



**Government of the Northwest Territories Response to
Committee Report 1-20(1) Report on the 2024-2025 Main Estimates**

The GNWT is proposing **\$13.349 million** of incremental funding for 2024-25 and **\$6.571 million** in 2025-26 and ongoing.

1. Enhance funding for Early Learning and Childcare.

The GNWT will continue to advocate to the Government of Canada for funding to increase compensation for ELCC to align with education assistants in the K-12 sector. In support of this initiative, and without fully costing a policy-based approach, the GNWT commits to an additional **\$3.5 million** ongoing in funding as part of Budget 2024-25.

2. Enhance the Small Community Employment Program Fund.

The GNWT will restore **\$1 million** in funding to this program.

ECE confirms the change to the Small Community Employment Program Fund allows the Department to revise program targets to small communities only. No funding has been removed from the small community allocation. The Department commits to reviewing the Program Policy to focus on communities with the lowest employment rates.

3. Support the Aurora College transformation to a Polytechnique.

The GNWT will provide **\$500,000** in 2024-25 to Aurora College in support of transformation activities.

4. Support for midwifery in the NWT.

The manager and senior consultant position will be reinstated (totaling **\$331,000** ongoing). The Department commits within the life of this government to expand midwifery services to cover two more communities that do not have birthing services including Behchokò and a second community to be determined. Behchokò is identified because of its proximity by road to Yellowknife as a birthing centre.

5. Enhance supports for transitional housing for individuals in recovery of addictions and increase assisted living options for adults with disabilities.

The GNWT commits **\$240,000** ongoing to increase support for respite services for families in the NWT.

The GNWT will engage community governments and organizations in Monfwi and Dehcho primarily, as well as others that may be identified, in order to expand Transitional Housing for Recovery from Addictions Program in the life of this government.

6. Restore the Community Access Program.

Funding of **\$1.5 million** will be reinstated for the Community Access Program.

7. Provide additional funding for maintenance of housing units.

The GNWT will add **\$3 million** in maintenance funding for 2024-2025.

8. Provide a plan for the closure of the Fort Smith Correctional Complex and its repurposing as a Wellness Center.

The funding for FSCC the Fort Smith Correctional Complex will be reinstated for 2024-25.

9. Support for an existing housing project in Łutselk'e.

The Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation is collaborating with the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and industry partners to build ten units in Łutselk'e. We commit to help make this project a success by adding **\$580,000** in this budget for the Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation to be able to get the supplies for this housing project on the August 2024 barge.

10. Transfer fourteen market rental units to the Tłı̨chǫ Government.

This work is being examined by inter-governmental officials responsible to report back through the bilateral process.

11. Reductions to the Youth Corp and High-Performance Athlete funding to be restored.

The GNWT commits to monitor the Youth Corp program. The GNWT will undertake widespread outreach to community leadership and organizations and amend intake processes and

applications to increase accessibility. If the funding is fully subscribed, MACA will seek increased funding in future budget years for the Youth Corp program.

12. Ensure that MACA reduce half of their current seventeen unfunded positions and reissue those dollars for programs and services.

MACA will reduce half of its unfunded positions. Funding for these positions will remain in the Department's budget for programming purposes.

13. Remove income testing for the new Extended Health Benefits program.

The Department of Health and Social Services commits to reviewing the program to better accommodate those least able to pay. All applicants who would fall at, or under, Band 10 will have a zero family maximum for the first year of the program in order to phase in the impacts based on income and ability to pay while still collecting the data for analysis. For all applicants at Band 11 and over, we will make every effort to have the deductible modified for incremental payments however we need to confirm whether this is possible through the Alberta Blue Cross system on which this program relies.

14. Provide an update to the Business Plan targets that highlights the need to Improve literacy and numeracy outcomes amongst JK-12 students.

ECE will investigate and provide further information as part of the 2025-26 Business Plan update.

15. Establish in the ECC Business Plan how the Department will prioritize, action, and implement changes recommended in the 2020 Environmental Audit, recognizing that most recommendations are likely to carry into the 2025 audit.

The 2020 Environmental Audit is a commitment in ECC's Business Plan. The GNWT is making progress on all commitments directed to it under the 2020 Environmental Audit. Two commitments have been completed. Many are ongoing as they are longer-term, complex and involve multiple partners, but progress is being made on all of them.

16. Realign all measures within the EIA Business Plan to match the measures laid out in the Homelessness Strategy.

EIA will investigate this request and provide further information as part of the 2025-26 Business Plan update.

17. Establish Services NWT with offices in all regional centres and Yellowknife by 2027-28 while also working to enhance the services offered by Government Service Officers to build more single-window access points for government services throughout the Territory.

