

Nunatsiavut
kavamanga



Nunatsiavut
Government

BACKGROUND

NUNATSIAVUT GOVERNMENT

Nunatsiavut Government is the name for Labrador Inuit self-government which comes into being on December 1, 2005 along with the “effective date” of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement. The structure and principles of Nunatsiavut Government are based on the Labrador Inuit Constitution which was approved by 66 per cent of the Labrador Inuit in a 2002 referendum.

Founding Principles

The word Nunatsiavut means “our beautiful land” in Inuttitut. The name reflects a crucial aspect of the Labrador Inuit Constitution: the need for the Labrador Inuit to strengthen and maintain their relationship to the land, water, plants and animals of their ancestral territory.

Other principles central to the Constitution and to the Nunatsiavut Government are Inuit culture and language. Each Labrador Inuit family, according to the Constitution, has both a right and a responsibility to pass on Labrador Inuit culture and language to their children. This is reflected in the fact that all laws and policies of the Nunatsiavut Government will be published in English and Inuttitut.

The Nunatsiavut Government embraces the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Indeed, the Labrador Inuit Constitution explicitly states that the fundamental human rights Labrador Inuit enjoy as Canadian citizens cannot be taken away by the institutions of Labrador Inuit self-government. An equivalent document, the Labrador Inuit Charter of Rights and Responsibilities, covers respect for human dignity, as well as upholding freedom of expression and religion.

Nunatsiavut Government Structure

The Labrador Inuit Constitution provides for two levels of government: the regional Nunatsiavut Government and five Inuit Community Governments which will be Nain, Hopedale, Rigolet, Makkovik and Postville.

Both levels of Nunatsiavut Government will come into being on December 1, but these will be transitional governments. In the case of the regional Nunatsiavut Government, elected board members of the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA) will initially fill the ministerial positions. One of the transitional government's main tasks during its first year will be to prepare for elections.

In the case of the five Community Governments, current members of the municipal councils will become the first representatives. Each Inuit Community Government will be headed by an AngajukKâk, who is the chief executive officer and mayor. While both Inuit and non-Inuit residents will be able to vote and serve as Community Councillors, the AngajukKâk must be an Inuk.

The Legislative Assembly of the regional Nunatsiavut Government will be based in Hopedale while the administrative centre will be Nain. Once the electoral system is up and running the President and members of the Assembly will be elected for four-year terms. The President can run for re-election but can serve no more than three terms.

Powers and Authority

While federal and provincial laws will apply according to the terms of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement, the Nunatsiavut Government will have the power in Labrador Inuit Lands and in Inuit Communities to make laws relating to cultural affairs, education, health, income support and child and family services. Working with the federal and provincial governments, the Nunatsiavut Government will progress towards self-government in these areas.

The Nunatsiavut Government is empowered to make decisions respecting environmental assessment of projects in Labrador Inuit Lands. Developers must meet approval from all three levels of government—federal, provincial and Nunatsiavut—before they can proceed with a project in Labrador Inuit Lands.

Inuit Who Live Outside the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area

In areas where there are significant numbers of Inuit living outside the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area, there will be Inuit Community Corporations. These bodies will provide Inuit an opportunity to participate in self-government. Each Corporation will have an elected executive which will be accountable to Inuit residents of their region. For example, the Upper Lake Melville Inuit Community Corporation will represent Inuit living in Happy Valley–Goose Bay, North West River and Mud Lake.

Community Representation in Regional Government

To ensure that Community Governments have input into regional government, the AngajukKâk of each Inuit Community Government and the chairperson of each Inuit Community Corporation will represent their constituencies in the Nunatsiavut Assembly.

The Nunatsiavut Government will at all times strive to live up to the open, democratic and inclusive principles of the Labrador Inuit Constitution.