

2012 Inclusive Public Service Survey: Results Analysis and Action Plan



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Department of Human Resources
Government of the Northwest Territories

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Background

In recent years, to determine how many Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) employees were persons with disabilities, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) relied mainly on statistics gathered from new employees. Employees who stated that they were 'Resident Disabled' in accordance with the GNWT's Affirmative Action Policy's definition of 'disabled' were, and continue to be, counted as persons with disabilities.

On March 31, 2010, 0.45% of GNWT employees self-declared as 'Resident Disabled' in accordance with the Affirmative Action Policy. On March 31, 2011 and March 31, 2012, the number of employees self-declaring as 'resident disabled' had slightly increased to 0.48% and 0.79%, respectively.

DHR suspected that the number of GNWT employees who are persons with disabilities was higher, mostly due to a belief that new and existing employees with disabilities were choosing not to disclose for various reasons. For example, employees self-identifying as Indigenous Aboriginal, in accordance with the Affirmative Action Policy, are unable to also identify as 'Resident Disabled' due to being restricted to identify using only one affirmative action category. Additionally, new employees may not have disabilities when they are hired, but may acquire them after beginning employment, and when current employees with disabilities who do not disclose also do not require accommodations, there is no formal mechanism in place for the GNWT to track statistics of those employees. Finally, the definition of 'disabled' contained within the Affirmative Action Policy may prevent new and existing employees from disclosing (e.g., a person may not feel that he or she is 'disadvantaged' as indicated by the Policy's definition).

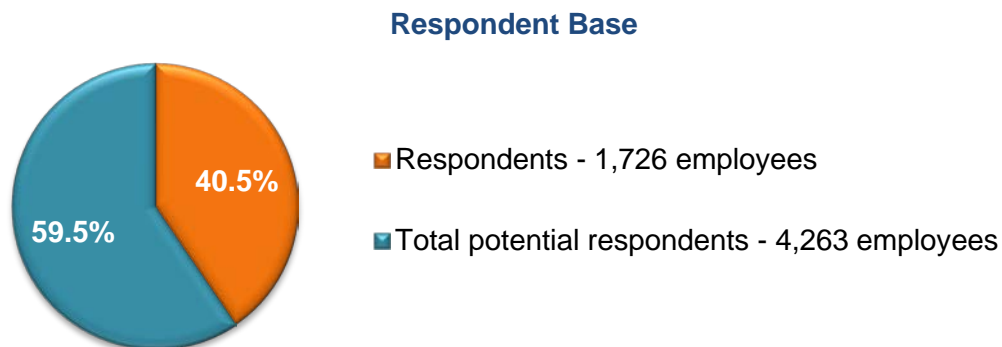
DHR wanted to obtain better data to reflect the representation of employees with disabilities in the GNWT, and wanted to learn from all employees about their perspectives on employment for persons with disabilities with the GNWT.

DHR consulted with the GNWT Advisory Committee on Employability (GACE), which includes GNWT employees with disabilities and representatives of non-government organizations serving the disability community in the Northwest Territories (NWT), and with the Yukon Government's Workplace Diversity Employment Office. As a result, the Inclusive Public Service Survey (IPSS) was developed by DHR and launched by the NWT Bureau of Statistics in January 2012. It was sent to all term and indeterminate (part-time and full-time) GNWT employees.

In the survey, disability was defined as: 'A physical, mental, medical or social / emotional condition that restricts the performance of one or more of a person's significant life activities for an extended period of time.' An extended period of time was further explained as being 'on a recurring or intermittent basis.' It was also noted that respondents with minor vision difficulties who wore corrective lenses which eliminated their vision difficulties should not self-identify as persons with disabilities, for the purposes of the survey.

Respondent Base

The IPSS was sent to 4,263 employees, and 1,726 employees responded, for a response rate of 40.5%. Some of the respondents self-identified as persons with disabilities and some did not. Due to the rate of response, it is difficult to attribute survey findings to the entire GNWT workforce however the results of the IPSS do provide useful information. The following chart illustrates the survey's respondent base.



Quantitative Data

Overall Representation Rate of Employees with Disabilities

Of the 4,263 GNWT employees that the survey was sent to, 273 or 6.4% indicated that they are persons with disabilities in accordance with the definition provided on the survey (see page 2). Therefore, it can be concluded that, at minimum, 6.4% of GNWT employees self-identify as persons with disabilities. While it is not appropriate to compare data from the survey to Statistics Canada's 2006 Participation and Activity Limitations Survey (PALS), the most recent, comprehensive national data available on persons with disabilities in the NWT and Canada, given that they are very different data collection tools, it is worth noting that according to PALS, 6.5% of the NWT workforce identified as persons with disabilities.

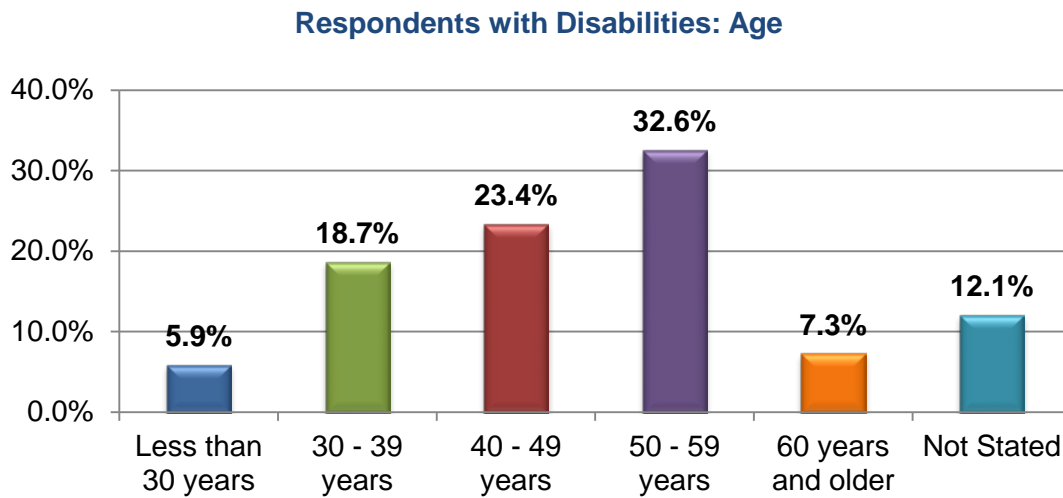
Respondents with Disabilities: Gender

273 or 6.4% of 1,726 respondents stated that they were persons with disabilities, in accordance with the definition provided on the survey. Of the 273 respondents, 25.3% were male, 62.3% were female, and 12.5% did not indicate a gender.

