

---

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2022JERI0067-001524  
Oct. 11, 2022

British Columbia Assembly of First Nations  
Office of the Premier  
Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation

### **New centre supports First Nations push for economic prosperity**

VANCOUVER – The British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) is launching a new Centre of Excellence in First Nations Economic Development to help advance the role of First Nations in B.C.'s inclusive economy and to work toward true and lasting reconciliation.

“B.C. is stronger when local economies are thriving and First Nations have the tools to be full participants in the social, cultural and economic landscape of the province,” said Premier John Horgan. “This new centre will support Indigenous excellence and innovation, deliver an economic boost to First Nations communities and help grow a stronger economy that works for everyone.”

As part of the StrongerBC Economic Plan, the B.C. government is providing more than \$1.2 million to the BCAFN this year to launch the centre. It will increase the capacity of First Nations in B.C. to engage in economic priorities and initiatives highlighted in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan, distribute best practices and policy papers about economic development to First Nations, and provide consulting services on opportunities such as joint ventures and impact benefit agreements.

“First Nations in B.C. have been advocating for economic reconciliation for decades, and the centre of excellence demonstrates progress toward this goal,” said Regional Chief Terry Teegee, British Columbia Assembly of First Nations. “I am pleased that the provincial government has chosen to support this project, and I am proud of the work done by First Nations and the BCAFN to bring this project to fruition. The centre of excellence will multiply the investments First Nations are making to close the socio-economic gap and bring us the prosperity we rightly deserve.”

The centre of excellence will support First Nations to determine and implement their economic development goals, priorities and strategies. Provincial funding support delivers a key action within the StrongerBC Economic Plan to establish a First Nations-led economic development entity and builds on existing supports to facilitate economic growth throughout B.C.

“Reconciliation is a shared responsibility, and part of that work is supporting First Nations-led solutions like the BCAFN Centre of Excellence in First Nations Economic Development,” said Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation. “We are proud to support the BCAFN and look forward to collectively pursuing inclusive, sustainable and innovative growth for our shared economy.”

The First Nations-led centre will employ approximately six people this year, with plans to grow in the coming years.

“Relationships that the Province and First Nations are building together, like this one between B.C. and the BC Assembly of First Nations, provide a concrete pathway for transformational change in this province that benefits everyone,” said Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. “The new Centre of Excellence in First Nations Economic Development is an important tool for First Nations in B.C. to maintain and strengthen their distinct economic institutions and self-determined economic prosperity.”

Working toward lasting and meaningful reconciliation, now and in the future, with Indigenous Peoples is fundamental to British Columbia and central to the StrongerBC Economic Plan. The plan is moving B.C. forward by tackling the challenges of today while growing an economy that works for everyone.

The long-term plan builds on B.C.’s strong economic recovery and works to address two long-standing challenges – tackling climate change and creating a low-carbon economy that works for everyone – by closing the skills gap, building resilient communities and helping businesses and people transition to clean-energy solutions.

#### **Quick Facts:**

- There are six missions in the StrongerBC Economic Plan, including advancing true, lasting and meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.
- The unanimous passage of the Declaration Act by all parties in the legislature enshrined into law the fundamental rights of Indigenous Peoples in B.C.
- Care has been taken in designing the StrongerBC Economic Plan to ensure consistency between it and the Declaration Act Action Plan.

#### **Learn More:**

To learn more about the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations, visit:

<https://www.bcafn.ca/>

To learn more about the StrongerBC Economic Plan, visit: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/plan>

To learn more about other First Nation economic develop supports from Government, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/indigenous-people/economic-development>

To learn more about the Declaration Act Action Plan, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/indigenous-people/new-relationship/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples/implementation>

**Contacts:**

Annette Schroeter  
Communications Officer  
British Columbia Assembly of First Nations  
annette.schroeter@bcfn.ca  
778 281-1655

Lindsay Byers  
Press Secretary  
Office of the Premier  
Lindsay.Byers@gov.bc.ca

Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and  
Innovation  
Media Relations  
250 893-3705

---

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [news.gov.bc.ca/connect](https://news.gov.bc.ca/connect)