



Open Government Town Hall

Minister Responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency

The Minister Responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency was created in the 18th Assembly as a commitment by Premier Bob McLeod to make our government more open and accountable. The Honourable Louis Sebert is the first Minister to hold this position. The Minister is responsible for setting the government wide direction on engagement and transparency.

What are these meetings for?

The Minister is developing an Open Government Policy and strategy to set consistent direction for all Departments to being more open. The policy will apply to all government departments, but will be implemented by each separately. Work is also being done to develop a public engagement strategy that would apply to all government engagement activities. This will make sure that the government takes a consistent approach to including public input in the decision making process. The input from these public meetings will feed into that work.

What do we hope to achieve?

To help develop the Open Government Policy and strategy for the Government it is important that it reflects the values and input from the public. Even though many of the changes are going to be inside government, how all of that affects the public is the concern. Departments may have slightly different approaches depending on what their focus is, but all will be more open.

What is Open Government?

Open Government has three main areas of focus, each is involved in making government more open to the public. The three focus areas identified by the government are used around the world to help define open government:

Open Information – Refers to the information that the government makes available to the public. This includes everything from financial accountability information to reports and studies.

Open Dialogue – Refers to how government engages the public and involves individuals and organizations meaningfully in the decision making process.

Open Data – Refers to the way government publishes information, making sure it is in the formats you need it in to make use of it.

Key Principles

To start the consultation process, the Minister has developed key principles that will set direction for this new policy. They are:

1. Government data, information, and decision-making should be accessible in a way that is responsive to the needs and expectations of NWT residents
2. How open government is understood in the NWT should reflect territorial culture and priorities
3. Citizen participation into potential government decisions should be encouraged
4. Access to government data, information and dialogue should be timely, simple, and available across multiple platforms
5. Increased accountability and transparency should result from open government policy and practice
6. Use of government data and information, along with public participation in decision making, should help identify opportunities to improve programs and services
7. Public services should be open by design, to build a government that becomes open by default
8. Reasonable limits should be placed on information sharing to protect the unauthorized collection, use, or disclosure of information

Discussion Questions

1. What does an Open Government mean to you?
 2. How can government better include residents and outside organizations in decision making?
 3. How do you access information about the government? Online? Media? Libraries? Other methods?
 4. Do you feel that government values public input? In what ways can government improve this?
 5. Are there any particular areas where you would like to see more open information available? (e.g., culture, finances, procurement, science, geospatial, etc)
 6. Is the information you need easily accessible? What would make it easier for you to access or use?
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