Respondents with Disabilities: Age

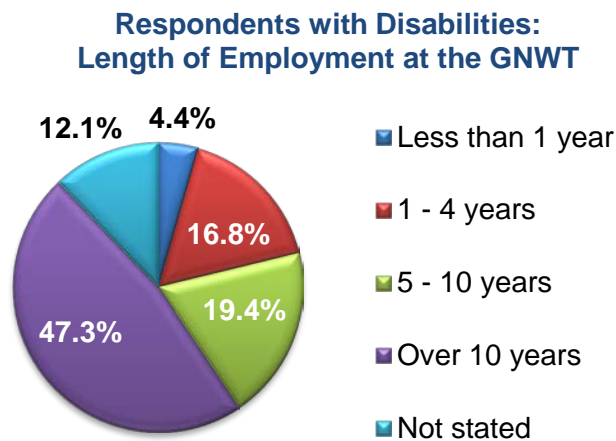
5.9% of respondents with disabilities were aged less than 30 years, 18.7% were aged 30 to 39 years, 23.4% were aged 40 to 49 years, 32.6% were aged 50 to 59 years, and 7.3% were aged 60 years or older. The remaining 12.1% did not indicate their ages.

The following chart outlines age identification:



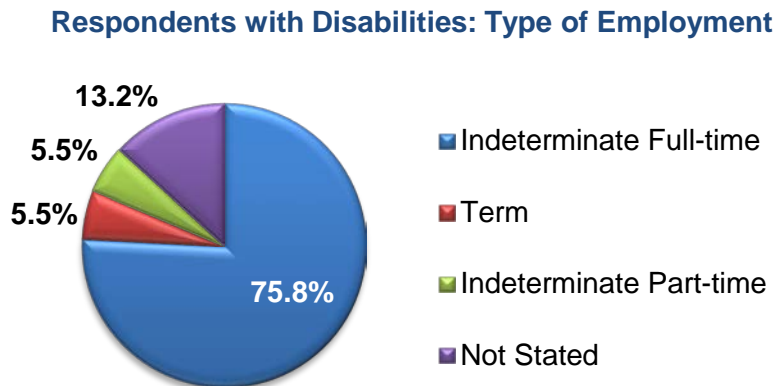
Respondents with Disabilities: Length of Employment at the GNWT

Respondents with disabilities were asked to indicate how long they have been employed at the GNWT. Nearly half (47.3%) of respondents stated they have been employed at the GNWT for longer than ten years. The following chart illustrates length of service at the GNWT for respondents with disabilities:



Respondents with Disabilities: Type of Employment

Respondents with disabilities were asked to identify whether they were employed in a term, indeterminate full-time, or indeterminate part-time position at the GNWT. A significant majority of respondents with disabilities, 75.8%, stated that they were indeterminate full-time employees. In each of the term and indeterminate part-time categories, respondents indicated rates of 5.5%, while 13.2% of respondents did not indicate an employment type. The following chart outlines types of employment for respondents with disabilities:



Respondents with Disabilities: Types of Disabilities

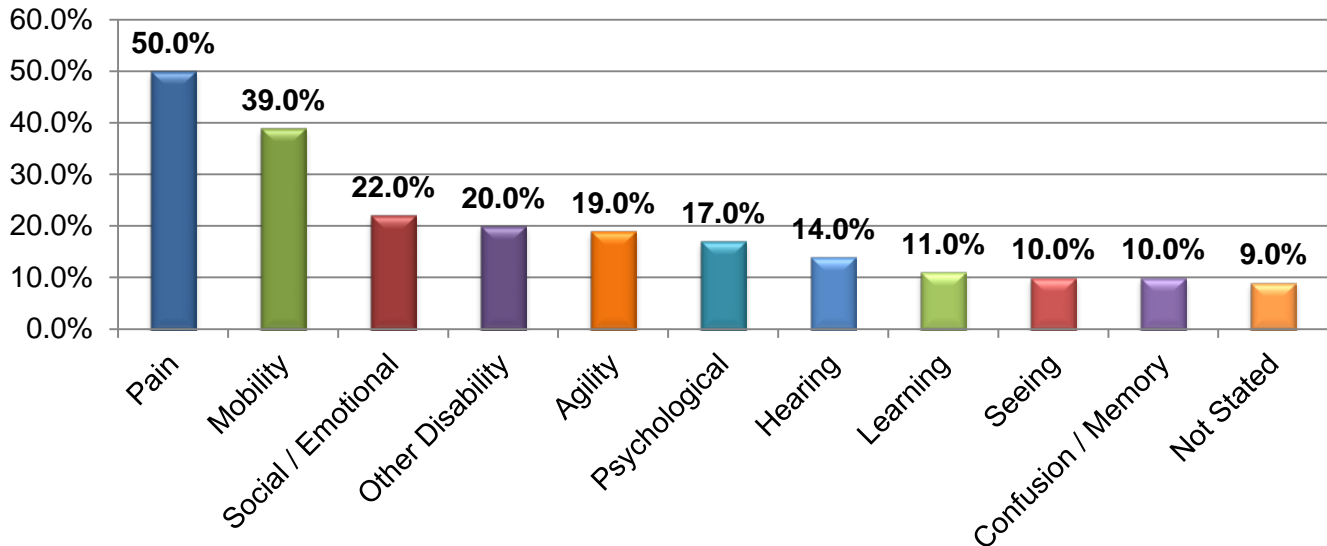
Respondents with disabilities were asked to indicate which disabilities they were affected by, as per the definition provided in the survey. Respondents could select more than one disability. Given that there are hundreds of disabilities, in order to keep responses manageable, respondents were provided with disability categories. Categories were:

- hearing
- seeing
- mobility
- pain
- learning
- psychological
- confusion / memory
- social / emotional
- other disability

The top three disability category types selected were Pain (118 respondents or 50%), Mobility (93 respondents or 39%), and Social/Emotional (51 respondents or 22%), which are usually invisible.

