



# ANNUAL REPORT

on Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls

June 2021

Government of Northwest Territories  
Gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest



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The NWT Help Line offers free support to residents of the Northwest Territories, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is 100% free and confidential. The NWT Help Line also has an option for follow-up calls. Residents can call the help line at **1-800-661-0844**.

For **immediate emotional assistance**, call 1-844-413-6649. This is a national, toll-free 24/7 crisis call line providing support for anyone who requires emotional assistance related to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.



The images in this Annual Report are from the Beaded Hearts Tapestry which commemorates and memorializes missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in the Northwest Territories. Donated by artists from across Canada and the world, each heart has a story and represents a grandmother, mother, aunt, cousin, niece, daughter, or granddaughter that is no longer with us. The hearts symbolize that they are not forgotten, that they still matter, and what happened to them was not part of a just and right society.

The Beaded Hearts Tapestry is an initiative led by the Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories. All images are used with permission.

# Executive Summary

Following the release of the *Reclaiming Power and Place: Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* on June 3, 2019, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) tabled an initial response called “*Doing Our Part*” in the Legislative Assembly.

In its initial response the GNWT committed to review and analyze the 231 Calls for Justice and assess its current programs and services. The intention of this status report is to provide an update on the existing GNWT programs and services identified in “*Doing our Part*”, that responds to the Calls for Justice.

The Gender Equity Division (formerly known as the Women’s Advisory Unit) within the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs will be working with all departments to develop the GNWT Action Plan that responds to the Calls for Justice and inform future government action, including efforts to end violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

Preliminary engagement sessions will take place with community contacts, the Native Women’s Association of the NWT, and the NWT Status of Women’s Council. This preliminary engagement will provide input and guidance to aid the development of the GNWT Action Plan, and to support the four primary recommendations put forward by the Native Women’s Association in their closing submission:

*“We must acknowledge that violence against Indigenous women and girls including members of the 2SLGBTQ communities is a crisis that demands an urgent and active response”.*

*“We must re-establish, build and foster trust between all levels of government, service providers, communities and every one of their citizens”.*

*“We must ensure that the purpose and objective of all government services is to be community and person centered”.*

*“We must establish a meaningful entity with accountability to monitor and evaluate the acknowledgement by governments, efforts towards rebuilding trust and establishment of and outcomes from community and person-centered government services”.*

The GNWT will first release a draft GNWT Action Plan to address the Calls for Justice of the *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. The draft Action Plan will allow for a more comprehensive engagement process before the Action Plan is finalized. The GNWT Draft Action Plan is scheduled to be completed by the Fall of 2021. The Draft Action Plan will address the GNWTs commitment to engaging Indigenous governments and people with lived experience in the development and delivery of programs and services that evolve from the *National Inquiry*.

# A Message From The Minister



Before I became an elected official and the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, I had the privilege of working with the Native Women's Association of the NWT on their submission to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Attending the National Inquiry as an advocate, I heard firsthand the stories of families from the Northwest Territories (NWT) who experienced the tragedy of a missing or murdered love one.

At the Hearings, many NWT families and survivors spoke their truths over the loss of their sisters, daughters, aunties, mothers, grandmothers, and friends. First and foremost, we wish to acknowledge and remember these women and girls and their families. Survivors and families deserve our respect and our help, and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) will continue to support them in their healing journey.

It is a fact that Indigenous women are more likely to experience violence than non-Indigenous women. Here in the Northwest Territories, we have the second highest rates of violence in the country. This is a statistic that we are not proud of and one that must change.

Sadly, a by-product of these high rates of violence is the normalization of violence in our communities. This in turn leads to a "culture of silence" that we heard about at the Hearings in Yellowknife during the National Inquiry.

The NWT is also dealing with a legacy of trauma that is very real within our communities. The trauma stems in part from colonization and the residential school system. As a government, we are looking for ways to heal and reconcile a historical relationship.

The GNWT recognizes that, as a relatively small government serving a Territory with a population just over 50% Indigenous, we have the opportunity to be a leader in developing programs and services that are responsive, accessible and culturally relevant. The GNWT acknowledges that we have lots of work ahead of us but also the opportunity to effect profoundly meaningful change.

Following the release of the Final Report, the GNWT committed to review and analyze the 231 Calls for Justice and assess its current programs and services. In the past 18 months we have carried out a careful and thorough review of existing GNWT programs and services, and we are carrying out preliminary engagement with key stakeholders and partners in advance of the development of a GNWT Action Plan that will respond to the Calls for Justice.

While we work towards a fulsome response in the Fall of 2021 to the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, this Annual Report describes the immediate steps taken by the GNWT to begin to address the needs of NWT women, girls, and two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual people when developing GNWT budgets and determining government activities and priorities.

**Honourable Caroline Wawzonek**  
**Minister Responsible for the Status of Women**

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# Introduction

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was officially launched on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016. On October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016, the GNWT registered an order under the *Public Inquiries Act* to provide the National Inquiry with the authority necessary to fully examine matters within the jurisdiction of the NWT.

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Commissioners were directed to examine and report on institutional policies and practices put in place as a response to violence, including those that have proven effective in reducing violence and increasing the safety of Indigenous women and girls.

The National Inquiry held nine (9) institutional hearings, 15 community hearings and additional statement gatherings in communities across Canada. In total, more than 2,300 people shared their stories and experiences and made recommendations for change.

In 2017, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Commissioner staff visited Yellowknife and Inuvik. During their visit, they met with family members who registered to participate in the family hearings. From January 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018, a community hearing was held in Yellowknife. A number of survivors and family members appeared before the Commission to share their stories. Those survivors and family members who did not wish to speak publicly were offered the opportunity to give their testimony in private. These meetings provided the foundation to address trauma, mental health, addictions, and violence that resulted from many experiences, including colonization, residential schooling, and racism.

The *Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* was released on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, in Gatineau, Quebec. The Final Report, which has over 1,600 pages, included

231 Calls for Justice and recommended the development of a National Action Plan to respond to the Calls for Justice.

The GNWT prepared an initial response to the Calls for Justice shortly after the release of the Final Report. The response entitled *Doing Our Part* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019. Due to the upcoming fall territorial elections, it was determined that it would be inappropriate to make commitments on behalf of the new incoming Government and, instead, a commitment was made to have a more in-depth review, and analysis of the Calls to Justice completed once the new Government was in place.

The GNWT did not respond to specific Calls for Justice in *Doing Our Part* but provided a list of thematic sections related to each of the Calls for Justice and highlighted the work the GNWT is already doing or can build upon. The GNWT also set out a number of high level questions that needed to be considered further.

On November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the Honourable Caroline Wawzonek, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, tabled a work plan in the Legislative Assembly outlining how the GNWT will prepare its action plan to respond to the Calls for Justice.

The 231 Calls for Justice are far reaching and complex, and developing a fulsome response is not a simple matter of reviewing and signing off on work already being done. The GNWT recognized that the process will take a careful and thorough review of what we are doing currently, realistically and honestly, assessing the effectiveness of what is being done, and identifying what we need to do by setting measurable targets to track progress.

The GNWT will first release a draft GNWT Action Plan to address the Calls for Justice of the *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. The draft Action Plan will allow for a more comprehensive engagement process before the Action Plan is finalized. The GNWT Draft Action Plan is scheduled to be completed by the Fall of 2021. The Draft Action Plan will address the GNWT's commitment to engaging Indigenous governments and people with lived experience in the development and delivery of programs and services that evolve from the *National Inquiry*.

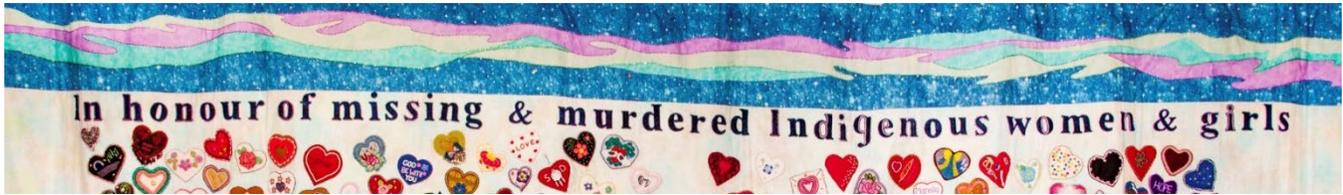
This Annual Report is intended to describe current initiatives undertaken to address systemic causes of violence against women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA people since the 2019 release of *Reclaiming Power and Place: Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*.



# What We Are Currently Doing

*Doing Our Part*, the GNWT's initial response to the *Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, identified some of the existing GNWT programs and services that address the four key themes presented in the Final Report: Culture, Health & Wellness, Safety & Human Security, and Justice.

The following information provides an update on the programs and services identified in *Doing our Part*, including any updates that have occurred since the release of that report.



# Human and Indigenous Rights and Governmental Obligations

*Calls for Justice 1.1-1.11*

## **New Gender Equity Division**

The GNWT recognizes the need identified by Call for Justice 1.3. The Commission identified the need for governments to prioritize and resource the measures required to eliminate the social, economic, cultural, and political marginalization and address violence towards First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women, girls, two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual (2SLGBTQQIA) people when developing budgets and determining government activities and priorities.

In March 2021, the NWT Legislative Assembly approved the creation of a new Gender Equity Division. The new Division is intended to expand the work of the Women’s Advisory Office and coordinate cross-departmental action on gender issues, including: gender-based violence, advancing gender equality, and women’s economic empowerment.

