

# Responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action

An Update on the  
Government of the Northwest Territories  
Responses

JUNE 2019



Government of  
Northwest Territories

## **A. Child Welfare (TRC Recommendations 1- 5 and 55i)**

### **GNWT Response:**

The GNWT commits to working to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care, as described by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations through the ongoing implementation of the *Child and Family Services Act* and through 'Building Stronger Families', our action plan to transform child and family services in the direction of a more collaborative and family-centered approach to child protection services.

### **2018 Updates:**

#### **Monitoring Investigations**

The Northwest Territories' Child and Family Services system was designed to protect children and youth from abuse and neglect in addition to preventing any child protection concerns from occurring by providing voluntary services to families, children and youth. Statutory appointed Child Protection Workers have been trained to take the necessary steps to ensure the protection of children and youth. If children or youth are found to be unsafe, staff will respond accordingly to address any concerns.

The Department of Health and Social Services has implemented some major enhancements to the child and family services system over the past several years, including the adoption, design and implementation of a Structured Decision Making® (SDM®) System. A new electronic child and family services case management information system, Matrix NT, was deployed in October 2017 to help Child and Family Services (CFS) staff better manage case information. Three SDM® tools are built into Matrix NT and are automatically generated and required in order for workers to complete an investigation and support case management. The SDM® tools are evidence based assessments tools and ensure equitable, consistent, quality based assessment of child protection concerns.

System-wide SDM® training was completed in 2016 and was implemented as part of core training for all workers in October 2017. In February 2019, child and family services managers, supervisors and senior staff received refresher training on the SDM® System. This training will support ongoing, sustainable learning for all child and family services staff.

In August 2018, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) implemented a monthly quality review process on all closed investigations within the NWT. The NTHSSA supports their regions and the other two authorities by conducting monthly teleconferences to discuss the results and develop region specific strategies to manage the specific risks identified in the review.

Although there is much more work we need to do in collaboration with our partners to reduce the number of indigenous children in care, we have already taken important steps by:

- Continuing to support prevention services (since 1998);
- Supporting children to remain with their families and extended families where possible;
- Negotiating self-government agreements with NWT Indigenous governments and working with them to be ready when they are at the point they want to exercise jurisdiction for Child and Family Services
- Continuing to support and imbed cultural respect across our health and social services system;
- Improving data management - a new Child and Family Services Information System called Matrix NT was launched in October 2017.
- Strengthening the ongoing support, use and integration of the Structured Decision Making® Assessment Tools within the Child and Family Services practice;
- Improving oversight of investigations through the creation of monthly quality reviews and the biennial system-wide child and family services audit.

### **Training Child Protection Workers**

Prior to being appointed to practice in the NWT, Child Protection Workers (CPWs) are required to participate in mandatory in-person training (“CPW Core Training”). Since 2007, CPW Core Training has included information on Indigenous cultures in the NWT, the impacts of colonization including the residential school system. In January 2019, all Child and Family Services Managers and Supervisors participated in the Health and Social Services system cultural competency pilot training, and are contributing their feedback in the development of a cultural competency training package.

CPW Core Training has taken place regularly, with the content evolving over the years in response to changes in legislation and practice to provide Child Protection Workers with training on the key responsibilities required to carry out child and family services.

- Child and Protection Core Statutory training has been delivered three times since May 2018.
- In October 2018, the NTHSSA finalized a clinical supervision model and have completed training for all supervisors and managers.
- In November 2018, the Department and NTHSSA delivered Specialized Assistant Director Training for incoming and current Assistant Directors on their delegated responsibilities.
- In November/December 2018, Assistant Directors also participated in the CPW Core Statutory Training, which will enable them to better support CFS Managers, Supervisors and frontline staff.

### **Supporting Parents**

Significant progress to support children and their families has been made in the first four years of delivering the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Framework.

The Department of Health and Social Services (HSS) and Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) continue to work in collaboration to improve the healthy development of all children in their early years.

In 2017-18, the GNWT invested \$6.4 million in early childhood development, with more than half going towards supporting children identified with developmental issues and families who are the most vulnerable.