Types of disabilities response rates are outlined in the following chart:

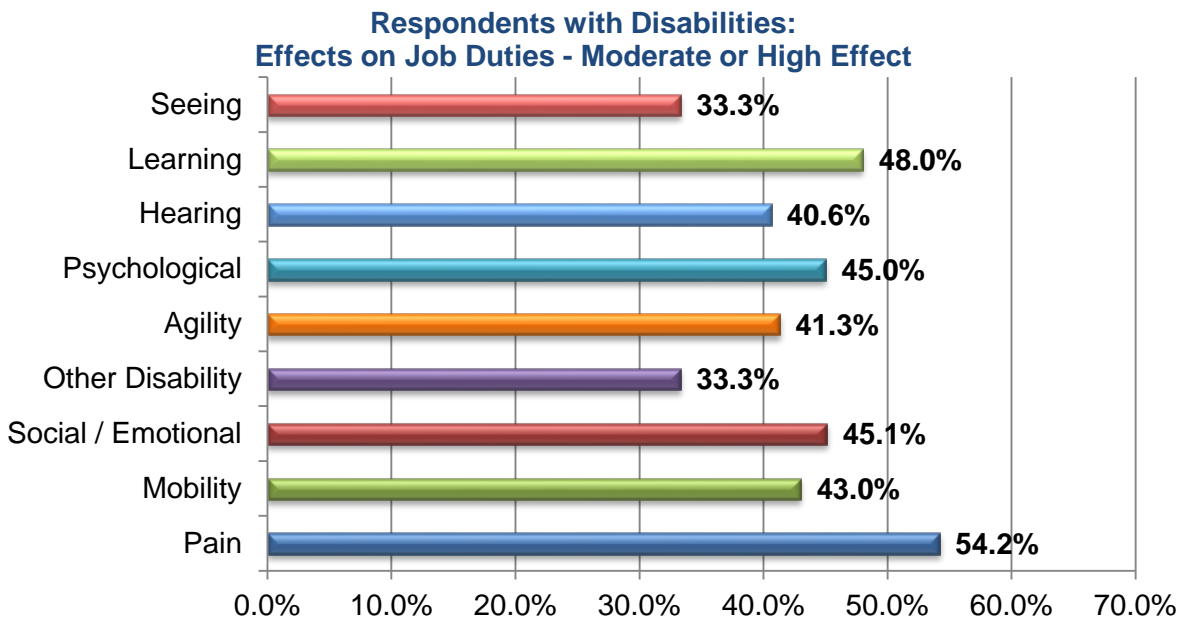
Respondents with Disabilities: Types of Disabilities

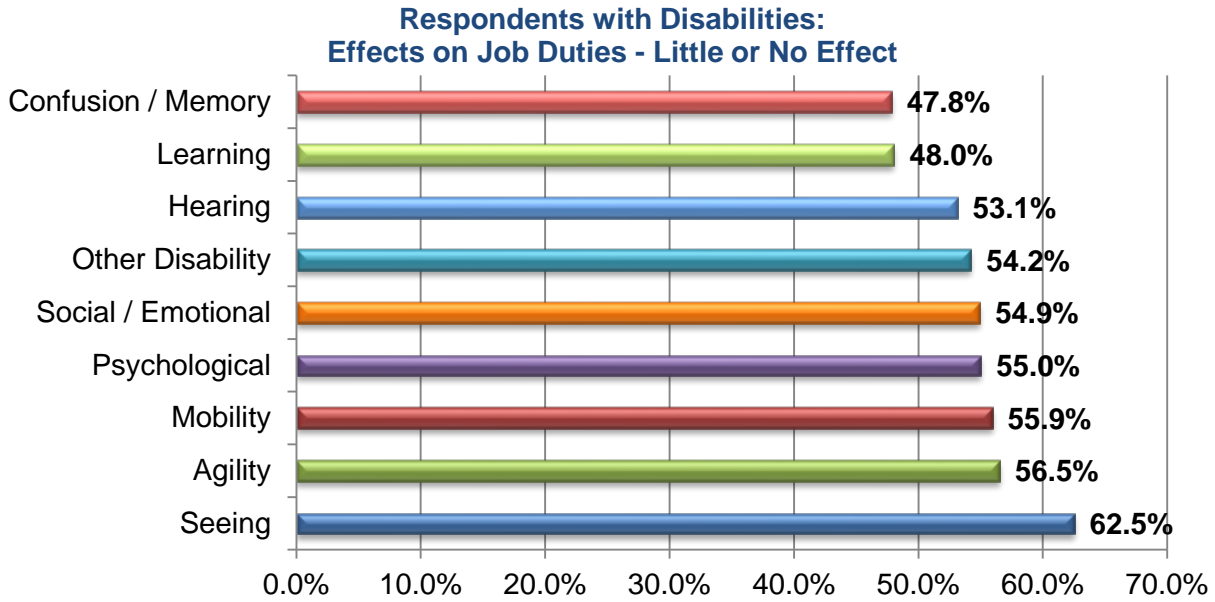


Respondents with Disabilities: Effects on Job Duties

Respondents with disabilities were asked to indicate whether or not their disabilities affected their job duties. Of 118 respondents with a pain disability, 64, or 54.2%, reported that their disability had a moderate or high effect on job duties.

Respondents with other disabilities reported a moderate or high effect on job duties at lower percentages. The following charts outline how respondents with disabilities reported 'moderate or high' and 'little or no' effects on job duties.





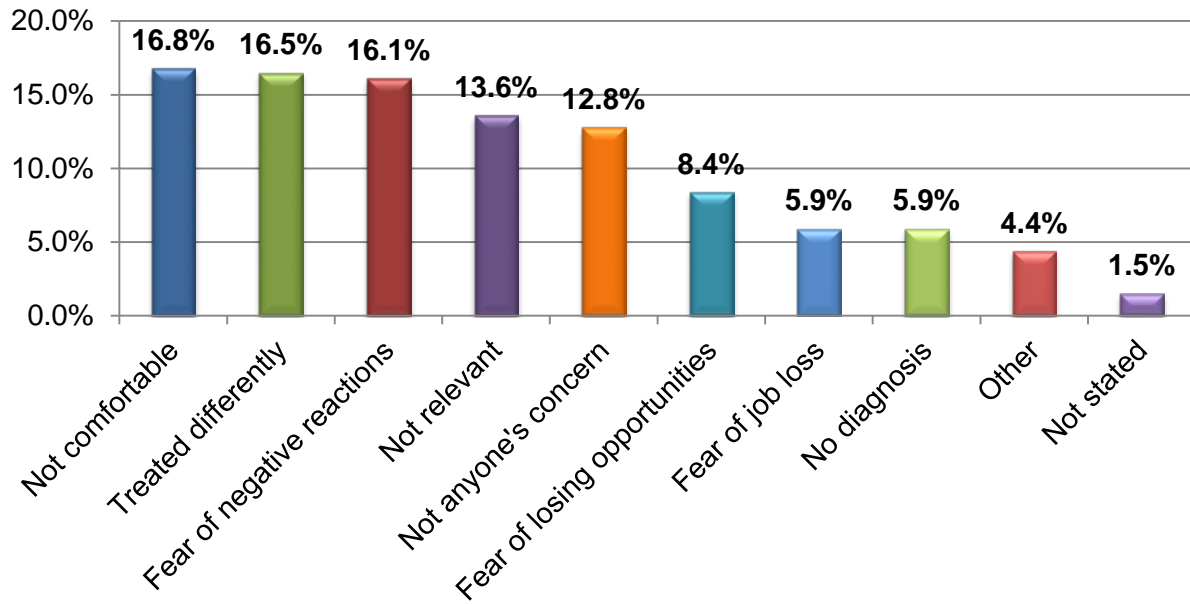
Respondents with Disabilities: Communication of Disability

