

Evaluation of the YG First Nation Training Corps Program

Findings Synthesis

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Program Genesis and Description	2
Short-term Outcome Achievement	6
Long-term Outcome Achievement.....	8
Efficiency of the First Nation Training Corps Program	9
Recommendations to Improve the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the First Nation Training Corps Program.....	11

Evaluation of the YG First Nation Training Corps Program

Introduction

The First Nation Training Corps (FNTC) Program is one of two equity hiring programs currently delivered by the Yukon Government. This report presents the findings of an evaluation of First Nation Training Corps Program operations over the period 2002/03 to 2010/11. The evaluation is focused on the question of whether the FNTC program is achieving its intended outcomes in an effective and efficient manner.

The intended short-term (ST) outcomes of the First Nation Training Corps Program are:

- Trainees acquire skills and experience in line with their training plans;
- Trainees are successful in competing for Yukon public service positions; and,
- Trainees receive job search support.

The intended long-term (LT) outcomes of the First Nation Training Corps Program are:

- Support towards a representative public service; and,
- Trainees have an impact on YG corporate culture.

The First Nation Training Corps Program was evaluated using multiple lines of evidence to assess whether it is achieving its intended outcomes in an effective and efficient manner. The lines of evidence included:

- an administrative file review;
- development of a logic model for the program;
- design and implementation of a web survey for program participants (30 completed surveys);
- a focus group with four FNTC participants;
- design and implementation of a web survey for YG staff involved in the delivery of the FNTC program (10 completed surveys);
- two key informant interviews; and,
- a focus group with 10 YG supervisors and human resource staff involved in the delivery of the FNTC program.

This report presents a synthesis of the findings from the lines of evidence and presents recommendations for improved delivery of the program. The table below outlines the structure of the findings synthesis which follows:

	ST Outcomes	LT Outcomes
Effectiveness	Finding A	Finding B
Efficiency	Finding C	

Evaluation of the YG First Nation Training Corps Program

Program Genesis and Description

The First Nation Training Corps (FNTC) program is designed to help build a Yukon public service that is representative of the people it serves by offering opportunities for people of Yukon First Nation ancestry to receive training and employment experience in a range of occupations at various levels in the Yukon Government. The program encourages the external hiring and internal promotion of Yukon First Nation citizens who do not have the full working-level qualifications required for positions. While postings vary in length, most last from one to two years and offer on-the-job training and professional development. Program participants initially receive 80% of the starting salary for a position with salary increases implemented as experience is achieved according to a training plan prepared for each program participant.

The First Nation Training Corps Program was launched over 25 years ago, in 1986, as a response to the very low level of First Nation representation within the Yukon Government. The program was intended to bring an immediate change to the ethnic composition of the Yukon government by increasing the number of First Nation employees. An initial focus of the program was to bring people into positions where a “First Nations perspective” would improve service delivery. Such positions included conservation officers, probation officers and social workers.

When first implemented, the program included a requirement that a permanent position be held available for program participants. Problematic to implement, the requirement to hold a position open has since fallen by the wayside. Through its history, the program has not been intended for entry level positions as those positions are seen to be generally more accessible to all potential job candidates. Greater need for equity assistance was seen at higher levels.

The table to the right presents an overview of program participation over the period 2002/03 to 2010/11 by Yukon First Nation affiliation. As can be seen from the table, there have been 85 FNTC placements over that period. Just under half (47%) of the total number of placements were for program participants affiliated with just three Yukon of the Yukon’s fourteen First Nations: Champagne and Aishihik First Nation (16 placements), Carcross Tagish First Nation (12 placements) and the Kwanlin Dun First Nation (12 placements). The total number of months of training (1,434) is equivalent to about 120 person-years.