The two Departments developed a new three-year action plan for 2017-20 shaped by priorities set by the 18th Assembly and guided by the results of a review of the first three years of the ECD Framework implementation.

The renewed action plan ensures that every child, family and community in the NWT, including those most at risk, have access to high quality, inclusive and accessible ECD programs and services that are community driven, sustainable and culturally relevant.

Milestones under the Action Plan for 2017-18 and 2018-19 include:

- Developing standards for pre and postnatal education based on existing programs.
- Working with our partners to achieve the Baby Friendly Initiative Designation which promotes and supports breastfeeding.

- The Aurora Research Institute was commissioned to identify the barriers to breastfeeding by sharing Indigenous practices around infant feeding. Findings generated knowledge about infant feeding practices in the NWT and will contribute to practice, policy, research direction, and health promotion. Findings are reported in: “Learning from Our Mothers, Grandmothers, and Great-Grandmothers about Breastfeeding in the Northwest Territories”.

HSS is improving outreach and support for expectant mothers and building on the strengths of the Healthy Family Program in all regions. In 2017, staff from NTHSSA and HRHSSA participated in focus groups at six Healthy Family Program sites and attended a territorial workshop to share their knowledge and best practices.

HSS continues to improve outreach, promotion, and education in the areas of pregnancy, breastfeeding, parenting, and mental health to support families in all regions of the NWT.

### **Jordan’s Principle**

The GNWT is supportive of federal initiatives to support its commitment to reducing the over-representation of Indigenous children in the social services system. We will continue to work with the Federal government to ensure initiatives, such as Jordan's Principle, are relevant to the NWT.

Indigenous peoples comprise half of the NWT population and do not live on reserves nor receive services through that model. A small portion live on two reserves (K'at'l'odeeche First Nation and Salt River First Nation) (+/- 500), and receive services through integrated service model.

Every Education Authority in the NWT has accessed funding under Jordan’s Principle to ensure that services are available to First Nation and Inuit children in schools when required. Funding has provided support for Support Assistant positions, Educational Psychological Assessments, and specialized support services.

The GNWT delivers child protection services for all residents at this time, although two self-government agreements (Tłı̨chǫ and Délı̨ne Goti’ine Governments) include the power to draw down this jurisdiction; we expect others to follow suit.

## **Working with Other Governments**

The GNWT will continue to work with NWT Indigenous governments to negotiate self-government agreements, including those who choose to exercise jurisdiction for child and family services.

The Minister of Health and Social Services has held discussions with Indigenous governments partners in the NWT to explore how they can work collaboratively not only to improve support for families at risk, and reduce the number of children in care, but also to ensure a smooth transition and on-going support when Indigenous groups assume this authority.

### **B. Education (TRC Recommendations 6-12 and 55ii and iii)**

#### **GNWT Response:**

The GNWT commits to working actively to close the education gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, and supports the objectives of the recommendations by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission under this theme.

#### **2018 Updates:**

##### **Early Childhood Education**

The Right from the Start - Early Childhood Development Framework and associated 2017-2020 Action Plan, as well as the recent Canada-NWT Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Bilateral Agreement and Action Plan emphasize the importance of working with communities to enhance culturally relevant programming, supports and services. Under the ELCC Bilateral Agreement and Action Plan, funding is provided to Aurora College for the delivery of a two year ELCC diploma program which is culturally responsive to the needs of the adult learners enrolled in the program. The diploma program has included on-the-land components and culturally relevant programming to support graduates in working in licensed early childhood programs throughout the NWT.

## Postsecondary Education

Under the NWT Student Financial Assistance (SFA) program, Indigenous residents are eligible to receive non-repayable grants to assist with tuition, books, travel and monthly living allowances while attending full-time post-secondary studies, to a maximum of 12 semesters. These non-repayable grants are referred to as Basic and Supplementary Grants. The SFA program also supports Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents with permanent disabilities through assistance with extraordinary expenses, tuition, books, travel and accommodations in addition to the funding noted above. All residents may also apply for a needs assessed repayable loan to assist with additional costs that may not be covered through the Basic and/or Supplementary Grant. Program reviews are completed regularly to ensure that benefits are meeting the needs of NWT residents.

## Working with Other Governments

The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment has been the Chair of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) Indigenous Education initiative since 2013. The Indigenous Language and Education Secretariat is responsible for Indigenous Languages and Culture based education from junior kindergarten to grade 12. Provincial and territorial Ministers of Education met in Vancouver in July 2018. ECE participated in and presented at the CMEC Symposium on Indigenizing Teacher Education.

The GNWT is working with regional Education Bodies to pilot and roll out programs that focus on closing the education gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Northern Distance Learning, which supports more equitable access to academic courses, and the Our Languages curriculum, under development and being piloted, which focuses on a whole school approach to developing proficiency and encouraging language revitalization and increasing student success.

## **Language and Culture (TRC Recommendations 13-17 and 62iii)**

### **GNWT Response:**

The GNWT commits to working actively to nurture and promote Aboriginal language use in partnership with Aboriginal governments and communities through the *Official Languages Act*, and supports the objectives of the recommendations by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission under this theme. The GNWT encourages the federal government to take appropriate action to ensure that Aboriginal language programming is adequately funded.

## 2017-2018 Updates:

### Official Languages

The NWT Language Commissioner continued to ensure that the rights, status and privileges of each of the 11 official languages in the NWT are protected within government institutions. In 2017-2018, the NWT Languages Commissioner was in year two of a four year term.

The NWT Aboriginal Languages Framework - A Shared Responsibility was tabled May 26, 2017. The Framework's vision is: "An NWT where Aboriginal languages are supported, respected and thriving as languages of communication by all people." The two supporting goals are Language Revitalization and Language Access.

The GNWT launched the new NWT Indigenous Languages Action Plan in 2018.

The Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat (ILES) work to enhance the protection, revitalization and promotion of Indigenous languages throughout the NWT by:

- Supporting Indigenous Governments and Regional Indigenous Language Coordinators to implement and monitor the 3-year Regional Indigenous Language Plans; and
- Negotiating and managing the NWT Cooperation Agreement for Indigenous Languages. In 2017, Canadian Heritage increased contributions to Indigenous languages to \$19.6M from 2016-17 to 2019-20.

Terminology has largely switched from "Aboriginal" to "Indigenous" with the exception of terminology based in legislation.

ILES collaborated with stakeholders from across the NWT on the creation of a new policy to replace the 2004 Aboriginal Language and Culture Based Education (ALCBE) with the NWT Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 Indigenous Languages and Education Policy (ILE Policy) released in 2018.

To promote, honour and centre Indigenous Knowledge and Teaching Methods in Classrooms ILES supported:

- The first year pilot of the Our Languages Curriculum;
- In preparation for the launch of the new ILE Policy in 2018-2019, ECE drafted four foundational documents:
  - The NWT School Funding Framework;



- The NWT Accountability Framework;
- The Indigenous Languages and Education Policy and Procedures Manual;
- The Indigenous Languages and Education Handbook, Our People, Our Land, Our Ways, Our Languages.

The Culture and Heritage 2018 Action Plan also supports the revitalization of Indigenous Languages.

### **Indigenous Knowledge and Teaching in Classrooms**

Six students graduated from the Aboriginal Language and Cultural Instructor Program through Aurora College in the Sahtu region in the Spring of 2017.

In 2017-2018, the first year of the Our Languages curriculum, the program was piloted in 19 NWT schools.

### **Reclamation of Aboriginal Names**

Legislative changes to the *Vital Statistics Act* and the *Change of Name Act* enabled reclamation of single names, if desired, since legislation previously required two names on a birth certificate. Residents are now able to register their name in an Aboriginal language as the restriction of the roman alphabet-only names was removed. The *Vital Statistics Act* Bill was approved on November 4, 2016.

One of the supporting goals of the NWT Aboriginal Languages Framework is Language Access: All people in the NWT are able to use and benefit from high-quality public services in all official Indigenous languages. This includes the priority area developing the resources and capacity within the GNWT to deliver services in Indigenous languages. Many of the GNWT's current information systems do not support diacritics and letters that are not in Latin orthography. In 2017-2018, ECE, in partnership with other GNWT departments, began looking for solutions to this issue.

