

YUKON POVERTY Report Card 2020

Campaign 2000 Update

CAMPAIGN 2000
END CHILD & FAMILY
POVERTY



Yukon Anti-Poverty
COALITION
anti-pauvreté du Yukon

About the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition

The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition works to facilitate the elimination of poverty in the Yukon through awareness, education, advocacy, action, and community building. The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition currently has over 500 members including community members and representatives from non-governmental organizations, elected officials, and representatives from the business and faith communities on issues involving food, shelter, income, and access to services.

The vision of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition is that all people in the Yukon live in an inclusive community free from poverty where diversity is respected and human rights are upheld. The official mandate of the organization is to:

- Foster strategies, actions, and partnerships with organizations to reduce and prevent poverty in the Yukon
- Identify gaps, support collaboration, and facilitate the development of solutions to deal with the effects of poverty
- Provide specific programming to alleviate the impacts of poverty on individuals and families
- Provide safe and welcoming spaces for new ideas and solutions to be incubated and supported
- Increase awareness of the causes of poverty and its impacts on Yukon people
- Provide factual information on poverty based on research and lived experience
- Coordinate actions and information, within and outside the Yukon, regarding poverty
- Advocate and support individuals and families to navigate current systems
- Advocate for positive systemic change with partner organizations

For more information: www.yapc.ca (867) 334-9317

About Campaign 2000

Campaign 2000 is a cross-Canada public education movement to build Canadian awareness and support for the 1989 all-party House of Commons resolution to end child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. Campaign 2000 began in 1991 out of concern about the lack of government progress in addressing child poverty. Campaign 2000 is non-partisan in urging all Canadian elected officials to keep their promise to Canada's children. The Campaign 2000 coalition consists of 120 partners committed to addressing the issue of child and family poverty and believe that the federal government has a responsibility to honour the all-party resolution to end child poverty.

One accountability tool used by Campaign2000 and its coalition partners is producing poverty report cards for Canada and the provinces and territories as a means of highlighting the challenges specific to each province and territory. The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition is a Yukon partner in Campaign 2000 and produced this first poverty report card for Yukon.

March 25, 2021

Contents

1.0 Introduction	4
2.0 Poverty in Yukon.....	4
2.1 The Housing Crisis	6
2.2 The Challenge of Food Insecurity.....	8
2.3 Living Wage Campaign	9
3.0 Current Initiatives.....	10
3.1 Putting People First.....	10
3.2 Minimum Wage Review	12
3.3 Yukon Social Inclusion Strategy.....	12
3.4 Universal Low-Fee Child Care.....	13
3.5 Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit.....	13
3.6 Whitehorse Transit Master Plan.....	14
3.7 Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office	14
4.0 Community Highlights.....	15
4.1 Safe At Home.....	15
4.2 Yukon Food for Learning.....	16
4.3 Yukon First Nations Education Directorate....	16
4.4 Kids Recreation Fund.....	16
References.....	17

1.0 Introduction

The Yukon is a unique place within Canada due to its rich cultural, ecological, geographic, and climatic diversity. It is home to approximately 42,500 residents dispersed over a landmass of nearly 475,000 square kilometres including 14 distinct First Nations, of which 11 have negotiated self-government agreements that support greater autonomy and self-determination. Despite its considerable riches and strengths, Yukon faces considerable ongoing challenges related to poverty, the consequences of which are disproportionately experienced by Indigenous peoples and children and youth.

This report provides an overview of key issues relating to poverty in Yukon:

- the housing crisis and the challenge of food insecurity with a focus of the disproportionate impact on children and youth, Indigenous peoples, and others.
- an overview of previous initiatives and ongoing work that can be leveraged to support a comprehensive approach to reducing poverty in the Yukon.
- a description of some successful community-driven initiatives that are supporting improvements in the health and wellness of Yukoners.
- ten recommendations including several policy proposals to improve the health and wellness of children, youth, and families specifically.

2.0 Poverty in Yukon

At this time, Statistics Canada does not measure the prevalence of poverty based on the Market Basket Measure (Canada's official measure of poverty) for Yukon although considerable work is underway to remedy this gap. Considerable qualitative and quantitative data exist relating to a series of key indicators demonstrating that poverty remains a significant issue in the territory that necessitates urgent action.

