

2022-2025

GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Human Resources Strategic Plan



Government of
Northwest Territories



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Message from the Minister



The Honourable Caroline Wawzonek,
Minister responsible for the Public Service

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is committed to a public service that delivers dependable service to the people of the Northwest Territories.

To fulfill this commitment, the GNWT requires a strong, stable public service that is diverse, competent, engaged and representative of the population it serves. The GNWT continues to develop initiatives and to support programs and opportunities that promote diversity and inclusivity, competence, and health, safety and wellness—all critical elements in building the public service.

GNWT Departments and Agencies (Departments) contribute collectively and independently to building our public service. The GNWT Human Resources Strategic Plan is intended to support Departments in attracting, developing, and retaining employees who are competent, committed, and engaged. To accomplish this, all Departments will develop Departmental Human Resources Strategies (DHR Strategies) that include measurable objectives, action plans, and reporting to ensure that the human resources priorities of each Department are consistently being met and align with the GNWT's overall vision for the public service.

The GNWT Human Resources Strategic Plan builds on the human resource programs and training that are already in place with new strategies for improving employee engagement and satisfaction, enhancing training opportunities and competency development, with increased focus on diversity and inclusion and Indigenous representation. Through effective planning, Departments can work together to build a healthy, diverse, and competent public service that effective programs and services that meet the needs of all residents of the Northwest Territories.

Executive Summary

The GNWT Human Resources Strategic Plan (HRSP) sets out the GNWT's Human Resources priorities and strategic goals, and the actions that will be taken by Departments to achieve these goals.

The HRSP priorities are:

- Diversity and Inclusion;
- Indigenous Representation and Indigenous Leadership;
- Health, Safety and Wellness; and
- Competency Development.

These priorities combine the values and mission of the GNWT and are intended to guide Departments in carrying out their own respective Departmental Human Resources Strategic Planning.

Four (4) Human Resources Strategic Goals have been established to align Departmental efforts and produce a collective approach to human resources strategic planning and execution.

These Goals are:

Goal 1: Fostering a work environment that supports, welcomes, and respects diversity.

Goal 2: Addressing bias, racism, and discrimination in the staffing process and in the workplace.

Goal 3: Increasing employee satisfaction and commitment through improved engagement and health, safety, and wellness supports.

Goal 4: Recruiting, developing, and retaining competent employees to meet the needs of NWT residents.

The HRSP lays out the specific actions that the GNWT and its Departments will use to achieve these strategic goals. The HRSP will provide guidance to Departments by identifying GNWT policies, programs, and initiatives, such as the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework and Action Plan, that can be referenced in their strategic and implementation plans.

By establishing a GNWT-wide approach to human resource planning, the HRSP will collectively engage in meeting the GNWT's priorities, while supporting Departments to meet their HR needs.

A Shared Strategic Approach

Producing and retaining a stable, competent workforce that delivers consistent, high-quality services to the people of the Northwest Territories (NWT) requires a strategic approach to human resources planning. Strategic human resources planning connects the vision and objectives of an organization with the planning and accountability metrics necessary to meet those objectives.

The 2022-2025 Human Resources Strategic Plan is intended to align our vision and values across the GNWT's public service, and to provide over-arching guidance for Departments as they develop strategic plans that accomplish objectives, track outcomes, and ensure accountability.

How Departments will apply the HRSP:

The HRSP establishes the GNWT's vision, mission, priorities, and goals and will guide Departments as they develop and implement their Departmental human resources strategic plans.

Using a whole-of-government approach, each Department will prepare the following to meet the needs of the public service collectively and consistently:

1. Departmental Implementation Plans, and
2. Annual Performance Reporting.

Departments will customize their Departmental Implementation Plans by using their results from

the Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey (EESS) to identify areas where specific additional actions may be warranted. The GNWT EESS model is structured in two spectrums and seven themes:

These EESS themes align with one of the four HRSP goals and by including EESS key areas in Departmental HR implementation plans can further support the GNWT's commitment to having a strong public service.

By developing, implementing, and utilizing these Plans, Departments will collectively empower the continued progress of GNWT HR initiatives and strengthen our public service.

Commitment

Capacity
Development
Excellence & Innovation

Engagement

Satisfaction

Culture
Diversity & Inclusion
Health, Wellness & Safety
Leadership



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About the GNWT Public Service

The GNWT’s public servants deliver programs and services to more than 44,000 NWT residents through rewarding careers in our Departments and Agencies. As the largest employer in the NWT, our employees provide services that are unique when compared to governments in other jurisdictions.

