



# A Path Forward: Priorities and Early Strategies for B.C.

*June 2025 Status Update*



Ministry of  
Public Safety and  
Solicitor General

## **TAKING CARE**

We recognize that this report may contain information that is difficult for many and that our efforts to honour survivors and families may act as an unwelcome reminder for those who have suffered hardships through generations of government policies that were harmful to Indigenous Peoples.

A ***Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*** support line is available to provide support for anyone who requires assistance at **1-844-413-6649**. This line is available free of charge, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

A National Indian Residential School Crisis Line is available to provide support to former residential school students, who can access emotional and crisis referral services by calling the ***24-Hour National Crisis Line*** at **1-866-925-4419**.

Support is also available through the ***Hope for Wellness Help Line for Indigenous Peoples*** at **1-855-242-3310** or through the online chat via the help line website at [www.hopeforwellness.ca](http://www.hopeforwellness.ca).

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Government of British Columbia acknowledges with respect and gratitude that this status update was produced on the unceded territories of the ɪáḱʷəŋən (Songhees & Esquimalt) and W̱SÁNEĆ (Tsartlip, Pauquachin, Tseycum, Malahat, and Tsawout) Peoples, whose deep connections with this land continue to this day.

Some of the work outlined in this report predates the Provincial application of the Distinctions-Based Approach. Where a Distinctions-Based Approach can be represented, it has been, but some references to “Indigenous people(s)” remain where data does not allow writers to disaggregate.

The Province also acknowledges with respect that the B.C. Public Service operates throughout B.C. on the traditional lands of 204 First Nations.

# Message from the Minister

In my first year of service as the Minister for Public Safety and Solicitor General, I am honoured to present the fourth status update on [A Path Forward: Priorities and Early Strategies for B.C.](#), the Province's response to [Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) (the National Inquiry) released on June 3, 2019.

Firmly embedded in our commitment to reconciliation, the Path Forward was developed through seventeen Indigenous-led community dialogue sessions where family members, survivors, community leaders and Indigenous partners shared their stories, provided advice and identified priorities for action. I acknowledge the courage and generosity of spirit that families, survivors and communities continue to demonstrate as we work together to address the urgent issue of improving safety for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Since the release of the Path Forward in 2021, we have made substantial progress on our commitments to improve access to safe spaces, healing supports, and resources and to strengthen relationships with our partners. While I take pride in these achievements, I recognize that far more is required to ensure that this Province is safe for all.

Decades of harmful policies and practices designed to systematically eradicate Indigenous ways of life have created cycles of intergenerational trauma that continue to impact Indigenous people today. As a result, many Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people continue to experience social and economic exclusion that directly puts their safety at risk.

The 231 *Calls for Justice* stemming from the National Inquiry highlight that we have a collective responsibility to address safety for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. This requires action across government, in partnership with Indigenous people. In January 2025, I attended the Indigenous-Federal-Provincial-Territorial Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people (MMIWG2S+), where I heard how partnerships among First Nations, Métis, Inuit, government and community-led organizations are leading critical initiatives to address MMIWG2S+.

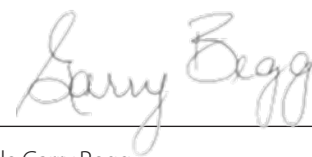
As we continue to implement change across the province, I want to recognize the expertise and commitment of our many First

Nations and Métis partners who lead their communities, and provide critical guidance to government, with knowledge and wisdom that has been passed down through generations. It is government's responsibility to listen with empathy, and pursue transformative change that ensures our programs, policies and legislation lead to better outcomes for Indigenous people.

We have heard from our First Nations and Métis partners that it is important for government to make sure they have the resources they need to lead the work to end violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Through the Path Forward Community Fund, we have invested \$15.84 million over the past three years in Indigenous-led programs that prevent and respond to violence through Indigenous knowledge, cultural practices and healing. As a result, as of March 2025, 86 community-led anti-violence projects have been supported to address violence across the Province. A further \$5 million in federal Women and Gender Equality funding will be invested this year under *Safe and Supported: B.C.'s Gender-Based Violence Action Plan*.

Over the past three years, government has enacted foundational legislative and policy commitments that make this Province a better place for all. I particularly recognize the work of colleagues across the Ministries of Attorney General, Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and Finance for enacting the *Declaration Act*, the *Anti-Racism Act*, the *Anti-Racism Data Act*, and developing the *Gender-Based Violence Action Plan*. These four commitments have underpinned many other actions across government that are improving the safety of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

As we continue to work toward our long-term vision for meaningful reconciliation, let us commit to working together with accountability, humility and care, so that we can achieve healing and safety for all.



Honourable Garry Begg  
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General

# Update on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan

On March 30th, 2022 the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation introduced a [five-year Declaration Act Action Plan](#) (the Action Plan) to achieve the objectives of the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UN Declaration). The Action Plan is a legislative commitment in the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) (Declaration Act) and is also referenced as an early priority action in the Path Forward. Together the Declaration Act and Action Plan set important context for the work related to Indigenous Peoples that is proceeding across government.

The 89 priorities of the Action Plan were identified in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples across the province. They are aligned with many of the Path Forward early actions and updates outlined in this report and are consistent with provincially relevant Calls for Justice held in the ***Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls***. The Action Plan articulates actions every Ministry in government is committed to undertake between 2022-2027 to create a better province for Indigenous Peoples in B.C.

The [2023-24 Declaration Act Annual Report](#) highlights efforts across government to build a better future and details work underway on 60 of 89 specific actions. Some of these actions include restoring Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services; changing the way First Nations can acquire, hold and register fee simple land in B.C.; improving outcomes for students with First Nations educators teaching First Nations children; and recognizing the importance of First Nations post-secondary institutes with funding to support the revitalization of First Nations languages and cultures.

The Province continues to work in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples across the province to implement the Action Plan and will provide another Annual Report in 2025.

# Progress on the Path Forward

On June 3, 2021, the second-year anniversary of the release of the final report of the ***National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (the Inquiry)***, B.C. released its initial response to the Inquiry, [A Path Forward: Priorities and Early Strategies for B.C.](#) (the Path Forward). The Province's participation in the *National Inquiry* was foundational to the context of developing the Path

Forward, along with research and review of historic reports with more than 3,000 recommendations, and engagements with Indigenous leadership, survivors, family members and community organizations undertaken in 2019 and 2021.

*The Path Forward establishes four core principles that guide the Province's approach:*



## PEOPLE CENTRED

Actions centre the people impacted by violence.



## HEALING CENTRED

Actions support community and family healing.



## RECIPROCAL

Engagements provide information and resources to communities rather than being information-seeking only.



## COMMUNITY DRIVEN AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Actions focus on building capacity among Indigenous communities and support self-determination.

**The key priority identified across all community engagement sessions in the development of the Path Forward was the need for increased capacity for Indigenous people to create and implement their own culturally safe and appropriate solutions to the systemic issues resulting in violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.**

In addition, 28 mandate letter commitments were identified that align early strategies to community priorities and make up the Path Forward (see Appendix). These commitments include actions related to safe spaces and safety plans, healing supports, strengthening relationships with partners and access to resources. With many of the 28 commitments complete or substantially underway, and a new Government in place, it is timely to consider new priorities and a new approach to future reporting.

# Update on the Path Forward Community Fund

The Province created the [Path Forward Community Fund](#) in 2022 with combined federal and provincial investment to date of \$20.84 million that is accessible to First Nations, Bands and/or Tribal Councils, Treaty First Nations, urban/off reserve communities, Métis chartered communities and organizations, Inuit citizens, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities. The Path Forward Community Fund provides grants to support community safety planning and capacity building and ensure the self-determination of Indigenous communities to address violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) developed and administers the fund, including the application process and grant distribution. A cornerstone of their work is a distinctions-based approach that honours and respects the expertise, agency, and leadership of Indigenous people throughout all stages of implementation. The distribution of grants is guided by a panel of diverse Indigenous people whose service on the adjudication committee reflects the various regions, on and off-reserve, community members with disabilities, 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities, and Elders and youth, First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and non-status people throughout B.C. In 2024, a renewed Adjudication Committee gathered for two days to discuss and suggest changes to the application and project guidelines, based on best practices and lessons learned from the previous rounds of funding.

An evaluation of the program was completed in Spring 2025.

The Path Forward funds activities such as:

- Building capacity;
- Hosting engagement and facilitation;
- Supporting the development of crisis response plans;
- Materials for communication plans;
- Information sharing and tools to navigate the justice and public safety systems;
- Culturally appropriate safety training; and
- Cultural support and healing.

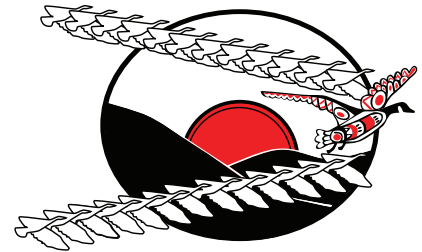


Figure 1: Logo of the B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

## **Path Forward Community Fund – Round 2 Funded Projects:**

*Dudes Club Society • Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association • Indigenous Women Rise Society • Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society • Kermode Friendship Society • Kwikwasut'inuxw Hax-wa'mis First Nation • Lillooet Friendship Centre Society • North Okanagan Friendship Centre • Pa'La7Wit Society of the Lower Lillooet Lake • Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre • Support Network for Indigenous Women and Women of Colour • Xaxli'p Nation*



Figure 2: Map of Path Forward Round Two Recipients

## **Path Forward Community Fund – Round 3 Funded Projects:**

*Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association • Fraser Valley Métis Association • High Bar First Nation • Indian Residential School Survivors Society • Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society • Kermode Friendship Society • Lower Fraser Valley Aboriginal Society • Métis Nation Greater Victoria • North Island Métis Association • Penticton Indian Band • Prince George Native Friendship Centre • Protect Our Indigenous Sisters Society • Skidegate Band Council • Tahltan Central Government • Tears to Hope Foundation • Tears to Hope Society • Victoria Native Friendship Centre • Wachiay Friendship Centre Society*



Figure 3: Map of Path Forward Round Three Recipients

As of March 2025, \$15.8 million has been invested through four rounds of applications, resulting in 86 Indigenous-specific, anti-violence projects around the province. The grant application process to distribute an additional \$5.0 million 2025 federal Women and Gender Equality contribution is expected to begin in Summer 2025.

