

# What We Heard

## Northwest Territories Nominee Program

February 2026



K'áhshó got'jne xədə k'é hederı ɔedjhtl'é yerınıwę nı dé dúle.  
Dene Kadé

ʔerıhtl'ıs Dēne Sųlıné yatı t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatı theɔɔ ɔat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yóftı.  
Dēne Sųlıné

Edı gondı dehgáh got'je zhaté k'éé edatl'éh enahddhę nıde naxets'é edahıfı.  
Dene Zhaté

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ijąhch'uu zhit yinohtan jı', diits'at ginohkhıi.  
Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqłuta.  
Inuvialuktun

Ċ'đċ ħħ'ḃΔĊ ĀŕĹJ&ŕĊ Δ.đħĊĊĊ'ŕĹĹħħ', đĊĊħ'đĊ đ'ḃĊŕ'đĊĊħħĊ.  
Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.  
Inuinnaqtun

kıspin ki nitawihtın ē nıhıyawıhk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsınān.  
nēhiyawēwin

Tıjchq yatı k'èè. Dı wegodı newq dè, gots'o gonede.  
Tıjchq

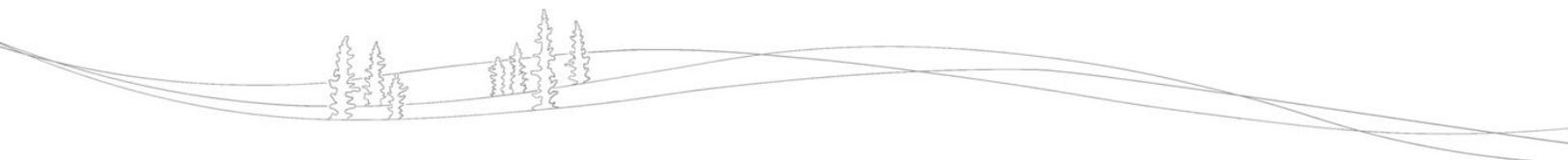
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Une version française de ce document est disponible.



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## Executive Summary

The Northwest Territories Nominee Program is an economic immigration program administered by the Government of the Northwest Territories in cooperation with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. In September 2025, the Government of the Northwest Territories sought public input on how the Northwest Territories Nominee Program is functioning and where improvements may be required.

Respondents identified several areas where the Northwest Territories Nominee Program could be strengthened. Many stated that public awareness of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program is limited and that clearer guidance, regular information sessions and more accessible communication materials would support both employers and foreign nationals. Respondents also noted that broader communication on the benefits of economic immigration could help address misconceptions within the Northwest Territories.

Feedback emphasized the importance of aligning nominations with labour market needs. Health care and social services, hospitality and tourism, and construction and infrastructure were identified as sectors facing significant shortages. Many respondents stated that work permit expiry dates are not an appropriate basis for prioritizing applications and that longer work experience in the Northwest Territories is a more meaningful indicator of both labour market contribution and intention to reside.

Respondents also identified factors that may demonstrate intention to remain in the Northwest Territories, including community involvement, family connections, previous education in the Northwest Territories and language ability. Views were mixed on the use of an Expression of Interest system and on the prioritization of specific occupations.

Overall, respondents indicated that the Northwest Territories Nominee Program is a useful tool for addressing labour shortages, but they also identified several areas where program design, communication, and support for settlement and retention could be improved.

## Introduction

The Northwest Territories Nominee Program is delivered by the Government of the Northwest Territories under an agreement with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. The Government of Canada determines national immigration levels, issues visas and work permits, and grants permanent residence and citizenship. The Government of the Northwest Territories is responsible for designing and administering the Northwest Territories Nominee Program in accordance with labour market needs in the Northwest Territories and the terms of the federal-territorial agreement.

In 2024, the Government of Canada announced reductions to national immigration levels and to the annual nomination allocations for provincial and territorial nominee programs, including the Northwest Territories Nominee Program. In January 2025, the Government of Canada confirmed the reduced allocation to the Government of the Northwest Territories. This confirmation initiated a review of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program to assess whether changes to eligibility criteria, intake processes, or program structure were required.

To ensure that the Northwest Territories Nominee Program continues to meet the needs of employers in the Northwest Territories, public engagement was undertaken to inform potential changes to the Northwest Territories Nominee Program for 2026 and future years. The engagement sought input on how the Northwest Territories Nominee Program could be strengthened by aligning more closely with Northwest Territories labour market needs, increasing flexibility for employers and foreign nationals, supporting program integrity, and considering practices used in other nominee programs across Canada.

