

Northwest Territories

Education, Culture and
Employment

Canada-Northwest Territories Job Fund

Annual Report 2015-2016



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The following Canada-Northwest Territories Job Fund Agreement information details labour market development activities from April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016.

Canada-Northwest Territories Job Fund Agreement

On behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) signed the Canada-Northwest Territories Job Fund Agreement (Job Fund) on August 6, 2014. This six year agreement (2014-2020) provided \$1,111,868 for 2015-16 to deliver programs in labour development and training.

The Job Fund provides funding to support training for individuals who are not eligible for Employment Insurance, including employed individuals; gives priority to groups who are underrepresented in the workforce due to a lack of workplace essential skills and/or low literacy skills; and focuses on employers who want to cost share training for current and new employees.

1. Labour Market Context

Environmental Scan

The Northwest Territories (NWT) covers an area of approximately 1,346,106 km² (about the size of Alberta and Saskatchewan combined).

Of the 33 communities in the NWT, only five (Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Smith, Behchoko and Yellowknife) have populations exceeding 2,000. The population of Yellowknife (20,637 as of July 1 2015), represents almost half of the territorial population at that time (44,088).

The population in the NWT is made up of approximately half Aboriginal and half non-Aboriginal persons (a ratio of 22,050 to 22,038 respectively as of July 1 2015). Of the 22,050 Aboriginal persons, only 4,901 (22%) were living in Yellowknife, as the majority live in the smaller communities.

The population of the NWT increased by 122 persons between January 1, 2015 and January 1, 2016. The components of natural increase consisted of 689 births and 207 deaths, resulting in a net increase of 482 persons. Inter-provincial migration accounted for 2,303 persons moving into the NWT while 2,812 moved away, representing a net loss of 509 persons. Internationally, there was a net in-migration of 149 persons.

The 2012 Survey on Disability conducted by Statistics Canada showed that 8.2% of the population of the NWT aged 15 years and older identified as having a disability (2,740 persons).

Employment Data

As of December 31 2015, Statistics Canada estimates that of the 32,000 residents 15 years of age and older in the NWT, 21,700 persons were employed. This represents an overall employment rate of 67.8%. This value has increased slightly compared to the 2014 employment rate of 66.7%.

Between 2014 and 2015 the NWT has seen an increase in the labour force participation rate from 72.0% to 75.3% even though the number of unemployed persons has also increased from 1,700 to 2,400. This is reflected in the increase in the unemployment rate from 7.4% to 10.0%.

The employment rates for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal persons remain disproportionate to the population figures and in 2015 were 55.3% and 80.0% respectively.

Geographically, Statistics Canada only reports data for Yellowknife and the 'rest of territory'. Yellowknife's employment rate peaked in 2007 at 83.3%, declined to 80.1% in 2010, and then slowly increased. By 2013 it had reached 82.0%, but in 2014 it declined to 79.2% and has only increased slightly to 79.7% in 2015.

The employment rate for other NWT communities has followed a similar trend and in 2009 was 53.4%. In 2012 it had climbed back up to 61.4% but has since declined again to 58.1% in 2015. These small communities in the NWT account for 61% of the available labour force.

Sector Employment Data

Employment numbers continued to decline in 2015 (21,900), dropping another 200 from 2014 to 2015 but not as severe a drop as between 2013 and 2014 when the overall number of employed persons decreased by 1,200.

The public sector did see an increase of 400 persons (to 9,400), rebounding slightly from 2014 but not getting close to the 10,200 persons in 2013.

The private sector decreased by 700 going down to 10,400.

After two years of growth in self-employment numbers, 2015 saw this category lose 300 people, dropping back to the lowest level since 2010.

2. Employer and other Stakeholder Engagement

The Assistant Deputy Minister, Labour and Income Security, meets on a monthly basis with the Regional Superintendents of the five administrative regions of the NWT (Beaufort-Delta, Sahtu, North Slave, Dehcho, and South Slave) and with the Directors of Income Security and Labour Development and Standards. During these branch meetings, broad plans for the social and economic wellbeing of Northern residents are discussed and developed.

In addition, the Regional Superintendents meet with Regional Training Partnership Committees or partnership representatives on a regular basis. These committees include representation from the GNWT, Aurora College, Aboriginal Governments, community organizations, industry and other stakeholders involved in education and training to determine regional training and labour market priorities.