## **Featured Success Stories**

### **From Recipients of the Path Forward Community Fund – Round Two**

#### **Kermode Friendship Society**

The Kermode Friendship Society (KFS) offers culturally sensitive programs and services to the Indigenous community in Terrace,

B.C. An inclusive space that welcomes people of all genders and backgrounds, KFS has developed many community connections with its local school district, Northern Health, the Tears to Hope Society, Women’s Resource Centre, Terrace Fire Department, Child Youth and Mental Health, the Ministry for Children and Family Development, Kitselas Nation, Métis Nation, Kitsumkalum Nation, Nisga’a Nation, and Foundry. The Aboriginal Child Youth and Mental Health (ACYMH) program at KFS offers culturally appropriate mental health services through education, advocacy, outreach, and support to promote positive mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being for children, youth, and families. ACYMH’s Indigenous core approach follows a Medicine Wheel Framework that includes land-based activities and cultural workshops.



Photo courtesy of Kermode Friendship Society

Support from the Path Forward Community Fund made it possible for female youth from the ACYMH program to attend the Kâniyâsihk Culture Camp at Ministikwan Lake. Participants were exposed to many Indigenous teachings, including the importance of language, land connection, Indigenous laws and protocol, and storytelling. Attending a sweat lodge ceremony allowed youth to experience the strength and resilience of their matrilineal lines and receive teachings related to protocol, respect, courage, and honour. Participants responded very positively to this experience and, in addition to feeling empowered, reported a stronger connection to each other, their community, and their ancestors.

## North Okanagan Friendship Centre

With Path Forward funding, the North Okanagan Friendship Centre launched Fathers for Positive Family Growth as part of its Pregnancy Outreach Program. Since its inception, Fathers for Positive Family Growth has experienced a significant increase in numbers and attendance. The program has equipped participants with tools and skills for stress and anxiety, healthy coping strategies, and emotional regulation techniques for anger management, and it has connected fathers to existing community resources. Fathers have participated in Knowledge Circles where topics such as intergenerational trauma, effective communication, and parenting skills are discussed. Additionally, the program has given fathers the opportunity to participate in cultural activities such as drum making, learning Indigenous songs, and crafting medicine bags and moccasins. Children are encouraged to attend the program, where they are offered exposure to cultural activities and witness their fathers model positive behaviour.



Photo courtesy of North Okanagan Friendship Centre

## From Recipients of the Path Forward Community Fund – Round Three

### Skidegate Band Council

Located on Graham Island (Haida Gwaii), B.C., the Skidegate Band Council was awarded a grant from the Path Forward Community Fund to run The Path Forward Community Workshop on Anti-Violence. By emphasizing the often-overlooked aspect of men as victims, the workshop sought to develop community capacity, provide tools for understanding gender-based violence, and create a safe space for dialogue. It also aimed to contribute to breaking the cycle of violence by bringing to light the experiences of Indigenous men who suffer in silence and challenging societal stigmas around their struggles.



Photo courtesy of Skidegate Band Council

The three-day workshop on mental wellness and gender-based violence brought about a profound positive impact on the community, survivors, and their families. Through engaging sessions, insightful discussions, and practical exercises, participants gained a deeper understanding of wellness and its significance in their lives. Survivors and their families particularly benefited from the workshop, as it offered them valuable tools and strategies to cope with trauma and navigate the healing process. By connecting with others who have similar experiences, survivors and their families found solace, understanding, and encouragement, and strong support networks were formed among participants. Overall, the three-day workshop brought about a transformative impact on the community, not only equipping them with essential knowledge and skills, but also instilling a sense of empowerment, hope, and unity.

## Fraser Valley Métis Association

Two Worlds, Two Spirits: Pathways to Healing was developed by the Fraser Valley Métis Association in Abbotsford, B.C. to capture the strategic vision of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis community in addressing gender-based violence and reclaiming the traditional roles of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people. It sought to identify community-based cultural practices and strategies to increase community and belonging to bridge the distance between Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ community members across B.C.

This project made possible a speaker series and sharing circles that created opportunities to learn about issues impacting Métis Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ communities. These gatherings also allowed participants to witness the different ways Two-Spirit people exist, in particular the diversity in self and cultural expressions. Attendees expressed gratitude for the opportunity to connect with kin, extending from other people to land and animals. Two events held in Osoyoos, B.C. – a talent show and a trade show – created space for participants to offer gifts, teachings, and resources. Such events help to highlight the importance of strength in community and collective well-being through culturally grounded ways of being. Additionally, their impact has been far-reaching. One participant shared that after participating at a gathering in Osoyoos, they started creating a community where Two-Spirit individuals support one another to “share the teachings we learned, creating safe spaces for us to thrive in.”



Photos courtesy of Fraser Valley Métis Association

**A full list of funded projects is available on the BCAAFC website or through this link: [BCAAFC – Path Forward Community Fund](#)**

# Progress on Key Path Forward Actions

The Path Forward identified 28 key commitments that align priorities identified through the 2019 and 2021 community dialogues with Government’s early strategies to address the systemic causes of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. These commitments were reflected in Ministers’ mandate letters and cross the spectrum of Government’s work, in recognition of the interconnected, multi-dimensional nature of the inequities facing Indigenous people and the multilayered response that is needed to address the issues identified through the **National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and its Calls for Justice**.

These commitments include:

1. Community-Based Supports
2. Health & Wellness
3. Housing
4. Transportation, Connectivity & Environment
5. Justice & Public Safety
6. Child Welfare, Early Learning, Education & Skills Training



## GOVERNMENT-WIDE INITIATIVES

The Province is implementing a range of overarching, government-wide initiatives to address the systemic racism and gender-based discrimination that underlies gender-based violence and the victimization of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. These initiatives respond to the Calls for Justice by centring Indigenous voices and mandating systemic changes that uphold the rights of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, key themes of the final report of the National Inquiry.

### SAFE AND SUPPORTED: B.C.’S GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ACTION PLAN

[Safe and Supported: British Columbia’s Gender-Based Violence Action Plan](#), launched in December 2023, is a three-year action plan to guide and coordinate action across government to prevent, address and respond to gender-based violence.

*Safe and Supported* includes a priority of “Lifting Up Indigenous-led Approaches”, which responds directly to advice and recommendations from Indigenous partners to support self-determination by putting resources in the hands of First Nations and Indigenous communities and organizations to determine their own priorities in a way that best meets the needs of Indigenous people. In the first year of *Safe and Supported*, and with federal support under the Canada-British Columbia agreement on the implementation of the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence, this included supporting the B.C. First Nations Justice Council to develop cultural competency training and continue work on the Indigenous Women’s Justice Plan and an Indigenous Youth Justice Plan; providing \$10 million to the Path Forward Community Fund to support Indigenous-led safety planning and culturally-safe responses to gender-based violence; providing \$2 million to the First Peoples’ Cultural Council for grants that support First Nations’ cultural practices; supporting new gender-based violence supports for Métis people with \$2 million to Métis Nation B.C.; and contributing \$1 million to the Giving Voice grant program

overseen by the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women for community-based healing.

Over the next two years of *Safe and Supported*, government will continue to work with Indigenous and community partners to monitor progress and roll out further initiatives.

### **ANTI-RACISM DATA ACT**

In June 2022, the provincial government introduced the *Anti-Racism Data Act* to identify systemic racism and advance racial equity. The legislation aims to use race and ethnicity-based data to better understand and eliminate systemic racism within government programs and services. Under the Act, the Province is required to determine research priorities to help guide government's approach to addressing systemic racism. *Anti-Racism Data Act* research priorities for 2023-2025 were developed with First Nations, Métis Peoples, and the provincial Anti-Racism Data Committee. In June 2024, the Province released research on education, health and racial diversity in the BC Public Service, and in 2025, further research will be released on the BC Public Service, representation on B.C.'s boards, and economic inclusion.

### **ANTI-RACISM ACT**

The *Anti-Racism Act* became law in May 2024 and builds on the *Anti-Racism Data Act* by requiring government action to address systemic racism. While the *Anti-Racism Data Act* ensures the collection and use of data to identify inequities, the *Anti-Racism Act* mandates systemic change by requiring public institutions to dismantle systemic racism, advance racial equity, and embed anti-racism in the development of policies, programs, and services. Priorities will be shaped through consultation with Indigenous people and engagement with racialized communities to ensure meaningful and lasting impact.

To implement the Act, the Ministry of Attorney General is adopting a cross-ministry approach to review and revise existing policies, programs, services, and processes to combat systemic racism, with a focus on Indigenous-specific systemic racism. Using a distinctions-based approach, the Ministry will co-develop an action plan through consultation and collaboration with Indigenous Partners and targeted engagement with racialized communities,

supported by the Provincial Committee on Anti-Racism. This action plan, to be completed by June 1, 2026, will outline key actions for all ministries, recruitment, retention, and advancement strategies, an assessment framework with clear indicators and targets, and comprehensive anti-racism training and curriculum development.

## **COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORTS**

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2S+ people (MMIWG2S+) highlights how the destruction of Indigenous communities and culture and systemic denial of access to social and economic means has caused the current conditions that compromise the safety of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. The Calls for Justice require all governments to uphold the social, cultural, economic and human security rights of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, and to support and resource Indigenous-led initiatives that pursue these rights. The Province is taking action to respond to these Calls for Justice by funding Indigenous organizations to deliver programs that enhance community safety, reduce violence, revive culture and language and promote social and economic development.

### **FIRST NATIONS WELL BEING FUND**

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction has provided over \$20 million since 2020 to the First Nations Well Being Fund in support of B.C.'s poverty reduction strategy. The fourth and final round of funding closed in June 2024. The First Nations Public Service Secretariat designed and administers the fund on behalf of the First Nations Summit. There are two funding streams. In the community projects stream, funding has supported local projects including food security, training, building skills and employment opportunities, and cultural initiatives to strengthen community and support decolonization, among other areas. In the second stream, funding has supported communities to develop their own poverty reduction or well-being plans. To date, First Nations have received funding to complete 212 projects.