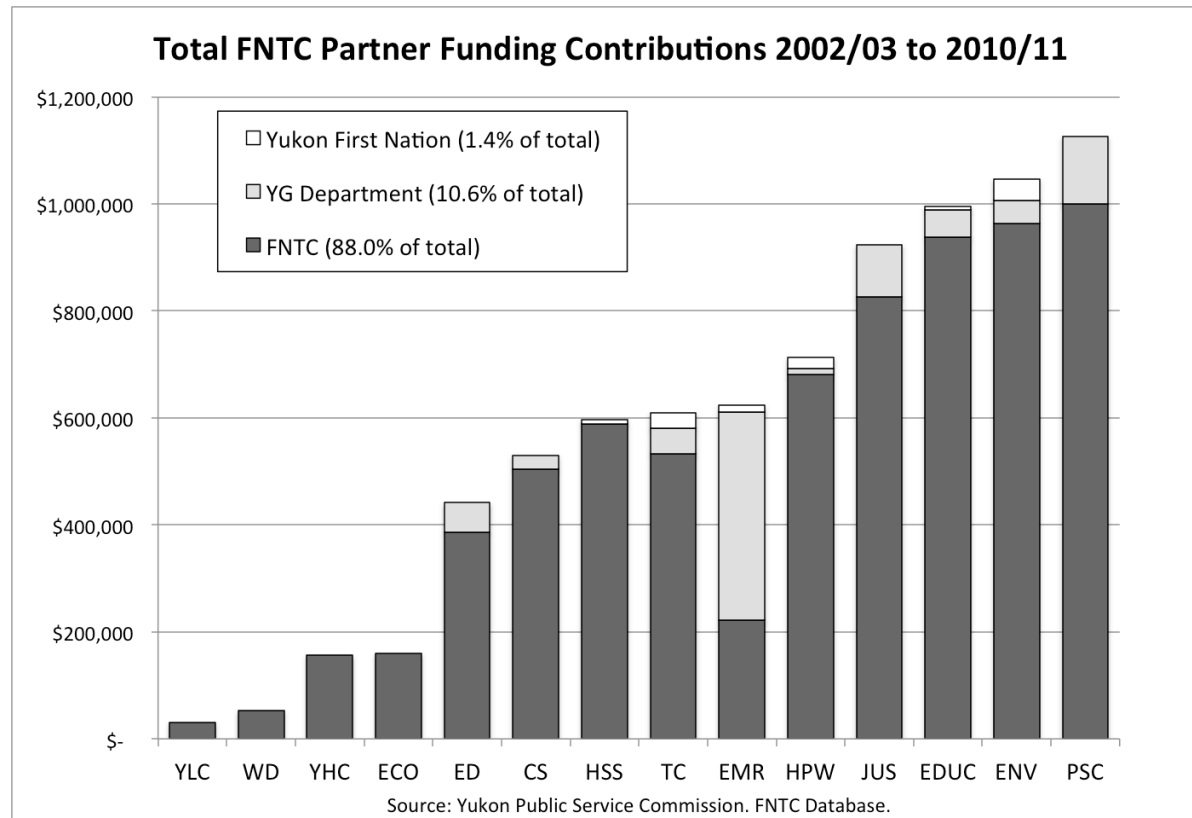
FNTC Program Participation 2002/03 to 2010/11

Yukon First Nation Affiliation	Number of Trainees	Participant Expenditures (\$)	Months of Training
CAFN	16	1,465,244	277
CTFN	12	1,440,437	243
KDFN	12	1,085,072	192
TH	9	641,701	120
TKC	8	741,365	128
TTC	7	485,218	94
NND	6	689,781	123
VGFN	5	342,091	68
KFN	3	304,398	57
LFN	2	397,269	54
LSCFN	2	261,836	48
RRDC	1	57,125	12
SFN	1	4,824	1
WRFN	1	85,861	17
Total	85	8,002,222	1,434

Evaluation of the YG First Nation Training Corps Program

While YG line departments and Yukon First Nations can and do make financial contributions to FNTC program operations, the program is almost completely funded with FNTC program dollars. During the 2002/03 to 2010/11 review period, 88% of all program expenditures (equivalent to \$7.0 million), originated with the FNTC program. Yukon Government departments contributed 11% of total expenditures (\$0.8 million) and Yukon First Nations contributed 1% of total FNTC program expenditures (\$0.1 million).

FNTC Program Funders 2002/03 to 2010/11		
FNTC	\$7,043,239	88%
YG Departments	\$843,875	11%
Yukon First Nations	\$115,108	1%
Total	\$8,002,222	100%



