



EMERGING STRONGER

PLANNING THE NWT'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
RECOVERY TOGETHER – JUNE 2023 UPDATE

UNE REPRISE EN FORCE

PLANIFIONS ENSEMBLE LA RELANCE ÉCONOMIQUE ET
SOCIALE DES TNO – MISE À JOUR JUIN 2023

Le présent document contient la traduction française de l'introduction en français.

If you would like this information in another official language, call us.
English

Si vous voulez ces informations dans une autre langue officielle, contactez-nous.
French

Kīspin ki nitawihtīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.
Cree

Tł̄chǫ yati k'èè. Dí wegodi newq dè, gots'o gonede.
Tł̄chǫ

ʔerihkt'ís Dëne Sųłiné yati t'a huts'elkér xa beyáyatı theʔq ʔat'e, nuwe ts'ën yólti.
Chipewyan

Edı gondı dehgáh got'je zhatié k'èè edat'eh enahddhę nıde naxets'ę edahłí.
South Slavey

K'áhshó got'ıne xadə k'e hederı ʔedıhtl'ę yeriniwę nídé dúle.
North Slavey

Jii gwandak izhii ginjìk vat'atr'ijahch'uu zhit yinohthan jì', diits'at ginohkhìi.
Gwich'in

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.
Inuvialuktun

Ć̄dłɬ ɬɬbΔc ɬɬLJɬɬc Δōbɬɬc̄bɬɬɬɬ, ɬɬc̄bɬɬōc̄bɬɬ. ɬɬbɬɬɬɬōc̄bɬɬc̄bɬɬ.

Inuktitut

Hapkuq titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.
Inuinnaqtun

Indigenous Languages:
867-767-9202, ext. 63053

French:
866-561-1664 Toll Free

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Introduction

Continuing to support our social and economic recovery

On May 31, 2021, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) tabled *Emerging Stronger: Planning our Economic and Social Recovery Together* in the Legislative Assembly; an update was tabled a year later, on June 2, 2022. *Emerging Stronger* is the GNWT's COVID-19 social and economic recovery plan. It aims to revitalize the Northwest Territories' (NWT) economy and support communities and people to recover from the economic impacts and to bridge the social gaps exposed by the pandemic.

Building on the *Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2019-2023* (the Mandate) commitments, *Emerging Stronger* committed to actions under the following themes:

- *Continue to adapt and respond to challenges in an efficient, coordinated and evidence-based way;*
- *Build stronger partnerships with Indigenous governments and organizations, community governments and the non-profit and charitable sector;*
- *Advance emergency response work based on lessons learned from initial stages of the pandemic;*
- *Further efforts to support broadband infrastructure for fast and reliable internet services across the NWT;*
- *Meet the needs of vulnerable populations;*
- *Improve services and expand equitable access to care for all Northerners;*
- *Provide accessible, quality education and training;*
- *Better support and integrate work-force development within infrastructure projects;*
- *Ensure that GNWT capital planning supports equitable opportunities throughout the territory, and a greener, more climate-resilient territory;*
- *Support the hardest hit sectors;*
- *Better support businesses; and*
- *Expand and diversify the economy.*

It has been more than a year since the GNWT's lifted the state of emergency that had been in place since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. This document highlights the progress the GNWT continues to make to recover from the pandemic and to address our economic and social challenges over the course of the past year as COVID-19 has become endemic. An update on economic and social (health and education) analysis is also provided in Appendix A.

Partnerships with all levels of government over the past year have allowed us to take action on our commitments and make meaningful progress in the areas identified in *Emerging Stronger* as well as in the Mandate. The GNWT will continue to advance actions to support the NWT's social and economic recovery as we transition to the 20th Legislative Assembly.

Introduction en français

Continuer à soutenir la relance économique et sociale des TNO

Le 31 mai 2021, le gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (GTNO) a déposé le document *Une reprise en force : Planifions ensemble la relance économique et sociale des TNO* à l'Assemblée législative; une mise à jour a été déposée un an plus tard, le 2 juin 2022. *Une reprise en force* est le plan de relance économique et sociale du GTNO en lien avec la COVID-19. Il vise à revitaliser l'économie des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (TNO) et à aider les collectivités et les résidents à se remettre des conséquences économiques de la pandémie et à combler les lacunes sociales révélées par celle-ci.

En s'appuyant sur les engagements du Mandat du gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest, 2019-2023 (le Mandat), *Une reprise en force* propose des mesures regroupées selon les thèmes suivants :

- *Faire preuve de souplesse et d'efficacité pour des interventions coordonnées et éclairées par des faits*
- *Établir des partenariats durables avec les gouvernements et organisations autochtones, les administrations communautaires et les organismes de charité et à but non lucratif*
- *Faire avancer les activités d'intervention d'urgence sur la base des leçons tirées du début de la pandémie*
- *Déployer plus d'efforts pour soutenir l'infrastructure haute vitesse afin d'assurer l'offre de services internet rapides et fiables partout aux TNO*
- *Répondre aux besoins des personnes vulnérables*
- *Améliorer les services et accroître l'accès équitable aux soins pour tous les Ténois*
- *Offrir une éducation accessible et de qualité pour tous*
- *Améliorer l'accueil et la formation de la main-d'œuvre dans les grands projets d'infrastructures*
- *S'assurer que la planification des immobilisations du GTNO vise un aménagement du territoire juste, vert et résilient au changement climatique*
- *Aider les secteurs fragilisés*
- *Mieux soutenir les entreprises*
- *Développer et diversifier l'économie*

Cela fait plus d'un an que le GTNO a levé l'état d'urgence mis en place au début de la pandémie de COVID-19 en mars 2020. Ce document souligne les progrès que le GTNO a continué de réaliser pour se remettre de la pandémie et pour relever les défis économiques et sociaux au cours de l'année écoulée, alors que la COVID-19 est devenue endémique. Une mise à jour de l'analyse économique et sociale (santé et éducation) est également fournie à l'annexe A.

Les partenariats établis avec tous les ordres de gouvernement au cours de l'année écoulée nous ont permis de réaliser nos engagements et de faire des progrès significatifs dans les secteurs identifiés dans le document *Une reprise en force* et dans le mandat. Le GTNO continuera à prendre des mesures visant à soutenir la relance sociale et économique des TNO pendant la période de transition vers la 20^e Assemblée législative.

Progress Report

Achievements to Date

Continue to adapt and respond to challenges in an efficient, coordinated, and evidence-based way

The pandemic emphasized the importance for the GNWT of making decisions based on accurate and accessible data. Based on some of the lessons learned during the pandemic, the GNWT committed to:

- *Continue to advance Phase 2 of the Government Renewal Initiative (GRI), including finalizing departmental program inventories, identifying programs and services to be assessed, and developing program designs and evaluation.*
- *Launch an online dashboard of NWT social and economic indicators.*

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Continue to adapt and respond to challenges in an efficient, coordinated and evidence-based way</i>	<i>Continue to advance Phase 2 of the GRI, including finalizing departmental program inventories, listing programs and services to be assessed and developing, program designs and evaluation</i>	In Progress	<i>12-18 months per department</i>	<i>Government Renewal initiative staged implementation by department</i>	The Department of Finance (FIN) is working with departments to complete Phase 1. Phase 2 has been divided into 2 parts, with Phase 2A supporting program design and Phase 2B undertaking assessments and evaluations. Phase 2A began in October 2022 with ECE, HNWT and FIN, with Phase 2B underway as of March 2023. The second cohort of participating departments (INF, MACA and HSS) began in March 2023, with Phase 2B of this cohort expected to begin in July 2023.
			<i>Annually through departmental business planning process</i>	<i>Tracking and reporting on program results</i>	FIN is coordinating departmental annual business plan submissions and has ensured that templates reflect program tracking and results.
<i>Launch an online dashboard of NWT social and economic indicators</i>		Fulfilled	Summer 2022	<i>Dashboard launched and updated regularly</i>	An online dashboard of NWT Social, Economic, and Environmental Indicators was launched in August 2022, and continues to be updated as new data become available.

