

Honourable Caitlin Cleveland
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment
Government of the Northwest Territories
PO Box 1320, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9

January 15, 2025

Re: Nominee Program: Prioritizing 2025 Work Permits

Dear Minister Cleveland,

Labour shortages remain a critical challenge across the Northwest Territories; thus, affecting the businesses' ability to maintain operations and pursue growth opportunities. The Northwest Territories Nominee Program (NTNP) is a critical pathway for securing skilled workers and strengthening our economy, alongside Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIAs). Immigration has consistently proven to be an effective tool to alleviate labour shortages and represents a significant opportunity for population growth and innovation in the territory.

We strongly support the NTNP as a mechanism to attract foreign workers, particularly those already in Canada, such as international students who have graduated and hold work permits. However, there are pressing issues within the program that need to be addressed to ensure its continued success and maximize its benefits for our community.

The demand for the NTNP has grown significantly in recent years, as reflected by the program reaching its 300-nomination cap by July 22, 2024—far earlier than in previous years. This dramatic growth underscores the program's effectiveness and highlights the increasing reliance of businesses on immigration pathways to address workforce needs. The early fulfillment has created a backlog of individuals unable to apply until the program reopened in 2025. Many of these individuals are now ready to apply, alongside new applicants, which places significant pressure on the current first-come, first-served application process. This approach inadvertently disadvantages individuals whose work permits are nearing expiration, leaving them and the businesses that depend on them in precarious positions.

To address these challenges, we request that the Government of the Northwest Territories consider prioritizing NTNP applications based on the proximity of applicants' work permit expiration dates. Implementing this change would help ensure:

1. Individuals with imminent work permit expirations can continue contributing to the NWT workforce without disruption.
2. Businesses are not burdened with the increased costs and inefficiencies of filling vacated positions due to worker departures.



3. The region maintains workforce stability and avoids the compounded effects of tightening federal immigration policies.

We urge the Government of the Northwest Territories to implement this recommendation in the first round of nominations starting January 16, 2025. Acting promptly will support workers, strengthen businesses, and reinforce the NTNP's role as a vital driver of economic growth. Each nomination is an investment in the territory's strength and sustainability, and prioritizing time-sensitive cases will provide workforce stability, bolster the business community, and uphold the NWT's reputation as a welcoming and innovative destination for newcomers.

We look forward to working collaboratively to ensure its continued success and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this proposal further.

Thank you for your time and leadership on this important issue.

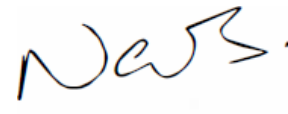
Sincerely,



Matthew Haliday
Executive Director
Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce



Francois Afane
Directeur général
CDETNO



Newton Grey
President
NWT Chamber of Commerce