Changes have been made to regulations under the *Motor Vehicles Act* to allow the Registrar to waive the payment of fees for residential school survivors and their families for name changes on General Identification Cards and Driver's Licences, in accordance with internal policies.

## Indigenous Fonts

The GNWT collaborated with Dr. Chris Harvey of “Language Geek” to introduce a unicode font system in all nine of the official Indigenous languages of the NWT in 2014.

The Unicode fonts are publically available for both PC and Mac computers.

The GNWT’s Technology Service Centre is working to ensure that the fonts are preinstalled and available on all employees’ computers.

The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre added the keyboards and other orthography tools to their website to support Indigenous language revitalization.

### **C. Health (TRC Recommendations 18-24 and 55iv)**

#### **GNWT Response:**

The GNWT will continue to address the population health disparities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, in partnership with the federal government and with Aboriginal governments.

## Performance Measures

Public reporting of performance indicator results allows for an open and transparent assessment of the effectiveness of the health and social services system. The HSS performance reporting framework is based on the Canadian Institute for Health Information’s performance framework as well as best practice from other Canadian and International health systems. Indicators specific to the NWT Health and Social Services system often do not have relevant national comparators due to the significant differences between southern Canada and the NWT.

The 2016-2017 performance reporting, included in the Annual Report, marks our third year of public reporting. 2018 was the first year that the Department tabled the 2016-2017 Annual Reports of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, Hay River Health and Social Services Authority and the Tlicho Community Services Agency, as per the new *Financial Administration Act* requirements.

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The 2016 Public Performance Measures Report can be found at <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/hss/files/resources/public-performance-measures-report-2016.pdf>

The 2017/18 HSS Annual Report can be found at <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/hss/files/resources/hss-annual-report-2017-18.pdf>

The Department of Justice reviewed the results of the pilot Community Safety Strategy project and its connections with other work such as crime prevention, community policing plans and restorative justice. The intended outcomes of the Community Safety Strategy are currently being met across the NWT by other departmental initiatives and inter-departmental work. The review identified the importance of interdepartmental collaboration and the critical work of engaging communities to address their public safety concerns.

### **Metis, Inuit and Off-Reserve Aboriginal Peoples**

HSS is committed to working in respectful partnership with Indigenous governments to ensure the seamless provision of health and social services.

HSS has established the Indigenous Health and Community Wellness Division to dedicate resources and give focus to concerns about the care given to Indigenous patients and clients, and to better address health and social outcome disparities that exist between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations of the NWT.

The GNWT has kept Indigenous leaders informed and sought their views; at gatherings in April 2015 and May 2016, at assemblies, and at government-to-government meetings. The Department continues this practice.

HSS has redirected prevention and promotion funding, and Aboriginal wellness funding, so that communities have much greater say in how funds are spent and what issues are addressed.

HSS is developing cultural competency training for service providers, a key success factor in Aboriginal Health.

In November 2016, The Minister of Health and Social Services tabled Building a Culturally Respectful Health and Social Services System, a Commitment to Action document, to advance cultural safety across the system, including finding ways to support traditional healing. The document was developed and informed by best practices, what we've done over the past three years and lessons learned.

Building a Culturally Respectful Health and Social Services System commits to developing an action plan that will outline the Department's direction in policies, standards, and training for the next five years. The Action Plan will be released in early 2019. Caring For Our People: Cultural Safety Action Plan 2018-2020 outlines the GNWT commitment to begin the response to Call to Action 23 (iii) – Cultural Competency training for all health-care professionals.

HSS established an Indigenous Advisory Working Group to provide recommendations to the structure and terms of reference for an Indigenous advisory body for the NTHSSA.

HSS is supporting the Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation to set the Foundation's economic platform for the sustainable delivery of traditional healing services.

### **Funding for Healing from the Harms caused by Residential Schools**

The GNWT established the On the Land Healing Fund to support community-led, land based initiatives to promote mental wellness and healing from addictions.

