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## TIA YUKON FORMS INDUSTRY LED TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS LABOUR CRISIS

Whitehorse: With concerns mounting from Yukon businesses about the challenges in attracting and retaining qualified workers, the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon (TIA Yukon), in collaboration with the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, has created the Yukon Recruitment and Retention Task force (YRRT).

The issue of staffing shortages is not new for the Yukon, nor is it an issue limited to tourism businesses. However, tourism has been and continues to be the industry most impacted by recruitment and retention challenges, not just in the Yukon, but also nationally and internationally. The pandemic amplified existing difficulties to the point that it has become a crisis that will hinder tourism recovery.

“The tourism industry – which includes the travel, hospitality, and cultural sectors - was the first to be hit by the pandemic, it was the hardest to be hit, and it will be the last to recover”, says TIA Yukon Executive Director, Blake Rogers. “The problems associated with labour shortages are complex and are not easy to address, but working together with partners both at home and afar provides the best chance of finding solutions to alleviate this issue for the tourism industry and for the Yukon as a whole.”

Rogers says that the YRRT was created with the intention of making the various territorial efforts to address labour challenges more “cohesive and coordinated”, bringing together experts from the Yukon’s public, private, and NGO sectors. Having the task force led by the tourism industry is a natural fit given that tourism has reliably been the Yukon’s largest private sector employer; TIA Yukon’s lead role also creates a conduit between the YRRT and the national task force on tourism labour being led by Tourism HR Canada. However, a keystone of the YRRT will be the integral involvement of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce as a key partner, as this will enable the Yukon’s business community to be represented in the discussions.

The YRRT is expected to be fully functional and ready to meet in April, 2022. For more information, the Terms of Reference for the Yukon Recruitment and Retention Task force can be found here:

<https://tiayukon.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/YRRT-TERMS-OF-REFERENCE-March-2022.pdf>

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## Quick Facts

- The tourism industry was responsible for 9% of all jobs in the Yukon's labour market in 2019. (Yukon Business Survey, 2019)
- 2360 of Yukon jobs were attributed to tourism in 2019. (Yukon Business Survey, 2019)
- In 2018, over two-thirds of Yukon businesses identified challenges finding qualified workers – the largest number of job vacancies were in the tourism industry. (Yukon Business Survey, 2019)
- One out of every 11 jobs in Canada is directly involved with travelers (Tourism Industry Association of Canada, 2019)
- 45% of tourism operators polled in Fall, 2021 listed “Difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified” as their top concern – this was the second most pressing concern after “Covid Related Travel Restrictions” (TIA Yukon Industry Survey, Fall 2021)
- In 2020, 62 million travel jobs were lost, representing a drop of 18.5%, leaving just 272 million employed across the sector globally, compared to 334 million in 2019. (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2021)
- In 2019, Travel & Tourism was one of the largest sectors globally, accounting for 1 in 10 jobs, and responsible for the creation of 1 in 4 of all new jobs across the world between 2015 and 2019. (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2021)
- In February 2022 Canada's tourism industry employs 430,000 fewer people than it did in February, 2019. (Tourism HR Canada, 2022)
- Currently there are 200,000-250,000 vacancies (jobs unfilled) in Canada's tourism industry despite the current context with hampered recovery and COVID-related constraints; this is about the same job vacancies as Construction, Retail and Manufacturing combined. (Tourism HR Canada, 2022)
- Less than 50% of tourism businesses in Canada report that they are fully staffed (Tourism HR Canada, 2022)