

Partnership Council

Meeting Minutes

Date: June 3, 2026

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: Virtual (Teams)

Chair: Abdulmalik Nuhu, ZIP Coordinator

1. Opening

Abdulmalik Nuhu opened the meeting and noted that given the smaller attendance, the session would be brief but purposeful. He provided an overview of activities undertaken since the March 11, 2026 meeting.

2. IRCC Updates

Emily Kesselman (IRCC) confirmed that no new updates were available. IRCC continues to work through the comprehensive expenditure review; the process has not yet reached indirect providers. Further information will be shared as it becomes available.

3. Year One Report

Abdulmalik advised members that the NWRWC Year One Annual Performance Report has been successfully submitted to IRCC. He extended appreciation to Gillian McGrath and Tetiana Shkuratova for their contributions in finalizing and submitting the report. The initiative is now entering its second year.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

4.1 Culturama Thompson

Abdulmalik provided the following update on Culturama Thompson, scheduled for September 12, 2026:

- A site visit to Thompson was completed. Letters were distributed to local businesses and organizations; a Save the Date flyer was produced and distributed at the Thompson Trade Show.
- Several organizations have begun responding, with some confirming participation and submitting in-kind donations.
- Grant applications submitted: Canada Heritage, Thompson Corporation, Thompson Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation (TNRC), TD, Honda, and Co-op.
- Co-op and Honda have declined at this time. Thompson Corporation confirmed a contribution of \$5,000. TNRC has verbally committed \$5,000; the application has been submitted and a response is pending.
- Planning focus for July onward will shift to organizing committees, confirming performers, recruiting volunteers, and coordinating sponsorships.

4.2 Linkages Conference

Abdulmalik attended the Linkages Conference in Thompson (April 28 to 29, 2026). The conference theme centered on education. He met with the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program (MPNP) representative to explore the possibility of an information session for regional businesses, to be hosted under the NWRWC umbrella. Discussions are ongoing. In response to a question from Duane Whyte, it was noted that Linkages is held in Thompson and The Pas. Andre Murphy encouraged members, particularly Swan River, to attend the October event.

4.3 Community Welcoming Survey and Strategic Plan

Abdulmalik reported that the community welcoming survey was completed. While the target for responses was not fully met, just under 100 responses were received. Swan River had the highest response rate, followed by The Pas and Thompson. Flin Flon had a notably low response rate.

Using the survey results, the feasibility study, and an existing community survey from The Pas, Abdulmalik has begun drafting a five-year strategic plan for NWRWC. Key findings presented include:

- Housing: identified as the top challenge by both newcomers (42 of approximately 92 respondents) and employers in the Cedar Lake employer survey.
- Skilled newcomers are underutilized: approximately 31 community respondents identified skill underemployment as a top challenge, while employer data reflects a mismatch between available labour and in-demand occupations.
- Business succession: no visible succession planning for many local businesses; the sudden closure of the Giant Tiger in The Pas was cited as an example of the impact of opaque business transitions on workers and communities.
- Immigration status retention: transitions between statuses, delays in draws, and lack of clear timelines remain major concerns for newcomers.
- Coordination gaps in healthcare, childcare, and transportation remain significant barriers, particularly childcare.

The draft strategic plan is organized around five pillars:

- Welcoming and Belonging
- Settlement Conditions
- Economic Integration, Retention, and Succession
- Voice, Coordination, and Capacity
- Pathways and Advocacy

The plan outlines priorities by year from 2026 to 2030. Abdulmalik will circulate the draft to members for review and input.

4.4 NWRIS Board Representation

Takudzwa (Taku) Mushosho received confirmation from the City of Flin Flon council to serve as an NWRIS Board representative. The three confirmed representatives from the

Partnership Council are: Chintan Modi, Takudzwa Mushosho, and the Council Chair. These appointments will be formally ratified at the NWRIS Annual General Meeting (AGM).

4.5 KFC Worker Support

KFC in The Pas did not proceed with the anticipated closure. Workers remain employed; however, some have been asked to sign agreements acknowledging that the business may close without notice. Several affected workers hold closed work permits. Abdulmalik continues to monitor the situation.

5. NWRWC Employer Guide

Abdulmalik shared that the NWRWC Employer Guide, covering pathways for hiring temporary foreign workers and newcomers, has been finalized and distributed to businesses and Partnership Council members. IRCC reviewed and provided input on the document.

