



Budget address 2025–26

presented by

Minister of Finance
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Introduction

Honourable Speaker,

colleagues, distinguished guests, members of the media, and everyone tuning in at home: it is my honour to table the Government of Yukon's 2025–26 territorial budget.

This budget sets a responsible, sustainable and compassionate path forward for our territory and everyone who calls it home.

Since our government was elected in 2016, we've worked to make the Yukon a strong, inclusive place where people can build a life, start families and grow their careers.

We've put reconciliation at the centre of all that we do.

We've tackled global crises, from the pandemic to inflation to economic uncertainty caused by the actions of a new U.S. administration.

We've partnered with the private sector to build up our territory, as well as with people across the political spectrum to advance shared priorities.

We're doing this because our vision for the territory is one where everyone can enjoy a sustainable, affordable and vibrant future.

We believe in a Yukon where hard work pays off and where people facing challenges aren't left out in the cold.

We believe in a Yukon where everyone is recognized for the inherent value they bring to our society, whether your ancestors have lived here since time immemorial, or you recently arrived.

We believe in a Yukon where our collective success depends on health care professionals, educators and first responders. With significant investments in our health care system, and in education, this budget acknowledges the efforts of public sector workers and helps to make the Yukon a more attractive place to live, do business and explore.

We believe in a Yukon where everyone can feel safe in their homes, their communities, and at work; where communities are able to meet the needs of their populations and where life is affordable.

This budget provides new funding for the RCMP, supports residential land development, increases the Comprehensive Municipal Grant and puts thousands of dollars back into the pockets of Yukoners each year.

This budget contains investments that will make life more affordable, support safe and healthy communities, protect the environment and build the economic and social infrastructure that our population needs in order to thrive.

As in previous years, this budget responds to pressures beyond our borders, like climate change, worker shortages, rising health care costs and global economic uncertainty.

We're being responsible. We are including including an \$82 million surplus and a \$75 million contingency that will allow us to continue to respond to climate change and natural disasters, pressures on the health care system and economic uncertainty caused by the evolving U.S. trade policy.

This budget reflects careful stewardship of public funds, responsible investment in essential services and infrastructure, and a commitment to long-term financial stability so people and businesses can plan for the future.

Public servants in the Yukon work tirelessly to ensure that essential services are provided in communities across the territory. This includes everything from the delivery of health care to education to emergency response.

They play a critical role in responding to emerging challenges, such as the Substance Use Health Emergency, while continuously working to improve the lives of Yukoners. Their dedication and commitment to the territory are essential in supporting the Yukon's growth and maintaining a high quality of life for residents.

They find innovative solutions to address the needs of Yukoners, often working across departments and collaborating with partners to maximize impact.

They continue to deliver vital services and contribute to the territory's development, ensuring that Yukoners receive the support they need, even in the most challenging times.

I want to thank the public service for their work on this budget – in particular, the staff at the Department of Finance who work hard, day in and day out, to ensure that the government's fiscal and operational decisions align with Yukoners' priorities.

Since this is the last budget I will table and debate as Finance Minister and MLA for the Klondike, I want to step back and take a moment to remind Yukoners of just how far we've come.

Where we are now

For several years, the Yukon has experienced a steady state of growth as we welcome new Yukoners to the territory, and in response, we have built new housing, new schools and new infrastructure and have supported new businesses opening in our communities.

Our population is expanding, and the demand for essential services and infrastructure is growing.

This budget addresses growth pressures, invests in essential services and helps ensure we have the financial flexibility to respond to emerging needs.

We're responding to increased costs of providing health care services to a growing and aging population by investing over \$70 million in Insured Health Services and core funding for the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

While we've historically operated under a fiscal plan that minimized borrowing, our governance structures as a territory have matured, our population has grown and our climate is changing rapidly.

Strategic borrowing will be a key tool in addressing our territory's evolving needs, providing the flexibility we need to manage cash flow while unlocking needed opportunities for growth and resilience.

Budget 2025–26 contains provisions for long-term borrowing of up to \$400 million.

This is a prudent, forward-looking measure that ensures we can respond to emerging pressures in the medium term while continuing to invest in essential services and infrastructure to support territory-wide growth.

