

Northwest Territories' Immigration Strategy 2017 to 2022

Building a Skilled Workforce and a Vibrant Economy





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Kīspin ki nitawihtīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān. Cree
Tłįchǫ yatı k'ę̀ę̀. Dı wegodı newǫ dè, gots'o gonede. Tłįchǫ
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Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta. Inuvialuktun
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Aboriginal Languages Secretariat: 867-767-9346 ext. 71037 Francophone Affairs Secretariat: 867-767-9343

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"The Nominee Program has broadened our scope of employment opportunities and has given us the peace of mind knowing our employees are able to remain employed in the North. The quality of work of those individuals is impressive in terms of work ethic, drive, and ambition. We find them valuable and integral to our operation."

Susan Wright, Human Resources Manager, North-Wright Airways Ltd

Message from the Ministers

We have many opportunities to build a strong economy for our future, but we need people to activate our full potential. Immigration is crucial to meeting our population growth objectives, but like anything else, we must compete with other jurisdictions to attract new residents.

To achieve our goal of a strong NWT, the Government of the Northwest Territories made a commitment in its mandate to increase the number of immigrants working in NWT and increase investment by immigrants, by implementing an immigration strategy that prioritizes streamlining application processes, increasing awareness of immigration programs, and consolidating our administrative supports.

In keeping with this commitment, we are pleased to release the *Northwest Territories'* (*NWT*) *Immigration Strategy 2017 to 2022; Building a Skilled Workforce and a Vibrant Economy.* This Strategy focuses on growing our population, assisting employers to meet critical labour market needs, and realizing increased investment, and will significantly contribute to the strength and stability of our economy.

In developing this Strategy, we spoke directly to immigration stakeholders to solicit their opinions and expertise. We would like to thank everyone who participated in focus groups, interviews and surveys. Your input was the foundation upon which this Strategy was built.

We are excited to see what the future will bring. The NWT is a land rich in resources and opportunity, and we, along with our partners, are ready to roll up our sleeves and help our territory reach its full potential.

Honourable Alfred Moses

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Minister of Education, Culture and Employment

Honourable Wally Schumann

Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment



Introduction

The GNWT is committed to addressing labour market challenges and supporting long-term economic growth and diversity. In order to maximize the economic opportunities over the next several years and support the sustainability of a Northern labour force, the GNWT developed the *Skills 4 Success-10 Year Strategic Framework* that focuses on ways to maximize growth in building the NWT workforce and the NWT Economic Opportunities Strategy (EOS) which aims to strengthen and diversify the economy.

The Strategy shares the goal of *Skills 4 Success* 10-Year Strategic Framework to effectively respond to employers' skill needs. Building the workforce and diversifying the economy will provide long term economic prosperity. The EOS is the blueprint by which we can build a balanced and diverse economy for the NWT. Part of the EOS includes addressing the need for population growth and the establishment of small and medium size businesses, both of which can be addressed, in part, through the Immigration Strategy.

The goals of this Strategy are to assist employers to build a skilled workforce while also supporting the immigration of foreign nationals who contribute to the economic development and success of the NWT. The GNWT wants to ensure the economy remains competitive and is committed to enhancing immigration to the North as a key component of the overall population growth, labour force and business development strategies. It encourages the employment of Northern workers by industry and new employers but also recognizes the considerable contribution that immigration can make to the NWT.

The GNWT continues to provide key programs and services that will support the development of a Northern workforce. The GNWT recognizes the importance of preparing Northerners for future economic and employment opportunities in order to obtain and sustain employment as the economy expands and diversifies.

This Strategy will result in meeting the mandate of the 18th Legislative Assembly to "increase the number of immigrants working and investing in the NWT by increasing awareness of the Nominee Program and to consolidate administrative supports." This Strategy will guide the GNWT to better promote the Nominee Program to attract skilled foreign nationals, investors and entrepreneurs while improving on stakeholder partnerships and developing immigration policy that directly supports building a skilled and diverse workforce. The Nominee Program is a tool that can greatly assist with improving the economic outlook of the NWT.

