

A photograph of an ice castle at sunset. The sun is low in the sky, creating a bright lens flare and casting long shadows on the snow. In the foreground, two people in winter gear walk away from the camera. To the right, a large ice structure features a circular opening with a person standing inside. A flagpole with a Canadian flag is visible in the background.

**Northwest Territories
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY
Friends and Family Travel Program
Guidelines**

*Sharing the
Spectacular NWT
with Friends
and Family
over the Holidays*

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Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority

FRIENDS AND FAMILY TRAVEL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

1. Program Description

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) Friends and Family Travel Program (FFT Program) is an incentive program available to indeterminate, term, and casual front-line nurse practitioners, and registered nurses providing direct patient care; and indeterminate, term and locum physicians providing direct patient care who are scheduled for a minimum of five full shifts between December 20, 2022, and January 4, 2023.

Eligible individuals have the opportunity for financial support to bring family members and/or friends to their community of employment. The program will cover the costs of flights and/or travel by privately owned vehicle, to a maximum of \$2,000 per employee.

2. Program Objective

The objective of the FFT Program is to address staffing shortages over the holiday season by incentivizing staff with an opportunity to work, while still celebrating the holidays with family and friends. This program will:

- Help address staffing shortages in hard-to-fill positions within the NTHSSA over the holiday season.
- Help in supporting a healthy work/life balance for employees working over the holiday season.
- Build and enhance employee engagement, by offering employees incentives to work and visit the NWT.

3. Eligibility

To be eligible for the FFT Program, the employee must be:

- An indeterminate (full-time, part-time, relief), term, casual front-line nurse practitioner or registered nurse providing direct patient care; or indeterminate, term or locum physician providing direct patient care within the NTHSSA; and
- Scheduled to work a minimum of five full shifts between December 20, 2022, to January 4, 2023. Where applicable, paid travel days are included in the five-shift minimum.

4. Funding

Friends and family who are travelling through the FFT Program may travel between December 1, 2022 and February 28, 2023. Eligible travel costs (maximum \$2,000), for up to a maximum of two people/vehicles, include the costs of flights and/or travel by privately owned vehicles. Additional costs associated with accommodations are at the expense of the employee.

Travel by privately owned vehicle rates will be determined by the GNWT [Duty Travel Guidelines](#), and determined at the convenience rate.¹

This is a pilot program and is presently only available to employees working between December 20, 2022 and January 4, 2023.

5. Application and Reimbursement Process

Employees interested in participating in the FFT Program should indicate their interest to their supervisor, to determine if they meet eligibility criteria, including the scheduling requirement to work a minimum of five full shifts between December 20, 2022 and January 4, 2023.

Supervisors and human resources staff should endeavor to promote the program to all employees who may be eligible.

For indeterminate, term, and casual employees, including physicians, steps for accessing the program are as follows:

¹ Rate set at \$0.275 per kilometre, as at September 1, 2022. This rate may change periodically.

1. Employee completes FFT Program Form and submits to their supervisor.
2. Supervisor reviews form, which includes a list of all required criteria to be considered eligible for the FFT Program.
3. If the employee meets all eligibility criteria, the supervisor signs form and sends back to employee.
4. If the employee does not meet eligibility criteria, the supervisor should inform the employee they are not eligible for FFT Program, including rationale.
5. An employee who receives the signed form back from their supervisor can then arrange booking flights and / or arrange travel plans by private vehicle for friends and/or family. Employees or their designates are responsible for booking flights, not the NTHSSA.
6. Once eligible travel costs have been incurred, the employee must submit eligible receipts and the signed form for reimbursement. For a step-by-step guide on submitting reimbursement claims through the FFT Program employees, including physicians, should refer to the **Claim Form Instructions** included with the Claim Form.
7. Claims will be reviewed and approved by NTHSSA_Payroll@gov.nt.ca for processing. If the claim is incomplete or does not meet eligibility requirements, it will be sent back to the employee with a request for clarification and/or revisions.
8. If/when the claim is approved, the eligible reimbursement amount, up to \$2,000, will be paid to the employee on a subsequent paycheque.
Note that for Locum Physicians, the claim will be paid via the regular vendor process.

It is important to note that funding paid through the FFT Program is subject to income tax. Employees are encouraged to consult the Canada Revenue Agency for more information or contact a tax professional for specific advice.

6. Additional Considerations

It is at the discretion of the CEO if an employee is eligible for the incentive. Employees are encouraged to contact their supervisor should they have any questions or concerns regarding the booking or payment process.

Every effort should be made to ensure that an employee approved through the FFT Program does not have a schedule change that makes them ineligible. Should an employee's scheduling status change, whereby they are no longer eligible to receive FFT Program funding, NTHSSA_Payroll@gov.nt.ca should be notified immediately. If the change in schedule is a result of decisions made by the employee, the employee will be required to pay back the monies awarded. Scheduling changes made by the NTHSSA that make an employee ineligible will not require monies to be repaid.

Every effort will be made to ensure all friend and family travel reimbursements are processed in a timely fashion. There may, however, be instances in which additional review is warranted. This may delay the payment process in some instances.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

The following section highlights the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the FFT Program:

Employee / Locum

- Identify interest in FFT Program to supervisor, to determine viability.
- Complete form and submit to supervisor for sign-off.
- Make necessary travel arrangements with friends and/or family, once approved.
- Submit signed form and eligible receipts for reimbursement, following processes outlined in Appendix A and B.
- Notify NTHSSA_Payroll@gov.nt.ca of any changes to program eligibility.
- Complete survey on FFT Program, if requested.

Supervisor

- Promote FFT Program to eligible employees.
- Confirm employee meets eligibility, through FFT Program Form.
- Be mindful of implications of any scheduling changes as it relates to making employees eligible / ineligible for the FFT Program.

Talent Acquisition Unit (NTHSSA)

- Promote the program to staff and hiring managers.

- Provide information on the program, where requested.
- Collaboration with NTHSSA Finance related to the administration and implementation of the FFT Program.
- Support evaluation of pilot program.

NTHSSA Finance [NTHSSA Payroll@gov.nt.ca](mailto:NTHSSA_Payroll@gov.nt.ca)

- Collaboration with the Talent Acquisition Unit (NTHSSA) related to the administration and implementation of the FFT Program.
- Administer the program, including:
 - Maintaining all documentation related to the FFT Program.
 - Approving reimbursements requests or requesting additional information.
- Support evaluation of pilot program.

8. For More Information

Please contact NTHSSAFeedback@gov.nt.ca for questions on the program.

Please contact [NTHSSA Payroll@gov.nt.ca](mailto:NTHSSA_Payroll@gov.nt.ca) for questions on claims / reimbursements.