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SMALL COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM
PROGRAM REVIEW

DRAFT SUBMITTED: MAY 31, 2020
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SUBMITTED TO:

GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES,
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT
LABOUR DEVELOPMENT AND STANDARDS DIVISION

SUBMITTED BY:

DPRA Canada
4916 – 49th St.
Northway Building
Yellowknife NT X1A 1P3
info@dpra.ca
1-800-661-8437
www.dpra.ca

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ACRONYMS

ATOC	Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupation Certification
DCA	Designated Community Authorities
ECE	Department of Education, Culture and Employment
GNWT	Government of the Northwest Territories
HQ	Headquarters
ISET	Indigenous Skills and Employment Training
ITI	Department of Industry, Tourism, and Investment
LMDA	Labour Market Development Agreement
NWT	Northwest Territories
NTNP	Northwest Territories Nominee Program
SCES	Small Communities Employment Support
WDA	Workforce Development Agreement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Small Community Employment Support (SCES) program is a six-year initiative linked to, and building on, the Skills 4 Success vision. A GNWT-funded program, the SCES aims to enhance employment and training opportunities and outcomes in small communities in the Northwest Territories. It does this through supporting small NWT communities and regional centres in developing job opportunities, which may include on-the-work training, for their residents.

SCES funds can be used to support job creation in small NWT communities, to support the implementation of community-based labour market development plans, and to integrate supports into the development and implementation of community infrastructure and economic development projects.

The purpose of the review was to assess the SCES program to determine the extent to which it is meeting its four objectives:
(1) Support job creation and labour market development in small NWT communities and smaller regional centres;
(2) Enable individuals to obtain and improve essential skills needed in the workplace;
(3) Support small communities and smaller regional centres in implementing respective local labour market development plans; and,
(4) Grow the NWT workforce through partnerships] and to identify best practices and program recommendations for the improvement of SCES program delivery moving forward.

APPROACH AND METHODS

The SCES program review was guided by a review matrix which identified the high-level review questions, indicators, data sources, methodologies, timing of data collection and stakeholders involved in collection.

Two key methods were implemented:
- Documents and data review (e.g., 2018/19 annual report data, annual plans, administrative information (programs guidelines, application forms)
- Key stakeholder telephone interviews with individuals representing: Designated Community Authorities (DCAs), community employers, Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) Headquarters (HQ) and Regional ECE Service Centre staff (n=30 interviews)

Quantitative data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel while qualitative data was analyzed using NVivo - Qualitative Data Analysis Software.

REVIEW FINDINGS

Overall, the evidence suggests that the SCES program is: a beneficial program for small communities; contributing towards the broader Small Communities Employment Strategy, being implemented as intended; and, achieving its intended purpose and to some extent its objectives. DCAs and community employers are very thankful that the program funds exists; noting that without the funds many new positions could not have been created and many employees could not have gained important essential employment skills.

The majority of stakeholders involved in the review believe that the program is being implemented in alignment with the guidelines and is providing value for money. While there was consensus that the program is creating new jobs, there was disagreement across the stakeholder groups that the program is creating sustainable jobs. Employers, especially those is communities with limited opportunities for economic activity, spoke about the challenges they encounter using the SCES funding because the program guidelines stipulate funding must be applied to new positions only (i.e., there are only so many new positions that be created in some small communities).

With respect to the four program objectives, the review indicates that the program is showing success in achieving some of the objectives. Overall, key stakeholders were in agreement that the SCES program was supporting job creation and labour market development in small NWT communities and smaller regional centres and that it was enabling individuals to obtain and improve essential skills needed in the workplace. There was disagreement regarding the program's ability to support small communities and smaller regional centres in implementing local labour market development plans. DCAs and ECE staff noted the efforts of ECE to support communities in getting their local labour market development plans in place with available funding and support. However, many communities have not yet completed the process and many community employers were unaware of the process or the existence of the community labour market development plans. Regarding growing the workforce through partnerships, the review indicated that this program is supporting a growing workforce in small communities through the creation of new employment opportunities and building the skills of individuals new to the workforce. However, the review identified opportunities for creating and leveraging more partnerships within the small communities, regions, and Territory. A summary of key stakeholder feedback on the questions guiding the review is found below.

Stakeholders	ECE HQ	Regional ECE	Opt-in DCA	Opt-Out DCA	Community Employers (Opt-in)	Community Employers (Opt-out)
Is the SCES program funding being utilized according to the purpose and guidelines established for the SCES program?	✅	✅	✅	✅	N/A	N/A
Is the SCES program providing value for money spent?	✅	✅	✅	✅	✅	✅

Is the SCES program creating new jobs in the NWT small communities?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Is the SCES program creating sustainable jobs in the NWT small communities?	−	−	✗	✗	−	−
Is the SCES program adhering to the Small Communities Employment Strategy?	✓	✓	✓	−	−	−
Is the SCES program accomplishing the objectives stated with the SCES program?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

[Legend: The green circles indicate that the majority of the stakeholders responded positively to the question. The yellow circles indicate that there were mixed responses with no majority. Red circles indicate that the majority of stakeholders provided a negative response to the question.]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this review, several recommendations are put forth for consideration by GNWT, ECE.

Recommendation #1: Conduct Additional Stakeholder Engagement
- Because changes to the SCES program were implement in the 2018/19 fiscal year, and given the current COVID-19 situation, it is recommended that consideration be given to delaying any changes to the program until more information can be collected from key stakeholders, specifically DCAs and community employers.
  - o While some DCAs and community employers were engaged in this review process, there numbers were small and not equally representative of all regions. To ensure that more robust feedback is obtained about the program from all communities and regions across the Territory, further engagement should be considered.

Recommendation #2: Transfer Annual Plan Decision-Making Authority to Regional ECE Service Centre Staff
- Regional ECE Service Centre staff have direct access to the communities utilizing the SCES program and work directly with the DCAs and community employers. It is recommended that consideration be given to providing the Regional ECE Service Centres with the authority to review the annual plans and make decision regarding the allocation of SCES funding.
  - o Due to their existing role in the SCES program, Regional staff have a better understanding of the regional and community labour market context which allows them to make more informed decisions about how the SCES funding can be distributed and optimized within local communities.
  - o This change in program administration would potentially improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the application process thereby allowing funds and new positions to be rolled out in a timely manner.

       o   This change would also position Regional staff to be able to explain more easily to DCAs and community employers the rationale behind the decisions made regarding the distribution of funding.

Recommendation #3: Enter into Multi-Year Contribution Agreements

- Given that DCAs and community employers find it difficult to plan for and sustain positions long-term, it is recommended that consideration be given to entering into multi-year contribution agreements that align with approved community-based labour market development plans.
  - This would require that all communities develop a community-based labour market development plan in collaboration with community organizations and businesses to ensure alignment within the community on local market needs and demands.
  - By offering multi-year funding, regions and communities would be better positioned to make longer term plans as they relate to employment and free them of creating new jobs on an annual basis. This will contribute to job sustainability, particularly for small communities with limited economic activity, by ensuring availability of funding to support essential positions year to year.
  - By aligning the funding with the community labour market development plans, it would simplify the process of creating annual plans because they would be required to flow directly from the broader labour market plan.
  - To monitor the spending, more robust reporting on the part of DCAs and community employers would be required to ensure funds are being spent as intended on a regular basis.

Recommendation #4: Revise the Reporting Requirements

- Based on the available data for this review and input from key stakeholders, it is recommended that consideration be given to revising the annual reporting templates to allow for more robust information to be collected (e.g., how the funds are actually being spent, who the funds are being spent on, sustainability of position).
  - Better quality reporting would provide ECE with much needed information on progress to, or achievement of, program objectives, and would enhance their understanding of program's value for money.
  - Changes to the template will require identifying key performance indicators for each program objectives to assist with the measurement of success. Revising the reporting requirements for those accessing the SCES funding will enhance the accountability on the part of the DCAs and community employers.
  - In addition to collecting more targeted information from stakeholders through reporting templates, it is also recommended that consideration be given to implementing, as a best practice, ongoing communication and reporting through the introduction of regular meeting between DCAs and community employers or Regional ECE Services Centre staff and community employers This will provide an opportunity for DCAs and the Regional Centres to offer support to community employers, while also increasing accountability.

Recommendation #5: Create More Formalized Territorial, Regional and Local Partnerships

- There are several important initiatives being offered in small communities that are necessary for supporting economic activity and employment; however, there seems to be a disconnect between the agencies delivering the various programming. To increase effectiveness, efficiency, and collaboration, it is recommended for consideration that ECE foster and maintain more formalized partnerships with other GNWT departments (e.g., HSS, ENR, ITI), as well as regional and local organizations/industries to support the identification of new and emerging employment and training opportunities.

Recommendation #6: Clarify the Program Criteria

- Key stakeholders suggested there is a lack of clarity regarding the criteria that guide the SCES program funding decision-making process. Changes have recently been made to the guidelines that have not been effectively communicated nor equitably implemented. It is recommended that consideration be given to reviewing the program criteria to ensure the process is fair and justifiable, and to ensuring that any updates to the program criteria are widely disseminated to DCAs and community employers.

Recommendation #7: Increase Community-level Program Promotion

- In some instances, key stakeholders indicated that they were unaware that the program was running in their community and missed the deadline to submit an application. It is recommended that consideration be given to increasing program promotion at the community level to ensure all local employers are aware of the program funds in a timely manner so they have the time needed to prepare their application.
  - o Particularly for employers who have not previously accessed this funding in the past, wide promotion of the program within communities is important to ensure equal opportunity.

Recommendation 8: Improve Communications

- It is recommended that consideration be given to improving the consistency and frequency of SCES program communication to Regional ECE Service Centres, DCAs and community employers. It is also recommended that roles and responsibilities regarding communication of SCES program information be defined and clearly articulated to ECE HQ and Regional staff.

Improving communication across all levels will ensure that stakeholders are getting accurate and up-to-date information.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In the coming 15 years, projections suggest that the Northwest Territories (NWT) will see tens of thousands of new job openings; forecasts project 28,500 to 36,700 job openings in a territory with a 2019 population of approximately 45,000 people. The jobs that are expected require post-high school education. It is predicted that 75% of new job opportunities will require university, college or apprenticeship training and less than 10% will be suitable for people with less than a high school education.

At present, a high proportion of the NWT labour supply is considered 'low skilled,' as determined by their highest level of completed schooling. Employers across the NWT are already experiencing challenges in recruitment and retention of employees, partially due to an aging workforce in the NWT, but also due to broader competition for skilled labour across Canada.

