



Proposed Approach to Regional Services Boards - Overview -

The Government of the Northwest Territories is proposing to modify its approach to governance of service delivery by creating Regional Services Boards that will manage service delivery of health, social services, education, and housing programs.

The primary objectives of the Board Reform Initiative are:

- Improving service delivery by implementing a board structure that encourages greater cooperation, emphasizes improved case management, and delivers programs that reflect regional priorities.
- Improving effectiveness and efficiency of boards by simplifying governance structures, identifying clear responsibilities, roles and powers and improving finance, administrative and other systems to improve accountability and reporting.

This overview is intended to describe the overall approach to the creation of Regional Services Boards. This material is supported by a background document that includes a number of consultation questions that will help shape the proposed approach and implementation plans in each region.

Some of the key elements of the proposed approach outlined in the background document include:

- It is proposed that the Regional Services Boards be comprised of 7-9 appointed members. Approach to how the membership is allocated (i.e., a member per community or certain members being appointed by regional Aboriginal organizations) will be a topic for consultation.
- Six regions are proposed including Beaufort-Delta, Sahtu, DehCho, South Slave, TliCho and North Slave. The communities included in each are described in the backgrounder. Consultation is required on this approach and whether communities should be included in regions where there is a closer geographic proximity.
- The areas of responsibility for service delivery are outlined in the backgrounder. These responsibilities will include:

Health & Social Services: management of health centers; coordination of rehabilitation services; program delivery for aspects of child protection services, emergency planning and family violence programming; management of regional and community continuing care services; management of public health and health promotion; and management of community based counseling (treatment, assessment, referral and aftercare).

Education, Culture & Employment: management for territorial schools operations; management of school and student support programs; program delivery of Early Childhood Programs; coordination of support for Aboriginal Language programs; administer Career Development programs, employment programs and administration of student financial assistance; and

administration of income security programs including: income assistance, public housing rental subsidy, Senior citizen supplementary benefit, and Senior home heating subsidy.

NWTHC: administration of the Homeownership Entry Level Program (HELP), the Providing Assistance to Territorial Homeownership (PATH) program, and Solutions to Educate People (STEP) program and other federally sponsored programs; administration of repair programs like the Contributing Assistance for Repairs and Enhancement (CARE) program; and work with clients to administer public housing program.

- The backgrounder proposes a structure for the authority that would be led by a Chief Executive Officer and contain five divisions. The Schools Division would be responsible for overall operation of schools and provide the required educational support programs. The Health Programs Division would include management of the operation of health centers, coordination of rehabilitation services, continuing care programs including coordination of home care and operation of long-term care facilities.

The Community Wellness Division would include management and support services for early childhood programs, protection services including child and adult services, health promotion and prevention services, mental health and addiction services, and coordination of Aboriginal language programs. By consolidating programs associated with wellness within this division, the potential exists to further integrate wellness programs associated with healthy living and land based programs.

The Housing and Community Development Division would be responsible for career development programming, delivery of income security programs, the administration of public housing, and working with clients on home ownership programs. Structuring the division in this manner would allow for increased integration of income security programs with productive choices, increase possibilities for consistency and integration of housing support programs with other income security programs and integration of housing programs with other training programs.

The Finance and Administration Division would be responsible for overall finance and payroll, budget development and support, reporting and accountability and information systems and human resource support.

- Accountability for the Regional Services Boards would contain a number of dimensions. Effective planning would include the development of a strategic plan and annual business plans that would align with the GNWT processes. Annual letters of expectation would be provided to the Regional Services Boards that would describe overall GNWT strategic direction.

Contribution agreements would be established with each Regional Service Board that would outline requirements related to service levels and could contain service agreements associated with each specific area of responsibility.

The contribution agreements would also outline reporting and monitoring requirements. Specific reporting would include financial and service delivery reporting on outputs and outcomes.

- Each Minister would maintain responsibility for programs and services associated with their departments. Program and policy development, regulations and legislation and resourcing levels would continue to be advanced, reviewed and receive the appropriate approvals by the Legislative Assembly.
- It is likely that changes to the approach to community service delivery will take some time to implement. In the medium term it is proposed that community services would take place around three clusters. Health programs would revolve around health centers and long-term care facilities and schools would be the focus of K-12 activities. Community Service Centers are proposed as a focal point for other community based programming. By co-locating these services to the extent that is possible, increased integration and cooperation would be achieved.
- Two options are proposed for continuing to get community input into programs and services. The first option would include the establishment of community education committees and housing advisory committees that would support school operations and provide advice to the Regional Services Board. The second option would be to combine these two functions into a community services committee.
- A Cabinet Sub-Committee is proposed to coordinate the overall relationship with the Regional Services Boards and address barriers to integration and cooperation. It is proposed that a Minister Responsible for Regional Services Boards be designated who would chair the Cabinet sub-committee and a joint management committee that would include board chairs. Deputy Minister and CEO's of the Regional Service Board authorities would form corresponding committees that would meet more frequently.
- Headquarter operations would change to reflect the changes associated with creating Regional Services Boards. Emphasis will be working through the appropriate Ministerial or Deputy Minister committee to identify policy and other barriers that limit increased integration in service delivery.

Some departmental resources targeted at supporting existing boards will be consolidated into a Regional Service Board Secretariat that would support the RSB joint management committee and DM/CEO committees, manage board appointments, coordinate the funding of administration of the Regional Services Boards, and provide overall coordination of contribution agreements and accountability and reporting requirements for the Regional Services Boards.

- It is proposed that Regional Services Boards would move towards implementing the GNWT's new financial information system, that human resource support would be provided through the Department of Human Resources and that IT support would be provided through the Technology Service Center.

There would be a single contribution agreement for each Regional Services Board. This would include appropriations for their respective components from Health & Social Services, Education, Culture and Employment and NWT Housing Corporation. A fourth component of the contribution agreement would be for overall administration and that would be coordinated through the Regional Service Board Secretariat.