



EMERGING STRONGER | UNE REPRISE EN FORCE

PLANNING THE NWT'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY TOGETHER
PLANIFIONS ENSEMBLE LA RELANCE ÉCONOMIQUE ET SOCIALE DES TNO



Le présent document contient la traduction française du message de la première ministre et de l'introduction.

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Message from the Premier

On May 31, 2021, our government tabled *Emerging Stronger: Planning our Economic and Social Recovery Together* in the Legislative Assembly. *Emerging Stronger*, the Government of the Northwest Territories' COVID-19 social and economic recovery plan, builds on the commitments made in the *Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2019-2023* (the Mandate) to revitalize the Northwest Territories' (NWT) economy and support communities and people to recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic, and to bridge the social gaps exposed by the pandemic. The plan included a commitment that it would be updated annually, based on the feedback we received and the changing state of the pandemic in the NWT, Canada, and the world.

At the time *Emerging Stronger* was released, we looked to the coming year with cautious optimism: effective vaccines had been developed and were being distributed across the NWT and elsewhere; vaccines for children and youth were in development; and the public health measures our government had taken in the NWT had been relatively effective in keeping case numbers low. The outlook for re-opening the NWT showed promise. At the same time, we acknowledged that social and economic recovery depended on factors beyond our control.

In the months that followed, the NWT experienced multiple COVID-19 outbreaks, requiring many communities to resume public health measures to control the spread of the virus. The emergence of the highly contagious Omicron variant in early 2022 again forced the closure of public places including businesses, schools, recreational facilities, and resulted in the extended declaration of a public health emergency.

The pandemic has taken its toll on all of us. I express my sincere condolences to the families and loved ones of those who have died from the disease. The coming months will bring further change as we adjust to COVID-19 being endemic and how that will influence our daily lives and the ways we do business. The NWT recently lifted the majority of public health measures and declared an end to the state of emergency. We are positioning ourselves to seize the opportunities that re-opened physical borders and increased virtual connectivity will offer.

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. Valuable feedback from Indigenous governments, stakeholders and the public has helped inform updates to this plan, which will continue to be implemented, tracked, and reported on. The commitment I made a year ago remains the same: by continuing to work closely with stakeholders to implement the actions in the Mandate and *Emerging Stronger*, we are making the most of the opportunity to position the NWT to thrive.

Message de la première ministre

Le 31 mai 2021, notre gouvernement a déposé le document intitulé *Une reprise en force : Planifions ensemble la relance économique et sociale des TNO* devant l'Assemblée législative. *Une reprise en force*, le plan de relance économique et sociale en lien avec la COVID-19 du gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (GTNO), s'appuie sur les engagements pris dans le cadre du Mandat du gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest 2019-2023 (le mandat) pour revitaliser l'économie des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (TNO) et soutenir les collectivités et les personnes afin qu'elles se remettent des répercussions économiques de la pandémie, et pour combler les écarts sociaux exposés par la pandémie. Le plan doit être mis à jour chaque année, en fonction des commentaires reçus et de l'évolution de la situation de la pandémie aux TNO, au Canada et dans le monde.

Au moment de la publication du plan *Une reprise en force*, nous envisagions l'année à venir avec un optimisme prudent; des vaccins efficaces avaient été mis au point et étaient distribués aux TNO et ailleurs, des vaccins pour les enfants et les jeunes étaient en cours d'élaboration, et les mesures de santé publique que notre gouvernement avait prises avaient été relativement efficaces pour limiter le nombre de cas. Les perspectives de réouverture des TNO étaient prometteuses. En même temps, nous avons reconnu que la relance sociale et économique dépendait de facteurs indépendants de notre volonté.

Dans les mois qui ont suivi, les TNO ont connu de multiples éclosions de COVID-19, obligeant plusieurs collectivités à remettre en place certaines mesures de santé publique pour contrôler la propagation du virus. Début 2022, l'apparition du très contagieux variant Omicron a de nouveau forcé la fermeture des lieux publics, notamment des commerces, des écoles et des installations récréatives, et a entraîné la prolongation de l'état d'urgence sanitaire.

La pandémie a été une épreuve difficile. Je présente mes sincères condoléances aux familles et aux proches de ceux qui sont morts de la maladie. Au cours des prochains mois, nous verrons d'autres changements, car nous devons nous adapter au caractère endémique de la COVID-19 et à son influence sur notre quotidien et nos méthodes de travail. Les TNO ont récemment levé la majorité des mesures de santé publique et déclaré la fin de l'état d'urgence. Nous nous positionnons pour saisir les occasions qu'offriront la réouverture des frontières physiques et la connectivité virtuelle accrue.

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. Il faudra savoir faire preuve de souplesse et de réactivité face aux obstacles tout comme aux occasions qui se présenteront et qui seront hors de notre contrôle ou difficiles à prévoir. Ce plan se veut donc un document évolutif qui sera mis à jour et présenté chaque année pour témoigner des réalisations accomplies. Les commentaires judicieux des gouvernements autochtones, des intervenants et du public ont contribué à la mise à jour de ce plan, qui continuera à être mis en œuvre, et à faire l'objet d'un suivi et de rapports. Le public peut continuer à apporter sa contribution au document *Une reprise en force* au <https://exprimezvous.nwt-tno.ca/>.

L'engagement que j'ai pris il y a un an reste le même : en continuant à travailler en étroite collaboration avec les intervenants pour mettre en œuvre les mesures prévues dans le mandat et dans le plan *Une reprise en force*, nous faisons le maximum pour assurer la prospérité des TNO.

Introduction

Strengthening the Foundations of Recovery

The Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT) response to the COVID-19 pandemic over the past two years has been informed by the lessons learned in the initial phases, in an effort to position the NWT for social and economic recovery. These lessons learned formed the basis of *Emerging Stronger: Planning the NWT's Social and Economic Recovery Together*, released in May 2021. Building on the Mandate, *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.

Since the release of *Emerging Stronger*, our government has sought and received input from Indigenous governments, business and industry groups, Standing Committee, and the public on our actions to support social and economic recovery in the NWT. The GNWT has reviewed and considered the feedback we received, as well as the current developments with regards to the COVID-19 pandemic situation and has made updates to the social and economic recovery plan that reflect our shared priorities as northerners as we continue to build the future together.

A year since *Emerging Strong* was released, COVID-19 is becoming endemic. Public health measures around the world are relaxing. In March 2022, two years after the pandemic was declared, the NWT re-opened its borders to leisure travel. From an economic perspective,

certain sectors such as retail trade, construction, and public administration have recovered, with a more promising outlook for tourism and other industries reliant on out-of-territory travel. While this trend is reason for optimism, there is urgency to our economic diversification and development actions as we anticipate the closure of the NWT diamond mines within the coming decade.

The GNWT is committed to working with Indigenous governments to support northern businesses and the development of a strong northern workforce. While capital projects will play an important role in economic recovery post-pandemic, there are some complications and challenges that have been amplified by the pandemic and these are being felt in the NWT as well as other Canadian jurisdictions and worldwide: supply chain issues, material and labour shortages, and increased product costs, to name a few. These issues are making it challenging to get some previously approved infrastructure projects moving.

This document highlights the progress the GNWT has made to recover from the pandemic over the course of the past year despite numerous challenges both in terms of the spread of COVID-19 and broader economic uncertainty and social instability. The GNWT expects the conversation around social and economic recovery to be ongoing and to continue to evolve, with a further update to *Emerging Stronger* to be provided one year from now.

Introduction

Consolider les bases de la relance

Les leçons tirées au début la pandémie de COVID-19 ont éclairé la réponse du gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (GTNO) pendant ces deux dernières années dans le but d'assurer la relance économique et sociale du territoire. Ces leçons ont formé la base du plan publié en mai 2021, *Une reprise en force : Planifions ensemble la relance économique et sociale des TNO*. En s'appuyant sur le mandat, le plan *Une reprise en force* comprenait des mesures à prendre 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 Ténos
- 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

Depuis la publication d'*Une reprise en force*, notre gouvernement a sollicité et recueilli les commentaires des gouvernements autochtones, des entreprises et des groupes industriels, du comité permanent et du public sur les mesures que nous avons prises pour appuyer la relance économique et sociale aux TNO. Le GTNO a passé en revue ces commentaires et en a tenu compte, a fait le point sur la situation actuelle de la pandémie de COVID-19 et a mis à jour le plan de relance économique et sociale afin qu'il reflète les priorités communes des Ténos alors que nous construisons l'avenir ensemble.

Un an après la publication d'*Une reprise en force*, la COVID-19 est devenue endémique. Les mesures de santé publique s'assouplissent dans le monde entier. En mars 2022, les TNO ont rouvert leurs frontières aux voyageurs d'agrément, deux ans après le début de la pandémie. Du point de vue de l'économie, certains secteurs se sont rétablis, comme le commerce de détail, la construction et l'administration publique, et les perspectives semblent prometteuses pour le tourisme et d'autres secteurs qui dépendent des voyageurs venant de l'extérieur des TNO. Si cette tendance suscite de l'optimisme, il reste urgent de développer et de diversifier notre économie, étant donné que la fermeture des mines de diamants ténosées est attendue au cours de la décennie à venir.

