



*Summary*  
*NWT Anti-Poverty*  
*Strategic Framework*

November 2013





# *Summary—NWT Anti-Poverty Strategic Framework*

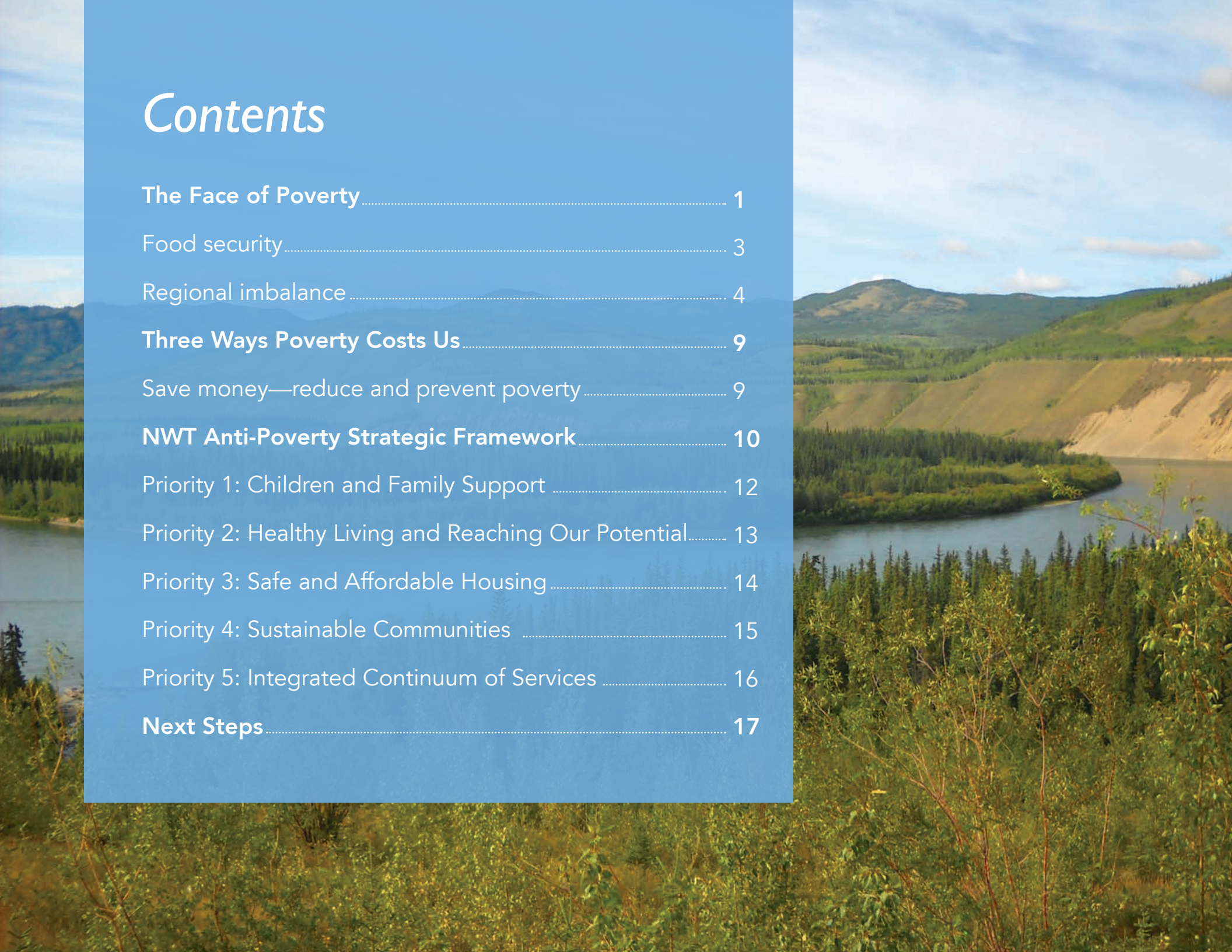
This document is a summary of the report “Building on the Strengths of Northerners—A Strategic Framework toward the Elimination of Poverty in the NWT”. It is also known as the “NWT Anti-Poverty Strategic Framework”.

The summary gives an outline of what poverty looks like in the NWT and the vision, principles, and priorities of the anti-poverty framework.



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# *The Face of Poverty*

People who live in poverty do not have enough money to pay for their basic needs. Because of this they share certain life conditions:

- Not enough food and often poor quality food.
- Poor housing conditions, crowded housing, housing that costs too much, or no housing—sleeping in shelters or on the street.
- Hard decisions about where to spend the money they have.
- Higher risk of poor health and early death.
- Less ability to take part fully in life and to reach their potential.
- More anxiety, hopelessness, and pain.



Certain groups of people are more likely to live in poverty.

