

# *A Better Yukon for All*

## GOVERNMENT OF YUKON'S SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY



**Yukon**  
Government

Government of Yukon 2012

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## Message from the Premier

I am pleased to release the Government of Yukon's Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy. Our goal is to build a Yukon society in which all citizens have fair and equitable opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, Yukon's cultural, social and economic growth.

We began this process by envisioning a Yukon where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity. Today we have the road map that will help us achieve our goals.

This strategy outlines the future direction of social policy development in Yukon and our commitment to improve outcomes for those most vulnerable. A socially inclusive society is one in which all people have access to the social, economic, political and cultural systems that contribute to the integration of a person into the community. Many factors contribute to social exclusion, including poverty, and inadequate education, housing, health, social participation, employment and access to services.

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The Government of Yukon is striving to achieve a better quality of life for all its citizens by increasing employment and education opportunities, fostering healthy and safe communities, and promoting sports, arts and culture. This strategy focuses on reducing the number of people who experience social exclusion and poverty, while improving the lives of people currently experiencing them. Investments in social inclusion not only improve the circumstance of the most vulnerable, they also bring people back from living on the margins of society and increase their ability to participate in the community.

This strategy builds on the accomplishments that this government has already achieved in addressing serious social issues. It is the result of collaboration between the government and community organizations and highlights the shared responsibility of community, individuals and government in striving for a common objective.

I thank everyone who participated in developing this Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy. In particular I thank the Community Advisory Committee and Interdepartmental Steering Committee for their commitment to this work. I also thank all Yukon citizens who took part in the data collection process and provided valuable feedback and information.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darrell Pasloski'.

*Darrell Pasloski*  
PREMIER



## Message from the Minister

Solutions to social exclusion and poverty will benefit all Yukoners, regardless of their income or social situation. The Government of Yukon's Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy, however, targets those vulnerable people who are experiencing, or who are at-risk of experiencing, poverty or social exclusion. Social inclusion recognizes that individual hard work, achievement and success should be encouraged, supported and rewarded, but also recognizes the need to support those who are struggling to succeed or thrive.

Visibly poor and homeless people are part of our community, but there are also people whose poverty and exclusion from community participation is hidden. These are people who have been shut out of all that Yukon has to offer and live "invisible" lives on the margins. This strategy is as much about helping them now as it is about preventing social exclusion and poverty. It's about returning people to a level of participation in our community that is comfortable for them.

Poverty is a complex problem with many overlapping factors and systemic barriers. With this strategy, the Government of Yukon strives to demonstrate leadership, optimism for the future and long-term thinking. Change does not happen overnight. Effective change is incremental, thoughtful and subject to analysis and review before the next step is taken. Together, government departments are looking at new and enhanced initiatives that will achieve measurable results.

Community engagement has been a key element in the collaborative development of this strategy. Government departments and community groups have been part of this process since the beginning. By listening to the stories of individual Yukoners, non-governmental organizations and front-line staff, we provided a forum for those people whose voices often are not heard.

A social inclusion strategy works to address poverty, bridge access gaps in government services and remove systemic barriers found in policies, programs and services. This strategy outlines how we will respond to challenges like housing, child care and employment, as well as how we will improve government programs and services to ensure that they are accessible and available for those who need them most. We are committed to helping Yukoners develop the skills necessary to prepare them for employment, to create opportunities in the workforce and to assist those who cannot work.

I join the Premier in thanking our partners and the community for their support and commitment to this process and strategy, in particular the Community Advisory Committee and the Interdepartmental Steering Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Graham".

*Doug Graham*

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

## Message from the Co-chairs of the Community Advisory Committee

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was created early in the development of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy and has played a meaningful role in building this strategy. The committee was asked to provide advice and feedback to the Interdepartmental Steering Committee while the strategy was under development.

The committee's members work with or represent Yukon's marginalized and vulnerable populations and have ensured that their voices were heard. They represent numerous organizations, and many different populations, including: people living with disabilities, women, youth, people of First Nation descent, people who are homeless, and people struggling with food insecurity. The committee is co-chaired by Ross Findlater from the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition and Dorothea Warren, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Social Services.

The CAC's members have undertaken their responsibilities with determination and dedication. They have brought their experience, observations, and above all their passion to this role. They have been advocates for the people that they represent; shared their stories and represented their needs with commitment.

The CAC's members recognized that the need for a strategy was a priority. They have held many meetings, including a workshop with the Interdepartmental Steering Committee to develop a framework for the strategy. They recognized that Yukon needs to take a coordinated and collaborative approach to social inclusion and poverty reduction.

Community involvement has been a key component in strategy development and the role of the CAC provides a blueprint for an inclusive process and future stakeholder engagement. Collaboration and stakeholder involvement are essential in the development of responsive and effective government programs and services.

There is much work ahead, and the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy is an important step towards tackling poverty and building a more inclusive Yukon. Going forward, a key to success will be to foster engagement with Yukoners from all backgrounds and economic situations. We hope that within the strategy, you see a vision of a better Yukon; one where all citizens are respected and can live in dignity.



*Ross Findlater*

YUKON ANTI-POVERTY COALITION  
CO-CHAIR, COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE



*Dorothea Warren*

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
CO-CHAIR, COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE



## Part 1: Executive Summary

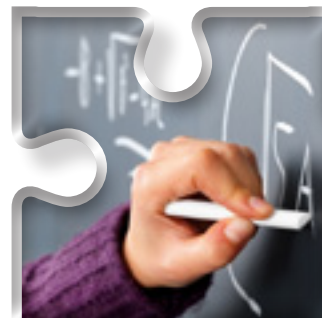
A socially inclusive society is one where all people feel valued, differences are respected and basic needs are met so they can live with dignity. Barriers in social, economic, political and cultural systems can prevent people from being part of their community. Everyone is affected by social exclusion and poverty, and everyone plays a role in finding solutions.

Poverty is one of the most obvious factors contributing to social exclusion, but it is also exacerbated by inadequate education, low literacy levels, inadequate housing, poor health, limited social participation, inadequate employment and barriers to services.

How can a strategy help to improve the lives of Yukon people on the margins of our society?

The *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy* will guide social policy development in the Yukon government so that policies, programs and services clearly reflect social inclusion and poverty reduction goals and objectives.

This strategy states a clear vision of the future and provides an overview of initiatives to meet three goals necessary to achieving a more inclusive society. Progress will be monitored and adjustments made so that the strategy continues to be a useful tool for making a positive difference in the lives of Yukoners and ultimately leading to a better use of funds to achieve desired outcomes.





## *Vision*

*A Yukon where social exclusion and poverty are eliminated, diversity is celebrated, and all Yukoners have the opportunity to prosper and participate to their full potential, free from prejudice and discrimination.*

## *Guiding Principles*

*Based on six Guiding Principles, this strategy promises to be an effective way to inform decision-making and to help us determine how best to invest resources to achieve true social inclusion and poverty reduction.*

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1. *Recognition of conditions unique to Yukon and the diversity of its population.*
2. *Recognition of the role of individuals, society and community can play in addressing issues of social exclusion and poverty.*
3. *Recognition of the role and responsibility of all governments in addressing social exclusion and poverty.*
4. *Planning that is timely, accountable and evidence-based.*
5. *Action that focuses on preventing and reducing social exclusion and poverty and improving the lives of people experiencing those conditions today.*
6. *Delivering services with a client-centred approach.*

## *Research*

Research was an important first step in the process of developing the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy as it provided a snapshot of the current situation in Yukon. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics gathered the data and the result was three reports which provide concrete evidence on social inclusion and poverty issues in Yukon and formed the basis for the strategy. The three reports are:

- *2010 Whitehorse Housing Adequacy Study;*
- *Dimensions of Social Inclusion and Social Exclusion in Yukon 2010; and*
- *Bridges and Barriers 2010: Yukon Experiences with poverty, social exclusion and inclusion.*

## *Key Findings*

The research showed that we can make improvements by addressing issues that make our communities less inclusive. An inadequate income, poor housing and inadequate access to transportation are major issues. Low literacy and poor education can also affect a person's ability to be involved in community life. Support networks and living in an inclusive community make a positive difference for people who are struggling.



The research also showed that an inclusive approach to service delivery is important. By viewing policies and programs through a socially inclusive lens, we will be able to understand how government can better serve all Yukoners and advance its services to improve the lives of those who are socially excluded and living in poverty.

