



FOR RELEASE

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Skookum Jim Friendship Centre to host new legal advocate for women

WHITEHORSE—The Government of Yukon has selected the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre in Whitehorse to host the new position of a legal advocate to help women navigate the legal system.

"The Yukon government is pleased to be moving forward with the creation of this key position," the Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate Elaine Taylor said. "Strengthening existing services and ensuring women have relevant and timely access to information when making decisions with legal implications will result in better outcomes for individuals, families and our communities overall."

In March the Government of Yukon announced \$281,000 over three years to pilot a legal advocate position in response to recommendations in the Review of Yukon's Police Force's final report, *Sharing Common Ground*, and the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues' report, *Gaps, Needs and Options: Legal Advocacy for Yukon Women*. Selecting a non-governmental organization to host the advocate was the next step in the process.

"The advocate will provide accessible and culturally-relevant services for women in Whitehorse as well as in rural communities," Minister of Justice Brad Cathers said. "The Skookum Jim Friendship Centre is a well-established community partner that will support the goal of providing improved access to legal consultation for women."

The Skookum Jim Friendship Centre will recruit and supervise the legal advocate. The centre was selected through an expression of interest process which included having to outline a vision for offering training on legal processes to front-line staff and supporting the delivery of culturally-relevant services.

"We recognize that women who may find themselves in any role within the justice system may have complex life stories with experiences rooted in trauma. We also understand that women may feel unsafe in sharing their knowledge and their struggles with persons and organizations that have historically silenced them," Skookum Jim Friendship Centre executive director Marney Paradis said. "We are greatly humbled and honoured to host the legal advocacy position and look forward to working with women across the territory."

The Skookum Jim Friendship Centre is a non-profit organization committed to bettering the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical well-being of First Nations people.

"On behalf of the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues I am pleased that Skookum Jim Friendship Centre was the successful organization to host the Women's Legal Advocate position," Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues chair Kim Solonick said. "They not only have a culturally relevant and holistic approach to service, but a unique expertise with women's programming. I am confident that the friendship centre will provide excellent service to all women navigating the legal system who need practical, timely and high quality support."

Learn more:

Gaps, Needs and Options: Legal Advocacy for Yukon Women

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