



FOR RELEASE
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Yukon RCMP receive training in Yukon First Nations history and culture

WHITEHORSE—A two-day course in First Nations history and culture for RCMP members is one of the key steps taken by the Yukon government in fulfilling the territory's policing priorities.

"The goal of this training is to ensure RCMP members acquire a deep understanding of the unique history and culture of First Nations in Yukon," Minister of Justice Mike Nixon said. "The course is already building constructive and respectful relationships between our police service and First Nations leadership, communities and citizens."

Training in First Nations history and culture for RCMP members was one of the recommendations of the *Sharing Common Ground* report on policing. In 2013 Minister Nixon set the year's policing priorities to include implementation of this training. The course is delivered by the Northern Institute of Social Justice at Yukon College.

"I truly believe it is through education and the sharing of our world views and realities that we will strengthen our relationships," Yukon College director of First Nations Initiatives Tosh Southwick said. "This training is integral to removing some common misconceptions so we can work together to improve our territory".

The course has provided an inter-professional learning opportunity for other Government of Yukon employees including Alcohol and Drug Services staff. This course is also mandatory basic training for correctional officers at Whitehorse Correctional Centre. Over the next two years all corrections staff will take the course as part of professional development.

"Collaboration was the key to developing this program," executive director of the Northern Institute of Social Justice Joanne Lewis said. "The idea evolved through discussions with the RCMP and Alcohol and Drug Services, who saw that training together would bring in more perspectives and strengthen their partnership. Development was led by the First Nations Initiatives department at the college working with First Nations and the cultural competencies provided through the Council of Yukon First Nations."

To date 49 RCMP members from across the territory have completed the course and the RCMP continues to take advantage of any new course offerings that come available. A training session for RCMP members is currently taking place during National Police Week, May 11-17.

"We have received excellent feedback on this course from the employees," said Chief Superintendent Peter Clark, Commanding Officer of the RCMP in Yukon. "The content has been of great interest, and the presentation and discussion have been engaging and useful. This program helps new and seasoned officers understand the diverse cultures of Yukon First Nations, and appreciate the strength that traditional knowledge and culture bring to our communities."

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