

Developing firearms legislation **What We Heard** report

October 2026



Engagement process

Background

Northern communities have deep connections with the land. Traditional activities like hunting, harvesting and trapping are not just recreation, they are core parts of northern culture, livelihoods, and, in many communities, integral to meeting survival and nutritional needs.

Supporting lawful Yukon firearms owners is a key mandate commitment of the Government of Yukon having already formally opposed the federal Assault-Style Firearms Compensation Program (ASFCP) and the related new federal prohibitions targeting lawful firearm owners.

The Minister of Justice and Attorney General and the Yukon government have advocated to the federal government through non-legislative means.

- In partnership with the governments of Northwest Territories and Nunavut, the Government of Yukon acted on motion no. 54 in the Legislative Assembly, which urged the Government of Canada “to acknowledge the unique northern context by establishing a carve-out exempting the three territories from the Assault-Style Firearms Compensation Program and related prohibitions.”
- The Minister of Justice met with the federal Minister of Public Safety to share opposition to the ASFCP and request reconsideration of the list of prohibited firearms.
- The Minister of Justice sent a follow-up letter to the Minister of Public Safety to reassert this position and request action from the Government of Canada to address concerns.
- The Government of Yukon has also requested that the federal government appoint a northern Chief Firearms Officer for the territories be based in Whitehorse to administer the Canadian Firearms Program for the territories.

Purpose

A public engagement was conducted from July 2 to August 7, 2026, to inform the development of territorial firearms legislation recognizing the current circumstances and the northern context. The engagement sought to determine public feedback on the creation of a Yukon Firearms Act and further proposed the creation of a firearms advocate position to better support legal firearms owners and enhance access to firearms-related public safety education opportunities.

How we engaged

The Government of Yukon provided several avenues for engagement including an online survey, in-person engagement sessions, and letters inviting feedback sent from the Minister of Justice to Yukon First Nation governments, and firearms-related and industry stakeholder groups. Engagement included specific questions about creating firearms legislation, including an advocate position and its priorities, and invited general, open-ended feedback. The Yukon government received written responses by email (19), online survey (226) and in-person communications (23), as well as verbal opportunities for information sharing and question and answer periods including an information night (July 20, 2026), attendance at the Yukon Sportsman and Hobby Show (July 25, 2026) and an invite-only Q&A opportunity for firearms community stakeholder groups (August 6, 2026). A total of 268 formal responses were received.

Who responded?

Both firearms owners and those who don't own firearms responded. Many of those who own a firearm shared their primary uses, whether it was for hunting, wilderness protection, sport or collecting. We heard from two Yukon First Nations governments, one gender equity NGO, several municipal governments and organizations that represent police services. Some special consideration and invitation were paid to the firearms community through organizations such as hunting and harvesting associations, rifle and pistol clubs and outfitters. The feedback received reflects this.

What we heard

The Government of Yukon posed questions about the creation of territorial firearms legislation and an advocate and their potential role. Many of the responses received focused on conveying individual and group concerns, questions, and confusion about the cumulative prohibition of 2,500 firearms at the federal level and the associated Assault-Style Firearms Compensation Program. This is important feedback, to better understand the context for the proposed legislation. Findings in this report may also be used to support a firearms advocate once appointed to understand Yukoners' priorities and advocacy work.

The questions from the online survey were used to structure this report. Long-form responses received in-person and by email are captured in Question 1, where people shared their opinion on the creation of an advocate, and then again in Question 6 where respondents provided general feedback.

Summary of questions and responses

Question 1: The proposed role of the firearms advocate would be to:

- support and advocate on behalf of lawful Yukon firearm owners;
- communicate with the public on firearms to hear and understand Yukoners' perspectives;
- advise the Minister of Justice on firearms issues; and
- support education, training and safety initiatives on firearms.

Does the proposed role of the firearms advocate align with your expectations of this role? Why or why not?