In order to ensure economic growth and competitiveness, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has developed a strong vision for the development of the NWT workforce. This is outlined in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's Skills 4 Success 10-Year Strategic Framework, which sets out a clear 10-year vision: "NWT residents have the skills, knowledge and attitudes for employment success". It notes "the skills, knowledge and talents of the people of the NWT [are] the number one resource and driving force behind our economy and sustainable communities. Skilled workers are critical to Canada's, and the NWT's, productivity, innovation and economic competitiveness."[1]

The 10-year Strategic Framework identifies four main goals designed to meet its vision:
1.   Increase Skill Levels through Relevant Education and Training
2.   Bridge Education and Employment Gaps through Targeted Supports
3.   Grow the NWT Workforce through Partnerships
4.   Improve Decision Making with Relevant Labour Market Information

The Skills 4 Success 10-Year Strategic Framework vision and goals are made-in-the-NWT solutions aimed at closing education and employment gaps and addressing recruitment and retention challenges.

To support labour market development in the NWT, including small communities, Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) delivers a number of territorially and federally funded programs:
- Labour Market Programs supported by the Canada-NWT Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) and Workforce Development Agreement (WDA)
- Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupation Certification (ATOC) Program
- Northwest Territories Nominee Program (NTNP)

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[1] GNWT, ECE. (2015). Skills 4 Success: 10-Year Strategic Framework.
https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/sites/ece/files/resources/skills_4_success_-_10-year_strategic_framework.pdf

- Small Community Employment Support (SCES) Program

These programs support the goals of ECE and the priorities of the 18th and 19th Legislative Assemblies of making strategic investments in workforce development, expanding opportunities for post-secondary education, trades-oriented and northern educational institutions, and increasing employment in small communities.[2]

1.2 THE SMALL COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Small Community Employment Support (SCES) program is a six-year initiative linked to, and building on, the Skills 4 Success vision. A GNWT-funded program, the SCES aims to enhance employment and training opportunities and outcomes in small communities in the Northwest Territories. It does this through supporting small NWT communities and regional centres in developing job opportunities, which may include on-the-work training, for their residents.

The objectives of the SCES are to:
- Support job creation and labour market development in small NWT communities and regional centres;
- Enable individuals to obtain and improve essential skills needed in the workplace;
- Support small communities and regional centres in implementing respective local labour market development plans; and
- Grow the NWT workforce through partnerships.[3]

SCES funds can be used to support job creation in small NWT communities, to support the implementation of community-based labour market development plans, and to integrate supports into the development and implementation of community infrastructure and economic development projects.

Eligibility for SCES program funds are limited to Designated Community Authorities (DCAs) in small communities and regional centres (excluding Yellowknife). DCAs are local government bodies (hamlet, village, or town councils) or First Nations Councils or Bands. The DCAs are required to "engage, seek out and support" other local community employers including:
- Registered businesses,
- Local housing authorities,
- Non-government organizations,
- Indigenous organizations, and
- Indigenous governments that are based in the community.[4]

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[2] GNWT, ECE (August 2019). Small Community Employment Support Program: Supports for Small Communities.
[3] GNWT, ECE (August 2019). Small Community Employment Support Program: Supports for Small Communities.
[4] GNWT, ECE (August 2019). Small Community Employment Support Program: Supports for Small Communities.

To access the program, DCAs are required to develop annual plans that identify how they will create or offer employment opportunities in their communities. In addition to annual plans, DCAs are asked to consider developing community-based labour market development plans – either internally, by the DCA, or through an external provider.

Funding is provided through contribution agreements between ECE and DCAs and consists of a base amount and an additional allocation based on the number of individuals aged 15 and older, and their employment rates.[5] DCAs who access the program, receive funds and administer those funds, are said to have opted-in.

When a DCA decides not to take on the responsibility of administering the SCES funding, they are said to have opted-out. When this happens, the Regional ECE Service Centres administer the SCES funds on behalf of the community. Organizations and employers that want to access funding apply to the Regional Centre. Successful applicants will enter into a contribution agreement with the Regional ECE Service Centre.

The SCES program is intended to support job creation in the communities – specifically new positions. However, in situations in which the position was created through SCES program funds, supports can be continued to provide for a second year.[6] To support sustainability of the positions, DCAs and employers are encouraged to identify alternative funds to help sustain the position in the future. [7]

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

The purpose of the review was to assess the SCES program to determine the extent to which it is meeting its four objectives:
1. Support job creation and labour market development in small NWT communities and smaller regional centres;
2. Enable individuals to obtain and improve essential skills needed in the workplace;
3. Support small communities and smaller regional centres in implementing respective local labour market development plans; and,
4. Grow the NWT workforce through partnerships] and to identify best practices and program recommendations for the improvement of SCES program delivery moving forward.

To that end, the review focused on answering the following questions:
1. Is the SCES program funding being utilized according to the purpose and guidelines established for the SCES program?
2. Is the SCES program providing value for money spent?

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[5] GNWT, ECE. (June 2018). SCES Program Fact Sheet.
https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/sites/ece/files/resources/lds_scesp_fact_sheet_jun18.pdf
[6] Prior to the revision of new SCES Program guidelines, funding could only be applied to new full-time positions. This meant that in the second year, SCES funds could not be used to subsidize this position.
[7] GNWT, ECE (August 2019). Small Community Employment Support Program: Supports for Small Communities.

3. What changes are recommended to the SCES program?
4. Is the SCES program creating new and sustainable jobs in the NWT small communities?
5. Is the SCES program adhering to the Small Communities Employment Strategy?
6. Is the SCES program accomplishing the objectives stated with the SCES program?

2.0 APPROACH AND METHODS

The review was conducted by DPRA Canada, a Yellowknife-based consulting firm. Working under the parameters outlined for GNWT research and review and in partnership with ECE staff, DPRA outlined a program review plan including data collection methodologies, instruments, and an analytical approach. The SCES program review was guided by a review matrix (see Appendix A) which identifies the high-level review questions, indicators, data sources, methodologies, timing of data collection and stakeholders involved in collection.

Two key methods were implemented: internal document and data review and key stakeholder interviews. It is important to note that the quantitative data included in this report is from 2018-19 only, while the qualitative information provided is derived from program documents and key stakeholder interviews that encompass a much longer timeframe (depending on the date of publication and the length of time the stakeholders have been involved in the SCES program).

2.1 DOCUMENT AND DATA REVIEW

Documents and data, provided by ECE's Labour Development and Standards Division, were reviewed relative to the quantitative and qualitative indicators identified in the Review Matrix. The documents and data provided background information on the program and presented results from community employers that accessed SCES program funding.

The document and data review included the following:
- 2018-2019 SCES Final Reporting File [includes all DCA reporting information]
- 2018-2019 Annual Plans (samples)
- Other Administrative data from ECE
  - SCES program guides and guidelines
  - SCES program fact sheet
  - SCES application forms
  - Contribution agreements (samples)

Quantitative data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel while qualitative data was analyzed using NVivo - Qualitative Data Analysis Software.

2.2 KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Key stakeholder interviews were carried out to explore program review topics such as funding utilization, value for money, creation of new and sustainable jobs, accomplishment of identified SCES objectives, alignment with Small Communities Employment Strategy goals, and recommendations for change.

Stakeholders comprised representatives from DCAs, employers and ECE staff. In total 30 individuals were interviewed as part of the program review process. The breakdown of stakeholders is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Breakdown of stakeholders engaged in SCES Program Review

Stakeholder Group	Number of Stakeholders Engaged	Regions Represented
DCAs (Opt-In)	6	Dehcho South Slave North Slave Sahtu Beaufort Delta
DCAs (Opt-out)	2	South Slave
Community Employers (working with DCAs)	3	Beaufort Delta
Community Employers (working with Regional ECE Service Centres)	8	Dehcho South Slave Sahtu Beaufort Delta
Regional ECE Service Centre Staff	6	All Regions
ECE Headquarters Staff	5	Territory

Interview participants were sent the questions ahead of time for review and preparation (see Appendix B for the interview guides). All interviews were conducted by telephone and ranged in length from 30 to 60 minutes in length. Notes were taken during the interview and upload to NVivo for analysis.

2.3 LIMITATIONS

The following limitations may have impacted the findings presented in this report:
1. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in employment status and location, significant stakeholder engagement challenges were experienced. These included difficulties contacting stakeholders because of incorrect contact information, lack of stakeholder availability, and a lack of stakeholder interest in participating in this review.
2. There was limited representation from some of targeted stakeholder groups. Specifically, there was very little participation by representatives from DCAs that opted-out of administering the

program and community employers that work with DCAs that opted-in. There was also not an equitable representation of regions/communities in the stakeholders that did take part.

3. There is an over-representation of ECE Regional and HQ staff stakeholder feedback in this report relative to feedback received from DCAs and community employers which influences the direction of findings.

4. While annual reporting data from each of funded regions/communities was reviewed and included as findings in this report, the information is not robust and not all of it addresses the questions posed for this review.

5. Many community employers were unable to speak about community-based labour market development plans because they did not know they existed or were not involved in the development or implementation of the community plans.

6. Outside of ECE HQ and Regional ECE Service Centre staff, stakeholders were unfamiliar with the goals of the Small Communities Employment Strategy and thus were unable to comment on whether the SCES program was contributing to achievement of the goals.

7. In some instances community employers were getting the labour market development funding programs confused, and as such may not have responded to the interview questions with specific reference to the SCES program.

8. The review is based on annual report information for the 2018/19 fiscal year only. A number of SCES program changes were implemented in 2018/19 so there is no opportunity to compare data before and after the changes were implemented.

9. While the findings do suggest some similarities in opinion and experiences, the limited number of DCA and community employer key stakeholders who took part in the review process calls into the question the extent to which their responses are representative of DCAs and employers more generally.

10. As a result of recent changes to the SCES program guidelines and further changes as a result of COVID-19, there was confusion on the part of Regional ECE staff, DCAs and community employers regarding the program guidelines.

3.0 REVIEW FINDINGS

The findings for the program review are presented by review question.

3.1 IS THE SCES PROGRAM FUNDING BEING UTILIZED ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE AND GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED FOR THE SCES PROGRAM?

Based on the financial information provided in the 2018-2019 SCES Final Reporting File, the SCES program funding is being utilized according to the purpose and guidelines established for the program.

During the interviews, there was a high level of consensus by ECE HQ staff, Regional ECE staff, DCAs opting-in and DCAs opting-out that the program is being used to serve the established purpose and

guidelines. These stakeholders indicated that the program was achieving its purpose of financing new employment opportunities in small communities outside of Yellowknife that otherwise would not be able to fund new positions. They noted the program provides opportunities for individuals (many being summer students) to gain experience and skills that they may not be able to acquire if the community did not have access to this funding.

> *"Yes. I believe the funding is being used to ensure NWT residents have the skills and abilities the need to meet labour market demands." – ECE Regional Stakeholder*

From the perspective of ECE staff (Regional and HQ), the process of having DCAs or, in the case of DCAs opting out, local employers, submit their Employer Applications before receiving funding helps to ensure that the SCES program guidelines are met and align with community-based labour market development plans (if prepared). This administrative process is an important mechanism in screening out potential uses the SCES funding that do not align with the guidelines. Regional ECE staff indicated that there is often a lot of back and forth between themselves, DCAs, local community employers, and ECE HQ throughout the annual planning process to ensure that the program guidelines are being met.