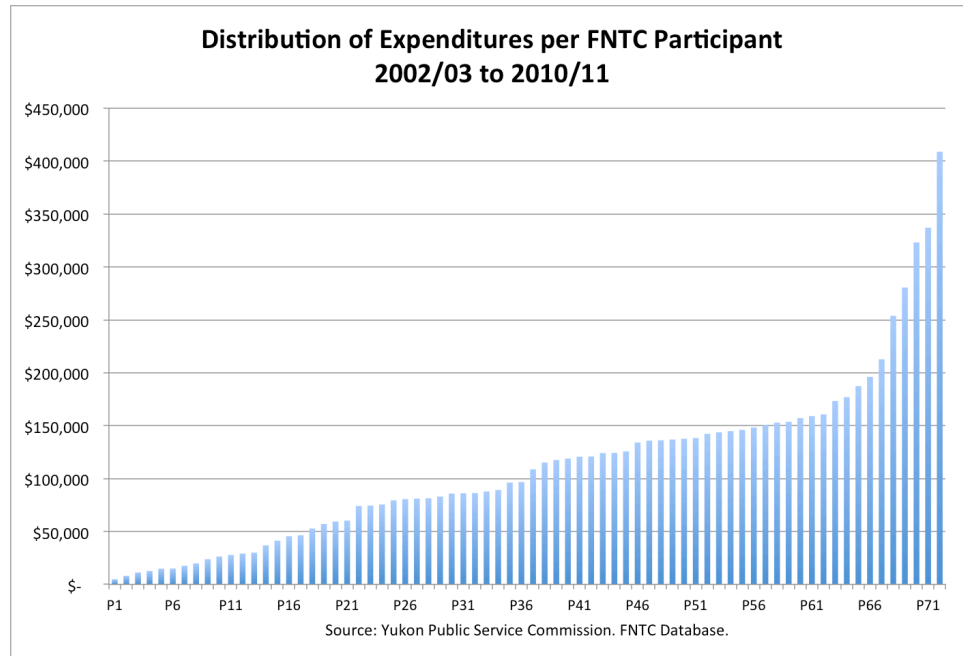
The figure to the left illustrates the allocation of FNTC program funding by YG department. As can be seen from the chart, the Public Service Commission received the largest share of FNTC program funding during the review period, followed closely by Education and Environment. Energy, Mines and Resources stands out on the chart as having contributed more than half of the funding to FNTC placements in that department. Note that the chart presents expenditures made only by departments which have participated in the program; departments not shown did not participate in the program during the review period.

In terms of program participant gender, two thirds of trainees (66%) were female and one third of trainees (33%) were male. The age of program participants is not tracked in the FNTC database.

Evaluation of the YG First Nation Training Corps Program

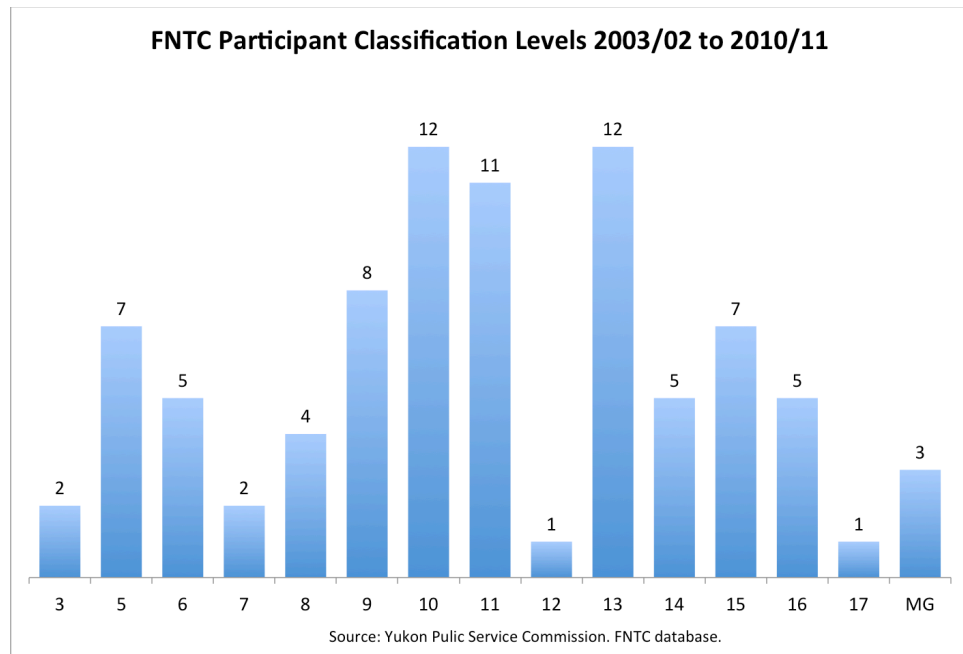
The average cost of an FNTC placement during the review period was \$94,111. Note that while there have been 85 FNTC placements over the course of the review period, the corresponding number of unique program participants is 72. Eleven individuals have participated in the program twice and one individual has participated in the program three times. Thus, the average cost per unique program participant during the review period was \$111,142. Note that the average cost of \$111,142 does not include the salary and benefit costs associated with program administration (to approximately one full time equivalent position).

The chart to the right presents the distribution of per-participant expenditures during the review period (n=72 and P1 refers to participant one, P2 refers to participant two, etc.). The lowest recorded per-participant expenditure was \$4,824 and the highest was \$408,911.



