

**INUVIALUIT REGIONAL CORPORATION
& INUVIALUIT GAME COUNCIL**

Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Program

Policy & Procedure Manual



Revised December 2025

Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Program

Policy

As the bodies representing the Inuvialuit, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) and the Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC) recognize:

- a) the importance of subsistence harvesting activities throughout the Inuvialuit Settlement Region and support and encourage wildlife harvesting as a means of supplementing Inuvialuit household income, and;
- b) that a combination of factors, including anti-fur lobby activities, decreased fur prices and associated reductions in household income have made it difficult and in some cases impossible for many Inuvialuit to continue their traditional harvesting activities and that as a result, many Inuvialuit harvesting households have been forced to turn to government income support and other forms of public support to meet their basic day to day family needs.

With this recognition, IRC, in concert with IGC and the Government of the Northwest Territories, has established an Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Trust; the purpose of which is to:

"Provide assistance to Inuvialuit individuals and groups to engage in traditional and emerging renewable resource activities"

Furthermore, in recognizing the broad scope of the trust's purpose, IRC and IGC have noted with grave concern the greatly reduced level of traditional skills held by Inuvialuit youth and the disappearance of traditional skills with the passing of Inuvialuit elders, and:

They have also recognized that the Inuvialuit harvesting household is the unit best suited to re-establishing and/or maintaining these skills among Inuvialuit youth:

Therefore, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and Inuvialuit Game Council have agreed that the Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Program should also encourage the re-establishment of traditional skills among Inuvialuit youth by providing financial assistance to those Inuvialuit harvesting households that regularly involve youth in their traditional harvesting activities.

Procedures

Introduction

In 1996 Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC), following extensive consultation with Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC), entered into a \$4.4 million agreement with the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) to develop and deliver a harvesters assistance program for Inuvialuit. All funds were placed into an Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Trust Fund.

Following the signing of this agreement a joint IRC/IGC working group was formed and the details of an Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Program (IHAP) were developed. Community corporations (CCs) and hunters and trappers committees (HTCs) were consulted and the program received final approval by the board of IRC on April 29, 1998. The program is reviewed on an annual basis and amendments are made to it over time to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

Definitions

Applicant: A subsistence harvester applying for assistance to the IHAP.

Application form: The document used to request assistance from the IHAP. (Appendix C)

Community IHAP Committee: A committee established in each of the six Inuvialuit communities holding the responsibility and authority to consider and approve/reject all IHAP applications from HTC and CC members in that community. The committee must consist of two HTC representatives, two community corporation representatives and one elder. An additional (sixth) member may be appointed by the committee as a whole to represent other community interests. All members must be Inuvialuit beneficiaries or be eligible to be beneficiaries. To promote transparency, if an individual or member of their household has an application to be reviewed, the individual shall not sit on the Community IHAP Committee for that year.

Contribution agreement: An agreement between an approved applicant and the IHAP that sets out the conditions and obligations under which the applicant receives funding from the IHAP. (Appendix D)

Demonstrated need: For the purposes of the IHAP “*demonstrated need*” means those Inuvialuit harvesters with the following characteristics:

- limited means to purchase required harvesting equipment and materials and/or cover harvesting operating and maintenance costs;
- recognized within the community as a subsistence harvester who must harvest for the benefit of the household and community;

Eligible equipment: As outlined in Appendix A and B. Items that will support a harvesting household in carrying out hunting, fishing or trapping activities for subsistence purposes. Only new equipment will be considered.

Household: An Inuvialuit family unit living in the Northwest Territories with one or more family members enrolled as a beneficiary 18 years of age under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement. For program purposes, every Inuvialuit beneficiary is a member of one and only one household. A household occupies a separate set of living quarters.

HTC: (Inuvialuit) hunters and trappers committee.

(Community) HTC resource person/CC corporate manager: depending on the community, one of these individuals is delegated with the responsibility for implementation of the IHAP at the community level with the assistance and guidance of the IHAP manager.

(Joint Secretariat) HTC resource person: The individual within the Joint Secretariat tasked with maintaining an up-to-date record of the membership of all HTCs.

