



September 27, 2024

GEORGE NERYSOO
MLA, MACKENZIE DELTA

Oral Question 254-20(1): High Cost of Food in Northwest Territories

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on June 24, 2024, regarding the high cost of food in the Northwest Territories.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) takes a comprehensive approach to food security, focusing on both immediate needs and long-term solutions. While a formal strategy has not been published, coordination is led by the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs (EIA), with oversight from the Governance and Service Integration (GSI) Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee. Food security efforts include supporting local food production, country food harvesting, and food storage. Although climate change has created challenges for food supply and traditional harvesting, programs like the Northern Food Development Program and federal partnerships help address these impacts.

Several departments contribute to this whole-of-government approach. The Anti-Poverty Fund and Healthy Choices Fund support local food initiatives, while community-based projects like meal programs receive funding from the Small Community Homelessness Fund. Schools and education bodies also receive support to provide healthy meals, and Indigenous governments use Community Wellness Initiatives to strengthen food security. In addition, the GNWT offers the Community Harvester Assistance Program and Indigenous governments can also access funds from partners such as Canadian Feed the Children for distribution to schools.

Federal partnerships remain key. The GNWT continues to advocate for federal support through frameworks like the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework, while the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) works with Canada on the National School Food Program. Additionally, Nutrition North Canada has expanded its support for isolated communities with subsidies and grants for traditional harvesting and food sharing. The GNWT's integrated efforts, combined with federal partnerships, provide a strong foundation for improving food security in the NWT.

With respect to the Nutrition North Program (NNP) and concerns that the full benefit of subsidies may not be passed along to residents, the GNWT has advocated for more detailed reporting under the NNP. Nutrition North Canada works closely with its Advisory Board, Indigenous Working Group, and the newly established Inuit-Crown Food Security Working Group to find ways to refine programs and support food security.

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Indigenous Working Group members include a representative from the Dene Nation, the Sahtu Dene Council and the Tłıchǫ Government. Canada has also appointed two additional advisory board members from the NWT, including the chair, Nellie Cournoyea. It is also important to note that Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) is currently conducting a five-year review of the NNP. The review is expected to be completed in the summer of 2025.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.J. Simpson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

R.J. Simpson
Premier

c: Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Director, Legislative Affairs and House Planning