Respondents with disabilities were asked whether or not they had discussed their disabilities with their supervisors and/or co-workers. 56.0% of respondents indicated that they had discussed their disabilities with their supervisors, while 59.3% indicated that they had discussed their disabilities with co-workers.

Of the 40.3% of respondents who stated that they had not discussed their disabilities with their supervisors, the top reasons indicated for not doing so were ‘not comfortable’ (46 respondents or 16.8%), ‘treated differently’ (45 respondents or 16.5%) and ‘fear of negative reactions’ (44 respondents or 16.1%).

Reasons for non-discussion are outlined in the following chart:

**Respondents with Disabilities:
Communication of Disability - Reasons for not Discussing Disability with Supervisor**



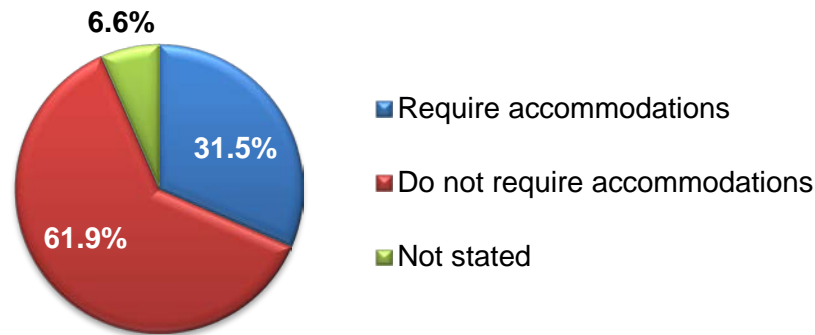
It is interesting to note that a slightly greater number of respondents with disabilities have discussed their disabilities with co-workers than with supervisors. It may only be assumed that this is due to factors such as levels of comfort (e.g., workplace friendships with coworkers) or perceived reduction of risk in talking with coworkers rather than supervisors (e.g., coworkers have little, if any, bearing on an employee's performance appraisal, etc.).

Workplace Accommodations

Accommodations, or workplace supports, assist some employees with disabilities by enabling them to complete job duties. Examples include, but are not limited to: ergonomic chairs, modified hours, and magnification software for computer use. Respondents with disabilities were asked whether or not they require workplace accommodations, and 86 persons or 31.5% indicated that they do require accommodations, while 169 persons or 61.9% indicated that they do not. The remaining 18 persons or 6.6% did not specify.

The following chart outlines this information:

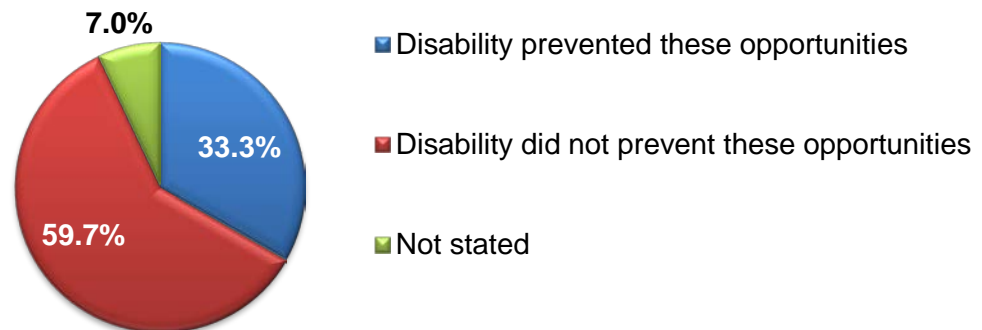
Respondents with Disabilities Requiring Workplace Accommodations