Based on the research – qualitative as well as quantitative – this strategy identifies Yukon populations that are at a higher risk of experiencing social exclusion and poverty. These include people with physical or mental disabilities or other health issues, people who do not have stable or adequate housing and Yukoners living on low incomes or who do not have adequate employment. People who have been institutionalized and are re-entering society face barriers as do people with limited education and those with low literacy skills. People who are isolated geographically and one parent families also face issues of exclusion.

### *Community Involvement*

Collaboration and community involvement have been essential in developing this strategy. The Government of Yukon undertook an integrated approach that included multiple levels of stakeholder engagement. The process was designed to ensure that all perspectives were heard, considered and represented. It was important that this process include participants from government and NGOs that represent people living in poverty or experiencing social exclusion. Community perspectives were respected and supported throughout the process and the community participated in offering suggestions for decision-making.

### *Strategy Goals*

Based on the key findings from the research, the vision and guiding principles, three main goals have been identified for the strategy.

- Improve access to services
- Reduce Inequities
- Strengthen Community Vitality

Under each goal, a number of objectives were developed that narrow the focus and address the major issues identified in the research. The goals and objectives are supported by initiatives which are outlined in the strategy. These initiatives will be monitored as part of a reporting and consultation process and adjusted as necessary.

### *Measuring Success*

An inclusive approach uses evidence-based measures to gauge the effect of programs and services on marginalized groups. This includes gathering information from service providers, program evaluations, client surveys, interviews and existing data and reports. This information will help government departments better understand the systemic barriers that keep key populations from accessing programs. It will also improve understanding of how factors of social exclusion and poverty correlate, and promote collaborative solutions. Monitoring and evaluation will help determine how we can best work towards our goals and objectives.

Implementing the strategy will require collaborative, coordinated work across all government departments and in close cooperation with stakeholders and partners. The Government of Yukon is committed to continue working to prevent and reduce poverty and social exclusion, and to improve conditions for vulnerable Yukoners.



## Part 2: Introduction

A socially inclusive society is one where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so they can live with dignity. It is a society where everyone has the opportunity to participate and to have their voice heard.

Social exclusion is the result of barriers in the social, economic, political and cultural systems. When effective, these systems contribute to the integration of a person into the community.

Poverty is one of the most obvious factors contributing to social exclusion, but social exclusion also stems from and is exacerbated by inadequate education, housing, health, social participation, employment and access to services. People experiencing social exclusion may feel like outsiders and can face stigma and discrimination. This Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy will address these factors in a collaborative and cohesive way so that all Yukoners can participate fully in society.

### *Social Policy Development in Yukon*

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The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy will guide social policy development in the Yukon government so that policies, programs and services clearly reflect social inclusion and poverty reduction goals and objectives.

Our strategy lays out a clear vision of the future and includes principles to guide government decision-making, actions and behaviours. The strategy includes specific actions that will help us meet our goals. These actions work to prevent social exclusion and poverty in the long term, but also to reduce the effects of poverty and improve the lives of vulnerable people in the short term. Progress will be monitored and improvements will be made to ensure the strategy continues to make a real difference for Yukoners.

### *An Inclusive Approach*

Our research made it clear that an inclusive approach to service delivery can make a very real difference to the lives of people. An inclusive approach recognizes that the recipients of services are not all the same, and moreover, that they may not come from the same circumstances as the service provider. It recognizes that sex, gender, race, culture, class, sexual orientation, ability and other factors may affect an individual's life circumstances and works towards a system that is respectful and responsive to an individual needs. An inclusive approach is one in which people get the services they need, as well as the assistance they may need in order to obtain those services, without a cost to their dignity.

In order to ensure our services provide maximum benefit to the most disadvantaged, an inclusive approach will be used to guide the development of our programs, policies and services. By viewing the development of policies and programs through a socially inclusive lens, we will be able to understand how government can better serve all Yukoners and advance its services to improve the lives of those who are socially excluded and living in poverty.

# Yukon Snapshot

An inclusive approach uses evidence-based measures to gauge the effect of programs and services on marginalized groups. This includes gathering evidence from service providers, program evaluations, client surveys, key informant interviews and other data and reports. This information will help government departments better understand the systemic barriers that keep key populations from accessing programs. By mitigating unintended barriers to access, departments will more effectively reach Yukoners who are currently experiencing social exclusion and poverty.

This will also improve understanding of how factors of social exclusion and poverty correlate. Understanding these relationships can inform decision-making and facilitate collaborative solutions with partners and between departments. By taking a coordinated approach to these issues, departments will reduce duplication and improve effectiveness. This can greatly improve the overall effectiveness of a strategy for addressing the complex challenges of social exclusion and poverty in Yukon.



- Yukon unemployment rate = 6.8%
- Yukon Aboriginal unemployment rate = 21.9%

YUKON BUREAU OF STATISTICS,  
YUKON EMPLOYMENT, AUGUST 2012

- 30% of lone parent families have an income under \$30,000 compared to 9% of couples who have an income under \$30,000.
- Of the 475 lone parent Yukon families earning under \$30,000, 75% of those are headed by a female parent.

2006 CENSUS STATISTICS CANADA

- 29% of Yukoners experienced at least one element of material deprivation
- 21% of adult Yukoners had experienced at least one element of food insecurity

YUKON BUREAU OF STATISTICS,  
YUKON SOCIAL INCLUSION HOUSEHOLD  
SURVEY, 2010

Population with less than a high school education:

- 18% of Yukoners (age 25+)
- 21% of Canadians (age 25+)
- 37% of Aboriginal Yukoners (age 25+)

2006 CENSUS STATISTICS CANADA

- In 2006 life expectancy at birth in Yukon was 75.7 years (Life expectancy at birth for Canada was 80.7 for 2005-2007, [www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/100223/t10023a1-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/100223/t10023a1-eng.htm))
- Aboriginal males had an average of 8.8 years less than non-Aboriginal males
- Aboriginal females had an average of 7.3 years less than non-Aboriginal females

YUKON BUREAU OF STATISTICS,  
LIFE EXPECTANCY IN THE YUKON, 2006



## Part 3: Developing the strategy

The Yukon government has been working towards improving the lives of the vulnerable people in our territory for a number of years through initiatives targeted to specific groups. In 2009 the Government of Yukon recognized that more could be done. The government envisioned a coordinated, collaborative approach to addressing poverty and exclusion in order to bring together government departments and community organizations and to build on current work while providing a common framework for future activity. The Department of Health and Social Services (HSS) led the development of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy for the Government of Yukon.

In order to include both the government and community members in a collaborative process, we formed two committees.

1. The Interdepartmental Steering Committee (ISC) included representatives from government departments. The ISC provided overall guidance to the development of the strategy.
2. We invited community organizations that represent those most vulnerable in our society to sit on the Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The role of the CAC was to engage the community, ensure public input and strengthen relationships between the government and non-governmental organizations. The CAC provided valuable advice and feedback to the ISC throughout the development of the strategy.

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The Yukon government's Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy is both collaborative and evidence-based. Health and Social Services and the Yukon Bureau of Statistics (YBS) gathered research and evidence to give us a picture of the extent of social exclusion and poverty in Yukon. We knew this would take a significant amount of time and resources but everyone agreed that base line information is necessary. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics (YBS) provided expertise and guidance to the ISC and the CAC during the data gathering and analysis stage.

The strategy's key priorities, vision and guiding principles were developed collaboratively during a facilitated workshop involving key stakeholders from within the Yukon government, non-governmental organizations and First Nations governments. A series of facilitated workshops was also held with the ISC and government employees, which led to the further development of the strategy goals and objectives. The initiatives associated with the goals and objectives were developed by Yukon government departments. The CAC provided feedback on the draft strategy and its initiatives.