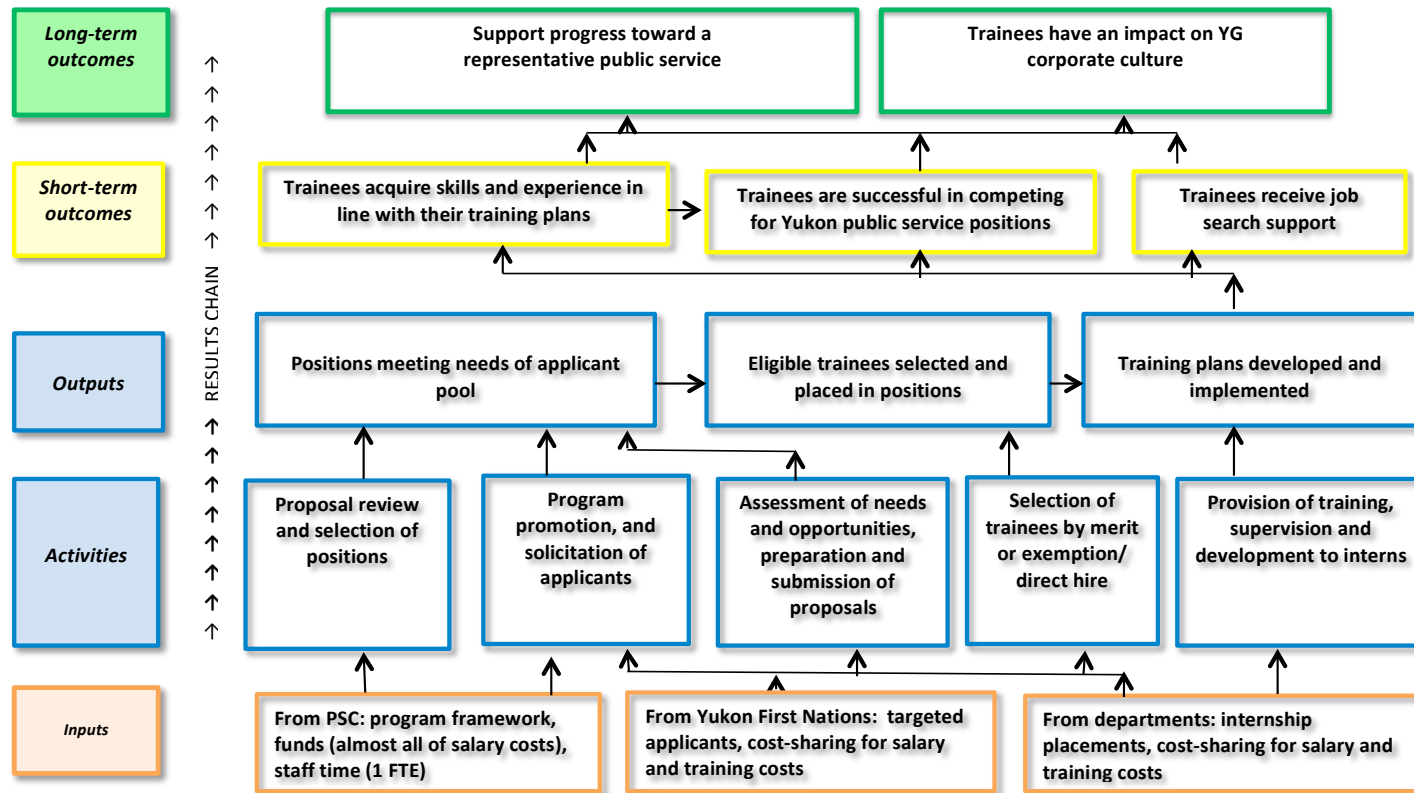
The chart at bottom right presents the distribution of participant classification levels for the 85 FNTC placements over the 2002/03 to 2010/11 review period. Pay ranges for YG employees on the main Master Pay Grid run from level '1' to level '22'. The median classification level for non-management positions was 10. There were three management level placements during the review period.

The chart on the following page presents the logic model for the Yukon First Nation Training Corps Program.



Evaluation of the YG First Nation Training Corps Program

Yukon First Nation Training Corps Program – Logic Model (24.02.12)



Evaluation of the YG First Nation Training Corps Program

Short-term Outcome Achievement

Effectiveness: the extent to which a program is achieving expected outcomes.

(Source: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. *Policy on Evaluation*.)

