



Community Harvesters Assistance Program (CHAP)



What is CHAP?

The Community Harvesters Assistance Program (CHAP) supports harvesting as an important cultural practice. The program provides opportunities for community members to have access to country foods for subsistence and promotes the continuation of traditional practices, land-based livelihoods and the traditional economy.

Funding is provided annually to NWT Indigenous governments or Indigenous organizations (Renewable Resources Councils, Hunters and Trappers Committee, etc.) who are responsible for administering the funds to best support their members.

Why did we review it?

This program has been running for over 20 years and there have been many changes to hunting and trapping (including changing climate, rising fuel cost, fur prices, etc.). It's important to make sure that the program is useful, easy to access, and the funds continue to support NWT Indigenous residents in the best way possible.

How did we gather information?

Starting in 2019, the Department of Environment and Climate Change (ECC) held open houses in 18 NWT communities and conducted a public survey to gather information on what is important to residents in terms of supporting sustainable livelihoods. During this process, residents said they wanted CHAP to be reviewed.

As a result, ECC began a focused review of CHAP in 2021. Virtual meetings were held with Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, renewable resource boards and councils, hunters and trappers' committees, NWT residents and harvesters. There was an online public survey, direct emails and a phone line to leave feedback. ECC asked what was working, what were some of the challenges or barriers and what changes might help.



What We Heard:

A *What We Heard* Report, released in 2021, summarizes the information we gathered in 2019. The main points are:

- The program is useful and should continue but could be improved.
- Funding amounts are no longer enough to support harvesters, especially with rising costs of living, supplies, and fuel.
- Some organizations did not know about the program.
- Clear and easy to understand guidelines are needed to explain who is eligible for funding and what it can be used for.
- Reporting tools should be easier to use.

People also shared ideas to improve the program:

- Help people who are currently not living in their home community.
- Help new harvesters learn skills and get equipment and supplies.
- Teach harvesting skills to youth.
- Review guidelines more regularly to make sure they are inclusive and fair.
- Give funding more than once a year.
- Allow funds to be used to buy larger items, including items that could be shared.



CHAP Evaluation Summary (2023):

The evaluation report outlines how ECC will respond to the *What We Heard* report. It identifies eight key actions to strengthen the program:

1. Make the program's goals and outcomes clearer.
2. Set clear performance measures and explain what information will be collected to track the program's progress.
3. Make resources more available, accessible and fair to everyone.
4. Review and update how funding is calculated and shared.
5. Refine and clearly communicate program guidelines.
6. Improve how the program is promoted and shared with the public.
7. Explore ways to improve access to the program for people who do not live in their home community.
8. Identify opportunities to provide training and support programs that work alongside CHAP.

What's Next?

Work to improve the program will continue over time. All feedback will help complete a formal evaluation in 2028.

Share your thoughts

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