



*Yellowknife*  
**CHAMBER**

**Support For Businesses  
During The COVID-19  
Pandemic**



# About Us



**Tim Syer**  
President



**Deneen Everett**  
Executive Director



# Business Resilience Working Group



**Rob Warburton**  
2<sup>nd</sup> VP  
CloudWorks



**Daryl Fetaz**  
1<sup>st</sup> VP  
Northland Utilities



**Adrian Bell**  
Director  
Century 21



**Jo-Ann Martin**  
Director  
Bullocks Bistro



**Natalie Kellar**  
Treasurer  
Avery, Cooper & Co.



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**April Desjarlais**  
Director  
Khione Resources



# Federal Recommendations

**Recommendation #1:** Waive the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy program's 30% reduction in gross revenue requirement for any Northwest Territories businesses that have incurred losses as a result of COVID-19 and government-imposed restrictions.

**Recommendation #2:** Work with the Government of the Northwest Territories to develop a COVID-19 Commercial Rent Strategy for the Northwest Territories. This strategy should focus on providing rental relief for businesses who have been forced to close or are unable to generate revenue as a result of COVID-19.

**Thank you for the April 23, 2020 letter supporting our COVID-19  
Federal Recommendations!**



# Territorial Recommendations

**Recommendation #1:** Amend to Employment Standards Act's requirement to recall laid off employees within 60 days of lay off in order to give employers the ability to recall laid off employees up to 30 days after the lifting of the Northwest Territories state of emergency.

**Recommendation #2:** Allow liquor off-sales and delivery for businesses who sell liquor regularly as part of their food service.

**Recommendation #3:** Issue payment to all GNWT vendors within 15 days of receiving an invoice.

**Recommendation #4:** Provide another intake for BDIC's Working Capital Loan program, and transition loans already under this program and any new ones to be interest-free until 2021 and include creative repayment options with a grant component. One option could be similar to the federal program: if the balance of the loan is paid on or before December 31, 2022, there will be loan forgiveness of 25% (up to \$6250).

**Recommendation #5:** Waive WSCC premiums for 2020 in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut and consider waiving 50% of premiums for 2021.

**Recommendation #6:** Provide a top-up to the federal wage subsidy program for eligible businesses. This top-up would be available in respect of salaries that are greater than the federal subsidy contemplates (\$58,700) and should be an amount that reflects the higher costs of doing business and costs of living that Northerners face.

**Recommendation #7:** Work with the federal and municipal governments to develop a COVID-19 Commercial Rent Strategy for the Northwest Territories. This strategy should focus on providing rental relief for businesses who have been forced to close their doors or have seen decreases in revenue as a result of COVID-19. The Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency's mandate may make that agency a good partner for this program.



# Municipal Recommendations

**Recommendation #1:** Invest some of the \$833,000 in the Downtown Development Reserve and some of the \$2.4 million from the Revitalization Initiative Reserve into a COVID-19 Relief Program. Members of the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce's Business Resilience Working Group would be willing to work with the City of Yellowknife to determine the most efficient and effective solutions.

**Recommendation #2:** Provide interest-free deferral of property tax installments scheduled for March through to December 31, 2020.

**Recommendation #3:** Provide interest-free deferral of water/wastewater payments for all businesses from March through to December 31, 2020.

**Recommendation #4:** Waive all development fees for April 1 to December 31, 2020.

**Recommendation #5:** Waive all business-related permit fees until December 31, 2020.

**Recommendation #6:** Transition all business licensing and permitting online by December 31, 2020.

**Recommendation #7:** Work with the federal and territorial governments to develop a COVID-19 Commercial Rent Strategy for Yellowknife. This strategy should focus on providing rental relief for businesses who have been forced to close or are unable to generate revenue as a result of COVID-19.



# Municipal Recommendation #2 and #3

We were pleased to learn that the City of Yellowknife is already doing this, in essence. However, the current messaging is unclear and this potential benefit to Yellowknife businesses is not well promoted.

We're asking Council to provide clarity on interest-free property tax and utility deferrals. If supportive, direct Administration to use stronger language to promote this relief for Yellowknife businesses.

## What if I Owe the City Money?

At this time, citizens and businesses are encouraged to keep their accounts current by using the [City's online services](#), making payments through their banks, mailing or dropping off cheques at the City Hall drop box, or calling City Hall. However, in recognition of the current extenuating circumstances, the City will be waiving penalties on late payments (eg. property taxes, utilities).

### 2019 TAX ARREARS COLLECTION

The City of Yellowknife has been working diligently to ensure essential services continue to be delivered safely, and to balance short-term pressures with long-term sustainability. To these ends, we encourage citizens and businesses to keep their City accounts current. However, we also recognize that COVID-19 may present financial challenges for some, so we are waiving penalties and interest on late payments during the pandemic.

As we look ahead, the City remains mindful of its obligations to adhere to the provisions of the *Property Assessment and Taxation Act*, the territorial legislation that governs property taxes throughout the Northwest Territories. This Act requires the City to follow strict schedules for levying taxes, collecting payments, and taking action when taxes are not paid. These stipulations include the need for the City to post the prior year's tax arrears list, and to send the property owners registered mail advising them of next steps.

The arrears list that the City posted on March 31, 2020 reflects property tax accounts that were in arrears as of December 31, 2019, prior to the COVID-19 outbreak.

If you have any questions or concerns about your tax account, please contact the City at 920-5625, 920-5664 or [taxation@yellowknife.ca](mailto:taxation@yellowknife.ca).

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# Our Asks

- #1** – Commit to establishing a COVID-19 Relief Program for businesses and provide funding for this initiative
  - #2** – Provide clarity on interest-free property tax and utility deferrals. If supportive, direct Administration to use stronger language to promote this relief for Yellowknife businesses
  - #3** – Commit to waiving development fees and business related permit fees as soon as possible
  - #4** – Commit to transitioning all business licensing and permitting online by December 31, 2020
  - #5** – Commit to reaching out to the federal and territorial governments to discuss opportunities for a Commercial Rent Strategy for Yellowknife
  - #6** – Provide a letter supporting our territorial recommendations
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## **Questions?**

**Connect with us anytime:**

**[ExecutiveDirector@YKChamber.com](mailto:ExecutiveDirector@YKChamber.com)**

**[President@YKChamber.com](mailto:President@YKChamber.com)**