



National Youth Policy Alliance

Resolution on Reducing Violent Crime against Youth

Dated: November, 2025

Executive Summary

Canada's youth violent crime rate rose from 2,571 to 2,898 per 100,000 youth between 2022 and 2023, marking a 13 percent increase. Youth under 18 remain the most common victims in youth-related incidents, comprising roughly 60 percent of total cases. This issue is particularly acute in Indigenous and northern regions and among international students facing social isolation and economic precarity. Current efforts under the National Crime Prevention Strategy and the Youth Gang Prevention Fund demonstrate the effectiveness of federal support, but sustained investment and modernization are required to align with emerging patterns of violence and digital exploitation.

Policy Objective

To safeguard Canada's economic stability and sovereignty by reducing dependency on U.S. markets, mitigating the domestic effects of tariffs, and positioning Canada as a competitive, diversified trading nation in the global economy.

Policy Recommendations

1. Expand Early Intervention and Community-Based Support Programs

Objective: Establish proactive mechanisms to identify and assist at-risk youth before criminal involvement occurs.

Rationale: Evidence from Public Safety Canada shows that youth-specific prevention programs reduce recidivism and promote social resilience. Norway's use of restorative justice councils lowered reoffending among youth by nearly 20 % through early engagement and accountability dialogues.

Actionable Steps:

- Increase funding under the National Crime Prevention Strategy to replicate successful models such as the “Stop Now and Plan” and Youth Gang Prevention Fund projects nationwide.
- Integrate school-based social workers and youth mentors to monitor early warning signs, including chronic absenteeism and exposure to violence.
- Develop federal-provincial funding streams to support localized community-intervention hubs for Indigenous and northern youth.

2. Embed Trauma- and Violence-Informed Practices Across Youth Services

Objective: Reduce the long-term psychological effects of violence and prevent re-victimization and/or retaliatory crime.

Rationale: Trauma and violence-informed frameworks promoted by the Public Health Agency of Canada enhance safety and trust in service systems. International evidence supports that rehabilitation-based systems yield lasting change, as seen in Norway's counselling-oriented juvenile rehabilitation model.

Actionable Steps:

- Mandate trauma-informed training for educators, police, and justice workers who interact with youth.
- Establish inter-ministerial protocols for mental-health screening and follow-up care after violent incidents.
- Require federally funded youth programs to include trauma-support components as a condition of funding.

3. Strengthen Restorative and Diversion-Based Justice

Objective: Reduce incarceration rates among youth while maintaining accountability through restorative approaches.

Rationale: Canada's Youth Criminal Justice Act already favors extrajudicial measures, but global evidence suggests expanding restorative conferencing improves community safety. Japan's moral-education programs and Norway's dialogue-based conflict resolution both lowered reoffending and improved reintegration.

Actionable Steps:

- Expand youth restorative justice circles in partnership with Indigenous communities and civil-society organizations.
- Provide federal grants to provinces adopting diversion programs combining education, employment, and victim-offender reconciliation.
- Include measurable outcome tracking—such as recidivism reduction targets—in federal-provincial justice agreements.

4. Enhance Community Policing and Safe-Neighbourhood

Initiatives

Objective: Build sustained trust between law enforcement and youth to prevent escalation into violent activity.

Rationale: Japan’s “Koban” system of community policing reduced juvenile arrests by 42 % over a decade through proximity and early engagement. Canada’s RCMP Youth Strategy already emphasizes education and leadership, but consistent national coordination remains limited

Actionable Steps:

- Pilot localized “Community Policing Hubs” modeled on Japan’s Koban stations in urban centers with high youth-crime severity indexes.
- Require officers in these hubs to undergo youth-engagement and cultural-competency training.
- Establish feedback councils where young residents meet regularly with police and municipal officials to co-design safety priorities.

5. Invest in Youth Justice Reinvestment and Socioeconomic Equity

Objective: Redirect funds from custodial measures toward education, housing, and employment for at-risk youth.

Rationale: Australia's Youth Justice Reinvestment programs cut youth incarceration by 27% in five years by targeting systemic inequities through education and community employment initiatives. Canada's 2025 federal budget already allocates \$1.8 billion to strengthen policing capacity and community programs, making justice reinvestment a timely extension.

Actionable Steps:

- Dedicate a percentage of correctional budgets to education, skills training, and youth entrepreneurship in vulnerable communities.
- Introduce a federal-provincial cost-sharing model to support affordable housing and mental-health care for youth exiting custody.
- Require public reporting on savings generated by reduced incarceration and their reinvestment in prevention initiatives.

6. Strengthen Data Coordination and Evidence-Based Evaluation

Objective: Improve monitoring of youth-violence trends and ensure accountability in program outcomes.

Rationale: Canada's fragmented data systems limit real-time understanding of youth-crime patterns. Consistent, transparent evaluation ensures efficient allocation of resources and enables adaptive policymaking.

Actionable Steps:

- Establish a federal Youth Safety Data Portal integrating justice, education, and social-service datasets under privacy safeguards.
- Mandate annual public reports on youth violent-crime severity indexes and intervention effectiveness.
- Commission an independent evaluation body under Public Safety Canada to review all federally funded youth-violence programs every three years.

Conclusion

Reducing violent crime against youth requires a society-as-a-whole approach grounded in prevention, partnership, and compassion. By scaling trauma-informed practice, expanding restorative justice, embedding community policing, and reinvesting in youth opportunity, Canada can meaningfully lower youth violent-crime rates and enhance national safety. The National Youth Policy Alliance respectfully submits these recommendations to the Minister of Justice for consideration and stands ready to collaborate on their implementation.