



United Way
Northwest Territories

Strategic Plan

2026 – 2032

TOGETHER
We Are Strong

nwt.unitedway.ca



Land Acknowledgement

United Way NWT acknowledges that we operate on the traditional lands of Dene, Métis, and Inuit peoples. We are grateful for the privilege of living, playing, and working on those lands, which have been their traditional lands since time immemorial. We respect the histories, languages, and cultures of all Indigenous Peoples, whose presence in the Northwest Territories continues to enrich our vibrant community.

Part 1 Background

United Way NWT History and Current Programming

United Way Northwest Territories (UW NWT) started in 2001 as United Way Yellowknife. It was reinvigorated in 2012 and renamed itself to UW NWT to reflect its goal of supporting northerners throughout the NWT. UW NWT is currently the only United Way chapter north of the 60th parallel in Canada.

UW NWT's community priorities align with United Way Centraide's national focus areas:

1. From poverty to possibility
 - Moving people out of poverty
 - Meeting basic human needs
2. Healthy people, strong communities
 - Improving access to social and health-related support services
 - Supporting resident and community engagement
 - Supporting community integration and settlement
3. All that kids can be
 - Improving access to early childhood learning and development programs
 - Helping kids do well at school and complete high school
 - Making the healthy transition into adulthood and post-secondary education.

UW NWT's core program is the Community Investment Fund (CIF), an application-based grant program for organizations serving NWT residents. The CIF has grown from approximately \$50,000 in 2001 to approximately \$265,000 in 2024. UW NWT has increased the maximum single-year grant size to \$10,000 and developed three-year grants of \$15,000 each year.

Since 2018, UW NWT has also become increasingly active in emergency response fundraising and distribution. Beginning with flood response in 2018 and 2019, UW NWT supported COVID-19 response in 2020 and then raised and distributed an unprecedented level of funding during the 2023 wildfire season. In 2024 and 2025, UW NWT continued to support emergency-related fundraising and distribution in communities including Whatì and Fort Providence. These experiences have strengthened UW NWT's relationships across the Territory and nationally, and demonstrated strong public trust, while also creating new demands on Board and staff.

Why a Strategic Plan?

UW NWT's Board and senior staff undertook this strategic planning process to establish a clear shared vision, align energy and resources, and focus on the priorities most important to the organization's long-term success.

Since 2018, consecutive emergencies have expanded UW NWT's scope and raised important strategic questions about how the organization should define and sustain its emergency role alongside its longstanding community investment mandate. Donor and volunteer patterns have also evolved, and UW NWT has grown from an organization distributing under \$500,000 annually to one that has, in peak emergency years, stewarded and distributed several million dollars.

This plan also responds to the realities of UW NWT's operating model: a working Board and limited staff capacity. It aims to support long-term sustainability, protect volunteer capacity, and ensure UW NWT can continue to deliver funds effectively and responsibly across the Northwest Territories.

Developing this Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan was developed through a mixed-method approach. The planning process included:

- Review of key UW NWT documents, including annual reports, financial statements, risk management planning, community impact planning, and resource development planning materials;
- Review of UW NWT's emergency readiness planning and communications platforms;
- Review of United Way Centraide resources related to strategic planning, membership requirements, community impact, and standards of excellence;
- One-on-one interviews with Board members;
- Meetings with UW NWT leadership, staff and key partners, including United Way Centraide membership support;
- A public survey with questions for donors and funding recipients; and
- An interactive workshop with Board Directors and UW NWT leadership.

Insights from this work were synthesized into a strengths, challenges, opportunities, and barriers analysis, which is provided in the appendices and informs the goals and priorities in this plan.



Part 2 United Way NWT Charter

Mission

Helping Northerners support Northerners —
building a strong and healthy community together.



Mandate

We promote the organized capacity of people in the Northwest Territories to care for one another. By raising and redistributing funds through our Community Investment Fund and Emergency Funding Program, we support critical projects and local nonprofits addressing the most pressing needs of Northern communities.

Statement of Values

The United Way NWT believes in its ability to bring our community together, from all walks of life, to create opportunities for people to improve their lives. We strive to earn our community's trust with integrity, transparency and with our shared values.

a. Community

We have seen our community in action and we know what we're able to achieve when we work together. Our goal is to continue to work alongside northerners to better understand where the greatest need is in the NWT.

b. Integrity and accountability

We are grateful for the communities that we live in and work hard to ensure that we are able to earn and keep the trust they have placed in United Way NWT.

c. Diversity and inclusiveness

We promote, value and celebrate equality, different abilities, perspectives and experiences.

d. Excellence and innovation

We are dedicated to excellence. We strive to better the United Way NWT each year and are always seeking better and new ways to achieve our goals.

e. Service

Because our community gives so much to us, we are motivated to give back just as much to them. We define our achievements by the success of the communities we work in.

Part 3 United Way NWT 2026-2032 Strategic Plan

2032 Vision

By 2032, UW NWT will be recognized across the Northwest Territories as a stable, resilient, and trusted partner. UW NWT will be supported by diversified and predictable funding, strong public partnerships, and representative governance. With a clearly defined and sustainably funded role in emergency response and strengthened Community Investment Fund programming, UW NWT will ensure that resources raised in the North create visible, lasting benefit for Northerners.



Goals and Objectives

UW NWT has identified four goals to guide its work between 2026 and 2032. Each goal includes objectives and strategic priorities to help the organization focus effort.

Goal 1: Build Sustainable and Diversified Revenue to Support UW NWT's Mandate.

Objectives:

1. Attract new donors and strengthen long-term partnerships.
2. Support continuity of giving across life transitions.
3. Secure stable public funding for core capacity and emergency readiness.

Goal 2: Strengthen the reach and efficacy of UW NWT's Programs.

Objectives:

1. Strengthen outreach and equitable access across the Northwest Territories.
2. Increase the impact and visibility of UW NWT's grants.
3. Strengthen the NGO Community and Broaden UW NWT's Support Role.

Goal 3: Strengthen Governance, Board Sustainability and Organizational Capacity

Objectives:

1. Diversify Board representation.
2. Strengthen staff and Board roles and continuity.
3. Support sustainable workloads and effective governance structures.

Goal 4: Define and Sustain UW NWT's Role in Emergency Response, Recovery and Preparedness

Objectives:

1. Clearly define UW NWT's scope in emergency response.
2. Align organizational capacity with emergency responsibilities.
3. Secure sustainable funding for emergency readiness.



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UNITED WAY NWT

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