

TWO NEW DIVERISTY AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to a competent Public Service that is representative of the people it serves. As Members would be aware, the GNWT has a variety of tools to achieve this goal including the Affirmative Action Policy that offers priority hiring to candidates belonging to eligible designated groups that are under-represented within the Public Service. Recently, the Human Resources Branch of the Department of Finance added two new diversity and inclusion initiatives aimed at further shrinking the gap of under-represented groups and make it easier for Indigenous northerners to access training and gain valuable on-the-job experience with the GNWT.

The Indigenous Career Gateway Program is intended for Northwest Territories residents who are designated Indigenous Aboriginal Persons under the GNWT Affirmative Action Policy and interested in careers with the territorial government. The Department of Finance will work closely with departments to create entry level positions and to develop individualized training plans for applicants who may not meet all the qualifications for typical positions posted. These individuals will be provided with a training plan that will help them acquire the skills and qualifications and will gain valuable work experience that is often required for long-term employment with the GNWT.

This initiative, Mr. Speaker, supports the GNWT's priority to develop and maintain a diverse workforce that is representative of the people it serves. In order to make the program as accessible as possible, interested applicants will be able to apply directly through the GNWT Careers Website.

In addition, the GNWT has launched the Indigenous Management Development and Training Program. This program will help provide current Indigenous Aboriginal employees the necessary skills, training and work experience for career advancement.

The Department of Finance will provide financial support to departments, beyond existing training and education programs, to further the career objectives of Indigenous employees. Interested employees will be encouraged to work with their managers to identify education and training opportunities that could be supported through this new initiative. This program will also be an important tool as we address the challenges of our aging workforce and the need for additional succession planning.

Mr. Speaker, our people are our territory's greatest resource. Investing in the skills and qualifications of northerners provides employment for our people and benefits all residents of the NWT. We all share the goal of our public service being representative of the population we serve. The reality is that work within the public service is getting more and more technical. Growth areas like health care related occupations and scientific and technology based jobs, all require support to ensure residents have the skills and abilities to take advantage of these opportunities.

To achieve our overall goal we need more than hiring preferences. We need to develop the skills and experience of our population and to focus on the development of our existing workforce to help achieve their career goals. These two new initiatives help build on our existing programs and services including developmental transfer assignments, our Leadership Develop program and other training and educations supports, the Internship program, the Summer Student program, and the Regional Recruitment program.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.