



Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupation Certification Strategy Extension

October 2024

Government of
Northwest Territories

K'áhshó got'íne xadā k'é hederí ʔedjhtl'é yeriniwé ní dé dúle.
Dene Kádá

7erihŋtʰis Dēne Sųtıné yatı t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatı theʔa ʔat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yóŋtı.
Dēne Sųtıné

Edi gondi dehgháh got'je zhatié k'éé edat'éh enahddhë nide naxets'é edahíí.
Dene Zhatié

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ijahch'uu zhit yinohthan ji', diits'at ginohkhii.
Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaq'luta.
Inuvialuktun

Inuktitut

**Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.
Inuinnaqtun**

kīspīn kī nīṭawīhtīn ē nīhīyawīhk ōma ācimōwīn, tipwāsīnān.
nēhīyawēwīn

Tɪjɕɔ yati k'èè. Dɪ wegodi newɔ dè, gots'o goneɗe.
Tɪjɕɔ

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Executive summary

The *Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupation Certification Strategy Extension* (the Strategy Extension) provides a framework to guide the Government of the Northwest Territories' activities and actions in apprenticeship, trade and occupation certification for the next two years. It builds on the [NWT Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification Strategy 2017-2022](#) (the Strategy 2017-22), which guided apprenticeship, trade and occupation certification activities and actions from 2017 to 2022.

The Strategy Extension sets out the actions and objectives for how the Government of the Northwest Territories will meet apprenticeship goals while serving the NWT's labour needs. To help inform the Strategy Extension and to ensure stakeholders across the NWT have the opportunity to contribute their ideas and perspectives towards further enhancing apprenticeship, trade and occupation certification in the NWT, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment held [engagement sessions](#) from January 15 to February 16, 2024 additional engagement sessions were hosted from April 30 to May 7, 2024. The findings have been summarized in a [What We Heard Report](#) and were used to inform key aspects of the Strategy Extension.

The actions identified in the Strategy Extension place an emphasis on the importance of properly marketing and promoting the Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupation Certification Program so potential apprentices and employers are aware of the process and benefits to participation.

The GNWT is committed to continue building on the [successes achieved](#) in apprenticeship, trade and occupation certification activities throughout 2017 to 2022. These successes include:

1. **Increased Participation:** The Schools North Apprenticeship Program witnessed exponential growth, with participation soaring from 0 students in 2016 to 22 students by 2022.
2. **Indigenous Inclusion:** Notable strides were made in Indigenous participation, with 59 percent of new apprentices in 2021-22 originating from Indigenous communities, compared to 51 percent in 2016.
3. **Enhanced Satisfaction:** Both employers and apprentices reported heightened satisfaction levels, attributing it to a more nurturing and supportive environment tailored to meet the diverse needs and preferences of stakeholders.
4. **Gender Diversity:** Efforts to encourage female participation in the trades resulted in the proportion of new female apprentices rising from two percent in 2016 to eight percent in 2021-22.
5. **Awareness Campaigns:** Extensive promotional endeavors through various mediums effectively raised awareness of skilled trades training and certification, ensuring broader dissemination of information and resources. Introduction

Introduction

The *Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupation Certification Strategy Extension* (Strategy Extension) puts into action feedback received from partners, while accounting for current trends in the Northwest Territories economy, population and labour market. It places an emphasis on the importance of strategic initiatives in marketing and promotion, comprehensive supports for apprentices and employers, and attracting further applicants to extend the impact and effectiveness of the [Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupation Certification](#) program.

The former [NWT Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification Strategy 2017-22](#) (Strategy) shared the [Skills 4 Success 10-Year Strategic Framework 2015-25](#) (Skills 4 Success) goal of effectively responding to employers' skill needs. The [Skills 4 Success](#) initiative was launched with the aim of improving employment success for NWT residents, closing skill gaps for in-demand jobs, and more effectively responding to employer, industry and community needs. The Strategy Extension continues to align with Skills 4 Success, furthering the Government of the Northwest Territories commitment to maintaining momentum on key initiatives and actions while supporting new and emerging priorities.

The Strategy Extension follows the same structure as the Strategy 2017-22, focusing and will focus on the same four goals, which are:

- Increase skill levels through relevant education and training
- Bridge education and employment gaps through targeted supports
- Grow the NWT workforce through partnerships
- Improve decision making with relevant labour market information

From January 15 to February 16, 2024 and April 30 to May 7, 2024, input was [gathered](#) from 15 stakeholders regarding the extension of the Strategy 2017-22. This input was received through emails, meetings and three engagement sessions. Six additional engagement sessions were held hosted from April 30 to May 7, 2024, drawing an additional 36 participants, including stakeholders, industry apprentices and employers. Attendees had the choice to engage in person or virtually. Feedback was also accepted via email.

The key takeaways from these engagement activities include:

- The continued importance of promoting and informing students, parents and employers about the benefits of apprenticeship training.
- Providing support on the worksite for apprentices and employers.
- Fostering a positive identity for trades and emphasizing that trades are not an alternative to higher education but an equivalent option.
- Providing resources to assist apprentices and employers in navigating the apprenticeship process and learning how to participate in the program.
- Continue to provide more trades training in the NWT and have more training options available.

NWT labour market

The NWT, like many other jurisdictions in Canada, continues to face labour shortages and tight labour markets. Currently, there is a mismatch of skills and occupations due to the territory's small population, limited post-secondary education options and skills demand being spread out unevenly in communities and regional centers.

