

# PlanItNEWS

*Working with northern communities and their partners to build vibrant, healthy futures.*

Spring 2020



## Northern Communities Helping one another during COVID-19

The Governments of Canada and NWT are making funding available to support communities with preparing for and responding to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Funding is flowing as quickly as possible through existing agreements between Indigenous Services Canada, GNWT and First Nations in the NWT.

There are also funding opportunities that may be accessed through proposal submissions. Individuals, businesses and non-profit organizations can access additional benefits such as wage subsidies, low and no-interest loans and emergency benefits.



In this newsletter, we share some ideas and resources about how communities can support residents during and after the pandemic.

### *Some Ways to Respond Right Away*

#### ***Coordinate Supplies and Travel***

In some places, community governments are coordinating trips to bulk purchase groceries and other supplies. This type of coordination reduces the overall number of trips to the local store or into a regional centre, helps to ensure that the most vulnerable stay home, and keeps all NWT communities safe.

#### ***Assist residents with their income tax returns***

Residents may not be able to access the benefits and credits to which they are entitled if they have not filed their 2018 income tax return. Communities can establish programs to assist community members in submitting their return.

#### ***Offset Essential Costs***

Many people have temporarily lost their jobs. Communities may be able to access or re-direct funding to help vulnerable community members with essential costs – such as groceries.



### **Make sure the most vulnerable are looked after**

With school out, some vulnerable community members may need more attention. The Jordan's Principle Fund ([www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1568396296543/1582657596387](http://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1568396296543/1582657596387)) may be a tool for communities to help fill current gaps in services for children because of COVID cancellations.

### **Ensure Residents are Connected**

Physical distancing does not need to mean social isolation. Now, more than ever, it is essential that elders and vulnerable community members are connected with their neighbours, family and friends, but from a safe distance. For many, this means communicating more on a phone or computer and using video communications through platforms like FaceTime, WhatsApp, Skype and Zoom.

These video applications are also becoming increasingly important for accessing health care.

But what about residents who don't have access to the internet or devices? Community governments can develop plans to help increase access for all residents during this extraordinary time so that everyone can stay connected to their loved ones and their health care providers.



In-person care is available when it is needed. Your health care provider will help determine the best approach for you. In

general, everyone is safest when they maintain physical distance from others. GNWT has information about health care by phone or by video available here:

[www.nthssa.ca/en/services/virtual-care-during-covid-19-pandemic](http://www.nthssa.ca/en/services/virtual-care-during-covid-19-pandemic)



## **Strengthening Communities through the Summer**

As the world continues to figure out how to respond to COVID-19 through the summer, it is evident that the repercussions of the pandemic will be felt for a long time. For northern communities, some of the existing challenges with housing, food security and energy security are going to be magnified due to less travel, maintaining physical distancing and disruptions to supply chains. Community governments can respond by planning and implementing projects that:

- help community members to grow more food
- assist community members to harvest and share food
- assess and address housing needs
- identify diverse economic development opportunities
- achieve energy retrofits, lowering household costs and helping the environment
- create emergency response plans that will work in your local context
- make progress on projects that can be done from a distance, such as sprucing up your community's website to facilitate productive and active community engagement.

# How can we help?



*We can help to plan and to implement the short-term projects that will assist your community in these challenging times. For instance, we can help your community to:*

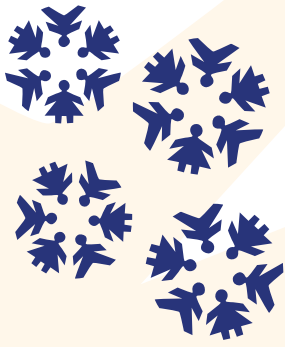
- Set-up virtual meeting and communication protocols
- Engage with community members virtually through, for example, newsletters, your website or a social media campaign
- Develop and revise policies that will help you to distribute Covid-19 related benefits and subsidies in ways that are fair and transparent
- Access various funding streams

## Did you know?

*The PlanIt North team has worked with northern communities on a number of long-term planning projects:*

- **Housing** – PlanIt North has led the assessment and planning work for the K’asho Got’ıne Housing Society in Fort Good Hope. We have supported the Society in planning and implementing a men’s transition home and finalizing a plan to address housing needs over the next five years.
- **Strategic planning** – We have completed Strategic Plans for several NWT communities, co-management and non-profit organizations.
- **Agriculture** – PlanIt North assisted in the development of NWT’s Agriculture Strategy. Our team can help to develop a community agriculture plan and articulate program guidelines that will work in your unique circumstances.
- **Communications** – PlanIt North’s team consists of leading-edge designers and communications specialists. We’ve assisted communities and businesses in developing books to document traditional knowledge and websites to share information.
- **Energy Retrofits** – PlanIt North has helped several clients access funds to develop community energy plans and implement energy projects.





