



Professional Development Initiative (PDI) Program Guidelines

1. Program Overview

The Professional Development Initiative (PDI) program is intended to provide Northwest Territories Health and Social Services System (HSS System) employees with increased opportunities for professional development, education, and training for the purposes of position relevant skill and career enhancement. Professional development initiatives support increased capacity and service quality within the HSS System.

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

2. Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible for PDI funding, applicants must:

- Be an indeterminate (full-time, part-time, job-share, relief) or term employee of the HSS System.
- Have a minimum of 12 months of continuous service when their professional development activity commences.
- Must perform work consistent with the type of work normally provided in one or more of the professions listed in **Appendix A: Eligible Position List**.

Applicants will be considered ineligible for PDI funding if they:

- Are resigning, retiring, or terminated employees.
- Term employees during the last six weeks of their contract.
- Are considered casual or on locum without a position number.
- Are on extended leave (i.e. maternity, parental, education, deferred, leave without pay). Note that PDI eligibility is reinstated upon return to an eligible position. Job share employees may utilize PDI during their rotation off.
- Have outstanding claims or monies owing to the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

3. Eligible Activities

Eligible activities that will be considered for PDI funding should:

- Be relevant to the applicant's position.
- Support capacity building and improved quality of service within the HSS System.
- Be supported by the learning plan, included in the application.
- Be a minimum of two days, where travel is covered by PDI. Two successive activities (i.e. two different, subsequent workshops in the same travel location) can be combined.

Eligible activities include:

- Conferences
- Workshops
- Certification registration
- Job shadowing
- Mentorships
- Practicum requirements
- Distance learning (i.e. online courses, webinars, credit programs)
- On-Site Group Activity
- Resources, including texts, electronic reference guides, memberships (excluding registrations required to legally practice), and subscriptions to newsletters and journals to support continuing learning, courses, and current practice (maximum \$700 per year).

Applicants seeking funding for an accredited certificate, diploma, undergraduate, or graduate degrees may wish to review the [Targeted Academic Support Program \(TASP\)](#) guidelines.

Managers or supervisors seeking to organize **on-site group activities** for staff should notify the PDI Coordinator at pdi@gov.nt.ca, providing details on the proposed on-site group activity and potential applicants. Each participant seeking to participate in the on-site group activity will be required to submit an individual PDI application, clearly identifying the group activity in their application.

4. Funding Availability

Maximum funding per year per applicant is determined by the location of the applicant's position, ranging from \$2,000 (Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Hay River) to \$4,880 (Ulukhaktok). Maximum PDI rates by community are included in **Appendix B: Community PDI Rates**.

Part-time and job-share employee funding is pro-rated, and based upon the position's full-time equivalency (FTE).

Relief employee funding is pro-rated, and based upon the eligible employee's number of eligible hours (any reported hours that are not overtime, or REG-like) worked in the previous fiscal year (April 1 – March 31); a standard relief worker PDI formula is used ($\# \text{ eligible hours} / 1950 \text{ hours} = \text{total \% of PDI}$)

The number of applicants supported through the program each intake will vary, based on demand and activity costs.

5. Deadlines

There are two application intake deadlines for fiscal year 2020-21:

- **March 2nd – 20th**, 2020 for activities beginning April 1st onwards.
- **July 15th – August 15th**, 2020 for activities beginning October 1st onwards.

PDI funding will be allocated evenly between the two deadlines for each fiscal year, ensuring funding is available for the second intake.

Activities approved for PDI funding must occur within the 2020/21 fiscal year, up to and including March 31st, 2021.

Resources approved for PDI funding must be purchased no later than March 31st of each fiscal year.

Applications submitted outside of the above noted time frames will be considered as late applications and may be considered if PDI program funding has not been exhausted.

6. How to Apply

Interested applicants should submit their completed and signed documentation to the Talent and Organizational Development Division (TODD) at pdi@gov.nt.ca no later than the March 20th or August 15th submission deadlines. Documentation should include:

- PDI application form, including completed learning plan
- Supporting documentation detailing the activity (i.e. activity brochure, website link, listed resources, etc.)
- Job shadow / mentorship / practicum form (if applicable)
- On-site group activity form (if applicable)

Please ensure you have met with your direct supervisor to discuss any leave options associated with your submission and received approval prior to submitting your application.

The PDI application and other forms can be found at [OurNTHSSA](#) or [PracticeNWT](#).

7. Selection Process

All applications will be reviewed by the PDI Coordinator to determine if:

- The applicant meets all eligibility criteria.
- The applicant has submitted all the required documentation.
- The applicant has applied by the application deadline.

Final funding decisions will be made based on:

- The strategic and professional development needs of the HSS System.
- The strength and relevance of the application as it relates to the applicant's position.