> *"We roll out the program to the communities. They submit their annual plans. We ensure their plans are aligned with their community labour market development plans and the program guidelines." –Regional ECE Stakeholder*

One of the common challenges ECE staff identified, was businesses proposing in their annual plan, the use of funding for jobs that were already in existence or that had been funded by the program in the previous fiscal years. Prior to the revised program guidelines in 2018-2019, SCES funding could only be used for new positions, not to support a position in its second year, with summer/seasonal employment positions being the exception. ECE staff noted that there was a lot of confusion on the part of community employers about how SCES funds could be used in this regard.

The new guidelines provide the option to use 15% of the total funding to cover administrative fees. In 2018-2019, of the 24 DCAs that opted-in to administering the program, 21 utilized the administrative funding. It was noted during the ECE HQ interviews, that providing the DCAs with money to support the administration of the program, resulted in an increase in the number of DCAs deciding to opt-in. Prior to this, DCAs were required to cover the costs associated with administering the program using their own funds.

3.2 IS THE SCES PROGRAM PROVIDING VALUE FOR MONEY SPENT?

During the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the average cost per SCES job created was $6,286.27. The range across the different regions was $4,405.05 in South Slave to $8,394.77 in the Sahtu region (see Table 2). It was noted during the ECE HQ interviews, that the low cost per job reflects the fact that many funded positions are summer/seasonal employment.

Table 2: Average Cost per SCES Job Created

Region	Total Spent	Number of New Jobs Created from SCES Program Funding	Average Cost per SCES Job Created
South Slave	$577,061	131	$4,405.05
North Slave	$652,401.46	111	$5,877.49
Dehcho	$689,127.72	111	$6,208.35
Sahtu	$570,844	68	$8,394.77
Beaufort Delta	$1, 276,044	178	$7,168.79
Overall	$3,765,478	599	$6,286.27

All of the DCAs and Regional ECE staff agreed that the program is providing value for money. There were only a couple of individuals representing community employers and ECE HQ who were unsure if the program was providing value for money they spent. They noted that while the program is able to create new positions, those positions are not sustainable and may require more effort than they are worth due to the amount of training and oversight the new employees need. One stakeholder identified the lack of sufficient reporting for the program as a limitation to understanding exactly how the money is being used and the true value for money being achieved through this program.

DCAs and community employers generally agreed that this program provided at least some value for money because they are able to use the funding to fill positions within the community. This funding is most frequently used to hire students for seasonal positions which provides them with an opportunity to acquire new skills, experiences, and money. One example of how the program is providing value to a local business is by being able to hire additional staff to work extended hours in the summer months. This provides an opportunity for new positions while also providing more opportunity for the business to serve the community and make money. Without SCES funding, this business would not be able to support the wage of staff for the extended hours of the business. Another example of how this program provides value to local businesses is by allowing them to offer higher wages and thus being more competitive with other employers (e.g., government) and helping them retain their employees.

"Yes. Well, because especially small businesses wouldn't be able to afford to keep their employees over summer for extended hours without assistance of government. Without that money we don't have that opportunity to work with them more, teach them more skills, let them work really." – Community Employer

"We struggle to operate in an environment that requires higher wages. This usually results in less manpower to fit budgets. This program alleviates this challenge." – Annual Report

For communities that have very small populations and limited employment opportunities, ECE staff and DCAs (both those that opt-in and out) commented on the value this program brings by being able to provide new employment opportunities that help develop the skillsets (both soft/essential and technical) of individuals thereby making them more employable for other jobs that may come up in the community. The value of the funding comes from the opportunities it creates for individuals who may have no other options for employment. This employment opportunity supports them in building transferable skills, self-worth, self-sufficiency, and confidence while potentially becoming more engaged in the community.

"Hopefully teaching these students life and work skills, as well as how to be responsible and dependable, will carry over into their futures in secondary education and future employment opportunities." – Annual Report

"This funding allows people to stay in their communities and find employment at home allowing them to raise their families in their home community which gives them a sense of pride and accomplishment." – Annual Report

Community employers also mentioned other positive outcomes associated with the program:

"There is a social impact outcome as people work to provide for their families, there is also a sense of connectedness to a community, less time spent at home in isolation and increased overall community health (healthier residents, healthier communities). Increased employment stimulates the economy and raises the standards of living within the community." – Annual Report

"The potential impacts for participating communities include improved productivity, increased employment readiness, higher levels of education and job experience, accelerated community capacity building leading to investment in the community. Lower crime rates, fewer addictions, and family violence reduction occur when residents of a community contribute, are valued, healthy and have a sense of self-worth and stability." – Annual Report

"Because employment means so much more than a job and a paycheck. Though these are important, the sense of agency one derives from being an actively contributing member of society has enormous ramifications in self-satisfaction and belonging. These are keystones in both physical and mental health." – Annual Report

Overall, the program appears to be providing value for money in the communities for local government, organizations, and businesses. While DCAs and local employers indicated that they could always use more funding to provide more employment opportunities in their communities, they feel that the existing support does enable them to support their communities and businesses.

"Huge benefit for individuals without a job and helps to support community economic growth." – ECE HQ Stakeholder

"Any financial aid is certainly a benefit to any small business. It allows the business owner to have a much-needed staff member that they may otherwise not have been able to afford. I can hardly tell you what that bit of weight off my shoulders does for me mentally as I'm sure it does for other employers. There is huge pressure when your business must generate enough revenue to pay all your staff and create a personal income. –" Annual Report

3.3 IS THE SCES PROGRAM CREATING NEW AND SUSTAINABLE JOBS IN THE NWT SMALL COMMUNITIES?

3.3.1 New Jobs

Based on the data from the annual reports and interviews conducted with key stakeholders, funding from the SCES program is helping to create new jobs in small communities across the NWT. In the 2018-2019 fiscal year, a total of 599 jobs were funded through the SCES program. Of these 599 jobs: 327 were new employment opportunities in the sectors of infrastructure and economic development; 324 were new jobs planned with the DCAs; and, 109 were new jobs planned within other community employers (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: New Jobs Created with SCES Program Funding

599	327	324	109
New jobs created through SCES	New jobs in infrastructure and economic development	Reported new jobs planned with DCAs	New jobs planned with other community employers
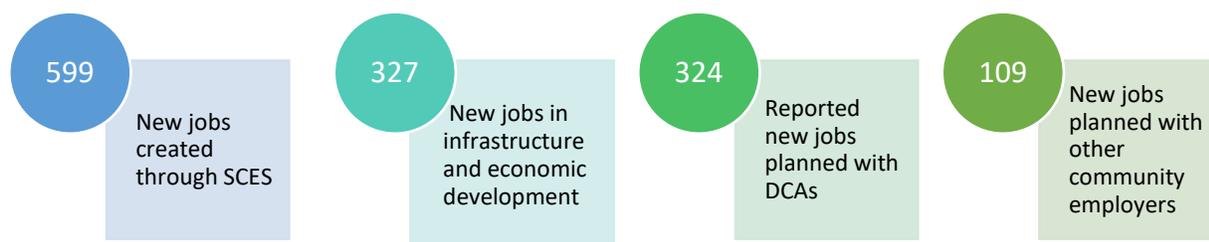
It is important to note that some DCAs or community employers did not specify the number of new jobs that they had planned and only indicated 'yes' or 'no' to planning new jobs (see Table 3).

Table 3: Number of Yes/No responses for "New Jobs Planned with the DCAs" and "New Jobs Planned Within Other Community Employers"

DCAs/Community Employers	Yes	No
New Jobs Planned with the DCAs	26	0
New Jobs Planned Within Other Community Employers	0	3

Of these, the Beaufort-Delta region was able to create the most positions through SCES funding, with a total of 178 new jobs. A breakdown of the new jobs created by region is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Number of New Jobs Created from SCES Program Funding

111 North Slave	131 South Slave	68 Sahtu	178 Beaufort-Delta	111 Dehcho

There was consensus across all the stakeholder groups that the SCES program is creating new jobs in communities as it is intended to do. As reported by one ECE HQ staff, the program was intended to inspire community employers to get creative about new employment positions in the community. This seems to work in many communities that are able to use the funding for seasonal and new community initiatives, including community beautification efforts, or hiring staff for summer programming. In other communities, however, they are using the funding to support fundamental positions that employers could not otherwise financially support. Several local employers indicated they would not be able to create jobs or provide employment opportunities without the support of this program. Most often, employers are using these funds for positions that are seasonal and tailored to students to provide them with job experience.

"Yes, especially for summer students. Lots of organizations use the funds to support summer students. It provides them with job readiness skills and skills the specific job requires." – Regional ECE Stakeholder

Regional ECE staff, DCAs and employers spoke about the challenge of trying to create new jobs each year in order to be able to obtain SCES funding when there are existing positions they are unable to fund without the support of wage subsidy programs. This leads to the creation of new positions. Yet, at the same time, existing positions are terminated/removed, particularly if they were funded by the SCES program, and no alternative funds have been identified to cover the wages. While community stakeholders welcome the creation of new positions, they noted there is a greater need to support existing positions in the community.

DCA stakeholders noted that the jobs being created through SCES funding are essential positions needed in the community and that if this funding were not available, they would have to find alternative funding to cover positions. Because these positions are deemed essential to the delivery of services for community members, only receiving funding for one year is a significant challenge.

Another element of creating and supporting the wage for new jobs in small communities is that it gives employers an opportunity to hire individuals that they otherwise would not. Community employers reported that when they are able to hire new employees, they often know who in the community is looking for work or who may be able to recommend someone who would be well-suited for the position.

The funds provide these employers with an opportunity to try out new employees they have not worked with in the past.

> *"Yeah – it gives incentives to maybe hire the guys that you normally wouldn't have the time or the money for." – Community Employer*

Several of the DCAs and community employers identified the area of tourism as a sector they are able to create new positions in on an annual basis as there are more new opportunities for tourism development. In addition to tourism positions, stakeholders in the communities identified opportunities for new jobs in municipal services like water treatment and maintenance, as well as in childcare and early childhood education.

> *"Tourism is a priority and a lot of new job creation will change yearly due to the economic state of the territory so that is where the pre-planning meetings are important to know what new jobs are needed." – DCA (Opt-In) Stakeholder*

3.3.2 Sustainable Jobs

While there was a high level of agreement that the program creates new jobs, there was less agreement as to whether the program supports the creation of sustainable jobs. Many of the ECE staff, DCAs and community employers suggested that because of the one-year funding model, it is difficult for the positions to be sustainable. The challenge with only providing one-year funding is that it does not allow for long-term planning within the community to determine how the position can become sustainable.

