

Northern Alberta Development Council

Annual Report

2017-18



September 2018

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Message from the CHAIR

I am pleased to present the Northern Alberta Development Council's (NADC) 2017-18 Annual Report. This report outlines our activities and accomplishments between April 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018. I am proud to celebrate these achievements and continued progress in the pursuit of a stronger Alberta through a stronger north.

On September 14, 2017, eight new members were appointed to the Council. Our members champion the cause of Alberta's northern economies and communities by exploring opportunities and implementing initiatives to facilitate growth in our northern region. We are committed to investigating, monitoring, evaluating, planning, and promoting practical measures to secure a prosperous future for the north and are supported by a team of staff based in Peace River, Bonnyville, Fort McMurray, and Edmonton.

Over the past year, our Council was actively engaged in strategic discussions on northern priorities and explored opportunities to collaborate with northern municipalities, First Nations and Métis leaders, and a variety of community and industry partners.

Through our engagement in the north, we are building an understanding of the issues and potential opportunities for our region, and are actively facilitating partnerships to support the development of adequate infrastructure, social and community support services, and workforce and training programs that support strong, vibrant communities and a diversified northern economy.

Our Council appreciates the commitments and efforts of our many partners across the province. Partnerships, research, and events such as conferences, seminars, and forums are fundamental to the work that we do. We will continue to engage with northern stakeholders, elected officials, community representatives, industries, and other northern jurisdictions across Canada.

As the Chair of the NADC, I will continue to work with our members to promote and advocate for the north as we pursue continued growth in the year ahead.

Debbie Jabbour, MLA for Peace River

Chair

NADC at a Glance

Overview

The Northern Alberta Development Council (“NADC”, “Council”) is a provincial government agency that investigates northern Alberta’s social and economic development priorities, programs, and services and provides advice and recommendations to the Government of Alberta to help facilitate growth in the region.

The Council is a vital part of the ongoing work of growing healthy northern communities and supporting a robust northern Alberta economy. Established under the *Northern Alberta Development Council Act* (S.A. 1963, c.41), the Council is an advisory agency accountable to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

The Council regularly engages with northern stakeholders, including northern MLAs, and continues to serve as key community contacts, bringing a local perspective and northern lens to discussions on the trends and issues that impact the north.

Mandate

The mandate of the Council, as set out in the *Northern Alberta Development Council Act*, is to investigate, monitor, evaluate, plan, and promote practical measures to foster and advance general development in northern Alberta and to advise the government accordingly. The Council may investigate the requirements of the people living in northern Alberta and make recommendations related to:

- social and economic development;
- development of communities and service delivery; and
- development of government services and programs.

Governance

The NADC champions the cause of Alberta’s northern economy and communities by exploring opportunities for growth and working on strategic priorities.

The Council is made up of no less than eight and no more than 10 members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, one of whom must be designated as Chair.

Council membership reflects the geographic, cultural, and vocational diversity of northern communities.

Chair

Name	Location	Appointment Date	Appointment Expiration Date
Debbie Jabbour, MLA	Peace River	September 28, 2016	October 13, 2018

Council

Name	Location	Appointment Date	Expiration Date
Alden Armstrong	Paddle Prairie	September 14, 2017	September 13, 2018
Cody Beirsto	Grande Prairie	September 14, 2017	September 13, 2020
Jason Schulz	Fort McMurray	May 7, 2014	September 13, 2020
Jeannette Danks	Peace River	September 14, 2017	September 13, 2020
Karla Buffalo	Fort McMurray	September 14, 2017	September 13, 2019
Ken Noskey (Vice Chair from October 2017)	High Prairie	March 8, 2012	March 31, 2021
Paula Evans	Athabasca	September 14, 2017	September 13, 2019
Peter Cardinal	Kikino	September 14, 2017	September 13, 2020
Sheri MacMillan	Grande Prairie	September 14, 2017	September 13, 2018

Vision, Mission, Goals, and Key Strategies

Vision

A stronger Alberta through a stronger north.

Mission

To identify and implement sustainable measures that will advance northern development and advise government on opportunities and issues for the benefit of Albertans.

Goals and Key Strategies

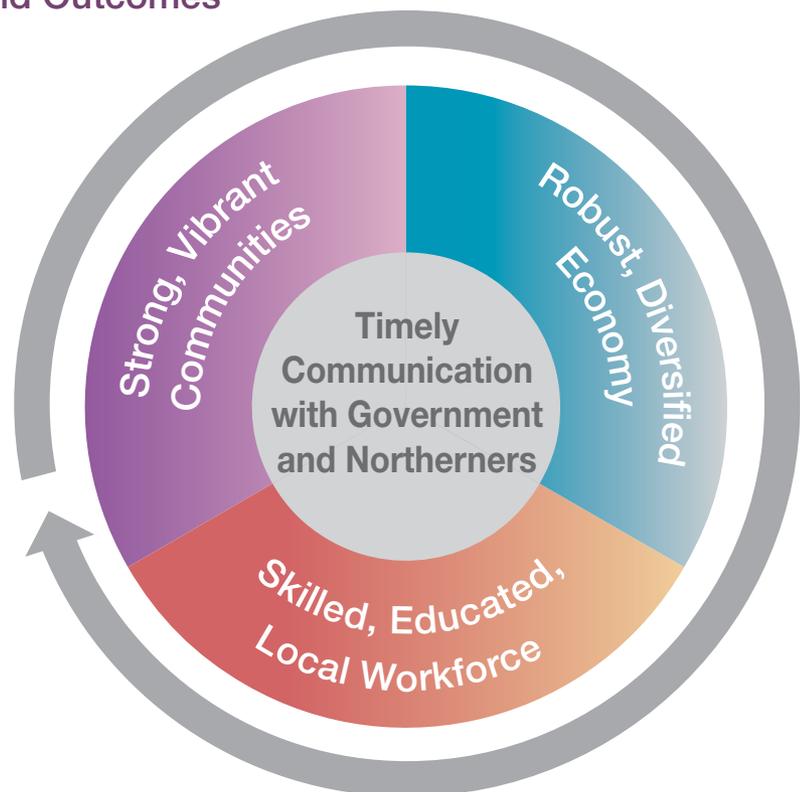
- Build partnerships among key stakeholders to establish priorities and pursue northern opportunities.
- Foster economic strength and diversity by supporting development in transportation, value-added agriculture, tourism, health, and other sectors.
- Support initiatives to increase northern skill levels in partnership with northern communities, business, industry, learning providers, and students.
- Increase awareness about northern Alberta's employment and lifestyle opportunities.

Core Approaches

1. Engage
2. Research
3. Partner
4. Promote
5. Advocate



Goals and Outcomes



Current State of the NADC Region*



60%
of Alberta's
total land area



100%
of the province's
mineable oil sands
development



19.3%
of Alberta farms



Region is largely boreal forest and boasts the largest Alberta Forest Management Agreement (58,120 sq. km.)



8.9%
of Alberta's
population
(2016 Census)



19%
Alberta
Municipal
Districts



23
Towns



9
Villages



9
Summer
Villages



101
Hamlets



2
Cities
Cold Lake and
Grande Prairie



2
Specialized
Municipalities
(Mackenzie County and
Regional Municipality of
Wood Buffalo)



2
Improvement
Districts (ID No.
24 Wood Buffalo
and ID No. 349)



8
Métis
Settlements



33
First
Nations



Treaty Areas 6,
8, and 10

*Source: NADC. (2016). [NADC Area Profile: An Economic Description of the Region](#). Alberta: Northern Alberta Development Council.

NADC in Focus

Key Achievements 2017-18

April 2017

- Recruitment and selection of new Council members for the NADC commenced under the portfolio of the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.
- Hosted the Industrial Hemp and Flax Opportunity Seminar in Whitecourt.
- Hosted the Inaugural Northern Health Roundtable in partnership with Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services (AHS).

May 2017

- Supported a Water North Coalition meeting in Cold Lake.
- NADC staff participated in Gender Based Analysis Training (GBA+) to enhance understanding of impacts of policy, programs, and legislation on diverse groups.

June 2017

- Participated in a Community Readiness Group meeting in Grande Prairie to discuss an Impact Study and Gap Analysis report related to the expected opening of the Grande Prairie Regional Hospital.

July 2017

- The Bursary Selection Committee met and selected recipients for the NADC and Specialty Bursaries.
- Launched the Northern Alberta Integrated Map – an interactive web-based mapping platform providing spatial data and geographic perspective in understanding issues vital to the northern Alberta's regional economy.

August 2017

- Coordinated a meeting between Northern Alberta Elected Leaders (NAEL) and Hon. Shaye Anderson, Minister of Municipal Affairs, to discuss municipal issues impacting northwest municipalities.
- The Bursary Selection Committee met and selected recipients for the first intake of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Bursary.