Most respondents replied in support of the creation of a firearms advocate position for the Yukon, with 122 responses agreeing the advocate role as presented met expectations (45.5%). Additionally, there were 22 responses (8.2%) best characterized as conditionally supportive. The expressed conditions included the advancement of a Chief Firearms Officer (CFO), cost concerns and suggestions for the advocate to operate outside of government. Two respondents suggested the advocate could operate as a non-governmental organization (NGO). It was further suggested that the advocate take into consideration not just the views of responsible gun owners but those who have been harmed by gun use including victims of intimate partner violence

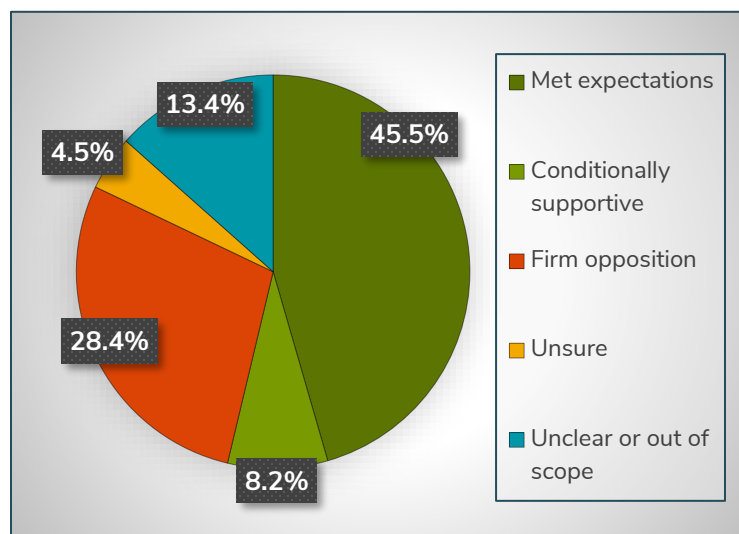


Figure 1 Answers to Question 1 "Does the proposed role of the firearms advocate meet your expectations?"

Firm opposition was voiced in 76 responses (28.4%), citing concerns related to allocation of public monies to this office and a general sentiment of this role being unnecessary or ineffective to achieve the aims of firearms owners and non-owners alike. A total of 12 respondents (4.5%) conveyed that, based on the information provided, they were not sure and a total of 36 responses (13.4%) were either unclear, out of scope or simply did not answer the question.

Approximately five responses contained suggestions to reframe the position as an advocate for victims of domestic violence, an advocate for survivors of firearms-related harms or an advocate for community or public safety more broadly.

Note: The remaining responses are summarized as themes raised as a number of respondents included multiple topics or concerns in one response. The numbers provided below do not align directly with the number of respondents.

Question 2: What are your priorities for firearms-related safety, training, and education?

Respondents were largely supportive of firearms-related training, support which is echoed in further responses. Only a handful noted a lack of support for such initiatives, including 15 who saw no need for additional training and 31 who opposed creating the advocate position entirely with many expressing concerns around cost or reiterating their general opposition to the creation of the position.

