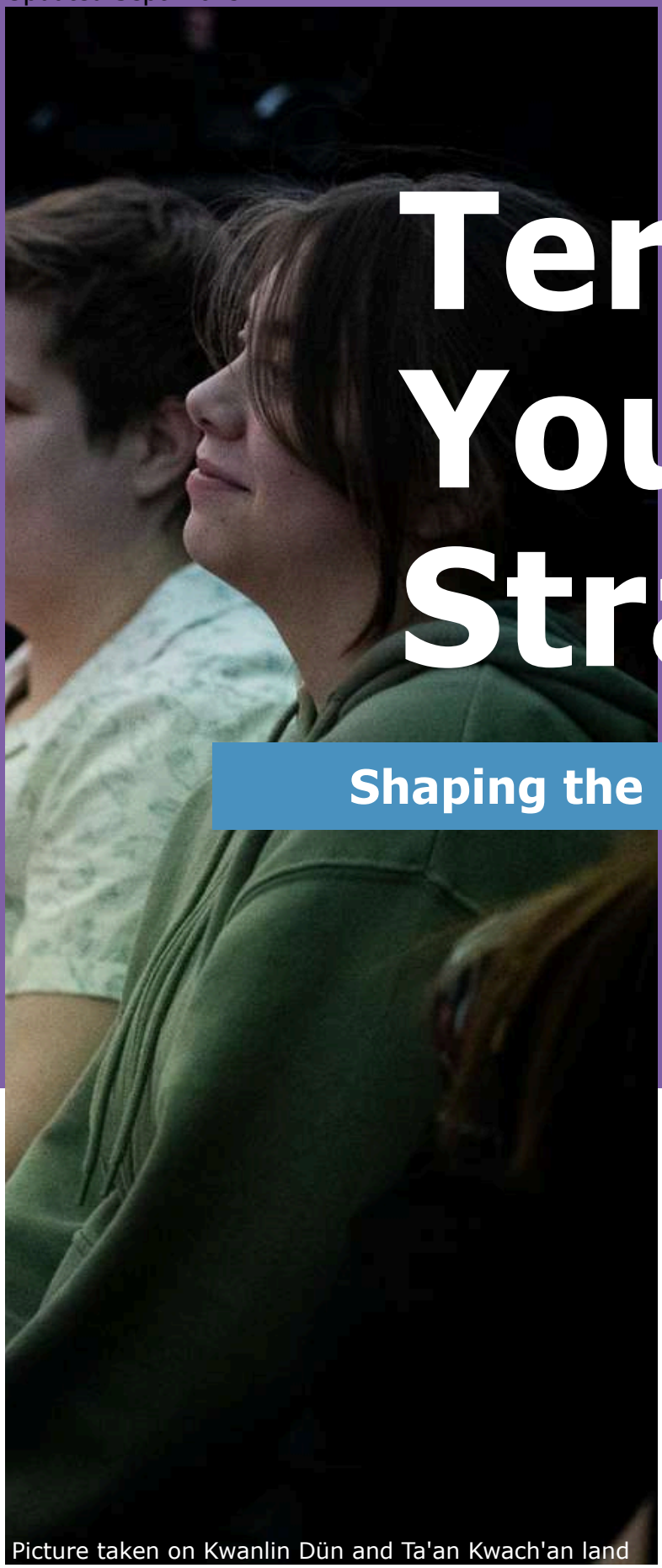
Updated Sept. 2025



Picture taken on Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an Kwach'an land

Territorial Youth Strategy

Shaping the Future with Yukon Youth

Territorial Youth Collective

Land Acknowledgement & Community Gratitude

We acknowledge that this work took place on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples who have stewarded the land for generations. We are deeply grateful to the communities who welcomed us, shared their knowledge, and invited us into their spaces. Your generosity and guidance continue to shape this work.



Picture taken on Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation land

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Introduction

Who are Youth

We define youth as the stage that bridges adolescence and young adulthood. For the purpose of this document, youth refers to individuals between the ages of 12 and 30.

What is the Territorial Youth Strategy (TYS)

Rather than being implemented through policy mandates, the TYS will serve as a guiding document for decision-makers at all levels and in all sectors. It will continue to exist as a living document in the years to come and will be revised based on conversations at accountability events and sessions throughout the year.

The TYS is a Process

TYS is a **collaborative, inclusive process** that connects a wide range of youth services and resources, engaging young people, youth-serving organizations, businesses, community members, and all levels of government. Inspired by the **7 generations concept** and guided by the **Yukon's Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice strategy** (Yukon Advisory Committee, 2020), the TYS uses that strategy's process and product as a foundational guide.