8. Applicants Approved for Funding

If an applicant is approved for PDI funding:

- The applicant and their direct supervisor will be contacted by the PDI Coordinator through email, notifying them of funding approval.

- The applicant must then confirm final approval from their supervisor for short term leave for training purposes, as per [Article 48](#) of the Collective Agreement. All leave approval is subject to operational requirements.
- Contingent on supervisor approval for short term leave for training purposes, the applicant will proceed with making travel and booking arrangements associated with the approved PDI activity. Please note that PDI is not considered Duty Travel and therefore a Travel Authorization is not required.
- Within 10 working days of completing the approved PDI activity or resource purchase, the applicant will submit a completed SAM generated expense claim form with supporting receipts through SAM using the following account coding string:
 - GL Unit: NTH01
 - Org: 12026
 - Account: 52111
 - Fund: 01
 - Area: 1A
- The expense claim submission process can be found at [OurNTHSSA](#) or [PracticeNWT](#).
- An expense claim may be submitted for approved, eligible costs incurred prior to the activity (i.e. flight bookings, tuition, conference booking fees, etc.), with supporting receipts. If the PDI activity is cancelled, any reimbursements will be charged back to the employee, or deducted from individual PDI allocations, as per Section 9 of the PDI program guidelines.
- Upon receipt of the expense claim and supporting receipts, eligible PDI costs will be reimbursed through direct deposit as per SAM processes.
- The PDI Coordinator may contact applicants to participate in a PDI Satisfaction Survey. Information gathered will be applied to the annual review of the program.

9. Program Funding Details

Costs eligible for PDI funding include:

- Eligible activities and/or resources, as outlined in Section 3.
- Airfare (or equivalent mileage), including first bag fees.
- Transportation to and from the airport.
- Accommodations (maximum of \$200/night).

Costs not eligible for PDI funding include application fees, student fees, salary/wages, operational coverage (back-fill costs), housing, per diems, child care expenses, parking fees, on-site ground transportation, electronic devices or tools, personal costs (i.e. insurance, airfare change fees, phone calls, excess baggage fees), travel costs for training that is offered locally, and/or any costs that are incurred before the applicant has received final approval for funding support.

Mandatory or statutory training required to legally perform the duties of a position (i.e. regulated licensure / memberships, first aid or CPR/BLS, Child and Family Services Information System) are not eligible under PDI.

Applicants may apply for international activities where they can demonstrate through a letter of justification that the training is not available in Canada and will benefit the employee, the employing unit, and the GNWT.

Only those expenses which have been pre-approved and which are eligible under the guidelines will be eligible for reimbursement.

Applicants are encouraged to access online training when feasible.

Applicants should ask for government rates when making travel arrangements and must use the most reasonable or economical means of travel possible.

Reimbursements will not be made for activities that were not attended except in circumstances of:

- Leave due to sickness, death in the family, or where unit operations require cancellation. A certificate of leave or confirmation from a Chief Operating Officer may be requested.

- Cancellation of travel due to extreme weather or road conditions.
- Training is cancelled by the facilitator.

Cancellation fees will be deducted from individual PDI allocations.

Voluntary cancellations must be communicated to the PDI Coordinator at pdi@gov.nt.ca. Voluntary cancellations will be charged back to the employee if reimbursements have already been made.

All receipts for activities that are scheduled to conclude between March 21st and March 31st must be submitted in SAM no later than April 5th.

For More Information

For information on PDI, please contact the PDI Coordinator at pdi@gov.nt.ca.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can approved PDI funds be transferred or shared between employees?

No. Funds may not be donated or transferred from one person to another person or group.

Can unused funds be deferred or transferred to the next fiscal year?

No. All approved funding must be used within the current fiscal year.

How does leave work if I am away from work for approved PDI activities?

As per [Article 48](#) of the Collective Agreement, short term leave for training purposes may be granted to employees with the approval of the Employer. This includes approved PDI activities and travel time.

Questions regarding short term leave and the process can be directed to the Department of Finance, Client Services Manager. Decisions regarding short term leave approvals and processes fall outside the scope of the PDI program.

Supervisor approval is required for short term leave for training purposes. All leave approval is subject to operational requirements.

Salary will be paid by the employing authority or department while the employee is on short term leave (or Leave with Pay) for training purposes. Employees will only be paid their regular salary for their time away from work.

If travel is required for this short term leave for training purposes, per diems and travel time outside of regular work hours WILL NOT be paid.

How do I enter my leave for professional development?

Employees approved for short term leave for training purposes for activities funded through PDI should enter their time as PD1 in the Human Resource Information System (PeopleSoft) attendance records, except in the HRHSSA where employees will code it PDIU in ORMED.

Employees may combine approved leave (i.e. annual, lieu, etc.) with PD1/PDIU with appropriate approval.

Do I have to wait until after I've completed my PDI activity to submit an expense report for reimbursement?