Several evaluation participants noted that at one time aboriginal individuals (including Inuit and Metis people) affiliated with non-Yukon First Nations were eligible to participate in the FNTC Program. The program appears to have evolved to be accessible only by members of Yukon First Nations, a circumstance supported by the FNTC program data which indicates that all 72 FNTC Program participants were affiliated with a Yukon First Nation. As expressed by one program participant, “I think it is important to keep the program available for Yukon First Nation individuals because it was the Yukon First Nations that fought for the Umbrella Final Agreement, not other First Nations.” As the establishment of the FNTC program predates the implementation of the UFA by 10 years, it would appear that program has morphed over time from an “employment equity program” into a “representative public service program” without fully considering what the best approach for increasing First Nation representation in the YG public service might be.

Draft training plans are prepared for program participants as part of the application process by YG line departments to secure FNTC program funding. Training plans are confirmed upon arrival of a program participant in a position and can be modified as required. FNTC program participants commence their employment at 80% of the bottom of the pay range for a position. As achievement of the training plan objectives is the basis for an increase in salary (e.g., 5% increments, at six month intervals), the training plans are an integral and well-functioning part of the program.

Both YG administrators and program participants indicated that there is generally good alignment between training plans and the training and work opportunities being made available to FNTC participants. A key feature of a good FNTC placement experience is having a supervisor committed to the success of the FNTC participant through the full time horizon of the placement. An à la carte approach to training, where a trainee partakes in a variety of job experiences with different shops and branches within a department, was identified as an example of how not to do it. A supervisor’s commitment to success needs to extend to ensuring that in his or her absence from the office (e.g., for vacation) that the role of FNTC champion and supporter is backstopped by other staff.

FNTC program data indicates that a significant number of program participants continue in their employment with the Yukon Government. Data gleaned from FNTC database indicate 34 of the 72 FNTC program participants (47%) are currently employed by the Yukon Government. Associated FNTC expenditures for the 34 FNTC participants currently employed by the Yukon Government were \$5.2 million, representing 65% of total FNTC expenditures over the review period or \$153,000 per participant. Note that the 47% figure represents the YG employment situation FNTC participants at a single point in time (February 2012) and includes individuals who were participating in FNTC placements as of March 31, 2011.

In addition, the 47% figure does not speak to individuals who may have participated in the FNTC program at the request of the a Yukon First Nation as a way to bolster the skills and knowledge of that individual with the express intent of the individual returning to work for that First Nation upon completion of an FNTC placement. While the exact number of individuals who fit such a participant profile during the review period is not known, the acknowledgement by trainee supervisors and HR administrators that such a profile exists highlights a quirk of the FNTC program. While the purpose of the FNTC program is to increase representation within the Yukon Government,

Evaluation of the YG First Nation Training Corps Program

there is evidence to suggest that the program is also being used to build capacity within Yukon First Nation governments without an expectation of increasing representativeness within the YG public service.

Similarly, it is not known how many FNTC participants have been exempted into their current positions. While the requirement to have a permanent position available at the end of an FNTC placement has fallen away, the FNTC program remains an employment equity program. As such, it is possible to appoint individuals into positions without competitions. Thus, it is difficult to determine how many FNTC participants have been successful in *competing* for YG positions.

Job search support for FNTC participants appears to be provided on an *ad hoc* basis, with support generally being offered to only those participants who make an active request to receive support. Some job search support activities appear to be tailored to individual FNTC participants while some program participants are encouraged to make use of the general job search support tools available from the Yukon Public Service Commission.

Supervisors and HR representatives pointed out that line departments could be doing much better at recognizing the investment being made by YG in FNTC participants by sharing information about who has been trained through the FNTC program and is available for hire. It was suggested that a 'common table' be established where supervisors and managers can share information about potential candidates. A common table could help overcome the entrenched pattern of avoiding the hiring of individuals trained by other departments (i.e., the pattern of "if such and such a department isn't hiring them, there must be something wrong with the candidate").

Line department supervisors and administrators noted that at some point in time, proposals to hire individuals through the FNTC program were accepted only once a year on a specific date. Program intake is now continuous, i.e, proposals may be put forward at any point in the year. While the switch to continuous intake has allowed for a better flow of program dollars (less lapsed funds) supervisors and administrators noted that there is less 'buzz' around the program, "it's kind of fallen off our radar". Now that program intake is ongoing, there is no sense of urgency or perception that a department's participation would help advance a broader corporate effort.

Finding A:

The YG FNTC program is clearly effectively achieving the first of its three intended outcomes, the acquisition of skills and experience in line with training plans.