## **STRONGER COMMUNITY SERVICES FUND**

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction provided \$60 million in 2023 to help non-profit organizations deliver programming through the Stronger Community Services Fund, delivered by the Vancouver Foundation in collaboration with key partners. Two of the funding streams were distributed in 2024 – the Community Prosperity Fund (\$25 million) and the Lighthouse Organizations Fund (\$22.9 million). Three million of the overall funding was distributed by New Relationship Trust in 2023 for the 2024 and 2025 fiscal years to 14 Indigenous organizations that are led by or serve Indigenous people. Indigenous organizations were also supported through four other funding streams including the Lighthouse Organizations and Community Prosperity streams (in 2024) and the Level Black, Indigenous and People of Colour fund and Recovery and Resiliency streams (in 2023).

### ***First Peoples' Cultural Council – Cultural Practices Grant***

The Cultural Practices Grant (CPG) is a new program administered by the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC), funded under Safe and Supported: B.C.'s Gender-Based Violence Action Plan. The CPG supports B.C. First Nations in planning, carrying out and documenting community-based cultural practices and events that affirm identities, foster a sense of belonging, transfer knowledge and celebrate the roles, relationships and responsibilities within communities. The reawakening and strengthening of these traditions is one way that B.C. First Nations are taking action against the gender-based violence that disproportionately affects Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people.

As of February 2025, CPG activities have included developing and promoting the grant program, application intake, review by a panel of Indigenous heritage experts, funding decisions, and issuing payments. FPCC approved 67 applications, totalling \$1.65 million in funding.

## **COMMUNITY GAMING GRANTS SUPPORT INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS**

Each year, Community Gaming Grants provide \$140 million in funding to not-for-profit organizations across the province that deliver programs and services in various sectors, including Arts and Culture, Sport, Environment, Public Safety and Human and Social Services. This includes supporting applications from self-identified Indigenous organizations. Community Gaming Grants provided over \$4.3 million in funding to Indigenous organizations in the 2023/24 fiscal year. The funding contributes to a community's overall health and wellbeing by supporting Indigenous organizations to deliver programming such as Indigenous language revitalization, after-school sports, food security programs, mental health and addictions recovery services, natural resource management, restorative justice initiatives, and programming for Friendship Centres, among many others.

## **NEW ROUND OF GIVING VOICE FUNDING SUPPORTS COMMUNITY HEALING**

In 2024/25, the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women (MACIW) distributed \$1 million in funding to 37 First Nations governments, Métis chartered communities, Indigenous non-profits and Indigenous friendship centres for community-based events that give voice to stopping violence against Indigenous women and girls. Giving Voice places emphasis on the right of Indigenous Peoples to cultural self-determination and aligns with the Province's efforts to strengthen relationships with Indigenous Peoples and take action in accordance with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. Community-driving healing initiatives, such as MACIW's Giving Voice grant program, were expanded as part of *Safe and Supported*.

### **Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women (MACIW)**

MACIW is an advisory council of respected Indigenous women created in 2011 to advise the B.C. government about how to improve quality of life for Indigenous women and girls throughout the province. Since its inception, MACIW has focused on advocating for the well-being of Indigenous women, providing advice and support to the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, and other government ministries, and offering guidance and direction that is rooted in Indigenous world views. MACIW has long championed the need for Indigenous Gender Based Analysis Plus (IGBA+) in economic and resource development decisions and launched an IGBA+ toolkit in 2023. MACIW's advice was critical in the development of *Safe and Supported*.

### **CIVIL FORFEITURE CRIME PREVENTION GRANT PROGRAM**

The [Civil Forfeiture Crime Prevention Grant Program](#) provides one-time funding to projects that align with annually selected funding streams. The funding streams support projects that address crime prevention, gender-based violence, restorative justice, and support healing in Indigenous communities. In 2024, 37 Indigenous Healing projects totalling over \$1.4 million and 62 projects addressing or preventing gender-based violence totalling over \$4.9 million were funded.

Examples include:

#### **Women's Wisdom for Safer Families - Niwîkôwin Métis Family Services Society (NMFSS), Prince George**

This project will support Métis and Indigenous women, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people from communities along the Highway of Tears who have experienced intimate partner violence. This project will provide education and support to address gender-based violence and to build safe relationships through culturally relevant, trauma-informed group sessions.

#### **Empowering Women and Girls through Personal Safety Workshop Project - Women Educating in Self Defense Training Society, Vancouver, Terrace, First Nations**

This project will provide self-defence training for women and girls (14+) living in northern Indigenous communities or in urban inner-city communities who are vulnerable to gender-based violence, helping them to become more empowered through simple yet effective personal safety strategies and resistance techniques.

#### **Supporting Community-Based Indigenous Mediation - Mediate BC Society, Province-wide**

This project will support First Nations seeking to train community-based family mediators as a step in restoring First Nations' legal systems and structures. Sixteen Indigenous mediators, identified by their communities, will receive introductory mediation training to support development of community-based family mediation.

#### **Salal Indigenous Counselling and Outreach Program - Salal Sexual Violence Support Centre Society, Vancouver**

This project will provide free-of-charge individual and group counselling, workshops, land retreats, and Elder support for 205 Indigenous survivors of sexualized violence, self-identified families of MMIWG2S+, and survivors of residential school, intergenerational trauma, and/or childhood sexual abuse.

### **SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS 2SLGBTQIA+ COMMUNITIES**

In 2024, many of the projects funded by the Civil Forfeiture Grant Program explicitly addressed preventing, responding to and healing from violence against Indigenous 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples. These programs provide intersectional, culturally-informed services that support the Indigenous 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

#### ***Heshook-ish Tsawalk- Everything is One – Ahousaht First Nation***

This grant will provide a program for the 2SLGBTQIA+ People in the Community of Ahousaht, ensuring that they have a safe space to gather, know they matter and have support.

#### ***Sexual Orientations and Gender Identity Indigenous Initiatives B.C.***

##### ***Pilot – ARC Foundation***

This project will equip First Nations schools with lesson plans and resources that offer Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer students much needed support.

#### ***Healing Hearts - QMUNITY BC's Queer, Trans and Two Spirit Resource Centre***

This program will address the critical need for mental health support for vulnerable, low-income Indigenous individuals who are also members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community by providing free counselling services with a culturally sensitive and trauma-informed approach, recognizing the unique experiences and challenges faced by Indigenous individuals, including the impacts of intergenerational trauma.

#### ***2SLGBTQIA+ Kaa-Wiichihitoyaahk Series – The Métis Nation of Greater Victoria Association***

This project will provide an ongoing series of initiatives that include regular gatherings and events to support the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health of 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis people living within the Greater Victoria Capital Region District.

## **MOOSE HIDE CAMPAIGN**



## **CAMPAGNE MOOSE HIDE**

### **MOOSE HIDE CAMPAIGN**

Since 2011, the Moose Hide Campaign has engaged men and boys to act in ending violence against women, children and gender diverse people through activities such as ceremony, fasting, participating in community events, and wearing a moose hide pin to show their commitment to honour, respect and protect the women, children and gender diverse people in their lives. They also commit to work together with other men to end violence against women, children, and those on the gender continuum.

B.C. has provided more than \$4.9 million in seed money to grow and develop the Moose Hide Campaign from an Indigenous-led provincial initiative into a national campaign, including \$2 million to support the campaign in 2023/24 through 2026/27. Over 34,000 members of the BC Public Service actively participate in Moose Hide activities. Together, over half a million Canadians joined in ceremony and solidarity on Moose Hide Campaign Day, May 16, 2024, with the goal of ending gender-based violence.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Peoples demonstrated how the destruction of traditional family and community structures and other forms of colonial violence has had a devastating impact on the health of Indigenous people, which contributes to placing Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people at risk.

Sixteen of the Calls for Justice directly called for governments (3.1 – 3.7) and healthcare providers (7.1 – 7.9) to take immediate action to ensure that the rights to health and wellness of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people are upheld. Key areas for action include recognizing that First Nations, Inuit and Métis people are experts in caring for and healing themselves, centering Indigenous-led prevention and healing programs, providing sustainable, adequate funding for health and wellness services wherever Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people reside and implementing ongoing anti-bias and anti-racism training for all healthcare workers.

Government is taking action to address the Calls for Justice in the areas of Health and Wellness through the initiatives described in this section.

### **Indigenous Health and Reconciliation**

#### **First Nations Health Authority**

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) is a health service delivery organization created and mandated to support B.C. First Nations to implement a number of guiding agreements seeking to elevate B.C. First Nations health outcomes through the creation of a more effective health care system.

#### **First Nations Health Council**

The First Nations Health Council (FNHC) is a provincial-level organization that is representative of and accountable to B.C. First Nations. FNHC membership is regionally-driven by First Nations. It is composed of fifteen members, with three members appointed by each of the five regions in B.C.

### **PRIMARY CARE NETWORKS AND FIRST NATIONS-LED PRIMARY CARE CENTRES**

The Ministry of Health is advancing the planning and implementation of Primary Care Networks and First Nations-led Primary Care Centres across the province, involving First Nations and Métis partnerships that are reflective of the local communities and regions they will serve. For 2024/2025, the Ministry committed \$7.7 million for traditional wellness supports including Elders for Indigenous communities, with these positions supporting culturally safe team-based primary care delivery in Primary Care Networks throughout the province. First Nations-led Primary Care Centres, a jointly funded initiative between the Ministry of Health and FNHA, also provide access to traditional wellness supports for Indigenous and First Nations peoples in B.C.

### **SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH 10-YEAR STRATEGY TRIPARTITE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

The tripartite *10-Year Strategy on the Social Determinants of Health* prioritizes building capacity within First Nations communities to support self-determination and Indigenous healing and wellness within four key areas of focus: Healing Approaches, Cultural Infrastructure, Sustainable Funding, and Nation-Based Governance. The 10-Year Strategy will achieve this through the development of community-driven and Nation-based health and wellness planning in collaboration with the tripartite partners and through supportive funding initiatives, while building on insights from the 2018 tripartite *Memorandum of Understanding – Tripartite Partnership to Improve Mental Health and Wellness Services and Achieve Progress on the Determinants of Health and Wellness* as well as Nation engagement at biannual regional health caucuses.