Ongoing operational stakeholder engagement is accomplished by Career Development Officers, located in the regional ECE Service Centres, who work with education and training providers, Aboriginal Governments, community organizations, and businesses in the communities to serve the career development needs of individuals and communities. Partnerships and collaboration are a hallmark in the delivery of career services in the NWT.

Over the course of the 2015-16 fiscal year, ECE has conducted extensive engagement sessions in numerous and various forums: working groups, online surveys, focus groups, information and input gathering sessions, and a labour force development symposium. Stakeholders participating in these forums represent a broad and comprehensive northern perspective, including: Aboriginal organizations, Aboriginal government operations, business and industry, non-government and not-for-profit organizations, special interest groups (including youth, women and disabled persons), the Francophone community, as well as other territorial government departments. These engagement sessions were key activities for the Skills 4 Success Initiative in 2015-16.

ECE is led by the Skills 4 Success Initiative (S4S), which is taking a systematic look at our adult and postsecondary education, and skills training programs, supports, and pathways. The goals of S4S are to improve employment success for NWT residents, close skill gaps for in-demand jobs, and more effectively respond to employer needs. This initiative is driven by labour market evidence, best practice research, and informed stakeholder input and feedback.

While there has been territory-wide progress in education and employment levels over the past 15 years, segments of the Northern working-age population remain under-educated, under-skilled, and unprepared for the range of employment opportunities in the NWT. There continue to be high unemployment rates and significant differences in skills and

postsecondary education levels across the North. S4S is continuing to develop short term and long term action plans to address these issues.

The four key objectives of the S4S Initiative are to:

- Better understand current and future labour market needs;
- Ensure that supports and incentives are relevant, effective and aligned with evolving labour market needs;
- Ensure that Northern residents have access to adult and postsecondary education and skills training programs and pathways that leads to employment; and,
- Strengthen economic diversification and growth by ensuring that employer and business skills needs are met.

3. Description of Activities and Expenditures

Job Fund projects focus on building strong partnerships and fulfilling current and future labour market requirements of the NWT. Each region in the NWT has varying needs and reflects different cultures and languages. Therefore planning needs to be flexible in order to meet upcoming regional needs.

The priorities of the Job Fund Agreement are to:

- Provide clients who are not eligible for Employment Insurance (EI) with access to programs that are comparable to those available for EI eligible clients. This will enhance the labour market participation of all Northwest Territories' residents, particularly low-skilled workers and under-represented groups.
- Encourage greater employer involvement in training to ensure that skills are better aligned to job opportunities, particularly in sectors facing skills mismatches and shortages.
- Make it as easy as possible for all residents of the Northwest Territories to get the help they need to develop the skills necessary to quickly find and maintain employment.
- Demonstrate to Canadians that their tax dollars are achieving the best possible results through increased labour market participation of eligible beneficiaries.

In 2015-16, ECE set out the following targets for its Labour Market Agreements:

- Create and implement locally-designed programs to address specific barriers and gaps to employability identified by regional partners.
- Ensure higher participation in the NWT labour market by underrepresented groups.

- Provide the supports needed to enable more local residents to fill longer term jobs in the smaller communities.
- Develop increased community partnerships in training and employment.
- Increase the number of employed NWT residents overall.
- Decrease the reliance on Income Assistance.
- Increase the opportunities for all NWT residents to participate in education and training, whether or not they are eligible for EI.
- Increase employer and other stakeholder involvement in skills development and training.
- Develop better Labour Market Information tools in order to determine the best training required for NWT economic growth.

ECE targets that were specific to the Job Fund for 2015-16 are:

- A minimum of 27 Job Grants. Depending on the value of grants funded and employer uptake of the program, the number of grants delivered may vary.
- A minimum of 350 individuals supported through Job Fund programs overall.
- \$267,000 in Job Grants awarded to employers.
- 165 unemployed clients served through individual and employer supports.
- 125 eligible clients served through 15 Community Initiatives.
- 50% of clients served have less than high school at the beginning of the intervention.
- 70% of clients served are Aboriginal.

3.1 Canada – Northwest Territories Job Grant

The ECE's target for 2015-16 was a minimum of 27 Job Grants at a maximum value of \$10,000 with total government contribution at \$266,848, based on allocation of 30% of the Job Fund, less administrative costs. The source of funding for Job Grants was 20% from the Job Fund, and 10% from the Canada-NT Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA). For greater certainty, LMDA funding is not applied to administration costs.

