



## **Income Security Programs**

2016-2017 through 2021-2022

Multi-year Report

October 2025

## **Programmes de la sécurité du revenu**

Rapport pluriannuel sur les programmes  
de la sécurité du revenu (2016-2017 à  
2021-2022)

Octobre 2025

*Le présent document contient la traduction française du sommaire.*

K'áhshó got'jne xədə k'é hederi ɔedjhtl'é yeriniwə ni dé dúle.  
Dene Kədə

ʔerihł'ís Dēne Sų́łné yatı t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatı theɔą ɔat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yółł.  
Dēne Sų́łné

Edı gondı dehgáh got'je zhaté k'éé edat'éh enahddhə nıde naxets'é edahlı.  
Dene Zhaté

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

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.  
Inuvialuktun

Č'ıdł nıŋ'ıbΔ<sup>c</sup> ʌɔłJΔɔ<sup>c</sup> Δıɔ'ıɔɔ<sup>c</sup>ɔłɔı<sup>c</sup>, ɔɔ<sup>c</sup>ı<sup>c</sup>ı<sup>c</sup> ɔ'ıɔ<sup>c</sup>ı<sup>c</sup>ı<sup>c</sup>.  
Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.  
Inuinnaqtun

kıspin ki nitawihtın ē nıhıyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.  
nēhiyawēwin

Tłjchq yatı k'èè. Dı wegodı newq dè, gots'ó gonede.  
Tłjchq

**Indigenous Languages**  
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# Executive Summary

The Income Security Programs multi-year report is intended to provide the public with information on program operations and client services during the 2016-2017 through 2021-2022 fiscal years.

Highlights during this time include:

## **Income Assistance:**

- In 2016, the Income Assistance program restructured to exempt income intended for raising children, including the Canada Child Benefit, the NWT Child Benefit, and child maintenance payments.
- In 2019, the Aged and Disabled Allowances were raised from \$300 to \$405 per month to further support vulnerable residents.
- In 2020, in response to COVID-19, Income Assistance clients were payrolled, additional income was exempted, and clients were put into one productive choice. In March 2020, an emergency allowance was issued to assist with a 14-day supply of food and cleaning products.

## **Student Financial Assistance**

- In 2019, the course reimbursement amount was increased to \$880 per course, with the lifetime limit raised to \$8,800, providing enhanced financial assistance to post-secondary students.
- In 2020, two non-repayable COVID-19 grants were introduced to assist students with the added costs of technology and internet fees, continuing through the 2022-2023 academic year.

## **Senior Home Heating Subsidy**

- In 2018, the Senior Home Heating Subsidy transitioned to a monetary-based system to help cover up to 80% of the average home heating and fuel costs.
- To ensure that seniors continued to receive the SHHS, COVID-19 measures were in place from March 2020 through to March 2022. All seniors approved for the SHHS during the 2020-2021 fiscal year were automatically approved for 2021-2022.
- In 2022, the Senior Home Heating Subsidy introduced a one-time payment for the 2022-2023 fiscal year to ensure seniors received up to 80% of the estimated average 2022 fuel cost associated with heating a home. The one-time payments were \$800 for Zone 1, \$600 for Zone 2 and \$400 for Zone 3.

## Sommaire

Le rapport pluriannuel sur les programmes de la sécurité du revenu vise à fournir au public des informations sur les activités des programmes et sur les services offerts aux clients pendant la période de 2016-2017 à 2021-2022.

Faits saillants

### Guide sur l'aide au revenu

- En 2016, le programme d'aide au revenu a été revu pour que les revenus destinés à l'éducation et au soutien des enfants ne soient plus comptabilisés comme des revenus dans le calcul de l'aide. Ces revenus exemptés d'impôt comprennent notamment l'allocation canadienne pour enfants, la prestation pour enfants des TNO et les pensions alimentaires pour enfants.
- En 2019, les allocations pour les personnes âgées et les personnes handicapées sont passées de 300 \$ à 405 \$ par mois afin d'offrir un meilleur soutien aux personnes vulnérables.
- En 2020, en réponse à la COVID-19, les clients de l'aide au revenu ont été intégrés à un système de versements automatiques, des revenus supplémentaires ont été exemptés d'impôt et les clients ont été regroupés sous un seul choix productif. En mars 2020, une allocation d'urgence a été versée afin d'aider à couvrir les coûts pour un approvisionnement de 14 jours en nourriture et en produits de nettoyage.

### Aide financière aux étudiants

- En 2019, le montant de remboursement des cours a été porté à 880 \$ par cours, et le plafond à vie a été fixé à 8 800 \$, afin d'offrir un meilleur soutien financier aux étudiants de niveau postsecondaire.
- En 2020, deux subventions non remboursables liées à la COVID-19 ont été allouées pour aider les étudiants à assumer les coûts supplémentaires causés par la pandémie, notamment les coûts liés à la technologie et aux frais d'accès à Internet. Elles ont été versées jusqu'à l'année scolaire 2022-2023.

### Subvention au chauffage résidentiel pour personnes âgées

- En 2018, la Subvention au chauffage résidentiel pour personnes âgées est passée à un modèle de versements afin de couvrir jusqu'à 80 % des coûts moyens de chauffage et de combustible d'un logement.
- Afin d'assurer la continuité du programme, des mesures liées à la COVID-19 ont été mises en place de mars 2020 à mars 2022. Toutes les personnes âgées approuvées dans le cadre du programme au cours de l'exercice 2020-2021 ont été automatiquement approuvées pour 2021-2022.

- En 2022, on a versé un paiement unique aux bénéficiaires de la subvention pour l'exercice 2022-2023 afin de les aider à payer jusqu'à 80 % des coûts estimés en 2022 de combustible associés au chauffage de leur logement. Les paiements ponctuels ont été de 800 \$ pour la zone 1, de 600 \$ pour la zone 2 et de 400 \$ pour la zone 3.

# Income Security Programs

## Income Assistance

### Program Overview

The Income Assistance program provides financial assistance to help northerners pay for basic needs, such as shelter, utilities and food. The program may also provide funds for other needs, such as clothing, childcare and education as well as allowances to Seniors and Persons with Disabilities. The amount of money an individual receives depends on their income, community and family size.

The Income Assistance program further supports clients in returning to the labour force by providing benefits for education and training costs, childcare expenses and record suspension application fees as well as income exemptions. Clients can also receive assistance with security deposits needed to occupy a rental unit.

Table 1 summarizes the total number of distinct cases and total expenditures for the Income Assistance program over the 2016-2017 to 2021-2022 fiscal years. Each distinct case includes a single individual or a family (parent(s) and child(ren)).

**Table 1: Income Assistance Statistics**

Fiscal Year	Total Number of Distinct Cases	Expenditures
2016-2017	3,465	\$24,850,864
2017-2018	3,618	\$27,882,533
2018-2019	3,685	\$31,044,827
2019-2020	3,748	\$34,574,370
2020-2021	3,198	\$32,038,449
2021-2022	2,774	\$27,337,589

The statistics show that the number of distinct cases and expenditures decreased in 2021-2022. This may be due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the benefits available to residents through the Government of Canada, such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit and Canada Recovery Benefits.

### Program Highlights

In recognition of the rising cost of living, the Income Assistance program restructured and exempted income intended to help with the cost of raising children in 2016, including the Canada Child Benefit, the NWT Child Benefit, and child maintenance payments. In addition, the program introduced the Community Cost Adjustment, which provides additional assistance to families with children living outside Yellowknife,

Ndilq and Dettah, recognizing that the Canada Child Benefit does not account for higher costs in remote communities.

Furthermore, the Aged and Disabled Allowances were also enhanced, rising from \$300 to \$405 per month in 2019, further supporting vulnerable individuals.

In response to COVID-19, the Income Assistance program exempted the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, Canada Emergency Student Benefit, and monetary gifts from income calculations. Additionally, a one-time emergency payment was issued in March 2020 to help cover a 14-day supply of food and cleaning products.

All Income Assistance clients were enrolled in the Productive Choice called “Wellness Self-Care” to ensure residents are taking care of themselves and their families. Clients were not required to report on progress. Clients were also payrollled, which meant that they did not have to report each month to ensure they received their payments consistently without having to do in-person reporting.

## Appeals

Income Assistance clients have the right to appeal decisions made regarding their eligibility and level of benefits. This right provides clients with the opportunity to verify they are receiving the appropriate benefits, and that front-line staff are assessing them in accordance with program legislation.

There are two levels of appeals under the *Social Assistance Act*:

1. The Social Assistance Appeal Committee (the Committee); and
2. The Social Assistance Appeal Board (the Board).

The role of the Committee and the Board members is to ensure the legislation has been properly applied.

There are six regional committees with a total of 19 members that hear Income Assistance appeals for the applicants in their Region. There are five members on the Board. When a decision made by the Committee is appealed, it goes to the Board.

Figures 1a to f identify the number of appeals heard by the Committee by Region.

