



City of Iqaluit
100-1085 Mivvik Street
Iqaluit, Nunavut
X0A 3H0

Public Service Announcement

Understanding Municipal Government Roles in Nunavut

August 12, 2025 – Iqaluit, Nunavut

The City of Iqaluit would like to help residents better understand how government works in Nunavut, specifically, which services are delivered by municipalities like Iqaluit and which are managed by the Government of Nunavut.

Nunavut's government structure is unique in Canada. It was created as part of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and reflects both Canadian law and Inuit traditions of consensus and shared leadership. The Government of Nunavut uses a non-partisan model, where Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) are elected as individuals and then choose the Premier and Cabinet through open discussion and secret ballot. The Government of Nunavut is responsible for services that affect the entire territory, such as healthcare, education, justice, and housing.

At the local level, a council governs each community, including Iqaluit, under territorial law. Iqaluit is Nunavut's only city and operates under the *Cities, Towns and Villages Act*. The other 24 communities are hamlets, governed by the *Hamlets Act*.

These laws give councils the authority to manage many important local services. This includes delivering water and collecting sewage, picking up garbage and managing waste, maintaining roads and clearing snow, running local recreation and community programs, and providing fire protection and emergency response. Councils are also responsible for creating and following local by-laws and making decisions about land use and development in the community.

As a city, Iqaluit has a larger administration, a broader tax base, and more complex infrastructure compared to smaller communities. This allows the City to offer a wider range of programs and manage more responsibilities locally.

Municipal governments focus on delivering services that people use every day. They are also responsible for community planning and budgeting, and for collecting property taxes and service fees. However, most of the money that keeps local governments running comes from the Government of Nunavut, through funding programs and grants. The Government of Nunavut also provides technical and administrative support to municipalities and has the authority to step in when needed, for example, by helping manage services during emergencies or major challenges.



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In Iqaluit, where both territorial and municipal governments operate side by side, it's common to interact with both. For example, you may pay your water bill to the City of Iqaluit, send your child to a school run by the Government of Nunavut, and receive healthcare at the Government of Nunavut-operated Qikiqtani General Hospital, all in the same day.

While the Government of Nunavut sets policies for the whole territory, municipalities are the front line of service delivery. The two levels of government work together to make sure Nunavummiut have access to the programs, supports, and infrastructure they need.

Residents are encouraged to learn more, attend Council meetings, and share their input as local voices help shape how services are delivered.

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For additional information, please contact:

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