



Breaking Trail Together

An inclusive Yukon Public Service

Strategic Plan 2019-2029



'Breaking Trail Together, an Inclusive Yukon Public Service' was developed in collaboration between the Government of Yukon and with self-governing Yukon First Nations. The Development Team consisted of representatives from Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Champagne and Aishihik First Nation, Kluane First Nation, the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and the Government of Yukon. All self-governing First Nations were invited to participate.

Breaking Trail Together



Inclusive workplaces benefit Yukoners by ensuring the public service includes multiple perspectives, and is reflective of the communities we serve. Beyond the practical benefits, Yukon government (YG) has a legal obligation to develop and implement a plan to attain the goals of “a representative public service located in the Yukon,” as outlined in 22.4.0 in each Yukon First Nation Final Agreement. Currently, YG’s Aboriginal employee representation rate is approximately 14.7%¹, and the current working-age population (ages 20-64) of Aboriginal people in Yukon is 21.7%².

Throughout this plan, the term Yukon First Nation people is used, however, it is understood that its strategies and actions are specifically intended to focus on Yukon Indian People, as defined within the Final Agreements.

This ten-year strategic plan highlights the values that guide our work, our vision, objectives and actions required for YG to deliver on its obligations. YG will strive towards recruitment that is

**FINAL AGREEMENTS
SCHEDULE A – CHAPTER 22**

4.0 Government Employment*

Government shall develop and implement a plan which will include measures designed to attain the goals of:

- A representative public service located in the Yukon, taking into account the aboriginal/non-aboriginal and gender make-up of the population of the Yukon

*numbering and wording varies slightly between agreements

¹ YG Workforce Census Data (self-identified)

² Yukon Bureau of Statistics – Census 2016 data

responsive and barrier-free; work environments that are culturally safe and supportive; and training and development that support Yukon First Nation employees.

Values that guide our work

YG and Yukon First Nation government (YFNG) representatives have collectively developed this strategic plan, which embodies a shared vision of a Yukon public service. These efforts reflect YG's commitment to achieving its obligations within the Final Agreements, and to broader reconciliation efforts.

These core values are the foundation of this plan and will continue to be at the forefront of all implementation activities.

- Working together in a mutually beneficial way, to achieve representation where public service employment opportunities exist, as outlined within the Final Agreements;
- Respect and appreciation for different perspectives; and
- Building and maintaining effective working relationships between all levels of government.

Vision

Our vision is that we will be a national trailblazer in achieving a representative Yukon public service, inclusive of Yukon First Nation people.

“Breaking Trail Together” takes a collective approach - making intentional efforts across all governments in Yukon (territorial, First Nation, federal and municipal) to build capacity, support inclusive workplaces, and achieve representation. This new way of looking at the Yukon public service is not about pooling numbers to reach representation, it is about working together to achieve our vision.

Objectives

1. Responsive and barrier-free recruitment

YG's structured recruitment process has created obstacles for some Yukon First Nation applicants. An assessment of YG's staffing practices would assist in identifying obstacles and actions that could be taken to support hiring that is barrier-free. Recruitment processes must be flexible and adaptable to allow for alternative methods of assessment, placing greater emphasis on achieving a 'two-way fit' for both the employer and employee, positioning YG as an employer of choice for Yukon First Nation people.

2. Culturally safe and supportive working environments

A culturally sensitive and safe work environment is one where all employees, including senior executives, managers and supervisors are aware and respectful of Yukon First Nation cultural norms and practices, and where all employees feel safe from discrimination. YG must ensure all employees are supported to share and maintain their culture in the workplace. Encouraging a greater understanding of the need for reconciliation amongst non-Aboriginal employees is necessary to move forward.

3. Training and development opportunities

Investing in continual training and development opportunities is essential in the retention of skilled and effective employees within the Yukon public service. A skilled workforce is vital to YG's ability to deliver programs and services, and to adapt to the changing needs of Yukoners. The advancement of qualified Yukon First Nation employees into management and other leadership positions supports the inclusion of a First Nation perspective and influence in all levels of decision-making. Temporary assignments between governments provide opportunities for employees and builds capacity for the public service.

Conclusion

As YG moves forward in the implementation of “The Breaking Trail Together” Plan, we will continue to work collaboratively with YFNG to achieve our vision of being a “national trailblazer”.

Our objectives: recruitment that is responsive and barrier-free; work environments that are culturally safe and supportive; and training and development that support Yukon First Nation employees will set the course of our work for the next ten years. Furthermore, our operational plan will outline how our objectives will be implemented, measured, and evaluated.

Many thanks to the countless YG and YFNG individuals who worked together to develop this plan.