- Single-parent families.
- People with low levels of education and literacy skills.
- Elders.
- People with disabilities.
- People with mental health and addictions problems.



## Food security

In the NWT, 1,855 households do not have food security. This means they cannot get enough nutritious, safe food that fits their lifestyle and provides a healthy diet. Access to healthy food depends on two main things:

- People always have enough money to buy the food they need for a healthy diet.
- Healthy, low cost food is always available where people live.





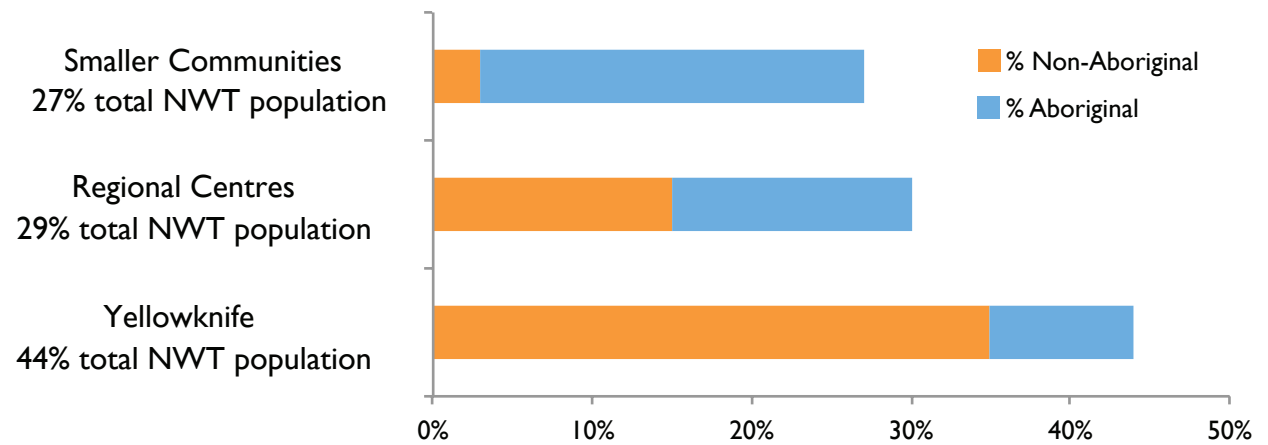
## Regional imbalance

In the NWT, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are spread unevenly among Yellowknife, regional centres, and smaller communities.

People who live in smaller communities—90% Aboriginal—are more likely to live with conditions that contribute to poverty. The following charts show examples of this regional imbalance.



*Where Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal residents live*



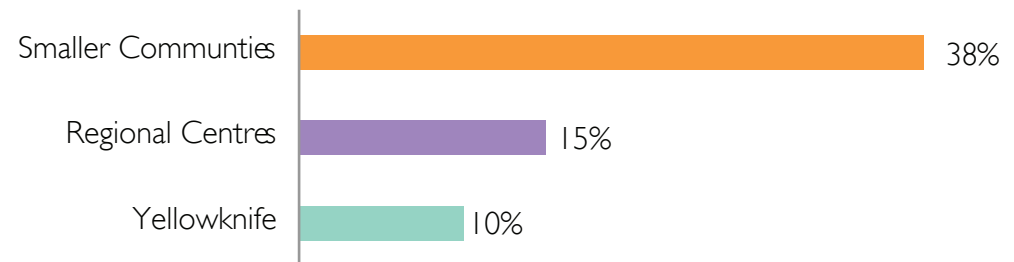
## Housing

People in smaller communities are much more likely to live in a home with core need than people in regional centres or Yellowknife.

People have a core housing need if their home does not meet one or more of these requirements:

- Suitable: enough bedrooms for the people that live there.
- Adequate: running water, indoor toilet, places to bath and wash; and needs no major repairs.
- Affordable: costs less than 30% of total household income. Includes utilities, water, heat, insurance, property taxes, land lease, rent, or mortgage.

*% NWT homes with core need (2009)*



## Education

People in smaller communities have much lower graduation rates than people in Yellowknife and regional centres.



*NWT graduation rates (2012)*



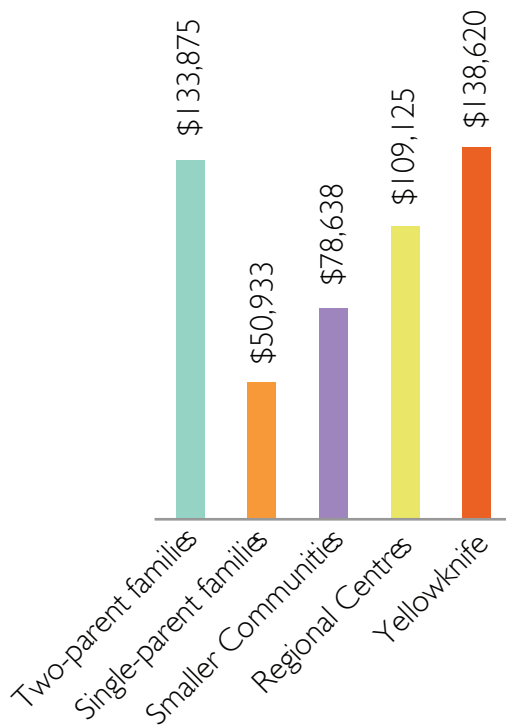
## Income

Income is not the only measure of wealth. But in today's world, not enough income or low income is a key element of poverty.