CC: (Inuvialuit) community corporation

IFA: Inuvialuit Final Agreement

IGC: Inuvialuit Game Council

IHAP (Review) Committee: The committee made up of two appointees from IRC and two appointees from IGC with the responsibility for considering and approving or rejecting all IHAP applications from outside the ISR, endorsing all Community IHAP Committee approvals, hearing all appeals, submitting an annual report on the operation of the IHAP to IRC/IGC and recommending revisions to the IHAP Policy and Procedures to the board of IRC. To promote transparency, if an individual or member of their household has an application to be reviewed, the individual shall not sit on the Community IHAP Review Committee for that year.

IHAP manager: The position that holds responsibility for the day-to-day management of the IHAP.

IHAP trustees: The board of trustees that oversee the Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Trust. (The executive members of the board of IRC)

Inuvialuit communities: The communities of Aklavik, Inuvik, Ulukhaktok, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour and Tuktoyaktuk.

IRC: Inuvialuit Regional Corporation

ISR: Inuvialuit Settlement Region

Subsistence harvester: Inuvialuit harvester, either currently or within the last three years, active for six or more months of the year in hunting, fishing or trapping activities for subsistence purposes.

Principles

The Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Program is based on the following principles. Decisions regarding eligibility, application of funding and identification of target individuals will be made in the context of these principles. Overall, these principles reflect the “spirit” and “intent” of the policy and will guide decision makers in the implementation of the program.

1. Renewable resource harvesting has and continues to be the cornerstone of Inuvialuit culture and society and that financially supporting Inuvialuit renewable resource harvesters will strengthen them and their family's ability to continue traditional activities.
2. Harvesting is a form of economic activity. It contributes to community wellbeing by creating financial worth for traditional and cultural activities and providing country food as an important replacement.
3. With the collapse of the fur trapping industry many Inuvialuit harvesting households have been faced with the increasing dependence on social assistance and other forms of government support. Inuvialuit harvesting household self-sufficiency must be encouraged through direct and indirect financial support.
4. Educating and training younger Inuvialuit in the traditions of subsistence harvesting, preparation of skins and sewing skills will ensure that the special characteristics of Inuvialuit culture will be preserved.
5. Inuvialuit have the responsibility to manage wildlife and the environment in a sustainable manner.
6. Need will be the primary consideration in the provision of financial assistance under the IHAP.

Scope

Assistance will be provided to offset the high costs of:

- Major Harvesting Equipment (Appendix A)
- Minor Harvesting Equipment (Appendix B)

Provisions

Authority and Accountability

- The Community IHAP Committee may approve one accountable financial contribution of a minimum of \$7,500 to any eligible applicant once every three-year period toward the purchase of one piece of major harvesting equipment.

Note:

- a. The contribution can be up to, but cannot exceed 75% of the total cost of the item to be purchased, with a minimum contribution of \$7,500.
 - b. The “once every three-year period” eligibility criteria may only be waived in those situations when the pieces of major harvesting equipment obtained with IHAP support during the previous two years were destroyed due to circumstances that were totally outside the control of the applicant. Before being considered under this provision, the applicant must have applied to and been refused assistance under the GNWT Hunters and Trappers Disaster Compensation Policy.
 - c. In any year when a member of a household has been approved for a major or minor piece of harvesting equipment no other member of that household will be eligible for consideration during that year.
 - d. An applicant may apply for both minor and one major item on the same application. Approval is at the discretion of the local IHAP committee and must be in a fair and equitable manner.
- The Community IHAP Committee may approve ongoing accountable financial contributions to any eligible applicant towards the purchase of any minor piece(s) of harvesting equipment. The contribution can be up to but cannot exceed 75% of the total cost of the item(s) to be purchased, with a maximum annual contribution of \$2,500 per applicant.
 - Funding will be allocated in a fair and equitable manner to Inuvialuit subsistence harvesters throughout the ISR with an additional allocation to Inuvialuit subsistence harvesters living outside the ISR.
 - Following individual community choice, either the CC or the HTC will provide for the administration of the IHAP in their community.
 - Either the HTC or CC, as the case may be, will provide information and assistance to HTC and CC members wishing to apply to the IHAP.
 - Each HTC or CC, as the case may be, will forward to the IHAP manager copies of all IHAP applications from their community.
 - Community IHAP committees will follow the spirit and intent of the policy when considering applications from its members.
 - IRC, in consultation with the IGC, HTCs and CCs, has the authority to review, evaluate and amend the program policy and the administration of the program at the community and regional levels to ensure the policy is effective and performing according to its stated objectives.