EIA will establish five co-located Integrated Service teams. These teams will initially focus on homelessness but the GNWT will look for opportunities to expand this approach to other programs and services. EIA will undertake a monitoring and evaluation of this program to ensure that the GNWT is making informed decisions going forward. EIA will also re-organize itself so that One Window service centres and Government Service Officers will be in the same organization to create opportunities for greater integration over time.

18. Provide for a costed implementation plan of the Strengthening the Non-Profit and Charitable Sector External Advisory Committee Final Report.

EIA will address the recommendations of the report during the life of this government.

19. Provide cost estimates to the Business Plan commitment that pledges to help NGOs stabilize their funding, particularly for those running supportive living facilities to keep vulnerable populations housed.

As part of the 2023-24 budget process, the GNWT approved forced growth requests from NGOs for inflation. NGOs are also able to conclude multi-year funding agreements. These budgeting provisions remain in place to help provide stabilized funding for NGOs. In addition, and as part of past and future budget dialogues, the Department of Finance will be hosting budget meetings with NGOs and Community governments to ensure budget areas like our vulnerable populations are being recognized in the GNWT's budget.

20. Ensure a revenue neutral carbon pricing regime which itemizes how revenues is then reallocated through public reporting.

Any net revenues retained by the GNWT from this program are used (notionally) to support and offset costs related to projects that reduce the NWT's GHG footprint or energy costs to residents. These projects are summarized below and as required under the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act; this information will be reported as part of the annual reporting requirements.

Planned 2024-25 Expenditures	(000s)
Climate Change Preparedness in the North	1,971
Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program	3,650
Alternative and Renewable Energy Program	70
Alternative Energy Technologies Program	200

Arctic Energy Alliance	1,496
Commercial Energy Conservation and Efficiency Program	200
Community Renewable Energy Program	100
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	360
Electric Vehicle Fast Charger Corridor	30
Electric Vehicles Rebate Program	153
Low-income program to address energy poverty	200
Energy efficiency incentive program	200
Energy ratings services support program	150
NWT Energy Efficiency Projects	300
Inuvik Wind Project	38,000
Total	47,080

*Not included in this chart but other costs to support residents with energy or heat costs also include Territorial home heating subsidy, the Territorial power support subsidy and recently \$30 million in support to mitigate the impacts of low water on power rates.

21. Create a strategy to reduce TSC Chargebacks by 10% across the GNWT.

The Department of Finance will develop a strategy to reduce the cost of technology services. Finance will also consider ways to reuse existing technologies to help departments reduce operational expenses, where possible. A quantitative target can be set once the strategy is developed through analysis of the reasons for TSC costs.

22. Create a plan that allows for a Tłıchǵ Administrative region for operations and capital planning purposes, removing it from the North Slave region.

The request to create a plan that allows for a Tłıchǵ Administrative Region has been raised at the bi-lateral process with our two governments. Senior officials with the GNWT and Tłıchǵ Government have agreed to discussing this matter further, including interests and challenges. Senior officials will report back through the bi-lateral process once more information is available.

23. A commitment to increase the Medical Residency Program from two residents to four residents by 2027-2028.

HSS continues to prioritize the recruitment and retention of physicians and this commitment will be reaffirmed in the updated HSS System Human Resources Plan. The Department commits to costing this request and confirming the timing of available supervisory capacity for potential inclusion of an additional resident position in a future budget.

24. Complete new internal Job Evaluations for all frontline healthcare staff.

All GNWT job descriptions are being reviewed as part of the roll out of the IRRF. This review is summarized below:

- All Departments, Boards and Agencies, beginning in 2022, are organizing and performing reviews of all job descriptions to address systemic barriers and incorporate Indigenous cultural and social factors. 21% of job descriptions were reviewed in 2022-2023. We expect that 69% will be reviewed by end of 2023-2024.
- HSS has reviewed 17.5% of its job descriptions in 2022-2023.
- Prior to staffing a position, the job description is reviewed.

In any case, whether vacant or encumbered, we attempt to review job descriptions every 5 years to ensure that job duties are still applicable.

25. Waive the current practice standards for Foreign Credentials for internationally educated nurses.

GNWT does not regulate the licensing of nurses or any healthcare professional. For nurses, this is done by the College and Association of Nurses in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. However, HSS and ECE are already in collaboration to identify the necessary available academic training and the requirement for a local.

26. Establish clear targets for Indigenous healthcare Training and Recruitment of Staff.

HSS has targets for training and hiring indigenous staff established in its Departmental Indigenous Employment Plan.

27. Examine and estimate the costs to introduce an Office of Practitioner Experience in the NWT healthcare system.

The Department will commit to examining & investigating the costs for this initiative further.