The engagement focused on areas where adjustments to the Northwest Territories Nominee Program could affect outcomes for Northwest Territories residents, foreign nationals, and employers, while remaining compliant with federal requirements established by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Public engagement was conducted from September 2 to September 30, 2025, through the Government of the Northwest Territories' Have Your Say platform and direct outreach to identified stakeholders. Respondents were asked to comment on eligibility requirements, prioritization of applications, intake mechanisms, employer roles, regional considerations, the Francophone Stream, the Business Stream, and factors that influence settlement and retention.

To support informed participation, respondents were provided with an engagement guide that described the Northwest Territories Nominee Program, outlined recent changes, summarized

the issues under review and included links to Northwest Territories Nominee Program stream guidelines. Feedback was collected through an online survey and by email.

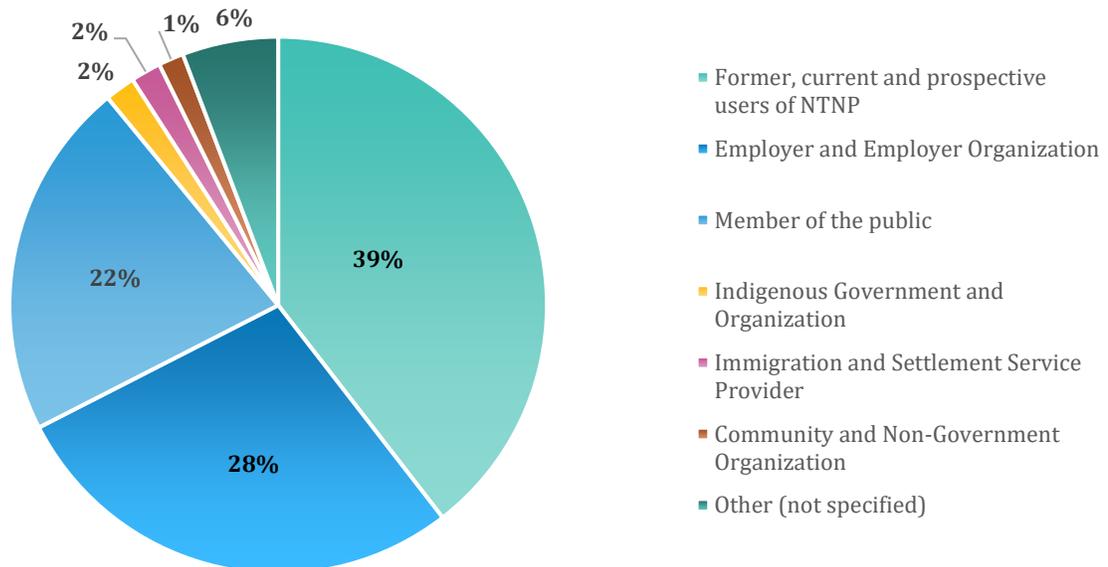
This report summarizes the feedback received. It reflects the views of participants and does not represent Government of the Northwest Territories policy decisions.

*The methodology describing how the feedback was received and collected is outlined at the end of this report.*

## What We Heard

This section summarizes the feedback received during public engagement on the Northwest Territories Nominee Program. It includes responses to general questions posed on the Northwest Territories Nominee Program as part of the engagement, including how the Northwest Territories Nominee Program has been used, whether it was effective, and how the program is perceived in general. It also includes specific responses to engagement questions.

A total of 295 responses were received. Respondents identified themselves as belonging to several groups, including former, current, and prospective users of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program, employers and employer organizations, members of the public, Indigenous governments and organizations, immigration and settlement service providers, community and non-government organizations, and respondents who did not specify a category.



The majority of responses were received from former, current or prospective users of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program. This is likely due to the fact that changes to immigration processes and the Northwest Territories Nominee Program could most directly impact them and their pathway to permanent residency in Canada.

Employers and Employer Organizations were the next largest group of respondents. Employers and Employer Organizations also have a significant interest in immigration and the Northwest Territories Nominee Program, as employers use the Northwest Territories Nominee Program to fill critical labour needs when Canadian or Permanent Resident workers are not available.

Members of the public represented the third largest group of respondents. Their feedback provides perspectives and insights into the impacts, benefits, needs and challenges of immigration in the Northwest Territories.

While the percentage of respondents who identified as an Indigenous government or organization, Immigration Settlement Service Provider, or Community and Non-Government Organization appears low, the Northwest Territories Nominee Program received more than five responses for each group, which provided useful information.

## **General Feedback**

General questions were used to gather insights into how the Northwest Territories Nominee Program has been used, whether it was effective, and how the program is perceived in general.

Specifically, 31% of respondents noted they have used the Northwest Territories Nominee Program to support their applications for permanent residency in Canada and to continue their residency in the Northwest Territories, and 17% to support recruitment and retention of workers.

