

Northwest Territories Health and Social Services System
FRIENDS AND FAMILY TRAVEL PROGRAM
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
December 2024 – January 2025

What is the Friends and Family Travel Program?

The 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 21, 2024, and January 5, 2025, inclusive.

Eligible individuals have the opportunity for financial support of up to \$2,000 to bring up 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 two people/vehicles, including the costs of flights and/or travel by privately owned vehicles.

Are Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) eligible for the program?

LPNs are not eligible under the program at this time. We do understand there are additional staffing challenges across the organization during this time and the FFT program will continue to explore possible revisions to its scope in the future.

How do I apply to the program?

Please refer to the Friends and Family Travel Program guidelines for step-by-step instructions on applying to the program.

Are there application deadlines for the program?

Yes, there are two deadlines, an application deadline and a claims deadline.

The deadline to submit completed applications is December 19, 2024 at 11:59pm MST. Applications received after this time will not be considered.

The deadline to submit claims is March 15, 2025 at 11:59pm MST.

Do paid travel days count toward the shift minimum to be eligible?

Yes, paid travel days are counted towards the shift minimum.

Do overtime shifts count towards the five-shift minimum?

No, overtime shifts do not count as eligible shifts towards the Friends and Family Travel Program. Only regular, scheduled shifts are counted.

Do my friends and/or family have to travel between December 21, 2024, and January 5, 2025?

No. Friends and/or family must travel to the community where you are working, however this travel can occur between December 1, 2024 and January 31, 2025, inclusive. Travel costs incurred for travel occurring prior to December 1, 2024, or concluding after January 31, 2025, will be not eligible for reimbursement.

What happens if only part of my friends and/or family's travel is between December 1, 2024, and January 31, 2025?

If your friends and/or family's travel is partially between December 1, 2024, and January 31, 2025, only the portion in those dates qualifies. For example, if they travel to your community on January 19, 2025, and return home on February 4, 2025, only the January 19 travel would be eligible.

If I am working less or more than the required shifts within the program dates, am I eligible for a pro-rated payment through the program of less or more than \$2,000?

No, each eligible employee receives a maximum of \$2,000 in travel support through the program.

Are accommodations, car rentals, and other travel costs reimbursed through the program?

No, the program only covers the costs of flights and/or travel by privately owned vehicle.

Can I be reimbursed for Reward tickets (i.e. using airline points) through the Program?

No. Reward tickets cannot be claimed, only the cash portion of the ticket(s).

Is there a limit on the number of family and friends I can bring up to my community of employment?

The program will cover the costs of flights and/or travel by privately owned vehicle, to a maximum of two people/vehicles, including the costs of flights and/or travel by privately owned vehicles.

If my friend or family requires a medical escort can the escort qualify as the second person?

Yes. If your friend or family member requires a medical escort for travel that escort can qualify as the second person under this program.

Is there someone in the NWT HSS System who will book travel for me?

No. Eligible employees approved for the program will be responsible for arranging and paying for travel costs. These costs will be reimbursed through the claims process.

When can I submit my claim form and receipts?

Claims can be submitted as soon as the expenses have been occurred. For air travel that is when the tickets are purchased whereas for vehicle travel that will be after travel has concluded.

When will I receive my reimbursement?

Reimbursement payments will be made after the claims form and all necessary paperwork has been submitted. 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.

Reimbursement payments will be paid through regular pay runs and will appear on your pay cheque. Reimbursements will not be paid on off-cycles (outside of regular pay periods).

I am a casual nurse practitioner or registered nurse being employed

by the NWT HSS System during the eligible dates. Can I access the program?

Yes, casual nurse practitioners and registered nurses working in front-line positions for a minimum of five full shifts can apply on this program.

Do I have to pay income tax on the funding reimbursed through this program?

Yes, funding paid through the 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.

As a contractor, locum physicians will not be subject to income tax deductions prior to reimbursement, however this amount will be included on their T4A for the year in which the expense is paid.

Will this program be offered again in the future?

This program is presently only available to employees working between December 21, 2024, to January 5, 2025.

Who do I contact if I have additional questions?

Please refer to the guidelines for your Health and Social Services Authority for the most current contact information for questions.