## *Community Advisory Committee Member Groups*

Association franco-yukonnaise  
Autism Yukon  
Blood Ties Four Directions  
Bringing Youth Towards Equality  
CAIRS  
Challenge  
Council of Yukon First Nations  
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon  
Food Bank Society of Whitehorse  
Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon  
Les Essentielles  
Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services  
Salvation Army  
Skookum Jim Friendship Centre  
Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre  
Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition  
Yukon Association for Community Living  
Yukon College  
Yukon Council on Aging  
Yukon Council on Disability  
Yukon Literacy Coalition  
Yukon Status of Women Council

## *Interdepartmental Steering Committee Member Departments*

Community Services  
Education  
Executive Council Office (ECO)  
Finance  
Health and Social Services  
Justice  
Public Service Commission  
Women's Directorate  
Yukon Bureau of Statistics (ECO)  
Yukon Housing Corporation

*"I am living life on a tightrope;  
if something does go wrong, I have  
zero margin of error; any little thing  
could turn into a catastrophe."*

BRIDGES AND BARRIERS  
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT 2010





## Part 4: Research

Research was an important first step in the process of developing the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy as it provided a snapshot of the current situation in Yukon. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics was tasked with gathering the necessary data, an intensive year long process that involved analysis of the data gaps, design and implementation of two surveys, and data analysis. The result was three reports:

1. Dimensions of Social Inclusion and Social Exclusion in Yukon 2010;
2. *2010 Whitehorse Housing Adequacy Study*; and
3. Bridges and Barriers 2010: Yukon Experiences with poverty, social exclusion and inclusion

These reports are available on the Health and Social Services website at [www.hss.gov.yk.ca](http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca)


The data from the three reports provides us with concrete evidence on social inclusion and poverty issues in Yukon and formed the basis for development of the strategy. Using a collaborative process for the data collection and involving stakeholders from both the community and government was an opportunity to engage all sectors of the community and begin to build relationships.

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#### *1. Dimensions of Social Inclusion and Exclusion in Yukon 2010*

A set of social inclusion indicators for Yukon was developed in 2010 (see Appendix A). Although there are numerous potential indicators, the ones chosen were those that would be available, relevant and easily understood in the Yukon context. A population-based approach allows for the identification of the broad areas of need as well as the specific needs of sub-populations.

The indicator framework includes data from existing sources (such as the national Census, the Labour Force Survey, and the Canadian Community Health Survey). Some data was not available through existing resources (e.g. Material deprivation) and the Yukon Bureau of Statistics developed a survey instrument to gather that information. There were 1122 people who responded to the household social inclusion survey, including 195 who did not have a home phone. The data gathered from the survey and other sources was compiled in the report Dimensions of Social Inclusion and Exclusion in Yukon 2010.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands, with a ring on the left ring finger, gently holding a small, white toy house with a green roof and a red chimney. The house has several windows and a red door. The background is blurred, showing a light-colored fabric.

*“Transportation is a huge problem; if you have no vehicle and no support system, you cannot get to appointments in Whitehorse or sometimes even in town.”*

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BRIDGES AND BARRIERS  
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT 2010

## *2. 2010 Whitehorse Housing Adequacy Study*

The 2010 Whitehorse Housing Adequacy Study was designed to address the need for statistical information on homelessness and housing challenges in Whitehorse. This study was designed by Health and Social Services, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics and the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics worked with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and key government departments to develop a housing adequacy questionnaire.

The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition and the Yukon Bureau of Statistics worked together to distribute the questionnaire in April and May 2010. It was not intended to be representative of the whole Whitehorse population, but focussed on Whitehorse residents who are facing housing challenges. This study provides a snapshot of vulnerable sub-populations. Questionnaire respondents included 107 homeless individuals and 641 people who were housed. Most respondents faced various housing challenges including living in hotel rooms or temporary accommodations, living in unsafe or overcrowded housing and difficulty accessing affordable housing.

The questionnaire was distributed by mail with telephone follow-up, to Social Assistance recipients and people on the Whitehorse Housing wait list. It was also available through a number of NGOs that provide services to people who face housing challenges, including lower-income individuals. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation also distributed the questionnaire to their Social Assistance clients in Whitehorse.

## *3. Bridges and Barriers 2010: Yukon experiences with poverty, social exclusion and inclusion*

Bridges and Barriers 2010: Yukon experiences with poverty, social exclusion and inclusion provides a qualitative glimpse into the experiences of some of the territory's most vulnerable people. It also includes the professional observations of service providers.

This report compiles information gathered at a series of facilitated workshops on the subject of social exclusion and poverty. These were held throughout Yukon between April and June 2010. Participants included government employees who provide services to the public, representatives from service-oriented NGOs and members of the public who have experienced or are experiencing social exclusion and poverty.

Workshop participants were asked to share their stories of exclusion, highlighting what helped them and what didn't. The notes taken during the workshops were thematically analyzed by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics resulting in one major theme, access to services, and 18 other prevalent, wide-ranging themes including disability, housing, dignity, support networks and health. The data that resulted from the workshops enriches and gives depth to the quantitative data from the other two reports and is useful in helping us better understand the experiences of those who face poverty and social exclusion.



GOVERNMENT OF YUKON PHOTO

*“The college does a good job on employment-readiness training; for anything more advanced, you pretty much have to go to Whitehorse, which is a very costly proposition.”*

BRIDGES AND BARRIERS  
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT 2010

## *Working Together with the Community*

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Collaboration and community involvement have been essential in developing the strategy. Everyone in the community is affected by social exclusion and poverty, and everyone plays a role in finding solutions. The Government of Yukon undertook an integrated approach that included multiple levels of stakeholder engagement. The process was designed to ensure that all perspectives were heard, considered and represented. It was important that this process includes participants from the government and NGOs that represent persons living in poverty or experiencing social exclusion. Community perspectives were respected and supported throughout the process and community members participated in offering suggestions for decision-making.

A major symposium was held in Whitehorse to bring together the public, all levels of government including First Nations, community service providers, and national leaders in the field of social policy. This was an important starting point for the engagement of the community because it underlined the seriousness of the problem in Yukon and allowed participants to learn from one another.

People who are experiencing poverty and social exclusion had the opportunity to voice their opinions at community workshops that were held throughout Yukon. At these workshops, frontline workers gave their perspectives on social exclusion and poverty. The workshop participants also had the opportunity to identify possible solutions to the issues that were discussed. Their voices were captured in the report *Bridges and Barriers 2010: Yukon experiences with poverty, social exclusion and inclusion*.

## *Yukon Snapshot*

A snapshot of Yukon’s population provides current data on population, housing, education, health care and life expectancy (see Appendix B). The information is drawn from bureau reports and from Census Canada data.

## Key Findings

Identifying priorities for a social inclusion strategy required identifying the common factors that feed into social exclusion and poverty, and also the areas where we can have an effect and make improvements. Six key findings emerged from the research and led to the formation of the strategy's goals and objectives.

1. Access to services is a major issue and there are many different barriers that can impede access to services.
2. Housing is an important and complex issue. Housing difficulties include excessive costs, inadequate housing, homelessness or housing that is hard to find.
3. Transportation and location are factors of social exclusion and poverty reduction. Yukon has a population that is sparsely distributed and often isolated. Most services are centralized in Whitehorse which can make it challenging for people from rural communities to access them.
4. Literacy and education are important factors in improving people's lives. Lack of education can have an impact on other aspects of a person's life including earned income and access to services.
5. An inclusive approach to service delivery makes a difference in people's lives by removing barriers and improving access.
6. Having support networks and living in an inclusive community makes a difference for people who are struggling.

Yukon populations specifically identified as at a higher risk of experiencing social exclusion and poverty are:

- people with a physical or mental disability or health problems;
- people without a permanent address or stable housing;
- people who have recently been institutionalized and are re-entering society;
- people with no high school and/or no post-secondary training or education;
- low income and economically vulnerable people;
- people whose low literacy level impacts their ability to communicate;
- people facing geographic or social isolation, or those living in under-served areas;
- people who are having difficulty securing adequate employment; and
- people in lone parent families.



*“People with complaints do not know where to go; in a small town nothing is anonymous.”*

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BRIDGES AND BARRIERS  
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT 2010





## Part 5: Goals, Objectives and Initiatives

The three goals for the strategy are:

- improving access to services;
- reducing inequities; and
- strengthening community vitality.

Under each of the goals, there are a series of objectives that further narrow the focus of the strategy. Building on the vision, guiding principles, goals and objectives, government departments worked together to identify initiatives that they will undertake in the immediate future. These initiatives will be monitored and evaluated.

Under each objective there are also some success stories which highlight what the government has already done prior to this strategy.