Barriers facing the recruitment and retention of skilled newcomers to the Northwest Territories were identified as high cost of living (21%), climate (16%), lack of affordable housing (12%), availability of Northwest Territories Nominee Program spots (11%) and job prospects (4%). Some of these barriers identified are uncontrollable, such as climate, but some barriers (housing and cost of living) can be mitigated through the Northwest Territories Nominee Program. For example, the Northwest Territories Nominee Program strives to address cost-of-living and housing barriers by having a median wage rate requirement where employers must pay nominee applicants the median wage rate as stated by Job Bank and Statistics Canada, for the occupation in question. This requirement is to support workers' ability economically establish themselves in the Northwest Territories.

In addition to the Northwest Territories Nominee Program median wage requirement, enhanced settlement supports (19%) and education on the Northwest Territories Nominee Program (13%) were identified as additional measures that would help employers and foreign nationals succeed in the Northwest Territories. Currently, federally funded settlement and integration services are only available in Yellowknife.

Respondents also noted that education on and awareness of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program can be improved with regular information sessions and the development of supporting materials for applicants, such as fact sheets, tutorial videos and or updated program guidelines and checklists.

Overall, general feedback received during the engagement suggests that current Northwest Territories Nominee Program processes are supporting employers and newcomers in the Northwest Territories, with suggestions for future improvement.

### **Northwest Territories Nominee Program Design and Delivery**

The Government of the Northwest Territories asked respondents for their views on the design and delivery of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program, including eligibility criteria, accessibility, and overall program function. Under the Northwest Territories Nominee Program, the Government of the Northwest Territories is responsible for program delivery, developing eligibility requirements, and assessing and nominating candidates for permanent residence. The Government of Canada sets national immigration levels, determines the Northwest Territories Nominee Program nomination allocation, issues visas and work permits and approves Northwest Territories Nominee Program design and eligibility criteria.

A total of 29% of respondents indicated that the Northwest Territories Nominee Program eligibility criteria should be reviewed annually.

Respondents identified several eligibility criteria that they considered important to the success of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program:

- A total of 53% identified work experience as a key criterion.
- A total of 47% identified the duration of work experience in the Northwest Territories.
- A total of 46% identified intention to reside in the Northwest Territories.
- A total of 31% identified the job offer.
- A total of 18% identified language ability.
- A total of 16% identified education.

The most common barrier identified in accessing the Northwest Territories Nominee Program was the employer quota, noted by 17% of respondents. This quota was introduced in 2025 due to the reduced nomination allocation but was removed in November 2025.

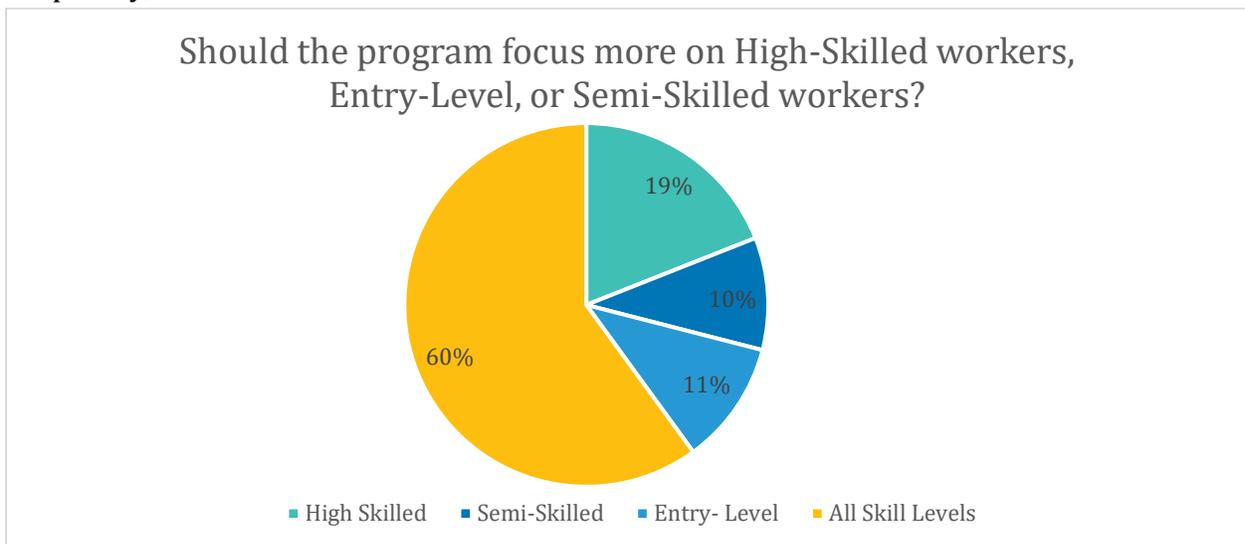
Respondents also provided suggestions for improving the Northwest Territories Nominee Program design and delivery:

- A total of 15% recommended aligning the Northwest Territories Nominee Program nominations with current workforce needs in the Northwest Territories.
- A total of 11% recommended improving communication on the Northwest Territories Nominee Program eligibility criteria.
- A total of 10% recommended faster processing times and prioritizing applicants who have been living and working in the Northwest Territories for more than one year.
- A total of 5% recommended more flexible eligibility criteria.

## High Skilled and Entry-Level/Semi-Skilled Occupations in the Northwest Territories Nominee Program

The Government of the Northwest Territories asked respondents for their views on which skill levels the Northwest Territories Nominee Program should focus on when allocating nomination spaces. Respondents were invited to comment on whether the Northwest Territories Nominee Program should prioritize high-skilled occupations, entry-level or semi-skilled occupations or support all skill levels.

A total of 60% indicated that the Northwest Territories Nominee Program should support all skill levels. Smaller proportions identified a varied preference for focusing on high-skilled, entry-level, or semi-skilled occupations. Respondents also identified several sectors where labour shortages are most significant, including health care and social services, tourism and hospitality, and construction and infrastructure.



## Prioritizing Specific Occupations or Using an Expression of Interest System

The Government of the Northwest Territories asked respondents for their views on whether the Northwest Territories Nominee Program should prioritize specific occupations or introduce an Expression of Interest (EOI) system. Respondents were invited to comment on whether structured prioritization or a points-based selection model would improve the Northwest Territories Nominee Program.

Responses were mixed. A total of 40% supported the use of an Expression of Interest system, while 48% did not. A total of 45% supported prioritizing occupations in high demand, and 45% did not. Although many respondents said no to an Expression of Interest system, some of their written comments indicated support for structured selection processes, including prioritizing

applicants with longer work experience in the Northwest Territories or aligning selections with labour market needs.

Respondents also indicated support for allocating a portion of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program nomination spaces to each stream or category. A total of 63% supported this approach.

When asked which occupations or sectors should be prioritized, respondents most frequently identified health care and social services, tourism and hospitality, and skilled trades.

### **Consideration of Work Permit Expiry Dates in Northwest Territories Nominee Program Processes**

The Government of the Northwest Territories asked respondents whether work permit expiry dates should be considered when prioritizing Northwest Territories Nominee Program applications. Respondents were invited to comment on whether expiry dates are an appropriate indicator of labour market need or applicant priority.

A total of 54% indicated that work permit expiry dates should not be considered when prioritizing Northwest Territories Nominee Program applications, and 47% disagreed that eligibility should prioritize applicants with soon-to-expire work permits.

Respondents expressed stronger support for prioritizing applicants based on the duration of their work experience in the Northwest Territories. A total of 90% supported prioritizing applications from individuals who have been living and working in the Northwest Territories for longer periods.

### **Assessing an Applicant's Intention to Reside in the Northwest Territories**

The Government of the Northwest Territories asked respondents for their views on how the Northwest Territories Nominee Program should assess an applicant's intention to reside in the Northwest Territories. Respondents were invited to identify the factors they believe best demonstrate an applicant's likelihood of remaining in the Northwest Territories long term.

A total of 90% indicated that the duration of work experience in the Northwest Territories should be prioritized when assessing intention to reside. A total of 68% agreed that the Northwest Territories Nominee Program should maintain the requirement that entry-level and semi-skilled applicants have at least 12 months of Northwest Territories work experience before applying.

Respondents also identified several additional indicators of intention to reside in the Northwest Territories. A total of 34% identified community involvement, 28% identified family ties and 17% identified education in the Northwest Territories as relevant factors.

### **Regional Considerations in Northwest Territories Nominee Program Processes**

The Government of the Northwest Territories asked respondents whether the Northwest Territories Nominee Program processes should consider regional factors within the Northwest Territories. Respondents were invited to comment on whether nomination spaces should be allocated to specific communities and whether regional labour market needs should influence Northwest Territories Nominee Program design.

The majority of Northwest Territories Nominee Program nominations have historically come from Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith, Norman Wells, and Inuvik, which are home to a significant portion of the Northwest Territories population; however, smaller or more remote communities experience important labour needs and may benefit from immigration to fill essential roles.