HSS allocates \$1.23M annually to the fund. Approximately \$1 million of this is provided to regional and community Indigenous governments to support community designed, culturally relevant land based healing programs. In 2018-2019, a total of eight contribution agreements were signed. This funding supported 35 different programs in 23 NWT communities.

There is \$125K available annually to each regional Indigenous government with an option to increase based on uptake. \$30,000 is available annually to community-based Indigenous governments.

To further assist communities to deliver On the Land programming, HSS worked with other partners to create the NWT On the Land Collaborative, which pools resources from philanthropic organizations, companies, Indigenous and other governments to support On The Land programming. HSS commits a minimum of \$200,000 annually to the Collaborative.

The Collaborative has a truly territorial reach. The third round of funding, allocated in February 2018, is supporting 48 projects totaling \$1 million.

### **Aboriginal Healing**

In 2017-2018, HSS allocated \$976,013 from the federal Health Services Integration Fund (HSIF) to support commitments identified in Building a Culturally Respectful Health and Social Services System document, including establishing the Indigenous Advisory Body and action plan development.

HSS received \$1 million per year in 2017-2018 for the development of cultural competency training from the Territorial Health Investment Fund.

HSS is supporting the efforts of the Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation to develop an Indigenous Wellness Centre. To date, this support includes funding for administration, arranging for access to a temporary healing camp site and securing proposal based Federal funding for compensation of Traditional Healers.

Additional information on Corrections programming to promote healing is provided under the justice section.

### **Health Care Professionals**

Recruiting health care and social work professionals in the Northwest Territories can be challenging, expensive, and time-consuming, especially in remote communities. By moving to one territorial health authority we have been able to improve our coordination of health care and social services, as we work together under one system to identify needs and fill these gaps.

HSS and the NTHSSA are actively updating and implementing programs to recruit and retain health and social services providers, with a focus on recruiting for hard to fill positions. Efforts are made to prioritize local hiring whenever possible, but in many cases we must look outside the community or even the territory to fill a position.

HSS is examining job design and skill mix for a number of health positions with a goal of reducing barriers to northerners for health related professions. We are updating existing programs and creating new programs to improve recruitment, while still supporting retention efforts. For example, in the future these efforts could include bursary programs and a shift in minimum experience requirements to increase hiring of new graduates. We will continue to engage with Aurora College on our future needs for health and social services professionals on the basis of our workforce planning and future needs with a goal of educating northerners to fill our workforce needs.

HSS also wants to ensure that health and social services professionals are supported to provide services in a culturally safe and respectful way, consistent with our commitments under Building a Culturally Respectful Health and Social Services System. Our investment in cultural safety will help further support all NWT residents, especially those who experience gaps and barriers to accessing safe, culturally respectful health care programs and services. We want to change the way we provide services so that people feel respected, feel that their voices are heard and feel safe and comfortable when accessing health care and social services. The next step in this work is the finalization of our Cultural Safety Action Plan.

Under Caring for Our People: Strategic Plan for the NWT Health and Social Services System 2017-2020, recruitment and retention strategies are being developed to ensure the Department, the NTHSSA, the Hay River HSSA, and the Tlicho Community Services Agency have the workforce to meet the needs of clients and deliver quality care to the residents of the NWT.

This includes various strategies to improve physician recruitment and retention, focusing on system wide needs while maintaining the importance of community interests at a local level. Strategies include:

- A territory-wide recruitment strategy to improve physician hiring processes (in development);
- Targeted attendance of NWT physicians and personnel at major job fairs in Canada to promote the NWT as a career choice;
- Increased use of Telehealth to connect physicians (both family physicians and specialists) with patients to ensure physician services are provided to all NWT residents, while reducing duty travel for physicians.

HSS and NTHSSA actively participate in corporate human resource initiatives applicable to all staff in all types of positions, including;

- Summer Student Employment Program;
- GNWT Internship Program; and
- Leadership Development Program.

The programs and services under the Health and Social Services Human Resources Strategic Plan from 2015 are being delivered as anticipated. Current programs offered under this plan are outlined below:

- Graduate Entry Level Internship Program (GEIP);
- Professional Development Initiative (PDI);
- Targeted Academic Support Program (TASP);
- Certificate in Remote Nursing; and the
- Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP).

