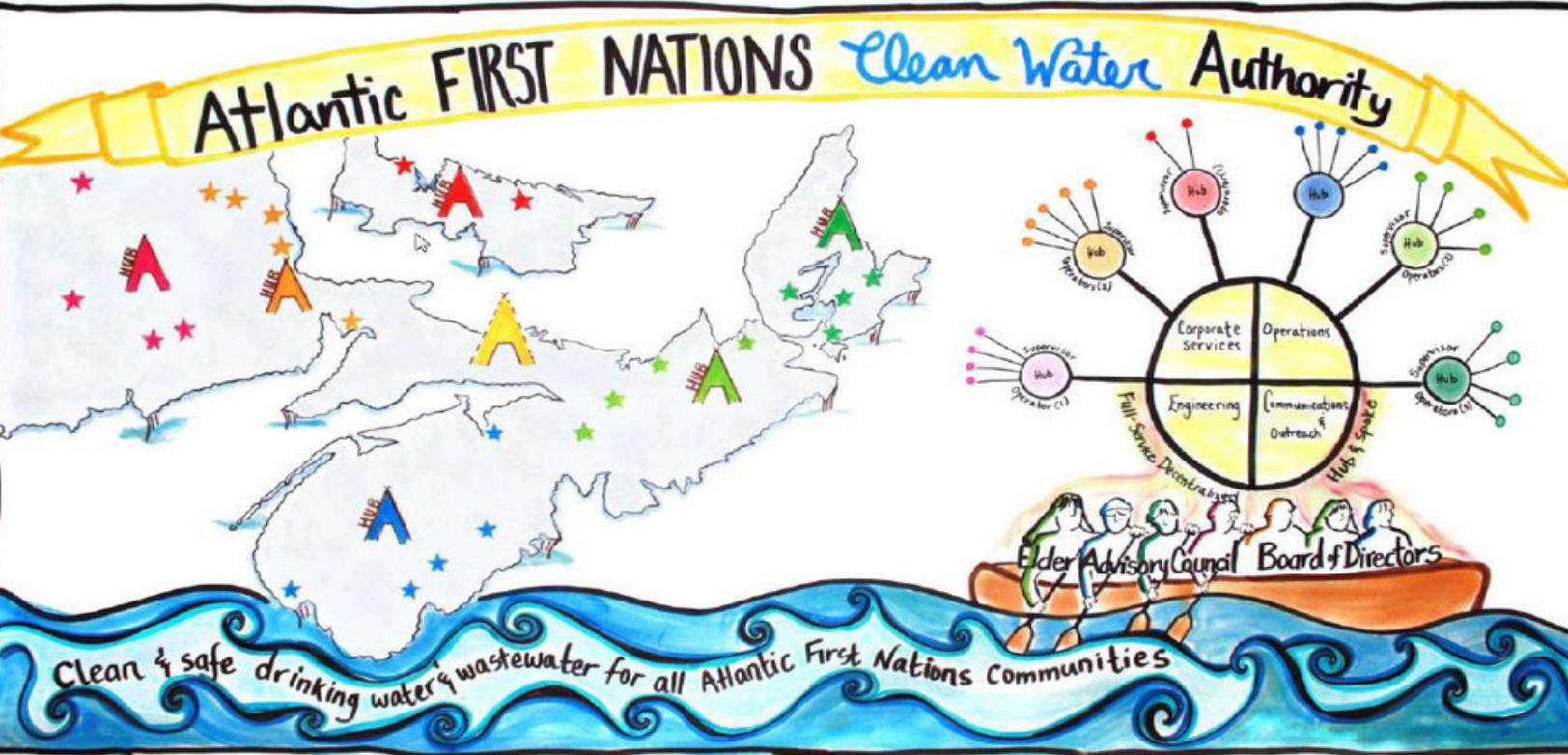




**PATHWAYS**  
**EXECUTIVE SEARCH**



## Director of Engineering





# The Organization

Access to safe drinking water and wastewater services is vital to the health of all Canadians. As many First Nations communities are gaining autonomy for operating their services, the Government of Canada has recognized the need to improve the quality and safety of water and wastewater services including the introduction of regulations, modernized institutions, and funding for critical infrastructure to rectify the challenging and multi-barrier systems that have plagued First Nations communities ([AFNWA Business Case, March 2021](#)).

## **AFNWA Mandate**

The Atlantic First Nations Water Authority (AFNWA) exists to transform water and wastewater services delivery to First Nations communities. Along with building capacity and promoting growth and prosperity for First Nations communities, the mission is rooted in self-determination and reconciliation.