Build stronger partnerships with Indigenous governments and organizations, community governments and the non-profit and charitable sector

The pandemic demonstrated how vital community partners are in the delivery of care, particularly to individuals who are most vulnerable. It also highlighted the opportunity to strengthen partnerships to better address the needs of the care economy. The GNWT committed to:

- *Undertake an internal review of supports for and issues faced by the non-governmental sector, and establish an external advisory table to make recommendations to strengthen the role and capacity of organizations operating in this sector.*
- *Continue direct engagement with Indigenous governments, including through a multilateral table, to ensure greater collaboration among the GNWT and Indigenous government leadership.*

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Build stronger partnerships with Indigenous governments and organizations, community governments and the non-profit and charitable sector</i>	<i>Undertake an internal review of supports for and issues faced by the non-governmental sector, and establish an external advisory table to make recommendations to strengthen the role and capacity of organizations operating in this sector</i>	Fulfilled	Fall 2022	<i>Review of supports completed</i>	An Interdepartmental working group was established in Spring 2022. The group provided and reviewed information on past work and reporting done by the GNWT on the non-profit and charitable sector, and identified issues that may be impediments to the operation and growth of the NGO sector. The results of the group's work was compiled into a report and provided to the external advisory table.
		Fulfilled	Fall 2022	<i>External advisory table established</i>	An Expression of Interest for membership on the external advisory table was put out in January 2023. In mid-February, the six members of the Committee were selected and their work is now underway. The Committee's report is expected to be completed by end of June 2023 and will be made public.

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Build stronger partnerships with Indigenous governments and organizations, community governments and the non-profit and charitable sector</i>	<i>Continue direct engagement with Indigenous governments, including through a multilateral table, to ensure greater collaboration among the GNWT and Indigenous government leadership.</i>	In Progress	Ongoing	<i>Regular meetings held with Indigenous governments, including multilateral table</i>	The GNWT is committed to continue working with rights-bearing Indigenous governments through bilateral relationships and multilateral forums such as the Intergovernmental Council and the NWT Council of Leaders to address the issues that impact all Indigenous governments in the NWT, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and social and economic issues.

Advance emergency response work based on lessons learned from initial stages of the pandemic

Throughout the pandemic, the GNWT worked to build emergency response capacity within the community sector and supported greater community emergency preparedness. In an effort to continue deepening partnerships and building emergency response capacity with and within the community sector going forward, the GNWT committed to:

- *Improve Pandemic Specific Hazard Plans and Essential Service Plans and templates based on lessons learned from the pandemic.*
- *Follow up annually with communities to encourage the review of Community Emergency Plans.*
- *Resume the delivery of Emergency Planning workshops.*
- *Develop an online webinar tutorial on updating Community Emergency Plans.*
- *Re-profile regional positions to establish dedicated regional EMO staff.*

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Advance emergency response work based on lessons learned from initial stages of pandemic</i>	<p><i>Improve Pandemic Specific Hazard Plans and Essential Service Plans and templates based on lessons learned from the pandemic</i></p> <p><i>Follow up annually with communities to encourage the review of Community Emergency Plans.</i></p>	<p>Fulfilled</p> <p>Fulfilled</p>	<p>Fall 2022</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p><i>Community Emergency Plans and Pandemic Specific Hazard Plan and templates are updated and distributed</i></p> <p><i># and % of community emergency plans updated annually</i></p>	<p>The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) worked with the Department of Health and Social Services (HSS) to update and distribute a Communicable Disease Plan template to community governments in December 2022.</p> <p>MACA has reached out to all community governments to offer delivery of Community Emergency Planning Workshops and Tabletop Exercise workshops for community governments. MACA's Regional Offices have compiled information on the status of all community emergency plans to inform and prioritize which communities require additional support to complete a review of their Emergency Plan. As of April 2023, five communities have updated their emergency plans.</p>
<i>Resume delivery of Emergency Planning workshops</i>	<i>Emergency Planning workshops</i>	Fulfilled	Ongoing	<i>5 Emergency Planning Workshops completed per year</i>	As of April 2023, since resuming workshops in Fall 2022, four community governments have participated in a Community Emergency Planning Workshop and one has participated in a Tabletop Exercise Workshop.

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Advance emergency response work based on lessons learned from initial stages of pandemic</i>	<i>Develop an online webinar tutorial on updating Community Emergency Plans.</i>	Fulfilled	Summer 2022	<i>Online webinar tutorial on updating Community Emergency Plans developed and launched</i>	In December 2022, updated and distributed the “Community Emergency Plan Template” intended to be used by community governments as a self-directed tool to facilitate development and annual review of community emergency plans.
	<i>Re-profile regional positions to establish dedicated regional EMO staff</i>	Fulfilled	Ongoing	<i>1 EMO position staffed in each region</i>	In late 2021-22, MACA re-profiled positions to establish one Regional Emergency Management Coordinator position in each of its five regional offices. To date, three regions have staffed their positions, and the two remaining regions are working towards staffing. In 2022-23, MACA received funding for three additional EMO staff at Headquarters on a one-time basis, and this funding was made ongoing effective 2023-24.

Further efforts to support broadband infrastructure for fast and reliable internet services across the NWT

The pandemic demonstrated that access to high quality, affordable internet is integral to how the GNWT and residents' communicate in business and in their daily lives. Recognizing the urgent need to bridge the digital divide to promote learning, training, business and entrepreneurship in order to advance long term economic and social recovery, the GNWT committed to:

- *Continue to press for federal policy changes to ensure applications for investment recognize the NWT's challenges.*
- *Urge the CRTC to take action to regulate rates for internet services in satellite communities; provide ongoing portable subsidies to lower rates for residential and business internet services; review the terms and conditions of wholesale access by competing service providers; and make network improvements to enhance reliability.*
- *Begin work on the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk fibre line to provide higher reliability, faster speeds and greater capacity.*

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Further efforts to support broadband infrastructure for fast and reliable internet services across the NWT</i>	<i>Continue to press for federal policy changes to ensure applications for investment recognize the NWT's challenges.</i>	In Progress	Ongoing	<i>Efforts made to lobby the federal government for policy change</i>	The GNWT continues to advocate and support initiatives to improve broadband internet availability, affordability, and quality in all NWT communities, while ensuring that the funding criteria and regulations suit the needs of northern communities.

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Further efforts to support broadband infrastructure for fast and reliable internet services across the NWT</i>	<i>Urge the CRTC to take action to regulate rates for internet services in satellite communities; provide ongoing portable subsidies to lower rates for residential and business internet services; review the terms and conditions of wholesale access by competing service providers; and make network improvements to enhance reliability</i>	Fulfilled	<i>Ongoing as per formal CRTC proceedings</i>	<i>Efforts made to lobby the federal government for policy change</i>	<p>The GNWT continues to monitor Northwestel's CRTC-funded project to provide broadband internet to terrestrial NWT communities (not satellite-served communities) by the end of 2023.</p>
					<p>The GNWT is an active participant in CRTC's proceeding to establish "a new regulatory policy" in Northwestel's serving area. On April 17, 2023, the GNWT reiterated its position on the key topic areas relevant to residents and businesses of the NWT. The CRTC is expected to request final comments on this proceeding in June 2023. The GNWT will continue to be involved in the proceedings to implement the new policy in Northwestel's serving area, and will continue to advocate for residents and businesses in the NWT.</p>
					<p>The GNWT will continue to advocate for greater affordability, reliability, redundancy, and competition.</p>
	<i>Begin work on the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk fibre line to provide higher reliability, faster speeds and more capacity</i>	In Progress	2022-23	<i>Work on the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk fibre line initiated</i>	<p>The GNWT has issued contracts for services to support both technical engineering and environmental assessments. A Project Description Report is anticipated to be complete in Spring/Summer 2023. Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) has supported the project and assisted the GNWT with planning for engagement activities.</p>

Meet the needs of vulnerable populations

While the NWT health system has responded effectively to the pandemic, in many areas COVID-19 exposed and magnified existing challenges related to social program delivery in the NWT. In order to support NWT residents' ability to meet their basic needs as we emerge from the pandemic, particularly those who were already in precarious circumstances, the GNWT committed to:

- *Introduce a new Income Assistance program geared towards Seniors and Persons with Disabilities, and improve the existing program for adults.*
- *Undertake public and stakeholder engagement on Integrated Service Delivery.*
- *Finalize an Alcohol Strategy.*
- *Review shelter funding arrangements as part of the Homelessness Strategic Action Plan.*

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Meet the needs of vulnerable populations</i>	<i>Introduce a new Income Assistance program geared towards Seniors and Persons with Disabilities, and improve the existing program for adults</i>	In Progress	Spring 2023	<i>New Income Assistance program implemented</i>	Engagement with Income Assistance program stakeholders was completed in March 2022. Feedback received through the engagement and Client Satisfaction Survey was incorporated into a What We Heard Report. This feedback was used to inform the creation of a new Income Assistance program for seniors and persons with disabilities. Implementation of the new program is planned for 2023-24.
<i>Undertake stakeholder engagement on Integrated Service Delivery</i>		Fulfilled	Fall 2022	<i>Stakeholder engagement initiated</i>	The GNWT engaged regional Indigenous governments in January and February 2023. Engagement with NGOs, community governments and Indigenous governments on the GNWT's draft Homelessness Strategy, which includes actions to establish an Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) unit and ISD regional sites, took place in March and April 2023, and officials were engaged through the NWT Council of Leaders Secretariat on April 25, 2023. The GNWT will engage Indigenous government leadership through the NWT Council of Leaders in June 2023.
<i>Finalize an Alcohol Strategy</i>		Fulfilled	October 2022	<i>Alcohol Strategy developed and tabled</i>	The Alcohol Strategy was completed and tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 29, 2023.

