



Yellowknife Street Support Network

Who we are

**JANUARY
2026**



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Yellowknife Street Support Network

VISION

A Yellowknife with no homelessness, where Indigenous people are respected, supported, and leading the change.

MISSION

We provide Indigenous-led, trauma-informed, and culturally grounded support that helps people meet their basic needs, find safety, heal, and rebuild their lives. Guided by compassion, accountability, and Indigenous leadership, we work alongside the community to create lasting & positive change in the systems that support Indigenous people experiencing homelessness in Yellowknife.

Background

The Yellowknife Street Support Network was created in November 2025 by a group of Indigenous Yellowknifers who have both lived and professional experience in the homelessness sector.

Many Indigenous people in Yellowknife are experiencing homelessness because of long-standing trauma, discrimination, and systems that were never designed to meaningfully support them. This reality is rooted in colonialism, residential schools, the foster-care system, forced displacement, and public services that have often failed to understand or respect Indigenous ways of caring for people. These harms also include medical experimentation on Indigenous patients at institutions such as the Charles Camsell Hospital. Together, these experiences caused deep and lasting damage to families, trust in public systems, health outcomes, and economic stability. The impacts continue across generations through intergenerational trauma, disrupted family systems, poverty, and ongoing mistrust of services. We firmly believe that homelessness and addiction is not an individual failure.

Through our conversations with people who have lived experience, Elders, frontline workers, and families, we know where support could be stronger and how it could work better. People want services that are connected, safe, culturally grounded, and trauma-informed. We need systems where Indigenous staff are valued for their knowledge, care, and leadership. We need approaches that build trust, respect Indigenous experiences, and help those experience homelessness and addiction to navigate challenges with dignity.

We also see lots of strength in the community, with people supporting and protecting each other, surviving day after day, and advocating for dignity even in difficult spaces. There is so much resilience, knowledge, and leadership among those experiencing homelessness and within the broader Indigenous community.

Our work is grounded in human rights. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the UN's research on Indigenous homelessness, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action all affirm that Indigenous people have the right to housing, safety, dignity, healing, and self-determination. We must be leaders in the decisions and systems that affect our lives.

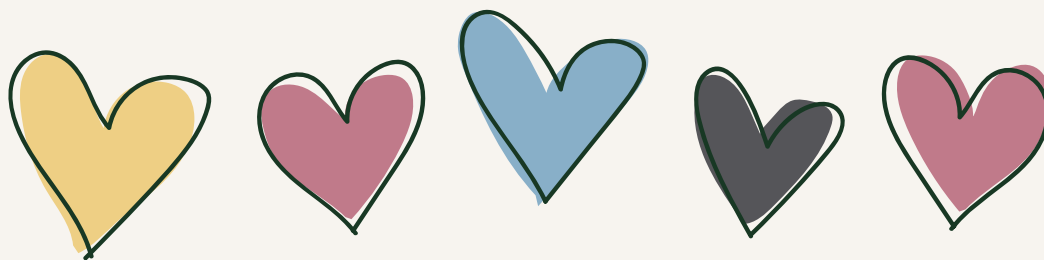
This plan is our commitment to act on what people have told us. It is shaped by our own experiences, strengths, and vision for a better future. We recognize that our understanding will continue to evolve, and our plans will continue to take shape through ongoing feedback from people with lived experience of homelessness and through the natural learning that comes from doing this work over time.

“How are you gonna feel love when you’re just trying to survive for today?” — Georgina Franki



Founding Values

01	Dignity	Everyone deserves to feel respected and safe. We see and value the humanity and worth of every Indigenous person, no matter what they are going through.
02	Reciprocity	We work with people. We listen, share power, and build solutions together with those who are most affected.
03	Indigenous Leadership	Indigenous people must guide this work at every level, from frontline supports to governance. Lived experience and cultural knowledge are the foundation of all decisions.
04	Healing	We focus on long-term healing. Trauma is the root of homelessness, and support must address emotional, mental, cultural, and spiritual needs.
05	Non-Colonial Practices	We follow Indigenous ways of meeting, deciding, working, and caring. This includes circle governance, Elder guidance, and culturally grounded support.