Appendix:

Plan's relationship to other agreements

It is important to note that the substance of this plan and its related actions address YG's obligations to attain the goals of a representative public service as outlined within the Final Agreements with YFNG. However, nothing in this plan (both strategic and operational) shall contravene YG's other established obligations, such as the Inuvialuit Final Agreement.

Relevant Yukon statistical context³

The total Yukon population grew at a rate of 23% between 2006-2016, with 84% of growth concentrated in Whitehorse. The population is stagnant or declining in other population centres such as Dawson (+4%) and Watson Lake (-7%).

Yukon has the highest share of people who were born outside the territory or country at 62.9%, mainly as a result of having the fastest growth rate of Canadian jurisdictions at 2.1%. The interprovincial growth rate is more than double that of international and natural increases combined.

As of 2016, the federal census reported that 21.7% of working age⁴ Yukoners reported having Aboriginal ancestry. Of the total population that reported Aboriginal ancestry, 17.6% reported belonging to a First Nation (including non-Yukon First Nations), 2.8% Metis, and less than 1% Inuit. The number of people who reported having an Aboriginal identity increased by more than 6% from 2011 - due to both natural increases, and a rise in self-identification.

Yukon has the highest proportion (68.4%) of the adult population who have post-secondary qualifications. From 2005-2016, the percentage of the Aboriginal population aged 25-54 with at least a high school diploma increased from 65.8% to 78.1% and 10.2% have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Yukon has the lowest unemployment rate and the highest workforce participation rate in Canada. In the first quarter of 2018, Yukon had one of the highest job vacancy rates (4.4%) in Canada. The sectors reporting the most job vacancies were: accommodation and food services;

³ Statistics Canada (Census of Population 2006 and 2016; Population estimates program 2017; Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2012; Conference Board of Canada, 2014; Labour Force Survey, 2010 to 2018; Job Vacancy and Wage Survey, 2018;

⁴ Working Age Population – Ages 20-64

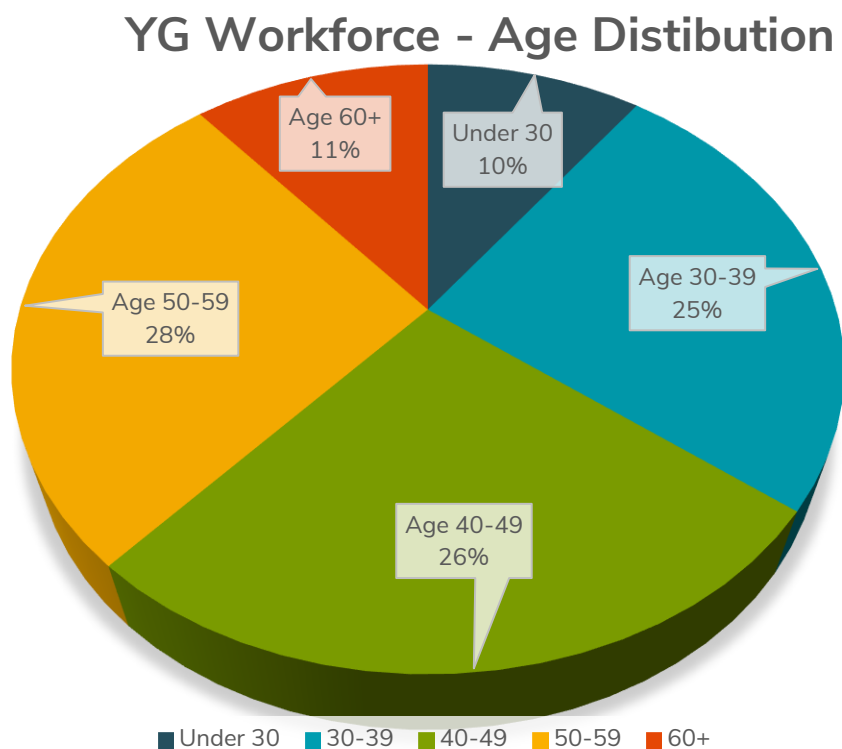
health care and social assistance; and public administration. There were a reported 725 job vacancies in Yukon during the quarter. Employment rates are not the same across Yukon communities, with a disproportional amount centred in Whitehorse (71.3%) compared to the rest of Yukon (58.5%).

The Government of Yukon public service

YG remains the single largest employer in the Yukon with 5,000+ employees as of March 31, 2018 (includes permanent, term, auxiliary-on-call and casual). Employment YG is perceived to provide higher wages, attractive benefits, and greater job security.

The current age representation of the YG public service is evenly split within the middle cohorts, and roughly 10% are over 60 and under 30. The age demographic profile for Aboriginal employees in YG is almost identical to the total workforce (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Age Representation of YG employees March 2018 (includes Aboriginal employees, self-reported)



Currently, women (64.4%) outnumber men (35.5%) in the public service overall (Figure 3), which is also reflected amongst the number of Aboriginal males and females within YG.

