



Workers' Advisor Office

Northwest Territories and Nunavut

2025

ANNUAL REPORT

Submitted to:

**Minister Responsible for the Workers' Safety and
Compensation Commission (NT)**

The Honourable Vince McKay

**Minister Responsible for the Workers' Safety and
Compensation Commission (NU)**

The Honourable Annie Tattuinee

WSCC Governance Council

Prepared by:

Workers' Advisor for the NT/NU

Maia Lepage, May 2026

Workers' Advisor Office Northwest Territories and Nunavut

ANNUAL REPORT

Table of Contents

A MESSAGE FROM THE WORKERS' ADVISOR 2

1. PURPOSE OF THE WORKERS' ADVISOR OFFICE 3

1.1 Who We Are.....3

1.2 What We Do.....4

2. WORKERS' ADVISOR SUMMARY 2025 5

2.1 WORKERS' ADVISOR OFFICE SUMMARY.....5

2.2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF 2025 RECOMMENDATIONS.....8

2.3 RECOMMENDATIONS 8

3. STATISTICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS FOR 2025..... 13

3.1 2025 AT A GLANCE INFOGRAPHIC 13

3.2 Northwest Territories Infographic..... 14

3.3 Nunavut Infographic 14

3.4 CASE MANAGEMENT 15

4. CONTACT INFORMATION 17

“Thank you very much for your email and the explanation. You explained some things that I wasn’t understanding about WSCC and accepted diagnoses. This helps me a lot in what I need to do going forward.”
– Worker Comment, Feb 2026

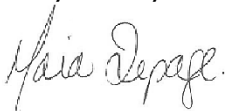
A Message from the Workers' Advisor

I am pleased to introduce the 2025 Annual Report for the Workers' Advisor Office of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (WAO).

As we reflect on 2025, the WAO continued its commitment to ensuring injured workers and their families have access to fair, informed, and compassionate support throughout the workers' compensation process.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to adapting to the evolving needs of northern workers while upholding the principles of accessibility, accountability, and advocacy that guide our work every day.

Thank you for your continued trust and support.


Maïa Lepage
Workers' Advisor



1. Purpose of the Workers' Advisor Office

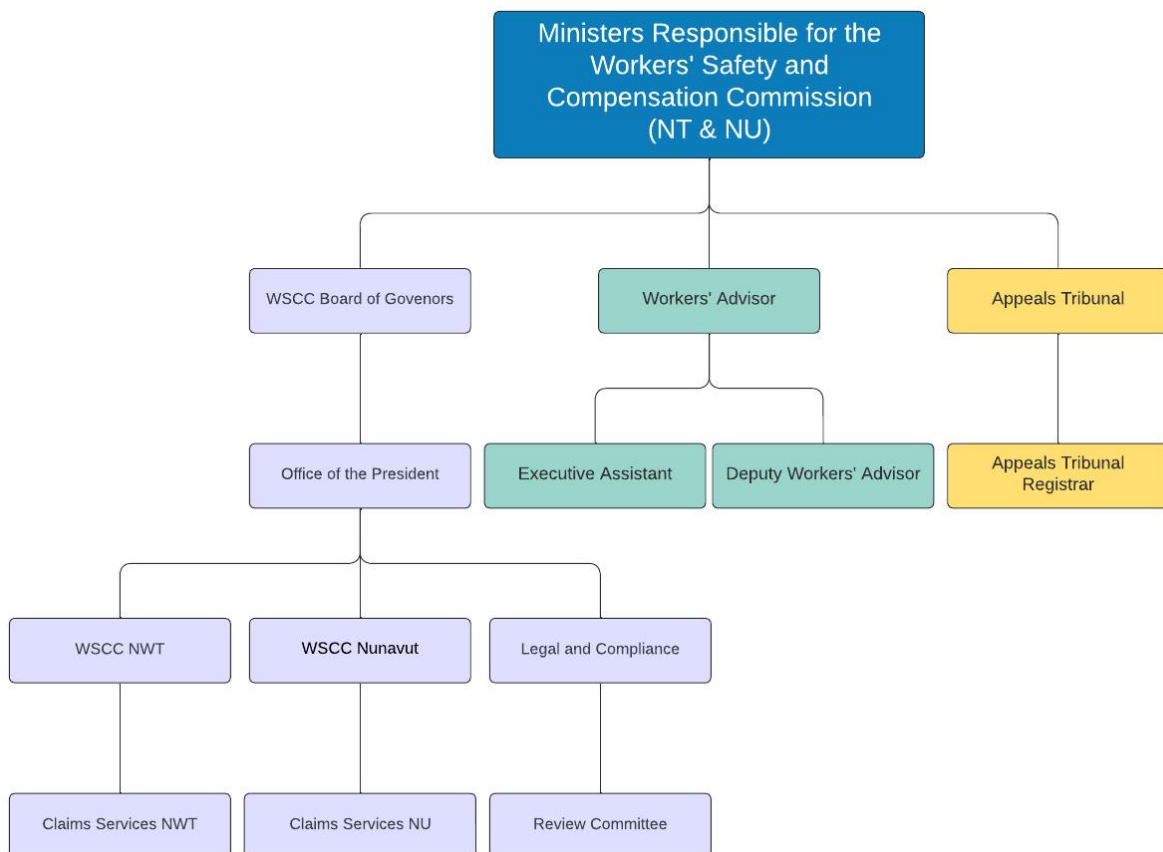
1.1 Who We Are

The Workers' Advisor Office of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (WAO) was established through the Workers Compensation Act to assist workers and others to understand this Act and to make claims for compensation.