Le GTNO s'est engagé à collaborer avec les gouvernements autochtones pour aider les entreprises ténosées et renforcer le développement d'une main-d'œuvre locale solide. Les projets d'immobilisations tiendront une part cruciale dans la relance économique postpandémie; toutefois, des difficultés ont été amplifiées par la pandémie et sont ressenties aux TNO et dans d'autres régions du Canada et du monde : problèmes liés à la chaîne d'approvisionnement, pénurie de matériaux et de main-d'œuvre, et augmentation des coûts de production, entre autres. Ces problèmes mettent un frein à la réalisation de projets d'infrastructure préalablement approuvés.

Le présent document souligne les progrès réalisés par le GTNO pour relancer l'économie depuis un an malgré les nombreuses difficultés posées notamment par la propagation de la COVID-19 et par l'incertitude économique et l'instabilité sociale plus globales. Le GTNO souhaite que la conversation autour de la relance économique et sociale se poursuive et évolue, et projette de mettre de nouveau à jour *Une reprise en force* dans un an.

Achievements to Date and Next Steps

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

The GNWT's initial response to the pandemic demonstrated our ability to act quickly and decisively, and the importance of having readily available access to accurate and relevant data. Based on some of the lessons learned during the first year of the pandemic, the GNWT committed to: build a better foundation for more responsible fiscal policy through the Government Renewal Initiative (GRI), by aligning public funding with priorities; report on a range of social and economic indicators; and improve data collection and reporting to better inform decision-making, improve program delivery, and provide timely information to residents on the performance of government programs.

Phase 1 of the GRI is nearly complete, with departmental program and service inventories completed for most departments. Phase 2 will involve finalizing departments' program inventories, identifying programs and services to be assessed and developing program designs and evaluation. GRI will result in the majority of GNWT programs and services being set up to report on performance measures.

During the pandemic, the GNWT reported quarterly on a range of social indicators related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including child maltreatment and neglect, mental health and addictions, alcohol related harms, and family violence. The GNWT is creating a dashboard of indicators, planned to launch in Summer 2022, to report regularly on the NWT's social and economic situation.

In addition to actions identified in the Mandate, the GNWT will:

- Continue to advance Phase 2 of the 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.

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 establish an external advisory table to focus on strengthening the role and capacity of the not-for-profit sector and expanding the caring economy; and continue directly engaging with Indigenous governments, including establishing a multilateral table to promote greater collaboration among the GNWT and Indigenous government leadership.

The GNWT is undertaking an internal review of supports for the non-governmental sector. Once complete, an external advisory table will be established in Fall 2022 to make recommendations to strengthen the role and capacity of organizations operating in this sector.

Collaboration with Indigenous governments is ongoing. The NWT Council of Leaders held its inaugural meeting on June 11, 2021 and met again in November 2021. Bi-weekly COVID-19 briefings were held throughout the pandemic between Indigenous leaders and the Premier, Minister of Health and Social Services, and public health officials. The third Modern Treaty and Self-Government Partners Forum was held on November 15, 2021.

Several working groups were established as a result of these meetings to advance matters of common interest including development of Indigenous procurement policy approaches, housing, and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in the NWT. Bilateral meetings between the leadership of Indigenous governments and the GNWT continued to occur (while respecting public health measures and advice), and included discussions related to COVID-19 response and measures, the economy, education, housing and supporting NWT businesses.

In addition to actions identified in the Mandate, the GNWT will:

- 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.

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 by: conducting after-action reviews and other system improvement initiatives, including the COVID-19 Incident Management Team; working with community governments to update Community Emergency Plans, providing Pandemic Specific Hazard Plan and Essential Service Plan templates to include emergency sheltering and pandemic response needs; and improving and expanding existing emergency response training to municipal governments.

The Emergency Management Organization's (EMO) After Action Review of its internal operations related to the COVID-19 pandemic response (prior to the establishment of the COVID-19 Coordinating Secretariat) will be finalized in Summer 2022. The results will inform future emergency response planning, including pandemic response planning.

Pandemic Specific Hazard Plan and Essential Service Plan templates were updated and sent to Regional Superintendents for community distribution in March 2020. EMO will use the lessons learned from the pandemic to improve these Plans and templates for redistribution to Regional Superintendents in Fall 2022.

Workshop materials were updated to highlight the need for communities to review their emergency plans on an annual basis. In addition, annual follow up is planned with communities to encourage community emergency plan review, as required under the *Emergency Management Act*.

Emergency Planning workshops were delayed due to the ongoing pandemic and Spring 2021 flooding. Workshops will resume as part of the 2022-23 EMO work plan. A self-directed online webinar tutorial is under development and will be available to communities in Fall 2022.

In addition to actions identified in the Mandate, the GNWT will:

- 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.

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 we all communicate in business and in our daily lives. The GNWT recognized 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 encouraging the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications (CRTC) to regulate rates for internet services in satellite communities; provide ongoing portable subsidies to lower rates for residential and business internet services; and review the terms and conditions of wholesale access by competing service providers and make network improvements to enhance reliability.

Through this advocacy role, the GNWT will continue to intervene and reply to matters before the CRTC that affect access, affordability, and quality of broadband in the NWT. Through the CRTC's broadband fund, Northwestel's Every Community project has recently made broadband available in Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Jean Marie River, Fort Liard, Behchokò, and Dettah for the first time. Through CRTC proceedings and with GNWT support, Northwestel has lowered its prices and increased both internet speed and the data cap for cable and fibre customers in the NWT.

The second phase of CRTC's Northwestel Regulatory Framework review is expected to address some of the most urgent issues in Fall 2022. The GNWT is advocating for low-cost, reliable, and redundant Internet in all communities in the NWT.

The GNWT's application for federal funding to support the extension of the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Line has been approved. The Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk fibre line project is currently part of the GNWT's capital plan with work scheduled to begin in 2022-23. The project will see the replacement of the existing microwave telecommunications system currently serving Tuktoyaktuk, with fibre optic infrastructure.

In addition to actions identified in the Mandate, the GNWT will:

- 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.

Meet the needs of vulnerable populations

The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on many NWT residents' ability to meet their basic needs, particularly those who were already in precarious circumstances. The GNWT opened shelters in Fort Simpson and Hay River during the pandemic and introduced the Canada-NWT Housing Benefit to support affordable housing. The pandemic also pushed the GNWT to move more quickly toward harm reduction approaches to addictions.

The GNWT committed to: review the Income Assistance (IA) program and create a new program that is geared towards Seniors and Persons with Disabilities, as well as improving the existing program for adults; develop an Integrated Service Delivery initiative to support better integration of services across departments and explore practical demonstration opportunities to improve timely and effective access to programs; create an approach to managed alcohol based on NWT data and accelerate work on the Alcohol Strategy and review the regulatory changes introduced during the pandemic; work with partners to address longer-term funding needs required to address identified gaps; and undertake a review of the NWT Housing Corporation (now Housing NWT) policies.

The GNWT recently engaged with Indigenous governments, key stakeholders, and clients on the IA program review. A What We Heard Report will be released in Spring 2022, and the introduction of a new IA program for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities as well as a re-profiled program for adults is expected in Spring 2023.

The Integrated Service Delivery Conceptual Framework has been completed, and stakeholder engagement is planned for Fall 2022. Engagement on a draft Territorial Alcohol Strategy is also ongoing, with a final strategy expected in Fall 2022.

A new name and mandate for the NWT Housing Corporation - now Housing NWT - were launched in March 2022. The new mandate for Housing NWT directs that efforts focus on providing fair access to quality housing support for people most in need. Further actions for policy changes will be implemented following the review of Housing NWT programs and policies as outlined in the Renewal Strategy. This review is currently underway.

In addition to actions identified in the Mandate, the GNWT will:

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

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. Due to the shift to online platforms, the NWT health and social services system is now better prepared to support virtual care options which may mean less disruption to services post-pandemic. In addition to actions identified in the Mandate, the GNWT committed to plan and implement a new Electronic Medical Record system and accelerate the development of a plan to sustain virtual care solutions.

Since May 2021, an electronic health record vision has been established to align all initiatives that involve a patient care record. Assessments are underway to re-establish the system roadmap for urgent, operational and strategic priorities. Virtual Care solutions that were rapidly deployed during the pandemic are now available for operational use. Use of these and other virtual care solutions will be included in the information needs exploration taking place for the electronic health record. The GNWT is participating in the Health Canada-led federal/provincial/territorial Virtual Care Action Plan.

The GNWT has also been working with Transport Canada to recognize the need for accommodations so all Northerners can access essential services only available by air travel.

