

Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy

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ASETS Policies and Procedures



Dehcho First Nations

PO Box 89
Fort Simpson NT X0E 0N0
Phone: (867) 695-2610
Toll Free: (866) 995-3748
Fax: (867) 695-2038

ASETS Policy and Procedures

Table of Contents

Subject	Page
ASETS Policies and Procedures	1
Table of Contents.....	2
Policy # 01 DEFINITIONS	3
Policy # 02 INTRODUCTION.....	4
Policy # 03 ASETS PROGRAM OBJECTIVE	5
Policy # 04 CLIENT ELIGIBILITY & RESIDENCE	6
Policy # 05 CAREER PLANS	7
Policy # 06 APPLICATION DEADLINES	8
Policy # 07 PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS.....	9
Policy # 08 TRAINING / LIVING ALLOWANCES.....	11
Policy # 09 TRAVEL ALLOWANCE.....	12
Policy # 10 TUITION, BOOKS, SUPPLIES / EQUIPMENT, EXAMS.....	13
Policy # 11 CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES.....	14
Policy # 12 ZERO TOLERANCE OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE	15
Policy # 13 CONFLICT OF INTEREST.....	16
Policy # 14 ASETS WORKING GROUP	17

Policy # 01 DEFINITIONS

DFN ASETS use the following definitions as per Schedule A of the ASETS agreement.

ASETS - Canada's Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy

SFA – Government of Northwest Territories Student Financial Assistance

ECE – Government of Northwest Territories Community Assistance Programs

UCEP – Indian & Northern Affairs Canada University & College Entrance Program

Policy # 02 INTRODUCTION

The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) mandate is to improve the employment opportunities of Aboriginal peoples and enable them to fully participate in the Canadian economy. In partnership with business, industry, and training institutions, ASETS offers training opportunities for First Nations, Inuit and Metis who are unemployed or underemployed while keeping in mind the three strategic priorities of ASETS:

1. **Demand driven skills development** – All education/training programs must improve the employability skills of Dehcho residents resulting in employment.
2. **Partnership with the private sector across the whole-of-government** - ASETS partners with funding agencies and employers to cover program delivery.
3. **Accountability and improved results** - All applicants are accountable for ASETS funds received.

Dehcho First Nations delivers the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy for all First Nation, Inuit and Metis people **residing in nine communities** in the Dehcho region:

- Fort Simpson
- Fort Providence
- Fort Liard
- Jean Marie River
- Kakisa Lake
- Nahanni Butte
- Trout Lake
- Wrigley and
- Hay River – **Hay River Reserve and West Point residents only, residents living in town of Hay River must seek ASETS assistance from Akaitcho Territory Government or NWT Metis Nation**

Members of Dehcho First Nations who reside in another region are not eligible to receive Dehcho ASETS assistance as ASETS assistance is **based on residency not on membership**.

For internet listing of ASETS holders, please enter “ASETS Holders”, click on Aboriginal Agreement Holders, click on location for ASETS holders by province/territory.

These policies provide a guideline on how the agreement is delivered.

Policy # 03 ASETS PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

- Support the expansion of partnerships that aligns programming, services and other activities with the labour market and promote positive relationship with employers and funding agencies
- Advocate for higher quality training and provide links for a more accessible training experience for clients
- Ensure that appropriate and equitable means of access to training and employment for women, youth and disabled exist
- Represent the training and employment interest of First Nation, Inuit and Metis
- Establish training and employment objectives
- Develop policies, application/proposal procedures and forms
- Develop training programs and employment projects
- Provide the allocation of funds for employment and training initiatives
- Monitor and evaluate the efforts of the training initiatives to improve the access and effectiveness of employment training programs
- Manage the appeals according to the present appeal policy

Policy # 04 CLIENT ELIGIBILITY & RESIDENCE

- First Nation, Inuit and Metis people residing in the communities of Fort Simpson, Fort Providence, Fort Liard, Jean Marie River, Kakisa Lake, Nahanni Butte, Trout Lake, Wrigley, Hay River Reserve and West Point may be eligible for ASETS assistance.
- Dehcho residents must provide their First Nation, Inuit or Metis status card numbers and NWT Health card numbers in order to be eligible to receive ASETS assistance.