Responses were split on whether the Northwest Territories Nominee Program should allocate nomination spaces to specific communities, with 50% indicating support for community-specific allocations. Respondents identified several challenges that could affect the success of nominees in smaller or more remote communities, including limited housing, fewer social amenities, higher cost of living, limited job opportunities and geographic isolation.

To support successful settlement in communities, respondents suggested providing settlement and integration services and offering Northwest Territories Nominee Program information sessions to employers as a recruitment and retention tool.

### **Employers' Roles in the Northwest Territories Nominee Program**

The Government of the Northwest Territories asked respondents for their views on the role of employers in supporting Northwest Territories Nominee Program nominees. Under the Northwest Territories Nominee Program, approved nominees may receive a work permit support letter to apply to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada for a closed work permit. A closed work permit ties the nominee's ability to work and remain in the Northwest Territories to the specific occupation and employer listed on the permit.

Respondents identified several ways employers could support nominees working under closed work permits. These included providing access to housing, offering competitive wages and benefits, supporting cultural training, and creating opportunities for community involvement.

### **Supporting Francophone Immigration**

The Government of the Northwest Territories asked respondents for their views on the Northwest Territories Nominee Program Francophone Stream. Under this stream, qualified foreign nationals may apply if they speak both French and English, have a valid job offer from a Northwest Territories employer, and intend to reside in the Northwest Territories.

A total of 47% indicated that Francophone immigration should not be prioritized within the Northwest Territories Nominee Program. Respondents identified several barriers to accessing the Francophone Stream, including limited access to French language courses, lack of awareness of the stream, and the limited number of French-speaking residents outside of Yellowknife.

Respondents suggested improving awareness of the Francophone Stream and promoting it as a recruitment tool for employers seeking French-speaking workers.

### **Attracting Foreign Investment through the Business Stream**

The Government of the Northwest Territories asked respondents for their views on the Northwest Territories Nominee Program Business Stream, which supports foreign nationals who wish to establish, purchase, or invest in a business in the Northwest Territories.

Respondents were generally unfamiliar with the Business Stream, and survey responses did not provide substantive feedback on its processes. Respondents noted that additional public education and engagement may help increase awareness and understanding of this stream.

### **Enhancing Retention Rates in the Northwest Territories Nominee Program**

The Government of the Northwest Territories asked respondents for their views on factors that influence whether nominees remain in the Northwest Territories after receiving permanent residence. Respondents noted that wages, cost of living, and housing availability can affect whether nominees choose to stay in the Northwest Territories long term.

Respondents emphasized the importance of designing Northwest Territories Nominee Program processes that support settlement, integration, and retention, noting that nominees who remain in the Northwest Territories contribute to population growth and labour market stability.

## Additional Findings

Some feedback received through the survey and written responses fell outside the scope of the engagement but were relevant to broader efforts to support foreign nationals in the Northwest Territories. Respondents identified several areas where improvements could be made.

### **Settlement Services and Community Resources**

Respondents noted potential benefits in enhancing education on Indigenous history and culture in the Northwest Territories, and in developing community resources on immigration and the Northwest Territories Nominee Program for use in community events and group settings.

### **Abuse and Mistreatment of Temporary Foreign Workers**

Respondents identified concerns about the potential abuse or mistreatment of temporary foreign workers. They noted the importance of ensuring workers are paid appropriately and that employers are transparent about their intentions to support Northwest Territories Nominee Program applications.

### **Public Perceptions of Temporary Foreign Workers**

Some respondents expressed concerns that temporary foreign workers may negatively affect the local labour force. Respondents noted that improved communication on the benefits of immigration and the Northwest Territories Nominee Program may help address misconceptions and support a more welcoming environment.

## Methodology

Public engagement on the Northwest Territories Nominee Program was conducted from September 2 to September 30, 2025, through a publicly available online survey developed by Government of the Northwest Territories staff responsible for delivering the Northwest Territories Nominee Program. Information on the engagement and instructions on how to provide feedback were posted on the Government of the Northwest Territories 'Have Your Say' public engagement portal. The public was informed of the engagement through a news release and Northwest Territories Nominee Program website, through Department of Education, Culture and Employment social media accounts, and through direct emails to past and present Northwest Territories Nominee Program applicants, Indigenous and community governments, and immigration settlement service providers.

A detailed engagement guide was provided to offer context for survey questions and to support respondents in understanding the purpose of the engagement. Links to background materials, including Northwest Territories Nominee Program Stream Guidelines, were made available. Respondents were able to submit feedback through the engagement portal or by email.