In addition to actions identified in the Mandate, the GNWT will:

- 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.

Provide accessible, quality education and training

The immediate and unplanned 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 offer. It also reinforced the potential to expand distance or blended delivery of post-secondary education programs at Aurora College as it transitions to a polytechnic university.

The GNWT committed to: increase education funding to assist with additional costs associated with online learning; review the Student Financial Assistance (SFA) program, to ensure residents have adequate resources to assist with the expenses associated in obtaining a post-secondary education; increase access to post-secondary education opportunities at Aurora College, including expanded online course offerings; expand and enhance Aurora College's teaching and research facilities across the North; provide increased access to post-secondary learning in every community, ladder programming from literacy to upgrading to certificate to degree, through the transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic university; defer or make optional large scale student assessments such as Diploma Exams and Alberta Achievement Exams for JK-12 students; and continue to provide supports for online, remote or blended learning, including internet access and devices like Chromebooks and Turbo sticks.

The COVID-19 Technology Grant and the COVID-19 Support Grant, introduced in 2020, continue to be available to post-secondary students for the 2022-23 academic year. Turbo sticks purchased for the 2020-21 Academic Year were available at Aurora College community learning centres for use by students engaging in community-based upgrading and online learning. A Client Satisfaction Survey was completed on the SFA program and a review of financial benefits is underway.

Technology was also distributed to education bodies at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year to address immediate technology needs for JK-12 students working remotely. The remainder of the technology resources were held in a central reserve and distributed to students who were required to shift to remote learning temporarily due to school closures.

The development of the Polytechnic University Facilities Master Plan will be completed in Summer 2022. A comprehensive technology needs assessment, together with the development of the Polytechnic University Facilities Master Plan, will support engagement with co-investment partners and help identify opportunities for enhancement to community learning centres. Changes stemming from legislative amendments will be implemented beginning in Spring 2022 and provide a foundation for the second phase of the Aurora College Transformation Implementation Plan.

The GNWT reinstated both the Alberta Achievement Tests (AATs) as well as the Grade 12 Diploma Examinations for June 2022. ECE continues to make progress on implementing the Action Plan to Improve JK-12 Student Outcomes and is regularly updating the [online progress tracker](#).

The GNWT and Canada recently finalized *the NWT Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement – 2021 to 2026*, which aims to improve the quality, affordability, accessibility and inclusivity of early learning and child care (ELCC) in the NWT. The agreement and action plan will: help lower fees for families by an average of 50% in 2022 to an average of \$10 a day by 2025-26; support the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators; create 300 new licensed spaces by 2025-26; support culturally appropriate ELCC programming for Indigenous children; and support inclusion in ELCC programs for children with diverse needs. Total estimated investment into the NWT's ELCC system through GNWT funding and federal agreements is expected to reach \$114 million between 2021-22 and 2025-26.

In addition to actions identified in the Mandate, the GNWT will:

- 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.

Better support and integrate work-force development within infrastructure projects

The pandemic highlighted the NWT's heavy reliance on an out-of-territory workforce. The GNWT committed to work with Indigenous governments, communities and businesses to improve training investments and career pathways; assist grade 9-12 students in career and post-secondary planning; and invest in apprenticeships through the NWT Housing Corporation and the Department of Infrastructure.

Labour market programs and the Small Community Employment Strategy continue to be implemented, with a focus on: addressing workforce and labour market needs; enhancing employment and training opportunities and outcomes in small communities; engagement and collaboration with local stakeholders through Regional Training Committees; and providing funding to support communities in developing their own labour market development plans. To date, 16 communities have developed or are working on plans.

The GNWT introduced the Labour Market Recovery Program and Labour Market Recovery Wage Grant, which together provided \$3 million in assistance to employers, community organizations and community governments. The Labour Market Recovery Program concluded March 31, 2021, and the Labour Market Recovery Wage Grant ended January 21, 2022.

The regionally based Career and Education Advisor (CEA) Program added three new Advisor positions and a Manager position in Fall 2021. CEAs are providing service to grade 9-12 students in the NWT in exploring options for post-secondary training and connecting with regional stakeholders. The CEA Program also supports the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification in increasing awareness and uptake in the Schools North Apprenticeship Program.

The GNWT works to maximize opportunities and community benefits through construction contracts by building in requirements for local hiring and training. For example, the Design-Build Request for Proposal for the Hay River Fish Plant included evaluation criteria related to maximizing on-the-job training for local residents. Options are being explored to require opportunities for apprentice hires to build experience, where possible, as part of construction contracts for new vertical infrastructure projects.

The Department of Infrastructure currently has 11 apprentice positions within its Regional Operations, while Housing NWT apprenticeship program provides up to 12 apprenticeship training opportunities each year with local housing organizations. In July 2020, Housing NWT amended its construction contracts to require general contractors to provide at least one work assignment for an apprentice over the term of each new construction housing project. Since July 2020, this requirement has supported 30 NWT apprentices in gaining experience towards their

NWT journey certification requirements. These opportunities are building future capacity in the construction sector.

The GNWT is working in partnership with Gahcho Kué Mine (De Beers Group and Mountain Province Diamonds Inc.) and the Native Women's Association of the NWT to implement *Building Forever: Women's Pre-Trades Program*. This program will give six women from the NWT a paid opportunity to explore a career in a skilled trade.

In addition to actions identified in the Mandate, the GNWT will:

- 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,
- 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.

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

There has been 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. In response, the GNWT committed to: accelerate the review of GNWT procurement policies including the Business Incentive Policy and the Negotiated Contracts Policy, and consideration of an Indigenous Procurement Policy; and invite Indigenous governments and businesses to be involved as equity partners in key strategic investments as projects develop.

The GNWT is currently engaging with Indigenous governments on the recommendations set out in the Procurement Review Report to strengthen government procurement, and new procurement approaches and policy amendments are under development.

The Department of Infrastructure fosters direct and early discussions with Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations and Indigenous-owned businesses during the planning stages of large infrastructure projects to understand interest and explore economic opportunities for projects such as the Mackenzie Valley Highway Project, Taltson Hydro Expansion Project and the Slave Geological Province Project.

The Department of Finance has increased training and open forums for vendors and has delivered over 30 procurement workshops on various topics annually. To improve awareness of GNWT contracting opportunities and procurement information, an online, one-stop-shop for vendors will be released in late Spring 2022. This resource will include information related to GNWT procurement, including all policies, guidelines, trade agreements, a contract database, contract reports, contact information, and the GNWT contracts events opportunities webpage.

The GNWT is also taking steps to reduce its carbon footprint with regards to housing construction. In June 2021, Housing NWT completed the oil to biomass heating system conversion for 53 public housing units in Yellowknife, and is developing an Energy Plan to guide future investments towards realizing NWT commitments on GHG emission reductions related to residential space heating.

In addition to actions identified in the Mandate, the GNWT will:

- 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.

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. The GNWT committed to: assist the tourism, aviation, construction, hospitality and the mining sectors; work with Northwest Territories Tourism (NWTT) to re-establish positive public sentiment towards travellers entering communities; invest, through NWTT, on marketing to Canadian domestic travellers and support businesses to compete for domestic and eventually international tourists once NWT borders are set to re-open; and work with partners to provide clear communication on the public health criteria to allow tourism operators to position themselves for rebound.

The Pandemic Relief Extension Program for licensed tourism operators and tourism related businesses and the Supplement for Tourism Accommodation Relief Program for accommodation providers were launched in 2021-22. The Tourism Restart Investment Program was also launched in Fall 2021, and for a second time in Winter 2022, as a one-time funding program to help restart the tourism industry in the NWT. Through funding provided to NWTT, a medical consultant was engaged to help remote lodges plan safe re-opening strategies that meet public health requirements.

The *Resident Readiness Strategy* has been developed to re-establish positive public sentiment toward travellers visiting the NWT. Implementation is set to begin in Spring 2022. In 2020-21, the GNWT sponsored individualized online training for 30 tourism operators, which was double the anticipated uptake.

To provide additional relief in the mining and exploration sector, the Work Credit Program was extended in 2021-22 to allow certain mineral claim holders impacted by COVID-19 to reduce cash-in-lieu deposit requirements on extension applications.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented the arts sector with unique challenges, particularly for the performing arts and for the sales of items that rely on tourism. In 2021, the GNWT released the *NWT Arts Strategy 2021-2031*. The Strategy sets out a plan to support the sector in remaining economically viable and to support arts, artists and organizations in the NWT. The GNWT continues to work with local and national partners to create new economic development opportunities for NWT artists, including supporting their attendance at events to show and sell their work to new audiences, and launch a workshop series entitled *Selling your Artwork* to artists across the NWT. The GNWT will also offer the NWT Producers Incentive Pilot Program for a second year, which invests in NWT film and television producers at the development stage of their projects.

The GNWT will conduct a review of arts funding programs and make recommendations to inform potential changes to improve supports for NWT artists and arts organizations.

