

# Questions for Federal Candidates 2019 Election

On behalf of the NWT Association of Communities, please accept these questions for Federal Candidates about issues important to communities in the Northwest Territories. We would greatly appreciate your responses by October 11, 2019. Please email your answers to [info@nwtac.com](mailto:info@nwtac.com).

We intend to post the responses to the following questions on our webpage and follow up with the elected Member in the future.

1. In the last budget, the government doubled the gas tax funding for one time, and it was well received. Do you support the permanent doubling of the gas tax fund for 211 communities in Canada?

*In order to help Canadian communities of all sizes to address their infrastructure needs, our government took the unprecedented step in Budget 2019 of doubling the Gas Tax Fund transfers for this year. Here in the Northwest Territories, this move has provided our communities with an extra \$16.5 million this year to improve the infrastructure their residents rely on.*

*I know how important these transfers are to our local governments, and believe a longer-term enhancement to this fund should be explored by the Government of Canada.*

*As laid out in our platform, if re-elected our government will require territorial and provincial governments to “identify and approve all of their long-term infrastructure priorities within the next two years. Funds that aren’t designated for specific projects by the end of 2021 will be reinvested directly in communities through a top-up of the federal Gas Tax Fund.”*

2. Climate change and weather-related emergencies are on the rise in recent years. How will you work with our local governments to increase resiliency to extreme

weather events and the effects of climate change?

*In the North, we are on the front lines of climate change. As we experience increasing challenges with how climate change impacts our lives, it is critical that the federal government is actively supporting all levels of government to address these issues. Our government introduced the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF) in Budget 2017; this 10 year, \$2 billion fund is specifically targeted to helping Canadian communities increase resiliency to the effects of climate change.*

*We've had 3 projects in the NWT already supported through DMAF contributions: the Yellowknife water pipeline replacement (\$25.8 million); the Inuvik runway widening and surface repairs (\$16.5 million), and improved fuel storage capacity in Hay River and Nunakput (\$21.75 million).*

*This fund is working for northern communities, and that is why I am pleased that our platform includes a top-up of \$1 billion to DMAF.*

3. The design of a program to support climate change in the north must be done in consultation with Northerners to be ensure it has uptake and be effective. Will you ensure that any program that is developed on climate change will be in consultation with Northerners?

*With the North warming at almost three times the global average rate, it is absolutely vital for Northerners to be actively involved and included in the development of climate policies and programs. I strongly support more northern voices being involved on all policies that affect us, and especially when it comes to our environment.*

4. Homelessness, mental health and addictions are serious issues in the North. How will your party work to ensure these issues get addressed and solutions developed?

*To address these three important issues in our territory will require strong partnerships with all levels of our society. Over the past four years, our government has taken significant steps to address these issues. For example, Through Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, the Government of Canada is providing over \$6 million over the next five years to the City of Yellowknife to assist their efforts. When it comes to mental health, federal investments in our territory have included supporting culturally-appropriate Mental Wellness Teams and the development of a suicide prevention and crisis support network. As well, we are providing the GNWT*

*with \$5.1 million to support the construction of a new health and wellness centre in Yellowknife, and Katlodeeche First Nation with over \$1.3 million to renovate their Dene Wellness and Development Centre.*

*Should we be re-elected, our government will strengthen the Canada Health Act to ensure the proper mental health services are made available in every territory and province as part of our \$6 billion investment in public health over the next four years. We will also provide territorial and provincial governments with additional investments for expanding community-based addictions services.*

5. Inadequate housing in terms of both quantity and quality is greatly affecting outcomes for our residents, whether it is in education, health, justice and many other areas. Will your party ensure that long term funding is made a priority, and will you work to find a flexible program that works for our Northern region?

*I have made housing a major priority during my time as the NWT's Member of Parliament. It is essential that we find a solution to housing issues in the North in order to address the intersecting socio-economic issues in our communities. In 2018, the Government of Canada and the GNWT signed a bilateral agreement that will see nearly \$140 million invested in community housing over the next decade. Additionally, a minimum of \$60 million will be available for building and repairing affordable housing in our territory through the National Housing Co-Investment Fund.*

*In 2020, our government's Canada Housing Benefit will be introduced. Co-developed with the territories and provinces, this \$4 billion benefit will go directly to Canadians in core housing need.*

*If re-elected, I will continue to advocate for additional housing resources for NWTers, with a particular focus on finding solutions for seniors and Indigenous communities.*

6. It is essential that all communities have access to all telecommunications so they can participate in the digital economy as well as all aspects of digital life. How do you intend to advocate for this essential service to all NWT homes and improve service and reliability for all?

*Our government has made improving Northerners' internet access a priority. During our mandate, we launched the \$500 million Connect to Innovate program to provide 300 rural and remote communities with high-speed internet by 2021. In our territory,*

*this program has supported extending satellite connection to 8 communities, as well as the construction of fibre-optic infrastructure for Jean Marie River. This program is also providing \$30 million for the fibre optic line from Dawson City to Inuvik; when completed, this project will help close the Canada North Fibre Loop, providing our region with greater reliability and a reduced risk of disruptions to the network.*

*The Liberal Party is committed to ensuring that all Canadians have access to quality high-speed internet. That is why our government unveiled earlier this year our ambitious target to have 100% of Canadian homes and businesses provided with high-speed internet by 2030. Through taking important steps towards achieving this goal, we will greatly reduce the digital gap Northerners currently face.*

7. More work needs to be done to ensure cellular coverage along current and future NWT highways. It is a necessity for safety in the North. How will your government support the NWT in this safety requirement?

*Providing greater security for NWTers and visitors travelling on our highways is something I certainly support. As I have done throughout my term as Member of Parliament, should a proposed project on this matter come forward I will support the local proponents, such as community leaders and the GNWT, to assist them in finding federal programs that can best support this northern priority.*