A total of 295 responses were received. Of these responses:

- 39% were from current, previous or prospective users of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program
- 28% were from employers and employer organizations
- 22% were from members of the public
- 6% were from non-specified users
- 2% were from Indigenous governments and organizations
- 2% were from immigration settlement service providers
- 1% were from community and non-government organizations

Data was collected and analyzed using a mixed-method approach. Quantitative responses were supported by narrative comments that provided additional context. Responses were grouped into major and minor themes, with efforts made to reflect all feedback received.

Survey questions were designed to gather input on Northwest Territories Nominee Program eligibility requirements, priorities, intake mechanisms, and considerations related to employee recruitment and retention. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix A.

In addition to feedback received during the engagement period, the Northwest Territories Nominee Program received recommendations and input throughout 2025 from foreign

nationals, employers, and other stakeholders. Individuals who provided this feedback were advised that their input would be considered as part of potential future changes to the Northwest Territories Nominee Program. This feedback has been consolidated with the engagement results and is reflected in this report.

Some feedback received through the survey and written responses fell outside the scope of the engagement but were relevant to broader efforts to support foreign nationals in the Northwest Territories. These included comments related to the need for additional settlement services, concerns about the potential mistreatment of temporary foreign workers, and public perceptions of the impact of temporary foreign workers on the local labour force. The Northwest Territories Nominee Program will continue to monitor this type of feedback outside the engagement process.

## Next Steps

Feedback received and summarized in this report will help to inform improvements to the Northwest Territories Nominee Program design and program eligibility in 2026 and beyond, with a view to ensuring it continues to meet the needs of Northwest Territories employers and foreign national workers who intend on making the Northwest Territories their home in Canada.

## Appendix A: Online Survey

The following survey was posted online as the main vehicle for stakeholder engagement.

### Which of these categories best describes you?

- Employer and Employer Organization
- Indigenous Government and Organization
- Immigration and Settlement Service Provider
- Community and Non-Government Organization
- Former, current and prospective users of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program, including employer and foreign national
- Member of the public
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Member of the public

### QUESTIONS ON THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES NOMINEE PROGRAM

#### General Questions on the Northwest Territories Nominee Program

These questions are to gather insights into the Northwest Territories Nominee Program (Northwest Territories Nominee Program). As a key pathway for attracting and retaining skilled newcomers to the territory, the Northwest Territories Nominee Program plays a critical role in supporting local workforce needs, strengthening communities, and driving long-term economic growth.

To better understand how the program is functioning, and how it can evolve, we invite you to reflect on your experiences. Your responses will help identify the program's goals, barriers, and opportunities for support, with the aim of improving outcomes for both employers and newcomers.

1. What should the goal of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program be?
2. If you have applied to the Northwest Territories Nominee Program in the past, what was your purpose in using the program?
3. What makes it hard to bring skilled newcomers to the territory and keep them here?
4. What supports would help employers and newcomers succeed?
5. Additional feedback

## **Northwest Territories Nominee Program Design and Delivery**

The Northwest Territories Nominee Program operates through an agreement between the Government of the Northwest Territories (Government of the Northwest Territories) and the Government of Canada.

Under the Northwest Territories Nominee Program, the Government of the Northwest Territories Government of the Northwest Territories is responsible for:

- developing program eligibility;
- assessing candidates; and
- nominating candidates.

The Government of Canada is responsible for:

- setting immigration levels (including the Northwest Territories Nominee Program's annual nomination allocation);
- reviewing and approving the Northwest Territories Nominee Program design; and
- reviewing and approving the Northwest Territories Nominee Program eligibility criteria.

### **Northwest Territories Nominee Program Program Design and Delivery**

1. How often should eligibility criteria be reviewed or updated?
2. How have you been affected by changing eligibility criteria?)
3. What eligibility criteria are most important for program success? (work experience, education, job offer, intention to reside in the Northwest Territories, language ability, duration of work experience in Northwest Territories, foreign national's settlement funds, number of applications allowable based on business size, employer's proof of job advertising – Pick top 3)
4. Are there current barriers/challenges in accessing the Northwest Territories Nominee Program that should be removed or changed?
5. How can we make the Northwest Territories Nominee Program better?
6. Additional feedback

## **High Skilled and Entry-Level / Semi-Skilled Occupations in the Northwest Territories Nominee Program**

The Northwest Territories Nominee Program plays an essential role in addressing the labour needs of the Northwest Territories. High-Skilled and Entry-Level / Semi-Skilled occupations are critical to the economy.

High-skilled occupations, which require specialized training and education, are necessary in sectors like healthcare, engineering, aviation, and information technology.

Entry-level and semi-skilled occupations are vital for industries such as hospitality, tourism, and retail.

It's important to assess how well the Northwest Territories Nominee Program addresses the needs of both High-Skilled and Entry-Level / Semi-Skilled occupations and whether the program should focus more on one area over the other.