In the fall, we updated Yukoners on the need to reassess our territory's borrowing limit. The federal government increased our borrowing limit to \$1.2 billion, giving us the ability to better manage our spending as we work to meet Yukoners' needs. Recent unforeseen challenges – such as urgent environmental responses, pressures on the health care system and the continued need to address issues related to climate change – have highlighted the value of increased flexibility to manage cashflows throughout the year and of using tools beyond the government's line of credit.

This fiscal year, we'll seek to secure long-term financing that will be carefully aligned with financial planning and cash flow needs, to ensure we access the most favourable lending terms available. Long-term borrowing instruments are not a new tool for the Government of Yukon; a similar approach was taken in 2008 when the Yukon Energy Corporation issued a bond to finance critical infrastructure investments. This precedent highlights the government's strategic use of borrowing to support the territory's long-term development.

This fiscal flexibility is critical to supporting the population and the economic growth we've experienced in the recent past.

Borrowed funds will provide the government with the flexibility to manage cash flow needs to meet rising health care demands, to respond to emergencies, and to support economic and environmental sustainability across the territory. They'll allow us to continue to invest in the strategic economic infrastructure that helps businesses and communities thrive.

And importantly, we have laid out a path to repay borrowed funds in a sustainable, responsible way.

We're doing the hard work now to set up future governments for success.

We'll continue to provide regular updates on financial decisions and borrowing strategies and have introduced new levels of reporting in the Mains and Fiscal and Economic Outlook to enhance transparency, aligning with the high fiscal accountability grade given to us by the C.D. Howe Institute.

Affordability for all

The high cost of living is making it harder for people across Canada to get ahead, and in the North, the impacts are even greater.

That's why we're fighting for Yukoners – holding cellular phone providers accountable, putting money back in people's pockets, supporting workers and building new homes – while ensuring our economy remains on a strong footing.

Families

We're making life more affordable for families by reducing child care costs, increasing Yukon Child Benefit payments and expanding support for caregivers and parents of children with disabilities.

Yukoners will continue saving through our public dental plan, a new \$10,000 fertility tax credit and the new upcoming Winter Electrical Affordability Rebate.

We're helping households switch to heat pumps, providing free transit passes for those in need and investing in school food programs, reflecting our commitment to students' health and wellbeing.

Businesses

We're easing financial pressures on small businesses by keeping the small business tax rate at zero, maintaining the lowest fuel tax in Canada and extending our Paid Sick Leave Rebate for a third year.

Our government is investing \$1.6 million in farm resiliency to strengthen food security and is continuing to prioritize buying local. This is particularly important as we prepare our response to potential U.S. tariffs. We are allocating \$1 million in funding through the Department of Economic Development to assist our local business community in navigating this challenge.

We're supporting cultural industries with investments of \$1.7 million in local media productions and funding for Yukon musicians, \$2.5 million for the Yukon's arts community and \$2.5 million for museums and First Nations cultural centres.

Targeted investments in the knowledge economy, technology, renewable energy and mining sectors are continuing to diversify our economy and make it more competitive.

Housing

We're making housing more affordable by investing over \$5 million to support the building of new affordable homes and launching a \$1 million program to help Yukoners purchase their first home.

Renters will benefit from more than \$6.8 million in rent supplements and subsidies including specific subsidies for survivors of gender-based violence, while investments in energy efficiency

programs and rebates will help residents save on home heating and repairs. From new housing projects to cost-saving initiatives to meeting our target of 1,000 new lots, we're committed to making sure all Yukoners have access to safe, affordable homes.

Budget 2025–26 will see a record level of capital investments made in developing new housing for Yukoners across the territory.

Our Premier, the minister responsible for the Department of Economic Development and the Yukon Housing Corporation, will have more to say during his speech on supports for businesses and how we're working to expand access to housing across the territory.

Territory-wide growth

As we invest in housing, we're also continuing to build the economic infrastructure that people and communities need to succeed.

In Budget 2025–26, our government has prioritized investments in upgrades to our transportation networks – including roads, bridges and airports – to improve connectivity and support economic growth.