In August 2018, the Government of Canada released *Opportunity for All: Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy*. The strategy enshrined the Market Basket Measure as official measure of poverty in Canada, established targets for poverty reduction, and enabled the creation of the National Advisory Council on Poverty to advise the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development on poverty reduction measures and to report annually on progress toward poverty reduction. ⁱ The Market Basket Measure establishes thresholds of poverty based upon the cost of a basket of food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and other items that reflect a modest, basic standard of living. ⁱⁱ

At this time, Statistics Canada is in the process of developing the Northern Market Basket Measure, a variant of the Market Basket Measure intended to reflect life in the North while incorporating available data sources, that will serve as the official measure of poverty for the territories. The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, the Yukon Status of Women Council, and several members of the community with an interest in poverty have engaged with Statistics Canada and the Yukon Bureau of Statistics as part of ongoing work to formalize the methodological design of the Northern Market Basket Measure. It is anticipated that Statistics Canada will produce preliminary estimates of the prevalence of poverty in Yukon and the Northwest Territories by mid-2021.

The proposed Northern Market Basket Measure builds on a study conducted by Statistics Canada in 2012 to determine the feasibility of measuring poverty in the territorial capitals using a Northern variant of the Market Basket Measure. The feasibility study included a baseline estimate of the prevalence of poverty for each of the territorial capitals. Key findings from the feasibility study included:

- 16% of all households lived in poverty
- 22.1% of persons under the age of 18 years lived in poverty
- 40.7% of persons in female lone-parent households lived in poverty ⁱⁱⁱ

Statistics Canada also produces the Low Income Measure, which serves as an additional indicator of low income that complements the Market Basket Measure. The Low Income Measure is a fixed percentage (50%) of median adjusted household income, where “adjusted” indicates that household needs are taken into account. Adjustment for household sizes reflects the fact that a household’s needs increase as the number of members increases. ^{iv}

Statistics Canada most recently reported the Low Income Measure for Yukon as of 2018. At that time, 4,070 or 10.9% of Yukoners were considered low income. Yukoners most likely to be considered low income based on the Low Income Measure include:

- Lone-parent families – 22.1%
- Persons not in census families – 23% *
- Households living outside of the Whitehorse – 14.5% ^v

** A person not in census families is an individual who is not part of a census family (couple family or lone-parent family). Persons not in census families may live with their married children or with their children who have children of their own. They may be living with a family to whom they are related or unrelated. They may also be living alone or with other non-family person*



2.1 The Housing Crisis

Despite the lack of current data regarding the prevalence of poverty in Yukon, considerable data exists relating to key indicators of several dimensions of poverty and inclusion. In particular, there is significant data that highlights the magnitude of the housing crisis across Yukon as well as challenges relating to food insecurity.

A major factor driving the housing crisis remains the lack of social and affordable housing across the territory. The most recent Yukon Rent Survey released by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics showed that vacancy rate was 3.2% as of October 2020 with no available rental units reported for Dawson and Haines Junction while only one vacant rental unit was reported for Watson Lake. Figure 1 below presents the vacancy rate by unit size and community as reported in the most recent Yukon Rent Survey for the period ending October 2020.

Figure 1: Vacancy rates for the period ending October 2020, by unit size and community

	Yukon	Whitehorse	Dawson	Watson Lake	Haines Junction
Vacancy Rate					
All	3.2%	3.4%	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%
Bachelor	10.9%	11.6%	0.0%	0.0% †	...
1 Bedroom	3.3%	3.3%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0% †
2 Bedrooms	2.3%	2.4%	0.0% †	0.0%	0.0% †
3-4 Bedrooms	1.7%	1.8%	0.0% †	0.0%	0.0% †
5+ Bedrooms	17.4%	26.7% †	...	0.0% †	...

As vacancy rates continue to decrease, the median cost of rental housing across the territory increased by nearly 6% between October 2019 and October 2020. ^{vi} Figure 2 below presents the medial rental housing costs by unit size and community as reported in the most recent Yukon Rent Survey for the period ending October 2020.

Figure 2: Median rental housing costs for the period ending October 2020, by unit size community

	Yukon	Whitehorse	Dawson	Watson Lake	Haines Junction
Median Rent					
All	\$1,150	\$1,155	\$1,000	\$800	\$620
Bachelor	\$900	\$900	\$1,000	x	...
1 Bedroom	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$528	x
2 Bedrooms	\$1,255	\$1,258	\$1,300 †	\$800	x
3-4 Bedrooms	\$1,725	\$1,750	x	\$1,200	x
5+ Bedrooms	\$2,200	\$2,500 †	...	x	...