Vision

The Strategy supports a long-term vision of building a skilled workforce and diversifying our economy to set the direction for immigration policy, programs, and services in the NWT over the next five years, from 2017 to 2022.

A skilled and culturally diverse workforce that meets local employers' needs and leads to a vibrant, diverse economy.

Nominee Program

The Government of Canada (Canada) has sole responsibility for determining who is admitted to Canada and issuing various types of permits such as visitor visas, work permits, permanent residency and Canadian citizenship. Although immigration is an area of federal jurisdiction, immigration is a shared responsibility between Canada and the provinces and territories under the Constitution. The GNWT entered into the *Canada-Northwest Territories Territorial Nominee Program Agreement* (Nominee Program) with Canada in 2008/09 through which the NWT administers the Nominee Program.

The Nominee Program is an immigration program used by the GNWT, in cooperation with Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), to nominate foreign nationals to apply for Canadian permanent residency. The Nominee Program helps strengthen the territory's economy by attracting qualified individuals to fill critical labour shortages and to establish in demand businesses that lead to economic diversification.

The GNWT delivers the Nominee Program. ECE delivers the *Employer stream*, and ITI delivers the *Business stream*. The Nominee Program nominates foreign nationals for Canadian permanent residency who possess the skills and experience required.

The Nominee Program continues to evolve, and we rely on stakeholder engagement to build a skilled workforce and to target the right entrepreneurs to better meet the needs of businesses and industry.



Foreign national

A person who is not a permanent resident or Canadian citizen, and is a citizen of another country. Foreign nationals are, or have the potential to become, work permit holders.

Employer stream:

The Nominee Program's *Employer stream* supports the recruitment and retention of foreign nationals when there are no qualified Northerners or permanent residents available. This program stream assists in building a skilled workforce in the NWT.

Employers must meet the program's mandatory eligibility criteria by submitting a completed application package and identify a foreign national whom they wish to employ.

Three different employer program streams are available to help NWT businesses hire foreign nationals they need. The program streams are:

CRITICAL IMPACT WORKERS intended to increase the labour pool for entry level jobs.

SKILLED WORKERS

designed to attract qualified individuals for occupations which require formal education and/or specialized training and experience.

EXPRESS ENTRY FOR SKILLED WORKERS

only for skilled foreign nationals who have been accepted into Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada's Express Entry Pool.

Business stream:

The *Business stream* is designed to attract entrepreneurs with business expertise and investment capital to settle in the NWT and enhance the economic environment of the NWT by purchasing, starting or investing in a local business.

Interested applicants in the *Business stream* need to start with a working business concept and a desire to move to the NWT. The prospective applicant must meet the requirements and criteria as set out in the application guidelines and submit a complete application and business plan that includes clear

details on the immediate and future benefits to the NWT for review and possible acceptance by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Once a prospective applicant is accepted and the business plan is implemented in the Northwest Territories, a nomination certificate will be issued and the applicant may commence the process of applying for permanent residency in Canada.



A foreign national who has been approved and nominated under the Nominee Program.

NWT Economy

The NWT economy presents stable opportunities for foreign nationals looking to establish a business and call the NWT home. The NWT's rich non-renewable resources provide a solid economic base and diversification across other economic sectors is aimed at reducing reliance on mineral and petroleum exploration. Prospects in sectors such as tourism, agriculture, fisheries and film are presenting themselves and adding to the diversification and strength of the NWT economy.

For example, the NWT Agriculture Strategy was recently released highlighting the continued growth and interest across the NWT in agriculture over the last few years. There has been significant agriculture successes in all 33 NWT communities, including community gardens that have sprouted. The NWT Agriculture Strategy will work to increase production of fresh, healthy, safe and more affordable locally grown food choices. The NWT Agriculture Strategy along with the need to increase competitiveness and develop supply chains in the industry means increased opportunities for Nominee Program applicants in this sector.