### *Vision*

*A Yukon where social exclusion and poverty are eliminated, diversity is celebrated, and all Yukoners have the opportunity to prosper and participate to their full potential, free from prejudice and discrimination.*

*“Clients with disabilities have a hard time fitting in; they try as hard as they can, but society won’t help them or make room for them.”*

BRIDGES AND BARRIERS WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT 2010

### *Guiding Principles*

Guiding principles are the values shared by community and government that direct decision-making and help us determine how best to invest resources to address social exclusion and poverty.

- Recognize conditions unique to Yukon and the diversity of its population
- Recognize the role individuals, civil society and community can play in addressing issues of social exclusion and poverty
- Recognize the role and responsibility of other levels of government in addressing social exclusion and poverty
- Plan in timely, accountable, and evidence based ways
- Focus action on preventing and reducing social exclusion and poverty and improving the lives of people experiencing those conditions today
- Deliver services with a client-centred approach



# Goal

## IMPROVE ACCESS TO SERVICES

*Government of Yukon aims to improve access to services and programs through integrated, collaborative and partnership approaches to policy development and service delivery. The availability and accessibility of services as diverse as education, housing, health care, social services, transportation, recreation and justice can facilitate social inclusion and poverty reduction.*

*The need for improved access to services arose as a theme in the research that the Yukon Bureau of Statistics did for both the Dimensions of Social Inclusion and Social Exclusion in Yukon 2010 and Bridges and Barriers 2010: Yukon Experiences with poverty, social exclusion and inclusion reports. The data showed that barriers to access were limiting vulnerable populations from benefitting from some of the available programs and services.*

*There were some reoccurring issues that arose from the data in relation to accessing services.*

- There was a split between rural residents and urban residents often related to the centralization of services in Whitehorse and lack of transportation.*
- Another common theme was the need for improved service delivery, whether it be increasing awareness of programs, or making them less intimidating and easier to use.*
- Coordinating government services can also make them easier to access and increase efficiency.*
- Coordinating services requires collaboration between departments, other levels of government and non-governmental service providers.*

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### Objective

#### **IMPROVE PROGRAMS, POLICIES AND SERVICE DELIVERY TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO ACCESS**

Although there are many government programs and services, barriers often impede access by those who most need them. The research focused on barriers people face when accessing government services like health care, mental health and addiction services. Aboriginal people, rural residents, people with low incomes or those receiving Social Assistance, single parents and people without a high school education were the most likely to have increased difficulty accessing government services.

Some of the barriers that prevent people from accessing services are tangible, such as having no fixed address or lacking transportation. Other barriers are less obvious, such as being discriminated against or feeling judged, overwhelmed or otherwise impeded.

## *Current Initiatives*

### **DOWNTOWN OUTREACH CLINIC**

The Department of Health and Social Services, with the Kwanlin Dün Health Centre and the Salvation Army is providing home care services at the Downtown Outreach Clinic. This clinic promotes health equity by providing nursing services to marginalized and homeless individuals who have difficulty accessing health services. Work is underway to enhance the capacity of the clinic to offer additional services, as well as looking at expanding services to additional delivery sites and developing community partnerships.

### **IMPROVING SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Health and Social Services is working with stakeholders and interest groups to examine programs and services provided through the department for adults with disabilities. This review will provide guidance and insights into improving access, increasing coordination and awareness, and strengthening connections among HSS, other government departments and non-governmental organizations delivering services to people with disabilities. This initiative will be linked to planning for changes to Social Assistance program design and service delivery to address issues that are specific to persons with disabilities.

### **COMMUNITY LIAISON COORDINATOR**

The Community Liaison Coordinator in Health and Social Services increases access to home care services by providing home care services for individuals outside of Whitehorse who need support to live independently in their homes. The Yukon Home Care Program works with Community Nursing and First Nation Home and Community Care providers to ensure that seniors in communities receive the supports that they need. This position builds capacity within Yukon communities by supporting training and partnerships, as well as overall client care management.

### **AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL) INTERPRETER**

The Public Service Commission provides the service of an accredited ASL interpreter to the Yukon deaf community and to Yukon government employees. The ASL interpreter assists people who are deaf access Yukon government services, communicate with Yukon government employees, access other community services such as health care appointments, and participate in public presentations and forums. The ASL interpreter can also facilitate communications within the Yukon government between deaf and other employees. The interpreter also supports Whitehorse General Hospital with communication requirements. The ASL interpreter and members of the deaf community can provide introductory ASL training to Yukon government employees. Funding for this initiative comes from the Public Service Commission, Health and Social Services, and under the Labour Market Agreement, both the federal government and the Yukon Department of Education.

## *Success Stories*

- Health and Social Services extended funding in February 2011 to continue three territorial mental health programs which provide services to rural mental health patients include those with early psychosis and complex cases.
- Yukon Housing Corporation changed the Social Housing Program and eligibility criteria in 2007 to better serve seniors and women fleeing from domestic violence.





GOVERNMENT OF YUKON PHOTO

*“I have transportation issues.  
I had to hitchhike to get here today.”*

BRIDGES AND BARRIERS  
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT 2010

## *Objective*

### **IMPROVE COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION WITHIN GOVERNMENT, WITH OTHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, AND BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS**

While some government services and programs overlap those provided by other organizations, there are also gaps in service that need to be filled. There is a need for coordination and collaboration among all levels of government, including First Nations, other service providers, and among Yukon government departments, so that programs and services are accessible and available and that there are no gaps. Coordination also ensures that program planning involves necessary stakeholders, resources are used efficiently and partnerships are built.

## *Current Initiatives*

### **ALCOHOL AND DRUG SERVICES INITIATIVE**

Health and Social Services is enhancing alcohol and drug services in Yukon. This will include improved links and communication with collateral service providers and integration of services. Enhanced services include introducing program models and treatment approaches that better respond to individual and community needs. HSS is working with other government departments, First Nations governments, and non-governmental organizations to incorporate a broad range of perspectives and priorities.

### **FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD AND CARE**

Health and Social Services and the Department of Education are developing a joint framework for early childhood learning and care with input from key stakeholders and First Nations. This will increase coordination between early childhood initiatives in both systems. Rural communities in particular will benefit from early childhood initiatives that are coordinated with other community services and schools.

## LYNX PROGRAM

The Department of Justice is leading the Lynx program which provides a multi-disciplinary team response to help children and youth victims and witnesses of crime. This is a collaborative program involving the RCMP, Health and Social Services Family and Children Services, Child Abuse Treatment Services, Justice Court Services, Victim Services, Yukon physicians, Whitehorse General Hospital, and the Public Prosecution Service of Canada.

## STRENGTHENING THE RURAL YUKON SAFETY NET

Health and Social Services is moving towards a one stop approach for residents of rural communities. This involves locating regional social services with other local service providers and advancing a team approach to service delivery. HSS will build on existing relationships to improve accessibility and effectiveness. Streamlining the delivery of services will reduce delays to individuals accessing services and create a less isolated working environment, thereby reducing staff turnover in rural communities.

## PROLIFIC OFFENDER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Justice, working with Health and Social Services, First Nations governments, the RCMP, and the federal prosecution and correctional services, is taking a collaborative approach to case management for offenders who are of a high risk to re-offend and whose offence history has had a serious effect on public safety. Through improved coordination and integration of services for these offenders, the goal is to reduce the number of serious offences and to better support court processes and sentencing decisions.

*“We’re all in the business of providing a service, once we identify what they need we direct them to the Human Rights Commission or the Sally Ann or a soup kitchen, Victims Services, EI office, to ensure they have a body not a phone to speak to. We need to eliminate the run around and treat people with respect.”*

BRIDGES AND BARRIERS  
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT 2010

## *Success Stories*

- The Department of Community Services amalgamated Emergency Medical Services with Protective Services (Wildland Fire Management, Yukon Emergency Measures Organization and the Fire Marshall’s Office) in 2007 in order to share support services, expertise and facilities, as well as streamline training opportunities for rural emergency volunteers.
- Education worked with the Council of Yukon First Nations on the Education Reform Project to improve the education system throughout the territory. The final report was released in 2008.



## *Objective*

### **PROMOTE AWARENESS OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

The research showed that there is a need for increased awareness of government services. Some clients do not know that services exist, others do not know how to access programs and services, and some do not know how to get help or ask questions about government programs and services. Some clients feel that services are intimidating or confusing, and that it is a struggle to access the government services they need. Promoting awareness of programs and services means making sure that target populations know about the service and that services are user-friendly.