Funding for the new Gender Equity Division came into effect on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 and will see the creation of three new positions in the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. These three new positions include a Family Violence Coordinator, a Gender and Diversity Analyst, and a Gender and Diversity Officer.

The work of the Gender Equity Division will include:

- Ensuring the GNWT’s commitment to gender equality is included and reflected in budgets, policies and programs;
- Promoting and training staff on how to use Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) to assess how diverse groups of women/girls, men/boys, and gender diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. When designing policies and programs that are meant to serve the needs of northerners, GBA+ encourages the consideration of many identity factors, including: Indigenous status, religion, sexual orientation, race, age, language, socio-economic status, mental and physical ability;
- Acting as the GNWT’s contact with non-government organizations concerned with gender equity; and
- Promoting gender equity and leadership at senior levels in the private and public sector.

This additional capacity will support concrete action by the GNWT in response to the *Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, as we move towards true and lasting reconciliation.

## **Federal/Provincial/Territorial Work**

The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women responded to a federal request for the GNWT to participate in a federal/provincial/territorial (F/P/T) working group on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The Gender Equity Division participates in bi-weekly teleconferences where regular updates are provided on the work being done to develop the National Action Plan.

The F/P/T Working Group is chaired by officials from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. The Gender Equity Division provides regular updates to the GNWT interdepartmental Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Working Group and the community contacts on the outcome of these meetings.

In 2020, the GNWT also established an interdepartmental Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Working Group to coordinate the GNWT's response to the Calls for Justice. This working group is chaired by the Director, Gender Equity Division and includes appointed representatives from the Departments of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, Health and Social Services, Justice, Education, Culture and Employment, and the NWT Housing Corporation.

The Gender Equity Division also provides regular briefings to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and to the Child and Family Deputy Ministers' Committee meetings. As noted above, updates are provided to the interdepartmental Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Working Group, and their input is sought when required. The Gender Equity Division will continue to participate in the F/P/T teleconference calls.

Early in 2020, the Gender Equity Division approached Indigenous governments across the NWT to identify a contact person that the Gender Equity Division could maintain contact with in relation to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls file. The purpose of this is to

ensure that information is being shared with communities on the work being done to respond to the Calls for Justice. Not all Indigenous governments have identified a contact person, but the GNWT continues to reach out to those that have not.

Monthly teleconferences are held with the community contacts, which also includes the Native Women's Association of the NWT and the Status of Women Council of the NWT. The Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife is also invited to participate in the calls. The Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife is an outreach organization that supports 2SLGBTQQIA youth, families, and adults in the NWT. Meeting notes are prepared and distributed to the community contacts to share with their respective leadership. The Gender Equity Division also has a standing offer briefi to the respective leadership.

## **National Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

Since May 2020, the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, has co-hosted a number of virtual online panel sessions. These sessions focus on regional/community activities that support the implementation of the Calls for Justice. Sessions are attended by participants from across the country and provide opportunities for networking, information sharing, and learning about promising practices and approaches taking place in other jurisdictions.

The GNWT held an online panel session co-hosted by the Honourable Caroline Wawzonek, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The session also included presentations by Ms. Jane Weyallon, President of the Native Women's Association of the NWT, Ms. Violet Camsell- Blondin, President of the Status of Women Council, and Ms. Lesa Semmler, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Inuvik Twin Lakes. This session was attended by more than 190 participants from across the country, and the feedback received indicated that it was informative and moving.

## Increased Funding for Women’s Initiative and Gender Equity Grants

The GNWT is responding to the Calls for Justice (1.8) to make funding available to Indigenous women’s and 2SLGBTQQIA people’s organizations to create, deliver, and disseminate prevention programs, education, and awareness campaigns designed for Indigenous communities and families.

The Women’s Initiative Grant is an application-based grant that has been provided to women and girls since 1998, and historically has been fully subscribed. In March 2021, the NWT Legislative Assembly approved new funding to double the amount available to \$100,000 annually, enabling the Gender Equity Division to provide grants designed to enhance gender equity across the Northwest Territories.

These grants provide funding for special projects that encourage the participation of women in cultural, economic, political, and social sectors in the NWT. Special projects may include but are not limited to: workshops, conferences, publications, life skills development, and support to organizations involved in these activities.

## Women in Leadership

Calls for Justice (1.4) recommend supporting and promoting the role of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people in governance and leadership. The importance of the Women in Leadership initiative, as it relates to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, is that by having more women in decision making roles, the impacts on women can be looked at from a feminine perspective and the solutions provided take into account women’s world views. Having women in leadership roles ensures that impacts on women and girls continue to be an important part of the political conversation and when setting priorities.

In 2019, the GNWT made significant investments to promote gender equality and empower women in

political leadership, including the development of a formal “Made in the North” curriculum to support the delivery of Campaign Schools for Women in communities across the NWT. A formal curriculum and individual training modules were developed to support the Campaign Schools for women. Participant workbooks, Instructor’s Guide, PowerPoint presentation, online materials, and training videos were also developed.

The GNWT jointly collaborated with the federal department of Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada and received federal funding support (2019/20 – 2020/21) to pilot the delivery of the new curriculum. The strategic investment allowed for the GNWT to partner with the Status of Women Council and Native Women’s Association to deliver the pilot workshops in March 2019 in Behchokò, Délı̄ne, Dettah, and Fort Providence.

As part of the federal funding, the GNWT developed the “She Can” social marketing campaign in August 2019. The “She Can” campaign is intended to encourage women across the NWT to consider running for all elected positions, including federal, territorial, municipal and school board/District Education Authority elections. The “She Can” marketing campaign is also designed to encourage voter confidence in women as elected leaders. The campaign also addressed barriers women may face and to encourage gender equality and women empowerment.

In 2020, the GNWT delivered a facilitators’ workshop to provide women across the NWT with skills and knowledge on how to teach the Campaign School for Women. By increasing the number of trained facilitators who can provide this training, more workshops can be delivered, and workshops led by regional facilitators can focus on specific regional and community concerns.

Eight women representing all the regions in the NWT completed the training and were in the process of scheduling Campaign Schools for Women workshops in all the regions before the COVID-19

pandemic. Because of COVID-19 response activities, the planning for the workshops was placed on hold. The Gender Equity Division recently met with the facilitators, and it was agreed that they would move forward with scheduling at least five workshops in the communities by the end of August 2021.

With the assistance of the federal funding provided, the GNWT designed and developed a “She Can” website ([www.shecannwt.ca](http://www.shecannwt.ca)), which was launched in December 2020. The portal provides a one-stop shop for easy access to relevant information about women’s leadership. The She Can website provides support and educational resources to increase the representation of women in political leadership at all levels of government.

The Gender Equity Division co-hosted a Territorial Leadership Gathering for Women on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, in partnership with the Status of Women Council. This online virtual all-day gathering saw presentations made by women in leadership roles in a number of areas. The feedback on this gathering was well received, and participants recommended that more gatherings like this should be scheduled.

## **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Reconciliation**

The GNWT is working in partnership with Indigenous governments to implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as is called for in the Calls for Justice 1.2.

On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, a meeting was held with the modern treaty and self-government partners, including leadership from the Tłı̨chq̓ Government, Gwich’in Tribal Council, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Sahtu Secretariat Inc., Premier Cochrane, and Minister Wawzonek. At the meeting, there was a commitment to direct officials to establish a working group to discuss a plan around the implementation of the United Nations Declaration in the NWT.

The Working group held its first meeting on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021, to develop plans and timelines to address the implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

There was a recommendation to establish two tables for these discussions: one specific to modern treaty and self-government partners and one with all Indigenous governments. Commitments to establish an officials’ working group with Indigenous governments on the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* were made at the fall bilateral meetings with Salt River First Nation, Tłı̨chq̓ Government and the Délı̨ne Got’ı̨nę Government and were proposed at the bilateral meeting in January and February 2021 with the Akaitcho Dene First Nations, Northwest Territory Métis Nation, Sahtu Secretariat Inc., Gwich’in Tribal Council and the Kátł’odeeche First Nation.

A letter was sent to Indigenous governments on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021, asking for a representative to be identified to participate in a working group of officials for the implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Work is underway for the first meeting of the Territorial Council of Leaders between the GNWT and Indigenous governments in the Summer of 2021. These meetings are intended to provide for the implementation of *the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, including the Action Plan, and for engagement on other NWT-wide issues.

## **Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resources Management and Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement**

A key feature of the Devolution Agreement is the establishment of an Intergovernmental Council to allow the public and Indigenous governments to cooperate and collaborate on matters related to lands and resource management.

The Intergovernmental Council provides an important opportunity for northern leaders to cooperate on land and resource management while respecting the autonomy and authority of each government over its own lands. The Council is established by the Northwest Territories Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resources Management, and its goal is to work together to explore ways to coordinate their respective land and resource management practices, share capacity, and avoid duplication.

Members of the Intergovernmental Council include:

- Government of the Northwest Territories
- Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
- Gwich'in Tribal Council
- Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated
- Northwest Territory Métis Nation
- Tłı̨chǫ Government
- Acho Dene Koe First Nation and the Fort Liard Métis Local #67
- Salt River First Nation
- Denínu Kúę First Nation
- Kátł'odeeche First Nation

Before Devolution, the Government of Canada collected and kept almost all of the money companies pay to develop resources on public land in the NWT. Since Devolution, the GNWT and Canada now share the resource revenues from public land in the NWT.

Since Devolution, the GNWT has also shared resource royalties with Indigenous government Devolution signatories. The NWT is the only jurisdiction in Canada to share resource revenues

like this. The GNWT shares 25% of its resource royalties. \$33 million dollars has been shared with devolution signatories since 2015. The resource royalties paid out to the Indigenous governments are used at their own discretion.

The Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement sets out the terms and conditions for the sharing of resource revenues from public lands in the NWT among the GNWT and Indigenous government signatories to the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement.

## **Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreements**

The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs has signed formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with Indigenous governments that outline matters of mutual interest related to intergovernmental cooperation and coordination. These bilateral agreements confirm the commitment of parties to work together to strengthen government-to-government relations, and establish a forum for leaders to address shared concerns.

The strengthening of the GNWT's intergovernmental relations with Indigenous governments is an integral part of the government's commitment to engage with Indigenous governments, as stated in "Respect, Recognition, Responsibility" – The GNWT's Approach to Engaging with Aboriginal Governments.

To date, the GNWT has completed nine MOUs with Indigenous governments, which have helped to formalize and advance the GNWT's government-to-government relations with:

- Tłı̨chǫ Government
- Gwich'in Tribal Council
- Northwest Territory Métis Nation
- Akaitcho Dene First Nations
- Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
- Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated
- Salt River First Nation
- Kátł'odeeche First Nation
- Délı̨ne Got'ı̨ne Government



## Culture

### *Calls for Justice 2.1-2.7*

The GNWT is committed to acknowledging, recognizing, and protecting Indigenous cultures and languages and is already implementing most of the culture-specific Calls for Justice, though some additional action is required to meet the recommendations.

### Land Claims

The GNWT proactively supports the settlement of land claims and has been a strong partner in their implementation, reflecting a broader commitment to recognizing and respecting Indigenous rights.

### Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs

On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, the 19th Legislative Assembly established a Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs to encourage discussions and recommendations related to Aboriginal<sup>1</sup> rights negotiations and reconciliation. The Legislative Assembly appointed Members of the Legislative Assembly: Lesa Semmler, Rylund Johnson, Frieda Martselos, Caroline Wawzonek and R.J. Simpson as members of the Special Committee. The Special Committee will receive detailed reports on the status of Aboriginal Rights negotiations and may access records or people to conduct their business, including engaging with Indigenous governments and organizations.

The Special Committee held its inaugural meeting on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, and selected Lesa Semmler as Chair and Rylund Johnson as Vice-Chair. Three subsequent meetings of the Special Committee have since been held. The Special Committee has invited

territorial Indigenous governments involved in negotiating Aboriginal land claims and self-government agreements and Indigenous governments involved in implementing Aboriginal land claims and self-government agreements to make a presentation to the Special Committee.

### Indigenous Languages

*Official Languages Act of the NWT*: Nine Indigenous languages are recognized in the *Official Languages Act of the NWT*. The *Act's* structure is based on advice from communities. The GNWT continues to work with Indigenous communities and the federal government to provide funding and other supports to revitalize, retain, and restore Indigenous languages within its jurisdiction. This includes the provision of interpreting services for government services, such as understanding clinical information within the health and social services system, and the courts, as required. The *OLA* also establishes the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, which have representation from all official languages, and provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on the provision of services in official languages and programs, and initiatives aimed at maintaining, promoting, and revitalizing Indigenous languages.

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<sup>1</sup> The term "Aboriginal" is being used instead of "Indigenous," as this is a legal term

### **Canada-NWT Agreement for Indigenous Languages**

**in the NWT:** Funding goes directly to Indigenous governments through the *Canada-NWT Agreement for Indigenous Languages in the NWT* to support community-centred Indigenous language initiatives.

**Indigenous Languages Curriculum:** In the Fall of 2020, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment released the *Northwest Territories (NWT) Indigenous Languages Curriculum: Our Languages*. Our Languages is part of the GNWT's effort to strengthen, revitalize and promote Indigenous languages. The Our Languages curriculum is written for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 core Indigenous language instruction; however, the curriculum also includes a section devoted to language revitalization efforts within the whole school and within communities.

The GNWT also uses the *Dene Kede* curriculum and *Innuqatigiit* curriculum in schools to ensure First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives are integrated. These curriculums were developed in collaboration with Indigenous peoples and Knowledge Keepers. Some schools also offer Indigenous language classes, using the *Our Languages* curriculum.

**Indigenous Language Revitalization:** In 2020-21, the NWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat budgeted \$21.0M dollars to support Indigenous language and education promotion, preservation and revitalization:

- \$11.6M supported Indigenous language and Education in the JK to 12 Education system.
- \$9.4M supported the NWT Indigenous Languages Framework and Action Plan

Of the \$9.4M funding, \$4.89M goes directly to Indigenous governments to manage their own language and culture restoration/reclamation efforts. \$1.9M is directed to program support (Training, Professional Development and Indigenous Education). \$2.0M is directed to contributions to

organizations committed to Indigenous language restoration, such as broadcasting societies.

### **NWT Archives**

The GNWT runs and operates the NWT Archives, which collects and preserves audio recordings of language, traditional knowledge and oral history. The NWT Archives also provides advice to communities regarding their heritage information, including audio recordings. Currently, there are several projects underway which the NWT Archives and Indigenous governments and organizations are collaborating on to preserve archival material, traditional knowledge, and language.

### **Traditional Knowledge**

Through the *Traditional Knowledge Policy*, the GNWT recognizes the value and importance of incorporating traditional Indigenous knowledge into its programs and services. The GNWT also recognizes that it needs to work closely with Indigenous communities and holders of Indigenous knowledge in a respectful and collaborative manner in order to access that information. To this end, funding is provided for traditional knowledge projects annually. There is also funding for traditional knowledge in areas such as the management and monitoring of water, wildlife, and fish.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resource (ENR) is leading the development of a GNWT-wide Traditional Knowledge Action Plan, which will address traditional knowledge work in the GNWT. ENR provides funding to undertake traditional knowledge studies in key program areas (e.g., Water Management and Monitoring, Wildlife and Fish, On the Land, etc.) and to support community needs.

Traditional knowledge is incorporated in the delivery of Health and Social Services programs and services, such as the inclusion of traditional healing in health care, supporting research into traditional

approaches to healing and wellness, midwifery, and through the GNWT's support to formally recognize custom adoptions. The GNWT understands that health and wellness is about more than physical health and that this requires everyone to work together to provide the best care to all residents.

## Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training

In March 2021, the Department of Finance, in partnership with the Departments of Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services, launched *Living Well Together*, a completely redesigned Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training course. The new course is mandatory for all GNWT employees (<https://www.fin.gov.nt.ca/en/services/diversity-and-inclusion/living-well-together>).

Through *Living Well Together*, GNWT employees first explore the current relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the North, the historical events, colonizing policies and practices, and the peoples that have shaped the current relationship. In the second half of the course, employees work to develop the cultural awareness, sensitivity and foundational competencies for supporting respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples into the future. The training modules are accessible through the Learning and Development Calendar and are also available to the public.

## Indigenous Mentor Apprentice Program

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment partnered with three regional Indigenous governments to deliver the NWT PILOT Mentor Apprentice Program with 60 participants active during the first year of the pilot in 2019-20. The Mentor and Apprentice pairs work together to build Indigenous language fluency over a period of up to 200 hours of immersion instruction and strategies. Both Mentors and Apprentices are paid

for their time in the program upon submission of progress reports. Mentors receive a starting compensation rate of \$25 per hour, and apprentices receive a starting rate of \$20 per hour.

In 2020-21 the NWT Mentor-Apprentice Program was expanded to other regions interested in the approach to language and learning and to allow training to now be provided for six Indigenous languages: Inuvialuktun, Gwich'in, North Slavey (also known as Dene K'ede), Dene Zhatié, Tłı̨chǫ, and Dëne Sų́líné.

## On the Land

**On The Land Collaborative:** The Department of Health and Social Services was a proud partner in the creation of the On The Land Collaborative in 2014, and has continued to work closely with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Tides Canada, and the NWT Recreation and Parks Association as the administrative leads for the Collaborative. The Collaborative brings together government, charitable, corporate, and other partners to combine efforts and make it easier for communities to access money and other resources for on-the-land projects.

In 2019 and 2020, the Departments of Health and Social Services, Environment and Natural Resources, Education, Culture, and Employment, and Industry, Tourism, and Investment, along with business and non-profit organizations, provided a total of \$2,000,100 in funding support through the NWT On-the-Land Collaborative to 103 projects across the NWT. Forty percent of project funding went directly to Indigenous governments and the rest to schools, non-government organizations and municipalities across the NWT. The Collaborative supports projects that: get people out on the land; connect community members to their land, culture, languages, and traditions; build or strengthen partnerships; enhance community capacity; and are sustainable, as it relates to the environment and the continuation of the program.

**Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan:** ENR is also implementing the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan, which identifies actions and supports needed for land-based activities, traditional economies, and country foods, all of which support culture and identity. ENR also supports land-based educational programs to help build cultural learning and awareness.

**Harvester Support:** In 2020, ENR launched new harvester support programs, including those aimed at addressing the impacts of COVID-19. These programs supported mentorship and training, food security and on-the-land connections. The Take a Family on the Land program encourages mentorship and knowledge sharing and will be an ongoing program.





## Health and Wellness

*(Calls for Justice 3.1 to 3.7)*

The GNWT is implementing most of the health- and wellness-specific Calls for Justice, though further action is required:

### **Community Wellness Plans**

The Department of Health and Social Services works with Indigenous communities and governments in creating and implementing their community wellness plans, which allow communities to decide for themselves where wellness funding should be directed. Community Wellness Plans include the following themes: Healthy Children, Families and Communities (healthy pregnancy, new parents, after-school programming, and FASD prevention, intervention, and support), Health Living and Disease Prevention (awareness, prevention, and promotion activities on topics such as diabetes, healthy eating, and active living), and Mental Health and Addictions (cultural programming and addictions).