As highlighted above, the ongoing housing crisis throughout Yukon worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic. Across North America, many jurisdictions have implemented a range of policies to protect renters during the pandemic including banning evictions and freezing rental rates. These measures are intended to ensure that people who may be at risk of homelessness due to the pandemic can maintain access to secure housing and prevent long-term health, social, and economic challenges associated with homelessness.

Recommendation 1: Implement a freeze on rent increases for renters for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic and limit future increases based on the Consumer Price Index for Whitehorse.

Responsibility: Yukon Government

On April 17, 2018, the Yukon Planning Group on Homelessness, with the support of the Council of Yukon First Nations and funding from the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy, conducted the second biennial Point-in-Time Count to enumerate the population of people experiencing homelessness in Whitehorse. The count revealed that at least 195 people were living in the community at that time without a fixed address who were experiencing homelessness or considered at risk of experiencing homelessness. Among those experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness:

- 83% were between the ages of 25 and 64
- 12% were between the ages of 15 and 24
- 5% were age 65 and over
- 82% identified as Indigenous
- 61% identified as male ^{vii}

Statistics Canada most recently released data regarding the prevalence of core housing need in Yukon as part of the 2016 census. A household in core housing need is one whose dwelling is considered unsuitable (i.e. not enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the residents based on National Occupancy Standards), inadequate (i.e. in need of major repairs), or unaffordable (i.e. shelter costs equal more than 30% of total before-tax household income). Statistics Canada reports that 12.1% of Yukoners lived in core housing need as of 2016. Yukoners most likely to live in core housing need include:

- households with children age 14 and younger (14.1%)
- persons age 65 and above (14.8%)
- Indigenous Peoples (22.9%)
- persons in lone-parent households (31.4%)
- persons not living in an economic family* (22.9%). ^{viii}

* a person living either alone or with others to whom he or she is unrelated, such as roommates or a lodger

The Yukon Housing Corporation reports that there were 316 people on the wait lists for social and seniors housing as of October 13, 2020.^{ix}

Recommendation 2: Substantially increase investments in social and affordable housing to eliminate wait lists for seniors and social housing and to ensure that no Yukoner experiences homelessness.

Responsibility: All levels of government

2.2 The Challenge of Food Insecurity

According to Health Canada, food insecurity exists within a household when one or more members do not have access to the variety or quantity of food that they need due to a lack of money.^x The experience of food insecurity can range from concerns about running out of food before there is more money to buy more, to the inability to afford a balanced diet, to going hungry, missing meals, and in extreme cases, not eating for whole days because of a lack of food and money for food.

Food insecurity is a serious public health problem in Canada because individuals' health and well-being is closely associated to their household food security status. Among children, exposure to severe food insecurity has been linked to poorer health status and the subsequent development of a variety of chronic health conditions, including asthma and depression.^{xi,xii} Adults in food-insecure households are much more likely than food-secure adults to report having been diagnosed with a wide variety of chronic diseases, including mood and anxiety disorders, arthritis, asthma, back problems, and diabetes.^{xiii}

Statistics Canada measures food insecurity through the Household Food Security Survey Module of the Canada Community Health Survey. The sample is designed to be representative of the ten provinces and three territories, but it excludes full-time members of the Canadian Forces, individuals living on First Nations reserves, Crown Lands, or in the Quebec health regions of Région du Nunavik and Région des Terres-Cries-de-la-Baie-James, and persons in corrections facilities or care facilities. Although First Nations people living on-reserve and people experiencing homelessness comprise relatively small proportions of the Canadian population, their high levels of vulnerability to food insecurity must mean that the true prevalence of food insecurity is underestimated because of their exclusion.^{xiv}

The Household Food Security Survey Module consists of 18 questions asking the respondent whether they or other household members experienced the conditions described, which range in severity from experiences of anxiety that food will run out before household members have money to buy more, to modifying the amount of food consumed, to experiencing hunger, and in the extreme, going a whole day without eating. Based on the number of positive responses to the questions posed, households are classified as either food secure or marginally, moderately, or severely food insecure.

