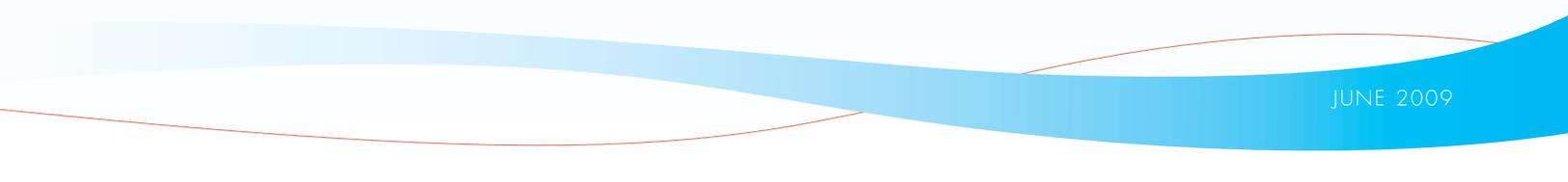


# **20/20: A Brilliant North NWT Public Service Strategic Plan**

Public Service. Public Focus.



JUNE 2009



## Minister's Message

In 2007, the Government of the Northwest Territories published "Challenge, Change and Commitment", a retrospective report on 40 years of progress since the GNWT was established in 1967. That document outlined the great strides that have been made in providing services to residents of the Northwest Territories – both in terms of the range of services and the quality of services.

This progress was made possible by the dedicated efforts of thousands of public servants who have chosen to work for the GNWT because they want to make a difference.

But the GNWT faces many challenges in developing and maintaining the public service. Some of these challenges are shared by other governments across Canada: for example, the ability to recruit and retain qualified staff in a competitive labour environment and the imminent retirement of a large proportion of our workforce. Other challenges are unique to our jurisdiction, such as the need to develop a home-grown workforce to reduce our need to import professional staff from outside the NWT. We share these challenges with our partners in NWT Aboriginal and community governments. To meet these challenges requires a focused effort to support and develop the NWT public service.

These challenges are recognized in the priorities of the 16th Legislative Assembly, which include: "Improve human resource management within the GNWT through training, career planning and encouraging innovation by employees." This Strategic Plan sets us on course to deliver on this priority.

The Strategic Plan sets an ambitious vision for the future public service. We recognize that the goals set out here are not achievable in the short term, and the Strategic Plan is intended to provide a 10-year framework for the development of the public service. We believe that the vision set out in this plan – "to provide excellent service to the people of the Northwest Territories" – is a vision not just for GNWT employees but for all levels of government that serve the residents of the NWT. To this end, we will strive to work in collaboration with Aboriginal governments and community governments as we move forward to develop not just an excellent public service, but the best in Canada!



Hon. Robert R. McLeod  
Minister



Hon. Robert R. McLeod  
Minister, Human Resources

## Message from the Deputy Ministers

As Deputy Ministers with the Government of the Northwest Territories, we are keenly aware of the essential role played by each and every employee in helping the Government to achieve its objectives. We also recognize that in order for government services to be effective and deliver results, the public servants who deliver those services must be provided with the tools, training and resources they need to do their best.

This Strategic Plan has been developed under the oversight of the Deputy Ministers' Committee, and reflects our vision and aspirations for the Northwest Territories public service. We are committed to working in partnership with the Department of Human Resources, our service delivery agency, to achieve the vision and goals outlined in *20/20: A Brilliant North*. This means attracting and retaining talented people, striving to achieve a workforce that reflects the population we serve, supporting learning and development for all our staff, and providing a working environment that encourages each one of you to achieve your best.

Working together, we can ensure that excellence, innovation and commitment are truly the touchstones of our service to the public.



Top row (left to right): Gary Bohnet, Mike Aumond, Dan Daniels, Russell Neudorf, Jeff Anderson  
Bottom row (Left to right): Bronwyn Watters, Gabriela Sparling, Dave Ramsden, Debbie Delancey  
Missing: Margaret Melhorn, Peter Vician, Dana Heide, Jeff Polakoff



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## Acknowledgements

The NWT Public Service Strategic Plan would not have been successfully completed without the extraordinary efforts, professional attitude and concentrated energy of the many stakeholders who contributed to the development of this plan. We would like to thank all the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) staff who attended the focus groups, completed surveys and participated in interviews. We would also like to thank Members of the Legislative Assembly, union representatives, Aboriginal governments, local community governments and other key stakeholders who took the opportunity to provide direction, information, comments and critique. The GNWT staff and stakeholders have helped shape how the NWT public service can reach its desired future.

We would also like to thank the collaborative contributions of Terriplan Consultants, PSTG Consulting, the GNWT Project Manager and Department of Human Resources (DHR) staff in the development of this plan.



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## Background

To advance the priorities of the 16th Legislative Assembly, in 2008 the Premier of the Northwest Territories announced five broad strategic initiatives. The "Refocusing Government" initiative is intended to look at ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of government operations, including improving human resource management across the Government of the Northwest Territories.