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Meet the needs of vulnerable populations</i>	<i>Review shelter funding arrangements as part of the Homelessness Strategic Action Plan</i>	In Progress	Ongoing	<i>Shelter funding arrangements reviewed</i>	The Pilot Homelessness Count in Hay River, Fort Smith and Inuvik has been completed. Housing NWT plans to conduct a territory-wide (outside of Yellowknife) collection of homelessness data in partnership with NWT Bureau of Statistics. Homeless shelter funding is currently being reprofiled to better suit the needs of vulnerable populations in communities. Additionally, two new homeless shelters were established in Hay River and Fort Simpson. Shelter funding is being reviewed as part of discussion on the GNWT's homelessness strategy. The draft strategy was tabled in March 2023 and anticipated to be finalized in June 2023.

Improve services and expand equitable access to care for all Northerners

The pandemic required a different approach to mental wellness and addictions recovery service delivery. In order to improve services and better support virtual care options, the GNWT committed to:

- *Replace legacy health information systems and new components to meet information needs of patients and providers.*
- *Develop a plan to sustain virtual care solutions rapidly deployed in response to the pandemic, including improved phone and video-based consultation and e-prescribing.*
- *Continue to work with Transport Canada to recognize the need for accommodations so all Northerners can access essential services only available by air travel.*

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Improve health care services and expand equitable access to care for all Northerners</i>	<i>Replace legacy health information systems and new components to meet information needs of patients and providers</i>	In Progress	Ongoing	<i>Planning and replacement of legacy health information systems, and investment in new information systems</i>	The Electronic Health Record (EHR) Strategy and Roadmap is drafted and work is progressing in multiple areas. One EHR initiative is complete: the Radiology Dictation System at Stanton Territorial Hospital. Additional initiatives are underway, including Diagnostic Imaging System Replacement (territorial), Public Health Information Improvements (territorial), and Clinical Charting Tool (Electronic Medical Record and MediPatient Replacement) (territorial).
	<i>Accelerate development of a plan to sustain virtual care solutions rapidly deployed in response to the pandemic, including improved phone and video-based consultation and e-prescribing</i>	In Progress	Ongoing	<i>Virtual care improvements implemented</i>	HSS is participating in the (Health Canada-led) FPT Virtual Care Action Plan. A Pan-Canadian Interoperability Roadmap has been drafted. The NWT EHR Strategy and Roadmap is drafted, and work is progressing in multiple areas. Improvements to core foundational components are being prepared, to support virtual care improvements as well as the overall EHR.

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Improve health care services and expand equitable access to care for all Northerners</i>	<i>Continue to work with Transport Canada to recognize the need for accommodations so all Northerners can access essential services only available by air.</i>	Fulfilled	Ongoing	<i>Accommodations provided to provide Northerners with access to essential services only available by air</i>	As air travel no longer requires vaccinations against COVID-19, the need for accommodations for Northerners has been eliminated. INF continues to monitor regular conference calls with Transport Canada to be aware of any regulatory changes and new barriers to air travel that may require mitigation.

Provide accessible, quality education and training

The closure of schools and some early learning and child care programs at the outset of the pandemic emphasized the essential social supports these programs and JK-12 schools provide for students and their families. Opportunities were also identified to expand distance or blended delivery of post-secondary education programs at Aurora College as it transitions to a polytechnic university. In order to ensure that early learning and child care and JK-12 education, including related programs and services, were available to support students and families, the GNWT committed to:

- *Continue to make the COVID-19 Technology Grant and the COVID-19 Support Grant available to post-secondary students for the 2022-23 academic year.*
- *Continue the review of the Student Financial Assistance program to ensure benefits support students to achieve their post-secondary goals.*
- *Provide more diverse post-secondary education opportunities for residents, including increased access to learning in every community, laddered programming from literacy to upgrading to certificate to degree, through the transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic university.*
- *Complete the Polytechnic University Facilities Master Plan and comprehensive technology needs assessment.*
- *Reduce child care fees charged to families and enhance child care affordability in the NWT through the Child Care Fee Reduction Subsidy.*
- *Provide funding for projects that preserve existing infrastructure of licensed centre-based child care spaces or create new licensed centre-based child care spaces in NWT communities through the Early Childhood Infrastructure Fund.*
- *Create 300 licensed early learning and child care spaces by 2025-26 to improve child care access for NWT families.*
- *Support the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators, through increased wages and access to increased professional learning and post-secondary learning opportunities.*

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Provide accessible, quality education and training</i>	<i>Continue to make the COVID-19 Technology Grant and the COVID-19 Support Grant available to post-secondary students for the 2022-23 academic year</i>	Fulfilled	2022-23 academic year	<i>Number of students accessing the COVID-19 Technology Grant and COVID-19 Support Grant</i>	The COVID-19 Technology Grant and Support Grant was extended to the 2022-23 academic year.

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Provide accessible, quality education and training</i>	<i>Continue the review of the Student Financial Assistance program to ensure benefits support students to achieve their post-secondary goals</i>	Fulfilled	<i>Beginning of the 2023-24 academic year</i>	<i>Revised SFA program implemented</i>	The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) has completed the SFA program review. Implementation of the changes to SFA will come into effect for the 2023-24 academic year.
	<i>Provide more diverse post-secondary education opportunities for residents, including increased access to learning in every community, laddered programming from literacy to upgrading to certificate to degree, through the transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic university</i>	In Progress	<i>Starting in the 2024-25 academic year</i>	<i>Expansion and enhancement of community learning centres</i>	A Facilities Master Plan was released in September 2022. The Facilities Master Plan will guide the development and maintenance of the future Polytechnic University's facilities. A comprehensive engagement with community learning centres (CLC) is being undertaken in Spring 2023 and will inform the development of a proposal for CLC infrastructure in the communities.
		In Progress	<i>Fall 2025</i>	<i>Polytechnic university launched</i>	The GNWT is taking a three-phase approach to the transformation of Aurora College, informed by ongoing engagement with Indigenous governments, campus communities, industry, College employees, students and the public. Phase 1 (Strengthening the Foundation and Planning for Change) was completed in early 2022 with the amending of the <i>Aurora College Act</i> . The focus now is on Phase 2 (Transformational Change).
<i>Provide accessible, quality education and training</i>	<i>Complete the Polytechnic University Facilities Master Plan and comprehensive technology needs assessment.</i>	Fulfilled	<i>Starting in the 2022-23 academic year</i>	<i>Polytechnic University Facilities Plan completed, including plans for the incremental expansion of community learning centres, research facilities in Inuvik, student housing in Fort Smith and a campus in Yellowknife</i>	A Facilities Master Plan was released in September 2022. A technology needs assessment was completed in December 2022.

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Reduce childcare fees charged to families and enhance child care affordability in the NWT through the Child Care Fee Reduction Subsidy.</i>	Fulfilled	March 2026/2022		<i>Average parent fees for children five years of age and younger who attend licensed child care reduced by 50% in 2022</i>	The Child Care Fee Reduction subsidy reduced the average fees paid by families by up to 50% starting in January 2022 and up to 60% in April 2023. Reducing fees to reach an average of \$10/day is the goal for March 2026.
<i>Provide funding for projects that preserve existing infrastructure of licensed centre-based child care spaces or create new licensed centre-based child care spaces in NWT communities through the Early Childhood Infrastructure Fund.</i>	In Progress	Ongoing/Annually		<i># of spaces preserved or created including any expansions to existing programs and amount of funding provided</i>	The Early Childhood Infrastructure Fund is a proposal-based program for which applicants may request and receive funding to address infrastructure needs that create, expand, or sustain licensed spaces.
<i>Create 300 licensed early learning and childcare spaces to improve child care access for NWT families.</i>	In Progress	2025-26		<i>300 licensed early learning and child care spaces created</i>	The GNWT does not open or operate licensed early learning and child care programs but contributes funding and supports the creation of new spaces. Spaces created during the 2021-22 to 2025-26 fiscal years will contribute to the target of 300 spaces by 2025-26. ECE is on track to achieve this target.
<i>Provide accessible, quality education and training</i>	<i>Support the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators, through increased wages and access to increased professional learning and post-secondary learning opportunities.</i>	In Progress	2024-25	<i>Wage grid for early childhood educators working in centre-based programs</i>	While the wage grid will be developed and implemented in 2024-25, Retention Incentive funding is being provided as of Fall 2022 to licensed centre-based programs to support the wages of early childhood educators working in licensed centre-based programs.
		In Planning		<i>NWT certification process for early childhood educators developed and implemented</i>	The certification process will be established and implemented in connection to the wage grid. This will be developed collaboratively with the early learning and child care sector in 2023-24.