Figure 1a: Beaufort Delta Social Assistance Appeal Committee Hearings

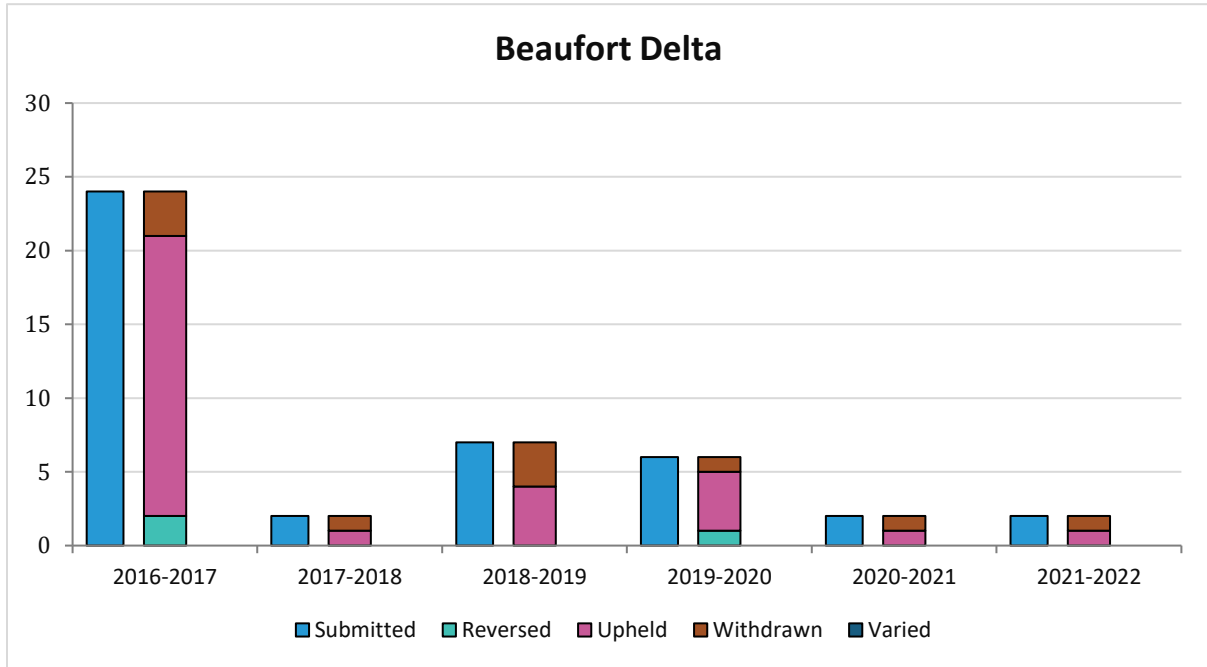


Figure 1b: Dehcho Social Assistance Appeal Committee Hearings

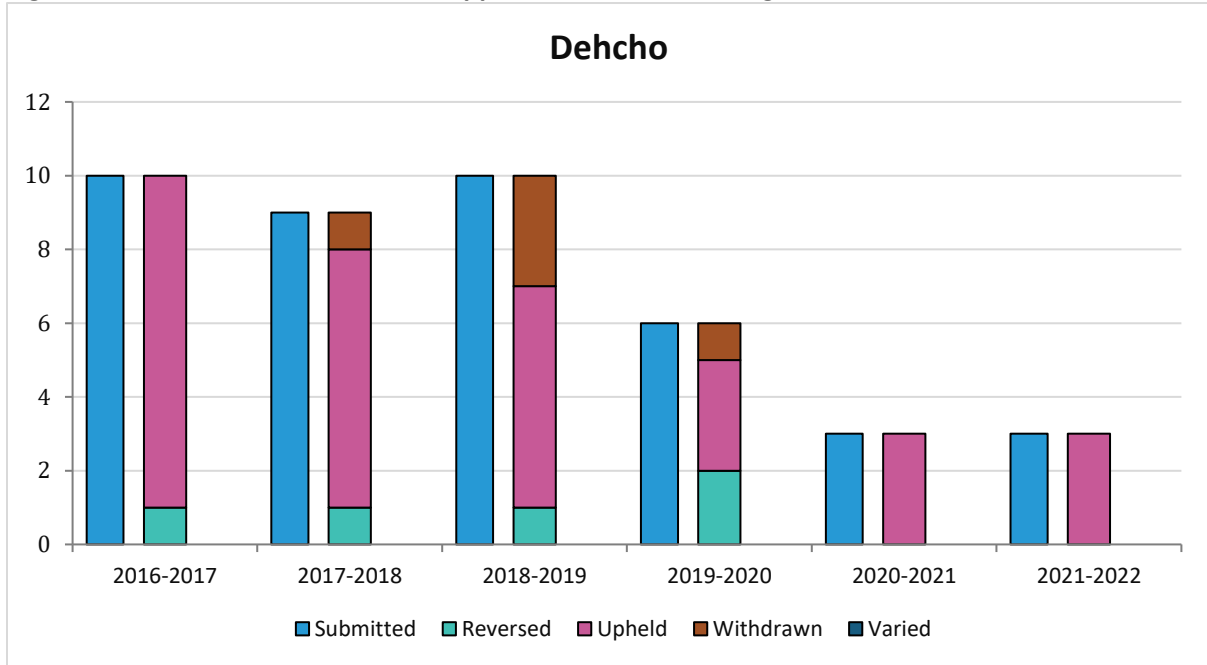


Figure 1c: North Slave Social Assistance Appeal Committee Hearings

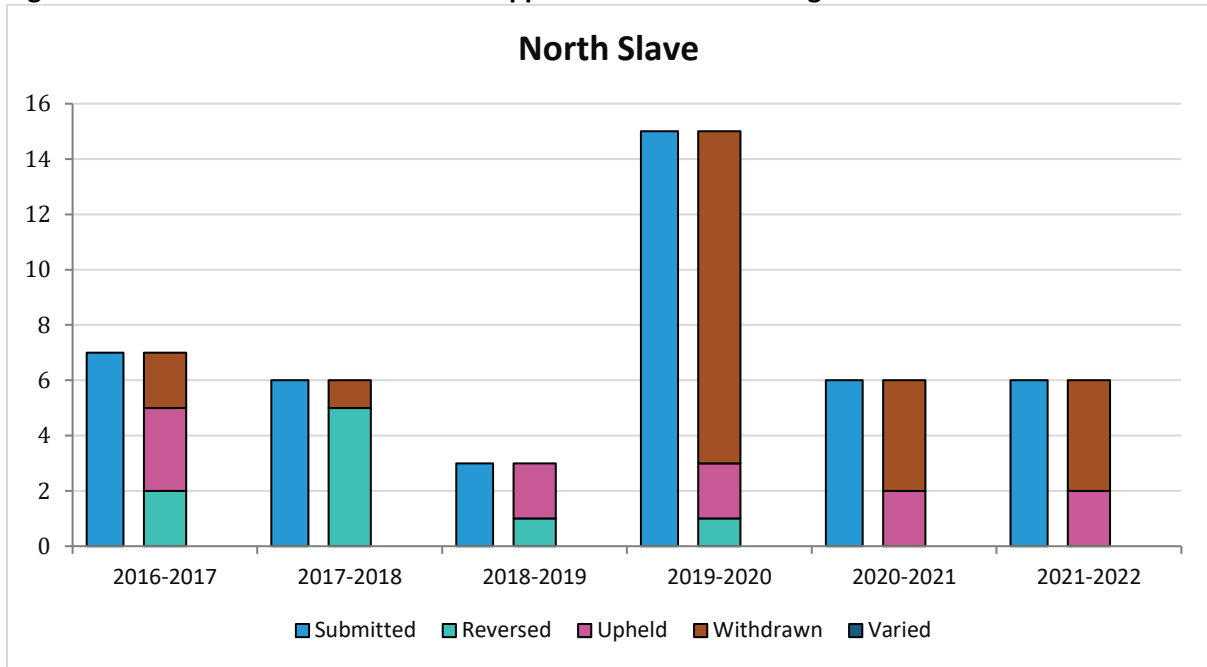


Figure 1d: Sahtú Social Assistance Appeal Committee Hearings

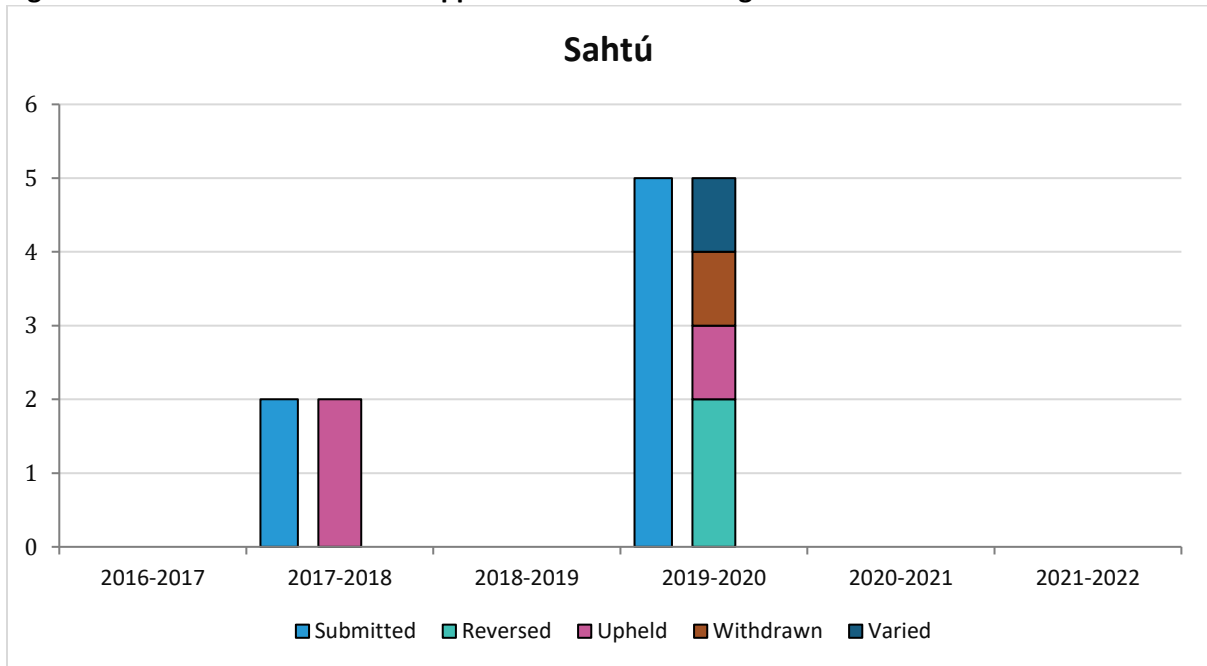


Figure 1e: South Slave Social Assistance Appeal Committee Hearings

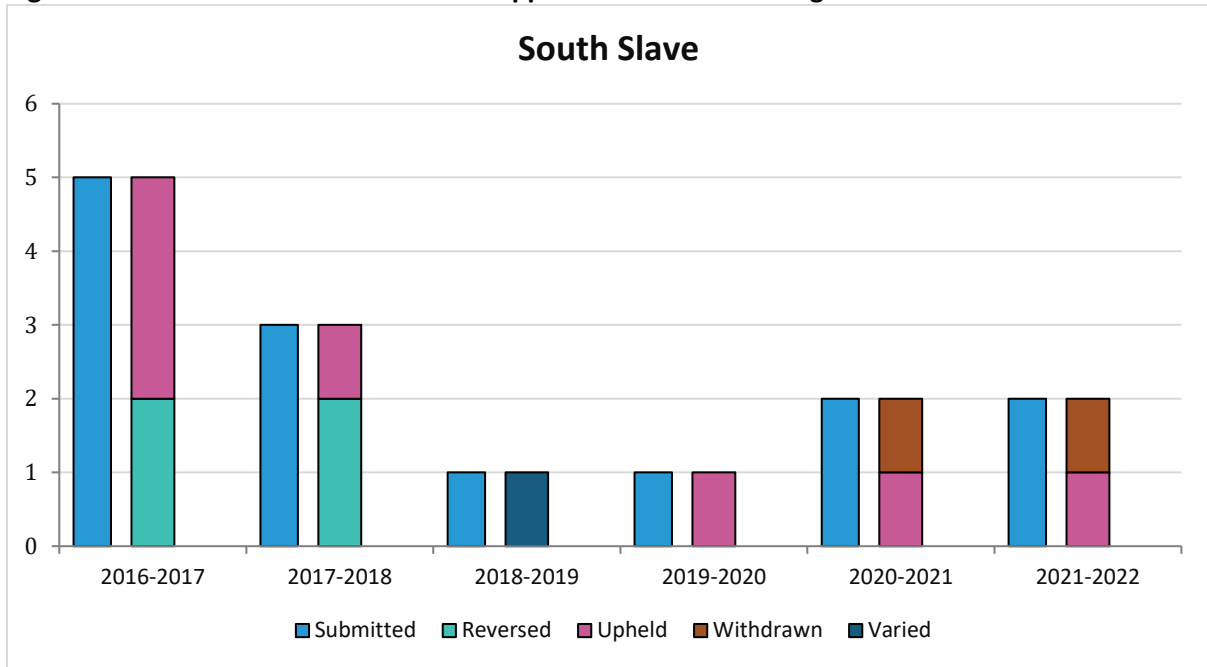
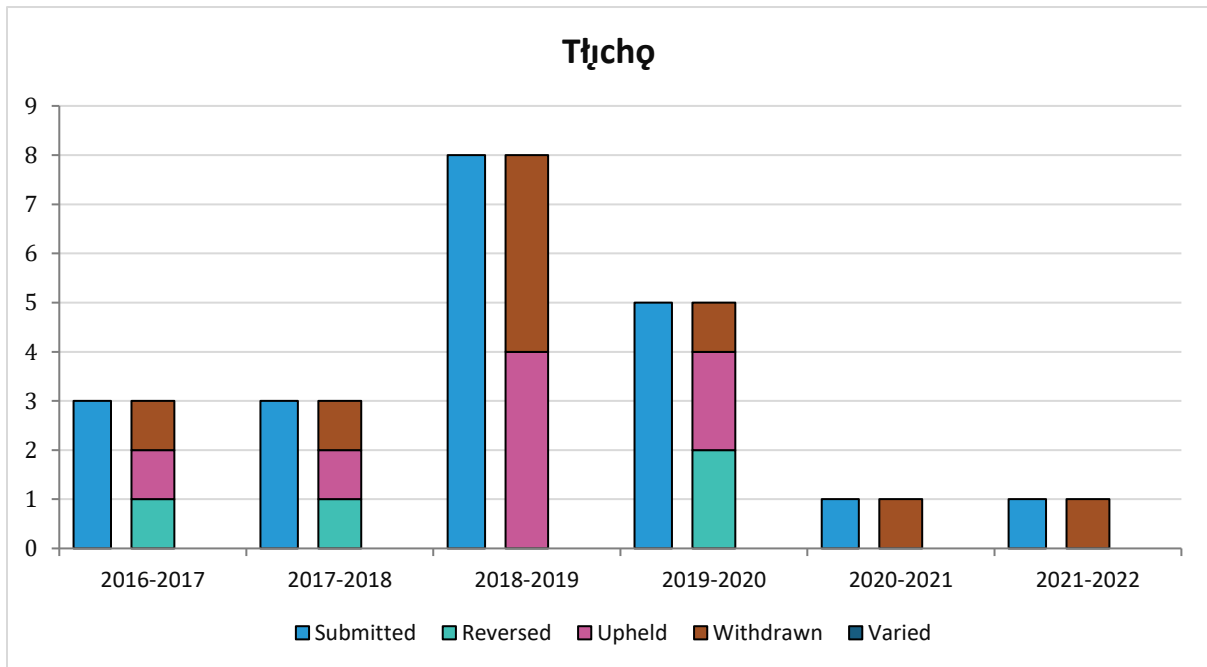
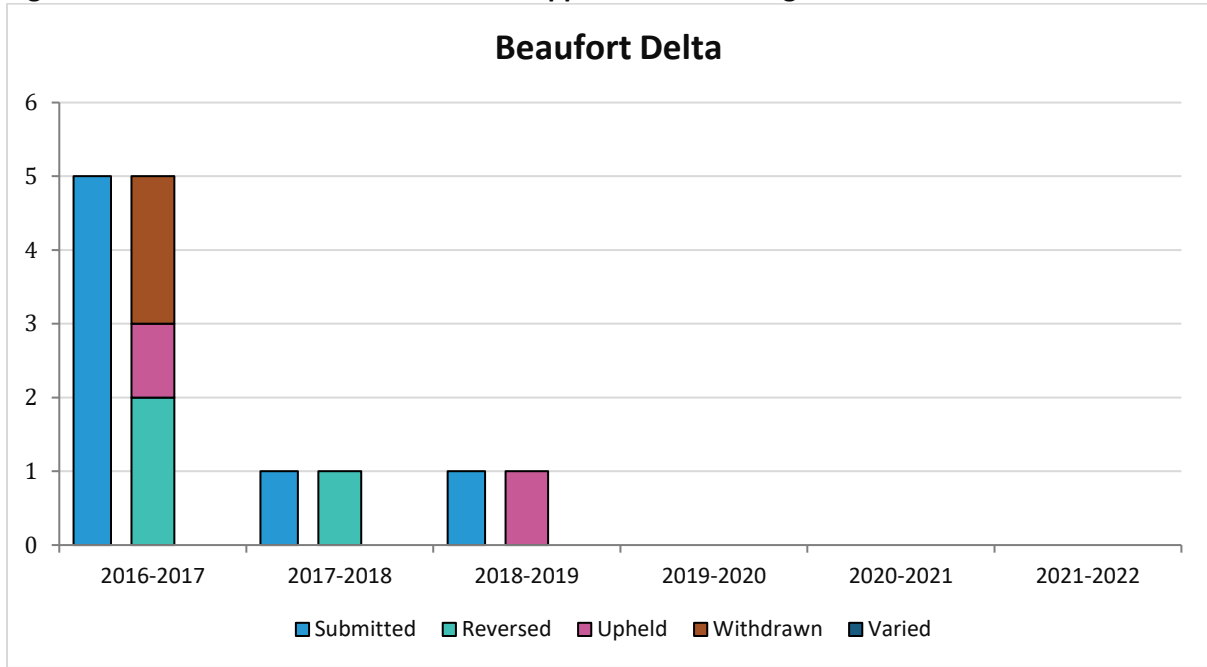


Figure 1f: Tłı̨chǫ Social Assistance Appeal Committee Hearings



Figures 2a to f identify the number of appeals heard by the Board by Region.

