



# Changing the Relationship

## **DRAFT ACTION PLAN**

In response to the calls for justice on missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people

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In response to the calls for justice on missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people



Le présent document contient la traduction française du résumé et du message du ministre.

*If you would like this information in another official language, call us.*

**ENGLISH**

*Si vous voulez ces informations dans une autre langue officielle, contactez-nous.*

**FRENCH**

*kīspin ki nitawih̄tīn ē nīh̄iyawih̄k ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsīnān.*

**CREE**

*Tl̄jch̄ŋ yatī k'ēē. Dī wegodī newo dē, gots'ō gonede.*

**TŁJCHO**

*Qerih̄t'īs Dēne Sųh̄né yatī t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatī theṛq ṛat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yóftī.*

**CHIPEWYAN**

*Edī gondī dehgáh got'je zhaté k'éé edat'éh enahddhē nīde naxets'é edah̄tī.*

**SOUTH SLAVEY**

*K'áhshó got'jine xāḁā k'é hederī ṛedjhtl'é yerīnīwē ní dé dúle.*

**NORTH SLAVEY**

*Jīi gwandak izhīi gīnjik vat'atr'ijqhch'uu zhit yīnohthan jī', diits'āt gīnohkhīi.*

**GWICH'IN**

*Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqłuta.*

**INUVIALUKTUN**

*Ĉ'ḁḁḁ ḁḁ<sup>ḁḁḁ</sup> ḁḁḁḁḁḁ ḁḁḁḁḁḁ<sup>ḁḁḁḁḁ</sup> ḁḁḁḁḁḁ<sup>ḁḁḁḁḁ</sup> ḁḁḁḁḁḁ<sup>ḁḁḁḁḁ</sup>.*

**INUKTITUT**

*Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.*

**INUINNAQTUN**

**1-866-561-1664**





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 Government of Canada provides funding for Indigenous governments to support survivors and families affected by MMIWG:

- The **Brighter Futures Program** provides funding to provide mental wellness support services for the survivors, family members and those affected by the issue of MMIWG.
- **Victims of Violence Investments** provide funding to enhance mental health counselling for victims of violence and support and enhance organizations and partnerships that provide integrated services to victims of violence.

**For more information about this funding, please contact:**

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# A Message from the Minister

A key principle of the 2019 Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is that **the daily encounters with individuals, institutions, systems, and structures that compromise security must be addressed with a new view toward relationships.**

The Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT) Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is seeking to change the relationship between our departments, agencies, employees, policies and processes and Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual plus (2SLGBTQQA+) people.

In their descriptions of daily encounters with government institutions, families and survivors who spoke at the National Inquiry consistently referred to four ways in which their experiences were rooted in colonialism— both historic and modern forms.

Addressing colonialism and racial and gendered discrimination from all levels of our government and public institutions means confronting these four pathways to violence, namely:

- historical, multigenerational, and intergenerational trauma
- social and economic marginalization
- maintaining the status quo and institutional lack of will, and
- ignoring the agency and expertise of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA+ people.

The GNWT recognizes that trauma, both historic and ongoing, is very real within the communities of the Northwest Territories. The trauma stems from the impacts of colonization and the legacies of the residential school system. As a government, we are looking for ways to heal and reconcile a historical relationship. As a relatively small government serving a Territory with a majority Indigenous population, we have an opportunity to be representative and inclusive, and a leader in developing programs and services that are responsive, accessible, and culturally relevant.

We recognize that we have lots of work ahead of us in order to effect meaningful change in our institutions, and in the relationships between our institutions and the Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQA+ people these institutions are meant to serve. Changes will take courage, patience, and humility. We also recognize that it must involve the participation of people with lived experience, and the perspectives of the families of the missing and murdered and survivors of violence.

The Native Women's Association of the NWT was the only NWT organization in addition to the Territorial government with standing to participate at the National Inquiry. The GNWT was the only government party to accept the final recommendations proposed by a party with standing from their jurisdiction. The GNWT publicly committed to supporting the four primary recommendations of the Native Women's Association of the NWT and to working in partnership to address the issue of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQA+ people.

These recommendations call on all levels of government to acknowledge that violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQA+ people is a crisis that demands an urgent and active response; and, to take meaningful steps to re-build trust and create person-centred services.

*Changing the Relationship* describes how the GNWT will address the Calls for Justice on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Over the next three years the GNWT is seeking to transform its approach to service delivery and begin to undo the effects of colonialism and racial and gendered discrimination from all levels of government and public institutions.

The Draft Action Plan is meant to support and empower Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQA+ people but the benefits will be far-reaching.



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

# Commitment of the Government of the Northwest Territories

Violence against Indigenous women and girls, including members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, is a crisis that demands an urgent response.

We, the Executive Council of the Government of the Northwest Territories, acknowledge the findings of the National Inquiry presented in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Final Report, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, and make a solemn commitment to create the transformative change needed to address colonialism and racial and gendered discrimination from all levels of government and public institutions.

As individual Ministers and as a united Cabinet, we commit to taking a wholistic government approach to the recommendations of the National Inquiry on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Final Report.

We will work across all departments to ensure the actions described in this action plan are implemented and our efforts to re-build trust and provide person-centred services is monitored so our government may be held accountable for its results.

This commitment was signed by the Premier and Cabinet Ministers on this 7<sup>th</sup> day of December 2021.



The Honourable Julie Green



The Honourable R.J. Simpson



The Honourable Diane Archie




The Honourable Shane Thompson



The Honourable Paulie Chinna



The Honourable Caroline Wawzonek



Premier Caroline Cochrane



# Executive Summary

Violence against Indigenous women and girls, including members of two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual plus (2SLGBTQIA+) communities, is a crisis that demands an urgent response.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has developed a Draft Action Plan to address the Calls for Justice presented in *Reclaiming Power and Place: Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)*.

The GNWT's Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is intended to begin the necessary process of addressing colonialism and racial and gendered discrimination from all levels of government and public institutions. Through the Action Plan, the GNWT is seeking to change the relationship between the GNWT's departments, agencies, employees, policies and processes and their daily encounters with Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

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*The daily encounters with individuals, institutions, systems, and structures that compromise security must be addressed with a new view toward relationships.*

The GNWT's Draft Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is presented in four parts:

**PART 1 – INTRODUCTION:** provides necessary context for understanding the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the 231 Calls for Justice, the National Action Plan, the Federal Pathway, and the approach taken by the GNWT to review the Calls for Justice and assess its existing programs and services.

**PART 2 – ACKNOWLEDGING THE CRISIS:** lays out some of the facts about the scope of the crisis and the need for an urgent response. This section is a reminder that the actions or inactions of government towards past generations can have long-lasting impacts to future generations.

**PART 3 – CHANGING THE RELATIONSHIP:** begins first by setting out a GNWT Vision statement that aligns with the National Action Plan and follows with the GNWT's objectives for changing the existing relationship between government institutions, policies, employees and Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ residents of the Northwest Territories (NWT). These objectives are built on the recommendations of the Native Women's Association of the NWT in their final submission to the National Inquiry. These objectives also align with the principles for change identified by the National Action Plan, the Federal Pathway, and the Final Report of the National Inquiry.

Part 3 also highlights the work of key divisions and departments within the GNWT who are working to bring about the transformative change needed to begin to undo the effects of colonialism and racial and gendered discrimination from all levels of government and public institutions.

**PART 4 – RESPONDING TO THE CALLS FOR JUSTICE:** articulates a detailed action plan for the GNWT to respond to the Calls for Justice. This section is organized thematically using the four key areas of rights violations identified by the Commissioners in *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. This section provides the GNWT's Action Plan to respond to Calls for Justice on Culture and Language, Health and Wellness, Human Security, and Justice.



## Vision Statement

The GNWT has adopted a vision statement that aligns with the National Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and four objectives to guide the changes that are taking place across the NWT public service and in our relationship with Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. The GNWT's objectives for change build on the recommendations made by the Native Women's Association of the NWT to the National Inquiry.

### OBJECTIVE 1:

#### Acknowledge:

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

### OBJECTIVE 2:

#### Establish Trust:

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

### OBJECTIVE 3:

#### Person-centered services:

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

### OBJECTIVE 4:

#### Accountability:

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

## Change Leaders in the Public Service

This change will be driven by dedicated employees and divisions within the GNWT with a mandate for transforming the public service. The divisions leading change in the GNWT include:

- Community, Culture and Innovation – Health and Social Services
- Gender Equity Division – Executive and Indigenous Affairs

- Indigenous Language and Education Secretariat – Education, Culture and Employment
- Diversity and Inclusion – Finance
- Community Justice and Policing – Justice
- Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery – Health and Social Services
- Northwest Territories Housing Corporation
- Single Window Service Centers – Executive and Indigenous Affairs
- Integrated Service Delivery Territorial Senior Management Committee
- Intergovernmental Forums with Indigenous Governments

## Responding to the Calls for Justice

The GNWT's Draft Action Plan includes 95 actions in response to the Calls for Justice. These actions are organized thematically using the four key areas of rights violations identified in *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* and they include:

**36** ACTIONS to Respond to Calls for Justice on Culture and Language

**17** ACTIONS to Respond to Calls for Justice on Health and Wellness

**21** ACTIONS to Respond to Calls for Justice on Human Security

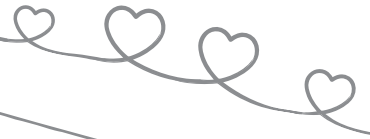
**19** ACTIONS to Respond to Calls for Justice on the Justice System

## Next Steps: Finalizing the Draft Action Plan

The GNWT is committed to incorporating the lived experience of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in the completion of the Action Plan. To finalize the Draft Action Plan, the GNWT will carry out public engagement from December 2021 – March 2022. This engagement will inform the completion of a Final Action Plan by June 2022.

## PART 1

# Introduction



## The National Inquiry

In 2006, a class action lawsuit was settled involving survivors, the federal government, and churches that ran over 139 church-run, government-funded residential schools. More than 4,100 documented children died while attending these schools, most due to malnourishment or disease, and many of the children at residential schools were physically, sexually, or psychologically abused. The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement is the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history. One of the elements of the agreement was the establishment of **the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada** to facilitate reconciliation among former students, their families, their communities, and all Canadians.

The 2015 Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada documents the tragic experiences of approximately 150,000 Canadian residential school students. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada issued 94 Calls to Action aimed at redressing the legacy of residential schools and advancing the process of reconciliation in Canada. Among the 94 Calls to Action was a call to *“appoint a public inquiry into the causes of, and remedies for, the disproportionate victimization of Aboriginal women and girls; and an investigation into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls”*.

The **National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls** was launched by the federal, provincial and territorial governments in 2016 in response to the recommendation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and decades of advocacy by families and grassroots Indigenous organizations. Commissioners of the National Inquiry 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. The 2019 Final Report of the National Inquiry *“Reclaiming Power and Place”* concludes that the violence described during the inquiry “amounts to a race-based genocide of Indigenous Peoples” which targets women and girls.

The Final Report includes 231 Calls for Justice which includes a Call for Justice to develop a National Action Plan in response to the Calls for Justice. Common to all the Calls for Justice are the following principles and findings identified in the Final Report:

- An absolute paradigm shift is needed to address colonialism and racial and gendered discrimination from all levels of government and public institutions.
- Exposure to violence is not a symptom of service gaps, it is a sign of systemic violation of the human rights of Indigenous women to gender equality requiring broad structural changes to the policies and processes of government.
- The implementation of the Calls for Justice must involve the participation of people with lived experience, and the perspectives of the families of the missing and murdered and survivors of violence.
- Government services and solutions must be influenced by Indigenous governments, and Indigenous women and involve a true partnership.
- The interpretation and implementation of the Calls for Justice must include Indigenous languages and culture.
- Incorporating knowledge of trauma into all policies, procedures and practices of service delivery is crucial.
- Efforts by Indigenous women and girls to be self-determining (particularly in relation to the delivery of services) face significant barriers because of short-term or project-based funding models used by governments. Contribution funding for programs and services should be needs-based and sustainable.

The only NWT Indigenous organization with standing in the National Inquiry was the Native Women's Association of the NWT. The GNWT's final submission to the National Inquiry supported the four primary recommendations put forward by the Native Women's Association of the NWT, which are directed at all levels of Canadian leadership including the federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments, as identified in their final submission:

- i. *We must acknowledge that violence against Indigenous women and girls including members of the 2SLGBTQ<sup>2</sup> communities is a crisis that demands an urgent and active response.*
- ii. *We must re-establish, build, and foster trust between all levels of government, service providers, communities and every one of their citizens.*
- iii. *We must ensure that the purpose and objective of all government services is to be community and person-centered.*
- iv. *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.*

In the wording of the recommendations put forward by the Native Women's Association of the NWT, they use the word 'We', thereby sending a clear message that everyone has a role in this and that the 'we' also includes them as an active participant.



Photo courtesy of Tessa MacIntosh Photography



<sup>2</sup> The National Inquiry lexicon of terminology [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/NIMMIWG\\_Lexicon\\_ENFR-1.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/NIMMIWG_Lexicon_ENFR-1.pdf) notes that there are many possible acronyms that cover sexual and gender minorities. The National Inquiry uses the term "2SLGBTQQA. The GNWT adopted the term 2SLGBTQQA+ to be consistent with the wording in the Calls for Justice and added the plus to account for other sexual orientation

## Developing the Draft Action Plan

The 231 Calls for Justice in *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* describes a breadth of actions that have significant implications for the GNWT and the residents of the NWT. Over the past two years “Reclaiming Power and Place” has fueled a conversation across GNWT departments, the NWT Legislative Assembly, Indigenous governments, and federal and provincial/territorial governments on the steps that need to be taken to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, and the entrenched root causes of that violence.

Many Calls for Justice will have significant implications for the GNWT and the way it delivers services for NWT residents. The Calls for Justice also raise questions (some previously raised by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission) about the impacts of colonization and the resulting racism and discrimination that has played a key role in how Indigenous peoples have been and continue to be viewed and treated.

Some of the broad questions the GNWT identified after the release of the Final Report included:

- How colonialism, racism, and gender disproportionately impact Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people; and the measures needed to address these factors in decisions on budgets, programs and policies.
- How to adopt the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration)* as a framework for reconciliation.
- Is there a need for distinctions-based services in a territory that is a majority Indigenous and composed of mixed communities and family ties of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and non-Indigenous peoples?
- How Indigenous people, particularly women and people with lived experience will be included in the development and delivery of programs and services that evolve from the National Inquiry.

As a first step, immediately following the release of the Final Report of the National Inquiry, the GNWT prepared an initial response to the Calls for Justice. The response entitled *Doing Our Part* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on August 22, 2019. The GNWT’s initial response highlighted work the GNWT had already initiated to help respond to the Calls for Justice and included a commitment to conduct a more in-depth review and

analysis of the 231 Calls for Justice and undertake an assessment of all GNWT programs and services.

On November 5, 2020, the Honourable Caroline Wawzonek, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, tabled in the Legislative Assembly “*Taking Action*” a workplan to address the Calls for Justice outlining how the GNWT will prepare its action plan. The workplan provided a transparent process towards the completion of a fulsome GNWT response to the Calls for Justice including a process for analyzing the Calls for Justice and reviewing current GNWT programs and services.

An interdepartmental working group on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was established to coordinate the GNWT’s response to the Calls for Justice. Chaired by the Director, Gender Equity Division, the Working Group 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.

Over a period of 18 months, the Gender Equity Division collaborated with GNWT departments to conduct an in-depth internal review and analysis of its programs and services. The results of the internal review were compiled into summary reports that identified:

- programs and services that fully address one or more of the Calls for Justice;*
- 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); and*
- programs and services that need to be implemented to address one or more of the Calls for Justice, noting those that:*
  - can be implemented immediately,
  - can be implemented within one year, or
  - require long-term planning.

These summary reports were used to guide preliminary engagement workshops that took place in June 2021 with key partners and stakeholders, including the Native’s Women’s Association of the NWT, the Status of Women Council of the NWT, and with community contacts consisting of representatives from Indigenous governments.

## Preliminary Engagement

In June 2021, the Gender Equity Division (which provides support to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women) carried out separate preliminary engagement sessions with the Native Women's Association of the NWT, the Status of Women Council of the NWT, and with community contacts representing NWT Indigenous governments and organizations. During the engagement workshops, these partners reviewed the results of the GNWT's self-assessment of current programs and services and made recommendations on concrete actions that should be addressed in the GNWT's Action Plan.

During the workshops, the GNWT also provided information about the release of the MMIWG National Action Plan and the Federal Pathway to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. The latter document is the federal government's response to the MMIWG Final Report. Participants provided a broad perspective on the GNWT's self-assessment and substantial input was received on how the GNWT can do better. Some of the priority areas that participants wanted to see the GNWT emphasize in its response included:

- Alignment with the National Action Plan and the Federal Pathway document to facilitate public understanding and greater opportunities for partnering with federal initiatives.
- The need for a representative public service that reflects the Indigenous languages and cultures of the population it serves in the languages of delivery of public services, in the priority hiring of Indigenous people and recognition of lived experience, and in the cultural competence of those that deliver services and make decision on policy.
- An emphasis on cultural awareness and anti-Indigenous racism training for all GNWT employees.
- Renewed focus on Aurora College programming for Indigenous language interpreters, social workers, teachers and midwifery.
- A greater focus on housing, including transitional housing with wrap-around care, family violence shelters, and community-led housing planning.
- Simplify the application process for all government funding programs.
- Greater information and access to multi-year funding for community-led health and wellness initiatives.
- The greater participation of women in decisions and leadership forums about the policies, programs, and services that impact their lives.

- Actions to address family violence, child protection, and the protection of women fleeing violence.
- Addictions treatment and aftercare facilities and culturally relevant mental health and wellness programming.

The GNWT produced a *What We Heard Report* on the results of the preliminary engagement workshops. Those who participated in the workshops were given an opportunity to review and provide comments on this Report prior to its release. The feedback received through preliminary engagement guided the preparation of the GNWT's response to the Calls for Justice and the development of the Draft Action Plan. This report is available online at: [https://www.eia.gov.nt.ca/sites/eia/files/mmiwg\\_action\\_plan-preliminary\\_engagement-what\\_we\\_heard.pdf](https://www.eia.gov.nt.ca/sites/eia/files/mmiwg_action_plan-preliminary_engagement-what_we_heard.pdf).

## Ongoing Partnerships

In early 2020, the Honourable Caroline Wawzonek, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women reached out to Indigenous governments with whom the GNWT has formal government-to-government cooperation agreements and requested that they identify a contact person to participate in monthly teleconference calls with the Gender Equity Division to be briefed on activities related to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Monthly teleconferences are held with these community contacts to share information on activities related to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls including the development of the GNWT Action Plan and to encourage dialogue amongst the communities. Both the Native Women's Association of the NWT and the Status of Women Council of the NWT also participate in these monthly calls.

The GNWT recognizes the value of seeking guidance and input from Indigenous governments and people with lived experience in the development of the Action Plan and into the development and delivery of programs and services that evolve from the National Inquiry, including community engagement activities. This message was reiterated by community contacts during the preliminary engagement sessions.

In addition, formal bilateral agreements are in place with several NWT Indigenous governments which will also provide another forum for the exchange of information and input during engagement on the GNWT's Draft Action Plan and in its future implementation.



### **Native Women's Association of the NWT**

Throughout the National Inquiry, the Native Women's Association of the NWT worked diligently to support the families involved – acting as a gathering place for families and survivors in advance of the pre-Inquiry meetings, partnering with the GNWT to act as a Family Liaison Unit leading up to and throughout the Inquiry, and hosting the Truth Gathering in Yellowknife in January 2018.

As noted previously, the GNWT supported the four primary recommendations put forward by the Native Women's Association of the NWT in its closing submission and committed to working in partnership with them to address the issue of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

During the preliminary engagements in June 2021, the Native Women's Association of the NWT reiterated the importance of being recognized as a strong partner in the GNWT's response to the Calls for Justice and looks forward to participating in the community engagement.

### **Status of Women Council of the NWT**

The GNWT continues to work closely with the Status of Women Council of the NWT and will coordinate information exchange and input from Board members throughout the community engagement process.

The Status of Women Council of the NWT has a long history of advocating for the rights of women, dating back to 1982 when the GNWT appointed the first Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. Previously called the Women's Secretariat, the Council has evolved over the years. In 1990, the enactment of the Status of Women Council Act led to the creation of the Status of Women Council.

The GNWT recognizes the important role the Council has in raising public awareness on issues affecting women and girls, promoting change in attitude related to women and girls, encouraging discussions on matters related to gender equality, and celebrating the achievements of those who advance the equality of women.

In 2020, the Status of Women Council of the NWT issued a report on a three (3)-year research project that provided an opportunity for women who had experienced intimate partner violence to talk about the challenges they experienced when trying to access services, suggestions for improvement to these services, and how to reduce the stigma associated with intimate partner violence. The final report entitled "We Hear You: a call for caring co-action to improve services for women experiencing intimate partner violence in the NWT" also presents recommendations informed by women with lived experience and includes a recommendation to declare intimate partner violence as a public health issue. The report reflects the Status of Women Council's 30 years of working with and advocating on behalf of NWT women to address gender-based violence and advance equality.

### **Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife**

During the preliminary engagement, the GNWT was encouraged to find ways to engage the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. The Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife is an outreach organization that supports 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, families, and adults in the NWT. On the organization's website, the Rainbow Coalition provides a response to the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. This response includes a commitment to advocate to have a number of related GNWT initiatives move forward.

The GNWT has worked with the Rainbow Coalition on several initiatives that support gender diversity and inclusion including LGBTQ2S+ Inclusive Workplace Awareness Training and guidelines for ensuring LGBTQ2S+ safety and inclusion in NWT schools. Throughout the engagement process, the GNWT will share information with and seek advice and participation from the Rainbow Coalition on how to better meet the needs of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

## Next Steps: Finalizing the Draft Action Plan

The GNWT is committed to incorporating the lived experience of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people in the completion of the Action Plan. To finalize the Draft Action Plan, the GNWT will carry out public engagement from December 2021 – April 2022. This engagement will inform the completion of a Final Action Plan by June 2022. The objectives of the engagement are:

- To **increase awareness and acknowledge** that violence against Indigenous women and girls including members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community is a crisis that demands an urgent and active response.
- To **inform and seek feedback** from Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations, community/territorial organizations, and people with lived experience on existing programs and services, proposed enhancements, and new initiatives intended to address the Calls for Justice.
- To take a **culturally safe and decolonized approach** and ensure a strong voice for Indigenous women is reflected in the design and conduct of community engagement.

The approach to community engagement will build on the feedback received from the Native Women’s Association of the NWT, the Status of Women Council of the NWT, and the community contacts representing NWT Indigenous government’s during the preliminary engagement conducted in June 2021.

NWT Indigenous languages will be a feature component of the GNWT’s approach to community engagement on the Draft Action Plan. The Gender Equity Division, with the support of the Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat, will work in partnership with the Native Women’s Association of the NWT to host an Indigenous languages terminology workshop involving interpreter/translators, Elders, people with lived experience, youth and other community resource people, as required.

The Gender Equity Division will work with government departments and other partners to compile a list of terms related to MMIWG, family violence and gender-based violence. The terms will be reviewed and discussed by the Elders and interpreter/translators along with resource people including those with lived experience. The Indigenous language terminology for the terms will be recorded in the respective Indigenous languages and when required, the Interpreter/translators will work with the Elders to develop equivalent terminology in their respective Indigenous languages. The Interpreter/translators and Elders will also be asked to identify

words in their Indigenous languages that may need to be translated into English for non-speakers, which may provide a unique perspective into the Indigenous way of thinking and being. The terminology developed will be distributed widely with opportunities to provide feedback.

It is anticipated that community engagement activities will begin in late January and conclude in early April. A schedule of engagement activities along with locations and dates will be widely advertised as details are confirmed. The community engagement activities could include an open house, focus group sessions, workshops and online sessions. In order to provide a safe, non-intimidating, welcoming environment during these community engagement sessions, we will work with the communities to plan these activities and commit to working with local resources and vendors.

The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs will coordinate with all GNWT departments and other partners to develop a “hub” site dedicated to MMIWG. The site will include key messages, information about the Calls for Justice and GNWT response, as well as a directory of programs and services available from the GNWT and other NWT providers.

The GNWT’s own social media channels will also be used on an ongoing basis to raise awareness and understanding of MMIWG and the Calls for Justice, as well as to direct users to the “hub site”. Social media can also be used to boost awareness of the GNWT’s participation in, and recognition of, events related to MMIWG.

The GNWT’s approach to engagement will include the following major milestones and timelines:

TIMELINE	TASK
January 2022	Indigenous Languages Terminology Workshop
January 2022	Launch of Public Awareness Campaign (Radio / Print / Online)
January 2022	Engagement begins
January – April 2022	Community Engagement Activities/Events
April – May 2022	Reporting on Engagement
June 2022	Tabling of GNWT Action Plan in the Legislative Assembly

## PART 2

# Acknowledging the Crisis

The GNWT recognizes the violence rates in the NWT are unacceptable. We acknowledge that we must take action now to better protect women and girls in the NWT from violence in their homes and communities.

During the Family Hearings of the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Yellowknife, we heard the stories of families from the NWT who have experienced the tragedy of a missing or murdered loved one. First and foremost, we wish to acknowledge and remember these women and girls and their families. The strength the families have showed is a reminder to us to begin making changes to better address the violence directed at Indigenous Women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

The underlying issues contributing to the crisis of violence against Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people are not simplistic. There are structural barriers, cultural biases, and practical concerns regarding service delivery. Indigenous women are more likely to experience violence than non-Indigenous women. In the NWT, we have the highest rates of violence in the country and sadly, we have the second highest rate of family violence. These are statistics that we are working to change.

A by-product of these high rates of violence is the normalization of violence in our communities. This normalization leads to a “culture of silence” that we heard about at the Hearings in Yellowknife during the National Inquiry. Trauma, both historic and ongoing, is very real within communities of the NWT. The trauma stems from the impacts of colonization and the legacies of the residential school system. The GNWT is looking for ways to heal and reconcile a historical relationship. The GNWT recognizes that this reconciliation must include the guidance and direction of Indigenous women and people with lived experience in the design of programs and services that meet their healing needs.

### The Facts:

In 2005, the Native Women’s Association of Canada initiated a five (5)-year research project to collect evidence and document, in a systematic way, issues of violence that women, families, and communities had been pointing to for the last generation – that hundreds of Indigenous women and girls have gone missing across the country and without any action by the police or the Canadian government<sup>2</sup>. This research documented 582 missing or murdered Indigenous women in Canada between the years of 1951 and 2010.