In order to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated response to this mandate, the Minister of Human Resources directed that the Department of Human Resources lead the development of a corporate human resource strategic plan for the Northwest Territories public service. Under the guidance of the Deputy Ministers' Human Resource Steering Committee, this work was initiated during the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

The Strategic Plan "20/20: A Brilliant North. NWT Public Service Strategic Plan" describes the mission, vision, long-term strategic goals and key initiatives necessary to guide the public service towards becoming the employer of choice in the NWT by 2020.

20/20: A Brilliant North reflects the desires of stakeholders across the NWT:

1. The 16th Legislative Assembly;
2. The GNWT public service (at all levels);
3. Aboriginal governments and community government partners; and
4. Special interest groups, including interns, persons with disabilities and Aboriginal employees.

To assist with implementation of 20/20: A Brilliant North, a supporting Action Plan has been created as a separate document. This plan identifies the actions, time frames and measurable performance results required to make continued progress in implementing the Strategic Plan.

Action will take many forms, with the overall goal of serving GNWT staff and the public. Our mandate, "Public Service. Public Focus.", will be achieved through changes, such as creating department-specific plans, resolving inconsistencies in service delivery and benchmarking the GNWT's performance in relation to other jurisdictions.



*This plan describes the mission, vision, long-term strategic goals and key initiatives necessary to guide the public service towards becoming the employer of choice in the NWT.*



*We are confident  
that the many voices  
of our public service  
have spoken out on  
the creation of this  
Strategic Plan.*

## How Was the Plan Developed?

The Strategic Plan was created based on the feedback of more than 1,100 employees from across the GNWT public service, including headquarters in Yellowknife and offices in regional and community locations. Further guidance and inputs were provided by the Deputy Ministers' Human Resource Committee, Aboriginal governments, community governments and special interest groups.

The next section provides more information on how GNWT employees from many backgrounds and other key stakeholders contributed to shaping the Strategic Plan, and the different steps that were taken to gather feedback from as many perspectives as possible so that the Plan represents everyone's interests.

The GNWT is a diverse workforce, representing thousands of employees across the territory. We are confident that the many voices of our public service have spoken out on the creation of this Strategic Plan.

## Key Steps in the Process

Different tools were used to gather the opinions and ideas from key stakeholders. These included:

### *“What are other public services doing?”*

Research was completed on identifying best practices and lessons learned from other jurisdictions that could be applied to the NWT. Reviews of public service strategies were completed for the Yukon, Alberta, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Australia.

### *“What is working well and what is not?”*

Review of GNWT human resources initiatives and programs (current and previous).

### *“Say what?”*

Online and mail-in surveys for GNWT staff:

- Nearly 2,000 online survey invitations.
- Approximately 1,800 surveys were mailed to those without e-mail and internet access.
- We heard back from more than 1,100 staff.

### *“Location, location, location.”*

A series of focus group sessions for GNWT employees were held in Inuvik, Yellowknife, Fort Simpson and Hay River. The session participants appropriately represented a cross-section of the NWT public service by job type, position, location, gender and years of service. Additional focus group sessions were held with interns, Aboriginal employees and persons with disabilities.

### *Other key people provided information:*

- Individual meetings with the Union of Northern Workers and NWT Teachers’ Association;
- Interviews with MLAs;
- Interviews with Deputy Ministers;
- Interviews with management staff; and
- Feedback from Aboriginal and community governments.

*The session participants appropriately represented a cross-section of the NWT public service.*



## What Did We Hear?

A key step in the process was to identify the overall strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) for the NWT public service. The SWOT analysis is an important part of the workforce planning processes with key stakeholders who have a vested interest in the NWT public service. The SWOT analysis assists in identifying the key issues that should be addressed as part of the Strategic Plan. Notes collected from focus group sessions, interviews, research and meetings were combined with survey responses and then organized into SWOT categories.

The following is a summary of the trends and key findings identified through the SWOT analysis. The detailed consultant's project report presents the complete SWOT findings. The complete report can be reviewed on the Department of Human Resources web site at [www.hr.gov.nt.ca](http://www.hr.gov.nt.ca). A summary of what we heard is presented below. Where appropriate, the key findings of the SWOT have been grouped into broader themes. In a few instances, characteristics were viewed to have both strengths and weaknesses.



*The SWOT analysis assists in identifying the key issues that should be addressed as part of the Strategic Plan.*

*Key Strengths: Identify the character of the NWT public service that can be reinforced to ensure a strong future.*

#### ***Affirmative Action***

- A sensitivity and respect for cultural differences, with support for the Affirmative Action policy, was expressed during focus groups with Aboriginal employees, senior management, MLAs and Deputy Ministers.
- A number of participants indicated that the Affirmative Action policy had and continues to have a positive impact on their careers.