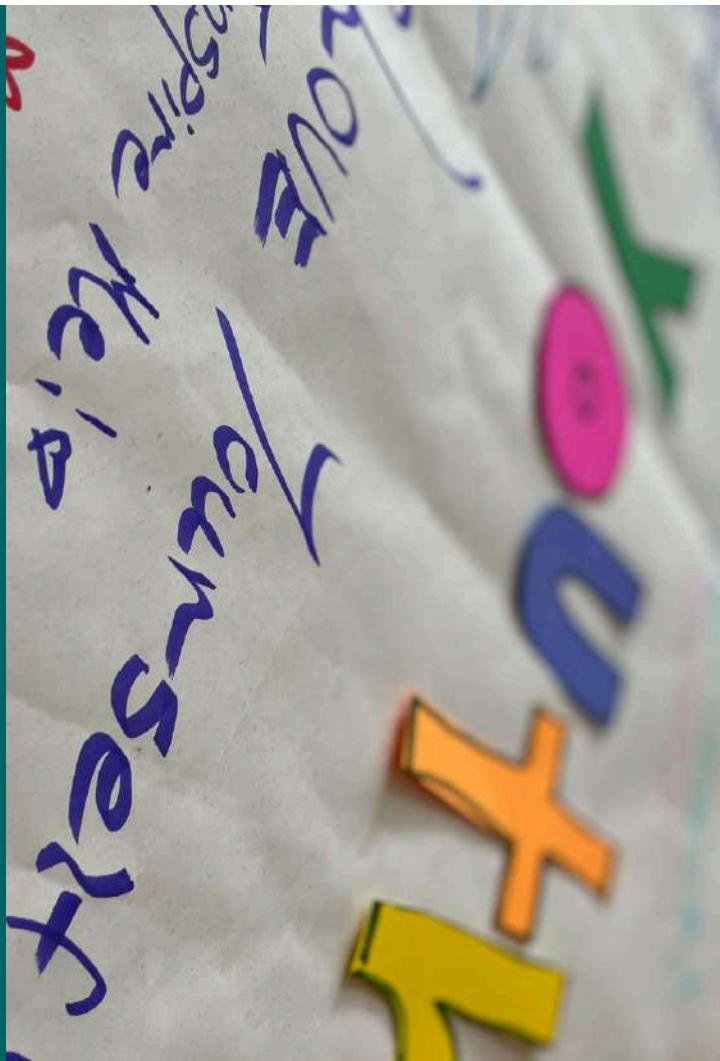
- **Following a Collective Impact approach, the TYS aims to:**
  - Increase collaboration across sectors by leveraging diverse strengths
  - Reduce duplication and fill gaps in services
  - Achieve systems-level change through strong partnerships
  - Increase funding for collaborative initiatives that help youth thrive

Nature of the Strategy

- The TYS prioritizes issues that matter most to young Yukoners by:
  - Fostering intergenerational connections
  - Providing immediate interventions and prevention-focused approaches
  - The Territorial Youth Collective (TYC) network is growing to support an inclusive TYS process
- TYC aims to engage a wide range of stakeholders, including:
  - Every Yukon First Nation
  - Government departments
  - Municipalities (cities, towns, villages)
  - Schools
  - Community organizations
  - Youth groups
  - Individuals committed to supporting youth
- Partners are encouraged to consider their unique roles in supporting and implementing the TYS to ensure meaningful impact

Collective Impact

- The Territorial Youth Collective (TYC) was formerly known as Communities Building Youth Futures (CBYF) Yukon
- Received funding and support from Tamarack Institute and Employment and Social Development Canada (2019/2020 – 2023/2024)
- Uses a Collective Impact approach to:
  - Identify and address barriers youth face
  - Build coordinated supports and solutions for Yukon youth
- Comprised of many organizations, plus many more participating through our Implementation Teams (formerly Action Teams).