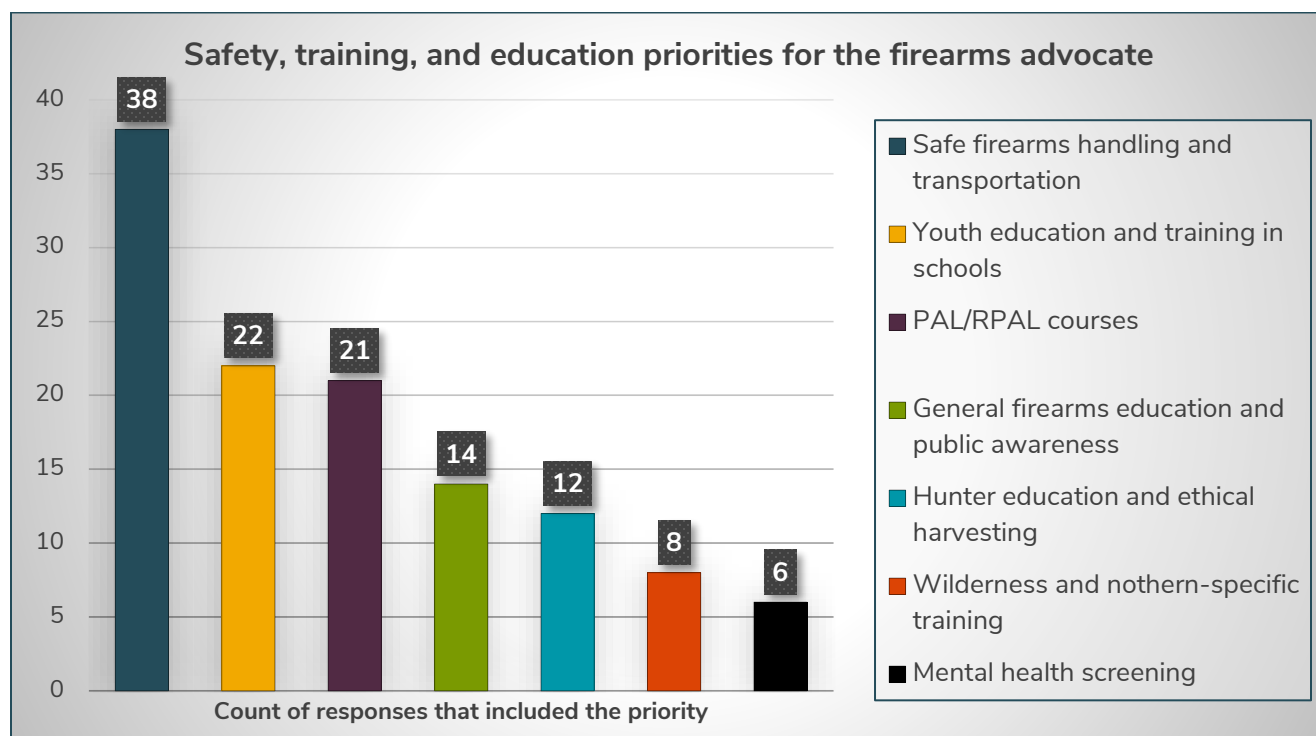


Figure 2 Answers to Question 2 "What are your priorities for firearms-related safety, training and education?" organized by theme. Individual respondents may have provided more than one priority in their response.

There is strong support for more educational opportunities with emphasis on expanding youth opportunities including incorporation into the school curriculum. Consideration could also be paid to further bolstering existing educational opportunities under the Hunter Education and Ethics Development (HEED) through the Department of Environment, which many participants were familiar with and supportive of.

Note: The remaining responses in Questions 3 to 6 heavily overlapped in identified themes and priorities.

Question 3: What should the advocate prioritize if given a budget to support related programming in the territory?

Responses included eight general themes.