The office is established under Section 107 in both territories, and is created to be independent from the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) and the public service. The WAO is the only Workers' Advisor office in Canada to span two jurisdictions, and is the only office in Canada that is not associated with a government body.

The Ministers Responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut work together to appoint the Workers' Advisor and Deputy Advisor. The Workers' Advisor reports directly to the Ministers Responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission on a quarterly basis. To ensure the independence of the WAO, the legislation stipulates that funding for the Workers' Advisor Office be paid from the Workers' Protection Fund.

The current WAO consists of a Workers' Advisor, a Deputy Workers' Advisor (position was vacant July 2025-March 2026), and an Executive Assistant.



* Although there are more services within WSCC, only the divisions that the Workers' Advisor Office regularly works with are listed.

1.2 What We Do

The WAO provides a range of supports and assistance to workers injured in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

These services may include:

- Obtaining information from the WSCC on a worker's behalf.
- Helping workers communicate with the WSCC at all levels.
- Reviewing file evidence to better understand and support cases.
- Explaining the WSCC processes and decisions.
- Assisting workers to prepare and present submissions to all WSCC decision-making levels.
- Referring clients to other community services; and
- Providing stakeholder feedback to WSCC regarding policy and legislation changes.

A worker's first contact with the WAO may take place at any stage of their WSCC claim and may concern any aspect of the WSCC process.

After an initial intake, where there is merit, the WAO may obtain and read through a worker's WSCC file to better understand their issue. If representation is needed at the case management level or at any stage of the appeals process, then the WAO would advise the worker of the options that may be available to them, and where appropriate, may represent them.

The WAO aims to resolve issues at the Claims Services level, but in circumstances where that is not possible, the WAO would also help prepare and represent the worker in the formal appeals processes where there is merit.

The WAO may decline to further assist a client if it is clear there are no grounds to proceed with a reconsideration or a review. A no merit assessment may be the result of lack of objective medical evidence or a lack of statutory entitlement. In all cases, the WAO would assess a workers' information and assists as much as we can before withdrawing further assistance.

Where the WAO may not be the appropriate place to provide advice, we do try to make referrals to outside supports to ensure that workers are appropriately supported. Each case is treated as unique.



"It's a pleasure working with you, you make a difference despite how it may seem right now. I could always trust and appreciate that you would provide a commonsense approach with sound advice. It meant a lot to me." –
Worker Comment, September 2025

2. Workers' Advisor Summary 2025

2.1 Workers' Advisor Office Summary

General Caseload Overview:

This year brought both challenges and opportunities across our northern communities. Rising costs of living, workforce pressures, and the unique realities of delivering services across remote regions reinforced the importance of accessible advocacy and clear communication. The WAO has remained focused on providing timely assistance, helping workers understand their rights, navigate appeals, and assistance in accessing the benefits and supports available to them. We are proud to support workers in both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut with services grounded in respect, fairness, and cultural understanding.

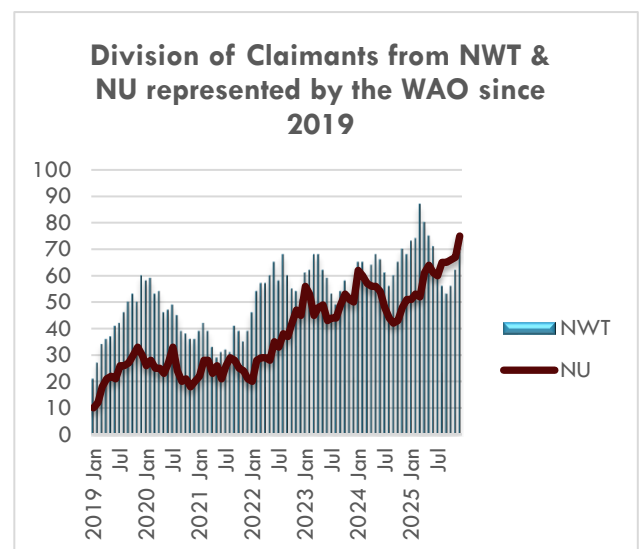
The requirements for the WAO Annual Report are located in the Workers' Compensation Act Regulations, Section 15. The Annual Report must include:

- a) the number of files in the Office's caseload;
- b) the length of time each file has been opened;
- c) the issues involved in each file;
- d) demographic information on the client base; and
- e) anything else the Workers' Advisor considers necessary and advisable.

In 2025, we assisted 298 unique workers from the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, which is an 11% increase over last year. In recent years, more and more workers are returning to access further services. We had 21 workers access services on multiple occasions, bringing our number of files in the office's caseload to 346 files in 2025. The average length a file is open was 159.8 days, which is in line with previous years.

The WAO adjusted our reporting categories in early 2025 to better line up with the WSCC policy manual, and to be more evident on where workers are hitting possible roadblocks. We increased the number of our issue categories from 16 to 29, breaking up "catch all" categories into more useful information. For example: in 2024, we would categorize all issues relating to entitlement of claims, under "Acceptance of a Claim." We have adjusted our reporting to break this issue into 2 categories: Acceptance of Claim: Physical and Acceptance of Claim: Psychological. While this does make it more difficult to compare previous years, we do think this will provide better insight moving forward.