Policy # 04-a INELIGIBLE CLIENTS

- Dehcho members who reside outside the Dehcho region.
- Applicants who were previously funded and were terminated, did not complete their training/education or did not provide follow-up after the end of their training period are not eligible to apply for two years or until funds are repaid.
- Applicants will not be funded if they owe money to DFN ASETS. Please note that installment arrangements can be made to pay down amount owing to DFN ASETS.
- **Applicants who quit their job to attend training will not be funded unless they have consulted DFN ASETS staff. Service Canada ‘Authorization to Quit’ guidelines are as follows:**
 - ASETS staff may counsel an applicant to quit their employment to attend an approved funded training program.
 - **A Service Canada ‘Authorization to Quit’ is only considered before the applicant quits their job, not retroactively.**
 - ASETS staff must provide written documentation to support decision to avoid risk of applicant being disqualified from EI benefits.
 - An ‘Authorization to Quit’ should be no more than 3 weeks before the training starts.
- ASETS will not sponsor students enrolled in secondary school.

Policy # 05 CAREER PLANS

Defining and updating student's career plan is an important part in the application process. It is in the student's best interest to seek career counseling through ASETS staff, NWT ECE, school counselors as well as community adult educators.

Career counseling with ASETS staff will ensure students are aware of ASETS policy regarding academic upgrading as well as seeking primary assistance through:

- GNWT SFA for post-secondary programs more than 12 weeks in length
- GNWT ECE for all programs not SFA eligible
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) UCEP for students who require up to two terms of upgrading to meet post-secondary requirements
- Employment Insurance Part 1 benefits

Policy # 06 APPLICATION DEADLINES

Work Readiness Programs: (Adult Literacy & Basic Education, Literacy & Essential Skills Programs)

- One full month prior to the start date of course/program.

Skills Development Programs:

- One full month prior to the start date of course/program.

Post-Secondary Programs:

- **Fall Term (September to December): July 15th - SFA, UCEP and ASETS**
- **Academic Year (September to June): July 31st - Dehcho First Nations Memorial Awards and Scholarships.**
- **Winter Term (January to April): November 15th – SFA, UCEP, ASETS**
- **Spring/Summer Term (May to August): March 15th – SFA, ASETS**

- **ASETS funding will not be provided unless the client has secured primary funding.**
- **ASETS will accept and assess late applications. The ASETS assessment process could take up to 30 days to complete (SFA 90 days). Applicants may be contacted for additional or missing information.**
- **If applicant chooses to attend school, they will start classes without knowing if they qualify for SFA and ASETS top-up. Applicants must keep in mind that whether they make or miss the deadline, they are responsible for all of their school expenses until SFA and ASETS top-up assistance are provided.**
- It is in the student's best interest to apply for as many scholarships as possible to help offset educational expenses.

Policy # 07 PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Work Readiness Programs: (Academic Upgrading, Literacy & Essential Skills Programs)
building client's essential skills required to get and keep employment. **All individual or group trainings must be labour market driven meaning there must be employment tied to the training.** ASETS may partner with other funding agencies or local employers to cover program delivery costs.

- ASETS may provide up to two years of Adult Basic Education for clients completing their Grade 11 and 12 Math, English, Science and Social Studies to meet post-secondary entrance requirements.
- After one year, clients will be encouraged to enroll in OCAP, UCAP or Access programs and seek University College Entrance Program (UCEP) funding.
- Persons enrolled in lower level ABE programs will be referred to ECE Income Support.
- If student moves residency to another province, ASETS may assist the client for one term only. This will allow the client to secure funding from the province/community they are residing.

Skills Development Programs:
building on client's skills development to improve clients' employability skills required to get and keep employment. **All individual or group trainings must be labour market driven meaning there must be employment tied to the training.** ASETS may partner with other funding agencies or local employers to cover program delivery costs.

Post-Secondary Programs:
clients are obliged to seek primary funding such as SFA, ECE, UCEP or EI for education and training programs more than 12 weeks in length. ASETS assistance is in the form of top-up to primary funding.

ASETS is not able to provide primary funding for university students who have used up all SFA grants. If all SFA grants have been used, clients are obliged to seek student loans to complete their studies prior to applying for ASETS top-up assistance.

All training programs must be labour market driven meaning there must be employment at the end of the training.

- **Certificate Programs**
- **Diploma Programs**
- **Undergraduate Programs**
- **Graduate Programs**

Assistance provided to post-secondary clients is based on the personal and academic information provided and is meant to add to clients own financial resources. **Clients are required to financially contribute to their education through summer employment, part-time employment, savings and careful planning.**

If cost of living at school is greater than SFA and ASETS top-ups combined, clients will be responsible for difference in cost through part-time employment or student loans.