Training Opportunities, Advancement and New Positions

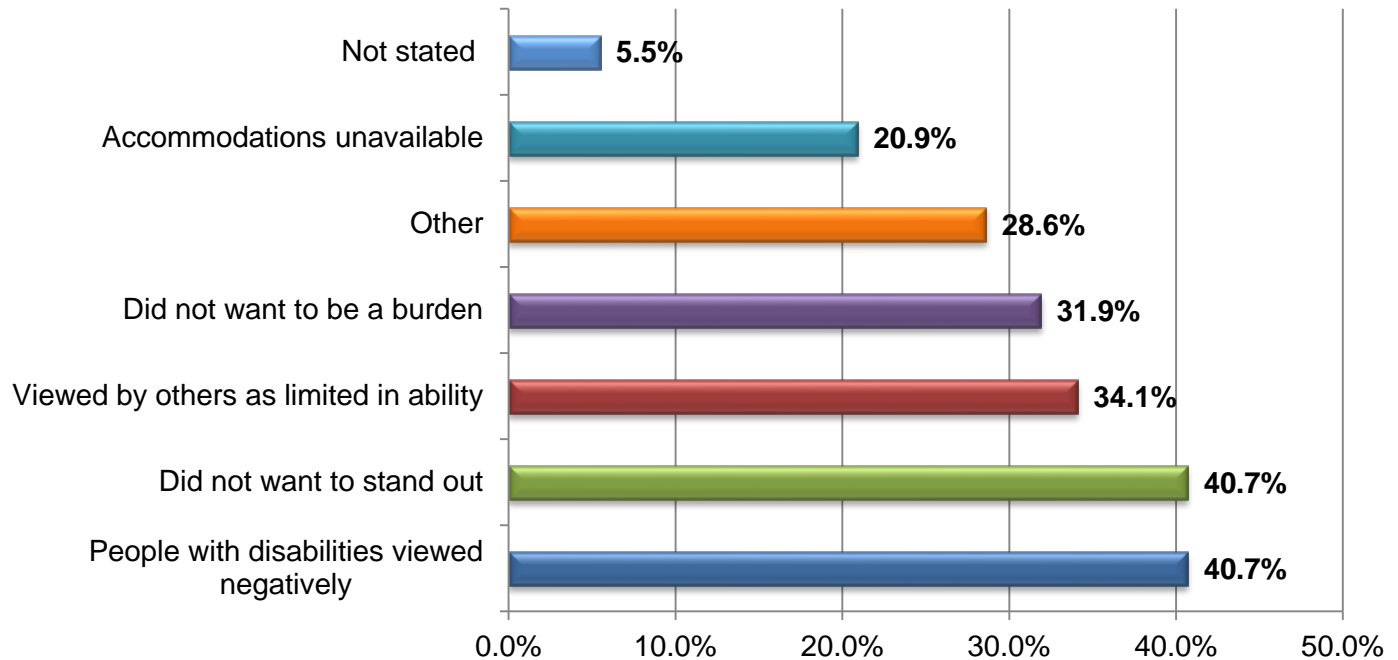
Respondents with disabilities were asked whether or not they believed their disabilities prevented training, advancement or opportunities for new positions at the GNWT. While 91 persons or 33.3% of respondents indicated yes, 163 respondents or 59.7% stated they did not believe this. The remaining 19 or 7% of respondents did not specify. This is demonstrated in the following chart.

Respondents with Disabilities: Disability Perceived to Hinder Training, Advancement, and New Positions



Respondents who stated that their disability had prevented training, advancement or new position opportunities were asked to indicate reasons why they believed this to be the case. The top three reasons selected were: 'People with disabilities viewed negatively' (37 persons or 40.7%), 'did not want to stand out' (37 persons or 40.7%) and 'viewed by others as limited in ability' (31 persons or 34.1%). Additional reasons are noted in the chart below.

Respondents with Disabilities: Perceived Reasons why Disability Prevents Training, Advancement or New Position Opportunities



It is important to acknowledge that some employees with disabilities perceive that these reasons are preventing them from pursuing and/or obtaining training, advancement or new position opportunities. Further, it is also important to note that 19 persons or 20.9% of these respondents believe that accommodations, which they presumably require in order to pursue these opportunities, are unavailable. It is unknown why these respondents believe that accommodations are unavailable.

All Respondents: Barriers to Employment for Persons with Disabilities

All respondents were asked if they believe employment barriers exist for persons with disabilities at the GNWT. Of the respondents:

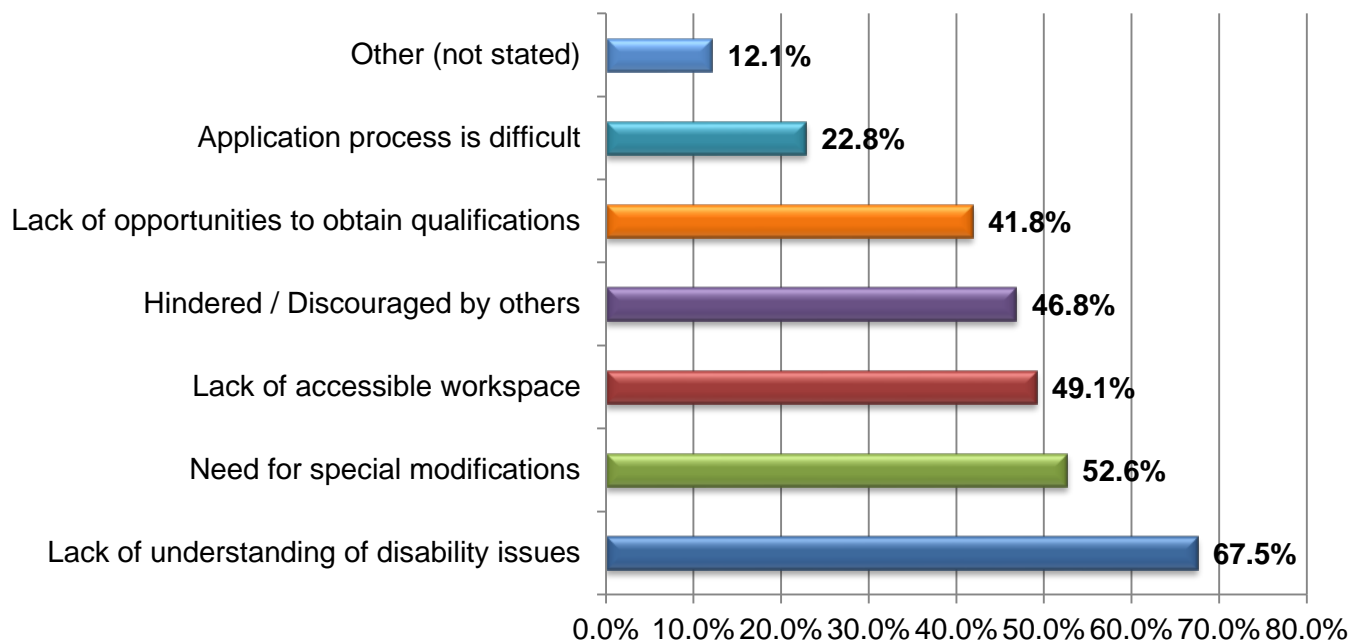
- 617 or 35.7% of all respondents stated that barriers exist for *seeking* employment;
- 641 or 37.1% of all respondents stated that barriers exist for *obtaining* employment;
- 501 or 29.0% of all respondents stated that barriers exist for *keeping* employment; and
- 634 or 36.7% of all respondents stated that barriers exist for *career advancement*.

It appears that a fairly consistent percentage of respondents feel that persons with disabilities face barriers in seeking and obtaining employment, and advancing in career opportunities once

hired. However, slightly fewer respondents feel that employees with disabilities face barriers to remaining employed, once hired.