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
		In Planning		<i>Number of early childhood educators in the territory who fully meet the NWT's certification requirements increased by 30%</i>	

Better support and integrate work-force development within infrastructure projects

Disruptions to industry and business during the pandemic highlighted the need for the GNWT to build and strengthen its workforce. In order to support NWT workforce development through its infrastructure investments, the GNWT committed to:

- *Continue to require general contractors to provide at least one work assignment for an apprentice over the term of each new construction housing project.*
- *Continue to invest in apprenticeships by requiring, where possible, apprentice hires as part of construction contracts for vertical infrastructure projects, based on funding and journeypersons available.*
- *Continue to hire GNWT apprentices based on funding and journeyperson availability.*
- *Implement Building Forever: Women's Pre-Trades Program, in partnership with Gahcho Kué Mine and the Native Women's Association of the NWT.*
- *Update Housing Maintainer Occupational Standards to reflect technological changes in housing and building systems and the skills required to maintain them, and to present the information in a simpler and more streamlined format.*
- *Continue to provide regional based Career and Education Advisor supports to all grade 9-12 students to assist students in post-secondary decision-making and planning*
- *Implement Build Your Skills, a pilot that provides online formal essential skills assessments to identify foundational skill gaps and uses trade-specific assessments to navigate the on-the-job and technical training.*
- *Implement Virtual Learning Strategist, an online, web-based platform, that provides tools, resources and supports to assist apprentices and pre-apprentices with learning challenges and difficulties.*

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Better support and integrate work-force development within infrastructure projects</i>	<i>Continue to require general contractors to provide at least one work assignment for an apprentice over the term of each new housing construction project.</i>	Fulfilled	Ongoing	<i>Minimum of one apprentice involved in each new housing construction project</i>	Between July 2020 and end of March 2023, Housing NWT's new construction contracts supported 35 new apprenticeship work assignments. During 2021-22, nine apprentices successfully completed one year toward their apprenticeship program.

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Better support and integrate work-force development within infrastructure projects</i>	<i>Continue to invest in apprenticeships by requiring, where possible, apprentice hires as part of construction contracts for vertical infrastructure projects.</i>	Fulfilled	Ongoing	# of apprentice hires as part of construction contracts for vertical infrastructure projects	The Department of Infrastructure (INF) works with Procurement Shared Services on contract language to incorporate the requirement for northern apprentices into standard GNWT Tender and Design/Build contracts.
	<i>Continue to hire GNWT apprentices based on funding and journeyperson availability.</i>	Fulfilled	Ongoing	# of apprentices hired	INF has 20 apprentice positions within its Regional Operations, 10 of which were filled as of January 31, 2023. INF continues to recruit for vacant positions. The Department also recently hired its first student under the Schools North Apprenticeship Program (SNAP) and hopes to hire other students in the future.
	<i>Implement Building Forever: Women's Pre-Trades Program, in partnership with Gahcho Kué Mine and the Native Women's Association of the NWT.</i>	Fulfilled	Beginning in 2022 - Applications closed April 2022	6 women from the NWT provided with a paid opportunity to explore a career in a skilled trade	Program completed in Fall 2022. Second intake of applicants for this program currently underway.
	<i>Update Housing Maintainer Occupational Standards to reflect technological changes in housing and building systems and the skills required to maintain them, and to present the information in a simpler and more streamlined format.</i>	Fulfilled	Fall 2022	Housing Maintainer Occupational Standards updated	The Housing Maintainer Occupational Standards were updated and made public on August 4, 2022.

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Better support and integrate work-force development within infrastructure projects</i>	<i>Continue to provide regional based Career and Education Advisor supports to all grade 9-12 students to assist students in post-secondary decision-making and planning</i>	Fulfilled	Ongoing	<i>Regional-based Career and Education Advisor supports provided to all grade 9-12 students</i>	<i>All nine of the funded Career and Education Advisor (CEA) positions across the NWT were filled and full CEA service across all regions was provided in the 2022-23 school year.</i>
	<i>Implement Build Your Skills, a pilot that provides online formal essential skills assessments to identify foundational skill gaps and uses trade-specific assessments to navigate the on-the-job and technical training.</i>	Fulfilled	Ongoing - launched Feb 2022	<i># of apprentices and pre-apprentices who access the program</i>	<i>Implementation of the Build Your Skills Program, launched in February 2022, is underway.</i>
	<i>Implement Virtual Learning Strategist, an online, web-based platform that provides tools, resources and supports to assist apprentices and pre-apprentices with learning challenges and difficulties.</i>	Fulfilled	Summer 2022	<i># of apprentices and pre-apprentices who access the program</i>	<i>The Virtual Learning Strategist Program was launched in late Summer 2022.</i>

Ensure that GNWT capital planning supports equitable opportunities throughout the territory and a greener, more climate-resilient territory

In response to increased public interest and federal priority placed on green energy, climate change mitigation and adaptation and an environmentally responsible approach to pandemic recovery, as well as recognizing how contract opportunities could be distributed to create more equitable levels of activity and stimulate the economy across regions, the GNWT committed to:

- *Develop an Energy Plan to guide future investments to reduce GHG emissions related to residential space heating.*
- *Assess large infrastructure projects for economic opportunities for Indigenous Governments and businesses, during all project phases.*

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Ensure that GNWT capital planning supports equitable opportunities throughout the territory, and a greener more climate resilient territory</i>	<i>Develop an Energy Plan to guide future investments to reduce emissions related to residential space heating</i>	In Progress	Spring 2023	<i>Energy Plan tabled in the Legislative Assembly</i>	Support for the development of the Energy Management Strategy and Action Plan is ongoing. In May 2022, Housing NWT awarded a contract to Dillon Consulting Ltd to develop an Energy Management Strategy and a 3-year Energy Action Plan. Housing NWT completed public engagement on the Energy Management Strategy in February 2023. Housing NWT is on track to complete the final draft of the Energy Management Strategy and Action Plan by the end of the 19th Legislative Assembly.
	<i>Assess large infrastructure projects for economic opportunities for Indigenous Governments and businesses, during all project phases.</i>	In Progress	<i>Timeline dependent</i>	<i>Indigenous government and business involvement in projects</i>	INF works to ensure Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations are actively engaged throughout the planning, design, construction and operation and maintenance of large infrastructure projects. Where appropriate, Memorandum's of Understanding and/or Contribution Agreements are established to support collaboration efforts.

Support the hardest hit sectors

The tourism, arts, entertainment, recreation, wholesale trade, accommodation and food service sectors experienced the steepest impacts of the pandemic. The GNWT provided relief to businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector that had exhausted existing federal relief programs. In order to support these hard-hit sectors, the GNWT committed to:

- *Work with NWT Tourism on implementing the Resident Readiness Strategy.*
- *Reintroduce mentorship and training programs to support the tourism sector, including the Youth Mentorship Program; Tourism Business Mentorship program; Tourism Training Fund; and Increase number of NorthernMost Host training opportunities in the NWT.*
- *Continue to support the deliverables contained in the Tourism 2025: Roadmap to Recovery Strategy, which provides actions to support and provide resources aimed at tourism recovery.*
- *Extend the NWT Producers Incentive Pilot Program for a second year, to provide financial support to NWT film and television producers at the development stage of their projects.*
- *Work with local and national partners to create opportunities for NWT artists, including supporting their attendance at events to show and sell their artwork; and delivering a workshop series to provide information to artists on selling their work.*
- *Extend the Work Credit Program (WCP) of a 125% credit for work conducted on mineral claims for the 2022-23 fiscal year.*
- *Launch the new Indigenous Capacity Building in the Resource Sector program.*
- *Conduct an arts funding programs review.*

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Support the Hardest Hit Sectors</i>	<i>Work with NWT Tourism on implementing the Resident Readiness Strategy.</i>	Fulfilled	<i>Beginning in 2022 and ongoing</i>	<i>Resident Readiness Strategy implemented</i>	Implementation of the Resident Readiness Strategy is underway in collaboration with NWT Tourism, including marketing initiatives aimed at improving resident sentiment.