In 2014, the RCMP followed up on the findings of the Native Women’s Association of Canada by publishing the results of a National Operational Review of police statistics from 1980 through 2012. The RCMP found that the number of missing or murdered Indigenous women was much higher than previously known including 1017 missing or murdered Indigenous women.

This is what we know<sup>3</sup>:




The RCMP report that there are currently **nine (9) open cases of missing Indigenous women in the NWT** but that number could be as high as 14 but this cannot be confirmed for five (5).

<sup>2</sup> Native Women’s Association of Canada: What Their Stories Tell Us- Research findings from the Sisters in Spirit initiative. (2010)

<sup>3</sup> Sources: CMP, “National Operational Overview” (2014); RCMP, “Update to the National Operational Overview” (2015); Statistics Canada, “Table 35-10-0156-01 Number, percentage and rate of homicide victims, by gender and Indigenous identity”; CANSIM table 253-0001; Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey; and, 2013 NWT Coroners Service Annual Report





These facts only tell part of the story. The truth is we don't know the whole story. As the National Inquiry found, *"Accurate data about violence in the lives of Indigenous Peoples in general is difficult to find, due to data-collection methods that fail to disaggregate information by gender, sex, race, or Indigenous identity"*<sup>4</sup>.

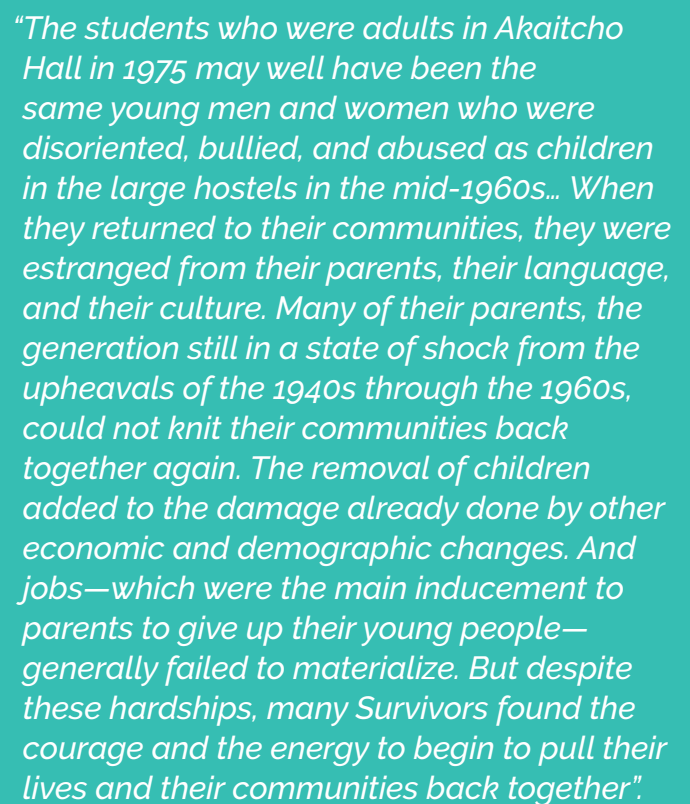
What we do know is that in 2019, there were **2605 police-reported instances of violence** against women and girls in the NWT<sup>5</sup>. This violence included physical assault, sexual assault, forcible confinement, kidnapping, harassment, threatening, and murder of women and children in the territory.

We also know that from 2009 to 2020 there have been **2224 reported cases of sexual assaults** in the NWT. We also know there have been **396 reported cases of sexual violations against children**<sup>6</sup>. However, according to those who work in this field, the actual numbers are likely higher than what are reported.

In the NWT, most of us know someone who has attended a residential school, whose parents attended Indian day schools or government-run hostels, or whose grandparents never knew what happened to their siblings who were sent away to sanatoriums thousands of kilometers from their home communities during the tuberculosis outbreak of the 1950's and 60's.

This is not just a dark chapter in Canadian history; it continues to live on through the multi-generational and intergenerational trauma that has impacted Indigenous people for decades and continues today. These are the truths that we must acknowledge and address as a territory.

As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada found:

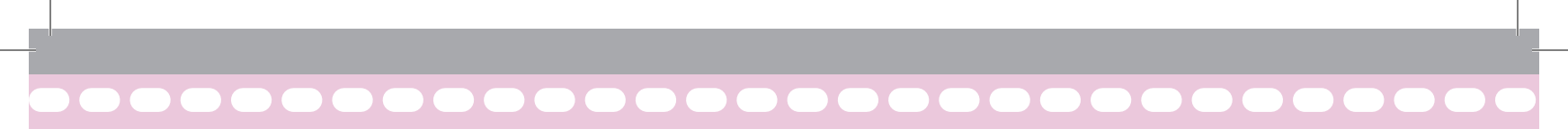


*"The students who were adults in Akaitcho Hall in 1975 may well have been the same young men and women who were disoriented, bullied, and abused as children in the large hostels in the mid-1960s... When they returned to their communities, they were estranged from their parents, their language, and their culture. Many of their parents, the generation still in a state of shock from the upheavals of the 1940s through the 1960s, could not knit their communities back together again. The removal of children added to the damage already done by other economic and demographic changes. And jobs—which were the main inducement to parents to give up their young people—generally failed to materialize. But despite these hardships, many Survivors found the courage and the energy to begin to pull their lives and their communities back together."*

4 Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

5 Statistics Canada: Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2019

6 Source: Statistics Canada Uniform Crime Reporting Survey Table 35-10-0185-01 (Found through <https://www.statsnwt.ca/justice/police-reported-crime/index.html>)



“We are inspired by  
the relationships  
across the Northwest  
Territories between  
and among different  
Indigenous nations,  
the consensus-based  
territorial government,  
local municipalities,  
federal government and  
individual citizens.”

Final Submissions to the National Inquiry on behalf of  
the Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories

PART 3

# Changing the Relationship

## Vision Statement

We envision an NWT where Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people live free from violence, are respected and valued, have equitable access to programs and services, are honoured and celebrated, and where their security is assured and provided no matter where they reside

The GNWT is committed to working with all Northerners and with partners across Canada to address systemic causes of violence, inequality, and racism so that Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people can feel safe and empowered in our country and in our territory.

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*We believe that changes in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians that were called for in RCAP [royal commission on aboriginal peoples] have begun. We also believe that reconciliation has begun. Like any other relationship, it will need work and will face challenges...*

Final Submissions to the National Inquiry on behalf of the Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories

## The GNWT's Objectives for Change

The GNWT has adopted four objectives to guide the change that is taking place across the NWT public service and in our relationship with Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. These objectives build on the core recommendations of the NWT Native Women's Association.



Photo courtesy of Tessa MacIntosh Photography



# Objectives of the GNWT's Action Plan

The following objectives are based on the recommendations of the Native Women's Association of the NWT in their final submission to the National Inquiry. These objectives also align with the principles for change identified by the National Action Plan, the Federal Pathway, and the Final Report of the National Inquiry.

## Acknowledge

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

This objective reflects the following principles for change of the National Inquiry and Guiding Principles of the National Action Plan:

- A Decolonizing Approach
- Cultural Safety

## Establish Trust

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

This objective reflects the following principles for change of the National Inquiry and Guiding Principles of the National Action Plan:

- Self-Determined and Indigenous-Led Solutions and Services
- A Focus on Substantive Equality and Human and Indigenous Rights

## Person-centered services

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

This objective reflects the following principles for change of the National Inquiry and Guiding Principles of the National Action Plan:

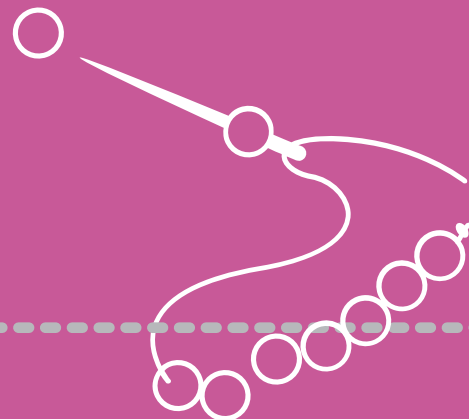
- Inclusion of Families and Survivors
- Trauma-Informed Approach

## Accountability

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.

This objective reflects the following principles of the National Action Plan:

- Co-develop, co-implementation, and co-management of the Action Plan



## How Change Will Come

The GNWT agrees with the findings of the National Inquiry that “**an absolute paradigm shift is required to dismantle colonialism within Canadian society, and from all levels of government and public institutions**”.

The GNWT’s Action Plan is aimed at bringing about the transformative change needed to begin to undo the effects of colonialism and racial and gendered discrimination from all levels of government and public institutions. Through the Action Plan, the GNWT will work to change the relationship between the GNWT’s departments, agencies, employees, policies and processes, and their daily encounters with Indigenous women, girls and two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual plus (2SLGBTQIA+) people.

### Changing the Relationship will Start With:

- 1 Culturally Safe, Anti-Racist, and Relationship-Based** transformation of the Health and Social Services system.
- 2 Gender Equity** in budgets, policies, and programs and culturally relevant **Gender Based Analysis+ tools** to assess the impact of policies, programs, and services on Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people.
- 3 Indigenous language** access and service delivery, interpreter training, and language revitalization support for communities.
- 4 Recruitment and training** of a public service that is representative of the Indigenous population of the NWT with the cultural competencies required for reconciliation.
- 5 Building a Wellness and Recovery Centre** to provide shelter and services to vulnerable people; **transitional housing for addictions recovery**; and **affordable housing in conjunction with wrap-around services**.
- 6 On-the-Land Healing funding for mental health and addictions** to increase the number and variety of Indigenous-led, culturally safe, community-based mental health and addictions programs, including aftercare.
- Enhancing **access to programs and services in small communities and for Elders** through single window and other person-centered (**integrated case management**) **services to assist vulnerable people** access programs related to justice, health, social services, education, and housing and help address the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice system.
- Renewing and increasing **multi-year, core funding agreements** for the NWT Native Women’s Association and Status of Women Council of the NWT.
- Implementing the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People** on a government-to-government basis with Indigenous governments.
- Establishing a MMIWG **Advisory Committee** with representatives from NWT Indigenous governments and key partners to provide guidance on the implementation of the GNWT Action Plan.

## Change Leaders in the Public Service

This change will be driven by dedicated employees and divisions within the GNWT with a mandate for transforming the public service. Change will also be led by GNWT and Indigenous government leadership through the formal structure of government-to-government NWT multilateral and bilateral forums that support the implementation of the *UN Declaration*.

### The Divisions Leading the Change in the GNWT Are:

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#### COMMUNITY, CULTURE AND INNOVATION – HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The **Community, Culture and Innovation division** (formerly Indigenous Health and Community Wellness) in the Department of Health and Social Services was established to address the disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous health outcomes and to bring a community development focus to the Department, by driving the system-wide shift towards a culturally safe, anti-racist, and relationship-based health and social services system. The division works to enable public participation and Indigenous engagement in priority setting, planning, and design that integrates the social determinants of health. The strengths of the division in working with communities and bringing Indigenous perspectives into planning and design need to be expanded and applied across the system.

Cultural safety is an outcome where Indigenous peoples feel safe and respected, free of racism and discrimination, when accessing health and social services.

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What the  
**Community, Culture  
and Innovation  
Division** will do to  
lead change in the  
GNWT:



- An **Indigenous Advisory Body** has been established to provide guidance and advice on incorporating Indigenous tradition, culture, and healing practices within the NWT Health and Social Services system. Membership of the Indigenous Advisory Body is comprised of Indigenous Government appointees, and staff from the Department of Health and Social Services and the three NWT Health and Social Services Authorities. The Indigenous Advisory Body aims to address inequities experienced by Indigenous residents when accessing health and social services.
- The Department of Health and Social Services is also establishing **Indigenous Patient Advocates** in the four NWT Acute Care Units which are located in Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Smith, and Yellowknife. They will contribute to a pilot project to establish an **Office of Indigenous Client Experience** to improve cultural safety and patient experience; supporting Indigenous patients in resolving concerns, complaints, and questions; and bridging cultural and language barriers.
- **Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Training** is one strategy the division uses to tackle systemic racism within the Health and Social Services system. The GNWT is the primary healthcare service provider in the NWT and is responsible for training all staff to deliver equitable and anti-racist service to all clients and patients. The Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Training will ensure that all health and social services staff, including healthcare workers, have the foundational knowledge and skills to identify, address, and prevent racism in all its forms. Content and activities outlined in the training framework will include Indigenous teachings; Indigenous experiences of residential schools, intergenerational impacts and resiliency; settler colonialism and privilege; understanding racism at interpersonal and systemic levels; community introductions; historical timeline; self-reflection exercises; and sharing circles.

Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Training is currently delivered monthly (depending on current COVID-19 response activities) and will be adjusted as per the feedback from the reviewers, such as the Health and Social Services Indigenous Advisory Body, Leadership Council, and key national experts in the field of cultural safety and anti-racism training. 2020-2021 sessions were schedule to take place in Fort Providence, Yellowknife, and Fort Smith. Sessions will be offered in additional communities in the new year.

The Community, Culture and Innovation division will also implement the GNWT's change objective to "*acknowledge that violence against Indigenous women and girls including members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities is a crisis that demands an urgent and active response*". The division will address systemic racism experienced by Indigenous residents when accessing health and social services through:

- A **Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Unit** has been established to lead system efforts to tackle anti-Indigenous racism and systemic racism in the NWT Health and Social Services System. The Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Unit is within the Community, Culture and Innovation division which is driving the system wide shift towards a culturally safe, anti-racist, and relationship-based health and social services system. The strengths of the division, which include working with communities and bringing Indigenous perspectives into planning and design, need to be expanded and applied across the system. Staff in this unit have facilitated weekly discussion circles where GNWT employees can access support and engage in dialogue about their Living Well Together learning experiences. In 2020-2021, 403 GNWT employees enrolled in the discussion circles.



Photo courtesy of Tessa MacIntosh Photography



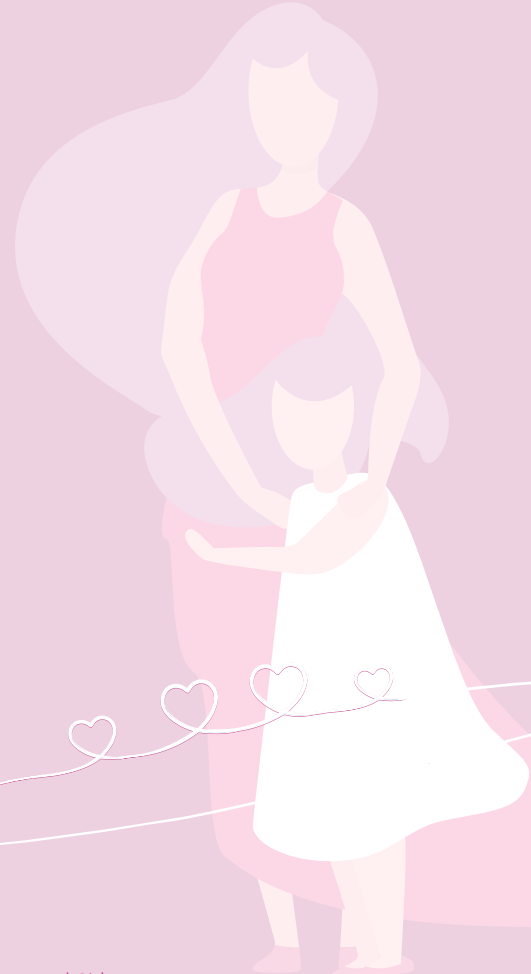
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## GENDER EQUITY DIVISION – EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reporting to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, the **Gender Equity Division** was recently established to promote the political, social and economic equality of people of all genders in the NWT and to advocate for women and people of diverse genders. The division ensures that a commitment to gender equality is reflected in the GNWT's budgets, policies and programs; and supports an intersectional approach to addressing misogyny and family violence that recognizes how colonialism, racism, and gender disproportionately impact Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

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# What the **Gender Equity Division** will do to lead change in the GNWT:





- Review GNWT budgets, policies and programs to ensure Gender Equality and Equity, and work with partners to **develop culturally relevant Gender Based Analysis tools** for use by GNWT departments to determine the impact of policies, programs and services on Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Lead a GNWT wide approach to **addressing misogyny and family violence** that recognizes how colonialism, racism, and gender disproportionately impact Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and in partnership with communities, women and families who need support.
- Promote **women in leadership** roles through annual campaign schools for Indigenous and northern women.
- Provide renewed, increased **multi-year core-funding** for the Native Women’s Association of the NWT and the Status of Women Council of the NWT.
- Advocating for change in GNWT processes and policies as it relates to recommendations in the Final Report of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
- Promote the needs of the NWT in the development and implementation of a Gender Based Violence National Action Plan and Implementation plan for the National Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

The Gender Equity Division will also implement the GNWT’s change objective “*to 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*” by:

- Establishing a **MMIWG Advisory Committee** with representatives from NWT Indigenous governments to provide advice and guidance to the GNWT on the programs and services that evolve from the National Inquiry and to support the GNWT in taking a culturally safe, decolonized and trauma informed approach when working on related initiatives and on the implementation of the Action Plan. The Native Women’s Association of the NWT, Status of Women Council of the NWT and the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife will also be invited to participate in the MMIWG Advisory Committee.
- On an annual basis, table a report in the NWT Legislative Assembly on the GNWT’s progress in implementing the Action Plan.



Photo courtesy of Tessa MacIntosh Photography



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## INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION SECRETARIAT – EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT

The NWT Official Languages Act recognizes that “*the existence of Indigenous peoples, speaking Indigenous languages constitutes the Northwest Territories a distinct society within Canada*” and acknowledges that all NWT Official Languages groups without regard for first language learned should have equal opportunity for employment and to participate in the institutions of the government.

The **Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat** works to meet the spirit and intent of the NWT Official Languages Act to protect and promote Chipewyan (Dëne Sųłné Yatıé), Cree (Nêhiyawêwin), Gwich’in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey (Sahtúqt’ıne Yatıı), South Slavey (Dene Zhatıé) and Tııchų Yatı (Tııchų).

The Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat’s role is to enhance the protection, revitalization, and strengthening of Indigenous languages throughout the NWT. The Secretariat’s work is guided by the NWT *Indigenous Language Framework and Action Plan* which provides the blueprint for Indigenous language revitalization and access in the NWT. The Secretariat is also guided by the UN Declaration article 13.1: *Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.*

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# What the **Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat** will do to lead change in the GNWT:



The Secretariat administers both federal and territorial funding to support language revitalization and government service delivery. This includes funding Indigenous governments to implement their Regional Indigenous Language Plans and supporting the Regional Indigenous Language Coordinators to implement those plans at the regional and community level.

The Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat will support the work of the Curriculum Development and Student Assessment Division to lead change in the NWT Education system through:

- Continuing to expand and renew mandatory **Northern Studies** high school curriculum on the history and legacy of residential schools, and the impact it has on students and families today, including the realities of inter-generational trauma and colonization.
- Work with NWT schools and Indigenous Governments through their Regional Indigenous Language and Education coordinators to implement the new mandatory Our Languages curriculum for JK-12 Indigenous language instruction within NWT schools.
- The **Our Languages Curriculum** is a competency-based curriculum that promotes a whole school approach to language learning and is aligned with the two foundational curricula, Dene Kede – which encompasses the language, culture and the way in which five Dene nations view the world; and Inuuqatigiit which focuses on the enhancement and enrichment of Inuit culture, heritage and language.

The Our Language curriculum also includes a teacher's guide, assessment tools and related resources to promote effective Indigenous language learning in schools across the NWT.

The Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat is negotiating a renewed **Canada-NWT Agreement on Indigenous Languages** that will support the GNWT and Indigenous governments in revitalizing languages and improving service delivery for the nine (9) Official NWT Indigenous languages.

Through the renewed Agreement, and an updated NWT Indigenous Languages Action Plan, the Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat will work to:

- **Complete multi-year Indigenous Language Plans** and fund Indigenous Governments to employ Regional Indigenous Language Coordinators to promote and revitalize Indigenous languages in their unique regions.
- **Support Indigenous language interpreter/translator service delivery**, training, and professional development to reverse the decline in language services.
- **Support Indigenous language broadcasting, media**, and the development of new assistive technologies, interactive apps, and information systems to manage language resources such as dictionaries, terminologies, and audio-visual materials.

- Develop a pilot **NWT Indigenous Languages Diploma program** to provide future students with opportunities to increase their Indigenous language proficiency at the post-secondary level through a one-year Certificate of Indigenous Language Proficiency or a two-year Indigenous Languages Diploma.
- Continue delivery of the Indigenous language community-based **Mentor-Apprentice Program**, which pairs a fluent speaker (mentor) with a committed learner (apprentice) in immersion language learning settings.
- Provide scholarships to NWT students attending post-secondary programs with a focus on Indigenous Language Revitalization
- **Promote the importance of Indigenous languages** through the Learn, Speak, Live Our Languages Campaign and Indigenous Languages Month (February)
- Organize and host the **Indigenous Languages and Education Symposium**, a quadrennial gathering of Indigenous people to celebrate Indigenous languages and education in the NWT (next gathering in 2023)

The Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat will work to achieve the GNWT's change objective to "*establish, build, and foster trust between all levels of government, service providers, communities and every one of their citizens*". Rebuilding this trust will require addressing the deficit that has developed in the GNWT's legislated mandate to deliver services in Indigenous languages through:

- A **review and renewal of the Official Languages Guidelines** for the delivery of services in the NWT's nine (9) official Indigenous languages to the public, including translation of signs and documents, interpretation, and service delivery in the Official Indigenous languages spoken in a community.
- **Supporting and offering training on interpretation/translation and training** to new and existing NWT interpreter/translator service through engagement with existing interpreters and translators.
- Responding to the Legislative Assembly's mandatory 5-year **review of the Official Languages Act** on the implementation, effectiveness, achievement of objectives in the preamble and recommendations for changes to the Act.
- Report annually on NWT Official Languages through the **Annual Report on Official Languages**
- Provide administration support to two legislated boards to promote, enhance, maintain, and revitalize the NWT official languages – Official Language Board and Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board.

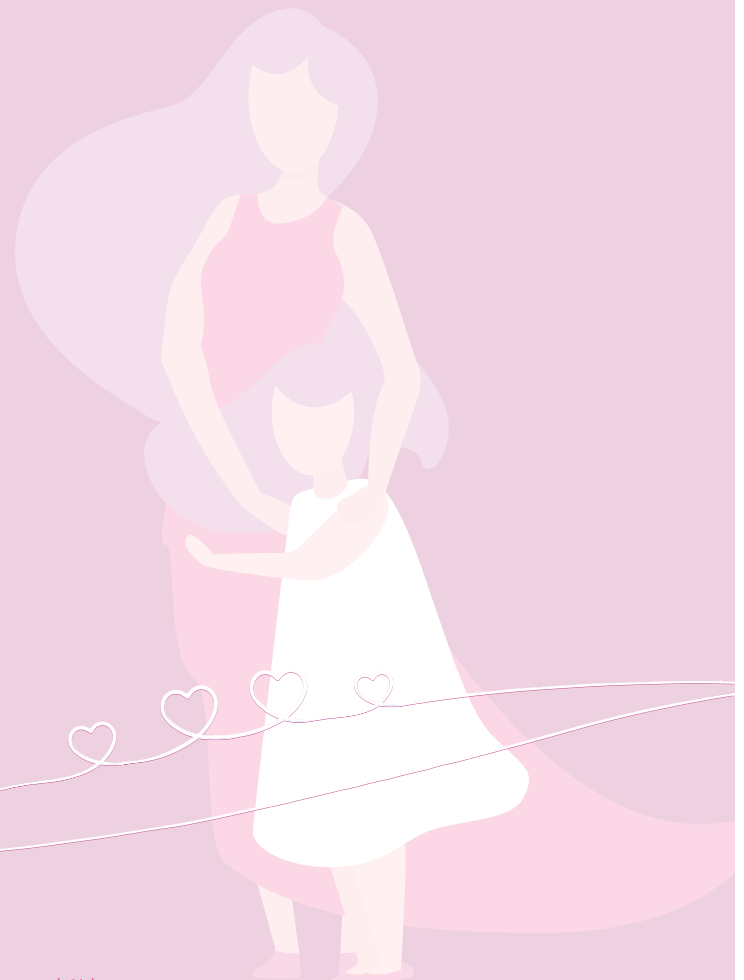
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## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION – FINANCE

The GNWT is committed to a competent Public Service that is representative of the people it serves. Within the Department of Finance, the **Diversity and Inclusion unit** was established to ensure a truly representative public service and that programs are developed to support the recruitment, development and retention of Indigenous employees.

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# What the **Diversity and Inclusion Division** is doing to lead change in the GNWT:



- The Diversity and Inclusion Division has developed an **Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework** to support GNWT hiring priorities intended to achieve a culturally inclusive workplace; to enhance Indigenous representation throughout departments; build capability and career development; and foster Indigenous leadership through talent management.

The Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework will require each department to develop an Indigenous employment implementation plan to increase, develop and maintain the number of Indigenous employees within the GNWT. This will allow departments to review recruitment and retention practices to ensure barriers to employment for Indigenous peoples are identified and addressed.

- A new **Building Capacity in Indigenous Governments** program aimed to support secondment arrangements with Indigenous governments in all regions. The GNWT will work jointly with Indigenous governments to help develop their human resource capacity and strengthen bilateral arrangements between the GNWT and Indigenous governments. The program builds off of a successful five-year capacity building secondment program with the Gwich'in Tribal Council. It is a newly created initiative which allows GNWT employees and employees from Indigenous governments in all regions to build capacity within their communities by providing work experience, training, opportunities for knowledge sharing, and exposure to Indigenous and territorial policy and procedures. This program will also allow public servants to obtain experience within Indigenous governments in the communities.
- An **Indigenous Career Gateway Program** was established to improve access to employment opportunities for Indigenous Aboriginal persons to obtain entry-level employment and trainee opportunities with the GNWT. The program can support up to 15 positions within GNWT departments.
- An **Indigenous Management Development Program** was established to support the professional development of Indigenous employees within the GNWT, by providing necessary skills training for career advancement. The program provides Indigenous employees with opportunities to gain experience in multiple professional fields in order to create a unique and versatile career path and includes training opportunities for Indigenous employees for occupations that are in labour market demand. The program will provide financial support to departments, beyond existing training and education programs, to support Indigenous employees. Candidates identify interest in their learning plans and work with their managers to access this opportunity.