In addition to actions identified in the Mandate, the GNWT will:

- 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 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.

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. The GNWT committed to: better align business support programs, and further examine existing roles, resources and support; examine existing contribution programs to ensure priority on northern benefit and investment; accelerate the work underway to reduce red tape; and enhance Business Development and Investment Corporation (BDIC) financial programs and expand investment options in response to the changing needs of NWT businesses while also advancing legislative amendments and improving operational processes.

The GNWT continues to work collaboratively with key partners to strengthen supports to start up new businesses, grow businesses, and improve access to financing, networks and expertise. As we move into economic recovery, the GNWT will continue to support small and medium businesses to access capital in order to adapt, grow, and compete globally, as well as bolster job creation, increase technology adoption, and expand opportunities.

In 2021-22, an *Access to Business Support Services* workshop was held with lending partners to help NWT entrepreneurs plan how to maximize their economic benefits post-COVID-19. A review of the Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development (SEED) program was completed, and the GNWT will further examine improvements to the SEED Policy.

The development of BDIC program options and proposed legislative amendments are underway. In 2021-22, as part of the strategic planning process, the BDIC completed a cross-jurisdictional review of venture programs to identify best practices and inform development of an enhanced venture investment program for the organization. The BDIC completed the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan and an engagement survey with entrepreneurs and businesses and is currently developing financial and non-financial program options as part of the proposed legislative amendments.

The BDIC continued to offer relief programs in response to business' changing needs during the pandemic, including extending the deferment or reduction of loan payments to March 31, 2022 and offering a contribution for business relief through the Business Development Program Fund (BDPF Aftercare Relief) from September 2021 to March 31, 2022. The BDIC continues to assist individual loan clients during their recovery period.

Funding was provided to Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC) through the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund Pool to support initiatives that improve the CFDCs capacity to deliver programming and business support to local small and medium-sized enterprises in their regions.

The GNWT will continue to deliver labour market programs including:

- The Self-Employment Program which provides support to eligible individuals who are starting a small business or taking over an existing business in which they did not have prior ownership in. Assistance is provided to clients by assessing their business idea, personal suitability, family issues, financial risks, and the resources available or required to be successful.
- The Employee Training Program (ETP) which supports employers who have hired employees in anticipation of their workforce needs by providing assistance to offset the cost of training and to support individuals who are under-employed or employed and in need of training to maintain or move to a different or better job.
- The Wage Subsidy Program (WSP) which provides support to employers to hire and train NWT residents. This program is intended to provide work experience and training for up to 52 weeks to better enable participants to obtain meaningful long-term employment.

In addition to actions identified in the Mandate, the GNWT will:

- 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 any changes to the 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.

Expand and diversify the economy

The pandemic emphasized disparities between the public and the private sector, the NWT's economic reliance on the mineral sector and further underscored the need for economic development and diversification. The GNWT committed to: work with Indigenous governments, development corporations, the mining industry and all regulatory partners to find ways to move proposed mine expansions and advanced projects into the production phase with community support; work with the federal government and Indigenous governments and organizations to prioritize and implement remediation projects; assess the potential for development of a 'remediation economy' within the NWT; attract and facilitate grassroots prospecting and exploration in areas of high mineral potential; work with the Conference Board of Canada to update the NWT Labour Market Forecast and Needs Assessment, including consideration of the mining and remediation, tourism, knowledge, housing and infrastructure economies; renew and implement the *Skills 4 Success Action Plan (2021-2025)* to meet the demand and supply needs of the NWT labour market; and update and launch economic diversification strategies including the Agriculture Strategy, which includes a focus on small scale foods, the NWT Arts Strategy and the NWT Film Strategy.

In March 2020, GNWT departments, the federal government, regulators, Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations and industry participated in the Mackenzie Valley Operational Dialogue workshop. Following a pause due to the pandemic, work has resumed in 2021-22. GNWT departments are collaborating to complete work identified in a Contaminated Sites Work Plan including policies, procedures, and other operational items to support contaminated site remediation and implement the GNWT Approach to Contaminated Sites Management. Discussions related to remediation projects and priorities between the GNWT and federal and Indigenous governments are ongoing.

The GNWT continues to work collaboratively with the federal government, the Yellowknives Dene First Nations, the North Slave Metis Alliance, the City of Yellowknife, and Alternatives North on the Giant Mine Remediation Project while maximizing socio-economic benefits for Indigenous and northern residents.

In partnership with the federal government, the GNWT is conducting an economic opportunities analysis of remediation projects in the NWT. A discussion paper on the potential of the NWT remediation economy was completed and the GNWT is undertaking public engagement starting in May 2022. The GNWT will identify actions to maximize remediation project opportunities to both Indigenous and other NWT businesses and corporations.

The Mining Incentive Program has been reviewed and recommendations are being implemented. In 2021-22, seven corporate and eight prospector projects were funded. Also in

2021-22, the GNWT was successful in obtaining a funding top-up for this program through the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency. An additional \$500,000 was used to support advanced-stage exploration programs and renew economic activity in the NWT mineral sector.

Both the latest Conference Board of Canada NWT Labour Market Forecast and Needs Assessment (to the year 2040) and the *Skills4Success Action Plan (2021-2025)* were released in April 2022. The action plan outlines the actions that the GNWT will take, with its partners, to improve employment success, close skill gaps for in-demand jobs, and more effectively respond to employer and industry needs. It focuses on using labour market information to enable evidence-based decision making, while also listening to education and training providers, employers and industry partners, and other governments and agencies to understand the best approach to advance the skills and education of NWT residents.

A strategic approach to food security is in development, as are regional economic development plans. Implementation is underway for completed strategies for agriculture, manufacturing, and the Great Slave Lake fishery. The GNWT undertook public engagement to develop an Innovation Action Plan to grow the knowledge economy. The GNWT continues to weigh all public interests, including economic interests, when making land management decisions, such as the establishment, renewal, or amendment of Land Withdrawal Orders.

In addition to actions identified in the Mandate, the GNWT will:

- 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.

Appendix A: Social and Economic Impacts

Economic Impacts

In 2019, a full year prior to the emergence of COVID-19, the NWT economy was in decline: real GDP shrank 8.8% in 2019 compared to 2018, diamond production dropped 21%, resident employment declined 0.5%, and the employment rate fell 0.3 percentage points. These declines signal structural and ongoing weakness in the NWT economy that has hindered growth and development for many years. This weakness is due to several ongoing economic challenges: a lack of economic diversification, aging diamond mines, and decreasing participation in paid employment.

These pre-existing weaknesses and challenges were exacerbated by the global COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, worldwide disruptions to activity due to measures implemented to mitigate the pandemic's spread were worsened by sharply lower external demand, falling industrial commodity prices—particularly for diamonds—and a collapse in tourism activity. NWT economic growth is expected to continue to slow until metal mining comes on stream in mid-2025, according to the Conference Board of Canada.

The collective effect of the coronavirus and associated public health measures implemented to protect people resulted in a steep economic decline:

- The overall NWT economy (measured in real GDP) shrank by 6.2% in 2019, 10.5% in 2020, and is estimated to have rebounded 7.3% into 2021.
- Diamond production (measured in carats) rose 12.5% in 2021, a major turnaround after the 15.2% fall between 2019 and 2020.
- Resident employment (excluding fly-in/fly-out workers) is estimated to have increased 7.8% in 2021, a major increase compared to the lows in 2019-2020.
- The employment rate fell to 63.1% in 2020, the lowest NWT employment rate on record. In 2021, the employment rate rose back to 69.1%, its highest since 2016.

The declines of 2020 were primarily related to the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic but were also a continuation of weak economic performance of 2019. Although the NWT economy has in some ways emerged from the disruptions caused by the global pandemic better than it went into 2020, the pre-existing weaknesses remain a serious threat. The recovery that started towards the end of 2020 and throughout 2021 into 2022 has been unevenly distributed across sectors, industries, and demographics.