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Support the Hardest Hit Sectors</i>	<i>Reintroduce mentorship and training programs to support the Tourism sector, including the Youth Mentorship Program; Tourism Business Mentorship program; Tourism Training Fund; and Increase number of NorthernMost Host training opportunities in the NWT.</i>	Fulfilled	2022-23 and ongoing	<i>Reports submitted at the completion of mentorships; proof of completion of training submitted; program recipients reported in 2022-23 Grants and Contributions report; NorthernMost Host number of workshops and attendance</i>	NorthernMost Host Training workshops were re-launched in early 2022-23 with both in-person and virtual (hybrid) options. 10 workshops were held in 2022-23. One NorthernMost Host Training workshop was delivered in April 2023, and three others are planned for May 2023.
	<i>Continue to support the deliverables contained in the Tourism 2025: Roadmap to Recovery Strategy, which provides actions to support and provide resources aimed at tourism recovery.</i>	In Progress	Ongoing	<i>Monitoring and evaluation frameworks to be developed</i>	The Tourism 2025: Roadmap to Recovery Strategy is being implemented and development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks are in process.
	<i>Extend the NWT Producers Incentive Pilot Program for a second year, to provide financial support to NWT film and television producers at the development stage of their projects.</i>	Fulfilled	2022-23	<i>Monitoring and evaluation framework in place; funding program performance reported in 2022-23 Grants and Contributions report</i>	The NWT Producers Incentive Pilot Program has been extended for a second year.

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Support the Hardest Hit Sectors</i>	<i>Work with local and national partners to create opportunities for NWT artists, including supporting their attendance at events to show and sell their artwork; and delivering a workshop series to provide information to artists on selling their work.</i>	In Progress	Ongoing	<i>Implementation of NWT Arts Strategy monitoring and evaluation framework</i>	The NWT Arts Program continues to develop partnerships for opportunities for artists and increase the number of artists receiving socio-economic benefits from these opportunities. The NWT Arts Programs Review has been completed and publicly released. The Review puts forth four recommendations to improve arts programs. ECE and ITI are currently responding to those recommendations with deliverables to be implemented in 2023-24.
<i>Extend the Work Credit Program of a 125% credit for work conducted on mineral claims for the 2022-23 fiscal year.</i>		Fulfilled	2022-23	<i>Annual reporting on number of reports and claims qualifying for WCP as well as dollar value of eligible reports and of credit granted</i>	The WCP has been extended and continues to benefit mineral exploration projects in the NWT. In April 2022, 303 mineral claims were submitted to the program, representing \$4,085,612 in additional work credit.
<i>Launch the new Indigenous Capacity Building in the Resource Sector program.</i>		Fulfilled	<i>Implementation in 2022-23</i>	<i>Implementation of monitoring and evaluation framework</i>	Ongoing annual funding of \$100,000 was approved for the Indigenous Capacity Building program starting in 2022-23. The pilot program launched in Fall 2022 and is now entering its second year. An evaluation framework has been created and will be used to refine the program as appropriate.
<i>Conduct an arts funding programs review.</i>		Fulfilled	June 2022	<i>Final report of findings and recommendations completed and used to inform program changes</i>	A contractor was hired to review six art funding programs administered by ITI and ECE. Their report was completed in late May 2022, and ECE and ITI are now working to develop a plan to address the key findings of the report.

Better support businesses

NWT residents demonstrated a willingness to support local and independent businesses during the pandemic. Retail sales and other service industries were able to rebound earlier than those relying on out of territory travel. To better support NWT businesses, the GNWT committed to:

- *Implement the action items from the Access to Business Support Services workshop;*
- *Undertake public stakeholder engagement to inform proposed legislative amendments to the BDIC Act and BDIC's financial and non-financial programs.*
- *Conduct stakeholder engagement to inform program options for each BDIC subsidiary business.*
- *Continue to deliver labour market programs including the Self-Employment Program, the Employee Training Program, and the Wage Subsidy Program.*

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Better support businesses</i>	<i>Undertake public stakeholder engagement to inform proposed legislative amendments to the BDIC Act and BDIC's financial and non-financial programs.</i>	Fulfilled	May-June 2022	<i>What We Heard Report released and Legislative proposal drafted</i>	The Business Development and Investment Corporation (BDIC) completed 11 public engagement sessions with key stakeholders, including businesses, industry associations, Indigenous Governments, Indigenous Organizations, Community Futures and government. A "What We Heard" Report was drafted and a legislative proposal for amendments to the <i>BDIC Act</i> developed and approved. An <i>Act to amend the Business Development Corporation Act</i> received 2nd reading during the February-March 2023 sitting of the Legislative Assembly.
	<i>Implement the action items from the Access to Business Support Services workshop.</i>	Fulfilled	Ongoing	<i>Action items implemented</i>	Lessons learned from the Access to Business Support Services workshop undertaken in 2021-22 are being incorporated into departmental business supports.

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Better support businesses</i>	<i>Conduct stakeholder engagement to inform program options for each BDIC subsidiary business.</i>	Fulfilled	2022-23	<i>Stakeholder engagement results received and options paper completed</i>	BDIC has completed engagement for a subsidiary business and drafted a preliminary report. Management options were prepared in consultation with the Subsidiary's board of directors and finalized in 2022-23. The BDIC will be undertaking an expression of interest in 2023-24 to seek the services of a qualified NWT business to provide operations, marketing and sales services of the Subsidiary. A similar expression of interest was undertaken for another Subsidiary in March 2023 and a successful proponent identified. The BDIC will develop and execute an implementation plan with the successful proponent in 2023-24.
	<i>Continue to deliver labour market programs including the Self-Employment Program, the Employee Training Program, and the Wage Subsidy Program.</i>	Fulfilled	Ongoing	<i># of individuals who have received funding under these labour market programs</i>	Labour market programs continue to be delivered in each NWT region and community.

Expand and diversify the economy

The NWT economy relies heavily on mining and related activities, including the existing diamond mines, remediation activities associated with natural resource project closures, as well as new exploration projects across the NWT's diverse array of resource commodities that will stimulate regional economic activity. The high proportion of NWT labour force employed by the public sector acted as an economic stabilizer during the pandemic, but also emphasized disparities between public and private sectors. To further advance efforts for economic development and diversification, the GNWT committed to:

- *Work with the federal government, Indigenous partners and other partners to help NWT critical minerals projects move from the advanced exploration phase into development and operation.*
- *Continue to partner with the federal government, Indigenous partners, industry, and co-management boards to improve operational issues relating to the regulatory system.*
- *Increase the Mining Incentive Program budget from \$1 million to \$1.3 million.*
- *Undertake public engagement and work with the federal government to advance the work on the NWT remediation economy.*
- *Implement the Skills 4 Success 2021-2025 4-Year Action Plan to meet the demand and supply needs of the NWT labour market.*
- *Review and evaluate the effectiveness of the GNWT's Land Lease-Only Policy, taking into consideration all public interests, including economic interests and housing opportunities within communities.*

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Expand and diversify the economy</i>	<i>Work with the federal government, Indigenous partners and other partners to help NWT critical minerals projects move from the advanced exploration phase into development and operation.</i>	In Progress	2022-23	<i>NWT Critical Minerals Action Plan developed</i>	The Critical Minerals Action Plan is under development. It will involve Indigenous governments and organizations and other stakeholders during the next steps. The plan is expected to be completed in Summer 2023. The GNWT also responded to Canada's Critical Minerals Discussion Paper in September 2022, followed by the release of the federal Critical Minerals Strategy in December 2022.

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Expand and diversify the economy</i>	<i>Continue to partner with the federal government, Indigenous partners, industry, and co-management boards to improve operational issues relating to the regulatory system.</i>	In Progress	2022-23	<i>Mineral Exploration template and associated learning materials developed</i>	ITI co-developed and co-led a Mackenzie Valley Operational Dialogue (MVOD) workshop in February 2023, which was attended by Indigenous partners, industry representatives, GNWT departments and the Government of Canada. A post-workshop report has been completed and has been publicly posted to the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board website. ITI continues to work with MVOD to address improvement areas.
<i>Increase the Mining Incentive Program budget from \$1 million to 1.3 million.</i>	In Planning	2022-23	<i>ORS Improvements made</i>		
<i>Undertake public engagement and work with the federal government to advance the work on the NWT remediation economy</i>	Fulfilled	2022-23	<i>Mining Incentive Program budget increased to \$1.3 million</i>	GNWT funding for the Mining Incentive Program was increased to \$1.3 million in 2022-23, to \$1.5 million in 2023-24 and ongoing thereafter.	
<i>Implement the Skills 4 Success Action Plan (2021-2025) to meet the demand and supply needs of the NWT labour market</i>	In Progress	Ongoing	<i>Action Plan completed and implemented</i>	In April 2022, the <i>Skills 4 Success Action Plan (2021-25)</i> was released. Implementation of the actions identified is underway, with data being collected for the first annual report, planned for release in Spring 2023.	