#### ***Marketing Public Service and the GNWT***

- The work carried out by the GNWT is meaningful and provides opportunities for employees to make a difference.
- The size and relative flatness of the GNWT provides employees with opportunities to form relationships with colleagues in other regions, allows for enterprise-wide work to be carried out, means that things “get done”, provides opportunities to be creative and means there is an ability to effect change.
- The NWT is an interesting society and part of the country where the pace of life can be more relaxed than in the south. In addition, employees have an opportunity to be part of the fabric of the north and a chance to be exposed to a unique northern and local cultural experience.

#### ***Compensation and Benefits***

- The pension plan, job security, education benefits and flexible hours were all cited as strengths of the GNWT. Furthermore, several focus groups and survey participants indicated “good benefits” were one of their primary reasons for remaining with the GNWT.

#### ***Lifelong Learning***

- There are a number of opportunities for employees to gain exposure to diverse kinds of work and projects that may not be available to them and/or are not available to someone with their level of experience in other settings.
- Opportunities for advancement, personal and professional growth, continuous challenge and career pathing are available.
- More than half of survey respondents “agreed or strongly agreed” that they are satisfied with their career progress in the NWT public service.

*Employees have  
an opportunity  
to be part of the fabric  
of the north.*



*There is widespread belief that the GNWT is losing employees to the south, the federal government and the private sector.*

*Key Weaknesses: Concerns that could be problematic and need to be addressed.*

**Affirmative Action**

- Perceived lack of progress in improving the representation of Aboriginal persons in the GNWT – in particular, at the management level.
- Aboriginal employees need increased support, such as management training and development and mentoring, in order to succeed.
- Concerns were expressed about the consistency with which the policy is administered.

**Compensation and Benefits**

- Concern about communication and a lack of responsiveness on the part of DHR related to compensation and benefits was expressed during the focus groups and in survey responses. Many employees indicated they often had difficulty finding answers related to pay and benefits.
- Concerns were also raised with respect to the efficiency of the government's human resource information system.
- Concerns were also raised about the perceived lack of competitiveness in the GNWT's pay for some positions relative to competition and/or the decreasing difference between "northern" and "southern" salaries, which is having a negative impact on attraction and retention. This was also noted by 25% of survey respondents and focus group participants.
- There is widespread belief that the GNWT is losing employees to the south, the federal government and the private sector.

**Retention and Recruitment**

- Youth and interns view a career with the GNWT as a foot in the door, a way of saving money and an opportunity to get valuable experience. However, a number of participants in this group do not see themselves remaining with the GNWT for an extended period of time.
- A number of survey and focus group respondents expressed concerns about retention in the GNWT. It was noted that turnover in staff seemed high. It was also noted that retention issues were adding pressure to remaining workers who are already negatively affected by increasing workloads due to vacancies.
- Recruitment and retention were noted as a key weakness by 40% of focus group and survey respondents.

### *Lifelong Learning*

- The responsibility for training, development, coaching and mentoring has shifted to departments and/or managers who lack time, departmental resources and support from DHR to handle these responsibilities. Inconsistencies in the delivery and/or availability of training and development programs were noted. This was noted as a key weakness by over 60% of focus group and survey respondents.
- Participants with disabilities felt that the training they received had not and/or could not be adjusted to meet their accommodation requirements.
- Regional focus groups expressed concerns about the lack of training and development programs in the regions. Most training is conducted in Yellowknife and the remoteness and/or lack of support for travel costs make travelling to Yellowknife difficult.

### *Feedback and Rewards*

- Concerns about the frequency with which performance reviews are conducted, methods for ensuring managers are conducting reviews, the failure to link performance reviews to ongoing training and the limited amount of time that management has to devote to reviews were expressed by both employees and management.
- Once reviews are complete they are not given the attention they deserve, nor are areas identified as requiring improvement addressed. There is uncertainty about what happens to performance reviews once they are completed.
- Furthermore, strong performance is believed to go unrecognized and there are concerns about how poor performers are managed.

### *Succession Planning*

- Succession planning was noted, almost unanimously, as an area requiring improvement. However, succession planning is often affected by budget constraints.
- Knowledge is being lost due to retirement. Often, ample notice of a pending retirement is given, yet limited efforts are made to retain and/or transfer knowledge of retiring staff.
- Promotional opportunities and the need for succession planning were identified by 17% of focus group participants and survey respondents as a key weakness.

### *Human Resources Service Delivery*

- There was consensus across focus groups, survey participants and interviewees that the GNWT was experiencing significant challenges with respect to Human Resources service delivery. DHR is perceived to be understaffed, unable to provide required support and consistent responses to questions, does not have a service-focused mentality and is lacking the level of knowledge required to provide the necessary services.
- Since the GNWT removed Human Resources supports from departments and moved to a centralized model there have been significant challenges with respect to service delivery combined with high levels of employee frustration with respect to Human Resources.
- There is limited flexibility to adapt Human Resources programs and/or policies to meet the diverse and changing needs of the public service.