> *"There was some seasonal type employment but that isn't sustainable. Because it isn't going to happen unless they get some funding to do it again. No long-term employment came out of these positions." – Community Employer*

Another reason why the program is not leading to the creation of sustainable jobs is that the type of jobs typically being created is those that serve the immediate needs of the community rather those that help generate revenue. This is due in part, to the lack of economic activity in many small communities. An example of this is the use of SCES funding to subsidize the wages for an Executive Director in a non-profit organization. Now that the funding year has ended, the organization is required to find funding elsewhere to support this position; a position that is necessary for the organization and for the community. As described by ECE staff at the HQ and Regional levels, for the jobs to be sustainable, there needs to be enough economic activity within the communities to support the wages after the SCES program is no longer available.

> *"Because a lot of the smaller communities rely on contract/short term employment, not sure about the sustainability" – Regional ECE Stakeholder*

On the other hand, some local employers reported that the program created sustainable employment because employees have been able to maintain employment beyond the one-year funding that subsidized their initial position. In some cases, the employee is continuing in the same position. However, in other instances, the employee is moved into a new position within the business, and in other cases, the employee gets another job in another organization due to the skills they gained through this program. Many stakeholders indicated that while the jobs may not be sustained, the skills the employee learns on the job are, and that person now becomes an employable community member and may remain in the workforce.

"We aren't creating new jobs for sustainability but it gives them experience to get into a position down the road that already exists." – DCA (Opt-out) Stakeholder

"This program will help develop community members for their future careers. Though they may choose other full-time career paths, the experience and income they earn from this program will assist them in that career." – **Annual Report**

"Participants realize that they are able to successfully complete training and procure better paying employment. There is also a ripple effect as other community members see the changes they are making in their lives and try to follow suit. People training in employment within our First Nation have developed lasting skills and will either continue to work for the First Nation or find suitable employment elsewhere." – **Annual Report**

DCA stakeholders suggested that there may be certain instances that lead to sustainable positions. For example, with the wage subsidy from the SCES program businesses can get creative and try different initiatives to try to grow the business without the risk of losing core funding to do so. In this case, the funding can help spark innovative thinking about how a business can prosper.

"To a certain extent, they will be able to keep these new jobs going. This funding gives other businesses the incentive to really look at their business to see where they can go with it." – DCA (Opt-In) Stakeholder

It was also noted in one of the Annual Reports that jobs offered through this program help get small communities moving,

"Our next generation is out future. We create jobs for the youth. Teach them how to be responsible. We create jobs for parents that are able support our children, show by experience. This program helps get people back in the workforce for small communities where employment is limited and being able to create jobs gets a community moving. The difference is we are creating the future for our children." –
Annual Report

3.4 IS THE SCES PROGRAM ADHERING TO THE SMALL COMMUNITIES EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY?

When stakeholders were asked what activities the SCES program is implementing or supporting that help achieve the goals of the Small Communities Employment Strategy, many responded generally that program supports all four strategy goals - (1) increase skill levels through relevant education and training; (2) bridge education and employment gaps through targeted supports; (3) grow the NWT workforce through partnerships; and, (4) improve decision making with relevant labour market information – but did not go into detail on how it did so.

That being said, there was consensus across the stakeholder groups that the program's support of new jobs through the provision of funding was directly supporting the first goal of the strategy - to increase skill levels through relevant education and training. It was noted that any community resident who accesses a job through the program would have an opportunity to learn transferrable skills that will help them in the future.

ECE staff (HQ and Regional) reported that all four of the goals of the strategy were being addressed through the SCES program. Some spoke about the fact that the program helps bridge employment and education gaps specifically for summer students. Others spoke about the fact that a key component of this program is working with partners and that the creation of the community-based labour market development plans requires the identification of partners and partners working together to identify employment opportunities. Another provided an example from one community in which the DCA reported they use their community-based labour market development plan while engaging with community employers to identify the potential employment opportunities that are needed for the year prior to submitting the application for the SCES program. They noted that this process ensures that the application is supporting the community labour market plan and serving the areas of the greatest demand within the workforce. This was identified as an excellent example of how the DCA is using data and partnerships to drive community employment while meeting community demands.

One ECE staff also spoke about the community-based labour market development plans, noting that they are a tool that helps support all four goals. The plans are used to assist communities in identifying priorities and opportunities and that also assist in focusing where resources are needed at the community level. The plans include any employment and training supports identified by the DCAs and local employers based on their needs and any upcoming economic development, such as infrastructure or major projects in the community. The DCAs can use the plans to inform the development of their annual SCES program plans and to identify other ECE funding programs, if needed, to meet the four goals.

Many employers felt that they weren't able to speak to the goals of the strategy, but they felt that the program was providing employment opportunities that otherwise wouldn't exist and providing individuals in the community opportunities to gain new skills that are transferable and that can be leveraged to help them remain in the workforce.

There were some stakeholders who felt that while the program may support some of the Strategy goals, that the outcomes may not be sustainable. For example,

> *"I think it is helping small business to identify where there may be gaps. And I think*
> *provide some skills and skill sets for youth – and there are other people. So, it has*
> *some benefit in those ways. But I think the benefit locally may end up being short*
> *term, in that those skills that are developed may end up having that individual say go*
> *to Yellowknife or another community where there are longer term opportunities" –*
> *DCA (Opt-In) Stakeholder*

3.5 IS THE SCES PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHING THE OBJECTIVES?

The responses to this question are organized by objectives. Because this question focuses specifically on program objectives, there is significant overlap between the finding presented here and the findings presented earlier in the report.

3.5.1 Supports job creation and labour market development in small NWT communities and smaller regional centres

As mentioned in section 3.3.1, a total of 599 jobs were created in the 2018-2019 fiscal year as a result of the SCES program. All stakeholders noted that the creation of these new local positions would not be possible without the availability of SCES program funding. Stakeholders stated that this was particularly true for small organizations (non-profits, grassroots) in communities that mainly depend on grants, government funding, and volunteers to function. With this funding, organizations are able to finance paid positions that significantly contribute to their viability.

> *"The difference for us is between being able to operate or not. That is how big this*
> *grant was for us. Our financials as a new business are challenging and having to limit*
> *our work to seasonal - September to March. In closing, we hope the program*
> *continues and includes workers who are not only new to a business but those that are*
> *… developing in skill and employability by continuous positive experiences at their*
> *present work." – Annual Report*

When stakeholders were asked specifically how the program has influenced the employment rate in communities, there were three common areas of responses:
- The employment rate increases seasonally as a result of this program because most of the jobs created are for summer students
- The employment rate has been positively influenced because the current rates are very low with very few opportunities for employment in the community, therefore the increased number of employment opportunities available due to this program increases the community rates.
- The program only supports the development of a couple jobs per year and does not really have any significant impact on the employment rate in the community.

One ECE employee summarized the challenge of understanding the impact on the community employment,

"Employment rates are calculated on an annual basis and if the communities use it for summer students, it isn't going to have an impact on the annual employment rates. It is impacted in the summer for when they are hiring students. It would be hard to tease out how the ECE financial support affects a community employment rates" – ECE staff

Regional ECE staff mentioned that it is becoming more challenging for communities to find new positions to create to qualify for the SCES program funds because, without new economic development opportunities, there are only so many positions that can be created. For example, one DCA spoke about seasonal positions that have been created for the purpose of community beautification. Once the work is done, there may not be a need for these types of positions the following year. Additionally, many of the jobs funded through the SCES program are essential jobs, and without SCES funding, communities would be unable to cover the wages. For example, the SCES program has funded summer camp counsellor positions that are essential to be able to run community programming in the summer for children and youth. Without the SCES funding, the community is required to find other funding sources because they do not have the core funding to support these positions that are essential for community programming.

Building on the challenge of finding new employment opportunities year after year, it was flagged that in some of the smaller communities the new jobs that are being created are going to the same individuals, limiting the expansion of the workforce in that community. Because the new jobs are unsustainable, and employees previously funded through the program will be looking for a new job every year or two, new jobs will tend to go to the same individuals who now have some experience and are a better hire. This indicates that while small communities may appear to be creating new jobs on an annual basis, it is not always creating net new jobs that grow the workforce.

The new jobs that are created tend to be seasonal or project-based in the areas of parks and recreation, infrastructure and maintenance, tourism, social services, and office administration. The specific types of jobs that have been created through the SCES funding are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Types of Jobs Created through the SCES Program

Parks and Recreation	Infrastructure and Maintenance	Tourism	Social Services	Office Administration
• Gardeners and grounds keepers • Painters • Day Camp Counsellor	• Water Plant Operator • General contractor	• Tourist Centre staff • Tour operator	• Early Childhood Education support staff • Outreach worker	• Secretary • Bookkeeper • Administrative Assistants

As seen in Table 4, the employment rate in the five regions ranges from 43.6% in North Slave to 64.8% in South Slave. Given these employment rates, there appears to be an opportunity for the SCES program to continue to create and promote new jobs where possible in regions with low employment rates to create opportunities where they may not currently exist.

Table 4: NWT Employment Rate/Labour Force Participation[8]

Region	Employment Rate	Number of Individuals in Labour Force	Total Population 15+
South Slave	64.8%	4,421	6,125
North Slave	43.6%	1,303	2,149
Dehcho	49%	1,829	2,697
Sahtu	60.1%	1,466	2,023
Beaufort Delta	57.4%	3,586	5,311

"The most significant impact that this program has had on our community has been two-fold: a) improving unemployment rates within the community b) funding important [essential] services … which the community relies on." – Annual Report

Overall, stakeholders agree that the SCES program is creating new employment opportunities in small communities and providing support to local employers to hire new employees that they otherwise could not financially support. However, there is uncertainty across the stakeholder groups as to how sustainable the new jobs are without the continuation of the SCES funding beyond one year (or now, year two with the program changes). While some stakeholders identified opportunities to create new positions to train employees to take on more responsibility and build the necessary roles into core funding, others indicated that some small communities do not have the level of economic activities to support new jobs when the funding cycle ends.

3.5.2 Enables individuals to obtain and improve essential skills needed in the workplace

Overall, one of the most common benefits of the SCES program identified by all stakeholders is the opportunity for new employees to develop essential skills that enhance their employability in the community. DCAs and community employers feel that individuals who are employed as a result of this program are gaining important on-the-job training that allows them to develop important transferable skills that will benefit both the employer and the employee long-term. The main skills that employers see being developed through these new positions are presented in Figure 4.

