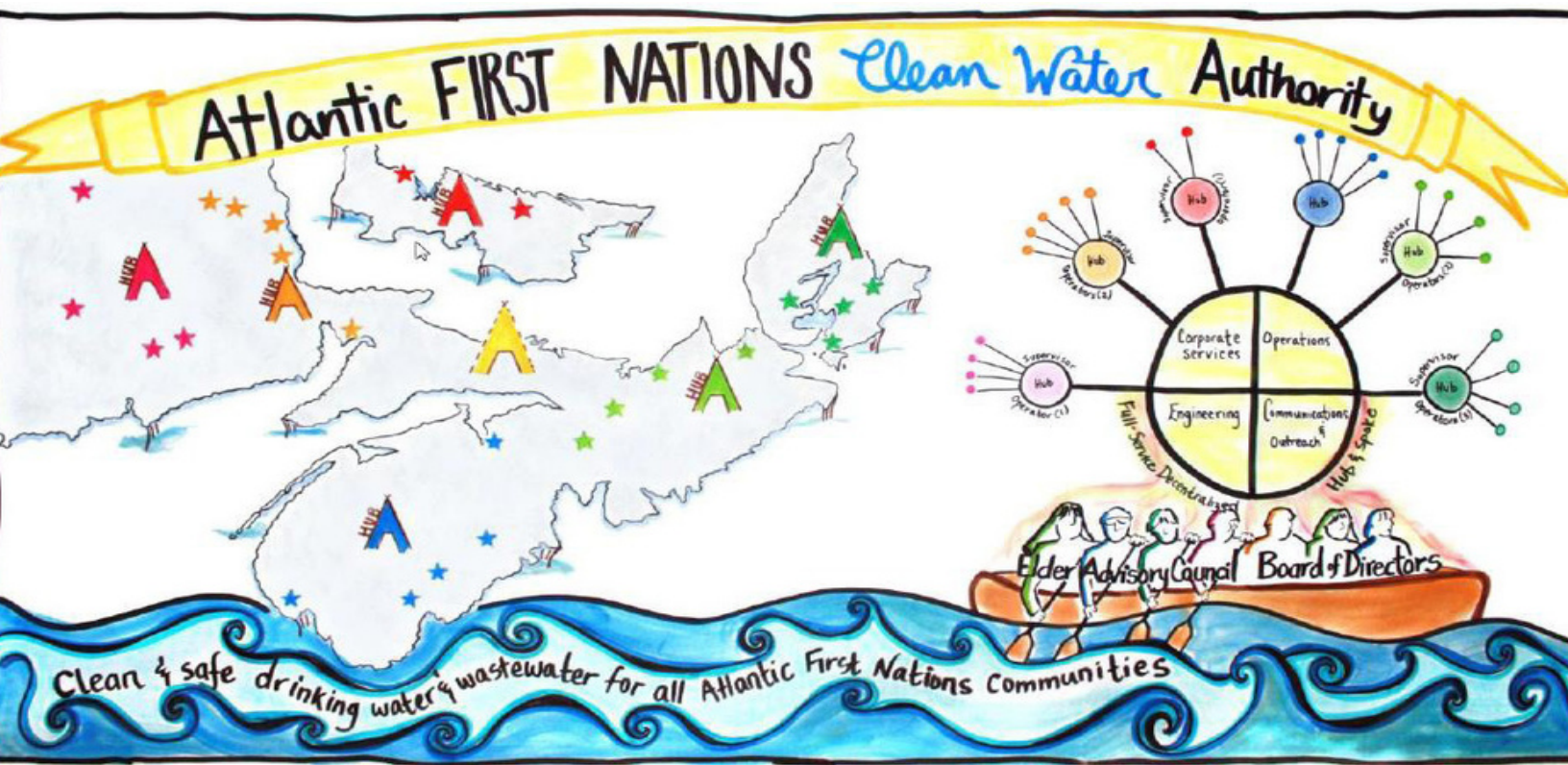




PATHWAYS
EXECUTIVE SEARCH



Director of Operations Engineering and Compliance





The Organization

Access to safe drinking water and wastewater services are 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.