The Diversity and Inclusion Division will work to achieve the GNWT's change objective to *"establish, build, and foster trust between all levels of government, service providers, communities and every one of their citizens"*. The first and most visible tool used by the GNWT to support diversity is the Affirmative Action Policy. The second aspect of building trust is the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of GNWT employees. The Diversity and Inclusion Division will:

- Complete a review and renewal of the Affirmative Action Policy in cooperation with Indigenous governments and with a goal of achieving a truly representative public service.
- Help fulfill the GNWT's commitment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action #57 and Articles 14 and 15 of the UN Declaration. The Department of Finance, in collaboration with Education, Culture and Employment, and Health and Social Services launched the GNWT's new Indigenous Cultural Awareness Sensitivity Training called **Living Well Together**.

Living Well Together is an 8-module online mandatory training program intended:

- To create awareness and understanding of the impact of colonization.
- To have all GNWT employees know the collective role in reconciliation; and
- To provide the necessary foundation and tools to become culturally competent.

Through the Living Well Together course, GNWT employees first explore the current relationship between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples in the North, and how the current relationship has been shaped by historical events, colonizing policies and practices, and people. The second half of the course helps develop the cultural awareness, sensitivity and foundational competencies for supporting respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples into the future.

This unique program includes 32 personal interviews with elders, respected community members, past leadership, and GNWT employees. Each region within the NWT is represented in these personal interviews.

This course is available to the public at no cost. This is a mandatory course for all GNWT employees and will be taken into consideration during performance review. As of September 16, 2021, 3,163 employees have started the training which represents over half of the public service in the first 6 months.

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## COMMUNITY JUSTICE AND POLICING – JUSTICE

The **Community Justice and Policing Division** recognizes the importance of reducing the number of Indigenous people who come into contact with the formal justice system through the development of community-based crime prevention programming. The Division also recognizes the importance of supporting the needs of those who do encounter the justice system and provides initiatives that seek to address the root causes of crime. The Division works closely with communities to develop and implement sustainable community-based programming in the areas of restorative justice, victim services, community safety and crime prevention. This includes support for formal diversions from the traditional justice system through Community Justice Committees, the use of alternative measures for adults and youth, local men’s healing initiatives and a new Community Safety Officer Program pilot.

The Division is responsible for the administration of the *Protection Against Family Violence Act* which provides for the use of Emergency Protection Orders (EPOs) as a legal tool to support survivors of family violence, works closely with the RCMP on policing priorities and community safety initiatives, and delivers the Integrated Case Management Program, which is a strength-based program that assists individuals with complex-needs to access and navigate a range of GNWT services in Yellowknife.

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What the  
**Community Justice  
and Policing Division**  
will do to lead change  
in the GNWT:



- The **Community Safety Officer (CSO) Program** is an innovative three-year pilot program established to provide a proactive, sustainable, trauma-informed, holistic approach to community safety, and to bridge the gap between Indigenous community safety needs and the role of the RCMP.

CSOs will respond to non-criminal safety concerns, develop and implement crime prevention strategies, build and promote the community's relationship with the RCMP, and patrol the community. CSOs act as a community safety enhancement service who works collaboratively with the RCMP to better address the communities' needs and to promote safety and wellness.

The program is administered and delivered by the community government that works with the GNWT and other community stakeholders to ensure the program meets the unique needs of the respective community. The pilot project is being hosted by the community of Fort Liard for three years starting with the hiring and training of three local officers in 2021-22.

- **Community Policing Action Plans** are developed in partnership between the RCMP and community leadership, based on the specific needs of each community. Policing priorities are reviewed and updated every year after consultations with community leaders, community citizens, other government departments and the RCMP.
- The NWT has signed a **framework agreement for funding the First Nations Policing Program (FNPP)** that funds nine positions across the territory under a First Nations Community Policing Service Framework Agreement. The positions are located in Inuvik, Behchokò, Fort Simpson, Fort Good Hope, Fort McPherson and Tulita and serve surrounding communities.
- The **Men's Healing Fund** was launched with the aim of making community-based healing initiatives available to men that help prevent family and intimate partner violence. The Healing Fund approach was developed based on recommendations from the program review of the Yellowknife-based 'A New Day' Men's Healing program and research conducted by the Aurora Research Institute on Intimate Partner Violence in the NWT. Funding supports the provision of community programming based on principles of cultural competence, self-determination, and collaboration with community stakeholders.



*Photo courtesy of Tessa MacIntosh Photography*

- The Community Justice Programs provide alternatives to the criminal justice system through the funding of **Community Justice Committees** across the NWT. A diversion protocol between the GNWT, RCMP and the Crown allows for offenders to be diverted away from the traditional justice system to Community Justice Committees. The program also provides community service options and crime prevention. Restorative processes support victims who chose to hold offenders accountable for their actions. Community Justice Committee members and Justice Coordinators are regularly trained in Restorative Justice and Victim Offender Conferencing. Communities operate programming through multi-year, Community Justice Funding agreements. Funding is available to all 33 communities.



- The **NWT Victims Services Program** was established to connect victims of crime, survivors and their families to supports and services when they need them most. The program provides funding to Indigenous governments, Hamlet Councils, and local organizations to deliver victim services across the NWT, taking into consideration the unique context and needs of their community. The GNWT and the RCMP have a referral protocol in place that formalizes the referral of victims to community victim services. Through in-person contact or telephone outreach, Victim Services Workers employed by local organizations offer:

- Immediate emotional support.
- Information on safety planning, emergency shelters, and court processes.
- Accompaniment to an RCMP detachment, hospital or health center.
- Assistance with victim impact statements,
- Applications to the Victims of Crime Emergency Fund.
- Registration for victim notification programs; and
- Referral to community programs and services.

Victims of a serious violent crime can also access emergency financial assistance for expenditures arising from the crime such as emergency travel to safety, clothing and food, cell phones for safety purposes, and crime scene clean-up.

Support and services to survivors of domestic violence (reported and unreported) consistently constitute the majority of work for Victim Services across the NWT. The program provides culturally safe, respectful and trauma informed access to mental and wellness services.

- The GNWT signed a new three-year agreement from 2020-2023 with Justice Canada for the NWT **Family Information Liaison Unit** (FILU) program to help the families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls find information about what happened to their loved ones. FILU is a national initiative to help families find information about their missing loved ones. A mobile office and outreach model is used to serve clients in remote areas.

- The Division is working with the YWCA to respond to the findings from a review of **Emergency Protection Orders** (EPOs) and processes. EPOs are temporary court orders of up to 90 days that are available under the Protection Against Family Violence Act.

The Community Justice and Policing Division will work to implement the GNWT's change objective to *"ensure that the purpose and objective of all government services is to be community and person-centered"*. It is not enough that government services are available; they must be accessible and delivered in a timely and flexible manner that recognizes that not everyone starts from the same point and ensures all members of the community are treated with dignity and respect. Based on this principle, the division (will continue to deliver integrated case management) services to assist vulnerable people access programs related to justice, health, social services, education, and housing and help address the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice system.

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*"ensure that the purpose and objective of all government services is to be community and person-centered"*.





Photo courtesy of Tessa MacIntosh Photography



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## MENTAL WELLNESS & ADDICTIONS RECOVERY – HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The devastating and prolonged effects of residential schools and other forms of systemic abuse and trauma continue to affect Indigenous peoples and communities in the NWT. We know that many survivors of residential schools continue to live with the effects of this trauma, along with the impacts of racism and marginalization, and that many have turned to alcohol and drugs in order to cope.

The GNWT established the **Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery Division** in order to help NWT residents access the right combination of supports that are community-based, culturally safe, and promotes self-determination – when and where they need it.

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What the  
**Mental Wellness  
and Addictions  
Recovery Division**  
will do to lead  
change in  
the GNWT:



- Establishing community-based, culturally relevant **transitional housing options** in the NWT. The program, in collaboration with the NWT Housing Corporation, will increase the availability of safe, sober housing close to home to support individuals in their recovery. Sober living helps people returning from addictions treatment to build on skills and habits learned while in treatment. It also helps them to develop sober social relationships in the NWT, which can assist in their recovery.
- The GNWT established an **On-the-Land Healing Fund for mental health and addictions** that is delivered by Indigenous governments in order to increase the number and variety of Indigenous-led, culturally safe, community-based mental health and addictions programs, including aftercare.
- Enhancing mental wellness and addictions recovery through **support for self-determination and community led solutions**, such as through the establishment of an Addictions Recovery and Aftercare Fund and a Peer Support Fund to increase access to addictions recovery and aftercare support and programming in communities, as well as a Community Suicide Prevention Fund to support community-based organizations develop and deliver culturally safe and appropriate programs that support the prevention of suicide.
- Implementation of a **family violence social marketing campaign, *What Will it Take?***, which is focused on shifting harmful attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate violence and stigma and make it difficult for women to access help.

The Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery Division will continue to work to meet the GNWT's change objective that *"the purpose and objective of all government services is to be community and person-centered"*. The division is taking active steps to ensure person and family-centered, culturally safe mental wellness and addictions recovery supports are in place. This includes providing timely access to counselling services through the elimination of wait times and introduction of same day appointments across the NWT. These changes, when coupled with enhanced availability of community based and led supports, means residents have access to a range of options to support their wellness and healing.



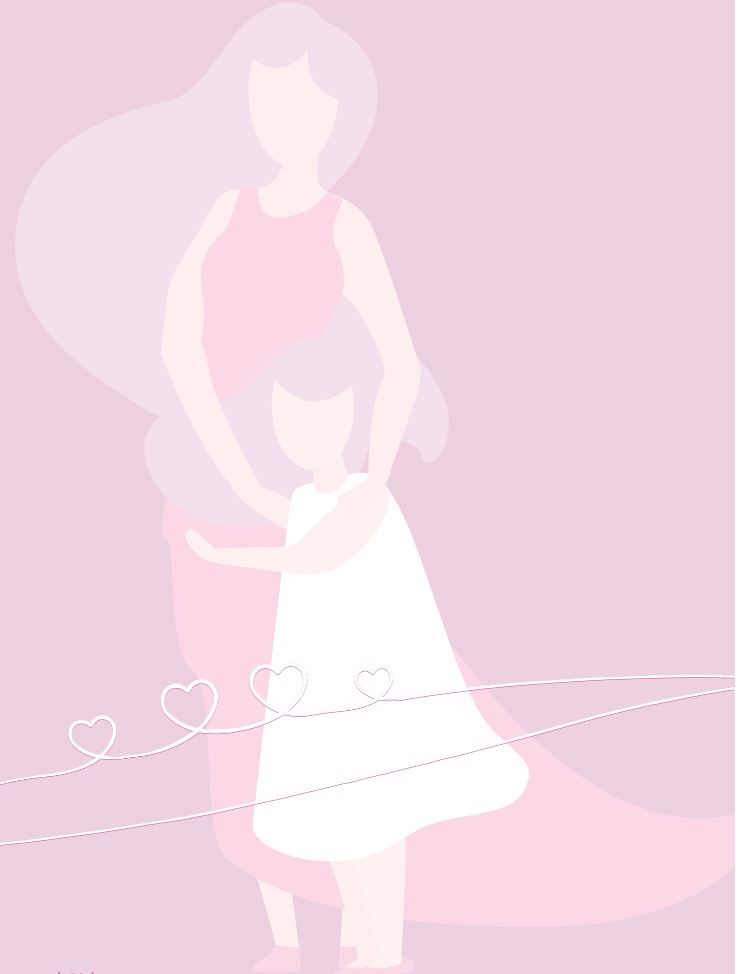
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## NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING CORPORATION

The availability of safe and affordable housing is a cornerstone of helping to ensure that Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are safe. Good housing provides the stability to advance other important priorities in ones' life like raising a family, caring for elders, going to school or addressing complex issues such as addictions and mental health. The **Housing Corporation** is beginning the process of mandate renewal in partnership with NWT Indigenous governments and a shift in its service delivery model towards integrated housing planning between the GNWT and NWT Indigenous governments.

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# What the **Housing Corporation** will do to lead change in the GNWT:



- In partnership with Indigenous governments, the NWT Housing Corporation supports the delivery of 4 supported housing projects in the communities of Behchokò, Fort Simpson, Aklavik, and Fort Good Hope through the **Northern Pathways to Housing** program providing long-term stable housing for persons that were previously chronically homeless. In conjunction with Health and Social Services, the Housing Corporation aims to develop a transitional housing model to support residents returning from treatment and combining a housing solution and wrap-around service support.
- The Housing Corporation supports the sustainability of **two emergency overnight shelters** in Inuvik to ensure that there are defined service standards, appropriately trained staff, and a safe and respectful operating environment. The Housing Corporation is currently looking to also leverage Indigenous wellness programming as supports for people experiencing homelessness in the Beaufort Delta.
- The Housing Corporation aims to support the development of community and Indigenous government led planning for housing solutions. In a shift towards community and Indigenous driven housing solutions is the development of 33 **community housing plans**, one for each NWT community. These plans are developed by communities with the support of the Housing Corporation. The final plans are owned by communities, which they can use for their own planning purposes, but also to engage funders such as all orders of government, NGOs and the private sector.
- The Housing Corporation is actively engaged in the development of **affordable housing opportunities** through:
  - The development of **100 new affordable housing units** by 2024.
  - The delivery of the **Canada-NWT Housing Benefit** In conjunction with the Canada and Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which provides a rent supplement for private market renters to bridge the gap between high rental rates and an appropriate affordable amount. Participants are eligible for up to \$800 a month to help them afford rental housing. This program will help address rental instability and as the benefit is portable and will move with the resident.

The NWT Housing Corporation will continue to work to meet the GNWT's change objective that *"the purpose and objective of all government services is to be community and person-centered"*. This work will start with a review of the Housing Corporation's mandate and all of its programs and services to further enhance its programming to address issues regarding MMIWG, especially in relation to social and economic equality and self-determined and Indigenous-led solutions. The Housing Corporation will also be engaging with NWT Indigenous governments to seek their perspectives on the mandate of the NWTHC as it proceeds with its work on strategic renewal.



Photo courtesy of Tessa MacIntosh Photography



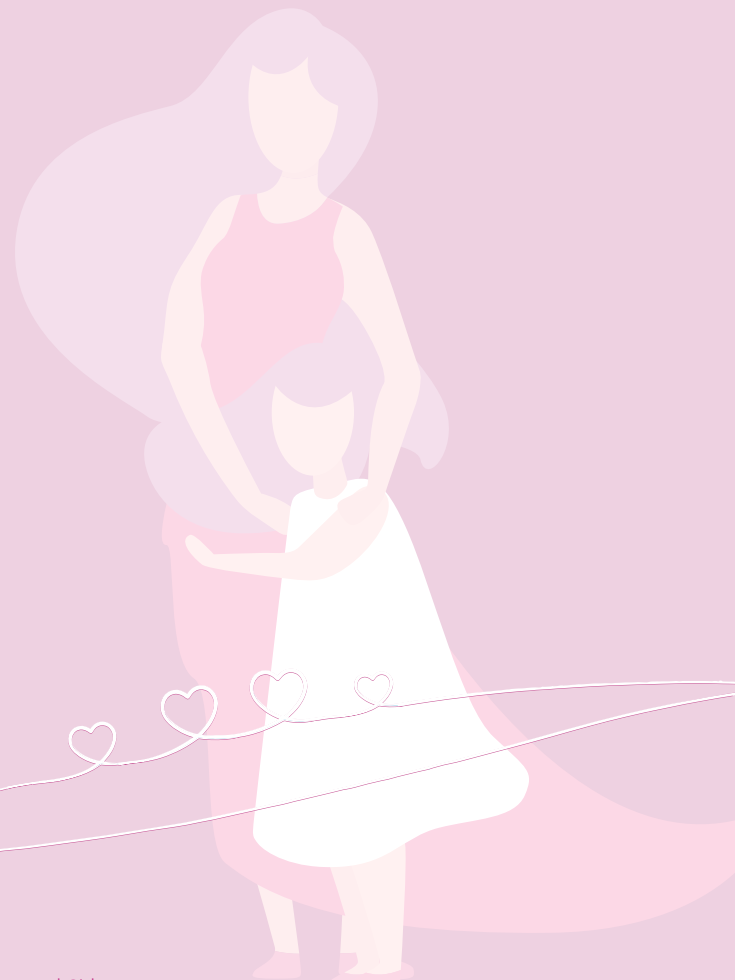
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### INDIGENOUS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The GNWT is committed to developing and maintaining respectful intergovernmental relations with NWT Indigenous governments. A productive and effective intergovernmental relationship among the GNWT and Indigenous governments promotes greater collaboration and cooperation on common goals and priorities.

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## What **Indigenous and Intergovernmental Affairs** does to lead change in the GNWT:



The National Inquiry called on governments to fully implement the recommendations of the UN Declaration. The GNWT is working multilaterally and bilaterally with NWT Indigenous governments to identify changes required in GNWT legislation and policies to best reflect the principles set out in the UN Declaration.

- An **NWT Council of Leaders** has been established between the GNWT and NWT Indigenous governments to discuss NWT-wide social and economic issues. The Council of Leaders has prioritized work on the implementation of the UN Declaration through an officials' working group.
- The **Modern Treaty and Self Government Partners Forum** has also been established with the five NWT Indigenous governments with modern treaties and self-government agreements and the GNWT. The forum is an opportunity to discuss matters of mutual concern and work collaboratively to improve the ongoing implementation of land claim and self-government agreements and will:
  - Move forward on the implementation of the UN Declaration in the NWT through the working group established under the NWT Council of Leaders, especially Article 37 of the UN Declaration that states treaties and agreements must be respected, recognized, observed, and enforced;
- **Intergovernmental Memorandums of Understanding** are in place to formalize bilateral government-to-government relationships between GNWT Executive Council and Indigenous government leadership and to establish a forum and process for leaders to discuss and advance shared concerns. Bilateral intergovernmental agreements are currently in place between the GNWT and the following Indigenous governments (the GNWT remains open to formalize bilateral agreements with further Indigenous governments):
  - Tłı̨chǫ Government
  - Gwich'in Tribal Council
  - Northwest Territory Métis Nation
  - Akaitcho Dene First Nations
  - Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated
  - Salt River First Nation
  - Kátł'odeeche First Nation
  - Délı̨ne Got'ı̨ne Government

- An **Intergovernmental Council on Land and Resource Management** is in place with leadership of the GNWT and Indigenous governments who are party to the Devolution Agreement. The members of the Intergovernmental Council include leadership from:

- GNWT
  - Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
  - Gwich'in Tribal Council
  - Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated
  - Northwest Territory Métis Nation
  - Tłı̨chǫ Government
  - Acho Dene Koe First Nation
  - Salt River First Nation
  - Denı̨nu Kúé First Nation
  - Kátł'odeeche First Nation
- A **Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement** was entered into with members of the Intergovernmental Council to share 25% of all resource royalties received by the GNWT.
  - The Intergovernmental council also established a **Legislative Development Protocol** for the collaborative development of land and resource statutes and regulations for the GNWT and Indigenous governments.

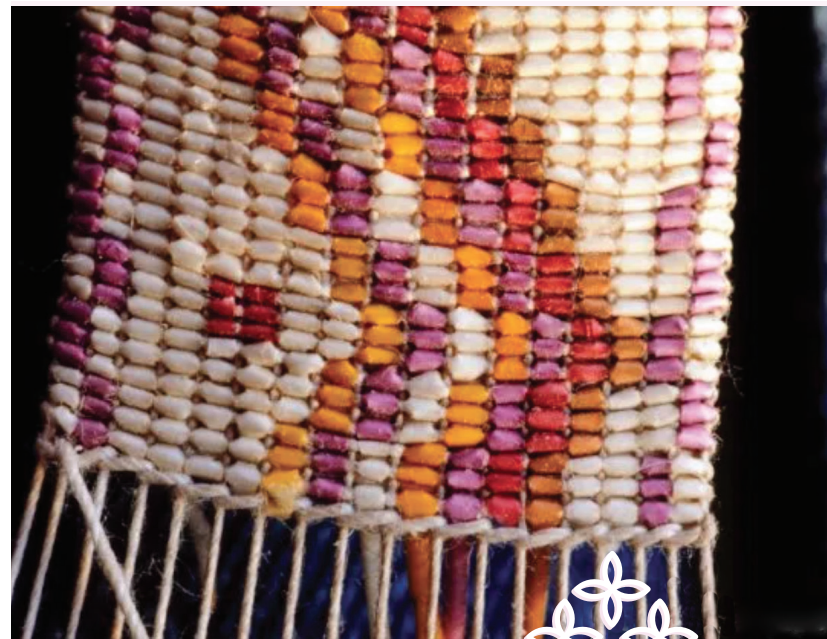


Photo courtesy of Tessa MacIntosh Photography

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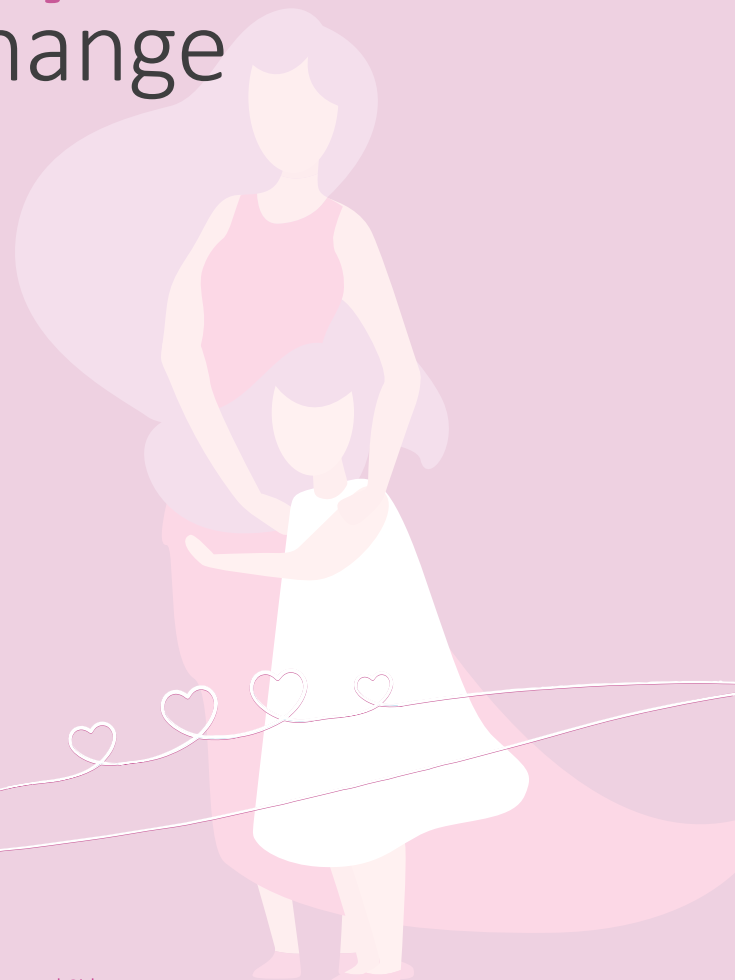
### **INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY TERRITORIAL SENIOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The departments of Justice, Education, Culture and Employment, Municipal and Community Affairs, Finance, Executive and Indigenous Affairs and Health and Social Services along with the Regional Health Authorities and the NWT Housing Corporation recognize that the fragmentation of services between departments, divisions and programs has contributed to the social and economic marginalization of Indigenous people, and disproportionately impacts Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

In response, the GNWT Child and Family Deputy Ministers' Committee have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) formalizing their commitment to support the planning, development, and implementation of an Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) initiative through a Territorial Senior Management Committee.

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## What **Integrated Service Delivery** does to lead change in the GNWT:





ISD is the organization and management of GNWT programs and services so that people get the care and support they need, when they need it, in ways that are user-friendly and accessible. Integration is not intended to maintain the status quo of existing systems, but rather to continuously improve complex services to meet the needs of individuals and communities. It is not a destination, but an evolutionary process that starts by coordinating and working together. As services are improved, gaps removed, and redundancies reduced, systems will move on the scale of integration towards more seamless services delivery and inter-disciplinary responses.

Through ISD and in the spirit of reconciliation, the GNWT is committed to facilitating a whole of government approach across the NWT to support enhanced wellbeing for individuals, families, and communities so they can thrive.

The ISD Territorial Senior Management Committee is working to achieve GNWT change objectives to “ensure that the purpose and objective of all government services is to be community and person-centered”.

Over the next three years, the ISD Territorial Senior Management Committee will:

- Work with Indigenous governments and communities to co-design and implement a culturally safe, person and family-centered, strengths-based, whole person care and community-driven ISD approach for the NWT.
- Implement common social indicators data collection and analysis across social envelope departments. The analysis of common socio-economic indicators will allow departments to:
  - Better understand the reasons residents seek out the services they offer and to focus resources in providing the right supports at the right time.
  - Identify gaps in data and identifying priority areas for improving data-collection methods to disaggregate information by gender, sex, race, or Indigenous identity.



Photo courtesy of Tessa MacIntosh Photography



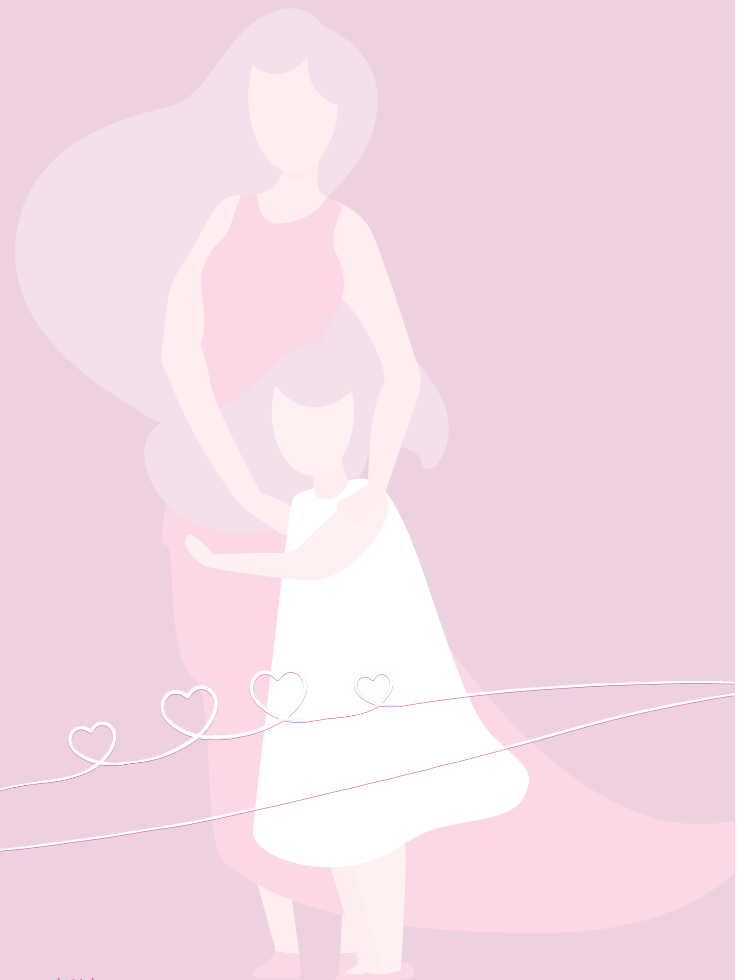
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**GOVERNMENT SERVICE OFFICERS – EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

22 Single Window Service Centres have been established across the NWT and are staffed by Government Service Officers (GSOs).

