



IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Health and Social Services	Quality Specialist, Child and Family Services and Adoptions Services	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
49-10762	Yellowknife	Territorial Social Programs/HQ

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Quality Specialist for Child and Family Services (CFS) and Adoptions Services ensures that the Northwest Territories (NWT) Child and Family Services System (CFS System) and Adoption Services are aligned with best practices in child and family services and adoptions, within a northern context. The incumbent is an expert on CFS and Adoptions Services practice, quality risk management, quality improvement and quality assurance. They provide policy direction, support, and interpretation to the three Health and Social Services Authorities (HSSAs) and decision-making support to the Manager, System Quality and Performance, and Statutory Director of CFS and Adoptions Services on the most complex of child protection and adoption matters, especially those that have significant statutory, legal, and risk related impacts. The incumbent performs system wide CFS and Adoptions Services quality improvement and quality assurance activities to ensure safe care to children, youth, and families, including but not limited to the auditing of the CFS and Adoptions Services program across all communities and regions in the NWT.

SCOPE

Located in Yellowknife, the Quality Specialist for CFS and Adoptions Services, reports directly to the Manager, System Quality and Performance, and reports statutorily to the Territorial Executive Director of Child and Family Services, also referred to as the “Statutory Director” (CFS/Adoptions).

The Statutory Director is ultimately accountable for the effective delivery of the Child and Family Services Program, and the Adoptions Services Program, under two separate pieces of NWT legislation (the *NWT Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)*, and the *NWT Adoptions Act (AA)*). Under the Child and Family Services Program, the Statutory Director is accountable for the care and support of approximately 1221 children and youth per year (2021-22 Directors’ Report). The incumbent is the permanent custodian of approximately 96 children and youth



(2021-22 Directors' Report). In 2021-22, CFS conducted 867 investigations on 806 unique households and 2416 unique children and youth were interviewed in the NWT (2021-22 Director's Report). In 2021-22, 98% of children, youth and families served identified as Indigenous. The Statutory Director is accountable to implement significant and comprehensive improvements within the NWT CFS and Adoptions Services systems, and at all levels of the systems, to address deficiencies, risks, and to facilitate universal system improvement and reform.

The Quality Specialist for CFS and Adoptions Services will lead the development of key standards, protocols, and policies that drive child and family services and adoptions services best practices across the NWT. The position is required to research national and international best practices in service delivery to ensure NWT standards, protocols and policies, and tools are rooted in quality practices. The incumbent will facilitate the implementation of policies, standards, protocols, and tools, by providing education and support to staff, and will perform quality improvement and quality assurance activities to ensure safe care to children, youth, and families, including but not limited to the auditing of all CFS and Adoptions Services work sites across the NWT. The Quality Specialist(s) for CFS and Adoptions Services are appointed as statutory Departmental Deputy Directors for both CFS and Adoption Services in the implementation of statutory roles responsibilities as appointed by the Statutory Director and in so doing, make decisions of a critical nature to the safety and wellbeing of children and youth. The incumbent(s) will work closely with the leadership of all three HSSAs delivering CFS and Adoptions Services in the NWT to ensure system quality within our northern context. Moreover, the incumbent plays an essential role in supporting the administrative duties, training, and delivery of the *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act* for adoptions in the NWT.

The Quality Specialist for CFS and Adoptions Services plays a critical role in supporting the successful adoption of children in the NWT, especially that of children and youth in the permanent care of the Statutory Director. The incumbent also supports the facilitation of international adoptions, private adoptions, inter-provincial adoptions, step-parent adoptions, post adoption (referring to supports and services to adoptive families, children and youth after adoptions take place) and offers support to Custom Adoption Commissioners who process custom adoptions in the NWT. The incumbent is also responsible for reviewing and auditing the Subsidized Departmental Adoption Assistance Agreements on behalf of the Director of Adoptions and support the post Adoptions Services Program when request for information received under the *NWT Adoption Act*. Additionally, the incumbent is an expert in adoptions, post adoption policy, and service delivery and will advise the Statutory Director and Registrar of the Adoptions Registry (CFS/Adoptions) regarding the development and sustainability of a healthy and well-functioning adoption and post adoption system in the NWT. The incumbent will further be responsible for providing system leadership to all HSSAs and Regions to ensure effective adoption services training, support, and quality/risk management.