September 2017

- The Lieutenant Governor appointed seven new members and re-appointed Jason Schulz to the NADC through O.C. 264/2017.
- Supported the Water North Coalition meeting in Wabasca.
- Coordinated Alberta's participation in the 2017 Northern Development Ministers Forum (NDMF).
- Health Care in Northern Alberta: Update to Northern Communities 2017 report was released.
- With partners, facilitated Northern Alberta Broadband Project roll-out in the Athabasca region.
- Attended the 75th Annual General Meeting and Conference of Alberta Forest Products Association (AFPA) in Jasper.

October 2017

- The Lieutenant Governor re-appointed Peace River MLA Debbie Jabbour as Chair of the NADC through O.C. 311/2017.
- Hosted the second Northern Health Roundtable where the opioid crisis and addictions were discussed as priority issues.
- Newly appointed NADC members met in Peace River.
- Participated in the Woodland Operation Learning Foundation (WOLF) AGM.
- With partners, facilitated Northern Alberta Broadband Project roll-out in the Fort McMurray region.

November 2017

- Supported AHS' Peace River: Eye of the Storm-National Addictions Awareness Week event.
- The Bursary Selection Committee met and selected recipients for the Northern Student Teacher Bursary (NSTB).
- Shared bursary information with students at Forestry Industry Career Day in Peace River.
- With partners, facilitated Northern Alberta Broadband Project roll-out in the Grande Prairie region.

December 2017

- Hosted a Northern MLA Roundtable in Edmonton to facilitate relationship building and information exchange around key northern issues.
- The Bursary Selection Committee met and selected recipients for the second intake of the FNMI Bursary.
- With partners, facilitated Northern Alberta Broadband Project roll-out in the High Level region.

January 2018

- Provided secretariat support to the NAEL meeting in Slave Lake.
- Supported the Water North Coalition meeting in Beaverlodge.

February 2018

- Hosted the Economic Development Officer (EDO) Roundtable in Grande Prairie with key economic and community development stakeholders.
- Met with regional leaders at Growing the North conference in Grande Prairie.
- Attended engagement sessions on the draft provincial Woodland Caribou Range Plan in Cold Lake.
- Released a report on Digital Education Resources in northern Alberta in partnership with Labour Education Applied Research North (LEARN).

March 2018

- The Lieutenant Governor re-appointed Ken Noskey as a member of the NADC through O.C. 068/2018.
- Attended engagement sessions on the draft provincial Woodland Caribou Range Plan in Fort McMurray, High Level, and Grande Prairie.
- Presented on northern initiatives at the Economic Developers Alberta Annual 2018 Conference and AGM in Banff.
- With partners, facilitated Northern Alberta Broadband Project roll-out in the High Prairie region.

The NADC Goals



Overarching Goal:

Timely Communication with Government and Northerners

To ensure the work of the Council is relevant and timely, the NADC has a communications strategy and a variety of mediums through which it can engage with northern stakeholders, partners, and government departments and officials. Supporting this engagement, the NADC has established protocols and channels for sharing key messages with government and stakeholders in the north and across the province. NADC staff work internally to build connections and synergies with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade's senior leadership and advance the business of the NADC through representation in cross-ministry collaboration. The Council works through the Chair and Minister responsible for the NADC to advance its advocacy work throughout the region.

Key Strategies:

- Build the Council's knowledge and timely understanding of the gaps, issues, and opportunities related to industry and community development in northern Alberta in order to equip the Council to advocate for and inform government of emerging issues, trends, and northern priorities.
- Facilitate and collaborate on cross-ministry initiatives to address critical issues and advance policy objectives.
- Support northern residents and communities in accessing essential services, training, and business development opportunities.
- Encourage dialogue between northern Alberta residents, small and medium-sized enterprises, industry, municipalities, and First Nations and Metis to advance opportunities for growth and new business ventures.
- Partner with other jurisdictions to explore and advance coordinated approaches for development and promoting the north's potential.

Goal One:

Skilled, Educated, Local Workforce



To support the economy in northern Alberta, its labour force has to meet the identified needs and requirements of northern communities and the industries operating in the region. The provision of specialized and localized training options and the inclusion of underrepresented groups is essential in ensuring local residents can fully participate in the region's growth, development, and prosperity.

Key Strategies:

- In partnership with Alberta Advanced Education, attract and retain skilled workers in the north.
- In partnership with Alberta Advanced Education, enhance support for training and workforce participation of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples in the north.
- Support northern student, employer, and community training needs through labour market research, capacity building, and responsive post-secondary programming delivered through the northern colleges.
- Align bursary funding and programming to reflect the current education and employment trends in the region. Conduct research to support initiatives that advance future growth in the region.
- Increase retention potential of northern professionals through promotion of northern career opportunities and engagement of northern business and industry in the recruitment process for high demand/hard to recruit to careers.
- Partner to explore new training opportunities in the region to meet the needs of northern students who wish to remain in the north for their post-secondary education.

Goal Two:

Robust, Diversified Economy

Continued economic growth is dependent on having the necessary transportation networks, access to markets, and infrastructure in place to support this growth while leveraging the unique characteristics of the region to diversify into new areas of opportunity. The NADC is focusing on fostering economic strength and diversity by supporting development of transportation corridors, value-added agriculture, tourism, health, and other areas to help enhance northern communities' ability to remain resilient in the face of resource price volatility and limited alternatives to economic diversification.

Key Strategies:

- Research and deliver expert information on key social and economic development opportunities in the north.
- Build and develop relationships with northern municipalities and Indigenous communities to ensure timely access to information on municipal priorities and issues.
- Build on existing data to enhance access to appropriate regional data through a user-friendly medium that the Council and northern businesses, industry, and municipalities can use to efficiently identify and advocate for required programs and initiatives.
- Advance rationale for funding requirements for northern priorities through comprehensive, sector-specific economic data.
- Encourage the development of forestry and other renewable resources in northern Alberta.
- Investigate and develop viable services and infrastructure in the north to support small business and secondary industry diversification and expansion.
- Partner with northern Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs) to identify and promote small business development, tourism, manufacturing, and processing opportunities in the north.
- Support potential value-added agriculture opportunities for northern producers.



Goal Three:

Strong, Vibrant Communities

Strong, vibrant communities are essential to a prosperous northern Alberta. This goal recognizes the need to identify and increase awareness of key health (both individual and community) and human services priorities of northern Albertans, and work collaboratively to meet these priorities.

Key Strategies:

- Facilitate conversations between provincial and northern leadership to determine priorities, opportunities, and strategies with respect to essential services in northern Alberta.
- Support and advocate for sustainable solutions to address northern water and wastewater management challenges.
- In partnership with northern municipalities and regional economic development and industry experts, advocate for transportation infrastructure required to enhance the north's connectivity and access to new markets.
- Research and share community best practices and approaches to address socio-economic challenges during fluctuating economic cycles.
- Support northern communities in assessing the gaps and potential impacts of socio-economic development with respect to new social infrastructure and services.
- Deliver a one-stop shop for northern leaders to engage directly with government Ministers to discuss key priorities for the north.



Highlights of 2017-18 Strategic Deliverables

Research

Northern Broadband

Broadband refers to high-speed internet that is faster than traditional dial-up access. Broadband connectivity has a big impact on how we live, work and play. Broadband capacity plays a role in the development of all economic sectors, boosts social engagement, creates opportunities for business development and diversification, facilitates access to training opportunities and enhances overall quality of life in the digital age.

The NADC partnered with Entrepreneurship and Regional Development (ERD) of Alberta Economic Development and Trade, and the five northern Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs) to identify the current state of broadband within the NADC region. The Northern Alberta Broadband Preparedness Project developed an inventory of the regional broadband system, including existing and planned broadband civil infrastructure, service footprints and service levels.

