



OCT 13 2017

MR. TOM BEAULIEU
MLA, TU NEDHE - WIILIDEH

Oral Question 899-18(2)
Small Community Employment Support Program

This letter is in follow-up to Oral Question 899-18(2) which you raised on September 28, 2017.

As you know, in April 2017, the Small Community Employment Support (SCES) program was the beneficiary of a budget increase, which saw annual funding under the program increase from \$1.3M to \$4.3M per year. This increase followed a Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) commitment, as outlined in the *Skills 4 Success 4-Year Action Plan 2016-2020*, to develop a strategy to increase employment in small communities.

In light of the program budget increase and given ongoing work towards the development of a strategy, our approach was an incremental and strategic one. This included making interim changes to the existing SCES program to maximize the benefits of the new funding while reducing the possibility of lapsing funds; engaging with stakeholders to inform the development of a strategy that responds to small community needs; developing and launching a strategy that sets the direction for our efforts to increase employment in small communities; and finally, designing specific program objectives, goals, and criteria informed by the strategy and what we heard in small communities across the Northwest Territories (NWT).

All of the recent SCES program enhancements, including those related to expanding eligibility to regional centers were implemented on an interim basis pending the completion of a strategy to increase employment in small communities. However, I can now confirm that, effective October 01, 2017, the program eligibility criteria has been amended to exclude regional centers for all new applications and proposals received.

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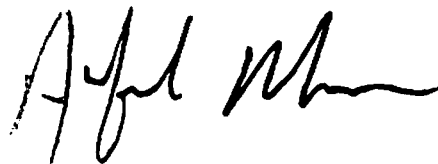
I would like to note that while the SCES program will be targeted to the NWT's smallest communities, the Strategy will provide direction for future enhancements that will be made to the program. These future enhancements would be made to increase and maximize the training and employment opportunities of residents in small communities.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the Strategy will consist of programming, supports and services that extend beyond the scope of the existing SCES program. The SCES program is just one of many initiatives and programs our government has in place to support job growth and employment.

This government's commitment to creating jobs and training opportunities in small communities remains strong. A report outlining what we heard from participants during community engagements across the NWT will be completed and released to the public shortly.

Moving forward, I look forward to engaging with the Committee on Rural and Remote Communities in seeking advice and ideas on how the GNWT can better support and help residents in our small communities. The Department will also be working with community leaders to find out what needs to be done in their communities and how we can use this funding to meet those needs.

As this work progresses, I look forward to sharing information on the development of the Strategy and our efforts to increase employment in small communities.



Alfred Moses
Minister, Education, Culture
and Employment

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Deputy Minister, Education, Culture and Employment
Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs