

REPORT ON THE STAFF RETENTION POLICY FOR 2013-2014 AND 2014-2015

BACKGROUND

In May 2000, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) introduced the Staff Retention Policy, which provides a process for the redeployment of staff whose jobs are eliminated or transferred to another community. The Policy focuses on the retention of employees within the public service but does provide lay-off as an option where redeployment is not feasible.

The Staff Retention Policy was updated in May 2013. Three Ministerial policies (Affected Employee and Staffing Priority, Lay-off and Voluntary Separation) have been developed to operationalize the collective agreement lay-off and voluntary separation articles in the Staff Retention Policy. The reporting requirement was changed to include the reasons that positions were eliminated or reorganized and the communities affected.

Once a person is identified as affected, their home department and Client Service Manager work with the employee to identify potential employment opportunities within the GNWT. If a reasonable job offer cannot be made to the individual during their affected employee period (up to eight weeks) and lay-off notice period (13 weeks), they are given one of the following lay-off options:

- Separation assistance payment based on years of service.
- Severance priority payment based on years of service plus hiring priority in the GNWT for 18 months after the lay-off notice period.
- Retraining for a specific or anticipated vacancy where the retraining can be completed within 12 consecutive months.
- Education assistance for one year to pursue further post-secondary education.

Voluntary Separation Severance is applicable only where an employee's position is transferred to another community or if they choose to terminate their employment to create a vacancy, which will be staffed by an employee who has been laid-off or will be laid-off.

STATUS

2013-2014

In fiscal year 2013-14, 32 individuals were identified as "affected employees" under the Staff Retention Policy as follows:

- Number of positions affected by lay-off or voluntary separation – 37
- Number of affected employees – 32
- Number of employees laid-off – 13
- Number subject to voluntary separation – 2
- Communities affected by elimination of positions, lay-off, and/or voluntary separation – 9 – Behchokò, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, Norman Wells, Whatì, Yellowknife.
- The reasons that positions were eliminated or reorganized – interdepartmental reorganization, internal department/agency reorganization where position redescribed or no longer required, position relocated, home position filled when incumbent on extended absence, position changed from full-time to part-time, and reduction exercise.
- Number of affected employees who chose to exercise a lay-off option rather than seeking retraining or alternate position – 15
- Retraining and redeployment options identified for employees subject to lay-off – 13
- Confirmation that all reasonable options to retain the employees were explored – Yes

2014-2015

In fiscal year 2014-15, 13 individuals were identified as “affected employees” under the Staff Retention Policy as follows:

- Number of positions affected by lay-off or voluntary separation – 18
- Number of affected employees – 13
- Number of employees laid-off – 8
- Number subject to voluntary separation – 0
- Communities affected by elimination of positions, lay-off, and/or voluntary separation – 5 – Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Hay River, Inuvik, Yellowknife
- The reasons that positions were eliminated or reorganized - interdepartmental reorganization, internal department/agency reorganization where position redescribed or no longer required, home position filled when incumbent on extended absence, and position relocated.
- Number of affected employees who chose to exercise a lay-off option rather than seeking retraining or alternate position – 6
- Retraining and redeployment options identified for employees subject to lay-off – 6
- Confirmation that all reasonable options to retain the employees were explored – Yes

Statistics for “the number of employees laid-off” can include employees who were affected in the identified fiscal year and/or previous fiscal years dependent on what lay-off option the employee selected.

Statistics do not include individuals who were potentially affected but where accommodation was made within their departments to place them without the individuals having to seek government-wide hiring priority.