



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **NWT Poverty Update reveals growing need for food and housing**

(Yellowknife, 27 September 2018): A coalition of anti-poverty advocates has released an update showing that the main conditions of poverty have worsened since the release of a territorial anti-poverty action plan in 2015.

The update outlines elements of poverty affecting NWT residents, and how some organizations are responding. The update will be delivered to all homes in the NWT in the coming week and encourages residents to use the update to ask questions of leaders about further efforts to reduce poverty.

“There have been some gains for low-income families, including the introduction of the Canada and NWT Child Benefits, but many still struggle to meet their most basic needs,” says Lyda Fuller, Executive Director of YWCA NWT.

“Decent housing is the first step out of poverty, and we’ve made progress there,” says Yellowknife Women’s Society Executive Director Bree Denning. “But the need is growing even as we build services.”

Food insecurity is on the rise. Information from the NWT Bureau of Statistics shows that there was more food insecurity in 2016 compared to 2010. The Yellowknife Food Bank, the Salvation Army and the Yellowknife Farmers Market, among others, provide food hampers and meals to those in need.

Homelessness has increased across the NWT. Housing First, which stabilizes families in housing and provides support as needed, is being offered by three non-profit organizations in Yellowknife to both single people and families.

A snapshot of income distribution in the NWT reveals the background to the growing need for the necessities. About 20 per cent of NWT households had an income of \$25,000 or less last year while another 20 per cent had income above \$200,000. There is still a substantial number of people in the NWT living in poverty.

The release of this update comes five years after the territorial government released “Building on the Strengths of Northerners: A Strategic Framework toward the Elimination of Poverty in the NWT” and an action plan released in 2015.

See the attached NWT Poverty Update. For more information about the update, please contact two of the housing non-profit organizations that contributed statistics to the update.

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