



## DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE INUIT LANGUAGE INCENTIVE POLICY

### POLICY STATEMENT

The *Inuit Language Protection Act* (ILPA) ensures that the Government of Nunavut (GN) identifies and implements measures to increase the use of the Inuit Language as a working language of Nunavut and ensures that services are provided in the Inuit Language. The GN is committed to encouraging employees to use the Inuit Language as the working language of the public service. The Inuit Language Incentive Policy encourages employees to increase their Inuit language skills and compensates them according to skill level.

### PRINCIPLES

This policy is based on the following principles:

Through the *Inuit Language Protection Act* (ILPA) the GN aims to revitalize and sustain the fluent use of the Inuit Language within the territory.

The *Official Languages Act* (OLA) recognizes the Inuit Language as an official language of Nunavut and guarantees that anyone can use it with, or receive services from, the head or central offices of any GN department or public body as well as other GN department/public body's offices if there is significant demand.

It is a priority of the GN to provide its employees with an incentive to strengthen their language proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing in the Inuit Language.

### INUIT SOCIETAL VALUES

This policy is guided by, and will be administered in a manner consistent with the following Inuit Societal Values:

***Qanuqtuurniq***: *Being innovative and resourceful* – This policy supports and incentivizes GN employees to increase their language skills. Fluency in the Inuit Language will ensure the most culturally relevant services are provided to Nunavummiut.

***Piliriqatigiinniq/Ikajuqtigiinniq***: *Working together for a common cause* – This policy allows the GN and its employees to work together to increase Inuit Language skills and to improve the service provided to the public.

***Pilimmaksarniq/Pijariuqsarniq***: *Development of skill through observation, mentoring, practice and effort* – This policy allows employees to access in-person training to develop their Inuit Language skills and continue improving.

***Pijitsirniq: Serving and providing for family and/or community*** – This policy promotes and incentivizes employees to communicate more effectively in the Inuit Language with all Nunavummiut.

## **APPLICATION**

This policy applies to all employees of the GN and its public bodies, including casual and relief employees, with the exception of employees of the Qulliq Energy Corporation (QEC) and employees of the Nunavut Teachers' Association (NTA). Persons hired as professional interpreters and/or translators for the GN are not eligible to receive the Inuit Language Incentive.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Assessor: Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit (IUT) or their designate. They will undertake the assessment of GN employees wishing to apply for the Inuit Language Incentive, identify an assessed proficiency level and provide feedback for further language skills development to the employee.

Language Proficiency: skill level assigned to an employee through an authorized language test.

Inuit Language (as defined in ILPA): means,

- (a) in or near Kugluktuk, Cambridge Bay, Bathurst Inlet and Umingmaktuuq, Inuinnaqtun;
- (b) in or near other municipalities, Inuktitut; and
- (c) both Inuinnaqtun and Inuktitut as the Commissioner in Executive Council may, by regulation, require or authorize.

Official Languages (as defined in the *Official Languages Act*): the Inuit Language, English and French are recognized as Nunavut's official languages.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit (IUT)

IUT will act as the assessor to determine the Inuit Language proficiency of GN employees. This includes setting the proficiency levels and performing or overseeing the design and administration of the proficiency tests, in accordance with IUT's mandate under ILPA.

IUT will be responsible for developing standardized terminology or expressions in the Inuit language, as well as competency levels/standards of Inuit language use or correctness; including as it relates to any dialect of the Inuit language in local use;

IUT will develop, review, recommend and administer tests that evaluate Inuit Language proficiency for purposes such as this incentive program to certify an

individual's educational or employment skill or competency level in the Inuit Language.

#### Department of Finance

The Department of Finance will develop and update this policy and associated guidelines and procedures as required.

The Department of Finance will be responsible for communicating the policy and monitoring its application.

The Department of Finance will provide an application process for the incentive program and process the language incentive pay for all successful candidates.

#### Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs (EIA)

The Department of EIA will provide Inuit Language training that supports employees to develop and increase their Inuit Language capacity.

#### Employees:

Employees who wish to access the language incentive program will be responsible for initiating and completing the application package, including requesting language testing for certification of proficiency.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that their language proficiency certification remains valid.

### **PROVISIONS**

Based on the GN's goal of making the Inuit Language the working language of the public service, employees who demonstrate proficiency in and use the Inuit Language in the workplace will be paid an allowance based on their assessed proficiency level.

The allowance is paid according to a three-level scale based on proficiency:

1. Fluency – ability to speak and understand the Inuit Language in a fashion that allows one to function in their job - \$1,500/year;
2. Fluency + Reading and Writing – includes level one (1) plus the ability to write and read the Inuit Language - \$2,400/year;
3. Language Expert – includes level one (1) and two (2) plus an expert level of skill and knowledge in the Inuit Language and the ability to provide leadership in advancing the status of the Inuit Language as the working language of the public service - \$5,000/year.

The language proficiency of GN employees will be assessed through an Inuit Language Incentive Program test.

Language proficiency tests will be required as proof of language proficiency. All official tests shall be arranged through IUT or their designate.

Employees who are assessed through the Inuit Language Incentive Program test will be provided language training recommendations to improve and expand their language skills.

Employees who are enrolled in the Bilingual Bonus Program (Inuktut) will be grandfathered into the Inuit Language Incentive Program at level one (1) as a baseline. In order to retain the incentive, these employees must apply to be assessed within two (2) years of the approval of this policy.

## ASSESSMENT FORMAT

The assessment will include:

- An oral component in which the employee answers questions and engages in conversation with the assessor;
- A reading comprehension component in which the employee will read a text and respond to related questions;
- A writing and multiple choice component in which the employee writes original content related to a topic as well as answering multiple choice questions.

## PLACEMENT/ADVANCEMENT

Employees may request an assessment to determine their proficiency level. This could be for initial placement at level one (1) of the program or to advance to a higher level following training and development to improve language skills. The scheduling of the assessment will be dependent upon the availability of assessors. Assessment will occur regularly. Proof of language proficiency will be valid for five (5) years and an employee can request an assessment to progress to the next level after one (1) year at their current level.

## ONGOING ASSESSMENT

Proof of language proficiency will be valid for five (5) years. The incentive will be dependent on ongoing demonstration of proficiency in the Inuit Language. In order to continue receiving the allowance a mandatory re-assessment will be required every five (5) years to confirm proficiency levels and eligibility.

## ASSESSMENT APPEAL PROCESS

Employees may challenge the results of an assessment and the resulting proficiency placement within the incentive program by submitting a formal appeal. Employees may appeal to retake or have their test results re-evaluated by another assessor. Employees may appeal a test once. Appeals must be submitted to IUT within 30 days of the assessment administration.

## CONDITIONS

No employee may receive both this incentive allowance and any other Inuit Language incentive or bonus.

An employee will be paid an incentive amount, depending on successful placement at one of the three (3) proficiency levels. Payment will be retroactive to the date they

formally requested an assessment, unless a delay in testing is due to employee availability.

Upon a successful appeal of assessment results, the incentive will be paid retroactive to the application date of the appealed assessment.

No other payment will be made retroactively under the Inuit Language Incentive Program.

#### **RELATED LEGISLATION AND POLICIES**

Nunavut Agreement, Article 23

*Inuit Language Protection Act*

*Official Languages Act*

Collective Agreement – Nunavut Employees Union

HRM Directive 1505: Bilingual Bonus

#### **PREROGATIVE OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Nothing in this policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of Executive Council to make decisions or take action respecting the use of the Inuit Language outside the provisions of this policy.

#### **SUNSET CLAUSE**

This policy will be reviewed within five (5) years of the date of signing.

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Peter Taptuna, Premier