

Bilingual Designation Policy

1. Statement of Policy

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is committed to providing services in the official languages of the Northwest Territories (NWT) as set out in legislation; Cabinet approved policies, and legally binding agreements. Those public servants who provide services in a language other than English as a part of their job will be recognized and compensated.

2. Principles

The GNWT will adhere to the following principles when implementing this Policy:

- (1) A government's ability to communicate in the official languages of the public it serves is an important part of the operation of good government.
- (2) The provision of government services in the official languages of the NWT, as set out in legislation, enhances and supports community efforts to maintain and develop those languages.
- (3) Service provision, as required and appropriate, in the NWT's eleven official languages, is the responsibility of all GNWT departments and agencies.
- (4) The process of staffing positions with specific language requirements will be in accordance with GNWT policies and procedures, including the Collective Agreement and Human Resource Manual.

3. Scope

This Policy and accompanying guidelines apply to all GNWT public servants, except employees who are members of the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association, employees of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, medical doctors employed by health authorities, and translators and interpreters that provide translation services.

4. Definitions

The following terms apply to this Policy:

Bilingual Required – refers to a position which has been designated as requiring the use of multiple languages, and where this requirement has been included in the job description for the position.

Bilingual Preferred – refers to an employee who is able to, and occasionally provides government services in an official language in addition to English, who is not in a position designated as bilingual required.

Official Languages – as defined in the *Official Languages Act*: Chipewyan, Cree, English, French, Gwich'in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey and Tłı̨chǫ.

Deputy Head – as defined in the *Public Service Act*: the deputy minister of a department, the chief executive officer of a public committee, board or council, or such a person may be appointed or designated as deputy head.

5. Authority and Accountability

General

This Policy is issued under the authority of the Financial Management Board. The authority to make exceptions and approve revisions to this Policy rests with the Financial Management Board. Authority and accountability are further defined as follows:

(a) Minister of Finance (Minister)

The Minister of Finance is accountable to the Financial Management Board for the implementation of this Policy.

(b) Deputy Minister

The Deputy Minister of Finance is accountable to the Minister for the administration of this Policy.

Specific

(a) Financial Management Board

The Financial Management Board may approve the Bilingual Designation Policy.

(b) Minister of Finance

The Minister may recommend amendments and exceptions to the Bilingual Designation Policy to the Financial Management Board; and

(c) Deputy Minister of Finance

The Deputy Minister of Finance may recommend Bilingual Designation Guidelines and amendments to the Minister. These guidelines may include:

- i. a process to designate positions within the public service as bilingual required;
- ii. a process to evaluate and assess employee language proficiency; and

- iii. a process to determine whether an employee in a non-Bilingual Required position will be designated as Bilingual Preferred.

(d) Ministers

Ministers are responsible for ensuring that all staffing in the departments, boards and agencies for which they have responsibility is carried out in accordance with the Bilingual Designation Guidelines.

(e) Deputy Heads

Deputy Heads are accountable to their respective Ministers for the application of the Bilingual Designation Guidelines.

6. Provisions

Public servants occupying bilingual required positions or assessed as having bilingual preferred status, who have demonstrated capability in more than two official languages will receive a single bilingual bonus.

7. Prerogative of the Financial Management Board

Nothing in this Policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Financial Management Board to make decisions or take action with respect to the designation of bilingual required positions, bilingual preferred status, or the payment of bilingual bonuses outside the provisions of this Policy.