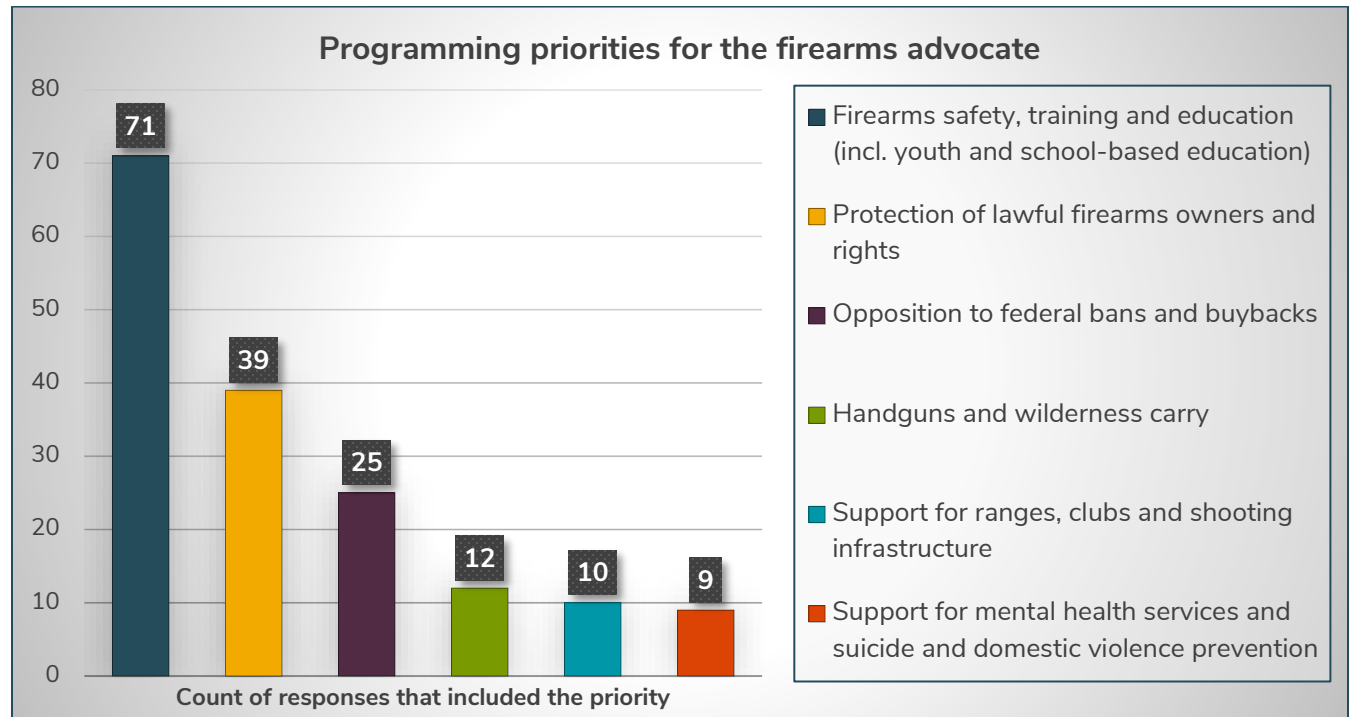


Figure 3 Answers to Question 3: "What should the advocate prioritize if given a budget to support related programming in the territory?" organized by theme. Individual respondents may have provided more than one priority in their response.

Twenty responses reiterated a lack of support for the advocate citing concerns around cost and resource diversion from other departments such as healthcare. Some responses just conveyed outright dissent to the initiative.

Question 4: What are your priorities for firearms-related advocacy on behalf of Yukon firearm owners?

Firearms-related advocacy themes in response to this question included:

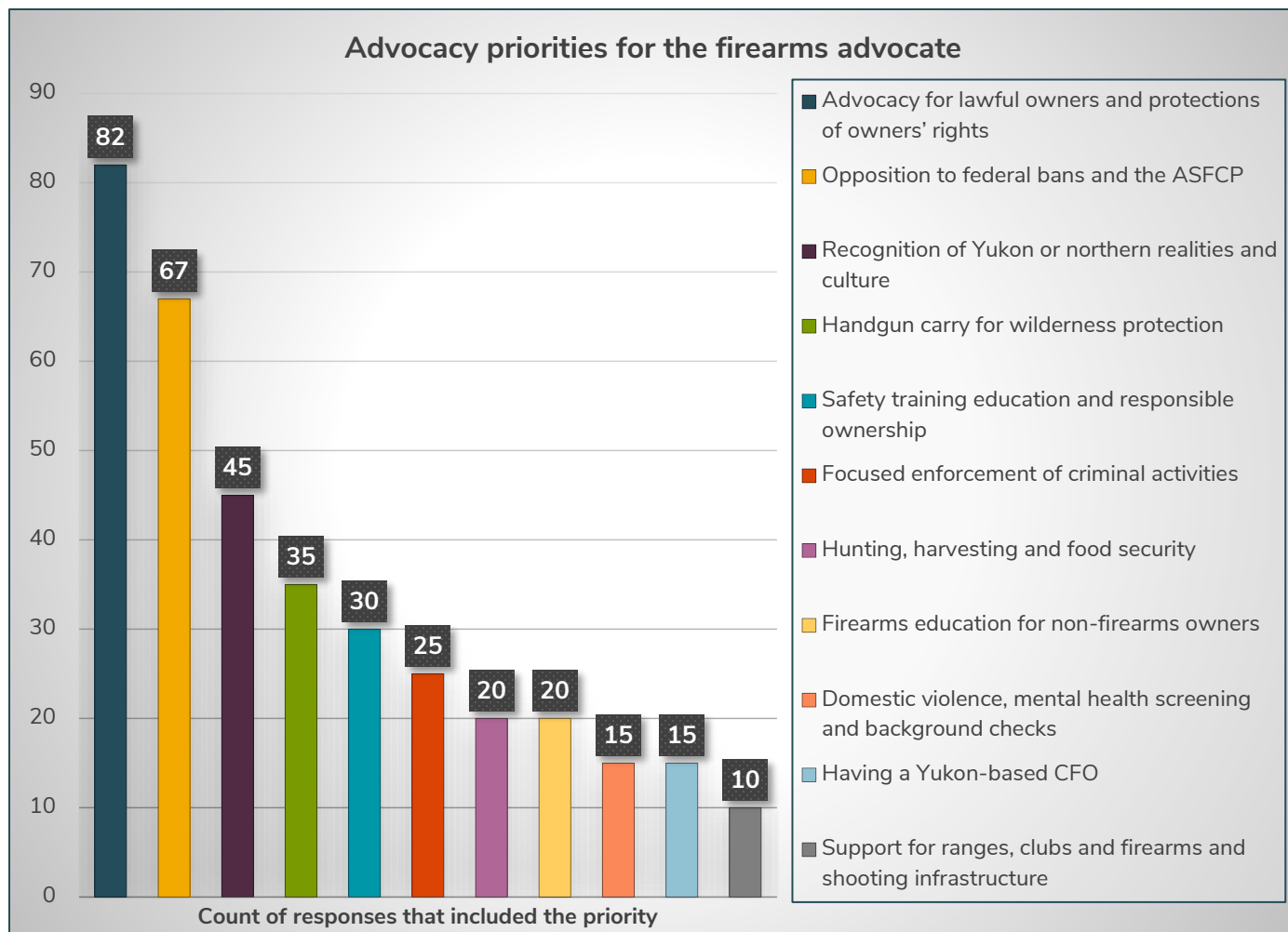


Figure 4 Answers to Question 4 "What are your priorities for firearms-related advocacy on behalf of Yukon firearm owners?" organized by theme. Individual respondents may have provided more than one priority in their response.

Some people indicated a desire to see increased restrictions, bans and reduced firearms ownership (20). Conversely, 50 responses indicated that they opposed the position generally with many raising cost concerns.

Question 5: As we move forward with drafting the firearms legislation, is there anything else we should consider?

For legislation, nine themes were extracted from the responses:

