



# Growing the NWT

SUPPORTING POPULATION GROWTH OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**A growing population in the NWT benefits our economy, and businesses, and helps to secure a better quality of life for all NWT residents.**

Population growth is a key component to expanding and diversifying our economy and is an essential element in realizing the vision of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly: ***a strong and prosperous NWT with a healthy and growing economy that provides opportunities in all communities and regions.***

More people living in the NWT mean more workers for existing and new businesses. It also means more demand for products and services. A growing population

encourages more potential entrepreneurs, managers and investors with the skills, experience and financing to envision, start and successfully grow new businesses throughout the territory.

Growing our population also means more revenue for the GNWT through transfers and taxes. This in turn supports our ability to maintain and enhance critical social, economic and infrastructure investments and support ways to reduce our cost of living. ►

**POPULATION GROWTH = A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE  
FOR ALL PEOPLE OF THE NWT**

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## Our Challenge

Currently, the population of the NWT is in slow decline. While the natural rate of population increase (births minus deaths) has been relatively stable over the past decade, our population growth rate is only 0.9%. This is because more people are leaving than coming to live in the NWT. This is our challenge.

All economic forecasts assume non-renewable resource development will be the primary driver of the NWT's economy for the foreseeable future. However, both the Economic Opportunities Strategy and the Mineral Development Strategy identify the lack of an available job-ready work force as a factor that may limit economic growth in the NWT. In order to grow our population, we need to take strategic approaches to increase the number of people living and working in the NWT. This means recruiting people from other

provinces and territories, as well as recruiting people from other countries.

Just as important as bringing more people to the NWT, we need to retain the residents we already have. As a government, providing quality services to individuals and families, improving infrastructure, supporting the business sector and reducing the cost of living are all significant issues related to keeping people in the NWT. As an employer, the GNWT has numerous programs intended to support retention, but more needs to be done.

Our challenge is made more difficult because other regions in Canada are also experiencing declining populations, putting us in direct competition for skilled labour. We must take a competitive and creative approach in implementing solutions to grow the NWT population by 2,000 by 2019.

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**GOAL: 2,000** THE INCREASE IN NWT POPULATION FROM 2014 TO 2019

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**33%**

THE PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE INDICATING COMPETITIVE PAY AND BENEFITS AS THE MAIN REASON THEY MOVED TO THE NWT



**Growth** *Growing the NWT population requires an integrated approach among a number of partners and stakeholders. This document identifies the tools GNWT has implemented to support population growth.*



## **Growing the NWT – Supporting Population Growth**

The GNWT has, and will continue to focus on the following key activities that create the environment for population growth:

- Investing in strategic infrastructure projects;
- Educating, training and developing a skilled workforce;
- Supporting increased business investment to diversify our economy;
- Advancing the NWT’s natural resource potential;
- Reducing the cost of living through targeted investments; and,
- Maintaining quality programs and services for our residents.

Growing the NWT sets out three priorities:

1. **Creating the right environment** for both the private and public sectors to retain employees by providing quality government programs and services that will encourage people to live and work in the NWT;
2. **Influencing private sector recruitment** through the marketing of the NWT as a great place to live and work;
3. Improving actions to both **recruit and retain employees in the GNWT** workforce.

Growing our population is not a simple task, nor is it one that the GNWT can accomplish alone. We must work together to put in place the right mix of policies and programs that will build on our territory's unique strengths and attributes.



## WAYS THE GNWT SUPPORTS POPULATION GROWTH

### CREATING THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

#### *Investments in the Energy Action Plan*

The 2013 Energy Action Plan places a renewed focus on energy conservation, efficiency and the use of renewable energy such as biomass, solar and wind.

Investments in energy initiatives ensure the availability of and reliability of our energy supply to meet the needs of a growing population and economy. Energy efficiency and conservation reduces the cost of living and makes business more productive, which, in turn, makes the NWT a more attractive place to live, work and do business. Government investments in energy efficiency mean less money being spent on operational costs and more money available for the delivery of government programs and services.

Key initiatives in the Energy Action Plan include:

- Investment in biomass, solar and wind energy; liquefied natural gas conversion and other renewable and alternative energy technologies;
- Investment in energy conservation and efficiency including supporting the Arctic Energy Alliance, LED streetlight conversion, community government energy efficiency retrofits and identifying power plant residual heat projects;
- Investment in the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund which targets energy efficiency investments in GNWT public buildings; and,
- Investigating a range of energy options to help increase the resilience and plan for future growth of the North Slave hydroelectricity system.

