



TECH YUKON  
ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE OCTOBER 2016

## Yukon NDP Response

Yukon New Democrats are committed to helping build a resilient, diversified and durable economy – one with jobs and opportunities for all. While Yukon's information and technology sector is robust, it has great potential for expansion. When it comes to diversifying our economy, Yukon New Democrats will make this sector a priority, with a focus on strategic investments to foster the industry

### **1) Tech hubs / accelerators:**

*Will your party support a business accelerator program for technology companies? Will your party continue providing financial support for TechYukon, the Technology and Telecommunications Development Directorate, and the technology innovation fund of the Cold Climate Innovation Centre?*

Small businesses are the heart of our economy. Yukon New Democrats support an entrepreneurial economy that is self-reliant, technologically smart and fully able to adapt, innovate and invest. Small businesses have been lost in the shuffle in recent years, and a New Democratic government will work to rectify this.

Given our values, it's safe to say Tech Yukon's interest in seeing a business accelerator program for technology companies will be a priority consideration as we investigate ways to grow and diversify Yukon's economy. A NDP government will do politics differently, taking a principled and practical approach that brings people together instead of driving them apart.

### **2) Access to capital:**

*What will your party do to make Yukon competitive with those jurisdictions, and to renovate its aging incentive programs, such as the Business Incentive Program?*

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Individuals, communities, small businesses and industry are facing compelling challenges that they expect government to help them address. The Yukon NDP is committed to:

- Expanding programs like the Yukon Small Business Tax Credit (which was created by a New Democratic government) to support the development of Yukon job-creating businesses,
- Reviewing and updating existing programs by pursuing ways to improve access to capital, working with financial institutions, First Nations development corporations, and other parties, and
- Providing easy access to business counselling in rural communities.

### **3) Support for business development:**

*How will your party use tools such as supply chain management, budgeting process, incentives and local-friendly procurement policies to enhance the capacity of the local technology sector? The capital IT spending envelope was recently increased to \$9.5M, in part due to TechYukon's lobbying, after years of stagnation. What will your party do to continue this investment, and to ensure that maximum benefit falls to Yukon companies and local job creation?*

Every dollar government spends here means more prosperity, stability and potential for Yukon's workers, businesses throughout the territory and our Yukon economy as a whole. A Yukon New Democratic team will:

- Revisit Yukon government contracting directives to improve local contractors' confidence in the process
- Work with businesses, contractors and service providers on local procurement policies and practices to improve working relationships and enhance government's ability to purchase locally and support Yukon hire in a cost-effective manner, and
- Stand up for Yukon's interests: for workers, local suppliers of goods and services and industry in the negotiation of the proposed new Canadian Free Trade Agreement, and if we can't get what Yukoners expect and deserve, we won't sign on.

### **4) Labour force development:**

*The Yukon Jobs program is a valuable resource for helping companies train their employees, but demand for this help frequently exceeds the supply available. What will*

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*your party do to increase access to training support for technology companies? The future of the technology sector depends heavily on the availability of talent to be recruited and trained. Unlike many jurisdictions, Yukon does not include education in computer programming in its curriculum. What will your party do to address this issue? Will your party support a summer job training and mentoring program for Yukon students enrolled in technology-related studies?*

Yes, the Yukon NDP would review the STEP programme to ensure that it can be adapted for the purpose of summer job training and/or mentoring.

The Yukon NDP recognizes information technology and internet infrastructure is critical to the movement of goods and services and Yukon's ability to capture business opportunities outside the territory. We have committed to developing a long-term strategy that builds on our strengths and existing industries while diversifying our economy through emerging sectors, such as energy solutions and technology.

We will focus on strategic investments to foster the IT sector. Training and education in technology-related studies would likely be an important component, especially given the NDP commitment to concentrate government IT spending on local suppliers to create local jobs.

Including education in computer programming in the Yukon school curriculum is something the Yukon NDP would of course consider. At the post-secondary level, we need to train people to work in a more diverse economy. Respectful working relationships with First Nations governments, Yukon College, employers, building trades, unions and other relevant partners will be key to making the positive changes needed to achieve these goals. A NDP government would offer free first-year tuition at Yukon College for Yukon residents as well support training and post-secondary education in emerging and expanding sectors.

#### **5) Internet connectivity:**

*What steps will your party take to improve internet infrastructure in Yukon, and to ensure that local companies are involved in the work of implementing those improvements? What will your party do to ensure technology companies have affordable, reliable access to the high speed internet service they need to create and support their products?*

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a robust and resilient internet infrastructure is as important to tech companies and the Yukon economy as roads were to opening up the Yukon to the outside world 75 years ago. Yukon's information and technology sector is strong, it has

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great potential for expansion. When it comes to diversifying our economy, a NDP government will make this sector a priority, with a focus on strategic investments to foster the industry. A Yukon New Democratic government will:

- Build a second fibre optic line through a competitive bidding process to provide a long-term solution to Yukon internet and connectivity requirements
- Work with other jurisdictions to develop ways to hold individuals and corporations responsible for cutting the fibre optic line(s) to/from the Yukon including penalties for negligence
- Work with the Government of Canada so the Yukon gets its fair share of new federal initiatives to extend and enhanced broadband services in rural and remote communities to improve local internet affordability, reliability and coverage, and
- Invest government IT spending in the industry, with a focus on local suppliers to create local jobs.

Respectfully submitted

On behalf of Yukon NDP  
October 25, 2016

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