

GNWT

Advisory Committee on Employability

GACE

Terms of Reference



August 28, 2012

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BACKGROUND

The GNWT Advisory Committee on Employability (GACE) will provide advice to the Deputy Ministers' Human Resources Committee. Committee members will promote awareness of the committee's mandate and objectives.

The advisory committee's work will tie in with Goal 2 of 20/20: A Brilliant North, NWT Public Service Strategic Plan, by forming a "community of interest" for employees with disabilities. The GACE will promote the development and advancement of designated groups in support of the *Affirmative Action Policy*, which provides priority hiring to resident persons with disabilities.

There is a need to improve the representation of persons with disabilities within the public service of the Northwest Territories. Within the NWT in 2006, 6.5% of the NWT workforce was identified as having a disability (NWT Bureau of Statistics 2006). The Government of the Northwest Territories has less than one per cent of its workforce who have self-identified as having a disability. The GNWT wants to increase this representation and needs to make the GNWT an "employer of choice" for persons with disabilities.

OBJECTIVES

The GNWT public service will become recognized as an organization that actively recruits, employs and supports persons with disabilities. This will facilitate the hiring and retention of employees with disabilities, encourage workplace diversity and inclusion, and promote the GNWT as an employer of choice.

The GACE will advise on methods to:

- Promote, support and increase the representation of persons with disabilities within the GNWT workforce; and,
- Reduce stigma, and foster a spirit of inclusion and awareness among GNWT employees.

AUTHORITY

The GACE will be Co-Chaired by the Deputy Minister of Human Resources and another Deputy Head. The GACE will report through the Co-Chairs to the Deputy Ministers' Human Resources Committee. Members of the GACE will be appointed by the Deputy Minister of Human Resources, upon the recommendation of the Deputy Ministers' Human Resources Committee.

MEMBERSHIP

The members of the GACE shall include:

- Two co-chairs – the Deputy Minister of the Department of Human Resources and another Deputy Head of a GNWT department or agency,
- Six GNWT representatives; and
- Two or three alternate GNWT members.

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The appointment of these individuals will be confirmed in writing by the Minister of Human Resources upon recommendations of the Deputy Ministers' Human Resources Committee. All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure regional, gender and cultural representation.

Criteria for membership will include:

- Persons with disabilities, and/or;
- Persons with an interest in employability issues; and/or
- Persons who have experience living and/or working with persons with disabilities.

The Deputy Minister of Human Resources will request recommendations for Non-government organizations, to act as Advisors, from the following organizations:

- Canadian Mental Health Association
- NWT Hard of Hearing Association
- Yellowknife Association for Community Living
- CNIB
- Autism NWT
- YWCA
- NWT Disabilities Council

The Deputy Minister of Human Resources will also request recommendations for representatives from the following organisations to serve in an advisory role:

- Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission of the NWT (WSCC)
- Disability Steering Committee Partnership (DSCP)
- Northwest Territories' Teachers Association; and
- Union of Northern Workers.

TERM

In order to prevent more than half of members resigning simultaneously, the term of the appointments will normally be two years for new members and efforts will be made to stagger the appointments. Upon completion of term appointments, members may re-apply for one or two year renewals.

Alternate members will be invited to become regular members when regular members resign, prior to completing their membership terms, if doing so would not result in overrepresentation of any one department or agency (e.g., more than two representatives from the same department).

SCOPE OF WORK

Roles and Responsibilities: Chairpersons

- Act as champions and be accountable to uphold the mandate of the GACE;
- Chair quarterly GACE meetings and teleconferences;
- Act as spokespersons for the media, the public, MLAs and the Minister;
- Bring recommendations to Deputy Ministers' Human Resources Committee;
- Secure resources as needed;
- Support the GACE members;
- Ensure work of GACE is linked to the *20/20: A Brilliant North, NWT Public Service Strategic Plan*; and
- Report on activities of the GACE to the Deputy Ministers' Human Resources Committee and provide reports for the Minister of Human Resources as appropriate.