Respondents who stated that barriers to employment at the GNWT exist for persons with disabilities were asked to identify them. The top three barriers identified were: 'lack of understanding of disability issues' (557 or 67.5%), 'need for special modifications' (434 or 52.6%) and 'lack of accessible workspace' (405 or 49.1%). Barriers are outlined below:

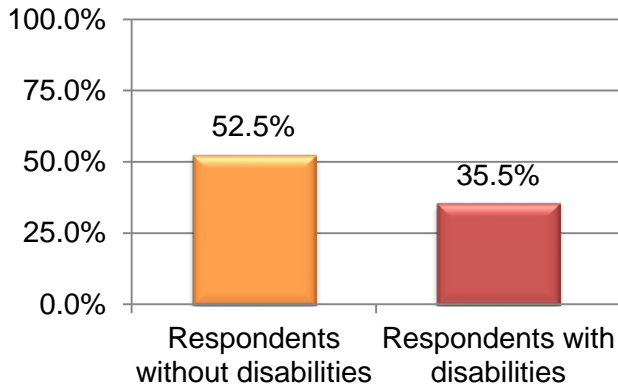
All Respondents: Barriers to Employment at the GNWT for Persons with Disabilities



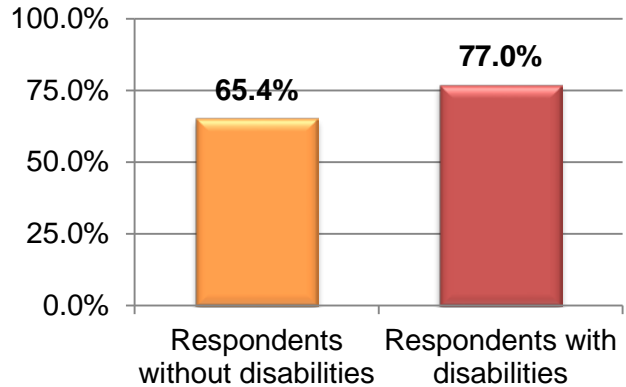
When the responses are examined, notable differences arise. 52.2% of respondents without disabilities stated 'lack of accessible workspace,' while only 35.5% of respondents with disabilities did. 65.4% of respondents without disabilities stated 'lack of understanding of disability issues,' while 77% of respondents with disabilities did.

The following charts demonstrate this:

Barrier: Lack of Accessible Workspace



Barrier: Lack of Awareness of Disability

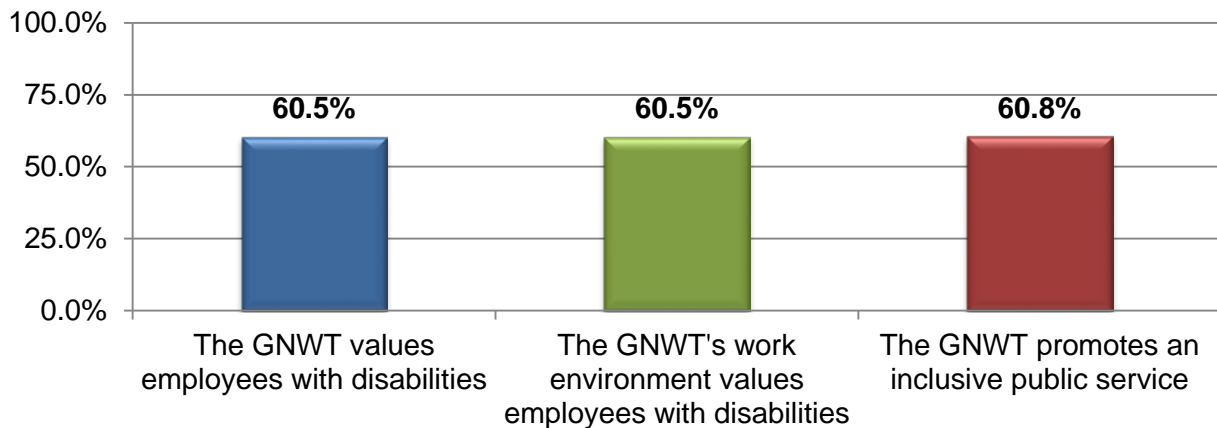


Perceptions and Attitudes

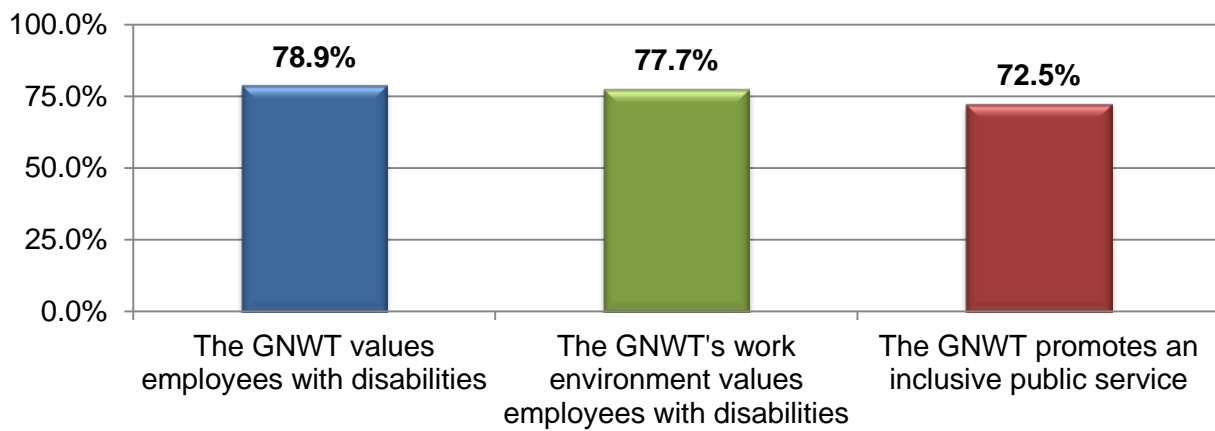
All respondents were asked if they believe the GNWT values employees with disabilities, and 1,312 or 76% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. All respondents were asked if they believe the GNWT's *work environment* values employees with disabilities, and 1,394 or 75% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Additionally, 1,219 or 70.6% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the GNWT promotes an inclusive public service.

Again, differences are noticeable between the responses of respondents with disabilities and respondents without disabilities, the latter of whom were more likely to state that 1) the GNWT values employees with disabilities, 2) the GNWT's *work environment* values employees with disabilities, and 3) the GNWT promotes an inclusive public service. This is demonstrated in the following charts.