### ***In Plain Sight: Recommendations to Address Indigenous-Specific Racism***

The *In Plain Sight* report (2020) exposed widespread systemic Indigenous-specific racism in B.C.'s health care system, calling for urgent reforms. Since then, the Ministry of Health and its partners have been implementing its 24 recommendations, with progress monitored under B.C.'s Declaration Act Action Plan (3.7). While progress has been made, full implementation of systemic changes will take time. Achievements in 2024 are part of a longer journey toward comprehensive results. Key advancements are highlighted below.

- A new Memorandum of Agreement has been included in the 2022-2025 collective agreements between health employers, unions and bargaining associations. The Memorandum acknowledges the historical and ongoing harms of colonialism and commits to a system-wide approach to address Indigenous-specific racism.
- A provincial Indigenous-Specific Anti-Racism forum has been established within the health sector, including a physician-specific committee. The next round of collective bargaining is currently underway with the bargaining associations.
- Health Quality BC in partnership with the In Plain Sight Task Team published the “Sharing Concerns: Principles to Guide the Development of an Indigenous Patient Feedback Process” in 2022 following a provincial dialogue session with a wide-ranging group of contributors from health organizations across B.C., as well as Indigenous patients and family members. This publication identifies core principles of a safe, accessible, and meaningful patient complaint process. An evaluation was completed in early 2024 and an updated “Sharing Concerns 2024” has since been released.
- Regional advancements are being made to improve the Indigenous feedback and complaints process, with a focus on creating a culturally safe and accountable system.
- A bilateral Health, Mental Health, and Harm Reduction Table has been established between Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC), the Ministry of Health, Mental Health and Addictions portfolio, and the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation to support the implementation of In Plain Sight as well as the Ministry's Declaration Act Action Plan commitments.
  - MNBC has signed Letters of Understanding with all six provincial health authorities.
  - The renewed Fraser Partnership Accord was signed on February 1, 2024. This marked a renewed commitment with the Fraser Salish Regional Caucus, Fraser Health, Ministry of Health and, for the first time, Métis Nation B.C., to improve health outcomes for Indigenous people in the region.
- The Tripartite Data Quality & Sharing Agreement (TDQSA) was extended through April 2025. FNHA and the Ministry are collaborating on the development of a new agreement to replace the TDQSA, in alignment with the Declaration Act.
- A provincial Indigenous Cultural Safety Measurement Working Group has been established to improve data sharing across the system, determine a balanced indicator set to measure cultural safety, and develop a standardized systemic performance monitoring dashboard.
- Continued work with the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, universities, colleges, and health system partners towards developing cultural safety and humility and Indigenous-specific anti-racism education, training, and frameworks.

## ***Mental Health and Substance Use***

First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations continue to experience poorer mental health outcomes than their non-Indigenous counterparts as a result of the harms caused by colonization. The Calls for Justice entreat governments to provide sustainable, accessible, culturally appropriate support services that can be accessed by all Indigenous people wherever they live, and establish culturally competent and responsive crisis response teams to meet the immediate needs of an Indigenous person, family and/or community when a traumatic event occurs. There is strong focus on working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities to establish these services, with particular support for Indigenous-led, community-based services.

In alignment with the Calls for Justice, the Province recognizes that First Nations, Métis and Inuit people know how to heal their communities and require partnership and resourcing from government to achieve this. The initiatives below are some of the key actions the Province is undertaking in partnership with Indigenous people to enhance access to culturally appropriate, trauma-informed mental health and substance use supports for all.

### **EXPAND ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE COMMUNITY COUNSELLING**

The Community Counselling Fund (CCF) is the first Provincial investment in community-based mental health care with an equity-focused approach to ensuring adults have access to low-barrier mental health supports. Grant funding is provided to 47 community-based non-profit organizations to deliver counselling services, including 12 organizations that focus on First Nations, Métis, or Urban Indigenous populations. Since 2018/19, the Province has provided a total of \$35 million to support community counselling through the CCF. From January to September 2024, funded organizations supported more than 12,000 individuals and families with low-barrier, inclusive counselling services across urban and rural geographies. The community counselling organizations delivered more than 31,000 counselling sessions and over 4,200 group counselling and psychoeducational workshops within the same period.

### **CRISIS RESPONSE, COMMUNITY LED**

Crisis Response, Community Led, or CRCL, are mobile teams that respond to mental health crisis calls. CRCLs provide crisis support over the phone, by text, and dispatch mobile responders as needed. CRCLs ensure that people experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis are met by a peer with lived and living experience and a mental health professional and are connected to the services and supports they need. Three of the six teams are operated by local Indigenous service providers in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association B.C. From January to December 2024, CRCLs responded to 5,882 calls. CRCLs have called for police back-up in only 1.3% of all calls.

### **ADULT SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT AND RECOVERY**

The 2023 Budget invested \$586 million to support people to access treatment and recovery services that are the right fit for their recovery goals. The Province also invested in services that will help people to continue their healing journey through aftercare supports and culture-based healing they can access closer to home. In total, more than 750 publicly funded substance use beds have been implemented in B.C. since 2017, 240 in 2023/24, and 157 in 2024/25 to date.

In addition, the Province has supported the implementation of Road to Recovery - a made-in-B.C. model of addictions care that establishes a seamless continuum of care from withdrawal management (detox) to treatment and aftercare services for clients with moderate to severe substance use disorders. Road to Recovery was initially launched in Vancouver in October 2023. To date, Vancouver Coastal Health has implemented 60 of 95 planned new substance use beds as part of this initiative.

Between October 2023 and November 2024, Road to Recovery Vancouver received 22,619 calls to the Access Central phone line, with 5,000+ of these being requests for withdrawal management. As a result, Road to Recovery supported 2,137 clients into a withdrawal management bed with a median wait time of one day for those prioritized as urgent. In July 2024, the Province announced that Road to Recovery would be expanded to every health region, with implementation planning now underway.

## CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT

The Capacity Building Grant was established in partnership with the Community Action Initiative and launched in July 2024. This grant provides one-time funding of up to \$25,000 for First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and urban Indigenous-led organizations which deliver bed-based treatment and recovery services. Eleven First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous-led organizations received one-time funding of \$25,000 in 2024. The grants help organizations expand and improve their treatment and recovery services by investing in programming supplies, equipment, technology, enhanced staffing, staff training, resident resources and other initiatives that will support long-term service improvements. There will be a second opportunity for First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous-led organizations providing bed-based treatment and recovery services to apply for one-time funding of up to \$25,000 each again in 2025.

## INDIGENOUS TREATMENT, RECOVERY AND AFTERCARE SERVICES FUND

As part of Budget 2023, the Province dedicated new funds toward Indigenous-led treatment, recovery, aftercare services and supports. These investments will enhance land-based healing modalities, and support Indigenous-led treatment, recovery, and aftercare services as the Province continues to work collaboratively with key partners and honour Nation-based approaches to mental health, wellness, and substance use service delivery. The Province continues to work with Indigenous partners to plan and implement the funded initiatives, such as the now operational Orca Lelum Youth Wellness Centre (Lantzville, Vancouver Island Health Authority) and Tsakwa'lutan Healing Centre (Quadra Island, Vancouver Island Health Authority).

## HOUSING

Experiencing precarious housing or homelessness increases a person's risk of victimization. The systemic dispossession of First Nations and Inuit people from their lands, and targeted removal of Métis people from historic settlements have contributed to the disproportionate representation of Indigenous people in unhoused populations. In B.C., the 2020 Homeless Count survey found that 39% of

respondents were Indigenous, despite Indigenous people representing just 6% of B.C.'s total population.

Calls for Justice 4.6 and 4.7 urge governments to meet the housing needs of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, particularly those who are experiencing homelessness, food insecurity and/or fleeing violence or sexual exploitation. Housing must be safe, culturally-appropriate and accessible wherever Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people reside. The actions below detail how the Province is increasing the supply of safe housing for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

## WOMEN'S TRANSITION HOUSING FUND

Government committed \$734 million over 10 years, starting in 2018, to build and operate 1,500 new units of housing for women and children leaving abusive family situations. In April 2023, the Province committed to funding an additional 1,500 new units, bringing the total funding to \$1.9 billion to develop 3,000 new housing units for women and their families fleeing violence. This includes transition housing, safe homes, second-stage and long-term housing. The Women's Transition Housing Fund program provides women and their children who are at risk of violence and/or who have experienced violence, with access to safe, secure and confidential services. Those services include information and support for decision-making, short-term shelter or housing, referrals to other services, and links to safe, affordable housing.

## INDIGENOUS HOUSING FUND

In June 2018 the Province announced a commitment over 10 years to build and operate 1,750 units of social housing for Indigenous people both on- and off-reserve. This is the first provincial housing fund in Canada that includes on-reserve housing. Through Budget 2023, the Indigenous Housing Fund has since received funds for an additional 1,750 new homes for Indigenous people both on-and off-reserve. This investment brings the total investment to almost \$1.7 billion and doubles the number of Indigenous Housing Fund spaces, bringing the total target to 3,500. In late 2023, BC Housing issued a new call for proposals which closed May 15, 2024. In September 2024, BC Housing

announced the successful projects, 41 on- and off-reserve projects that will create 1,662 new Indigenous-led affordable rental homes. It includes 667 on-reserve homes for First Nations members and 995 off-reserve homes for Indigenous people.

### **COMMUNITY HOUSING FUND**

The Community Housing Fund is a \$3.3 billion investment to build more than 20,000 affordable rental homes for people with moderate- and low-income households by 2031/32. To date, 10% of the total Community Housing Fund units have been allocated to Indigenous people. BC Housing is planning to launch a new Community Housing Fund call in 2025, encouraging organizations throughout the province to submit their affordable rental housing proposals for funding consideration.

### **COMPLEX CARE HOUSING**

Launched in 2022, Complex Care Housing provides housing alongside health, social and cultural supports to adults with complex mental health and substance use challenges who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability. In recognition of the over-representation of Indigenous people among those who need complex care, a guiding principle of the program is cultural responsiveness to ensure settings and practices are trauma-informed, culturally safe and led by and for Indigenous people wherever possible. Complex Care Housing operates in all regions of the province. As of January 1, 2025, 27 out of a planned 33 projects are operating in all regions of the province, providing services for more than 500 people as committed in Budget 2022.

