

**QUANTITATIVE & QUALITATIVE  
PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH SERVICES (POR)  
INUIT IN NUNAVUT AND PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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*Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français sur demande.*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Introduction and Background

The following report describes the findings of the public opinion research conducted on behalf of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) on Inuit in Nunavut and public sector employment, as well as the conclusions associated with these findings. The research included a telephone and online survey (the Nunavut Inuit Survey) with Nunavut Inuit. Focus groups were also conducted in two Nunavut communities. This public opinion research was implemented based on the objectives and activities described in Article 23 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA).

In 1993, the Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories (succeeded by the Government of Nunavut) and the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area, as represented by the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut (a predecessor to Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI)), negotiated and signed the NLCA. The signing of NLCA was followed by the passage of the Nunavut Act (1993) that led to the official creation of the territory of Nunavut on April 1, 1999. One of the objectives identified in the NLCA was to increase participation of Inuit covered by the NLCA (NLCA Beneficiaries) in government employment in Nunavut. In order to help increase the employment of NLCA Beneficiaries, Article 23 of the NLCA identifies the obligation of producing a Nunavut Inuit Labour Force Analysis (NILFA) “to provide a detailed analysis of the labour force of the Nunavut Settlement Area”. Accordingly, the purpose of the NILFA is to analyze “the availability, interest and preparedness of the Inuit in Nunavut for government employment” (NLCA, Article 23.3.1) and “to assess the existing skill level and degree of formal qualification among the Inuit labour force” (NLCA, Article 23.3.2). In order to support the development of future NILFAs, the Government of Canada’s Department of Employment and Social Development commissioned Malatest to conduct a Public Opinion Research (POR) survey (the Nunavut Inuit Survey) and focus groups among Inuit in Nunavut to identify their availability, interest, and preparedness for public sector employment. Accordingly, this report outlines the results from the POR survey data and focus group findings.

### Methodology

Data were collected through the Nunavut Inuit Survey and community focus groups. The survey was administered online and by telephone to 500 individuals who resided in Nunavut, were NLCA beneficiaries, and were between the ages of 18 and 64 years. The target of 500 completions was achieved by the survey. The survey instrument was developed in close consultation with ESDC, NTI, and the Government of Nunavut. It was approximately 18 to 20 minutes in length.

It should be noted that the 500 respondents to the survey were composed of those who had telephones (landline or cellular) and who consented to complete the survey. Therefore, they may not be representative of the entire Nunavut population.

In the following findings, the term “statistically significant” is used to denote differences between groups which were significant at  $p \leq 0.05$ . As statistical significance is more reliably detected in larger groups, small differences between large groups can obtain statistical significance and large differences between small groups may not reach the level of statistical significance.

The focus group moderator guide was developed with ESDC, NTI, and the Government of Nunavut. Originally, one focus group was planned for Kugluktuk, two for Rankin Inlet, and two for Iqaluit. Due to inclement weather which prevented travel to Iqaluit, the Iqaluit groups were cancelled. An additional Rankin Inlet group was held. Therefore, a total of four focus groups with 29 individuals were completed. Focus groups were approximately two hours in length. As focus group research findings are qualitative and not quantitative in nature, focus group results mentioned in this report provide an indication of participants' views, but cannot be taken to represent the views of all Inuit in Nunavut.

## Main Findings

### *Demographic Characteristics of the Sample*

In total, 500 individuals were included in the survey. The majority of survey respondents were female (63%), while the remaining one-third was male (37%). Over one-half of survey respondents reported their age as 30 to 54 years (56%), while very few respondents (3%) reported being 18 to 19 years of age (see Table A.1).

**Table A.1: Age of Respondents**

Age Group	% of Respondents
18 to 19 years	3%
20 to 24 years	10%
25 to 29 years	13%
30 to 54 years	56%
55 years or older	16%
No response	2%

*n* = 500. (DE\_02). In what year were you born?

Thirty-eight (38%) of respondents were from Baffin (outside of Iqaluit), 30% were from Keewatin, 19% were from Kitikmeot, and 13% were from Iqaluit.

Approximately one-half (47%) of respondents had completed a high school diploma or equivalency, and 60% had completed additional education, training, or courses. At the time of the survey, respondents were:<sup>1</sup>

- Employed (58%);
- Not engaged in the wage economy, though they were engaged in family responsibilities and/or community/cultural activities (39%);
- Enrolled in education at the time of the survey (21%); and
- Unemployed (2%).

Throughout the analysis, comparisons were made between respondents grouped based on their proficiency in Inuit languages (Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun) and English.<sup>2</sup> Approximately one-quarter (22%) of respondents reported being comfortable speaking, reading, and writing in both Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun and English. An additional 31% of respondents indicated they felt comfortable speaking Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun and English (though they were not comfortable reading and writing in both English and Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun).

<sup>1</sup> Percentages do not total 100% as respondents could be engaged in education as well as be employed or outside of the wage economy.

<sup>2</sup> All respondents who were proficient in French were also proficient in English.

Almost two-fifths of respondents reported they worked for the government or hamlet (38%) at the time of the survey, while the remaining 62% did not. Of the 62%, two thirds were past government employees, and one third had never worked for government.

### *Interest*

Non-government employees (62% of the sample, 311 individuals) which includes past government employees (42% of overall sample) generally perceived government employment favourably, as 89% were interested in working for a hamlet/City of Iqaluit, the Government of Nunavut, or the Government of Canada. Government positions were interesting to respondents because they were seen as offering good pay (26%), work that had an impact on the community (15%), interesting work (14%), and good benefits (13%).