What we will do	How we will do it	Status	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress	Progress to Date
<i>Expand and diversify the economy</i>	<p><i>Review and evaluate the effectiveness of the GNWT's Land Lease-Only Policy, taking into consideration all public interests, including economic interests and housing opportunities within communities.</i></p>	Fulfilled	<p><i>Review commenced in 2020-21, expected to conclude and recommend action taken in 2022-23</i></p>	<p><i>Review complete and recommended actions taken</i></p>	<p>As of April 1, 2023, the Land Lease-Only Policy was repealed and replaced with the Limitation of Land Sales Policy.</p>

APPENDIX

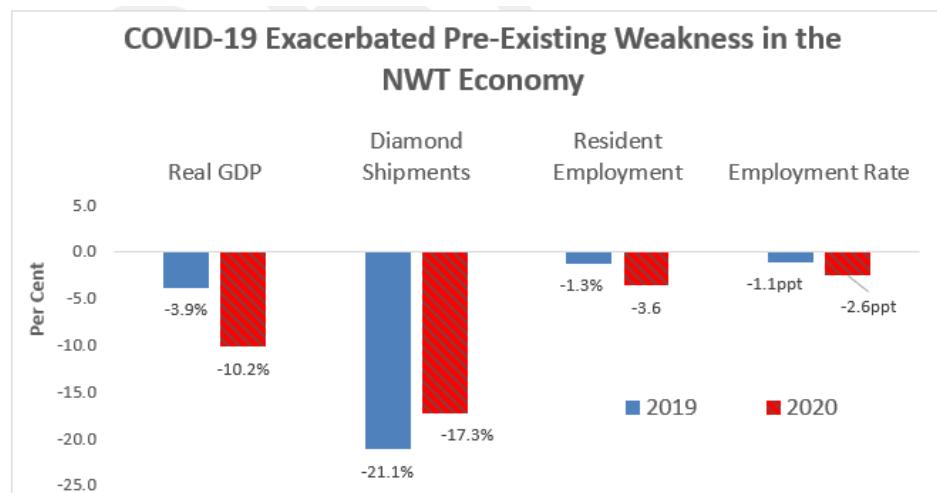
Economic and Social Impacts Analysis

Economic Impacts

In 2020, COVID-19 and public health measures implemented to mitigate the pandemic's spread had an immediate and severe impact on the NWT economy. This public health shock to the economy was worsened by severe supply chain disruptions to the production and shipment of global goods and services used by NWT businesses and residents, sharply lower global demand for NWT goods and services, falling industrial commodity prices (particularly for diamonds), and a collapse in domestic and international tourism activity. The collective effect of this resulted in steep economic decline:

- *The overall NWT economy (measured in **real GDP**) shrank by 10.2% in 2020, the deepest decline of any province or territory.*
- *Diamond production shipments (measured in carats) fell by 17% in 2020, as the global diamond supply chain faltered, and the Ekati diamond mine temporarily closed operations.*
- *Employment of NWT residents (excluding fly-in/fly-out workers) declined by 3.6% in 2020, primarily due to a drop in youth employment.*
- *The NWT **employment rate** (share of the population that is employed) fell to 64.0% in 2020, the lowest NWT employment rates on record.*

In 2019, however, a full year prior to the emergence of COVID-19, the NWT economy was already in decline. Real GDP, diamond production, and employment were all falling. This pre-pandemic deterioration signaled long-standing, structural weakness in the NWT economy. Maturing diamond mines, labour declines, and a lack of economic diversification are long-standing challenges that have hindered economic growth and development for many years. The global COVID-19 pandemic simply exacerbated this structural weakness.

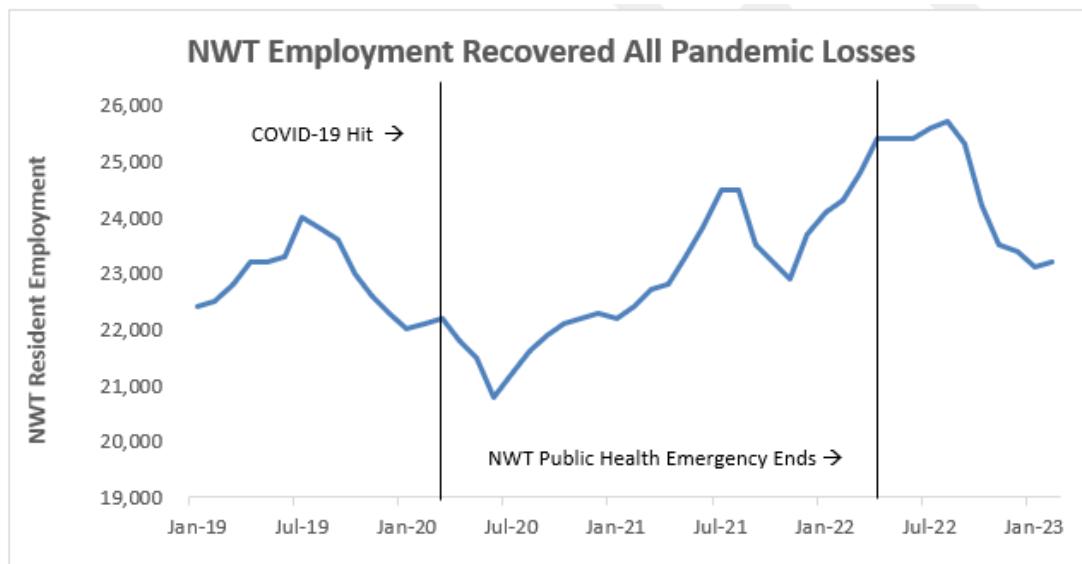


Source: Statistics Canada, NWT Bureau of Statistics, and NWT Finance.

The economy has since recovered from pandemic lows. Economic indicators that initially collapsed in 2020 have either surpassed or nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels. Real GDP, resident employment, diamond shipments and labour participation all rebounded strongly in 2021, even as COVID-19 and associated public health measures continued to disrupt economic activity both globally and domestically. By most economic measures, the overall NWT economy was less severely damaged compared to other jurisdictions and recovered more strongly. The one exception is NWT tourism.

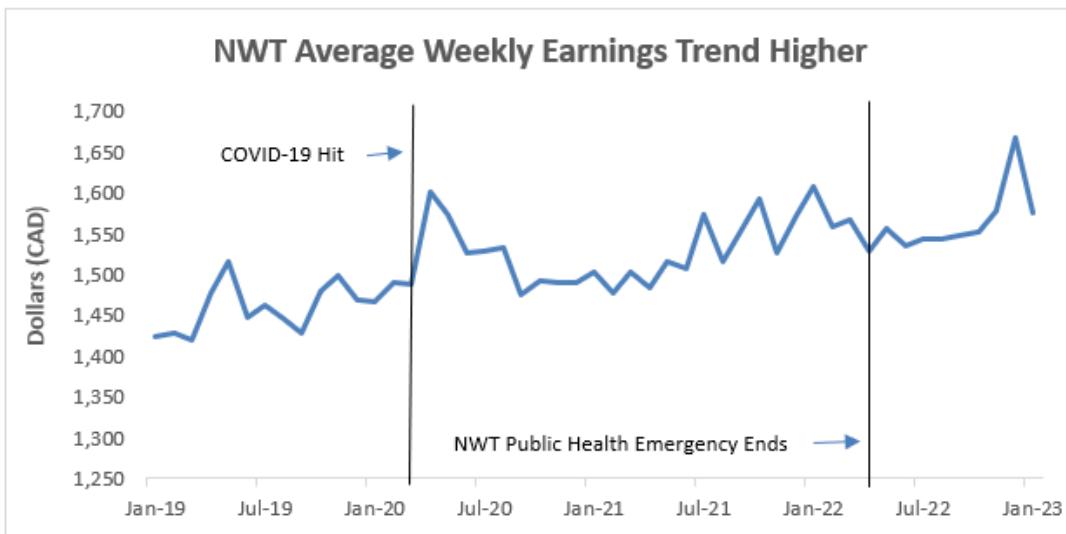
As a result of the travel restrictions imposed in the NWT during the pandemic, output in the accommodation and food services industries that rely on visitors from outside the territory fell sharply in 2020. While a partial recovery is underway, changes in consumer preferences and ongoing pandemic-related restrictions have kept these industries well below their pre-pandemic levels.