## *Current Initiatives*

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### **CONTINUING CARE PARTICIPATORY CARE**

The Continuing Care Branch in Health and Social Services has established an inclusive, participatory care model. Continuing Care services involve clients, residents, patients, families and stakeholders in policy development, care provision and service design and delivery. This will improve individualized care and increase client satisfaction as clients become more engaged and involved in their care and the services they receive.

### **WHITEHORSE FACILITIES FAMILY MEETINGS**

Health and Social Services is holding regular open forums for families of continuing care facility clients. HSS is working with residents and their families to develop relationships and to ensure that quality care is being provided. These meetings will ensure that families are aware of the programs and services provided by continuing care and have the opportunity to provide feedback and discuss concerns.

## *Success Stories*

- The Health and Social Services Outreach Nurse Program is an ongoing service to help vulnerable populations manage infectious diseases. Infectious disease nurses provide outreach services including testing and managing STIs, health education and adult immunizations. The nurses provide these services to Whitehorse corrections, Yukon College, Detox, and Blood Ties Four Directions.
- Health and Social Services improved access to smoking cessation services in 2009 and promoted quitting smoking with a guide to becoming smoke free, a community tour examining barriers faced by rural Yukoners, a toll-free telephone line and free nicotine replacement therapy in rural communities.



# Goal

## REDUCE INEQUITIES

*The Government of Yukon aims to reduce inequities by equipping individuals with the education, skills, resources, housing, social support and experiences they need to realize their potential and reduce disparities.*

*Reducing inequities helps Yukoners overcome the barriers that can keep them from achieving their full potential, and promotes dignity for all.*

*Poverty is a complex issue with numerous intersecting and contributing factors. A major issue that arose from the research was the difficulty people faced trying to move out of poverty. Many workshop participants felt that the barriers to breaking that cycle compound and become overwhelming. At times it was a small opportunity that provided the necessary bridge that helped some people succeed.*

*Reducing inequities is about improving the lives of people today and preventing people from falling into poverty in the future. Prevention focuses on increasing employability, improving the lives of children and providing opportunities to access basic needs including food and adequate housing.*

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### *Objective*

#### **CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE INCOME BY REDUCING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT**

Employment is a major factor in the cycle of poverty and it is affected by limited education, low literacy skills and health issues. Childcare is also a barrier to employment for some Yukon residents who find it difficult to find reliable and affordable childcare. Families that receive Social Assistance, single parents, rural residents and people of Aboriginal descent are most likely to report they have challenges in this area.

### *Current Initiatives*

#### **IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE IN YUKON SCHOOLS**

Education and Health and Social Services are launching an initiative to increase attendance rates at Yukon schools. The two departments will work with a student and family advisory committee to discover and respond to reasons for poor attendance.

#### **YUKON LITERACY STRATEGY**

Education is developing a strategy to improve literacy levels in Yukon in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, First Nations governments, Yukon College, the Government of Canada and other Yukon government departments. The strategy will identify ways to improve essential skills and it will focus on populations that struggle with employment. Development of the strategy will begin in November 2012.



## LABOUR MARKET AGREEMENT

Education is working with numerous partners including other Yukon government departments, Yukon College, labour market service providers, First Nations governments and Canada to help people find employment and build skills. The department provides funding to non-governmental organizations that provide employment services like job training and employment counselling to people who are not eligible for employment insurance and struggle to find employment.

## LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

The Yukon government through the Department of Education and with the Government of Canada is providing funding to non-governmental service providers who help unemployed people build skills and find employment. The agreement helps individuals who are eligible for employment insurance and could benefit from job training, employment counseling and other services to overcome barriers to employment.

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*“I like being seen as more  
than my disability.”*

BRIDGES AND BARRIERS  
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT 2010

### *Success Stories*

- Education improved labour market initiatives over the past four years including the Yukon Nominee program, Targeted Older Worker program, Student Financial Assistance and the Apprenticeship program.
- The Government of Yukon increased the minimum wage from \$9.27 to \$10.30 on May 1, 2012. The minimum wage is indexed to the annual Whitehorse Consumer Price Index so it will increase with changes in the cost of living.

*“There are so many hoops to jump through; it’s overwhelming filling out all the forms...I can’t even take the first step.”*

BRIDGES AND BARRIERS  
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT 2010

## *Success Stories*

- Health and Social Services doubled the Yukon Seniors Income supplement for eligible low-income seniors in 2009. This supplement is indexed which ensures that it will increase with the annual cost of living.
- The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources’ Community Garden Initiative provides funding to develop agricultural products that enhance regional economic development and contribute to sustainability in rural communities.

## *Objective*

### **STRENGTHEN SUPPORTS AND ACCESS TO NECESSITIES (SUCH AS FOOD) FOR THOSE MOST IN NEED**

Food insecurity and material deprivation indicators in the Dimensions of Social Inclusion and Social Exclusion in Yukon 2010 report uncovered some large disparities among Yukon populations in the area of access to necessities. Low-income households and people who receive Social Assistance are most likely to experience difficulties buying the things they need. Improved employment opportunities create better access to necessities.

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Examples in the Bridges and Barriers 2010: Yukon Experiences with poverty, social exclusion and inclusion report detail how material deprivation feeds into the cycle of poverty and makes it difficult to fit into society. This can have a particularly strong negative effect on children who are struggling to feel included.

## *Current Initiatives*

### **SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND SERVICES REDESIGN**

Health and Social Services, in collaboration with client representatives, non-governmental organizations, other government departments and stakeholders is reviewing the Social Assistance program design and service delivery. Priorities for review and action include identifying program models that better support workforce participation and ensure timely access to necessities for those receiving Social Assistance, enhancing client service and simplifying administrative processes, and increasing awareness of rights, responsibilities and accountability mechanisms. Areas that have been identified for immediate attention include updates and revisions to program policies to improve clarity, purpose and consistent application. The examination of options for program design will require research, analysis and consultation and will be done in conjunction with improving services for persons with disabilities.

### **THOMSON CENTRE**

Health and Social Services is increasing services by adding 10 residential beds to the Thomson Centre. The Thomson Centre provides long term care to seniors and to other people with medical, physical and cognitive needs that require ongoing support and supervision. Increasing the number of beds ensures that more clients can access these necessary supports.

## *Objective*

### **ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS, HOUSING AVAILABILITY, AFFORDABILITY AND THE QUALITY OF HOUSING**

Housing came up as an important and complex issue in the 2010 Whitehorse Housing Adequacy Study, Bridges and Barriers 2010: Yukon Experiences with poverty, social exclusion and inclusion and Dimensions of Social Inclusion and Social Exclusion in Yukon 2010 reports. The shortage of affordable, available rental properties, the shortage of adequate housing without maintenance and safety problems, and the need for social housing and supported housing were repeated issues noted in both the qualitative and quantitative data.

The 2010 Whitehorse Housing Adequacy Study highlighted housing challenges such as inadequate housing, homelessness, overcrowding and unsafe neighbourhoods. Many housed respondents were staying in hotel rooms or other temporary accommodations; some were living in unsafe, dilapidated, overcrowded or unaffordable housing. A majority of respondents said it was difficult to find affordable rental accommodations. Many couldn't afford the deposit and the first and last month's rent.

Amongst the people who filled out the questionnaire, the most likely to be homeless were Aboriginal, youth under the age of 25, people making less than \$20,000 a year and people who were not raising children. For those who were housed, excessive shelter costs were associated with youth, poverty, and single parenthood, although rent subsidies eliminated the difference for single parents on Social Assistance. Seniors were more likely to be experiencing overcrowded housing.

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## *Current Initiatives*

### **OPTIONS FOR INDEPENDENCE HOUSING**

The Yukon Housing Corporation and the Government of Canada are working with Options for Independence Society and Health and Social Services to build a new supportive housing complex which will house and provide supports for 26 people with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

### **WHITEHORSE SENIORS RENTAL UNIT**

The Yukon Housing Corporation, with Health and Social Services, is building an accessible low income seniors' housing complex in Whitehorse with 34 suites. This facility will provide housing opportunities for seniors who have mobility challenges or other disabilities and those who cannot afford private sector rental housing.