In 2017-18, 16.9% of Yukoners reported that they had experience some degree of food insecurity in the previous 12 months of which:

- 5.1% were considered severely food insecure
- 7.4% were considered moderately food insecure
- 4.3% were considered marginally food insecure

Yukon currently has the third highest rate of food insecurity in Canada behind Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, considerably higher than the national average of 12.7%. In total, it is estimated that approximately 6,100 Yukoners experience some degree of food insecurity. Yukoners most likely to report some degree of food insecurity include:

- People who receive social assistance – 64.5%
- Children under 18 years of age – 18.3%^{xv}

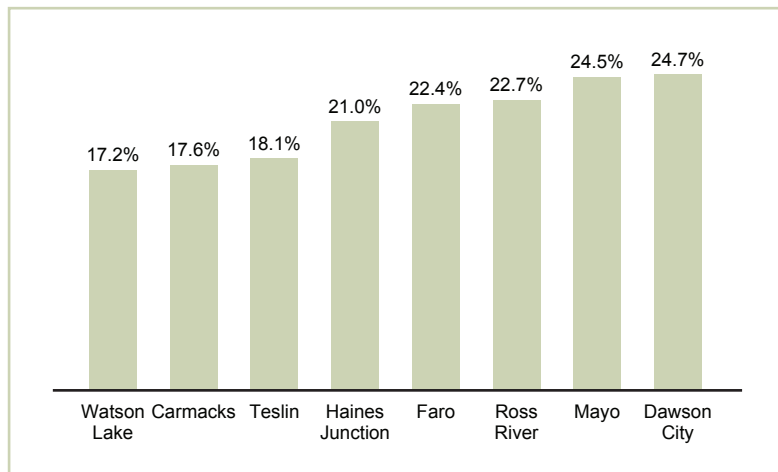
2.3 Living Wage Campaign

The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition calculates the living wage for Whitehorse each year to maintain a current and accurate measurement of the cost of living in the community. Living wage calculations are an effective way to measure the cost of living in a community in a way that directly integrates the role of public policy, including the provision of social services and the tax-and-transfer system. This calculation facilitates the identification and quantification of affordability challenges facing low- and modest-income households as well as opportunities for policy changes to improve affordability and to reduce poverty. Calculating the living wage on an annual basis enables an assessment of the effect of policy changes on the ability of low- and modest-income families to meet their basic needs.

The Whitehorse living wage equalled \$19.07 in 2019, an increase of 50 cents from 2018. As with previous years, housing affordability remains a significant concern for low- and modest-income households living in Whitehorse and is the single largest expense incurred by the reference family with child care fees representing the second largest household expense.

It is worth noting that the cost of goods and services are typically much greater than in Whitehorse. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics measures the relative cost of various goods in communities across the territory compared to Whitehorse through its Community Spatial Index. Figure 3 below presents the most recent figures from the Community Spatial Index for July 2020.

Figure 3: Weighted overall average price differences between Yukon communities and Whitehorse, July 2020



This year the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition will release updated living wage calculations for 2020 and 2021 that will detail the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on affordability.

3.0 Current Initiatives

3.1 Putting People First

In November 2018, the Premier and the Minister of Health and Social Services appointed an independent committee tasked with conducting a comprehensive review of health and social programs and services in Yukon. As part of the review, the Committee engaged with Yukoners to better understand the challenges that people face when interacting with various health and social services and the gaps that exist across the continuum of services. In its report, *Putting People First: The final report on the comprehensive review of Yukon's health and social programs and services*, the Committee found that:

“While we found that some parts of the system are working well in Yukon, other parts are not. More importantly, there is a lack of coordination across the system. This makes it hard to deliver services in a person-centred, holistic, preventative, safe and respectful way. To fix this, we believe that major, system-level changes need to be made.”

The Committee produced a series of 76 recommendations with the intent to foster a health and social service system that is person-centred, holistic, focused on prevention, relationship-based, and safe and respectful. Recommendations intended to close the gaps for lower-income Yukoners included:

- Bring together all social assistance delivery agents to create a common vision for social assistance, leading to the design and delivery of more equitable, effective, easy-to-navigate and person-centred income support programming.
- Develop a referral policy and procedure to employment and training services for all individuals on social assistance to determine work readiness and/or vocational planning. Ensure that the current employment and training services are meeting the needs of clients. Retooling these services should also lead to improved outcomes in social assistance duration, workforce attachment, and reducing the overall impacts of poverty.
- Develop a referral policy and procedure for community health services for individuals with medical barriers to work if they are not currently receiving medical treatment.
- Create a framework and provide support for data management and analysis for social supports programs. This work should be completed with associated reporting timelines attached, to ensure relevant data is reviewed and reported upon regularly.
- Conduct a program evaluation of social supports, to determine if current practices and policies are achieving program objectives and are cost-effective, and what the most influential factors in entering, staying on, and leaving social assistance are in Yukon.
- Provide funding to NGOs to formally implement free tax clinics for low-income Yukoners to maximize benefits tied to income tax filing. There should also be a coordinated effort to: recruit and train volunteers; offer this service physically and/or virtually in all communities; and advertise these clinics widely so social workers and other health care workers can make referrals.
- Design and implement a guaranteed annual income pilot, in collaboration with the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, and potential funding partners such as the federal government, health and social research programs and others.
- Create an income-tested, payer-of-last-resort public plan for extended benefits.
- Working with First Nations governments and the Government of Canada, determine how to coordinate the delivery of non-insured health benefits to all Yukoners to ensure consistency in benefits and efficient delivery.

- Create a separate, stand-alone disability benefit for those with permanent disabilities. Leave the Yukon Social Assistance top-up in place for individuals with short-term disabilities, who generally have higher expenses than the average social assistance recipient.
- Increase the disability top-up amount to \$325, to reflect inflation since 2005, and index disability income to inflation going forward.
- Combine Adult Disability Services and Child Disability Services into one needs-based program and develop a new eligibility and assessment framework for services based on the needs of adults and children with disabilities.
- Expand the mandate of adult programming to cover a broader range of disabilities and create new services, as appropriate, to meet the needs of this expanded adult service population.
- Provide self- or family-managed care funding to enable adult Yukoners with disabilities to live at home for longer.
- Align Government of Yukon housing initiatives under one provider, including management of non-governmental organization services for Yukoners requiring housing supports.
- Implement a By-Name List to improve coordination among service providers and reduce homelessness in the territory.
- Work with partners to increase investment in infrastructure and programming for community food hubs in all Yukon communities.

Recommendation 3: Implement the recommendations from the *Putting People First* report including those intended to close the gaps for lower-income Yukoners.

Responsibility: Yukon Government

Following the release of the *Putting People First* report, the Yukon Anti-Poverty developed a detailed values statement and a policy brief to help support the development of basic income program in Yukon. The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition is prepared to support the Yukon Government and the Government of Canada to ensure the creation of a robust basic income program in Yukon that helps to facilitate the elimination of poverty in the territory.

Recommendation 4: Build upon work completed by the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition to develop a made-in-Yukon basic income program.

Responsibility: Yukon Government, Government of Canada

3.2 Minimum Wage Review

In February 2018, the Minister of Community Services Minister requested that the Yukon Employment Standards Board conduct an independent review of the minimum wage and provide a recommended schedule for increases going forward. At that time, Yukon's minimum wage was slated to drop to seventh highest among provinces and territories by May 2018. ^{xvii} After reviewing the evidence and engaging with local stakeholders including the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, the Board recommended a phased approach to increasing the minimum wage over three years that would have resulted in an increase to approximately \$13.80 per hour on April 1, 2020 and to \$15.12 per hour on April 1, 2021. The Yukon Employment Standards Board concluded that the proposed increases “will benefit the Yukon by reducing the inequality gap as recognized by the living wage, improving the local economy by increasing consumer spending power, and allowing employers to attract and retain employees more easily”. ^{xviii}

Not satisfied with the result of the independent review, the Yukon Government rejected the proposed schedule and instead decided to limit the increase to \$13.71 per hour for 2020 and \$13.85 per hour for 2021, a mere one percent increase. ^{xix} As a result, the gap between the living wage and the minimum wage remains high and ensures that minimum wage earners in the territory will face significant challenges in meeting their basic needs.

Recommendation 5: Immediately increase the minimum wage to \$15.12 per hour with future annual increases based on the Consumer Price Index for Whitehorse in accordance with the schedule proposed by the Yukon Employment Standards Board.

Responsibility: Yukon Government

3.3 Yukon Social Inclusion Strategy

The Yukon Government released a Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2012 to help guide social policy development so that policies, programs, and services reflect social inclusion and poverty reduction goals. The strategy consisted of three primary goals: 1) improving access to services; 2) reducing inequities; and 3) strengthening community vitality. ^{xx}

Although the strategy included a series of social inclusion indicators (e.g., distribution of income, high school completion, labour force participation, and access to affordable housing and health services), it did not include a formal definition of poverty or any measurable targets.

A comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that includes a formal definition and measurable definition of poverty with legislated targets is needed to ensure that the Yukon Government can effectively reduce the number of Yukoners who experience poverty. A comprehensive strategy should prioritize actions that improve access to quality health and social supports and services, improve affordability by reducing the cost of basic needs including adequate housing and child care, and increase household incomes.

Recommendation 6: Renew the Yukon Poverty Reduction Strategy and include legislated targets and timelines for poverty reduction.

Responsibility: Yukon Government

3.4 Universal Low-Fee Child Care

As highlighted in recent living wage reports produced by the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, the annual cost of child care services has increased substantially in recent years. In response to increasing rates, the Yukon Government announced the creation of a universal low-fee child care program starting April 1, 2021. Under the program, the average daily cost of child care is anticipated to decrease from roughly \$43 to \$11.^{xxi} The reduction in child care costs will substantially benefit low- and modest-income families and will help to reduce the gap between the minimum wage and the living wage.

An evaluation of the Quebec universal low-fee child care program found that the program led to increased provincial tax revenues, decreased expenditures on transfers to individuals (i.e. reliance on income supports) and resulted in an increase in provincial Gross Domestic Product by an estimated 1.7% more than would have occurred otherwise.

Recommendation 7: Move forward with the creation of a territory-wide universal low-fee child care program.

Responsibility: Yukon Government

3.5 Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit

In December 2020, the Government of Canada and the Yukon Government jointly announced the Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit, a direct to household benefit program which helps to subsidize rental market housing for low- and modest-income Yukoners. Under the program, eligible Yukoners receive a monthly payment up to \$800 depending on household size and family size.^{xxiii} Table I below provides an overview of the basic details of the Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit.

Table I: Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit Program Overview

Eligible Unit Size	Maximum Monthly Benefit (\$)	Maximum Annual Household Income Amount (\$)
Bachelor	\$200	\$51,480
1-Bedroom	\$200	\$59,320
2-Bedrooms	\$400	\$68,720
3-Bedrooms	\$600	\$85,840
4-Bedrooms	\$600	\$87,040
5-Bedrooms	\$800	\$103,070

Note: The claw back rate for the program has not been disclosed publicly

3.6 Whitehorse Transit Master Plan

Public transit provides access to affordable, basic mobility for citizens, including low-income households and people with disabilities, and those seeking another option to supplement private vehicle ownership. Transportation is a significant expense incurred by many families throughout Yukon. In 2018, the City of Whitehorse released its Transit Master Plan, which outlined key goals and a series of recommendations intended to meet demand, maintain the strengths of the existing system, and rectify its shortfalls in operations and customer experience. The plan highlights the need for substantial investments to promote a multi-modal transportation system that provides users convenient and low-cost alternatives to private vehicle ownership such as bussing, walking, and cycling.^{xxiv}

Recommendation 8: Build on the Whitehorse Transit Master Plan with investments to improve the quality and accessibility of affordable transportation options including walking, cycling, and public transit.

Responsibility: City of Whitehorse

However, for low- and modest-income households, transit fares can act as a significant barrier that limits social inclusion and access to health and social services.

Recommendation 9: Offer subsidized public transit passes to low- and modest-income households to help reduce their transportation costs and promote greater social inclusion.

Responsibility: City of Whitehorse

3.7 Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office

Established in 2010, the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office advocates for children's voices to be heard, loudly and intentionally, throughout the Yukon. The Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office helps children and youth effectively access government services and have their views heard and rights considered in the decision-making of government service provider, identities systematic or policy related-issues, and provides public information about the role of the Advocate and children's rights. In their 2020 Annual Report, the Child and Youth Advocate flagged the growing number of individual advocacy issues and the disproportionate impact on Indigenous children and youth and noted

“While we have observed conscious effort to shift out of a long-standing colonial system, there are ongoing service gaps for children and youth. The implementation of policies like Jordan’s Principle are vital and encouraging. However, money alone does not repair the psychological impacts of trauma, past and present, and as such there is an ongoing need for family supports, family treatment and healing.”

The report contained three main recommendations:

- Update the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* to include a mandate to review critical incidents and deaths of children
- Apply a child rights impact assessment as part of the development and design of all relevant programs and policies
- Build meaningful partnerships with Yukon First Nations that support cultural connections, strengthening relationships, and building resiliency for children and youth ^{xxv}

Recommendation 10: Implement the recommendations from the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate's 2020 annual report.