Overall though, the NWT economy emerged from the disruptions caused by the global pandemic better than it went into it in 2020. Reasons for the NWT's economic resilience are threefold: the NWT has a large public sector; NWT diamond mines kept operating during the pandemic; and NWT businesses innovated in the face of public health measures. Government supports provided a further safety net to residents and businesses.



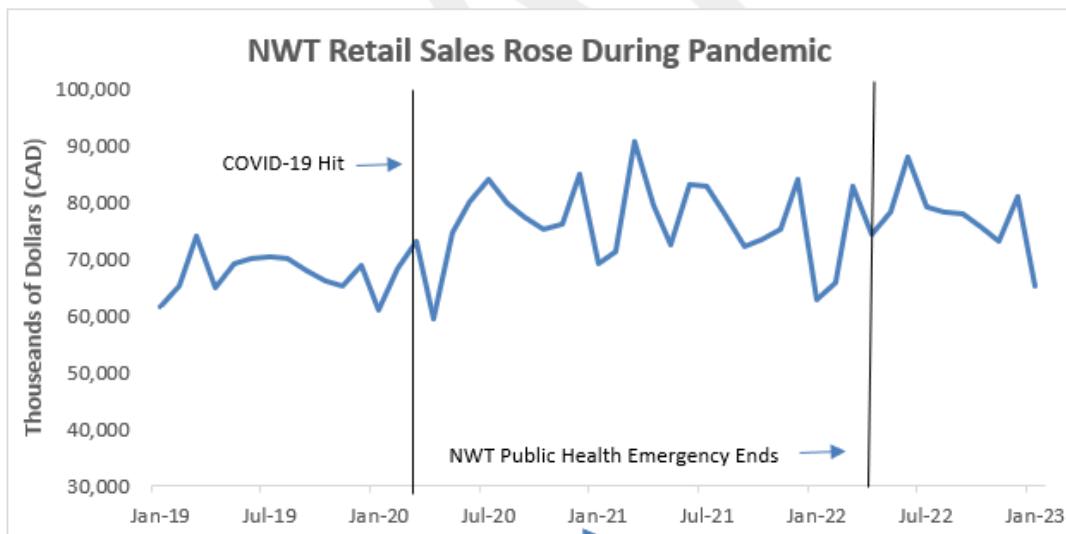
Source: Statistics Canada and NWT Finance.

After an initial sharp decline, NWT employment recovered remarkably well from pandemic lows. This is largely because over half of the NWT workforce is employed in the public sector. During the pandemic, these public sector employees were able to pivot to remote work without any loss in pay or employment. This allowed households to maintain their pre-pandemic spending levels on goods and services, which in turn supported economic activity in the territory. The large NWT public sector thereby acted as a significant stabilizer to the economy during the pandemic.



Source: Statistics Canada and NWT Finance.

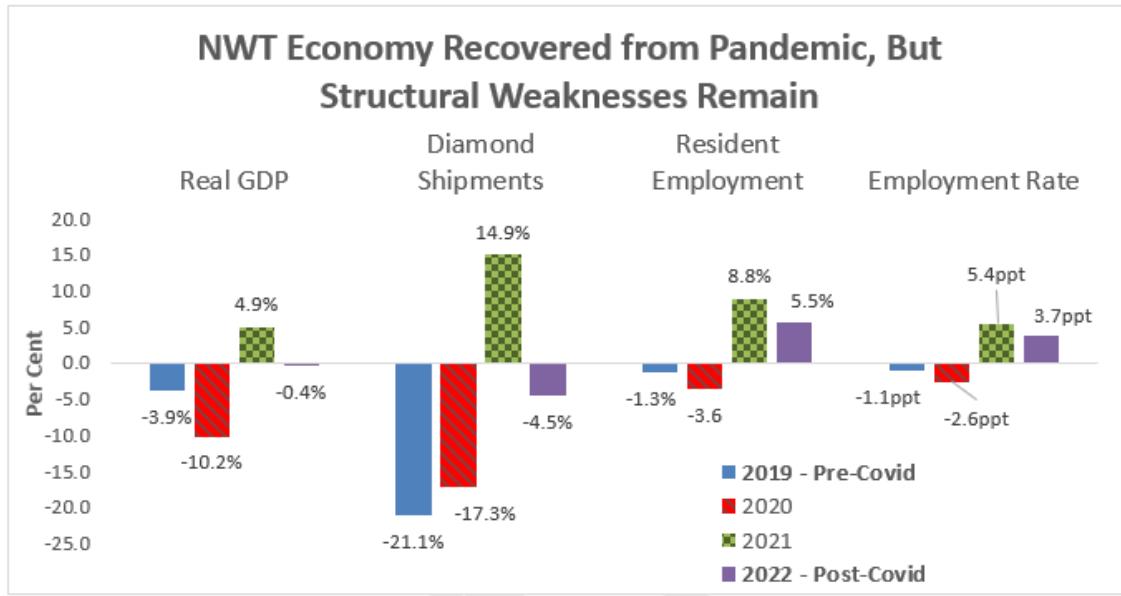
Another stabilizing factor was the ability of two of the three diamond mines to remain in production. This maintained employment and incomes of the largest private-sector employer in the NWT.



Source: Statistics Canada and NWT Finance.

Smaller private-sector businesses innovated during the pandemic, pivoting to online sales and curbside pickup, job sharing and hero pay, and domestically-focused products, as a means of continuing to operate in the face of health concerns and public health restrictions. These three attributes helped mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic, and placed the NWT in a strong position to emerge from COVID-19 strongly.

However, pre-existing weaknesses remain a serious threat to economic growth. In 2022, the economy returned to its path of slow decline.



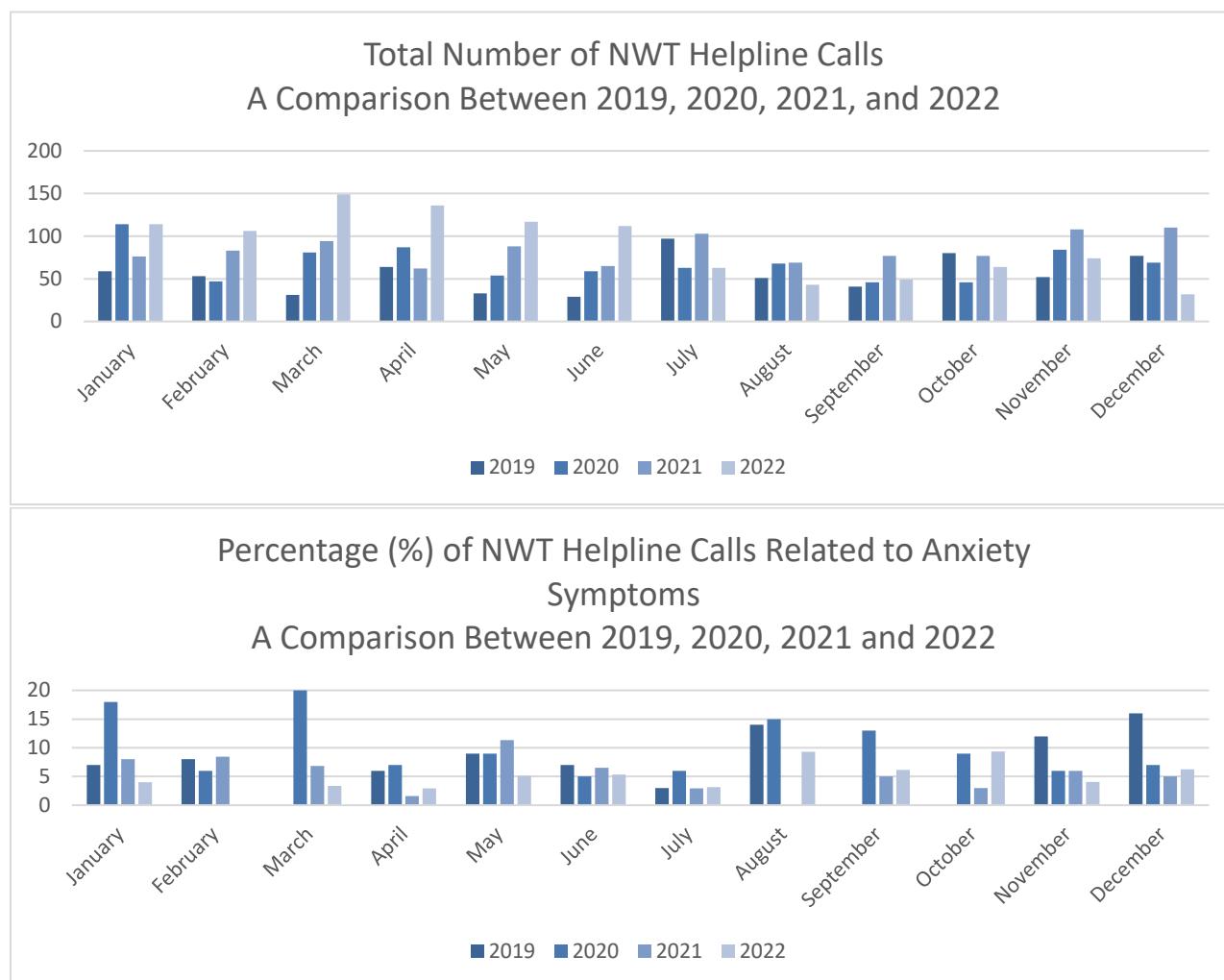
Source: Statistics Canada, NWT Bureau of Statistics, and NWT Finance.