The Quality Specialist for CFS and Adoptions Services will further provide decision making support to complex individual cases, with the special perspective that includes thorough knowledge and understanding of CFS and Adoptions Services legislation, standards, procedures, policies, risk management, quality management and related legal and ethical considerations. This portfolio involves supporting children and youth with extremely challenging behaviors, who have experienced significant emotional trauma related to abuse and/or neglect and may have a variety of complex medical conditions. As part of their duties, the incumbent will also be required to manage conflicts on a variety of different levels and coordinate placement services for multiple complex cases.

The incumbent will be involved in all NWT adoption cases, facilitating with the approval provisions of suitable adoption homes, matching process between children and adoptive families, placement of children in an approved adoption home, adjudication of Subsidized Departmental Adoption Assistance Agreement and all the way through to the completion of the adoption in the judicial system. The incumbent will also be involved in individual cases in which significant issues are identified, to assist and support the best decision making possible in these situations, with a perspective that includes expert level knowledge of adoptions best practices, policies, risk management, quality management and related legal and ethical considerations.

This position is also involved in shaping the quality improvement and quality assurance agenda for the system through a review of existing best practices; a consideration of our northern context; the development of forward-thinking standards, policies, protocols on behalf of the Director and the system; and in the related training and education of staff. Finally, this position works in partnership with the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA), Tłı̄ch̄o Community Services Agency (TCSA) and Hay River Health and Social Services Authority (HRHSSA) in order to ensure that promising practices identified by those HSSAs and their staff (at all levels including the frontline) are captured appropriately in standards and processes, to support better outcomes for children, youth and families in the NWT.

This position exposes the incumbent to challenging situations involving CFS, foster care, adoptions, adoptive families including significant incidents, foster care and adoptions breakdowns, and cases in which children, youth, and families have been negatively impacted.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Leads the design and development of CFS and Adoptions Services System Standards, Procedures, Policies, and Directives on behalf of the Director.

- Develops a work plan to address the completion of standards, procedures, policies, directives, and other job functions, and provides regular reporting to management concerning their progress.



- Researches best practices in CFS and Adoptions Services across Canada and internationally, including practices in northern jurisdictions and jurisdictions serving Indigenous populations.
- Reviews best practice options with Department and HSSAs, providing recommendations on their incorporation in system standards and processes.
- Receives recommendations from HSSAs and Department with respect to promising practices that should be considered, as well as changes that should be made to standards, procedures, policies, directives to improve quality.
- Receives recommendations on changes to legislation and reviews in consultation with Director, Legal and Policy, Legislation, Communications Division.
- Develops new CFS and Adoptions Services standards, procedures, policies and directives for system feedback and Director approval.
- Communicates/educates staff using multiple forms of communication, on new CFS and Adoptions Services standards, procedures, policies, directives.
- Consults with staff on the impact of new CFS and Adoptions Services standards, procedures, policies, directives, and whether they are meeting their intended objectives. Provides updates to improve the quality of policies to better support the frontline and operations.
- Monitors and evaluates compliance to CFS and Adoptions Services standards, procedures, policies, directives. Provides feedback, support, and direction to HSSAs to help them improve compliance with requirements.
- Ensures that the CFS and Adoptions Services Standards and Procedures Manual, policies and directives are maintained and updated in a regular schedule, to ensure that they are continuously improved, relevant, and useful for the frontline, management, and senior management, and available to the public.

2. Monitors and evaluates the quality of care provided by the CFS and Adoptions Services systems and leads or supports strategic approaches in quality improvement and quality assurance.