Significant funding has also gone toward modernizing health care and educational facilities, expanding digital connectivity and internet redundancy in remote communities and enhancing essential services like water, sewer, waste management and energy systems.

We can't do this alone. A strong Yukon requires collaboration between the public and private sector.

Changes to federal immigration programs have left employers with questions about the upcoming year.

Our government is working with federal officials to explore our options and is reviewing our policies to better support employers in meeting their needs.

The Staffing UP program remains available to help employers find, hire and keep workers that are a good fit for their organization, while the STEP and Summer Career Placement programs can help employers hire a Yukon youth or student in secondary or post-secondary school.

Our five-year innovation strategy sets a clear path for how our government will support and enable innovative practices.

Developed through extensive engagement with innovators and industry leaders – both locally and globally – this strategy reflects a shared vision for a forward-thinking, prosperous Yukon.

With nearly \$2 million in the Economic Development Fund and another \$1.6 million to support technological growth, we're directly supporting business innovation, diversification and competitiveness, and improving our local entrepreneurial ecosystem.

We're proud to support local programs with partners like Yukonstruct and Yukon Venture Angels, which connect early-stage Yukon businesses with capital, mentorship and strategic guidance to drive sustainable growth.

Response to tariffs

The Trump administration's evolving tariff threats put jobs, businesses and supply chains on both sides of the border at risk.

In response, we're working with business and industry groups on a buy local campaign and have set aside \$1 million to develop a program to support Yukon businesses impacted by tariffs, if the need occurs.

We're also collaborating with federal, provincial and territorial partners to expand trade opportunities, cut shipping costs and reduce red tape.

At the same time, we're prioritizing Arctic sovereignty and security. We are continuing work on a feasibility study for a Canadian Institute for Arctic Security to ensure northern voices lead this national – and global – conversation.

Transportation infrastructure

We're making major investments in infrastructure, including roads, bridges, schools, health care facilities and homes to support our communities.

This year, we're dedicating significant funding to transportation, with \$50 million dedicated to bridge infrastructure, including a significant investment in the completion of the Nisutlin Bay Bridge replacement, \$31 million for North Klondike Highway upgrades, \$10 million for the Yukon Resource Gateway Project, and \$75 million for upgrades at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport.

Our *Five-Year Capital Plan* prioritizes projects that will provide Yukoners with safer roads, stronger connections and improved transportation networks.

I encourage Yukoners to review the *Budget Highlights* document for a list of infrastructure projects by community, and I know the Minister of Highways and Public Works will be going into greater detail on our investments in infrastructure across the territory when he addresses the Legislative Assembly in the days to come.

Investing in communities

The Yukon's communities are the heart of our territory, contributing to its economy, culture and identity, with places like my community of Dawson City showcasing a rich Gold Rush history and a deep connection to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation.

To support strong local governance and services, we are increasing the Comprehensive Municipal Grant to \$29.5 million this fiscal year and investing nearly \$3 million in local projects through the Community Development Fund.

We are investing in sport, recreation and active transportation infrastructure – for example, by expanding Whitehorse’s multi-use trail network, upgrading arenas and facilities across the territory, supporting new projects like the nearly-completed Polarettes gymnastics facility and climbing gym and the new biathlon facility, while also preparing for the 2026 Arctic Winter Games in partnership with Sport Yukon and the City of Whitehorse.

We’re also funding municipal building retrofits, lot development and community infrastructure projects across the territory to ensure every Yukon community thrives.

The Minister of Community Services will expand more on his portfolio’s programs and priorities when he addresses the Legislative Assembly.

Building prosperity through reconciliation

Our government is committed to supporting Yukon First Nations as we continue our shared responsibilities in the implementation of the Umbrella Final Agreement and the individual Self-Government Agreements that have been reached. Several decades have passed since most of these agreements were established and much work has been done. While we have many joint achievements to celebrate and key milestones to mark in our shared history, our work towards reconciliation does not stop.

We continue regular meetings with First Nations Chiefs through the Yukon Forum. We are making progress on land use planning, including the Dawson Regional Land Use Plan and consultation on the potential creation of new national parks or Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas.

With a \$700,000 investment, we are supporting the Yukon Residential School Missing Children Project to uncover the truth about children taken from their families.