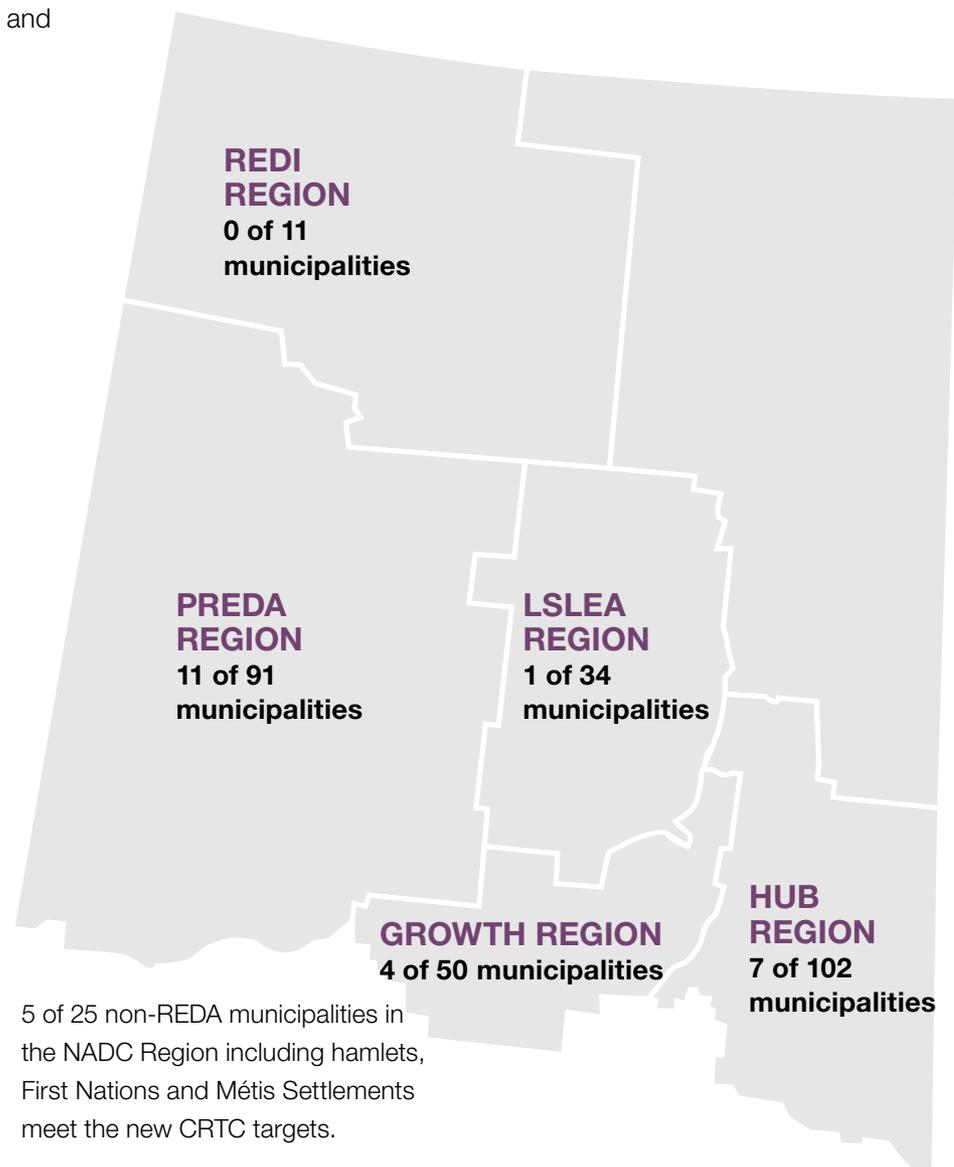
New Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) targets for universal basic telecommunications services in rural and remote areas include:

- speeds of 50 Mbps download/10 Mbps upload for fixed broadband services;
- an unlimited data option for fixed broadband services; and
- the latest mobile wireless technology available not only to all homes and businesses, but also along major Canadian roads.

(Source: <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/internet/internet.htm>)

Only eight per cent of northern Alberta communities in the Northern Alberta Broadband Preparedness Project study region meet the current CRTC objectives related to upload and download speeds.

Where are the new CRTC targets being met?



Completed in August 2017, the project delivered an assessment for the NADC region as a whole, including sub-region assessments for each northern Alberta REDA. The final reports are available on the [NADC website](#).

Securing affordable broadband service is essential for accessing new markets and connecting businesses and residents. The NADC will continue to monitor and advise the government on the north's needs with respect to broadband infrastructure to support the growth of strong vibrant communities and a diversified northern economy.

Accessible, affordable and reliable high speed broadband services, provided in a coordinated and interconnected system, is seen as foundational to supporting economic prosperity locally and regionally, enabling greater social connectedness and well-being of the region's population. High speed broadband services provide foundational infrastructure for community prosperity, resiliency and quality of life, not unlike roads, electricity, water and wastewater, land and other essential utilities and support economic activity and community life (*Northern Alberta Broadband Preparedness Project, 2017, pp. 1-2*).

At project completion, northern Alberta REDAs facilitated a series of seminars to present the final report relevant to their region. The report will be used to inform future developments and frameworks for broadband in the north. Taylor Warwick Consulting Limited in the report, pp. 61-62 suggests that municipalities can advance inexpensive approaches in the short term, as they position themselves for a possible broadband play in the future.

1. Broadband Facilities Master Plan

- Carry out high-level boundary connections assessment to potential future back-haul locations
- Carry out high-level feeder network assessment for development, re-development and capital project inclusion of conduit/fibre/tower locations and or ROW [Right of Way] protection and agreements
- Use informed decision support when working with service providers, development community and/or regional partners



2. Municipal Planning

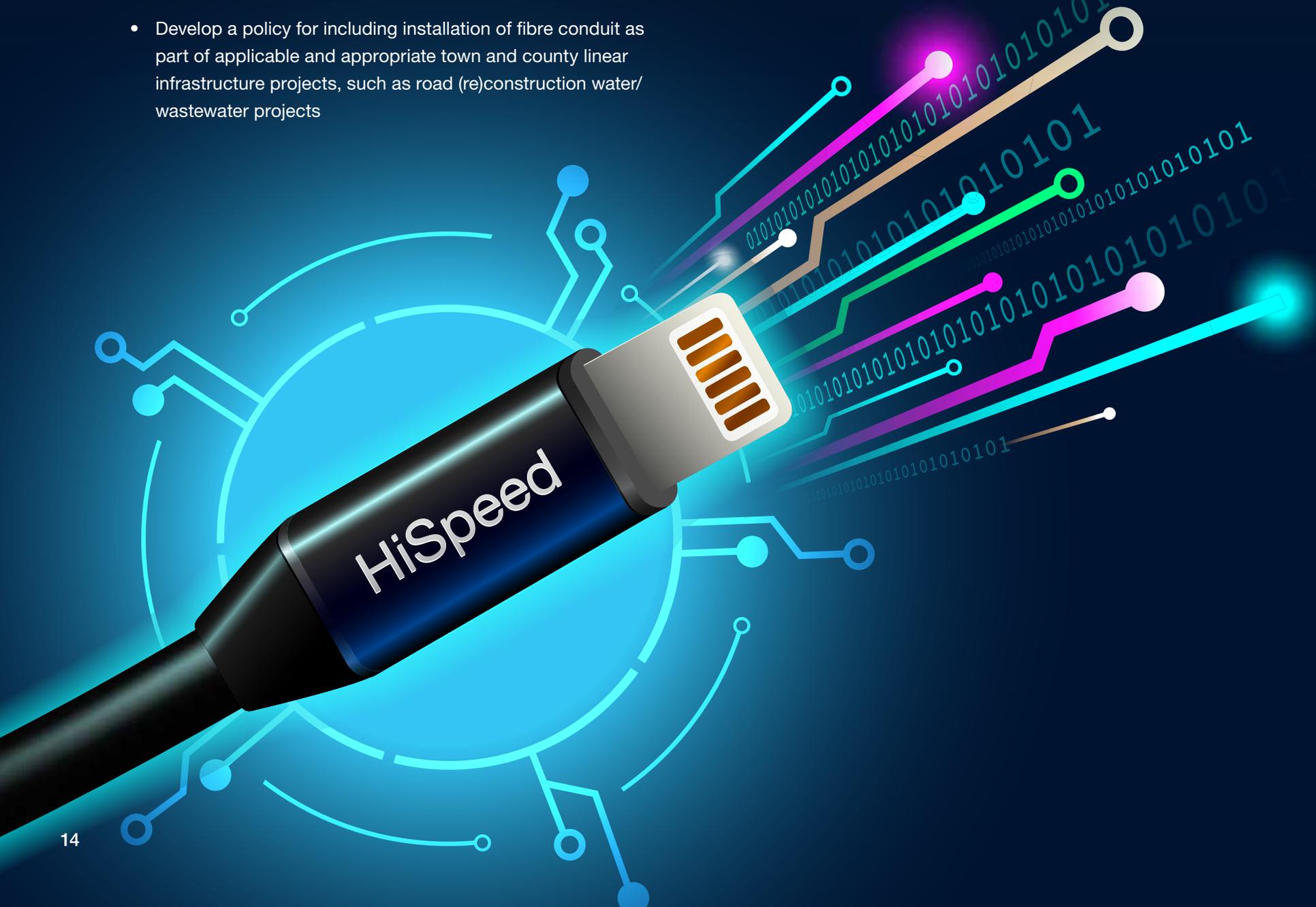
- Work with the NADC and [neighbouring communities] to leverage staff capacity and resources
- Develop a Broadband Services Strategic plan specific to your community
- Embed fibre network requirements in internal IT planning processes
- Accelerate currently planned IT infrastructure deployment

3. Leverage Planned Civil Works

- Develop a policy for including installation of fibre conduit as part of applicable and appropriate town and county linear infrastructure projects, such as road (re)construction water/wastewater projects

4. Position for the future

- Require that the inclusion of fibre conduit be a mandatory requirement in all applications for new residential and business development permits
- Adopt an inside wiring standard with Cat-5 wiring as the minimum standard



Northern Development Integrated Map

The [NADCM](#) is a web-mapping site developed using ArcGIS technology that leverages expertise and infrastructure from Alberta Environment and Parks, and geospatial data layers maintained by ministries within the provincial government.