1. Is the Northwest Territories Nominee Program effectively balancing the recruitment of High-Skilled workers and Entry-Level/Semi-Skilled workers to meet the territory's economic needs?
2. Should the program focus more on High-Skilled workers, Entry-Level, or Semi-Skilled workers? (four options: high-skilled; entry-level; semi-skilled; all the above)
3. Are there any emerging industries or sectors that Northwest Territories Nominee Program should focus on to address future workforce gaps?
4. Additional feedback

### **Prioritizing Specific Occupations or Using an Expression of Interest System**

As the demand for skilled workers in the Northwest Territories persists, one consideration for the Northwest Territories Nominee Program is whether to prioritize occupations that are in urgent demand or implement an Expression of Interest system similar to other provinces.

An Expression of Interest system allows prospective nominees to express their interest in immigrating to the Northwest Territories by submitting a profile with details about their skills, work experience, education, and other relevant factors. Based on this information, applicants are ranked according to a points-based system and the highest-ranked candidates are selected for further consideration. This would allow eligible applicants to apply year-round with selection draws made throughout the year.

This system also provides information on how many employers and foreign nationals are interested in using the Northwest Territories Nominee Program at any time, which can inform program planning.

1. Should the Government of the Northwest Territories consider adopting an Expression of Interest system that would allow prospective applicants to apply throughout the year and be selected for further consideration, based on a points-based ranking system? (Yes, No, I don't know)
2. Should the Northwest Territories Nominee Program allocate a certain number or percentage of its nominations for each program stream and category (Francophone, Skilled Worker/Express Entry, Entry Level/Semi-Skilled,)? (Yes, No, I don't know)  
Additional feedback
3. Should the Northwest Territories Nominee Program prioritize specific occupations that are in high demand, (Yes, No, I don't know) Additional feedback
4. What occupations or specific skills should be prioritized in the Northwest Territories Nominee Program?
5. Additional feedback

### **Consideration of Work Permit Expiry Dates in Northwest Territories Nominee Program Processes**

Most foreign workers currently in the Northwest Territories hold temporary work permits that will eventually expire.

Many foreign nationals spend some of their temporary work permit time working in other provinces or territories before coming to the Northwest Territories. This creates a situation where workers with expiring work permits may face a time crunch to secure permanent residency.

While work permit expiry creates urgency, work permit expiry dates alone are not a true reflection of the labour market needs in the Northwest Territories nor of an individual's intention to permanently reside in the territory. Prioritizing workers with soon-to-expire permits may not always be fair to those who have contributed longer to the local economy.

1. Should the Northwest Territories Nominee Program prioritize applications from those with soon-to-expire work permits? (Yes, No, I don't know)
2. Should the Northwest Territories Nominee Program give priority to people who have worked in the Northwest Territories for a longer time? (Yes, No, I don't know)
3. How can the Northwest Territories Nominee Program ensure that giving priority to workers with expiring permits doesn't unfairly affect those who have already built a life and work history in the Northwest Territories?

4. If considering work permits, which should the Northwest Territories Nominee Program prioritize:
  - a. Applicants with soon-to-expire work permits
  - b. Applicants with an Northwest Territories employer-specific work permit (those who can only work for the Northwest Territories employer listed on their work permit)
  - c. No prioritization based on work permits
  - d. Other (please specify)
5. The Northwest Territories Nominee Program eligibility requirements should prioritize soon-to-expire work permits. (Strongly Agree; Somewhat Agree; Neutral; Somewhat Disagree; Strongly Disagree)
6. Additional feedback

## **Assessing an Applicant's Intention to Reside in the Northwest Territories**

One of the goals of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program and a primary responsibility of the Government of the Northwest Territories is to ensure that the individuals nominated have the genuine intention of residing in the Northwest Territories long-term.

Currently, the Northwest Territories Nominee Program assesses an applicant's intention to live in the Northwest Territories through requirements such as:

- having an indeterminate job offer;
- the length of work experience in the Northwest Territories;
- and proof of settlement funds.

This is to ensure that applicants have a meaningful connection to the territory and are more likely to stay long-term.

1. Right now, people applying for Entry-Level or Semi-Skilled jobs need to work in the Northwest Territories for one year before they can apply. In the past, it was six months. Do you think it should stay one year or change? (Options box: keep it at one year; change it back to six months; Other (please explain))
2. In addition to work experience, what other factors should be considered when evaluating an applicant's commitment to living in the Northwest Territories long-term (e. g. , family ties, community involvement, previous education in the territory, or other)?
3. How can the Northwest Territories Nominee Program balance the need to assist employers with their immediate workforce needs while ensuring that nominees are genuinely interested in making the Northwest Territories their long-term home?
4. Your feedback

## **Regional Considerations in Northwest Territories Nominee Program Processes**

Since its launch, the majority of Northwest Territories Nominee Program nominations have been received from the communities of Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith, Norman Wells and Inuvik.