28. Expand on the existing GNWT Physician Workforce Plan by creating an overall Healthcare Workforce Plan that contains:

- **An updated territorial model of physician services that is formalized and funded;**
- **An effective Territorial Primary Care Model based on equitable access and continuity; and**
- **A re-evaluation of the health systems leadership model.**

The physician workforce plan is based on practitioner-centered / current state care models, not integrated care teams with everyone at full scope. The Department remains committed to the recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals. This is being reaffirmed in the Department's updated HSS System Human Resource Plan.

29. Provide options and costing for a mobile X-Ray Machine for small Communities.

X-ray machines already exist in all community health centers with nurses.

30. Encourage better upkeep of public housing units by supporting resident-led collective efforts to protect their homes and neighbourhoods through the creation of incentives for housing cooperatives.

HNWT will commit to discussing this matter further with the City of Yellowknife and the YKDFN to understand the potential for future cooperative housing models.

31. Provide an update to the ITI Business Plan that sets goals to increase the value of income, employment and dollars spent on all film productions taking place in the NWT.

ITI will investigate this request and provide further information as part of the 2025-26 Business Plan update.

32. Provide a costed plan that outlines how the utility regulator, the three electrical utilities, the GNWT and interested Indigenous Governments will work together to develop a short, medium and long-term roadmap with appropriate planning, regulatory, and policy tools to enable the transformation of the NWT electricity system over the coming decades in alignment with climate goals and building greater energy independence in the NWT.

The Department has committed in its Business Plan to developing and releasing a new strategic approach to energy in 2025-26. It will be based on what was heard during the public engaging in 2023-24. We will update committee on this work and consult with them on what should be included in the strategic approach to energy and ways that the GNWT can reach its climate goals and build energy independence.

Specifically, the GNWT will commit in its strategic plan to net-zero emissions, for both non-industrial and industrial emitters, by 2050.

33. Advance the currently proposed timeline for changes to the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* with a Legislative Proposal by the winter sitting of 2025.

A review of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* will be completed by Summer 2025 and will inform the need/schedule for any legislative changes including any appropriate, associated timeline.

34. Provide a Legislative Proposal that aims to modernize the *Residential Tenancies Act* by the winter sitting of 2025.

A review of the *Residential Tenancies Act* will be completed by Summer 2025 and will inform the need/schedule for any legislative changes.

35. It has been highlighted that the Municipal Funding Gap under the current formula cannot be closed or reduced without substantial investment. Committee is seeking a commitment to adopt a more equitable funding formula that equalizes the gap for communities across the NWT. This funding formula should fund models and new contributions which capture:

- **Operations and Maintenance;**
- **Water and Waste;**
- **Capital;**
- **New contributions for Municipal Emergency Preparedness and Public Safety; and,**
- **Ability to implement ground ambulance services to interested communities.**

MACA has recently updated its Community Government Funding policies for operations and maintenance, water and sewer, and Capital to provide a more equitable distribution of funding by basing allocations on a needs-based formula. Implementation of the new funding policies will be in 2024-25, but the allocations will not be implemented until 2025-26 to allow time to engage with community governments as well as the NWT Association of Communities and LGANT. Allocations will be implemented over a three-year transition period.

Funding sustainable community government services is a shared responsibility across all levels of governments. Community Governments may use their O&M funding and dedicate it toward emergency preparedness and public safety, to include ground ambulance services if they choose.

36. Provide detailed plans for Housing NWT's capital carryover and its operating surplus.

The GNWT commits to provide a fully costed and detailed plan for all carryover, surplus and capital funds as part of the 2025-26 budget cycle.

37. Have Housing NWT repurpose housing units for community use.

Housing NWT does not follow the GNWT's Disposal of Improved Real Property Policy. Housing NWT will provide an outline of the process followed to transfer or surplus units prior to the 2025-26 budget cycle.

38. Provide an update on the status of the Home Ownership Inspection Consultation Program.

Housing NWT will provide an update on the Home Ownership Inspection Consultation process.

39. Amend policy within Housing NWT respecting monthly income submissions for persons with disabilities and low-income seniors.

HNWT commits this fiscal year to modify the requirements for monthly income submissions by persons with disabilities and low-income seniors to align with the "payroll" approach used by Income Assistance to support these clients. We will also examine whether this approach can be applied to clients who are caregivers to persons with permanent disabilities.

40. Provide housing supports to the community of Enterprise.

Housing NWT does not hold units in Enterprise. However, HNWT commits to meeting with residents of Enterprise to find out if any residents would be eligible for public housing (assessment of income levels below threshold) and whether the residents would accept a public housing unit instead.

41. Provide support to communities affected by the cancellation of the barge season.

The GNWT commits to help coordinate alternative shipping services and provide financial support to residents and SMEs to assist in offsetting higher costs. INF will commit to enhancing the winter road in order to accommodate enhanced resupply during the 2025 winter road season.