### **NWT Health and Social Services Leadership Council**

Through quarterly public meetings, the Leadership Council directs the affairs of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority and provides advice to the Minister of Health and Social Services on strategic directions and programs. The Leadership Council is composed of a chairperson, the chairpersons from each of the Regional Wellness Councils (Beaufort Delta, Dehcho, Fort Smith, Hay River, Sahtu, and Yellowknife), and the chairperson of the Tłı̨ch̓ Community Services Agency.

### **On the Land Healing**

Call for Justice 3.2 asks that government provide funding for Indigenous-centred and community-based health and wellness services that are available and accessible in Indigenous communities and culturally appropriate, and meet the health and wellness needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people.

In 2014/2015, the GNWT established the On the Land Healing Fund for Mental Health and Addictions.

The annual budget for the On the Land Healing Fund is \$1.8 million. Funds are allocated to Indigenous Governments to deliver community-led, land-based initiatives that specifically target mental wellness and healing from addictions, including mobile addictions treatment and family-based aftercare. Supporting Indigenous governments to deliver land-based healing means that residents can receive culturally respectful support for mental health and addictions closer to home and expands the number of options available to them.

Indigenous governments apply for funding through proposals. Program activities and locations change from year to year depending on the needs identified by the Indigenous governments. Some regions divide the funding equally between communities while others deliver programs on a regional or rotational basis.

In 2019 and 2020, the approximate breakdown of the On the Land Healing Funding was as follows:

- \$875,000 to Indigenous Regional Governments (\$125,000 each)
- \$120,000 to Indigenous Community Governments (\$30,000 each)
- \$100,000 towards the On the Land Collaborative

In 2019/20, additional funding of \$730,000 to support mobile treatment and aftercare was added and is being split equally among regional and community governments for an allocation of \$66,363 each.

### **NWT Clinical Practice Guidelines**

These Guidelines are used in remote communities to guide the clinical practice of Community Health Nurses. They highlight the need for nurses to be aware of the realities of trauma and address the cycle of damaging effects. Trauma-informed care provides the foundation for a basic understanding of the psychological, neurological, biological, social, and spiritual impacts that trauma and violence have on individuals.

### **NWT Sexual Assault Guidelines**

These Guidelines were created in 2019 to provide guidance to health care practitioners when providing care to survivors of sexual assault. The guidelines emphasize that sexual assault is a deeply traumatizing and subjective experience. It takes immense courage for a survivor of sexual assault to come forward and disclose their experience. It is the health professional's duty to honour the survivor's trust, treat them with dignity and respect, address their concerns, and to support them through their traumatic experience.





# Human Security

*(Calls for Justice 4.1 to 4.8)*

The GNWT is engaged in a variety of work to address basic social and economic needs. The Anti-Poverty Fund supports community organizations in their pursuit of social and economic security. Ongoing work will continue to ensure clean drinking water is available to all NWT residents. Food security remains a focus, including encouraging local food production, traditional harvesting, and effective collaborative management of wildlife. Some of the Calls for Justice are addressed through the following GNWT programs and services:

## Anti-poverty Fund

In 2019-20, the Department of Health and Social Services provided \$1 million dollars in contributions to Indigenous governments and community-based organizations to support local poverty reduction projects through the Anti-Poverty Fund.

Successful proposals aim to reduce poverty by supporting: food security, those experiencing homelessness, early childhood development, employment and training, healthy living, supporting Traditional Knowledge, and on-the-land activities.

In 2019-20, 47 projects received support. Highlights from the successful proposals include:

- The Rapid Rehousing Program, run by the Yellowknife Women's Society. This housing first program helps individuals experiencing homelessness to access and retain housing. The program provides targeted and time-limited financial assistance and support services for those either at high risk of/or who are experiencing homelessness;
- Food First Foundation supports meal preparation and gardening programs in NWT schools, helping children to be attentive in school, increasing their ability to concentrate, learn, and develop into healthy adults.

- Tłıchq Łeagia Ts'ıjlı Kq plans to establish a youth council that will develop a Behchokq Youth Needs Assessment and Poverty Prevention Strategy to inform youth programming in the community.

## Food Security

**Healthy Foods for Learning:** funding is provided to schools to support healthy eating. This initiative has life-changing, far-reaching impacts on children and their learning.

## Education Assistance

**Northern Distance Learning:** provides opportunities for learning in small communities that will improve outcomes and can change futures for students.

**Student Financial Assistance Program:** assists eligible residents with the costs of obtaining a post-secondary education and supplements a student's own financial resources.

## Income Assistance

The **Income Assistance Program** provides financial aid to assist with basic needs, food, accommodation and utilities.

In March 2020, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment made several changes to the delivery of the Income Assistance Program to ensure residents were supported and continued to receive benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These measures include:

- issuing a one-time Emergency Allowance to all Income Assistance recipients who received benefits during the month of March 2020.
- payrollling applicants and removing the requirement to report in person.
- exempting the following types of income:
  - financial assistance provided by Indigenous Governments, benevolent organizations, family and friends.
  - Special Goods and Services Tax (GST) credit for low and modest-income residents.
  - Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB).
  - Special Old Age Security (OAS) and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) payments.
  - Special Payment for certified holders of the Disability Tax Credit.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment also introduced a new Productive Choice that all current and new applicants are automatically enrolled in, named Wellness – Public Health. Having this Productive Choice be automatic for all applicants provides additional financial assistance to assist with enhanced needs, including clothing and childcare expenses.

**Senior Home Heating Subsidy:** assists seniors with low to modest income with the costs associated with heating their homes and supports seniors to age in place.

**Disabled and Aged Allowance:** helps clients obtain additional supports and services they may require as a result of age or disability.

## Workforce Participation

The Small Communities Employment Strategy and the Small Community Employment Support Program supports employment in largely Indigenous NWT communities. In addition, the *Canada-NWT Labour Market Agreements* support the labour market in providing employment and training programs. The new high school *Pathways* program will expose students to a broad range of occupations and the educational pathway to obtain their selected path.

## Family and Gender-based Violence

**Family Violence Shelters and Awareness:** The GNWT provides core funding to shelters for women and children fleeing violence and continues to work with shelters to address the trauma-related needs of those who access these services. The GNWT will also continue to participate in F/P/T forums on the safety of women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

In September 2019, the Department of Health and Social Services implemented operational Standards for the NWT Family Violence Shelters. The annual investment to support family violence shelters is \$3.5M. This includes an increase of \$500,000, which began in 2019-2020.

In addition to the \$3.5M allocated to family violence shelters, the Department of Health and Social Services allocates an additional \$483,000 to support the following initiatives:

- ‘What Will It Take?’ social marketing campaign
- Non-Shelter Region Protocols/Response Teams
- Education and awareness activities for children who witness violence
- Territorial Family Violence Shelter Network
- Family Violence Awareness Week

**Family Violence Strategy:** In 2020, the GNWT identified a need for greater coordination and

accountability in its collective response to family violence in the territory. In response to this identified need, Cabinet directed the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs (Gender Equity Division) to take the lead on this issue.

In March 2021, the NWT Legislative Assembly approved the establishment of a Family Violence Coordinator position to coordinate family violence work across the GNWT. This position is located within the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. Family violence-specific program delivery will remain with the individual GNWT departments.

An interdepartmental Family Violence Working Group will work with the new Coordinator to develop a family violence strategy. The goal of this work is to identify best practices, align existing GNWT work, and identify priority areas for improvement. It is expected that this position will work closely with NWT communities when developing the strategy.

**Gender-Based Violence National Action Plan:** At the January 21-22, 2021 annual meeting of Ministers' of the Status of Women, a Joint Declaration was issued stating the Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Ministers' commitment to work on developing a Gender-Based Violence National Action Plan.

Since April 2020, senior FPT officials have been working on guiding documents for the development of the Gender-Based Violence National Action Plan. The GNWT Gender Equity Division has been working closely with departments in compiling and submitting comments on the guiding documents.

At the annual meeting of FPT Ministers responsible for the Status of Women Jan 2021, FPT Ministers endorsed the development of the Gender-Based Violence National Action Plan in accordance with the guiding documents and issued a Joint Declaration for a Canada free of Gender-Based Violence.

## Changes to the *Employment Standards Act*

Amendments to the *Employment Standards Act* and Regulations came into force on Jan 1, 2020, and included the introduction of Parental, Compassionate, Family Caregiver, and Family Violence leaves.

The *Employment Standards Act* establishes the minimum standards for the terms of employment between employers and employees in the NWT. The new amendments included:

- Entitlement to parental leave was extended from a maximum of 37 weeks of unpaid leave to a maximum of 61 weeks. The introduction of parental sharing leave provides an additional 8 weeks of unpaid leave for parents who choose to share parental leave.
- Entitlement to compassionate leave was extended from a maximum of 8 weeks of unpaid leave within a 26-week period to a maximum of 27 weeks of unpaid leave within a 52-week period to care for family members who are at risk of death within 27 weeks.
- Family Caregiver Leave is a new unpaid leave that allows eligible employees up to 17 weeks of unpaid leave to provide care or support for an adult (18 years or older) family member who is critically ill or injured, and up to 37 weeks of unpaid leave to provide care or support for a child (under 18 years) family member who is critically ill or injured.
- Family Violence Leave is for employees experiencing family violence. Ten days of emergency family violence leave, five (5) paid and five (5) unpaid, can be taken by eligible employees to seek support or safety when dealing with a family violence situation. Eligible employees may also access 15 weeks of unpaid leave to address ongoing family violence situations.