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Roles and Responsibilities: GACE Members

The Diversity Officer will develop an annual work plan, with identified GNWT initiatives, for which members may be asked to provide advice and feedback. Examples may include seeking advice and/or feedback from the GACE regarding:

- Defining “persons with disabilities” in a fair manner that considers physical, sensory, emotional and mental disabilities;
- How to implement the priorities for action;
- Current government successes in hiring persons with disabilities and the development of a base line of information (e.g., the number of persons with disabilities employed at the GNWT);
- Recruitment and selection programs for persons with disabilities and effective human resource management practices and processes;
- Initiatives which ensure that the GNWT becomes an employer of choice for persons with disabilities in keeping with the terms and conditions of the Collective Agreements and the NWT Human Rights Act;
- Promotion of the benefits of self-identification for persons with disabilities in the GNWT public service.

It should be noted that members will not be involved in the work of developing and/or carrying out such initiatives, but may be called up on to provide advice and feedback, in order to assist the GNWT in its efforts to increase the representation of persons with disabilities within the public service.

Roles and Responsibilities: Non-Government Organizations

Non-Government Organizations will provide advice for consideration on issues related to employability within the GNWT public service.

The following NGOs are invited to identify one representative from their organisation to serve on the GACE as a Community of Interest Advisor:

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| • Canadian Mental Health Association | • CNIB |
| • NWT Hard of Hearing Association | • Autism NWT |
| • Yellowknife Association for Community Living | • YWCA |
| | • NWT Disabilities Council |

Roles and Responsibilities: Advisors

Advisors will provide advice for consideration on issues related to employability within the GNWT public service, or on other related issues as required.

The following organizations are invited to identify one representative to serve in an advisory capacity:

- Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission of the NWT (WSCC)
- Disability Steering Committee Partnership (DSCP)
- Northwest Territories' Teachers Association
- Union of Northern Workers

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Additionally, the Health and Wellness Consultant and Duty to Accommodate Advisor, Department of Human Resources, will serve in an advisory capacity to the GACE and, in turn, seek advice from the GACE as needed.

Roles and Responsibilities: Department of Human Resources

- Implement and review programs, policies and practices;
- Conduct research as needed; and
- Provide overall communications, and develop communications strategies as required.

The Diversity Officer will act as a special advisor to the GACE, will provide ongoing operational support, and will attend GACE meetings. The Diversity Officer will report to the Manager of Employee Development and Workforce Planning.

BUDGET

Year-to-year funding levels will be determined through the GNWT business planning process. For departmental representatives, their home departments will cover the costs for their employees to attend meetings. The GNWT will support costs for NGOs' travel if it is necessary and feasible for the GNWT to do so.

PROCESSES

The Co-Chairs may establish meeting procedures and policies necessary for the operation of the GACE, and will facilitate quarterly meetings of the GACE. Meetings will be held in Yellowknife and in the regions, as appropriate.

The Terms of Reference for the GACE will be evaluated by the Deputy Ministers' Human Resources Committee every five years and/or on an as needed basis.

The GACE will provide advice to the GNWT's Duty to Accommodate Advisor when requested. The Duty to Accommodate Advisor will provide an update for every meeting. The GACE will also advise on any other matter referred by the Deputy Ministers' Human Resources Committee. A two-thirds majority of GNWT members present constitutes a quorum.

The "Core GACE" (Co-Chairs, GNWT members, and the Diversity Officer) will be invited to every meeting. The "Full GACE" (Core GACE plus Non-Government Organization representatives, and representatives from the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, Disability Steering Committee Partnership, Northwest Territories Teachers' Association, and the Union of Northern Workers) will be invited to GACE meetings bi-annually. The Health and Wellness Consultant and Duty to Accommodate Advisor will attend as needed.

GACE Structure