### **LANDLORD AND TENANT ACT**

Community Services with the assistance of Health and Social Services, the Yukon Housing Corporation, Justice and the Women's Directorate is developing new legislation to modernize the residential tenancy laws of Yukon. The Act will provide greater clarity around landlord and tenant roles and responsibilities, and will address minimum rental standards that will help to improve living conditions for tenants. It will also provide for an out of court dispute resolution model and a timeframe for resolving disputes.

*“Transportation is a huge problem; if you have no vehicle and no support system, you cannot get to appointments in Whitehorse or sometimes even in town.”*

BRIDGES AND BARRIERS  
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT 2010



## SECOND STAGE HOUSING – BETTY’S HAVEN

The Women’s Directorate, the Yukon Women’s Transition Home (Kaushee’s Place) and the departments of Highways and Public Works and Health and Social Services are building 10 new units of second stage transitional housing for women and children fleeing abuse. By providing supported housing for stays of 12 to 18 months, these units will increase housing security and offer programming to enable women to leave situations of abuse and find stability. Programming will address all aspects of living independently after experiencing relationship violence, including safety planning, trauma, navigating the legal system and life skills.

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## YOUTH SHELTER

In collaboration with the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, Health and Social Services is relocating the emergency youth shelter out of its current location in the Sarah Steele building. Moving the youth shelter will allow for a focused, integrated approach to serving youth in need of emergency services. The youth shelter will be better able to provide culturally appropriate services for youth including referrals to necessary support services.

## DAWSON CITY WOMEN’S TRANSITION HOME EXPANSION

Health and Social Services is working with the Dawson City Women’s Transition Home to increase spaces and enhance services. The transition home provides support, advocacy and shelter to women in crisis and their children. This expansion will ensure that there is more safe and appropriate emergency housing available for women and their children in the Dawson City area.

## ADULT GROUP HOME

Health and Social Services is partnering with Challenge to develop and implement a five-bed residential program for vulnerable adults. This adult group home will support people who have a range of challenges and are at risk of homelessness. Access to housing will provide stability while they are re-entering society.

## *Success Stories*

- In 2010, the Women’s Directorate and the Yukon Housing Corporation collaborated to develop Whitehorse Affordable Family Housing, to provide safe, affordable housing for single parent families.
- The Yukon Housing Corporation constructed eight new social housing units in Carmacks and Ross River in 2011.



## *Objective*

### **PROVIDE SUPPORTS FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY**

Bridges and Barriers 2010: Yukon Experiences with poverty, social exclusion and inclusion showed that families with children living in poverty need more support. This is particularly so for those raising children with disabilities and families in rural communities. Reducing inequities by supporting families with children can help to break the cycle of poverty.

## *Current Initiatives*

### **CHILD CARE INITIATIVES**

Health and Social Services is completing an analysis of the effect of previous funding initiatives to inform future developments in child care. The goal of this initiative is to improve accessibility for families who require child care in order to participate in the workforce or attend school.

### **FAMILY CONFERENCE SERVICE**

Health and Social Services is increasing the number of children and families served through the Family Conference Service. Family conferencing is available for children and families involved in the child welfare system. It brings together extended family members and others who are significant in a child's life to plan for and support children, young people and their families. The Family Conference Service engages participants in a participatory decision-making process.

### **FAMILY SUPPORTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

Health and Social Services is providing additional funding for therapies for children with a range of disabilities. The department is also working with other organizations to determine options for families to access funding for specialized equipment, ramps and lifts. Providing access to these supports will help families care for their children in their own home, as well as remove barriers and enable children to participate in recreational, social and community activities.

### **YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND ACTIVITIES PROGRAM (YLAP)**

The Yukon government's Youth Directorate is promoting activities, employment and training that focus on leadership and build life and work skills for youth. The Youth Directorate, Community Services, Justice, the RCMP and Health and Social Services are working together to provide funding to non-governmental organizations, municipalities and First Nations governments that provide these services. The YLAP fund ensures that youth in rural communities and Whitehorse have the opportunity to access healthy recreational activities, employment and training.

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## *Success Stories*

- In 2007, Health and Social Services increased the Yukon Child Benefit to assist low-income Yukoners with the costs of raising their children and changed the eligibility level to make it available to more families.
- In 2008, Health and Social Services increased child care subsidies provided to parents and increased funds provided to child care operators to raise wages for child care workers.

## Objective

### PROVIDE CITIZENS WITH THE OPPORTUNITIES AND THE TOOLS TO MAKE HEALTHY AND SAFE LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Yukon residents fare poorly on health and well-being indicators when compared to Canadians as a whole including having a lower life expectancy at birth and a higher percentage of deaths due to accidental injury. The data shows that certain populations struggle with making healthy lifestyle choices or cannot afford healthy choices. These populations include low income households, households receiving Social Assistance, and people without a high school education. The average life expectancy has been on the rise in Yukon over the past few years, but there are still large differences between the life expectancy of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Yukon residents.

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Participants in the Bridges and Barriers 2010: Yukon Experiences with poverty, social exclusion and inclusion workshops reported multiple challenges to making healthy choices. Barriers include financial challenges, social isolation, peer pressure and lack of transportation to access health or addiction services. A reoccurring issue throughout the discussions was the role a social network can play in supporting a healthy and safe lifestyle and how an absence of that network is a major barrier to attaining a healthy lifestyle.

## Success Stories

- In 2008, Community Services and Health and Social Services launched a new healthy living campaign with Recreation & Parks Association Yukon (RPAY) encouraging women to adopt healthier lifestyles.
- In 2010, Health and Social Services held an Aging Well Expo to receive input from Yukon seniors to help develop the Aging Well Strategy.

## Current Initiatives

### PATHWAYS TO WELLNESS

Health and Social Services is creating a wellness plan for Yukon's children and families. Pathways to Wellness will provide Yukoners with a common basis for understanding wellness, the factors that influence health and wellness, and what works for individuals, families and communities to improve health and wellness. This project will keep the needs of First Nations people, low income families and rural residents in the foreground. HSS is engaging other Yukon government departments, non-governmental organizations, federal, municipal and First Nations governments, the business sector and other sectors to build the wellness plan. The Pathways to Wellness website provides evidence-based information on how to improve well-being.

### IMPLEMENTING THE COMMUNITY NURSING SERVICES REVIEW

Health and Social Services is implementing the recommendations that came out of the Community Nursing Services Review. This includes working with stakeholders like First Nations and clients to collect feedback and ensure that services are culturally sensitive. Front line staff will be included in planning processes and HSS branches will work together to provide integrated and streamlined services in the communities, ensuring better access to high quality health care.

### AGE-FRIENDLY BUSINESS GUIDE

Health and Social Services, together with seniors groups and organizations, is promoting an age-friendly community through the creation of an age-friendly business guide. The guide includes an assessment to help businesses and other organizations review how well their environment fosters courtesy, safety, comfort and visibility. The guide helps businesses recognize how making age-friendly modifications will be good for business while improving safety, security and independence for seniors and elders, as well as the general population.

# Goal

## STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY VITALITY

*The Government of Yukon aims to strengthen community vitality by continuing to build good relations, greater respect, acceptance and equity among all citizens of the community.*

*Community vitality reflects the ability of a community to sustain itself into the future, while providing opportunities for its residents to pursue life goals and experience positive life outcomes.*

*Inclusive communities are those in which people support one another when resources are scarce or difficult to obtain. Healthy and safe communities are communities where residents feel connected, have strong support networks and a sense of social responsibility.*

*Part of living in an inclusive and diverse society is that citizens have opportunities and choices. Participation in society should be accessible to all residents. Having the opportunity for everyone to participate in the civic, cultural and recreational life of the community builds strong connections among residents and promotes inclusion.*

### Objective

#### **INCREASE AWARENESS ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF A SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE SOCIETY AND PROMOTE A CULTURE OF INCLUSION**

Inclusive communities are those in which people support one another and where people get the services and assistance they need without a cost to their dignity. Dignity (or lack of dignity) came up as a major theme in the research. People felt a stigma or prejudice associated with poverty, disability, religion, and race in their community and when accessing services. Many Yukon residents say they have experienced discrimination in the past five years and the most common places that discrimination was experienced were at work, in a store, bank or restaurant, or on the street.