## Vulnerable Populations

In 2019-20, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWT HC) made a number of investments to support vulnerable populations, especially during the winter months and as a result of COVID-19:

- In partnership with the Hay River Council for Persons with Disabilities, an emergency overnight shelter was developed in Hay River with the capacity to provide overnight support for up to 15 individuals.
- In Fort Simpson, the NWT HC worked with the Village of Fort Simpson to set-up a 15-person emergency overnight shelter.
- To utilize extra space within the Salvation Army, the NWT HC provided a contribution to expand the Salvation Army's overnight capacity to 40 persons.
- The NWT HC is supporting some of the operations of the Salt River First Nation shelter.
- To increase overnight shelter capacity, the NWT HC supported the procurement of a GNWT office building in Inuvik to temporarily expand the operations of the Inuvik Emergency Warming Shelter so that they can assist up to 20 persons safely physically distanced.
- The NWT HC's Homelessness Assistance Fund has been increased from \$125,000 to \$325,000 to help ensure that residents are stably housed.

## Housing

The Calls for Justice recommended that governments commence construction of new housing and repairs for existing housing; support the establishment of Indigenous-led low-barrier shelters, safe spaces, transition homes and services for the homeless; and ensure that Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people have access to housing that is safe, appropriate to geographic and cultural needs, and available where they reside.

In 2019-20, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation provided \$600,000 in funding over four

years to support a Housing First program in Yellowknife to house and support up to 25 previously homeless individuals who have concurrent mental health and addictions.

The Rapid Rehousing Program pilot builds on the experience of non-governmental organizations using their effectiveness in case management and expertise in program referral. The NWT HC partnered with non-governmental organizations through a flexible contribution that allows the organizations to help, in whatever manner they determine is appropriate, provide housing stability to the individuals they serve in their organizations.

NWT HC has piloted three Rapid Rehousing programs to provide support for families and individuals to exit homelessness or prevent homelessness in Yellowknife and Inuvik. In less than two (2) years of implementation, the initiative has helped 93 households find and maintain stable housing. The pilot programs have been extended to 2022.

To address homelessness in small communities outside of Yellowknife, NWT HC developed the Northern Pathways to Housing, a supportive housing program for single adults experiencing housing instability. The goal of the program is to stabilize individuals with housing, and work with communities to develop wrap around systems of support to encourage the integration of individuals into the community. NWT HC currently supports four northern pathway projects in Aklavik, Fort Simpson, Behchokò and Fort Good Hope.

Over \$1.4 million in capital funding has been allocated to these four communities to construct or renovate housing for 16 housing spaces appropriate for single persons experiencing homelessness.

In Yellowknife, the NWT HC provided \$750,000 to the Yellowknife Women's Society to support a project that would reconfigure its shelter to include 16 semi-independent spaces. The spaces give women more privacy and security compared to mats or bunks that were previously used. These renovations build on the 8 suites previously created by

renovating the basement of the YWS shelter.

Operational funding agreements have also been completed to provide funding support for community partners: Łíídlj Kúé First Nation, Behchokò Friendship Centre, Aklavik Indian Band, K'asho Got'ine Housing Society.

The NWT HC is assisting the YWCA in their proposal to the federal government to construct an extension of Lynn's Place, a transitional housing program for women and women with families. It is anticipated that the application will be completed within the fiscal year 2021-22.

Finally, the NWT HC supported Indigenous government proponents such as the Łíídlj Kúé First Nation, the Acho Dene Koe First Nation, and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation to develop proposals to the federal government for construction and operations funding for a shelter to support Indigenous women and girls. The federal government is funding a total of 2 shelters in the three northern territories. A decision on the location of the two shelters is expected in Summer 2021.





# Justice

*(Calls for Justice 5.1 to 5.25)*

Many of the Calls for Justice that fall under the theme of Justice will require further policy work, particularly with other governments. Work is being done, but there is also a need to identify further action and commitments before the Calls for Justice can be fully considered and met:

## Community Justice Committees

Community Justice Committees support communities to develop alternatives to the criminal justice system, such as diversion programs, community service options, and crime prevention programs. Committees consist of community volunteers and a community justice coordinator. Committee members are appointed by the GNWT Department of Justice Minister for a term of three years, and facilitate both youth and adult diversions.

## Domestic Violence Treatment Options Court

As of December 2020, 173 participants have successfully completed the Domestic Violence Treatment Options Court (DVTO) program in Yellowknife and Hay River. In 2019-20, the GNWT allocated \$868,000 to provide for Specialized Courts, which include both the Wellness Court and Domestic Violence Treatment Options Court. In 2021-20, the Department of Justice will be completing an evaluation of the program.

DVTO is an option for low to medium risk offenders who take responsibility for their actions (plead guilty) and agree to attend an eight module program. Offenders are carefully screened and are required to attend the eight module program as ordered by the Court. Successful completion of the program is a mitigating factor in sentencing.

Funding for crime prevention is available to all 33 communities in the NWT. The Department of Justice continues to work with those communities that have not accessed funding to address issues that may be barriers to the establishment of a committee. GNWT staff continue to engage with community leadership, often in collaboration with the RCMP, to explore ways to support crime prevention programs or initiatives in the communities.

## Victim Services

The Calls for Justice call on governments to develop an enhanced, holistic, comprehensive approach for the provision of support to Indigenous victims of crime and families and friends of Indigenous murdered or missing persons.

The NWT Victims Services Program is a community-based service delivered by community organizations, as opposed to public servants. The program is briefly referenced within Reclaiming Power and Place. The GNWT provides funds to community-based victim service providers who offer victims of crime and tragedy person-centred emotional support, practical assistance, and referrals. It is based on the needs of the individual and is not “incident specific.” The services provided are designed by individual communities to meet local needs. All NWT residents have access to the Victim Services Program, either in person or by phone.

The total number of Victim Services clients (including open files and brief contacts such as requests for information) has increased from 5,820 in 2018/19 to 6,892 in 2019/20.

The Enhancing Victim Services in the NWT agreement from Canada's Victims Fund provides the GNWT with \$775,600 annually towards the costs of our victim services program. The agreement term is from April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016, to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The sunset of the federal funding is currently scheduled to occur in the 2021-22 fiscal year. The Department of Justice is actively in discussions with the Federal Government on renewing the agreement.

Through the NWT Victim Services Program, the GNWT provides funding for 11 community-based victim services workers in eight (8) communities, as well as GNWT staff to support the program. Victim Services program support is provided to the following communities:

#### **Yellowknife**

Two (2) full-time positions serving: Dettah, Łutsek'e, Ndilq and Yellowknife

#### **Behchokò**

Two (2) full-time positions serving: Behchokò, Gamètì, Wekweètì and Whatì

#### **Hay River Reserve**

Two (2) full-time positions serving: Enterprise, Fort Providence, Fort Resolution, Hay River, Kát'odeeche First Nation and Kakisa

#### **Fort Simpson**

One (1) full-time position serving: Fort Liard, Fort Simpson, Jean Marie River, Nahanni Butte, Trout Lake and Wrigley

#### **Fort Smith**

One (1) full-time position serving: Fort Smith and Salt River First Nation

#### **Fort Good Hope**

One (1) full-time position serving: Colville Lake, Déljñę, Fort Good Hope and Norman Wells

#### **Tulita**

One (1) full-time position serving Colville Lake, Déljñę, Norman Wells and Tulita

#### **Inuvik**

Two (2) full-time positions serving: Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Holman, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tsiigehtchic, Tuktoyaktuk and Ulukhaktok

In 2019-20, the Department of Justice completed a full Victim Services program evaluation. The evaluation was completed in April 2020 and has been shared publicly. The Department of Justice is currently assessing and working with the victim services providers to develop a plan to enhance victim services as a result of the evaluation. The Department of Justice is also assessing whether any planned changes to Victims Services in the NWT can be done through its existing program and through negotiations with the federal government.

### **Emergency Protection Orders**

From April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, 61 Emergency Protection Orders files were opened. Emergency protection orders are temporary court orders (up to 90 days) available under the *Protection Against Family Violence Act* to help victims of domestic/intimate partner violence create prohibitive separation from their abusers; primarily from the use of property such as the family home.

The Department of Justice contracts the YWCA to provide 24-hour support to victims of violence and to help keep them safe. The 2019-20 budget to support emergency protection orders related work was \$105,000. The YWCA provides victims with 24-hour assistance to apply for emergency protection orders, aftercare support, general safety planning and compiling statistical/qualitative information regarding the experiences of applicants. The department works with the YWCA to ensure the funding is appropriate to meet the program delivery needs.

In 2020-21, the YWCA conducted a review of the NWT use of emergency protection orders. A final

report titled “The Nature of Emergency Protection Orders (EPOs) In The Northwest Territories, Canada: A Case Study” was released in January 2021. The Department of Justice is currently reviewing the findings and recommendations to inform improvements in the use of emergency protection orders as a tool for survivors of family violence.

### **Family Information Liaison Unit**

The GNWT signed a new three-year agreement from 2020-2023 with Justice Canada for funding the NWT Family Information Liaison Unit program to help the families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls find information about what happened to their loved ones.