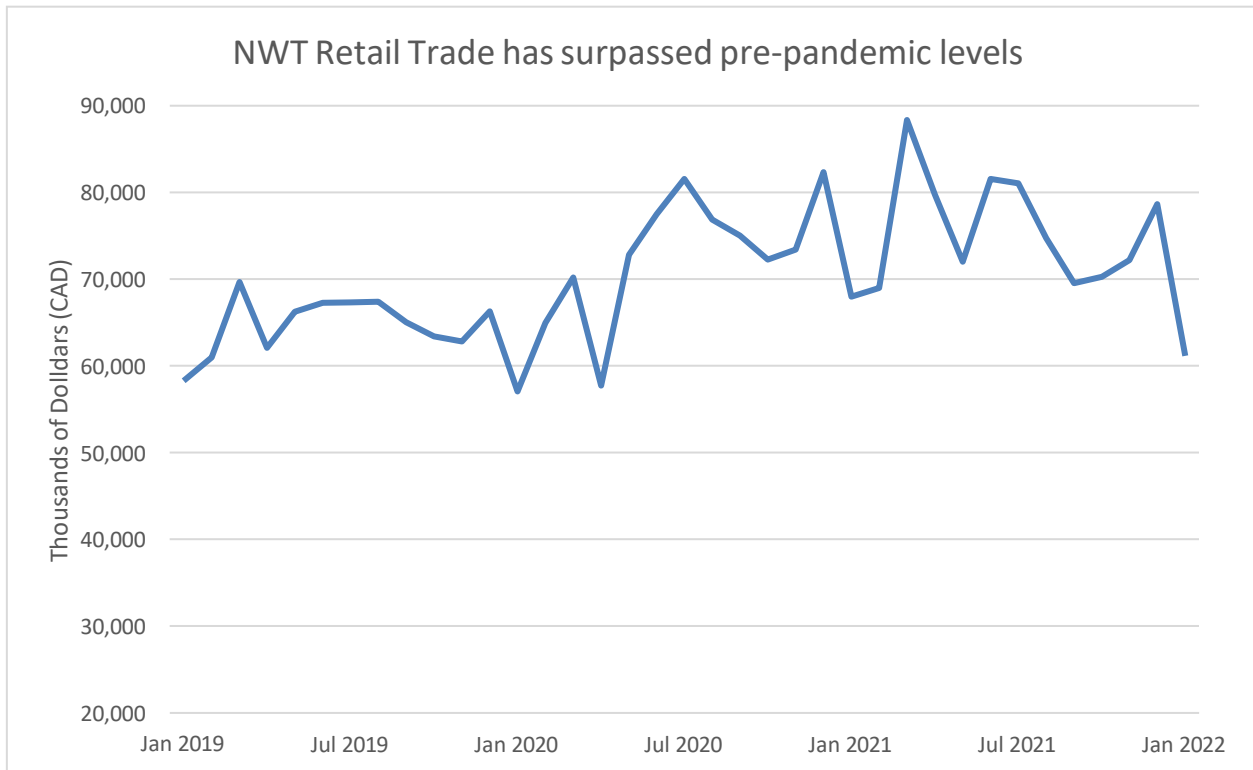
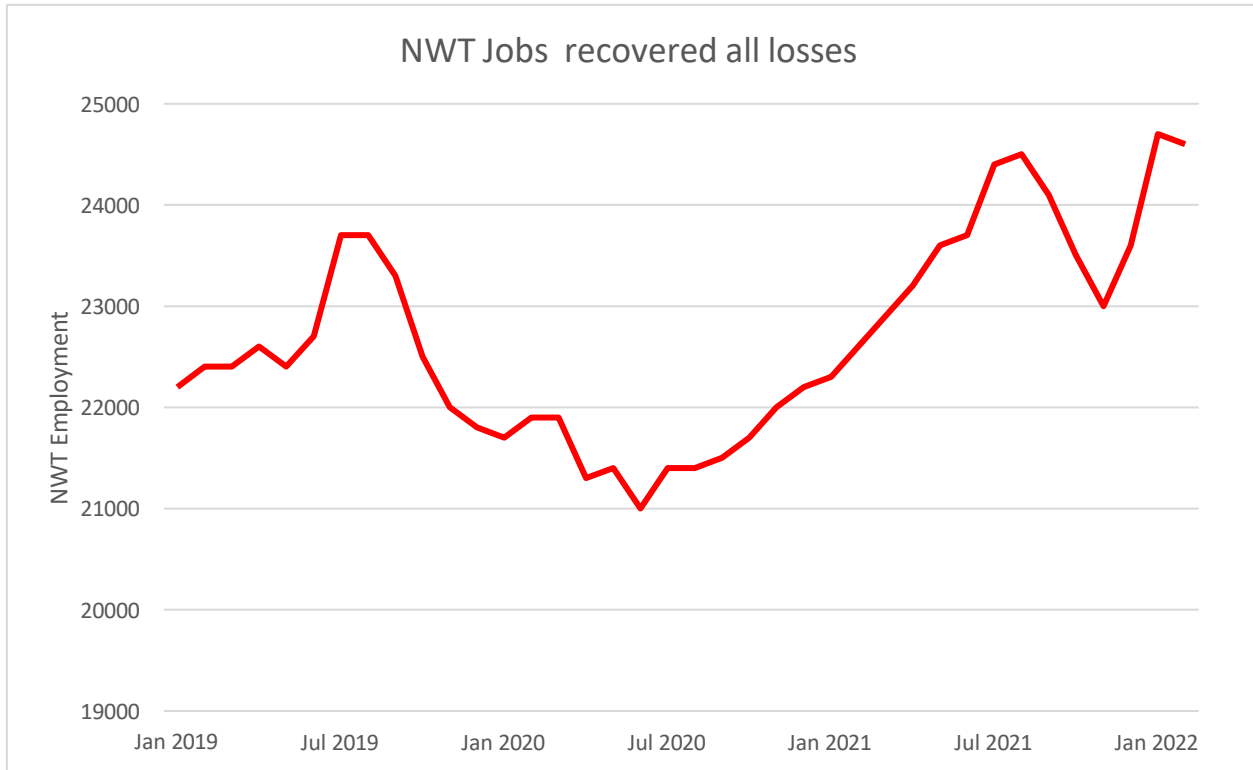
Sectors able to pivot to remote work, such as retail trade and public administration, have not experienced declines and in some cases have seen increases in economic output, activity, jobs, and employment. Nearly half of the NWT labour force is employed by the public sector, which acted as an economic stabilizer during the pandemic, but also emphasized the disparities between public and private sectors and further underscored the need for economic development and diversification.

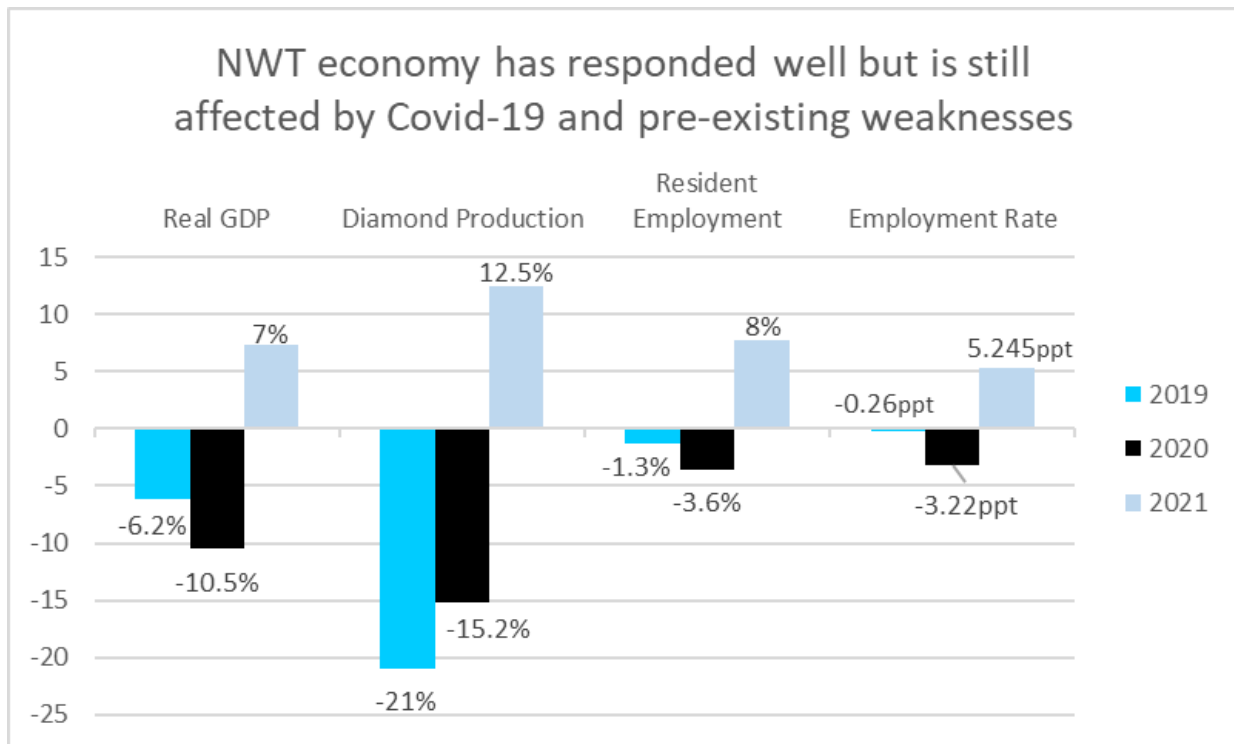
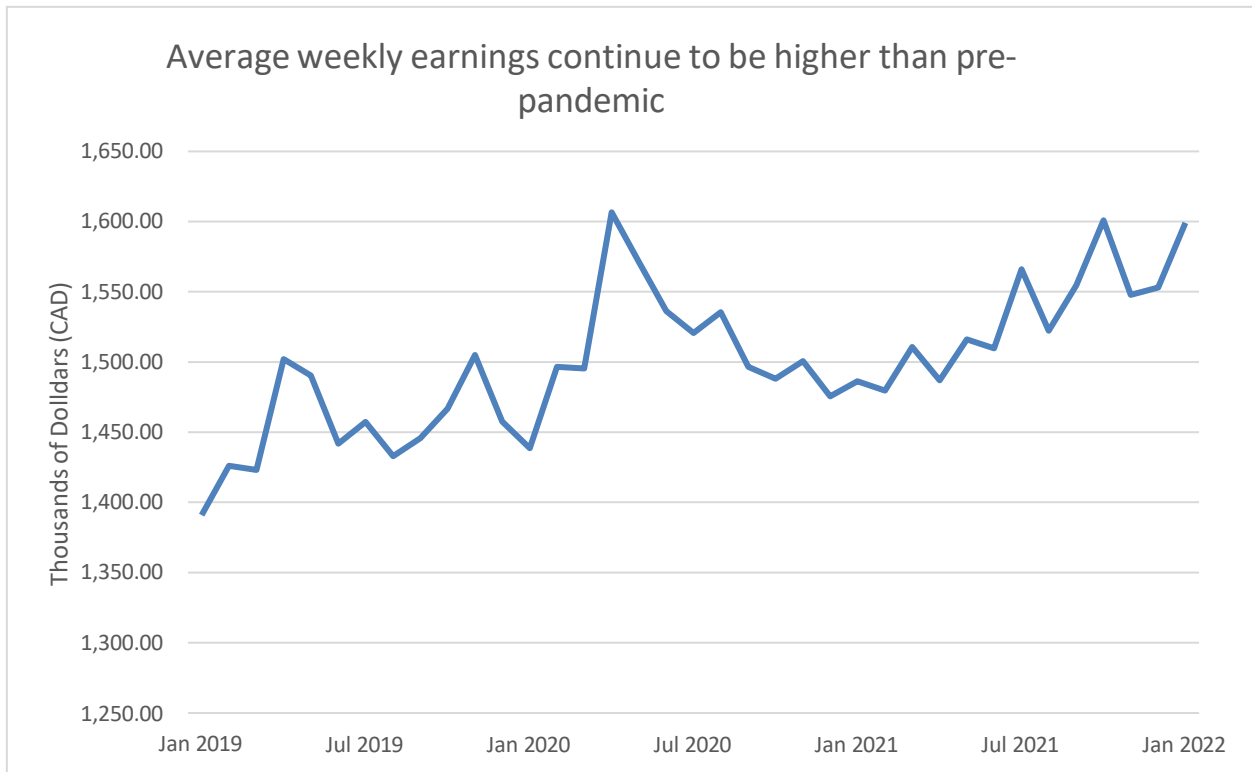
Another stabilizing factor was the ability of two of the three diamond mines to remain in production. As economic restrictions were eased during the pandemic, retail sales and other service industries less reliant on mining or tourism were able to rebound more quickly.