**Figure 2a: Beaufort Delta Social Assistance Appeal Board Hearings**



**Figure 2b: Dehcho Social Assistance Appeal Board Hearings**

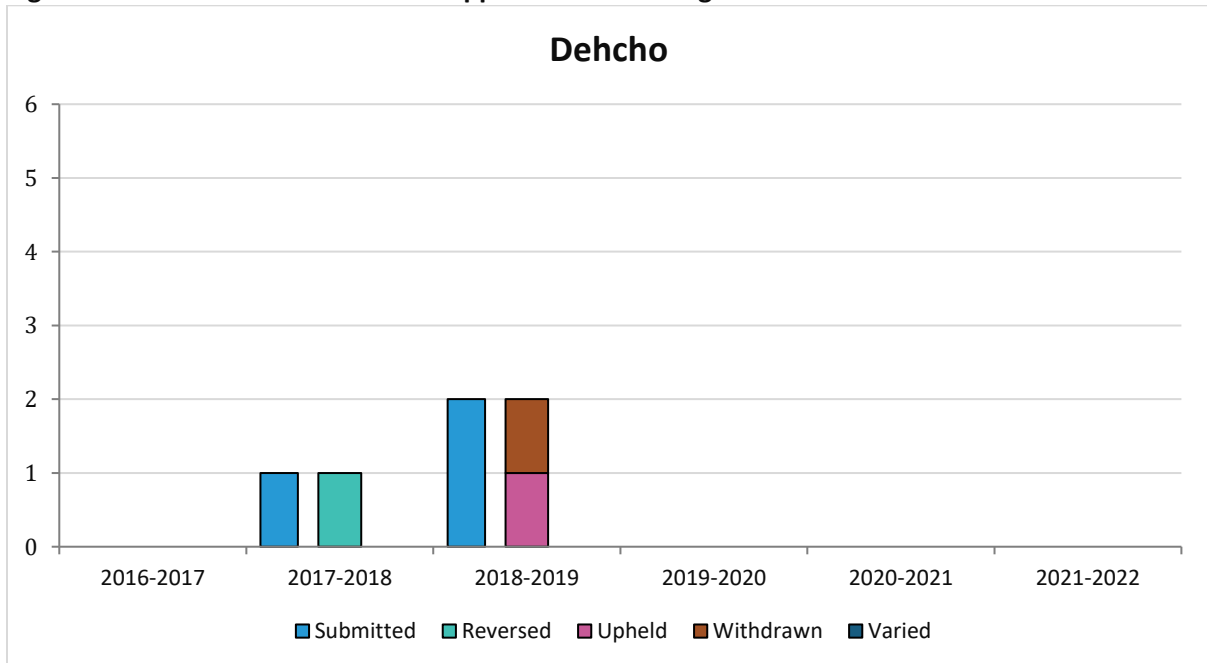


Figure 2c: North Slave Social Assistance Appeal Board Hearings

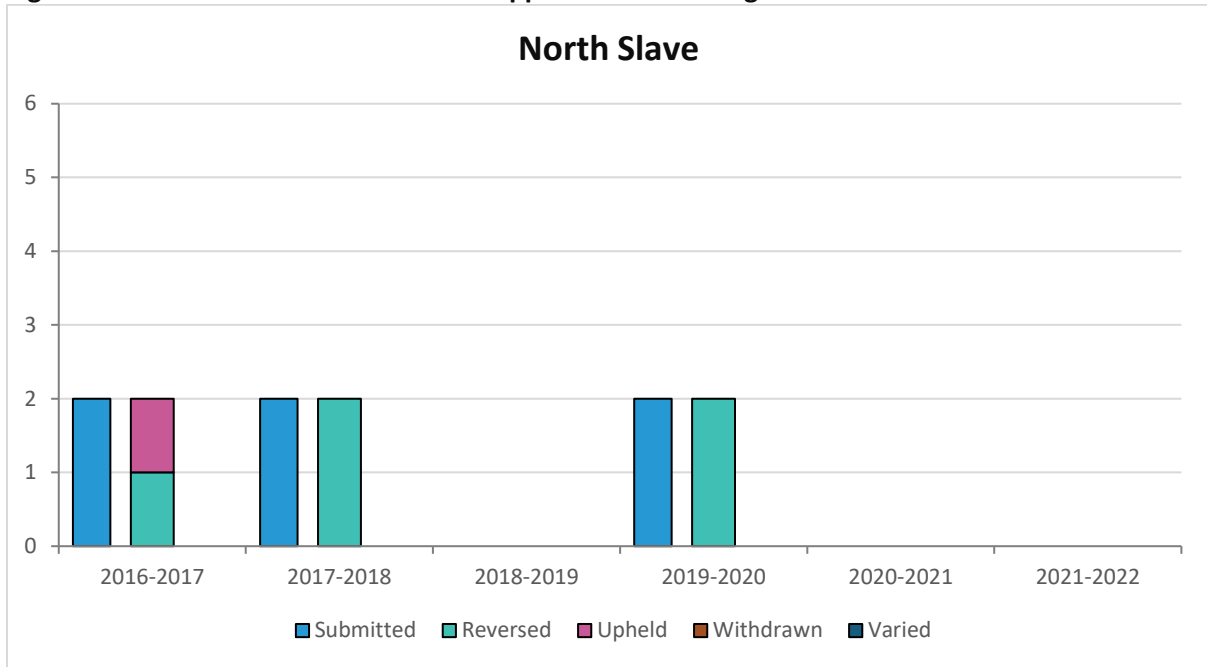


Figure 2d: Sahtú Social Assistance Appeal Board Hearings

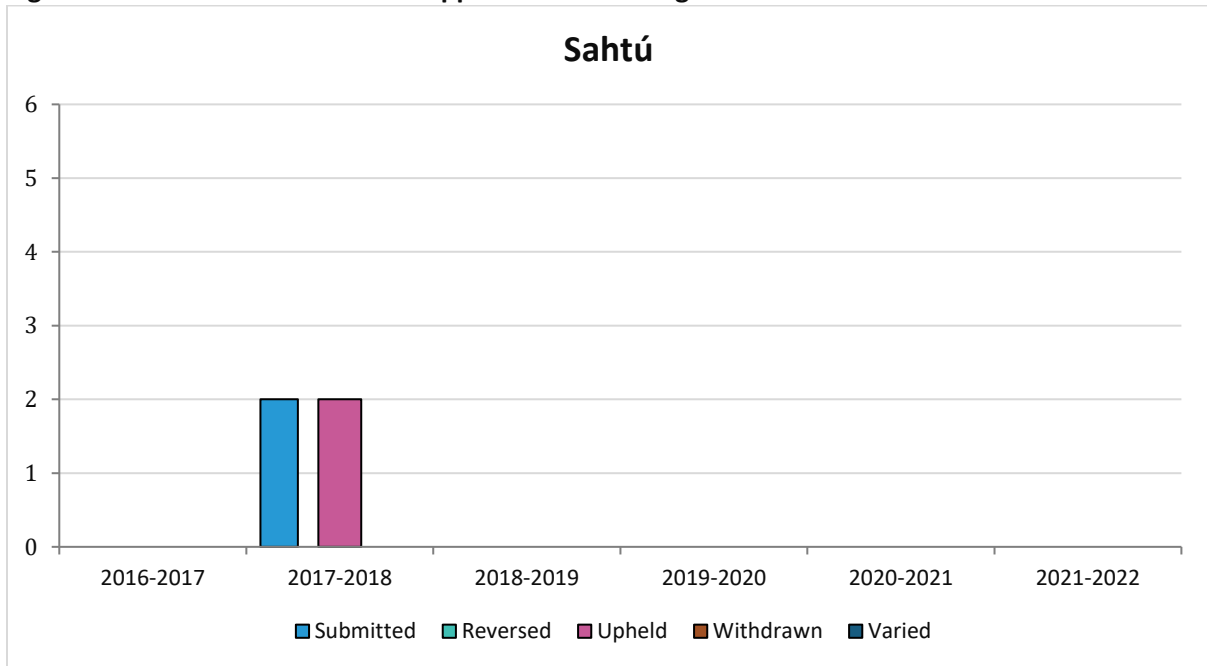


Figure 2e: South Slave Social Assistance Appeal Board Hearings

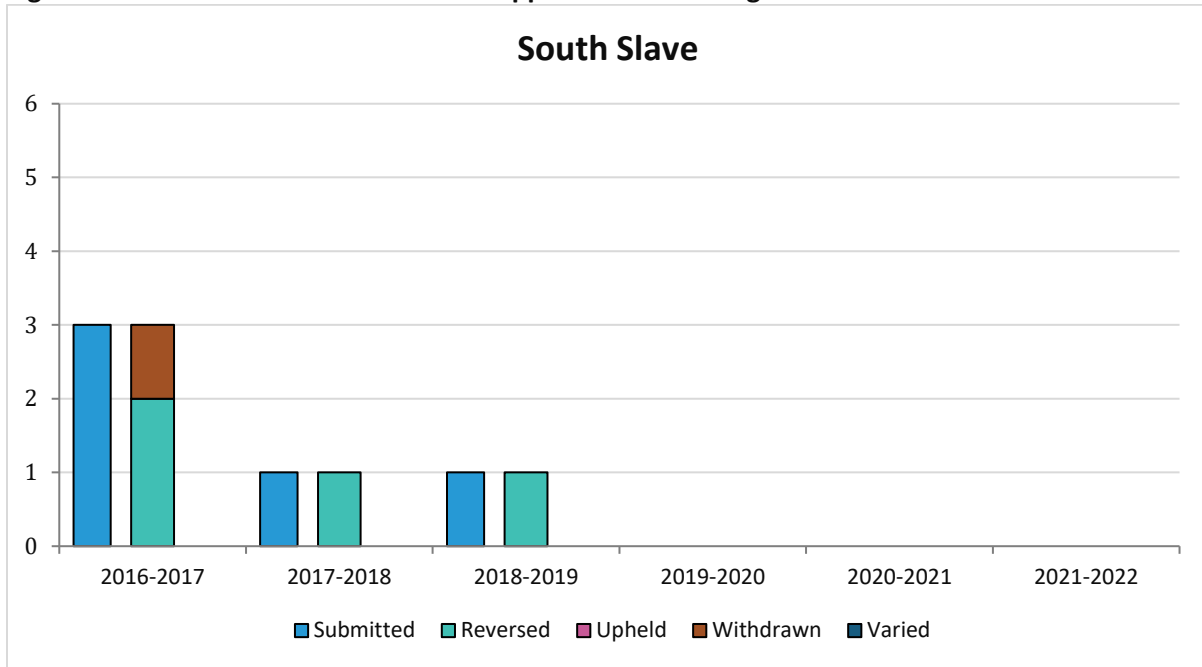
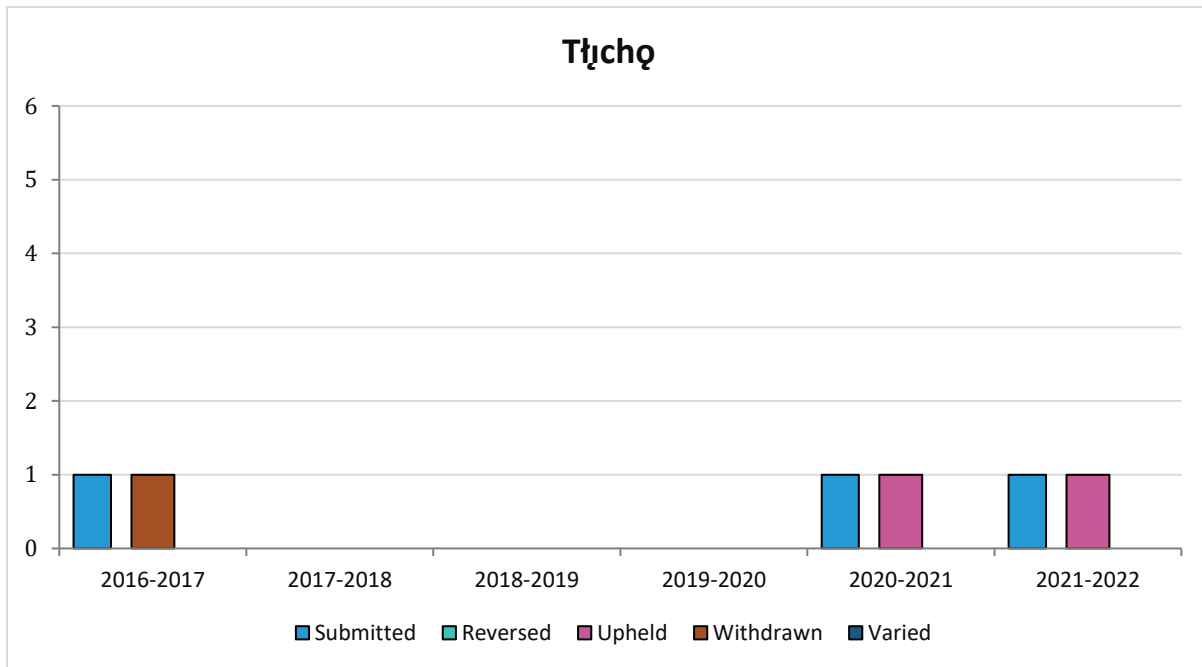


Figure 2f: Tłı̨chǫ Social Assistance Appeal Board Hearings



## Student Financial Assistance

### Program Overview

The Student Financial Assistance program assists Northwest Territories residents in pursuing a post-secondary education through a combination of grants and loans. Student Financial Assistance benefits assist with the costs associated with tuition, books, travel and living expenses.

The basic principle of the program is that the cost of a post-secondary education is a shared responsibility and is intended to supplement a student's own resources.

Table 2 summarizes the total number of students who received Student Financial Assistance and total expenditures for the program over the 2016-2017 to 2021-2022 academic years.

**Table 2: Students receiving Student Financial Assistance**

Year	Number of Students	Expenditures
2016-2017	1,451	\$17,766,785
2017-2018	1,418	\$17,300,654
2018-2019	1,328	\$16,781,821
2019-2020	1,295	\$15,897,305
2020-2021	1,176	\$14,829,621
2021-2022	1,340	\$16,904,612

### Program Highlights

In 2018, the Basic Grant funding was amended to provide students with families the same travel benefits as single students, allowing all Basic Grant recipients to access up to two return trips per academic year from their home community to any community in the NWT or to Edmonton.