In history of the WAO, the available reporting showed that the division of claimants accessing WAO services had conventionally been weighted around 70% NWT claimants, and 30% Nunavut claimants. Since 2019, we saw those figures starting to change and there were times when it was close to a 50/50 split, but never has Nunavut superseded the NWT, until August 2025. In the last 2 quarters of the year, Nunavut claimants have outnumbered NWT claimants accessing WAO services 55% to 45%. While the reasons for this shift could have many factors, including an increase in WAO referrals from Nunavut case managers, there are also trends that we are seeing with workers around timeline complaints that also deserves some consideration. In looking at the statistics from 2025, on



average, a Nunavut claimants file is open 20 days longer than an NWT claimants file with the WAO.

Further, when looking at the list of unique claimants accessing services over the course of a year, NWT would still represent 55% of the caseload in the WAO – but when looking at open files, because of the length a file is open and the recurrence of workers accessing services, when looking at the monthly totals, Nunavut claimants are currently superseding the NWT. It is an interesting development and worth monitoring moving forward.

Relationship with WSCC:

The Office of the Workers' Advisor is independent from and does not form any part of the Workers Safety and Compensation Commission. While the WAO has a strong and productive working relationship with WSCC Claims Services, our relationship with the Office of the President has become strained.

The development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is needed to clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations between the WSCC and WAO, and to support effective collaboration moving forward. Understanding this work may be underway already, there needs to be a collaborative process where both offices are involved and agree with the direction moving forward.

It may also be appropriate, given the strained relationship identified, to have a third party involved to act as a mediator for the MOU to ensure a neutral, clear, and fair process.

WAO Staffing and Office Changes:

Throughout 2025, we continued to work at improving our client service delivery, but there were some obstacles.

After a 2-year search, we started off 2025 with a full complement, which included 3 full time positions: 1 Workers' Advisor, 1 Deputy Workers' Advisor and an Executive Assistant. The Deputy Advisor was based out of Iqaluit, and the resources were provided for him to establish a second Workers' Advisor office. While the Deputy made valued contributions during their tenure, it was ultimately determined that the role was not their best fit long-term. The Deputy Advisor concluded their time with the WAO in July, and the Iqaluit office was closed the same month.

Changes in staffing provided an opportunity to reassess the needs of the Deputy role, with a focus on our intention to strengthen our client service delivery. Consideration was made to temporarily relocate the Deputy Advisor position to Yellowknife, so the WAO can be housed in one office, ensuring consistency and continuity in service for workers, while offering in-person support for the incoming Deputy Advisor. The intention was to revisit the composition of the WAO once operational capacity permitted.

Our hiring process for the new Deputy began in October 2025 and it highlighted that the WAO is very under-resourced for undertakings like a hiring process. In the past, WSCC has provided some support in select areas, like HR or IT, but there has been a push back in recent years and WSCC has indicated there are strict limitations to their assistance moving forward.

As the sole Workers' Advisor for the NWT and Nunavut, I was expected to facilitate the hiring process independently, while also keeping up with my case load and reporting requirements, but this proved to be an extreme challenge, as the WAO is already overextended.

In the first stages of the competition, we are grateful for the assistance from the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer for the Northwest Territories. The Chief Electoral Officer assisted with screening applications and provided a valuable unbiased perspective.

After initial screening, there were 2 prospective applicants for the Deputy Advisor position, and due to a conflict, Minister McKay's office graciously stepped in to help. We were able to successfully conclude the hiring process with the assistance of the GNWT HR, but again, it really highlighted that processes associated with the WAO need to be reassessed and the office needs to be appropriately supported, especially in periods of transition.

The WAO is the only office of its kind in Canada that is not associated with a government department. The two WAO advisor positions are treated as independent contractors – we are not employed by WSCC or the government. The advisors receive no pension or benefits and are expected to pay for WAO expenses out of pocket before they can be reimbursed.

In looking at the composition of our Canadian counterparts, there is a strong indication that the WAO will need to evolve to keep up with the increasing demand from workers.

Our closest jurisdictions in office size are PEI and the Yukon.

PEI has 2 full-time advisors and 1 admin. They have a case load of approximately 26 workers a year. This would represent a caseload of 13 workers per advisor.

The Yukon has 2.75 full time advisors, no listed admin, and a caseload of 105 workers per year. This would represent a caseload of approximately 38 workers per advisor.

In addition, both offices mentioned above receive support as they are both part of a government department – Yukon falling under the Department of Justice and PEI falling under the Department of Workforce, Advanced Learning & Population.

The closest jurisdiction to the WAO in terms of claimants accessing services would be Manitoba. They have 8 full-time Workers Advisor positions and a caseload of approximately 275 workers per year. Each advisor is working with approximately 34 workers per year. The Manitoba Worker Advisor Office is part of the Department of Labour and Immigration.

In contrast, the WAO has 2 full-time advisor positions and 1 Executive Assistant. We carry a caseload of approximately 346 files per year, with very limited outside support. In 2025, this caseload was predominantly carried by one advisor, but if we were fully staffed that would be a caseload of approximately 173 files per advisor.

In addition to our caseload, the sole Workers' Advisor is also responsible for the training and supervision of the Deputy Workers' Advisor and WAO staff, all reporting requirement (quarterly and annual reports), and administration of the office including all the finance and HR needs of the WAO. All aspects of this office is contingent on one individual.

While the office has continued to meet its obligations, the current workload and breadth of duties are stretching available resources and are not sustainable under the present staffing structure.

From an administrative perspective, I believe it would make sense to establish a second WAO office in Nunavut. Each office should have 2-3 advisors and 1-2 admin staff. This would align the WAO with other jurisdictions, and allow the advisors to concentrate on their legislated duties and better represent the workers needing assistance. Whether it is appropriate for the offices to be absorbed into their respective governments should also be considered.