Export-reliant sectors, such as diamond mining, suffered deep declines due to global production and supply chains disruptions, changing consumer preferences, and shifting international relations. This can be seen by the 23.7% drop in exports in 2020.

The pandemic has been particularly damaging to the NWT tourism industry. 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, pre-pandemic output levels are not expected to return until after 2025-26.

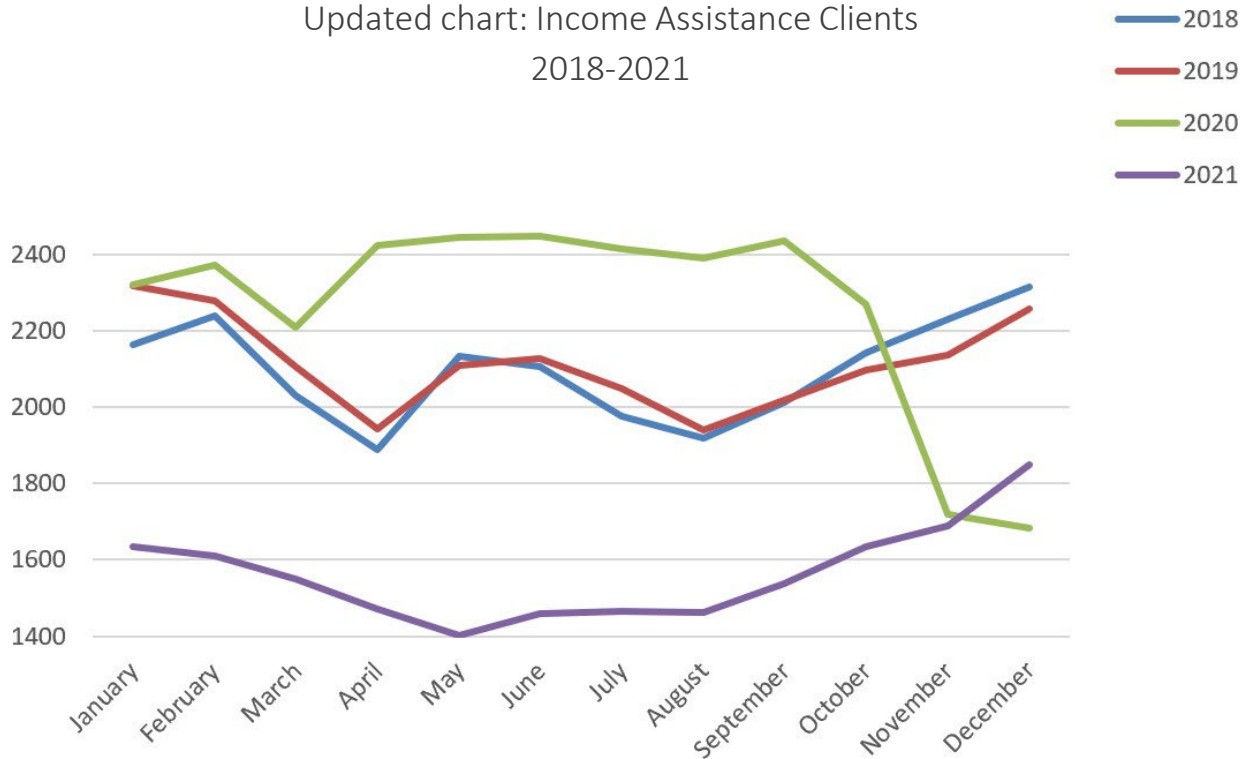
The economic decline associated with COVID-19 should be considered in the broader context of national and international recession. Much of the economic recovery in the NWT relies on recoveries elsewhere. Compared to many other jurisdictions the NWT has fared well and economic indicators that initially collapsed in March 2020 have either surpassed or nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels. The recoveries in retail sales, NWT jobs, household income, and hours worked, suggests the overall NWT economy was less severely damaged compared to other jurisdictions. However, the economic decline experienced in 2020 with COVID-19 was a continuation of previous years of downward performance and the NWT still must address these long-term, structural challenges. 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

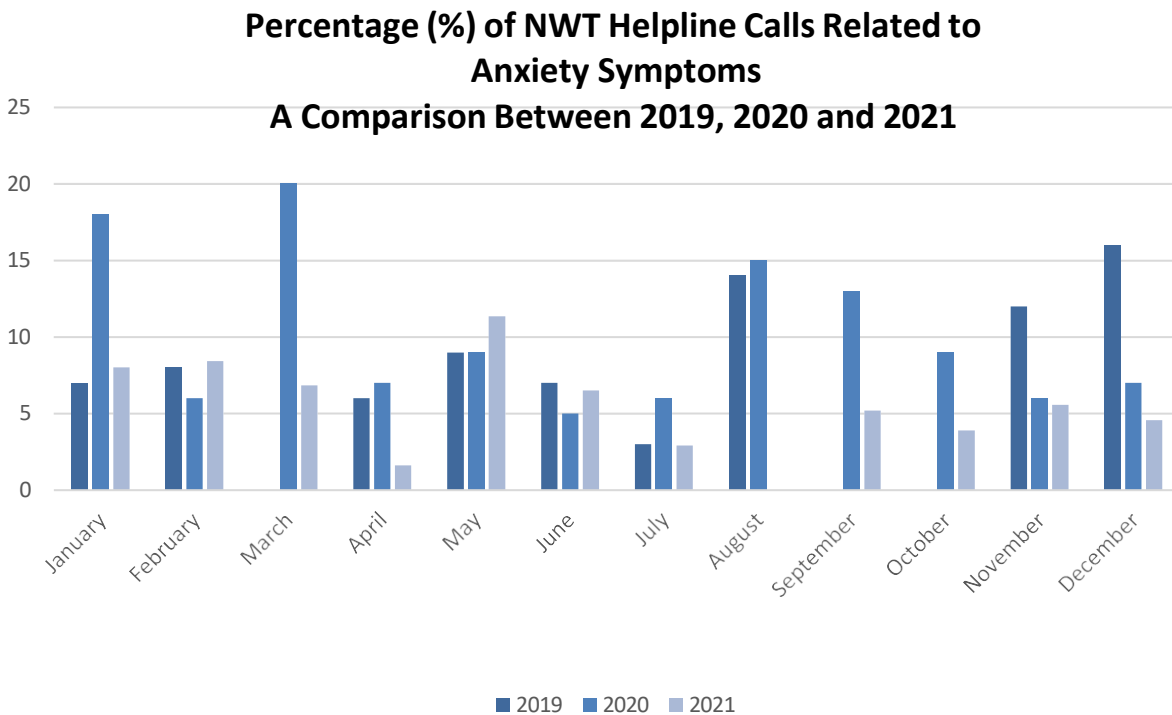
The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on residents' ability to meet their basic needs, as indicated by the increased client uptake in Income Assistance (IA) during the first months of the pandemic. From April to October 2020, IA expenditures witnessed 17% growth on average in 2020 compared to 2019. Payments have gone down since November 2020 when IA clients were required to provide documentation to verify their income which had not been mandatory during the initial months of COVID-19, and with recognition of payments provided by the federal government as income in IA benefit calculations. As the federal government's COVID-19 benefits are ending, it is expected that there will be an increase in client uptake in IA, as is shown in December 2021.