In 2019, the program further increased support by raising the course reimbursement amount to \$880 per course, with the lifetime reimbursement limit also increased to \$8,800, ensuring enhanced financial assistance for post-secondary students.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, two non-repayable grants were introduced in 2020-2021 academic year to support students with the added costs of continuing their education during this challenging period. The COVID-19 Technology Grant provided \$750 for technology equipment, while the COVID-19 Support Grant offered \$100 per month to help cover internet fees. These grants remained available in the 2021-2022 and the 2022-2023 academic years.

## Student Financial Assistance Statistics

Table 3 identifies the top 15 institutions most commonly attended by students receiving Student Financial Assistance. The data reflects the average number of recipients per year from 2016-2017 to 2021-2022, with Aurora College having the highest average annual number of Student Financial Assistance recipients during this period.

**Table 3: Top 10 Institutions Students Accessed from 2016-2017 to 2021-2022**

Institution	Average Number of Students Per Academic Year
Aurora College	167
University Of Victoria	45
University of Alberta	43
University Of Lethbridge	39
Athabasca University	33
Mount Royal University	28
MacEwan University	28
University Of British Columbia Okanagan	28
Vancouver Island University	25
Thompson Rivers University	24
Lethbridge Polytechnic	24

Table 4 identifies the top 15 programs most commonly accessed by students receiving Student Financial Assistance. The data reflects the average number of recipients per year from 2016-2017 to 2021-2022.

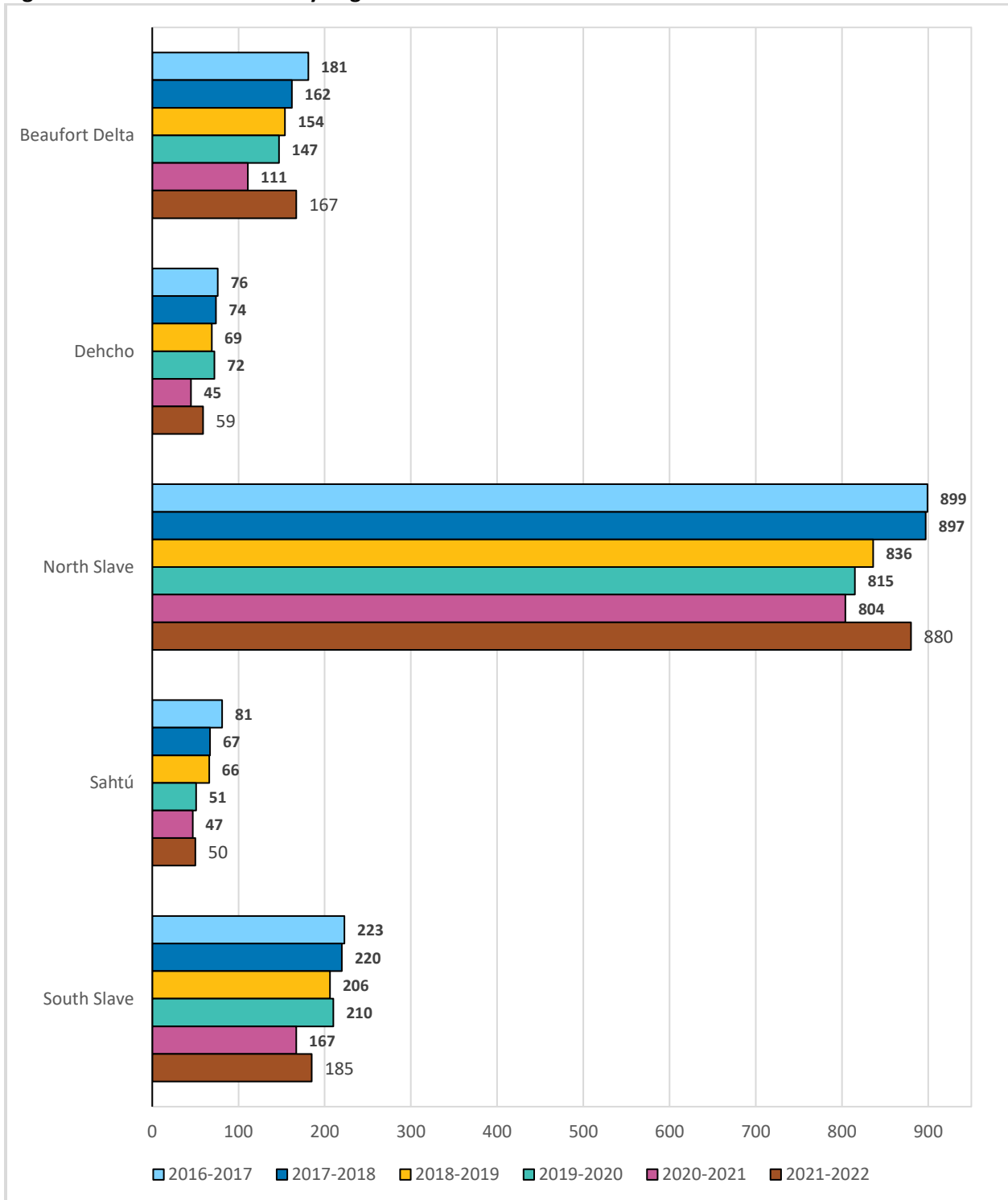
**Table 4: Top 15 Programs Students Accessed from 2016-2017 to 2021-2022**

Program	Average Number of Students Per Academic year
Business Administration	81
Bachelor of Arts	79
Education	47
Bachelor of Science	43
Nursing	41
Social Work	29

Program	Average Number of Students Per Academic year
Early Childhood Education	28
Commerce	28
Office Administration	25
University and College Access Program	20
Law	20
Environment Natural Resources	18
Personal Support Worker	17
Medicine	16
Psychology	16

Figure 3 and Table 5 outline students who accessed Student Financial Assistance by region and ethnicity.