*“There should be more people like me (with special needs) on boards – too many decisions are being made by people who don’t know/understand. There is a difference between hearing about a problem and living it.”*

BRIDGES AND BARRIERS  
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT 2010

## *Current Initiatives*

### **FAMILY HOUSING PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

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The Women’s Directorate and the Yukon Housing Corporation are collaborating to develop a family housing program coordinator position. The program coordinator provides support for tenants at Whitehorse Affordable Family Housing and helps to build a strong social housing community for single parent families at 60 Selkirk. By developing and maintaining key collaborative relationships with the departments of Justice, Health and Social Services, Education and with the Women’s Directorate, the coordinator will provide tenants with information and access to services. The Yukon government has built relationships with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Riverdale community, including the Child Development Centre through the delivery of education and community justice workshops.

### **POSITIVE IMAGES OF AGING**

Health and Social Services, with non-governmental organizations and community programs, will begin a public information campaign to promote positive images of aging. This is a collaborative campaign promoting inclusiveness and challenging the negative attitudes towards aging. The Positive Images of Aging campaign is a part of the broader Aging Well Strategy that is being developed by the Yukon government along with non-governmental organizations, community members and representatives from all levels of government.

## *Success Stories*

- The Women’s Directorate provides policy advice to improve programs, policies and services to reduce societal inequities, particularly around gender inequality. The directorate is expanding its gender analysis policy outreach plan and providing new training on how to create policies, programs and services that consider gender and diversity and lead to increased equality in society.
- In 2009, Education developed and introduced a First Nations Bi-Cultural Program with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations at St. Elias School in Haines Junction. The program includes a curriculum enhanced with lessons in Southern Tutchone language and culture.

## *Objective*

### **CREATE CONDITIONS TO ACHIEVE GREATER PARTICIPATION IN THE CIVIC LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY**

Participating in the civic life of the community and volunteering are ways that some people feel involved and included in their community. People with low income, those who receive Social Assistance, and youth were less likely to participate in civic life. When they were asked why, survey respondents said they were worried that they would not be respected or taken seriously. Voting is another way to gauge participation in the civic life of the community. Survey responses indicate that youth, Aboriginal people and people who receive Social Assistance were less likely than others to have voted in the most recent federal election.

Workshop participants discussed being penalized for speaking up in their communities. They reported feelings of intimidation that kept people from participating in public events and left them feeling marginalized in their communities.

## *Current Initiatives*

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### **YUKON ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S SUMMITS II**

The Women's Directorate co-hosted a second Yukon Aboriginal Women's Summit in October 2012 with the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's issues. The summit brought together Yukon Aboriginal women from all communities. Summit participants provided feedback on community projects which were developed to address issues identified at the first Yukon Aboriginal Women's Summit in November 2007 and identified new priorities.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS FUND**

The Department of Environment provides grants to non-governmental organizations that provide public information and education on Yukon's natural environment, promote conservation and encourage sustainable use of fish, wildlife and their habitat. The department works with its stakeholders and the public to ensure the health of Yukon's natural environment.

## *Success Stories*

- Health and Social Services consulted with First Nations governments to develop the Child and Family Services Act in 2008. The new Act has provisions for better protection of Yukon children and supports for families and extended families to care for children.
- Emergency Medical Services increased training and opportunities for volunteer emergency workers in rural Yukon communities and continues to offer these skill building opportunities.



## Objective

### CREATE BROADER ACCESS TO PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS, RECREATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

The research showed that participation in sports, recreation, arts and culture was closely tied to household income. Participation rates were lowest among low income respondents, people who receive Social Assistance, and seniors (less than 50%). When it came to sports and recreation, low participation rates also included those with less than a high school education, single parents and Aboriginal people. Barriers to recreation include transportation, financial difficulties, and limited activities available in the communities.

## Current Initiatives

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### RENEWED YUKON ACTIVE LIVING STRATEGY

Community Services is partnering with Health and Social Services and Education to renew the Yukon Active Living Strategy. Many non-governmental organizations work with Community Services to deliver active living programming to the public. By focusing on rural communities, the Active Living Strategy will provide more healthy living opportunities to rural children, youth and adults.

## Success Stories

- With the Kids Recreation Fund, the Yukon government provides assistance to children and youth who are unable to participate in recreation programs because of financial hardship.
- The Government of Yukon makes annual contributions to the Youth Investment Fund for projects for youth (including camps, recreational programs and cultural events). Many of these projects are designed to help youth susceptible to at risk behaviours. In 2012 the government invested a total of \$53,000 for 21 different projects.



## *Objective*

### **IMPROVE CONDITIONS THAT RESULT IN A SAFE COMMUNITY**

Community safety was a priority area in both the qualitative and quantitative data. Community safety concerns included the connection between crime and homelessness, the need for support for victims to address their concerns, and support for offenders coming out of jail. People interviewed talked about not having a positive support network and being surrounded by negative influences.

## *Current Initiatives*

### **COMMUNITY RE-INTEGRATION PILOT PROJECT**

The Department of Justice is collaborating with First Nations governments, municipalities and rural communities, non-governmental organizations and other service providers on a pilot project to help offenders re-integrate into their communities. Financial support is provided to communities and non-governmental organizations to support the case management goals of the offender and to improve the outcome of the offender returning to their community.

### **COMMUNITY WELLNESS COURT/JUSTICE WELLNESS CENTRE**

The Department of Justice is using alternative justice approaches to reduce re-offending, address the needs of victims and also to improve safety in Yukon communities. This approach involves working with offenders who have substance abuse issues, cognitive delays and mental health issues to identify a wellness plan that addresses the underlying factors related to criminal activity. This initiative is a partnership among several units in the Department of Justice and various non-governmental organizations that provide programming.

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## *Success Stories*

- The Women's Directorate contributes annually to the Prevention of Violence against Aboriginal Women Fund which supports projects developed by Aboriginal women for their communities. The funds were doubled in 2009 to respond to high demand.
- The Government of Yukon introduced Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods (SCAN) legislation in 2006 to create safer communities and protect Yukoners.

## Part 6: Measuring Success

In order to measure success, it is important that we monitor our progress and make improvements as necessary. Monitoring progress means measuring outcomes over time that are tied to the goals in the strategy. We will measure our success by monitoring progress on two levels:

1. through our strategy initiatives; and
2. through our social inclusion and poverty reduction indicators.

### *Strategy Initiatives*

Initiatives are attached to each goal in the strategy. These initiatives will be undertaken and led by departments, often in collaboration with each other, other levels of government and non-governmental organizations. We will monitor strategy initiatives on an ongoing basis to ensure that specific initiatives are meeting objectives and contributing to the overall goals and objectives of the strategy. The progress of initiatives will be reported on regularly through mechanisms such as departmental strategic plans and annual reports.

### *Measuring Social Inclusion Indicators*

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Social inclusion indicators consider the well-being of populations as well as individuals. A social inclusion indicator framework has been developed for Yukon (see Appendix A). A number of these indicators will be tracked as part of our ongoing monitoring so that the well-being of Yukon society can be monitored over the longer term. These Yukon-wide indicators will be directly linked to the strategy's goals and objectives and will ultimately gauge its overall success and future direction.

Some examples of Yukon's social inclusion indicators include:

- distribution of income;
- sources of income;
- rates of material deprivation;
- high school completion rates;
- literacy and numeracy scores;
- labour force participation rates;
- access to affordable housing; and
- access to health services.

## Part 7: Moving Forward

The initiatives laid out in this strategy are a crucial step in reducing social exclusion and poverty in Yukon. In the future, the strategy will evolve and respond to the ongoing and changing needs of the Yukon population. Implementing the strategy will involve working across all government departments and in close cooperation with stakeholders and partners.

To this end, the Yukon government will establish a steering committee that will implement the strategy, including developing new initiatives, improving existing initiatives and commenting on social policy development in the Yukon government so that it aligns with the strategy's goals and objectives.

New directions in the strategy will be guided by a strong evidence base that will come from ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The government will establish a system for regularly measuring progress and reporting results as a key component of the initial implementation of the strategy.

The voice of the community will continue to be heard as the strategy is implemented. Representatives of stakeholder groups and populations directly affected by the strategy will have an ongoing role in providing the government with feedback and advice related to advancing its goals.

## Appendix A: Social Inclusion Indicators

A social inclusion indicator framework was developed for Yukon in 2010. Social inclusion indicators consider the well-being of populations as well as individuals.