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# What **Government Service Officers** do to lead change in the GNWT:



Single Window Service Centres and GSOs deliver a critical service to residents in the small, rural, and remote communities of the NWT, by providing a seamless point of access for value added information on government programs and services.

- Single Window Service Centres are equipped with tools for the public to connect with programs and services and the GSOs are familiar with clients and can assist in problem solving and researching options for clients.
- Many Government Service Officers provide services in their Indigenous language, plain language interpretation and translate or explain forms and applications in terms or analogies that the Elders would understand.
- GSOs support and advise departments who do not have an ongoing presence in their respective communities to optimize visits to the community and connect them with clients and can also help to coordinate between departments and agencies already present in communities through interagency or informal processes.
- GSOs meet regularly with Service Canada and the NWT Canada Revenue Agency team to share information that benefit Elders.
- GSOs have regular training sessions to acquire knowledge and skills for enhanced delivery of programs and services and are briefed on initiatives of interest. Annual training workshops provide a forum for networking, training, and team building.



Photo courtesy of Tessa MacIntosh Photography



**PART 4**  
Responding to  
the Calls for Justice

CONTENTS

- pg 40-79** Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Culture and Language
- pg 80-96** Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Health and Wellness
- pg 97-119** Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Human Security
- pg 120-142** Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Justice

## Culture

**We call upon all governments to acknowledge, recognize, and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples** to their cultures and languages as inherent rights, and constitutionally protected as such under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

- to recognize Indigenous languages as official languages,
- to support language revitalization,
- to ensure access to immersion programs for children from preschool into post-secondary education,
- to preserve knowledge and support grassroots and community-led Indigenous language and cultural programs,
- to create an empowerment fund that supports land-based educational programs,
- to educate public servants and citizens about, and to confront and eliminate, racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia, and
- to improve the representation of Indigenous Peoples in media and pop culture.

## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Culture and Language

Department of Education, Culture And Employment

### ACTION 1

**Seek a renewed Canada-NWT Agreement on Indigenous Languages to revitalize language communities and service delivery for the nine Official NWT Indigenous languages.**

#### DEVELOP AN NWT INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES DIPLOMA PROGRAM

#### CONTINUE TO DELIVER AN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE MENTOR-APPRENTICE PROGRAM

- a) Rebuild a team of Indigenous language interpreter / translators within the GNWT and develop capacity for all departments to meet their own Indigenous language translation and service needs.
- b) Continue funding for Indigenous governments to employ Regional Indigenous Languages Coordinators and develop Indigenous-led language revitalization plans
- c) Continue funding to support Indigenous language teaching and learning centres nested in the school system across the NWT
- d) Continue funding support to Indigenous Languages Communications Societies and community radio broadcasters
- e) Develop digital technologies to manage Indigenous language resources such as dictionaries and terminology

#### PROGRAM

Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat – Canada-NWT Agreement on Indigenous Languages

#### CONTEXT

The GNWT recognizes the importance of the Calls for Justice calling for the recognition of Indigenous languages as official languages, with the same status, recognition, and protection provided to French and English. Several Calls for Justice include support for access to government services, language revitalization and media supports.

The Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat is currently negotiating a renewed Canada-NWT Agreement on Indigenous Languages that is meant to support the GNWT and Indigenous governments in revitalizing language communities and service delivery for the nine Official NWT Indigenous languages. Through the renewed Agreement, the following activities have been prioritized:

##### Support for Language Communities:

- Funding to Indigenous governments to support their multi-year Indigenous Language Plans and employ a Regional Indigenous Language Coordinator to promote and revitalize Indigenous languages.
- Improving Access and Service Delivery:
- Development of new assistive technologies, interactive apps, and information systems to manage language resources such as dictionaries, terminologies, and audio-visual materials.
- Formation of a professional association and accreditation body for the interpreter / translator profession, and development of terminology resources.

- Funding GNWT departments and agencies to meet their own Indigenous language service needs, including document translation and interpretation at point-of-service.
- Rebuild Indigenous language interpreter/translator service delivery, training, and professional development to reverse the decline in language services.

**Broadcast and Media Support:**

- Continue funding support to the Native Communications Society and Inuvialuit Communications Society to provide radio services in nine (9) Indigenous languages across the territory
- Funding to community broadcasters to develop programming, train staff, and purchase or upgrade equipment
- Funding for the Native Communications Society to expand its efforts to transfer technical knowledge to community radio stations and mentor a new generation of Indigenous broadcasters and announcers.

**Indigenous Language Training Programs:**

- Providing language partners, students, and community members access to specialized training and learning opportunities including continued delivery of an Indigenous language Mentor-Apprentice Program and further programming through academic institutions.
- Expanding the scope of the Indigenous Language Revitalization Scholarship to support more language-related careers in fields such as interpretation, translation, and broadcasting.
- Developing and delivering a new two-year pilot Indigenous Language Diploma program in partnership with Aurora College, University of Victoria, and Indigenous governments.

**Community Learning and Resources:**

- Continued funding to support seven teaching and learning centres nested in the school system across the NWT that provide support to Indigenous language and cultural programs within communities and in schools, including developing and producing Indigenous language resources

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**TIMELINE**

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Funding Agreement in place for 2022 and programing roll-out through to 2025.

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## ACTION 2

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**Review and renew the Official Languages Act Guidelines for the delivery of services in the NWT's 11 official languages to the public including translation of signs and documents, interpretation, and service delivery in the Official Indigenous languages.**

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### PROGRAM

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Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat – Official Languages Act

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### CONTEXT

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The NWT *Official Languages Act* (OLA) gives official status to English and French and to nine Indigenous languages: Chipewyan, Cree, Gwich'in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey, and Tłı̄chǫ.

The Official Languages Policy provides that members of the public shall have reasonable access to programs and services in the official languages of the NWT. The 1997 Official Languages Act Guidelines direct how and where the GNWT provides for the delivery of services in the NWT's 11 official languages to the public including translation of signs and documents, interpretation, and service delivery in the Official Indigenous languages spoken in the respective community.

The GNWT has initiated a review of the Official Languages Guidelines and will update official languages regulations, policy and guidelines to improve access to public services in Indigenous languages.

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### TIMELINE

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Completed by Fall 2023





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## ACTION 3

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### **Graduate students with an understanding of the history and legacy of residential schools, including the impact it has on students and families today, and the realities of inter-generational trauma and colonization.**

- a) Update the mandatory Northern Studies 10 curriculum resources to include information about the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the Calls for Justice.
- b) Develop Northern Studies 20 & 30 curricula with the Education Bodies and Indigenous governments. The new curricula will be focused on opportunities for students to learn about land claims, treaties and implementation agreements, as well as more in-depth learning about the NWT style of consensus government.

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## PROGRAM

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Curriculum Development and Student Assessment- Northern Studies Curriculum

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## CONTEXT

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Grade 10, Northern Studies is a graduation requirement for all NWT high school students. The Northern Studies 10 curriculum has at its heart, the concepts of citizenship, identity and engagement in a Northern context. It is reflective of the diverse cultural perspectives of the NWT, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous, that contribute to the North's evolving realities.

Northern Studies explores the history and legacy of residential schools, including the impact it has on students and families today, including the realities of inter-generational trauma and colonization. Interactive activities explore relationships between Indigenous people and Europeans, including the history of colonization of the lands that is now Canada.

Schools are expected to involve community members (local leaders, survivors of Residential Schools, cultural experts, Elders) in the teaching of Northern Studies. Residential Schools Awareness training will continue to be provided to all new NWT educators. ECE also supports GNWT departments and outside agencies who are interested in offering the NWT Blanket Exercise experience to new GNWT employees upon request. The Blanket Exercise is a component of the Northern Studies 10 curriculum that explores relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, including the history of colonization of the lands that are now Canada.

The Department has updated the materials provided to teachers for the Northern Studies 10 curriculum to include information about the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the Calls for Justice. The NWT Online Timeline, which is also a resource that is used within Northern Studies 10, is currently being updated to better reflect contemporary NWT and will include specific mention of the Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Action, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the MMIWG Calls for Action. This online resource will be available on the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre website.

The GNWT is currently expanding Northern Studies by developing Northern Studies 20 & 30 courses with NWT Education Bodies and Indigenous governments. The new courses will be focused on opportunities for students to learn about land claims, treaties and implementation agreements, as well as more in-depth learning about the NWT style of consensus government.

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## TIMELINE

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Pilot Northern Studies 20 in 2022-23 and Northern Studies 30 in 2023-24.

Northern Studies 20 & 30 available in all NWT high schools by 2025.

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## ACTION 4

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### **Renewal of the NWT Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum to ensure an alignment with NWT Indigenous perspectives, culture, and languages.**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Curriculum Development and Student Assessment- JK-12 Curriculum Renewal

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#### **CONTEXT**

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Curriculum in all jurisdictions must be renewed regularly, including the curriculum used in the NWT, to ensure it aligns with the territory's priorities and values for education.

The NWT Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 (JK-12) curriculum is out of date and needs to be renewed. The NWT uses a significant portion of Alberta's curriculum, which is undergoing large-scale changes to every subject and grades from K-12.

ECE is currently in the research and engagement phase of curriculum renewal; this includes exploring possibilities for a new provincial partnership with a western province, such as British Columbia. Curriculum renewal will require additional resources.

Any curriculum used in the NWT must meet the needs and interests of students and communities. It must be grounded in Indigenous world views and reflect the identities of northern children and support them in becoming capable people.

As part of the GNWT's commitment to reconciliation, ECE will ensure the JK-12 curriculum is in alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry and the United Nation's Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Ensuring an alignment between this commitment to Indigenous perspectives, culture, and languages and the curricula that are developed, adopted, or adapted is an important consideration necessary to meet these commitments. The commitment the GNWT has made to respond to MMIWG Calls for Justice will equally contribute to the development, maintenance, and renewal of this curriculum.

In 2021, ECE undertook an engagement and consultation process to hear from key educational partners across the NWT about their concerns, ideas and questions regarding JK-12 curriculum renewal. The engagement and consultation process involved hearing directly from Indigenous governments and organizations; Education Bodies, including elected education leaders, superintendents, principals, and teachers; the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA) and other interested parties

The most prominent theme heard during the preliminary engagement is the importance of Indigenous Ways content in curriculum, and approaches to learning. As the NWT explores the possibilities of renewing the JK-12 Curriculum, the new *"Their Voices will Guide Us"* student and youth engagement guide developed by the National Inquiry will be explored for how and when it can be recommended and promoted as a resource for schools to use throughout JK-12.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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Decision on renewed provincial partnership by 2022. Implementation of new curriculum beginning in 2022 through 2026

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## ACTION 5

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**Expand the Northern Distance Learning Program to ensure students in small community schools, most of whom are Indigenous, have equitable access to higher-level academic courses at the high school level.**

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### PROGRAM

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Curriculum Development and Student Assessment- Northern Distance Learning

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### CONTEXT

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Northern Distance Learning (NDL) is a program that helps to respond to the Calls for Justice for educational and training supports within all Indigenous communities. NDL was created to ensure students in small community schools, most of whom are Indigenous, have equitable access to higher-level academic courses at the high school level while remaining in their home communities.

Live courses are delivered through videoconferencing, meaning students have in-real-time interactions with their teachers in Inuvik in addition to the In-class Support Person who is physically present to support their learning in their community. In the 2019-2020 academic year, 67% of Grade 12 NDL students applied to postsecondary programs, all of whom were accepted.

ECE is working to ensure that no student should have to choose between being at home in their community and moving to another community to access their desired courses. Previous to the availability of NDL, students in small community schools who wanted to access higher-level academic courses, were required to move away from the safety and security of their homes and communities, to larger regional centres, live in boarding homes with strangers and learning to navigate a new community without the immediate support of their parents and families.

NDL is currently available in 15 NWT communities. The GNWT is currently working to expand the number of communities that can access the NDL program to 20 NWT communities, increase the number of students from 85 to 100 students and to expand the curriculum from 17 to 27 offered courses.

This expansion will include a larger team of support based in Inuvik and increased NDL teaching capacity.

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### TIMELINE

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2021-22 and ongoing



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## ACTION 6

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**Implement the new mandatory curriculum for JK-12 Indigenous language instruction within all NWT schools.**

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### PROGRAM

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Curriculum Development and Student Assessment- Our Languages Curriculum

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### CONTEXT

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In 2020, the GNWT launched the ***Our Languages JK-12 Indigenous languages curriculum*** (OLC) a new mandatory curriculum for JK-12 Indigenous language instruction within NWT schools. Indigenous languages are the foundation of identity, and pride and an expression of community values and beliefs. The OLC requires all school staff to integrate Indigenous languages into everyday practices in daily greetings, hallways, announcements, and assemblies.

OLC is a competency-based curriculum that provides Indigenous language instructors with curricular outcomes, instructional strategies, and assessment tools to foster language growth in classrooms. It promotes a whole-school approach to language learning to ensure that Indigenous languages are heard and spoken throughout schools, at assemblies, and during routines and in all NWT classrooms.

OLC was developed in the NWT in collaboration with Indigenous Elders, teachers, language champions, neurolinguistic experts, curriculum coordinators and community advocates, and was informed by national and international curricular documents. The curriculum incorporates the two foundational language curricula, *Dene Kede* – which encompasses the language, culture and the way in which five Dene nations view the world; and *Inuuqatigiit* which focuses on the enhancement and enrichment of Inuit culture, heritage and language. ECE has also created instructional resources in both Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun.

ECE is working with NWT schools and Indigenous governments through their Regional Indigenous Language Coordinators to implement OLC, including the teacher guide, assessment tools and related resources to promote effective Indigenous language learning in schools across the NWT. ECE will be staffing an OLC Coordinator to help support the implementation of the OLC for a two-year term beginning in 2022-23.

Currently, four communities in the NWT have Indigenous Immersion Language Programs and 41 of 47 schools offer Indigenous language as a core language program. All schools must have a minimum of 90 hours of instructional time using the mandated curriculum of OLC.

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### TIMELINE

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Ongoing initiative with complete implementation by 2023-24.



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## ACTION 7

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### **Support schools to create learning environments that centre, respect and promote the Indigenous worldviews, cultures and languages of their community.**

- a) Provide sustainable funding for Indigenous languages and education initiatives in schools
- b) Provide professional development for Indigenous language instructors in NWT schools to maintain delivery of language instruction.

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## PROGRAM

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Indigenous Languages and Educations Secretariat – JK-12 Indigenous Languages and Education Policy

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## CONTEXT

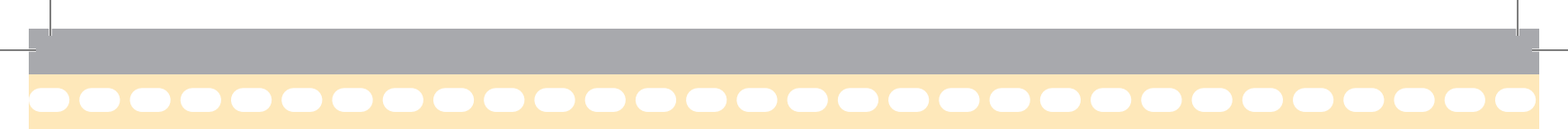
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The NWT Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12- Indigenous Languages and Education Policy (ILE Policy) supports schools to create learning environments that centre, respect and promote the Indigenous worldviews, cultures and languages of the community in which the school is located. The ILE Policy was developed to guide culture-based education and the involvement of Elders in NWT schools: commonly referred to as Indigenizing education.

The ILE Policy provides a more effective way to support education bodies in the delivery of Indigenous languages and education programming by outlining improved program guidelines, training, funding, and accountability measures. It also supports language and culture-based learning by focusing on promoting Indigenous worldviews, cultures, and languages of communities in which schools are located.

The ILE Policy mandates that education bodies provide quality Indigenous language instruction and relevant culture-based school programs that:

- welcome all students into learning environments that centre and promote the Indigenous worldviews, culture, and language of the community.
- ensure Elders and cultural resource experts play an integral role in developing these learning environments; and
- ensure that a whole school approach to language learning is employed.
- The ILE Policy also ensures Indigenous language instruction and culture-based school programs are supported and adequately resourced through five (5) specific funding areas:
  - Regional Indigenous Languages and Education Coordinators- positions within Education bodies that provide a regional leadership role
  - Indigenous Education- for operation and maintenance of Indigenous education programs and activities in NWT schools
  - Indigenous Languages Instruction- for Indigenous language instructors' benefits and salaries
  - Our Languages Resource Development- for resource development activities to support the Our Languages Curriculum and ILE Handbook
  - Community Support- to purchase on-the-land equipment and supplies, hire cultural resource experts for short term projects, and provide Indigenous language and education training within communities



The NWT JK-12 Indigenous Languages and Education Handbook: Our People, Our Land, Our Ways, Our Languages (ILE Handbook) provides administrators and classroom teachers with a user-friendly guide to implement the ILE Policy and ensure quality culture-based school programming.

The Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat will continue to provide ILE Handbook workshops to help schools operationalize the ILE Policy for culture-based education and whole school approaches to language learning; and deliver the *Our Languages Curriculum*.

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## TIMELINE

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Ongoing initiative with complete implementation by 2023-24.

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## ACTION 8

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**Establish an Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council to foster success of Indigenous students and staff, and the overall success of Aurora College as it transforms into a Polytechnic University.**

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### PROGRAM

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Aurora College – Strengthened Governance System

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### CONTEXT

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Aurora College is currently undergoing changes to its enabling legislation – *Aurora College Act* - which proposes a new tricameral governance model that includes an Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council. It is expected that the Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council will promote policies and operational decisions that foster the success of Indigenous students and staff and the overall success of Aurora College.

The Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council will develop and monitor implementation of a framework that guides Aurora College in all areas of strategic and operational decision-making. Among other areas, the Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council is expected to inform on how to best support the success of Indigenous students and staff; program development and review; and awareness of the culture, traditions and histories of Indigenous peoples.

As part of the transformation into a polytechnic university, Aurora College will renew its approach to regional program delivery to help ensure an expanded and sustainable network of community learning centres. The goal is for the polytechnic university to maintain a presence in every community of the NWT.

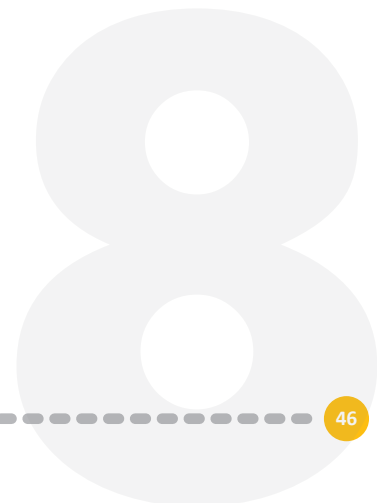
Aurora College also received a federal grant to research, develop, and implement an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion plan for Aurora College and to plan, develop and implement an updated Indigenous Knowledge policy that eliminates systemic barriers to Indigenous researchers and educators.

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### TIMELINE

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Expected timeframe for assent of an amended *Aurora College Act* is November/December 2021.



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## **ACTION 9**

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**Complete a review of all college programs starting with the Social Work Diploma and Bachelor of Education programs.**

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### **PROGRAM**

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Aurora College – Review of Programs- Transformation into a Polytechnic University

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### **CONTEXT**

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Aurora College is transforming into a polytechnic university to increase access to quality post-secondary education opportunities for Northerners and to foster growth of research that is beneficial to our communities and people.

As part of the transformation, Aurora College is reviewing all of its programs, starting with the Social Work Diploma and the Bachelor of Education programs. Future program decisions and the development of new, revised curricula will be informed by the results of these program reviews.

Northern Health, Education and Community Services was identified as one of four initial areas of specialization for the new polytechnic university. This specialization will respond to the health and social support needs of the people and communities of the NWT and together with the outcome of program reviews will inform future program decisions for Aurora College and the polytechnic university.

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### **TIMELINE**

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Program Review of Social Work Diploma Program and Bachelor of Education Programs Completed by 2022.





## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Culture and Language

Department of Finance

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### ACTION 10

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**All GNWT employees will complete Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training and be aware of the impact of colonization, their collective role in reconciliation; and have the tools to become culturally competent.**

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#### PROGRAM

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Human Resources- Diversity and Inclusion- Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training

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#### CONTEXT

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The GNWT completely redesigned and launched an Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training in March 2021. Entitled, Living Well Together, this training is mandatory for all GNWT employees (per GNWT Learning and Development Policy) and is integral to creating a public service where cultural diversity is appreciated and where people from diverse cultural backgrounds communicate and work with mutual respect.

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

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#### TIMELINE

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98-100% of employees by 2023-24



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## ACTION 11

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### **Develop an Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework designed to recruit and retain Indigenous employees, address bias, racism, and discrimination throughout the staffing process, and improve cultural competency in the public service.**

- a) Conduct a review of all GNWT job descriptions to associate Indigenous cultural and social factors within job descriptions, and develop a process to request Indigenous representation on hiring committees
- b) Develop an Indigenous employment implementation plan for each GNWT department.

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## PROGRAM

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Human Resources- Diversity and Inclusion- Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework

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## CONTEXT

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In 2021-2022, the GNWT will develop an **Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework**.

Each department will develop an Indigenous employment implementation plan to increase, develop and maintain the number of Indigenous employees within the GNWT. This will allow departments to review recruitment and retention practices to ensure barriers to employment for Indigenous peoples are identified and addressed.

The GNWT will conduct a review of all GNWT job descriptions, developing guidelines to assist departments in determining the education and experiences required for positions, developing resources for departments to include Indigenous cultural and social factors within job descriptions, and providing an opportunity to request Indigenous representation on hiring committees.

An Action Plan will be developed to address bias, racism, and discrimination throughout the staffing process, resulting in improved cultural competency in the public service.

This new initiative will encompass and support the existing GNWT programs designed to recruit and retain Indigenous employees which include but are not limited to:

- **The Indigenous Career Gateway Program (ICGP)** which supports Indigenous people to obtain entry-level employment and trainee opportunities with the GNWT.
- The **Indigenous Management Development and Training Program (IMDTP)** which supports the professional development of existing Indigenous employees within the GNWT, by providing necessary skills training for career advancement.
- The **Regional Recruitment Program** which links vacant regional positions with potential employees and on-the-job training.
- The **Indigenous Employee Advisory Committee** which advises the Deputy Ministers Committee on Human Resources on recruitment, retention, and promotion of Indigenous people and includes two members from each of the five regions in the NWT plus two members to represent Yellowknife.
- The **Internship Program** also provides unique employment opportunities to recent northern graduates through internships with GNWT departments. This valuable work experience enhances their employment prospects and helps retain skilled northern workers. In 2019-20, 54% of the hired interns were Indigenous.
- The **Affirmative Action Policy** which offers priority hiring to Indigenous people, women, persons with disabilities and northerners.

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## TIMELINE

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Implemented by 2022

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## ACTION 12

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### Partner with Indigenous governments to build capacity through an employee secondment Program

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#### PROGRAM

---

Human Resources- Diversity and Inclusion, Building Capacity in Indigenous Governments (BCIG) program

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#### CONTEXT

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In June 2021 the GNWT launched the **Building Capacity in Indigenous Governments (BCIG) program**.

This program was developed collaboratively with Indigenous governments to support secondment agreements with Indigenous governments in all regions.

Secondment agreements allow staff from the GNWT to work in Indigenous governments and staff from Indigenous governments to work in the GNWT. The program will support Indigenous governments to develop their human resources capacity while providing opportunities for employees of Indigenous governments and the GNWT to gain experience and share knowledge and strengthen bilateral relationships.

Seconded's will be paired with an existing employee and receive on the job training. The term of a secondment can be for up to two years.

Under this program, the Department of Finance will provide up to \$40,000 to support each secondment and is able to support approximately 10 secondments per year and applications are accepted at any point during the year.

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#### TIMELINE

---

Ongoing implementation with annual uptake.



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## ACTION 13

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**Complete a review of the Affirmative Action Policy in cooperation with Indigenous governments and with the goal of achieving a truly representative public service.**

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### PROGRAM

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Human Resources- Diversity and Inclusion – Affirmative Action Policy

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### CONTEXT

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The GNWT is committed to developing a competent public service that is representative of the population it serves. The GNWT *Affirmative Action Policy* offers priority hiring to candidates belonging to eligible designated groups that are under-represented within the Public Service including Indigenous people, non-Indigenous residents who were born in the NWT, women and persons who have a disability.

The GNWT also has dedicated programs to support the hiring, training and career development of Indigenous residents of the NWT, as well as new opportunities to access training and gain valuable on-the-job experience within the government. These programs help support the GNWT's priority to develop and maintain a diverse workforce that is representative of the people it serves.

The Department of Finance is currently developing an Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework that will review current programs, tools, and resources, provide opportunities for innovation, and identify and address barriers within internal resource policies, systems, and procedures. This Framework and its implementation plan will be completed during the 2021-22 fiscal year.

As part of the development of the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework the GNWT has committed to completing a review of the *Affirmative Action Policy* including meaningful engagement with NWT Indigenous governments.

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### TIMELINE

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2023-24

# 13

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## **ACTION 14**

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### **Deliver anti-racism and allyship training and resources for employees to support a diverse and inclusive workplace**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Human Resources- Diversity and Inclusion- Anti-Racism Training

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#### **CONTEXT**

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The GNWT offers anti-racism training and resources for employees to support its commitment to provide a diverse and inclusive workplace.

A workshop series titled 'Equitable Workplace: Cultivating Attitudes of Anti-Racism and Allyship' is an initiative which creates space for learners to explore their own personal experiences with racism and allyship. The workshop helps participants identify how these experiences impact our lives daily, especially within the workplace. It also teaches participants to deconstruct what they thought they knew about social norms while discovering tools to help them reshape the way they see the world and our interactions with each other.

By learning about anti-racism, GNWT managers and employees will be better equipped to dispel common myths and misconceptions about biases, racism, power, and privilege so they can take steps in becoming agents of change in confronting racism.

