



## IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority	Speech Language Pathologist	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
48-657	Yellowknife	Rehabilitation and Continuing Care Services/Yellowknife

## PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) provides diagnostic, intervention, and referral services to patients in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Rules of Speech and Audiology Canada (SAC) and the philosophy and objectives of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) to prevent and provide intervention for communication problems or disorders in language, speech, voice, fluency and swallowing.

## SCOPE

NTHSSA is the single provider of all health and social services in the Northwest Territories (NWT), with the exception of Hay River and Tłıchǫ regions, covering 1.2 million square kilometers and serving approximately 43,000 people, including First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and non-indigenous. Health and social services include the full range of primary, secondary, and tertiary health services and social services including family services, protection services, care placements, mental health, addictions, and developmental activities, delivered by more than 1,400 health and social services staff.

While the Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA) and Hay River Health and Social Services Agency (HRHSSA) operate under separate boards, NTHSSA will set clinical standards, procedures, guidelines and monitoring for the entire NWT. Service Agreements will be established with these boards to identify performance requirements and adherence to clinical standards, procedures, guidelines, and policies as established by NTHSSA.

NTHSSA administers health and social services to the residents of the Yellowknife Region in the NWT. NTHSSA directly and contractually employs over 300 staff who deliver these services in Yellowknife, Ft. Resolution, Lutselk'e, N'dilo, and Dettah for the Yellowknife Region. NTHSSA provides and supports the delivery of services to adults, children, and seniors on an inpatient,



outpatient, and outreach basis at multiple sites across the city of Yellowknife and the Communities of Lutselk'e, N'dilo, Dettah, and Ft. Resolution. These services include community-based social services, a public health clinic, primary care services, rehabilitation services, home and community care services, and long-term care/extended care services.

The legacies of colonization and residential schools have impacted Indigenous health outcomes and the way health and social services are delivered and accessed. The incumbent is required to always honor and promote a culturally safe environment. Practicing from a trauma informed care perspective is expected and the position requires that interaction with clients and families is tactful, respectful, and humble.

There are four regional rehabilitation teams located in Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, and Yellowknife. Rehabilitation services consist of audiology, occupational therapy (OT), physiotherapy (PT) and speech language pathology (SLP). All teams provide PT, OT and SLP services; the Yellowknife and Inuvik teams provide audiology services. Each regional team is responsible for delivering services within the community where they are located as well as other smaller communities. The provision of regional services is achieved using various methods of delivery including community travel clinics, telehealth, telephone, etc. Child Development Teams (CDT) are located within the Yellowknife and Inuvik rehabilitation teams. Additionally, a territorial Youth Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Diagnostic and Family/Community Support program is embedded in the Yellowknife CDT.

Reporting directly to the Territorial Manager, Audiology and Speech Language Pathology, the incumbent is one of a team of SLPs who independently manage their own caseload and provide diagnostic, treatment, preventative or educational counseling and referral services to in and out-patients ranging from preschool to seniors. The Speech Language Pathology unit consists of a Territorial Manager, Audiology and Speech Language Pathology, SLPs, Hearing and Speech Aide, and Program Assistant.

The Yellowknife Speech Language Pathology Department has approximately 5,000 encounters a year (approximately five encounters per Therapist per day). Physicians, nurse practitioners, community nurses, parents, social workers, and midwives may refer patients to speech language pathology. Schools may refer directly for school-based services with parental consent. The SLP will perform clinical and standardized assessments and may provide ongoing intervention, e.g., one-on-one treatment, consultation, education of family or other care providers. The incumbent may also monitor the delivery of treatment delegated to patients, family or other healthcare providers, early childhood workers and school staff as well as act as an educational resource in various locations in the NWT and Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut that include, but are not limited to, the hospital, community health centers, preschools, and schools. The incumbent will research, design, and implement programs and provide educational material and deliver workshops on topics related to speech, language, communication, and swallowing. Unlike SLPs in southern institutions, the incumbent must have working knowledge



in all areas of speech language pathology as opposed to a specialization in one area.