### PERSONAL ASSETS

#### Money

- Income distribution
- Sources of income
- Low income households

#### Education

- High school completion/graduation rates
- Participation in continuing education
- Barriers to continuing education

#### Literacy

- Literacy and numeracy scores

#### Transportation

- Main forms of transportation used
- Transportation difficulties

#### Child care

- Reduced work hours to care for children
- Methods of child care used
- Difficulties regarding child care

#### Health and wellbeing

- Life expectancy at birth
- Deaths due to unintentional injury
- Self-reported physical
- Self-reported mental health
- Prevalence of obesity
- Physical activity levels
- Rates of activity limiting disability
- Smoking rate
- Patterns of alcohol use
- Emergency care for drug and alcohol related health issues
- Satisfaction with life

### PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY

#### Employment

- Labour force participation rate
- Unemployment rate
- Barriers to employment
- Volunteerism

#### Participation in arts, cultural activities, sports and recreation

- Participation in arts and cultural activities
- Participation in sports and recreation activities
- Membership in clubs and associations

#### Civic engagement

- Voter participation
- Membership on boards and councils

- Advocacy and participation in public consultations
- What happens when people speak up?

### COMMUNITY ASSETS

#### Proximity and remoteness

- Distance to work
- Distance to an urban centre
- Distance to basic services
- Accessibility of health care
- Has a regular health care provider
- Barriers to accessing health care
- Difficulty obtaining immediate care
- Satisfaction with the health care system
- Availability of mental health and addiction services
- Knowing how to access mental health and addiction services
- Barriers to seeking mental health or addiction services

#### Community safety

- Crime rates
- Crime Severity Index
- Victims of violent crime
- Perceptions of community safety

#### Freedom from discrimination and prejudice

- Feeling out of place
- Experiences of discrimination

#### Social support and community belonging

- Sense of community belonging
- Size of social networks
- Trust in the community
- Confidence in service agencies and institutions

### ACCESS TO NECESSITIES

#### Food and material goods

- Cost and affordability
- Material deprivation
- Food security

#### Housing

- Population in housing below standards
- Population in core housing need
- Housing affordability
- Housing safety
- Population without housing
- Having a choice in where one lives



## Appendix B: Yukon Snapshot

### POPULATION OVERVIEW

Population 35,503 as of June 2012\*

25.1% self-identify as Aboriginal\*\*

76% live in Whitehorse\*

Dawson City population is 1,912\*

Watson lake population is 1,490\*

Populations of other Yukon communities range from 51 to 815\*

### GOVERNMENT OVERVIEW

There are many layers of government in Yukon including the Government of Yukon, Government of Canada, 14 Yukon First Nations and municipalities. Of the 14 Yukon First Nations, 11 have finalized land claims and have Final and Self-Government Agreements in effect.

### EMPLOYMENT\*\*\*\*\*

Yukon labour force = 20,700 people in August 2012

Number employed = 19,400 people

Unemployment rate = 6.8%

Unemployment rate for males = 7.7%

Unemployment rate for females = 4.9%

Employed with fulltime employment = 89.1%

Employed males with fulltime employment = 91.2%

Employed females with fulltime employment = 86.1%

Employment data from 2006 Census\*\*

Yukon labour force = 19,120

Number employed = 17,315

Unemployment rate = 9.4%

Unemployment rate for males = 11.0%

Unemployment rate for females = 7.8%

Yukon Aboriginal labour force = 3,905

Number employed = 3,050

Unemployment rate = 21.9%

Unemployment rate for males = 26.8%

Unemployment rate for females = 17.3%

### WHICH INDUSTRIES EMPLOY THE MOST YUKONERS?\*\*

Public administration (24.0%)

Retail trade (10.2%)

Health care and Social Assistance (9.1%)

Accommodation and food services (8.9%)

Construction (6.9%)

Educational services (6.8%)

(Based on an experienced labour force population of 18,895)

### INCOME\*\*

How much do Yukon families earn? (Based on 2005 income data)

12% less than \$30,000

23% \$30,000 - \$59,999

23% \$60,000 - \$89,999

31% \$90,000 and \$149,999

10% \$150,000 and over

30% of lone parent families have an income under \$30,000 compared to 9% of couples who have an income under \$30,000.\*\*

Of the 475 lone parent Yukon families earning under \$30,000, 75% of those are headed by a female parent.\*\*

## LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS (LICOS)\*\*

The Low Income Cut-offs (LICO) is an estimated income threshold below which families are expected to spend 20% more of their income on food, clothing and shelter than the average family of the same size. This is based on after-tax household income. The numbers for Yukon are a rough estimate because LICOs are not calculated specifically for Yukon.

4.3% of all economic families were living below the LICO\*\*

9.3% of lone-parent families were living below the LICO\*\*

## WHAT IS THE COST OF LIVING?

Annual average inflation rate (2010 to 2011) 3.0%

29% of Yukoners experienced at least one element of material deprivation\*\*\*

21% of adult Yukoners had experienced at least one element of food insecurity\*\*\*

The community spatial price index compares the cost of living in Whitehorse to that of smaller Yukon communities using the prices of a set list of goods and services. In April 2012, the most dramatic difference was in Old Crow, where the prices were on average 100.4% higher than in Whitehorse. The other 6 communities all had prices higher by at least 11%.

Communities range in highway distance from Whitehorse from 54 km to 536 km, and one community, Old Crow, is fly-in only. Most communities have a rudimentary food store, a gas station, an elementary school and a health care centre. Some communities, however, lack basic services, and the people living there must travel to obtain goods and services.

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## HOUSING

Vacancy rate (June 2012 in Whitehorse) – 1.3%\*

Median rent (June 2012 in Whitehorse) – \$835\*

Average selling price for a house (2012 first quarter in Whitehorse) – \$417,618\*\*\*\*\*

Average selling price for a condo (2012 first quarter in Whitehorse) – \$276,976\*\*\*\*\*

Yukon households in core housing need (2006) – 16%\*\*

Renters vs. Homeowners in core housing need

30% of all renters\*\*

10% of all homeowners\*\*

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation defines core housing need as households which are unable to afford shelter that meets adequacy, suitability and affordability norms. The CMHC's common definition of affordability is that the cost of adequate shelter should not exceed 30% of household income. These definitions are available on the CMHC website at [www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/corp/faq/faq\\_002.cfm#5](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/corp/faq/faq_002.cfm#5).

## EDUCATION

Several Yukon communities offer school services to grade 12, however in smaller communities, students travel to Whitehorse to complete grades 10-12.

## NUMBER OF SCHOOLS IN YUKON\*\*\*\*

29 public schools

477 teachers

5,007 students

(May 2011)

## POPULATION WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION\*\*

18% of Yukoners (age 25+)

21% of Canadians (age 25+)

37% of Aboriginal Yukoners (age 25+)

## POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Yukon College

13 campuses throughout Yukon (Yukon College website)

831 full-time students (Sept 2010 – June 2011)\*\*\*\*

5,010 part-time students (Sept 2010 – June 2011)\*\*\*\*

## HEALTH CARE \*\*\*\*

2 hospitals

76 beds

13 health centres throughout Yukon

71 resident physicians

146 non-resident physicians

23 resident dentists

21 non-resident dentists

People in smaller communities must travel to Whitehorse for appointments with specialists or dentists. Specialists will visit Yukon to provide services but do not travel outside of Whitehorse.

## LIFE EXPECTANCY IN YUKON\*\*\*\*\*

In 2006 life expectancy at birth in Yukon was 75.7 years

(Life expectancy at birth for Canada was 80.7 for 2005-2007\*\*\*\*\*)

Aboriginal males had an average of 8.8 years less than non-Aboriginal males

Aboriginal females had an average of 7.3 years less than non-Aboriginal females

\* Yukon Bureau of Statistics, Yukon Monthly Statistical Review, August 2012

\*\*2006 Census Statistics Canada

\*\*\* Yukon Bureau of Statistics, Yukon Social Inclusion Household Survey, 2010

\*\*\*\* Yukon Bureau of Statistics, Yukon Fact Sheet, March 2012

\*\*\*\*\*Yukon Bureau of Statistics, Life Expectancy in the Yukon, 2006

\*\*\*\*\*Yukon Bureau of Statistics, Yukon Real Estate Survey, First Quarter 2012

\*\*\*\*\*[www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/100223/t10023a1-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/100223/t10023a1-eng.htm)

\*\*\*\*\*Yukon Bureau of Statistics, Yukon Employment, August 2012









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