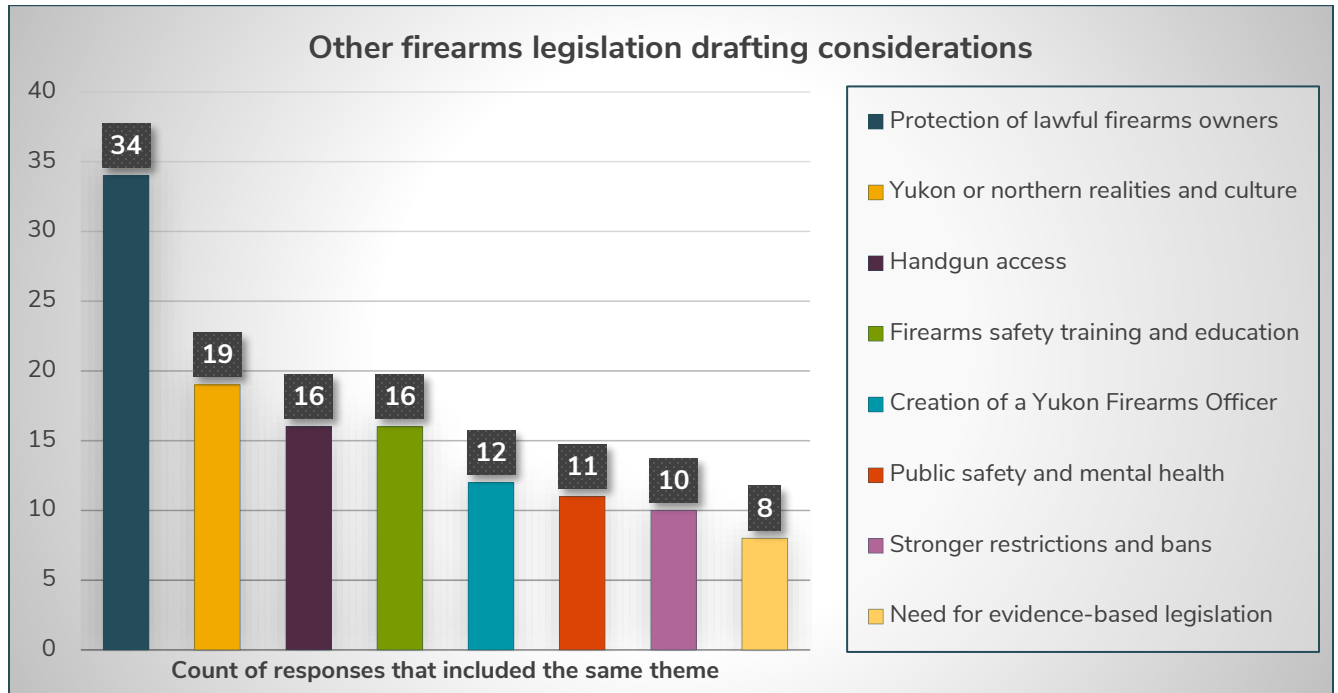


Figure 5 Answers to Question 5 "As we move forward with drafting the firearms legislation, is there anything else we should consider?" organized by theme. Individual respondents may have provided more than one priority in their response.

A total of 35 people reiterated their dissent to the creation of a firearms advocate expressing concerns around cost and resource constraints as well as outright opposition.

Question 6: Is there anything else you would like to see included now or at a future date?

General feedback included:

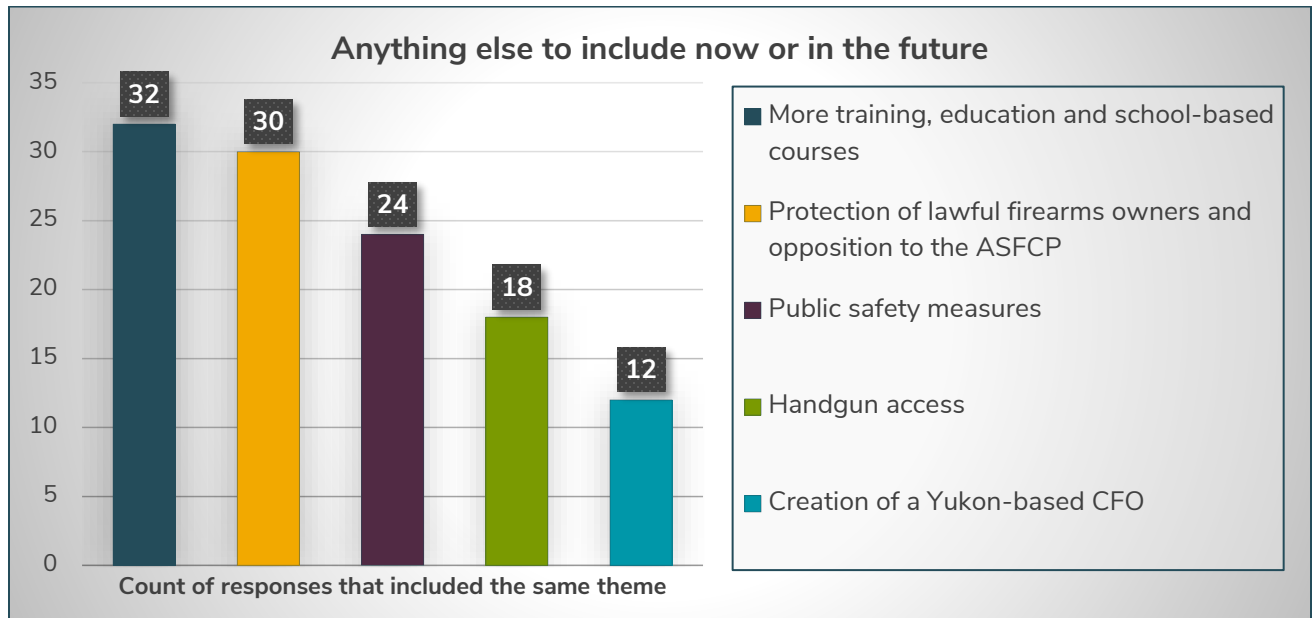


Figure 6 Answers to Question 6: "Is there anything else you would like to see included now or at a future date?" organized by theme. Individual respondents may have provided more than one priority in their response.

On the final question, 25 respondents indicated that money and resources should be focused elsewhere citing examples including health care, housing, education and general fiscal constraints by the Government of Yukon. A total of 15 responses specifically raised opposition to the advocate position.

Further observations

Overall, there were common ideas or concerns raised by participants across the various methods of engagement.

Firearms are private property warranting protection

The framing of firearms as private property warranting protection came up several times during in-person engagements and via email responses but is not heavily reflected in the online responses. Online responses indicated a desire for government to protect lawful firearms owners but not specifically their property.

Firearms owners' sentiment of misunderstanding

A few respondents shared that they feel consistently misunderstood or vilified by others as the owners of firearms or that others don't understand the important meaning of firearms in their lives and livelihoods. They asked for information to this effect to be shared with the public by the advocate, although not as a first priority. Likewise, a stakeholder conveyed the importance of balancing recognition of cultural and lifestyle practice such as subsistence hunting or hobbyists with real or perceived harms. Consideration to including policies and programs related to firearms that account for things such as changes in mental health over time were also raised.

Firearms and Intimate Partner Violence

Some input also noted that not all legal gun owners use or store firearms responsibly. Sometimes, just having a firearm in a household, even when legally owned, can be perceived as threatening to others or can be a risk when potentially accessible to others, particularly when not properly stored. Approximately 11 respondents raised explicit concerns around the use or presence of firearms in instances of domestic or intimate partner violence. Firearms in a household can increase risk when accessible to individuals who are experiencing a mental health episode, severe intoxication, etc. Some participants in the engagement discussed opportunities for the advocate to strengthen awareness and education to promote public safety.

Assault-Style Firearms Compensation Program

Many individuals shared specific concerns about the federal *Firearms Act* and the Assault-Style Firearms Compensation Program and other federal prohibitions such as the handgun prohibition. These concerns arose in approximately 77 responses (28.6%).

Confusion about the role of the advocate and the Government of Yukon

Responses also included a sense of misunderstanding around the territorial government's jurisdiction and what the role of the advocate can do in opposition to the federal government's policies or legislation.

Additional communications materials may be necessary to support understanding of the advocate's position when the bill becomes public and may continue to impact the role of the advocate.

Next steps

The Government of Yukon will table a territorial firearms bill during the fall 2026 legislative sitting to create a firearms advocate position in law as outlined in this engagement process. It is the intention of this report to capture the sentiments expressed by Yukoners to inform the development of that legislation as well as to help initially inform the firearms advocate in setting priorities that reflect the perspectives and concerns of Yukoners expressed in this engagement.