The SLP works with patients of all ages who have speech, language, voice, pragmatic fluency, and or swallowing delays or disorders which may be secondary to loss of hearing, congenital or developmental delays, physical illness, or the aging process. Types of care delivered may include, but not be limited to, improving articulation and/or language skills, increasing fluency, supporting patients using augmentative communication, and managing and/or improving swallow function. The focus of the therapy is to maximize and maintain the patient's ability to succeed in professional and social settings as well as to improve the patient's quality of life. Patients who have communication delays/disorders may not be able to request assistance or communicate needs when required.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. Provides direct assessment, diagnosis, and treatment to a wide variety of patients (preschool to geriatric) requiring speech language therapy using a problem-solving approach and in accordance with the standards, guidelines, and scope of speech therapy to facilitate individualized patient care.**

- Evaluates patients' need for speech language therapy service based on presenting impairment, disability and/or handicap,
- Provides assessment and evaluates findings.
- Designs and prescribes a treatment plan that meets the specific needs of the patient, keeping in mind evidence-based information, relevant best practice, and clinical expertise.
- Implements, and modifies as needed, the treatment plan that ensures a coordinated and client-centered approach which best meets the needs of the patient.
- Maintains documentation on all therapeutic encounters.
- Assists patients in realizing and maintaining maximum capacity,
- Works in partnership with a team to provide clinical and instrumental assessment, appropriate texture modifications and/or treatment to adults with swallowing dysfunction.
- Works in partnership with a team to provide clinical assessment, recommendations, and referral for instrumental assessment for pediatric patients with suspected swallowing dysfunction.
- Recommends further diagnostic investigation or cross referral to other healthcare providers (e.g., ENT specialists, pediatricians and social workers, audiologists, occupational therapists, etc.), if warranted.
- Promotes the autonomy of patients and helps them to express their health needs and values to obtain appropriate information and services, dignity, and self-respect.
- Safeguards the trust of patients that information learned in the context of a professional relationship is not shared outside the healthcare team without the patient's permission.



- Applies and promotes principles of equity and fairness to assist patients in receiving unbiased treatment and a share of health services and resources proportionate to their needs.
  - Documents the impact of Speech Language Pathology intervention through outcome measures.
  - Acts in a manner consistent with their professional responsibilities and standards of practice.
  - Provides treatment, follow-up, training, and consultative services through tele-health.
- 2. Develops, modifies, coordinates, and facilitates education/teaching based on the needs of the patient, families, care givers and other community service providers.**
- Uses a holistic approach to facilitate the individual learning of patients and, where applicable, their families or other stakeholders.
  - Assesses the patient's knowledge of their health, injury, impairment and learning needs.
  - Counsel's patients, families, care providers, and other stakeholders regarding all aspects of language and communication disorders.
  - Provides community education and health promotion, including resources and workshops, within the communities.
  - Develops, revises, and evaluates on an ongoing basis, educational resources necessary to support patients, families, care providers and other stakeholders.
  - Aids in the coordination of the transfer or discharge of patients. This includes explaining and ensuring that the patient understands the discharge plan (established by the Healthcare Team for the patient's care and treatment) as it relates to their functional needs at home, school/work or in the community.
- 3. Arranges travel clinics to provide care to residents of the smaller communities within the NWT and the Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut.**
- Coordinates community clinics and collaborates with community healthcare staff, school staff and other stakeholders to determine schedule, caseload, services, and follow-up.
  - Provides aftercare programs (treatment plans) for community patients.
  - Provides necessary training to the patient, family, care providers and school staff regarding patient programming.
  - Monitors delivery of services delegated to community healthcare providers, preschool workers, or school staff.
- 4. Advocates for practice environments that have the organizational and resource allocations necessary for safe, competent, and ethical care.**
- Recognizes the importance of cultural safety and cultural diversity in working with clients and their support systems.



- Collaborates with physicians, nurses, and other members of the health team to advocate healthcare environments that are conducive to ethical practice and to the health and well-being of patients and others in the setting.
- Provides coaching and leadership to peers, students, and other members of the healthcare team to develop skill levels necessary to achieve the standard of care.
- Provides consultation and professional opinion on diagnosis, prognosis and appropriate treatment of conditions affecting language and communication to family physicians, physician specialists, community nurses, and other healthcare professionals.
- Provides consultation and professional advice to teachers, early intervention workers, and other community service providers about optimal programming to best serve patients with special needs in an inclusive environment.
- Provides orientation to new employees on scope of service and clinical responsibilities.
- Refers patient to other health providers when appropriate.
- Provides information and recommendations on capital expenditure.
- Participates in committees, task teams, and research projects as required.