## ABOUT US

***We are the only professional planning firm located wholly in Canada's North.***

For more than five years, PlanIt North has worked with NWT communities to deliver projects that matter most to them. We are committed to working closely with community governments, leaders, staff, and residents so that everyone can learn through the processes of planning and implementing a project. Only if everyone is learning together is the project likely to be sustainable in the long-term.

Our team brings more than fifty years of combined experience working in NWT. We bring broad expertise in planning and project management, balanced with an understanding of what works well in northern communities.

We also have an extensive network of other expert collaborators.



## The PlanIt TEAM

### CHRISTINE

Christine Wenman brings fifteen years of planning and community engagement experience to her work. For the past ten years, she has worked in community and regional planning in the NWT, leading initiatives for NWT community and local governments as well as co-management boards. She founded PlanIt North five years ago to ensure that her work could best serve communities and First Nation interests. Her specific projects have included: overall organizational strategic planning, land use planning, housing assessment and planning, wellness planning and protected area planning.

Christine is a Registered Professional Planner and Member of the Canadian Institute of Planners. She holds a Masters in Science in Community and Regional Planning from the University of British Columbia and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences from the University of Ottawa.

### AMANDA

Amanda Blair brings fifteen years of experience with people-focused projects, particularly related to health, energy and Information Technology. She recently led the planning for the operational transition for the new Stanton Territorial Hospital. Previously, she planned for and managed changes in people, process and technology with BC Hydro. She has also worked with the GNWT Energy Division to plan energy infrastructure projects in support of the NWT's 2030 Energy Strategy.

Amanda holds a Master of Business Administration from Simon Fraser University and a Bachelors in Anthropology and Geography from the University of British Columbia. She has completed PhD courses in Industrial Economics at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. She is a Certified Change

Management Practitioner and is excited to support people and communities with a planned approach to change.

### RABIA

Rabia Ahmed brings experience with community-based research, social innovation processes, visual communication, policy analysis and GIS mapping, and is passionate about planning approaches that centre local voices in decision-making. Rabia has worked in co-management contexts in BC, Ontario and NWT and has focused on a wide range of issues from affordable housing to fisheries and food systems. With her strong research, analytical and communication skills, Rabia is well equipped to help communities and their partners make context-appropriate and evidence-based decisions and plans.

Rabia holds a graduate degree in Environmental Studies from York University with a specialisation in planning and an undergraduate degree in Arts and Science from McMaster University.

### SHAUNA

For over a decade, Shauna Morgan has provided support for community development and land protection initiatives across the Northwest Territories. Shauna brings strong research, and facilitation skills to her work and is experienced working across social and natural science disciplines. She managed the northern program of the Pembina Institute (a clean energy non-profit thinktank) for four years, where her work focused on community engagement in regulatory processes, community-based environmental monitoring initiatives and locally-driven renewable energy projects. More recently, she has served on the Board of the Yellowknife's Women Society and contributes her time and energy to assist in the planning

and implementation of Housing First and other innovative social programs. Shauna is currently in her second term as an elected Yellowknife City Councillor and served in 2019 as Deputy Mayor.

### SYLVIA

Sylvia Charlo is a strong facilitator, communicator and community advocate. A member of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation from Dettah, NT, Sylvia was raised in Yellowknife and grew up traditionally, harvesting from the land with her family, and developing a deep respect for the environment. Sylvia is motivated to work collaboratively with government, non-government, and Indigenous organizations to achieve healthy environments in northern communities both for her daughter and also for generations to come.

Sylvia recently fulfilled one of her dreams by graduating with a Diploma from the Environment and Natural Resources Technology Program at Aurora College.

### JENNIFER

Jennifer Luckay has lived in the North for over fifteen years and has worked on numerous northern projects. She is the design wizard for the team and has over two decades of award-winning graphic design, branding, illustrations and project management skills. She can make your vision come alive on paper and on-screen. Her passion is working with communities, and helping to share knowledge and stories of the land and culture.

A Certified Graphic Designer and a graduate of the Graphic Design program at Red River in Winnipeg, Manitoba, she has also studied in Rome, Italy, as part of her certification towards earning her Bachelor of Professional Arts, Communications with Athabasca University.



**For more information or to discuss how your PlanIt North team can help, please call Christine at 867-445-4127 or email [christine@planitnorth.ca](mailto:christine@planitnorth.ca)**