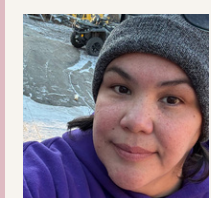
Our Board

Co-Chairs



GEORGINA FRANKI | Co-Chair

Georgina Franki is a Tłıchǫ-language instructor and a strong advocate for Indigenous-led responses to homelessness. She has been a visible voice in community-based initiatives that centre dignity, cultural safety, and lived experience, while also supporting the preservation and teaching of Tłıchǫ language and culture.



STACEY DRYGEESE SUNDBERG | Co-Chair

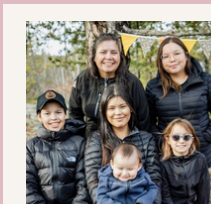
Stacey Drygeese Sundberg is Wìlìideh Dene from Dettah, known for her work in cultural inclusion and community building. She strongly believes in the healing impacts of the land, cultural practises, and language.



BRENDA KOWANA | Co-Chair

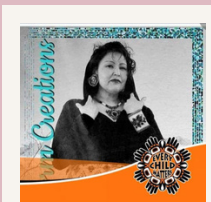
Brenda Kowana is Inuvialuit from Aklavik and has lived in Yellowknife for over two decades. She has lived experience of homelessness and addiction and is 8 years sober. She is passionate about sharing her healing journey to support others when they are ready.

Directors



JENNIE MAY SMITH | Director

Jennie Smith is a Gwich'in woman who is passionate about supporting people who are struggling to live healthy and safe lives.



MARIA GREENLAND | Director

Maria Greenland is Gwich'in from Aklavik. She values spaces where people support and lift one another, and she strives to be that person for others. Maria is committed to sharing her own story, listening to the experiences of others, and advocating based on the teachings passed down from our Elders.

Priorities for 2026



We recognize the importance of starting small and building toward a sustainable, impactful organization. For our first year of operations, we are focusing on the following priorities:

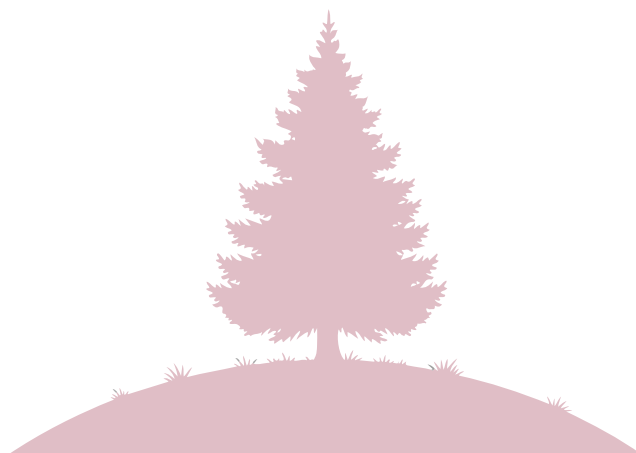
Food Support: Provide food and meals for people on the street.

Clothing & Essentials: Ensure people have the clothing and supplies they need for safety and comfort.


Language, Arts & Land-Based Programs: Support cultural reconnection, creative expression, and Indigenous language revitalization as a way to heal from trauma.

Partnerships: Build and maintain relationships with Indigenous organizations, governments, and other sector partners to strengthen support for those experiencing homelessness.

Public Education: Raise awareness and understanding of homelessness, Indigenous experiences, and the organization's work.



Yellowknife Street Support Network



The Yellowknife Street Support Network acknowledges that we are located in Chief Drygeese territory, the traditional land of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. We respect the histories, languages, and cultures of all other Indigenous Peoples including the North Slave Métis, and all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community. As an organization addressing homelessness in Yellowknife, we recognize that people experiencing homelessness come from many cultures and lived experiences, and we are committed to respecting these differences and upholding dignity, safety, and belonging for all.

Additionally, we honor and respect the diverse peoples who come from all parts of the world, each contributing to the fabric of our community with their unique traditions, knowledge, and perspectives. We are committed to celebrating this diversity and fostering a culture of respect and inclusion for all.