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[8] *Source: 2019 NWT Bureau of Statistics*

Figure 4: Reported Transferable Skills Developed in Employees through the SCES Program

Literacy and Numercy	Customer Service	Computer Skills	Time Management	Accouuntability

Bookkeeping	Communication	Team Work	Hospitality
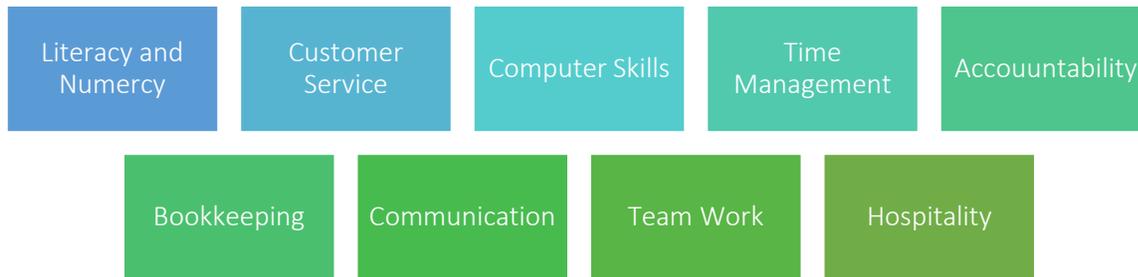
In addition to acquiring these essential and transferable skills that can now be added to their resumes to help obtain future employment, it was also noted that these employment experiences provide individuals with an opportunity to build confidence and self-esteem while gaining valuable experience. For example, one student who was studying early childhood education at a post-secondary institution was employed during the summer in the area of childcare as a result of SCES program funding. This opportunity gave the student relevant experience that aligned with their education and could be added to their resume when they complete their program and begin looking for a full-time job in the field of early childhood education. The program also provides community members with the opportunity to determine if they are interested in pursuing careers in certain fields of work.

> *"We gave a young mother the chance to see if working in finance and an office environment was what she wanted and if she wanted to further herself and get an education in which the nation would also help with funding for school and counsel her through it." – Annual Report*

One of the common benefits that employers witness through this program is that new employees are given the opportunity to develop and demonstrate a strong work ethic. It was noted that having a good work ethic is a highly valuable asset in small communities. When other employers in the community see someone with a good work ethic, they are more likely to offer that individual employment in the future. So while the jobs created through this program may not be sustainable, they do provide employees with more opportunities for future employment with other employers in the community.

> *"Successes were measured by providing a stable, yet flexible environment for our employees to meet the challenges of regular employment. Some of our employees have had problems with accountability i.e. Missing work, late, etc. We were able to work together diligently towards increasing the understanding of work ethics and responsibility to make for longer term and reliable employees." – Annual Report*

As previously mentioned, this program provides many summer positions. These summer positions provide experiences and skills building opportunities that can be invaluable to students when they begin to present themselves as employable members of the community. There were several anecdotes from community employers about how individuals who were employed through SCES went on to be highly valued employees in other organizations in the community, in part, because of their previous

experience(s) with this program. For example, one employee who was hired in a short-term position through the SCES funding thanked their employer for providing them with the opportunity and mentorship that allowed them to develop skills that then resulted in other employers hiring them in the community. Stakeholders also provided examples in which employees have been recruited by other employers because they see their positive attitude and dedication towards the job.

While stakeholders noted that this program is not intended to support formal training for employees, most employers mentioned that they have new employees take part in an orientation process that introduces them to processes and protocols related to the job. WHIMIS training was identified as a formal training program that was mandatory for new employees. Examples of formal training opportunities that employees obtained through the SCES funded positions are listed in Figure 6. Employers noted that while formal training opportunities are not funded through SCES funding, the wages to cover the employees attending training are. Often, employers will leverage other program funding to financially support employees to attend training and certification programs. Several employers described the importance of providing mentorship and supervision to those who are hired through the SCES program and how that support and guidance was necessary in developing the skills required for the job.

Figure 5: Formal Training Opportunities Provided to Employees in Positions Funded by SCES

First Aid	WHIMIS	DARE Awareness	Driver's Licencing	Machine Safety training

One DCA stakeholder stated they have used the funding to create 'trainee' positions that will build the capacity of an individual so that they can take on other positions in the organization once they have the proper skillset. Another DCA stakeholder spoke about using the one-year funding to employ someone who may not be qualified with the intention of helping them to gain the qualifications necessary to fill other vacancies that are more permanent in nature.

"It gives me incentive to pass on knowledge and experience to make people more employable and successful." – Annual Report

Table 5 provides a breakdown of the number of employers by region that offered development and training and the type of skill development and training offered as reported in the 2018-2019 Annual Reports.

Table 5: Number of Skill Development and Training Interventions Delivered

Region	Number of Employers Offering Development and Training	Types of Skill Development and Training
South Slave	11	▪ Maintenance ▪ Administration ▪ Utility and production distribution ▪ Recreation parks and maintenance ▪ Early childcare education ▪ Construction and Trades ▪ Barista/customer service ▪ Self-discipline/time management ▪ Planning and programming ▪ Retail business skills
North Slave	5	▪ Pre-employment training ▪ Radio announcer ▪ Construction basics ▪ Early childhood education ▪ Post-secondary training ▪ Environmental monitoring and remediation ▪ Heavy equipment operation ▪ Hands-on training and certification ▪ Pre-Trades
Dehcho	7	▪ Gardening ▪ Carpentry ▪ Power plant operator ▪ Water treatment
Sahtu	6	▪ Construction ▪ Bookkeeping ▪ Financial systems ▪ Office administration ▪ Down stream training ▪ Sawmill operation ▪ Job shadowing of Business Manager, Finance Officer, and Projects Administrator
Beaufort Delta	1	▪ General employment training and skill development
Overall	30	

Overall, it was noted that,

> *"The positive impact that this program has had within participating communities will*
> *allow for improved economic structure and efficiency - within each specific*
> *communities, as well as for the north as a whole. Improving services, while*
> *simultaneously increasing employment, serves to help each community by running at*
> *a higher level of capacity and allows for each community to run with a more*
> *progressive approach, rather than maintaining a reactive state." – Annual Report*

3.5.3 Supports small communities and smaller regional centres in implementing respective local labour market development plans

While not every community was represented in the stakeholder engagement, those who were engaged reported that their community either had or was actively developing a community-based labour market development plan. In the Beaufort-Delta region, communities were collaborating with others in the area to develop a collective labour market development plan. In the 2020-2021 guidelines of the SCES program guidelines, it requires communities to have a local labour market development plan in order to access the program funding. The intent is that the annual plans submitted for the SCES program are in alignment with the existing local market development plan.

DCA stakeholders reported working with Regional ECE staff to ensure that the labour market development plans are completed and are aligned with the annual plans. Regional ECE stakeholders noted that this creates some administrative challenges. They mentioned that while Regional ECE staff have relationships with DCAs, and support them in developing their community-based labour market development plans, and preparing their annual plans, the ultimate decision of what plans get approved and how the funding is allocated is made by ECE HQ staff who may not have the same level of information or context about the plans. It was noted that the current decision-making process is problematic because, while the annual plans are expected to align with the community-based labour market development plans, ECE HQ does not utilize the labour market development plans in their annual SCES program decision-making process. It was also noted that there is at times a slowdown in the annual plan review process created by the need for ECE HQ to review all the plans. Many community employers were unaware of the community-based labour market development plans and were unsure if their community had one. Further to that, if there was knowledge of such a plan existing, they often indicated that they were not included in the development process.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic situation, for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, Regional ECE staff have been given the authority to approve annual plans. This was identified as a positive change and one that would be retained post-COVID -19.

With respect to the community-based labour market development plans, some DCAs indicated that they are not particularly useful in gleaning new information for the communities because the demographics and the jobs in demand are fairly static, limiting the availability of any new data to inform decision-

making. Alternatively, one DCA reported using the community-based labour market development plan to make decisions regarding where the SCES funding is most needed. They use the plan as a tool in the selection process for allocating SCES funding, ensuring that funds are going to community employers that are in alignment with the needs and demands of the community labour market.

Infrastructure and economic development are two sectors where there is a growing need for employment, increasing demand in communities across the Territory, and identified as a priority area for market development. As seen in Figure 1, there were 327 new positions created specifically in the sectors of infrastructure and economic development which is more than half of the jobs created through the program. Figure 6 shows the breakdown of these new positions by region.

Figure 6: Number of New Jobs Created in Infrastructure and Economic Development by Region

3.5.4 Grows the NWT workforce through partnerships

It was noted by stakeholders that all the jobs funded through the SCES program should be supporting NWT occupations in demand or local employment needs. While the labour market information identifies 300 in-demand occupations, most of these are in the regional centre (Yellowknife), and not the small communities. As such, many of the SCES funded positions are those that meet local needs as opposed to territorial needs.

As one ECE HQ individual noted,

"The small communities are unique so there is a need to tailor employment opportunities based on their local needs."

As an indicator of growing the workforce through partnerships, it is important to look at the labour force participation rate. This illustrates the opportunity for employment in the regions that have fairly low participation rates when taking into consideration the working age population and the number of individuals currently in the labour force (see Table 6).

Table 6: 2019 NWT Labour Market Participation Rate[9]

Region	Labour Force Participation Rate	Number of Individuals in Labour Force	Total Population 15+
South Slave	72.2%	4,421	6,125
North Slave	60.6%	1,303	2,149
Dehcho	67.8%	1,829	2,697
Sahtu	72.5%	1,466	2,023
Beaufort Delta	67.5%	3,586	5,311

When asked about how the NWT workforce is growing through partnerships, many stakeholders were unsure if this was being done. Regional ECE staff, DCAs and employers feel that the program does not promote more formalized partnerships. On less a formal note, stakeholders did mention that employers within communities share information on upcoming or needed positions, as well as share employees to ensure that those who are in the workforce have ample employment opportunities. Employers recognize that in the small communities, there are limited opportunities for employment and few workers available, so they all have the same goal of supporting individuals in the workforce to maintain employment. For example, one stakeholder spoke about an individual who obtained employment through a SCES funded position which gave the employee skills and opportunity to learn about working in the tourism industry. This employee created contacts through their position, and through various government wage subsidy funding sources, went on to start their own business in the tourism industry.

"Other agencies have approached us to partner in employment for students following their training." – Annual Report

ECE (Regional and HQ) and DCA stakeholders were asked how they promote the SCES program to understand how the program is being communicated across regions and within communities to develop and leverage partnerships. The most common approaches to promoting the SCES program and engaging participants are presented in Figure 7.

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[9] Source: 2019 NWT Bureau of Statistics

Figure 7: Common and Effective Approaches to Promoting the SCES Program

ECE HQ	Regional ECE	DCAs
• ECE website • SCES Program Fact Sheets • SCES Program Guidelines	• Phone calls to DCAs • Face-to-face meeting with DCAs (travel to communities) • Email packages to DCAs and community employers • Career fairs • Local events • ECE sponsored events to promote our programs and services	• Community Facebook pages • Community bulletin boards • Word of mouth • Radio announcements

Regional ECE stakeholders stated they are in regular communication with DCAs and community employers for communities that have opted-out. Some Regional ECE staff do monthly community visits, either drive or fly to communities in their region, or job seeker come to the Regional ECE Service Centres, where staff provides them with advice and guidance and when possible, directs them to employers that are looking for workers.

DCAs that have opted-in are communicating directly with community employers, promoting the program and the application cycle, accepting applications, communicating decisions, and overseeing the distribution and utilization of the funds.