### **SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RENT SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM**

Announced in early 2025, the Survivors of Gender-Based Violence Rent Supplement Program will use federally funded Canada-BC Housing Benefits to support low-income survivors of gender-based violence whose needs are not served by existing programs, who are already renting in the private market and require assistance to maintain their housing, or who are currently residing in Women's Transition Housing and Support Programs and need support accessing rentals in the private market.

The Federal government is investing nearly \$37 million over four years, with the Province matching that funding. The benefit is expected to help 1,700 individuals or households during the critical time of vulnerability and need experienced by those fleeing violence, experiencing homelessness or with severe core housing need.

## **TRANSPORTATION, CONNECTIVITY AND ENVIRONMENT**

The Calls for Justice demand that all Indigenous people have access to safe transportation options, particularly in rural, remote and northern communities (4.1, 4.8, 17.9). Without safe and accessible transportation, Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are forced to put themselves at risk to access basic rights including employment, housing, education, safety and healthcare. The danger that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people encounter when safe transportation and cellular service are not available was highlighted by the 2006 Highway of Tears Symposium Report, which commemorated the mostly Indigenous women and girls who have gone missing or been murdered along Highway 16 between Prince George and Prince Rupert, and provided key recommendations on how to keep Indigenous women and girls safe in future. These recommendations included establishment of regular, safe shuttle bus services between towns and First Nations reserves and installing emergency phone booths along Highway 16 due to inadequate cellular coverage.

The initiatives below outline the key actions the Province is taking to respond to the Calls for Justice and Highway of Tears Symposium Report, to provide safe transportation and a safe environment for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

## Transportation and Connectivity

### SPOTLIGHT: Improving Transportation and Connectivity Along the Highway of Tears



Photos provided by Rogers Communications

#### **HIGHWAY 16 “HIGHWAY OF TEARS” CELLULAR EXPANSION PROJECT**

The Provincial and Federal governments are supporting a Rogers Communications project to provide 252 km of continuous cellular coverage between Prince Rupert and Smithers on Highway 16 – the Highway of Tears. Rogers Communications Inc. received approval for up to \$4.5 million in joint funding from the Connecting British Columbia program and the Federal Universal Broadband Fund to build 11 new cellular towers between Prince Rupert and Witset (formerly Moricetown).

In December 2024, Rogers Communications turned on five new cellular towers along Highway 16, providing 911 access for all travelers and 5G wireless coverage for customers, which marks significant completion of the project build, with nine out of 11 towers now in service. The nine towers provide an expected 166 kilometres of 5G cellular coverage on Highway 16, closing more of the wireless gap between Prince Rupert and Prince George.

When the project is complete, the new coverage along Highway 16 will ensure continuous cellular access along the entire 720-kilometre corridor. This will establish a safer environment for travel, and fulfill one of the recommendations in the [2006 Highway of Tears Symposium report](#) to enhance safety for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

#### **NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

BC Bus North continues to operate with funding from the Province, providing safe, reliable, and affordable transportation between communities. In 2023 an additional route was added from Prince George to Kamloops and service to Fort Nelson was increased. The Prince George to Kamloops route has been highly successful, with ridership of over 8,500 in 2023/2024, compared to almost 6,000 ridership from all other routes combined.



Khast'an Drummers in front of BC Bus North Photo provided by Ministry of Transportation and Transit

On May 29, 2023, the Province announced a commitment of \$5 million to the Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) to continue northern transportation services. This funding will ensure the continuation of critical transportation services, including BC Bus North and community shuttles, which connect people in rural communities to regional centres. The fall 2024 intake for the Northern Community Shuttle program resulted in eight successful applications from First Nations, local governments and not-for-profit organizations for services operating through 2026/27.

### **HIGHWAY 16 REGIONAL TRANSIT SERVICE**

Regional transit service along Highway 16 was an action item in the 2017 Highway 16 Transportation Action Plan developed in response to the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry Report. The BC Transit inter-community service continues to provide reliable, affordable and safe transportation between communities along Highway 16. Ridership continued to increase in 2023/24 with almost 20,000 passengers (up from just over 17,000 in 2022/23). To date, the total number of passengers is over 115,000 since the service began in 2017. The bus service allows people to travel to their nearest large community and return home the same day.

### **INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY ACCESS AND RESILIENCY PROGRAM**

The Indigenous Community Access and Resiliency Program, delivered through the Ministry of Transportation and Transit's Preservation Program, funds projects that improve safety and access for First Nations communities, including First Nations women and girls, along with other projects to rehabilitate and improve safety on B.C.'s highways, sideroads and bridges. This program, announced in 2023/24, will invest \$120 million over nine years, \$42 million over the next three years, to support projects that improve access and resiliency for First Nations communities. Projects are prioritized in response to requests and input received directly from First Nations communities both through direct contact with ministry staff and minister meetings at the annual First Nations Leaders' Gathering. Many of the projects delivered under this program will include partnering with Indigenous communities to deliver the work.



Photo provided by Rogers Communications

### **Connecting Communities B.C. Funding Program**

In 2022, B.C. and Canada announced a partnership to invest as much as \$830 million, contributing \$415 million each, toward high-speed connectivity infrastructure projects in rural and remote areas. The Program completed five intakes between September 2022 and December 2024, with the sixth intake open until end of June 2025. Through the Program, the Province aims to provide all remaining underserved household and First Nations communities with access to high-speed internet by 2027.

## Environment

### REFLECTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' HISTORY AND CULTURES IN PROVINCIAL PARKS

From 2020-2023 the Minister of Environment and Parliamentary Secretary were directed in their mandate letters to better reflect Indigenous peoples' history and cultures in provincial parks and wilderness areas. To achieve this commitment, BC Parks has worked with numerous Nations on a wide variety of projects and initiatives including (but not limited to) park renaming, interpretive signage, storytelling, joint patrols/training with Guardians and a shared compliance and enforcement pilot. In addition, detailed interviews were conducted with five Nations to better understand how government could improve its ongoing work in this area. The commitment has now been operationalized in the Ministry Service Plan as one of several key strategies for the Ministry to "emphasize the expression of Indigenous Peoples' history and culture as a component of BC Parks' broader effort on the path of reconciliation".

Learn how to pronounce First Nations tribe and territorial names: [Phonetic Pronunciation Guide - Province of British Columbia](#)

Learn about which First Nation's land you are on: [Native-Land.ca](#)

### ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE NATURAL RESOURCES SECTOR

The Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) is contributing to the *Safe and Supported: B.C.'s Gender-Based Violence Action Plan* by developing a Gender-Based Violence Policy Framework, which will include a suite of policies, guidance, tools and training to address and mitigate gender-based violence in the natural resource and industrial project sectors. A key component of this work is the development of a standardized gender-based violence condition that can be applied to future natural resource and industrial projects with temporary workforce accommodations to develop a gender and cultural safety plan to enhance the security and well-being of women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals residing or working in nearby communities.

Through consultation and cooperation with First Nations and with the assistance of a consultant, the EAO will continue to refine the standardized condition throughout 2025. The EAO will also be working with a consultant to develop and implement gender-based violence mitigation training for EAO Compliance and Enforcement Officers and project assessment staff.

### City of Vancouver adoption of an United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Strategy

In 2021, Vancouver City Council created a United Nations Declaration Task Force to provide recommendations and a strategy to implement the UN Declaration in the City. The Task Force worked with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and undertook formal engagement with Indigenous people living in urban areas. The City passed an UNDRIP Strategy in October 2022 and 79 calls to action, making Vancouver a world leader in implementing a clear strategy toward UNDRIP and Reconciliation. The City's MMIWG2S Response Report, led by the MMIWG2S+ Advisory Committee, is part of its implementation of the UNDRIP Strategy and Reconciliation Framework. In partnership with the Vancouver Police Department, the Committee is working on creating a city-wide response protocol for when an Indigenous woman, girl or 2SLGBTQQIA+ person goes missing from Vancouver.

## JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The systematic destruction of Indigenous families and ways of life through decades of harmful colonial policies created the current social, economic and cultural conditions that routinely compromise the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

The Calls for Justice entreat all governments and the justice sector to implement reforms from a place of respect and partnership with First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. In particular, the Calls for Justice included eleven recommendations (9.1 – 9.11) to transform Indigenous

and non-Indigenous police services to support self-determination, improve oversight and accountability, and ensure equitable service provision in rural and remote communities. Recommendations for other parts of the justice system include providing comprehensive, culturally-appropriate services for Indigenous victims of crime and their families (5.6), establishing culturally-competent and responsive crisis response teams to support immediate needs after a traumatic event (3.5), providing community-based and Indigenous-specific options for sentencing (5.16) and providing mental health, addictions and trauma services for Indigenous people who have been incarcerated (14.6).

The initiatives below detail how the Province is taking action to respond to the justice and public safety sector-related Calls for Justice.

### **B.C. FIRST NATIONS JUSTICE STRATEGY**

In partnership with the B.C. First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC), work is underway to advance initiatives expressed in the [B.C. First Nations Justice Strategy](#) (the Strategy). Achievements in 2024 include:

- BCFNJC held their third annual Justice Forum in Vancouver in April 2024. Indigenous leaders, rightsholders, service organizations, and government partners gathered to hear updates on the progress of the Strategy and to set priorities for the year ahead.
- BCFNJC released the Indigenous Women’s Justice Plan (IWJP) at the annual Justice Forum in April 2024. Following its release, BCFNJC and the Indigenous Justice Secretariat, Ministry of Attorney General, met with representatives of 28 areas of the Provincial government to discuss the IWJP, look for alignment, and build relationships to assist in implementation planning.
- Following community engagement over the fall of 2023, BCFNJC completed further regional and virtual engagements in 2024 to continue to advance Strategy 10 and a future Indigenous Youth Justice and Prevention Plan.
- BCFNJC continues to deliver Gladue services in B.C., providing Gladue Reports and Letters for Indigenous people at sentencing.