The NADC began work on a web-based mapping platform in the latter part of fiscal year 2015-16 to support broader community engagement with municipal partners. The site provides practical information to enable and develop local and regional joint projects within the NADC region. The mapping website went live on July 13, 2017.

The site contains data layers on the NADC and municipal boundaries, lands and township systems, boundaries for economic regions and land-use framework planning, roads, hydrography and topography.

Data created by the NADC for public release is available at the GeoDiscover Alberta Program [website](#).

Data in the maps not only provides a visual perspective of themes and statistics, but also allows customized and interactive views from user queries and data layer selections that are relevant to their respective needs and requirements. The NADCM can also be customized for app development.

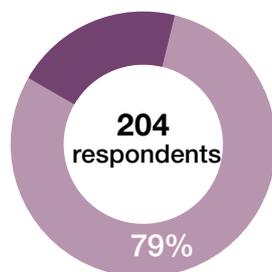


Workforce Scan

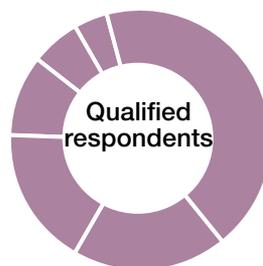
The NADC has been conducting scans of northern Alberta's workforce for over 20 years on a biennial basis. The 2017 report [Professional Workforce Scan: A Multi-sector Summary of Employment Trends Across Alberta's North](#) provides sector specific input from northern employers including: major competencies employers are looking for, challenges in hiring, perspectives on retaining employees, and top in-demand and hard-to-recruit post-secondary education programs.

The NADC collects the industry specific input to develop insight into the needs and experiences of employers in northern Alberta in terms of recruiting and retaining employees in the region, and determining post-secondary program priorities for the NADC's annual selection of its bursary recipients.

Results Highlights:



79% respondents from 19 industries were qualified to participate in the survey



- 43% private for-profit
- 19% municipal public organization
- 17% federal or provincial public
- 10% private not-for-profit
- 6% First Nations or Métis
- 4% Other



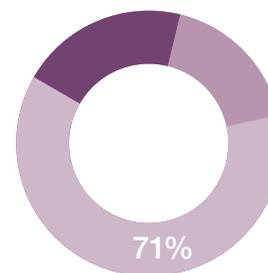
51% qualified respondents employ 1 to 50 employees



Over 70% of employees operate solely within the NADC region



Educational background is an important factor in hiring decisions, as well as experience, communication/ interpersonal skills, and certifications



71% qualified respondents experienced challenges in hiring qualified employees especially in rural/ remote locations



Difficulty in retaining employees in the region

The most common factors that impacted organizations' ability to retain employees were: wages, competition, location, and work environment

The top three in-demand and hard-to recruit post secondary education programs ranked by the respondents:

In-demand		Hard-to recruit	
1	Diploma in Heavy Equipment	1	Diploma in Heavy Equipment
2	Apprentice in Automotive Service Technology	2	Journeyman in Automotive Service Technology
3	Journeyman in Automotive Service Technology	3	Degree in Civil Engineering

Resource Development

Northern Flax

The growing bio-food and fibre industry continues to capture the attention of national and international investors and offers unique growth opportunities for northern Alberta's agricultural producers, with a potential key role as a diversified sustainable economic option for Alberta. Flax fibers are used for the manufacturing of high quality linen fabrics and numerous industrial applications such as textiles and building blocks.

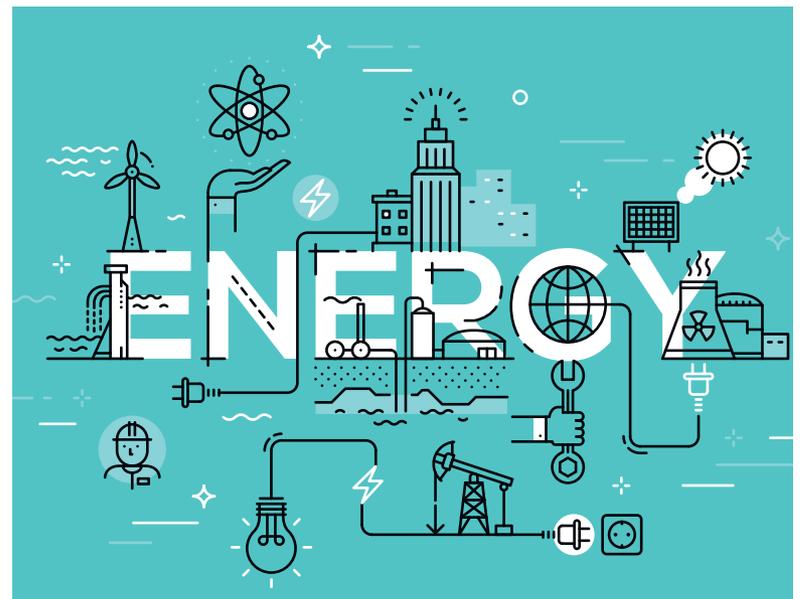
The NADC partnered with InnoTech Alberta (formerly Alberta Innovates Technology Futures) to continue research into the development of early maturing flax so that advantages of flax grown in Canada's northern region are promoted through data documentation and reporting. The project researched biochemical profiling of selected lines/varieties of northern adapted flax and full utilization of Alberta's flax fibre. The final report *Biochemical Profiling of Selected Lines/Varieties of Northern Adapted Flax and Full Utilization of Alberta's Flax Fibre* will be available for public access on the NADC website upon its release.

Geothermal

The NADC formed a partnership with the Alberta Community and Co-Operative Association (ACCA) in December 2017 to promote renewable energy in the north by supporting a feasibility study on geothermal. The ACCA was a contributing participant in the opportunity seminars on Alternative Energy, and created a [Community Energy Cooperative Toolkit](#).

The NADC has provided a grant for the ACCA to complete a high-level scan of the sub-surface geology for up to 50 northern Alberta communities. The scan will identify any geothermal reservoirs and aquifers that warrant further investigation alongside an estimation of their energy potential. The ACCA will develop resources based on the results of the research, including a guidebook and online material for use by planners, local developers, economic development officers, municipalities, and community groups interested in furthering the geothermal potential in their regions.

The research will identify types of viable projects: 1) power production, 2) direct use, or 3) direct heat. Additionally, this work encourages the onset of a geothermal market. Accurate data in this area enables developers to deploy capital in northern Alberta. This first step offers clarity for early investment decisions, and signals the energy market about exploration and development in northern Alberta. Research will be completed by August 2018.



Collaborative Partnerships and Initiatives

Northern Health

Health Care in Northern Alberta: Update to Northern Communities, 2017 Report

In 2016, the NADC, in partnership with Alberta Health (AH) and Alberta Health Services (AHS), hosted the Northern Health Summit. The Summit was a key engagement opportunity to connect senior health officials and experts with community leaders and facilitate opportunities for partnerships and discussions to enable further communication and action on key health challenges and priorities in the north. Based on feedback from community leaders and information captured through facilitated breakout sessions, challenges, recommendations, and innovative ideas for health care provision were identified. Council actively shared the information gathered with northern communities and our partners, AH and AHS and advanced six recommendations, where system improvements would benefit northern communities. These included:



Engage and Communicate	Leverage Technology	Address Transportation	Consider Distributed Models	Promote Healthy Lifestyles	Build a Sustainable Strategy
<p>A mechanism to coordinate ongoing communication and engagement be developed with northern municipalities and Indigenous communities to ensure health policies and services for the north are inclusive of local community perspectives</p> <p>1</p>	<p>The use of technology be explored to better serve northern residents, minimize travel for health services where possible, and support patient advocacy and quality of care</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Gaps in transportation infrastructure be addressed to support patients requiring access to health services</p> <p>3</p>	<p>A distributed service delivery and funding model for health services and education that meets the geographical, cultural and vocational realities of the north and its residents be developed</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Municipal and Indigenous leaders be engaged to actively support health promotion and healthy community initiatives in the north</p> <p>5</p>	<p>A sustainable northern health workforce strategy be developed</p> <p>6</p>

In September 2017, the NADC released [*Health Care in Northern Alberta: Update to Northern Communities*](#), a set of initiatives related to health services in the north developed with Summit partners and presenters, identifying innovative programs and services actively supporting health service delivery in the north.

The NADC continues to advocate, collaborate and gather information on areas identified by northern communities where improvements in health care service are needed, particularly with respect to communication and engagement, access to services, transportation and health promotion.

