

NWT Association of Communities Priorities for the 2019 Territorial Election



Funding Gap

It is well established that the NWT Communities are struggling to survive with an annual funding shortfall of almost \$40 Million. They are chronically underfunded. It is 37% less than what communities need.

ALL NWT Community Governments need funding to provide programs and services that impact residents of the Territory.

GNWT has a responsibility and MLA's need to push for these changes immediately. ALL MLA's need to state their position on supporting community governments and fixing the funding crisis long term.

The GNWT's budget has increased due to mounting pressures and forced growth. Community Governments are facing the same pressures. GNWT needs to recognize this and increase funding for communities. For example;

The GNWT's support for community infrastructure has remained the same since 2007 at \$28 million.

The GNWT's investment in Territorial infrastructure has almost doubled in since 2007.

GNWT must work with community governments to prevent further crisis by proactively addressing the funding formulas, and by also increasing the amount of funding.

For more information on the funding gap please read the Community Matters 2015 Report. www.nwtac.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Community-Funding-Report-2015.pdf.

For more information on how dollars are spent at a municipal level have doubled the impact of community economies please read a study commissioned to the Centre of the North here. <http://www.nwtac.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Economic-Impacts-of-Community-Spending-on-the-Territorial-Economy-Final-Aug-5-2015.pdf>

For Community Governments to survive and thrive GNWT needs to:

- Increase overall funding provided to community governments based on demonstrated need
- Modernize the funding formulas, based on recommendations from the MACA and NWTAC review in 2014
- Commit to indexing community government funding, like the Gas Tax funding
- Continue to build and support community capacity to ensure our communities are resilient, vibrant, safe and attractive places to live

Preparing for Climate Change

The funding gap of 37% put major limits on the communities of the NWT's ability to be resilient in the face of Climate Change.

When you ask NWT Mayors what keeps them up at night Climate Change ranks near the top of the list. With rates of change at more than 4 times the rest of Canada in the northern NWT and 2 times the rest of Canada for the south, this worry is justified.

Whether it is threats to food security or collapse of infrastructure, the risk is already real in the NWT.

The NWTAC is continuing to work with the Territorial Government to quantify the impacts of other Climate Risks in the NWT as they relate to Infrastructure, Wellness and the Economy.

Human health, infrastructure, economics, culture food security public safety, water and waste are all at risk. Life of Assets in the North are being shortened.

The cost of one risk alone: the cost of permafrost decay on public infrastructure is estimated at \$1.3 Billion. Infrastructure Investments should be seen as critical to nation building.

Adequate funding to all governments should be a priority to ensure all are equipped to deal with climate change challenges and any program design developed must include consultation of northerners. You will find visual minutes of our Climate Change Forum and Charrette, which illustrates the current situation. <https://climatechange.toolkitnwtac.com/>

Please read our Climate Change Strategic Plan and Action Plan. <https://climatechange.toolkitnwtac.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2019/06/NWTAC-Climate-Change-Strategic-Plan-June-20-2019.pdf>



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Education Reform



The education system in the Northwest Territories is failing students and is in desperate need of reform. Students are graduating without basic reading, writing and math skills.

At its Annual General Meeting in February 2019, the NWTAC passed an important resolution regarding education containing the following:

- It is recognized that there are major deficiencies and lack of adequate programming and resources in many NWT Communities.
- GNWT has identified a desire to improve public education in the NWT via Education Renewal and “early childhood development”
- Many residents lack the capacity to succeed at education so educational alternatives are required.
- Auditor General of Canada should review education in 2019 to ensure that all NWT residents have the capacity to successfully enter post-secondary upon graduation
- Necessary to have to look at the *Education Act*
- 17.7 % of Grade 9 students in small communities were at an acceptable level, while in regional centres 53% were
- GNWT should continue to fund Aurora College to continue running the Bachelor of Education program and the Social Work program
- GNWT continue to prioritize the current programming of Aurora College courses is its consultation with communities and government leaders to ensure all programs can start to work for the students of the NWT as soon as possible.



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You will find more information on the priorities of the NWT Association of Communities in our Resolutions at <https://www.nwtac.com/resolutions/>



Homelessness, Mental Health and Addictions

There has been unprecedented increase in homelessness for all NWT communities. It is recognized as a multifaceted problem exasperated by a shortage of affordable housing and an increase in need for social housing that is the responsibility of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Mental Illness and Addictions are also a factor in this complex social issue.

Mental health and well-being contribute to our quality of life and to our ability to enjoy life. Good mental health is associated with better physical health, education, employment, and rich social relationships.



Mental Health First Aid
You can make a difference!

In order to improve and find solutions to the complex homelessness, mental health and addictions problem the following should be considered:

- Canada and the Northwest Territories need to continue to work together to improve access to home and community care and strengthen access to mental health and addictions services.
- Need to continue ongoing investments in home and community care and mental health and addictions services.
- All homelessness programs and resources should be working together in an integrated approach under one strategic plan and should include multiple government departments, including health and social services, education, culture and employment, justice, and the territory's housing corporation.
- Community-based mental health and addiction practitioners working amid intense and sustained social and economic transformation need more resources.