### **MÉTIS JUSTICE STRATEGY**

Following engagement by Métis Nation BC (MNBC) with their then 38 Métis Chartered Communities in 2019, the [Métis Justice Strategy](#) was developed in partnership with MNBC and the Province. The Strategy seeks to address the overrepresentation of Métis people involved with and impacted by the justice system and it received Provincial endorsement in June 2024. Included in the Strategy is a recommendation to address ongoing issues related to MMIWG2S+ in B.C. MNBC and the Indigenous Justice Secretariat will be engaging with Provincial partners to plan implementation.

### **Courts**

#### **FIRST NATIONS/INDIGENOUS COURTS**

First Nations/Indigenous Courts are criminal sentencing courts that integrate restorative justice approaches and traditional ways to achieve justice and healing for the individual and community. The courts focus on balancing rehabilitation, accountability and healing. Judges, lawyers, Crown Counsel, Elders, community members and family members work with the client to create a healing plan that helps to restore mental, physical, spiritual and emotional health. There are nine Indigenous Courts in B.C.:

New Westminster First Nations Court • North Vancouver  
Chet wa nexwníw ta S7eḵw’í7tel Indigenous Court •  
Kamloops Cknucwentn First Nations Sentencing Court  
• Duncan First Nations Court • Nicola Valley Indigenous  
Court • Prince George Indigenous Court • Williams  
Lake Indigenous Court • Hazelton Indigenous Court •  
Lillooet Indigenous Court

## **Indigenous Justice Centres**

Indigenous Justice Centres (IJC) provide culturally appropriate information, advice, supports and representation for Indigenous people involved in the justice system for both criminal and child-protection matters. As part of the Safer Communities Action Plan, the Province committed funding to open an additional 10 Indigenous Justice Centres bringing the total number of IJCs in the province to 15. Following a call for interest to communities to host an IJC, BCFNJC announced the remaining six physical IJCs would open in Burns Lake/Hazelton, Fort St. John, Williams Lake, Kamloops, Cranbrook, and Port Hardy. The opening of these centres completes Strategy 4 of the First Nations Justice Strategy. The above new IJCs join the already operating nine physical IJCs (Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo, Surrey, and Kelowna, Merritt, Prince George, Prince Rupert and Chilliwack), as well as the virtual IJC which serves clients across B.C.

## **Policing**

### **POLICE ACT REFORM INITIATIVE**

Government has been working to address the 2022 Special Committee on Reforming the *Police Act's* (the Special Committee) 11 recommendations, which speak to an enhanced continuum of response to mental health, community and Indigenous inputs into policing, and improvements to police education and training. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General has undertaken comprehensive and broadscale engagement with partners. As part of this process, capacity funding was provided to 57 First Nations, four Modern Treaty Nations, one treaty society, and four Indigenous leadership organizations. In total, 87 First Nations and Modern Treaty Nations participated in cooperation and consultation sessions between March and September 2024.

In Spring 2024, amendments to the *Police Act* were introduced that focus on municipal police governance and oversight. The amendments establish a new class of Safety Officers and align with recommendations of the 2022 Special Committee related to police board chairs (2b), the public

safety continuum (5c), and the definition of misconduct (9e). The amendments also advance several recommendations of the 2019 Special Committee to Review the Police Complaints Process to improve oversight. Government is now developing regulations that will bring the 2024 *Police Act* amendments and other related changes into force. Policy development for future legislative reforms is also underway in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous people and local governments. Additionally, a technical Working Group has been established with the B.C. First Nations Justice Council and First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC).

### **TRAINING FOR POLICE ON SEXUAL ASSAULT INVESTIGATIONS**

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General is in the final stages of a project to determine provincial requirements for police training on sexual assault investigations in alignment with the [Provincial Standards](#). The Ministry is engaging with police agencies and police training bodies, community-based anti-violence organizations, and Indigenous organizations, including the BCFNJC, to gather feedback on the content and delivery of training on this topic.

### **SITUATION TABLES AND INTERVENTION CIRCLES**

Situation Tables bring together front-line staff from the public safety, health and social service sectors to identify high-risk individuals and collaboratively and rapidly connect them to services and supports they need, before they experience a negative or traumatic event (e.g., victimization, overdose, incarceration, eviction, etc.). Situation Tables empower agencies to work together to provide holistic supports to people, lower the risk of harm, and increase community safety and well-being. There are currently 40 Situation Tables across B.C.

Intervention Circles are a modified version of Situation Tables designed in consultation with and led by Indigenous communities to deliver culturally safe interventions by, for, and within the community, Band or Nation. There is one active Intervention Circle (Esk'etemc), and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General has funded two additional Intervention Circles, Wisset First Nation and Gitanmaax Band, which are currently under development.

## Corrections

### INDIGENOUS PATIENT NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

The Indigenous Patient Navigator program managed by the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) - Correctional Health Services is part of the majority of Community Transition Teams within BC Correctional facilities.

These programs are designed to ensure Indigenous men and women in provincial custody centres with mental health and addiction challenges safely and effectively transition to community-based mental health and addiction services. In 2024, 534 Indigenous clients were supported by Community Transition Teams in their transition to the community.

### SUPPORTING COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION

BC Corrections continues to build and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities to improve outcomes for Indigenous clients returning to their communities. Over the last year, BC Corrections has been in ongoing discussions with six First Nations regarding the development of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to increase communication and coordination when supporting individuals leaving custody or returning to their community. MOUs with Squamish and Tsawwassen First Nations are currently being drafted, and preparations are underway to sign an MOU with Huuayat First Nation. A Letter of Intent to develop an MOU has been signed with Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation.

### INDIGENOUS CONCURRENT DISORDERS COUNSELLOR

The Provincial Health Services Authority is introducing an Indigenous Concurrent Disorders Counsellor at Surrey Pretrial Services Centre as part of the new Mental Health Unit, with the intention to assess and introduce similar positions at other provincial correctional centres in the near future. This position has been created to provide culturally relevant addictions counselling to Indigenous clients in custody with the goal of improved mental health outcomes.

## Victim Services

### SUPPORT FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS

With \$10 million in new annual funding for sexual assault programming, the Province is supporting 70 new Sexual Assault Services and five Sexual Assault Centres. Twenty-two of the Sexual Assault Services are focused on Indigenous survivors. These programs engage with Indigenous communities to increase access to services and integrate Indigenous approaches to healing and planning for safety. Working from what a survivor needs, the services may use smudging, brushing, ceremonies or being in nature as part of their supports, as well as referrals and accompaniment to police, healthcare, and court.

### RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

In March 2024, the Province provided \$3 million to restorative justice organizations through the Law Foundation of B.C. Several organizations were funded following extensive engagement with stakeholders to identify priorities and maximize impacts in the community. Over \$300,000 will be provided over three years to the Indigenous Justice Association to enhance capacity and support the implementation of its new strategic plan, and host the 2025 Indigenous Justice Program gathering. An additional \$300,000 over three years will be provided to the Prince George Urban Aboriginal Justice Society to support the innovative Pre-Charge Diversion Program in Lheidli T'enneh Territory (Prince George). Restorative justice programs facilitate community healing by addressing the needs of victims and holding offenders accountable through a collaborative experience of justice.

### TRAINING FOR INDIGENOUS SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES PROGRAMS

In October 2024, the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General collaborated with Stó:lō Service Agency to organize regional training for Indigenous Sexual Assault Service (SAS) programs from across northern B.C. Prince George Sexual Assault Centre provided local support. The training was developed and delivered by Stó:lō Service Agency to frontline workers from six Indigenous SAS programs that support survivors of sexual violence. The program responded to an

expressed need from Indigenous SAS programs for Indigenous-specific training that included a focus on Indigenous worldviews and teachings to support those disclosing sexual violence while taking care of oneself as a frontline worker.

### **ENHANCED ANTI-RACISM TRAINING FOR VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDERS**

The Ending Violence Association of B.C. (EVA BC) enhanced its Anti-Racism for Anti-Violence Workers training in 2024 with support from the Federal government and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. The training was enhanced through expanding learning resources, the addition of new practice scenarios and the development of new multimedia components for integration into training.

### **FAMILY INFORMATION LIAISON UNIT**

The Family Information Liaison Unit (FILU) was established to provide frontline victim services for families of missing and murdered Indigenous people. FILU works directly with families in a culturally grounded and trauma-informed manner to help them access information related to police investigations, coroner reports and inquests, and court proceedings. One of FILU's achievements in 2024 was the development of a new partnership with Service BC, and the launch of a pilot project in Smithers through which Service BC staff support families of missing and murdered Indigenous people by helping them access resources and print posters of missing loved ones. This initiative was a significant step forward in strengthening community engagement and ensuring that families have accessible and timely tools to seek help and raise awareness.

### **FUNDING FOR VICTIM SERVICE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN PROGRAMS**

In 2024, the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General provided over \$3.5 million to victim service programs that are specifically designed for Indigenous victims and survivors. In addition, a total of \$3.9 million in one-time grants were provided to community-based service providers delivering victim services and violence against women programs to build capacity and address waitlists under *Safe and Supported: B.C.'s Gender-Based Violence Action Plan*. These programs provide critical support and counselling services to survivors as they overcome violence in their lives.

## **CHILD WELFARE, EARLY LEARNING, EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING**

Over many decades, the child welfare and education systems have been used by colonial governments to separate First Nations, Métis and Inuit families and deprive individuals of their right to language, culture and traditions. These harmful practices, including the residential school system and the Sixties Scoop, have had devastating consequences for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people who continue to suffer from intergenerational trauma caused by the destruction of family, community and culture.

The Calls for Justice demand that all governments, education and child welfare systems ensure that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have their basic rights to culture, safety, education and employment upheld (1.1). This means transforming the child welfare system to recognize Indigenous self-determination and inherent jurisdiction over child welfare and family services, and ensuring Indigenous communities have control over the design and delivery of family services (12.1 – 12.2). Access to culture must be upheld through the education system and Indigenous-led community-based programs, including permanent and meaningful opportunities to access language and land-based programs in order to restore and revitalize cultures and identities (2.3, 2.5). Indigenous youth, particularly those who have been part of the child welfare system, must have access to educational, training and employment opportunities that enable them to fulfil their basic rights (4.4, 12.11).

The initiatives below outline the key actions the Province is taking to respond to the Calls for Justice and reform the child welfare and education systems to protect Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples' rights to education, safety and culture.

