

FOR RELEASE
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Rural Yukon communities are biggest beneficiaries of Mental Wellness Innovation Fund

WHITEHORSE—The Government of Yukon has awarded \$620,000 to 12 community projects through the Mental Wellness Innovation Fund.

"I am incredibly impressed with the depth and breadth of the projects submitted for funding by organizations across Yukon. The quality of these projects is an indication of how hard people are working to improve the health and mental well-being of their fellow Yukoners," Minister of Health and Social Services Mike Nixon said.

The fund has been broken into two award periods. The first period ended June 30, with 33 applications submitted for consideration. All proposals were reviewed by a committee comprised of the Council of Yukon First Nations, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, other Yukon First Nations, and government representatives.

"We are so pleased to see this fund will support Yukon First Nation communities by assisting them to further develop and implement their mental wellness initiatives and strategies," Grand Chief Peter Johnston of Council of Yukon First Nations said. "We recognize there are service gaps in this area and we are hopeful that these additional resources will address that inequity and build capacity in all of our communities. We are likewise pleased Yukon First Nations and Yukon government are working together with a view to improving mental wellness for the entire Yukon."

The Liard Aboriginal Women's Society is receiving \$110,000 for a peer support program for youth, including the creation of traditional regalia, which will be taught by elders in the community.

Ross River Dena Council received funding for projects to create a youth program and a volunteer program in the community; and to hold cultural workshops that will enhance family function and capacity by connecting women with their culture. Together these two projects received \$137,270. Other projects in Ross River were also funded: \$28,000 to Minnie Besner for building sweat lodges over the next 12 months and \$16,767 to the Tu Lindlini Youth Group to create a capacity building workshop for youth leaders.

Other recipients include:

- Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation (\$40,800) to engage youth in a video project on the four quadrants of being;
- Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (\$50,000) to develop a healing camp;
- Kluane First Nation (\$37,100) for a series of workshops on strength and coping skills;
- Yukon College and Selkirk First Nation (\$38,700) to run capacity building and life skills programs as part of the rural apprenticeship program to increase student ability;
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (\$20,000) to develop a proposal for on the land healing; and
- the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation (\$20,000) to further develop a concept to meet service gaps in Old Crow.

"Earlier this year, we gathered people together to chart a path forward towards improving mental wellness and mental health of Yukon citizens. These projects address some of the important work that needs to take place. They focus on youth, families and building community capacity, which we can all agree will help us build a healthier Yukon," Nixon added. The second application deadline is September 2.

Learn More: www.hss.gov.yk.ca/forwardtogether.php

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