to changing the way we think, the way we perceive the workplace, the way we act and what we believe.

Our Shared Commitment

To reach these goals, the GNWT has developed an Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Action Plan, which sets out objectives and deliverables to help Indigenous people to succeed within the recruitment process and within the organization as whole.

The success of this initiative depends on the entire GNWT sharing the responsibility of achieving its goals. Each Department and Agency will be required to create an Indigenous Employment Plan to address the objectives outlined within using statistics and a labour force statistical analysis to set realistic benchmarks for success. Each department and agency will have their own unique Indigenous Employment Plan that will guide their way to reaching the Framework's vision and goals.