We are implementing the Breaking Trail Together Strategy to build a more inclusive public service and are continuing to invest in the Yukon First Nation School Board to support education rooted in First Nations’ ways of knowing and doing.

Our government is partnering with Yukon First Nations governments and development corporations to build essential infrastructure, such as schools, housing and wellness centres, including investments in the Range Point Subdivision in partnership with Kwanlin Dün First Nation and providing support for the Council of Yukon First Nation’s Family Preservation Wellness Centre.

Safe and healthy families and communities

Our government has always prioritized the wellbeing of families, workers and communities for a safer and healthier Yukon. This year is no different.

Health care system

In Budget 2025–26, we are investing heavily in our health care system.

In her speech, the Minister of Health and Social Services will discuss our additional \$47 million investment in Insured Health Services and \$24.5 million investment in the Yukon Hospital Corporation, including increased bed capacity, support for vaccine programs and investment in Personal Support Workers.

She will tell Yukoners how our government is working to establish the new health authority, Shāw Kwā'ą / Health and Wellness Yukon / Santé et mieux-être Yukon.

She will discuss, in greater detail, the \$4.2 million investment in hospital maintenance, \$2.3 million to optimize long-term care capacity and \$1.2 million for planning potential expansions at Whitehorse General Hospital, based on feedback from health care professionals and patients alike.

This past year, we made great advancements to address health care workforce challenges, partnering with the Canadian Forces Health Services, offering virtual learning and skill upgrades for Yukon-based licensed practical nurses through the University of New Brunswick, and streamlining credential recognition for internationally-educated health professionals – already assisting 45 professionals. This work continues.

We're also taking steps to enhance the medical travel system, including early work to identify options for a travel lodge in Whitehorse to support residents who need treatment in the capital.

We are also continuing to fund efforts that ensure Yukoners have access to services and information – especially related to our health care and legal systems – in French.

Inclusion

Our government believes that safe, healthy communities are built on inclusion, respect and the freedom for everyone to live authentically. We stand against the growing global and domestic threats to the rights and safety of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals.

We continue to support partners like Queer Yukon and are committed to modernizing legislation – building on our historic achievement of covering broad gender-affirming health services – to ensure all Yukoners are able to live as their authentic selves.

We will continue to celebrate – and invest in – our territory’s cultural diversity, partnering with the Canadian Filipino Association of Yukon to plan for a Filipino community centre. We will continue to work with community organizations to foster cross-cultural learning that enriches our territory.

Education

We are investing in upgrading school infrastructure across the Yukon, including the relocation of École Whitehorse Elementary School, building the Kêts’ádań Kù School in Burwash Landing, and starting the work to consult on building a new school in downtown Whitehorse.

We are supporting families and helping young people get the right start in life by increasing the number of early learning and childcare spaces.

We are also investing in education professionals, continuing to support strong wages for early childhood educators, signing a new collective agreement with Yukon teachers, and hiring more educators and school staff.

I know that the Minister of Education looks forward to discussing these and other investments in our education system when she speaks to Budget 2025–26 initiatives.

Budget 2025–26 also continues to support projects that empower young people, through programs like the Youth Developmental Asset Program and Youth Investment Fund, which provide critical resources for our young people.

Safety

Community safety is a growing concern for Yukoners, with rising property crime and the ongoing Substance Use Health Emergency affecting all communities.

In response, our government has developed the *Downtown Whitehorse Safety Response Action Plan*, collaborating with partners to tackle issues like homelessness, addiction and public safety.

Key community partners, such as the Safe at Home Society, continue to provide essential services, and new programs, like our Safebiz program, delivered in partnership with the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, are helping local businesses address security concerns.

In past budgets, we’ve significantly increased funding to the RCMP. This budget continues that trend, with an additional \$5.8 million in investments that will increase the number of RCMP officers and hire more SCAN investigators.

Protecting our environment

The Yukon is a place of immense natural beauty, and with this privilege comes the responsibility to protect and preserve the land for future generations.

Mining

Mining is a key driver of the Yukon's economy, providing high-paying jobs and growth opportunities as global demand for minerals rises.