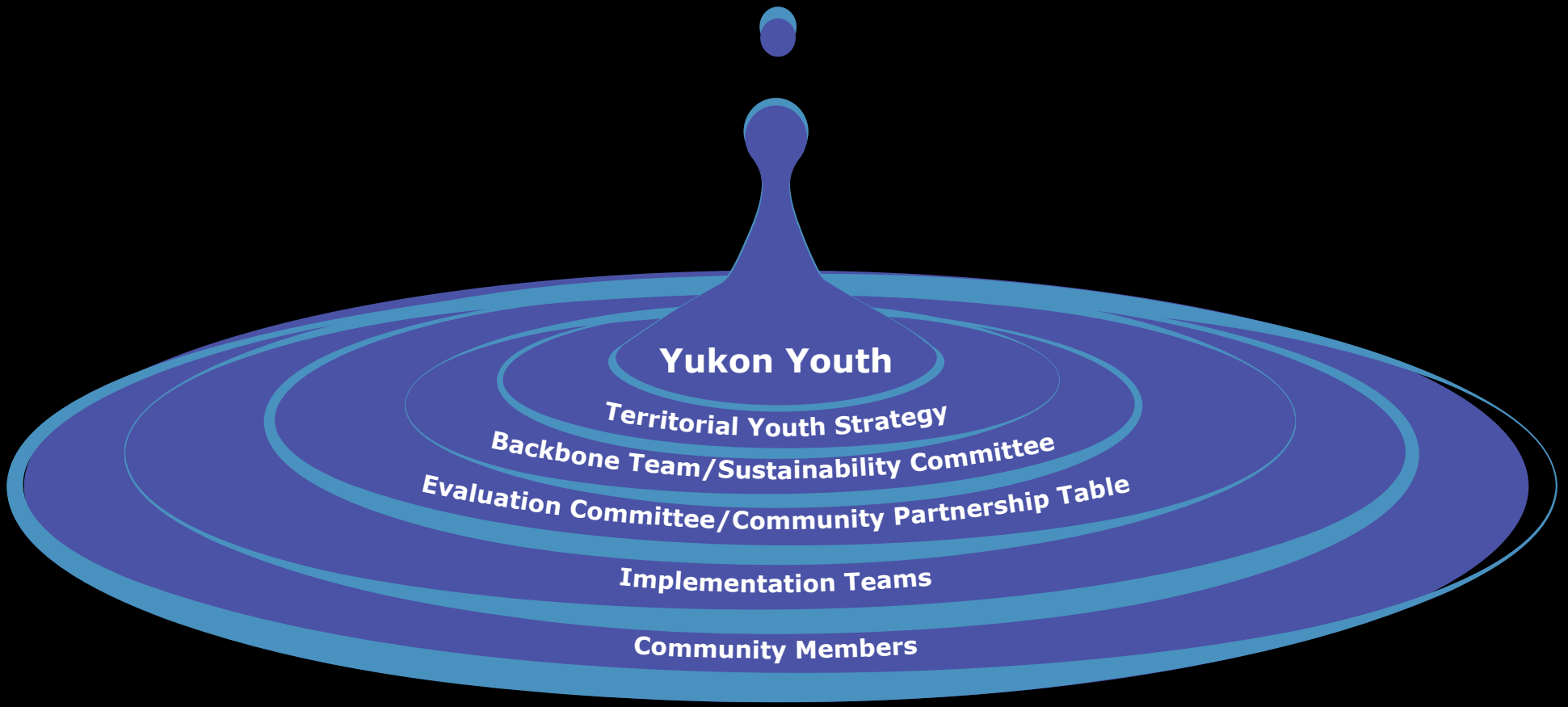


Collective Structure

We picture our structure like a drop of water falling into a still pond, sending ripples outward. At the center are Yukon Youth, the spark of ideas, energy, and leadership that sets everything in motion. Surrounding them is the Territorial Youth Strategy (TYS), the guiding vision that holds the circle together and ensures youth remain at the heart. The next ripple is the Backbone Team and Sustainability Committee, steadying the flow and keeping things moving with purpose. Further out, the Evaluation Committee and Community Partnership Table (CPT) listen carefully, gather feedback, and help keep community voices strong. The Implementation Teams form the next ring, where ideas are transformed into projects that take root in communities. Finally, the outer ripple belongs to families, neighbours, and partners—those who carry and expand the impact of youth leadership. Together, these ripples create a living system of support and action, each layer connected to the next, all beginning with Yukon Youth at the center.

Picture taken on Taku River Tlingit First Nation land

Ripples of Collaboration



Declaration

Yukon's Territorial Youth Strategy Declaration

As Yukoners and leaders

- We acknowledge the work of the Territorial Youth Collective and accept the findings of the Territorial Youth Strategy.
- We commit to **upholding the voices of youth, marginalized and vulnerable peoples, and communities** through collective impact and collaboration.
- We are committed to do our part in the **design and execution of an implementation plan** for the Yukon Territorial Youth Strategy, and initiatives that contribute to the yearly priorities identified by Yukon youth.
- We commit to **creating a sense of belonging for all Yukon youth**, while empowering youth's visions to have a positive sense of self and feel connected to and supported by their family, community, and land.
- We commit to be **accountable to youth, other partners, contributors, Yukon First Nations and our community members** for implementation of this Strategy through an accountability process and development of evaluation metrics and tools.



Picture taken on Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an Kwach'an land during the signing ceremony 2024

As of September 2025

Declaration Signatories:

Adventure Time

Isabelle Piche – Owner

Air North

Debra Ryan – Manager, Strategic Planning & Alliances

Association Franco - Yukonnaise

Josee Jacques – Director

BGC Canada

Owen Charters – President & CEO

BGC Yukon

Lindsay Cornell – Executive Director

Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Yukon

Dale Abbott-Smith – Executive Director

BYTE – Empowering Youth Society

Casey Albert – Executive Director

Canadian Filipino Association

Dominic Pelayo – President

Jo Aying – Board Member

Carcross/Tagish First Nation

Maria Benoit – Ḵaa Shaadé Hení (Chief)

City of Whitehorse

Laura Cabott – Mayor of Whitehorse

Council of Yukon First Nations – Health Dept.

Kareena Joshi – Health Analyst

Kristeen McTavish – Senior Analyst

Faces to the Sun Consulting Inc.