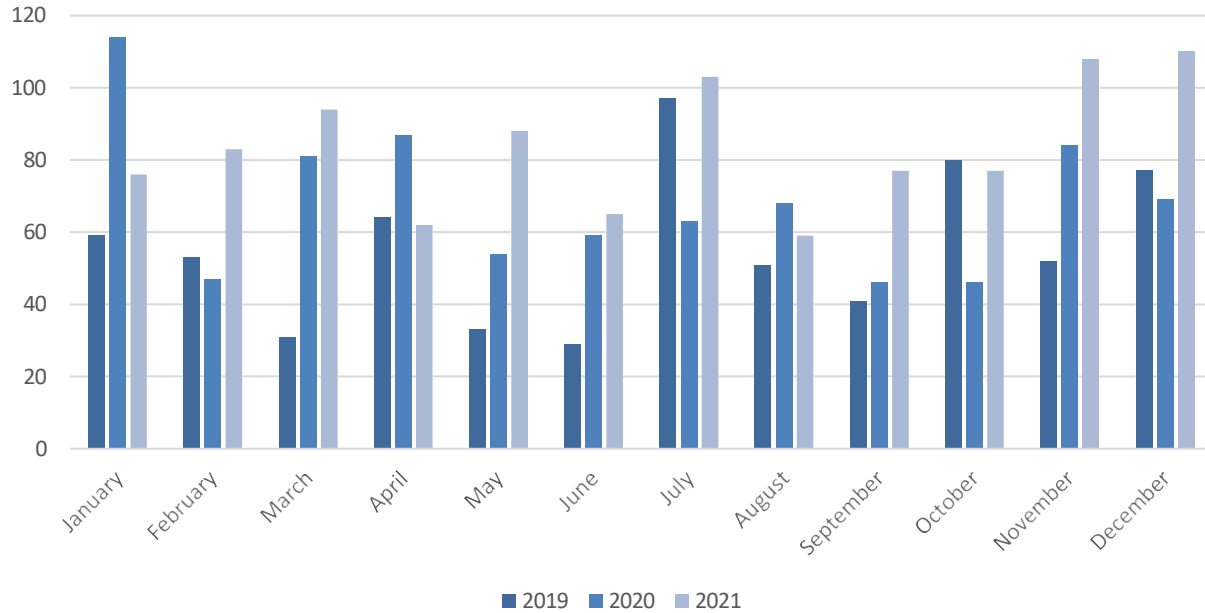
While the health system has responded effectively to the pandemic, residents experienced challenges as some health and social services moved from in-person to telephone or virtual care, and access to land-based and southern-based treatment facilities fluctuated. There are likely individuals who did not seek care as they would have before the pandemic. Employees in the health and social services system have been significantly affected by COVID-19 in terms of workload and the early public health measures that for many made managing work and family life a challenge.

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 provincial and territorial, and even international boundaries. A number of 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 can suffer even more.

The charts below compare call volumes to the NWT Helpline and the percentage of calls related to anxiety and mood symptoms between 2019 and 2021. While overall calls to the Help Line in 2020 saw an increase over 2019 during the first few months of the pandemic, it appears that overall call volume was lower than 2019 during the fall of 2020. Calls specific to anxiety and mood were initially lower during the pandemic period than in 2019, but between August and October 2020, increased over the previous year.

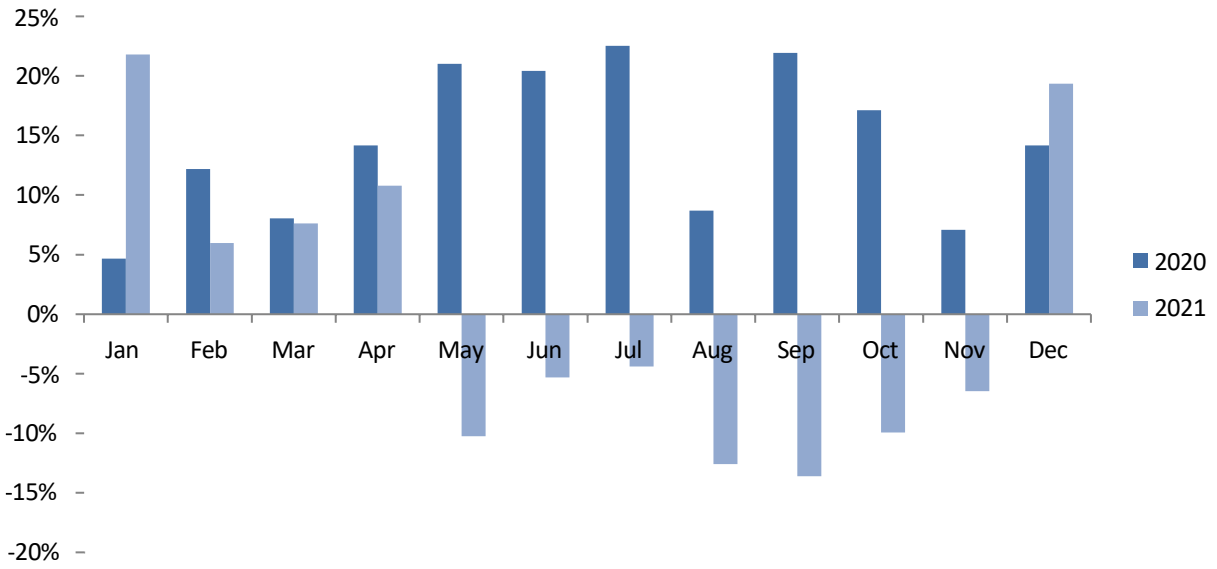


Total Number of NWT Helpline Calls A Comparison Between 2019, 2020 and 2021



Across Canada, 18% of Canadians reported consuming more alcohol due to COVID-19, attributing the increase to a lack of a regular schedule, boredom, and stress. 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 increase of approximately 20% in sales. This trend began to reverse in May 2021, with all months except December 2021 showing a reduction in sales from the same month in 2020.

% Figure X: 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 2022 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.

Educational Impacts

Over the last two years, there has been disruption to student learning around the world. In the NWT, the impacts of school closures and remote learning time vary from community to community and from school to school.

- In the 2019-20 school year, students pivoted to remote learning for 30% of the school year.
- 2020-21 saw significant impacts on education delivery, particularly for Grade 7-12 students, with more stringent isolation and health and safety requirements.
- 2021-22, has seen even more significant impacts, with many schools closed to in-person learning nearing 50% of the school year (as of February 4, 2022), with some as high as 72%.

While some students have made it through the last two years of schooling with minimal impacts, it has been a challenging time for many others – for their mental wellness as well as academic achievement. In the coming years, it is anticipated that grades, assessment results and graduation rates will be lower than pre-pandemic years. This is largely due to inconsistencies in learning between 2020 and 2022. As we shift towards a greater return to 'normal' it is important that we meet students where they are.

The GNWT will closely monitor the needs of NWT students using existing wellness data, referrals for school-based services, and educational programming progress as reported by education authorities. The GNWT has reinstated both the Alberta Achievement Tests (AATs) as well as the Grade 12 Diploma Examinations for June 2022 and has also been able to continue with the administration of the Middle Years Development Instrument in spring 2022, which surveys students in Grades 4 and 7 on social-emotional, health and wellness-related issues. Data from the Health Behaviour of School Aged Children study will also help us look for possible impacts, as it looks at the health, wellbeing, and behaviours of young people, especially in the school environment. While there is not a single solution to these challenges, the GNWT offers a variety of programs and resources to support student learning and wellness.