YG Workforce - Gender

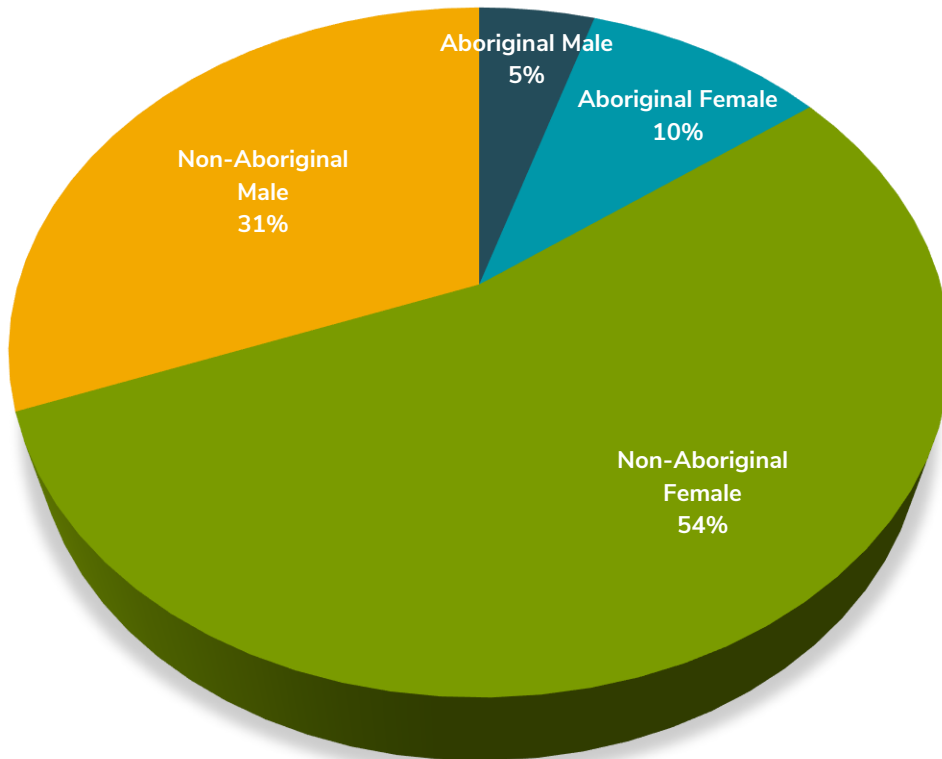


Figure 2 Percentage of YG Workforce by Sex (self-reported)

The percentage of YG Aboriginal employees in the communities is significantly higher than in Whitehorse (11%). The highest being in Old Crow and Carmacks (69%) and Faro the lowest with less than 1%

As of March 31, 2018, 14.7% of respondents to YG's workforce census self-identified as having Aboriginal ancestry. While there has not been a significant overall percentage increase in the last decade, the total numerical growth is substantial. In 2012-13 there were 451 Aboriginal employees compared to 659 in 2016-17, an increase of 46% over five years and demonstrates that Aboriginal representation has remained consistent with the overall growth rate of YG public service (refer to annual FA-RPSP Dashboard Reports for details).

