



MACA SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028



INTRODUCTION

The Minister and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) are responsible for the development and maintenance of community governments, responsive and responsible to the residents, with sufficient legal authority and resources to carry out community responsibilities, to provide public programs and services essential to good community life and to deal effectively with other government organizations. The Minister and Department are also responsible for protecting the interests of consumers. The Department accomplishes this mandate by supporting capable, accountable and self-directed community governments to provide a safe, sustainable and healthy environment for community residents.¹

The School of Community Government (the School) supports community government staff and elected officials to develop the knowledge, skills, abilities and habits they need to fulfill their mandated responsibilities related to good governance, public safety and delivering programs and services. The School achieves this by providing community governments with the operational/administrative/technical training opportunities that staff need to fulfill their roles and responsibilities.

Training courses and other learning opportunities are available in the following subject areas:

- governance
- public safety, including fire protection
- recreation, including facilities management and program leadership
- public works, including water and waste management
- finance and administration
- management and supervision

Learning and development (L&D) describe organizations' ongoing efforts to improve employee performance and workplace satisfaction through various learning methods and programs. These efforts have taken on a broad range of applications in the modern workplace—from instruction in highly specific job skills to long-term professional development. Training programs generally have very

¹ https://www.fin.gov.nt.ca/sites/fin/files/resources/2020-21_to_2023-24_gwnt_business_plan_for_website.pdf

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specific and quantifiable goals, like operating a particular piece of machinery, understanding a specific process, or performing certain procedures with great precision. Developmental programs, on the other hand, concentrate on broader skills that apply to a wider variety of situations, such as decision-making, communication, leadership skills, and goal setting and are often informal.

The School has traditionally sought to fulfill its mandate of enhancing the competencies and capacity of community government elected officials and staff through the traditional delivery of courses taught in a classroom setting. External factors have challenged this approach, particularly the global pandemic. Twenty years of research indicate that adult learners are most likely to learn when they direct the learning, can immediately apply the new knowledge to real-life situations and can draw from their life experiences to help with their learning.

Except for the Advancing Local Government Administrators Program (ALGAP) the School almost exclusively focuses on training. While training, delivered through formal programs, can address skills gaps or re-training needs, it does not address all the learning needs of someone new to a job. The 70/20/10 approach focuses on learning in the context of the workplace. Seventy percent of what an employee needs to know they learn on the job by doing, 20% is learned through mentoring and coaching and 10% through formal courses. The 70/20/10 approach recognizes employee learning and enhanced performance through these three primary methods.

This Strategic Plan has been prepared to guide the re-alignment work of the School to improve and support the development of workplace skills and learning.

The School will transition from relying solely on traditional classroom delivery to embracing multiple modes of learning, including self-directed online courses, virtual classrooms, coaching, mentoring, case studies, work exchange, discussion forums, videos, reading and other practices in grounded adult education. The School will work collaboratively with advisory committees, which will have representation from community governments and MACA's Regional Offices and headquarters, to ensure that all voices are heard.

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This Strategic Plan has been prepared through discussions with Senior Administrative Officers (SAOs) Band managers, and MACA senior management committee. This Strategic Plan will be strengthened through consultation with advisory committees. The Strategic Plan is intended to be fluid and will be revisited annually to ensure that it reflects the current operational context.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2023 TO 2028

Vision

Community government staff and elected officials will have the knowledge, abilities, skills, and habits (KASH) to effectively perform their work and deliver programs and services to community residents.

Mission

The School will assess learning needs, identify solutions and connect community government staff and elected officials to workplace learning and development opportunities. This will be accomplished through partnerships with northern non-governmental organizations and Aurora College, hosting and referrals to accredited industry training, and the development of customized learning solutions.

Values

The School will strive to uphold the following values in delivering on its Vision and Mission:

- *Respect* – treating community governments, learners, team members, partners and stakeholders with mutual respect and sensitivity, recognizing the importance of Indigenous cultures and values. We respect all individuals and value their contributions.
- *Community-focused* – listening to community government needs and honouring the commitments that we have made.
- *Flexibility* – providing community governments with learning opportunities that are tailored to the needs of the individual and the community.

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- *Collaboration* – working with community governments and partners to deliver training that is “fit-for-purpose.”
- *Evidence-based* - using best practices and established learning and development practices to design, develop and deliver effective learning solutions.
- *Confidence* –to address the root cause of the identified learning need.
- *Quality learning* - products and solutions will meet both adult education and plain language principles.

Principles

- The School of Community Government supports the development of KASH among elected community officials and community government staff.
- The School supports learning focused on the learner's needs and interests.

The School has developed four goals based on workplace learning and development best practices. The rationale for, and the objectives to realize, each goal are presented.

An Action Plan has been developed to accompany this Strategic Plan. The action plan will guide the division's work over the next five years.

GOALS

Goal 1: Provide custom learning solutions to employees, managers and elected officials to address performance/knowledge gaps.

Learning solutions will assist community government staff and elected officials with specific learning needs.

Actions To Achieve This Goal:

1. Support community governments to understand the learning needs of elected officials and staff and develop a plan to assist learners in fulfilling training needs.
2. Offer customized workshops to address specific group learning needs.
3. Support community governments in developing and implementing strategic planning/priority setting.

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4. Support MACA divisions/program areas, where operationally feasible, to create custom workshops in their area of specialty.

Goal 2: Transform the School from a program centred to a learner-centred organization becoming the division of Community Government Workplace Learning & Development.

The division will deliver and support evidenced-based workplace learning and training specific to community governments.

Actions To Achieve This Goal:

1. Work with community governments through advisory committees to identify the unique roles and responsibilities of those employed by community governments.
2. Partner with K-12 education specialists to bridge education gaps.
3. Develop and review standard operating procedures (SOPs) to allow for consistent support of learning and development of community government staff and council.
4. Adopt standardized processes for individual learning needs assessment, monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes.

Goal 3: Work closely with the NWT Association of Communities, the Local Government Administrators of the NWT and Education, Culture and Employment to bridge education and experience gaps through targeted supports.

Community government positions will have established core skills and competency profiles with paths to promote succession planning and job satisfaction.

Actions To Achieve This Goal:

1. Have sector-endorsed occupation certification for community government occupations.
2. Establish a suite of occupation-specific resources to aid in identifying and supporting learning needs.

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3. Pursue partnership opportunities for job shadowing and enhanced workplace learning of employees new to municipal services.
4. Create an SAO handbook that connects an SAO with MACA programs and services.

Goal 4: Establish a robust learning environment.

Effective and appropriate learning resources will be established and managed to provide community government staff and elected officials with access to learning in various formats.

Actions To Achieve This Goal:

1. Expand learning solutions beyond classroom courses to include a broad range of learning opportunities.
2. Develop and support a pool of northern instructors and mentors.
3. Establish foundational courses and a set schedule for delivery.
4. Align human and financial resources consistent with the School's goals and objectives.

THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The School is a small and highly skilled unit of 10 people, led by a Director who is supported by a Manager, Coordinator, eLearning Administrator, Training and Admin Coordinator and Training and Development Advisors in 4 regional centres. The School is also highly collaborative within the GNWT and is supported by MACA's regional offices, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and Aurora College in its program delivery.

In delivering its programs and services, the School also works closely with external partners, including the NWT Association of Communities (NWTAC) and Local Government Administrators of the NWT (LGANT). For instance, the School's Training Development Advisors (TDAs) travel to communities with ECE's Career Development Officers. The School works with Aurora College to deliver training for community governments (e.g., Heavy Equipment Operator Refresher), and the

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School works with LGANT and NWTAC to develop and deliver training for Senior Administrative Officers and Elected Officials.

IMPLEMENTATION

To implement the Plan, the School of Community Government has developed an action plan detailing specific commitments, actions and anticipated results for each action. This Plan includes:

- Objectives and Actions to achieve each goal.
- Linkage to goals and objectives
- Timelines
- Anticipated outputs.

Annual engagement will be conducted to ensure that the Plan remains relevant and evolves to meet the changing needs of community governments, partners and stakeholders.

These annual engagements will assess the Plan's implementation against the Logic Model and the operational Plan.

CONCLUSION

Training and development activities are essential to achieve highly competent, strong community governments. These goals address community governments' challenges, including staff turnover, the need for almost on-demand training, skilled mentors and tailored learning approaches to complex problems.

The School will undertake a broad range of activities to support community governments. The Plan identifies goals and objectives for developing and implementing strategic actions to enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities of community government staff and elected official.