- Conducts formal, validated NWT CFS and Adoptions Services system audits, to assess CFS and Adoptions Services effectiveness; and compliance with CFS and Adoptions Services standards, procedures, policies, directives.
- Conducts formal, validated NWT Subsidized Departmental Adoption Assistance system audits, to assess compliance with Adoptions Services standards, procedures, policies, and directives.
- Provides consultation, expert advice, and support to HSSAs to ensure the coordination of all Adoption Services and Subsidized Departmental Adoption Assistance in the NWT.
- Reviews all adoption applications, reports and Subsidized Departmental Adoption Assistance and makes recommendation to the Director of Adoptions.
- Review all Child Assessment for Adoptive Placement report and make recommendation to the Director of CFS.
- Provides recommendations to the Director of CFS and the Director of Adoptions



- regarding adoptive placement of children and youth.
- Prepares all legal documentation for the finalization of all Departmental adoptions in the NWT.
 - Liaise and collaborate with the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Inter-country Adoptions Services) and attend monthly meetings with the Provincial and Territorial Ministries providing Adoption program and services.
 - Develop, coordinate, and facilitate training and support to Custom Adoption Commissioners as required.
 - Identifies system challenges that may be impeding quality care and quality-based Adoptions Services Program as well as provides recommendations, support, information, and/or direction to support quality improvement and quality assurance.
 - Establishes, in conjunction with Departmental Social Epidemiologist and project management resources, processes for soliciting feedback from staff, clients and/or other key stakeholders on client/stakeholder experience and recommendations for improving experience. Informs the CFS and Adoptions Services systems on client/stakeholder feedback and supports the system in developing quality improvement planning.
 - Monitors quality of care issues in CFS and Adoptions Services through the Matrix system, using this technology to provide insight into practice challenges, quality control issues, compliance issues. Provides information, insight and works collaboratively with system leaders to establish quality improvement initiatives to address deficiencies.
 - Participates in formalized quality improvement processes through the Director's Coordinating Committee as required, which is a working group designed to tackle specific quality issues identified by the system. Supports this Committee in establishing plan-do-study-act processes and other related quality initiatives.
 - Participates in the Assistant Directors Forum, the Manager/Supervisor's Forum and the Child and Youth Fatality Review Committee, if required. These Forums are designed to enhance planning and improve communication and coordination between the Department and the HSSAs. The incumbent(s) will provide information, recommendations, and support to these forums to address quality issues and move system quality agendas in a proactive direction.
- 3. Provides direction, and/or support and advice to HSSAs, including senior and middle management, and frontline staff, to effectively address complex CFS quality and risk issues.**
- Reviews all significant incidents as reported by HSSAs pertaining to CFS, Adoptions Services and post adoptions support as well as provides recommendations, direction, or advice for each incident.
 - Ensures that all significant incidents are appropriately addressed by HSSAs or Department, and that there are appropriate risk mitigation strategies to prevent future incidents.



- Assists the Director of CFS and Adoptions Services, in responding to formal complaints or information requests received by the Department, and/or through the Minister's Office.
- Assists with the completion of briefing materials for cabinet, on behalf of the CFS and Adoptions Services Programs.
- Consults with the Director of CFS, Director's lawyer and/or GNWT Risk Management on significant incidents in which harm occurred to a child, youth, parent, or other stakeholder, in their experience with the CFS system.
- Educates the system on potential approaches and processes that should be put into place to mitigate risks.
- Provides information to the system on significant incidents and near misses, to educate the system on potential risks and processes that should be put into place to mitigate risks.
- Conducts investigations and/or file reviews for Adoptions Services and in cases in which a child and youth, family member, or system stakeholder was harmed, as per direction of the Director of CFS and Adoptions Services.
- Provides consultation, support, and direction to HSSAs and staff, on complex CFS and Adoptions Services cases and/or cases in which harm has occurred to a client or stakeholder. Follows up to ensure that matters are appropriately addressed.
- Assists the NTHSSA's Training Leads, DHSS Training Specialist and Curriculum Development Specialist with the development, and delivery of the Adoptions Worker Statutory Core Training.
- Reviews existing adoptions services training and identifies gaps/issues, providing recommendations for improvement. Assist the DHSS Curriculum Specialist and Training Specialist, in facilitating the design, development and/or improvement of adoptions training that is culturally appropriate and in line with best practices in other jurisdictions. Monitors the delivery of adoptions services training to ensure a standardized approach, and that training requirements are successfully met.
- Collaborates with the appointed Adoptions Workers, and/or other stakeholders on adoptions projects, processes, and the establishment of an adoption's framework, and training implementation across the NWT.
- Recommends the appointment of the Adoption Workers to the Director of Adoptions upon successful completion of the statutory adoption training and ensures that the legislative mandate is met.