*Succession planning was noted, almost unanimously, as an area requiring improvement.*



*Opportunities: Opportunities and circumstances that could be taken advantage of to lead to improvements for the NWT public service and DHR.*

***Affirmative Action***

- Re-introduce competency-based training for the development of Aboriginal managers.
- Create a skills inventory of Aboriginal employees that can be used to match them with promotional opportunities that they are qualified for.

***Marketing Public Service and the GNWT***

- Promote the benefits of working for small communities in a northern location and emphasize the opportunities to perform interesting work with interesting people and amazing cultures.
- Design a marketing campaign to inspire and attract youth to work for the GNWT.

***Compensation and Benefits***

- Provide enhancements to compensation and overall remuneration for positions where current compensation is below a competitive level.

***Retention and Recruitment***

- Provide opportunities for older workers to remain actively involved in the GNWT.
- Develop customized retention programs that address differences in generational and cultural values.
- Use the internship and summer student programs as a way to keep youth interested in working with the GNWT.
- Allow for more flexibility in programs; provide more opportunities to “share employees”.
- Consider utilizing former employees, summer students, interns and co-ops to fill gaps created during the recruitment process.

***Lifelong Learning***

- Expand developmental programs, including internships and summer student and apprenticeship programs.
- Use web seminars and other forms of technology to deliver training in the regions. Share knowledge and information across programs.
- Create an orientation manual and video; dedicate resources available to answer employee questions related to orientation.
- Provide an orientation “booster” for long tenure employees.
- Cater orientation programs to different groups of employees. For example: students, interns, engineers, northerners and southerners.
- Provide departments with more opportunities to manage training and development (including temporary transfer assignments).
- Develop and implement a formal mentorship and coaching program.

*Promote the benefits  
of working for  
small communities  
in a  
northern location.*

### *Feedback and Rewards*

- Examine how performance reviews are currently conducted and determine ways for improving employee goal and objective setting, and the frequency with which appraisals are conducted. This will help an employee link performance to their career progress.
- DHR to track performance reviews more rigorously to ensure consistency across departments.
- Ensure that recognition programs allow for flexibility in their methods for recognizing employees. Simple, low-cost methods have the potential to be highly effective, such as a simple “thank you” on a job well done.

### *Succession Planning*

- Put a system in place that helps employees “connect the dots” between their career path and the succession needs of the GNWT.
- A dedicated resource that departmental managers can contact for information should also be involved in steering the overall program.
- Develop a mentorship program that encourages those close to retirement to groom and develop their successor.
- Develop programs to keep retirees actively involved with the GNWT once they retire.

### *Human Resources Service Delivery*

- Streamline processes to improve operational efficiencies.
- Improve the quality of service via training and hiring additional resources, and focus on improving the consistency with which services are delivered.



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employees.*



*Their political masters will need to acknowledge the risks and encourage their managers to meet these head on.*

*Threats: Issues and concerns that must be dealt with in a focused manner to find resolution and lead to an improved NWT public service.*

**Overall, key threats include:**

- The current economic climate and associated labour market implications
  - The economic downturn places added pressure on the availability of funding to improve human resources programs.
- Competition for talent with northern Alberta and private sector companies in the NWT
  - Competition for talent in other public and private sector employers puts upward pressure on compensation and retention.
- The constant scrutiny of the GNWT by members of the public and MLAs
  - The GNWT operates in a politically charged and sensitive environment; any major changes to human resources programs will require support from MLAs, senior leadership and, potentially, members of the public.
- Service delivery inconsistency
  - Forward thinking and creative programs related to Affirmative Action, compensation and benefits, leadership development, rewards, training and development, wellness, succession planning and talent management in other public and private sector employers puts pressure on the GNWT to, at a minimum, provide comparable programs.
- Leadership and change management
  - This Strategic Plan sets the stage for significant changes to human resource practices within the public service; whether these changes actually come about will depend on the presence of strong and consistent leadership, and effective and persistent change management practices.
- Risk taking
  - Undertaking to reshape a system as large and complex as the NWT public service will entail a certain amount of risk-taking, which is something that public service managers are too rarely encouraged to do. Their political masters will need to acknowledge the risks and encourage their managers to meet these head on.

## Mission and Vision

Based on the information collected from stakeholders, the following mission, vision and motto for the NWT public service are presented below.

**Mission:**

To provide excellent service to the people of the Northwest Territories.

**Vision:**

Excellence, innovation and commitment are the touchstones of our service to the public.

**Motto:**

*Public Service. Public Focus.*

**What does this mean for employees?**

It means that there is a common mission and vision for delivering service to the public, which will guide the approach to providing services and be embedded in our program delivery.

The motto ensures that while we carry out the many activities that comprise the work of government, we never lose sight of the end game – providing excellent services to residents of the Northwest Territories.