Northern Health Roundtable

Strong communication is at the forefront of the partnership between the NADC, AH and AHS as the development of the Northern Health Roundtable has emerged. The Northern Health Roundtable is a result of the commitment by the Honourable Sarah Hoffman, Minister of Health, to the NADC, to ensure ongoing communication with the NADC on health priorities for the north. Quarterly meetings will facilitate a direct link between the NADC and key leaders in health to support knowledge exchange, collaborative planning and timely information sharing on emerging issues and programs for the north.

National Addictions Awareness Week

The opioid crisis in Alberta is a public health crisis. The NADC supported AHS at its National Addictions Awareness Week event “Through the Eye of the Storm” on November 15, 2017. The NADC is actively supporting northern health providers to raise awareness, educate, and support northern residents in understanding the opioid crisis and supports and services available, to ensure strong resilient northern communities.



Labour Education Applied Research North (LEARN)

LEARN is a joint initiative between the NADC and four northern Alberta post-secondary institutions: Grande Prairie Regional College, Keyano College, Northern Lakes College and Portage College.

LEARN's latest research examined the delivery of, access to, preferences for, and best practices associated with Digital Educational Resources (DERs) in northern Alberta post-secondary institutions. DERs are technologies that provide students enhanced control over the time, place and pace of their learning.

As technology evolves at an ever-increasing rate, post-secondary institutions must strive to remain up-to-date and continually adjust and prepare to meet future workforce needs. DERs are being increasingly used in post-secondary institutions to increase access to higher education and provide a better learning experience.

Through the use of DERs and online course materials, students are better able to integrate education into their personal situation. The uses of DERs in education are as effective, and in some cases more effective, than classroom instruction. DERs and online learning engage students and help develop the skills needed for today's economy and society.

The NADC will continue to use this partnership forum to meet regularly and share information, identify workforce trends and conduct research to inform the modification or creation of new training through college programming so that the skills gaps in the north are addressed.



Highlights of *Digital Educational Resources in Northern Alberta Research Report*

- 70 per cent of students surveyed said DERs allowed them to more easily complete their post-secondary education.
- DERs can improve access to post-secondary education for students in rural areas and those who are unable to attend traditional classes. However, access to reliable and affordable internet continues to impact the degree to which students can use DERs.
- Promotion of DERs is required to ensure their adequate and appropriate use within post-secondary institutions.



Water North Coalition (WNC)

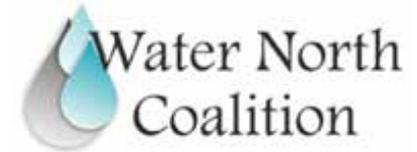
WNC is currently comprised of over 50 municipalities and water and wastewater commissions, professionals, rural water co-ops, owners, operators and provincial and federal government representatives. Through quarterly meetings, hosted in rotating locations across the north, the Coalition aims to:

- collaborate and share information on water and wastewater regulations and responsibilities;
- identify emergent workforce needs and succession plan; and
- advocate for “made in the north” solutions and funding for training, education, recruitment and retention for water and wastewater professionals in the region.

Over 150 attendees participated in WNC meetings throughout the year in Cold Lake, Wabasca and Beaverlodge to discuss the north’s water and wastewater challenges. The Coalition’s four subcommittees Advocacy, Public Education, Training, and Recruitment and Retention finalized and delivered several key resources.

- Water Resource Library: A collection of web-based resources for improved public water literacy in northern Alberta
- Training in the North: A reference guide on training available for water and wastewater operators in Alberta’s north
- Mutual Aid Templates: Short and long-term templates for municipalities sharing operator resources

The NADC will continue to provide support to the WNC through knowledge sharing, capacity building and administrative support to advance the WNC goal of safe and sustainable systems for every northern community.



“The WNC is a diverse group representing many people from across northern Alberta. The administrative expertise the NADC has provided has been instrumental in the successes we have achieved. This has allowed us to make steady progress on our strategic plan.”

*Bob Marshall
Water North Coalition Chairman
Councillor - County of Grande Prairie*

Industrial Hemp and Flax

To advance sustainable economic diversification opportunity options in the north, the NADC hosted industrial hemp and flax opportunity seminars in St. Paul and Whitecourt. Attended by approximately 140 delegates, the seminars shared results on current flax research, informed of the potential market access and global supply chains for Alberta's bio fiber-food potential, highlighted the advancement of technology and innovation, offered resources and supports to encourage business and economic development strategies, and identified strategic issues that impact growth in northern Alberta.

In November 2017, the Canadian Hemp Trade Alliance announced its goal that by 2023, hemp will be a \$1-billion industry in Canada. This goal is just a few years away and Alberta can have a lead role in achieving this vision.

The NADC has participated in roundtable meetings initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to contribute to discussions related to programs, supports, industry advancement, provincial sustainable rural economic development, and the development of an Alberta Industrial Hemp Strategic Plan.

The NADC continues to engage in information sharing, working groups and roundtable meetings with the Government of Alberta, economic development officers and industry business representatives concerning projects, advancement, education and research in this industry.



The information materials handed out at the Industrial Hemp and Flax seminars



Source: Architectural design of the Grande Prairie Regional Hospital, Alberta Health Services

Community Readiness Group

Following the release in November 2016 of the [*Economic Development Project, Economic Impact and Gap Analysis of the Grande Prairie Regional Hospital: Executive Summary*](#) report related to the expected opening of the Grande Prairie Regional Hospital in 2019, project stakeholders, led by the Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce, met in June 2017. They discussed the study findings and set priorities and direction moving forward. Other key stakeholders of this project include the City of Grande Prairie Economic Development, County of Grande Prairie Economic Development, Municipal District of Greenview Economic Development, Grande Prairie Regional College, Grande Prairie

Regional Hospital Foundation, Alberta Health Services and the NADC.

The Community Readiness Group identified organizations and leads within the community for further engagement to discuss how the identified gaps in the study may be addressed.

The Community Readiness Group focused its discussion on gaps that are considered to be of immediate concern. These include gaps in retail and food services, non-emergency transportation, schooling and child care facilities and labour gaps in medical and allied medical professions.

Local, Regional, and National Engagements



Northern Alberta Elected Leaders

Northern Alberta Elected Leaders (NAEL) is a consortium of municipalities, First Nations and Métis Settlements located within the northwestern boundaries of the NADC region. As secretariat, the NADC builds relationships, gains valuable insights into regional issues, and works collaboratively with northern elected officials to identify, coordinate and advocate for northern priorities.

NAEL members represented close to 40 municipalities during meetings hosted in Peace River and Slave Lake in 2017-18. NAEL members hosted the Honourable Shaye Anderson, Minister of Municipal Affairs in August 2017, allowing for meaningful engagement on priority areas.

- Economy, funding and community supports
- Infrastructure
- Environment and natural resources
- Regulations
- *Municipal Governance Act*

“NAEL provides an opportunity for northwestern Alberta communities to come together to identify areas of common interest and concern. We develop a collective strategy for tackling issues and advocate on behalf of northern Albertans to ensure their voice is being heard.”

*Jim Rennie, Chair, NAEL
Mayor - Woodlands County*

In 2017-18, NAEL members collaborated to share concerns and opportunities on a number of high profile issues including the Caribou Range Plans, changes to the Assessment Year Modifier and the *Municipal Governance Act*, clarification of processes for Indigenous consultation, funding for emergency management,

broadband, and the need for enhanced communication with municipalities in the north. Members met with the Alberta Cannabis Secretariat and discussed the legalization of cannabis and its impact on northern municipalities, highlighting concerns and the need for additional information at the municipal level.



2017-18 Meetings Highlights

<p>Caribou Range Plans</p>		<p>Caribou Range Plans must include an assessment of the socio-economic impacts on businesses, industries and communities in the north, developed through adequate consultation and engagement with northern municipalities, Indigenous communities, industry leaders, and residents.</p>
<p>Broadband</p>		<p>Cross ministry coordination, training, and financial resources are needed to build broadband infrastructure and create synergies and servicing strategies to secure the north's digital future.</p>
<p>Funding and Tax Structures</p>		<p>Carbon tax levies and changes to the Assessment Year Modifier have impacted municipal budgets, placing significant tax burden on residential and commercial taxpayers. Municipalities will explore opportunities to advocate for stable funding to ensure municipal services are delivered, without crippling local economies and residents.</p>
<p>Legalization of Cannabis</p>		<p>Northern communities must prepare for the pending legalization of cannabis and plan for production, distribution, consumption, and enforcement within their municipal boundaries.</p>
<p>Intermunicipal Collaborations Frameworks (ICFs)</p>		<p>Access to grants is critical for successful implementation of ICFs. Applicability requirements need to be clearly defined, and tools and templates must be provided to assist municipalities in adjusting to recent <i>Municipal Government Act</i> (MGA) amendments regarding ICFs.</p>

“Canada’s North plays a vital role in building a diversified, resilient economy all Canadians can count on. This year’s forum provided an important opportunity for collaboration – identifying ways we can pool our data and resources to evaluate and implement initiatives that promote economic growth and diversification to benefit northern communities.”

