



**Northwest Territories
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES SYSTEM**

2026/2027 BURSARY PROGRAM
Guidelines



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Northwest Territories Health and Social Services System

BURSARY PROGRAM GUIDELINES

1. Program Description

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services System Bursary Program (Bursary Program) is a program available to Northwest Territories (NWT) students pursuing an education in high demand health and social services fields, including allied health, midwifery, nursing, social services, and medical occupations in the NWT Health and Social Services System (NWT HSS System).

The NWT HSS System includes the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority (HRHSSA), the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA), and the Tłjchq Community Services Agency (TCSA – Health).

The Bursary Program is administered through the Talent Acquisition Unit within the NTHSSA.

Current information on the HSS Bursary Program can be found on the PracticeNWT site at: <https://www.practicenwt.ca/en/nwt-health-and-social-services-bursary-program>.

2. Program Objective

The Bursary Program is intended to support NWT students in the pursuit of high demand health and social services occupations. This will:

- Encourage NWT students to consider careers in the health and social services occupations.
- Help address future staffing and vacancy needs within the NWT HSS System.
- Build and enhance local capacity, by increasing resident health and social services employees within the community.
- Help support continuity of care to NWT residents.

3. High Demand Occupations

High demand occupations are identified through a yearly review that considers past and current vacancies, the number of positions within the occupational area, and projected need based on Government of Canada 3-year employment outlooks. High demand occupations are detailed in the [NWT HSS Bursary High Demand Occupation List](#).

4. Funding and Return of Service Commitments

The amount of financial support for NWT students varies, ranging from \$2,500/year for eligible full-time diploma programs, to \$10,000/year for eligible medical degrees.

Table 1: Funding and Return of Service Commitments

Area of Focus	\$ / year	Return of Service (ROS) Commitment	ROS (per year of Bursary Funding)
Certificate / Diploma	\$2,500	One month per \$500 received	5 months
Undergraduate Degree	\$4,500	One month per \$500 received	9 months
Graduate Degree	\$6,000	One month per \$500 received	12 months
Medical Degree or Residency	\$10,000	One month per \$2,000 received	5 months

For medical degree and residency programs, the return of service expectation is one calendar month for every \$2,000 received. For all other programs, there is a return of service expectation of one calendar month for every \$500 received.

5. Eligibility

To be eligible for the Bursary Program, an Applicant must:

- Be accepted (or have applied to) an approved, post-secondary program at an [accredited post-secondary institution](#) that is directly related to identified high demand occupations;

- Be physically residing in the NWT for 12 continuous months or more; or be in full-time post-secondary studies and had physically resided in the NWT for 12 continuous months or more immediately prior to your studies;
- Be a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident of Canada, or a protected person of Canada;
- Not be receiving any form of direct funding or financial sponsorship for their program of study from an employer;
- Agree to complete a Return of Service (ROS) in the NWT HSS System; and
- Not have a ROS Agreement or other contractual obligations that may prevent him or her from fulfilling the ROS commitment.

In addition, medical degrees and residency programs will only be supported for medical students and/or medical residents pursuing or intending on pursuing an area of focus currently employable as a permanent physician within the NWT HSS System.

Current practice areas of employment include Family Medicine (including enhanced skills in emergency medicine, anesthesia, obstetrics, surgical skills, or obstetrical surgical skills), General Surgery, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Ophthalmology, Orthopedic Surgery, Otolaryngology, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, and Radiology.

6. Application Process and Packages

Interested applicants who meet the eligibility criteria are required to submit a complete application package to NWTHSS_Bursary@gov.nt.ca.

To be considered, interested students should submit a completed application package to NWTHSS_Bursary@gov.nt.ca by June 30 each year. Applications received after June 30 will be considered once initial bursary funding has been allocated, should funding still be available within that fiscal year.

Application packages shall include:

- A completed application form;
- A letter of interest expressing why you are interested in the NWT HSS System high demand occupation;
- The applicant's current résumé that highlights their experience and demonstrates, where possible, their interest in studying and working in the selected area;

- Recommendation letters from two references who are familiar with the applicant’s academic background and/or community service involvement. Where the applicant has worked as a health or social services professional previously, one of the letters must be from the most recent relevant supervisor;
- Official written proof of enrolment in an [approved post-secondary program](#). If proof of enrolment is not yet available, proof of application – pending approval – will be considered. Proof of enrolment is required for final approval;
- Proof of NWT residency for 12 continuous months or more. If attending full-time schooling outside of the NWT, those 12 continuous months or more must be prior to enrolment into the approved program. Proof of residency includes things such as copies of rental agreements or mortgage documents, utility bills, high school transcripts, or the residency statutory declaration form;
- Proof of Canadian residency (e.g., Canadian birth certificate, passport, or citizen certificate); and
- Proof of indigenous status (as per the [GNWT’s Indigenous Employment Policy](#)), if applicable. This can include the [Verification of Indigenous Status form](#).