Our Shared Vision

“Strong individuals, families, and communities sharing the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable, and prosperous Northwest Territories.”

Our Shared Mission

“Producing a healthy, stable, diverse, and inclusive workforce that is representative of the population it serves and competently delivers a high-quality of service to the people of the Northwest Territories.”

Shared Strategic Priorities and Goals

The GNWT's Human Resources priorities and goals are our shared commitment to meeting the vision and mission of the HRSP.

These goals were developed to provide a path forward to address areas for improvement identified through feedback from employees, management, and the Employee Engagement Satisfaction Survey (EES) results. These areas for improvement have been grouped under four key areas with associated overarching goals.

Strategic human resources planning integrates the strategies and systems such as the GNWT Core Competencies, Departmental business objectives, and HR Succession planning, to achieve the GNWT's corporate vision and mission.

Priority: Diversity and Inclusion

The NWT is home to a diverse population with varying perspectives, knowledge, education, socio-economic status, and life experiences. To attract and retain a public service that is diverse and representative, we must strive to create work environments in which employees feel valued and are involved, respected, connected, and encouraged to bring their ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives to the work we do and to the services we provide to NWT residents.

Goal 1: Fostering a work environment that supports, welcomes, and respects diversity

Diversity and inclusion are core values of the GNWT and are integral to the GNWT's priority of employing a diverse workforce that is representative at all levels of the people of the NWT. Where diversity recognizes differences, inclusion ensures that differences are embraced and leveraged to the benefit of employees, the GNWT, and the public.

A dedicated Diversity and Inclusion unit in the Department of Finance supports the GNWT's commitment to providing employees with a healthy, safe, and inclusive workplace, and a work environment where all persons are treated with respect and dignity.

Three objectives have been identified to help achieve this goal.



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Objective #1: Gather more information on the diversity of the GNWT workforce and identify gaps and barriers to inclusion.

This will be achieved through:

- Ongoing engagement with the GNWT Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion and the Indigenous Employee Advisory Committee on new programs and initiatives.
- Receiving and analyzing the GNWT wide feedback through the Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey about GNWT programs and services surrounding Diversity and Inclusion.
- Engaging with internal and external stakeholders on GNWT Diversity and Inclusion initiatives.
- Gathering more detailed demographics about our labour force to help support in developing initiatives that address barriers and gaps to inclusion.
- Implementing surveys for those who have accessed the provisions outlined in the Harassment Free Respectful Workplace Policy (HFWP) and Duty to Accommodate Injury and Disability Policy (DTAP) to determine if any improvements on best practice need to be made.

Objective #2: Develop and implement a Diversity and Inclusion Framework to address gaps and barriers.

This will be achieved through:

- Ensuring GNWT policies, programs and services reflect, and support NWT Residents' needs and concerns with a focus on reaching exceptional outcomes that benefit everyone.
- Maintaining an inclusive workplace culture that is respectful, equitable and safe for all employees to make them feel supported and encouraged to contribute their unique perspectives to the work that we do.
- Developing an Implementation Plan with objectives in the following key areas:
 - Recruitment and Retention
 - Leadership and Advancement
 - Learning and Development
 - Health, Safety and Wellness

Objective #3: Promote and support GNWT programs and resources geared towards the development of diversity and an inclusion-focused mindset for GNWT managers and employees.

This will be achieved through:

- Empowering GNWT employees to question social norms and discover tools to help them reshape how they see the world and their interactions with each other.
- Ensuring employees review legislation, policy, frameworks, and action plans relating to diversity and inclusion.
- Ensuring that employees are familiar with current programs and initiatives that promote a diversity and inclusion-focused mindset, including:
 - Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace Awareness Module
 - Living Well Together: Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training
 - Indigenous Development Training Program
 - 2SLGBTQQA+ Inclusive Workplace Awareness Training
 - Equitable Workplace: Cultivating Attitudes of Anti-Racism and Allyship training
 - Duty to Accommodate training
 - Gender-Based Analysis Plus training
 - Unconscious Bias training
- Increasing the use of Diversity and Inclusion recruitment programs, such as:
 - The Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework and Action Plan
 - The Indigenous Career Gateway Program
 - The Regional Recruitment Program
 - The Summer Student Employment Program
 - The Internship Program
 - Strategic staffing initiatives directed to Indigenous candidates using limited competitions



Priority: Indigenous Representation and Indigenous Leadership

The GNWT is prioritizing improving Indigenous representation and Indigenous leadership in the public service. Strengthening the representation and inclusion of Indigenous persons in the GNWT workforce is an important principle of the Human Resources Strategic Plan and the GNWT's approach to recruitment and retention. To achieve meaningful change, the GNWT is focused on creating opportunities for Indigenous persons to join and advance in the public service.