Further, as caseloads and responsibilities continue to expand, strengthening workplace wellness supports will be essential to maintaining employee health, organizational capacity, and service continuity. Studies have shown that when individuals are working in roles that involve regular exposure to mental health concerns, those individuals may experience significant emotional and psychological strain. Without access to appropriate benefits, wellness resources, or organizational supports, these challenges can contribute to increased stress, burnout, and difficulty maintaining overall well-being.

The WAO is regularly exposed to significant trauma while assisting workers navigate their claims. We do what we can in office to support well-being, like providing debriefing opportunities, but our resources are limited as there is no external support for this office.

The Workers' Advisor and Deputy Advisor are appointed under the legislation and treated as independent contractors with no benefits. Any adjustments to our contracts or entitlements have been decided on by WSCC. Other Statutory Officers, like the Human Rights Commissioner, the Languages Commissioner, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Integrity Commissioner, the Chief Electoral Officer, the Equal Pay Commissioner and the Ombud are entitled to rights, privileges and benefits, including remuneration and pension benefits, similar to the entitlements of Assistant Deputy Ministers. If these offices are able to be appropriately supported and remain independent, then the WAO should be given similar considerations.

2.2 Executive Summary of 2025 Recommendations:

For 2025, the WAO provides the following recommendations:

1. Remove Section 133 No Judicial Review from the Workers' Compensation Act;
2. Consider improvements in communication around WSCC processes and timelines;
3. All WSCC decisions should align with Section 31 of the Workers Compensation Act and provide reasons for the decision;
4. Consider a comparative analysis between the WSCC NWT Office and the WSCC NU Office to determine whether service standards are aligned;
5. Review adequacy of supports for workers who are non-English speakers;
6. Establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to solidify processes and expectations for how WSCC and the WAO work together
7. Consider a Comparative and Operational Review of the WAO

2.3 Recommendations

A. 2025 Recommendations for WSCC:

i. **Remove Section 133 No Judicial Review from the Workers' Compensation Act**

As part of the submissions to MLAs during a Review of the Workers Compensation Act (WCA), the WAO put forth the suggestion of removing Section 133, which states:

Except where there has been a denial of natural justice or an excess of jurisdiction, no act by or decision of the Commission, including the Governance Council and the Review Committee, or the Appeals Tribunal, may be questioned or reviewed in any court, and for greater certainty no act by, decision of or proceeding before the Commission or Appeals Tribunal may be restrained by injunction, prohibition or other process or proceedings in any court

Workers' compensation decisions often involve complex medical, vocational, and legal assessments. Judicial review serves as an important mechanism to correct errors in process, interpretation, or application of the law that may materially affect injured workers.

Currently, the appeals process reviews all of the available evidence before deciding whether the original decision was correct under the law and policy. While administrative efficiency is important, it should be balanced with the right to meaningful review in cases where decisions may significantly affect an individual's income security, medical care, or ability to work. The availability of independent court oversight strengthens public confidence in the workers' compensation system by reinforcing that decisions are subject to impartial review where concerns about fairness or legality arise.

Recognizing that Section 133 is a "privative" or "preclusive" clause, attempting to escalate an issue with a decision becomes about whether it is appropriate under the privative clause, instead of ensuring the decision itself is fair. This process prolongs court proceedings and makes it cost prohibitive for workers who may already be under financial strain.

We feel that consideration should be given to remove section 133 from legislation to allow workers a remedy of last resort to challenge WSCC decisions to ensure fairness.

The Workers' Advisor office in some jurisdictions, like Nova Scotia where judicial review is allowed, can represent workers in that process – but other Workers Advisor Offices in jurisdictions that allow judicial review, like Saskatchewan, do not represent workers at the judicial review level. How the WAO would support workers with judicial review would be a consideration of the office if the situation were to arise.

ii. **WSCC Timelines and Communication**

This recommendation has been raised in previous reporting but given the increasing concerns from WSCC claimants about timelines and communication, it is worth noting again.

A lack of clarity and transparency in timelines of WSCC processes is a common complaint from workers. With the understanding that there are exceptions and sometimes timelines cannot be met, case managers should be keeping workers informed of any delays in decisions or in internal processes.

There are several points in a claim where timelines are outside of the case manager's control. For example: when a file needs a Medical Advisor opinion, when Finance needs to do a wage calculation or when a file is being transferred to the Pension Department. In these instances, workers often feel they are not being properly informed about what is going on or how long they are expected to wait. Case Managers should still be checking in with workers and keeping them informed to the best of their abilities on possible timelines.

With a pension transfer, some workers are told that they should expect to be without income for 6-12 months while the pension process is happening. This is significantly longer than what was present in the past, and the transparency around this process is lacking. Asking a worker to be without income for 6 to 12 months poses undue financial hardship for the vast majority of workers, and even more so for those workers who are unable to return to any form of work. If it takes WSCC 6-12 months to ensure a file is complete, the worker should not be penalized for WSCC's shortcomings.

At the Review level, where the expectation is set that a decision will be given within 50 business days from registration date, in decisions received by the WAO in 2025, the average decision took 197.78 business days (or 275.67 days total). In fact, since 2019, of the 55 reviews the WAO participated in that have received decisions, only 4 were completed within the 50-business day standard. While there are justifiable reasons for deferring a review, if the bulk of reviews are not meeting the 50 business-day standard, the standard should be updated to reflect the reality of what workers can expect.