On-The-Job Training Programs/Job Maintenance/Upskilling: provide assistance to employers hiring clients who have obtained basic training.

- **Wage Subsidies/Training-on-the-Job** – ASETS may provide up to 50% of individual employment costs for under-skilled employee
- **Job Maintenance/Upskilling** – provide training opportunities for under-skilled employees to improve their skill level to meet current employment requirement or advance in their employment opportunities. ASETS may provide up to 50% of individual training costs for under-skilled employees and up to 100% of safety training costs delivered in the community

Youth Programs: provide programs to explore career options.

- **Trades Awareness Program (TAP)** – TAP Exploration during fall term is geared at junior high students with students trying out 4 trades over 4 days. TAP Intense during winter term is geared at senior high students with students trying out 1 trade over 4 days.
- **Summer Student Investment** – ASETS may provide up to \$12.50 per hour for high school student job creation
 - Maximum of 35 hours/week will be reimbursed per employed student.
 - A limit of two student jobs per business
 - It is preferred that students are permanent community members
 - Program is intended to fund newly created jobs for students
 - Employer must set up interview dates for all students applying for posted jobs
 - Employer must be a registered WCB business (copy of WCB required)

Other:

Distance Education – On-Line or Teleconferencing:

Clients participating in post-secondary education via distance learning may be eligible to receive reimbursement of tuition, admission or enrollment fees, postage, required books and internet fees. **Living allowances are not provided for distance post-secondary education.**

Program descriptions and educational expenses are to be attached to the completed ASETS post-secondary application. Upon approval of funding, a service contract will be prepared and signed prior to the beginning of distance learning. The service contract will outline the maximum amount of reimbursement when program is successfully completed. Transcripts and receipts are required.

Evening Learning:

Clients participating in evening classes to improve their employability skills may be eligible to receive reimbursement of tuition, books and fees. **Training allowances are not provided for evening learning.**

Program description including cost of tuition, books and fees are to be attached to the completed ASETS post-secondary application. Upon approval of funding, a service contract will be prepared and signed prior to the beginning of evening learning.

High School Students:

The ASETS program does not sponsor clients who are attending secondary school.

Policy # 08 TRAINING / LIVING ALLOWANCES

Work Readiness Programs: (Academic Upgrading [ABE], Northern Lights Distance, Literacy & Essential Skills Programs [LES])

- \$850.00 monthly rate for full-time ABE/LES programs or three (5 credit courses of 125 hours class-time) distance high school courses per academic term
- Training allowances not provided for part-time studies of one-two (5 credit) distance high school courses per academic term
- Income Support Clients are eligible to receive a flat rate of \$5.00 per day to a maximum of \$100.00 per month based on actual attendance. As per Income Support rules, attendance and copy of monthly training allowance are forwarded to Income Support Worker

Skills Development Programs: (training programs less than six months in length)

- \$1,380.00 monthly rate for full-time Skills Development programs
- Training allowances not provided for programs less than one week in length (safety training, exploring change) or 2-3 hours per day (driver training)
- Income Support Clients are eligible to receive a flat rate of \$5.00 per day to a maximum of \$100.00 per month based on actual attendance. As per Income Support rules, attendance and copy of monthly training allowance are forwarded to Income Support Worker

Post-Secondary Top-Up Programs:

- **The purpose of SFA and ASETS top-ups is to supplement the cost of post-secondary education, not to cover all expenses.**
- All post-secondary applicants must secure primary funding assistance through other funding agencies or local employers as well as contribute financially to their education through summer employment, part-time employment, savings and careful planning.
- **If cost of living at school is greater than SFA and ASETS top-ups combined, clients will be responsible for difference in cost through part-time employment or student loans.**
- **Single No Dependents based on actual expenses:**
 - \$1,550 monthly rate for full-time students **less SFA living allowance equals ASETS top-up**

(Post-Secondary with Dependents amended Motion #8, November 22, 2018 Fall Leadership)

- Post-Secondary Dependent care is provided to allow clients to concentrate on their studies without the added burden of worrying about the cost of their child's safety.
- **Single with One Dependent Child based on actual expenses:**
 - \$2,350 monthly rate for full-time students **less SFA living allowance equals ASETS top-up**
- **Single with Two Dependent Children based on actual expenses:**
 - \$2,750 monthly rate for full-time students **less SFA living allowance equals ASETS top-up**
- **Single with Three Dependent Children based on actual expenses:**
 - \$3,150 monthly rate for full-time students **less SFA living allowance equals ASETS top-up**
- **Single with Four Dependent Children based on actual expenses:**
 - \$3,550 monthly rate for full-time students **less SFA living allowance equals ASETS top-up**

Policy # 09 TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

Eligible clients may be allowed additional allowance for travel; if no other allowance is available. Treasury Board's lower rates will apply for private vehicle travel or lowest possible airfare.