Tourism has and will continue to have a significant impact on the NWT economy as Aboriginal tourism and Aurora Borealis viewing continues to increase. The release of the GNWT's Tourism 2020: Opening our Spectacular Home to the World is a five year investment plan for the tourism sector for increasing the value of the tourism industry further. This may present the requirement for increased foreign investment and labour.

A Strategy for Revitalizing the Great Slave Lake Commercial Fishery is being implemented. This Strategy recognizes the importance of investing in the NWT fishing industry and the important role that it plays in fostering a strong diverse economy.

Programs like the Nominee Program can build on the important strategies above, leading to further diversification of the NWT economy as interested entrepreneurs and business owners from around the world, across all economic sectors, establish and invest in the NWT. Investment from foreign nationals is necessary to take full advantage of the increasing entrepreneurial opportunities that exist across all areas of the territory.

A number of exciting opportunities remain in the resource sector of the NWT economy. The territory has a wealth of mineral resources including diamonds, gold, cobalt, bismuth, tungsten and rare earths. The Mineral Development Strategy (MDS) sets out the vision to realize, responsibly and sustainably, the full potential of the NWT's rich mineral resources and use it to ensure lasting prosperity for NWT residents and communities. In turn, the MDS presents opportunities for foreign investment from Nominee Program applicants.

With a relatively small population, the NWT is working to develop our small business service sector in all NWT communities. There are always opportunities for Nominee Program applicants within this sector.



The NWT had 2,962 persons move away and experienced a year over year population decline of 0.4%



Community gardens have sprouted in all 33 NWT communities

NWT Population

The health of the economy has a direct impact on population growth. From 2016-2017, the NWT had 2,962 persons move away and experienced a year over year population decline of 0.4%, and population growth is projected to remain flat over the next 10 years. This is in contrast to all other provinces and territories, which have experienced varying degrees of positive growth during the same period. International immigration saw 209 people move to the NWT, representing an important and significant source of population growth to the territory.

At the national level, population growth remains stable but not enough to offset the aging Canadian population, low birth rate and small youth population. The Government of Canada recognizes that immigration represents a key to economic prosperity and is maintaining its commitment to a strong immigration program that will welcome 300,000 immigrants in 2017.





Labour Market Information

As part of the Skills 4 Success 10-Year Strategic Framework, the GNWT recognized the need for timely and relevant labour market information and partnered with The Conference Board of Canada to examine the NWT's forecasted labour demand over the next five, 10 and 15 years to better understand the education and training requirements.

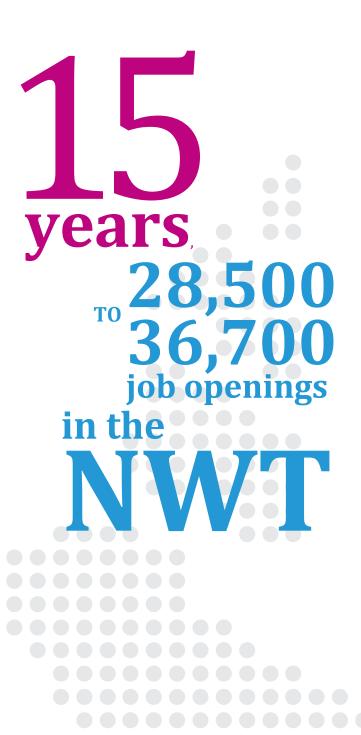
The results of the assessment are presented in the *Northwest Territories Labour Market Forecast and Needs Assessment* (LMFNA). This document holds a wealth of information from which to make evidence-based decisions, support NWT residents to successfully get jobs and help businesses build their workforce.

The report describes the characteristics of the NWT's current labour market and anticipates employers' hiring needs under different market conditions up to the year 2030.

- Over the next 15 years, it is forecasted there will be 28,500 to 36,700 job openings in the NWT, of which 78 percent will typically require some form of postsecondary education and/or extensive work experience and seniority.
- Approximately 98 percent of the 28,500 job openings will be to replace workers who have retired or moved from the NWT.