Alexia Miron – President and Director

Government of Canada

Brendan Hanley – Member of Parliament for Yukon

Inspire Yukon

Nikita Sawrenko-Bailey – Communications Coordinator

Käjit-in Zho (Youth Centre) – Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation

Lisa Anderson – Käjit-in Zho Manager

Kwanlin Dün First Nation – Youth Council

Natilee Thompson – Youth Councilor

Les Essentielles

Laurence Rivard – Director

Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation

Russell Blackjack – Chief

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Kent Langley – Inspector

Safe at Home Society

Kate Mechan – Executive Director

Skills Canada Yukon

Douglas McRae – President

Abbey Gartner – Program Coordinator

Katie Mooney – Executive Director

Ta'an Kwäch'än Council

Amanda Leas – Chief

Tamarack Institute

Liz Weaver – President and Co-CEO

The Yukon Party

Currie Dixon – Leader of the Yukon Party

Unleash Canada

Kelly Proudfoot – Representative

Village of Teslin

Lindsay Johnston – Recreation Manager

Youth Coalition 4 Food Security North

Meesha Wittkopf – Founder

Youth of Today Society

Linda Benoit – President

Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition

Myryja Friesen – Director

Yukon Child & Youth Advocate Office

Annette King – Child and Youth Advocate

Yukon Food Security Network

Michelle Watson – Coordinator

Yukon Government

Ranj Pillai – Premier of Yukon

Jeanie McLean – Deputy Premier of Yukon

Doris Bill – Chair, Board of Directors (Yukon Housing Corporation)

Sheena Reidy – Youth Outreach Counsellor (Child, Youth, and Family Treatment Team)

Yukon Invasive Species Council

Meesha Wittkopf – Executive Director

Yukon New Democratic Party

Lane Tredger – MLA for Whitehorse Centre



Picture taken on Champagne and Aishihik land

Our Vision

All Yukon youth have a sense of belonging throughout the Territory. This means that they feel empowered, have a positive sense of self and their futures, have mutually caring and fulfilling relationships, and feel connected to and supported by their family, community, and land.

Foundational Values

Meaningful Consideration of the Rights of Children & Youth

- Investing in youth strengthens the health and future of Yukon communities
- The **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** outlines 54 rights ensuring youth are:
  - Protected
  - Supported
  - Able to participate in decisions affecting them
- In Yukon, efforts are underway to include youth in policy development
- The **CRIA Working Group**, led by the **Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office**, promotes the use of the **Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA)** tool
- This tool helps governments ensure **youth rights are respected** in all decisions—everywhere, in everything, every day

Intersectionality

Many Yukoners continue to suffer from various forms of discrimination. The TYS works towards a more equitable future through providing supports to all Yukon youth which increase their sense of belonging. This means the TYS must prioritize supports and services for underserved youth, especially those experiencing multiple marginalized identities (i.e., Indigenous, Black, and other racialized youth, 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth, youth with disabilities, neurodiverse youth, and more).

Yukon First Nations Ways of Knowing, Doing, & Being

A foundation of Yukon First Nations values is integral to the success of the TYS. Yukon First Nations are leaders in understanding the need to prioritize children and their sense of belonging for the generations to come.
These values emphasize:

- Belonging and connection to family, community, and land
- Respect for all living things, including traditional knowledge and teachings
- Intergenerational relationships and learning from Elders
- Holistic approaches that support emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual wellness

The TYC, in respect to the First Nations we work with, added a wolf and crow/raven into our logo to represent the First Nation Communities we work with and serve in our work.



Picture taken on Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in land

Principles of Implementation

Youth Voice, Leadership, & Participation

- The TYS promotes a culture that **values youth voice and lived experience,** regardless of professional or academic background
- **Youth must lead** the development and ongoing implementation of the TYS
- Youth engagement must go beyond tokenism or "checking a box"
- Increase **access to panels, councils, and committees,** ensuring real influence and decision-making power
- Provide opportunities for youth to lead and create change beyond formal committees, including:
  - Creative outlets like art, music, storytelling, and other forms of expression
- Ensure youth hold **meaningful roles at all levels of government** (Municipal, Territorial, Federal, and First Nation)

Capacity Building in Rural Communities

- Rural communities outside Whitehorse face unique challenges, especially for young people
- Goal: **Reduce reliance on Whitehorse-based services for youth support**
- Strategies include:
  - **Increasing human resources** through recruitment and training in rural communities
  - Funding and supporting **existing youth-serving projects** and organizations
  - Focusing on **long-term sustainability of local supports**

Evaluation & Accountability

Ongoing **reflection, tracking, and responsiveness** are essential to ensure the strategy remains relevant, youth-driven, and effective. Rather than a one-time event, the accountability process will include **regular engagements with youth and community partners throughout the year**. These engagements will help assess progress, identify gaps, and inform next steps. Evaluation efforts will focus on **measuring impact, uplifting youth voice, and ensuring transparency** in how the strategy is carried out across the territory.