## Child Welfare

### CHILD WELL-BEING ACCORD

The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) and the Province have signed a child well-being accord that recommits how the parties work together to support First Nations children and families. The Rising to the Challenge Accord, co-developed by the FNLC and the Province, outlines a shared commitment to create a new approach to child and family well-being. Signed on September 18, 2024, the Accord recognizes and upholds that First Nations have the inherent right to self-determination, including jurisdiction over First Nations children and families, and is a step on the pathway to reconciliation.

### AMENDMENTS TO THE ADOPTION ACT AND THE CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ACT

Amendments to the *Adoption Act* and the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* that advance Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services were passed by the B.C. legislature in spring 2024. The amendments:

- expand the definition of “Indigenous child” in the Act so Indigenous Governing Bodies not yet exercising jurisdiction may identify and support children province-wide;
- broaden the scope for joint and consent-based decision-making agreements with Indigenous Governing Bodies as an additional pathway for them to provide child and family services; and
- enable the B.C. Court of Appeal to administer Indigenous child and family services laws for Indigenous Governing Bodies who choose to use the Provincial court system for dispute resolution.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development continues to engage with Indigenous partners to consider further amendments to support Indigenous communities to exercise authority for child and family services. This work builds upon the historic *Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Service Act* (Bill 38), which was passed with unanimous support in November 2022. It also more closely aligns the Ministry’s approach with the intention of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

### First Nations jurisdiction over child and family services

The Ministry of Children and Family Development continues to work with First Nations and the Federal government to restore jurisdiction over child and family services to Indigenous Peoples. In 2024, the following historic agreements were signed:

- **Coordination agreement between the Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw Nations, Canada and B.C.** This coordination agreement affirms and restores jurisdiction over children and families, and shows a change in the tide for Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw children and families, community, culture and people. This collaborative effort is rooted in the shared understanding that Indigenous children and families should flourish within their communities, surrounded by the embrace of loved ones and the richness of their cultures.
- **Coordination agreement between Sts’ailes, Canada and B.C.** This coordination agreement supports Sts’ailes’ exercise of jurisdiction in relation to the provision of child and family services, through their Snowoyelh te Emi:melh te Sts’ailes, Sts’ailes’ Child and Family Services law. Snowoyelh te Emi:melh te Sts’ailes ensures the safety and well-being of Sts’ailes children and families while nurturing their strong cultural pride and identity so they grow strong in the knowledge of who they are, where they come from, and what they belong to. The law preserves the connection children have with their culture.
- **Coordination agreement between Cowichan Tribes, Canada and B.C.** This coordination agreement will support the implementation of Snuw’uy’ulhtst tu Quw’utsun Mustimuhw u’ tu Shhw’a’luqw’a l’ Smun’eem (The Laws of the Cowichan People for Families and Children) for Cowichan citizens across Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, with the potential for future expansion across B.C. and Canada. The Law’s implementation includes the full transfer of all child and family services, operations and programs to Cowichan Tribes’ responsibility and control.

- **Tsq'ésceŋ First Nation's child well-being law and interim coordination agreement between Tsq'ésceŋ and British Columbia.**

Tsq'ésceŋ First Nation brought their child well-being law, T'k'wenm7iple7ens re Kíkwe, into effect on December 21, 2024. They have always upheld and practiced their laws, teachings, and responsibilities in caring for, protecting, supporting, and uplifting Tsq'ésceŋm'c (Tsq'ésceŋ people, "people of the broken rock"). Tsq'ésceŋ and British Columbia signed a bilateral "interim coordination agreement" on December 21, 2024 to ensure that child and family services to Tsq'ésceŋ children, youth, and families are coordinated between them until a tripartite coordination agreement with Canada is signed.

- **Section 92.1 Community Agreements.**

In 2024, the Province signed Section 92.1 Community Agreements with five First Nations: Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations, Tla'amin, Tl'etinqox, Binche Whu'ten and Toquaht. These agreements were co-created with representatives from the community, highlighting their involvement in protection, planning and placement of their children when working with the Ministry and delegated agencies. They can also serve as a stepping stone to restore First Nations' jurisdiction over child and family services.

## **EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY, NEW SUPPORTS AVAILABLE FOR CURRENT, FORMER YOUTH IN CARE**

Effective April 2024, expanded eligibility for the Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE) program means supports are available to thousands more young adults with care experience up to their 27th birthday. SAJE eligibility now includes young adults from any legal care status, including those in kinship care, who have spent 24 or more cumulative months in care, or who were in care when they turned 19. It also includes those who were adopted or permanently placed between ages 12 and 19, and those in comparable statuses under Indigenous law.

This expanded eligibility completes the implementation of SAJE, which also provides: conditional and unconditional income supports with a no-limit earnings exemption; dental, optical, mental health and life-skills benefits; rent supplements and other housing supports; and guidance from Navigators and Guides.

## **SUPPORTING LGBTQIA+/2STNBGD CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

In April 2024, the Ministry for Children and Family Development updated its *Standards for Staffed Children's Residential Services*. The updates responded to Recommendation 8 from the Representative for Children and Youth report, *The Right to Thrive: An Urgent Call to Recognize, Respect and Nurture Two Spirit, Trans, Non-Binary and other Gender Diverse Children and Youth (2STNBGD)*, which recommended that all Ministry-staffed care services include requirements for policies and training specific to gender-affirming care. The updated Standards now require Ministry-staffed services to develop gender-affirming care policies; respect and support the gender identity of 2STNBGD children/youth; and ensure all staff complete training to enhance their ability to support 2STNBGD children/youth.

## **Early Learning, Education and Skills Training**

### **TRIPARTITE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE FOR FIRST NATIONS**

In September 2024, Canada, B.C. and the First Nations Leadership Council—comprising the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, the First Nations Summit, and the B.C. Assembly of First Nations—signed a Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Early Learning and Child Care for First Nations in British Columbia. This MOU is the first of its kind in Canada for early learning and child care and marks a significant step forward in B.C.'s path to reconciliation. The agreement advances First Nations' jurisdiction in early learning and child care and supports the self-determination of First Nations in British Columbia, aligning with Declaration Act Action Item 4.19.

## **EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE ACT AND INDIGENOUS LAW**

The Province reaffirmed its commitment to making child care more affordable, inclusive, and culturally safe through the Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulations, which came into force on September 1, 2024. As part of this, the Province enabled enhanced Affordable Child Care Benefit support for child care arranged or recommended by an Indigenous authority under Indigenous law. This change ensures families receive the same financial support for child care, whether arranged through the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies, or under Indigenous law. It also supports Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services, reflecting the government's commitment to reconciliation.

## **SCHOOL ACT AMENDMENTS – INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COUNCILS (IECS)**

The Ministry of Education and Child Care is committed to implementing the 13 education and child care specific actions in the Declaration Act Action Plan. Action 4.03 involves co-developing an Indigenous Education Council (IEC) policy with the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), including a provincial IEC Terms of Reference template. Bill 40 was passed on November 7, 2023, requiring all school districts to have an IEC.

The Ministry and FNESC co-developed legislative amendments to the *School Act*, a ministerial order, an IEC Policy, and a template Terms of Reference to support effective implementation of IECs across the 60 school districts. The Ministry consulted directly with B.C. First Nations and Modern Treaty Nations on the legislation and policy. The Ministry also engaged with Métis Nation BC (MNBC) on the legislation and subsequent policy relating to IECs.

## **FIRST NATIONS JURISDICTION OVER EDUCATION**

As of July 1, 2023, three additional First Nations (Canim Lake Band, Ditidaht First Nation, and Squamish Nation) became Participating First Nations, for a total of seven First Nations in B.C. exercising law-making authority over their K-12 education systems. The First Nations Education Authority assists Participating First Nations in developing the capacity

to provide education on First Nations lands.

First Nations in B.C. have been working to advance jurisdiction over education for more than 20 years, including teacher certification and regulation. Supporting First Nations control over First Nations education, including greater control over teacher certification and regulation, is likely to lead to improved outcomes for students. As of July 1, 2023, a Coordination Agreement has been in effect between the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the First Nations Education Authority (FNEA). The Coordination Agreement outlines how the Ministry of Education and Child Care will support the FNEA with respect to Teacher Certification and Regulation processes, and how B.C. will assist in certification investigations for FNEA Teaching Certificate, which will be administered by the FNEA.

## **INDIGENOUS-SPECIFIC RACISM REVIEW**

The Ministry for Education and Child Care has started internal discussions regarding Declaration Act Action Plan, Action 3.03 to “Conduct an external review of Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination in the provincial public education system, and create a strategy, including resources and supports, to address findings.” In August 2023, the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) requested that work on this action begin on a priority basis. Initial discussions have focused on expanding the scope to include both K-12 and post-secondary in the public education sector review. The Ministry is in the initial stage of engaging with Indigenous partners to discuss the necessary steps to move work on this action forward.

### **Gathering Our Voices Grant**

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction provided a \$10.35 million grant to enable approximately 500 more Indigenous youth from First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban and off-reserve communities to attend Gathering Our Voices annually for the next five years. Gathering Our Voices is an annual event that brings together Indigenous youth delegates ages 14 to 24 to participate in ceremonies, workshops and engaging educational experiences. The funding will allow Gathering Our Voices to focus on ensuring the attendance of youth in care who have fewer opportunities to attend the event. It will also support the expansion of education and training workshops, and the exhibitors' hall to include more employment and academic training opportunities for attendees.

### **INDIGENOUS SKILLS TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

Through the Indigenous Skills Training and Education program, the Ministry of Post Secondary Education and Future Skills supports community-led skills training and education programs for Indigenous people in B.C. by providing funding to First Nations, First Nations partners, Métis Nation B.C. (MNBC), and the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC). Efforts focus on employment opportunities, further education, community revitalization, and improved socioeconomic well-being for Indigenous people and communities. The Indigenous Skills Training and Education program also funds initiatives that promote healing such as cultural programming (including language revitalization), as well as providing supports like counselling, nutrition, childcare, transportation, and living allowances that are essential for participation, particularly for women. In addition, the program can support drivers' education which promotes independence and safety for Indigenous women and girls.