*We never lose sight  
of the end game –  
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of the Northwest  
Territories.*



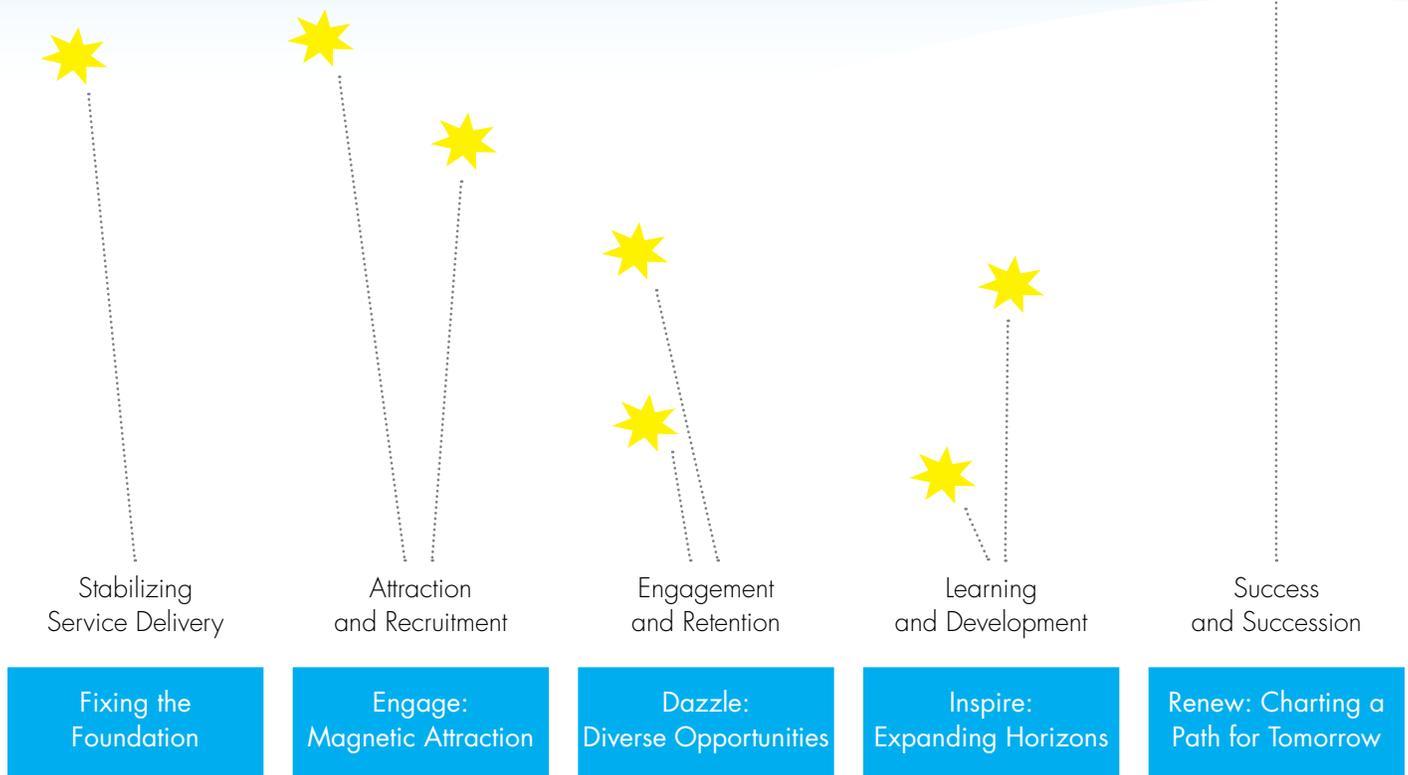
*There are five strategic goals which will drive the actions to implement the Strategic Plan over the next 10 years.*

## Strategic Goals and Supporting Objectives

The Strategic Plan maps out an ambitious vision to be achieved over a 10-year period, and envisions collaboration across all levels of public service in the Northwest Territories – including not only the GNWT but also community and Aboriginal governments.

There are five strategic goals which will drive the actions to implement the Strategic Plan over the next 10 years. Each of these goals is made up of supporting objectives which will serve to guide the way we manage our human resources. While each has equal value and importance, there are important connections and linkages amongst them. From an action plan perspective, this means that some key initiatives must be completed early on so that we establish a good foundation for successfully implementing the full Strategic Plan.

The strategic goals for *20/20: A Brilliant North* take the shape of the Big Dipper, with the North Star (Polaris) as a guiding light. The stars of the Big Dipper are easily seen, and act as guides to others. The following diagram illustrates the highlights of our strategic plan; our guide to achieving brilliance.



## Five Strategic Goals and Their Intended Outcomes

### *Strategic Goal One*

We will support our Mission and Vision by putting in place a firm foundation of excellent human resource management practices and services. This foundation will ensure all of the other Strategic Goals have the support necessary to be successful.