- The IHAP (Review) Committee will provide IRC and IGC with recommendations on policy amendments to program efficiency and/or increased benefits accruing to Inuvialuit harvesters.
- The IHAP (Review) Committee under the direction of IRC and with the support of the IHAP manager holds the responsibility for the ongoing implementation, administration, monitoring and evaluation of the program.
- Program budgets must be approved by IRC on an annual basis.

Eligibility

- Enrolled beneficiary under the IFA (18 years of age).
- A member in good standing with the community corporation (if living in an Inuvialuit community).
- Free of indebtedness to the Inuvialuit Corporate Group.
- Preference will be given to Inuvialuit subsistence harvesters engaged in harvesting activities and showing demonstrated need for program support to continue or start harvesting.
- Preference will also be given to those harvesting applicants who regularly involve youth in their traditional harvesting activities.
- The applicant agrees that they will not sell or trade the merchandise that is received through the Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Program (IHAP) for a period of 2 (two) years. The applicant understands that if they breach this condition they will not be eligible for future assistance through IHAP for the next 6 (six) years.

Review

Applications for assistance are approved by the Community IHAP Committee. All approvals are subject to endorsement by the IHAP (Review) Committee for compliance with the terms and conditions of the Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Program.

Accountability Requirements

Once final approval has been given and payment received, the applicant shall produce receipts as deemed necessary by the committee. Such requirement shall be provided in writing in the contribution agreement with the applicant.

Payment

- For the purchase of all harvesting equipment, the IHAP Manager will make direct payment to the retailer upon proof that the applicant has contributed their portion of funds for the purchase of the equipment or has made appropriate credit arrangements.
- Payment will not be released unless it is guaranteed in writing by the retailer that the equipment being purchased will be released to the applicant upon receipt of funds from IHAP.

Funding Formula

- The total amount available to the IHAP will be \$210,000 per year. This amount may increase or decrease in future years depending upon the revenue available from the Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Trust.
- Each Inuvialuit community will be provided with an annual base allocation of \$30,000.
- One additional base allocation of \$30,000 will be set-aside for Inuvialuit residing in other parts of Canada.
- The remaining funding will be distributed to Inuvialuit communities via a formula that compares the membership of each community corporation with the total membership of all six community corporations as follows:

$$\boxed{\text{Funds remaining after core allocations}} \times \boxed{\frac{\text{membership of each cc}}{\text{membership of all ccs}}} = \boxed{\text{additional community allocation}}$$

- Up to 5% of each community allocation may be used for program administration purposes.
- Funding allocated should be spent in the year it has been distributed without carry-over amounts unless there are unforeseen circumstances such as applicant withdraws. The IHAP manager will allocate remaining funds where necessary to a maximum of 75%

Assessment Guidelines:

The following guidelines are provided to assist those tasked with reviewing IHAP applications.

a) Completion of the application form (Appendix C)

The first section of the application form provides the Community IHAP Committee with information that will assist them in assessing the “demonstrated need” and priority of the applicant. The six questions in this section and explanatory notes are as follows:

1. Name and Community.

2. Are you Inuvialuit?

In all cases the answer must be “yes”.

For purposes of the program, "Inuvialuit" means enrolled beneficiaries 18 years of age and older. Students temporarily outside the community applying for funding will be eligible for consideration if they are included on the community corporation membership list for that community.

3. Harvester Status.

- a. A full-time harvester, i.e. you spend 6 (six) or more months fishing, hunting and/ or trapping for subsistence purposes.
- b. A part-time harvester, i.e. you spend less than 6 (six) months fishing, hunting and/ or trapping for subsistence purposes.
- c. A full or part-time harvester but unable to harvest because of limited income.
- d. Unable to gain entry as a new full or part-time harvester because of lack of start-up funds.

Check off as appropriate.

4. Household:

Applicants must provide a listing of all members living in the home and their relationship to the applicant. Supporting documents may be requested to confirm physical addresses.

- 5. Have you or any other member of your household received funding for harvesting equipment from this program during the last three years? If yes, how much?**

6. Current Equipment:

The applicant must provide a list of equipment currently owned by all members of their household and give details as to the condition of the equipment. This will assist the review committees in ranking applications and judging need.

