



IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Legislative Assembly	Legislative Assembly Advisor	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
12-1017	Yellowknife-HQ	Committee and Advisory Services

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Legislative Assembly Advisor (Advisor) provides independent and objective analysis, support, and broad policy advice directly to decision-makers on legislative and policy issues and initiatives, fiscal initiatives (e.g., departmental business plans, Main Estimates, supplementary appropriations), and strategic planning. The Advisor provides subject-matter expertise to legislative committees on departments, agencies, other entities, and specialized topics within their Terms of Reference (e.g., social programs, economic development, public accounts, or statutory officers). The position also monitors the Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT) Departments' and other GNWT agencies' compliance with Ministerial commitments made to Committees, and their follow-through on Committee directions and recommendations.

SCOPE

The scope of advice provided through the research and advisory function covers the full range of activities of the GNWT and its agencies, as well as initiatives of other levels of government, the private sector and the non-governmental sector that are of interest to clients.

Located in Yellowknife and reporting to the Manager of Committee and Advisory Services, the Legislative Assembly Advisor provides expert advice on topics related to social programs, economic development, and/or government operations, but also has broad knowledge of other major issues of the day and the capacity to inter-relate issues to provide value to clients and to complete occasional assignments outside of their specialty.

The Legislative Assembly Advisor is required to have an in-depth understanding of the Indigenous Government relationship and governance structure within the Northwest Territories (NWT) as these relationships directly impact the legislative and policy work of the



public government. Primary clients are Standing and Special Committees and individual Members of the Legislative Assembly. The Speaker and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly are also frequent clients.

Committees and individual Members use advice and analyses provided by the Legislative Assembly Advisors in making decisions on legislation, appropriations, and other government initiatives, and on whether and how to pursue constituency issues. The Northwest Territories' consensus system results in Standing Committees and Regular Members having considerably more influence over Government spending and decision-making than their provincial counterparts and a genuine power to hold Government to account. The Government is always in the minority and requires Committee Members' support to continue in office and to bring legislation, including appropriation Bills, into effect. All business plans, appropriations, and legislative and policy initiatives, as well as many program initiatives and agreements, are referred to Committees in draft before they are ever made public. Committee recommendations, which may be public or confidential, frequently compel the Government to add or delete millions of dollars in program spending, to make significant policy changes, to initiate major mandate, policy, legislative, and program reviews, and to revise its priorities. With their majority, Committee Members can directly and without the consent of Cabinet, delete amounts from Appropriation Bills, defeat or significantly change any Bills before the Assembly, request investigations by the Office of the Auditor General for Canada, and remove Cabinet Members who do not perform to their satisfaction. The briefing notes and advice prepared and presented by the incumbent to Standing Committees therefore directly affect government business plans and budgets, policy, legislation, priorities and program delivery.

The Legislative Assembly Advisor must exercise considerable initiative and work independently in analyzing and compiling briefing notes; providing advice to primary clients; keeping abreast of local, national and international current events and developments on issues of interest to clients; interpreting direction from decision-makers and tactfully suggesting alternatives where appropriate. The Advisor determines appropriate methodologies for analyzing the issues and presenting findings. This includes recommendations for decisions, actions and/or further analysis as appropriate.

The Advisor is expected, on Committee direction, to negotiate with Government officials to determine the workability of Committee recommendations or actions under consideration, to develop language on motions, recommendations, etc. which will allow for support by both Government and Regular Members, and to manage large and complex information requests.

The Advisor often plays a facilitation role by helping Committee Members establish priorities, and achieve consensus on specific issues by identifying areas of common ground and preparing reports and other documents which reflect the diverse viewpoints of up to eleven independent Members. Final Committee reports prepared by the incumbent and submitted to the committee for Members' endorsement are made public once tabled in the Legislative Assembly, receive



broad circulation with the government's decision-makers, and can affect government policy, legislation, programs and priorities. Reports and other documents prepared by the incumbent are often reviewed by provincial and national governments, and occasionally international governments, and can impact on outside perceptions of the NWT.