**Figure 3: Student Breakdown by Region**



**Table 5: Student Breakdown by Ethnicity**

Ethnicity	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Dene	397	385	344	345	258	339
Inuvialuit	156	117	115	106	83	103
Métis	128	110	91	92	81	85
Non-Indigenous	770	806	778	752	754	813

## Appeals

All Student Financial Assistance clients have the right to appeal decisions made regarding their eligibility and level of benefits. This right provides clients with the opportunity to verify they are receiving the appropriate benefits, and that front-line staff are assessing them in accordance with program legislation.

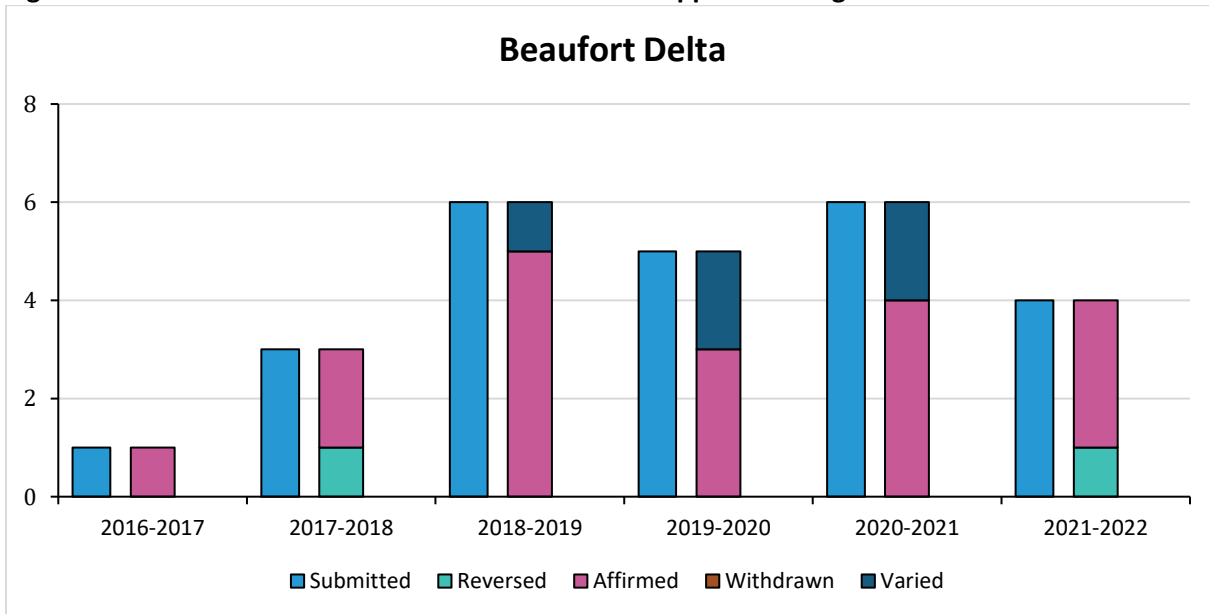
There are two levels of appeal under the *Student Financial Assistance Act*:

1. Internal Review Committee; and
2. Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board (SFA Board)

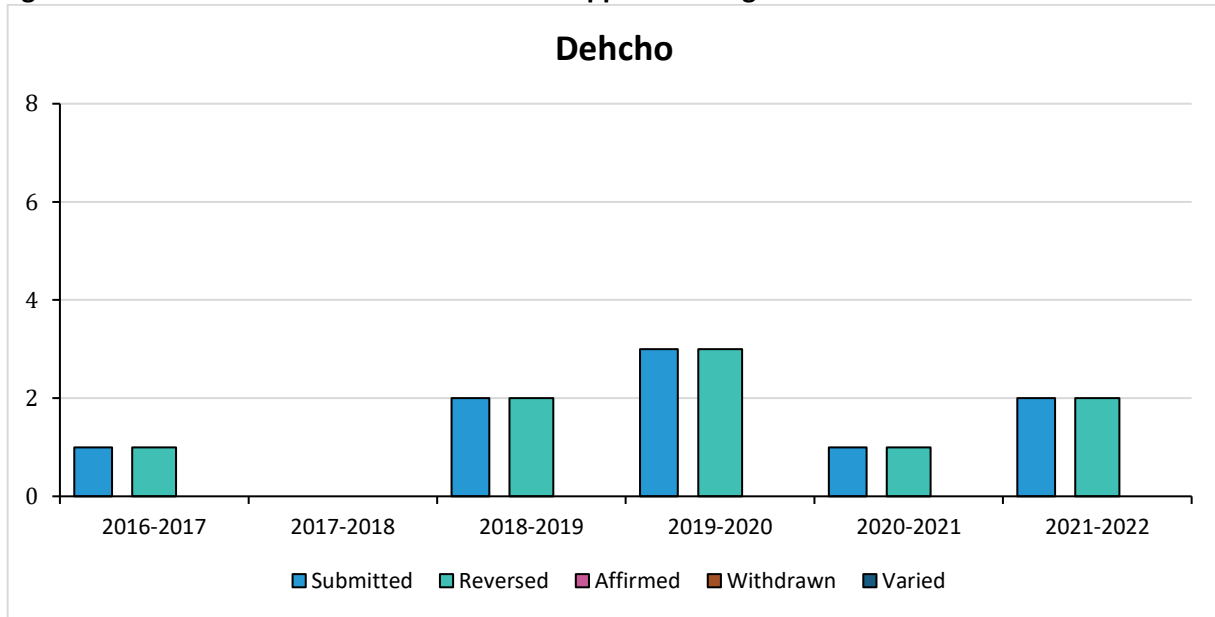
The role of the internal review committee and the Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board is to ensure the legislation has been properly applied.

Figures 4a to f identify the number of appeals heard by the internal review committee by Region.

