



Volunteer Support Initiative Status Report

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2005-2007

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Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

As Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA), I am pleased to present the 2005-2007 Volunteer Support Initiative Status Report.

In the Northwest Territories there is a rich history of volunteering and community involvement. Volunteers are a critical part of community life in the North. They provide a range of valuable services and actions. They are firefighters, mentors, organizers and individuals who are dedicated to the betterment of their communities.

I am proud of the work undertaken and accomplished by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) through the Northwest Territories Volunteer Support Initiative. This report outlines the actions taken by MACA and the GNWT, along with other partners to address the challenges of recruiting, retaining, recognizing and rewarding volunteers. The report also provides a good indication of activities that we will undertake to support volunteer programs in the near future.

For more information on Volunteer Programs in the Northwest Territories, please contact the Municipal and Community Affairs office in your region.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a final flourish.

Honourable Michael McLeod
Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs

The Volunteer Support Initiative Background

In November 1997, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers. Volunteer service was defined as actions that individuals carry out for the well being of their neighbours, community or society at large for which they receive no remuneration.

In 2000, Volunteer Canada and the Government of Canada launched and supported the International Year of the Volunteer celebration in Canada. In 2002, the Government of Canada announced an International Year of the Volunteer legacy that included funding for the Canada Volunteerism Initiative. Volunteer Canada and Imagine Canada were selected to deliver the program.

The Canada Volunteerism Initiative was developed to promote the participation in and contribution of volunteers to Canadian society. An element of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative was the establishment in each province and territory of a Host Centre to administer and support the work of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative Local Networks. Volunteer NWT was established for this purpose. Sport North has acted as the corporate host for the organization. Supported by federal funding, Volunteer NWT has played an active role in developing support for volunteers and raising the profile of the voluntary sector.

In 2005, the Government of the Northwest Territories Volunteer Declaration, a statement of commitment and support to the voluntary sector, was announced. A related Action Plan outlining the steps that the GNWT will take to promote and support volunteerism was announced at the same time. Volunteer NWT was instrumental in assisting with the development of the Declaration and Action Plan.



The Volunteer Support Initiative Introduction

Northerners have a rich history of volunteering and community involvement, from community feasts and weddings to fire departments, sporting events and helping neighbours in times of stress and crisis. The NWT Volunteer Support Initiative was developed to showcase these great traditions and encourage younger generations to follow suit. This report provides a progress report on the work completed to date on implementing the goals and objectives of the Initiative.

Progress Report on Implementation of the Goals and Objectives

Address the challenges of recruiting, retaining, recognizing and rewarding volunteers.

Raise Public Awareness and Understanding of Volunteering.

1. Collect and maintain factual information on volunteers and voluntary organizations in NWT communities.

Statistics Canada has agreed to include the three Territories in the National Survey on Volunteering and Giving. This survey provides qualitative data on volunteer participation rates. The last report was completed in 2004. It is anticipated that the study will be conducted every three to four years. A summary of NWT data is included.

Prior to inclusion in the national survey, the NWT Bureau of Statistics collected some volunteer participation data as part of the Labour Force Survey and other survey projects.

2. Launch a public education campaign to communicate the role and value of volunteers and voluntary organizations in NWT society.

Public education messaging on the importance of volunteers is included in the Outstanding Volunteer Awards Program, National Volunteer Week and International Volunteer Day advertising sponsored by MACA.

Volunteer NWT has been successful in raising the profile of volunteers and volunteer organizations through a number of initiatives including community workshops, a regular email newsletter and the positive relationship they have established with various media outlets resulting in regular media stories on local and territorial volunteers and volunteering.

The Volunteer NWT website (www.volunteernwt.ca) also provides a range of information of volunteer resources, news affecting volunteers and opportunities for organizations working with volunteers, amongst other information.

Progress Report on Implementation of the Goals and Objectives

Promote Active Participation and Good Citizenship Through Volunteering.

3. Encourage and support future generations of NWT volunteers.

The Outstanding Volunteer Awards Program is the Department's primary volunteer recognition program. MACA also sponsors the Fire Service Merit Awards that recognize both volunteer and paid personnel working in this sector. Both programs serve to encourage and inspire future generations of volunteers.

In 2001, the Department introduced the youth category of the NWT Outstanding Volunteer Awards Program. Since the inception of the program, nominations of significant youth volunteers have been exceptional with awards being presented to a total of seven outstanding youth to date.

The Youth Ambassadors Programs at the 2007 Canada Winter Games allowed the Department to recognize youth from most NWT communities and to provide them with a significant volunteer development opportunity. The Department is investigating ways of continuing this program at future multisport games events.

4. Promote the value, benefits, reasons, feelings and spirit of family volunteering.

Volunteer NWT has offered a regular series of community based volunteer development workshops that promote the value and benefits of volunteering.