Communicating Resources & Services

- Communication is key to helping youth feel a sense of belonging
- Improved communication helps:
  - Youth **understand available services** and resources
  - Agencies recognize each other and **collaborate**
  - **Share information** across organizations
  - Inform funders and decision-makers about **what's working and what's needed**



Picture taken on Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwach'an Council land

Acting Now

Why it's Urgent & Necessary

The Yukon continues to experience many urgent crises, some of which are becoming increasingly challenging. Listed here are just a few of the urgent challenges facing our young people that the TYS aims to address (in no particular order):

- Mental wellness
- Substance Use Health Emergency
- Drug toxicity crisis (Overdose crisis/opioid crisis)
- Housing crisis
- Climate and biodiversity crises
- Health-care crisis
- Crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit+ people
- Post-COVID social isolation
- Lack of hope for a positive future
- Need for an increased sense of belonging in schools to address education disengagement
- Significant over-representation of indigenous youth in care
- Poor communication to youth about services, resources, and opportunities
- Intergenerational disconnect between youth and Elders/Seniors
- Labour market shortage
- Lack of youth voice and leadership opportunities
- Need for conversation around how these crises intersect



Picture taken on Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an Kwach'an land

Calls to Action

Through conversations, workshops, community visits, and collaborations with youth service providers, we **listened to what matters most to youth**. From these engagements, we identified key **Calls to Action; clear priorities that reflect the needs, hopes, and ideas shared by youth**. These Calls to Action are organized into sections that group related topics together, making it easier to understand how they connect.

- The Calls to Action are designed to guide:
  - Youth-serving organizations
  - Yukon First Nations
  - Government
  - Other youth-related sectors
- The Calls to Action are developed to:
  - Uplift youth voice
  - Guide funding decisions for youth initiatives
  - Advocate for youth issues
  - Highlight systemic barriers impacting youth
  - Break down silos across youth-serving fields
- The TYC is continuously evolving and committed to advocacy
- Each year, TYC identifies and shares key youth priorities to:
  - Spotlight issues that need immediate action
  - Support meaningful community action



Picture taken on Kaska Dena land

1.Basic Needs

Meeting basic needs is essential for the wellbeing of young people in the Yukon. Access to safe housing, nutritious food, clean drinking water, and healthcare provides the foundation for security and support. Many youth, especially those in rural and Indigenous communities, face added challenges due to high costs, geographic distance, and limited local services, putting their health and sense of safety at risk.

1.1 Housing Security

Everyone should have a safe, affordable place to live. In Canada, housing is considered “affordable” if it costs less than 30% of a household’s before-tax income[1]. Have safe housing options for people in vulnerable situations and unstable housing, such as youth sleeping on friends' couches or in their cars (aka “couch-surfing”). Connecting youth with support systems as well as homelessness prevention services.

1.2 Transportation

Young people need safe, accessible, reliable, and affordable transportation, especially between communities. This includes access to driving programs, support in getting a driver’s license, public transit, safe rides, and independent travel. Meeting these needs ensures that all young people can connect with education, employment, cultural events, and essential services.

1.3 Food & Water Security

Every young person should have access to affordable, nourishing food, and clean drinking water. In Canada, groceries are considered "affordable" if it's less than approximately 15% of household income[2]. Food supports for youth and their families are clearly communicated and accessible. Prioritize equitable and consistent access to fresh drinking water. Communities have the capacity to maintain reliable water and sustainable local food sources.

1.4 Healthcare

Young people need reliable, consistent, and accessible healthcare. This means increasing staffing capacity in the healthcare system and consistent support in nursing stations across rural communities to make it culturally safe, and free of stigma- especially for queer and transitioning youth. Have approachable sexual health care education and services for young people (i.e., menstrual products, STI testing, birth control, etc.). Meeting these needs ensures young people do not face long wait times or unnecessary travel. Youth have the right to necessary support and resources to be healthy and thrive.

Picture taken on Carcross/Tagish First Nation land

2.Community Safety & Harm Reduction

Young people in the Yukon need communities where they can feel safe, supported, and free from harm. Access to harm reduction services, safe spaces, and responsive support systems helps youth navigate challenges without fear, reduces risk, and promotes wellbeing. In both rural and urban communities, young people face unique safety challenges, and ensuring reliable, youth-focused approaches is essential for their health, confidence, and ability to participate fully in community life.

2.1 Barrier Free Youth Shelter

Young people need a welcoming shelter, safe space that is accessible and reliable. This includes 24/7 access to places where youth can rest, connect, and find support, including spaces for those who may be under the influence. These spaces should be open to young people ages 12–18, while also prioritizing those aged 19–26 who have "aged out" of other programs but continue to need support. Shelters and safe spaces should be available in communities across the Yukon that provides culturally safe services, peer connections, and links to mental health, housing, and wellness supports.

2.2 Sober Events & Spaces

Have engaging social events and spaces where young people can connect and have fun together without the presence of drugs or alcohol. These programs and facilities should be accessible and consistent with a focus in rural communities, as well as after hours options that work with young people's schedules.

2.3 Reduce Stigma & Increase Recovery Support

Youth need to feel understood and comfortable asking for and receiving help for substance use, including recovery and support systems to promote well-being. Have people reach out and care for young people who are struggling with substance use reliance and invite them to participate in healing/cultural activities. Provide sober social spaces for those healing and recovering from trauma and addictions.

2.4 Funding for Treatment Centers & Intervention Supports

Young people need culturally-safe local intervention and treatment supports. Build more Yukon-based treatment centres, intervention supports, family-based care, and aftercare. Focus on methods that heal and repair harm instead of punishment, and create community-focused options outside of the court system.