These communities are home to a significant portion of the Northwest Territories population. However, other regions of the Northwest Territories, especially smaller or more remote communities, also have important labour needs and could benefit from immigration to fill essential roles.

The question is whether earmarking a portion of Northwest Territories Nominee Program nominations for underserved communities could help spread immigration more evenly across the territory, boosting local economies and addressing workforce shortages. It's important to consider that integration and settlement services (e. g. language classes, welcome and integration services, family and school supports, and employment supports) for new immigrants are currently only available in Yellowknife. This could create challenges in integrating newcomers, as the same level of infrastructure or support to assist immigrants is not available.

1. Should the Northwest Territories Nominee Program be changed to increase nominations for smaller or more remote communities in the Northwest Territories? Why or why not?
2. What challenges do smaller communities face in attracting and retaining immigrants?
3. How can the Northwest Territories Nominee Program better support immigration needs in communities outside of Yellowknife? (Options: Set aside nomination spots for smaller communities; Provide settlement and support services outside Yellowknife; Offer Northwest Territories Nominee Program information sessions in other regions; other)
4. Are there any challenges to using the Northwest Territories Nominee Program in smaller communities or regions? What are these challenges?
5. Your feedback

### **Employer Roles in the Northwest Territories Nominee Program**

Under the Northwest Territories Nominee Program, approved nominees are eligible to receive a work permit support letter so they can apply for a closed work permit. This means that their ability to work and remain in the Northwest Territories is tied to their employment with their nominating employer.

This system places significant responsibility on employers, who are hiring foreign workers and helping these workers to integrate into the community and contribute to the workforce long term.

Employers have a key role in the well-being and success of these workers.

1. What responsibilities should employers take on to support the well-being and success of nominees who hold employer-specific work permits during their time in the territory?
2. How can employers help nominees feel more connected to the Northwest Territories beyond their work, fostering long-term retention and settlement?
3. Should employers be encouraged or required to provide more holistic support (e. g., housing assistance, family support, or facilitating connections with local community resources)? Please explain why or why not?

4. What kinds of incentives could be offered to employers to ensure that they prioritize the well-being of nominees and contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable workforce in the Northwest Territories?
5. Your feedback

### **Supporting Francophone Immigration**

In 2002, the Northwest Territories Nominee Program launched a Francophone Stream. Under this Stream, qualified foreign nationals can apply to the Northwest Territories Nominee Program if they:

- speak both French and English;
- have a valid job offer from an Northwest Territories Employer; and
- have a genuine intention to reside in the Northwest Territories.

Foreign national applicants to the Francophone Stream are not required to have a valid work permit when they apply. The Francophone Stream supports the growth of francophone communities in the Northwest Territories and aligns with the federal government's goal to strengthen French-speaking minority communities outside of Quebec.

1. Should the Northwest Territories Nominee Program continue with the Francophone Stream or prioritize francophone applications in the Employer Driven Stream? (Options: continue with Francophone Stream, prioritize francophone applications in the Employer-Driven Stream, both, neither, I don't know)
2. What are the barriers to using the Francophone Stream?
3. How can the Northwest Territories Nominee Program better support Francophone immigration in the Northwest Territories?
4. Your feedback

### **Attracting Foreign Investment Through the Business Stream**

The Business Stream of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program aims to grow and diversify the economy and support the labour market of the Northwest Territories as foreign nationals establish, purchase or invest in a local business.

When applying to the Business Stream, applicants can expect no wait-list, fast processing times, and program staff to help through the process from start to finish.

1. What are the barriers and challenges to using the Business Stream?
2. How can the Northwest Territories Nominee Program improve the establishment or investment of businesses outside Yellowknife?

3. What types of businesses are needed in the Northwest Territories?
4. Your feedback

### **Enhancing Retention Rates in the Northwest Territories Nominee Program**

Designing the Northwest Territories Nominee Program in a way that supports the settlement, integration and retention of nominees is essential to the success of the program.

Retention of nominees supports the labour market and population growth of the Northwest Territories. When nominees stay in the Northwest Territories following receipt of permanent residency, it is foundational to community stability, national unity, and Canada's long-term presence in the Arctic.

1. What supports and resources would help nominees make the Northwest Territories their home long term?
2. What can employers do to help nominees make the Northwest Territories their home long term?
3. Why do some nominees leave the Northwest Territories after achieving permanent residency?
4. Your feedback