ECE HQ stakeholders noted that they do not do a lot of on-the-ground promotion. They rely on the website, program resources and ECE Regional Service Centre staff. One ECE HQ stakeholder noted that communication about the program could be better. That being said, it was also noted that because the program is only intended for the 32 small communities and not Yellowknife, stronger communication may result in more Yellowknife organizations and employers finding out about the program and starting to complain because that they don't have access to the program funds.

Employees themselves are also promoting the program,

"Students were quite keen in their areas of learning and have by word of mouth encouraged others in the community to sign up for training." – Annual Report

The number and type of engagements among partners vary widely depending on the region and community. For one example, one DCA meets with community employers accessing SCES funding on a bi-weekly basis to build in accountability and offer support throughout their funding. In this particular community, there is regular and ongoing communication and reporting, so the DCA is aware of any challenges with employees or vacancies for the funded positions. In other communities, there is less

frequent and more informal reporting on an ongoing basis and requires only financial reporting of spending.

In the South Slave Region, there is a regional training committee that is comprised of representatives from the communities, Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET), Aurora College, Mine Training Society, NWT Metis Nation and ECE. The committee meets four times a year to discuss existing and upcoming labour market demands in the region. This helps the communities and organizations prepare for the demands by identifying goals, strategies and jobs needed to address those demands. The group helps inform the development of the community-based labour market development plans.

3.6 WHAT CHANGES ARE RECOMMENDED TO THE SCES PROGRAM?

Stakeholders were asked what changes they would recommend to the SCES program. From the responses, several key themes emerged including changes to program administration, program objectives, extending funding period, program monitoring and reporting, and program promotion.

3.6.1 Program Administration

There were several suggested program administration changes. For example, Regional ECE staff suggested that allowing them to have decision-making authority over the approval of annual plans would decrease inefficiencies by removing the need for them to have to go back and forth between the DCAs and ECE HQ. Other program administration changes identified by Regional ECE staff included:

- Having Regional ECE Service Centres be more involved in the process of selecting the composition of the DCAs in communities, would help ensure transparency and fairness in how SCES funding is distributed. Ensuring that Regional ECE Service Centres have the information they need to communicate effectively with DCAs. For instance, when communities and/or local employers receive less SCES funding than they applied for, Regional ECE staff are not in a position to explain why because they were not involved in the decision-making process. Yet, they are responsible for communicating the results of the applications, which leads to frustration for both the staff and the community or employers.
- Establishing more formal partnerships with other GNWT departments to identify and create employment opportunities that will ultimately benefit the whole community. For example, partnering with the Department of Health and Social Service to provide funding for health and wellness jobs in the communities (e.g., Community Wellness Worker for the Hamlet) or collaborating with Infrastructure to identify local opportunities to support projects like road development in the smaller communities.
- Sharing the annual reports prepared by DCAs or ECE with the communities that access the funding in order to increase transparency and demonstrate how the funding has been used across communities, regions, and the Territory.

Related to decision making authority, in the 2018-19 Annual Report file, there were a number of instances in which delays in funds and delays in program roll out were reported. One ECE HQ staff also noted that having ECE HQ review all of the annual plans creates bottlenecks in application process.

"The Hamlet received the contribution late in the year, with not enough time to offer resources to community businesses, so it was agreed the community could, internally, utilize the funds this year, which enabled the creation of two extra positions." –
Annual Report

"One challenge was the timing of the program; it was delayed in its roll out which made it difficult to plan for our summer employment". – Annual Report
"That funding came so late in the year, funding had to be expended under time constraints." – Annual Report

"The funding applications were submitted in March 2018 and funding only was made available in March 2019. Bridge financing was provided through other means." –
Annual Report

Some DCAs and community employers suggested that ECE take over the administration of the program because there are problems in some communities with the DCAs deciding who gets the funding. Stakeholders questioned the decision-making process that guided how the funds were distributed in the communities, indicating that the process is not always fair.

DCAs that opted-out of administering the program identified the inability to support the administrative duties required by the program and felt that it was easier to leave the administrative duties to ECE. On the other hand, some DCAs who opted-in, stated that they are best suited to make decisions as to where the funding should be distributed in the community to best support local labour market demands.

DCAs that opted-out of administering the program also suggested that ECE and ITI should work more collaboratively to coordinate various economic development and wage subsidy programs. They noted that ITI has business development officers in communities that could be administering the SCES funding while at the same time ensuring that the positions funded align with other economic development efforts in the community. This requires breaking down existing silos within the government to promote collaboration and synergies across the various programs that ultimately are working towards the same goals.

Regarding the distribution of funding through the SCES program, one community employer suggested that targeting specific industries that are looking to grow in the community would be most beneficial and that this could be done by utilizing the community-based labour market development plans. This individual went on to note that this process would require a collaborative community approach.

3.6.2 Program Objectives

Some community employers were unclear about the objectives of the SCES program and suggested that more communication about the program and clearer objectives were needed. One community employer suggested that the program purpose change from funding new positions that may not be sustainable once the funding ends, to providing wage subsidies for community employers. Some Regional ECE staff also suggested shifting the focus of the program to one that provides wage subsidies. Such a focus would require employers to cover a portion of the wages in an effort to promote more sustainable positions.

3.6.3 Extending Funding Period

DCAs and the community employers spoke about the challenges in planning for longer-term positions because the funding through the SCES program is only one year in duration. Stakeholders noted the inability to plan for jobs beyond one year, which limits their ability to organize for programs and services in their communities. They suggested that the funding period for the SCES program extends to allow for multi-year funded positions that are necessary longer term but for which employers are unable to finance. The stakeholders suggested that this would support more sustainable jobs and would provide more time for the benefits of the new positions to be experienced by the business/community. More long-term positions may provide more time for the employee to gain new skills and abilities required to help them maintain employment. One stakeholder indicated that one year is often not enough time to build up the skillsets needed by an employer for them to be able to take on greater responsibilities within the business and therefore, more time in the position would be beneficial to building the skills of the employers making them more employable down the line.[10]

Community employers also expressed concerns about whether the program would be available from year to year.

> *"The only challenge we encountered was not knowing if the program would continue in the new year. This caused a bit of stress trying to achieve everything on our 'to do' list. Future plans have been made in hopes it will continue." – Annual Report*

3.6.4 Program Monitoring and Reporting

Both ECE staff and DCAs identified opportunities to change the program monitoring and reporting processes. ECE staff (HQ and Regional) suggested that the existing reporting requirements be adapted to gather more meaningful information about the program and the funding allocation at a community level. ECE staff also suggested that information be gathered on individuals who are being funded through the program (e.g., number of employees per position during funding period, turnover rate, time spent recruiting) so that ECE has a better understanding of who the program is serving and how the program is

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[10] It is noted that the funding period has been changed from one year to two years if the position was created through SCES program funding.

contributing to employment in communities, beyond just creating new jobs. This type of reporting could include reporting on how many students are hired through SCES funded jobs or how many individuals enter the workforce for the first time through this program. As it currently stands, ECE does not collect information on who is filling the positions that are being created in the communities. ECE staff emphasized the importance of maintaining rigour in the reporting so that ECE has data over time to make informed decisions.

DCAs suggested that the data gathered be looked at to understand trends over time to see what sort of positions are being created and how long they are being sustained. They stated that this would help identify the economic needs and demands within the communities. DCAs also suggested that community employers be expected to regularly report in order to build in accountability processes. They also suggested that regular employer reporting would allow the DCAs to provide better supports to employers when needed to employers accessing the funding to create new positions.

Employers overall were satisfied with the reporting requirements and found the reporting process to be fair and straightforward.

3.6.5 Program Promotion

Community employers want to see changes in how the program is promoted. Community employers reported needing to actively reach out to the DCAs to inquire about the application process because there no promotion or information about the program being disseminated. There were reports of employers missing the application period and thus being unable to apply for funding.

> *"From the outset, there was limited knowledge of the program, not enough information provided to the DCA which made it difficult to answer questions from local employers ... Lack of information from ECE staff, communications were poor between ECE and the DCA … I had employers going directly to ECE to apply, this makes running this program very difficult." – Annual Report*

Suggestions for improvement to program promotion included:
- Using the community government list of those with business licenses to reach out to all the businesses so that everyone has equal opportunity to apply.
- Extending the timeframe for when applications are accepted and increasing SCES program promotion.
- Increasing program transparency by explaining the decision-making process and communicating the results to community employers on an annual basis.

3.6.6 Other Suggested Changes

There were several other suggested changes identified for the program, including:
- Branching out and funding non-profit organizations and societies.

- ▪ Establishing funding partnerships with other departments and organizations to streamline funding and reduce number of required applications.
- ▪ Increasing the amount of funding to be able to support more sustainable positions.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the evidence suggests that the SCES program is a beneficial program for small communities, it is contributing towards the broader Small Communities Employment Strategy , it is being implemented as intended, and it is achieving its intended purpose and to some extent its objectives. DCAs and community employers are very thankful that the program funds exists.

The majority of stakeholders involved in the review believe that the program is being implemented in alignment with the guidelines and providing value for money. While there was consensus that the program is creating new jobs, there was disagreement across the varied stakeholders that the program is creating sustainable jobs. Employers, especially those is communities with limited economic activity, spoke about the challenges they encounter using the SCES funding because the program guidelines stipulate funding must be applied to new positions only.

When it comes to the four program objectives, the review indicates that the program is successful in achieving some of the objectives. Overall, key stakeholders were in agreement that the SCES program was supporting job creation and labour market development in small NWT communities and smaller regional centres and that it was enabling individuals to obtain and improve essential skills needed in the workplace.

There were discrepancies regarding how the program is supporting small communities and smaller regional centres in implementing respective local labour market development plans. DCAs and ECE staff noted the efforts of ECE to support communities in getting their local labour market development plans in place with available funding and support. However, many communities have not yet completed the process and many community employers were unaware of the process or the existence of the community labour market development plans.

Regarding growing the workforce through partnerships, the review indicated that this program is supporting a growing workforce in small communities through the creation of new employment opportunities and building the skills of individuals new to the workforce to support future employment. However, the review identified opportunities for creating and leveraging more partnerships within the small communities, regions, and Territory.

Table 8 breaks down how each key stakeholder group reported on the key review questions. The green circles indicate that the majority of the stakeholders responded positively to the question. The yellow circles indicate that there were mixed responses with no majority. Red circles indicate that the majority of stakeholders provided a negative response to the question.

Table 8: Summary of key stakeholder input for the guiding review questions

Stakeholders	ECE HQ	Regional ECE	Opt-in DCA	Opt-Out DCA	Community Employers (Opt-in)	Community Employers (Opt-out)
Is the SCES program funding being utilized according to the purpose and guidelines established for the SCES program?	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A
Is the SCES program providing value for money spent?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Is the SCES program creating new jobs in the NWT small communities?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Is the SCES program creating sustainable jobs in the NWT small communities?	—	—	✗	✗	—	—
Is the SCES program adhering to the Small Communities Employment Strategy?	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—
Is the SCES program accomplishing the objectives stated with the SCES program?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this review, several recommendations are put forth for consideration by GNWT, ECE.