4. Fulfills decision making responsibilities as Deputy Director, for the Department.

- As per the Director's Accountability Framework and Table of Delegations, the incumbent will serve as a Deputy Director of CFS and Adoptions Services on behalf of the Director of CFS and Adoptions Services, making decisions and approving requests as per the authorities outlined with their appointment.
- Provide Deputy Director responsibilities during working hours, and after-hours on-call, on a schedule, 365 days per year.



- Participate in the Directors of Child Welfare meetings on behalf of the Director, as required.
- 5. Responsible for performing the duties of Deputy Registrar under the *Adoptions Act and the regulations*.**
- Ensure appropriate storage of departmental records related to adoption.
 - Ensure that the registry for completed adoptions under the *Adoptions Act* is maintained in an appropriate manner.
 - Assist the Registrar in reviewing post adoption inquiries and determining eligibility of the disclosing information from the adoption records.
 - Assist the Registrar in completing searches for adopted persons or birth parents to facilitate reunification between parties.
 - Acts as a liaison between the Registrar, NWT Vital Statistics and the Governance and Band Administration Registrar, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.
- 6. Oversees the monitoring, coordination, training and Appointment of Custom Adoption Commissioners under the *NWT Aboriginal Custom Adoption and Reconciliation Act*.**
- Liaises with Policy, Legislation and Communications and Indigenous Band Organizations for the facilitation of Nomination Reference Letters for new or returning Custom Adoption Commissioners.
 - Generates the instructions for the Minister to provide the instrument to appoint the Nominated community members.
 - Tracks the issuing and registering of the Custom Adoption Commissioners Appointment.
 - Provides and develop training instructions for new Custom Adoption Commissioners in collaboration with the DHSS Curriculum Specialist, Vital Statistics, and the Supreme Court.
 - Coordinates face to-face training and knowledge exchanges amongst Adoption Commissioners and Legal Counsel as well as Vital Statistics.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

No unusual demands.

Environmental Conditions

No unusual conditions.



Sensory Demands

No unusual demands.

Mental Demands

No unusual demands.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- Knowledge of and/or the ability to acquire knowledge of the CFS program and Adoptions Services program.
- Knowledge of and/or the ability to acquire knowledge of CFS and Adoptions Services legislation, standards, procedures, directives, policies, legal requirements, and risk management requirements.
- Knowledge of program management.
- Knowledge of continuous quality improvement processes.
- Knowledge of mental health disorders including addictions, behavioral disorders, and disabilities.
- Knowledge of trauma and trauma related behavioral disorders. Knowledge and application of clinical approaches used to address mental health, addictions, and other related clinical conditions that are related to child protection issues.
- Knowledge of and / or the ability to acquire and apply knowledge of NWT-wide CFS and Adoptions Services, resources, and communities, including referral requirements and liaison /referral experience.
- Ability to be sensitive to cultural and geographical considerations to assist in identifying concerns, assessing, and discharging children/youth/families from treatment facilities.
- Communication, documentation, and interpersonal skills with the ability to work with CFS and Adoptions Services system leaders, senior/middle management for service providers, and all levels of staff.
- Ability to work independently, exercising sound organizational and prioritization skills with the ability to manage challenging situations.
- Ability to apply creative and innovative approaches to standards, procedures, policies and directives with CFS and Adoptions Services to meet territorial needs.
- Written and oral communication skills including listening, observing, identifying, and reporting.
- Skilled in advocacy, contract negotiations, conflict management/resolution, financial management and budgeting.
- Assessment skills with respect to clinical presentation and clinical decision-making skills.
- Organizational skills, including ability to prioritize complex issues, time management, analytical facilitation, and presentation skills.
- Assessment and clinical decision-making skills with respect to clinical presentation.



- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

A Bachelor of Social Work Degree and three (3) years of direct experience in Child and Family Services and/or Adoptions Services.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Position Security

- No criminal records check required
- Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

French language (check one if applicable)

- French required (must identify required level below)
Level required for this Designated Position is:
ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION
Basic (B) Intermediate (I) Advanced (A)
READING COMPREHENSION:
Basic (B) Intermediate (I) Advanced (A)
WRITING SKILLS:
Basic (B) Intermediate (I) Advanced (A)
- French preferred

Indigenous language: Select language

- Required
- Preferred