Advice, information, analysis and speaking points the incumbent provides to Committee Members are often the basis for the Members' questions and statements in Committee or the House and can impact on the credibility of the Member in the eyes of the public and other Members. Some Members, especially those who are newly elected, rely heavily on the incumbent's advice and may look to him or her as a sounding board. The incumbent therefore must act with a heightened sense of objectivity, non-partisanship, tact, protocol and judgment.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Analyze, interpret and critically assess public policy issues and initiatives requiring Committee decisions, actions, and/or recommendations against historical information, statutes, policies, business plans, Committee and Government priorities, environmental realities, and comparable initiatives or practices in other jurisdictions**
 - Analyze issues and initiatives to ensure accuracy/plausibility of information, ensure conformity/consistency with established governing authorities, identify outcomes if implemented, compare to similar circumstances in other jurisdictions, and anticipate likely reaction from I impacts on the public, stakeholders, and the Government itself
 - Undertake self-directed learning to quickly develop an understanding of technical topics related to emerging issues before the Committee that are not within the incumbent's current knowledge (e.g. by reading, attending information sessions, and/or identifying and consulting with appropriate experts)
 - Remain current with policy developments and innovations
 - Consult with Law Clerk, Auditor General of Canada staff, and/or senior departmental officials to ensure accuracy of analysis, interpretation, and assessments, to seek clarification or additional information where required, and to advise of potential non-political concerns with initiatives (e.g. mistakes in budget documents or Bills; possible unintended consequences of policies, or legislative initiatives)
 - Maintain effective communications with other staff to identify areas of overlapping issues and concerns and to assist other team members where required

- 2. Provide independent and objective advice and recommendations to Committee on legislative initiatives, business plan and appropriation items, strategies, policies, priorities, and actions proposed by Government, Auditor General and statutory officer reports, and other information items and issues on the Committee agenda**
 - Prepare and present briefing notes containing advice and recommendations about Government initiatives and other information items and issues before the Committee



- Present advice and recommendations on questions to be asked, amendments to be considered, and actions to be taken in response to issues by the Committee or individual Members
- Proactively monitor the political, policy, cultural, social, and economic environment, and bring issues to the attention of individual Members and Standing Committees, including developments in other jurisdictions and with other levels of government
- Monitor Departments' and other GNWT agencies' compliance with Ministerial commitments made to Committees, and responses to a follow-through on Committee directions and recommendations
- Track, review, and ensure major action plans, strategic plans, and work plans of departments are being updated, evaluated, and adjusted throughout the implementation phases of those plans

3. Facilitate the development and communication of Committee positions, findings, and recommendations

- Actively listen for and summarize areas of common ground during Committee discussions and suggest possible compromises and alternate approaches where Members are struggling to achieve consensus to facilitate decision-making
- Draft reports, correspondence and position papers to communicate Committee positions, findings or recommendations, or to facilitate further Committee discussions
- Maintain good communication with all Members and awareness of each Member's viewpoints and interests
- Negotiate with Government officials, on Committee direction, to determine the workability of Committee recommendations or action under consideration, to develop language on motions, recommendations, etc. which will allow for support by both Government and Regular Members, and to manage large information requests

4. Provide broad policy advice, research and analysis to Members of the Legislative Assembly

- Prepare background papers and briefing notes, points for use in Members' statements, questions and speeches as requested, ensuring that all such work is in keeping with Committee mandates, parliamentary rules and conventions.
- Suggest alternatives to requests where appropriate
- Verbally explain issues or information on request
- Coach Members who seek out advice by providing tactful feedback where requested, asking questions to encourage them to work through their ideas themselves, and suggesting options, to the extent incumbent's knowledge and experience allows and without compromising the need for objectivity and non-partisanship
- Work with the Manager of Research to support Members in individual pursuits that stem from the work of Standing and Special Committees



5. Contribute to Legislative Assembly corporate initiatives and mentorship

- Lead or participate on project teams for special corporate initiatives (e.g. development of strategic plans, policies and/or operational procedures; transition/post-election planning)
- Contribute to a collaborative learning environment by providing mentorship to more junior employees and sharing professional experience and expertise with other employees
- Support opportunities for all staff within the Office of the Clerk to obtain information of parliamentary processes through internal and external dialogue, training, and mentorship.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

The position works in a typical office setting, and during periods of high activity such as Session and Committee meeting weeks may be required to sit for long periods in meetings and writing to deadlines at the computer.