Recommendation #1: Conduct Additional Stakeholder Engagement

- Because changes to the SCES program were implement in the 2018/19 fiscal year, and given the current COVID-19 situation, it is recommended that consideration be given to delaying any changes to the program until more information can be collected from key stakeholders, specifically DCAs and community employers.
  - o While some DCAs and community employers were engaged in this review process, there numbers were small and not equally representative of all regions. To ensure that more robust feedback is obtained about the program from all communities and regions across the Territory, further engagement should be considered.

Recommendation #2: Transfer Annual Plan Decision-Making Authority to Regional ECE Service Centre Staff

- Regional ECE Service Centre staff have direct access to the communities utilizing the SCES program and work directly with the DCAs and community employers. It is recommended that

consideration be given to providing the Regional ECE Service Centres with the authority to review the annual plans and make decision regarding the allocation of SCES funding.

  o Due to their existing role in the SCES program, Regional staff have a better understanding of the regional and community labour market context which allows them to make more informed decisions about how the SCES funding can be distributed and optimized within local communities.

  o This change in program administration would potentially improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the application process thereby allowing funds and new positions to be rolled out in a timely manner.

  o This change would also position Regional staff to be able to explain more easily to DCAs and community employers the rationale behind the decisions made regarding the distribution of funding.

Recommendation #3: Enter into Multi-Year Contribution Agreements

▪ Given that DCAs and community employers find it difficult to plan for and sustain positions long-term, it is recommended that consideration be given to entering into multi-year contribution agreements that align with approved community-based labour market development plans.

  o This would require that all communities develop a community-based labour market development plan in collaboration with community organizations and businesses to ensure alignment within the community on local market needs and demands.

  o By offering multi-year funding, regions and communities would be better positioned to make longer term plans as they relate to employment and free them of creating new jobs on an annual basis. This will contribute to job sustainability, particularly for small communities with limited economic activity, by ensuring availability of funding to support essential positions year to year.

  o By aligning the funding with the community labour market development plans, it would simplify the process of creating annual plans because they would be required to flow directly from the broader labour market plan.

  o To monitor the spending, more robust reporting on the part of DCAs and community employers would be required to ensure funds are being spent as intended on a regular basis.

Recommendation #4: Revise the Reporting Requirements

▪ Based on the available data for this review and input from key stakeholders, it is recommended that consideration be given to revising the annual reporting templates to allow for more robust information to be collected (e.g., how the funds are actually being spent, who the funds are being spent on, sustainability of position).

  o Better quality reporting would provide ECE with much needed information on progress to, or achievement of, program objectives, and would enhance their understanding of program's value for money.

- o Changes to the template will require identifying key performance indicators for each program objectives to assist with the measurement of success. Revising the reporting requirements for those accessing the SCES funding will enhance the accountability on the part of the DCAs and community employers.

- o In addition to collecting more targeted information from stakeholders through reporting templates, it is also recommended that consideration be given to implementing, as a best practice, ongoing communication and reporting through the introduction of regular meeting between DCAs and community employers or Regional ECE Services Centre staff and community employers This will provide an opportunity for DCAs and the Regional Centres to offer support to community employers, while also increasing accountability.

Recommendation #5: Create More Formalized Territorial, Regional and Local Partnerships

- There are several important initiatives being offered in small communities that are necessary for supporting economic activity and employment; however, there seems to be a disconnect between the agencies delivering the various programming. To increase effectiveness, efficiency, and collaboration, it is recommended for consideration that ECE foster and maintain more formalized partnerships with other GNWT departments (e.g., HSS, ENR, ITI), as well as regional and local organizations/industries to support the identification of new and emerging employment and training opportunities.

Recommendation #6: Clarify the Program Criteria

- Key stakeholders suggested there is a lack of clarity regarding the criteria that guide the SCES program funding decision-making process. Changes have recently been made to the guidelines that have not been effectively communicated nor equitably implemented. It is recommended that consideration be given to reviewing the program criteria to ensure the process is fair and justifiable, and to ensuring that any updates to the program criteria are widely disseminated to DCAs and community employers.

Recommendation #7: Increase Community-level Program Promotion

- In some instances, key stakeholders indicated that they were unaware that the program was running in their community and missed the deadline to submit an application. It is recommended that consideration be given to increasing program promotion at the community level to ensure all local employers are aware of the program funds in a timely manner so they have the time needed to prepare their application.
  - o Particularly for employers who have not previously accessed this funding in the past, wide promotion of the program within communities is important to ensure equal opportunity.

Recommendation 8: Improve Communications

- It is recommended that consideration be given to improving the consistency and frequency of SCES program communication to Regional ECE Service Centres, DCAs and community employers. It is also recommended that roles and responsibilities regarding communication of SCES program information be defined and clearly articulated to ECE HQ and Regional staff.
  - Improving communication across all levels will ensure that stakeholders are getting accurate and up-to-date information.

6.0 REFERENCES

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7.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: REVIEW FRAMEWORK

Review Question	Indicator	Data Source	Methodology	Timing of Data Collection	Stakeholders involved in collection
Is the SCES Program funding being utilized according to the purpose and guidelines established for the SCES program?	% of allocated funding spent	2018-2019 SCES Final Reporting File	Document and Data Review	End of fiscal 18/19	ECE
	% of communities with 15% admin fee utilized	2018-2019 SCES Final Reporting File	Document and Data Review	End of fiscal 18/19	ECE
	Perceptions of program funds utilization	DCAs Community Employers Regional ECE Service Centre Staff HQ Contacts	Interviews	March 2020	Evaluator
Is the SCES Program providing value for money spent?	Perceptions of value for money spent	DCAs Community Employers Regional ECE Service Centre Staff HQ Contacts	Interviews	March 2020	Evaluator
	Average cost per SCES job created	2018-2019 SCES Final Reporting File	Document and Data Review	End of fiscal 18/19	ECE
What changes are recommended to the SCES Program?	Recommendations on program changes	DCAs Community Employers Regional ECE Service Centre Staff HQ Contacts	Interviews	March 2020	Evaluator
Is the SCES Program creating new and sustainable jobs in the NWT small communities?	# of new jobs planned with the DCA (as per Annual Plan)	2018-2019 SCES Final Reporting File	Document and Data Review	End of fiscal 18/19	ECE
	# of new jobs planned within other community employers (as per Annual Plan)	2018-2019 SCES Final Reporting File	Document and Data Review	End of fiscal 18/19	ECE
	# of new employment opportunities related to	2018-2019 SCES Final Reporting File	Document and Data Review	End of fiscal 18/19	ECE

Review Question	Indicator	Data Source	Methodology	Timing of Data Collection	Stakeholders involved in collection
	Infrastructure or economic development projects (as per Annual Plan)				
	# SCES Jobs 2018-2019	2018-2019 SCES Final Reporting File	Document and Data Review	End of fiscal 18/19	ECE
	Perceptions related to new SCES job sustainability in small communities	DCAs Community Employers Regional ECE Service Centre Staff HQ Contacts	Interviews	March 2020	Evaluator
Is the SCES Program adhering to the Small Communities Employment Strategy?	# and type of key actions being implemented	DCAs Regional ECE Service Centre Staff HQ Contacts	Interviews	March 2020	Evaluator
Is the SCES Program accomplishing the objectives stated within the SCES Program? 1. Support job creation and labour market development in small NWT communities and smaller regional centres	# of new jobs created in communities as a result of SCES program funding	2018-2019 SCES Final Reporting File	Document and Data Review	End of fiscal 18/19	ECE
	% of new jobs planned that are filled	2018-2019 SCES Final Reporting File	Document and Data Review	End of fiscal 18/19	ECE
	NWT employment rate in communities	NWT Bureau of Statistics Community Employers DCAs	Document and Data Review Interview	March 2020	Evaluator
	Perceptions of job creation support and labour market development	DCAs Community Employers Regional ECE Service Centre Staff HQ Contacts	Interviews	March 2020	Evaluator
Is the SCES Program accomplishing the objectives stated	# of employees reporting SCES program hires have	Community Employers	Interview	March 2020	Evaluators

Review Question	Indicator	Data Source	Methodology	Timing of Data Collection	Stakeholders involved in collection
within the SCES Program? 2. Enable individuals to obtain and improve essential skills needed in the workplace	gained essential skills for future employment				
	Perceptions of SCES program hires' skill development for the workforce	Community Employers	Interview	March 2020	Evaluators
	# of skills development and training interventions delivered	Community employers DCAs Regional ECE Service Centre Staff 2018-2019 SCES Final Reporting File	Interviews Document and Data Review	March 2020 End of fiscal 18/19	Evaluator ECE
Is the SCES Program accomplishing the objectives stated within the SCES Program? 3. Support small communities and smaller regional centres in implementing respective local labour market development plans	# of communities with community labour market development plans	DCAs Regional ECE Service Centre Staff HQ Contacts Community SCES Annual Plans	Interviews Document and data Review	March 2020	Evaluators
	# of filled employment opportunities that related to infrastructure or economic development projects.	2018-2019 SCES Final Reporting File	Document and Data Review	End of fiscal 18/19	ECE
	Perceptions of support for implementing local labour market development plans	DCAs Regional ECE Service Centre Staff Community Employers	Interviews	March 2020	Evaluator
Is the SCES Program accomplishing the objectives stated within the SCES Program? 4. Grow the	NWT labour force participation rate in communities	NWT Bureau of Statistics	Document and Data review	March 2020	Evaluator
	# and type of promotional tools introduced to raise	DCAs Community Employers	Interviews	March 2020	Evaluators

Review Question	Indicator	Data Source	Methodology	Timing of Data Collection	Stakeholders involved in collection
NWT workforce through partnerships	awareness of labour market information, programs and resources among partners, employers, job seekers and the general public	Regional ECE Service Centre Staff HQ Contacts			
	# and type of engagements completed with partners, employers, job seekers and the general public	HQ Contacts DCAs Regional ECE Service Centre Staff	Interview	March 2020	Evaluator

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interviews Guide for DCA's that Opt-In

Name	
Community	
Agency	
Date	

General
1. What made your agency decide to opt-in for the SCES program?

Funding Utilization
2. Do you think the SCES program funding is being used to serve the purpose and guidelines established for the SCES program?

Value for Money
3. From your perspective, do you think the SCES program is providing value for money spent?
    a. If yes, how so?
    b. If no, why not?
4. Are you able to do what you need with the money provided through the SCES program?

New and Sustainable Jobs
5. Is the SCES program supporting the creation of new jobs in small communities?
    a. If yes, how is it doing so?
    b. If no, what is preventing this?
6. Is the SCES program creating sustainable jobs in small communities?
    a. If yes, how?
    b. If no, what is preventing this?