**Figure 4a: Beaufort Delta Internal Review Committee Appeal Hearings**



**Figure 4b: Dehcho Internal Review Committee Appeal Hearings**



**Figure 4c: North Slave Internal Review Committee Appeal Hearings**

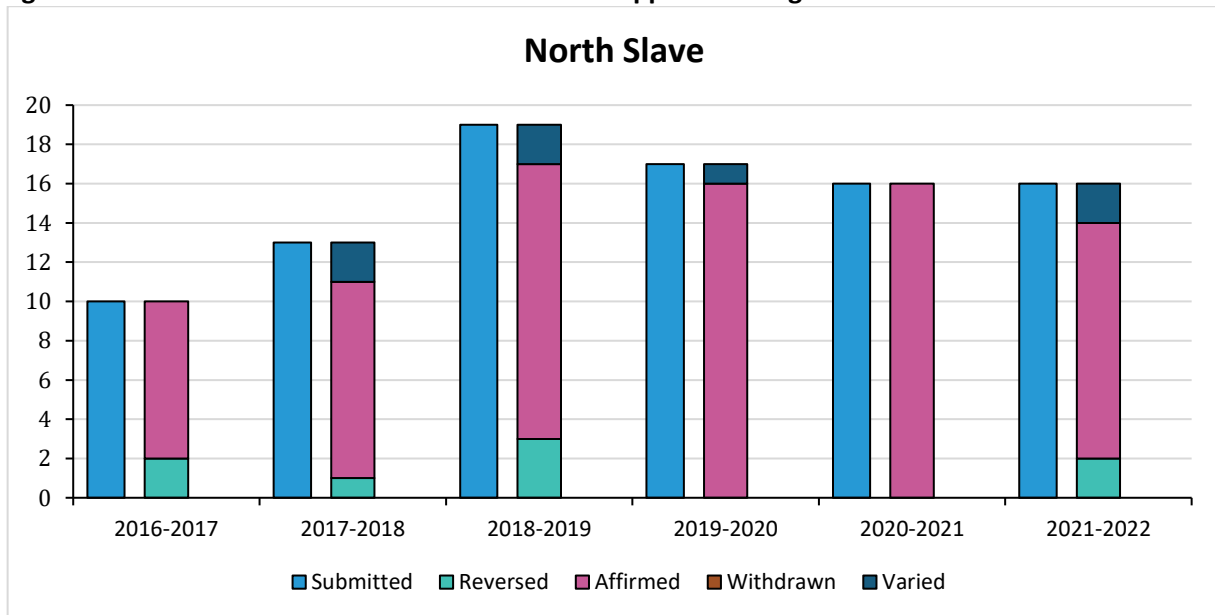


Figure 4d: Sahtú Internal Review Committee Appeal Hearings

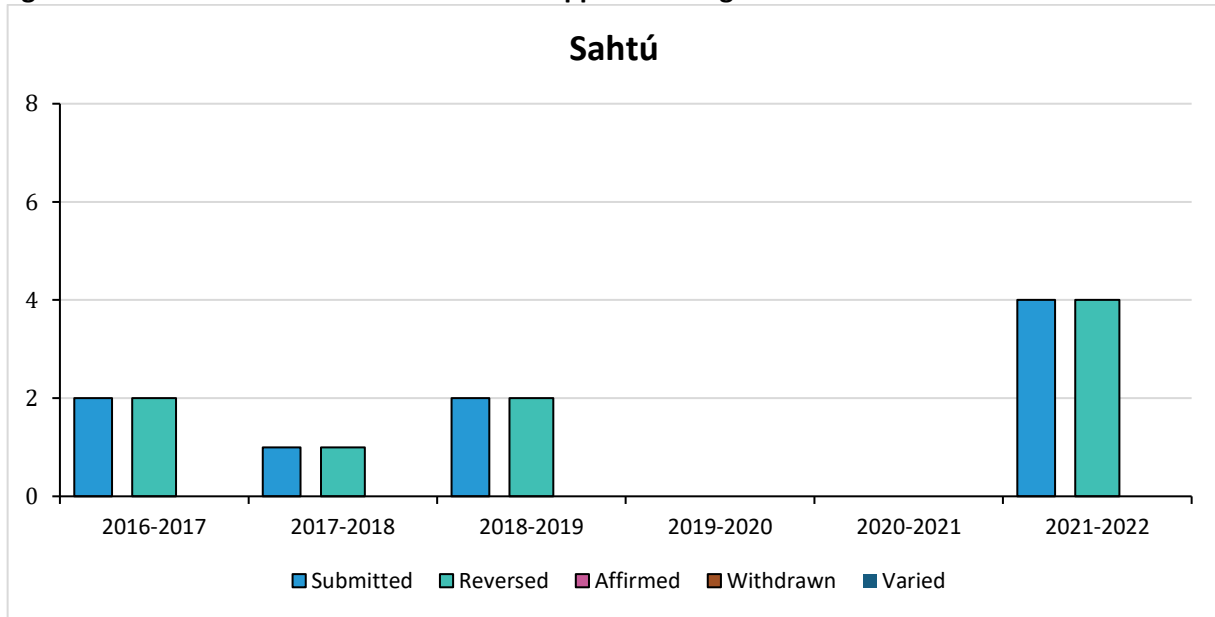
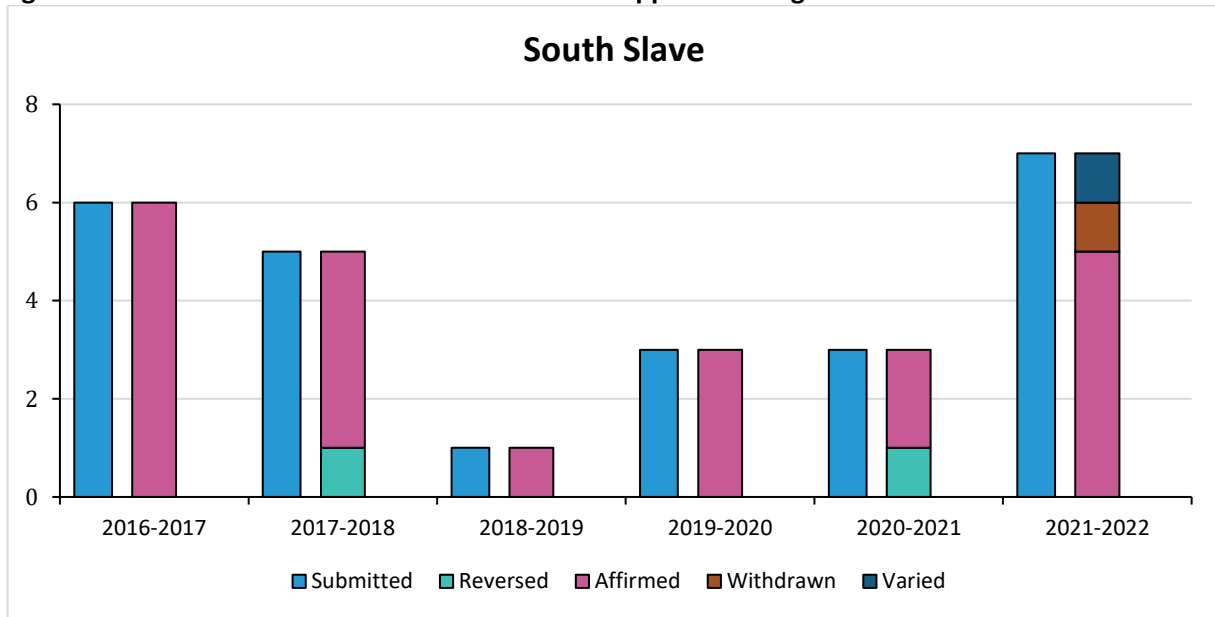
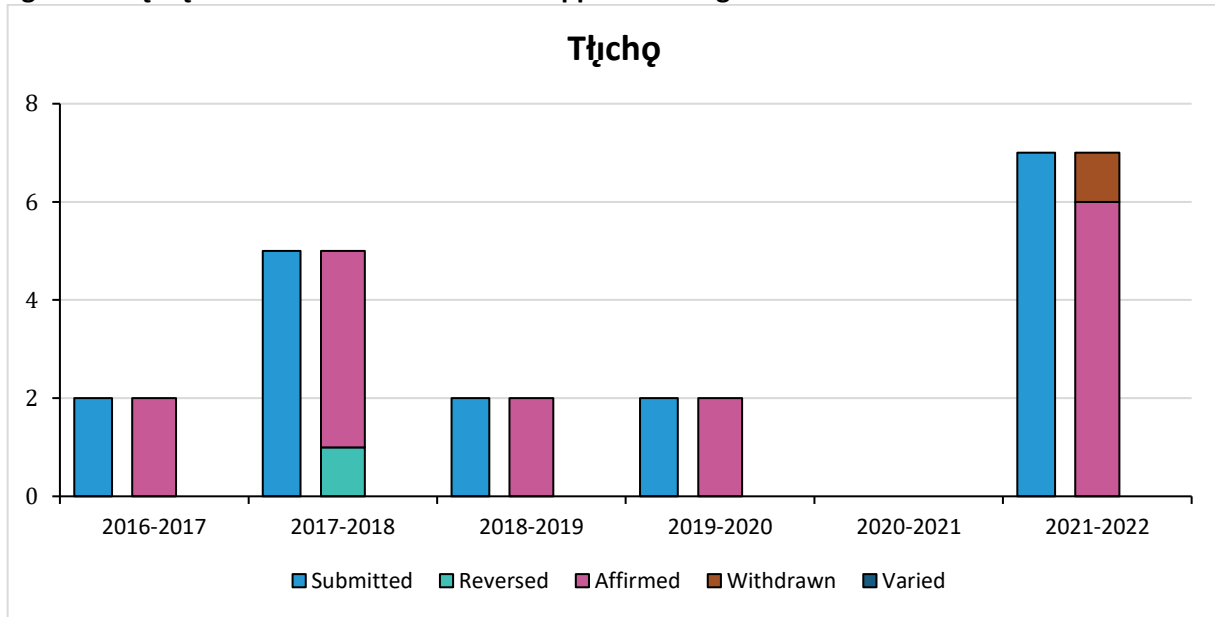


Figure 4e: South Slave Internal Review Committee Appeal Hearings

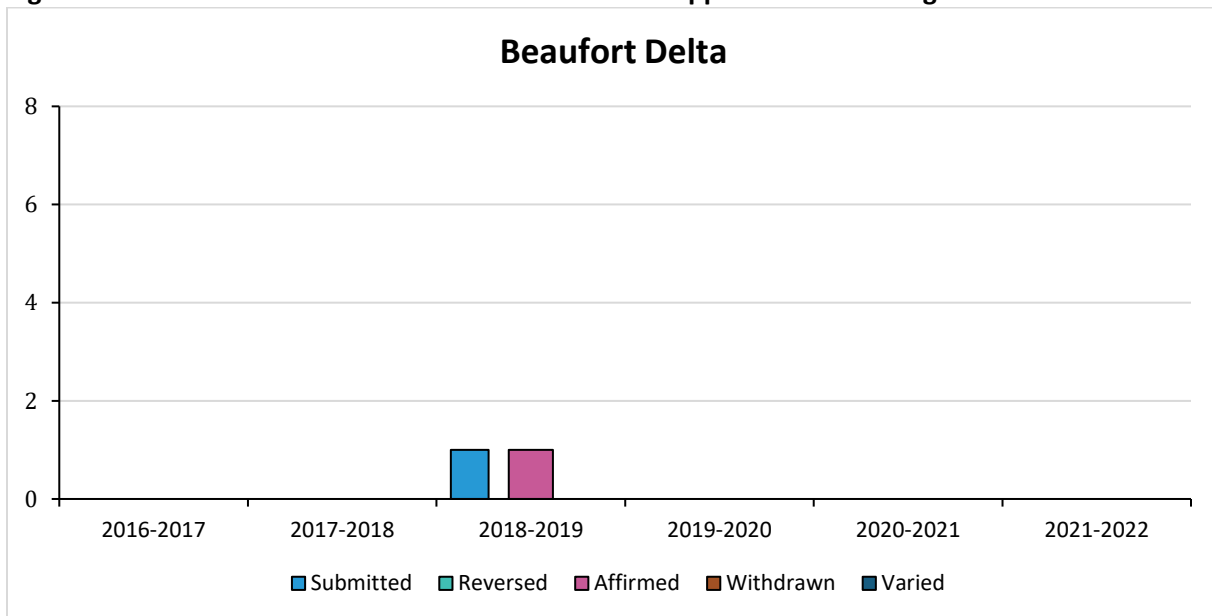


**Figure 4f: Tłıchǫ Internal Review Committee Appeal Hearings**

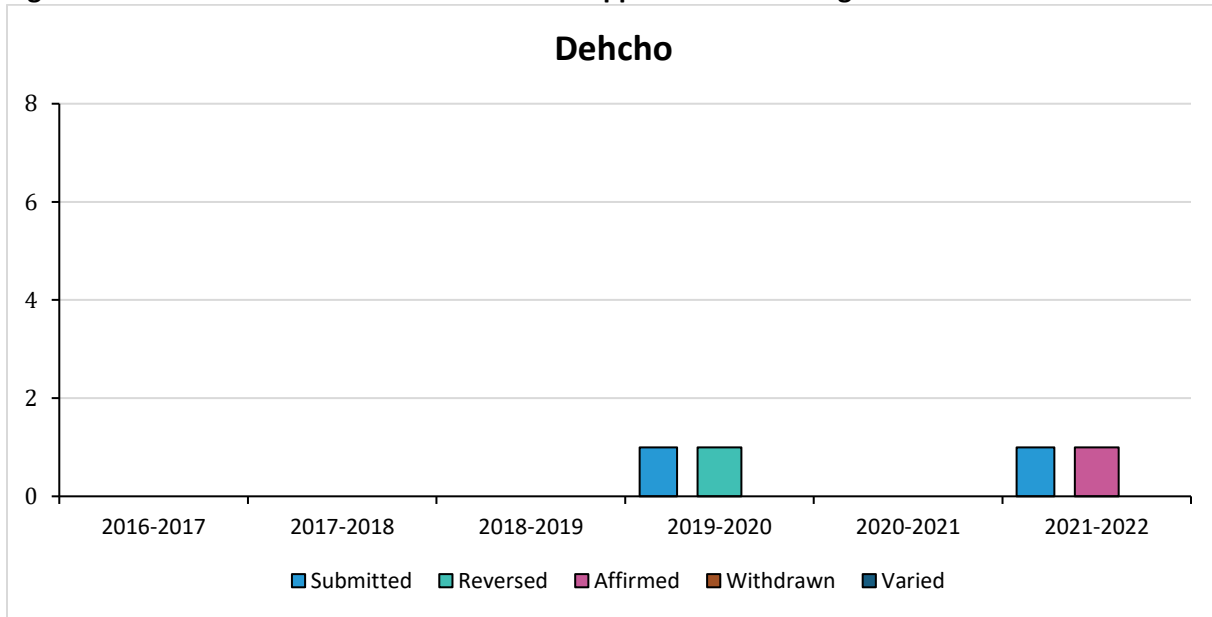


Figures 5a to e identify the number of appeals heard by the SFA Board by Region. There were no SFA Board appeals for Sahtú.