Setting realistic expectations is paramount in maintaining trust and confidence in the WSCC system. If the service standards and timelines that WSCC are setting for themselves are not representative of what is possible, then communication should be updated to reflect the actual timelines.

iii. WSCC Decisions Should Follow Section 31 of the Workers Compensation Act

Section 31 of the WCA states:

Responsibility of Commission

31. (1) *The Commission shall make all decisions respecting entitlement to compensation.*

Grounds of determination

(2) *Decisions of the Commission must be based on*

(a) the evidence before the Commission;

(b) the application of this Act and the regulations;

(c) the application of any policy of the Governance Council that relates to the issue in question; and

(d) any medical, legal or other relevant professional opinion that the Commission considers should be accepted.

Notice of decision

(3) *The Commission shall give written notice of its decision regarding a claim for compensation to the claimant, or his or her legal or personal representative, and to the worker's employer.*

Contents of notice

(4) *The notice of decision must contain the reasons for the decision.*

Lately, some workers have been receiving decisions from some Case Managers that contain insufficient information to understand the WSCC decision.

Section 31 is very clear on the standard legislated for the communication of these decisions and Case Managers should take more care in providing sufficient reasoning to the workers.

A review of decision letters provided to workers should be undertaken, and areas where workers may be receiving insufficient information should be addressed.

iv. Consider a Comparative Analysis between the WSCC NWT Office and the WSCC NU Office to Determine Whether Service Standards Are Aligned

WSCC is split between the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, but the decisions coming from case management should not differ depending on which jurisdiction you are in.

In 2025, the WAO encountered several situations where the WSCC Nunavut Office seemed to exhibit different standards than what we were experiencing in the NWT. Examples:

- Decision Making
 - A decision on a claim may not be able to happen if a WSCC employee goes on vacation. We have encountered situations where:
 - Case Managers were unable to make any decisions on a claim they were covering because the assigned case manager would “know the claim better”.
 - A Case Manager was not able to make any decisions without their supervisor present – an acting supervisor was not sufficient for their process.

- Senior Management at WSCC was not able to intervene on case management decisions because the decision-making power lies with the Case Manager. Support was provided that the decisions would need to wait for the appropriate party to return.
 - Accountability within the decision-making process is seemingly insufficient. Workers should not be asked to wait weeks or months for a decision solely because a WSCC employee chose to take vacation.
 - From what the WAO has been involved in, the same issues do not appear to be present in the NWT Office.
- Decision Letters
 - As recommended earlier, decisions should follow Section 31 of the WCA.
 - While there is a standard letter template that is used by both WSCC offices, the standard for decision letter content is seemingly lower in Nunavut. Decisions are provided to workers without the rationale of what was weighed and/or the relevant policy or legislation that was used. This makes it difficult to understand the decision and what steps may be needed to move forward.
 - NWT decision letters appear to be more robust, making it easier to provide advice to workers because the WAO is able to understand the decision without having to read the file first – all relevant information is contained in the letter.
- Timelines
 - Aside from wait time for decisions, there is also seemingly disparity in the pension transfer process for Nunavut Claimants.
 - In the NWT, when a file is being transferred to the Pension Department from Case Management, our understanding is that it happens fairly quickly. From the information we have been provided, once the pension department has received the file, it may take 6-8 weeks for the pension to be initialized.
 - The information provided to Nunavut Claimants is that it will take 3-6 months for Case Management to transfer a file to the Pension Department and there is a possibility that the workers will be without income for 6-12 months while the pension is being assessed – it is not clear why there is such a difference between the NWT and Nunavut.
 - Of the 30 complaints the WAO received from workers regarding Nunavut claims, 46% of the complaints were focused on timelines.
 - From the WAO perspective, we do not receive nearly as many complaints regarding timelines from NWT claimants.

To improve transparency and performance context, we feel it is reasonable for WSCC to undertake a comparative review of service standards in the two jurisdictions to ensure that workers are being treated equitably within WSCC.

v. Increased Supports for Workers who are non-English Speakers

The WAO encountered an increase in non-English speakers seeking support because they felt they were not receiving adequate services from WSCC.

We encountered French speaking individuals that had to wait months for their WSCC file to be translated in order for WSCC to make a decision on compensation, while others had their medical disregarded because the case manager was not able to read it in another language. With the options for translation available, it does not seem reasonable that these workers are treated any differently than English speaking individuals.

Additional supports do already exist within WSCC for non-English speakers, but these supports should be reviewed to ensure they are adequate.

B. Recommendations for WSCC from 2024 Report:

- i. Improve communication around WSCC processes and timelines;
- ii. Consider Indexing Total Disability (TD) payments on long standing claims;
- iii. Establish a Memorandum of Understanding to solidify processes and expectations for how WSCC and the WAO work together.
- iv. Amend Sections 107-111 of the Workers' Compensation Act to include provisions for the Workers' Advisor and Deputy Workers' Advisor similar to those that exist for other statutory offices in regard to salary and benefits.

C. Recommendations Remaining from 2023 Report:

- i. Ensure adequate financial supports are available for workers unable to return to work
- ii. Amend the scope of the retirement transition benefit to apply to all workers who will need to retire because of their accepted workplace injury
- iii. Provide support for workers who are returning to employment with their pre-injury employers until they fully return to work.

D. Recommendations Remaining from 2022 Report:

- i. Establish a formal WSCC complaint process for when workers have issues with their case managers.