# The Organization (continued)

## History

In the Atlantic region, a vision for a water utility by and for First Nations was first discussed in forums established by the Atlantic Policy Congress (APC) for the First Nations Chiefs Secretariat as early as 2003. Since that time, many studies, workshops, and engagements have taken place. In 2017, APC tendered a project that would include cost estimates to make the AFNWA a functioning utility. Halifax Water was contracted to develop suitable corporate structure options for the future AFNWA. In assessing options, they drew upon national experience and industry best practices and facilitated workshops with First Nations voices to incorporate First Nations' culture and values. Each proposed model was evaluated against the triple bottom line, looking at economic, social, and environmental outcomes.

Here, a full-service de-centralized business model with a hub-and-spoke organizational structure was adopted, ultimately leading to the incorporation of the AFNWA on July 18, 2018. Since its inception, AFNWA has advocated for and has successfully secured operational and capital funding to rectify deficiencies of the past while bringing service levels to the standards of leading utilities in Canada.

Centrally located in Millbrook First Nation, Nova Scotia, the headquarters for AFNWA is no more than a 4 to 5-hour drive from any member First Nations community. All senior management and most of the non-operational staff are in this central hub.

## Moving Forward

The AFNWA 10-year Business Plan established a full-service de-centralized business model with a hub-and-spoke organizational structure for service delivery, which allows for a closer relationship with communities and a faster localized response within each service area across the Wabanaki territory. It is also a scalable model so that additional First Nations communities may join AFNWA in the future. As such, service areas have been established regionally as follows:

- Unama'ki (Cape Breton)
- Epekwitk (Prince Edward Island)
- Wolastokuk (New Brunswick West)
- Misigeneegatig (New Brunswick East)
- We'kopekwitk (mainland Nova Scotia East)
- Kespukwitk (mainland Nova Scotia West)

An office is established in the hub community of each service area where a regional supervisor directs staff and maintains close working relationships with the Public Works departments of participating communities. Supervisors will report directly to the Superintendent of Operations who will be stationed at the headquarters in Millbrook. It is anticipated that all Operators be cross-trained in each water and wastewater system within their service area to facilitate staffing for vacations, sick days, or emergency situations.

# The Organization (continued)

## Significant Achievements

In its early stages of development and operations, the AFNWA has achieved significant progress including:

- Becoming the first Indigenous-owned water and wastewater utility in Canada.
- Establishing a strong board governance structure with an engaged Board and Elders Advisory Lodge.
- Reaching its target of 8 signed communities in December 2022 which ratified the Service Delivery Transfer Agreement with Indigenous Services Canada.
- Supporting communities through the process of joining the AFNWA mission:
  - 12 communities have become or are about to become members of the AFNWA after transferring their service responsibility to the AFNWA.
- Growing and developing the AFNWA team, which is now 51 full-time staff.
- Developing a robust set of policies and decision-making structures to ensure a strong approach to Human Resources, Continuous Improvement, Safety and Training, Asset Management, Regulatory Compliance, Enterprise Risk Management, etc.

To learn more about the AFNWA, visit: <https://www.afnwa.ca/>.

## The Opportunity

Reporting to the CEO, the AFNWA is seeking a strategic and collaborative Director of Engineering who will be responsible for the Engineering department. The ideal candidate will be a dedicated change agent who is passionate about being part of an emerging organization. The Director will combine both managerial and technical leadership to oversee asset management and capital planning, infrastructure planning, capital project delivery, strategic projects, and business development.

### Duties and Responsibilities

#### General

- As a member of the Senior Management Team, the director is responsible for the direction, supervision, performance, and development of all staff in the Engineering Department and for contributing to decisions affecting the department in accordance with departmental and organizational policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- Develops short and long-term capital strategic plans including capital planning strategies, asset management plans, master plans, and capital improvement plans.
- Develop short- and long-term strategic plans for the department ensuring performance targets are set and measured, and resources are sufficient to effectively deliver mandated services in accordance with AFNWA regulations, policies, and desired service levels.

# The Opportunity (continued)

## Duties and Responsibilities

### General

- Exercises guidance in establishing and maintaining a positive workplace culture where diversity is valued.
- Provides leadership in technological innovation and process improvement in the engineering department to continually improve value to customers.
- Ensures effective systems for service delivery, business continuity, and emergency response to provide safe and reliable service and protection of public health and the environment.
- Participates in various AFNWA committees engaged in strategic infrastructure planning projects and development.
- Represents AFNWA at various national and international industry organizations as required, to monitor emerging trends and appropriate implementation of such innovations at AFNWA.
- Participates with the management team of AFNWA in strategic planning, budgeting, establishing goals/objectives, policy and procedures, preparation of regulatory submissions, and general utility administration.
- Liaises with federal and provincial authorities, neighbouring municipalities, electrical and gas utilities, telecommunications companies, and others on matters requiring a joint approach for the benefit of the customers and the AFNWA.