**5. Workplace Health and Safety: employees of the Authority are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and respectful workplace for employees and patients/clients. Building a safe and respectful workplace is everyone's responsibility.**

- All employees and contractors have a professional and personal responsibility to perform their duties to health and safety regulations, standards, practices and procedures.
- All stakeholders (management, staff, UNW, and Worker's Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC)) need to ensure our Workplace Health and Safety Committee works effectively, with a shared purpose of continuous quality improvement in health and safety.
- All Managers and Supervisors play an active role in workplace health and safety through their daily management: identifying prevention opportunities, ensuring staff are trained in Risk Monitor Pro, investigating potential risk and accidents, and applying timely corrective measures.
- A healthy workplace, where employees can provide quality service under safe conditions, is the right thing to do and makes good business sense.

**WORKING CONDITIONS**

**Physical Demands**

Approximately 60% of the incumbent's day will be spent sitting in small chairs, bending, and standing in awkward positions providing physically demanding services.



While visiting smaller communities the incumbent will need to travel with heavy baggage that holds testing equipment (e.g., diagnostic resources, therapeutic equipment, etc.).

School-based SLPs will need to travel with heavy baggage containing testing and therapy materials.

### **Environmental Conditions**

During their day, the SLP may be exposed to communicable diseases, blood and body fluid that can result in potential health risk to the incumbent.

During home visits the incumbent may be exposed to unsanitary conditions, cigarette smoke and loud noises (e.g., crying baby).

### **Sensory Demands**

The incumbent will be required to use the combined senses of touch, sight and hearing during assessment and provision of care in a variety of settings that vary from controlled (e.g., hospital) to uncontrolled (e.g., daycare). Uncontrolled settings may be distracting for both the incumbent and the patient (noise level, visual commotion, etc.).

The SLP must be constantly aware of patients' physical and emotional needs (mood, hygiene, etc.) while providing care (60% of the workday). Patients may be unable to request assistance when required, therefore the incumbent must maintain alertness at all times.

### **Mental Demands**

The SLP has the opportunity to develop relationships with the patients of the Rehabilitation Services Department. The Speech Language Pathologist is expected to remain calm, controlled, and professional, regardless of the situation, and demonstrate compassionate care to the patient, family, and other members of the healthcare team.

The incumbent will travel to communities up to four weeks per year, which may cause moderate levels of stress on the incumbent's family and social life.

In addition, within the healthcare setting there can be significant lack of control over the work pace, with frequent interruptions that may lead to mental fatigue or stress.

The SLP is required to be motivated and innovative in continuing education and practice to encourage the professional growth of self and others.

### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES**

- Knowledge of current accepted standards of rehabilitation practice with a broad base of





- skills and clinical experience
- Knowledge of applicable protocols, policies, regulations, and legislation.
  - Knowledge of education principles, related to adult learners, required to develop, and deliver subject specific training and development.
  - Knowledge of, and sensitivity to, cultural, social, gender and age dynamics as they relate to the delivery of primary healthcare programs and services with an ability to deal with a variety of people in a non-judgmental manner.
  - Sensitivity to issues, and the ability to lead in a collaborative way to inspire, influence and persuade.
  - Research and evaluation skills to conduct reviews and analyze or compare practices against evidence based and accepted standards.
  - Written and oral communication skills including listening, observing, identifying, and reporting; including an ability to communicate effectively and efficiently to a divergent group of people. This includes an ability to communicate and interact professionally and effectively with irate clients.
  - Ability to work with individuals at all levels in a variety of organizations at the community, regional and territorial level.
  - Ability to lead and foster excellence in multi-disciplinary client service delivery.
  - Ability to develop new programs, to facilitate creative problem solving using a situational approach, and incorporating conceptual, analytical, interpretive, evaluative, intuitive, and constructive thinking skills.
  - Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently personally practicing diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.

**Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:**

Successful completion of a master's degree in Speech Language Pathology.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Speech Language Pathologists must have provisional professional licensure in any Canadian province and full licensure within six months of hire. In most cases, this will include graduating from a Canadian or other recognized Speech Language Pathology Program and successful completion of the certification exam within a reasonable time frame. SLPs must also be practicing members of Speech and Audiology Canada (SAC).
- Proof of Immunization in keeping with current public health practices is required.

NTHSSA has several certifications that are required upon hire, depending on the area where the employee works, including but not limited to: Indigenous Cultural Awareness, Biohazardous

Waste, Biosafety and Biosecurity, Infection Control, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) and others directly related to the incumbent's scope of practice.

**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