Volunteer NWT, in cooperation with MACA, has also published a series of resources that support and promote the benefits of volunteers. The resources are available on the Volunteer NWT website. Topics include:

- Board Governance and Management
- Community Resources
- Event Management
- Freebies
- Fundraising
- Marketplace
- Organization Development Resources



Progress Report on Implementation of the Goals and Objectives

- Resources for Volunteers
- Societies Registration Resources
- Training Opportunities
- Volunteer Management

5. Investigate and implement tangible incentives to support volunteers in the NWT.

In September 2006, the Minister recognized a number of key sport and recreation regional and partner volunteers at the Champions for Children Dinner sponsored by Sport North Federation.

6. Support the sharing of information and build support for all forms of voluntary action.

The Department's regional staff, in cooperation with sport and recreation partners, has incorporated volunteer development, information and training sessions into semi-annual regional workshops.

Build Capacity Among Volunteers and Voluntary Organizations to Advocate and Respond to Community and Social Service Needs.

Strengthen and Expand the Skills and Knowledge of Volunteers and Voluntary Organizations.

7. Build capacity among volunteers and voluntary organizations to advocate and respond to community and social service needs.

The GNWT is developing a resource booklet that will outline, in plain language, the financial policies that guide funding to volunteer related organizations, and the rules non-governmental organizations must follow to apply for and report on funding received from the government. Some of these rules and regulations will be updated to assist in the application and reporting process.

MACA is working with Sport Canada and Sport North Federation to establish four to six Executive Director positions to support the operation of Territorial Sport Organizations.



Progress Report on Implementation of the Goals and Objectives

Seek Financial Stability Within Voluntary Organizations.

8. Review the establishment of an NWT volunteer network and resource centre to coordinate and monitor voluntary sector training and development.

The Department supported the 2006 workshop on volunteerism in Aboriginal communities sponsored by Volunteer NWT. Topics included promotion for and support of volunteerism at the community level.

The Department continues to provide direct support to volunteer training through the Volunteer Development Fund.

The NWT Chapter of the Canadian Evaluation Society has offered one on one evaluation services for the non-government organization sector.

The Department's School of Community Government continues to provide a wide range of related training. Volunteer organizations are able to attend on a space available basis or through funding support from the Volunteer Development Fund.

Seek Financial Stability Within Voluntary Organizations.

9. Clarify and refine government funding / financing policies and practices related to the voluntary sector.

The Department provided funding support for the work of Volunteer NWT's Finance Action Group whose mandate was to research and make recommendations on ways of clarifying and refining GNWT funding / financing policies related to non-government organizations.

A GNWT Deputy Ministers committee has responded to the Group's recommendations. The GNWT, amongst other items, will be developing an 'easy to access' handbook and workshop for non-government organizations and government staff on how to effectively navigate related regulations.

Progress Report on Implementation of the Goals and Objectives

10. Pursue alternative mechanisms for diversifying voluntary sector revenues.

The Department provided initial support to assist with the establishment of the KidSport Fund operated by Sport North Federation in the NWT. KidSport is a national charity that brings sport and needy kids together - so all kids can play. It is designed to provide financially disadvantaged children with the opportunity to participate in community sport programs.

Promote and Strengthen Healthy and Equal Relationships Within the Voluntary Sector and With the Government and Business Sectors Including Aboriginal Organizations in Each Sector.

Launch New Ways of Working With Communities.

11. Promote and support the need for paid volunteer coordinator position(s).

The Department has established regional Youth and Volunteer Program internship staff positions to improve the support provided to smaller community organizations.

MACA is working with Sport Canada and Sport North Federation to establish four to six Executive Director positions to support the operation of Territorial Sport Organizations.

12. Explore options for voluntary sector partnership funds.

The Department provided financial support to Volunteer NWT's Finance Action Group. Non-Governmental Organizations will benefit from the partnership between the Finance Action Group and the GNWT which will provide awareness programs and information on how to effectively pursue funding.

Progress Report on Implementation of the Goals and Objectives

Recognize and Protect the Voluntary Sector's Role in Promoting Active Citizen Participation in Society and Advocating for, and Influencing Public Policy, Programs and Legislation.

13. Negotiate and implement an agreement to guide government and voluntary sector relationships at the territorial level.

The GNWT Declaration on Volunteering and Volunteer Support Initiatives were approved in 2005.

14. Work to establish a mechanism to support voluntary sector advocacy.

Volunteer NWT has filled the role of advocating for the voluntary sector in the NWT.

Link GNWT and Federal Government Support Initiatives.

15. Facilitate connections and relationships within the NWT's voluntary sector and connecting the sector with federal initiatives that support volunteers and volunteer organizations.

The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs has strongly advocated for the continuation of Federal government support for Volunteer NWT. The Department has provided Volunteer NWT with a one time contribution of \$50,000 in 2007-2008 to assist the organization in seeking other funding sources to continue its operations.

16. Identify and where possible assist in linking federal and territorial voluntary support initiatives, such as the national Volunteer Support Initiative, to help address technology training and other user support needs among NWT volunteers and voluntary organizations.

The Government of Canada Volunteer Support Initiative has been discontinued. The Department continues to support the development of volunteer capacity in the area of technology training through the Volunteer Development Fund and training offered in regional workshops and through the School of Community Government.

Contact Information

For more information Programs, please contact the MACA office in your region.

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