In 2023, the average employment rate was 69.9 percent, dropping from 72.2 percent reported in 2022. During the same period, the unemployment rate increased by close to a percentage point to 5.9 percent as the number of people seeking employment increased from 1,300 to 1,500.

The demand for certified workers in the trades continues to be driven by Yellowknife's economic activity, in contrast with smaller communities where unemployment rates are higher and the local workforce either fills the demand or positions remain vacant for reasons such as remoteness or limited housing. For example, [2021 Census data](#) on labour force activity showed an employment rate of 64.6 percent in the NWT, with Yellowknife's employment rate being the highest in the NWT at 74.4 percent. When excluding the communities of Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson and Inuvik the employment rate for the remaining communities averaged 46.7 percent.

Action plan

The Strategy Extension sets out actions that provide guidance and direction to help achieve the GNWT's goals in apprenticeship, trade and occupation certification over the next two years. The new actions ensure that apprenticeship goals are met while serving the NWT's labour market needs. The Strategy Extension is based on [feedback](#) from NWT apprenticeship stakeholders and informed by the current state of the NWT's economy, population and labour market.

The actions identify the need to build a skilled and diverse workforce while growing the economy and adding to the vibrancy of NWT communities.

Goal 1: Increase skill levels through relevant education and training

Action:

- Collaborate with Aurora College to increase new trades training opportunities in the NWT.

Goal 2: Bridge education and employment gaps through targeted supports

Actions:

- Increase outreach to apprentices and employers, increasing the Department of Education's Culture and Employment's presence on the worksite.
- Increase the number of [Schools North Apprenticeship Program](#) students transitioning into the apprenticeship program.
- Review and improve the administration of the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupation Certification program to ensure it is responsive to clients, employers and the needs of the labour market to increase the number of apprentices, including women, in trades.

Goal 3: Grow the NWT workforce through partnership

Actions:

- Promote apprenticeships as first-choice careers for students and youth.
- Provide comprehensive guides to help employers and apprentices navigate the apprenticeship system.
- Strengthen partnerships with the [Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupation Certification Board](#) and industry.
- Work with the Department of Infrastructure and Housing NWT to identify opportunities and remove barriers to increase the number of apprentices.

Goal 4: Improve decision making with relevant labour market information

Actions:

- Align the NWT apprenticeship training system with labour market demand so that the apprenticeship training system is relevant and responds to the needs of apprentices, employers and NWT residents.

Performance measurement

A performance measurement plan has been developed which includes performance measures, indicators and implementation of an effective data management and information system to track and report on results. This plan establishes a strong accountability structure between program areas, the Government of the Northwest Territories, and the public. Performance measurement also provides a platform to identify and showcase successes in apprenticeship and ultimately, contributes to the continuous improvement of the labour market in the NWT.

In accordance with the Strategy Extension's Performance Measurement Plan, at the conclusion of the two-year Extension, the Government of the Northwest Territories will report on the performance measures below.

Action	Performance measure(s)	Data source	Data collection responsibility
Goal 1: Increase skill levels through relevant education and training			
Collaborate with Aurora College and industry to increase new trades training opportunities.	Description of collaborative processes (e.g., new programs and initiatives developed and/or supported).	Administrative records	Department of Education, Culture and Employment
Goal 2: Bridge education and employment gaps through targeted supports			
Increase outreach to employers and apprentices, increasing the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's presence on the worksite.	Number and frequency of regional on-the-job engagements with employers and apprentices.	Administrative records	Department of Education, Culture and Employment
Increase the number of Schools North Apprenticeship Program students transitioning into the apprenticeship program.	Number of Schools North Apprenticeship Program students that register as apprentices. Number of high school students participating in	Administrative records	Department of Education, Culture and Employment

	Schools North Apprenticeship Program.		
Review and improve the administration of the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupation Certification program to ensure it is responsive to apprentices, journeypersons, employers and the needs of the labour market.	Client and employee perception of Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupation Certification program.	Client satisfaction survey results	Department of Education, Culture and Employment
Increase the number of apprentices including women in trades.	Number of new apprentices and new qualified journeypersons. Number of women in trades.	Administrative records	Department of Education, Culture and Employment
Goal 3: Grow the NWT workforce through partnerships			
Promote apprenticeships as first-choice careers for students and youth.	Types of promotional media related to careers in the trades. Number of clicks on paid digital and social ads. Number of engagements on social posts.	Administrative records	Department of Education, Culture and Employment
Provide comprehensive guides to help employers and apprentices navigate the apprenticeship system.	Guides are completed, available, and accessible to apprentices and employers.	Administrative records	Department of Education, Culture and Employment

Strengthen partnership with the Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupation Certification Board and industry.	Description of effective partnerships with Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupation Certification Board, employers, training providers, communities.	Administrative records	Department of Education, Culture and Employment
Work with the Department of Infrastructure and Housing NWT to identify opportunities to increase the number of apprentices.	Opportunities identified. Description of collaborative processes and initiatives undertaken.	Administrative records	Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Department of Infrastructure, Housing NWT
Goal 4: Improve decision making with relevant labour market information			
Align the NWT apprenticeship training system with labour market demand so that the apprenticeship training system responds to and is relevant to the needs of apprentices, employers, and NWT residents.	Number and percentage of NWT apprentices who entered trades under the category of Skills 4 Success jobs in demand. Number and percentage of NWT apprentices who were certified as a journeyperson in trades under the category of Skills 4 Success jobs in demand.	Administrative records	Department of Education, Culture and Employment