2.5 Harm Reduction Supports

Increase harm reduction supports and education. Invest in low-barrier, youth-centred, and youth-led harm reduction programs and spaces, including safer consumption options, drug testing, and naloxone training. Make resources visible and create spaces for open conversations about substance use. Have sustainable harm reduction supports in rural communities.

2.6 Building Relationships Between Law Enforcement & Youth

Hire more Community Safety Officers (CSO's) and prioritize building positive relationships between CSO's, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and young people to support them in making safe choices. Ensure that law enforcement is trained in cultural safety, trauma-informed practice, and youth engagement. The vision is that people in law enforcement will act with compassion and empathy.

2.7 Positive Programs for Young Men & Boys

Create and expand programs that help young men and boys explore positive ideas of masculinity, connect with healthy role models, and engage in activities that build empathy, purpose, and well-being.

3.Mental Wellness & Connections

Young people in the Yukon need strong support for their mental wellness and opportunities to build meaningful connections. Access to mental health services, peer support, and inclusive community networks helps youth feel valued, understood, and supported. For many, especially in rural and Indigenous communities, geographic distance, limited services, and social isolation can make it harder to access these supports, highlighting the importance of consistent, culturally safe, and youth-centered approaches to wellbeing.

3.1 Youth Centers & Drop ins

Create more drop-in programs and youth centres where young people can hangout, meet supportive role models, and join activities. Keep youth centres open 7 days a week with evening hours and create programs for ages 19-26 who lose support after aging out.

3.2 Interest Based Activities & Recreation

Programming should be shaped by youth themselves, with regular opportunities for them to share what they want to see and meaningful follow-through on their ideas. It is important to remove barriers such as cost, physical accessibility, and transportation for these activities to be accessible to all youth.

3.3 Communication With Youth

Improve the ways that resources and opportunities are communicated to young people to increase access and awareness, both in their local community and beyond. Meet young people where they’re at, with their preferred method of communication, while prioritizing relationship-building.

3.4 Training for Recreation Capacity

Increase capacity for recreation and youth programs in all communities. Increase developmental opportunities for youth recreation staff (training, courses, conferences), including training for culturally responsive and trauma-informed care. Acknowledge the role recreation plays in improving mental wellness.

3.5 Funding for Recreation Capacity

Provide sustainable funding for Yukon recreation so programs have the staff, coaches, and resources they need to provide barrier-free recreation.

3.6 Healthy Mentors & Positive Role Models

Invest in mentoring programs so young people can connect with healthy, diverse role models and promote intergenerational connections. Expand mentorship training and create inclusive spaces to build sustainable, healthy relationships for young people's daily lives.

3.7 Mental Health Resources for Rural Communities

Young people need reliable access to mental health services. This means increasing staffing capacity of clinical counselors, psychiatrists, and substance use supports especially in rural communities. Make sure services are culturally safe, and free of stigma. Reduce long wait times, unnecessary travel, and dependence on Whitehorse-based services. Promote and support the resources already in the community first before bringing others in.

3.8 Intergenerational Connections

Invest in opportunities for young people to engage with Elders, children, Knowledge Keepers and role models. Have spaces where young people can learn their languages, ceremonies, and meaningful spaces where generations can share perspectives and priorities. The connections should prioritize culture, traditional livelihoods, language, and land-based programming.

3.9 Support for Caregivers of Young People

Create more consistent and accessible programs for caregivers (including young people who are caregivers) to learn skills for building trust and connection with the youth in their care. Have sustainable funding for culturally-relevant programs supporting traditional parenting, parents/guardians, child development, and single parents.

3.10 Reduce Stigma & Increase Support for People Struggling with Mental Wellness Challenges

Young people need consistent, accessible, and responsive mental health services in their schools and communities. This means offering peer-to-peer counselling, and reaching out to youth who are struggling. Supports should include professional services such as mental health workers, as well as culturally relevant resources.

Picture taken on Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an Kwach'an land

4.Access to Learning & Education

Young people in the Yukon deserve equitable access to quality learning opportunities, no matter where they live. Flexible, inclusive, and culturally relevant education, from early learning through post-secondary; support, helps youth in developing their skills, confidence, and sense of purpose. In rural and Indigenous communities, distance, limited resources, and systemic barriers can make learning harder to access, underscoring the need for consistent, community-driven, and youth-centred approaches to education.

4.1 Sense of Belonging in Schools

Improve inclusion for all students to feel a strong sense of safety and belonging. Make sure there is a focus on marginalized, neurodiverse, and/or youth facing barriers in other aspects of life. Create spaces for cultural events and activities for young people to have decolonized learning opportunities. Strengthen relationships between students and educators to build school cultures that value dignity, independence, and mental wellness.

4.2 Educators Support

Support educators to prioritize the process of learning over grades/results and to consistently use traditional teachings & knowledge, and Individualized Learning Plans in and out of the classroom. Have opportunities for educators to participate in culturally relevant training and courses to improve classroom attendance and belonging.

4.3 Guardians & Caregiver Involvement in Learning

Have guardians and caregivers more engaged in young people’s learning. Establish the school as a community hub to bridge the gaps between school, family, and community. Improve participation in school and cultural events to create more space for gathering.