### ***Investments in Infrastructure***

Improving our infrastructure has a long-term impact on economic and population growth. The GNWT has made significant infrastructure investments in an effort to lower the cost of living, improve mobility and quality of life for NWT residents, as well as encourage mining exploration and development. Examples include the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Line; Stanton Territorial Hospital; the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway, the new Hay River Health Centre, the new East Three School in Inuvik, the Dehcho Bridge, extending Tsiigehtchic ferry operations and increasing our stock of affordable housing.

GNWT investments and partnerships generate significant economic activity and business and employment opportunities in all northern communities. The GNWT continues to develop innovative ways to maximize local and northern resident labour through a variety of procurement approaches for the design and construction of infrastructure projects as well as for deferred maintenance, energy retrofits and regular maintenance programs.

### ***Encouraging a Resident Workforce***

The GNWT is actively working with the three diamond mining companies to identify ways to encourage their employees to live and work in the NWT. Recently, Dominion Diamond (Ekati) Corporation announced it would no longer fly employees living outside the NWT to its mine site. It is hoped that this will encourage DDEC employees to relocate to the NWT.

### ***Maintaining a Competitive Tax System***

Northwest Territories residents enjoy some of the lowest personal income tax rates in Canada. We are taxed at a rate lower than the national average across all income levels. The NWT does not have a territorial sales tax. Other tax benefits include the NWT Cost of Living Tax Credit and the federal Northern Residents Deduction.

### ***Quality Health Care***

The NWT has an excellent health care system. There are no premiums for medical care and eye exams. Many northern employers offer additional health coverage.

**\*\$113,581.00**

**WAS THE AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD  
INCOME IN 2011**

*(\*Single family, multiple family, single, roomates)*





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For example, dental care and other health related services may be covered under plans supported in part by employers. Extended health benefits are also available, upon application, at no cost, for specified conditions that are not covered by hospital and medical care insurance.

## **INFLUENCING PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

### ***NWT's Nominee Program – Departments of Education, Culture and Employment & Industry Tourism and Investment***

The NWT's Nominee Program is an immigration program operated by the GNWT with Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Individuals nominated by the NWT are eligible to apply for permanent residency. The goal of the program is to attract qualified foreign workers to fill critical labour shortages and promote business development in the NWT.

There are five streams within the Nominee Program:

**Skilled Worker** – employer driven process that is intended for individuals with specialized training or education;

**Critical Impact Worker** – assists NWT employers with critical labour shortages that cannot be filled by local residents in the hospitality and service sectors;

**Entrepreneur Business** – open to entrepreneurs or owner/operators of businesses who want to immigrate and establish a business in the NWT;

**Self-Employed Business** – open to professionals that can provide a service that is in demand in the NWT; and,

**NWT's Express Entry Stream** - employer driven process that is intended for individuals with specialized training or education.

The GNWT has introduced enhancements to the Canada-Northwest Territories Agreement on Territorial Nominees. This includes increasing the number of nominee applications by 25% each year over the next five years. To date, the GNWT has exceeded its 2015 target by 17% and has experienced a 54% increase in nominations from 2013 (31) and 2014 (48).

The GNWT is also intensifying engagement with employers and industry to promote the use of the Nominee Program and maximize program options under the Express Entry System.

The GNWT is committed to increasing immigration as a pillar to support population growth. This includes developing an immigration framework to coordinate and integrate immigration policies, programs and services.

### ***Skills 4 Success Initiative – Department of Education, Culture and Employment***

The Skills 4 Success Initiative is taking a systematic look at adult and post-secondary education, and skills training programs, supports and pathways. The goal is to improve employment success for NWT residents, close skill gaps for in-demand jobs and more effectively respond to employer, industry and community needs.

The Skills 4 Success Initiative is being undertaken in partnership with key stakeholders to:

- Better understand current and future labour market needs;
- Ensure that supports and incentives are relevant, effective and aligned with evolving labour market needs;
- Ensure that Northern residents have access to adult and post-secondary education, skills training programs and pathways that leads to employment; and,
- Strengthen economic diversification and growth by ensuring that employer and business skills needs are met.

A 10-year Strategic Framework to guide Skills 4 Success is being developed that will:

1. Ensure NWT residents have easy access to labour market information to make smart education, career and business decisions;
2. Ensure NWT residents have streamlined access to incentives and supports that are relevant, effective and aligned with evolving labour market needs and demands;

3. Ensure that the NWT skills and post-secondary system excels to address short-term labour market demands and build long-term capacity to respond to individual, community and employer needs; and,
4. Support recruitment and retention efforts through strengthening workforce capacity and encouraging a culture of higher learning and employment.

