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Office of the Chief Electoral Officer  
2020  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr.  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Northwest Territories  
P. O. Box 1320  
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour of submitting to you the annual report on the activities of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Elections NWT, for the 2020-21 fiscal year as a reporting requirement under s.266.1(1) of the *Elections and Plebiscites Act*.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicole L.M. Latour', written in a cursive style.

Nicole L.M. Latour  
Chief Electoral Officer, Northwest Territories

## Preface

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**Elections NWT Mission:** To cultivate the northern electorate, through education and ensuring confidence in the integrity of the electoral process, to become fully engaged participants in an event that elects their territorial representatives to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

The annual report is prepared in accordance with the Chief Electoral Officer's reporting requirements under s.266.1(1) of the *Elections and Plebiscites Act*.

The Annual Report is structured as follows:

- I. Message from the CEO
- II. Office of the Chief Electoral Officer 2020-21 Activities
- III. 2020-21 Financial Overview
- IV. Looking Forward

## **I. MESSAGE FROM THE CEO**

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In 2020-21, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (OCEO) activities focused on two main areas: reporting and change management. The delivery of the CEO Report of the 2019 Territorial General Election was achieved just prior to COVID 19 taking hold but proceeded nicely through legislative review using covid protocols through the fiscal year.

The second focus in 2020 was the need for change management within the OCEO. Modernization of the electoral process and procedures required a review of job descriptions to ensure they reflected the necessary knowledge and expertise required of personnel to deliver electoral events. Through the years Canadian election management bodies have moved from paper-based processes to advanced online event management, education and learning systems. Currently no OCEO job descriptions reflect the need for that level of internal working knowledge.

Further to the need to update the current job descriptions, there was also a need to have the new job descriptions evaluated, placed on the GNWT pay grid and then conduct several staffing actions during the 2020-21 fiscal year.

However, due to the disruption of the COVID 19 pandemic and decisions taken by the Board of Management, intended business did not go as planned in 2020-21 which compromised the intended outcomes of the OCEO 2020-21 work plan. Consequently, this Annual Report is presented as a synopsis.

Nicole Latour  
Chief Electoral Officer, NWT

## II. Office of the Chief Electoral Officer 2020-21 Activities

**NOTE:** The impact of COVID 19 saw the CEO working remotely from her primary residence and home community of Hay River NT from April 2020 until June 2021. The CEO did travel to Yellowknife on numerous occasions to manage OCEO business during that period.

As per the cyclical four-year operations model of the OCEO, the 2021-22 fiscal year serves as 'Year 1: Analysis' that included a comprehensive review and analysis of election event data that was subsequently shared in the CEO Report of the 2019 Territorial General Election. The Report was delivered to the Speaker March 2020 and once tabled underwent a legislative review by the Committee of Rules and Procedures.

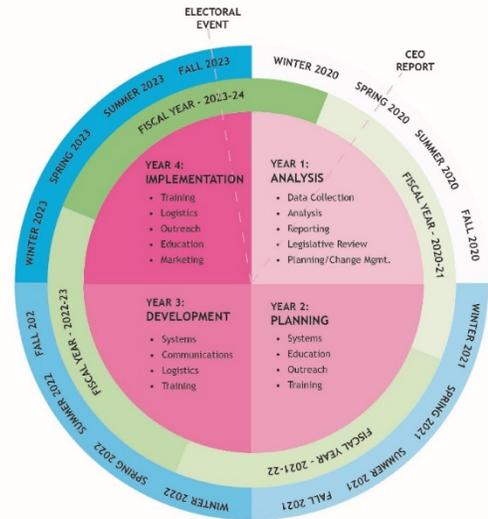
Upon completion of the delivery and reporting of the 2019 Territorial General Election all OCEO staff who were engaged as a casual or term employees departed in spring 2020 with the sunset of their employment contracts. This happening would leave the OCEO with no permanent staff in key OCEO positions. Instead of extending employment terms that functioned under outdated job descriptions, the decision was taken to use the 2020-21 fiscal year, under the focus of 'planning and change management' as an opportunity to ensure currency of knowledge and skills required were incorporated in OCEO job descriptions. Furthermore, the work plan included the undertaking and completion of a staffing action prior to the end of the fiscal calendar. Consequently the 2020-21 fiscal year was proposed as a 'transitional year' to the Board of Management in December 2019.

In addition to updating job descriptions to support modernization needs, a principal goal of this transitional year was to achieve permanency of OCEO staff. For years, the OCEO has not been staffed in a manner that provided employment security to personnel and allowed them to achieve expert election knowledge or a true sense of their level of authority. The benefit to achieving stability of OCEO human resources would be realized through being able to maintain a continued state of election readiness.

Upon the completion of a thorough internal review of personnel needs and expertise requirements, two drafted Job descriptions for key OCEO positions: Deputy Chief Electoral Officer and previously titled 'Elections Administrator' were provided to the Clerks Office in December 2020 for review and signature which would allow them to move to the GNWT job evaluation process and assign a salary. The intention was to complete the evaluation process in January 2021 and enter the job competition phase in late February- early March 2021 and have new personnel in the OCEO in April for the 2021-22 fiscal year.

To date the draft job descriptions have not progressed beyond the submission to the Clerk's Office.

On the national level work continued with frequent online meetings with national colleagues, groups and exercises around the work of the Secretariate of Electoral Collaboration.



### III 2020-21 OCEO Financial Overview

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The OCEO spent 54% of its 2020-21 Fiscal budget, resulting in a budget surplus of \$201,000 of the budget proposed by the Board of Management (BOM). Due to the COVID 19 pandemic which caused a downturn in activities, and the absence of OCEO staff only 22% of the Operation and Maintenance budget was spent. Staff vacancies also resulted in only 63% of Compensation and Benefits budget spending.

	OCEO Proposed	BOM Proposed	Dollars Spent	Percentage of Budget
Compensation and Benefits	\$321,000	\$344,000	\$216,995	63%
Operation and Maintenance	\$108,000	\$95,000	\$20,724	22%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>\$429,000</b>	<b>\$439,000</b>	<b>\$237,719</b>	

### IV Looking Forward

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As COVID 19 pandemic passes the 2021-22 fiscal year will normalize and the stalled pursuits of the 2020-21 year may come to fruition. Specifically, efforts to permanently staff the Office of the Chief Electoral Office must be achieved not only for the continuity of knowledge but to remain in a state of election readiness.

A full complement of elections staff is not only required to prepare to deliver the Territorial General Election in 2023, but additionally must manage work that will stem from the 2021 Electoral Boundaries Commission (EBC). Without question once the EBC work is complete, the OCEO will need to undertake additional work to adjust and re-draw Electoral District maps, complete an analysis to re-assign electors to their polling division and conduct work around the re-distribution of the address ranges of this divisions.