Perceptions of the GNWT: Respondents with Disabilities (Agree or Strongly Agree)



**Perceptions of the GNWT:
Respondents without Disabilities (Agree or Strongly Agree)**



Qualitative Data

Suggestions for an Inclusive Public Service

All survey respondents were asked to provide suggestions on how the GNWT can improve efforts in being an inclusive employer, and ensure that GNWT employees with disabilities are treated equitably. Approximately 600 responses were received. The top two comments were:

1. 33.3% of all respondents: Provide more information/training/education on working with and hiring persons with disabilities; and
2. 20.0% of all respondents: Ensure GNWT facilities are accessible (barrier free) and safe for persons with disabilities, especially in winter.

Other top comments were:

3. Identify positions that are a suitable match for persons with disabilities and focus on abilities.
4. Current efforts by the GNWT to ensure persons with disabilities are treated equitably are good.
5. Consult persons with disabilities to determine their needs and support their daily struggles.
6. Provide appropriate tools and/or accommodations.
7. Treat everyone the same (with respect and dignity) regardless of their disability.

8. Visibly promote hiring persons with disabilities and promote the GNWT as being inclusive.
9. Follow policies and proper hiring practices and have oversight to ensure these are followed correctly.
10. Treat persons with disabilities with respect and dignity.

Summary of Data, Past, Current, and Future Initiatives

In summary, most respondents with disabilities:

- were aged 40-59 (56%),
- were female (62.3%)
- were long term employees (over ten years, 47.3%),
- were in full-time, indeterminate positions (75.8%); and
- had disabilities categorized as 'pain,' 'mobility,' or 'social / emotional,' which are often invisible disabilities, at rates of 50%, 39%, and 22%, respectively.

6.4% of respondents stated that they had one or more disabilities, which is an improvement over the previously known percentage of less than 1%.

While 62.3% of respondents with disabilities stated that they are female, 64.47% of all GNWT employees at the time the survey was conducted were female. Therefore, the percentage of female respondents vs. male respondents disabilities is likely not relevant.

The GNWT has already begun to address some of the issues identified in the survey results. For example, the Duty to Accommodate Injury and Disability Policy and the Harassment Free and Respectful Workplace Policy help shape initiatives which ensure that employees with disabilities are treated fairly and have their accommodation needs addressed appropriately. The table on the following page outlines efforts by the GNWT to address the issues raised by the survey, and future initiatives to further address issues of inclusion and diversity.

Action Plan: Summary of Data, Past, Current, and Future Initiatives

Key Issue Identified from Survey Results	Past and Current GNWT Initiatives Which Address the Issue	Future Initiatives
<p>1. Statistics on GNWT Employees with Disabilities</p> <p>Quantitative survey results tell us that at least 6.4% of employees are persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Affirmative Action Policy statistics of 'Resident Persons with Disabilities' have consistently remained at less than 1%. Therefore, it appears that applicants have largely chosen not to identify as 'Resident Persons with Disabilities.'</p> <p>Other tracking has included monitoring the number of employees who have been provided disability-related accommodations.</p>	<p>a. Encouraging job applicants to identify as 'Resident Persons with Disabilities' by including messaging in job ads and on the Human Resources website, and tracking the number of employees who self-identify as 'Resident Persons with Disabilities' under the Affirmative Action Policy. (However, this method does not allow for completely accurate tracking.)</p> <p>b. Tracking the number of employees who receive accommodations. (However, this only captures some employees with disabilities who are accommodated – usually via a more significant accommodation – as many employees' accommodations are not reported to DHR, sometimes accommodations are not recognized as accommodations, etc.)</p>	<p>The Department of Human Resources will launch regularly occurring Inclusive Public Service Surveys to better monitor statistics of GNWT employees with disabilities. This survey will be added on to the existing biannual Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey. All employees will be asked about their perceptions on employability at the GNWT, and employees with disabilities will be asked additional questions which pertain specifically to them. This will commence with the 2014 launch of the Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey.</p> <p>In future, managers will also be able to track accommodations of their own employees in PeopleSoft, the GNWT's human resource management system.</p>

<p>2. Education, Training and Awareness</p> <p>The most frequently stated comment in qualitative results was, “Provide more information/training/education on working with and hiring persons with disabilities.”</p> <p>In quantitative results, 67% of all survey respondents stated that lack of understanding of disability issues is a barrier to employment for persons with disabilities. Further, 54.2% of respondents who reported a ‘pain’ disability stated that their disability had a moderate or high effect on job duties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Disabilities Awareness Training for managers and employees. b. Tailored workshops on topics under the diversity umbrella, including disabilities, upon request by managers. c. Disability and Duty to Accommodate training are included as part of Diversity Presentations during monthly orientation training for new GNWT employees. d. Disability is included as part of Summer Student Orientation Training. e. Messaging about disability awareness, including invisible disabilities, is included in a poster campaign. f. Duty to Accommodate Training is tailored to particular audiences. 	<p>Disability Awareness and Duty to Accommodate training opportunities for managers and employees will continue to be offered and will be reviewed and updated as necessary.</p> <p>Enhance messaging about disability issues in a future poster campaign to include information on the top three disability categories identified by respondents with disabilities (pain, mobility, and social/emotional) and their effects on job duties. The possibility of including messaging about workplace accommodations may also be explored for inclusion in future poster campaigns.</p>
<p>3. Accessibility</p> <p>A top comment mentioned in qualitative results was, “Ensure GNWT facilities are accessible (barrier free) and safe for persons with disabilities, especially in winter.”</p> <p>In quantitative results, 49.1% of survey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Department of Human Resources’ website was recently redesigned to be accessible to all audiences. As well, all GNWT websites will be redesigned for a ‘common look and feel’ and will also include appropriate accessibility provisions. The GNWT Advisory 	<p>The GNWT Advisory Committee on Employability will review accessibility requirements for GNWT buildings, in respect to the National Building Code of Canada, and make any necessary recommendations to the Deputy Ministers’ Human Resources Committee.</p>