The NWT is experiencing labour market challenges. The Northern workforce continues to struggle to meet the educational and skill levels required to meet the current labour market demand and the size of the workforce needed to address the economic growth. There is concern that any decline in our population would directly result in shortages in skilled labour supply. A potential declining population and an aging workforce mean that Northern businesses must increase efforts to attract workers.

In order for NWT residents to have the skills, knowledge and attitudes for employment success, strategically developed programs such as the Nominee Program are critical to the overall success of the territory to create opportunities. The Nominee Program's *Employer stream* is a tool that employers can use that assist with building a skilled workforce that meets demands.



Action Plan

Both the NWT and the GNWT are in a strong position economically to actively pursue all possible opportunities to grow the population, strengthen and diversify the workforce and to continue to build on the cultural diversity and fabric of the NWT. The goals of the Strategy support the mandate of the 18th Legislative Assembly while describing how the Nominee Program will increase in size, improve partnerships and diversify the economy.

The Strategy is based on the following five goals:

- 1. Attract foreign nationals to the NWT whose skills are aligned with current workforce needs.
- 2. Attract foreign investment through the establishment or purchase of a business by a foreign national, to benefit the economy.
- 3. Support and be responsive to settlement and integration needs.
- 4. Support the workforce by educating foreign nationals and NWT employers on workers' rights
- 5. Consolidate administrative efforts between the departments of ECE and ITI.

The Strategy's actions were identified to provide guidance and direction on what needs to be accomplished in the next five years to ensure that the Nominee Program is building an economically viable and culturally diverse workforce. A key criterion in understanding how to strategically use immigration as a tool for success was identifying how it plays a vital role in increasing the population of the NWT.

The actions identify key activities needed to build a skilled and diverse workforce for the NWT. The GNWT is committed to achieving the actions of this Strategy to assist in building a skilled workforce. Work has already started on several fronts to move the Strategy forward, including creating a communications strategy to market the North as a destination, and launching an enhanced www.immigratenwt.ca website and revised program guidelines.





Attract foreign nationals to the NWT whose skills are aligned with current workforce needs.

The Nominee Program is a tool for employers to recruit and retain a skilled workforce. The Nominee Program's *Employer stream* has a commitment to increase approved applications by 25 percent per year until 2019.

Stakeholders identified that the GNWT should prioritize Francophone immigration to the NWT. Therefore, a target to increase Francophone applications by five percent per year until 2022 has been set.

Objectives:

- 1. Increase the number of approved nominees per year.
- 2. Increase the number of approved Francophone nominees.

Actions:

- Implement a comprehensive communications marketing strategy to promote the Nominee Program to both employers and foreign nationals at the local, national and international level.
- Explore options on how to enhance the *Employer streams* to include a new express entry stream specific
 to labour market needs based on occupations in demand in the NWT.
- Research avenues to recruit and retain Francophone foreign nationals.
- Introduce a Francophone immigration stream under the Nominee Program.

Building your workforce? It's within reach.

Team up with the NWT Nominee Program.





Attract foreign investment, through the establishment or purchase of a business by a foreign national, to benefit the economy.

The *Business stream* of the Nominee Program is a means to diversify the economy of the Northwest Territories as foreign nationals establish, purchase or invest in a local NWT business. Successful implementation of the *Business stream* promotes business

development across all sectors of the economy, while increasing the number of businesses available to serve the local market, increasing the jobs available to the local community, and increasing the overall population.

Objectives:

- 1. Increase foreign investment through the establishment or purchase of a business by a foreign national.
- Increase economic diversification.
- 3. Increase the number of approved business applicants.

Actions:

- Continue to streamline application procedures to allow for orderly intake of processing of applicants while ensuring it is easily accessible to all interested foreign nationals.
- Market the *Business stream* to top markets based on informed research.
- Develop and distribute *Business stream* promotional materials to increase awareness of the Nominee Program *Business stream* program.
- Identify partnership opportunities with key stakeholders to jointly promote the *Business stream*.

