

## **Pilot project starts for literacy, skills training**

*NWT Literacy Council gets new funds for pilot project delivering skills training*

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### **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

The NWT Literacy Council will receive part of \$3.1 million in funding for a new project developed in partnership with literacy groups from the other two territories.

According to Katie Randall of the NWT Literacy Council, the funds will be spread over three years and split among the three territories.

"This is a pilot project," stated the youth and adult services co-ordinator in an e-mail. "The funding is for training for youth out of school and unemployed adults who may need to upgrade their literacy and other essential skills.

"The training will embed literacy and essential skills into training so that people are learning technical skills related to each area, for example good customer relations, as well as improving their literacy."

As part of the funding, a new organization, the Northern Alliance for Literacy and Essential Skills (NALES) will work with members in each of the territories to integrate literacy and skills training into workplace training programs. According to a news release issued by Employment and Social Development Canada, the emphasis will be on reading, writing, document use, numeracy, computer use, thinking, oral communication, working with others and continuous learning.

Randall said the NWT is responsible for the service industry project, but that each territory will have a project in the three areas of tourism, service industry and traditional skills.

"These projects are different from most training because they integrate literacy and other skills development into the training," she said. "Given the NWT's high drop out rate, there are many people here who do not have the skills they need to gain employment."

The NWT Literacy council still has to meet with communities interested in the project but Randall said her organization anticipates about 60 people will benefit from the funding.

The youth and adult services co-ordinator also said two additional people will be hired on contract as part of the project: a literacy and essential skills instructor to help the NWT Literacy Council develop teaching materials and support delivery, as well as an evaluator.

For Randall, this initiative helps address a huge need in the territory to look at alternative ways to engage people who require upgrades to their learning skills.

"This is an innovative pan-territorial project that is exciting to work on," she said. "We are very fortunate to have received this funding at a time when many literacy groups are closing down because of lack of funding."

The announcement was made by Nunavut MP Leona Aglukkaq and Yukon MP Ryan Leef.