*Richard Feehan,
Minister of Indigenous Relations,
Alberta*



Northern Development Ministers Forum (NDMF)

The NDMF was established in 2001 to advance the diverse and common interests of the people living in Canada’s North, while raising awareness among decision-makers and the public about the accomplishments, contributions and potential of northerners.

The forum centres on a common theme and a series of priority projects identified by ministers at the previous year’s forum.

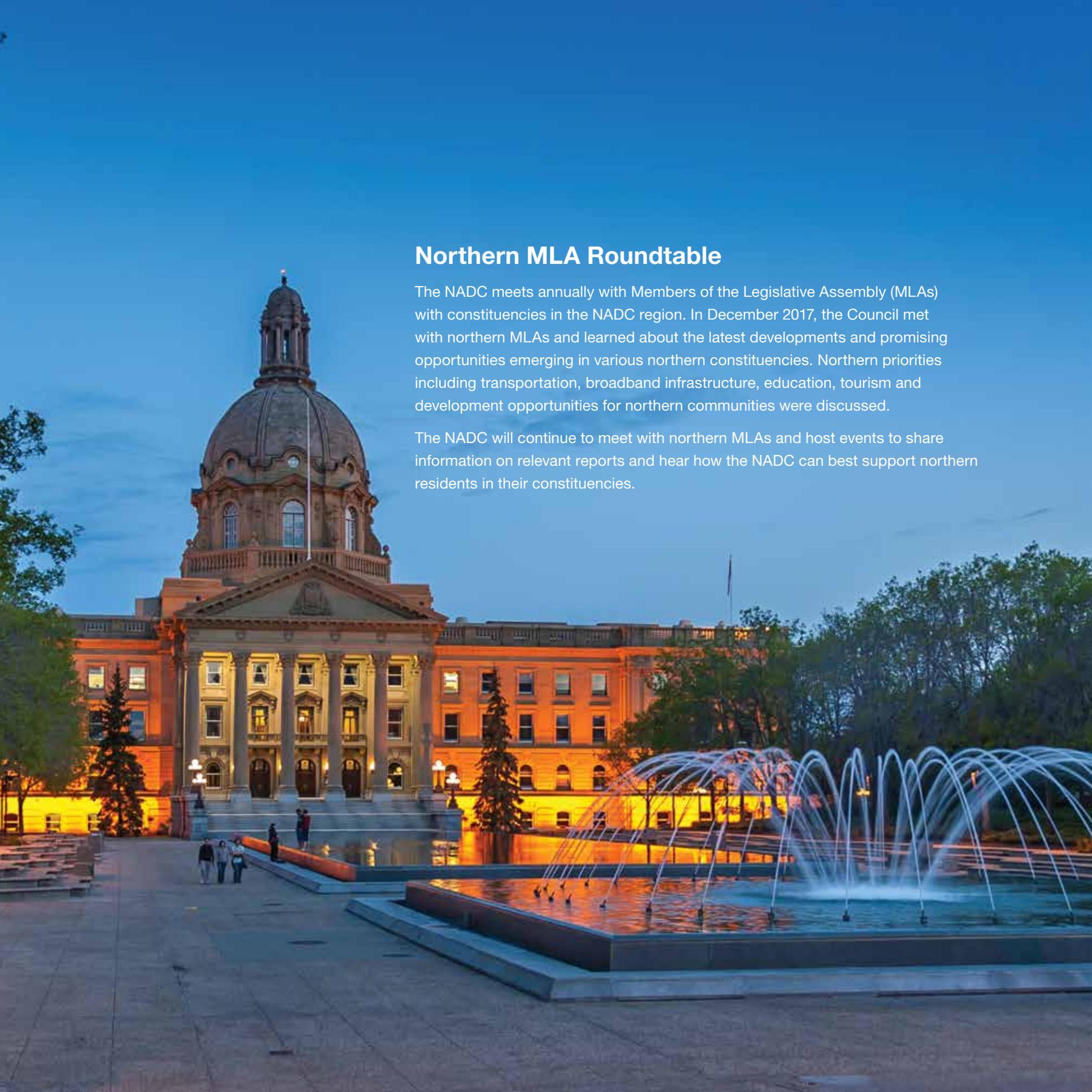
Project deliverables include panel discussions, site-specific visits and reports on key northern issues. Member jurisdictions include the governments of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Ontario, Québec, Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada. Ministers responsible for northern development represent their member jurisdictions.

The 2017 forum was held in Montréal, Québec from September 5-8, 2017. The Honourable Richard Feehan, Minister of Indigenous Relations, attended the 2017 Forum on behalf of the Government of Alberta.

At the 2017 forum, projects were in alignment with the theme, “The Importance of Collaboration in Northern Development.”

Priority projects included the Québec-led project on alternative sources of heating for northern communities in Canada; the Alberta-led project on the implications of regional northern data for understanding and advancing development in Canada’s North; and the Nunavut-led project on the economic opportunities and strategies to develop local workforces that can better take advantage of northern employment opportunities.

The 2018 forum theme is defined as “Inclusive Partnerships in the North” and will be hosted by the Government of Canada. Four priority projects are slated for discussion. These include economic resiliency – rebuilding communities after a catastrophic event; growing the digital economy in remote northern communities; government service delivery in Canada’s North; and, labour force development.

The image shows the Northern Michigan State Capitol building at dusk. The building is illuminated with warm yellow lights, highlighting its classical architecture, including a large central dome and a portico with columns. In the foreground, a large, active fountain with multiple jets of water is lit with blue light. The sky is a deep blue, and some trees are visible on the right side of the frame. A few people can be seen walking on the plaza in front of the building.

Northern MLA Roundtable

The NADC meets annually with Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) with constituencies in the NADC region. In December 2017, the Council met with northern MLAs and learned about the latest developments and promising opportunities emerging in various northern constituencies. Northern priorities including transportation, broadband infrastructure, education, tourism and development opportunities for northern communities were discussed.

The NADC will continue to meet with northern MLAs and host events to share information on relevant reports and hear how the NADC can best support northern residents in their constituencies.

Economic Developers Alberta Annual 2018 Conference and AGM

The NADC attended the 2018 Economic Developers Alberta (EDA) annual conference in Banff from March 21-23, 2018 and participated in the breakout session entitled “Government Resources for Economic Developers: Stories from Across the Province.” Panelists included presenters from various branches of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. EDA is Alberta’s leading economic development network, committed to advancing the economic development profession by providing resources, professional development and networking opportunities.

The NADC focused on Council’s role in linking social and economic development in the north and the need to approach northern priorities and projects through this holistic lens. Recent reports were shared, including the Economic Area Profile, Workforce Scan, and Northern Alberta Broadband Preparedness Project. The NADC Bursary program and its importance in growing the workforce in the north was highlighted along with the personal story of a previous bursary recipient who is now living and working in the north.

The NADC will continue to engage with the networks like EDA to share and learn expertise that is valuable in fostering sustainable economic prosperity in the north.



A photograph of a caribou with large, velvet-covered antlers standing on a sandy shore next to a lake. The caribou is facing left, and its shadow is cast on the sand. The lake is calm, reflecting the surrounding green forest. The background is a dense forest of tall evergreen trees under a clear sky.

Caribou Recovery

In December 2017, the Government of Alberta released draft range plans as part of its three-phase approach to finalizing a long-term strategy for the at-risk Woodland Caribou. In addition to the range plans, phase two also included online consultation, multi-stakeholder meetings, and six public information sessions. The government will review and analyze all feedback received to inform range-specific details and a final draft plan will be released.

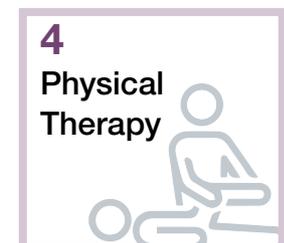
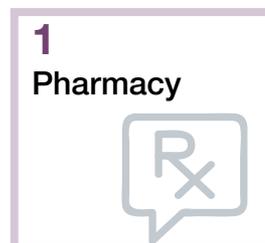
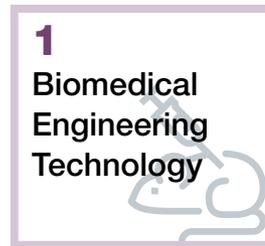
The NADC engaged with the provincial government communicating the concerns of northern stakeholders regarding the need for a balance between protection of the caribou and socio-economic impacts.

NADC members and staff attended information sessions in Fort McMurray, Cold Lake, High Level and Grande Prairie.

NADC will continue to participate in discussions with all levels of government and advocate on behalf of northern Alberta so that a plan that fully understands the social and economic impacts of achieving caribou recovery is developed.