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#### **TIMELINE**

---

Ongoing, monthly course offering

14

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## **ACTION 15**

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**Offer 2SLGBTQQA+ Inclusive Workplace Awareness Training to GNWT employees.**

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### **PROGRAM**

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Human Resources- Diversity and Inclusion- 2SLGBTQQA+ Inclusive Workplace Awareness Training

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### **CONTEXT**

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The GNWT, with support from the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife, offer 2SLGBTQQA+ 101: Inclusive Workplace Awareness Training to all GNWT employees. The course is designed to provide GNWT employees with the necessary knowledge and tools to recognize key terms associated with the 2SLGBTQQA+ community, identify and apply respectful behaviour and to support co-workers and clients within the 2SLGBTQQA+ community.

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### **TIMELINE**

---

Ongoing, monthly course offering

15

## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Culture and Language

Department Of Health And Social Services

### ACTION 16

**Develop a Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Training Framework to tackle systemic anti-Indigenous racism within the Health and Social Services system.**

#### PROGRAM

Community, Culture and Innovation: Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Training

#### CONTEXT

The GNWT is committed to embedding cultural safety into the health and social services system, with a focus on Indigenous residents. Cultural safety aims to address systemic racism experienced by Indigenous residents when accessing health and social services.

The Department of Health and Social Services is working to embed cultural safety throughout the health and social services system by strengthening staff capacity for cultural safety; honouring traditional knowledge and healing approaches in care; and improving Indigenous client and community experience.

The Department is currently finalizing a Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Training Framework developed through 13 cultural safety pilot training sessions. The pilots included content on Indigenous medicine teachings, Indigenous experiences of residential schools, resiliency, and inter-generational impacts, and understanding racism at interpersonal and systemic levels. Approximately 225 Health and Social Services system employees participated in these pilots. The pilot projects were developed and delivered in partnership with local Elders, Knowledge holders, Indigenous educators and academics and partner organizations Hotì ts'eeda, the Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation, and Dene Nahjo.

The completed NWT Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Training Framework will be reviewed by the Health and Social Services Indigenous Advisory Body, Leadership Council, and key national experts in the field of cultural safety and Anti-Racism training.

The Community, Culture and Innovation division also offers discussion circles to GNWT employees completing the Living Well Together training modules to provide an opportunity to discuss the modules and offer support in employee's learning journeys.

#### TIMELINE

The Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Training Framework will be completed by 2022. Training will be delivered beyond 2021-22 on an on-going basis and will be adjusted as per the feedback provided by the reviewers outlined above.

2022-23 training dates will be determined by March 31, 2022



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## ACTION 17

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**Develop an engagement toolkit and training for staff to improve and promote respectful processes for engaging Indigenous communities in decision-making across the health and social services system.**

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### PROGRAM

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Community, Culture and Innovation: Engagement Guidelines

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### CONTEXT

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The Community, Culture and Innovation division was established to enable public participation and Indigenous engagement in priority setting, planning, and design that integrates the social determinants of health.

The work of the division recognizes that a critical feature of cultural safety is community and client engagement so that Indigenous residents have an active role determining programs and services that are meaningful for them. In turn, Indigenous residents are more likely to access care and services when needed, leading to improved health outcomes.

In 2020, a **Social Determinants, Innovation and Public Participation Unit** was also established within the Community, Culture and Innovation Division. The unit will oversee the design, development and implementation of strategic public participation and Indigenous engagement initiatives to support health and social services and community programming. A key focus of the unit is in creating a health and social services engagement process that moves beyond typical approaches and involves residents and Indigenous communities in sustainable decision-making based on public participation and input.

A Public Participation and Indigenous Engagement Specialist position was recruited in September 2021. This position will guide the overall Indigenous engagement process of the health and social services system, and will include:

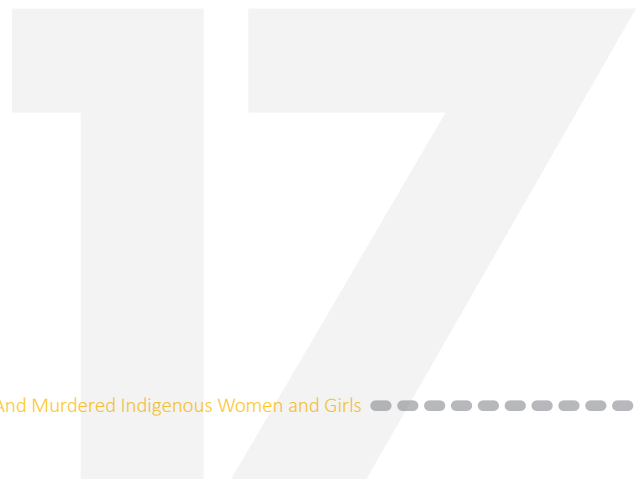
- Cultural safety
- Relationship based
- Trauma informed engagement that ensures all communications and activities are in plain language, recovery orientated, and strength based.

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### TIMELINE

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Engagement Guidelines completed by 2022





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## **ACTION 18**

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### **Leading a system wide shift towards a culturally safe and relationship-based health and social services system**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Community, Culture and Innovation: Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Unit

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#### **CONTEXT**

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A Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Unit has been established in the department to lead system efforts to tackle anti-Indigenous racism and systemic racism.

The Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Unit is within the Community, Culture and Innovation division (formerly Indigenous Health and Community Wellness). The Community, Culture and Innovation division has an expanded role in driving the system wide shift towards a culturally safe, anti-racist, and relationship-based health and social services system. The strengths of the division in working with communities, and bringing Indigenous perspectives into planning and design, need to be expanded and applied across the system.

The unit includes six (6) positions including dedicated staff for cultural safety in Child and Family Services, Indigenous Knowledge and Wellness, and Cultural Safety Specialists.

All cultural safety initiatives are considered trauma informed as cultural safety is premised on the need to address anti-Indigenous racism which has its roots in colonialism, violence, and trauma. Staff awareness of this history and legacy is key to addressing systemic racism. Unit staff are expected to always honour and promote a culturally safe environment and to interact with clients and families, community members, partners and colleagues in a relationship-based approach. This involves being tactful, respectful, and humble in order to develop and maintain ongoing and trusting relationships.

The Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism unit works at the frontline of the GNWT's efforts in anti-racist approaches, routinely identifying and addressing both conscious and unconscious bias and discrimination at the individual and systemic levels.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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Ongoing

18

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## **ACTION 19**

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### **Address inequities experienced by Indigenous residents when accessing health and social service in partnership with Indigenous governments through an Indigenous Advisory Body**

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#### **PROGRAM**

---

Community, Culture and Innovation: Indigenous Advisory Body

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#### **CONTEXT**

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An Indigenous Advisory Body has been established to provide guidance and advice on incorporating Indigenous tradition, culture, and healing practices within the NWT Health and Social Services system. Membership of the Indigenous Advisory Body is comprised of Indigenous Government appointees, and staff from the Department of Health and Social Services and the three NWT Health Authorities. The Indigenous Advisory Body aims to address inequities experienced by Indigenous residents when accessing health and social services.

The Indigenous Advisory Body reviews and provides advice 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's focus of providing guidance on ways to incorporate Indigenous culture, tradition and healing practices within HSS places value on Indigenous knowledge and healing approaches as opposed to solely a western approach which has contributed to anti-Indigenous racism and trauma.

A Senior Advisor, Indigenous Knowledge and Wellness position within the Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Unit provides the necessary coordination supports to the Indigenous Advisory Body.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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Quarterly meetings



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## **ACTION 20**

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### **Establish Indigenous Patient Advocates in NWT Acute Care Units and an Office of Indigenous Client Experience**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Community, Culture and Innovation: Indigenous Patient Advocates

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#### **CONTEXT**

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HSS is establishing Indigenous Patient Advocates in NWT Acute Care Units located in Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Smith, and Yellowknife. They will contribute to a pilot project to establish an Office of Indigenous Client Experience to improve cultural safety and patient experience; support Indigenous patients in resolving concerns, complaints, and questions; and bridge cultural and language barriers.

Indigenous Patient Advocates and an Office of Indigenous Client Experience will facilitate access to cultural, spiritual and emotional support, such as connection to family, Elders, and community partners, and support the provision of culturally safe care.

The Indigenous Patient Advocates will contribute to culturally safe and healing environments for Indigenous clients by placing value in Indigenous wellness concepts, bridging cultural and language barriers and actively working to address systemic racism which make acute care settings unsafe and inaccessible.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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2022 and ongoing



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## **ACTION 21**

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### **Insured Health Services: Eliminate “either-or” gender option on health forms and include gender-inclusive, gender-neutral, or non-binary options**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Gender-inclusive, gender-neutral, or non-binary options on forms

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#### **CONTEXT**

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HSS will review all HSS forms to identify where updates can be made to eliminate “either-or” gender option on forms and include gender-inclusive, gender-neutral, or non-binary options. To date, this includes birth certificates.

After this review, HSS will determine if changes can be made to the forms. Some forms are set out in legislation and would require amendments, while others require close engagement with our epidemiologists to see what options are available on our electronic systems and the effects of any form changes on our data collection and reporting.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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Initial scoping of work by March 2022

Complete review of all forms by December 2023.

21

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## ACTION 22

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### Promote the tradition of custom adoption

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#### PROGRAM

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Child and Family Services: Custom Adoption

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#### CONTEXT

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Custom Adoption is a long-standing practice amongst Indigenous people of the NWT. It recognizes the inherent rights of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities to care for their children/youth.

The NWT *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act* supports the formal recognition of custom adoption. Families that assume guardianship or adopt children through custom adoptions are eligible for voluntary support services. A custom adoption certificate has the same effect as any other type of adoption order/certificate.

HSS will initiate a territory wide media campaign to inform of the importance of custom adoptions to ensure the wellbeing of children and youth in the NWT. The purpose of the campaign is to inform all residents of the NWT on the importance of custom adoption in advancing cultural continuity for children and youth.

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#### TIMELINE

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September 2022 to June 2023



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## **ACTION 23**

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### **Develop culturally informed Foster Care Practice Standards**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Child and Family Services – Foster Care

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#### **CONTEXT**

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HSS is developing Foster Care Practice Standards that will outline key areas of cultural considerations including an approach to screening of Foster Resources which take into consideration impact of residential schools and multi-generational trauma.

The standards are being developed in collaboration with a newly created Culturally Safe Child and Family Services position created to establish and support a system-wide shift to address the needs of all children and youth in the NWT and to further advance culturally informed practices.

As part of the foster care practice standards review, HSS will consider introducing the Heart and Spirit Model of Foster Resource recruitment and training. This model would serve to introduce culturally profiled assessment tools for recruitment along with a training curriculum designed for the care of Indigenous children and youth.

A review of the per diem reimbursement foster resource policy will also take place as part of this practice standards review to ensure that barriers to care by Indigenous families are addressed and remedied.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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January 2023 to March 2024



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## ACTION 24

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### Transforming Child and Family Services to improve services and supports for Indigenous children, youth, and their families through a cultural safety approach

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#### PROGRAM

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Child and Family Services

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#### CONTEXT

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The Department is working to reform Child and Family Services (CFS) and advance the mandate of the new federal legislation, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (Federal Act), to improve services and supports for Indigenous children, youth, and their families through a cultural safety approach.

The Federal Act sets out minimal principles and standards for service provision that apply across Canada. Since the coming into force of the Federal Act in January 2020, the GNWT has been working to advance the mandate of the Federal Act and implement the national principles and standards in the delivery of child and family services in the NWT and across Canada.

The implementation of the Federal Act advances reconciliation, recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and treaty rights, and supports program and service delivery by Indigenous governments.

To support this transformation, the GNWT has supported 56 new positions over the course of three years. It has also developed training initiatives, implementation of a youth in care support initiative, and community engagement to develop alternative care models. This includes a Senior Advisor, Culturally Safe Child and Family Services position created to establish and support a system-wide shift of embedding principles of cultural safety and anti-racism throughout CFS practices, policies, and services.

To support the implementation of the Federal Act, the Department is also:

- Revising the CFS Standards and Procedures Manual to align practice with the principles of the Federal Act.
- Increasing formal sharing of data on children, youth, and families receiving CFS with Indigenous governments.
- Offering briefings on the GNWT's implementation of the Federal Act to all Indigenous Governments in the NWT and sharing information on the GNWT's implementation with the public by posting information on the Department's website.
- Implementing a new Section 12 Notice standard, which requires service providers to give notice to a parent, care provider, and Indigenous governing body prior to taking a significant measure in relation to an Indigenous child or youth and which promotes collaborative planning for children and youth in earlier stages of CFS delivery.

In addition, the GNWT will also be proposing legislative amendments to the NWT's *Child and Family Services Act* in order to align with the Federal Act.

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#### TIMELINE

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Practice Standards dedicated to implementing the Federal Act are updated on an ongoing basis based on feedback.

The updating of other practice standards will happen every 2 years.

Legislative amendments to be completed during the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly (Fall 2023).

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## ACTION 25

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### Supporting the inherent right of self-government, including jurisdiction in relation to Child and Family Services

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#### PROGRAM

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Child and Family Services

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#### CONTEXT

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Indigenous governments in the NWT can exercise jurisdiction in relation to CFS through a Final Self-Government Agreement or through the pathways established under the federal government's *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (Federal Act).

HSS supports self-governance by sharing data and information and by working collaboratively with Indigenous governments who are developing and enacting child and family services laws, regardless of what stage the Indigenous government may be (i.e., initial stages or final/implementation stages).

HSS is leading an internal working group to ensure the GNWT can respond efficiently and collaboratively if an Indigenous government informs the GNWT they intend to exercise jurisdiction. Representatives from Health and Social Services, Justice, and Executive and Indigenous Affairs sit on the working group. Additional GNWT representatives will join the Working Group when specialized expertise is required.

Supporting self-government can also include approaches that recognize GNWT-led territory-wide initiatives, such as establishing a child and youth advocate, may not be the best way to support Indigenous children/youth. Indigenous Governments must be able to determine the best approach to advocate for their children, youth, and families, as this will differ across the NWT. Instead, supports are best placed in advocating for self-governance, information sharing, and capacity building so that advocacy models reflect the priorities and preferences of individual elected governments.

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#### TIMELINE

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Ongoing





## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Culture and Language

Department Of Environment And Natural Resources

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### ACTION 26

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**Support communities to access cultural knowledge by connecting with their land, culture, languages, and traditions.**

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#### PROGRAM

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On-the-Land Collaborative

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#### CONTEXT

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The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) provides funding and administrative support to the NWT On the Land Collaborative, which in turn provides funding to land-based projects across the NWT.

The NWT On the Land Collaborative is made up of philanthropic, government and corporate funding partners that provide centralized access to funding, resources, and support for on the land programming that centers around land-based education, sharing knowledge and cultural revitalization.

Between 2016 and 2021, the GNWT, along with the other Collaborative partners, dispersed a total of \$4,800,000 in funding support through the NWT On-the-Land Collaborative to 270 land-based programs across the NWT. Each year, approximately 40% of project funding goes directly to Indigenous governments and the rest to schools, non-government organizations and municipalities across the NWT.

The NWT On the Land 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.

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#### TIMELINE

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Ongoing, annual call for funding.



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## ACTION 27

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**Work collaboratively with GNWT departments to develop an Indigenous Knowledge Action Plan and update the Traditional Knowledge policy, to account for the UN Declaration, as required.**

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### PROGRAM

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Indigenous Knowledge<sup>2</sup>

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### CONTEXT

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The GNWT Traditional Knowledge Policy, developed in 1997, provides for incorporation of traditional knowledge into government decisions and actions wherever appropriate. Since 2009, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) has implemented the Traditional Knowledge Implementation Framework to strengthen how the GNWT collectively gathers, preserves, and applies Indigenous knowledge across departments.

ENR engaged with NWT Indigenous governments, organizations and communities in 2019 on the development of an Indigenous Knowledge Action Plan and ENR's Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan. These engagements will inform the development of a GNWT-wide Indigenous Knowledge Action Plan. Part of this work includes reviewing and revising the Traditional Knowledge Policy as appropriate.

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### TIMELINE

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2022-23

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<sup>2</sup> ENR is adopting the globally accepted standard of 'Indigenous' knowledge rather than 'Traditional' knowledge, to specifically recognize the knowledge that has been and is currently being created by Indigenous peoples, groups, and organizations.

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## ACTION 28

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### Support families and youth in land-based activities.

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#### PROGRAM

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Take a Family on the Land and Take a Kid Trapping Programs

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#### CONTEXT

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ENR continues to support land-based educational programs that assist in foundational cultural learning and awareness.

The **Take a Family on the Land** program provides funding to NWT Indigenous communities, governments and organizations, as well as not-for-profit associations, who then support the facilitation of on the land activities for families. Specifically, the program is intended to offset some of the costs associated with on the land activities, and to encourage and enable more NWT residents to pursue those activities, as families. The program is intended to be used to support families in need who may not have other resources to support land-based activities. The program first ran in 2020-2021 and will soon be launched again for 2021-22.

Families, for the purposes of this program, are broadly defined as any two or more people who share mutual ties and/or play an important role in each other's lives. All family combinations, including 2SLGBTQIA+ families, single-parent families and multigenerational families are considered eligible under the program.

The **Take a Kid Trapping Program** is designed to introduce school age youth in the NWT to the traditional harvesting practices of hunting, trapping, fishing and outdoor survival. The program is delivered through schools and Indigenous organizations, in co-operation with ENR.

Additional support to on-the-land programs is provided through the NWT On the Land Collaborative (See Action #26. ENR delivered a female-specific trapper training program in 2019 and will do so again in the future when possible.

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#### TIMELINE

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Ongoing, annual calls for funding, and project support on a case by case basis where resources are available



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## **ACTION 29**

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**Preserving areas of cultural importance to Indigenous peoples through establishing and maintaining territorial protected areas.**

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### **PROGRAM**

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Conservation Network Plan

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### **CONTEXT**

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ENR recognizes and supports the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples to their culture through its programs and services, including supporting cultural continuity through establishing and managing territorial protected areas. In 2021, established territorial protected areas include Thaidene Nënë and Ts'udé Niljine Tuyeta and negotiations to establish Dinàgà Wek'èhodi territorial protected area and five candidate areas in the Dehcho Region are ongoing.

Culture is a critical aspect of territorial protected areas, as Indigenous governments and organizations are actively involved in and receive funding to support their participation and cultural activities in areas of cultural importance to them.

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### **TIMELINE**

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Conservation planning and implementation is ongoing.

An updated conservation network plan will be released in 2022.



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## ACTION 30

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**Identify potential resources, partnerships and programming that will support community-driven harvesting programs.**

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### PROGRAMS

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On the Land

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### CONTEXT

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ENR continues to support land-based programs that assist in foundational cultural learning and awareness. ENR is expanding its supports and programming, based on engagement with Indigenous governments, organizations and communities in the development of the *Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan 2019-2023*.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan includes actions to develop or support programming for community-driven harvesting programs that contribute to local food sharing and security. This programming will be designed with special consideration to women and girls, including single parents, Elders, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, as well as people with different mobility needs, and people in addictions recovery.

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### TIMELINE

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2022-2023

30

## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Culture and Language

Department Of Executive And Indigenous Affairs

### ACTION 31

#### **Prioritize Gender and Diversity in budgets, policies and programs.**

- a) Develop culturally relevant Gender Based Analysis+ tools to assess the impact of policies, programs and services on Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people.
- b) Assess impacts on Gender and Diversity in decision making on budgets, policies and programs

#### **PROGRAM**

Gender Equity Division – Culturally Relevant Gender Based Analysis

#### **CONTEXT**

In April 2021, the GNWT established a new Gender Equity Division reporting to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, to promote the political, social and economic equality of people of all genders in the NWT and advocates for women and people of diverse genders. This new division replaces the Women’s Advisory Division.

A key focus of the Gender Equity Division is to respond to the Calls for Justice urging governments to prioritize measures that eliminate the marginalization of Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people when developing budgets and determining government priorities.

The GNWT has also committed to incorporating Gender Based Analysis (GBA+) in decision making as part of the Cabinet and Financial Management Board (FMB) decision making processes. FMB has approved the use of ‘Gender’ and ‘Diversity’ as variables to be considered and analyzed when departments submit funding requests to the FMB Secretariat.

The Gender Equity Division will work with its partners to develop culturally relevant Gender Based Analysis tools (GBA+) for use as a decision-making tool by Financial Management Board and GNWT departments to determine the impact of policies, programs and services on Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people.

A Gender and Diversity Analyst and a Gender and Diversity Officer position are currently being recruited. These two positions will be responsible for working with departments to ensure the GNWT’s commitment to gender equality is reflected in budgets, policies and programs.

#### **TIMELINE**

Gender and Diversity criteria were incorporated into all GNWT decision making instruments in 2020.

GBA+ tools will be implemented by 2023-24



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## ACTION 32

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### **Empower and encourage Indigenous and northern women to pursue political leadership roles through the implementation of a new “Made in the North” curriculum for Campaign Schools for Women**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Gender Equity Division – Women in Leadership

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#### **CONTEXT**

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The GNWT acknowledges the Calls for Justice to support and promote the role of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA+ people in governance and leadership.

The 2020 NWT Women’s Profile (NWT Bureau of Stats) shows that women represent almost half the population of the NWT. Over a quarter of the population of the NWT are Indigenous women. Empowering and encouraging women to participate fully in public office is essential to ensuring that governments reflect the societies they represent.

The GNWT, in partnership with the Government of Canada, made significant investments to promote gender equality and empower women in political leadership, to support Indigenous and northern women to pursue political leadership roles through the implementation of a new “Made in the North” curriculum for Campaign Schools for Women. The workshops provide support and relevant information about elections and campaigning to prospective female candidates who are considering running for an elected office.

The GNWT also invested in training to provide women from 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 the content of the workshops instructed by regional facilitators who can focus on specific regional and community concerns and can be delivered in the Indigenous languages of the respective communities.

A “She Can” social marketing campaign was also launched to encourage women across the NWT to consider running for 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 and uses well known respected women to promote women in leadership. This poster campaign is distributed widely to all communities and is translated into the Indigenous languages

The division also designed and developed a “She Can” website, 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 will work with community facilitators to introduce the Women in Leadership training into the high schools and deliver at least five workshops in the communities on an annual basis. Additional workshops may be scheduled during peak election cycles. The Gender Equity Division is also organizing an online workshop to be held in February. The intent is to offer these online sessions twice yearly to allow for greater participation from across the NWT.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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At least 5 workshops annually along with twice yearly online sessions from 2021-22 to 2023-24

Online learning modules by 2023-24

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## ACTION 33

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### **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.**

- a) Establish a MMIWG Advisory Committee in partnership with Indigenous governments to provide guidance on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and on the implementation of the Action Plan.
- b) Table annual reports on the GNWT response to the Calls for Justice in the NWT Legislative Assembly

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## PROGRAM

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Gender Equity Division – Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

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## CONTEXT

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The Gender Equity Division supports the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women to advocate for change in GNWT processes and policies as it relates to the Calls for Justice presented in the Final Report of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. The Gender Equity Division is also responsible for reporting on the implementation of the GNWT Action Plan.

This work involves engaging with communities and Indigenous governments, as well as collaborating with Canada and Federal-Provincial-Territorial partners in the implementation of the National Action Plan.

During the development of the Draft Action Plan the Gender Equity Division sought advice and shared information with the Native Women's Association of the NWT, the Status of Women Council of the NWT, and with community representatives identified by Indigenous governments.

Building on these relationships, the Gender Equity Division will work with NWT Indigenous governments to establish a MMIWG Advisory Committee. The Committee will provide advise and guidance on the implementation of the Action Plan and to support the GNWT in taking a culturally safe, decolonized and trauma informed approach to the design and conduct of community engagement. The Native Women's Association of the NWT, the Status of Women Council of the NWT and the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife will also be invited to participate in the MMIWG Advisory Committee.

On an annual basis, the Gender Equity Division will also prepare and table a report in the NWT Legislative Assembly on the GNWT's progress in responding to the Calls for Justice. The Gender Equity Division will also work with its Provincial/Territorial partners on identifying and addressing cross jurisdictional issues.

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## TIMELINE

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Establish Community Advisory Committee: 2022

Annual Reporting: Ongoing





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## **ACTION 34**

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### **Provide core and sustainable funding for regional Indigenous and Women’s organizations**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Gender Equity Division – Core Funding

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#### **CONTEXT**

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The GNWT recognizes the need identified by the National Inquiry for core and sustainable funding, as opposed to short term program funding for regional organizations that represent Indigenous women’s and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

Core funding is also provided to the Native Women’s Association of the NWT. The Native Women’s Association of the NWT is a not-for-profit organization that was incorporated in 1977 to empower and support Indigenous women and their families in the NWT. The mandate of the Native Women’s Association of the NWT is to offer programs, services, resources and opportunities for Indigenous women of the NWT, so they can choose to live wholesome lives for themselves and their families.

The GNWT provides core funding to the Status of Women Council of the NWT. The Status of Women Council of the NWT was established under the NWT Status of Women Council Act in April 1990. Its mandate is to work towards the political, social and economic equality of all women in the NWT. The GNWT recognizes the important role the Council has in raising public awareness on issues affecting women and girls, promoting change in attitude related to women and girls, encouraging discussions on matters related to gender equality and celebrating the achievements of those who advance the equality of women.

The multi-year funding agreements for both organizations were renewed on April 1, 2021, for five-year terms and expire on March 31, 2026. This contribution agreement included a \$50,000 annual increase.

The Gender Equity Division is aware of the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife’s concern that they are not provided with core funding to carry out their operations. The GNWT understands the organization’s stance on this matter but funding is currently not available to provide core funding, however, the Gender Equity Division is open to working with the organization to come up with solutions to address their funding needs.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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5-year core funding agreements: April 2021 – March 31, 2026



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## ACTION 35

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### Make funding available to support programs for Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people

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#### PROGRAM

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Gender Equity Division – Grant Programs

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#### CONTEXT

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

In 2021, the GNWT approved new funding to double the amount available \$50,000 to \$100,000 annually, enabling the Gender Equity Division to provide grants designed to enhance women and gender equity across the NWT.

The **Women's Initiative Grant** is an application-based grant that has been provided to community groups for activities involving women and girls since 1998, and historically has been fully subscribed.

The **Gender Equity Grant** is a new community initiative grant program that provides up to \$5,000 for community-based projects that enhance gender equity across the NWT.

These grant programs provide funding for special projects that encourage the participation of women and gender diverse people 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.

Eligibility is restricted to non-government organizations, community governments, and Indigenous governments undertaking community-based projects designed to support the identified objectives of the funding programs.