4.4 Alternative Education

Young people need more educational pathways as part of their learning journey. Redefine class structure and time schedules in secondary schools to promote the use of traditional teaching and alternate educational opportunities (e.g. Teen Parent Centre and Independent Learning Centre). Having more pathways increases accessibility and capacity in young people's lives. Land-based, experiential, and traditional knowledge should be available to all students.

4.5 Wrapping School Around Culture

Integrate Indigenous knowledge and history into all parts of the Yukon’s education system and curriculum. Create learning environments for youth to develop a deeper understanding of not only systemic oppression and marginalization of Indigenous people but also spaces to celebrate Indigenous cultures and resilience. Elders and Knowledge Keepers are consistently brought in to teach traditional skills such as trapping and skinning for school credits out on the Land.

4.6 Development of Essential Skills

Create more opportunities inside and outside of school for young people to build essential life skills. Focusing on personal finances, gardening, cooking, driving, employment readiness, social/emotional learning, and navigating systems (e.i.healthcare, buying/renting homes). Increasing accessibility of these essential skills will aid the transition to adulthood for young people's mental wellbeing and development.

4.7 Healthy Relationships & Consent

Young people need more resources around healthy relationships, gender, sexuality, consent, boundaries, 2SLGBTQQIA+ and sexual health. Have these discussions in all programming for all forms of relationships including family, friends, and partners. Have culturally safe spaces to discuss these topics making sure they are age appropriate.

4.8 Training on Responding to Unhealthy Relationships

Increase training on identifying and responding to toxic behaviours for youth. Teach about healthy relationships at a younger age so youth develop a better understanding of abuse, grooming, consent, boundaries, and toxic relationships. Increase training for educators so they know what to look for, and understand the protocol in supporting young people who have disclosed an incident. Provide workshops and training for young people and adult supporters to learn how to identify when an incident may be occurring, how to take action, and how to keep themselves safe.

4.9 Support Resources in Schools

Improve and expand educational and mental health resources in schools for young people dealing with neurodiversity and mental health crises. Ensuring accessible, consistent resources and culturally relevant trauma supports such as Elders and traditional language education assistants (EAs). Professional support should be available in all schools (e.g.counselors and therapy animals).

4.10 Anti-Racism Education

Schools, programs, and communities will prioritize anti-racism education through a decolonized lens that challenges systemic racism, colourism, and oppression in everyday life. Anti-racism learning must be woven into curriculum, programs, and practices, with training for teachers, staff, and community members (not just youth). Recognize and interrupt racism, especially from people in positions of power. This work should be guided by Indigenous, Black, and other racialized youth with lived experience. Strengthened through intergenerational learning and community conversations in spaces beyond school settings.

5.Employment & Career Opportunities

Young people in the Yukon need fair access to employment and career pathways that reflect their skills, interests, and cultures. Opportunities for training, mentorship, and meaningful work help youth build independence, contribute to their communities, and plan for the future. For many, especially in rural and Indigenous communities, limited job options and lack of local training can make it harder to gain experience, showing the importance of diverse, accessible, and culturally safe career opportunities for youth.

5.1 Exposure to Career Opportunities

Familiarize youth with a broader range of career options to expose them to different sectors of career pathways. Increase career-related presentations in the classroom and have more career fairs so students can get job exposure. Highlight learning opportunities for healthcare professionals and trades. Create hands-on experiences by bringing students, especially those in rural communities, out to work sites, giving them direct exposure to the jobs and careers available.

5.2 Work-Study Opportunities

Create more work-study opportunities and co-op programs for young people. These opportunities allow students to gain practical skills and employment experience while earning school credit, and setting them up for success as they approach graduation. Create more community-engaged learning spaces and experiential learning opportunities for students utilizing local resources.

5.3 Employer Support for Youth Development

Invest more in wage subsidy programs that support employers to hire young people effectively. When youth first enter the workforce it is essential for them to build skills, earn income, and gain work experience. Increase the number of entry-level positions and offer training to employers so they can better support and mentor young people. Having more year-round opportunities for programs like the Student Training and Employment Program (STEP), not just during summer break, will make it easier for employers. This will provide the stability needed for youth to grow and develop professionally.

5.4 Youth Employment in Rural Communities

Have more training and employment opportunities available for young people in rural communities. This will help to strengthen local capacity and pathways for youth success. Invest in local businesses that can offer meaningful employment and expand access to healthy mentors. Ensure opportunities such as apprenticeships, mentorship programs, and entrepreneurial training are rooted in community strengths as well as responsive to local needs. To provide young people with the skills, support, and experiences so they can succeed.

5.5 Retention of Youth Support Workers in Rural Communities

The Yukon and federal governments must invest in the long-term retention of youth support workers (educators, youth workers, counsellors, recreation staff, and Knowledge Keepers) in rural communities. Support workers are more likely to stay when they receive liveable wages, paid leave, benefits, and housing support. Support local youth to grow into these roles with proper training and mentorship. Hire people who reflect the cultural identities and lived experiences of the youth they serve. Ensure staff are valued, supported, and connected to promote belonging.

