



Community Safety

Policy Position of Association of Yukon Communities (2025-26)

Community Safety. *Association of Yukon Communities – For Discussion, April 2025*

1. Background

Safe communities are foundational to economic vitality, public health, and civic trust. Across Canada, municipalities are facing rising concerns related to repeat offending, drug and alcohol-related harm, homelessness, and mental health crises. While policing is a critical component of community safety, upstream solutions—including mental health care, housing, youth engagement, and social support—are equally important.

In the Yukon, communities are experiencing a complex and evolving set of safety concerns that require integrated responses. Many municipalities lack the resources or jurisdictional tools to respond adequately, while the burden of managing public safety increasingly falls on local governments and front-line service providers.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has emphasized the need for strengthened bail reform, better RCMP service levels, and investments in community-based mental health and substance use care.

2. Yukon and Northern Context

Community safety challenges in Yukon include:

- Gaps in mental health and substance use services, particularly in smaller or remote communities;
- Concerns over RCMP staffing levels, service availability, and response times;
- Limited options for diversion and alternative justice programs tailored to northern realities;
- Increasing incidents related to public intoxication, property crime, and interpersonal violence; and
- Overlap between homelessness, addictions, and justice system involvement

3. Policy Position

The Association of Yukon Communities supports community-based approaches to safety, grounded in prevention, harm reduction, restorative justice, and culturally informed practices. This approach must be resourced through multi-level government partnerships and tailored to the realities of rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. **Local governments must be empowered—with funding, data, and jurisdictional clarity—to co-lead community safety strategies alongside territorial and federal partners.**

4. Recommendations

AYC calls on the federal and territorial governments to:

1. Enhance RCMP resourcing and service continuity in Yukon communities, including addressing staffing shortages and increasing local involvement in public safety planning.
2. Invest in community-based mental health and substance use programs, including mobile crisis response teams and wraparound services.
3. Fund the development of integrated community safety plans, led by local governments and developed in partnership with First Nations and frontline agencies.
4. Support the creation of diversion and alternative justice programs, including Indigenous-led and restorative justice initiatives.
5. Develop a Northern Public Safety Fund to pilot new models of service delivery in areas such as youth outreach, violence prevention, and culturally relevant crisis response.
6. Advance data-sharing agreements to improve coordination between policing, health, housing, and social services while respecting privacy and community governance.

5. Strategic Considerations

- **Cost escalation in justice and policing:** Municipalities are being asked to absorb more responsibility for safety without corresponding funding or authority.
- **Rural-urban service gaps:** Smaller communities face disproportionately high barriers to access specialized services, despite experiencing complex safety concerns.
- **Need for upstream investments:** Without housing, mental health care, and youth engagement, enforcement-based approaches alone will not deliver long-term safety.
- **Trust and reconciliation:** Strengthening public safety in Yukon must go hand-in-hand with repairing trust in institutions.

6. Implementation

To strengthen local capacity for community safety, AYC recommends:

- Establishing Community Safety Hubs in regional centres, offering coordinated access to mental health, housing, justice, and youth services.
- Providing multi-year funding agreements for local governments and non-profits delivering community safety programming.
- Training and supporting community safety officers or liaisons to assist with non-criminal public safety issues.
- Facilitating peer-to-peer learning between Yukon communities on best practices in violence prevention, restorative justice, and community wellness.

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