E. Recommendations Remaining from 2021 Report:

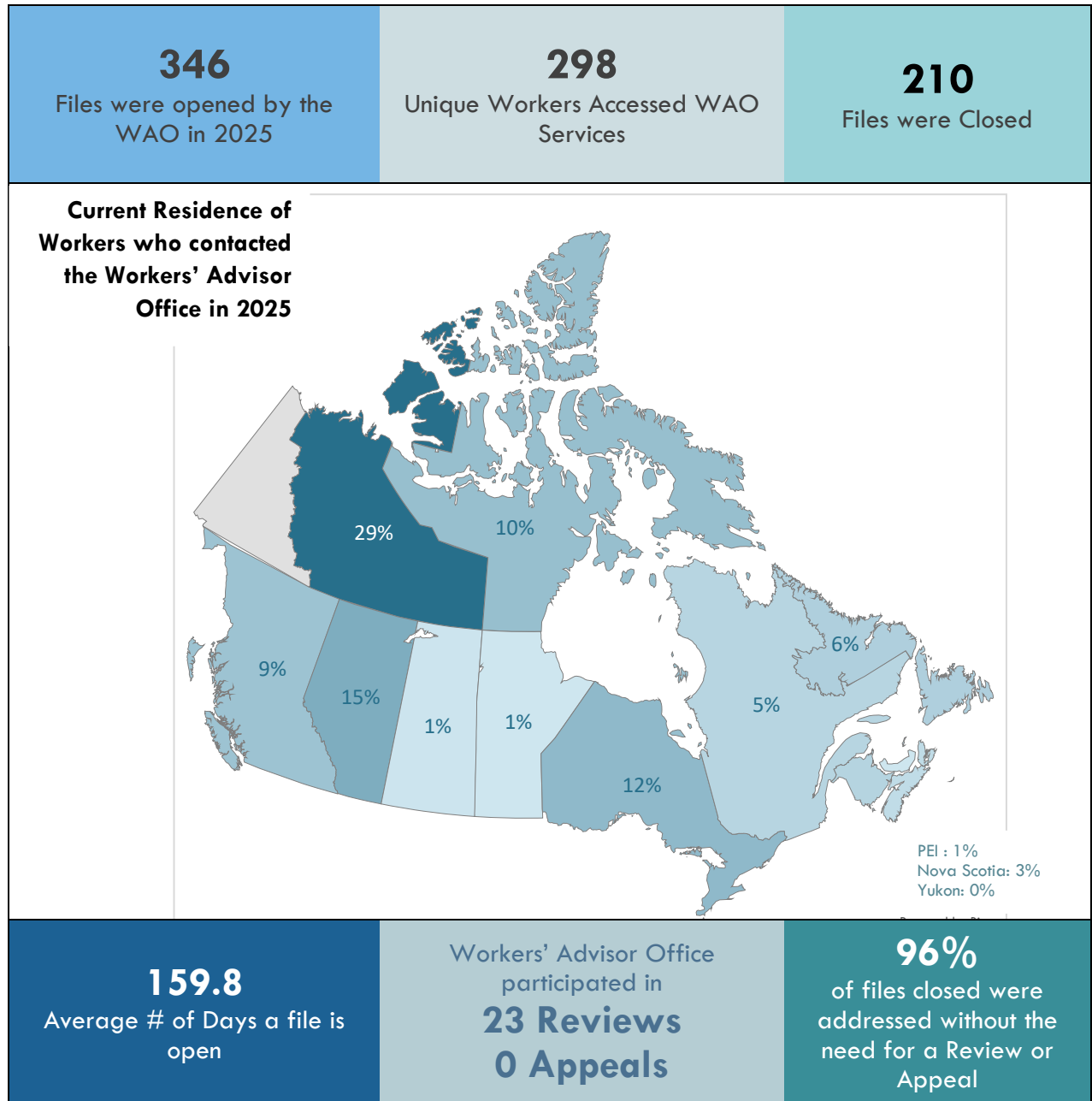
- i. Investigate the feasibility of having dedicated support staff for claims dealing with psychiatric or psychological disorders
- ii. Consideration of an employer advisor

F. Recommendations for Workers' Advisor Office:

- i. **Establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to solidify processes and expectations for how WSCC and the WAO work together**
 - While the WAO is separate and independent from WSCC, in the past there was some support available through WSCC to ensure the WAO was up to standard in areas like IT and HR.
 - Those supports have been stripped back, which has had an impact on the WAO operations, and has caused confusion between the WAO and WSCC.
 - While the WAO agrees with WSCC that it is important to have boundaries in place, the realities of this office are that we are small. Our focus is not technology and procurement but addressing worker concerns. We end up spending a significant amount of time and money on services that could have been reasonably provided by WSCC, while still maintaining an arm's length relationship.
 - The WAO recommends that an MOU address these gaps by explicitly outlining the areas where WSCC will offer support, how both parties will work together and an expectation of the timelines so that everyone is on the same page.
 - The WSCC have already confirmed that they are also in favour of creating an MOU but this work has not yet materialized. The WAO would like to reiterate their mutual support and recommend a mediator to support in the creation of this document.
- ii. **Consider a Comparative and Operational Review of the WAO**
 - The Minister's Responsible for WSCC should consider undertaking a comparative and operational review of the WAO to identify operational needs. The organizational structure, resource allocation, and best practices in similar offices should be a part of the review.

3. Statistics and Demographics for 2025

3.1 2025 AT A GLANCE INFOGRAPHIC



"Thank you so much! All your hard work!! You have no idea how grateful we are to you... This is life changing for our little family!!"

