



Northwest Territories
EQUAL PAY
Commissioner

Annual Report 2024 - 2025



Northwest Territories Equal Pay Commissioner

ANNUAL REPORT 2024 - 2025

It is a pleasure to present my Annual Report as Equal Pay Commissioner for the year 2024-2025. As in previous years, this report consists of two parts. The first part provides the context for the work of the Equal Pay Commissioner (the Commissioner). It summarizes the right to equal pay for work of equal value in the Northwest Territories (NWT) and outlines the role of the Commissioner in relation to this right. The second part summarizes my activities as Commissioner during the year.

I. The Right to Equal Pay in the Northwest Territories

In the Northwest Territories, the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is set out in section 40 of the *Public Service Act* (the “Act”) and applies to designated sectors within the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) public service. The legislation prohibits pay differences between male and female employees performing work of equal value within the same establishment.

The *Act* recognizes three distinct establishments for this purpose: the GNWT itself, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, and teachers who fall under the *Public Service Act*.

The concept of “equal value” refers not to identical work, but to work that is comparable in terms of skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions. This framework enables comparisons between different types of jobs when evaluating pay equity.

Where male and female employees in the same establishment are performing work of equal value, the *Act* requires that they receive

equal pay. Pay encompasses more than just salary or hourly wages—it includes all forms of remuneration such as bonuses, benefits, housing or clothing allowances, and other job-related payments.

However, the *Act* permits certain justified pay differentials. These may arise from gender-neutral systems or policies, such as seniority-based pay, merit-based progression, cost of living adjustments, or differences tied to commission structures, labour market shortages, temporary rehabilitation or training initiatives, or job reclassification or demotion processes. An amendment introduced in 2014 also permits specific types of transition allowances¹ to be recognized as legitimate exceptions, provided they are applied without gender bias.

The *Act* also provides for the role of the Commissioner, who is tasked with handling complaints related to pay equity. Employees who believe they are being paid unfairly in relation to others doing work of equal value because they are female may submit a complaint. The Commissioner will then investigate the matter and may attempt to mediate an informal resolution. If informal efforts are unsuccessful, the Commissioner must issue a report with recommendations. If there is no resolution, the matter may be referred to arbitration, where a binding decision will be rendered.

In addition to addressing complaints, the Commissioner has a broader responsibility to foster public understanding of the right to equal pay for work of equal value.

II. Activities of the Commissioner During 2024-2025

The GNWT pay equity website (www.equalpaynwt.ca), which was built in 2023-2024, saw good activity in the past year. After the initial flurry of users when the site first went live, there was a second uptick of interest in August 2024. Over the past year, there have been more than 300 active users of the website, according to Google Analytics.

¹ Specifically, the Act refers to transition allowances provided under the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement of January 25, 2013.

Social media was also used to promote awareness of equal pay for work of equal value. Postings were shared on September 18, International Equal Pay Day, and again on March 8, International Women's Day.

In early 2025, I was contacted by legislative interns with the Ontario Legislature Internship Programme (OLIP) regarding inclusion of the Equal Pay Commissioner in their study tour of other jurisdictions' legislatures and legislative appointees. I met with the interns on March 14, 2025, and shared information about the role of the Equal Pay Commissioner in the Northwest Territories.

As in previous years, no formal complaints were received during the reporting period. The only formal complaint ever filed with the Equal Pay Commissioner was submitted in 2019. While the absence of complaints may appear to be a positive sign, I would caution against interpreting this as evidence that pay equity has been achieved and maintained in the GNWT public service establishments. As I noted in my [2023-2024 Annual Report](#), ensuring that pay equity is established and maintained over time requires periodic, systematic reviews. While such reviews can be conducted voluntarily, a legislative requirement would provide a more robust and enduring mechanism for accountability. I would welcome the opportunity to support the development of such legislation.

In the coming year, I will continue to promote education and awareness of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, to help ensure that this fundamental human right is upheld throughout the GNWT public service. I will also continue to emphasize the benefits of proactive pay equity legislation and the importance of narrowing the gender wage gap through proactive pay equity measures.

I would like to close by thanking the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly for entrusting me with the responsibility of serving as your Equal Pay Commissioner. I look forward to continuing to support the Assembly in the years ahead.

Respectfully submitted this 9th day of June 2025,

Renée Caron
Equal Pay Commissioner of the NWT