Health Care Practicum

Through a partnership with Alberta Health Services (AHS) North Zone, the NADC supports students considering a northern placement for their health care practicum to expose students to the north and career opportunities in health care in the region. Applications are prioritized based on practicum location, and programs of study linked to high demand health fields, as determined by AHS Talent Acquisitions. In 2017-18, the NADC provided \$50,000 in funding to 47 students who completed a health care practicum in northern Alberta. Students received reimbursement for travel and accommodation to designated locations and facilities. The program was oversubscribed by twenty-eight per cent.

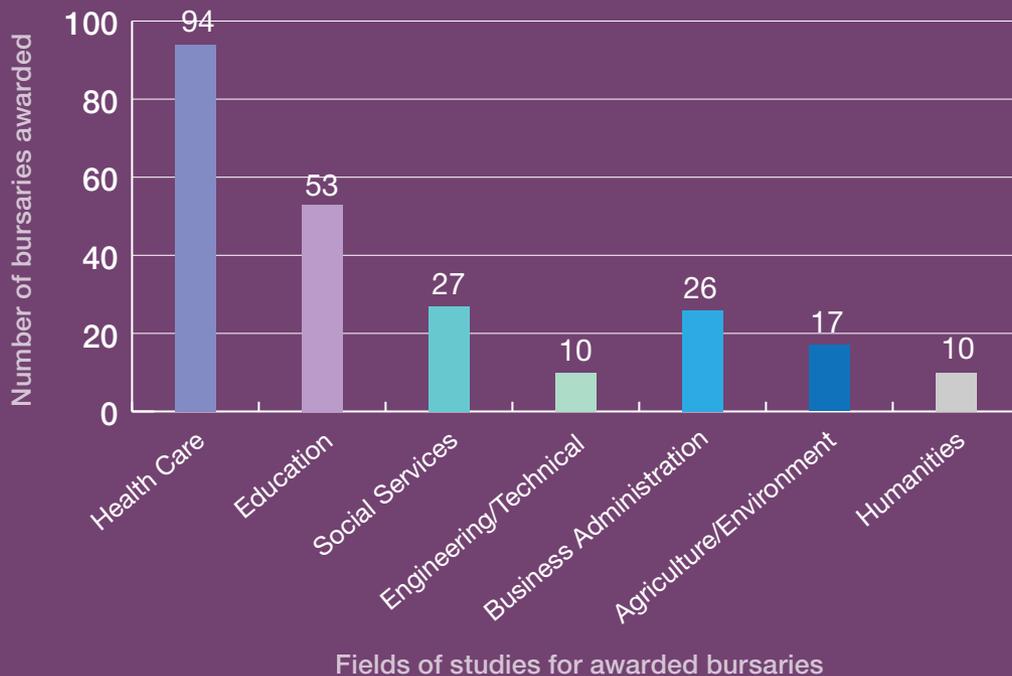


The NADC Bursary Programs

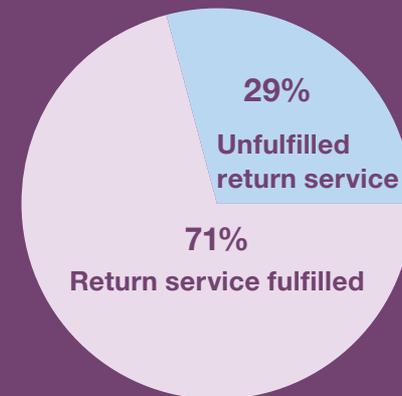
The NADC bursaries help to attract and retain skilled professionals in demand by northern businesses and communities. Recipients of the NADC bursary enter into an agreement to live and work in northern Alberta when they complete their education - one year of full-time work for each year of bursary support. Students who do not complete their return service obligation must repay the bursary funds they received. Since 2000, the NADC has awarded 4,385 bursaries, and the program maintains a high rate of return service. In 2017-18, the return service rate was 71 per cent. Demand for the bursary program continues to exceed available funding.

In collaboration with the Alberta Student Aid office of Alberta Advanced Education, the NADC offered 237 return service bursaries to Alberta students in the 2017-18 academic year. This number includes the NADC bursaries, specialty bursaries, partnership bursaries through the Bursary Partnership program, First Nation (status or non-status), Métis and Inuit Bursary, and the Northern Student Teacher Bursary, offered in collaboration with Alberta Education. Details on the NADC bursaries can be found in the Our Bursaries section of the [NADC website](#).

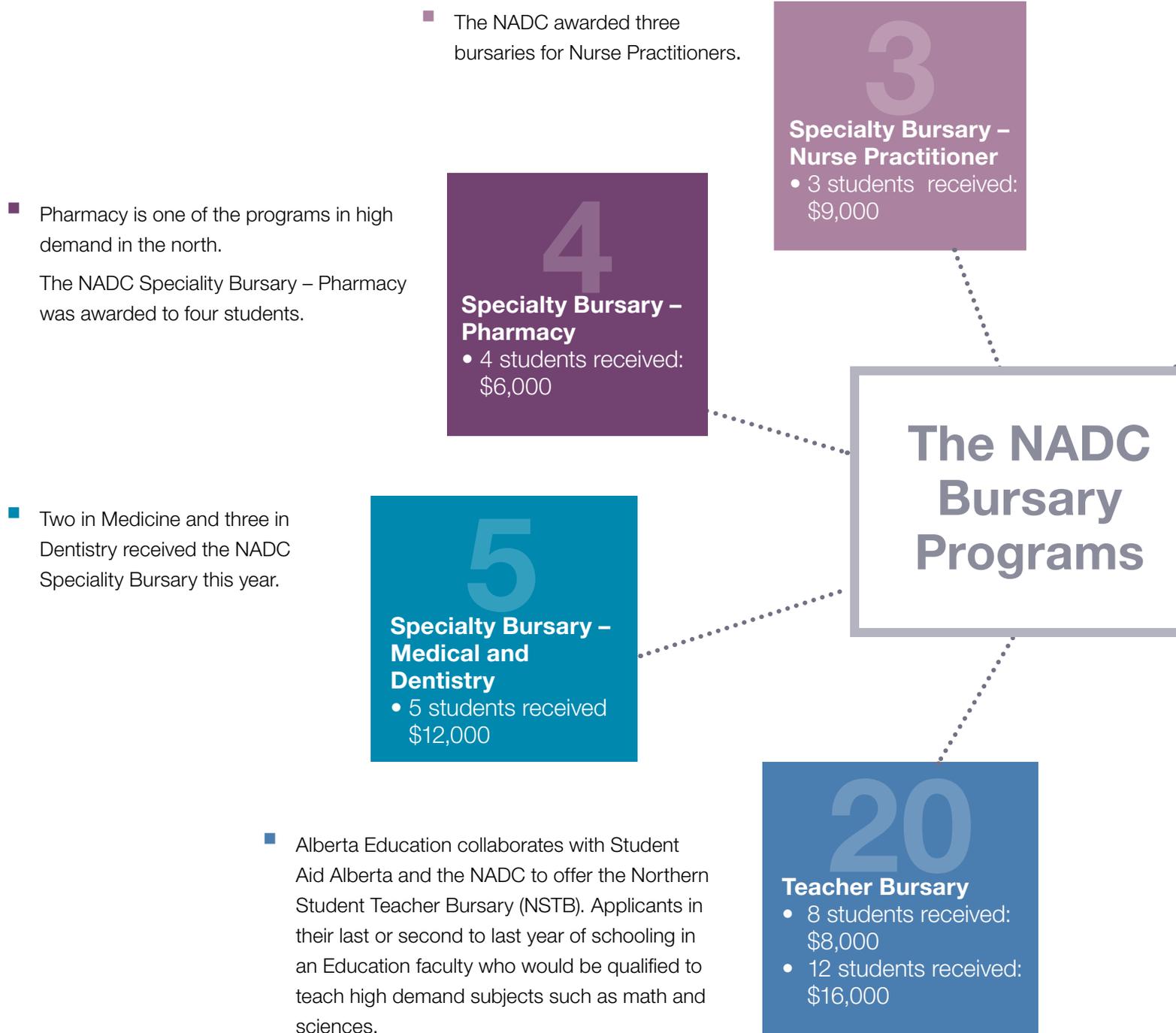
NADC Bursaries Awarded in 2017-18, 237 in total



2017-18 Rate of Return Service



2017-18 Bursary Programs at a Glance



80

General Bursary

- 74 with an amount of \$6,000
- 6 with an amount of \$3,000

- The NADC General Bursary focuses on students training in professions determined to be in demand by northern employers.