A path to Permanent Residency:

Build a business in Canada's Northwest Territories.



Support and be responsive to settlement and integration needs.

Newcomers to the NWT, whether as employees or business owners, face many challenges with their settlement and integration such as securing housing, registering in education,

obtaining language, and culture. The focus is to help newcomers make the NWT their home, and to support them to fully participate in and contribute to all aspects of living in the North.

Objectives:

1. Improve partnerships with the Federal Government and Territorial stakeholders to ensure the NWT is responsive to the needs of foreign nationals and Northern employers.

Actions:

- Coordinate semi-annual meetings with federally-funded Settlement Service Providers.
- Provide resources for settlement services including the development of a "Welcome to the NWT" resource booklet for the attraction, settlement and retention of foreign nationals to the NWT
- Determine resources that should be available to assist with the integration of successful business applicants into the NWT.
- Explore the feasibility of the expansion of settlement services while improving partnerships with external supports available for settlement and integration.
- Enhance information sharing with the Federal Government to increase awareness of where
 foreign nationals have settled in the NWT and support their access to specific settlement and
 integration services and supports.

Permanent Residency? It's within reach.

Choose Canada's Northwest Territories.







Support the workforce by educating foreign nationals and NWT employers on rights and responsibilities.

There is a continued need to provide education on workplace safety and rights. The NWT *Employment Standards Act* and Regulations

set the minimum terms and conditions of employment that serves the needs of both employers and workers.

Objectives:

1. Increase awareness of workplace safety and rights among foreign nationals and NWT employers.

Actions:

- Provide training on workplace safety and workers' rights to foreign nationals and provide education on the *Employment Standards Act*.
- Deliver information sessions and distribute information materials to inform employers of their workplace responsibilities under the *Employment Standards Act*.

A path to Permanent Residency:

Build a business in Canada's Northwest Territories.



Consolidate administrative efforts between the departments of Education, Culture and Employment and Industry, Tourism and Investment.

The Nominee Program is a tool for both employers and foreign investors to build the workforce and diversify the economy. To ensure effective program delivery, there is a need to consolidate administrative efforts.

Additionally, stakeholders expressed the continued need to review existing program guidelines to ensure there are no systemic barriers.

Objectives:

1. Increase the coordination of Nominee Program delivery.

Actions:

- Develop a shared database between ECE and ITI to ensure effective program delivery.
- Update program guidelines in accordance with IRCC policies, the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, and the Canada-NWT Agreement on Territorial Nominees as necessary and based on client feedback to ensure it is clear and user friendly.
- Track retention of applicants.



Team up with the NWT Nominee Program.



Our Approach

Leadership

ECE in partnership with ITI met with stakeholders to develop the Strategy. The information gained identified building blocks for long-term success.

Research Methods

The departments undertook various methods of obtaining information to guide the development of the Strategy: listening to our stakeholders, learning and building from other GNWT initiatives and researching best practices from other jurisdictions.

Listening to our stakeholders

First, we identified stakeholders who had applied to the *Employer stream*, or have been involved in the Nominee Program in some way. Stakeholder participation was fundamental in understanding how the Nominee Program can assist with building a skilled and diverse workforce.

Stakeholders included were:

- Employers who had applied to the Nominee Program;
- The chamber of commerce in each region;
- Federally funded immigration service providers;
- Registered immigration consultants;
- · Cultural and community organizations; and
- Regional superintendents (ECE & ITI).

The stakeholder engagement was undertaken by three methods to provide input and feedback:

- In-person interview in the five regions.
- Facilitated focus group discussion in the five regions.
- Online survey.

The engagement process provided an opportunity for stakeholders to share their experience with the Nominee Program. Stakeholders offered suggestions for ways in which the *Employer stream* can support employers in the recruitment and retention of foreign workers. They also provided recommendations for improving partnerships with stakeholders. Overall, valuable information was received to consider on ways to promote the Nominee Program at the local, national and international level. As a result of the engagement process, stakeholders provided significant information that was used to develop the Strategy.