### *Strategic Goal Two*

Through the “Magnetic” Attraction of Northerners and others to the public service, and through the engagement of our existing workforce, we will establish a public service that reflects our diverse cultures and provides high quality service in the Northwest Territories.

### *Strategic Goal Three*

We will strive to have a public service which “Dazzles” through our commitment to our workplace and environment, our individual wellness and our commitment to establishing and maintaining excellent relationships with the public, our stakeholders and our partners.

### *Strategic Goal Four*

We will strive to “Inspire” our public service to “Expand Our Horizons” and continually develop ourselves individually and collectively.

### *Strategic Goal Five*

We will “Chart a Path” for the future through excellent planning and management of our public service. We will continually build on our strengths and monitor our progress.

Each of the Strategic Goals is now described in more detail on the following pages.



*Steps have already been initiated to address some of the service issues and progress is being made.*

## Strategic Goal One – Fixing the Foundation

We will support our Mission and Vision by putting in place a firm foundation of excellent human resource management practices and services. This foundation will ensure all of the other Strategic Goals have the support necessary to be successful.

Management at all levels, and human resources leaders and employees, recognize that there are service issues which must be addressed. Steps have already been initiated to address some of the service issues and progress is being made.

Therefore, specific goals for the Department of Human Resources are also noted here as a key enabler to implement the Strategic Plan, provide human resources frameworks, policies and tools, promote exemplary human resources management and provide excellent human resources services to the departments.

This goal will be accomplished through two supporting objectives. These are:

### ***Supporting Objective One – Creative and Dedicated People***

To have highly skilled and professional human resources staff to promote exemplary human resources management.

### ***Supporting Objective Two – Having and Using the Right Tools***

To develop and implement comprehensive and integrated human resource frameworks, policies and tools to support GNWT managers and employees.

### ***How will we do it?***

- Improved processes in pay and benefits;
- Simplified and more flexible human resources policies to address departments' needs;
- Reinforced customer service focus for DHR;
- Professional skills training for DHR staff; and
- Review the organization and clarify roles of human resources staff to address service issues.

*What does it mean for GNWT employees?*

- Better service from the HR Department;
- Clearer roles for the Department of Human Resources; and
- Human resources policies that are simpler, flexible and aligned to support the Strategic Plan.

*What does it mean for NWT residents?*

- A stronger public service; and
- Better managed public service, with managers and employees supported with positive human resources policies and tools.

*What will change and why is this important?*

- Human resources programs are designed to address current, and anticipate future, needs of the public service. Innovative programs are designed to address the unique perspectives of the NWT, and customer and service delivery is stabilized and enhanced to promote exemplary human resources management. The public service will be better positioned to provide excellent and responsive services to the public in the Northwest Territories.



*The public service  
will be better  
positioned to  
provide excellent  
and responsive  
services to the public  
in the Northwest  
Territories.*



## Strategic Goal Two – Engage: Magnetic Attraction

Through the “Magnetic” Attraction of Northerners and others to the public service, and through the engagement of our existing staff, we want to establish a public service that represents our diverse cultures and wants to perform public service in the Northwest Territories. Based on feedback, we know it is necessary to continue our commitment to Affirmative Action and diversity. We also know it is important to market and promote the public service within the NWT and to be competitive in the labour market to ensure we continue to attract and keep great people.

This goal will be accomplished through three supporting objectives. These are:

### ***Supporting Objective One – Affirmative Action and Diversity***

To promote the Affirmative Action policy to create a public service which reflects the diverse cultures of the NWT, and promotes the development and advancement of designated groups.

### ***Supporting Objective Two – Marketing Public Service***

To market the strengths, benefits and opportunities of the public service in the NWT.

### ***Supporting Objective Three – Compensation and Benefits***

To provide competitive pay and benefits in a manner which appropriately compensates employees of the public service while ensuring fiscal prudence.

#### ***How will we do it?***

- Targeted training programs for Aboriginal employees at all levels within the organization to promote development and excellence;
- Enhanced supports for persons with disabilities;
- An expanded and more comprehensive occupational demand and supply outlook for the NWT. This type of outlook will inform and facilitate a range of human resource management strategies and actions, including recruitment, retention, succession planning, training and development, and affirmative action initiatives;
- Partnerships between the HR Department and other government departments, such as MACA, ECE and ITI, to promote the GNWT as a desired employer;
- Outreach programs to NWT high schools and northern colleges about public service in the north;
- Develop and implement a program to reach out to designated groups members and potential employees based on an approach similar to “Ambassador” type programs of other provincial jurisdictions; and
- Regular compensation reviews and benchmarking against relevant employers in the NWT and our neighbours.