Appendix B: Emerging Stronger Plan

What we will do	How we will do it	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress
Continue to adapt and respond to challenges in an efficient, coordinated and evidence-based way	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	12-18 months per department	Government Renewal initiative staged implementation by department
		Annually through departmental business planning process	Tracking and reporting on program results
	Launch an online dashboard of NWT social and economic indicators	Summer 2022	Dashboard launched and updated regularly
Build stronger partnerships with Indigenous governments and organizations, community governments and the non-profit and charitable sector	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	Fall 2022	Review of supports completed
		Fall 2022	External advisory table established
	Continue direct engagement with Indigenous governments, including through a multilateral table, to ensure greater collaboration among the GNWT and Indigenous government leadership.	Ongoing	Regular meetings held with Indigenous governments, including multilateral table

What we will do	How we will do it	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress
Advance emergency response work based on lessons learned from initial stages of pandemic	Improve Pandemic Specific Hazard Plans and Essential Service Plans and templates based on lessons learned from the pandemic	Fall 2022	Community Emergency Plans and Pandemic Specific Hazard Plan and templates are updated and distributed
	Follow up annually with communities to encourage the review of Community Emergency Plans.	Annually	# and % of community emergency plans updated annually
	Resume delivery of Emergency Planning workshops	Ongoing	5 Emergency Planning Workshops completed per year
	Develop an online webinar tutorial on updating Community Emergency Plans.	Summer 2022	Online webinar tutorial on updating Community Emergency Plans developed and launched
	Re-profile regional positions to establish dedicated regional EMO staff	Ongoing	1 EMO position staffed in each region

What we will do	How we will do it	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress
Further efforts to support broadband infrastructure for fast and reliable internet services across the NWT	Continue to press for federal policy changes to ensure applications for investment recognize the NWT's challenges.	Ongoing	Efforts made to lobby the federal government for policy change
	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	Ongoing as per formal CRTC proceedings	
	Begin work on the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk fibre line to provide higher reliability, faster speeds, and more capacity	2022-23	Work on the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk fibre line initiated

What we will do	How we will do it	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress
Meet the needs of vulnerable populations	Introduce a new Income Assistance program geared towards Seniors and Persons with Disabilities, and improve the existing program for adults	Spring 2023	New Income Assistance program implemented
	Undertake stakeholder engagement on Integrated Service Delivery	Fall 2022	Stakeholder engagement initiated
	Finalize an Alcohol Strategy	October 2022	Alcohol Strategy developed and tabled
	Review shelter funding arrangements as part of the Homelessness Strategic Action Plan	Ongoing	Shelter funding arrangements reviewed
Improve health care services and expand equitable access to care for all Northerners	Replace legacy health information systems and new components to meet information needs of patients and providers	Ongoing	Planning and replacement of legacy health information systems, and investment in new information systems
	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	Ongoing	Virtual care improvements implemented
	Continue to work with Transport Canada to recognize the need for accommodations so all Northerners can access essential services only available by air.	Ongoing	Accommodations provided to provide Northerners with access to essential services only available by air

What we will do	How we will do it	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress
Provide accessible, quality education and training	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	2022-23 academic year	Number of students accessing the COVID-19 Technology Grant and COVID-19 Support Grant
	Continue the review of the Student Financial Assistance program to ensure benefits support students to achieve their post-secondary goals	Beginning of the 2023-24 academic year	Revised SFA program implemented
	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	Starting in the 2024-25 academic year	Expansion and enhancement of community learning centres
		Fall 2025	Polytechnic university launched
	Complete the Polytechnic University Facilities Master Plan and comprehensive technology needs assessment.	Starting in the 2022-23 academic year	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

What we will do	How we will do it	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress
	Reduce childcare fees charged to families and enhance childcare affordability in the NWT through the Child Care Fee Reduction Subsidy.	March 2026	Average parent fees for children five years of age and younger who attend licensed childcare reduced by 50% in 2022
	Provide funding for projects that preserve existing infrastructure of licensed centre-based childcare spaces or create new licensed centre-based childcare spaces in NWT communities through the Early Childhood Infrastructure Fund.	Ongoing/Annually	# of spaces preserved or created including any expansions to existing programs and amount of funding provided
	Create 300 licensed early learning and childcare spaces to improve childcare access for NWT families.	2025-26	300 licensed early learning and childcare spaces created
	Support the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators, through increased wages and access to increased professional learning and post-secondary learning opportunities.	2024-25	Wage grid for early childhood educators working in centre-based programs
2024-25		NWT certification process for early childhood educators developed and implemented	
2025-26		Number of early childhood educators in the territory who fully meet the NWT's certification requirements increased by 30%	

What we will do	How we will do it	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress
Better support and integrate work-force development within infrastructure projects	Continue to require general contractors to provide at least one work assignment for an apprentice over the term of each new housing construction project.	Ongoing	Minimum of one apprentice involved in each new housing construction project
	Continue to invest in apprenticeships by requiring, where possible, apprentice hires as part of construction contracts for vertical infrastructure projects.	Ongoing	# of apprentice hires as part of construction contracts for vertical infrastructure projects
	Continue to hire GNWT apprentices based on funding and journey person availability.	Ongoing	# of apprentices hired
	Implement Building Forever: Women's Pre-Trades Program, in partnership with Gahcho Kué Mine and the Native Women's Association of the NWT.	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
	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.	Fall 2022	Housing Maintainer Occupational Standards updated
	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	Ongoing	Regional-based Career and Education Advisor supports provided to all grade 9-12 students

What we will do	How we will do it	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress
	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.	Ongoing - launched Feb 2022	# of apprentices and pre-apprentices who access the program
	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.	Summer 2022	# of apprentices and pre-apprentices who access the program
Ensure that GNWT capital planning supports equitable opportunities throughout the territory, and a greener more climate resilient territory	Develop an Energy Plan to guide future investments to reduce emissions related to residential space heating	Spring 2023	Energy Plan tabled in the Legislative Assembly
	Assess large infrastructure projects for economic opportunities for Indigenous Governments and businesses, during all project phases.	Timeline dependent on each project	Indigenous government and business involvement in projects

What we will do	How we will do it	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress
Support the Hardest Hit Sectors	Work with NWT Tourism on implementing the Resident Readiness Strategy.	Beginning in 2022 and ongoing	Resident Readiness Strategy implemented
	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.	2022-23 and ongoing	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
	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.	Ongoing	Monitoring and evaluation frameworks to be developed
	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.	2022-23	Monitoring and evaluation framework in place; funding program performance reported in 2022-23 Grants and Contributions report.

What we will do	How we will do it	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress
	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.	Ongoing	Implementation of NWT Arts Strategy monitoring and evaluation framework
	Extend the Work Credit Program of a 125% credit for work conducted on mineral claims for the 2022-23 fiscal year.	2022-23	Annual reporting on number of reports and claims qualifying for WCP as well as dollar value of eligible reports and of credit granted.
	Launch the new Indigenous Capacity Building in the Resource Sector program.	Implementation in 2022-23	Implementation of monitoring and evaluation framework
	Conduct an arts funding programs review.	June 2022	Final report of findings and recommendations completed and used to inform program changes

What we will do	How we will do it	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress
Better support businesses	Implement the action items from the Access to Business Support Services workshop.	Ongoing	Action items implemented
	Undertake public stakeholder engagement to inform proposed legislative amendments to the BDIC Act and BDIC's financial and non-financial programs.	May/June 2022	What We Heard Report released and Legislative proposal drafted
	Conduct stakeholder engagement to inform program options for each BDIC subsidiary business.	2022-23	Stakeholder engagement results received and options paper completed
	Continue to deliver labour market programs including the Self-Employment Program, the Employee Training Program, and the Wage Subsidy Program.	Ongoing	# of individuals who have received funding under these labour market programs
Expand and diversify the economy	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.	2022-23	NWT Critical Minerals Action Plan developed
	Continue to partner with the federal government, Indigenous partners, industry, and co-management boards to improve operational issues relating to the regulatory system.	2022-23	Mineral Exploration template and associated learning materials developed
		2022-23	ORS Improvements made

What we will do	How we will do it	Timeline	How we will demonstrate progress
	Increase the Mining Incentive Program budget from \$1 million to 1.3 million.	2022-23	Mining Incentive Program budget increased to \$1.3 million
	Undertake public engagement and work with the federal government to advance the work on the NWT remediation economy	Beginning May 2022	Actions identified to maximize remediation project opportunities to both Indigenous and other NWT businesses and corporations
	Implement the Skills 4 Success Action Plan (2021-2025) to meet the demand and supply needs of the NWT labour market	Ongoing	Action Plan completed and implemented
	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.	Review commenced in 2020-21, expected to conclude and recommend action taken in 2022-2	Review complete and recommended actions taken.