7. Selection Process

The Bursary Program Selection Committee (the Selection Committee) is comprised of the Program Specialist, the Manager of the Talent Acquisition Unit, and the Director of the Talent and Organizational Development Division.

All applications are reviewed to determine if they meet all eligibility criteria. Applications will be prioritized based on a combination of the following criteria:

- Current and anticipated future needs of the HSS System;
- The assessment of applicant applications, including:
 - Applicant letter of interest;
 - The applicant’s current résumé; and
 - The applicant’s recommendation letters (2).
- Priority status of applicant under the [GNWT Indigenous Employment Policy](#)¹.
- In some circumstances, interviews may be conducted by the Selection Committee as part of the selection process.

¹ For the 2026-2027 Application Year, priority status will be based on the Government of the Northwest Territories Indigenous Employment Policy (in effect starting April 1, 2025).

The number of applicants supported through the Bursary Program will vary from year to year, based on funding. Applications that do not receive funding due to budget limitations will be waitlisted, should openings occur within that fiscal year.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application.

8. HSS Bursary Agreement and Receipt of Funding

Applicants conditionally approved for HSS Bursary funding will be provided with an HSS Bursary Return of Service Agreement (Agreement) and other documentation to be completed and returned. Once the Agreement package is reviewed and confirmed complete, the application will be approved, and the applicant will receive funding.

9. Request to Review

Every effort will be made to ensure all applications are given careful consideration. There may, however, be instances in which a bursary applicant or recipient feels that further review is warranted. Should this be the case, the applicant or recipient is encouraged to contact the Program Specialist with their concerns. If a resolution cannot be identified, a formal written request to review can be submitted by the applicant or recipient. Once a request to review is received, a formal review of the request will be completed. The applicant will be informed of the review results.

10. Return of Service

As the bursary recipient graduates from their post-secondary education, the HSS Bursary Program will shift from funding to Return of Service (ROS) obligations. ROS commitments should be secured within six months after successful completion of the bursary recipient(s)' final year of academic, residency, or practicum requirements.

The receipt of this bursary does not guarantee employment with the NWT HSS System upon completion of the academic program. In circumstances where employment within the NWT HSS System is not secured, the bursary recipient will be responsible to repay the bursary funds as outlined in their ROS Agreement.

The Program Specialist will help guide the bursary recipient(s) to network with potential managers within the HSS System, and support the recipient(s) to seek, apply for, and secure employment within the NWT Health and Social Services System.

The ROS can be completed through indeterminate, term, or salaried contracts (physicians). ROS cannot be completed through casual employment or through locum physician contracts. The expectation is that individuals who receive bursary funding will seek and fill indeterminate positions, term positions, and salaried contracts. Part-time ROS will be pro-rated.

Throughout the ROS period, the Bursary Recipient is responsible for demonstrating that the ROS commitments are being met. Flexibility for ROS commitments should be discussed with the Program Specialist and will be considered. Should repayment be required, it will be coordinated through the Program Specialist.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

The following section highlights the roles and responsibilities of those internal to the HSS System and of the bursary applicants and recipients.

HSS Bursary Selection Committee

- Decision-making related to the development, administration, and implementation of guidelines for the NWT HSS Bursary Program.
- Decision-making related to HSS Bursary Program applicant selection and recipient deferrals.

Bursary Applicant/Recipient

- Provide documentation required for the Bursary Program in a timely manner.
- Retain copies of the submitted application(s), form(s), and anything else submitted to the Bursary Program if some, or all, documentation is not received.
- Inform the Program Specialist of any changes to their schooling, practicum placement, or employment thereafter that would affect the terms of the Agreement.
- Inform the Program Specialist of any updates to their contact information, such as address or phone number.
- Within six (6) months of graduation, take necessary steps to find employment in NWT HSS System.
- Meet all requirements under the Return of Service (ROS) Agreement.

Talent and Organizational Development Division

- Oversight and administrative compliance with these Guidelines and the associated Agreements.
- Promote and provide information on the Bursary Program.
- Administer the Bursary Program, including:
 - Reviewing documents submitted for the Bursary Program;
 - Authorizing and processing funding for approved students;
 - Maintaining all documentation related to the HSS Bursary Program; and
 - Ensuring that all program participant information is kept confidential.
- Communicate with applicants regarding applications, process, and results.
- Regularly communicate with bursary recipients throughout the Bursary Program including during the recipients' ROS.
- Help guide the bursary recipient to network with potential managers within the HSS System and support the recipient to seek, apply for, and secure employment within a high demand health and social services occupation in the NWT HSS System.
- Ensure that bursary information is up to date and available.

Health and Social Services System

- Pursue opportunities to employ bursary recipients, as human resource needs dictate.

12. For More Information

For information on the NWT HSS Bursary Program, please contact the Program Specialist at NWTHSS_Bursary@gov.nt.ca or check out the latest [Frequently Asked Questions](#) documentation