*It is important to market and promote the public service within the NWT and to be competitive in the labour market to ensure we continue to attract and keep great people.*

*What does it mean for GNWT employees (existing and future)?*

- Management is able to support designated employees throughout their public service career;
- Employees are proud to work in the public service;
- Greater likelihood existing employees stay and become marketers for the GNWT as a place to work for future employees;
- The Government and the public respect and recognize the values, skills and abilities of the public service and the excellence of the services it provides; and
- Current and future employees are satisfied with compensation and benefits as one component of their work experience.

*What does it mean for NWT residents?*

- Recruiting the right people for the right jobs, and reducing employee turn-over, will ensure that the GNWT can continue to provide and maintain a high quality of services to residents and ensure service stability.

*What will change and why is this important?*

- The GNWT will have a diverse workforce, with the required skills and experience to provide innovative and dynamic services to the residents of the GNWT; and
- The GNWT will be better able to attract employees to fill positions that have been difficult to fill because of the skills and experience required, and will also be able to attract designated group members who stay with the organization as valued contributors.



*The GNWT will have a diverse workforce, with the required skills and experience to provide innovative and dynamic services.*



*We have a unique opportunity to enhance our commitments and contributions.*

## Strategic Goal Three – Dazzle: Diverse Opportunities

We will strive to have a public service which “Dazzles” through staff commitment to our workplace and environment, our individual wellness and our commitment to establishing and maintaining excellent relationships with the public, our stakeholders and our partners. We know from our review of other governments that wellness and environmental consciousness are emerging priorities within organizations. We have a unique opportunity to enhance our commitments and contributions.

This goal will be accomplished through three supporting objectives. These are:

### *Supporting Objective One – Healthy and Respectful Workplace*

To instill a culture which promotes and encourages individual, organization and community wellness, respect and safety.

### *Supporting Objective Two – Positive Relations with Bargaining Representatives*

To create a work environment that respects the role of its employee bargaining representatives and encourages engagement to advance common goals.

### *Supporting Objective Three – Greening the Workplace*

To value the environment and be ‘green’ in the public service.

#### *How will we do it?*

- Provide wellness programs for employees (e.g. smoking cessation, conflict management, stress management and fitness);
- Promote and provide safety awareness training in collaboration with the Workers’ Safety and Compensation Commission, bargaining representatives and other employers;
- Work with bargaining representatives to resolve issues and address common goals;
- Reinforce managers’ responsibility for applying the collective agreements and resolving disputes;
- Encourage ‘grass roots’ environmental programs in the workplace; and
- Partner with co-located organizations or the community to adopt or expand greening initiatives.

*What does it mean for GNWT employees?*

- Safer workplace;
- Increased emphasis and supports for healthy lifestyles;
- Better mechanisms to resolve workplace issues; and
- More environmental greening initiatives.

*What does it mean for NWT residents?*

- NWT initiatives related to the environment and health improvement will be mirrored in the organization activities of the GNWT; and
- Safety programs and early resolution of issues are good for the organization and save costs.

*What will change and why is this important?*

- These activities will create a workplace which demonstrates a breadth of interest in safety, health, problem solving and the environment. These activities will make employees feel that, regardless of their own function, they have the opportunity as a member of the GNWT to do something positive for themselves, the workplace, their community and/or the environment. This will improve morale and commitment to these priorities, which mirror those of the public in many respects. Improved morale translates into more motivated employees providing better service.



*Safety programs  
and early resolution  
of issues  
are good for  
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and save costs.*



## Strategic Goal Four – Inspire: Expanding Horizons

We will strive to “Inspire” our public service to “Expand Our Horizons” and continually develop ourselves individually and collectively.

Development must take place at all levels within an organization. There is: cultural development, which is about defining and living cultural values and modeling these through behaviours; organization development, which focuses on organization targeted employee groups, structures and systems; and finally, development focused on individuals. All should be striving to deliver on the Mission and Vision of the public service.

### *Supporting Objective One – Leadership*

To develop a sustainable core group of middle and senior managers in the GNWT, with a targeted approach to ensure that Affirmative Action designated groups develop the skills to progress and succeed in leadership roles.

### *Supporting Objective Two – Lifelong Learning*

To value organization and individual learning in the GNWT.

### *Supporting Objective Three – Feedback and Rewards*

To create or foster a work environment where employees are valued and recognized for excellent contributions to the public service.

### *How will we do it?*

- Roles, accountabilities and expectations of managers are more clearly defined. The role of a manager is not only to deliver policy and programs or services, but to do so through effective leadership of people and management of resources;
- Management competencies are defined and communicated;
- Deputy Ministers are held accountable for the development of their leadership teams;
- Leaders are considered a corporate resource, and programs are implemented to facilitate the rotation and transfer of managers through a range of departments and management perspectives: e.g. HQ vs. Regional; policy vs. operations; and direct service vs. corporate service. Initially, pilot for Aboriginal employees as part of a targeted development program;
- Commit investment in learning and development programs, including classroom, intranet, coaching and mentoring;
- Identify value for money learning initiatives that can maximize development and participation, and minimize travel costs;
- Develop learning plans at an organizational level for different employee and functional groupings as well as individual learning plans to support the drive for excellence;
- Research and implement innovative feedback mechanisms; and
- Rewards (compensation and non-compensation) are flexible to address cultural diversity and individual preferences.