As of 2020, 50 family members have asked NWT Family Information Liaison Unit staff for help with their research. Cases span from 1953 to 2019 and

involve the police, coroner, court and medical records. Some of the cases are still before the courts or are open police investigations. Several clients live in or are seeking records in other provinces or territories.

### **Men’s Healing Fund**

In response to the A New Day program reviewed that was completed in January 2021, the Department of Justice adjusted the programming model for Men’s Healing to focus on community-based implementation. In doing so, the Department initiated an Expression of Interest for community-based organizations to develop and deliver their own community-based Men’s Healing programs throughout the NWT. Expressions of Interest will be accepted and selected on a continual basis throughout the 2021-2022 fiscal year until the allotted budget has been disbursed in its entirety.





## Media and Social Influencers

*(Call for Justice 6.1)*

The GNWT supports all the Calls for Justice in this area and supports them indirectly or directly through grants and scholarships across government, such as through NWT Arts Council grants and the *Caring for our People: Cultural Safety Action Plan*.

### Indigenous Broadcasting

The GNWT recognizes the Calls for Justice to increase the number of Indigenous people in broadcasting, television, and radio, and in journalist, reporter, producer, and executive positions in the entertainment industry; and, to support Indigenous people sharing their stories, from their perspectives, free of bias, discrimination, and false assumptions, and in a trauma-informed and culturally sensitive way.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment provides funding for two (2) Indigenous Broadcasting Societies (Native Communication Society and Inuvialuit Communication Society) and 15 NWT community radio stations.

Throughout the Native Communication Society's history, experienced language personalities have mentored youth through training in interview techniques, script preparation, and on-air delivery style. This strategic action envisions a larger role for the Native Communication Society of the NWT in ensuring sustained project support for local Indigenous media, pairing the transfer of technical knowledge with the training and mentorship of a new generation of Indigenous radio broadcasters and announcers.





## Health and Wellness Service Providers

(Calls for Justice 7.1 to 7.9)

The GNWT supports all the Calls for Justice in this area, though further actions are required.

### Community Wellness Plans

In addition to on-the-land approaches highlighted earlier in this document, Community Wellness Plans, which are developed by each community, set out initiatives that are supported by the GNWT. The Community Wellness Plans are not only community-based, they are also community-centred, as called for in the Calls for Justice.

The Department of Health and Social Services is working with Indigenous communities and governments in creating and implementing their Community Wellness Plans, which allow communities to decide for themselves where wellness funding should be directed. Community Wellness Plans include the following themes: Healthy Children, Families and Communities (healthy pregnancy, new parents, after-school programming, and FASD prevention, intervention, and support), Health Living and Disease Prevention (awareness, prevention, and promotion activities on topics such as diabetes, healthy eating, and active living), and Mental Health and Addictions (cultural programming and addictions).

### Cultural Safety

The Department of Health and Social Services has continued to address systemic racism through cultural safety initiatives across the Health and Social Services (HSS) system. The *Caring for Our People: Cultural Safety Action Plan 2018-2020* was released in February 2019 and outlined a series of commitments to embed cultural safety.

Key activities completed in 2019-20 under this Action Plan included:

- Between December 2018 and July 2020, the Department of Health and Social Services piloted 13 training models to health and social services staff across the NWT. The training included content around: Indigenous medicine teachings, Indigenous experiences of residential schools and inter-generational impacts, settler colonialism and privilege, and racism at interpersonal and systemic levels within the health and social services system.
- Initiating development of an engagement toolkit for staff to improve and promote respectful engagement processes when working with Indigenous peoples and communities on areas of concern and to inform policies and programs.
- Formalizing a project team dedicated to incorporating relationship-based care in primary health care.

### Indigenous Advisory Body

The Department of Health and Social Services established an Indigenous Advisory Body (IAB) in 2018 to provide guidance and advice on ways to incorporate cultural safety, Indigenous traditions, cultures, and healing practices across the health and social services system. Members are appointed by Indigenous governments. The Indigenous Advisory Body reviews and provides recommendations to system-wide work, including but not limited to Child

and Family Services, Mental Wellness and Addictions, Seniors and Continuing Care, and Cultural Safety. The Indigenous Advisory Body met in January 2020 and toured the Stanton hospital, learned about primary health care reform and cultural safety initiatives and provided guidance on key activities in the *Caring for Our People: Cultural Safety Action Plan 2018-2020*.

## **NWT Midwifery**

On March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the NWT Legislative Assembly approved \$600,000 in increased funding to move the NWT's Midwifery Program into Phase 2 of implementation. The relationship between midwives and the families they see are historically and culturally important and contribute to the well-being of communities in the NWT. The Territorial Midwifery Program will work in partnership with communities to develop appropriate and practical approaches to the provision of midwifery care as close to home as possible. Outreach activities such as providing care in settings outside health care facilities help to ensure equitable access for all clients, regardless of their circumstances.

The *NWT Midwifery Practice Framework* was updated in 2018 as the foundation for an expanded territorial midwifery program serving Indigenous communities. Midwives honour the Indigenous cultural roots and midwifery traditions of the communities they serve in the NWT while respecting the cultural diversity of all clients. Midwives create spaces where clients can feel safe to express who they are, what they need, and how they wish to receive care.

Midwifery care promotes, protects and supports human reproductive and sexual health rights, based on principles of justice, autonomy, equity and respect for human dignity for all clients, in particular those experiencing marginalization.

## **Recruitment and Retention**

To reflect its commitment to a public service that is representative of the people it serves, the GNWT established the *Affirmative Action Policy*. The policy provides priority hiring to candidates from eligible designated groups that are under-represented in the public service, including the health care field.

"Indigenous Aboriginal Persons" are Dene, Inuit or Métis, Indigenous to the present boundaries of the Northwest Territories, and includes any Indigenous persons resident at birth, and Canadian Aboriginal persons who have lived more than half of their lives in the NWT.

Recruitment and retention of Indigenous community members is a priority within health and social services, particularly child and family services. Recognizing that a healthy workforce is essential to the provision of effective programs and services, the GNWT provides access for all employees to an Employee Assistance Program that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Self-care is so important for those who are required to work with those experiencing trauma and violence. Mental health support offered through the Employee Assistance Program can contribute to staff retention.

## **NWT Friendship Centres**

The GNWT is also supporting Friendship Centres as a means to address Calls for Justice (7.3) which recommend support for Indigenous-led prevention initiatives. In 2019-20, \$250,000 was provided to NWT Friendship Centres, including the NT/NU Council of Friendship Centres; Dehcho Friendship Centre; Tłı̨chǫ Friendship Centre; Ingamo Hall; and Soaring Eagle Friendship Centre.

NWT Friendship Centres are part of the national Friendship Centre Movement that has a vision of ensuring that urban Indigenous individuals, families

and communities become full and active participants in Canadian Society. The NWT has seven established Friendship Centres located in various regions.

Friendship Centres are Non-Government Organizations that work towards fostering healthy communities through multifaceted, grassroots-based programming in the areas of health, housing, family, education, sports and recreation, language, justice, economic development, cultural, and community wellness, with emphasis on youth specific programming.





## Transportation Service Providers and the Hospitality Industry

*(Call for Justice 8.1)*

Based on an initial review, the GNWT is of the opinion that this Call for Justice is not within its jurisdiction, but supports it in principle and will share information about this Call for Justice with industry partners.





## Police Services

*(Calls for Justice 9.1 to 9.11)*

Policing is provided by the RCMP through a Policing Services Agreement between the GNWT and the RCMP. The Minister of Justice establishes policing priorities for the RCMP each fiscal year based on the agreement. For this reason, most Calls for Justice in this area will require collaborative work, including new actions and commitments. However, the initial review indicates that in most areas, work has at least been initiated.

### Indigenous Policing

The GNWT recognizes the Calls for Justice for specialized Indigenous policing units within non-Indigenous police services. While there are no specific Indigenous police units, the Department of Justice has received federal funding to support nine (9) First Nations Policing positions funded under a First Nations Community Policing Service Framework Agreement. Under this agreement in 2020-21, the GNWT added five (5) new positions for a total of nine (9) First Nations police officers. These positions are located as follows:

<b>Behchokò: 3</b>	<b>Fort Simpson: 2</b>
<b>Fort Good Hope: 1</b>	<b>Inuvik: 1</b>
<b>Fort McPherson: 1</b>	<b>Tulita: 1</b>

The Department of Justice is working with the Federal Government on a longer-term framework agreement and is anticipating the continuation of funding approval for the new positions.

### 911 Emergency

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 9-1-1 services went live simultaneously in all 33 communities. 9-1-1 is fully bilingual in French and English, and callers can be connected with interpretation services for NWT Indigenous languages and other languages.

### Training

Trauma-informed practice and resilience training is provided (including 90 frontline staff since 2016).

### Community Input

Each community in the NWT influences policing practices specific to their needs through Policing Action Plans. Developed by the RCMP and community leadership, priorities are based on the needs of each community, taking into consideration the available financial and human resources.

All communities have set policing priorities with the RCMP for the past four fiscal years. The Plans are reviewed quarterly and revised as necessary. This helps foster better relationships between community members and RCMP, which may encourage residents to report violence and seek assistance more often.

RCMP policing activities are reported to community leadership and the Department of Justice through monthly reports. Community leadership may choose to share these reports publicly or with other leaders, including Members of the Legislative Assembly. Working together enhances communication between partners and increases the level of commitment towards achieving local goals. Community governments benefit by being active partners and having a direct role in making their community a safer place to live.



## Attorneys and Law Societies

*(Call for Justice 10.1)*

The GNWT is generally supportive, though not directly responsible for all of the Calls for Justice in this area. The new *“Living Well Together”* cultural sensitively course is available to the public and can be accessed by members of the Law Society at no cost.