– Worker Comment, March 2025

3.2 Northwest Territories Demographics

164 Workers' claims originated in the Northwest Territories	88 Claimants indicated their primary residence was in the NWT	120 NT Files Closed
Explanation of WSCC processes Most Common Issue Addressed for NWT Workers	Workers' Advisor Office participated in 13 Reviews 0 Appeals For files originating in NWT	152.3 days Average time a NWT file is Open

3.3 Nunavut Demographics

131 Workers' claims originated in Nunavut	31 Claimants indicated their primary residence was in NU	87 NU Files Closed
Explanation of WSCC processes Most Common Issue Addressed for NU Workers	Workers' Advisor Office participated in 10 Reviews 0 Appeals For files originating in Nunavut	172.5 days Average time a NU file is Open

**** 298 workers accessed WAO services, 295 are accounted for in the above demographics. 3 workers were not from WSCC's jurisdiction and were referred to the appropriate Workers Compensation Board. This accounts for the difference in files closed as well. ****

"I'd like to thank you for your assistance. It was a vital service and one that has helped financially, more so emotionally. Having the support of someone working to help is paramount. I appreciate you."

– Worker Comment, October 2025

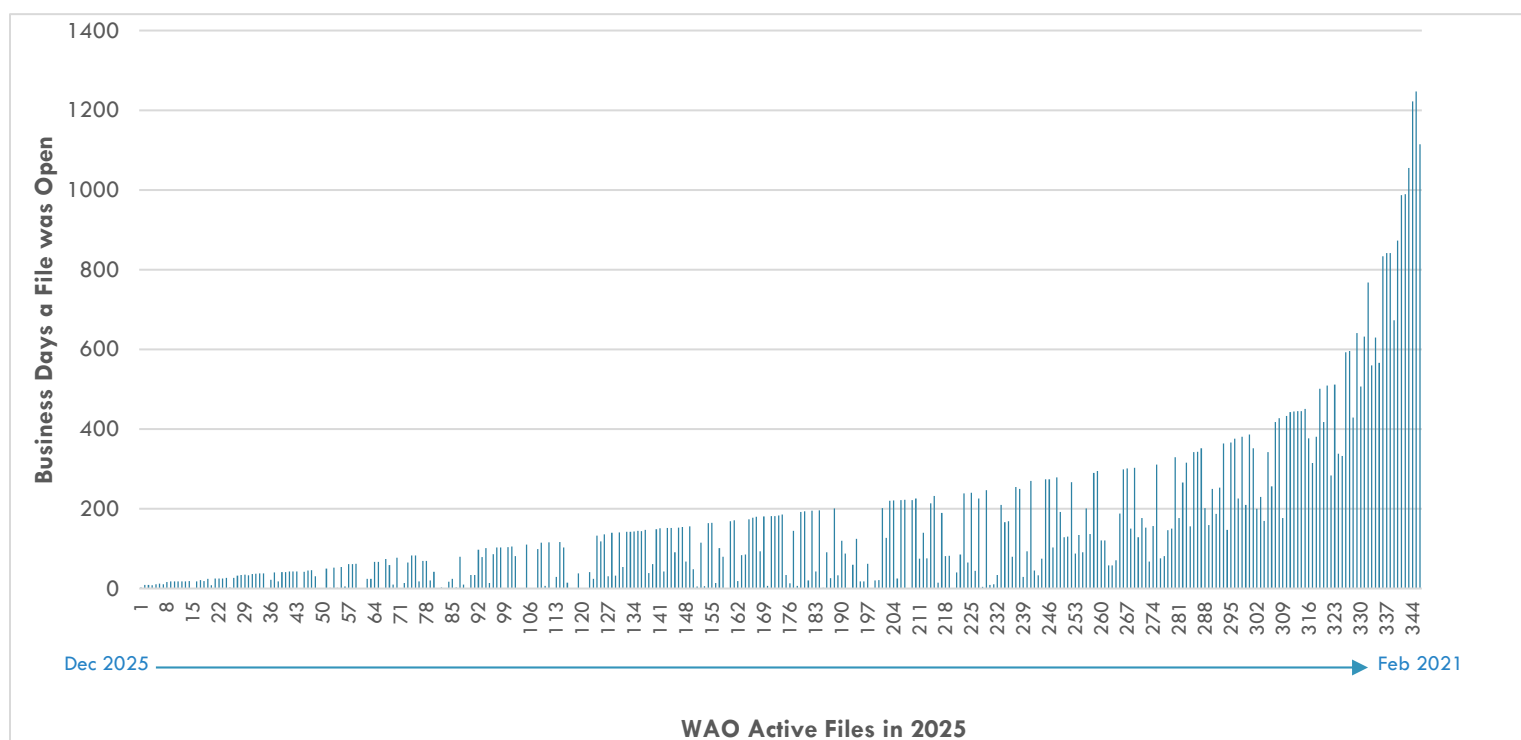
3.4 Case Management

A file is considered open when a worker first contacts the WAO. The file remains open until issues identified are resolved, the worker indicates that they are no longer requiring the services of the WAO, or there has been no contact from a worker over the span of months. The chart below illustrates the files that were active during 2025. While 298 distinct workers contacted the office during 2025, several workers accessed services on multiple occasions. This is reflected in the number of files identified, which 346.

The WAO assists the worker to address their issue(s) in the timeliest manner possible. While some issues are able to be resolved the same day, such as explanation of a WSCC process, others may take several months and go through several phases. In some instances, the worker chooses to keep their file active and work with the WAO on a regular basis moving forward, even when there are no active issues.

