

## **GNWT RESPONSE TO MOTION 6-16(6): INCREASE TO STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE LIVING ALLOWANCES**

**Part 1:** That the Department of Education, Culture and Employment increase the living allowances set out in Schedule B of the Regulations to the *Student Financial Assistance Act* by 27 percent;

**Part 2:** AND FURTHER that the structure of the program be altered to ensure that Student Financial Assistance (NWT SFA) grants be indexed and subject to annual changes that are linked to the Consumer Price Index

The Government of Northwest Territories' (GNWT) Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) has begun conducting an independent review of the Student Financial Assistance (SFA) Program. The review will take place throughout 2011-12.

The primary objective of the review is to determine if the basic grant, supplementary grant, repayable loan and remissible loan levels are sufficient to adequately financially assist students in pursuing a postsecondary education. The SFA review will also ascertain how the program contributes to GNWT goals and objectives of developing a healthy educated workforce, and developing skills and resources to meet the needs of our northern communities.

In May 2011, Members of the Legislative assembly were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the Terms of Reference within the Request for Proposals.

The review was awarded to an independent consultant team with expertise in evaluation, and in both qualitative and quantitative social research methods, which will result in a thorough review of SFA Program. Their work will include consultation, research, an in-depth analysis and a final report outlining recommendations.

Consultations are scheduled to begin in September 2011. The consultants will be in contact with current and previous students, parents, Aboriginal organizations, and other interested parties. The consultants will use various methods throughout their consultations, which include telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews, focus groups and online surveys.

Any ensuing changes to the SFA Program will be proposed to the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly for implementation in the 2012-13 academic year.

**Part 3:** AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 90 days.

This document forms the GNWT's comprehensive response within the 90 day deadline.