### Financial

- Directs and supervises the preparation of the capital budget and operating budget for the Department, including recommendations for extraordinary expenditures, capital works requirements, and staff complement within the Department.
- Ensures departmental budget managers and capital project managers monitor budgets and complete projections in a timely manner.
- Ensures capital budgets and current estimates are developed within AFNWA guidelines and works closely with the other departments to develop budgets and plans that are prudent and sustainable.
- Responsible for ensuring that expenditures are appropriately controlled, recorded, and reallocated to meet changing requirements and AFNWA policies.

# The Opportunity (continued)

## Regulatory Compliance

- Ensures conformance of departmental activities and policies to appropriate statutes and enforces appropriate Regulations.
- Ensures that departmental activities and policies conform to all applicable environmental, public health, and occupational health and safety legislation.
- Reviews and recommends changes to AFNWA Regulations and enforces relevant provisions of the Regulations as required.
- Ensures planned capital improvements will meet operational & regulatory requirements, and applicable guidelines and standards.

## Engineering

- Responsible for the delivery of engineering services through the core activities of infrastructure planning, capital project delivery, asset management & capital planning, strategic projects, and energy efficiency & business development.
- Responsible for the delivery of infrastructure information services, program enhancement, and process improvements.
- Ensures infrastructure records are properly maintained and that information systems are available to deliver data to field staff.
- Assigns, coordinates, and reviews technical work of the department or project teams. Provide technical review and recommendations regarding operational issues, consultant's reports, and capital works initiatives.
- Consult and negotiate with developers, contractors, and consultants to establish appropriate contracts for AFNWA infrastructure projects.
- Prepares reports, makes recommendations, and participates with the CEO in communication and coordination with other Government agencies, consultants, and the public in matters relating to the Engineering Department and other matters affecting AFNWA.
- Performs other duties as may be assigned.

# Skills and Qualifications

## Education

- A Post-Secondary degree in Engineering in a related field is required
- Possession of, or eligibility to obtain a Professional Engineer designation is an asset.
- Must have a valid driver's license.
- Must be willing to undertake relevant technical, management, and safety training.

# Skills and Qualifications (continued)

## Experience

- Seven (7) years of senior management and engineering experience in a relevant field.
- Demonstrated management, administrative, and negotiation skills.
- Demonstrated knowledge of work management and financial management processes and business systems necessary to operate in a utility setting successfully.
- Knowledge of employee relations and labour practices.
- Demonstrated experience dealing with elected officials, residents, media, and other relevant stakeholders.
- Demonstrated understanding of or lived experience with First Nations or Indigenous communities.

## Required Knowledge, Skills, Abilities

- Extensive experience in Capital project planning, management, and delivery.
- Extensive knowledge of design, construction, rehabilitation, and operation best practices.
- Knowledge of water and wastewater treatment technology and operation best practices.
- Knowledge of stormwater management best practices.
- Knowledge of relevant statutes, AFNWA Regulations, by-laws, and policies.
- Ability to work cooperatively and effectively in both team and leadership roles to accomplish organizational goals.
- Demonstrated skill in communications including report preparation and presentations.
- Working knowledge of emergency response planning, asset management, environmental management systems, and enterprise risk management.
- Knowledge and experience in budgeting and program planning.
- Ability to work under stressful situations to accommodate time limits and program changes.
- Leadership and management abilities with proven knowledge and skills in administration practices.
- Must have a thorough knowledge of the occupational hazards and the safety precautions and regulations that are applicable to the position's area of work.
- Thorough knowledge of engineering principles, policies, regulations, and practices relating to water and wastewater infrastructure.
- Thorough knowledge of national, provincial, and municipal engineering procedures, standards, specifications, and guidelines.
- Demonstrated ability to work closely and effectively with a broad range of stakeholders, including elected officials, community interest groups, regulators, government representatives, developers, consultants, lawyers, and insurers.
- Strong consultative and negotiation skills.
- Strong skills in municipal engineering computer applications.
- Fluency in Mi'kmaq or Wolastoqiyik language would be considered an asset.



## **Location:** Truro and Millbrook First Nation, Nova Scotia

With over 2000 members, Millbrook First Nation is a Mi'kmaq community located within the town of Truro, positioned as the hub of Nova Scotia just north of Halifax.

AFNWA's headquarters are located in Millbrook, Nova Scotia, however, this position will work from the Truro office until the new headquarters building is built in Millbrook (in 3 years).

This position also requires frequent travel to member communities in Atlantic Canada.

## **To Apply**

To apply, submit a comprehensive résumé and cover letter in confidence to Pathways Executive Search.

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**Pathways Executive Search** is a national recruitment firm offering Indigenous-focused professional services. With a mission to make recruitment and career journeys less challenging and more equitable, Pathways is guided by Indigenous values and principles of Indigenous inclusion, which underscore the capacity to build an inclusive process for all racialized and equity-deserving professionals.