Our government is committed to responsible resource development through the development of new minerals legislation in collaboration with First Nations partners. We are also working with the Yukon Chamber of Mines and other stakeholders to ensure mining benefits our economy while respecting the environment and the Umbrella Final Agreement.

This year, our government is allocating \$118 million in loans to the court-appointed receiver for Victoria Gold Corporation to continue remediation efforts required following the heap leach facility failure at the mine site.

Addressing this environmental disaster and ensuring long-term protection of the Yukon's land and water is an absolute priority.

We are also providing contributions to the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, as well as the costs for an Independent Review Board to investigate the underlying causes of the failure. We look forward to receiving the Independent Review Board's report and recommendations when their work is completed.

Reclamation work will also continue at Minto mine with over \$21 million allocated in the budget and efforts to increase water treatment and address repairs to a suspected leak in the tailings storage facility will be undertaken at the Wolverine mine site this year.

Investments in mineral exploration are critical to future mine development in the territory. This work must be undertaken in a sustainable and responsible manner in partnership with First Nations. The Yukon has deposits of 12 critical minerals and occurrences of 13 more. These critical minerals are needed for a transition to a sustainable low-carbon and digital economy. In 2023, our government introduced new criteria to encourage exploration for critical minerals. This budget will continue funding the well-established Yukon Mineral Exploration Program to advance projects throughout their lifecycle.

One promising project is Fireweed Metals' Mactung Project, which is one of the largest and highest-grade tungsten deposits in the world. We were pleased to see the Government of Canada and the U.S. Department of Defence announce in December, a \$35.4 million investment to advance pre-development activities at the site.

Investments through the Yukon Mineral Exploration Program are also continuing for placer projects. In 2024, the Yukon saw the value of placer gold production in the territory reach record levels at \$271 million.

As we focus on work that will ensure responsible development across our resource sector, we must also look ahead to ensuring a sustainable future for our energy needs.

Our path forward as a territory cannot be powered by fossil fuels. Efforts are underway to promote greener energy solutions, and we are continuing to work to connect the Yukon and British Columbia power grids to reduce emissions and ensure a sustainable, affordable, clean power supply for people and industry across the territory.

Outfitting

Hunting, trapping and outfitting have long been a vital part of the Yukon's culture, providing food security for families, sustaining traditional ways of life, fostering a deep connection to the land and supporting our economy.

Hunting also plays a key role in wildlife management, ensuring healthy populations and ecological balance across the territory.

Our government is investing in new technologies for data collection to improve resident hunting opportunities.

By using tools like GPS tracking, remote cameras and drones to monitor wildlife, we can track and manage wildlife populations more accurately. Access to better data helps government make informed decisions to ensure we are providing Yukoners with access to sustainable harvesting and continued conservation.

Camping

This year, we are continuing to improve Yukon campgrounds, enhancing the campground reservation service by ensuring Yukon seniors can reserve online and still receive their 50 per cent discount.

We are adding new campsites, collaborating with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Community Development Corporation on the Charcoal Ridge Trail in Tombstone Territorial Park, and upgrading boat launches, day-use areas and playgrounds at campgrounds across the territory.

The Minister of Environment will expand more on these and other investments when he addresses this legislature in the days to come.

Emergency preparedness

In this budget, we are investing in emergency preparedness by increasing volunteer honoraria for Emergency Medical Services and firefighters, purchasing a new fire truck for unincorporated communities, and enhancing wildfire prevention, flood mapping and climate resilience efforts.

We all have a responsibility to be prepared, and I encourage all Yukoners to have a 72-hour emergency kit. But also know that these and other measures in Budget 2025–26 aim to strengthen our communities' ability to respond to disasters and protect lives and property.

Conclusion

This budget reflects our government's unwavering commitment to a thriving, inclusive Yukon where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

We are investing in critical infrastructure, health, education and innovation – bolstering economic growth while supporting the wellbeing of our communities.

With bold initiatives and strategic partnerships, we are laying the foundation for a resilient future that meets the challenges of today and seizes the opportunities of tomorrow.

Together, we will continue to build a Yukon that is prosperous, sustainable and united.

Thank you. Merci. Mǎh̄si' choo. Gù̀nè̀ch̄ish. Shǎ̀w níthǎ̀n.