

Northern Incentives Program – Frequently Asked Questions

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1. **What is the purpose of the Northern Incentives Program?**

The goal of the AHS Northern Incentives Program is to attract and retain employees in some of our most northern work sites by providing an equitable and standardized compensation incentive. Compensation is also provided to those working in the Municipality of Wood Buffalo to partially offset higher cost of living. The program addresses various incentive practices established by the former northern health entities (Aspen, Northern Lights, Peace and AADAC).

2. **What type of compensation is available through the Northern Incentives Program?**

The program consists of the following allowances:

- Northern Allowance (employees working above the 57th parallel);
- Remote Retention Allowance (employees working between the 55th and 57th parallels);
- Fort McMurray Allowance (employees working in the Municipality of Wood Buffalo); and
- Travel Reimbursement (one round trip per calendar year to any destination in Alberta for employees working above the 57th parallel).

3. **Is the Northern Incentives Allowance based on where you live or where you work?**

You receive the northern incentive allowance applicable to the location of the work site you are assigned to on a permanent, temporary or casual basis. If you hold more than one position and are assigned to different work sites for each position, you will get the allowance for each work site based on the number of hours worked in each position at a basic rate of pay.

4. How does this change affect Management and Out of Scope employees living within the program boundary?

Management and Out of Scope employees will be paid based on hours worked, at their basic rate of pay. This will be a change for many employees as some former entities paid a flat rate and/or included overtime.

5. Why was the 55th latitude chosen as the geographical boundary for the program?

Approved by the Executive Committee and derived from stakeholder consultations, the boundary also aligns with other public sector programs, including the one offered by the Alberta government.

6. Will staff in Fox Creek and Grande Cache continue to receive their northern allowances?

Yes. Current Management and Out of Scope employees assigned to a work site in Fox Creek or Grande Cache will have their current allowance grandfathered for as long as they continue to be assigned to a Fox Creek or Grand Cache work site. In future, these allowances may be discontinued and, if so, new employees will not receive an allowance.

7. What is a split assignment and do these employees qualify for a northern allowance?

In some cases, staff may work at two sites – one below the 55th parallel and the other above. This is considered a split assignment. These employees qualify for a northern allowance only for the position located above the 55th parallel based on the number of hours worked in the position at a basic rate of pay.

8. Do the allowances build on each other or are they separate?

Each allowance is separate. Each employee gets only one Northern Incentives allowance.

9. Is the travel reimbursement prorated for part-time employees?

Yes, the program includes reimbursement for one round trip (up to \$1235) to anywhere in Alberta, per calendar year for employees north of the 57th parallel. It is prorated by FTE. For part-time employees with more than one position, he/she will be prorated based on his/her cumulative FTE.

10. Why is the kilometer rate lower than the Travel Policy's rate?

The rate is lower for travel because this is considered personal and not business related. It is intended to only reimburse staff for gas, not for insurance, depreciation and maintenance. The rate is consistent with the mileage rate in the AHS Relocation Policy and was also benchmarked with the Alberta government's policies.