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#### TIMELINE

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Grant funding advertised on an annual basis



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## ACTION 36

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### Address the federal funding gap for Métis local councils and Métis Health Benefits

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#### PROGRAM

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Indigenous Affairs – Core Funding to Métis Locals and Métis Health Benefits

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#### CONTEXT

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The GNWT provides core funding to Métis locals in the NWT as there is no equivalent federal funding available for the Métis. Dene bands currently receive funding from the federal government under the Indian Act. There is no equivalent funding for Métis councils.

Similarly, the federal government provides Non-Insured Health Benefits to NWT Dene and Inuit as part of its responsibilities under the Indian Act, but do not include Métis under this 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 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 NWT 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 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

The GNWT will also work in cooperation with Métis organizations and governments to review the Métis Locals Policy and to lobby Canada on obtaining federal funding for Métis related programs and services, with a focus on Métis HealthBenefits.

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#### TIMELINE

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Ongoing



## Health and Wellness

**We call upon all governments to acknowledge, recognize, and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples**, specifically of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, are recognized and protected on an equitable basis. This includes:

- providing adequate, stable, equitable, and ongoing funding for Indigenous-centred and community-based health and wellness services,
- establishing community-based trauma-informed programs for survivors of trauma and violence,
- providing accessible, holistic, wraparound services, including mobile trauma and addictions recovery teams paired with other essential services such as mental health services and services to respond to issues of sexual exploitation and sex trafficking,
- making available, culturally competent and responsive crisis response teams in all communities and regions,
- ensuring substantive equality in the funding of services and Indigenous-run services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, that ensure that jurisdictional disputes do not result in the denial of rights and services, and
- providing healing programs and support for all children of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and their family members.

## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Health and Wellness

Department Of Health And Social Services

### ACTION 37

**Build a permanent Wellness and Recovery Centre to provide shelter, consulting, and community wellness spaces.**

#### PROGRAM

Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery- Wellness and Recovery Centre

#### CONTEXT

The GNWT is committed to addressing the shelter and service needs of vulnerable populations of the Dene, Metis and Inuit who have been impacted by inter-generational trauma of Canada's residential schools and social and economic marginalization.

Based on the 2018 Point-in-Time Homeless Count Technical Report, there were 338 people in 2018 who experienced homelessness, 90% of which were Indigenous and 50% of whom were women.

The Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery Division will ensure a permanent Wellness and Recovery Centre will be built in Yellowknife, to provide shelter, consulting, and community wellness spaces.

The facility will be developed with a cultural safety lens and will incorporate Indigenous culture into the facility design with a community gathering space enabling traditional healing practices. The list of program occupancies for the new facility will include:

- Day Shelter
- Sobering Centre
- Administration Area
- Community Gathering/Traditional Healing and Ceremonial space
- Multi-departmental Service Space

The GNWT has approved \$4.1M and secured a federal commitment of \$5.2M for a total of \$9.3 Million for the design and construction of a facility that will be developed with a cultural safety lens and will incorporate Indigenous culture into the facility design with a community gathering space enabling traditional healing practices.

#### TIMELINE

Construction Start: 2022-23

Occupancy: 2023-24

37

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## ACTION 38

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### Insured Health Services: Reflect emerging changes in the health care for transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming people

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#### PROGRAM

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*Health Care for Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender Nonconforming People: Guidelines for the NWT.*

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#### CONTEXT

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As part of its commitment to building a health system where cultural safety and relationship-based care is at the heart of everything it does, the GNWT, led by the Department of Health and Social Services released *Health Care for Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender Nonconforming People: Guidelines for the NWT*. This document has been developed for use by health care providers across the NWT.

A key component of the referral process outlined in the guideline eliminates the need for a psychiatrist to diagnose an NWT patient with gender dysphoria, which used to be a common requirement in Canada before an individual could obtain health care services. It is anticipated that the referral process, as set out in the guidelines, will reduce lengthy wait times for these health care services.

These Guidelines were developed with the support of experts within the Department of Health and Social Services and a Workforce Diversity Officer from the Department of Finance, experienced primary care practitioners, patient advocates, and the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife.

The guidelines also acknowledge that Indigenous people face the added barriers of racism and colonialism within the healthcare system.

A Ministerial Directive was issued to require all Health and Social Services Authorities to implement the Guidelines when providing health care services to transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming patients.

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#### TIMELINE

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Ongoing Implementation. Annual Review of Guidelines.

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## **ACTION 39**

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### **Address facility-based addictions treatment needs**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery- Facility-Based Addictions Treatment

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#### **CONTEXT**

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Facility-based treatment is one component of the larger continuum of addictions recovery services which includes counselling, land-based healing programs, treatment and community-based aftercare supports.

HSS has recently completed an Addictions Recovery Survey which was focused on exploring the full continuum of addictions recovery supports. This included a specific exploration of facility-based treatment. The results of the survey will inform priority setting and next steps.

In addition to work to determine the best approach to treatment services for addictions, HSS is taking active steps to enhance and increase community-based supports for addictions, including aftercare. These efforts include taking steps towards the implementation of a Managed Alcohol Program, the implementation of Peer Support and Addictions Recovery and Aftercare Funds, the development of a territorial model for detox and work towards transitional/sober living supports for individuals returning from addictions treatment.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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The results of the NWT Addictions Recovery Survey will be available in 2021-22.



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## ACTION 40

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### **Provide community-based, culturally safe counselling and addictions recovery support to all residents.**

- a) Community Counselling positions in all regions
- b) Update program standards to reflect person- and family-centred, recovery-oriented approach
- c) Establishment of Child and Youth Care Counsellors in NWT schools and communities
- d) Support for the Dene Wellness Warriors' Indigenous Professional Counsellor Training Program

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## PROGRAM

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Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery- Community Counselling Program

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## CONTEXT

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The **Community Counselling Program** (CCP) serves as the backbone of community mental wellness and addictions recovery support services in the NWT. The CCP provides free confidential counselling and addictions recovery support to all residents and is a key referral source for specialized services including Facility Based Addictions Treatment.

Counselling positions are located in 19 communities across all regions with approximately 70 CCP staff, including Community Wellness Workers and Mental Health and Addictions Counsellors. Telephone counselling and fly-in services are also provided to all communities without a local counsellor.

In 2019, the GNWT approved an expansion of the CCP to place **Child and Youth Care Counsellors** in NWT schools and communities that support children and youth mental wellness and build coping skills and resilience. The expansion of the program is currently reaching full implementation with 49 Child and Youth Care Counsellors in NWT schools across all regions.

Staff of the CCP receive regular and ongoing professional development. This has included extensive training in trauma informed practice, the linkages between the effects of trauma on the brain and addiction, and cultural safety.

The **Community Counselling Program Standards** have been updated to reflect a more person- and family-centred, recovery-oriented approach. This approach to care values relationships, recognizes the unique context of everyone's life/experience, and provides the right level of supports, at the right time, by the right person—as defined by the service-user. This includes being more responsive to a spectrum of needs ranging from informal to formal supports, including family and friends, peer supports, e-based options, community and land-based options, inpatient care and more.

There are no wait times for community counselling services; same day access has been implemented in all regions.

In recognition of the importance of local, culturally safe service provision, HSS is providing support for the **Dene Wellness Warriors' Indigenous Professional Counsellor Training Program**. Graduates of this program may wish to seek employment opportunities within the Community Counselling Program.

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## TIMELINE

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The CCP is an ongoing permanent program with bi-annual client surveys and program improvements  
Full implementation of Child and Youth Care Counsellor initiative by 2022



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## ACTION 41

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### **Stable, multi-year funding agreements for Indigenous-led, culturally safe, community-based mental health and addictions programs, including aftercare**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery- On-The-Land Healing Fund for Mental Health and Addictions

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#### **CONTEXT**

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The GNWT established an *On-the-Land Healing Fund* for mental health and addictions to increase the number and variety of Indigenous-led, culturally safe, community-based mental health and addictions programs, including aftercare.

These options can be used by residents who have attended addictions treatment as part of an aftercare plan but, they can also be accessed by individuals who do not wish to attend treatment.

The *On-the-Land Healing Fund* is now \$1.825 million annually, including funding specifically targeted to support Indigenous governments in delivering mobile addictions treatment, family-based treatment, and aftercare programming.

HSS recently conducted an evaluation of the *On-the-Land Healing Fund*. The evaluation report is final and HSS is working with Indigenous governments to implement the recommendations which focus on the need to streamline funding application and reporting processes, build capacity of recipient groups, enhance flexibility and enhance communication.

This is an annual fund with stable, multi-year funding agreements for Indigenous-led mental health and addictions treatment initiatives.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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Annual funding, multi-year funding agreements

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## **ACTION 42**

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### **Establish community-based, culturally relevant transitional housing options in the NWT**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery: Transitional Housing for Addictions Recovery

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#### **CONTEXT**

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HSS, in conjunction with the NWT Housing Corporation, is taking steps to establish community-based, culturally relevant transitional housing options in the NWT.

The availability of safe, sober housing options is a key component of supporting individuals in their recovery. Sober living helps people returning from addictions treatment to build on skills and habits learned while in treatment. It also helps them to develop sober social relationships in the NWT, which can assist in their recovery.

The GNWT will be conducting community engagement to develop community-based models for transitional housing supports. HSS will be issuing an Expression of Interest to identify those communities interested in and with capacity to lead the operation of a transitional housing program

The GNWT will then work with communities to develop program models and establish units across the NWT.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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Communities will be selected, and program models developed during the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Nine transitional housing units will be established by 2024.

# 42

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## ACTION 43

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### Increase access to addictions recovery peer support programming in communities

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#### PROGRAM

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Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery- Peer Support Fund and Programs

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#### CONTEXT

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HSS has recently established a **Peer Support Fund** to increase access to addictions recovery peer support programming in communities. Peer Support is a supportive relationship between people who have a common lived experience. Peer support initiatives offer a community-based approach to fostering relationships between people facing similar situations.

Peer support initiatives can be based on an abstinence model or a harm reduction model and take different forms, ranging from informal to formal:

- Informal peer support may include sharing circles, on-the-land gatherings, and community events such as educational speaker events.
- Formal peer support programs may be led by a trained facilitator and offer a structured approach to allow individuals to gather and share their experience, knowledge, coping strategies, and offer one another emotional support.

Peer support programs offer emotional, social, and informational support to individuals who share common experiences. Common examples of peer support in addictions recovery include *Alcoholics Anonymous* and *Wellbriety*.

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#### TIMELINE

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Ongoing annual funding

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## **ACTION 44**

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**Establish a Suicide Prevention and Crisis Response Network with a focus on community-based prevention, improved intervention, and a timely and coordinated response in the event of a crisis.**

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### **PROGRAM**

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Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery- Suicide Prevention and Crisis Response Network

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### **CONTEXT**

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The Health and Social Services system offers a variety of supports that work to prevent suicide and to support those impacted by suicide in the community. Services include the Community Counselling Program, land-based healing programs, NWT Helpline, and psychiatric care and treatment.

In addition, the Department and the NWT Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) are working to establish a Suicide Prevention and Crisis Response Network. This work includes a focus on community-based prevention, improved intervention, and a timely and coordinated response in the event of a crisis.

This work includes the development and implementation of two Suicide Risk Assessments, one for adults and one for youth, that are used by health professionals across the system as well as training for system staff and efforts to increase the numbers of frontline staff able to perform the risk assessments. Procedures have also been developed within the Health and Social Services Authorities that support a coordinated approach to suicide risk and crisis.

The NTHSSA is also developing crisis response training for members of the HSS system who respond to critical incidents. A regional response approach to provide crisis support and surge capacity is currently being established.

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### **TIMELINE**

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Full implementation by 2022. Funding programs are advertised on an annual basis



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## ACTION 45

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**Develop an NWT Managed Alcohol Program to reduce harm for people with severe alcohol dependence and chronic homelessness**

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### PROGRAM

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### MENTAL WELLNESS AND ADDICTIONS RECOVERY- MANAGED ALCOHOL PROGRAM

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### CONTEXT

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**Managed Alcohol Programs** (MAP) are a harm reduction approach that focus on managing alcohol consumption to reduce harm for people with severe alcohol dependence and chronic homelessness. These programs provide people with set, regular doses of alcohol, in combination with housing and other supports.

The goal of MAP is not to provide treatment or lead to abstinence, but instead to decrease harms by reducing binge drinking, consumption of non-beverage alcohol products, such as mouthwash and hand sanitizer, and consumption in unsafe environments.

Controlled access to alcohol has been provided as part of the COVID-19 response for individuals experiencing homelessness. Based on these experiences, HSS is developing a MAP model for the NWT.

In preparation for the eventual implementation of a formal MAP, HSS is developing program standards, policies and procedures and a monitoring and evaluation approach including key indicators. The MAP model and policy guidance are being developed in close collaboration with providers who have been involved in alcohol distribution during the pandemic.

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### TIMELINE

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MAP implementation by 2023

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## **ACTION 46**

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**Develop a model for the provision of Medical Detox across the NWT to ensure that residents have access to both in-hospital and in-community level care for their recovery.**

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### **PROGRAM**

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Mental Health and Addictions Recovery Supports- Medical Detox Program

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### **CONTEXT**

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Not everyone struggling with addiction needs detoxification in a hospital setting. For some people, detoxification in a community setting is more helpful. Detoxification can also be the first step in entering a facility-based addictions treatment program.

Medical Detox is currently available to NWT residents in the south before they attend a facility-based addictions treatment program.

HSS is developing a Territorial Medical Detox Program in the NWT to support the full addictions recovery continuum of supports. Work is underway to establish a process for primary care providers to access medical detox through direct admission. A working group with key stakeholders across the Health and Social Services system has been established and work is underway to review current policies and determine staff training needs.

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### **TIMELINE**

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2023

46

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## ACTION 47

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### Provide supplementary support to youth transitioning out of permanent care

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#### PROGRAM

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Child and Family Services- Extended Support Services Agreements

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#### CONTEXT

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**Extended Support Services Agreements** (ESSAs) are intended for young adults who were under the permanent custody of the Director and who are turning 19 years old and transitioning out of care.

These young adults may request an extension of support services to help them transition to independent living. ESSAs are a voluntary support available to the young adult until the age of 23 and can provide supplementary support (financial and non-financial) to youth transitioning out of permanent care that does not duplicate already existing supports. For example, financial support for post-secondary education can be provided through an ESSA if the youth cannot get funding through other sources like Student Financial Assistance.

As part of the legislative review of the *Child and Family Services Act*, HSS is reviewing ESSAs and reviewing potential changes to the Act for young people of the Territories.

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#### TIMELINE

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January 2022 – Fall 2023

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## **ACTION 48**

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### **Support Indigenous-led priorities for community wellness funding through updated community wellness plans**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Community, Culture and Innovation- Community Wellness Plans

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#### **CONTEXT**

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HSS works with Indigenous governments and communities to develop, implement and report on community wellness plans that guide how wellness funding is directed in the community.

The Community Wellness Initiatives program supports Indigenous-led priorities and programs for wellness in their communities. Funding is used to administer and develop programs of community priority and concern. Examples of related programming include healthy living, focus on family, mental health and addictions, celebrating culture, and building community capacity. Services can be developed based on the needs of community members.

The Community Wellness Plans can be refreshed and updated annually based on community input. Work Plans are developed at the beginning of the fiscal year to ensure the programming meets the needs, priorities, and concerns of community members from all populations. New Community Wellness Plans are created at the initiation of a five-year block funding agreement. The communities receive multi-year funding for the implementation of yearly work plans developed by the communities.

Community wellness plans allow communities to decide for themselves where wellness funding should be directed. For example, communities may choose to fund family and children's programming such as play groups and community wellness camps.

Community Development and Wellness Planners provide facilitation supports and coordination of dialogue with interagency groups, and local governments to increase awareness and knowledge exchange.

A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, currently being implemented, is an essential element to managing effective and efficient delivery of community health and wellness programs and services.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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Ongoing renewal of five-year funding agreements. Current agreements in place until 2024

# 48



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## ACTION 49

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### **Address cultural safety and relationship-based care issues in primary care that lead to health disparities and systemic barriers for Indigenous people and communities.**

- a) Creation of Integrated Care Teams that are focused on meeting the health care needs of their communities
- b) Partnered with Hotì Ts'eeda to conduct an external evaluation of the transition to Integrated Care Teams, relationship-based care, access, and outcomes

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## PROGRAM

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Regional Health Authorities – Primary Health Care Reform

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## CONTEXT

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The GNWT launched the **Primary Health Care Reform Initiative** to address health disparities and systemic barriers for Indigenous people and communities through a cultural safety, anti-racist, and relationship-based care approach.

Recognizing the impacts of issues like poverty and intergenerational trauma, and factoring those into care, the reform includes the creation of Integrated Care Teams that are focused on meeting the health care needs of their communities and on building culturally safe and patient centered relationships with individuals and their families.

New roles have been established in primary care to better support relationship-based care, including Holistic Wellness Advisors and Community Health Nurses in Primary Care.

Phase one of the reform included six demonstration projects, located in the Dehcho and Tłı̄chǫ regions, Fort Smith, and Yellowknife (3 projects). A seventh project has now begun planning, community engagement, and early implementation in Fort Good Hope, and project options are being developed in Hay River and the Beaufort Delta region.

Each project is locally led by a project team that includes frontline staff who will be impacted by change.

The Department of Health and Social Services has partnered with Hotì Ts'eeda (a research support unit hosted by the Tłı̄chǫ Government and governed primarily by NWT Indigenous Governments) for external evaluation of the transition to Integrated Care Teams on relationship-based care, access, and outcomes.

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## TIMELINE

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Ongoing program roll-out. The evaluation will be completed by the end of 2022-23.



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## ACTION 50

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### Establish a Territorial Midwifery Program in order to support a child-focused and family-centered approach to improving early childhood development indicators

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#### PROGRAM

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Territorial Health Services- Territorial Midwifery Program

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#### CONTEXT

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The GNWT is establishing a **Territorial Midwifery Program** to support a child-focused and family-centered approach to improving early childhood development indicators.

Midwifery care is client-centered care based on respect for pregnancy as a state of health and childbirth as a normal physiological process. Midwives acknowledge that the events of the reproductive life cycle are profound and carry significant meaning for childbearing clients, their families and 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 space in which all clients can feel safe to express who they are, what they need, and how they wish to receive care.

The implementation of the Territorial Midwifery Program includes:

- growing, sustaining, standardizing and integrating midwifery services in the NWT under the guidance of a Territorial Manager, Midwifery
- strengthening the existing midwifery teams in Fort Smith and Hay River
- expanding the Hay River midwifery program to provide outreach services in the Dehcho / South Slave region
- establishing midwifery teams with capacity to reach out to surrounding regions, starting with an initial focus on the community of Behchokǝ
- developing a territorial midwifery recruitment and retention plan, phased over two years to March 31, 2022, including a focus on developing a northern workforce

The Territorial Midwifery Program has been successful in staffing an expanded number of positions in Yellowknife, Hay River, and Fort Smith. The Territorial Manager, Midwifery and the Territorial Specialist, Midwifery, located in Yellowknife, will work together to build territorial program capacity and lay the foundation for the creation of future midwifery teams. Enhanced support and training for Community Health Nurses (CHNs) is an integral component of the Territorial Midwifery Program. Access to midwifery expertise in resource stretched communities ensures the equitable access to quality, person-centered prenatal care.

The Hay River Health and Social Services Authority has successfully staffed three full-time indeterminate midwifery positions and is recruiting for an additional position. Fort Smith has recently staffed an additional position, bringing the total number of midwives in that community to three.

The future goals of the program are to establish the first midwifery team in Yellowknife and to strengthen and support the provision of outreach services to communities in the NWT.

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#### TIMELINE

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Ongoing recruitment to 2022

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## ACTION 51

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### Support access to culturally safe and relationship-based care across the Early Childhood Development system from prevention to intervention

- a) Establishing a reproductive, perinatal, infant, child health and Indigenous birthwork model of care
- b) Support the establishment of an Indigenous Doula Training Program.
- c) Training for staff and caregivers of children in care with disabilities and complex needs
- d) Implementing the renewed Healthy Family Program to shift towards Indigenous cultural-based prevention and family and community driven programming.

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## PROGRAM

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Community, Culture and Innovation – Early Childhood Development

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## CONTEXT

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The GNWT recognizes the need to implement Calls for Justice for government and service providers to support the revitalization of Indigenous health and childcare practices.

Multiple factors influence early childhood development, including health, nutrition, security and safety, responsive caregiver, and early learning. A new early childhood development team has been created and housed with the Community, Culture and Innovation Division to guide the transformation of the early childhood development system to an integrated model of delivery between departments and service providers.

The team includes four (4) positions dedicated to this key area: Manager, Social Determinants, Innovation and Public Participation; Senior Advisor, Early Childhood Development; Strategic Project Analyst, Maternal, Child and Family Wellness; and an intern.

The GNWT engaged with staff from across the Early Childhood Development system to understand the places in the system that can be strengthened to better meet the needs of families and communities.

Areas of focus include:

- Supporting delivery and access to culturally safe and relationship-based care across the Early Childhood Development system from prevention to intervention.
- Establishing a reproductive, perinatal, infant, child health and *Indigenous birthwork model of care*, including the expansion of the Territorial Midwifery Program.
- Establishing a contribution agreement with the Northern Birthwork Collective to establish an Indigenous Doula Training Program.
- Improving services for children in care with disabilities and complex need by enhancing training for staff and caregivers.
- Providing information to families and communities through resource development and a family resource hub.
- Implementing the renewed Healthy Family Program to shift towards Indigenous cultural-based prevention and family and community driven programming.

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## TIMELINE

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Full Implementation by 2025

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## ACTION 52

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### Deliver Indigenous centered parenting programs

- a) Expand the delivery of the Healthy Family Program from the existing 15, to a total of 20 communities
- b) Implement a new robust, peer-reviewed, made-in-the north curriculum

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### PROGRAM

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Community, Culture and Innovation – Healthy Family Program

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### CONTEXT

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The Healthy Family Program is a proactive, outreach-oriented and strength-based program focused on parent support, education, and community engagement to ensure children thrive. The program is currently offered in 14 communities: Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Fort Liard, Fort Providence, Tuktoyaktuk, Inuvik, Fort McPherson, Norman Wells, Délı̄ne, Fort Good Hope, Tulita, Colville Lake, and Yellowknife.

The GNWT will expand the Healthy Family Program to 5 additional communities. These communities will be selected in collaboration with regions, community partners, and established selection criteria.

The goal of the Healthy Family Program is to build upon the strengths of families and communities to support parents in ensuring healthy child growth and development. This program assists parents by providing support, information, and by facilitating connection to community and culture towards better supporting child growth and development.

The GNWT has partnered with Hotı̄ ts'eeda to create a robust, peer-reviewed, made-in-the north curriculum prototype under the guidance of health experts, elders, caregivers, and a curriculum expert.

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### TIMELINE

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Program Expansion: two (2) communities in 2021/22, two (2) communities in 2022/23, and an additional community in 2023/24.

Made-in-the-North Curriculum: finalized in 2022.

Implemented by 2023

Implementation of the renewed Healthy Family Program and impact evaluation by 2025.

52

## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Health and Wellness

Departments Of Health And Social Services And Education, Culture And Employment

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### ACTION 53

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#### Improve early childhood development indicators for all children

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#### PROGRAM

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Early Childhood Development- Integrated Service Delivery Working Group

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#### CONTEXT

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The GNWT is transitioning social envelope programs to provide integrated service delivery (ISD) that is culturally safe, and trauma informed. The Early Childhood Development system is a strategic priority. Recognizing that multiple factors influence early childhood development, including health, nutrition, security and safety, responsive caregivers, and early learning, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide an integrated approach to Early Childhood Development. The Early Childhood Development Integrated Services Delivery Working Group was established to address this action area.

An integrated service delivery model will involve a child-focused and family-centered approach to improving early childhood outcomes by strengthening collaboration among GNWT departments, Indigenous Governments, program and service providers, and community stakeholders involved in early childhood development supports.

One area of identified need is a single window approach to funding early childhood development that promotes parenting and early childhood development.

Work in this area includes:

- Development of an integrated services delivery approach for early childhood.
  - Streamlining early childhood development funding across government by instituting multi-year funding and exploring the establishment of a single window for grants to promote parenting and early childhood development.
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#### TIMELINE

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Single-window approach implemented by end of 2022/23



## Human Security

**We call upon all governments to uphold the social and economic rights of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people** by ensuring that Indigenous Peoples have services and infrastructure that meet their social and economic needs. This can be done through:

- community-based supports and solutions led by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people,
- support programs and services for people in the sex industry,
- educational, training, and employment opportunities,
- a guaranteed annual livable income,
- new housing and the provision of repairs for existing housing, and access to housing that is safe, appropriate to geographic and cultural needs,
- long-term sustainable funding of Indigenous-led housing, and services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people who are homeless, dealing with food insecurity or fleeing violence and exploitation,
- safe and affordable transit and transportation services and infrastructure for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people living in remote or rural communities.

## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Human Security

Northwest Territories Housing Corporation

### ACTION 54

**Review and renew the mandate, programs and services of the NWT Housing Corporation in partnership with Indigenous governments.**

#### PROGRAM

Housing Corporation – Mandate Review

#### CONTEXT

The NWT Housing Corporation is conducting a strategic review of its mandate, programs and services with a view to implementing actions to improve housing in the NWT. The renewal will also involve determining ways to further enhance its programming to address issues regarding MMIWG, especially in relation to social and economic equality and self-determined and Indigenous-led solutions.

The NWT Council of Leaders Multilateral Forum established between the GNWT, and Indigenous governments created a housing working group that will provide a venue for ongoing feedback and updates on the review and for sharing housing partnership opportunities.

Initiatives arising from strategic renewal will span the range of housing areas from homelessness to homeownership, new programming and revisions to policy and procedures.

#### TIMELINE

Completion of Mandate Review by 2022

54

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## ACTION 55

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### Combine appropriate housing solutions and wrap-around service support

- a) Support the delivery of supported housing projects that provide long-term stable housing for persons that were previously chronically homeless
- b) Develop a transitional housing model to support residents returning from treatment

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## PROGRAM

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Housing Corporation- Northern Pathways to Housing Program

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## CONTEXT

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In partnership with Indigenous governments, the NWT HC currently supports the delivery of 4 supported housing projects in the communities of Behchokò, Fort Simpson, Aklavik, and Fort Good Hope through the Northern Pathways to Housing (NPH) program.

NPH uses the Housing First principles of providing affordable housing in conjunction with wrap-around services. To-date, these projects delivered by the Łíídlı́ Kúé First Nation, the Aklavik Indian Band, the Behchokò Friendship Centre, and the K'asho Got'ine Housing Society have shown effective results in providing long-term stable housing for persons that were previously chronically homeless.