3.2 Employment Services and Supports

ECE allocated \$733,832 of Job Fund monies to Employment Services and Supports (ESS).

ESS provides funding for programs designed to enhance the labour market participation of eligible beneficiaries by supporting preparation for entry into, or return to, employment; to otherwise obtain or keep employment; or to maintain skills for employment. ESS programs funded through the Job Fund include: Skills Development, Work Experience, Community Initiatives, and Self-Employment.

Skills Development

This program provides support for eligible beneficiaries to participate in short-term training opportunities (52 weeks or less) to develop essential employability skills and/or upgrade their skills and knowledge to meet the demands of the labour market.

Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to: academic upgrading, workplace essential skills, life skills, employment readiness programs, pre-employment training courses, and skill-specific training programs.

Financial assistance may include: tuition costs, books, travel, living allowances, special equipment and supports, childcare, and license or certificate fees.

Work Experience

This program provides support for employers in developing a productive workforce and providing work and learning opportunities for eligible beneficiaries. Training-on-the-job and work experience projects aids targeted clients entering or transitioning into the labour market.

Employer assistance may include: wage subsidies, course costs, special equipment and supports, job coaching and mentoring.

Community Initiatives

This program provides support for third party organizations to deliver community and regional activities aimed at engaging underrepresented groups in the labour market.

Activities may include: training programs, workplace education programs, community projects (such as Construction Boot Camp and Trades Awareness programs), and labour market research & strategic planning partnerships.

It also includes employment assistance services such as career counselling, labour market information and job coaching.

Self-Employment

This program provides support for eligible beneficiaries to pursue self-employment as a career choice by providing business coaching and mentoring through a qualified business expert.

Direct financial assistance may include: travel and living allowances, course costs, childcare, and special equipment and supports.

3.3 Employer Sponsored Training

Employer Sponsored Training programming will be introduced in year four of the Job Fund Agreement (2017-18)

4. Results Achieved

4.1 Canada – Northwest Territories Job Grant

The Job Grant program provided 128 Grants to 15 employers. In all but four cases, training was provided to current employees. Data suggests, but not conclusively, that employers would have been less likely to support the training without Job Grant assistance .

The majority of training courses pursued was upskilling (118) with a small portion for maintenance of skills (20). No entry level training was supported by the Job Grant. The majority of skills learned were specialized or technical skills (80), with a significant number (58) in management skills. Most participants completed the training.

Education levels of the participants in the Job Grant ranged from 33% with high school or less than high school, to 39% with a university degree or trades certificate. No participants identified as new immigrants; 26% identified as Aboriginal; and 25% identified as women.

The great majority of participants remained in their pre-training job, and any increases in pay are likely a result of annual increments. While no direct link is evident between training and career advancement, most participants agreed or strongly agreed that their employment situation has improved, they are better qualified, and they have increased skills.

Employers indicated that their skills training needs and their expectations of the Job Grant were met.

Please see Annex A for Job Grant performance indicator table details.

4.2 Employment Services and Supports

A total of 242 individuals were supported through ESS in 2015-16; 37 through the Work Experience program and remaining 205 participated in training through the Skills Development program. 177 of these individuals were served through 11 Community Initiative projects.

Most individuals were unemployed (140) or not in the labour force (17). There were 61 employed individuals and 24 did not declare their employment status.

Most clients fell within one or more of the three following demographic descriptors: Aboriginal (74%); male (57%); with an education level less than high school (47%). Nine individuals identified as having a disability. This combination of demographics have the highest level of unemployment or lowest labour force participation rate and as such are a priority for ECE's programming.

Of the 205 skills development interventions 98% of participants completed training successfully, 63% of these obtained certification. Almost all certifications were for industry

standards, such as WHMIS, Food Safety, First Aid, CPR, and driving licenses. These certifications are required for many of the seasonal, tourist, project based and mining job opportunities available in the NWT's more remote communities.

The participants who were contacted for follow up surveys at three months either agreed or strongly agreed that their training has better prepared them to find and maintain employment, and that they have developed and increased their skills. As to whether or not the training had improved their employment situation, less positive answers were consistent with ongoing unemployment.

Employers accessed wage subsidy funding for 37 individuals who gained on-the-job experience and training. An additional 11 individuals gained work experience through Community Initiative projects.

Please see Annex B for Employment Services and Supports' performance indicator table details.

5. Audited Financial Statement for 2015-16

Attached as an Annex C