## Educators

*(Calls for Justice 11.1 to 11.2)*

The GNWT supports the Calls for Justice directed at educators, though additional policy work and actions may be required:

Since 2014, all educators in the NWT have had the opportunity to participate in the Residential School Awareness Training. Each August, the “New to the North” Teachers Conference provides new teachers to the NWT the opportunity to participate in this training.

Educators who teach Northern Studies in NWT schools receive a different, more detailed in-service to provide them with the knowledge required for their role in supporting Grade 10 students in learning about the history and legacy of residential schools.

As an NWT-based institution, Aurora College has long recognized the importance of incorporating traditional knowledge and culture into both the curriculum and the operations of the College.

The majority of students and learners are Indigenous; the College strives to be reflective of and acknowledge their experiences and histories. Wherever possible, Aurora College programs incorporate traditional knowledge, languages, and culture into classroom work and outcomes. On-the-land learning opportunities are part of several programs. Elders are regular guest presenters in classes and are often consulted when developing relevant criteria and curriculum. In addition, campuses strive to include culture in events, activities, and ceremonies. Several courses, including Developmental Studies, English and Social Studies, as well as in Nursing, Education, and Social Work programs, include content about the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, and violence against women and children.





## Social Workers and Those Implicated in Child Welfare

*(Calls for Justice 12.1 to 12.15)*

The GNWT supports the Calls for Justice directed at social workers and those implicated in Child Welfare, though additional action may be required. Many of the Calls for Justice are already addressed through the NWT *Child and Family Services Act*, the GNWT's implementation of the federal government's *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* and through self-government implementation.

### **The Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families**

The GNWT has prioritized implementing the federal government's *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* in the NWT since it came into force on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

All child and family services providers in Canada, including the GNWT, must follow the minimum standards outlined in the new *Act* when providing services to Indigenous children or youth. The principles and standards focus on the best interests of the child, cultural continuity, and substantive equality—many of which are already reflected in the NWT's *Child and Family Services Act*. Child and Family Services staff have been trained on the national principles and new standards for service provision, and there is a strong focus on the engagement and collaboration on the planning of a child or youth with Indigenous Governments.

Child and Family Services is updating practice standards to align with the principles and standards of the *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* and to incorporate feedback from Indigenous Governments, families, and frontline service providers. These practice standards are available on the Department of Health and Social Services' website.

In addition, the *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* affirms the inherent right of self-government and jurisdiction in relation to child and family services. The Department of Health and Social Services is offering briefings to Indigenous governments in the NWT to share information and initiate an open, ongoing dialogue on child and family services across the NWT. The GNWT is offering support to Indigenous governments should they wish to exercise their inherent rights now or in the future, either under the *Act* or a final self-government agreement.



## Extractive and Development Industries

*(Calls for Justice 13.1 to 13.5)*

The Calls for Justice in this area require further review and analysis, as well as further collaboration, prior to developing a response. Extractive and development industries play an important role in the overall economy of the NWT, as well as the economies of Indigenous communities. Indigenous governments and businesses are engaged in this work directly. It is essential that gender, equality and social impacts are carefully considered and addressed by governments and industry.

The GNWT helps address concerns related to impact assessments during the planning (environmental assessment) phase of some resource development projects. The Impact Assessment Boards determine the scope of the assessment, which can include the well-being of potentially impacted people. As an example, the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board included the requirement to consider the safety of women within the scope of assessment for the Tłı̄chq All Season Road. The Department of Lands facilitated discussions between

the proponent (the GNWT's Department of Infrastructure) and an Indigenous government (Tłı̄chq Government) regarding the need for increased security for women. The result was agreed-upon language for a commitment by government developers that directly addressed the safety of women within a settlement region.

For a resource development project where the GNWT is not a proponent, the GNWT can help facilitate the inclusion of information related to the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

The GNWT, as well as the Indigenous governments, have gained a lot of experience working with industry over the years. All parties recognize the importance of protecting the environment, and governments have collaboratively worked with industry to not only address environmental concerns, but also to take advantage of opportunities to address potential social impacts.



## Correctional Service Canada

*(Calls for Justice 14.1 to 14.13)*

These Calls for Justice are not within the jurisdiction of the GNWT but are supported in principle.





## All Canadians

*(Calls for Justice 15.1 to 15.8)*

The GNWT supports the Calls for Justice directed at all Canadians. The GNWT has already initiated work across departments to increase understanding of *Reclaiming Power and Place*. The GNWT will support National Action Plan activities that also help to increase awareness of all Canadians and work to address racism, sexism, ignorance, homophobia, misogyny, and transphobia.

As described earlier in this report, in March 2021, the Department of Finance, in partnership with the Departments of Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services, launched “Living Well Together,” an Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training course. The new course is mandatory for all GNWT employees. The training modules are accessible through the Learning and Development Calendar and are also available to the public.

Through Living Well Together, GNWT employees first explore the current relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the North, the historical events, colonizing policies and practices, and the peoples that have shaped the

current relationship. In the second half of the course, employees work to develop the cultural awareness, sensitivity and foundational competencies for supporting respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples into the future.

In addition to this training, a new workshop series is now available for free to GNWT employees on Equitable Workplace: Cultivating Attitudes of Anti-Racism and Allyship for Employees. This series creates space for participants to explore their own personal experiences with racism and allyship, identifying how these behaviours impact our lives daily, especially within the workplace.



## Distinction-based calls – Inuit

(Calls for Justice 16.1 to 16.46)

The GNWT supports the distinction-based Calls for Justice for Inuit and will continue to work with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation in these areas. GNWT programs and services are intended to address the needs of all NWT residents which include Inuit and have been addressed elsewhere in this report. For example, the internet (broadband) issues, health services in the communities, suicide prevention programs, housing needs, child welfare programs and services, data collection and monitoring and other programs may be relevant to the needs of Inuit.

GNWT community-based funding and programs referenced earlier in this report are also available to fund Inuit-specific activities

Below are some of the specific activities that address this population:

### Housing

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has partnered with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation to work towards the development of safe and affordable housing. This partnership involves both construction and renovation of Public Housing units in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

### Official Languages

The *Official Languages Act* enshrines Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut and Inuvialuktun as Official Languages of the NWT, granting them equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all government institutions.

The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation receives funding to implement its Regional Indigenous Language Plan. The funding supports the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation in reaching their vision that: "Inuvialuktun and Inuinnaqtun will be the main means of communication that connects Inuvialuit with our past, strengthens our social, emotional and spiritual well-being, and reinforces the importance of our traditions, culture and modern way of life

(Annual Report on Official Languages, 2020, pg.14)."

Additionally, the *Official Languages Act* establishes two Ministerial advisory language boards: the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board. The two boards have representation from all three (3) official Inuit languages, and members provide advice and recommendations to the Minister for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment on the provision of services in official languages and programs and initiatives aimed at maintaining, promoting and revitalizing Indigenous languages.

### Inuuqatigiit – Language Curriculum

The Northwest Territories (NWT) Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 (JK-12) Indigenous Languages and Education Policy is in place to support the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and education bodies in welcoming all students within learning environments that centre, respect and promote the Indigenous worldviews, cultures and languages of the community in which the school is located. This policy is rooted in the

foundational curricula of Inuuqatigiit and Dene Kede. Inuuqatigiit was developed by Inuit educators and Elders to provide direction to Inuit and Non-Inuit to understand the values and beliefs of the Inuit and are to be integrated into all instruction. The funding framework for the Policy includes funding for Elders and cultural resources experts to support student and staff learning. The Our Languages curriculum is the mandatory curriculum for JK-12 Indigenous language instruction within NWT schools.

### **Adult Literacy and Basic Education**

Aurora College offers a number of short courses and basic education programming at the three campuses and 21 community learning centres, including the Inuit communities of Uluhuktuk, Inuvik, Aklavik and

Tsiigehtchic. The Adult Literacy and Basic Education program helps community residents get a foothold in the education system and gain enrolment in access, certificate and diploma programs.

### **Intergovernmental Memorandums of Understanding**

The GNWT has a formal relationship with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and has regular bilateral meetings, at least once per year, to discuss areas of mutual interest. The last bilateral meeting occurred on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The GNWT also collaborates with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation on a number of multilateral forums, including the Intergovernmental Council and the Modern Treaty and Self-Government Partners forum.





## Distinction-based calls – Métis

*(Calls for Justice 17.1 to 17.29)*

The GNWT supports the distinction-based Calls for Justice for Métis and will continue to work with Indigenous governments with responsibility for Métis in these areas. GNWT programs and services are intended to address the needs of all NWT residents, which include Métis and have been addressed elsewhere in this report. For example, the internet (broadband) issues, health services in the communities, suicide prevention programs, housing needs, child welfare programs and services, data collection and monitoring and other programs may be relevant to the needs of Inuit. GNWT community-based funding and programs referenced earlier in this report are available to fund Métis-specific activities.

Below are some of the specific activities that address this population:

### **Métis Health Benefits Program**

The GNWT sponsors the Métis Health Benefits program to provide eligible Indigenous Métis residents of the NWT access to a range of benefits not covered by hospital and medical care insurance.

Through this program, eligible NWT residents receive coverage for eligible prescription drugs, dental services, vision care, medical supplies and equipment. There are also benefits related to medical travel such as meals, accommodation and transportation services required to access medical treatment not available in the home community.