Learning and building from other GNWT initiatives

Skills 4 Success 10-Year Strategic Framework

The Strategy stems from the ECE's *Skills 4 Success* 10-Year Strategic Framework, which aims to improve employment success for NWT residents, close skill gaps for in-demand jobs and more effectively respond to employer and industry needs. From this work, it is evident that the Nominee Program needs to continue to have a strategic role in contributing to economic development to support building a skilled workforce.

Strong Cultures, Strong Territory: Government of the Northwest Territories Culture and Heritage Strategic Framework

In addition, the Strategy builds on the goals and priorities of the GNWT's *Strong Cultures, Strong Territory: Government of the Northwest Territories Culture and Heritage Strategic Framework* (Framework). The Framework is the first of its kind in the NWT – a ten-year, overarching framework that recognizes the powerful link between "culture and heritage" and all that the GNWT does. The Framework is inclusive of the cultures of all NWT residents, and is based on the premise that the GNWT must understand the past, in the context of today's cultures,



Stakeholder

The stakeholders in this engagement process included employers, immigration service providers, representatives from various chambers of commerce, and regional superintendents.

to make wise decisions for the future. Supporting the inclusion and integration of immigrants and new Canadians is one of the priorities of the Framework.

Economic Opportunities Strategy & Mineral Development Strategy

The Immigration Strategy also builds on ITI's EOS and Mineral Development Strategy (MDS), which aim to identify opportunities to create and promote a strong, diverse and sustainable economy through a number of recommendations.

One important recommendation of the EOS includes attracting, retaining, and preparing the NWT workforce. The EOS states that "A growing population is critical to maintaining the NWT's economic base and links directly to government revenues, consumer demand and labour supply." Therefore, in response to strengthening initiatives to attract new residents to the NWT, ITI is investing resources into the delivery of its Business stream of the Nominee Program.

The purpose of the MDS is to realize, responsibly and sustainably, the full potential of the NWT's rich mineral resources and use it to ensure lasting prosperity for the NWT residents and communities. The MDS lays out a clear plan to ensure that the benefits from mineral exploration and mining activities continue well into the future. The MDS also acts as a key policy instrument to improve investor and public confidence in the resource sector. This means that opportunities exist for *Business stream* applicants in the mineral resource sector.

Researching best practices from other jurisdictions

All jurisdictions within Canada have agreements in place with Canada for Provincial/Territorial Nominee Programs, with the exception of Nunavut. Several

jurisdictions have developed immigration strategies and frameworks that are predominately shaped to address particular labour market and economic development needs.

The overall purpose of Provincial/Territorial Nominee Programs is to attract and retain foreign nationals most likely to generate economic activity for the province/territory. Nominee Programs continue to experiment with creating programs and criteria designed to assist with economic growth. Therefore, the Nominee Programs vary widely and learning from other jurisdictions of key policy features provided valuable information. Provincial Nominee Programs are effective programs that are used to satisfy a number of national and regional interests, primarily economic interests. The NWT Nominee staff meet annually with other jurisdictions to discuss best practices and improve the programs to make them effective and welcoming.

Listening to NWT residents during federal consultations on the future of immigration in Canada

Every fall, the Minister of IRCC tables in Parliament the Annual Report on Immigration, which includes an immigration levels plan for the following year. The immigration levels plan details how many immigrants Canada will welcome as permanent residents under family, economic, refugee, humanitarian and other classes (which include persons admitted on humanitarian or public-policy grounds).

In the summer of 2016, IRCC consulted with NWT stakeholders on immigration levels that provided Nominee staff an opportunity to listen to NWT residents' thoughts and concerns while being able to give a voice to the NWT's immigration needs.

Future of the Northwest Territories' Economic Immigration

To accelerate meeting skilled workforce demands and to diversify the economy, the Nominee Program has identified an action plan to support the vision of building an economically viable and culturally diverse workforce.