Goal 2: Addressing bias, racism, and discrimination in the staffing process and in the workplace

Indigenous under-representation in the public service is a complex and multi-dimensional issue, which will require a variety of actions, both within and outside of the GNWT, to be fully addressed. The GNWT has developed and introduced many initiatives, including policies, programs, training opportunities and resources, to achieve this priority.

A collaborative approach with participation from every Department is essential if meaningful changes are to be made to removing barriers to representation in the public service. Three objectives have been identified to help achieve this goal.



Objective #1: Implement the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework.

This will be achieved by:

- Supporting the GNWT efforts of building a workforce that is representative of the population it serves.
- Developing business practices that include recruitment and retention strategies, the Framework will empower Departments to recognize the importance of Indigenous perspectives within their policies, programs.
- Providing the tools to implement plans, the Framework will support Departments as they incorporate Indigenous perspectives into their work units at all levels.
- Offering self-directed, skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism through the Living Well Together: Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training.
- Departments conducting a detailed review of all GNWT job descriptions.
- Reviewing recruitment and retention practices to address barriers.
- Enhancing employment opportunities for Indigenous candidates.
- Improving access and awareness of staffing process resources and information for applicants.
- Developing Departmental Indigenous Employment Plans and Targets.
- Increasing internal supports to Indigenous employees to improve retention and job satisfaction.
- Improving learning and development options and opportunities for Indigenous employees' career advancement.
- Building capacity and career development.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of frameworks and associated action plans so that adjustments can be made as necessary.
- Strategic staffing initiatives directed to Indigenous candidates using limited competitions

Objective #2: Promote and support employee access to GNWT programs and resources geared towards harassment prevention, anti-racism, and recognizing unconscious biases.

This will be achieved through:

- Ensuring employees review legislation, policy, frameworks, and action plans relating to anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, anti-racism, and recognizing unconscious biases.
- Ensuring that employees are familiar with current training and initiatives that promote a diversity and inclusion-focused mindset, including:
 - Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace Awareness Module
 - Living Well Together: Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training
 - Indigenous Development Training Program
 - 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusive Workplace Awareness Training
 - Equitable Workplace: Cultivating Attitudes of Anti-Racism and Allyship training
 - Harassment Free Respectful Workplace training
 - Unconscious Bias training
 - Anti-racism campaign

Objective #3: Promote and support employee access to GNWT programs geared towards the development and recruitment of Indigenous candidates.

This will be achieved through Departments using a variety of GNWT employment programs intended to support the recruitment and development of Indigenous employees, including:

- The Summer Student Employment Program
- The Regional Recruitment Program
- The Graduate Internship Program
- The Indigenous Career Gateway Program
- The Indigenous Development and Training Program
- Strategic staffing initiatives directed to Indigenous candidates using limited competitions



Priority: Health, Safety and Wellness

The GNWT recognizes the importance of providing its employees with a work environment that prioritizes the health, safety, and wellness of its employees. To improve employee satisfaction and engagement, the GNWT is approaching its employees' health, safety, and wellness needs through enhanced communication and dialogue with employees.

Goal 3: Increasing employee satisfaction and commitment through improved engagement and health, safety, and wellness supports

The health, safety, and wellness of employees is a priority for the GNWT. The GNWT recognizes that improvements in employee health, safety, and wellness lead to a variety of benefits for both the employee and the employer.

Employee wellness is an important part of a successful workplace and, as a result, the GNWT has programs, services, and training, to ensure that all employees have access to health, safety, and wellness supports. Ensuring that all employees are aware of, and have access to, these benefits will lead to increased productivity and satisfaction, reduced absenteeism, and reduced workplace injuries.

Employee engagement reflects the degree to which employees find their work meaningful and energizing, and whether they feel inspired, proud, and attached to their organization and their work. Increased employee engagement means an employee

is more satisfied and committed to their work, which then results in improved service delivery. Strong employee engagement can also reduce staff turnover and motivate employees to develop and advance within the GNWT, which in-turn can positively impact Departmental and Corporate goals.

Each of the identified priorities in the GNWT Human Resources Strategic Plan can influence levels of employee engagement. For example, employees who feel their employer supports their learning and development are more likely to be engaged and motivated to do excellent work. Similarly, employees who work in positive and safe workplaces are likely to be more engaged and satisfied than those who do not.