Evidence to support a finding of trainees successfully competing for Yukon public service positions is less clear. While a significant number of FNTC participants (34, or 47%) are currently employed by the Yukon Government, it is not known how many competed for their current positions.

Job search support, both from within the FNTC program and at the broader YG corporate level, appears to be happening on a limited basis. The extent to which this outcome is being achieved is correspondingly limited.

Long-term Outcome Achievement

According to Statistics Canada, the average number of Yukon Government employees during the 2002/03 to 2010/11 review period was 4,186 (CANSIM 183-0002). As noted above, approximately 34 FNTC participants are currently employed by the Yukon Government. Thus, the FNTC program is making a very small contribution to overall First Nation representation within the Yukon Government, with the average annual number of FNTC participants representing less than 1% of total average annual Yukon Government employment.

Data from the *Yukon Government HR Metrics Snapshot* (November 2011) indicate the Yukon Government employed 4,183 individuals (excluding Yukon Teachers Association members) in 2010/11 and that 13% of all YG employees self-identified as aboriginal in the *YG Workforce Census*. The corresponding number of aboriginal YG employees for 2010/11 is 544. Thus, even within YG's cohort of aboriginal employees, the FNTC program is making a relatively small contribution to the establishment of a representative Yukon public service as only 6% of the total number of aboriginal YG employees are estimated to have entered the Yukon public service via the FNTC program.

With regard to whether trainees have had a positive impact on YG corporate culture, several evaluation participants indicated that the program has indeed had a positive impact on Yukon Government corporate culture, especially in the early days of the program when First Nation representation levels were very low. "These folks are just like one of the gang, we've always been glad to have them on board". Overall, FNTC program participants were seen to have demonstrated very good job performance capabilities and have been well-regarded by their peers.

All employment equity programs embody a delicate balance between advancing the career opportunities of a target population and inequities perceived to be borne by other employees within the organization. Thus, the selection of candidates for participation in employment equity programs needs to be seen as very transparent by all who have an awareness of the program to ensure that the positive effects of the program are not countered by negative perceptions regarding selection transparency. As described earlier in this paper on page 2, the distribution of FNTC participant opportunities among Yukon First Nations – whether measured by the number of participants, the volume of expenditure or the number of training months provided – suggests there may be an imbalance in the awareness of FNTC program opportunities among Yukon First Nations.

Finding B:

With the average annual number of FNTC participants representing less than 1% of total average annual Yukon Government employment, the YG First Nation Training Corps Program is providing a very limited amount of support towards achievement of a representative public service.

FNTC participants are perceived to be having a positive impact on YG corporate culture. This impact is tempered, however, by an ongoing need to ensure the candidate selection process is seen to be transparent.

Evaluation of the YG First Nation Training Corps Program

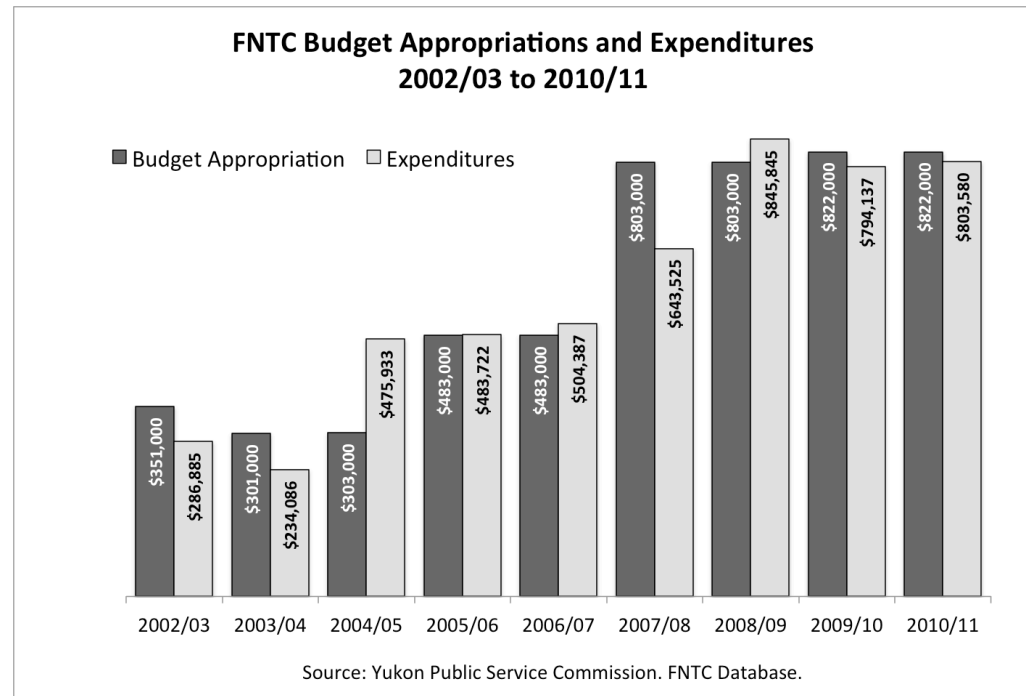
Efficiency of the First Nation Training Corps Program