**Figure 5a: Beaufort Delta Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board Hearings**



**Figure 5b: Dehcho Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board Hearings**



**Figure 5c: North Slave Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board Hearings**

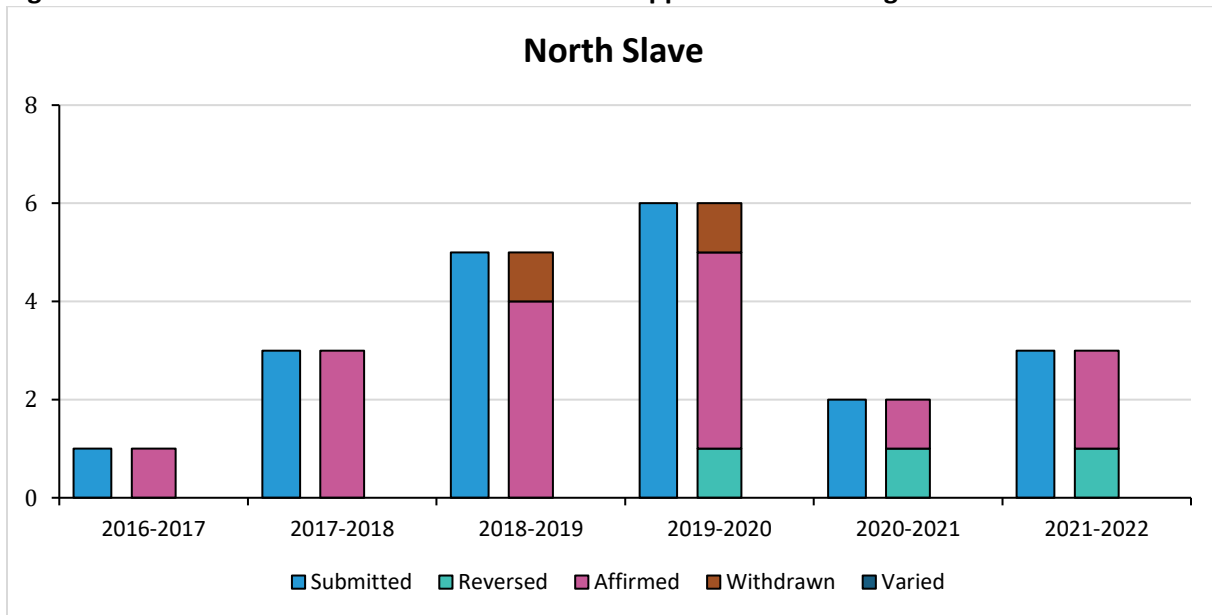


Figure 5d: South Slave Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board Hearings

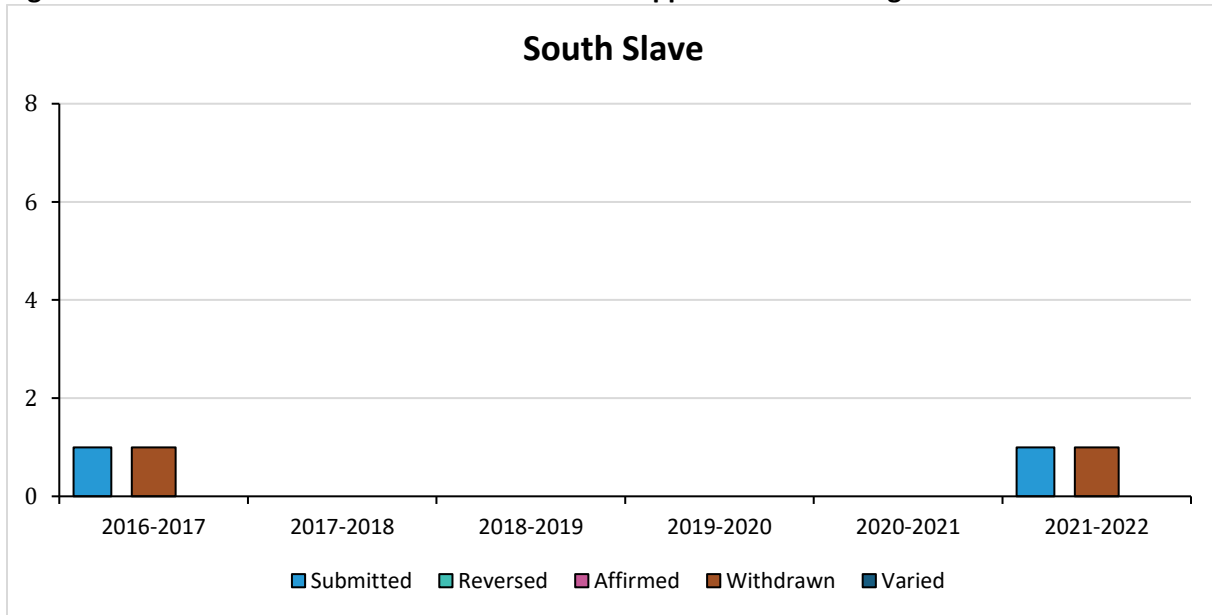
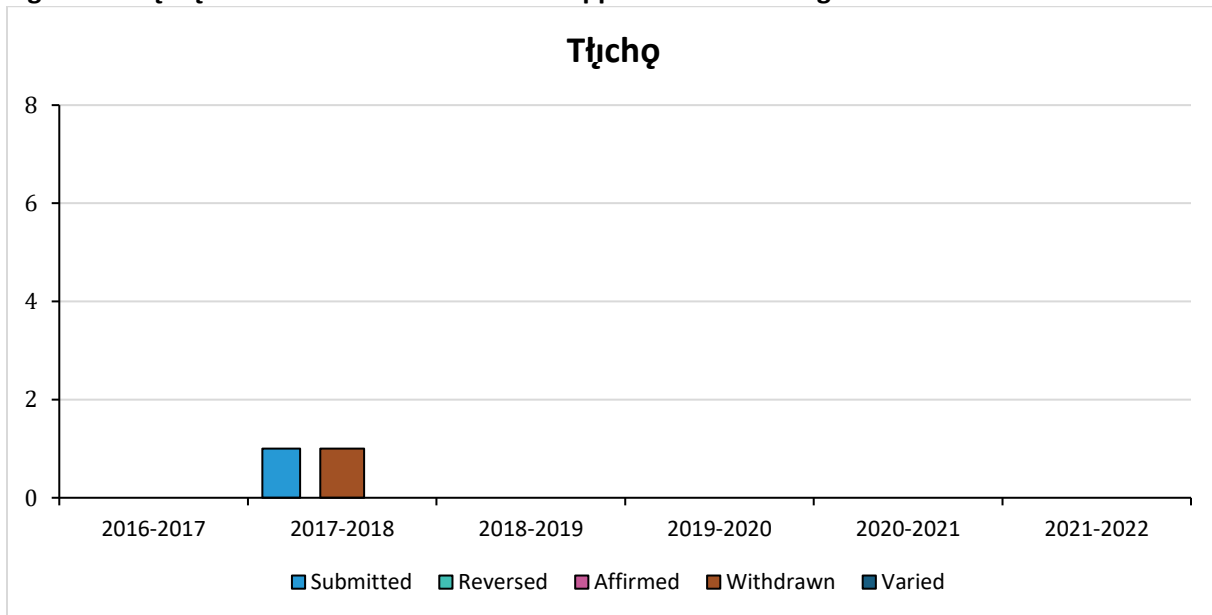


Figure 5e: Tłıchǫ Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board Hearings



## Senior Home Heating Subsidy

### Program Overview

The Senior Home Heating Subsidy provides financial assistance to low-to-modest income seniors, 60 years of age or older, to help with the cost of heating their homes.

Table 6 summarizes the total number of distinct cases and total expenditures for the Senior Home Heating Subsidy over the 2016-2017 to 2021-2022 fiscal years. Each distinct case includes a single individual or a family (senior and spouse).

**Table 6: Senior Home Heating Subsidy Statistics**

Fiscal Year	Number of Distinct Cases	Expenditures
2016-2017	525	\$1,437,592
2017-2018	520	\$1,461,773
2018-2019	579	\$1,902,916
2019-2020	575	\$1,951,274
2020-2021	637	\$2,192,236
2021-2022	653	\$2,470,655

### Program Highlights

In 2018, the Senior Home Heating Subsidy transitioned from a fuel allocation system to a monetary-based system, where recipients receive a set amount based on their home community, rather than a fixed fuel allotment. This change was designed to assist up to 80% of the average cost of home heating and fuel. It simplified administrative processes and ensured that any unused credit would carry over to the next fiscal year, ensuring no benefits were left unused. Additional enhancements to the program included increased eligibility income thresholds, the removal of phase-out income thresholds, and the extension of the program to seniors who rent self-contained units with heating costs in addition to rent.

In 2019, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment conducted a review to determine if the changes made in 2018 resulted in increased access for seniors, efficiencies in program delivery, and the appropriateness of the current benefit levels.

The review determined that more seniors received the Senior Home Heating Subsidy in 2018-2019, and a larger number were able to access the full subsidy following improvements in the administration of the program. However, it was also noted that the purchasing power of the subsidy had decreased due to rising heating oil prices.

In 2020, a modest increase was applied to Senior Home Heating Subsidy amounts across all zones, with Zone 1 increasing from \$2,700 to \$2,900, Zone 2 from \$3,600 to \$3,900, and Zone 3 from \$4,200 to \$4,600.

Table 7 summarizes zones, subsidy amounts and income thresholds over the 2016-2017 to 2021-2022 fiscal years.

**Table 7: 2016-2017 to 2019-2020 Zones, Subsidy Amount, and Income Thresholds**

	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3
Income Threshold	\$56,000/year	\$64,000/year	\$73,000/year
Subsidy Amount (2016-2020)	\$2,700/year	\$3,600/year	\$4,200/year
Subsidy Amount (2020-2022)	\$2,900/year	\$3,900/year	\$4,600/year

## Appeals

Senior Home Heating Subsidy clients have the right to appeal decisions made regarding their eligibility and level of benefits. This right provides clients with the opportunity to verify they are receiving the appropriate benefits, and that front-line staff are assessing them in accordance with program legislation.

There were two levels of appeal under the Senior Home Heating Subsidy program:

1. An internal review; and
2. Social Assistance Appeal Committee.

Between 2016-2017 to 2021-2022, there was a total of 10 internal reviews.

Between 2016 and 2018, the appeal structure evolved from an Administrative Review Group to the Social Assistance Appeal Committee. In 2016, appeals were initially reviewed internally by Regional Superintendents. If a client was dissatisfied with the outcome, they could escalate the appeal to the Administrative Review Group within the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. In 2018, the establishment of the Social Assistance Appeal Committee introduced a formal second-level appeal process, enhancing procedural fairness for applicants.

Figures 6a to c identify the number of appeals heard by the internal review for the Dehcho, North Slave and South Slave. There were no internal review hearings for Beaufort Delta, Sahtú, and Tłı̄chq.