**D. Justice (TRC Recommendations 25-42 and 55v, vi and vii)**

**GNWT Response:**

The GNWT is committed to continuing work towards reducing the number of Aboriginal people in custody, and will participate in national efforts to monitor and evaluate progress. This is a long-standing and complicated issue - addressing it requires the active collaboration of many entities including all GNWT social program departments, Aboriginal Governments, and communities at large.

The GNWT supports the TRC call for federal, provincial, and territorial governments to implement and evaluate community sanctions that provide realistic alternatives to imprisonment for Aboriginal offenders.

The GNWT continues to explore ways to best address the needs of offenders affected by addictions, mental illness, FASD and other cognitive impairments. This includes approaches which place a focus on the individual - and which aim to address their underlying issues - while identifying and building on their strengths.

The GNWT notes that it is important to recognize the independence of the judiciary in the consideration or implementation of the TRC recommendations.

## Alternative Justice

- In the NWT, local Community Justice Programs are the primary vehicle for communities to develop an alternative system of justice that meets the needs of their residents, including youth. The RCMP or Crown may divert selected criminal matters away from the traditional court system to be handled by a Community Justice Committee whose members are appointed to assist in providing programs and services for offenders, young and adult.
- The GNWT supports local Community Justice Programs in accessing funding for crime prevention and community safety initiatives, including on the land programs that are rooted in Indigenous traditions, ways of being and knowledge. One such territorial fund is the NWT On-The-Land Collaborative, an initiative administered by Health and Social Services that brings together government, charitable, corporate and community partners to make it easier to access funding and other resources for on the land projects. Specialized Courts are alternatives to conventional court that focus on the offender and their underlying reasons for offending rather than on the offence. In order to participate in the Wellness Court or the Domestic Violence Treatment Options (DVTO) Court, an offender must accept responsibility for their offence and plead guilty. Sentencing is then deferred while the offender participates in tailored programming aimed at addressing their behaviour. DVTO Court and its supporting 8-module PARTNER program continue to be offered in Yellowknife and Hay River. Programs are generally scheduled 2-4 months after conclusion of the previous session.
- The Integrated Case Management (ICM) Pilot Project supports participants with complex needs in accessing existing government services. The ICM pilot project serving Yellowknife has now received over 300 referrals. The GNWT is currently looking for a way forward for holistic integrated services delivery, building on work across departments, to include children, families and individuals with complex needs across the NWT.



## Victim Services

- The Victim Services Program is a fundamental component of how support is provided support to victims of crime in the NWT. The NWT Victims Services Program is a community-based program, meaning it is delivered by community organizations, not public servants. The Government of the Northwest Territories provides funding for 11 community-based victim services workers in 8 communities. Indigenous Governments, Hamlet Councils and community organizations are provided funding to deliver the services, taking into consideration the unique context of their community. GNWT staff support the overall management and coordination of the program.
- The GNWT and the RCMP have a referral protocol in place that formalizes the referral of victims to community victim services providers. It is based on the principles of courtesy, compassion, respect, dignity, and privacy.
- All victims may exercise their rights under the Canadian Victim Bill of Rights. These rights include the right to information, to protection, to participation in the criminal justice process, and to seek restitution.

## Youth Programs

- Since the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* came into force on April 1, 2003, counts of youth in custody have decreased. In 2002-2003, the average count in the NWT was approximately 45. As of November 26, 2018, there were 3. (Source: NWT Corrections Offender Management System).
- The low number of youth in custody continues to allow the NWT Corrections Service to provide individualised attention and programming to the young offenders. For those young offenders who do serve a sentence at the dedicated territorial youth unit, a range of Indigenous programs are offered. Specifically, the GNWT contracts with local Elders to spend time with the youths as part of the facility's school schedule, engaging in cultural activities such as mitten and moccasin making and facilitating ceremonies such as smudging and Healing Circles. Staff also take the youth on the land for day trips.