Every case is treated as unique.

Duration of Workers' Advisor Office Cases in 2025



Once a file is initiated, issues are identified through discussions with the worker and if needed, through an extensive file assessment conducted by the WAO.

Of the 346 files active in 2025, the files were open an average of 159.8 days, which is in line with previous years. We are hopeful that with a full complement of staff, we can lower these numbers, but the reason a file may stay open can depend on many factors outside the WAO's control, such as waiting on information or decisions from WSCC, waiting on workers to provide further information, or waiting for a worker to access appropriate health care.

There are many reasons a worker may seek assistance from the WAO. Below is a chart of the issues identified and resolved in 2025:

Identified Issues	Total Issues Identified	Northwest Territories		Nunavut	
		# of Resolved Issues	Average Timeframe (Days)	# of Resolved Issues	Average Timeframe (Days)
Acceptance of Claim: Physical	34	2	229.7	5	208.1
Acceptance of Claim: Psychological	14	1	204.0	1	40.0
Addition to Claim: Physical	21	4	133.5	6	514.5
Addition to Claim: Psychological	9	2	174.5	0	0.0
Assistance with File	18	5	13.0	4	17.8
Assistance: Claim Closed	21	3	62.0	4	95.5
Assistance: Pension General	17	6	27.0	1	20.0
Assistance: Pension PMI	29	5	170.2	5	103.5
Assistance: Return to Work	20	1	160.0	3	107.7
Assistance: Review/Appeal	24	2	111.5	4	246.1
Explanation of WSCC processes	165	85	1.7	80	5.9
Case Manager / File Management Complaint	53	19	12.4	22	7.4
Medical: Complementary & Alternative Tx	13	4	279.5	1	6.0
Medical: General Aid	25	9	129.1	3	201.3
Medical: Medical Devices	2	1	215.0	0	0.0
Medical: Medications	1	0	0.0	1	10.0
Medical: Travel	4	2	6.5	2	1.0
Reimbursements/Payments: General	29	7	18.0	8	82.1
Reimbursements/Payments: Overpayment	15	0	0.0	1	88.0
Reimbursements/Payments: Prescriptions	9	5	69.4	2	27.5
Reimbursements/Payments: Subs/Travel	12	5	22.4	3	39.3
Reimbursements/Payments: TD Benefits	17	6	220.2	1	37.0
Services: HMILA /Attendants Allowance	5	2	29.0	0	0.0
Services: Pain Management/Supportive Counselling	3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Suspension or Termination	6	0	0.0	0	0.0
Vocational Rehabilitation: Allowances and Grants	1	0	0.0	1	104.0
Vocational Rehabilitation: Initial Entitlement	3	1	39.0	1	1.0
Vocational Rehabilitation: Services and Programs	6	3	33.0	1	1.0
WSCC Not Responsive to Client	2	1	150.0	0	0.0
	577 Total Identified	184 Total Resolved	86.6 Average Open	176 Total Resolved	104.4 Average Open
		Positive Outcome	162	Positive Outcome	162
		No Merit	22	No Merit	14

The three most common issues addressed in 2025 were:

1. Explanation of WSCC processes (29%)
2. Case Manager / File Management Complaint (9%)
3. Acceptance of Claim: Physical (6%)

These three categories account for 44% of the workload in the Workers' Advisor Office. An explanation of process can happen for an abundance of reasons and would be in the normal course of helping a worker. This issue is typically opened and closed on the same day, and would act as a record for when the WAO had to provide a significant amount of advice or detail pertaining to specific processes.

Case Manager / File Management Complaint would be listed when a worker's concern does not pertain to the policy or legislation, and more so to their case manager or how WSCC is handling their file in general. In the NWT, there were 22 complaints (19 resolved), with interpersonal issues with their case manager being the most frequent complaint representing 50% of the Case Manager/File Management Complaints. In Nunavut, there were 30 complaints (22 resolved), with 46% of the complaints centered on timelines.

Acceptance of Claim: Physical would be listed when a worker's claim for a physical injury has been denied. The WAO would assist the worker by better understanding their situation and providing advice for what steps may be needed for WSCC to reconsider entitlement. In many cases, workers need to provide further information for WSCC to consider the claim further (example: medical clarification on the injury, further documentation on the mechanism of injury, etc.). It may take some time, but if there is a reasonable connection between the injury and the worker's duties at work, WSCC Claims Processing does a decent job at providing a fair and balanced decision.

	<u>Review Submissions</u>			<u>Appeals Submissions</u>	
	Active Reviews	Favorable Outcome	Pending Decisions	Appeals Requested	Favorable Outcome
Pending from 2023	1	0	0	N/A	
Pending from 2024	9	6	1	N/A	
Review from 2025	12	2	9	0	0
Total:	22	8	10		

In the event that the WAO feels there is sufficient information present for WSCC to accept something, but a reconsideration still results in a denial, the WAO may make representations on behalf of a worker in the appeals process. This applies to submissions to the Review Committee and/or the Appeals Tribunal.

Of the 12 decisions we received from the Review Committee in 2025, 67% were a favorable outcome for the worker. We received the review decision, on average, 197.78 business days from the date of when the first submission was made. We made no submissions to the Appeals Tribunal in 2025.

4.0 Contact Information

Maia Lepage, Workers' Advisor

Email: advisor@workersadvisor.ca

Office: 867 920.3006

Fax: 867 669.0995

Physical Office: Unit 207- 4817 49th Street, Yellowknife, NT X1A 3S7 (Bowling Green Building, 2nd Floor)