Maximum Travel allowance available:

- Up to \$2,000.00 is available annually for travel by air and private vehicle.

Christmas Travel allowance for clients with families attending post-secondary school out of region:

- Up to \$2,000.00 is available annually to assist with going home for Christmas holiday. If client receives Christmas travel allowance and does not go home, funds will be recovered by the end of program

Policy # 10 TUITION, BOOKS, SUPPLIES / EQUIPMENT, EXAMS

Tuition:

- Up to \$5,000.00 maximum per year will be provided for tuition – **receipts required within one month of receiving tuition assistance**
- ABE distance tuition up to \$2,500/year
- ABE lab fees and student fees up to \$200/year

Books:

- Up to \$2,000.00 maximum per year will be provided for books – **receipts required within one month of receiving book assistance**

Supplies / Equipment:

- Up to \$2,500.00 maximum per year will be paid for supplies identified as a course requirement – **receipts required within one month of receiving supplies/equipment assistance**

- Special equipment above maximum amounts will be assessed based on individual need and funding availability – **receipts required within one month of receiving special equipment assistance**

Exams:

- A lifetime allocation of up to \$2,000.00 maximum per ASETS client for professional designation exams may be allocated when identified as a requirement to receive a professional designation – **receipt required within one month of receiving exams assistance and copy of professional designation certification to be provided upon receipt.**

Policy # 11 CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide receipts for full amount received within one month of receiving tuition, books, supplies, equipment and/or exam assistance
- Provide attendance on a biweekly or monthly basis as set out in service contract
- Provide transcripts after each term
- Provide copies of final marks and written report
- Provide copies of certificates/safety tickets
- Provide digital photo of self or group training photo
- Upon completion of training program, client must seek employment and call in on bi-weekly basis to report employment status until employed or for a 24 week period
- The ASETS program is results based which means a desired result is required to remain eligible for future assistance
- Desired results are an employed outcome for adults and an employed and/or returned to school outcome for youth
- Applicant must have alternate childcare in place when child is sick or when there is no primary school.
- Applicant must ensure support network is in place.

SFA Funded Students must contact SFA prior to enrolling in an on-line course as they may be disqualified from receiving continued SFA assistance.

Post-Secondary Top-Up to GNWT Student Financial Assistance

SFA requires all students to disclose ASETS assistance. ASETS students receiving a SFA top-up must provide SFA with ASETS assistance provided. The assistance provided through ASETS cannot duplicate the funding students receive from the SFA program.

SFA contact information:

- Phone 867-873-7190
- toll-free 1-800-661-0793.

Policy # 12 ZERO TOLERANCE OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

DFN ASETS is committed to providing a work environment in which all workers are treated with respect and dignity. Workplace harassment will not be tolerated from any person in the workplace including clients.

Workplace violence is defined as actions or words that endanger or harm another employee or result in other employees having a reasonable belief that they are in danger. Such action includes:

- verbal or physical assaults or attacks
- verbal or physical threats/intimidation
- gestures of a violent nature
- any other conduct that might reasonably give a worker cause for fear, offends his or her dignity or create a hostile or poisonous work environment.

Clients who are verbally abusive to ASETS staff in person or on the phone, or are abusive to ASETS staff or the ASETS program on email or social media will have their ASETS assistance terminated. Abuse of any kind against ASETS staff will not be tolerated.

Acts of violence will not be tolerated and the person(s) will be removed from the premises with or without RCMP assistance.

Policy # 13 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All ASETS staff have a shared responsibility to ensure that they conduct themselves in an unbiased manner and serve the goals of Dehcho First Nations ASETS. It is thus the responsibility of DFN ASETS and its employees to guard against conflicts of interest which might compromise the integrity and objectivity of DFN ASETS.

Policy # 14 ASETS WORKING GROUP

- Consist of all ASETS staff.
- Meet at least twice a year to discuss the overall administration of the DFN ASETS.
- Review and update DFN ASETS Policies and Procedures.
- Review and respond to HRSDC annual accountability and evaluation criteria.
- Meet as required to develop and review local annual community employment and training strategies.
- Meet as required to review and discuss budget priorities.
- Discuss any issue of concern brought forward that is relevant to the overall administration of DFN ASETS.