No. A SAM generated expense claim may be submitted for approved, eligible costs incurred prior to the activity (i.e. flight bookings, tuition, conference booking fees, etc.), with supporting receipts.

Note: all travel is to be submitted through an expense claim and NOT a travel authorization.

If the PDI activity is cancelled, any reimbursements will be charged back to the employee, or deducted from individual PDI allocations, as per Section 9 of the PDI program guidelines.

Can my costs be pre-paid by PDI?

No, if additional support is required for the pre-payment of PDI activities, please speak with your manager regarding divisional payment options. If your division prepays your costs, they can invoice back the charge to the PDI program.

I've been approved for PDI funding, but want to change my activity and/or resources. Can I do this?

Please contact the PDI Coordinator at pdi@gov.nt.ca if you anticipate a change in activities and/or resources. Any PDI costs incurred before the proposed changes have been reviewed and approved or denied will not be reimbursed.

Appendix A: **2020/21 Eligible Position List**

Employees in the following positions may be eligible for the PDI program. Titles may vary between authorities/departments/regions and funding is based on preset criteria and the type of work identified in the assigned National Occupation Code (NOC).

These frontline professional, clinical, and manager positions require specific health or social services education, certification or licensing in order to provide or directly support day-to-day assessment of or care to residents of the Northwest Territories.

- Activity Coordinator, Assistant & Aide
 - Aide – Clinical, Long Term Care, Nursing & Operating Room
 - Audiologist
 - Coder
 - Combined X-Ray/Lab Technicians
 - Community Health Representative
 - Community Primary Care Worker
 - Counselors – Family, Drug & Alcohol, Behavior Management, etc.
 - Day Program Coordinator, Programmer, Facilitator or Assistant or Aide (includes Adult & Elder Programs)
 - Dental Therapist
 - Diagnostic Imaging Technologist
 - Dietitian
 - Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
 - Environmental Health Officer
 - Family Support Worker/Visitor/Liaison
 - Health or Medical Records Technician or Supervisor
 - Health Promotion Officer
 - Hearing Aid Practitioner
 - Home Support Worker
 - Home Visitor
 - Laboratory Assistants
 - Laboratory Technicians or Technologist
 - Lay Dispenser
 - License Practical Nurse
 - Mammographer
 - Managers, Health Care & Social Services
 - Medical Radiation
 - Midwife
 - Nurse Mentor
 - Nurse Practitioner
 - Nursing Supervisors & Clinical Coordinators
 - Nutritionist
 - Occupational Health & Safety Coordinator
 - Occupational Therapist, Assistant or Aide
 - Ophthalmic Technician
 - Pharmacist or Technician
 - Personal Outcome Support Worker
 - Personal Support Worker or Attendant
 - Physiotherapist
 - Prevention & Health Worker
 - Psychologist
 - Radiology Technician
 - Recreation Therapist, Coordinator or Assistant
 - Registered & Psychiatric Nurses
 - Rehabilitation Therapist, Assistant or Aide
 - Rehabilitation Wellness Coordinator
 - Resident Care Aid
 - Reprocessing/STD Technician
 - Respiratory Therapist
 - Speech Language Assistant or Aide
 - Social Worker – Clinical, Medical, Family & Child, Community Services, etc.
 - Sonographer
 - Speech Pathologist & Assistant or Aide
 - Ultrasonographer
 - Wellness Worker
- Other Positions that may qualify:
- Quality & Risk Management
 - Health & Social Services Consultant, Specialists, Coordinators & Planners
 - HSS Specific Directors may qualify

Appendix B:
2020/21 PDI Community Rates

Community	Rates
Aklavik	3,700
Behchoko	3,100
Colville Lake	3,900
Deline	3,800
Dettah	3,000
Enterprise	3,000
Fort Good Hope	3,750
Fort Liard	3,000
Fort McPherson	4,000
Fort Providence	3,000
Fort Resolution	3,000
Fort Simpson	3,600
Fort Smith	2,000
Gamètì	3,330
Hay River	2,000
Hay River Reserve	2,000
Inuvik	3,550

Community	Rates
Jean Marie River	3,350
Kakisa	3,000
Lutselk'e	3,300
Nahanni Butte	3,990
N'Dilo	3,024
Norman Wells	3,425
Paulatuk	4,400
Sachs Harbour	4,610
Trout Lake	3,980
Tsiigehtchic	3,680
Tuktoyaktuk	3,830
Tulita	3,710
Ulukhaktok	4,880
Wekweeti	3,300
Whati	3,300
Wrigley	4,032
Yellowknife	2,000

NOTE: Rates identified are the maximum amount paid per position. Actual funding is budgeted based on the projected tuition, economical airfare for travelling the day before and the day after the activity, and capped accommodations as calculated by the PDI Office.