Aboriginal YG Employee Representation by Community

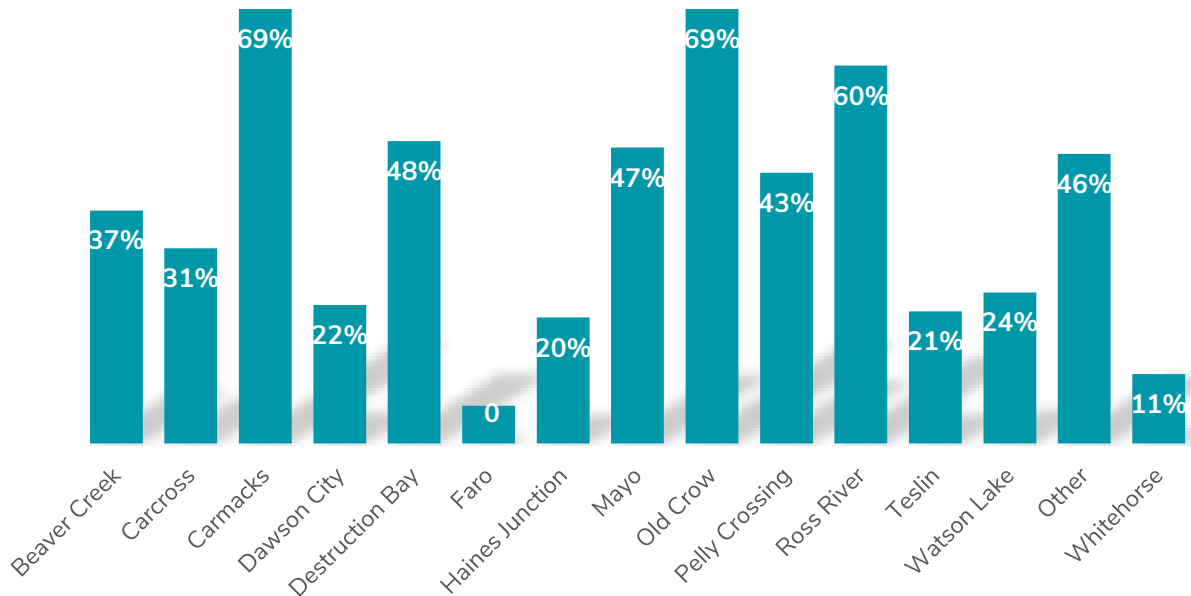


Figure 3 Percentage of Aboriginal YG employees by community as of March 31, 2018 (self-identified)

Challenges common at all levels of government

During the development of this new plan, discussions between YG and YFNG representatives revealed common challenges. While discussions focused on achieving Yukon First Nation public service representation within YG, ideas began to emerge on how First Nation governments could also benefit from the plan. A desire to work more collaboratively, specifically in the areas of recruitment, retention, learning, development and training emerged.

Recruitment & Retention

Some Aboriginal employees report struggling to 'fit' within the public service workplace culture⁵. Initiatives such as the Aboriginal Employees Forum (AEF), cultural activities and access to culturally appropriate workplace support have helped many. The results from YG's 2018 Employee Engagement Results demonstrate that Aboriginal employees have comparable or higher scores across a range of areas, including job satisfaction.

⁵ AEF (Aboriginal Employees Forum) Focus group sessions

YG Employee Engagement Results, 2018

	Aboriginal Employees	Corporate
Q62 I am satisfied with my job.	76	73
Q63 I am satisfied with my department.	67	66
Q64 Overall, I am satisfied with my work as a Yukon government employee.	77	75
Q65 I am proud to tell people I work for the Yukon government.	75	73
Q66 I would recommend the Yukon government as a great place to work.	74	74
Q67 I would prefer to stay with the Yukon government, even if offered a similar job elsewhere.	75	73

The current labour market is a challenge for both YG and YFNG, who are competing for employees within the same small labour pool. Housing shortages for employees exist across Yukon, and enticing new people into the communities is often difficult.

Employee turnover can be high, which leads to increased pressure on recruitment efforts. Governments are losing both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees not only to other governments but also in some cases to higher paying private sector jobs, self-employment or retirement. Current YG Aboriginal employee turnover rates (7.3%)⁶ are slightly better than non-Aboriginal employees (8.1%).

Both YG and YFNG experience challenges in undertaking effective succession planning as a result of being in a state of continual recruitment. Both also report significant increases in staffing actions in recent years. This situation often results in a loss of corporate knowledge and increased orientation and training time for new employees.

⁶ These numbers include all full-time and part-time employees excluding: Judges, Elected Members, Employees in the HeadStart Program, Order-in-Council appointees except DMs, Justices of Peace, Co-Op Students, Student Hires, Substitute Teachers, MLA & JD Pensioners, employees on leave without pay for 2 years or more, Ombudsman and Child Youth Advocate Office employees and Casual-Sporadic employees

Training & Development

There is a strong desire and need for coaching, mentoring, and job shadowing opportunities for Aboriginal employees. The challenge is not only to find people that have the time but more importantly are capable of taking on these roles. Proactive recruitment planning is needed to allow job shadowing for new employees to learn from their predecessors.

Ensuring that Aboriginal employees have access to culturally appropriate learning & development opportunities is a challenge. Logistical issues and costs can be prohibitive for employees in the communities. Travel is often required, which means time away from both family and work. Online learning is not always available or reliable, especially for those in communities where internet connectivity and cost can be a barrier.

Employees can often resist participating in learning events, especially when the benefit or requirement isn't clearly articulated. Employers must ensure that professional development provided or offered is not only available but also relevant and appropriate.

Critical issues and strategic focus for next decade

This iteration of the plan takes into account several factors, which may affect the plan's success. With the current labour market "stretched" as it presently is, establishing achievable targets and measures will be a priority. The present data indicates that it may be challenging for YG to achieve Yukon First Nation representation without potentially impacting YFNG's ability to recruit.

A greater focus on removing barriers for Yukon First Nation people in obtaining public service employment is needed. Opportunities for improving the current recruitment processes and practices are available, and input from Yukon First Nation people will be vital to achieving success in this area. Improved recruitment planning will allow for strategic targeting of Yukon First Nation people into underrepresented roles, functions and job classes within the public service.