Gillian McGrath requested that the guide also be uploaded to the NWRIS ZIP page on the NWRIS website. Abdulmalik confirmed he would action this.

6. Settlement Services in Flin Flon

Tetiana Shkuratova and Gillian McGrath advised that NWRIS will be opening a settlement office in Flin Flon, representing a significant expansion of service capacity in the region. Key updates:

- A Settlement Manager has been hired for the Flin Flon office. The anticipated start date is the week of June 15, 2026.
- Tetiana and a Ana visited Flin Flon to assess potential office locations. The City of Flin Flon has offered temporary space in their offices while a permanent location is secured.
- An official opening of some kind is planned once the office is established.

Abdulmalik commended the progress and thanked Gillian for her efforts in securing funding to establish the office.

7. NWRIS Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Gillian McGrath advised that the NWRIS AGM will be held the following Monday at 5:00 PM on Teams. Members in Swan River are welcome to attend in person, where a screen will be set up. At the AGM, the new NWRIS Board will be ratified, including the three Partnership Council representatives.

All members who plan to attend are asked to confirm attendance with Gillian in advance to assist with quorum and attendance tracking.

8. Regional Workforce and Immigration Initiative

Abdulmalik invited discussion on regional workforce needs and the status of the Northwest Manitoba Immigration Initiative. Key points from discussion:

- The initiative, which would allow participating communities to nominate newcomers for permanent residency based on community-set priorities, has been in development for approximately two years, led by the Town of The Pas and regional partners.
- Andre Murphy (Mayor, The Pas) clarified that the initiative is led by the Town of The Pas CAO and is still active. A letter from Bola (CAO) to Minister Marcelino was referenced, indicating a planned formal launch on June 19, 2026, in conjunction with the AMM Northern District meetings in The Pas.
- Gillian McGrath confirmed that the program allows communities to set their own priorities (e.g., healthcare, hospitality, retail) and then select applicants accordingly.
- Chintan Modi noted that the Thompson Community Development Corporation had pursued a similar initiative through the province. He stressed the importance of ensuring Thompson is included in any regional rollout.
- Mihir Patel noted the program had been implemented in communities such as Winkler, Roblin, Gilbert Plains, and Dauphin, though questions remain about its ongoing status in some areas.
- Upendra Patel and Chintan Modi highlighted the direct impact of worker status uncertainty on their businesses and their ability to operate confidently.
- Duane Whyte asked for clarification on the program model; it was confirmed that communities set priorities and applicants apply to the community, rather than communities selecting from a pre-assigned list.

Andre Murphy and Abdulmalik agreed to meet before the CDC meeting on June 4, 2026 with Bola (CAO, Town of The Pas) to clarify the status of the initiative and explore next steps.

Abdulmalik committed to sharing an update with the full Council following those discussions.

9. Next Meeting

The next quarterly Partnership Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 9, 2026 at 10:00 AM (Teams). The date was adjusted from September 2 to accommodate members' schedules. Abdulmalik will send a calendar invitation.

10. Closing

Abdulmalik thanked all members for their ongoing contributions and participation. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:41 AM.

Action Points

Northwest Regional Welcoming Communities (NWRWC)

Action Item	Details / Lead
Employer Guide to NWRIS Website	Upload the NWRWC Employer Guide to the NWRIS ZIP page on the NWRIS website. (Lead: Abdulmalik)
Strategic Plan Circulation	Share the draft five-year strategic plan with all Partnership Council members for review and input. (Lead: Abdulmalik)
Northwest MB Immigration Initiative Follow-Up	Meet with Bola (CAO, Town of The Pas) and Andre Murphy on June 4, 2026 to clarify the status of the initiative and identify next steps. Share update with full Council. (Lead: Abdulmalik)
NWRIS AGM Attendance Confirmation	Members to confirm AGM attendance (Monday, 5:00 PM on Teams) with Gillian McGrath. (Lead: All members)
MPNP Info Session for Businesses	Continue discussions with MPNP representative about hosting a regional information session for employers. (Lead: Abdulmalik)
KFC Worker Support Monitoring	Continue monitoring employment conditions for workers at KFC, The Pas, and advise on options as appropriate. (Lead: Abdulmalik)
September 9 Meeting Invitation	Send calendar invitation for next Partnership Council meeting: Tuesday, September 9, 2026, 10:00 AM (Teams). (Lead: Abdulmalik)