Responsibility: Yukon Government

4.0 Community Highlights

All levels of government as well as many community organizations play an important role addressing poverty and improving the health and wellness of Yukon children and youth. This section highlights some of the work currently underway, but in no way serves as an exhaustive list of initiatives throughout the territory to improve the health and wellness of Yukon children and youth.

4.1 Safe At Home

In 2017, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the City of Whitehorse, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the Government of Yukon joined with non-governmental organizations, people with lived experience, and the business community to formally endorse the vision, goals and actions in the *Safe at Home Plan*. The Plan was an unprecedented success for Yukon, and a model for how diverse partners could work through complex matters with urgency and care. Over time, it became evident that an agency dedicated to ending and preventing homelessness through strong coordination of housing stock, supports and resources would enable a clearer path to ending homelessness. As a result, the Safe at Home Society (SAH) was formed in November 2020.

Progress towards ending homelessness is measured through a bi-annual Point-in-Time Count and in real time, through a By-Name List of people experiencing homelessness. SAH stewards both initiatives on behalf of community partners.

Program highlights since 2017 include:

- **Prevention:** Investments have supported a greater focus on education programs and financial and social supports for tenants and landlords to help prevent evictions.
- **Increasing Supply:** Investments have supported significant increases in the number of new supportive housing units as well as increases in housing options in rural Yukon.
- **Strong Coordination:** Improvements to the coordination of systems of care have included meaningful collaborations between services. This has improved access to both supports and housing for persons who have faced difficulties when attempting to navigate complex systems of care.
- **Establishing a "Mission Control":** Investments from all levels of government and community partners have supported increased capacity to coordinate, communicate, and facilitate systems change.^{xxvi}

4.2 Yukon Food for Learning

Formed in 1996, the Yukon Food for Learning Association supports school nutrition program across Yukon that help ensure that children have access to healthy, nutritious food. The Yukon Food for Learning Association currently partners with 29 schools across the territory and provides approximately 160,000 breakfasts, lunches, and snacks to children each year.

4.3 Yukon First Nations Education Directorate

Every Yukon First Nation boy and girl deserves an education that reflects their cultural realities and respects the inherent wisdom of their ancestors' traditions, methods, and ways. The Yukon First Nations Education Directorate was founded by Yukon First Nations parents and grandparents with the intention of exercising greater self-determination over education. Considerable work is underway to ensure that education is culturally safe and relevant for First Nations children and youth. Additionally, the Yukon First Nations Education Directorate is leading work to ensure that all children and youth attending school receive nutritious school lunches.

4.4 Kids Recreation Fund

Established in 1999, the Kids Recreation Fund aims to assist children and youth whose families are experiencing financial hardship so that they may actively participate in sport, art, cultural, social, and recreational programs. Since its onset, more than 6,000 children and youth from across the territory have accessed more than \$1,800,000 to support their involvement in various recreational activities.

References

- ⁱ Employment and Social Development Canada. (2018). Opportunity for All – Canada’s First Poverty Reduction Strategy. Employment and Social Development Canada Catalogue no. SSD-212-08-18E.
- ⁱⁱ Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. (1998). The Market Basket Measure – Constructing a New Measure of Poverty. *Applied Research Bulletin*, 4(2): pp. 1-4.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Statistics Canada. (2012). *Northern Market Basket Measure Feasibility Study*. Unpublished report.
- ^{iv} Statistics Canada. *Low income measures*. Statistics Canada Income Research Paper Series – Research Paper 75F0002M. Last updated November 27, 2015. Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/nl/pub/75f0002m/2012002/lim-mfr-eng.htm>
- ^v Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0018-01 After-tax low income status of tax filers and dependants based on Census Family Low Income Measure (CFLIM-AT), by family type and family type composition. doi: <https://doi.org/10.25318/1110001801-eng>
- ^{vi} Yukon Bureau of Statistics. (2021). *Yukon Rent Survey – October 2020*. Retrieved from: https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/ybs/rent_oct20.pdf
- ^{vii} Mechan, Kate. (2018). *Whitehorse Point-in-Time Count, 2018 Report*. Whitehorse, Yukon: Yukon Planning Group on Homelessness and the Council of Yukon First Nations
- ^{viii} Statistics Canada. *Table 39-10-0050-01 - Population in core housing need, by selected economic family characteristics of persons and sex*. Released December 9, 2020. doi: <https://doi.org/10.25318/3910005001-eng>
- ^{ix} Yukon Legislative Assembly. *Hansard, 34th Legislature, 3rd Session, No 58 (November 4, 2020)*. Retrieved from: <https://yukonassembly.ca/sites/default/files/hansard/34-3-058.pdf>
- ^x Roshanafshar, S., and Hawkins, E. (2015). *Food Security in Canada*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-624-X. Released March 25, 2015. Ottawa, Ontario.
- ^{xi} Kirkpatrick, S.I., McIntyre, L., and Potestio, M.L. (2010). Child hunger and long-term adverse consequences for health. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 164(8):754-62. doi: 10.1001/archpediatrics.2010.117
- ^{xii} McIntyre, L., Wu, S., Kwok, C., and Patten, S.B. (2017). The pervasive effect of youth self-report of hunger on depression over 6 years of follow up. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 52(5): 537-47. doi: 10.1007/s00127-017-1361-5
- ^{xiii} Tarasuk, V., Mitchell, A., McLaren, L., and McIntyre, L. (2013) Chronic physical and mental health conditions among adults may increase vulnerability to household food insecurity. *The Journal of Nutrition*; 143(11): 1785-93. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3945/jn.113.178483>
- ^{xiv} Deaton, B.J., Scholz, A., and Lipka, B. (2019). An empirical assessment of food security on First Nations in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 68(1): 5-19. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/cjag.12208>