<p>respondents stated that lack of accessible workspace is a barrier to employment for persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>Committee on Employability made recommendations for changes.</p> <p>b. With direction from the Duty to Accommodate Injury and Disability Policy and Guidelines, GNWT workspaces are changed or revised as required in order to accommodate employees with disabilities, when requested, within Duty to Accommodate obligations.</p>	<p>The Department of Human Resources will work with departments to ensure appropriate accessibility within GNWT buildings. For example, a Department of Human Resources representative will meet with departmental, board, and agency representatives to review accessibility and make suggestions for general improvements within their workplaces. In addition, the Department of Human Resources will continue to provide advice on specific accommodation measures.</p>
<p>4. Job Matching</p> <p>A top comment noted in qualitative results was, “Identify positions that are a suitable match for persons with disabilities and focus on abilities.”</p>	<p>a. The GNWT is legally obligated to accommodate employees with disabilities to complete job duties when their disability impacts their ability to do so. Accommodation measures may include but are not limited to: re-bundling of duties, change of position, and re-training.</p> <p>b. Messaging about focusing on employees’ abilities is included in a poster campaign.</p>	<p>Past and current initiatives will continue as appropriate.</p>
<p>5. Future Surveys</p> <p>A top comment in qualitative results was, “Current efforts by the GNWT to</p>	<p>a. Questions about GNWT employees’ perceptions of disability, diversity and inclusion are contained within Employee Engagement and</p>	<p>Future Inclusive Public Service Surveys, which will become amalgamated with future Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Surveys, will continue to</p>

<p>ensure persons with disabilities are treated equitably are good.”</p>	<p>Satisfaction Surveys.</p>	<p>include questions about GNWT employees’ perceptions of employability issues.</p>
<p>6. Consultation with the Disability Community</p> <p>A top comment in qualitative results was, “Consult persons with disabilities to determine their needs and support their daily struggles.”</p>	<p>a. The GNWT Employability Working Group (GEW) was established to provide advice on initiatives to increase the representation of persons with disabilities at the GNWT.</p> <p>b. Focus groups of GNWT employees were held to seek input on initiatives to increase the representation of persons with disabilities at the GNWT.</p> <p>c. The GEW disbanded and the GNWT Advisory Committee on Employability was established, to provide recommendations to the Deputy Ministers’ Human Resource Committee on initiatives concerning employment of persons with disabilities at the GNWT, such as the Inclusive Public Service Survey.</p>	<p>Add questions to the survey to ascertain additional information. For example, why do some employees with disabilities choose not to disclose to their supervisors but do so with co-workers, and why do some employees with disabilities believe that accommodations are not available to them.</p>
<p>7. Providing Accommodations & Accommodation Policy</p> <p>A top comment in qualitative results was, “Provide appropriate tools and/or</p>	<p>a. The Department of Human Resources provides advice and support to the GNWT in regard to accommodating current employees and job candidates during the hiring</p>	<p>Disability Awareness and Duty to Accommodate Training opportunities for managers and employees will continue to be offered by the Department of Human Resources. These training</p>

<p>accommodations.”</p> <p>31.5% of respondents with disabilities indicated that they require accommodations, in quantitative results, and 20.9% of respondents with disabilities indicated that ‘accommodations unavailable’ was a reason for disability preventing training, advancement or new position opportunities.</p>	<p>process.</p> <p>b. Employment ads include a statement which encourages candidates with disabilities to self-identify and to ask for accommodations, if required, for the hiring process.</p> <p>c. Duty to Accommodate Training is available to all GNWT employees and managers, and focuses primarily on the GNWT’s legal duty to accommodate injury and disability.</p> <p>d. Disabilities awareness training is regularly offered to all GNWT employees and managers. This training includes information on the benefits to the GNWT for accommodating employees.</p> <p>e. The GNWT’s Duty to Accommodate Injury and Disability Policy and accompanying Guidelines are available to the public, as well as to GNWT managers and employees, via the Department of Human Resources’ website.</p>	<p>programs will be modified as necessary.</p> <p>The Department of Human Resources will continue to provide advice and support to the GNWT in regard to accommodating current employees and job candidates during the hiring process.</p>
<p>8. Ensuring Employees with Disabilities are Treated with Respect</p> <p>Top comments in qualitative results were, ‘Treat everyone the same (with</p>	<p>a. Harassment Free and respectful Workplace Policy and guidelines are available to GNWT employees and the public on the Human Resources</p>	<p>Inclusive Recruitment Strategy will include initiatives on recruiting, hiring, and retaining employees with disabilities as part of maintaining an inclusive,</p>

<p>respect and dignity) regardless of their disability.’ and</p> <p>‘Treat persons with disabilities with respect and dignity.’</p>	<p>website.</p>	<p>respectful workplace.</p> <p>Enhance messaging in a future poster campaign to promote these messages.</p>
<p>9. Communications and Messaging</p> <p>A top comment in qualitative results was, “Visibly promote hiring persons with disabilities and promote the GNWT as being inclusive.”</p> <p>In quantitative data, the top three reasons for not discussing disabilities with supervisors were indicators of a need to ensure that the GNWT workplace is known for being a work environment where employees with disabilities are included.</p>	<p>a. Promotion of being named one of Canada’s Best Diversity Employers in 2013 and 2014 (award was given in part for efforts to recruit, retain, and include persons with disabilities in the Public Service).</p> <p>b. Social media messages, available to the public, promote our efforts to recruit and hire persons with disabilities to the GNWT.</p>	<p>Enhance messaging in a future poster campaign to promote these messages.</p> <p>Launch external campaign (in addition to social media efforts) to ensure the public receives these messages. Anticipated launch date is 2014-2015 fiscal year. Specific actions and budget to be determined. Some possible actions: media ads, promotional materials on www.gnwtjobs.ca, promotional materials for career fairs which are attended by the department.</p>
<p>10. Policies and Procedures</p> <p>A top comment in qualitative results was,</p> <p>“Follow policies and proper hiring practices and have oversight to ensure these are followed correctly.”</p>	<p>a. All hiring procedures are to follow the Affirmative Action Policy which provides priority hiring to designated groups, such as Resident Persons with Disabilities.</p>	<p>The Department of Human Resources will review human resource procedures and policies as warranted, and/or provide training to human resource employees on such procedures when appropriate.</p>

Conclusion

The Inclusive Public Service Survey revealed that the GNWT is on the right track in efforts to recruit, employ, and include persons with disabilities in the public service. Given that the GNWT now employs three Duty to Accommodate Advisors, the DHR now has the capacity to provide more education, support, and advice regarding accommodations of GNWT employees with disabilities who require them.

The DHR will repeat the survey in 2014, as part of the Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey, with filter questions to allow employees with disabilities to answer questions specific to them. This will enable the DHR to compare survey results to those of 2012, after continuing to provide initiatives which attract, recruit, retain, promote and include persons with disabilities to the Public Service.