Figure 6a: Dehcho Internal Review Appeal Hearings

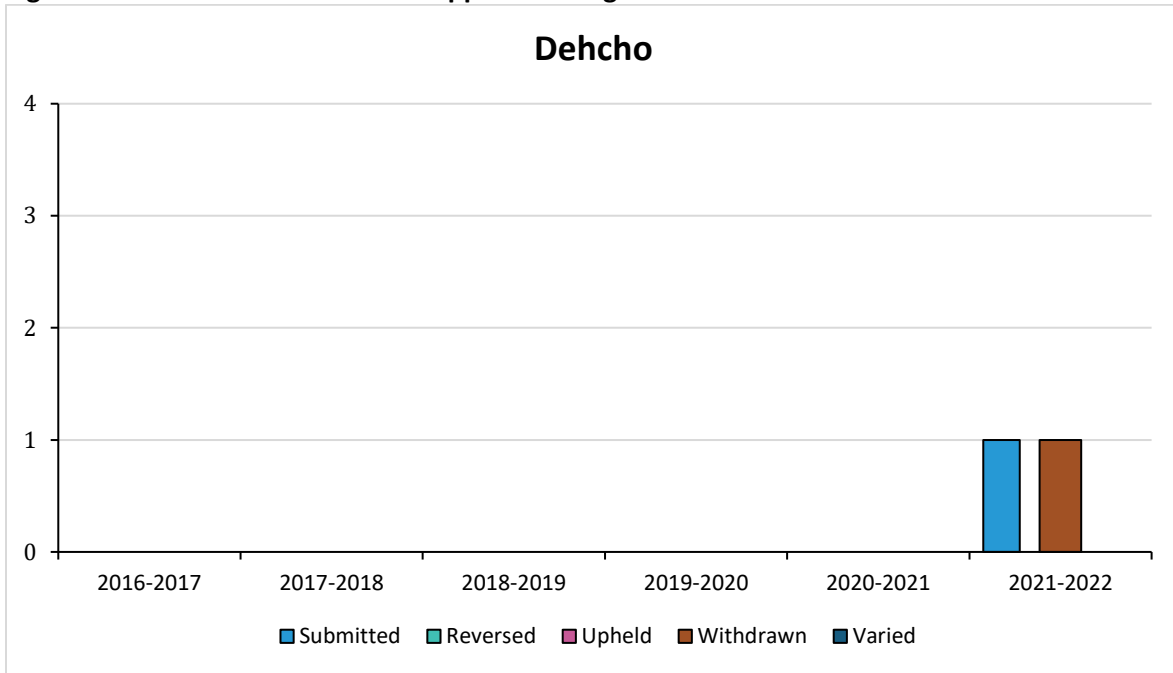
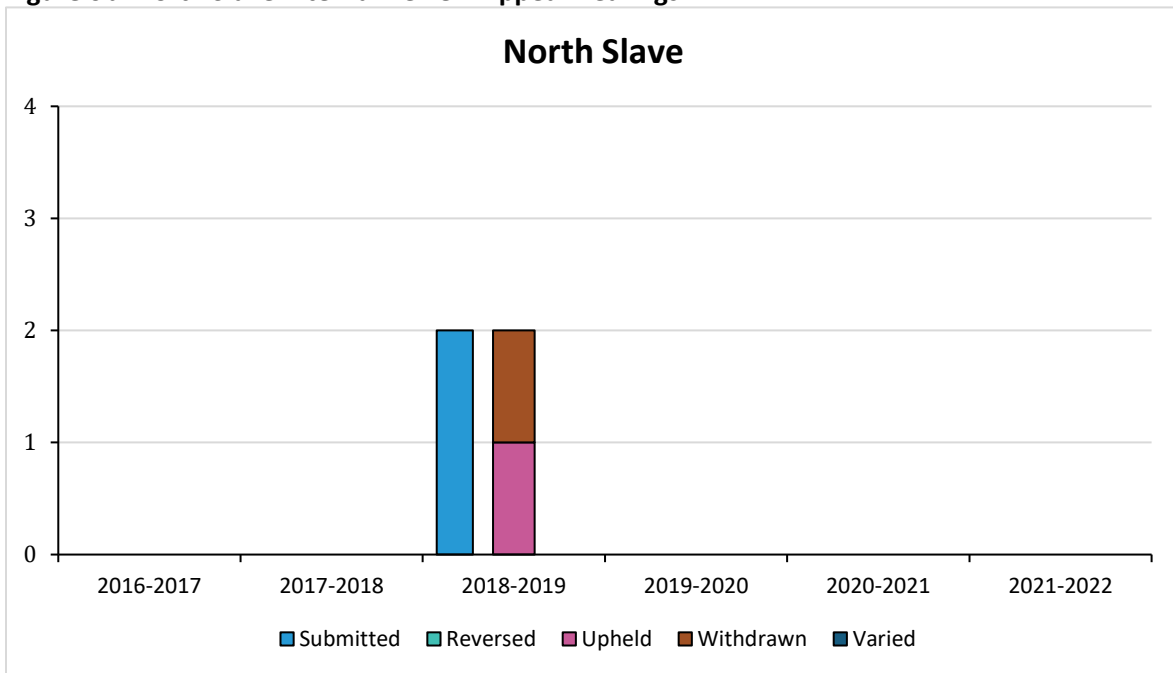
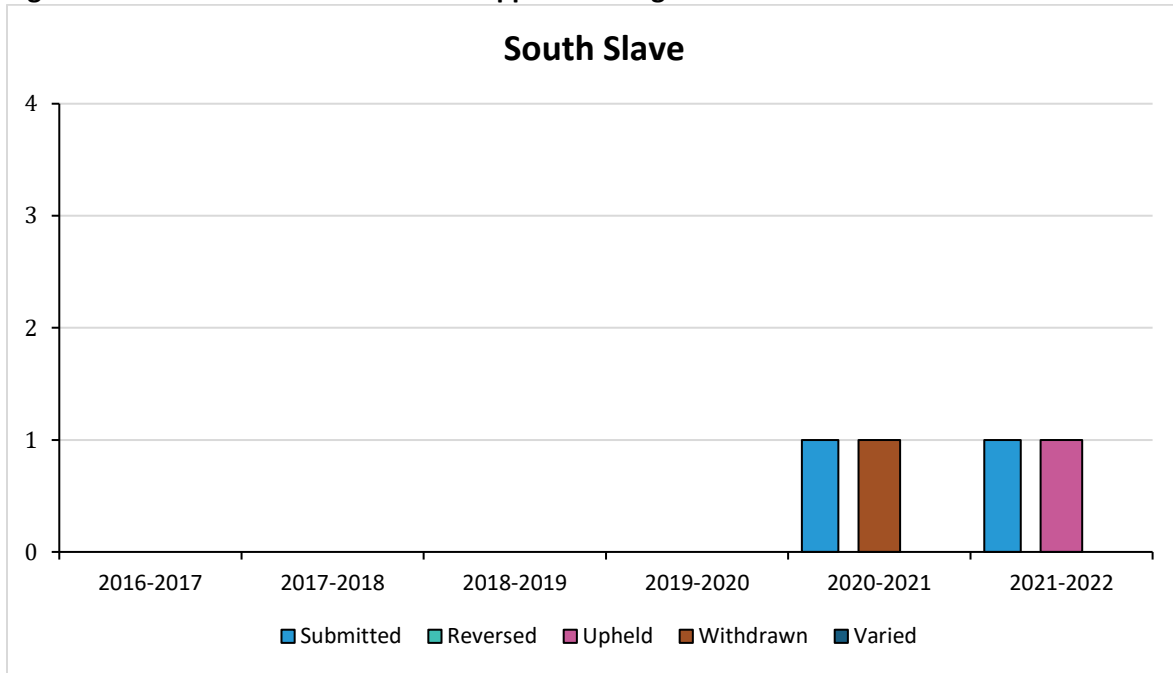


Figure 6b: North Slave Internal Review Appeal Hearings



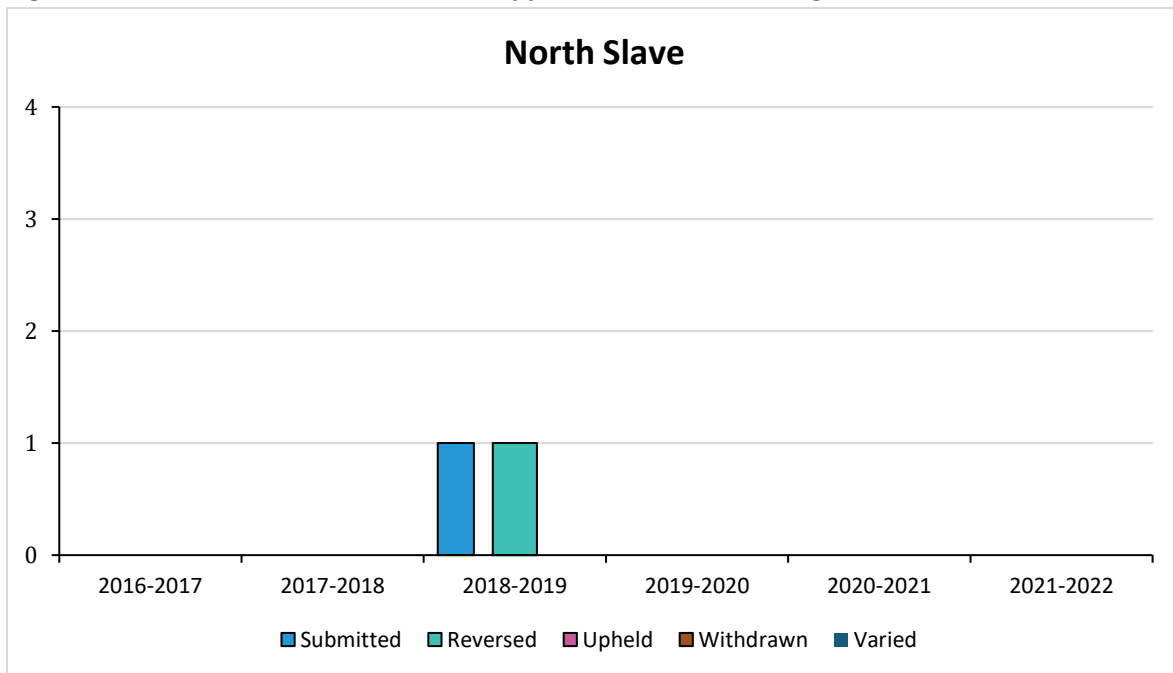
**Figure 6c: South Slave Internal Review Appeal Hearings**



Over the 2016-2017 to 2021-2022 fiscal year, there were no Social Assistance Appeal Committee hearings in the following communities: Beaufort Delta, Dehcho, Sahtú, South Slave and Tłı̨chǫ. In the North Slave, there was a total of two Social Assistance Appeal Committee Hearings.

Figure 7a identifies the number of appeals heard by the Social Assistance Appeal Committee for the North Slave.

**Figure 7a: North Slave Social Assistance Appeal Committee Hearings**



## Other Income Security Programs

The Income Security Programs division has additional programs that are administered by the Federal Government. This results in a consistent delivery system and application process for both federal and territorial benefits.

### Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit

Table 8 summarizes the number of seniors and total expenditures for this benefit over the 2016-2017 to 2021-2022 fiscal years.

**Table 8: Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit Statistics**

Fiscal Year	Number of Distinct Cases	Expenditures
2016-2017	1,627	\$2,627,567
2017-2018	1,160	\$2,440,880
2018-2019	1,152	\$2,754,916
2019-2020	1,181	\$2,787,376
2020-2021	1,309	\$3,084,674
2021-2022	1,330	\$3,074,707

### NWT Child Benefit

Table 9 summarizes the number of families and total expenditures for this benefit over the 2016-2017 to 2021-2022 fiscal years.

**Table 9: NWT Child Benefit**

Fiscal Year	Number of Distinct Cases	Expenditures
2016-2017	1,494	\$1,095,475
2017-2018	2,195	\$2,046,040
2018-2019	2,173	\$2,450,887
2019-2020	1,181	\$2,437,399
2020-2021	2,102	\$2,414,431
2021-2022	2,200	\$2,256,725

## Conclusion

The Income Security Programs Division continually refines policies, procedures, guidelines, and services to ensure the programs meet the needs of NWT residents.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment remains committed to delivering the highest quality programs and services to the residents of the NWT.

## Contact Information

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