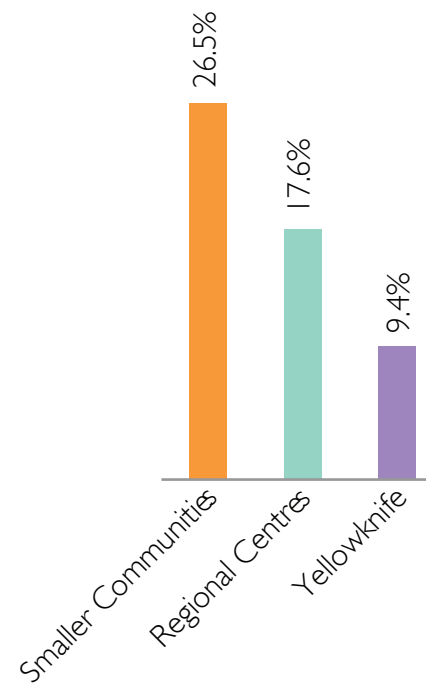
In the NWT, average total family income is lowest for single-parent families and people in smaller communities.

Sixteen percent (16%) of NWT families—1,840 families—earn less than \$30,000. Half of those families live in smaller communities.

*Average total family income (2010)*



*% NWT families that earn less than \$30,000 (2010)*



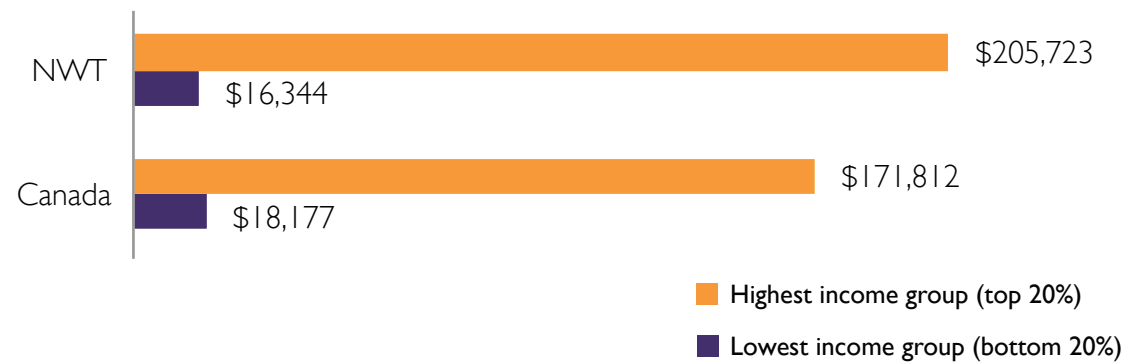
## Gap between rich and poor

Compared with most developed countries, Canada has a higher rate of poverty and a faster-growing gap between rich and poor. This gap is wider in the NWT than in other parts of Canada.



Terry Parker/GNWT

### Gap between highest and lowest income groups



# Three Ways Poverty Costs Us

- Direct costs: for social programs such as income support, social housing, and other services for people living in poverty.
- Indirect costs: for health care, education, law enforcement, and other public services.
- Social costs: for lost potential, poor health, reduced contribution to community life.

*Save money—reduce and prevent poverty*

If we invest money and other resources to reduce and prevent poverty, we can save money. Research clearly shows that, in the long term, the amount of money we need to deal with the root causes of poverty is less than the money we spend to support poverty.



When we invest to reduce and prevent poverty, we:

- Reduce the gap between the rich and the poor.
- Distribute income more equally.

Effective actions to reduce and prevent poverty are closely linked to actions that improve health, education, employment, housing, early childhood development, and food security.

The background of the page features a vibrant field of purple flowers in the foreground, with a soft-focus view of blue mountains under a cloudy sky in the distance. A semi-transparent blue rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the title and two paragraphs of text.

# *NWT Anti-Poverty Strategic Framework*

To develop this strategy, territorial and Aboriginal governments, non-profit groups, and business worked together to learn about and understand poverty. They studied the research. They talked with people who live in poverty, people who provide services, and people concerned about the effects of poverty.