Among the 62% of respondents who were not working for the government, 52% had looked for a job in the government or hamlet. Of those who had looked for a government job, 80% followed through and applied for the job. Moreover, 57% of non-government employees planned to apply for a government or hamlet job in the next year, and this proportion increased substantially when the job was known to be accepting of Inuit culture (93% would apply).

Indeed, 69% of non-government employee survey respondents (62% of the sample, 311 individuals) felt it was very important to work with people who understand Inuit culture and society.

Current government employee respondents (38% of the sample, 189 individuals) also reported that it was very important that their workplace supported Inuit culture. The support of their co-workers (89%) and supervisors (87%) was approximately equally important to respondents. Furthermore, most government employee respondents (71%) felt that it was very important to be able to use Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun at work, if they chose.

Approximately one-third of government employee respondents were supervised by an Inuk person (37%) while 62% were not supervised by an Inuk person. Thirty-five percent were able to speak Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun all the time at work. The majority of respondents reported that there were opportunities to learn about Inuit culture in their government and hamlet workplaces (71%).

### *Availability*

Focus group participants were asked to explain their interpretation of the concept of being available to work. They felt that availability to work included being willing to take and commit to a job, and to take additional training if needed.

Sixty-two percent of the survey sample were not government employees, the majority (79%) of them reported that they would be available to work at least some months of the year. Most of these respondents also said they could work full time (74%).

### *Preparedness*

Almost one-half (47%) of all survey respondents reported that they had a high school diploma, or an equivalency certificate such as General Educational Development, Adult Basic Education,

or Pathway to Adult Secondary School. Additionally, 60% of all survey respondents said they had completed education, training, or courses beyond high school. Respondents also reported having several skills such as:

- Teamwork (89%);
- Communication skills (73%);
- Computer and Internet skills (71%); and
- Typing and writing skills (67%).

Current government employees surveyed reported having several skills with greater frequency than non-government employees. Current government employees more frequently reported having teamwork (92% of current government employees compared to 81% of non-government employees), public speaking (84% of current government employees compared to 58% of non-government employees), and typing (80% of current government employees compared to 50% of non-government employees) skills.

Community focus group participants suggested that skills they believed to be related to government employment may be learned through Inuit cultural activities. They mentioned learning the following skills from participating in family, community, and cultural experiences:

- Attention to detail;
- Discipline and work ethic;
- Communication and listening skills;
- Several skills related to working well with others, such as tolerance, teamwork, and respect;
- Planning and decision-making;
- Leadership;
- Fine motor skills; and
- Environmental awareness.

The majority (86%) of all survey respondents were not engaged in upgrading their skills at the time of the survey. The most common reasons for not engaging in education were having family responsibilities (21%), believing that they did not need additional education (16%), lacking local options for post-secondary education (11%), or lacking time (9%).

A slight majority (57%) of survey respondents not currently government employees but interested in becoming so, reported that they would need more training to work for a government or hamlet employer, while the remaining 43% felt that they already had the right skills. Respondents were less likely to have felt that they had the right skills for government employment if they did not have a post-secondary degree, diploma, or certificate..

Focus group respondents noted that one barrier to obtaining post-secondary education was a lack of access to courses within their community. Participants cited the high costs of tuition,<sup>3</sup> travel, and living expenses as barriers to accessing education outside of the community.

Indeed, a large majority (90%) of all survey respondents would be willing to take post-secondary education or training in their home community (and at no cost). Their willingness decreased somewhat when the training was hypothetically available elsewhere in Nunavut (75%).

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<sup>3</sup> Participants did not define what they believed to be the high cost of tuition.

### *Current Government Employees*

The following section addresses findings reported by current government employees who responded to the survey (38% of the sample, 189 individuals).

Government employee respondents who were employed by the Government of Canada (9%), the Government of Nunavut (61%), or a hamlet/City of Iqaluit (27%) during survey administration were asked about their experiences in government workplaces and how Nunavut Inuit could be supported to obtain and advance in government positions.

Current government employee respondents most frequently performed roles in education (20%), administrative support (16%), and municipal services (11%). The advantages of government work that these respondents identified were often similar to those identified by non-government employees. For example, 26% of non-government employees surveyed who were interested in government work cited the perceived pay offered by government jobs as a point of interest. Similarly, 38% of current government employees surveyed noted the rate of pay as an advantage of government work.

Though only 11% of government employees identified access to training and learning opportunities as an advantage of government employment, three-quarters (75%) of government employees reported that they had engaged in training since starting to work for a government or hamlet employer. The majority of this training (89%) was provided by the employer. In general, respondents believed their skills were being put to good use by their government and hamlet employers. High proportions of respondents reported that their English language skills (89%), formal education qualifications (80%), and reading, writing, math, and problem-solving skills (86%) were put to good use in their current position.

Approximately two-thirds (68%) of current government employee respondents (38% of the sample, 189 individuals) would be interested in advancing to a higher government position. They reportedly knew what steps to take to advance (84%) and believed they worked in environments conducive to advancement (75% of government employees agreed that their supervisors helped employees achieve their job goals). They suggested that more training opportunities were needed to support Nunavut Inuit advancement in government and hamlet positions (41%). In terms of Nunavut Inuit who were not yet employed by the government, government employees also believed additional training (31%) and job opportunities (15%) would support them in potential applications for government positions.

Overall, the majority of government employees reported enjoying their current workplace (89%) and 61% intended to remain in their position for at least two years (24% intended to leave and 15% did not know or did not respond). Reasons cited for intending to leave were primarily related to pursuing further education (22%) and retirement (18%).

*Political Neutrality Certification*

This certification is to be submitted with the final report submitted to the Project Authority.

I hereby certify as Senior Officer of Quantitative & Qualitative Public Opinion Research Services (POR) Inuit in Nunavut and Public Sector Employment that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada* and *Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research*.

Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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