- As noted above, diversions allow for the development of alternatives to the criminal justice system using a restorative approach. In the NWT diversion are increasingly the preferred mechanism for responding to youth who come into contact with the justice system. Local community Youth Justice Committee members are appointed under the NWT *Youth Justice Act* to assist in providing programs and services for young offenders.

## **FASD**

- It is unclear how many people live with FASD in the NWT but research indicates that youth and adults living with this condition, directly or indirectly, are likely to have repeated contact with the justice system as victims, witnesses, suspects, accused, or offenders. Individuals who live with FASD may also live with other secondary disabilities and the NWT justice system provides some holistic options for eligible offenders who wish to participate.
- The NWT Wellness Court referenced previously combines intensive supervision of offenders with a program that provides a comprehensive and collaborative approach to addressing mental health issues, addictions, and cognitive challenges such as FASD as all conditions that can affect an individual's behaviour and contribute to their contact with the justice system.
- The GNWT recognizes that to make a difference, corrections programming for offenders in custody must address the root causes that lead an individual to crime.
- NWT Corrections statistics indicate that substance abuse is the most prevalent issue requiring intervention, especially among offenders assessed at medium and high risk to re-offend. The Substance Abuse Management (SAM) program is designed to help inmates with shorter sentences, as well as those serving their sentence in the community. Participants are assisted to identify the triggers that most often lead them to abuse substances, and to apply this understanding in their daily lives. Launched in 2016, the SAM program is delivered across all NWT correctional facilities and community probation services. The NWT Corrections Service also delivers programming on Living Without Violence and Respectful Relationships. All these programs recognize the importance of Indigenous culture and traditions. Aboriginal Liaison Officers or Elders may attend the groups to help participants reflect on their culture and learning.

Along with facility psychologists, Corrections has traditional and addictions counsellors and liaison officers on staff to identify an inmate's specific needs and work with case managers to ensure appropriate supports are made available.

- In 2017-2018, the Department of Justice initiated the development of an NWT-based Indigenous pre-treatment and substance abuse program that respects the unique needs and cultures of offenders in NWT correctional facilities. It is envisioned that this program will become the cornerstone of the Therapeutic Community model in an NWT correctional facility.

**K. Professional Development and Training for Public Servants (TRC Recommendation 57)**

**GNWT Response:**

The GNWT is already actively supporting this recommendation.

In addition to ongoing online Indigenous Culture Awareness Training, the Department of Finance has undertaken initiatives to increase Indigenous representation in the workforce.

**Indigenous Career Gateway Program**

The goal of the Indigenous Career Gateway Program is to improve access to employment opportunities for external indigenous Aboriginal persons for entry-level employment and trainee opportunities with the GNWT. This program will help to promote and foster an environment that values development, diversity and professional growth opportunities for Indigenous people. Through this program, the GNWT will work to establish partnerships with educators and Aboriginal governments to identify Indigenous candidates who are at the conclusion of their studies or are seeking meaningful work experience. Client Services (MRS/Regions) will work with client departments to identify employment opportunities. This program makes working for the Public Service more accessible for Indigenous peoples by creating training opportunities. Having a representative workforce will assist in providing culturally relevant services to NWT residents.

## **Indigenous Management Development and Training Program**

The goal of this program is to support the professional development of Indigenous employees within the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) by providing the necessary skills training and/or work experience for career advancement which will support Indigenous employees to progress into Management positions. This program gives Indigenous GNWT employees the opportunity to further their professional development with the efforts to increase Indigenous representation in middle and senior management positions.

### **M. Education for Reconciliation (TRC Recommendation 62-65)**

**GNWT Response:**

The GNWT is already actively supporting this recommendation.

The NWT Minister of Education has been the Chair of the CMEC Indigenous Education initiative since 2013. The Indigenous Language and Education Secretariat are responsible for Indigenous Languages and Culture based education in JK-12 and has led the GNWT participation on this issue.

Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Education met in Vancouver in July 2018. ECE participated in and presented at the CMEC Symposium on Indigenizing Teacher Education.

GNWT is committed to the work of the Council of Ministers of Education and continuing to support its work toward reconciliation by ensuring that Indigenous language instruction and culture-based school programs are adequately supported and resourced.