7. Request for Assistance

The second section of the application form lists all items for which financial assistance is being requested through the IHAP. Ensure equipment is appropriate and totals include freight and GST. Purchases of used equipment will not be considered – new equipment only. The applicant will provide a quote from the retailer that they wish to purchase the equipment from.

8. Supporting Narrative “Why do you need assistance”

This will assist community IHAP committees in identifying the appropriate level of assistance to be provided.

b) Confirm Demonstrated Need and Applicant Ranking (Appendix C)

In the review of applications, the Community IHAP Committee must assess the “demonstrated need” of each applicant. According to the IHAP policy demonstrated need means those Inuvialuit harvesters with the following characteristics:

- a. Limited means to purchase required harvesting equipment and materials and/or cover harvesting operating and maintenance costs.
- b. Recognised within the community as a subsistence harvester who must harvest for the benefit of their household or community.
- c. The Community IHAP Committee will confirm that the applicant is a subsistence harvester who must harvest country food for the benefit of their household and/or community.
- d. The Community IHAP Committee should also consider the extent to which the applicant will involve youth in their harvesting activities.

c) Determine Level of Funding to be provided

Funding can be provided in two areas:

1. One major piece of harvesting equipment
2. Minor pieces of harvesting equipment

Note: It is up to each Community IHAP Committee to decide how much to allocate to each of these areas. An applicant may apply for both minor and one major item on the same application. Approval is at the discretion of the local IHAP committee. All decisions must be in a fair and equitable manner.

1. Major Pieces of Harvesting Equipment.

Each approved applicant may receive an accountable financial contribution of up to 75% of the total cost of the item approved with a minimum contribution of \$7,500 per applicant.

2. Minor Pieces of Harvesting Equipment

Each approved applicant may receive an accountable financial contribution of up to 75% of the total cost of the item(s) approved with a maximum annual contribution of \$2,500 per applicant.

Program Cycle:

Between the times the IHAP is advertised to the time an applicant receives funding there are several steps involved. These are listed as follows:

1. By **January 1**, the IHAP Manager advises each HTC or CC of their funding allocation and provides the required application forms and guidelines to each HTC resource person or CC corporate manager.
2. HTCs or CCs immediately advertise and call for applications.
3. Beneficiaries living outside the Inuvialuit communities will be advised of program availability through the IRC board summary, social media and IRC's website.
4. Applications should be received by the HTC or CC by **January 31**.
5. Applications should be reviewed and approved/rejected by Community IHAP Committee by **February 15**.
6. **February 1 to Feb 15**, Conditional approval/rejections posted in each community. Rejected applicants may appeal the Community IHAP Committee's decision to the IHAP (Review) Committee. The IHAP manager must receive appeals by **February 28**.
7. Applications from beneficiaries outside the Inuvialuit communities should be received by the IHAP Manager by **February 28**.
8. Copies of all applications with details of those approved or rejected should be forwarded by the Community IHAP Committee to the IHAP manager by **February 28**.
9. The IHAP (Review) Committee will consider any appeals and advise on their decision by March 15. The committee will also consider applications from beneficiaries outside the Inuvialuit communities and endorse all Community IHAP Committee approvals - those that do not meet the eligibility requirements and the spirit and the intent of the policy may be rejected by the committee.
10. **March 15 to March 31** approved applicants make down payments/credit arrangements.
11. HTC resource persons or CC corporate managers will immediately arrange for:
 - a. Completion and signing of a contribution agreement with the applicant and payment to the supplier
 - b. Providing the IHAP manager with copies of all documents
12. Beginning **April 1** the IHAP manager will begin to arrange for cheque issuance to retailers, pending all supporting documents have been received (and following confirmation that their portion or 25% applicant share or credit arrangements are in place).

13. The IHAP manager will provide this service for beneficiaries outside the Inuvialuit communities.
14. Should any approved applicants be unable to make the required down payment or credit arrangements by **March 31** their approval will be withdrawn. The next person on the priority list established by the Community IHAP Committee will have up to an additional 14 days to make the required down payment / credit arrangements. Their cheques will be processed as soon as possible following confirmation of these arrangements. No additional approvals will be considered after **August 31** of each year.
15. If an approved applicant is unable to obtain the piece of major equipment that was approved, the applicant may request that another piece of major equipment be purchased in its place. The decision on such a request will be made by the IHAP manager who will notify the local IHAP committee.