Efficiency: the extent to which resources are used such that a greater level of output is produced with the same level of input or, a lower level of input is used to produce the same level of output. The level of input and output could be increases or decreases in quantity, quality, or both.

(Source: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. *Policy on Evaluation*.)

The chart to the right illustrates the budget appropriations and expenditures for the FNTC program over the 2002/03 to 2010/11 review period. As can be seen from the chart, annual budgetary appropriations for the program have been as low as \$301,000 (2003/04) and as high as \$822,000 (2010/11).

One of the challenges in administering an employment program like the FNTC is that successful efforts at the start of a fiscal year to achieve full program subscription do not necessarily translate into expenditures levels that match budgetary appropriations. Resignations and other early releases from the program can mean that budgetary dollars are freed up yet still must be expended before the end of the fiscal year. It is for this reason that the FNTC program now operates on an open-intake basis. As illustrated in the chart, program administrators have generally done a good job of matching annual appropriations with expenditures.



As noted earlier in this paper, the FNTC program created 85 training placements over the course of the 2002/03 to 2010/11 review period. With eleven individuals participating in the program twice and one individual participating three times, the corresponding number of unique program participants is 72. An estimated 34 individuals, including individuals participating in the FNTC program as of March 31, 2011, have continued their employment with the Yukon Government. With a total program cost of \$8.0 million over the review period, the average cost per continuing FNTC program participant during the review period is estimated to be \$235,000.

It was not within the scope of this evaluation to undertake a comparative assessment of similar employment equity programs. As such, it is not possible to state whether the \$235,000 average cost per continuing participant is reasonably within the bounds of efficiency or

Evaluation of the YG First Nation Training Corps Program

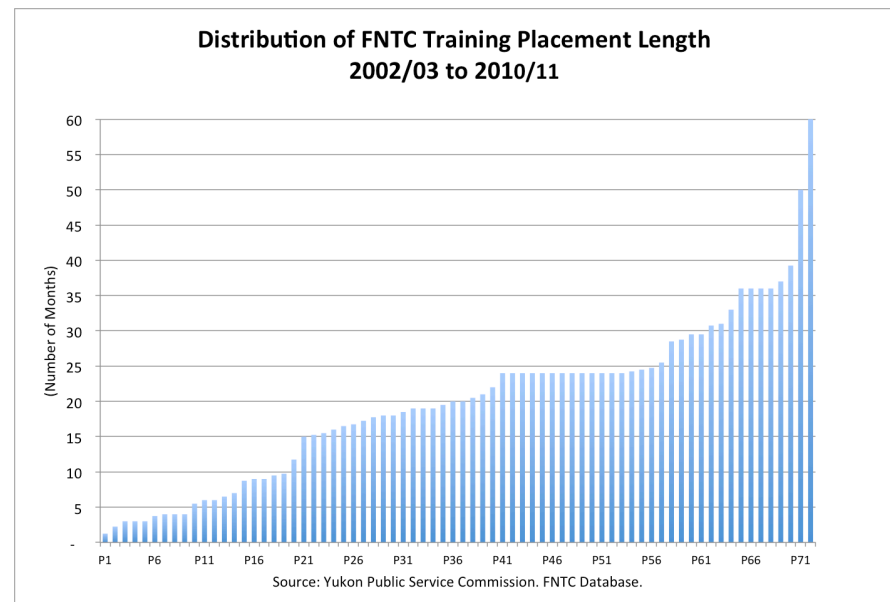
not in comparison to other jurisdictions. It is known, however, that the median non-MG group classification level for FNTC participants during the review period was '10' and that the minimum annual Master Pay Grid rate for 10-level employees was \$53,691 (effective January 1, 2011). Thus, the current average cost of one continuing FNTC participant is equivalent to approximately four one-year placements at the median classification level.

As noted previously, 12 individuals have participated in the FNTC program more than once. It is understood that FNTC participants are eligible to participate a second time in the program if the subsequent position involves a promotion to a higher pay classification level. However, it could not be established, on the basis of FNTC program documentation, why a promotional opportunity would be provided to an individual already participating in the FNTC program ahead of an individual who has not participated in the program when one of the overall objectives of the program is to increase the representativeness within the Yukon public service.