In the early 1990s, when the policy was being developed, the NWT Métis organization of the time (Métis Nation of the Northwest Territories) was a significant contributor to the development of the policy, including the setting of the eligibility criteria.

In 2020-21, there were 1,758 individuals covered by the Métis Health Benefits program. The Government of the Northwest Territories budgets \$2.8 million annually towards this program.

In May 2021, the GNWT made changes to the Métis Health Benefits program policy to eliminate the

requirement for the applicant to validate they were not eligible for benefits under the federal government's Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program. Instead, applicants are asked to:

- self-identify as Métis;
- declare that they are not registered under the *Indian Act* or recognized by an Inuit Land Claims organization; and
- provide a letter that confirms that they are a member of an Indigenous government or Indigenous organization (IGO) in the Northwest Territories whose members hold or assert Aboriginal rights in the NWT as affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act*.

This change is a more respectful way of determining eligibility criteria for the Métis Health Benefits Policy and aligns with principles of self-determination identified in the UN Declaration.

## **Intergovernmental Memorandums of Understanding**

The GNWT has a formal relationship with the Northwest Territories Métis Nation and has regular bilateral meetings, at least once per year, to discuss areas of mutual interest. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Northwest Territory Métis Nation and the GNWT was first signed in 2012, renewed in December 2017, and will soon be renewed again in 2021.

## **Self-Government Negotiations Framework Agreement**

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Northwest Territory Métis Nation (NWTMN), the GNWT, and the Government of Canada, signed a framework agreement that will further advance reconciliation, the right to self-determination, work toward building strong Indigenous nations, and the NWTMN land claim negotiations.

The framework agreement outlines the process for self-government negotiations, including governance of the NWTMN entities, legal status and capacity of Métis governments, administration of lands, Métis government finances, law-making authority, implementation plans, and elections for Métis government. It also supports the principles of the UN Declaration.

## **Indigenous Languages**

The GNWT administers the multi-year Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement for Indigenous Languages. The agreement transfers funds directly to regional Indigenous governments to lead and manage their own regional language plans, while sustaining training and professional development activities, community broadcasting, and other language-related initiatives.

Through the Canada-NWT Agreement, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment provides annual funding to the Northwest Territory Métis Nation to implement language programming in their communities. The Northwest Territory Métis Nation has total jurisdiction over how those funds are spent and distributed.



## 2SLGBTQQIA

*(Calls for Justice 18.1 to 18.32)*

The GNWT has done some work highlighted by these Calls for Justice:

### **Gender-inclusive, Gender-neutral and non-binary options**

The GNWT is working to eliminate “either-or” gender options and include gender-inclusive, gender-neutral, or non-binary options. To date, this includes driver’s licenses and birth certificates, as well as surveys collected by the NWT Bureau of Statistics.

### **Inclusive Workplace Awareness Training**

LGBTQ2S+ Inclusive Workplace Awareness Training is offered to all GNWT employees with support from the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife. The content of this full-day course is designed to provide GNWT employees with the necessary knowledge and tools to recognize key terms associated with the LGBTQ2S+ community, identify and apply respectful behaviour and to support co-workers and clients within the LGBTQ2S+ community.

In the 2019-20 fiscal year, there were a total of 16 sessions completed, with a total of 210 GNWT employees receiving this training. Two of which were outside of Yellowknife. One session was held in Inuvik and the other in Hay River.

By the end of this training, participants will to:

- Gain an understanding of key terms within the LGBTQ2S+ community; identify the barriers and unique challenges that LGBTQ2S+ employees may experience in the workplace; and
- Be able to take action in creating and supporting a healthy, inclusive workplace.

### **Guidelines for Ensuring LGBTQ2S+<sup>2</sup> Equity, Safety and Inclusion**

Guidelines for ensuring LGBTQ2S+ Safety and Inclusion in NWT schools have recently been developed in partnership with the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife and implemented in all NWT schools beginning in the 2019-20 school year.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment, under its Education Renewal initiative, has developed Guidelines for Ensuring LGBTQ2S+ Equity, Safety and Inclusion in NWT Schools, along with resources and training, to support NWT schools to provide a welcoming and respectful place for all.

Another example of how the GNWT supports the distinction-based approach involves the establishment of Gay-Straight Alliance/Gender Sexuality Alliances in schools, providing safe venues for students to share challenges and bring issues forward.

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<sup>2</sup> The course title uses the term ‘LGBTQ2S’, so that term used here instead of ‘2SLGBTQQIA’ as noted in the final report of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

## **Gender-Based Analysis and Gender Equity**

The Gender Equity Division is a new unit within the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs that expands on the work of the Women’s Advisory Office. The purpose of the unit is to ensure that the GNWT’s commitment to gender equality is reflected in budgets, policies and programs, as well as to coordinate cross-departmental action on gender issues, including gendered violence and advancing gender equality. Work will be done to support the intersectional and interdepartmental work required to address gender equity throughout the NWT, as well as the impacts of misogyny and family violence.

The GNWT’s Financial Management Board has approved the use of ‘Gender’ and ‘Diversity’ as variables to be considered and analyzed when departments submit funding requests. GBA+ analysis provides a lens to critically consider how government activities impact diverse groups of

people, which the GNWT can apply to better serve all populations across the territory – the plus in GBA+ speaks to the fact that the lens allows for consideration of other factors as well as gender.

GNWT employees also have access to an online GBA+ training course offered through Women and Gender Equality Canada. This course teaches how to apply GBA+ to decision-making processes in order to enhance the responsiveness, effectiveness, and outcomes of government initiatives.

The Gender Equity Division will be responsible for promoting and training staff on how to use Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) to assess how diverse groups of women/girls, men/boys, and gender diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. GBA+ encourages the consideration of many identity factors, including Indigenous status, religion, sexual orientation, race, age, language, socio-economic status, and mental and physical ability when designing policies and programs that are meant to serve the needs of northerners.

# Moving Forward

On November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women tabled a work plan that outlines how the GNWT plans to develop an Action Plan in response to the 231 Calls for Justice. This work plan included a proposed timeframe with target dates.

The Draft GNWT Action Plan was supposed to be tabled at the May/June 2021 session of the Legislative Assembly, however, early in February, Minister Wawzonek directed that preliminary engagement and consultation be carried out on the Summary Reports in order to get feedback on the GNWT's self-assessment of those Calls for Justice that are identified as requiring a response.

Throughout the fall of 2020 and winter of 2021, the Gender Equity Division conducted an in-depth review and analysis of GNWT programs and services. The results of this review are captured in Summary Reports that identify:

- i. programs and services that fully address one or more of the Calls for Justice;
- ii. programs and services that partially address one or more of the Calls for Justice (i.e. they do not exactly match the specific intent of a Call for Justice)
- iii. programs and services that require a response to address one or more of the Calls for Justice
- iv. Calls for Justice that don't apply to the GNWT

The purpose of the preliminary engagement is to do a check in with key stakeholders and partners to review the GNWT's assessment of the Calls for Justice and those that they have determined require a response. The plan for the preliminary engagement and consultation includes facilitated focus group workshops with key stakeholders and partners such as the Status of Women Council and the Native Women's Association of the NWT.

A Preliminary Engagement Plan was prepared and approved. The Gender Equity Division is now moving forward with plans to hold those facilitated sessions during the summer. Once those engagement workshops have concluded, a "What We Heard" report will be prepared and shared with government departments to begin working on their responses to the Calls for Justice that are determined to require a response.

The Draft GNWT Action Plan will require a more comprehensive community engagement and consultation plan to be undertaken on the draft Action Plan once it is completed. The GNWT recognizes the importance and value of working with and engaging Indigenous governments and communities in developing and implementing the GNWT response to the Calls for Justice, and in order to do that effectively, we need to have a clear transparent process for community engagement and consultation. A very important component of community engagement is the need to provide mental health support throughout the process. A trauma informed approach will be taken to minimize further harm.

The Draft Action Plan will also include a communications strategy that will outline how the GNWT proposes to develop awareness on MMIWG and to inform the public on the draft GNWT Action Plan and how they can provide input and feedback.

The timeline in the work plan has been adjusted, and it is now anticipated that the Draft Action Plan will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly in the Fall of 2021. Once tabled, the GNWT will begin engaging and consulting with Indigenous governments and organizations, communities and other stakeholders. The Draft Action Plan will be finalized based on the feedback and input received. However, this will be a living document and subject to change as things unfold and situations change.

# Conclusion

The release of the *Reclaiming Power and Place: Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, was a historic moment for Canadians. It marked the culmination of years of work and countless hearings and gatherings, which provided an opportunity for survivors and families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to tell their stories. The stories shared were rooted in pain, trauma, racism, and resilience; their courage to come forward has provided a platform to effect change. The National Inquiry is not just a report; it is a call to action; and according to the Native Women's Association of the NWT, "We must acknowledge that violence against Indigenous women and girls including members of the 2SLGBTQ communities is a crisis that demands an urgent and active response."

The GNWT has answered the call and is taking the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls recommendations seriously and is working across all departments to develop and implement a timely and comprehensive plan. Survivors and families of missing and murdered Indigenous women in the NWT deserve respect and help, and the GNWT will continue to support them in their healing journey.

The GNWT cannot do this work alone and recognizes the importance and value of working with Indigenous governments and communities, and key stakeholders and advocacy groups, to develop and implement an NWT response to the Calls for Justice. There is much work to do, and all Northerners need to work together to address systemic causes of violence, inequality and racism, so that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people can feel safe and empowered in our territory and in our country. The only way to truly honour the memory of all the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is to end this tragedy right now.