Reporting:

From HTC and CCs: The HTC resource person or corporate manager shall prepare and submit a report to the IHAP manager by **September 30** containing:

1. The names of people who applied for funding and the amount requested.
2. The names of people approved for funding, what they were approved for and the amount of funding approved.
3. Confirmation of those applicants (list by name) who accessed and used the funding.
4. Copies of all signed contribution agreements (and receipts of purchase).
5. The balance of unused funds (if any).
6. Observations or concerns with the program.
7. The names of people who appealed, why they appealed and the appeal outcome.

From the IHAP (Review) Committee: The committee will submit an annual report to the board of IRC by October 31 outlining the operations and expenditures of the IHAP during the past year and providing recommendations for changes to IHAP policy or procedures.

Responsibilities:

Community HTC resource person or CC corporate manager (as applicable):

This individual holds the delegated responsibility to implement IHAP at the community level with the assistance and guidance of the IHAP manager. Responsibilities include:

- Local advertising of the IHAP
- Advising applicants and assisting them in filling out their applications

- Collecting and holding on file all applications submitted
- In consultation with the IHAP manager, ranking of all applications for Community IHAP Committee's review and approval
- Forwarding copies of all applications to the IHAP manager
- Notifying all applicants of Community IHAP Committee's decisions on their applications
- Referral of appeals to the IHAP manager
- Administration of contribution agreements to approved applicants (i.e. ensuring that they are signed and that the approved applicant understands the requirements of the agreement)
- Completion of annual reports to the IHAP manager

(Joint Secretariat) HTC resource person

- Provide applications and assist the community corporation manager as required

IHAP manager:

This is the position delegated with the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the IHAP. Responsibilities include:

- Reviewing applications to ensure consistency with the IHAP Policy and Procedure Guidelines; for example:
 - Verification of applicant's beneficiary status.
 - Verification of applicant's financial standing with the Inuvialuit Corporate Group.
 - Verification that applicant has not exceeded the \$7,500 maximum/ 3 (three) years for a major item.
- Confirmation of the CC membership in each community (information to be used in establishing program eligibility and in the allocation of IHAP funds over and above the community core allocation of \$30,000.00);
- Reviewing applicant appeals;
- Training of Community IHAP Committee directors and staff on the IHAP policies and procedures;
- Overseeing program monitoring and evaluation;

- Maintaining financial controls;
- Issuing payments;
- Maintaining financial records and budgets;
- Maintaining program files, records and database;
- Responding to applicant inquiries;
- Sending program literature to applicants, HTC's, CCs and other groups;
- Preparation of an annual report to the IHAP Committee, which will include, as required, recommendations for modifications to improve or alter the procedures, operations or goals of IHAP within the terms and conditions of the Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Trust.

IRC/IGC:

Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, in consultation with Inuvialuit Game Council, is responsible for the development and implementation of an appropriate IHAP policy and program. It is also responsible for ensuring the program is properly monitored and evaluated, thus ensuring accountability to Inuvialuit beneficiaries.

IHAP Trustees:

A board of trustees (the executive members of the board of IRC) oversees the Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Trust. They are responsible to ensure the terms and conditions of the Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Trust are followed in the implementation and delivery of the IHAP.

Appendix A

Major Harvesting Equipment:

Snowmobiles

Boats (may submit as a package deal)

Outboard Motors over 25 hp

All-Terrain Vehicles (4-Wheelers)

Cabin Material with quotes over \$10,000

Each approved applicant may receive an accountable financial contribution of up to 75% of the total cost of the item approved with a minimum contribution of \$7,500 per applicant.

Appendix B

Minor Harvesting Equipment:

Smaller pieces of harvesting equipment such as: outboard motors under 25 hp, flotation devices, radios (trappers radio or mobile), tents, stoves, heaters, chainsaws, sewing machines, fish nets, cabin material, generators, firearms (must provide FAC), commercially manufactured and home made toboggans, ATV toboggans/trailers, global positioning systems, ice augers, binoculars and other items as determined from time to time by the Community IHAP Committee.

Food, fuels, lubricants and other consumables are not eligible for assistance.

Each approved applicant may receive an accountable financial contribution of up to 75% of the total cost of the item(s) approved with a maximum annual contribution of \$2,500 per applicant.