The strategy outlines a vision, principles, and five priority areas to work on. It builds on other work such as the NWT Social Agenda developed in 2001.

## Vision

Building on the strengths of our people and communities, northerners have the supports they need to live in dignity and free from poverty, as active participants in community life.

## Principles

- Respect and equality are essential to anti-poverty work.
- People are our most important resource.
- How we do things is as important as what we do.

## Five priorities

To work towards the vision, the strategy has five priority areas for action.

- Child and family support.
- Healthy living and reaching our potential.
- Safe and affordable housing.
- Sustainable communities.
- Integrated continuum of services.



Tessa Macintosh/GNWT



# Priority 1:

## Children and Family Support

**Goal: Children and families lead healthy lives free from poverty in a safe and nurturing environment.**

### *Where we need to do more*

- ✓ Improve access to and participation in early childhood development programs and services, and supports for children and families.
- ✓ Improve the quality of early childhood development programs, services, and supports.
- ✓ Increase support to families so they can better access safe, suitable, and affordable child care.



### *How to get there*

- ✓ Increase access to affordable, high-quality early learning programs and child care services.
- ✓ Expand early intervention and assessment aimed at infants and new parents, and better coordinate and integrate services.
- ✓ Increase promotion, awareness, and education initiatives for families and communities.
- ✓ Support women who do not typically access prenatal services.
- ✓ Support families to have positive early parenting experiences.

## Priority 2:

### *Healthy Living and Reaching Our Potential*

**Goal: NWT residents access the supports they need for healthy living and reaching their full potential.**

#### *Where we need to do more*

- ✓ Increase awareness of available mental health services—where people can go for support, regardless of where they live.
- ✓ Close gaps so that services do not miss hard-to-reach people.
- ✓ Improve academic achievement, including graduation rates and literacy and essential skills.



#### *How to get there*

- ✓ Help people find the right combination of culturally appropriate services, treatments, and supports.
- ✓ Eliminate barriers and improve outreach to groups of people that these programs often do not reach.
- ✓ Ensure parents engage in their children's education and that students have the supports they need.

## Priority 3: Safe and Affordable Housing

**Goal: Everyone has a roof over their head and a safe and affordable place to call home.**

### *Where we need to do more*

- ✓ More affordable housing available to people on fixed and low income.
- ✓ Improve housing quality in smaller communities.
- ✓ Develop a northern approach to the “Housing First” program. This program quickly provides homeless people with housing, and then provides other follow up services.

### *How to get there*

- ✓ Support communities to promote safe and affordable housing.
- ✓ Improve housing accessibility, quality, and sustainability.



## Priority 4: Sustainable Communities

**Goal: Sustainable communities manage their resources based on current need and ensure that future generations have adequate resources.**

### *Where we need to do more*

- ✓ Improve basic infrastructure to support business opportunities, reduce cost of living, and support effective service delivery.
- ✓ Invest in developing a local skilled workforce, including more people certified in the trades.
- ✓ Diversify the economy through greater support for small business in areas such as arts and crafts, fishing, trapping, agriculture, forestry, tourism.

### *How to get there*

- ✓ Improve access to programs and services that promote new economic opportunities for northerners.
- ✓ Invest in infrastructure and education that increase employment options for NWT residents.
- ✓ Develop more local sources of energy and food.



## Priority 5: Integrated Continuum of Services

**Goal: NWT residents receive a range of services, according to their needs.**

### *Where we need to do more*

- ✓ Improve support for community-based groups so they can deliver effective and efficient programs that meet peoples' needs.
- ✓ Develop better ways for all levels of government and community groups to work together as partners on shared priorities.
- ✓ Streamline and simplify access to social programs and services, including referrals.



### *How to get there*

- ✓ Provide multi-year block funding to stabilize programs and reduce administrative burden.
- ✓ With strong leadership from the GNWT, organize stakeholders around shared interests and work as partners to build system capacity.
- ✓ Develop a one-window approach to better integrate and coordinate services.

# Next Steps

The next step is to develop and carry out an action plan. This plan will list specific actions that governments, community groups, and businesses can take to address each priority. The action plan must also include a way to measure and report on what good this work does for people living in poverty.

This strategy does not stand on its own. It must work with other social, economic, and environmental strategies. Different government departments must work together and in partnership with communities, Aboriginal governments, and the non-profit and business sectors.

To eliminate and prevent poverty is a long-term process and a complex challenge. Individuals, families, communities, non-profit groups, and businesses all have a role to play. Aboriginal and community governments, and especially the GNWT, are responsible for services that directly affect the actions we need to take to reduce and prevent poverty. The GNWT tabled this strategy in the Legislative Assembly—an important step in their leadership role to eliminate and prevent poverty.



Arctic Adventure Tours