- ^{xv} Tarasuk, V., and Mitchell, A. (2020). *Household food insecurity in Canada, 2017-18*. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). Retrieved from: <https://proof.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Household-Food-Insecurity-in-Canada-2017-2018-Full-Reportpdf.pdf>
- ^{xvi} McLennan, B., Green, G., Marchildon, G., Strand, D., and Zelmer, J. (2020). *Putting People First: The final report of the comprehensive review of Yukon's health and social programs and services*. Retrieved from: https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/hss/hss-imgs/putting_people_first_final_report.pdf
- ^{xvii} Yukon Government. (2018, February 27). *Government of Yukon announces minimum wage review*. Retrieved from: <https://yukon.ca/en/minimum-wage-review>
- ^{xviii} Gignac, J. (2018, December 12). A review of Yukon's minimum wage suggests it's time for a raise. *Yukon News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.yukon-news.com/news/a-review-of-yukons-minimum-wage-suggests-its-time-for-a-raise/>
- ^{xix} Yukon Government. *Find minimum wage in Yukon*. Retrieved March 14, 2021 from: <https://yukon.ca/en/doing-business/employer-responsibilities/find-minimum-wage-yukon>
- ^{xx} Department of Health and Social Services. (2012). *A Better Yukon for All – Yukon Government's Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy*. Whitehorse, Yukon
- ^{xxi} Yukon Government. (2021, February 1). *Universal childcare and early kindergarten will support Yukon families*. Retrieved from: <https://yukon.ca/en/news/universal-childcare-and-early-kindergarten-will-support-yukon-families>
- ^{xxii} Fortin, P., Godbout, L., and St-Cerny, S. (2012). *Impact of Quebec's universal low fee childcare program on female labour force participation, domestic income, and government budgets*. Working paper 2012/02. Sherbrooke, Québec: Université de Sherbrooke.
- ^{xxiii} Yukon Government and Government of Canada. (2020, November 4). *Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit supports rental housing affordability*. Retrieved from: <https://yukon.ca/en/news/canada-yukon-housing-benefit-supports-rental-housing-affordability>
- ^{xxiv} Masterton, G., Pejcic, S., Putre, B., Ratti, N., Verbich, D., and Malo, C. (2018). *City of Whitehorse Transit Master Plan: Final Report*. Retrieved from: <https://whitehorse.ca/home/showpublisheddocument?id=10014>
- ^{xxv} Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office. (2020). *Advocacy Trails: 2020 Annual Report – 10 Year Review*. Retrieved from: https://3995930a-ffe0-4b01-89cb-f7975f8a922d.filesusr.com/ugd/a5713e_6f6a117883a94abbb8f3bf24fa1464bf.pdf
- ^{xxvi} Mechan, K. and Pratt, M. (2020). *Safe At Home – Ending and Preventing Homelessness in Yukon: Our Progress 2017-2020*. Retrieved from: <https://yapc.ca/assets/files/S%40H-ProgressReport-2020Jul-Online-Compressed.pdf>



Yukon Anti-Poverty
COALITION
anti-pauvreté du Yukon