The Housing Corporation is supporting Health and Social Services in identifying and developing a transitional housing model to support residents returning from treatment. This model will combine an appropriate housing solution and wrap-around service support.

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## TIMELINE

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2023-24 for the implementation of the transitional housing Program





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## **ACTION 56**

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### **Support service delivery at NWT Emergency Shelters in partnership with Indigenous governments**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Housing Corporation – Emergency Overnight Shelters

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#### **CONTEXT**

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The Housing Corporation will support the sustainability of the two emergency overnight shelters in Inuvik: the Inuvik Emergency Warming Centre and the Inuvik Homeless Shelter. Governance support will be provided by the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC), the Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC), the Town of Inuvik and persons with lived experience.

The Housing Corporation will support shelters to ensure that there are defined service standards, appropriately trained staff, a safe and respectful operating environment, and an operation respecting the priorities of local stakeholders especially Indigenous Governments.

The involvement of the IRC, GTC and Town of Inuvik are critical to the success of sheltering approaches in Inuvik. The NWT HC will be looking to also leverage Indigenous wellness programming as supports for people experiencing homelessness in the Beaufort Delta.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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2021-22



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## ACTION 57

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### Shift towards community and Indigenous driven housing solutions through the development of community and Indigenous government led housing plans for every community

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#### PROGRAM

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Housing Corporation – Community Housing Plans

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#### CONTEXT

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Central to the shift towards community and Indigenous driven housing solutions is the development of 33 community housing plans, one for each community. These plans are developed by communities with the support of the Housing Corporation. The final plans are owned by communities, which they can use for their own planning purposes, but also to engage other funders such as all orders of government, NGOs and the private sector.

Through the development of community housing plans, the Housing Corporation aims to support the development of community and Indigenous government led planning for housing solutions. Partnering with Indigenous governments such as the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Tłı̄chǫ Government and the Gwich'in Tribal Council ensures that these housing plans appropriately reflect the perspectives of Indigenous governments and the people that they represent. In so doing, this approach ingrains into planning processes culturally appropriate housing design and specifically narrows priorities to exactly what the Indigenous governments think is needed to improve housing. The plans incorporate the housing needs of Indigenous women and girls and vulnerable populations.

All 33 housing plans are in active development with partnerships between the Housing Corporation and community and Indigenous governments. Partners for these projects currently include the Salt River First Nation, the Community Government of Whatì, the K'asho Got'jne Housing Society, the Jean Marie River First Nation, the Charter Community of Tsiigehtchic, the Behdzi Ahda First Nation Band and the Nahanni Butte Dene Band.

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#### TIMELINE

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2023-24



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## **ACTION 58**

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### **Develop 100 affordable housing units**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Housing Corporation – Affordable Housing

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#### **CONTEXT**

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The Housing Corporation is actively engaged in the development of affordable housing opportunities. Creating more housing will help to address social imbalance, which is a primary negative driver for Indigenous women and girls.

The availability of safe and affordable housing is a cornerstone of helping to ensure that Indigenous women and girls are safe. Good housing provides the stability to advance other important priorities in ones' life like raising a family, caring for elders, going to school or address complex issues such as addictions and mental health. As a mandate commitment, the Housing Corporation will support the development of 100 new affordable housing units in the life of the 19th Legislative Assembly. It is becoming evident that the Housing Corporation, in collaboration with its partners (non-governmental organizations, Indigenous governments and the private sector), are on pace to greatly exceed the target of 100 units. An example of initiative in support of this commitment involves the renovation of the Yellowknife Women's Society (YWS) shelter to convert part of its space into 24 semi-independent rooms for women. The vast majority of YWS' program participants are Indigenous women.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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100 new units by end of 2024

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## **ACTION 59**

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### **Address rental instability**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Housing Corporation – Affordable Housing Rent Supplement

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#### **CONTEXT**

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The NWT HC will support more affordable housing in conjunction with the Canada and Mortgage and Housing Corporation through the delivery of the Canada NWT Housing Benefit, which provides a rent supplement for private market renters to bridge the gap between high rental rates and an appropriate affordable amount.

Under this program launched in 2021, program participants are eligible for up to \$800 a month to help them afford rental housing. This program will help address rental instability and as the benefit is portable, will move with the resident. This will help ensure Indigenous women are not placed in an unbalanced power relationship in relation to their landlord. It has been shown that imbalances in rental relationships have led to discrimination and abuse suffered by single women.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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The program to 2028 aims to help up to 400 households live more affordably

59

## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Human Security

Department Of Education, Culture And Employment

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### ACTION 60

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#### Supports Indigenous and northern women, interested in a career in the trades through the development of a Women in Trades Program

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#### PROGRAM

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Labour Development and Standards – Women in Trades

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#### CONTEXT

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The GNWT recognizes the need to increase the participation and completion rates of targeted groups in apprenticeship and certification, including Indigenous women apprentices in non-traditional trades. One of the key actions of the GNWT is to develop and implement an initiative that will increase the number of women in the trades and occupations. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is working on the development of a Women in Trades program to encourage more women to enter the trades.

The GNWT currently supports Indigenous women interested in a career in the trades through a variety of supports including the following funding supports:

- Trade occupation wage subsidy available to employers who hire and register a female apprentice.
- Financial supports available for women who attend technical training.
- Grants available through the Federal government available to women in trades.

The GNWT and Skills Canada NWT are partnering to host a workshop designed to interest more young women in the trades and to provide opportunities for female high school students to explore the trades as a career path. Teen girls (aged 13-17) from schools in Yellowknife, Dettah, Ndilq and Behchokò are invited to attend the Girls in Trades workshop, which will be held during the 2021-2022 school year. This workshop is a pilot project. The GNWT hopes to offer additional workshops in other regions in subsequent years.

The GNWT is exploring partnerships with mining companies to provide women interested in trades with short term work experience at mine sites, with the potential to attract more female apprentices in the NWT.

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#### TIMELINE

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This initiative is anticipated to roll out in 2021 – 2022 and 2022-2023



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## ACTION 61

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### Review and renew the Income Assistance program

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#### PROGRAM

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Income Security Programs Division – Income Security Programs

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#### CONTEXT

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The GNWT administers the Income Assistance program to assist residents who do not have the financial resources to meet their basic needs, including shelter, food, clothing, and utilities. The Income Assistance program pays for the actual costs associated with shelter and utilities while there are set amounts for food and clothing based on family size and community of residence.

The GNWT is current carrying out a review of the Income Assistance Program. The review will inform the development of a new Income Assistance program geared towards Seniors and Persons Living with Disabilities. In addition, the review will ensure that the types and levels of benefits as well as income exemptions are meeting the basic needs of NWT residents and that the program aligns with the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation of Canada, the Calls for Justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and the UN Declaration. The review will also consider the diverse needs, realities, and geographic locations of clients.

As part of the review, ECE will carry out engagement with Income Assistance clients, program delivery partners and Indigenous governments.

There are benefits provided by the Income Assistance program that take into account geographic location. For example, the food benefit for someone residing in Tuktoyaktuk would be higher than the food benefit for someone residing in Yellowknife. The Income Assistance program also offers a Community Cost Adjustment allowance that is dependent on where the client lives (and the number of dependants). This allowance provides additional resources for family expenditures and is also based on price differences between NWT communities and Yellowknife.

The Income Assistance program is delivered through 6 Regional ECE Service Centres and 14 Community ECE Service Centres. Residents residing in a community that does not have an ECE Service Centre can contact the Regional and Community Service Centre to apply for Income Assistance. ECE also has Itinerant Client Services Officers that travel to small communities. Client Services Officers work with the clients, Government Service Officers and Indigenous government offices to obtain the required documentation in these situations. In addition, Client Services Officers work closely with Government Service Officers and Indigenous governments to better support applicants. Clients are also able to have friends, family, or advocates attend meetings with them when they apply for this additional support.

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#### TIMELINE

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Review is expected to be completed by spring 2022 at which time the development of new and reprofiled program will commence. Launch and implementation of the new Income Assistance program is expected to begin April 1, 2023.

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## ACTION 62

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### Review and renew the Student Financial Assistance program

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#### PROGRAM

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Income Security Programs Division – Student Financial Assistance

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#### CONTEXT

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The GNWT is carrying out a review of the Student Financial Assistance program to ensure benefits and the delivery of the program supports NWT students to achieve their post-secondary goals and to remove barriers to post-secondary participation for Indigenous students.

The Student Financial Assistance program assists NWT residents with the costs of obtaining a post-secondary education. The program offers loan repayment incentives to help alleviate the burden of student loan debt upon completing full-time studies, while encouraging students to return to the territory.

To help alleviate the burden of debt upon ceasing full-time studies, the Department offers a variety of incentives to students who reside in the NWT upon ceasing full-time studies:

- Students who are in receipt of Remissible Loans may have their loans forgiven by a certain amount for each day they reside in the NWT upon completion of their studies. Forgiveness rates vary based on a student's community of residence and range from a maximum of \$6,000 to \$12,000

annually.

- Students repaying their student loans while residing in the NWT are eligible to have their interest rate reduced to 0%. Students who do not return to the NWT are charged interest, which is prime, less 1%. The current interest rate for students ceasing full-time studies in 2021 is 1.45%.

- A Northern Bonus provides \$2,000 a year to a limit of \$10,000 as a financial incentive to entice students who have left the NWT for studies to return, and to retain students studying in the NWT upon completion of their studies.

Students can also give consent for the Department to connect them with employers in the NWT for the purpose of scholarship and employment opportunities as well as programs for Indigenous and student employment within the GNWT.

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#### TIMELINE

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Review complete by 2023.



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## ACTION 63

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### Support equitable access to culturally relevant early learning and childcare programming.

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#### PROGRAM

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Early Learning and Childcare Division- supporting Licensed Early Learning and Childcare Programs

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#### CONTEXT

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There are many factors involved with increasing access to licensed early learning and childcare programs (licensed programs), such as creating welcoming, culturally responsive environments for families, having qualified and trained staff available to work, and having access to high quality infrastructure that is suitable and safe for early learning and childcare programs.

In the NWT, licensed programs are community driven. They are initiated and maintained by Indigenous governments, non-profit organizations, and local individuals who are in the best position to meet the needs of children and families they serve. Improving access to early learning and childcare requires working closely with our partners who operate licensed early learning and childcare programming and providing funding and various supports that are responsive to their needs.

Since 2017, the Canada-NWT Early Learning and Childcare Bilateral Agreement and subsequent action plans have provided funding and support to increase access and quality of licensed early learning and childcare programs in the NWT, including:

- professional development and postsecondary learning opportunities for early childhood educators
- enhanced Early Childhood Program (ECP) operating subsidy funding for centre-based licensed early learning and childcare programs
- funding for the development of new childcare spaces

In Spring 2021, ECE held discussions with Indigenous governments and engaged with early childhood educators and operators of early learning and childcare programs to develop a What We Heard Report. This information has been used to assist with the development of a 2030 Early Learning and Childcare Strategy with the intention to increase the availability and affordability of culturally relevant early learning and childcare in the NWT.

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#### TIMELINE

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Completion of the 2030 Early Learning and Childcare Strategy – Completed by 2022



## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Human Security

Department of Infrastructure

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### ACTION 64

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#### Incorporating gender-neutral washrooms in all new infrastructure builds and major renovations

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##### PROGRAM

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Gender-Neutral Washrooms and Changerooms

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##### CONTEXT

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The Department of Infrastructure is incorporating gender-neutral washrooms in all new builds and major renovations. All requests from GNWT departments for upgrades to existing washrooms are reviewed from a barrier-free and gender-neutral perspective.

Universal, all-gender washrooms are included in the Inuvik Air Terminal Building and all new school projects including the new Yellowknife school project (formerly Sissons), Łutselk'e Dene School, Tuktoyaktuk Mangilaluk School, and are programmed for the Colville Lake School development.

The Department of Infrastructure will update the *Good Building Practice for Northern Facilities* manual to give guidance on all-gender washrooms.

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##### TIMELINE

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Ongoing practice. Updates to *Good Building Practice for Northern Facilities* manual anticipated by 2023-34

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## **ACTION 65**

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**Provide alternative forms of government issued identification to increase security of vulnerable people**

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### **PROGRAM**

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Temporary Identification

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### **CONTEXT**

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The GNWT recognizes that vulnerable people can be at risk of being trapped in abusive situations, particularly in remote communities where identification is required to board flights.

Enhancing access to personal ID cards can support the ability of vulnerable persons to board flights, register for programs, and seek help.

Beginning in November 2020, temporary identification cards were made available at Driver and Motor Vehicles Offices.

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### **TIMELINE**

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Implemented and ongoing Program

65

## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Human Security

Department Of Executive And Indigenous Affairs

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### ACTION 66

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**Develop a whole of government response to family violence that will interrupt the cycle of family violence, change attitudes, and hold perpetrators accountable**

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#### PROGRAM

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Gender Equity Division – Addressing Family Violence

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#### CONTEXT

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Family violence is pervasive in the NWT. It contributes to and is caused by a cycle of trauma. To interrupt the cycle of family violence, the GNWT recognizes that it must change attitudes. We need to protect survivors and their children by holding perpetrators accountable and finding new community-based approaches to prevent violence.

A Family Violence Coordinator position was established within the new Gender Equity Division to coordinate family violence work across the GNWT departments. This position will provide greater coordination and accountability in the GNWT's collective response to the incidence of family violence in the territory.

Through an interdepartmental Family Violence Working Group, the Gender Equity Division will develop a strategic response to family violence in the NWT that aligns with the National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence. The development of a family violence strategy will include continuous community outreach to make and maintain strong relationships with service providers, community members and Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

It is anticipated that the family violence strategy will include both enhancements to existing programs and services as well as the introduction of new programs and services across several intersecting departments.

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#### TIMELINE

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Completion of Strategic Approach by 2022-23

## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Human Security

Department Of Health And Social Services

### ACTION 67

#### Reduce poverty across the territory

##### PROGRAM

Community, Culture and Innovation – Anti-Poverty

##### CONTEXT

No single sector, department, policy or initiative can address the complexity of poverty on their own. The GNWT is taking a whole-of-government approach to this important issue, with the responsibility for coordination and fund administration resting with a position established at the Department of Health and Social Services.

The GNWT is working to reduce poverty in the NWT by:

- Introducing short-term measures to the Income Assistance program in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the NWT's most vulnerable residents had a sense of financial security. The Income Assistance program exempted several COVID-19 relief supports that were provided through the Government of Canada, Indigenous governments, and benevolent organizations
- Making funding available to address homelessness in smaller communities through the Northern Pathways to Housing, Supportive Housing Program
- Identifying funding to support the Housing First program in Yellowknife and the Rapid Rehousing program in Inuvik and Yellowknife
- Undertaking actions to address food security through supports to meat safety, agriculture and community gardening projects

The Anti-Poverty fund provides contributions on an annual basis to community-based organizations to support local poverty reduction projects.

##### TIMELINE

Ongoing



## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Human Security

Department Of Lands

### ACTION 68

**Consider the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people at all stages of resource extraction planning, assessment, implementation, management and monitoring**

#### PROGRAM

#### CONTEXT

The GNWT considers the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people at all stages of resource extraction planning, assessment, implementation, management and monitoring.

The Department of Lands has a coordinating role on behalf of all GNWT departments for processes related to environmental assessment in the NWT and neighbouring jurisdictions. Assessments are conducted by independent quasi-judicial resource management boards, established under land, resource and self-government agreements. The boards' mandates include consideration of a variety of factors related to well-being and impacts on culture, economy, and society. The boards consider evidence provided by the developer, the GNWT and other parties, and make recommendations to the GNWT and other governments as to whether projects should proceed, and if so, under what conditions. For projects in the NWT, the Department of Lands works with all affected GNWT departments to analyze the boards' recommendations and support Ministers' decision-making authorities under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Inuvialuit Final Agreement. All GNWT departments are legally obligated to implement approved recommendations and mitigation measures from environmental assessments, to the extent of their authority.

During environmental assessments, several GNWT departments have responsibilities to review development proposals with respect to concerns around safety, security and equity benefit for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. If concerns are identified, these departments provide evidence for inclusion in the GNWT's submissions to resource management boards. The Department of Lands coordinates GNWT's evidence and ensures that all departments are aware of the process for providing evidence. The Department of Lands will also ensure departments are aware of the importance of considering the Calls for Justice in the context of environmental assessment. Lands facilitates discussion and dialogue among departments at the Deputy Minister level, through the Project Assessment Senior Management Coordinating Committee, and at the working level.

Each department remains accountable for the evidence it contributes to the GNWT's overall submission. The Department of Lands will include the Calls for Justice related to the extractive industry as a standing agenda item for interdepartmental discussion of the Terms of Reference at the start-up of every environmental assessment. The Department will also remind all departments to consider these Calls for Justice during the development of GNWT's formal interventions in environmental assessment proceedings and will help facilitate the inclusion of information related to the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

#### TIMELINE

2022 and ongoing

## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Human Security

Department Of Municipal And Community Affairs

### ACTION 69

**Provide the public, communities and first responders with effective emergency communications services for access to police, fire, rescue and medical services when immediate action is required**

#### PROGRAM

NWT 9-1-1 Service

#### CONTEXT

On November 4th, 2019, 9-1-1 services went live simultaneously in all 33 communities. 9-1-1 is fully bilingual in French and English, and, where required, callers can be connected with interpretation services in the NWT Indigenous languages.

NWT 9-1-1 aims to provide the public, communities and first responders with effective emergency communications services for access to police, fire, rescue and medical services when immediate action is required.

The GNWT is preparing for a few new initiatives in this area. They include:

- The next generation of 9-1-1 functionality; a Canada-wide effort by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to provide enhanced 9-1-1 services across the country including, among other enhancements, the geolocation of callers.
- A public alerting system for the NWT is in the process of being implemented. This system is based on the national Alert Ready platform which will allow for NWT residents to receive emergent alerts on their cell phones.
- Residents and municipal stakeholders have indicated a desire for expanded cellular coverage within the NWT particularly on territorial highways. This would allow for increased access to cell service for residents and allow for emergency calls to be made from across more of the NWT. The GNWT has advocated for the increased need for cellular service and alternate technology for emergency communications as a priority to the CRTC. The GNWT will explore opportunities to address the high costs associated with the establishment and operation of mobile networks.

#### TIMELINE

A report is tabled annually as per legislative requirements.

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## **ACTION 70**

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### **Ensure compassionate and culturally sensitive by-law enforcement and community safety**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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School of Community Government- By-Law Enforcement Officer Course

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#### **CONTEXT**

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The GNWT takes a collective approach between departments and with Indigenous governments to address the over-representation of Indigenous people across the territorial justice system. An important part of this work is to promote increased capacity for Indigenous and community-based by-law officers.

The GNWT, through MACA's School of Community Government, offers a by-law enforcement officer course. This training provides its graduates with the knowledge and practical skills to effectively perform the duties of a by-law officer.

The course is structured around the unique aspects of northern communities from a culturally sensitive perspective and is generally tailored toward community government employees, many of whom are Indigenous and based in their home communities. This helps ensure compassionate and culturally sensitive enforcement and community safety.

In order to better support community governments to train and maintain capacity of their community-based staff, the GNWT has initiated changes to the School of Community Government delivery model in 2020-21 in an effort to modernize the program curriculum and to move it from a program-centered to a learner-centered model.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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Ongoing delivery at request of community governments.



## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Human Security

Department Of Industry, Tourism, and Investment

### ACTION 71

**Review the GNWT's approach to Indigenous participation in contracting and procurement based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership.**

#### PROGRAM

Government Contracting, Economic Measures and Procurement Review

#### CONTEXT

Government procurement policies can support social and economic goals. Clear objectives support those outcomes and ensure they are well integrated into the policy framework.

The GNWT will review its approach to Indigenous participation in procurement. This will contribute to reconciliation by encouraging Indigenous business development and socio-economic outcomes that support the path to self-determination and contributes to the renewal of the relationship based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership.

This could take the form of an NWT-wide Indigenous procurement policy or agreements that specifically address the unique circumstances of particular Indigenous governments.

The GNWT has initiated a Modern Treaty and Self-Government Forum to discuss matters of common interest among treaty partners. Economic measures and government procurement are a standing agenda item at the forum.

The Procurement Review process included invitations to all Indigenous governments to hold one-on-one engagement sessions to hear their perspectives and views on government contracting and procurement.

The Tłı̨chǫ Infrastructure Cooperation Agreement is a recent example of the GNWT's commitment to working with Indigenous governments to advance mutual interests in economic collaboration.

#### TIMELINE

Completed Review: 2023-24





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## ACTION 72

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**Review the GNWT’s approach to negotiating Socio-Economic Agreements to increase the success of these agreements for meeting socio-economic objectives, maximizing benefits and increasing opportunities for equity participation with local and Indigenous governments in economic development projects.**

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### PROGRAM

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Socio-Economic Agreements

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### CONTEXT

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The GNWT acknowledges the Calls for Justice on ensuring the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people as well as their equitable benefits from development at all stages of resource extraction planning, assessment, implementation, management and monitoring.

The GNWT has initiated a review of its Socio-Economic Agreements policy to increase the success of these agreements for meeting socio-economic objectives, maximizing benefits and increasing opportunities for equity participation with local and Indigenous governments in economic development projects.

The GNWT has partnered with Indigenous governments through a technical advisory panel on the review.

The GNWT established socio-economic agreements (SEA’S) as a tool for maximizing benefits and meeting socio-economic objectives from resource development projects. When an environmental assessment takes place for a major resource development, the GNWT asks for follow-up programs to be put in place in the form of socio-economic agreements. The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is responsible for negotiating these agreements on behalf of the GNWT including:

- Employment, training and business opportunities
- Cultural well-being and traditional economy
- Community, family, and individual well-being
- Net effects on government
- Sustainable development

Through socio-economic agreements, the GNWT seeks to promote equitable participation by Indigenous women in various training programs (e.g., Introduction to the Mining Industry, Safety Boot Camp and the prospecting, geoscience field assistant, and surface mining courses). These training programs are funded through joint investments from the GNWT, the Government of Canada and the mining industry.

The GNWT oversees the implementation of these socio-economic agreements and coordinates government efforts under each agreement while monitoring how well each company carries out its respective responsibilities, which is reported annually in the socio-economic annual report. The annual report examines several social and economic indicators to monitor impacts by the mining industry. Reports are publicly released each year and posted on ITI’s website.

The GNWT currently has six SEAs in place:

- Dominion Diamond Corporation, Ekati Diamond Mine, signed October 1996
- Diavik Diamond Mines (2012) Inc., signed October 1999, amended January 2015
- De Beers Canada Incorporated, Snap Lake Mine, signed May 2004
- Mackenzie Gas Project, signed January 2007
- Canadian Zinc Corporation, Prairie Creek Mine, signed August 2011
- De Beers, Gahcho Kué Project, signed June 2013

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## TIMELINE

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The results of the review and renewed approach to be completed by 2022.



## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Human Security

Environment And Natural Resources

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### ACTION 73

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**Create equitable opportunities for women and non-binary persons.**

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#### PROGRAMS

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Firefighters Training for women and non-binary persons

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#### CONTEXT

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ENR is committed to improving the diversity of its workforce. In August 2021, a week-long firefighting training session for women and non-binary people was held. Community involvement and awareness will be determined during the program planning and design phase for 2021-22 and onwards.

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#### TIMELINE

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Ongoing, annual course offering dependent on uptake.

73

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## ACTION 74

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**Increase access to country foods by delivering culturally appropriate harvester support programs.**

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### PROGRAM

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Food Security

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### CONTEXT

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In support of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment's lead on increasing food security, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) is responsible for improving access to country foods by delivering culturally appropriate harvester support programs, in collaboration with Indigenous government and organization partners. Country foods are a very important part of the social, cultural and overall well-being of NWT residents.

One of ENR's key programs designed to support harvesting of country foods is the Community Harvesters Assistance Program. ENR's evaluation and redesign of this program will ensure it continues to support and meet the needs of those who access it.

A priority for ENR is to be responsive to the needs of harvesters and deliver programs that help encourage and support people to be on the land and participate in harvesting activities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, ENR responded to concerns about people's health and wellness by launching several new and enhanced programs to support harvesters and families to go out on the land. These programs reflect the importance of increasing food security through locally harvested food and are a direct response to the challenges communities faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These new and enhanced programs were launched in addition to existing ongoing programs like the Take a Kid Trapping program, Hunter Education Program, Trapper Training, the Hunters and Trappers Disaster Compensation Program, and included:

- The ongoing Take a Family on the Land Program, which provided funding to organizations to help offset costs for families in need to pursue on the land activities, including harvesting.
- A Pilot Harvesters Mentorship Program, being developed in collaboration with regional Indigenous governments.

Additional actions related to supporting community-driven food security programs and research are outlined in ENR's Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan 2019-2023.

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### TIMELINE

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Ongoing, annual funding programs to harvesters

Community Harvesters Assistance Program review complete in 2022



## Justice

### **We call upon provincial and territorial governments to:**

- immediately and dramatically transform Indigenous policing,
- 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. This includes but is not limited to the following measures:
  - access to financial support and meaningful and appropriate trauma care;
  - culturally relevant and accessible victim services;
  - legislated paid leave and disability benefits;
  - access to independent legal services; and
  - victim services independent from prosecution and police services,
- fund the provision of policing services within Indigenous communities in northern and remote areas in a manner that ensures that those services meet the safety and justice needs of the communities,
- enact missing persons legislation,
- ensure that protection orders are available, accessible, promptly issued, and effectively serviced and resourced to protect the safety of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people,
- recruit and retain more Indigenous justices of the peace,
- increase accessibility to meaningful and culturally appropriate justice practices by expanding restorative justice programs and Indigenous Peoples' courts,
- increase Indigenous representation in all Canadian courts,
- expand and adequately resource legal aid programs,
- address the over-incarceration of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and
- thoroughly evaluate the impacts of Gladue principles

**We call upon all governments to resource research on men who commit violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.**

## Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice on Justice

Department Of Justice

### ACTION 75

#### Develop missing persons legislation

##### PROGRAM

Missing Persons Legislation

##### CONTEXT

All policing services in the NWT are delivered by the RCMP through agreement with the GNWT. The RCMP 'G' Division Major Crimes Unit investigates missing persons and unsolved historical cases. As of October 2021, there were 67 missing persons investigations underway in the NWT, comprising 79 missing people. 14 of the 79 individuals have been identified as female, 9 of whom are confirmed to be Indigenous. Given the information that is currently available, the RCMP are unable to confirm if the other 5 female individuals are Indigenous. There are currently seven unsolved homicides between 1985 to present, including four Indigenous females and three Indigenous males."

