



**YUKON
REGION**

Summary Findings: 2022 Policing and Justice Engagement

This document summarizes perspectives shared in the Yukon Region about First Nations community safety, policing, and justice priorities at the 2022 Indigenous Community Safety Summit, and in responses to a survey. It also recommends actions for the federal government to consider in the development of the national Indigenous Justice Strategy and First Nations Policing Services legislation. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Yukon office supported the Indigenous Safety Summit and developed the survey as part of an engagement project coordinated by the national AFN.

Addressing Individual Needs of Yukon First Nations

- Approaches to community safety, justice, and policing services within Yukon First Nations (YFN) communities must centre around their unique needs.
- The unique worldviews, practices, and traditions of each YFN must be respected and upheld within community safety and justice systems.
- Community safety, justice, and policing services must compliment Modern Treaty and inherent rights. Justice and safety approaches must be developed with a First Nation's traditions, laws, and agreements in mind.
- Administration of Justice Agreements (AJAs) provide a mechanism for many YFNs to develop their own laws and law enforcement mechanisms, in accordance with their traditions, laws, and values.
 - » For example, First Nations whose governance structures involve clan systems may choose to set up their own courts or adjudication systems based on their clan customs and traditions.

Mental Health and Community Safety

Community safety programs need to include mental health and harm reduction supports to be successful.

- All levels of government must apply a harm-reduction lens to address the root causes of many community safety issues, which include mental illnesses like addiction and trauma.
- Mental health and wellness needs in Yukon communities include:
 - » Accessible counselling services
 - » Community-based aftercare, addictions support workers in rural and remote communities, and culturally-relevant and trauma-informed mental wellness programming.

Shifting Towards Prevention, Healing, and Restorative Justice

Building strong communities is an important preventative measure to reducing crime or violence.

- Trauma-informed practices must be learned and applied by law enforcement officers and agencies (i.e., racial bias training, harm reduction education, etc.)
- Community safety initiatives should address the root causes of crime (i.e., restorative justice initiatives, crime prevention education, holistic community wellness promotion, youth-specific programming)
- Rather than focusing on punitive measures (i.e., incarceration), an Indigenous Justice Strategy should incorporate interpersonal healing and principles of restorative justice
- Systemic racism in the justice system must be addressed by reimagining it through a First Nations lens (i.e., greater civilian oversight, establishing and expanding First Nations Courts, Gladue Courts, etc.)

Building and Maintaining Community Partnerships

Strong partnerships between First Nations and external governments or service providers are vital to meeting community safety needs.

- Outside agencies and governments should take a 'bottom-up' approach, and fit into the processes of local bodies/ organizations, not the other way around.
- First Nations are often best equipped to support each other in times of crisis. More opportunities are needed for First Nations to gather and discuss how they could collaborate and share resources during emergencies.
- All law enforcement officers require adequate, culturally-appropriate training to build trusting partnerships with First Nations and properly support their safety needs
- YFN citizens, leaders, and staff prefer to have policing, law enforcement, and community safety services led by their own people.

Learning from the Yukon Community Safety Officer (CSO) Program

The CSO program provides a concrete example of how YFN are successfully applying restorative justice approaches to their own public safety services.

- CSOs are trusted and familiar members of a YFN who engage their community in crime prevention and community safety
- 94% of Kwanlin Dūn First Nation citizens reported feeling safer today than when the program first started
- CSOs make focused efforts to earn the trust of the community, which is something the police and RCMP have generally not be able to do effectively



Community Safety Opportunities and Recommendations for Action

- General Community Safety Recommendation
- First Nations Policing Recommendation
- Indigenous Justice Strategy Recommendation

COMMUNITY SAFETY OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDED REGIONAL COORDINATION (For AFN and YFN Consideration)	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
<p>Increase understanding of the unique community safety, justice and policing concerns and needs of each Yukon First Nation.</p> <p>Amplify successful programs, partnerships, services, and/or supports aimed at upholding community health and wellness.</p> <p>Strengthen relationships between First Nations and local agencies (e.g., first responders) by highlighting successful models, education resources, and partnership opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for Yukon First Nations to organize and hold localized community safety workshops. • Analyze successful First Nation-led community health and wellness programs, services, and partnerships to provide First Nations with an information toolkit on how to implement these types of successful initiatives. • Recommend culturally-informed and relevant training and/or education resources that can be incorporated into the federal First Nations Policing framework and the Indigenous Justice Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest sustainable federal resources into community safety programs, services, and partnerships determined by Yukon First Nations • Expand the definition of ‘policing’ to include alternative law enforcement services (including citizen-led community safety officer programs) within the proposed federal legislation to make First Nations policing an essential service. • Include implementing and properly resourcing Administration of Justice agreements with Yukon First Nations as a priority in the federal Indigenous Justice Strategy. • Explore ways to strengthen inter-agency and inter-governmental relations with First Nations for improved emergency response. • Amend policies and allocate funding to increase, and strengthen, partnerships between First Nations for public safety and emergency response services
<p>Develop alternative approaches to the administration of justice that may be implemented within the Modern Treaty context of most Yukon First Nations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop information materials outlining alternative approaches to the administration of justice, and steps necessary to realize such approaches (i.e., Gladue principles, First Nation courts, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funding for Yukon First Nations to develop their own alternative approaches to law enforcement and the administration of justice. • Through the Indigenous Justice Strategy, empower First Nations to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Rebuild their own justice systems » Develop programs and services that divert offenders and victims out of the Canadian Justice system
<p>Improve policies and funding programs to reach Yukon First Nations directly with community safety resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out bilateral opportunities between Yukon First Nations and the Government of Canada to ensure any federal legislation, funding, and policy initiatives related to First Nations’ community safety is inclusive of Yukon First Nation needs and priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand access to First Nations policing and community safety funding to include alternative law enforcement service models, such as the Community Safety Officer program operating in several Yukon First Nations. • Implement the justice arrangements outlined in the Umbrella Final Agreement, and Yukon First Nations’ own Final and Self Government Agreements. • Engage the three Yukon First Nations that have not pursued Final Agreements to have direct dialogue on justice reform. • Reform policies and legislation to better include Gladue principles in the Canadian justice system.