



## 1. Statement of Policy

The Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes that providing information to the public in a timely, accurate and consistent manner is fundamental to the operation of good government. Communications will be managed in an orderly and planned fashion in order to:

- (1) ensure that the public is informed about government policies, activities, initiatives and programs and services;
- (2) take into account the concerns and views of the public in establishing priorities, developing policies and implementing programs;
- (3) ensure that the government is visible, accessible and answerable to the public that it serves; and
- (4) present a consistent and positive corporate image of government.

## 2. Principles

The Government of the Northwest Territories will adhere to the following principles when implementing this Policy:

- (1) Adequate information should be provided to the public or its representatives so that the public is able to understand, benefit from and influence the development and implementation of government activities, initiatives, policies, programs and services.
- (2) The status of languages as established by the *Official Languages Act* and related regulations or policies and in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms should be respected and upheld in all government communications.
- (3) Government communications should be free of sexual or racial stereotyping and shall provide for the fair and representative depiction of people in relation to sex, race, ethnic origin and disability and should reflect the cultural diversity of the Northwest Territories.
- (4) To the extent practical, government communications should take into account the special communications needs of key audiences.



- (5) Government communications should use simple language and clear symbols in order to achieve clarity and ease of understanding.

### 3. Scope

This Policy applies to all departments, agencies and employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

### 4. Definitions

The following terms apply to this Policy:

Communications Directives – for the purposes of this Policy, a directive issued by the Premier governing specific communications processes.

Communications Planning – a coordinated management planning process that examines and considers public affairs implications and audiences in the development of programs or policies and in making decisions. Communications planning results in the development of communications goals and outlines methods to achieve them.

Corporate Identity – visual identifiers approved to present a uniform and consistent visual identity, as set out in the Government of the Northwest Territories Visual Identity Program.

Designated Spokesperson – a person appointed by a deputy minister to respond to inquiries from the public and the media on established policies, programs and services.

Deputy Minister – the deputy minister of a department.

Public Affairs Services – A specialized activity of communications that ensures a consistent and positive image of the government and Executive Council by identifying media opportunities and public events and coordinating the release of information through the media.

Strategic Communications Plan – For the purposes of this Policy a plan in an approved format developed to assist the government in achieving its priorities and fulfilling mandated responsibilities through the systematic and organized use of clear, consistent messaging, and effective communications techniques and



channels to improve public understanding and support for government policies, activities, initiatives, and programs and services.

## 5. Authority and Accountability

### (1) General

This Policy is issued under the authority of the Executive Council. The authority to make exceptions and approve revisions to this Policy rests with the Executive Council. Authority and accountability is further defined as follows:

#### (a) Premier

The Premier is accountable to the Executive Council for the implementation of this Policy.

#### (b) Secretary to Cabinet

The Secretary to Cabinet is responsible for the administration of this Policy.

### (2) Specific

#### (a) Executive Council

The Executive Council may:

- (i) approve broad policies, and broad strategies for government communications and operations including strategic communication plans; and
- (ii) approve visual identifiers to be used in the development of government's corporate identity.

#### (b) Premier

The Premier may:

- (i) recommend communications strategies to the Executive Council;



- (ii) establish and publish communication directives governing communication planning and procedures, including visual identity guidelines;
- (iii) issue guidelines governing public affairs programming procedures; and
- (iv) inform the public of approved government initiatives through the provision of public affairs services;

(c) Ministers

Ministers:

- (i) will ensure that appropriate communications planning occurs within their departments and agencies in accordance with any operational communications model approved by the Executive Council and communication directives established by the Premier;
- (ii) may approve deputy minister appointments of designated spokespersons;
- (iii) may, following consultation with the Director, Cabinet Communications, inform the public of the approval of departmental initiatives; and
- (iv) may, in consultation with the Director, Cabinet Communications entertain requests for interviews involving policy issues or program and services issues.

(d) Director, Cabinet Communications

The Director, Cabinet Communications will:

- (i) provide support and advice to the Executive Council, Financial Management Board and the Committees-of-Cabinet;



- (ii) determine the strategic sequencing and prominence of government communications initiatives and ensure Executive Council direction is reflected in government communications activities;
  - (iii) review and provide recommendations on strategic communications plans submitted to the Executive Council;
  - (iv) support the communications needs of the Premier and Ministers and develop political communications strategies and products;
  - (v) maintain and coordinate the implementation of government-wide public affairs and media relations standards and procedures; and
  - (vi) maintain and coordinate the implementation of an issue management system and procedures.
- (e) Director, Corporate Communications

The Director, Corporate Communications will:

- (i) coordinate communications planning processes to operationalize strategic communications priorities of government and review and approve communications products pursuant to identified communications priorities and strategies;
- (ii) provide government-wide communications support services, including creative and advertising, digital, internal communications, and research and evaluation to ensure communications consistency and efficiency across government;
- (iii) manage a professional development program and initiatives to manage the health and professional capacity of the government communications community;



- (iv) review and advise on communications implications related to submissions to the Executive Council and Financial Management Board and;
- (v) maintain and coordinate the implementation of corporate identity standards.

(f) Deputy Ministers

Deputy Ministers:

- (i) will ensure fulfillment of communications priorities and requirements assigned their respective departments;
- (ii) are accountable for adherence to communications policy and directives issued by the Premier;
- (iii) will, following consultation with the Director, Corporate Communications, publicly explain approved departmental policies, programs and services; and
- (iv) may appoint individuals to serve as designated spokespersons in accordance with this Policy.

## 6. Provisions

(1) Implementation

Executive Council is the authority for government communications planning and ministers have the ultimate responsibility for providing information to the public on government policy, program or services issues.

(2) Communications Planning

Communications planning assists in the development of a proper understanding, by all groups, of government policies, positions, programs, services and events.



Communications plans are developed in consultation with the Director, Corporate Communications and in accordance with communications guidelines issued by the Premier.

(3) Interviews

Requests for interviews involving policy issues or program and service issues are referred to the Minister responsible.

Announcement of new or changed policies, programs and services or government positions, approved by the Executive Council, must be made by the Minister responsible or any other person directed by the Executive Council to do so.

Explanation or discussion of established policies, programs and services may be provided by the deputy minister or designated spokespersons.

(4) Corporate Identity

All printed or electronic materials and video or film presentations, as well as government buildings, construction signage and moving equipment must be properly identified with the appropriate visual identifier in accordance with guidelines issued by the Premier.

(5) Advertising

Advertising is an essential component of the communications process and must be easily understood and recognized as a product of government. All advertising must conform to provisions of this Policy and be approved in accordance with communications guidelines issued by the Premier.

## **7. Prerogative of the Executive Council**

Nothing in this Policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Executive Council to make decisions or take action with respect to communications outside the provisions of this Policy.



Northwest  
Territories

# Policy

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Communications Policy

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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert R. McLeod".

Premier and Chairman of the  
Executive Council