### **FUNDING FOR INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION**

Through the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan, \$3 million in new funding is being provided to support First Nations Language Fluency degrees. This funding is to be delivered over three years, 2023-2026, and supports curriculum development and community-based delivery of credentials that ladder into degrees. In 2023, the first cohort of students graduated with the Bachelor of Nsyilxcn Language Fluency degree. Four other degrees have been launched with a fifth program under development. The Ministry of Post Secondary Education and Future Skills also supports the revitalization of the Michif language through the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan.

### **PROVINCIAL TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM EXPANSION FOR FORMER CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE**

The Provincial Tuition Waiver Program covers tuition and other education-related fees for students who were formerly children or youth in care. Students are supported to pursue studies at a B.C. public post-secondary institution, Native Education College or an eligible union trades training centre. In August 2023, the program expanded to include all former children or youth in care, regardless of age, and those who turn(ed) 19 regardless of time in care. The expansion also introduced a new annual \$3,500 Learning for Future Grant to assist tuition waiver recipients with additional educational costs like books, supplies or a computer.

### **POST-SECONDARY SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE ACTION PLAN**

The Ministry of Post Secondary Education and Future Skills is committed to developing a Post-Secondary Sexualized Violence Action Plan (the Action Plan) to prevent and respond to sexualized violence at post-secondary institutions with support from the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity, and in partnership with post-secondary institutions, student leadership, and Indigenous partners across B.C. The Action Plan will outline how the post-secondary sector will enhance efforts to prevent and respond to sexualized violence at post-secondary institutions, and is also a key deliverable under *Safe and Supported: B.C.'s Gender-Based Violence Action Plan*.

# Reflections and Next Steps

2025 marks the sixth anniversary of the release of the ***Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls***. The Province remains focused on addressing the systemic causes of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people through reconciliatory work with Indigenous people to identify and implement meaningful and lasting solutions. There is resiliency and innovation in community, and we recognize solutions must be led by Indigenous people and in particular, the leadership and expertise of Elders, Indigenous women and girls, must be acknowledged and supported.

Over the past four years, our government has reported on progress toward honouring our Path Forward priorities as well as the efforts set out in both the ***Final Report of the National Inquiry*** and the ***Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act***. As in past years, this update provides examples of some of the recent initiatives we have undertaken to advance work on the commitments to create a safer province and end violence against Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit and gender diverse people.

While we can feel some satisfaction with all that we have accomplished together in the past few years, advancing work and supporting the safety of Indigenous people and communities, we recognize there is much more we need to do and must do to achieve true reconciliation.

Given this Government has a new mandate and in recognition that all of the early priorities are well actioned or complete, there is a need to refresh the activities that will be reported on in the future.

The Province is committed to the safety of Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit and gender diverse people and we will continue to collaborate with, and support and seek guidance from, Indigenous people to ensure this priority is considered and centred in policies and program development.

We look forward to making our way forward working together to achieve our shared goal of a British Columbia where all Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people can live free from fear, violence and exploitation.

# Appendix: B.C.'s Path Forward Priorities and Early Strategies: Key Commitments

BC's Path Forward Priorities and Early Strategies for BC: Key Commitments		Ministry Mandate Letter	Relevant Call(s) for Justice	Status
1. SAFE SPACES AND SAFETY PLANS				
1.1	Invest in community-based mental health and social services so there are more trained frontline workers to help people in crisis, and free up police to focus on more serious crimes	Ministry of Health/Mental Health and Addictions (with Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General support - Policing and Public Safety Modernization Project)	1.5, 3.4; 3.5, 4.1; 4.2	In progress
1.2	Support communities in addressing street disorder and public safety concerns by expanding mental health intervention team	Ministry of Health/Mental Health and Addictions	1.5, 3.4; 3.5, 4.2	In progress
1.3	Identify minimum standards for sexual assault response	Ministry of Finance - Gender Equity Office & Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General-Community Safety & Victim Services Branch (GBV Action Plan)	1.5; 1.8; 4.3; 5.3; 16.38	Complete
1.4	Increase training related to sexual assault for police agencies, Crown Counsel and justices	Ministry of Finance - Gender Equity Office & Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General-Community Safety & Victim Services Branch (GBV Action Plan)	1.5; 1.8; 4.3; 5.3; 16.38	In progress
1.5	Based on recommendations of the Special Committee on Reforming the <i>Police Act</i> , identify recommendations to address systemic racism, create dedicated hate crime units within local police forces, and review training and procedures related to 'wellness checks.'	Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General-Police Services Branch (with Ministry of Attorney General - PS for Anti-Racism Initiatives' support)	1.5,3.5; 5.7; 9.2; 9.3; 9.4; 9.5; 9.6; 9.7; 9.8; 18.13	In progress
1.6	Implement a homelessness strategy	Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs	4.1, 4.6, 4.7, 12.4, 12.11, 16.1, 16.18, 16.19, 18.25	In progress

BC's Path Forward Priorities and Early Strategies for BC: Key Commitments		Ministry Mandate Letter	Relevant Call(s) for Justice	Status
2. HEALING SUPPORTS				
2.1	Advance the First Nations Justice Strategy and improve access to culturally appropriate justice	Ministry of Attorney General (with Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)	1.5, 5.11; 5.12; 5.15; 5.16; 5.21	In progress
2.2	Continue to establish Indigenous Justice Centres across the province	Ministry of Attorney General (with Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)	1.5, 4.2; 5.11	In progress
2.3	Provide an increased level of support – including more access to nurses and psychiatrists – for B.C.'s most vulnerable who need more intensive care than supportive housing provides by developing Complex Care housing	Ministry of Health/Mental Health and Addictions (with Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs support)	3.2; 4.1; 18.25	In progress
2.4	Further implement A Pathway to Hope, BC's roadmap for making mental health and addictions care better for people, by expanding access to counselling, using new e-health and other technologies to bring care to more people in all regions of BC	Ministry of Health/Mental Health and Addictions	3.2; 3.4; 18.28	In progress
2.5	Accelerate B.C.'s response to the opioid crisis across the full continuum of care: prevention, harm reduction, safe prescription medications, treatment, and recovery	Ministry of Health/Mental Health and Addictions	3.2; 3.4	In progress
2.6	Expand the availability of treatment beds for people by building new treatment, recovery, detox and after-care facilities across the province with some beds specifically for British Columbians under age 24	Ministry of Health/Mental Health and Addictions	3.2; 3.4	In progress
2.7	Expand support for Aboriginal Friendship Centres that serve the needs of local Indigenous communities	Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation	4.2	Complete

BC's Path Forward Priorities and Early Strategies for BC: Key Commitments		Ministry Mandate Letter	Relevant Call(s) for Justice	Status
2.8	Reflect Indigenous peoples' history and cultures in provincial parks and wilderness areas	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (with Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation support)	2.3; 2.4; 2.5	Policy review complete
2.9	Extend support for cultural preservation and revitalization by funding key projects designed to preserve and respect Indigenous cultures, including the retention and revitalization of First Nations languages	Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation	2.1; 2.3	In progress
2.10	Continue to support families involved with the child welfare system by focusing on family preservation and keeping children and youth connected to their communities and culture	Ministry of Children and Family Development	4.1; 12.6; 12.7	In progress
3. STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR PARTNERS				
3.1	Deliver the action plan required under the <i>Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' Act</i> to build strong relationships based on recognition and implementation of the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples protected in UNDRIP and Canada's constitution	Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (with Attorney General support)	1.2	Complete
3.2	Draw from recommendations from 'In Plain Sight' to address Indigenous-specific racism in health care in B.C.	Ministry of Health (with Attorney General - PS for Anti-Racism Initiatives' support)	18.26	In progress
3.3	Expand the 'situation table' model that connects front-line workers from different health, safety, and social service sectors to identify and help vulnerable people	Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (with Ministry of Health support)	1.6; 4.2; 7.3	In progress

BC's Path Forward Priorities and Early Strategies for BC: Key Commitments		Ministry Mandate Letter	Relevant Call(s) for Justice	Status
3.4	Continue to work with Indigenous partners and the federal government to reform the child welfare system, including implementing the new federal Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, and continuing to reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in care	Ministry of Children and Family Development	12.1; 12.2; 12.4; 17.16	In progress
4. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS				
4.1	Establish core funding for sexual assault centres	Ministry of Finance - Gender Equity Office & Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General-Community Safety & Victim Services Branch (GBV Action Plan)	1.8, 3.3, 4.2	Complete
4.2	Improve transit options for people in rural communities by expanding service for the BC Bus North program	Ministry of Transportation and Transit	4.1; 4.8; 17.9	In progress
4.3	Conduct a full review of anti-racism laws in other jurisdictions and launch a stakeholder consultation to inform the introduction of a new <i>Anti-Racism Act</i> that better serves everyone in B.C.	Ministry of Attorney General (PS for Anti-Racism Initiatives)	1.2, 5.24, 16.16, 16.31, 16.44, 17.2, 18.3, 18.4	In progress
4.4	Work with B.C.'s new Human Rights Commissioner and other stakeholders to introduce legislation that will help reduce systemic discrimination and pave the way for race-based data collection essential to modernizing sectors like policing, health care and education	Ministry of Attorney General (PS for Anti-Racism Initiatives)	1.2	Complete
4.5	Expand the use of cross-government data to increase evidence-based decision making and better inform public policy	Ministry of Citizens' Services	5.24	In progress

BC's Path Forward Priorities and Early Strategies for BC: Key Commitments		Ministry Mandate Letter	Relevant Call(s) for Justice	Status
4.6	Assist more people from underrepresented groups get their first job in the tech sector, while simultaneously helping B.C.-based tech companies hire and grow, by increasing the number of Innovator Skills Initiative Grants and prioritizing placements for women, Indigenous people, people of colour and others currently underrepresented in B.C.'s tech sector	Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation (with PS for Technology and Innovation's support)	4.4	In progress
4.7	Create a plan for a dedicated Secretariat by the end of 2021 to coordinate government's reconciliation efforts and to ensure new legislation and policies are consistent with the <i>Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</i>	Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation	1.2	Complete
4.8	Build on our expanded supports for youth in care, with particular attention to supporting the transition to independence and ensuring supports reach all youth	Ministry of Children and Family Development	12.11	In progress



Ministry of  
Public Safety and  
Solicitor General