The following objectives have been identified to achieve this goal:

Objective #1: Support an organizational culture focused on health, safety, wellness, and anti-racism within the GNWT.

This will be achieved by:

- Developing and launching a Health, Safety and Wellness Program.
- Implementation of the Mental Health Commission of Canada - National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (the Standard) across all GNWT Departments and Agencies.
- Ensuring employees have completed the Living Well Together: Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training.
- Including the Supervisor Safety Training; Equitable Workplace: Cultivating Attitudes of Anti-Racism and Allyship; 2SLGBTQQA 101: Inclusive Workplace Awareness Training; Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace; Harassment Free Respectful Workplace Training; and Living Well Together: Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training as part of the Management Series training, which is mandatory for all GNWT managers and supervisors.
- Ensuring all employees understand that they have the right to a healthy and safe work environment that minimizes the risk of workplace injuries, accidents, and illnesses.
- Offering confidential counseling and wellness resources designed to promote health and well-being for its employees and their immediate family members. These programs include:
 - Employee & Family Assistance Program
 - LifeSpeak
 - AbilitiCBT
 - Lifeworks

Objective #2: Promote employee engagement as part of the organizational culture, empowering employees to effectively contribute to the role, team, environment, and GNWT.

This will be achieved by:

- Developing and implementing an action plan to improve employee morale.
- Encouraging employees to complete the Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey (EES).
- Reviewing results from the EES and develop strategies to address areas needing improvement.
- Developing internal communication plans to help ensure that essential information flows effectively from senior management to employees.
- Continuing to engage and train employees in communicating more effectively.
- Providing formal and informal opportunities for employees to give input, raise issues, and get feedback from peers and managers.
- Developing and implementing Departmental employee rewards and recognition programming.
- Supporting the engagement of employees through meaningful, strategic goal setting within the performance development process.
- Regularly communicating the HRSP, its priorities, goals, objectives, and actions to GNWT employees.

Priority: Competency Development

To attract and retain a public service that meets the needs of NWT residents, the GNWT is focusing on using the GNWT Competency Model when recruiting employees, developing their competencies, and planning for employee advancement and succession.

Goal 4: Recruiting, developing, and retaining competent employees to meet the needs of NWT residents

The GNWT supports effective ongoing competency-based performance management for all staff.

The GNWT has a formalized, government-wide performance management program in place to support the development of employee competence, to support ongoing learning and development, and to ensure business objectives are being met. Managers and supervisors lead the performance management and development of their employees in line with the GNWT's Performance Development Program.

To ensure a competent and well-trained public service, the GNWT strives to provide employees with access to learning and career development opportunities that support their career goals and their ability to serve the residents of the NWT effectively and efficiently.

Three objectives have been developed to help achieve this goal.

Objective #1: Increase formal and informal learning experiences to assist employees in achieving career milestones through targeted developmental opportunities.

This will be achieved by:

- Ensuring employees are aware of the public service legislation, regulations, policies, programs, and relevant guide, frameworks and action plans related employee development. This includes, but not limited to:
 - GNWT policies
 - HR policies and programs
- Maintaining an open dialogue with employees about their learning goals and career aspirations and supporting employees to complete the Performance Development process.
- Including the Performance Development for Managers as part of the Management Series training, which is mandatory for all GNWT managers.
- Supporting employee education advancement through Education Assistance.
- Developing and implementing a GNWT Mentorship Program to allow employees to access mentors from within the GNWT.
- Promoting a coaching mindset and approach for GNWT managers, supervisors, and employees.
- Taking a long-term view of staffing that focuses on developing current employees through succession planning, career pathing, and building internal capacity, thereby establishing the GNWT as an employer of choice and increasing retention.



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Objective #2: Implement consistent succession planning to effectively communicate the succession planning approach to workforce planning and development.

This will be achieved by:

- Proactively planning and collaborating to ensure the GNWT remains competitive while building a public service which is representative of the population it serves.
- Departments conducting regular succession and replacement planning initiatives, using the Succession Planning Guide and templates, which focus on indigenous development, leader development and career development.
- Using the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework and Affirmative Action Policy when prioritizing access to training and advancement opportunities.
- Implementing strategies to facilitate the work knowledge transfer between experienced employees to new and existing employees. This sharing of work knowledge will help support the continuity of work when experienced employees leave their roles.
- Supporting employee career development through ongoing performance development.
- Ensuring employees complete onboarding programs and re-board to new positions as employees transfer between positions within the Public Service and supporting employees during the onboarding and re-boarding processes.
- Encouraging a proactive approach to learning and development.