It is also not clear why, in the absence of a stated program objective to increase First Nation representation at a specific classification levels, promotional opportunities would be afforded to existing program participants when it is known that only 13% of YG employees self-identified as aboriginal in the *YG Workforce Census* and YG is obligated "...to move to an aboriginal representation rate of 25%.¹

A key feature of the FNTC program is collaboration with Yukon First Nation governments and YG line departments. According to FNTC program data, approximately two-thirds of all FNTC positions were jointly sponsored with Yukon First Nation Governments during the 2002/02 to 2010/11 review period. However, as noted on page three of this report, only 1% (or, \$0.1 million) of total FNTC program expenditures were contributed by Yukon First Nations. Similarly, Yukon Government departments contributed 11% (or, \$0.8 million) of total FNTC program expenditures. The number of FNTC participants, and overall First Nation representation in the Yukon public service, could conceivably, and rather easily, be bolstered through increased financial participation by FNTC program partners.

FNTC program placements averaged 20 months in length over the review period. As shown in the chart to the right (n=72 and P1 refers to participant one, P2 refers to participant two, etc.), the shortest FNTC placement was for one month and the longest was for 60 months. In contrast, the Yukon Governments' other employment equity program, Grad Corps, limits trainee placements to a maximum of 12 months. While the length of an FNTC placement corresponding to being able to successfully compete for Yukon public service positions is difficult to determine, FNTC program data indicates that the 34 FNTC participants currently employed by the Yukon Government trained for an average of 26 months.



¹ *Yukon Government HR Metrics Snapshot*, page 3.

Evaluation of the YG First Nation Training Corps Program

Finding C:

The short-term and long-term outcomes of the YG First Nation Training Corps Program could be achieved in a more efficient manner.

At a point in time when current aboriginal representation levels with the Yukon public service are well below the target of 25%, repeat participation in the program limits the number of opportunities available to the overall First Nation population to gain work experience, and potentially employment, with the Yukon Government.

Financial participation rates for FNTC program partners (Yukon First Nations and YG line departments) are very low. Increased partner contributions would bolster the number of program participants and First Nation representation within the Yukon public service.

Further thought needs to be given to the length of program participation required to achieve the outcome of participants being able to successfully compete for YG positions and to whether current program participation lengths are longer than necessary.

Recommendations to Improve the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the First Nation Training Corps Program

- R1. To better leverage the investment being made in FNTC participants, establish a mechanism through which line department supervisors and HR managers can share information about FNTC participants who are approaching the end of their placements.
- R2. Implement a tracking system to ensure that all FNTC participants who may benefit from job search support have job search support services made available to them.
- R3. Investigate the length of program participation required reasonably be able to successfully compete for YG positions at various classification levels and set upper limits on the number of months of program participation that match the finding for each classification level.
- R4. Limit the number of times an individual can participate in the program to one, and consider limiting the amount of program funding that can be received by an individual participant so that a broader range of Yukon First Nation candidates can participate in the program.
- R5. Ensure that the program continues to have a positive impact on YG corporate culture by improving the transparency of the candidate selection process and the allocation of program funding among candidates from all Yukon First Nations.

Evaluation of the YG First Nation Training Corps Program

- R6. Seek increased levels of financial participation from FNTC program partners (both Yukon First Nations and YG line departments).
- R7. In consultation with Yukon First Nation governments, determine whether capacity building for First Nation Governments via the FNTC program remains a valid need and whether it is reasonable to continue to expect that a YG employment equity program be used to build capacity in other governments, especially without substantive financial participation.
- R8. Improve the level of collaboration between the FNTC program and YG organizations (including the Advanced Education Branch and Yukon College) to identify recent graduates who may be eligible for participation in the FNTC program.
- R9. Share FNTC statistical reports on program participation and successes with YG line departments to help supervisors and HR managers understand they are part of a larger corporate effort to improve the level of First Nation representation within the Yukon public service.
- R10. Given the very narrow candidate base that has been involved in the FNTC program during the 2002/03 to 2010/11 review period (72 individuals), consider broadening access to the program by implementing alternative approaches to funding YG employment equity opportunities. For example, coop placements could be used to create a functioning bridge between post-secondary education opportunities and FNTC training opportunities.
- R11. Improve the effectiveness of the program by recognizing that not every position within YG needs to be eligible for participation in the program and focus program funding on specific sub-populations such as youth.