Strategy Actions
7. The Small Communities Employment Strategy sets out to achieve four goals: 1) increase skill levels through relevant education and training, 2) bridge education and employment gaps through targeted supports, 3) growing the NWT Workforce through Partnerships, and 4) improve decision-making with Relevant Labour Market Information.
    a. From your perspective, what activities is the SCES program implementing or supporting to achieve these SCES Strategy goals?

Program Objectives
8. In what ways is the SCES program supporting job creation and labour market development in small NWT communities and smaller regional centres?
    a. How has the SCES program influenced the employment rate in your community?
9. In what ways is the SCES program enabling individuals to obtain and improve essential skills needed in the workplace?

      a. How many skills development and training interventions have been delivered through the SCES program?
10. How does the SCES program support small communities and smaller regional centres in implementing respective local labour market development plans?
      a. Does your community have a community labour market development plan in place?
11. How is the SCES program growing the NWT workforce through partnerships?
      a. How many of the partnerships with employers' support NWT occupations in demand or local needs?
      b. How do you promote the SCES program?
          i. Where and what kind of promotions were most successful?
      c. What type of engagements do you have with partners, employers, job seekers and the general public? How often are you engaging each of them?

Recommendation for Changes
12. What changes to the SCES program would you recommended?
      a. Changes at the employer level? Community level? Program level?

Other
13. Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

Name	
Community	
Agency	
Date	

General
1. What made your agency decide to opt-out for the SCES program?

Funding Utilization
2. Do you think the SCES program funding is being used to serve the purpose and guidelines established for the SCES program?

Value for Money
3. From your perspective, do you think the SCES program is providing value for money spent?
   a. If yes, how so?
   b. If no, why not?
4. Are you able to do what you need with the money provided through the SCES program?

New and Sustainable Jobs
5. Is the SCES program supporting the creation of new jobs in small communities?
   a. If yes, how is it doing so?
   b. If no, what is preventing this?
6. Is the SCES program creating sustainable jobs in small communities?
   a. If yes, how?
   b. If no, what is preventing this?

Program Objectives
7. In what ways is the SCES program supporting job creation and labour market development in small NWT communities and smaller regional centres?
   a. How has the SCES program influenced the employment rate in your community?
8. In what ways is the SCES program enabling individuals to obtain and improve essential skills needed in the workplace?
9. How does the SCES program support small communities and smaller regional centres in implementing respective local labour market development plans?
   a. Does your community have a community labour market development plan in place?
10. How is the SCES program growing the NWT workforce through partnerships?
    a. How many of the partnerships with employers' support NWT occupations in demand or local needs?
    b. How do you promote the SCES program?
       i. Where and what kind of promotions were most successful?

    c.   What type of engagements do you have with partners, employers, job seekers and the general public? How often are you engaging each of them?

Recommendation for Changes

11. What changes to the SCES program would you recommended?
    a.   Changes at the employer level? Community level? Program level?

Other

12. Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

Interview Guide for Community Employers working with DCAs

Name	
Community	
Agency	
Date	

General

1. What DCA do you work directly with?
2. How would you describe this working relationship?
3. As an employer/business owner, has the SCES program impacted your business?
    a. If so, have these impacts been positive and/or negative?"

Value for Money

4. From your perspective, do you think the SCES program is providing value for money spent?
    a. If yes, how so?
    b. If no, why not?
5. Are you able to do what you need with the money provided through the SCES program?

New and Sustainable Jobs

6. Is the SCES program supporting the creation of new jobs in small communities?
    a. If yes, how is it doing so?
    b. If no, what is preventing this?
7. Is the SCES program creating sustainable jobs in small communities?
    a. If yes, how?
    b. If no, what is preventing this?

Strategy Actions

8. The Small Communities Employment Strategy sets out to achieve four goals: 1) increase skill levels through relevant education and training, 2) bridge education and employment gaps through targeted supports, 3) growing the NWT Workforce through Partnerships, and 4) improve decision-making with Relevant Labour Market Information.
    a. From your perspective, what activities is the SCES program implementing or supporting to achieve these goals?

Program Objectives

9. In what ways is the SCES program supporting job creation and labour market development in small NWT communities and smaller regional centres?
    a. How has the SCES program influenced the employment rate in your community?

10. In what ways is the SCES program enabling individuals to obtain and improve essential skills needed in the workplace?

      a.   How many skills development and training interventions have been delivered through the SCES program?

      b.   Have employees reported that they feel better prepared for employment?

      c.   Do you think the employees have enhanced skills through job readiness training?

           ii.   If so, how many employees do you think have developed skills necessary for employment?

           iii.   How have their enhanced their skills?

11. How does the SCES program support small communities and smaller regional centres in implementing respective local labour market development plans?

      a.   Does your community have a community labour market development plan in place?

12. How is the SCES program growing the NWT Workforce through Partnerships?

      a.   How many of the partnerships with employers' support NWT occupations in demand or local needs?

      b.   How do you promote the SCES program?

           iv.   Where and what kind of promotions were most successful?

Recommendation for Changes

13. What changes to the SCES program would you recommended?

      a.   Changes at the employer level? Community level? Program level?

Other

14. Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

Interview Guide with Community Employers working with ECE Service Centres

Name	
Community	
Agency	
Date	

General
1. What Regional ECE Service Centre do you work directly with?
2. How would you describe this working relationship?
3. As an employer/business owner, has the SCES program impacted your business?
   a. If so, have these impacts been positive and/or negative?"

Value for Money
4. From your perspective, do you think the SCES program is providing value for money spent?
   a. If yes, how so?
   b. If no, why not?
5. Are you able to do what you need with the money provided through the SCES program?

New and Sustainable Jobs
6. Is the SCES program supporting the creation of new jobs in small communities?
   a. If yes, how is it doing so?
   b. If no, what is preventing this?
7. Is the SCES program creating sustainable jobs in small communities?
   a. If yes, how?
   b. If no, what is preventing this?

Strategy Actions
8. The Small Communities Employment Strategy sets out to achieve four goals: 1) increase skill levels through relevant education and training, 2) bridge education and employment gaps through targeted supports, 3) growing the NWT Workforce through Partnerships, and 4) improve decision-making with Relevant Labour Market Information.
   a. From your perspective, what activities is the SCES program implementing or supporting to achieve these goals?

Strategy Goals
9. In what ways is the SCES program supporting job creation and labour market development in small NWT communities and smaller regional centres?
   a. How has the SCES program influenced the employment rate in your community?

10. In what ways is the SCES program enabling individuals to obtain and improve essential skills needed in the workplace?

      a. How many skills development and training interventions have been delivered through the SCES program?

      b. Have employees reported that they feel better prepared for employment?

      c. Do you think the employees have enhanced skills through job readiness training?

          i. If so, how many employees do you think have developed skills necessary for employment?

          ii. How have their enhanced their skills?

11. How is the SCES program growing the NWT workforce through partnerships?

      a. How did you find out about the SCES program?

Recommendation for Changes

12. What changes to the SCES program would you recommended?

      a. Changes at the employer level? Community level? Program level?

Other

13. Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

Interview Guides for Regional ECE Service Staff

Name	
Community	
Agency	
Date	

Funding Utilization
1. Do you think the SCES program funding is being used to serve the purpose and guidelines established for the SCES program?

Value for Money
2. From your perspective, do you think the SCES program is providing value for money spent?
   a. If yes, how so?
      If no, why not?

New and Sustainable Jobs
3. Is the SCES program supporting the creation of new jobs in small communities?
   a. If yes, how is it doing so?
   b. If no, what is preventing this?
4. Is the SCES program creating sustainable jobs in small communities?
   a. If yes, how?
   b. If no, what is preventing this?

Strategy Actions
5. The Small Communities Employment Strategy sets out to achieve four goals: 1) increase skill levels through relevant education and training, 2) bridge education and employment gaps through targeted supports, 3) growing the NWT Workforce through Partnerships, and 4) improve decision-making with Relevant Labour Market Information.
   a. From your perspective, what activities is the SCES program implementing or supporting to achieve these goals?

Program Objectives
6. In what ways is the SCES program supporting job creation and labour market development in small NWT communities and smaller regional centres?
   a. How has the SCES program influenced the employment rate in communities?
7. In what ways is the SCES program enabling individuals to obtain and improve essential skills needed in the workplace?
   a. How many skills development and training interventions have been delivered through the SCES program?
8. How does the SCES program support small communities and smaller regional centres in implementing respective local labour market development plans?

       a.   Does your community have a community labour market development plan in place?
9.   How is the SCES program growing the NWT workforce through partnerships?
       a.   How many of the partnerships with employers' support NWT occupations in demand or local needs?
       b.   How do you promote the SCES program?
            iii.   Where and what kind of promotions were most successful?
       c.   What type of engagements do you have with partners, employers, job seekers and the general public? How often are you engaging each of them?

Recommendation for Changes

10. What changes to the SCES program would you recommended?
       a.   Changes at the employer level? Community level? Program level?

Other

11. Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

Interview Guide for ECE HQ Staff

Name	
Community	
Agency	
Date	

Funding Utilization
1. Do you think the SCES program funding is being used to serve the purpose and guidelines established for the SCES program?

Value for Money
2. From your perspective, do you think the SCES program is providing value for the money spent?
   a. If yes, how so?
   b. If no, why not?

New and Sustainable Jobs
3. Is the SCES program supporting the creation of new jobs in small communities?
   a. If yes, how is it doing so?
   b. If no, what is preventing this?
4. Is the SCES program creating sustainable jobs in small communities?
   a. If yes, how?
   b. If no, what is preventing this?

Strategy Actions
5. The Small Communities Employment Strategy sets out to achieve four goals: 1) increase skill levels through relevant education and training, 2) bridge education and employment gaps through targeted supports, 3) growing the NWT Workforce through Partnerships, and 4) improve decision-making with Relevant Labour Market Information.
   a. From your perspective, what activities is the SCES program implementing or supporting to achieve these goals?

Program Objectives
6. How do you think the SCES program is supporting job creation and labour market development in small NWT communities and smaller regional centres?
7. How do you see the SCES program enabling individuals to obtain and improve essential skills needed in the workplace?
   a. How many skills development and training interventions have been delivered through the SCES program?
8. How does the SCES program support small communities and smaller regional centres in implementing respective local labour market development plans?
9. How is the SCES program growing the NWT workforce through partnerships?

      a.   How many of the partnerships with employers' support NWT occupations in demand or local needs?

      b.   How do you promote the SCES program?

          i.   Where and what kind of promotions were most successful?

      c.   What type of engagements do you have with partners, employers, job seekers and the general public? How often are you engaging each of them?

Recommendation for Changes

10. What changes to the SCES program would you recommended?

      a.   Changes at the employer level? Community level? Program level?

Other

11. Do you have anything else that you would like to add?