The GNWT is responding to the Call for Justice to develop missing persons legislation. The Department of Justice is exploring options for the development of a legislative regime to facilitate the collection of necessary and timely information by police when conducting a missing persons' investigation. When an investigation spans more than one jurisdiction, having similar legislation across provinces and territories can help police work together more effectively.

Missing persons cases can be closely linked to the legacy, actions and inactions arising from colonialism, historical and intergenerational trauma, social and economic marginalisation, racism and sexism. Work toward developing legislation will include engagement with a wide range of partners, including Indigenous governments, community Victim Services, the Native Women's Association of the NWT, the Status of Women Council of the NWT, the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife, Inclusion NWT, the NWT Disabilities Council, the general public as well as other NWT partners such as the legal community and the RCMP.

##### TIMELINE

Completed legislation by 2023-24

# 75

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## ACTION 76

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**Provide integrated service support to assist vulnerable people with accessing programs related to justice, health, social services, education, and housing and to help address the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice system**

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### PROGRAM

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Integrated Case Management

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### CONTEXT

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The GNWT recognizes that government service delivery must consider social and economic marginalization, and the historical, multigenerational, intergenerational, and resulting personal trauma, experienced by residents that together perpetuate violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. The Integrated Case Management (ICM) program is a strength-based, participant-informed, participant-centered, voluntary program that assists individuals with complex needs to access and navigate Yellowknife services related to justice, health, social services, education and housing. The program identifies systems gaps and barriers by working with other GNWT departments to increase the wellbeing of individuals.

A multi-year pilot program was established in Yellowknife by the Department of Justice to assist individuals with complex needs and who are frequent government service users. Pathfinders coordinate and liaise with other government services to help participants achieve self-identified life goals. The range of social issues navigated by the pathfinders includes homelessness, poverty, legal challenges, mental health and substance use, lack of social support, medical issues, debt, conflicts with other service providers, domestic violence and family issues. The program brings together the departments of Justice, Health and Social Services, Education, Culture, and Employment, the NWT Housing Corporation, the NWT Health Authority and Stanton Territorial Hospital to reduce system barriers experienced by ICM participants.

Findings from the 2020 program evaluation indicate that 78 per cent of program participants are Indigenous, 54 per cent are women, and 65 per cent are either residential school survivors or have family members who attended residential school.

The GNWT has renewed the Integrated Case Management program to assist vulnerable people access programs related to justice, health, social services, education, and housing and help address the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice system.

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### TIMELINE

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The program is now an indeterminately funded GNWT program.



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## **ACTION 77**

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### **Bridge the gap between community safety needs and the role of the RCMP**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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#### **COMMUNITY SAFETY OFFICER PILOT PROGRAM**

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#### **CONTEXT**

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Many communities in the NWT, especially Indigenous communities, benefit from community-led programs that build capacity and social trust. The Community Safety Officer Program is designed to provide a proactive, sustainable, trauma-informed, holistic approach to community safety, and to bridge the gap between community safety needs and the role of the RCMP.

Community Safety Officers will receive training and will respond to non-criminal safety concerns, develop and implement crime prevention strategies, build and promote the community's relationship with the RCMP, and patrol the community. The Officers do not have authority to enforce laws and are not a replacement for police but act as a community safety enhancement service, working collaboratively with the RCMP to better address community needs and to promote safety and wellness.

The program is administered and delivered through the community government and works to tailor services to the unique needs of the community with support from the GNWT, RCMP and other community partners.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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Program implementation: 2021-2022 / 2022-23

Program evaluation and review: 2023-24





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## **ACTION 78**

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**Provide multi-year stable funding for Indigenous-led, preventative approaches to support men's healing as a means to reduce intimate partner/family violence.**

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### **PROGRAM**

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Men's Healing Fund

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### **CONTEXT**

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The GNWT established the Men's Healing Fund to support Indigenous communities to develop, design and implement their own unique Men's Healing programs in line with local needs and priorities. Programming is based on principles of community cultural competence, self-determination, and collaboration.

The Men's Healing Fund supports community-led wellness programs for men's healing as a preventative approach to addressing family and intimate partner violence. The Men's Healing Fund is a response to the gap in community-based healing programs for men as identified in the evaluation of the Yellowknife-based 'A New Day' Men's Healing program and research on Intimate Partner Violence conducted by the Aurora Research Institute. The Department of Justice has increased the dollar amounts provided per funded community program as well as the term of the funding agreements from single to multi-year funding.

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### **TIMELINE**

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Ongoing annual funding with multi-year funding opportunities



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## ACTION 79

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**Implement a new correctional model to assist eligible resident inmates in making a change in their behaviour, with a goal to reduce their contact with the criminal justice system and transition back to NWT communities.**

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### PROGRAM

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Correctional Centre – Therapeutic Community

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### CONTEXT

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The GNWT is moving forward with work to transition the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre (SMCC) in Hay River into a facility that operates under a *Therapeutic Community* model. Under this model, a holistic approach is used that touches on every aspect of an offender's life. With an emphasis on social learning and mutual self-help, individual participants take responsibility for themselves and for their peers' recovery. Providing help and support to others is seen as an important part of changing oneself under this model.

The SMCC *Therapeutic Community* model consists of four key phases. Three of these phases occur within the correctional centre and the final phase occurs upon release, in the former *Therapeutic Community* resident inmates home community.

The SMCC Therapeutic Community will use community support as the key towards an individual's recovery journey – both within the "community" created in the correctional facility and with resources in any of the 33 NWT communities to which former resident inmates will be released. The goal is to ensure that resources, supports, and mentors outside the *Therapeutic Community* are connected with the resident inmate and are invited to participate in and provide support for (and during) the transition process.

Community outreach by the Corrections Services to link *Therapeutic Community* resident inmates with their home communities will begin upon entry into SMCC and continue upon release. The Corrections Service will reach out to other GNWT departments, agencies and non-profit organizations to build a support network to assist with community re-entry.

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### TIMELINE

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Full implementation by 2021-22.

Program evaluation will be conducted 3-5 years from implementation.



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## **ACTION 80**

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### **Assists communities in developing an alternative to the criminal justice system**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Community Justice Program

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#### **CONTEXT**

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The GNWT Community Justice Program assists communities in developing an alternative to the criminal justice system through Community Justice Committees and Community Justice Coordinators across the NWT.

Local Community Justice Committees provides diversion programs, community service options, and crime prevention activities. Through a restorative process, victims can hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. Community Justice Coordinators and Committee members regularly receive Restorative Justice and Victim Offender Conference training. So far in 2021-22, Community Justice funding agreements have been established for 24 out of 33 NWT communities.

Youth and adult offenders in the NWT can be diverted away from the formal justice system at several stages in the criminal justice process.

Cases referred to a Community Justice Committee are dealt with using a restorative model of justice through sentencing panels, victim-offender reconciliation, family group conferencing, victim-offender conferencing and/or other community-based approaches.

As the number of diversions rise, the number of individuals who are charged, attend court, or are placed on probation or in custody decreases.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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New multiyear agreements will be provided as of 2022-23



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## ACTION 81

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### Develop an enhanced, holistic, comprehensive approach for the provision of support to Indigenous survivors of crime and families and friends of Indigenous murdered or missing persons

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#### PROGRAM

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Victims Services

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#### CONTEXT

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The Calls for Justice call on governments to develop an enhanced, holistic, comprehensive approach in the provision of supports to Indigenous survivors of crime, and families and friends of Indigenous murdered or missing persons. NWT Victims Services is a community-based program delivered by community organizations. The program is referenced within the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls *“Reclaiming Power and Place”*.

The GNWT provides funding to community-based victim service providers that offer victims of crime and tragedy person-centred emotional support, practical assistance, and referrals to other services. Victims Services are based on the needs of the individual and are not “incident specific.” Each community designs services provided to meet local needs. Access to the Victim Services Program can be in person or by phone.

Funding is provided to Indigenous Governments, Hamlet Councils, and local organizations to deliver victim services across the NWT, taking into consideration the unique context and needs of their community. The GNWT and the RCMP have a referral protocol in place that formalizes the referral of survivors to community victim services. Through in-person contact or telephone outreach, Victim Services Workers employed by local organizations offer:

- Immediate emotional support.
- Information on safety planning, emergency shelters, and court processes.
- Accompaniment to an RCMP detachment, hospital or health center.
- Assistance with victim impact statements,
- Applications to the Victims of Crime Emergency Fund.
- Registration for victim notification programs; and
- Referral to community programs and services.

Victims of a serious violent crime can also access emergency financial assistance for expenditures arising from the crime such as emergency travel to safety, clothing and food, cell phones for safety purposes, and crime scene clean-up.

Support and services to survivors of domestic violence (reported and unreported) consistently constitute the majority of work for Victim Services across the NWT. The program provides culturally safe, respectful and trauma informed access to mental and wellness services.

In 2021-22, the Department of Justice has reallocated funding to expand and increase program funding to support 13 community-based victim services workers and 10 community victim services programs.

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#### TIMELINE

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Victim services are ongoing and agreements with community service providers are multiyear.

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## **ACTION 82**

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**Provide survivors of crime with access to information about a convicted offender who is incarcerated**

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### **PROGRAM**

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Victim Notification Program

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### **CONTEXT**

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The Victim Notification Program was established to provide survivors of crime with access to information about a convicted offender who is incarcerated. This may include information on sentencing, location of the offender, protective conditions, release dates and temporary absences.

All NWT correctional facilities have Victim Notification representatives.

The Victim Notification Program will transition from an application process to a registration process that is initiated at the request of the survivor. The language used in the program is being amended to reflect the principles of the new *Corrections Act* including guidance and policy that further outlines the establishment, administration and maintenance of a program respecting the rights of survivors.

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### **TIMELINE**

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Current directives, policies and forms will be revised as required by the new *Corrections Act* that came into force in late October 2021.

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## ACTION 83

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**Complete a review of the use of Emergency Protection Orders and how they are supporting people experiencing family violence.**

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### PROGRAM

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Emergency Protection Orders

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### CONTEXT

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The Department of Justice contracts the YWCA to provide 24-hour support to survivors of violence and to help keep them safe and provide assistance to apply for Emergency Protection Orders, aftercare support, general safety planning and compiling statistical/qualitative information regarding the experiences of applicants.

Emergency Protection Orders (EPOs) 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. Over the 2020-21-year 100 EPO cases were filed and 89 were judicially confirmed. On average about 65 EPO cases are judicially confirmed each year.

In 2020, the YWCA released *The Nature of Emergency Protection Orders in the Northwest Territories, Canada: A case Study*, a review of the Emergency Protection Orders process. The GNWT will respond to the report and the findings and recommendations from the review will help to inform GNWT improvements to the administration of EPOs as a tool for survivors of family violence.

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### TIMELINE

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2023-24



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## **ACTION 84**

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**Ensure the ability of persons to be able to present evidence and participate in Indigenous language when appearing before the court**

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### **PROGRAM**

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Court Interpretation and Translation Services

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### **CONTEXT**

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The Court Services Division supports the operation of the independent courts of the NWT through the provision of interpreters and translators when required for court proceedings.

Court proceedings may proceed in either English or French; however, when participants who speak an Indigenous language are required to testify or participate as an accused, victim or juror then an interpreter can be provided on request for the duration of their participation. When documents or other evidence are submitted in an Indigenous or other language, they are translated in order to be included in the court record.

This program ensures the ability of persons to be able to present evidence in their first language when appearing before the court, which supports access to justice.

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### **TIMELINE**

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Ongoing Essential Service

84

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## ACTION 85

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### **Provide access to independent legal services and advice to vulnerable individuals facing the threat of domestic violence**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Services of the Legal Aid Commission

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#### **CONTEXT**

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The Legal Aid Commission was established by the GNWT to provide access to independent legal services and advice to vulnerable individuals facing the threat of domestic violence. The Outreach Clinic, in addition to individual lawyers in other clinics, will provide advice and information to persons facing violence or at risk of violence including the process for seeking Emergency Protection Orders. A guide to seeking and varying Emergency Protection Orders has been completed to assist other departments, agencies, as well as individuals, and will be made available to the public.

Staff lawyers also routinely connect vulnerable individuals to appropriate resources. Referrals to the Integrated Case Management Program are routinely made for clients who have multiple needs and have difficulty accessing services.

Court workers act as a first stop for individuals accessing the justice system. They work out of offices in Inuvik, Norman Wells, Behchokò, Yellowknife, Fort Simpson, Hay River and Fort Smith and provide ongoing assistance to individuals involved in the criminal justice system and the civil justice system. Court workers assist in screening individuals for family violence, completing applications for legal representation, and provide ongoing assistance in completing necessary documents, locating individuals for court appearances, and connecting individuals with appropriate services. Some court workers also provide interpretation services to help facilitate communications between lawyers and individuals.

The Legal Aid Commission has supported the training of lawyers, including specific training on family violence. All lawyers and staff will continue to be encouraged to access professional development training concerning victims of violence and providing trauma-informed services. They also have access to the Living Well Together cultural sensitivity training course.

Screening techniques to identify family violence will continue to be developed and enhanced, as needed, with the view to “screen early”. Court workers, staff lawyers, and other staff will be given training and guidance on screening for family violence.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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Ongoing Program

85



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## ACTION 86

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**Provide for direct supervision of sentenced women offenders and facilitates holistic healing in a safe, secure environment**

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### PROGRAM

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Dedicated Women's Correctional Unit

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### CONTEXT

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The GNWT has established a facility that provides for the direct supervision of sentenced women offenders from across the NWT. The new Women's Unit at the Fort Smith Correctional Facility facilitates holistic healing in a safe, secure environment.

This new unit provides women with access to family support to aid them in the healing process and to improve their reintegration back into their community. These safe and secure areas will allow necessary holistic work through education, training, counselling and culturally appropriate spiritual support. This new unit also includes a space for the co-location of infants with incarcerated mothers.

The creation of a new dedicated women's unit in 2019 enhanced access to family support to aid in the healing process and improve reintegration of inmates into their communities. With the renewed facility, the Department of Justice is able to continue housing women inmates in the NWT instead of having to relocate women offenders to corrections facilities in southern Canada.

The new *Corrections Act*, which came into force in October 2021, includes a number of sections that are dedicated to the safe and humane supervision of women offenders; including, the use of physical restraints on pregnant inmates, addressing the health care needs of women, gender requirements for searches and the placement and supervision of women offenders.

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### TIMELINE

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The dedicated Women's Unit has been established.



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## ACTION 87

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### Establish independent Community Advisory Board's for each of the NWT's correctional facilities

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#### PROGRAM

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Corrections Facilities – Community Advisory Boards

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#### CONTEXT

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The new *Corrections Act*, which is targeted for full implementation at the end of October 2021, updates the NWT Corrections legislation and incorporate modern practices and approaches at the national and international levels. The new Act takes into consideration the unique cultural background, historic legacy and experience of offenders in the NWT.

The new Act will enhance the operations, transparency and accountability of corrections services in the NWT. This, in turn, will allow for more opportunities for the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of NWT offenders into their communities. The changes proposed recognize the cultural and historical legacy of the offenders in the NWT and set the framework for incorporating these elements into the rehabilitation process.

One significant change provided for in the Act is the establishment of independent Community Advisory Boards. The GNWT plans to establish Community Advisory Boards at each of the NWT correctional facilities. Community Advisory Boards will review and make recommendations in respect of:

- a) the administration of the Corrections Act and the regulations, other than in respect of establishment matters, personnel matters or discipline matters for specific inmates; and
- b) any program established or to be established or service to be provided under the Act or the regulations.

By strategically engaging the public, correctional facilities can foster trust and a mutual understanding and build partnerships. Community Advisory Board members can provide valuable experience, expertise, and perspectives.

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#### TIMELINE

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Establishment of Community Advisory Boards will begin in the winter of 2022.

# 87

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## **ACTION 88**

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### **Help families find information about their missing loved ones**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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NWT Family Information Liaison Unit Program

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#### **CONTEXT**

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The GNWT signed a new three-year agreement from 2020-2023 with Justice Canada to fund the NWT Family Information Liaison Unit (FILU) program. FILU is a national initiative to help families find information about their missing loved ones. As of 2020, 50 family members have asked NWT FILU 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. Clients can get help with their research even if the police investigation showed their loved ones' cases did not involve foul play.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic a mobile office and outreach model was used to serve clients in remote areas. Since 2019, FILU staff have travelled to 17 communities to provide outreach to community members. In working with FILU, families and individuals direct the process at their own pace and are the key decision makers in all aspects, at every stage.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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Ongoing funding to 2023



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## ACTION 89

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### Review and renew specialized courts:

- a) Conduct a review of Domestic Violence Treatment Options Court
- b) Conduct a review of the Wellness Court

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## PROGRAM

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Specialized Courts

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## CONTEXT

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The **Domestic Violence Treatment Options Court** was established to provide an option for low to medium risk offenders who take responsibility for their actions (plead guilty) and agree to attend a program which provides participants with information and tools to reduce future incidents or escalation of domestic violence in their relationships. Offenders are carefully screened to participate. Successful completion of the program is considered by the Court in sentencing. Victim safety is always a key consideration.

A review of the Domestic Violence Treatment Options Court program will be conducted to provide an indication of program effectiveness and the extent to which the program is helping the intended audience achieve positive outcomes

The **Wellness Court** was established to provide another alternative to conventional court and focuses on the offender rather than the offence. It targets primarily chronic offenders and applies a model that seeks to address underlying issues of drug and alcohol addiction, mental health and cognitive challenges. A wellness plan is developed for each offender which outlines programming and goals they are expected to complete. When they complete their wellness plan, the offender returns to court for sentencing. Successful completion of the program is considered by the court in sentencing.

The Wellness Court program intends to address the issues underlying a person's offending behavior, such as drug and alcohol addiction, mental health issues and cognitive challenges with a goal of reducing future offences or escalation in criminal behavior.

A review of the Wellness Court program will be conducted to provide an indication of program effectiveness and the extent to which the program is helping the intended audience achieve positive outcomes.

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## TIMELINE

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Completion of program reviews by 2023



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## ACTION 90

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**Implement remote court via telephone or videoconferencing to minimize the impacts of delayed justice to families and communities.**

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### PROGRAM

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Remote Court Appearances and Technologies

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### CONTEXT

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Courts in the Northwest Territories have used telephone appearances for a number of matters where appropriate for many years. The Department of Justice supports technology initiatives to allow for remote video appearances to allow participants to be seen and view proceedings they are involved in.

The GNWT acknowledges the increased impacts to families and communities caused by delayed access to court because of limited court dates in communities and lengthy wait times for accessing services.

The Department of Justice supports court initiatives that will allow for enhanced remote appearances before the court from all communities via telephone or videoconferencing. The Department currently supports remote testimony that facilitates testimony from locations outside of the courtroom for vulnerable witnesses so that they can testify before the court without being in view of their alleged attacker.

The Department is working with the courts of the NWT to implement solutions that will make it easier to conduct court hearings remotely, where appropriate. Such initiatives benefit Indigenous people in that they can have quicker access to justice within their communities. Where suitable, as determined by the courts, the changes also allow for better use of finite police and court resources to benefit the public.

Use of technology facilitating remote appearances allows for persons attending before the courts to do so in a more comfortable manner thus allowing fuller and more frank testimony and earlier resolution of matters originating in smaller communities. The program promotes access to Justice.

#### **Remote appearances at bail hearings**

Recent experience during COVID-19 restrictions in the NWT has demonstrated that bail hearings could be held earlier and the accused, who are successful in being granted bail are released sooner, avoiding costly accommodation and travel to return to their community. The Department is actively engaged with the RCMP in installing video connections and equipment in each NWT detachment, with work in 19 detachments underway.

#### **Remote Docket Appearance Court Circuits**

Courts have exclusive jurisdiction over when and where sittings may be scheduled. The Supreme and Territorial Court judges and court staff travel to communities to hear matters as needed. Recently, the Territorial Court has proposed remote docket appearances in usual circuit communities if certain conditions around travel and technology can be met.

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### TIMELINE

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Remote Bail Appearances will be piloted commencing in September 2021 with a view to full implementation by the end of the 2021/22 fiscal year.

Remote Docket Appearances have been deferred during pandemic restrictions and will be revisited within 6 months of pandemic restrictions ending and travel resuming to near-pre-pandemic levels.

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## ACTION 91

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### Deliver culturally relevant programs to support offender rehabilitation and reintegration

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#### PROGRAM

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Corrections Programming and Traditional Spaces

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#### CONTEXT

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The term “program” in corrections includes a wide range of services made available to offenders to promote individual rehabilitation and reintegration. This includes criminogenic programming to address the root causes that lead an individual to crime, academic upgrading, traditional and spiritual programs, recreational and work activities. All are intended to bring about change to behaviours and attitudes of offenders and promote their return to the community as contributing members of society.

All correctional facilities and programs integrate Indigenous culture and traditions in the way they are delivered with input from Elders, Traditional Liaison Officers and the participation of other Indigenous staff. During criminogenic programs, traditional counsellors or Elders may attend the group to help participants reflect on their culture and learning. Indigenous cultural programming and knowledge-sharing is intended to have a positive effect on the social and behavioural development of offenders. Traditional land-based activities external to the facilities may also be conducted where inmate risk levels allow for this.

Each correctional facility currently has at least one position dedicated to the delivery of Indigenous cultural programs, counselling and services at the facility.

The North Slave Correctional Complex (NSCC) has three traditional areas: one located inside the facility, and the other two located outdoors, within the secure perimeter. These areas are used for smudging, one-on-one counselling and sharing circles.

The Northern Sessions program offered at the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre (SMCC) aims to harmonize with the core criminogenic programming and addresses the specific background and needs of Indigenous inmates. It is expected to be extended to the NSCC and Fort Smith Correctional Complex (FSCC) in winter 2021-22.

A made-in-the NWT Indigenous Pre-Treatment Healing Program, also offered at the SMCC, prepares offenders at the beginning of their healing journey to engage in more structured core correctional programming. It is envisioned that this program would be expanded to the NSCC and FSCC and will become the cornerstone of the Therapeutic Community model being implemented at the SMCC.

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#### TIMELINE

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Ongoing program delivery integrating culture, traditions, and knowledge-sharing

Completion of the retrofit of the traditional area located inside the NSCC to allow for smudging indoors by the end of 2021-22.

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## **ACTION 92**

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### **Set policing priorities in partnership with community and Indigenous governments**

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#### **PROGRAM**

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Community Policing Action Plans

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#### **CONTEXT**

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The Minister of Justice sets policing priorities annually through consultation with community leaders to reflect changing dynamics and expectations that communities have for their safety.

Policing priorities are reflected in Community Policing Action Plans developed in partnership between the RCMP and community leadership, based on the specific needs of each community. Policing priorities are reviewed and updated every year after consultations with community leaders, community citizens, other government departments and the RCMP.

The 2021/22 policing priorities are consistent with themes of reconciliation that have come from the UN Declaration, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the Calls for Justice from the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry, and the voices of our communities heard by RCMP in consultation for Community Policing Action Plans.

Community Policing Action Plans have been developed in all 33 communities, in consultation with community leaders, to identify priorities that the RCMP are to work on to promote community safety.

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#### **TIMELINE**

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Policing priorities are reported on a quarterly basis throughout the year through Community Safety Plans and Mayor and Chief's Monthly Reports.



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## ACTION 93

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### Support a professional, dedicated and culturally responsive policing service to Indigenous communities

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#### PROGRAM

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First Nations Policing Program Agreement

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#### CONTEXT

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The Calls for Justice for specialized Indigenous policing units within non-Indigenous police services have been heard by the GNWT. While there are no specific Indigenous police units in the NWT, the Department of Justice has signed the First Nations Community Policing Service Framework Agreement that funds nine positions across the territory under the First Nations Policing Program (FNPP). The positions are located in Inuvik, Behchokò, Fort Simpson, Fort Good Hope, Fort McPherson and Tulita.

The Department of Justice has long sought additional federal funding to expand the FNPP in order to support a professional, dedicated and culturally responsive policing service to Indigenous communities and has met with Indigenous Governments and leaders in regard to the placements for the FNPP positions to enhance police services in some communities.

The Department of Justice continues to lobby the Federal Government on a longer-term framework agreement. The department will focus on the expansion of the First Nations Policing Program in the NWT, with the goal of exploring alternatives to bridge the gap between the needs of communities and what the RCMP can provide operationally.

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#### TIMELINE

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Four regional agreements in place by 2021-2022 that formally recognize the community's role in shaping the policing they receive





## Other Actions to Respond to Calls for Justice

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### ACTION 94

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#### Communications Strategy and Plan

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#### PROGRAM

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The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs

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#### CONTEXT

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A clear and defined communications process is necessary as the GNWT moves forward in its response to the Calls for Justice. This communications strategy will be an important element in the Action Plan.

EIA will serve to coordinate all GNWT communications related to MMIWG in order to help raise awareness of MMIWG and the violence directed at Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ and inform the public about the GNWT's efforts to address the Calls for Justice and will provide Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations, community/territorial organizations, residents of the NWT with opportunities to provide input that will be considered in future plans and actions.

The communications strategy will include:

- 1) **A public awareness campaign** that raises public understanding and awareness of MMIWG and the violence directed at Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ and the GNWT's ongoing commitment to address the Calls for Justice.
  - 2) *Ongoing program-related communications* that will raise public awareness of available supports related to MMIWG and how to access them. These efforts will demonstrate how GNWT programs and services are aligned with—and help to fulfill—the Calls for Justice.
  - 3) **Regular updates on how the GNWT is working to address the Calls for Justice** and opportunities for Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, community governments and organizations, and people with lived experience to provide input.
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#### TIMELINE

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A three-year (2022 – 2024) communication strategy



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## ACTION 95

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### Public Engagement on the MMIWG Draft Action Plan

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#### PROGRAM

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The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) will carry out public engagement in order to get feedback on the Draft Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls from Jan 2022 – April 2022. The results of this engagement will inform the completion of the Final Action Plan by June 2022.

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#### CONTEXT

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To finalize the Draft Action Plan, the GNWT will undertake community engagement with Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations, community/territorial organizations, and people with lived experience. The objectives of the engagement are:

- i) To **increase awareness and acknowledge** that violence against Indigenous women and girls including members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community is a crisis that demands an urgent and active response.
  - ii) **To seek feedback** from Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations, community/territorial organizations, and people with lived experience on the Draft Action Plan.
  - iii) To take **a culturally safe and decolonized approach** and ensure **a strong voice for Indigenous women** in the conduct of community engagement.
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#### TIMELINE

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Engagement will take place between Jan 2022 – April 2022.

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