

## **Skills 4 Success Initiative**

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) launched the Skills 4 Success (S4S) Initiative with the goal to improve employment success for NWT residents, close skill gaps for in-demand jobs, and more effectively respond to employer, industry and community needs. This work supports the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly's priority to foster lifelong learning, skills development, training, and employability.

### **Engagement with Stakeholders Discussion Papers and Stakeholder Engagement Report**

The S4S Initiative began in 2014 and was designed to be an inclusive process, to gain public feedback and input from stakeholder groups. This was achieved with the aid of discussion papers and a series of regional focus group sessions targeted towards students, educators and trainers, employers, job seekers and unemployed persons, employed persons and retirees.

In spring of 2015, the Skills 4 Success Symposium and online survey provided further opportunity for NWT residents to join the conversations to help shape skills training and postsecondary education strategies to align with labour market needs and demands in the NWT. Over 700 people across the NWT have so far engaged with S4S and a collective call for change to build a strong culture of education and employment was prevalent throughout the dialogue and discussions.

All stakeholder feedback was summarized in the S4S Engagement Report and informed the development of a 10-year strategic framework for the Skills 4 Success Initiative.

### **Skills 4 Success 10-Year Strategic Framework**

In October 2015, the GNWT tabled the *Skills 4 Success 10-Year Strategic Framework* which has four foundational goals for action:

**1) Increase Skill Levels through Relevant Education and Training**

Skills development and postsecondary education programming addresses labour market demands and builds long-term capacity.

**2) Bridge Education and Employment Gaps through Targeted Supports**

NWT residents access supports and incentives that are relevant, effective and aligned with NWT labour market needs.

**3) Grow the NWT Workforce through Partnerships**

NWT employers are able to recruit a capable workforce that expands and maximizes residents' skills, attracts newcomers to fill shortages, and retains people in the NWT to contribute to the ongoing growth of the economy.

#### **4) Improve Decision Making with Relevant Labour Market Information**

NWT residents, other prospective workers and NWT employers have easy access to relevant, accurate and timely labour market information to make informed career and business decisions.

The Framework is the first step in a 10-year process to ensure that the North's education and training system keeps pace with the changing dynamics of its labour markets, and addresses the ongoing recruitment and retention challenges in the NWT. But before determining the appropriate actions to take, it became important to first understand the NWT's labour market and changing needs.

#### **NWT Labour Market Forecast and Needs Assessment**

As part of the S4S Initiative, the GNWT recognized the need for solid labour market information and partnered with The Conference Board of Canada to examine the NWT's forecasted labour demand over the next 5, 10 and 15 years to better understand the education and training requirements.

The results of the assessment are presented in two separate documents: the *Northwest Territories Labour Market Forecast and Needs Assessment* (LMFNA) and a companion document entitled, *Labour Market Information Resource* (LMI Resource). These two documents hold a wealth of information from which to make evidence-based decisions, help more NWT residents successfully get jobs and help businesses find the employees they need.

The LMFNA summarizes the general education and skill levels that the NWT's labour force will need to seize employment opportunities based on three economic scenarios that are described in detail. The LMI Resource provides in-depth analysis of the LMFNA with over 200 charts and tables of data. Both reports will help the GNWT and stakeholders better understand the characteristics of the NWT's current labour market and resident labour force, as well as anticipate employer hiring needs under different market conditions up to the year 2030.

High level findings from the LMFNA are:

- Over the next 15 years, it is forecasted there will be 28,500 to 36,700 job openings in the NWT, of which 78% will typically require some form of postsecondary education and/or extensive work experience and seniority.
- Approximately 98% of the 28,500 job openings will be to replace workers who have retired or moved from the NWT.

The development of the LMFNA supports Goal Four – which is one of the key pillars of the Strategic Framework and essential for supporting improved decision making across the NWT.

## **Skills 4 Success 4-Year Action Plan**

The GNWT will use this important labour market information to develop a four-year Action Plan which supports the Skills 4 Success Strategic Framework goals and priorities. The GNWT will also use the stakeholder feedback from all the previous engagements.

As development of the Action Plan gets underway, the GNWT will provide further opportunity for stakeholder engagement to share input on proposed actions before they become final and are approved.

The Action Plan is anticipated to be complete before the end of the year. It will state clear objectives with measures and will identify who is responsible for what activity. It will be supported by a Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan to track and report on results and measure successes.

The Skills 4 Success vision is NWT residents have the skills, knowledge and attitudes for employment success. We want every child, youth and adult to have opportunities to succeed in life, whether it's advancing their education, gaining employment, or seizing a business opportunity. Providing these opportunities through partnership, comprehensive information, and strategically developed programs is critical to our overall success as a territory, and we have heard the call to create those opportunities.