Environmental Conditions

The position works in a typical office setting with no unusual environmental demands. Some travel is required to regional centres and small communities 1-3 times per year, for up to 2 weeks at a time.

Sensory Demands

The position must be able to maintain focused listening and concentration for long periods during Committee meetings, sometimes with members of the public or media in the room, in order to listen actively, observe body language and respond discreetly to notes and sidebar discussions from Members or staff. The demands are particularly intense when the position is acting as a facilitator.

Substantial time is spent reviewing, analyzing and writing lengthy documents, subject to frequent interruptions.

Mental Demands

Periods of high activity in competing deadlines and heavy workload, as Committee workloads are substantial. Priorities may change quickly. Information must be presented clearly and professionally at times on very short notice and/or in a politically tense environment. Managing and releasing information of a confidential and sensitive nature can be demanding.



KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Political sensitivity and diplomacy, facilitation and active listening skills to be able to provide advice to Members, facilitate strategic planning sessions, and obtain political direction
- Judgment is required in handling confidential information, recognizing the limits of one's knowledge and ability to provide advice, knowing when to speak up in Committee discussions and when not to, and distinguishing between policy and political advice.
- Negotiating and interpersonal skills and a client service orientation to develop and maintain effective working relations with Members and senior government staff in situations that are often high pressure and sometimes confrontational
- Verbal and written communication skills to be able to explain complex concepts and information to clients in plain language, to prepare clear and accurate briefing notes and to draft public reports, correspondence and other documents summarizing Committee positions
- Facilitation skills to assist Committees in strategic planning and decision-making
- Analytical skills to interpret and critically assess information from disparate sources including Committee direction (which may at times be unclear), financial data, current or proposed policies, mandates, programs, draft legislation, land claim and self-government agreements, socioeconomic agreements, strategic plans, and reports and recommendations from statutory officers or outside agencies
- Planning, project management and organizational skills to manage Committee assignments and large and complex research, analysis and writing projects
- Research skills, and ability to use a variety of research methods and styles including qualitative and quantitative analysis, statistics, interjurisdictional comparisons, Internet, printed materials and personal contacts
- Knowledge of issues related to social programs, economic development, and/or government operations, and the ability to quickly fill knowledge gaps through self-directed learning
- Knowledge of political, economic, social and cultural circumstances of the NWT and Canada across the spectrum of government activity
- Knowledge about consensus government and the functions and protocols of the Legislative Assembly, including parliamentary procedure and the development of legislation and budgets
- Proficiency in the use of computers and related software applications, such as word-processing, spreadsheets, databases, presentations, Internet and email
- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.
- Understanding of the impacts of colonization, institutional and structural racism and biases have had on society, in particular Indigenous people who make up more than half of the



population. Ability to build strong relationships and consider diverse cultures, languages, abilities, and literacy and numeracy levels when communicating and developing documents.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

A degree in a relevant discipline such as Public Administration or Political Science and five (5) years progressive experience in a policy development or strategic planning function incorporating work on topics related to social programs, economic development, and/or government operations, preferably, working directly with elected officials, boards, or Indigenous Governments.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Position Security (check one)

- No criminal records check required
- Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

French language (check one if applicable)

- French required (must identify required level below)
Level required for this Designated Position is:
ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION
Basic (B) Intermediate (I) Advanced (A)
READING COMPREHENSION:
Basic (B) Intermediate (I) Advanced (A)
WRITING SKILLS:
Basic (B) Intermediate (I) Advanced (A)
- French preferred

Indigenous language: Select language

- Required
- Preferred