In the end, 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'kopekwithk (mainland Nova Scotia East)
- Kespukwithk (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 Operations Engineering and Compliance who will readily transform water and wastewater systems by delivering quality services and building capacity for First Nation communities. 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 with the vision necessary to ensure the Operations Department has the proper operational controls, administrative and reporting procedures, and resources in place to grow the organization effectively and ensure operating efficiency.

Leading a team of over 20, the Director is responsible for providing technical support and proactive leadership to operating programs and projects in the Operations Department. They will plan, develop, review, and monitor operating programs, practices, and service standards that are consistent with corporate objectives. The Director of Operations Engineering and Compliance ensures the safe delivery of services through efficient day-to-day operations.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Director of Operations Engineering and Compliance is a member of the senior management team. Their responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Direction, supervision, performance, and development of all staff in the Operations Department and responsible for decisions affecting the Department in accordance with departmental and organizational policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- Development and execution of an organizational plan for the Department ensuring the requisite staff complement for the technical, administrative, supervisory and line personnel capable of effectively delivering mandated service within the policy and operating budget guidelines.
- Participate in a variety of management activities including hiring, performance management, discipline, budgeting, safety, and employee relations matters.
- Provide leadership in innovation and process improvement in the department to continually improve value to end users.
- Serve as the AFNWA's knowledge lead and prime technical resource on water and wastewater system operations.
- Maintain expert-level knowledge of the operation of water and wastewater systems and provide guidance to the Superintendents on strategies for system operation.
- Ensure effective systems for service delivery and emergency response to provide for safe and reliable service.
- Responsible for the preparation, implementation, and execution of short- and long-term objectives of the Department.
- Provide technical review and recommendations regarding operational issues, consultant reports, and capital works initiatives.

The Opportunity (cont'd)

Duties and Responsibilities

- Responsible for the preparation and quarterly monitoring of the budgets for the Department including recommendations for extraordinary expenditures, capital works requirements and staff complement within the Department.
- Responsible for the operation, maintenance and management of water and wastewater treatment facilities, emergency water supplies, and related infrastructure (including reservoirs, pumping stations, control chambers, etc.), industrial control systems, and water distribution and wastewater collection systems.
- Develop and implement strategic preventative maintenance programs and ensure that service, maintenance, materials, and design standards are appropriate.
- Ensure there is an appropriate maintenance management system to record productivity and costs to adequately report on management information to allow appropriate business decisions.
- Consult with the Director of Engineering on water and wastewater system planning, water and wastewater treatment, asset management and capital improvement requirements and delivery of projects.
- Develop and implement all Departmental policies and procedures ensuring conformance to the Environment Act, Fisheries Act, Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality, federal Wastewater System Effluent Regulations, Occupational Health & Safety legislation, Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act and all other legislative requirements.
- Lead and coordinate on behalf of operations with other AFNWA programs such as asset management, water and sanitation safety plans, standards and specifications development, maintenance, managerial systems, environmental management systems and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and mapping products.
- Ensure infrastructure records are properly maintained and that information systems are available to deliver data to field staff.
- Act in the capacity of CEO or for other Departmental Directors as required.
- Perform 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 (cont'd)

Experience

- Seven (7) years of senior management and engineering experience in a relevant field.
- Demonstrated experience in working with water and wastewater systems and operational best practices including a thorough understanding of Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition [SCADA] systems.
- 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 and lived experience with First Nations or Indigenous communities.

Required Knowledge, Skills, Abilities

- Knowledge of Indigenous communities' structure, culture, and protocols.
- Extensive knowledge of design, construction, rehabilitation, operating and maintenance practices for water and wastewater systems.
- Experience delivering presentations to different audiences (First Nations communities, Board of Directors, conferences).
- Knowledge of relevant statutes, water and wastewater utility 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 Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
- Working knowledge of emergency response planning.
- Skilled in using computer applications.
- Knowledge and experience in budgeting and program planning.
- Ability to work extended hours in emergency situations.
- Ability to work under challenging 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.
- Previous work related to First Nations water and wastewater operations is considered an asset.
- The ability to speak Mi'kmaq or Wolastoqiyik is considered an asset.
- Ability to travel throughout Atlantic Canada.



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.