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**FEASIBILITY STUDY LAUNCHED FOR NORTHERN INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE**

WHITHEHORSE – The Yukon government is working with the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the federal government to investigate the feasibility of creating a northern institute of justice.

A northern institute of justice would help address the chronic shortage of qualified workers in justice related fields. Individuals would be trained in either the social services area or in related regulatory enforcement service in the North. This feasibility study will identify the options available to meet northern justice needs.

“We heard very clearly during the Consultation on Corrections and during the drafting of the Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan that there was a need for additional training,” Justice Minister John Edzerza said. “We also heard from our northern neighbours that this is a problem in their jurisdictions as well, so we are moving forward with them to address the issue.”

The feasibility study is being led by the Yukon Department of Justice in collaboration with the Department of Education and the Public Service Commission; the Council of Yukon First Nations and Carcross/Tagish First Nation; government officials in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut; and the three territorial colleges - Yukon College, Aurora College and Arctic College. Other partners include Justice Canada, the RCMP and the Yukon Federal Council.

“Yukon College is very excited to be participating in the development of an institute that focuses on research, education and training related to justice issues in the North,” Charles Stuart, coordinator of the Northern Justice and Criminology Program at the college, said.

The feasibility study will look at options for providing training for careers in areas such as corrections, probation, addictions counselling, firefighting, conservation and environmental protections. It could also provide in-service training in conflict resolution, administrative tribunals, management and leadership.

The project was launched at a meeting held March 20 to 22, and has a budget of \$218,000 for the current and next fiscal year.

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Contact:

Peter Carr  
Cabinet Communications  
(867) 667-8688  
[peter.carr@gov.yk.ca](mailto:peter.carr@gov.yk.ca)

Dan Cable  
Communications, Justice  
(867) 667-3508  
[dan.cable@gov.yk.ca](mailto:dan.cable@gov.yk.ca)