



February 4, 2021

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**Oral Question 468-19(2)**  
**Government of the Northwest Territories Affirmative Action Policy**

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on November 4, 2020 regarding the Affirmative Action Policy. During our exchange, I committed to ensuring that Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) departments who are working in collaboration with the Human Resources Branch, are making unbiased decisions during the hiring process. I also committed to ensuring that the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework that is currently being developed, includes clear and department-specific goals.

Hiring Process

Hiring decisions within the GNWT are based on merit and Affirmative Action. The Affirmative Action Policy offers priority hiring to designated groups under-represented within the Public Service. Standard GNWT hiring practices include the application of the Affirmative Action Policy during various phases of the hiring process to ensure that the Public Service is competent and representative of the people it serves.

The initial application submission process is identified as the Screening Phase. Once a job posting closes, members of an established Selection Committee review the submitted applications of potential candidates to determine who meets the requirements listed in the screening criteria. The Selection Committee consists of, but is not limited to, a Human Resource Representative, the supervisor of the position being filled, and any other appropriate representative. A preliminary screening confirms whether the applicant meets the statutory requirements of the position, which includes specific education, training or certifications. Following this preliminary screening, the Selection Committee establishes a short list of candidates taking into consideration the Affirmative Action priority categories.

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The Assessment Phase assesses the candidate's suitability for the job through an interview and possibly an assignment. Assignments are evaluated based on a predetermined answer key approved by the Selection Committee. When an interview is conducted, each question is awarded points based on the response provided. Points are awarded for each question and based only on responses for that specific question, not toward other questions. The top candidate based on merit and Affirmative Action then undergoes a reference check. If necessary, applicants may be asked to confirm their Affirmative Action status.

Finally, the Appeal Phase determines if a procedural error occurred in the application of pertinent legislation, guidelines and procedures during the competition process that adversely affected an appellant's opportunity for appointment. A hearing may be conducted to review the process to ensure that procedural fairness occurred in the application of pertinent legislation, guidelines, directives and procedures.

### The Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework

The Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework (Framework) is currently under development. The Framework will support departmental priorities to achieve a culturally inclusive workplace; enhance Indigenous representation throughout GNWT departments; build capability and career development; and foster Indigenous leadership through talent management. The Framework will review current programs, tools, and resources to ensure that they are developed and are in compliance with the GNWT's commitment to achieve a representative workforce.

Current GNWT programs include:

- the Affirmative Action Policy
- the Indigenous Employee Advisory Committee
- the Indigenous Career Gateway Program
- the Regional Recruitment Program
- the Indigenous Management and Development Training Program

Feedback is also being sought from external partners to ensure those perspectives are considered. Engagement with Indigenous Governments resumed in January 2021, and the barriers they identified will be reviewed and considered as we develop the Framework.

As part of the implementation of the Framework, each department will develop an Indigenous employment implementation plan to increase, develop, and maintain the number of Indigenous employees within the GNWT. This exercise will require departments to review recruitment and retention practices to ensure barriers to employment for Indigenous peoples are identified and addressed. Both the Framework and its Implementation Plan will be completed within the 2021-22 fiscal year.



Caroline Wawzonek  
Minister, Finance

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Deputy Secretary of Human Resources, Finance  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
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