### ***Student Financial Assistance – Department of Education, Culture and Employment***

The NWT Student Financial Assistance (SFA) program is one of the best programs in Canada and offers loan forgiveness, non-repayable grants to assist with the cost of tuition, books and travel. The NWT Program does not base eligibility on household or parental income.

The GNWT has made significant improvements related to the SFA Program to help encourage people to stay in, or move to the NWT, as well as to make post-secondary education more affordable, accessible and attractive to NWT residents.

**45,550**

**GNWT POPULATION GOAL  
BY MARCH 31, 2019**



The improvements include:

1. Increasing the remissible loan forgiveness by 50%, based on students residing in Yellowknife, municipal taxation and general taxation areas;
2. Introducing a \$2,000 Northern Bonus to be applied directly to student loans for both current and new NWT residents;
3. Reducing the interest rate to 0% for students returning and residing in the NWT;
4. Introducing a revolving loan limit and remove the 20 semester limit to encourage continued learning; and,
5. Increasing the Basic Grant (tuition, fees and books) up to 80% of the average cost of obtaining an undergraduate degree.

***Implementation of the Economic Opportunities and Mineral Development Strategies – Department of Industry, Tourism & Investment***

The **Economic Opportunities Strategy** (EOS) has been developed to guide and increase growth, diversity and certainty in the NWT economy. The EOS includes initiatives to pursue major investments, improve supports to NWT businesses, growing a stable

entrepreneurial environment and attracting, retaining and preparing the NWT workforce.

Key activities under the EOS include:

**Tourism Development:**

- Skills training;
- Aboriginal Tourism Strategy; and,
- Working with NWT Tourism to establish a Convention Bureau.

**NWT Film Strategy:**

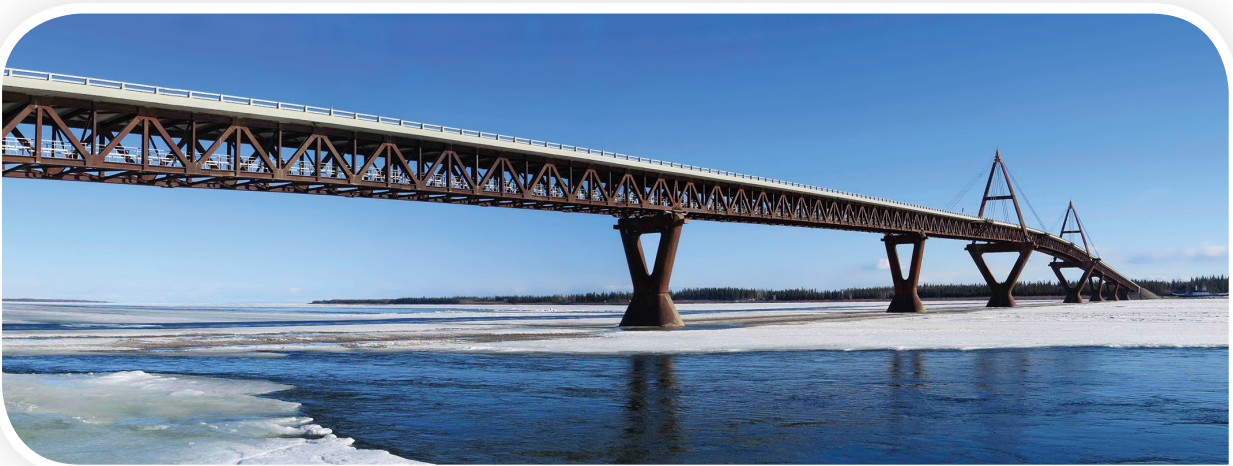
- Increase the number of film productions in the NWT; and,
- Explore potential for a rebate program for filmmakers.

**Support for Manufacturing**

- Develop a marketing plan.

**Revitalization of the Fishing Industry:**

- Provide training and financial support to existing and new fishers;
- Expand the export and domestic market of Great Slave Lake Fish; and,
- Support the investment for the construction, management and operations of fish processing plant.





### **NWT Agriculture Strategy:**

- Increase participation and investment in the agriculture sector; and,
- Work in collaboration with the Northern Farm training Institute in conducting research on agriculture and greenhouse technologies.

### **Regional Economic Planning:**

- Create regional economic action plans for communities and regions; and,
- Develop Professional Services Support Program to assist businesses in smaller centres to recruit and retain accredited accountants, bookkeepers and managers.

The **Mineral Development Strategy** has been developed to ensure the NWT will be an attractive destination for responsible and sustainable mineral development.

There are five pillars in the Mineral Development Strategy Action Plan:

#### **1. Creating a Competitive Edge:**

- Provision of world class geoscience information and knowledge;
- The Mining Incentive Program to support mineral exploration;

- Improvements to infrastructure to support mineral development; and,
- Marketing campaigns to encourage investment in mineral development.

