

Northern/Housing Allowance for NWTTA members

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A part of the compensation package for NWTTA members is their allowances. Two specific allowances that have been negotiated into the collective agreements because of the high cost of living in the NWT are the **Housing Allowance that is provided to YCS members**, and the **Northern Allowance that is provided to GNWT members**. During the last collective bargaining session, **YK1 choose to absorb their housing allowance into their basic salary**. The advantage for YK1 members in doing so, the housing amount is now pensionable income.

A significant way Northern and Housing Allowances are different than basic salary is these allowances are not pensionable income, nor are Association dues deducted from these allowances. Allowances are taxable income though.

For YCS, the Housing Allowance is simple enough to explain as an acknowledgement of the high cost of housing in the NWT. It is not based on any formula, and it is set for the life of the collective agreement. If the Housing Allowance was to change, it would have to be bargained for at the negotiation table.

The Northern Allowance rate for GNWT NWTTA members, though, is a little more complicated. It does have one set rate, the amount for Yellowknife. This rate would have to be changed at the bargaining table. This rate is the comparison used for the rest of the NWT as rates are set every spring. Basically it is an acknowledgement of the difference in cost for certain items, and an amount for travel costs. The Northern Allowance is meant to support members with the high cost of goods and travel in the north.

For GNWT NWTTA members a significant portion of the Northern Allowance is for travel. The NWTTA bargained for this as travel costs are a significant cost to living in the NWT. As travel costs rise, they affect the Northern Allowance rates. It is important to note that the cost is compared to the Yellowknife base rate. So if travel in Yellowknife goes up more than it might in a community, the actual effect might be a decrease in the community travel amount of the Northern Allowance. Last year the travel component was increased in 19 communities (this includes ground and air travel).

Besides this there is a Living Cost Differential (LCD) which compares the cost of living in communities to Yellowknife. This is based on a survey that was last done in 2013, which will be used until another survey is completed.

Finally is a Survey of Household Spending that was done in 2015 by Statistics Canada. Also applied to this information is the Consumer Price Index from the previous year. The results of this survey were an overall decrease of \$2133 from the previous year. This attributed to an overall decrease for Northern Allowance in 26 communities in the NWT. The Survey of Household Spending is based on a certain number of specific items.

There are three common misunderstandings of the Northern Allowance Rate:

1. Housing costs are not part of the Northern Allowance Calculations, though some household items do show up in the Survey of Household Spending.
2. A change in the cost of an item at the community level does not immediately affect the Northern Allowance rate. When the survey is done the effect of change will get calculated. Travel actually affects the rate more directly year-to-year.
3. Finally, the calculations are always a comparison to the cost of living in Yellowknife. Though a cost for an item or travel may go up in a community. If the similar costs go up in Yellowknife there may not be an adjustment in Northern Allowance. If the cost of an item or service goes up more in Yellowknife than it does in a community, then there may actually be a reduction in Northern Allowance in a community.

The table at right on the opposite page represents the present Northern Allowance rates by community for 2017-2018.

The table can be found online at this URL:

<https://my.hr.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/Website%20NWTTA%20NA%202017-2018.pdf>

Northern Allowance Rates 2017-2018

As per Article B1.02 of the collective agreement between the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association and the Government of the Northwest Territories, the following chart shows the Northern Allowance of each NWT community effective from the beginning of your 2017-2018 school year and remains in effect to the end of your school year.

Community	Rate
Aklavik	\$20,902
Behchoko (Edzo)	\$4,855
Behchoko (Rae)	\$4,876
Colville Lake	\$27,671
Deline	\$22,730
Fort Good Hope	\$25,397
Fort Liard	\$9,590
Fort McPherson	\$19,184
Fort Providence	\$8,292
Fort Resolution	\$9,796
Fort Simpson	\$10,174
Fort Smith	\$5,916
Gameti	\$14,890
Hay River	\$6,457
Hay River Reserve	\$6,476
Inuvik	\$13,966
Jean Marie River	\$11,998
Kakisa	\$8,198
Lutselk'e	\$19,110
Nahanni Butte	\$18,516
Norman Wells	\$19,475
Paulatuk	\$28,104
Sachs Harbour	\$28,973
Sambaa K'e	\$23,237
Tsiigehtchic	\$20,083
Tuktoyaktuk	\$21,480
Tulita	\$25,246
Ulukhaktok	\$33,321
Wekweeti	\$14,620
Whati	\$14,560
Wrigley	\$16,004
Yellowknife	\$3,250

Northern Lights

Meet Anna-Lee McLeod from Aklavik (Beaufort-Delta region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in my hometown of Aklavik where our motto is "Never Say Die".

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

I guess the first time I realized that I wanted to become a Gwich'in Language Teacher was when I was approached by a past Principal to fill a position here in Aklavik. That opened my eyes to a whole different view on the Aboriginal Language and how I could make a difference with our future speakers.

Q. What do you teach?

I teach the Gwich'in Language to students that are in Kindergarten to Grade 10.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

The thing I most enjoy about teaching is when I see the students singing, laughing and wanting to learn the language.

Q. How do you engage your students?

I try to engage my students through songs, stories, videos, on-the-land programs as well as traditional games and dances. We try to make learning as fun as we can, using laughter to rejuvenate our minds and bodies.

I Love My Language!

When I was first teaching the Gwich'in Language, it was so easy to teach the younger students who were eager to learn, and would sing and dance like no one was watching. As I got to the higher grades, the teenagers were a challenge, however anyone who knows me knows that I look forward to taking on a new challenges everyday. I had a group of students in grade 9 who were way too cool to learn how to sing the Canadian Anthem in the Gwich'in Language. So I thought, how can I make this a fun learning experience? After playing around with my keyboard one evening, I managed to sing the Gwich'in version of the Canadian Anthem to a rap tune and believe me, these teenagers laughed at first, but by the end of class I had them singing, laughing and wanting to learn more songs. The moral of my little story is to never give up on teaching our youth, every child just needs that extra love, encouragement and support to see a positive outcome in their daily learning.

Shigiinjik at'iinithan ! (I love my language!)