Objective #3: Attract, recruit, and retain current and prospective employees to the public service creating a dynamic workforce that supports programs and services for NWT residents.

This will be achieved by:

- Promoting and marketing the GNWT as an employer of choice to recruit qualified and dynamic employees to our workforce.
- Taking a long-term view of the labour market and develop employees through succession planning, career pathing, and building internal capacity, thereby increasing retention.
- Actively recruiting new employees to the GNWT public service to ensure continuity of programs and services, while maintaining minimum vacancy levels.
- Promoting the generous and competitive salary and benefits packages available to our territorial public servants, incentives, and insurances:
 - An organization that supports employee work-life balance priorities.
 - A unionized environment.
 - Competitive salary and benefits.
 - Generous incentives and insurances.
 - Public Service health care plans.
 - Participation in the Government’s Pension Plan.
- Presenting a fair and transparent workplace environment that encourages a positive environment throughout the careers of our employees.

Moving Forward

The HR Priorities and HR Strategic Goals set out in the 2022-2025 HRSP are not merely benchmarks of improvement, they are also intended to reflect the values of the GNWT.

These values pre-date the 2022-2025 Human Resources Strategic Plan and will continue to guide future initiatives and programming developed by the GNWT. This plan reflects and embodies the many efforts that the GNWT has undertaken, and will continue to undertake, to meet the needs of our employees and all people of the NWT.

Our values are not finite or time-limited and neither is our desire to improve, to innovate, and to grow our public service into one which is representative of the population it serves, and which serves the NWT with pride, commitment, accountability, and excellence.

As the HRSP is implemented by Departments, it is our hope that we will efficiently see the results of our collective efforts in a public service that continues to develop and provide the quality of service that our residents deserve; collectively, representatively, and with purpose.

Next Steps for Departments

The Department of Finance has developed this GNWT Human Resources Strategic Plan and its accompanying resources to help Departments develop their own Implementation Plans that are aligned with the GNWT HR Priorities and HR Strategic Goals.

With guidance and support from the Human Resources Branch of the Department of Finance, Departments will develop Implementation Plans that are aligned with their organizational business objectives and that are customized to their unique situations.

Monitoring and Evaluating our progress

The Department of Finance will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the GNWT's progress toward the stated goals of the plan. This will be achieved through close collaboration with Departments as they develop and implement their implementation plans. The Department of Finance will gather information from Departments and employees throughout the implementation period of the HRSP. Regular information gathering, or monitoring, will allow the Department of Finance to evaluate our collective progress in the four key areas and make any course corrections that may be required.

The Department of Finance will conduct a formal review of the HRSP in the 2024/25 fiscal year. This will allow us to re-evaluate the goals and objectives of the present HRSP, our overall progress, and any new areas for improvement in preparation for the next HRSP.

APPENDIX A: Strategic Goals at a Glance

Diversity and Inclusion

Goal 1: Fostering a work environment that supports, welcomes, and respects diversity

- Gather more information on the diversity of the GNWT workforce and identify gaps and barriers to inclusion.
- Develop and implement a Diversity and Inclusion Framework to address gaps and barriers.
- Promote and support GNWT programs and resources geared towards the development of diversity and an inclusion-focused mindset for GNWT managers and employees.

Indigenous Representation and Indigenous Leadership

Goal 2: Addressing bias, racism, and discrimination in the staffing process and in the workplace

- Implement the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework.
- Promote and support employee access to GNWT programs and resources geared towards harassment prevention, anti-racism, and recognizing unconscious biases.
- Promote and support employee access to GNWT programs geared towards the development and recruitment of Indigenous candidates.

Health, Safety and Wellness

Goal 3: Increasing employee satisfaction and commitment through improved engagement and health, safety, and wellness supports

- Support an organizational culture focused on health, safety, wellness, and anti-racism within the GNWT. Promote employee engagement as part of the organizational culture, empowering employees to effectively contribute to the role, team, environment, and GNWT.

Competency Development

Goal 4: Recruiting, developing, and retaining competent employees to meet the needs of NWT residents

- Increase formal and informal learning experiences to assist employees in achieving career milestones through targeted developmental opportunities.
- Implementing consistent succession planning to effectively communicate the succession planning approach to workforce planning and development.
- Attract, recruit and retain current and prospective employees to the public service creating a dynamic workforce that supports programs and services for NWT residents.

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