Employers require highly skilled foreign nationals to meet labour demand that will allow their businesses to be more productive and in return will diversify economic growth while increasing the NWT population.

Attracting and retaining skilled foreign nationals who bring critical skills and capital to invest that can help small and medium sized businesses grow into larger established enterprises can also create high quality jobs for Northerners.

The vision "A skilled and culturally diverse workforce that meets local employers' needs and leads to a vibrant, diverse economy" can be achieved by focusing on the action plan to attract skilled foreign

nationals with specialized skill sets currently lacking in the NWT. Immigration is able to meet immediate business workforce gaps while also attracting entrepreneurs and business leaders to expand and diversify the economy in all regions of the NWT.

Next Steps

The Nominee Program is committed to achieving the vision, goals and objectives of this Strategy to support a brighter future for the NWT. Work is already underway on several fronts to move the Strategy forward to build a skilled workforce and a strong diversified economy that is sustainable and socially responsible.

The Strategy supports building a skilled workforce and diverse economy and sets the direction for immigration policy, programs and services in the NWT.

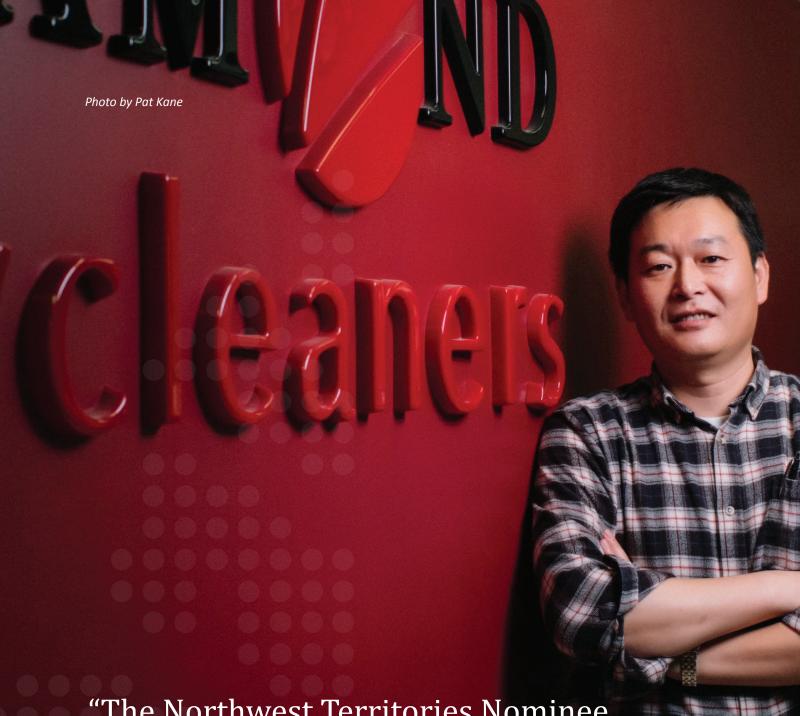
Performance Measurement

A performance measurement plan will be developed that aligns with the NWT Immigration Strategy 2017-2022. This performance measurement plan will include the creation of performance measures and indicators, and the implementation of an effective data management and information system to track and report on results. Performance measurement establishes a strong accountability structure between program areas/GNWT and the public. Performance measurement also provides a platform for the GNWT to identify and showcase successes in immigration, and ultimately, will contribute to the continuous improvement of the Nominee Program in the NWT.

What is an Indicator?

An indicator is what we use to measure different aspects of a strategy or program, and is important in providing evidence that we have accomplished the goals, objectives and actions. Indicators can be both quantitative and qualitative, depending on the aspect we are looking to measure.

For more information on the Nominee Program visit: www.immigratenwt.ca



"The Northwest Territories Nominee Program *Business stream* allows me to live out my dream and bring my family to Canada. It lets me become a member of the community and show how hard I can work running a successful business that is needed in the NWT."

Bingjun (Colin) Wang. Purchased Diamond Drycleaners on September 30, 2016.