Picture taken on Carcross/Tagish First Nation land

6.Land & Stewardship

Young people in the Yukon have a deep connection to the land and need opportunities to learn from, care for, and protect it. Access to land-based education, stewardship programs, and traditional knowledge helps youth strengthen their identities, leadership skills, and wellbeing. In many rural and Indigenous communities, barriers such as funding, distance, and loss of traditional spaces can make it harder to participate, highlighting the need for sustained, youth-led, and culturally grounded land stewardship opportunities.

6.1 Land Based Programming & Healing

Have more land-based opportunities available for young people to strengthen cultural connection, community engagement, and personal growth. Invest in cultural programming and infrastructure that supports participation in cultural activities, community gathering, and mentorship (e.g. culture camps, sweat lodges, hunting trips,and fire-keeper training) . Ensure these opportunities are rooted in local traditions that provide young people with the skills, knowledge, and support to explore their culture, traditional healing, and community connection.

6.2 Climate Action & Stewardship

Take concrete action on climate change while ensuring youth are meaningfully included in shaping Yukon’s sustainable future. Advance education on sustainability, climate change resilience, and mitigation to protect the land for future generations.

6.3 Renewable Energy Career Opportunities

Invest in renewable energy career pathways for youth by increasing access to training and raising awareness of renewable energy resources. Have more paid opportunities for youth to engage in the Lands and Heritage departments and/or sectors.

Input & Evidence

Appendix A

Over many years of youth-focused programs, events, campaigns, presentations, academic sources, legislation, and research projects have informed the development of the TYS. The list includes many sources that cannot possibly all be named. Here are some of the main sources of information:

Youth Focused Events & Engagement

- 2024 and 2025 Yukon Youth Summit sessions with youth and leaders
- 2024/2025 Implementation teams
- 2023-2025 Collective Impact sessions in Yukon communities (Old Crow, Dawson City, Teslin, Haines Junction, Faro, Ross River, Mayo, Watson Lake, Carmacks, Carcross, Whitehorse)
- 2024 Youth Employment Surveys in partnership with DevLab and Youthful Cities
- 2023 Yukon Youth Summit (Youth of Today Society & CBYF Yukon, Apr 2023)
- 2022-2023 Collective Impact sessions in some Yukon communities with young people and youth-service leaders (Carmacks, Dawson City, Faro, Haines Junction, Mayo, Teslin, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse)
- Empowering School Communities Project (CBYF, 2022-2023, and 2021)
- 2022 Yukon Youth Summit (Youth of Today Society, Apr 2022)
- Youth Pathways to Leadership Project and Survey (CBYF Yukon, 2022)
- Supporting Students' Sense of Belonging in Schools (CBYF, 2021, presented at the Annual Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards, and Committees Gathering in October 2021)
- Youth Town Halls (KDFN and Youth of Today Society, 2018-2021)
- UNICEF Change Summit (BGC Yukon & UNICEF, 2019)
- Northern Youth Want Project (BYTE, 2022-ongoing)
- Yukon Youth Want Campaign (BYTE, 2013-ongoing)

Community & Government Reports

- Making Space for Children's Rights 2023/2024 Annual Report (YCAO)
- Implementation Plan: Yukon's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit+ People Strategy (Yukon Government, 2023)
- Substance Use Health Emergency Strategy (Yukon Government 2023)
- For Our Children: A Review of Systemic Racism in Yukon Education (YCAO & YFNED, 2025)
- Youth Mental Health Research and Services (Yukon Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research, 2023)
- Yukon Youth Calls to Action (CBYF Yukon, 2022)
- Our Recommendations, Our Future: 27 Programs and Policies to Embolden the Yukon's Climate Action (Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change, 2021)
- School Attendance Review (Yukon Child & Youth Advocate Office, 2021)
- Youth Engagement Report (CBYF Yukon, 2021)
- Youth Research Project (Northern Council for Global Cooperation, 2021)
- Whitehorse Point in Time Count (Safe at Home Society, 2021)
- A Place To Call Home (Blood Ties Four Directions, 2021)
- One Death Is Too Many: Grappling with the Overdose Epidemic in the Yukon (Getting to Tomorrow Yukon, 2021)
- Strengthening Our Connections To Promote Life: A Life Promotion Toolkit by Indigenous Youth (Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, 2021)
- Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice: Yukon's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit+ People Strategy (Yukon Advisory Committee, 2020)
- GlobalChild research project (Yukon Child & Youth Advocate Office, 2018-2019)



Picture taken on Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an Kwach'an land during the MMIWG2S+ Walk 2025

Additional Inputs

- 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement between the Yukon Liberal Caucus and the Yukon NDP Caucus (Yukon Liberal Caucus, 2023)
- "Ensure that all schools in the Yukon have safe spaces for LGBTQ2S+ students in the form of student activities or organizations" (Legislative Assembly of Yukon, Bill 304: Act to Amend the Education Act, 2022)



Territorial Youth Collective

Picture taken on Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Carcross/Tagish First Nation land

Territorial Youth Collective

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