#### **2. Establishing an Improved Regulatory Environment:**

- Improvements to client services to assist industry to navigate the regulatory and consultation process; and,
- Establishment of a Mining Industry Advisory Board.

#### **3. Enhancing Aboriginal Engagement and Community Capacity**

- Assist Aboriginal communities to strengthen their capacity to deal with the engagement and environmental review requirements associated with mineral development.

#### **4. Promoting Sustainability:**

- **Improvements to the Socio-Economic Agreement** process; and,
- Establishment of a Northern Minerals Business Office to help local businesses develop opportunities.

**\$30,000**  
PER PERSON VALUE  
ON THE TERRITORIAL  
FORMULA  
FINANCING GRANT



## 5. Enriching Workforce Development and Public Awareness:

- Identify current and future labour force needs within the mining sector;
- Collaboration between the GNWT and industry to promote awareness of career opportunities in mineral exploration and mining; and,
- Establishment of a Geoscience Field Assistant Training Program.

### ***Come Make Your Mark – Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment***

Come Make Your Mark is a national marketing campaign to promote the excellent career opportunities and lifestyle choices available in the NWT. The campaign features a website with all the information needed to make a decision about moving to the NWT under the following headings:

- **Work** – contains a job board where private sector partners post available jobs in the NWT
- **Live** – information about housing, education, health services and climate
- **Play** – information about what recreational and cultural activities are available

The campaign identifies target markets in central and eastern Canada as well as university and college students. Other promotional efforts include the use of social media and newspaper advertising. Come Make Your Mark has recently expanded to include NWT employer partners who are using the platform as part of their specific recruitment efforts.

## **RECRUITING AND RETAINING EMPLOYEES IN THE GNWT WORKFORCE**

### ***Targeted Recruitment for Key Occupations - Department of Human Resources***

This initiative addresses the need for targeted, direct recruitment activities of candidates for specific occupations that have been identified as being “hard to recruit” positions;

Activities include:

- Participation in selected Career Fairs;
- Increased use of social media (LinkedIn; Twitter; Facebook);
- Promotion of enrollment in the GNWT Talent Community; and,
- Researching best practices in recruitment.



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### **Career Fairs – Department of Human Resources**

The GNWT as an employer will have a greater, more active presence in selected career fairs;

Activities include:

- Branding of GNWT as an employer of choice and marketing the NWT as a great place to live;
- Promoting job opportunities within the GNWT; and,
- More efficient staffing processes.

### **Attracting Post-Graduate Students Back to the NWT – Department of Human Resources**

The GNWT has implemented enhancements to the Graduate Internship Program to encourage NWT students to return to the NWT after graduation from post-secondary studies. These include:

- Extending the duration of internships to allow interns to gain the experience to move into a position within the GNWT;
- Targeting some internships for students who have academic qualifications in an occupation where there is an identified skills shortage; and,

- Developing a Cooperative Education Program in key occupations with post-secondary institutions.

### **Regional Recruitment Program**

The goal of this program is to link vacant regional GNWT positions with potential employees. It offers on-the-job training through a structured training plan.

The GNWT also recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Capacity Building with the Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC), which commits both GNWT and GTC to explore internship opportunities for Gwich'in employees in the GNWT. The parties will develop a joint internship pilot project that will provide for full-time employment opportunities with the GNWT for up to a maximum of nine Gwich'in workers. Interns will have the opportunity to gain work experience with the GTC and the GNWT for work placements of up to 12 consecutive months in each organization.

### **PracticeNorth.ca – Department of Health and Social Services**

PracticeNorth.ca is an online site to market job opportunities and recruit health and social services professionals in the NWT.





***Development of a Retention Initiative –  
Department of Human Resources***

The GNWT recognizes that improving retention of GNWT employees is a critical component of growing the population. Work is underway to strengthen and revamp the rewards and recognition activities. Current activities focus on employee learning and development as well as employee recognition and rewards such as:

- Aboriginal Management Development Program;
- GNWT Mentorship Program;

- Leadership Development Program;
- Management Series;
- Premier’s Awards; and,
- Dave Ramsden Career Excellence Award.

***Investments in Market Rentals – NWT  
Housing Corporation***

The NWT Housing Corporation is working with smaller communities to provide rental accommodation to educators, health professionals and other essential staff. Over the next three years, an additional 100 rental units will be built to improve housing options in communities where either limited or no rental accommodation exists.



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Department of Finance  
Fiscal Policy Division  
Phone: 867-920-6436