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Building Nunavut Together
Nunavuliuqatigiingniq
Bâtir le Nunavut ensemble

Nunavut, Our Land

Nunavut (the Inuktitut word for “our land”) was created April 1, 1999, as a result of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Today, Nunavut is a growing society that blends the strength of its deep Inuit roots and traditions with a new spirit of diversity.

Nunavut is a territory that spans two million km2 of Canada, extending north and west of Hudson Bay, above the tree line to the North Pole. With landscapes ranging from the flat muskeg of the Kivalliq to the towering mountain peaks and fiords of North Baffin region, it is a territory of extraordinary variety and breathtaking beauty.

With a median age of 22 years, Nunavut’s population is the youngest in Canada. It is also one of the fastest growing; the 2017 population was just over 38,243 compared to 26,000 in 2001. Inuit represent about 85 per cent of the population and form the foundation of the territory’s culture. Government, business and day-to-day life are shaped by Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, the traditional knowledge, values and wisdom of Nunavut’s founding people.

Nunavut’s 25 communities range in size from tiny Grise Fiord (population 167) to Iqaluit (population 7,590), the capital. Grise Fiord is the most northern settlement and Sanikiluaq is the most southern. No communities are accessible by road or rail; everything from people to fuel to food arrives by airplane or sea. Nunavut has three official languages: the Inuit language (Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun), as well as English and French. The largest employer in Nunavut is government – federal, territorial and municipal. New jobs are rapidly emerging in the mining and resource development sectors. Important growth is also occurring in the tourism and fisheries sectors, and in the Inuit art sector. The realization of Nunavut’s full economic potential will, in part, be contingent upon the improvement of the territory’s infrastructure. Existing housing, sewage and waste management, transportation and telecommunications systems are already stretched beyond their limits, and will come under even greater pressure from Nunavut’s growing population.

With an area one-fifth the size of Canada, and a population density of 1.3 people per 100 km2, the creation of Nunavut has called for innovative approaches to the delivery of virtually every aspect of government programs and services.

From health to education, from justice to the Legislative Assembly, the institutions and structures that define Nunavut are designed to meet the needs of a unique people in a unique land.

The challenges are many. But in partnership with Canada, and building on the strength and energy of its resilient people, Nunavut looks to the future with confidence and hope.

For more information about Nunavut, please
contact the Government of Nunavut communications.
(867) 975-6000