The need for economic development and diversification in the face of aging diamond mines and labour shortages remains. As the effects of COVID-19 recede, and the pandemic becomes an economic shock of the past, the urgency for structural economic change becomes ever clearer. Tackling these issues rather than solely focusing on the near-term status quo is necessary for promoting stable economic growth and diversifying the NWT economy.

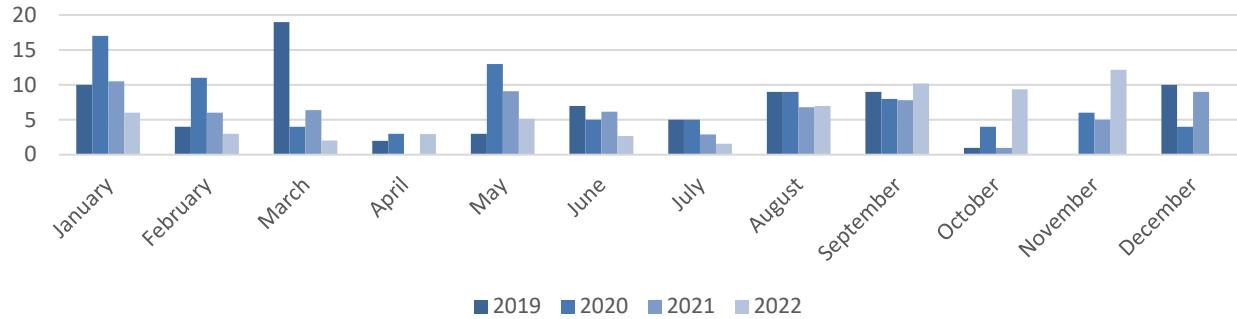
Health and Social Impacts

While the NWT health system has responded effectively to the pandemic, residents experienced challenges as some health and social services moved from in-person to telephone or virtual care, and access to land-based and southern-based treatment facilities fluctuated. There are likely individuals who did not seek care as they would have before the pandemic.

The charts below compare call volumes to the NWT Helpline and the percentage of calls related to anxiety and mood disorder symptoms between 2019 and 2022. In general, call volume was higher throughout the pandemic period, however, it has been decreasing since March 2022. Calls for concerns related to anxiety symptoms seem to be decreasing since the beginning of the pandemic. Calls for concerns related to mood disorder symptoms continue to fluctuate from the onset of the pandemic.



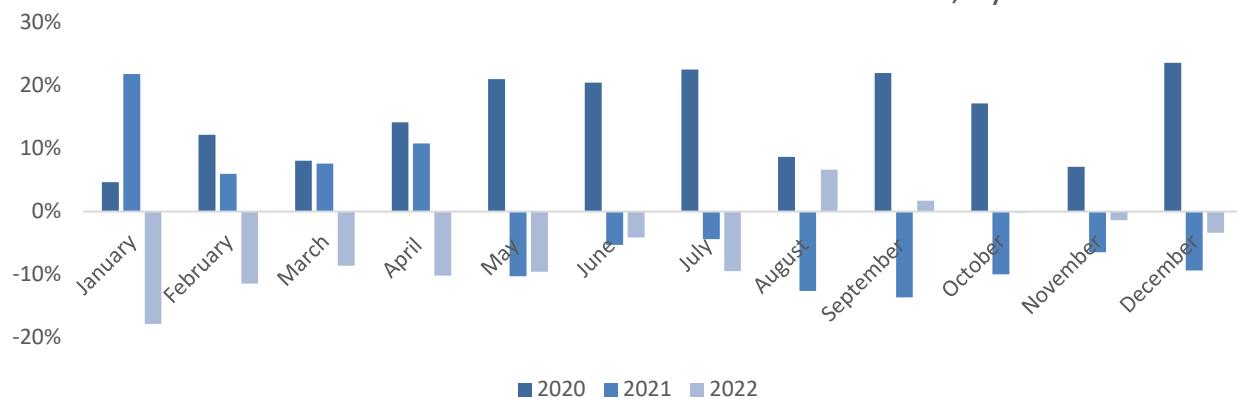
Percentage (%) of NWT Helpline Calls Related to Mood Disorder Symptoms
A Comparison Between 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022



The COVID-19 pandemic has also had an impact on the recruitment and retention of qualified staffing, in part as a result of travel constraints across provinces and territories, and even international boundaries. Professionals, including teachers, doctors, nurses, and others with significant family connections must take these travel limitations into account when making decisions to take on or continue employment opportunities in the NWT. Without the support of professionals, the vulnerable population is at increased risk for adverse health outcomes.

Across Canada, 24% of Canadians reported consuming more alcohol due to COVID-19. The availability of alcohol varies by community in the NWT, with retail sales of alcohol available in only six out of 33 communities. According to alcohol sales data shown below, spending on alcohol across the NWT increased in 2020, compared to the same months in 2019. Since April 2020, most months saw an average increase of approximately 16% in sales. This trend began to reverse in May 2021, with the majority of months showing a reduction in sales from the same month in the previous year. Further, according to the alcohol sales data shown below, spending in the NWT continued to decrease in 2022, compared to the same months in 2021. Except for August and September, most months saw a decrease of an average of 6% in sales.

Difference in Alcohol Sales from the Previous Year, by %



The GNWT continues to monitor and report on a range of social indicators including child maltreatment and neglect, mental health and addictions, alcohol related harms, and family violence. Reports are released quarterly since the first report was released in January 2021. The latest report was released in March 2023 and is available on the [Department of Health and Social Services website](#).

The GNWT will continue to focus on key areas of intersection between these indicators to inform ongoing program planning and service delivery in the short term and beyond the pandemic. We will also utilize additional social indicators beyond the health care system to better inform all of our social programs.

Education Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on schooling globally and in the NWT. Since the beginning of the pandemic, every school in the territory had to close and pivot to remote learning at various times. The shift to remote learning and the limitations on students' ability to connect with their community and engage in after school programming had a negative impact on the well-being and academic experiences for most students.

As with other jurisdictions across Canada, there are substantial gaps in assessing COVID-19's impact on students in the NWT. ECE will continue to collect, analyze, and report on key findings related to the impacts of COVID-19 on student outcomes as data becomes available.

The following highlights the impacts the pandemic had on the JK-12 education system in the NWT, as reported by ECE in the October 2022 [COVID-19 Impact Indicators Report: Northwest Territories JK-12 Education System](#):

- *Early Development Instrument (EDI) data: Enrollment was down for kindergarten compared to pre-COVID levels. Kindergarten students in small communities had lower developmental readiness reporting for Grade 1. There was a decline in the reporting of social competency and language and cognitive development domains during the pandemic.*
- *Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) data: Students in Grades 4 fared better than older students in Grade 7. Fewer Grade 7 students were thriving and more reported low overall well-being.*
- *Alberta Achievement Tests (AAT) and diploma exams were not conducted, and attendance was difficult to properly maintain in 2019-2020 through to the 2021-2022 school period, making it difficult to assess impacts on student learning.*

In the coming years, ECE anticipates that grades, test results, and graduation rates will be lower than in pre-pandemic years. Further research will be required to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the impact of the pandemic on the education system.

In addition to the indicators noted in ECE's report, ECE will closely monitor the needs of NWT students using existing wellness data, referrals for school-based mental health and wellness services, and academic progress reports provided by education bodies.

While there is not a single solution to the challenges students may face as a result of school closures and inconsistencies in learning during the pandemic, ECE provides a multitude of resources and programs that can help.

For more information, see the [COVID-19 Impacts Indicator Report](#) available on the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's website.