In the 2017-2018 academic year, 80 students received the general NADC bursary. The educational levels of the recipients were different:

- 7 certificate
- 34 diploma
- 29 degree

67

Bursary Partnerships

- Total amount awarded: \$221,150
- Provided through NADC: \$109,700
- Sponsor portions: \$ 111,450

- The Bursary Partnerships Program (BPP) allows sponsors to provide students they select between \$1,000 and \$3,000, and then apply to the NADC for matching bursary funds. Specialty bursaries allow for higher matching funds amount ranging from \$6,000 to \$12,000. Eighteen different sponsors partnered in the BPP in 2017-18.

58

First Nation, Métis or Inuit Bursary

- 1 student received: \$3,000
- 16 students received: \$6,000
- 41 students received: \$10,000

- This bursary provides \$6,000 for students in a certificate or diploma studies and \$10,000 for students in a Bachelors, Masters or PhD program. In its third year of existence the FNMI Bursary program received 190 applications and selected 58 individuals. The NADC completed selection in August and December. A total of \$509,000 was provided to students who committed to living and working within the NADC boundary after they complete their studies.

NADC Communications

The NADC uses multiple methods to communicate with and gather feedback from northern residents, business and industry and community leaders. The NADC website and social media (Facebook and Twitter) provide timely information on projects and initiatives to maximize reach to northern Albertans. Newsletters and videos produced throughout the year highlight NADC research, partnerships and events. Face-to-face meetings, roundtables, and expert presentations keep Council and staff apprised of challenges and opportunities as they emerge across the region.

The NADC is actively implementing new communications tools and analyses and updating its communications strategies. Through this work, we aim to strategically grow our networks and build critical connections with new stakeholders to improve correspondence with established connections.

To keep up to date on all of the latest NADC news, events and activities, follow us on:

 <https://www.facebook.com/NADCca/>

 <https://twitter.com/NADCca>

 www.nadc.ca

Social media highlights 2017-18



448
FOLLOWERS
16.7% GROWTH
FROM 2016-17
102 POSTS



1075
FOLLOWERS
6.5% GROWTH
FROM 2016-17
163 ORIGINAL
CONTENT TWEETS



+100,000
PAGE VIEWS

Top web hits were directed at NADC's new Council roster and the Bursary pages. Over 90 per cent of users are in province and higher than nine per cent are international.



An animated video featuring the Council has been created and released. To watch the video, please visit [the NADC webpage](#).

Appendices

Appendix A: Council Members in Northern Communities

April 2017

Industrial hemp and flax opportunity seminar in Whitecourt

September 2017

Seven new Council Members Appointed, and Jason Schulz re-appointed

October 2017

Debbie Jabbour re-appointed as Chair of the NADC

Council orientation session in Peace River

Review of the NADC strategies, programs and activities

December 2017

Council meeting in Edmonton

Northern MLA Roundtable in Edmonton

January 2018

Water North Coalition meeting in Beaverlodge

February 2018

Council meeting in Grande Prairie

Economic Development Officers Roundtable in Grande Prairie

NADC meet and greet at Growing the North Conference in Grande Prairie

Presentation to County of Grande Prairie Council

March 2018

Ken Noskey re-appointed as a Council Member

Caribou Range Plan consultation sessions in Grande Prairie

Council teleconference on Caribou Range Plans

Meeting in Edmonton with Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA), previously Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC)

Appendices

Appendix B: Council Biographies*



Debbie Jabbour, Chair

Debbie Jabbour was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, representing the constituency of Peace River, on May 5, 2015. On June 11, 2015, she was elected Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees. She currently serves as a member of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices and the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services.

Prior to serving as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, she worked as a mental health specialist, an analyst with Alberta Health, and as a Hansard input editor with the Alberta Legislative Assembly.



Alden Armstrong

Alden Armstrong was elected three times to the Paddle Prairie Council, serving two terms as Chairman and once as Vice-Chairman. He was also elected President of the General Council for one term. Because of his election to office, he was able to provide the northern perspective to Alberta's Water for Life Strategy and ensured that the north was served while he was a director on the Rural Alberta Development Fund.

His community service was recognized in 2005 with an Alberta Centennial Medal. He looks forward to contributing his extensive background in Aboriginal governance and his passion for strengthening northern and rural communities and the environment to his role with the NADC.



Ken Noskey

Ken Noskey is currently serving his 28th year as an elected official. He was president of the Métis Settlements General Council for nine years, has served on the Council of the Peavine Métis Settlement for 19 years, and was re-elected for another term in October 2017. He has presented to both the Senate and the Royal Aboriginal Commission on Aboriginal governance and twice travelled abroad with the federal government to share the Canadian experience of Aboriginal governance with Indigenous people in Argentina and Thailand. He represented the Peavine Métis Settlement as a member of the Lesser Slave Lake Economic Alliance and the High Prairie Chamber of Commerce.

Ken's passion is to see the north's human resources developed to maximize the potential of the region's natural resources and contribute to building stronger communities across the north.



Cody Beirsto

Cody Beirsto is a partner in a family-run business founded 54 years ago and has previously served one year as president, and four years as a member, of the Grande Prairie and District Chamber of Commerce. As a current member of the Community Futures Grande Prairie and Region Board, he particularly enjoys the role he plays in helping entrepreneurs access the capital they need to get started, innovate, and grow.

In delivering the NADC's mandate, Cody brings his passion for social and economic development and his belief that, more now than ever, Albertans and northerners cannot develop in isolation of each other.



Jason Schulz

Jason Schulz has worked with the Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association (NAABA) that facilitated an Aboriginal Incubator study to encourage success in Aboriginal business. The study was a multi-stakeholder initiative undertaken by NAABA, Keyano College, the Government of Alberta, the Government of Canada and industry.

Jason taught business at Keyano College for 10 years, teaching courses in marketing and human resources. He was a contracts manager with industry and is currently Director, Strategic Advisory Services with Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN). Jason is a member of the Wood Buffalo Housing and Development Corporation and a former member of the Wood Buffalo Real Estate and Zoning Development Appeals Board.

He is a past member of the Board of Directors for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, Child and Family services and sat on the Athabasca Oil Sands Area Transportation Coordinating Committee, which is comprised of industry, provincial, and municipal government and advocates for transportation initiatives within the region.



Karla Buffalo

Karla Buffalo has lived in the north since 1999 and is currently CEO of the Athabasca Tribal Council, which provides services to five First Nations. She has previously worked with Fort McKay First Nation as manager of government relations, with Syncrude in stakeholder relations, and with the Government of Alberta in community development.

In her community, Karla volunteers as the head Doula. Doulas provide support to expectant mothers to help them have healthy pregnancies and prepare for a successful labour and delivery. She is mentoring and training others to practice this important vocation for the health and support of mothers and babies.

She wants to see improved delivery of government services and higher educational achievement for northern communities.



Peter Cardinal

Peter Cardinal is a current board member with Community Futures Lac La Biche and AlbertaHUB, as well as former board member of the trust fund and health board of Métis Settlements General Council for all eight settlements. In his role with Community Futures Lac La Biche, Peter values his ability to provide business coaching and prepare the newest entrepreneurs for success. Peter sees the recent economic downturn as an opportunity to focus on improving oil and gas technologies and diversify into other industries.

Peter helped revive Buffalo Days and its Métis triathlon that tests participants' skills in canoeing, running, and horseback riding. He also helped start the Wellness Committee to offer community-based programs in social, mental, and emotional well-being.



Jeannette Danks

Jeannette Danks is a financial advisor with a long history in the banking and finance industry and has held executive positions with the Peace River and District Chamber of Commerce, Peace River Curling Club, and Peace River Child Care Association. In her role with the Peace River Child Care Association, she helped guide the funding and construction phases to replace the daycare building that had been destroyed by a fire in May 2014.

Jeannette is most interested in social and economic development and looks forward to contributing her experience in finance and her understanding of community action to help pursue social and economic development in the north through a balanced approach that spans industry diversification to equal access to healthcare and education.



Paula Evans

Paula Evans has previously served as a Municipal Councillor for the Town of Athabasca for nine years and is a retired teacher. She is currently the chair of the Alice B. Donahue Library and Archives Board, treasurer for the Athabasca Heritage Society, and a member of Science Outreach Athabasca, the Baptiste and Island Lake Stewardship Society, and the Crooked Creek Conservancy. All these community development initiatives strive to improve the quality of life of northern citizens.

Paula understands that community development is as important as economic development if a community plans to retain both its workforce and younger generations.



Sheri MacMillan

Sheri MacMillan is an Addictions Counsellor with Alberta Health Services where she sees many of the people that suffer when the economy goes through its boom and bust cycle. Her interest extends to the workplace where she is making a difference by becoming a Union Steward with Health Sciences Association of Alberta to be an advocate for workers in a volatile economy. Sheri enjoys scrapbooking in her free time for self-care and has had some of her work published in the Creative Scrapbooker Magazine.

She wants to work on the development of community and service delivery mandate, working to give social agencies a voice and preparing community agencies to help with people in need.

* Full biographies are available on the [NADC website](#).





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