*Development must take place at all levels within an organization.*

*What does it mean for GNWT employees?*

- Our employees will benefit from ongoing learning and development opportunities and a chance to serve the public in a manner which promotes learning; and
- Our employees will have individual learning plans to effectively develop themselves within the public service.

*What does it mean for NWT residents?*

- Our public service will be led by very committed and qualified executives and managers, who will continually develop themselves to reach new heights personally and professionally; and
- Our public service will be committed to continual learning, which will translate to new and innovative ways of serving the public and doing business more efficiently and effectively.

*What will change and why is this important?*

- We will place a significant emphasis on learning and establishing clear paths for progression and enhancing skills within the public service.



*We will place a significant emphasis on learning and establishing clear paths for progression and enhancing skills within the public service.*



## Strategic Goal Five – Renew: Charting a Path for Tomorrow

We will “Chart a Path” for the future through excellent planning and management of our public service. We will continually build on our strengths and monitor our progress.

To be successful and sustain our Mission and Vision, we must have proper succession planning in place. The long-term sustainability of an organization is best served by having a flexible workforce planning process in place to be able to forecast and assess changes to the workforce based on political, economic and/or demographic changes.

Globally, employers are facing demographics issues, with an aging workforce resulting in employees at all levels leaving the workforce. Perhaps the greatest impact is at the level of more experienced workers who have progressed to the leadership levels of the organization and take with them experience and skills when they leave.

This goal will be accomplished through three supporting objectives. These are:

### ***Supporting Objective One – Succession Planning and Knowledge Management***

To effectively manage workforce stability, development, progression and risks for leadership and critical success roles.

### ***Supporting Objective Two – Talent Management***

To anticipate and prepare for future skills requirements through the development of northerners and knowledge management capacity.

### ***Supporting Objective Three – Workforce Planning***

To make strategic decisions about GNWT business and service priorities, taking into account human, financial and capital resources.

### ***How will we do it?***

- Establish a succession planning framework;
- Learning plans are developed and implemented to prepare for succession and broadening perspectives, competencies and skills;
- Corporate and department programs support one another to provide a cross-GNWT approach to the development of leaders;
- Successors assume positions for up to six months prior to current leaders exiting the organization to promote knowledge transfer and mentorship;
- Develop a robust talent management program: e.g. skills inventory, forecast current and future skills requirements, gap analysis and redeployment and retraining opportunities, learning and development programs to address gaps and shortages which are aligned to Affirmative Action, rewards, and recognition goals and actions;
- Partner with other governments to identify common priorities, shortages and shared solutions for talent development; and
- Enhance workforce planning and an HR planning framework to support each department in the development of their HR Plan, which is aligned to the Strategic Plan and supports their three-year business plan.

 Globally,  
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*What does it mean for GNWT employees?*

- Employees will benefit from being part of a well managed and organized public service, which includes tracking their aspirations and the progress of their careers.

*What does it mean for NWT residents?*

- Residents must be confident in our public service. Part of this confidence comes with knowing the public service will do everything possible to maintain stability, continuous operations and transfer knowledge and skills when people move on; and
- Residents can also be assured the public service places a significant value on planning and monitoring our workforce to ensure proper management of taxpayer dollars through our human resources.

*What will change and why is this important?*

- Our approach to managing our employees must be more rigorous, so leaders will be required to devote resources and time to monitoring and developing their teams; and
- We will improve the methods of capturing and reviewing workforce data, which is very important to the effective management of our human resources.

*Employees will  
benefit from being  
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and organized  
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## Moving Forward: Action Plan

The Strategic Plan maps out a vision to be achieved over a 10-year period. The goals and objectives outlined here are ambitious and will take both time and effort to be realized. To stay on track we will need a road map – a guide that sets out the steps needed to achieve the goals and the mileposts that will help to measure our progress.

This is why we have prepared a three-year Action Plan as a companion document to this Strategic Plan. The Action Plan provides more detail on the key foundation pieces that must be put in place over the next three years. It outlines the tasks that will be undertaken, time frames for them to be completed, and who has lead responsibility for each task. It also identifies the performance measures that will be used to demonstrate progress.

In conclusion, a Strategic Plan is only as good as the commitment to:

- Drive it by taking ownership of it;
- Resource it with money, skills, time and effort;
- Support it publicly and consistently;
- Evaluate it and adjust the plan to respond to changing conditions or emerging trends;
- Communicate it; and
- Manage it.

The GNWT is committed to achieving a brilliant future for the NWT public service in 2020. Our commitment is captured in the Action Plan and will be demonstrated through regular progress reports as we move forward.

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