



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

June 2024 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 and continue to be harmful to Indigenous Peoples.

*An independent and national **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**.*

*A Hope for Wellness Help Line for Indigenous Peoples is available at **1-855-242-3310** or through the online chat via the help line website at 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 ɪəkʷəŋən (Songhees & Esquimalt) and W̱SÁNEĆ (Tsartlip, Pauquachin, Tseycum, Malahat, and Tsawout) Peoples, whose deep connections with this land continue to this day.

Much of the work outlined in this report predates the Provincial application of a 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

As B.C.'s Solicitor General and Minister of Public Safety, I am honoured to present this third update on the Province's response to [*Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*](#) released on June 3, 2019.

At that time, the Province committed to the development of a Path Forward to end violence and supported seventeen Indigenous-led community dialogue sessions to inform this work and identify priorities. Guided by the invaluable testimonies of family members, survivors, community leaders and Indigenous partners across British Columbia, [*A Path Forward: Early Priorities and Strategies for B.C.*](#) was released three years ago, outlining early actions and commitments to prevent, protect and respond to violence against Indigenous Peoples, and particularly Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

I write to you today with a mix of gratitude for the strides we have made, and a solemn acknowledgement of the arduous journey that lies ahead in addressing the pressing issue of keeping Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples safe in our province. Over the past three years, we have witnessed progress that reflects our shared dedication to creating a safer future for all. Collaboration with Indigenous leaders and communities has been instrumental in shaping our approach.

The voices of those directly affected by the tragedy of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, and gender diverse people have informed our policies and legislation, ensuring that they are rooted in empathy and understanding. These voices have guided us along the path to where we are today.

As part of the Province's commitment to reconciliation and self-determination for Indigenous people, the Path Forward Community Fund was established in

2022 with a foundational investment of \$5.34 million to support Indigenous-led safety planning and capacity building. Another \$5.5 million was allocated on June 3, 2023. To date, the Community Fund, administered by the B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, has received investment totalling \$10.84 million and awarded grants to 51 Indigenous-led, community-based projects.

Funding through the Path Forward Community Fund is available to First Nations, Metis, Inuit people and communities, non-profits, service providers and First Nation governments across the Province to implement a wide range of initiatives. From the creation of an emergency response team trained in culturally safe approaches, self defense courses and mental health first aid, to cultural teachings and supports such as parent-child programs with Elders and Women's Circles that provide opportunities for sharing perspectives on intimate partner violence.

While we take pride in our steps forward, we remain acutely aware that our work is far from complete. Meaningful reconciliation demands sustained effort, accountability, unyielding dedication, and a collective commitment to justice. Progress is not always linear – it requires us to look at the world all around us, not just straight ahead. We recognize the need for ongoing dialogue, evaluation, and adaptation of our strategies to ensure they remain responsive to the evolving needs of those affected.

As we move forward, let us renew our commitment to action, safety, and healing for everyone.



Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan

On March 30, 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 achieves a legislative commitment in the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) (Declaration Act) and is an early 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.

The [2022-23 Annual Report on the Action Plan](#) highlights efforts across government to build a better future and some key accomplishments, such as the establishment of a Declaration Act Secretariat to support the province's obligations to ensure laws, policies and practices are consistent with the Act. The new digital approach to the 2022-23 Annual Report reflects the partnership with Indigenous leaders, experts and artists and is responsive to feedback from Indigenous people for reporting that is more accessible, accountable, transparent, co-operative and impactful.

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 2024.

*In June 2023, the Province took the entire Declaration Act Annual Report online **with a redesigned Declaration Act website**, which highlights the work to implement the Action Plan, as well as a comprehensive reporting approach on progress and indicators and a new dashboard with meaningful iconography.*

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 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 on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls** was foundational to the context of developing the Path

Forward, along with research and review of historic reports with more than 3,000 recommendations, as well as 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 communities 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 priorities identified through the engagements 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.

Update on the Path Forward Community Fund

The Province created a [Path Forward Community Fund](#) in 2022 with investment to date of \$10.84 million that is open to any of the following Indigenous agencies and communities in BC: Indigenous organizations, First Nations, Bands, and/or Tribal Councils, Treaty First Nations Governments; Metis Chartered Communities; Metis organizations or services providers; and Urban / off reserve Indigenous organizations/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, Two-Spirit and gender diverse people.

The B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) developed and administers the fund, including creating the application process and performing grant distribution. A cornerstone of their work is a distinctions-based approach that honours and respects the expertise, agency, and leadership of Indigenous Peoples 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, 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, Elders and youth, First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and non-status First Nations people throughout B.C.

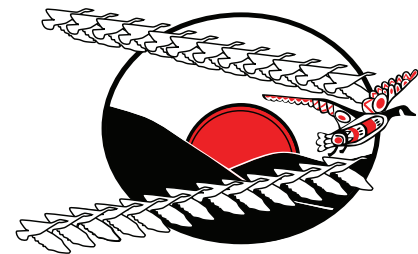


Figure 1: Logo of the B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

The Path Forward funds activities such as

- Building capacity,
- Hosting engagement and facilitation,
- Supporting the development of crisis response plans,
- Creating and purchasing 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.

Path Forward Community Fund – Round 1 Funded Projects (projects concluded March 31, 2024)

Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness • AWTXW Foundation • Carrier Sekani Family Services • Dze • K'ant Friendship Centre • Hulitan Family and Community Services • Lake Babine Nation • Land Back Healing Society • Lii Michif Family Support Services • Malahat Nation • Nawican Friendship Centre • North Cariboo Métis Association • Okanagan Nation Alliance • Squamish Nation • Stó:lō Services Agency • Tears to Hope Foundation • Tl'azt'en Nation • Tillicum Lelum Friendship Centre • Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society • Waceyá Métis Society • Wachiay Friendship Centre

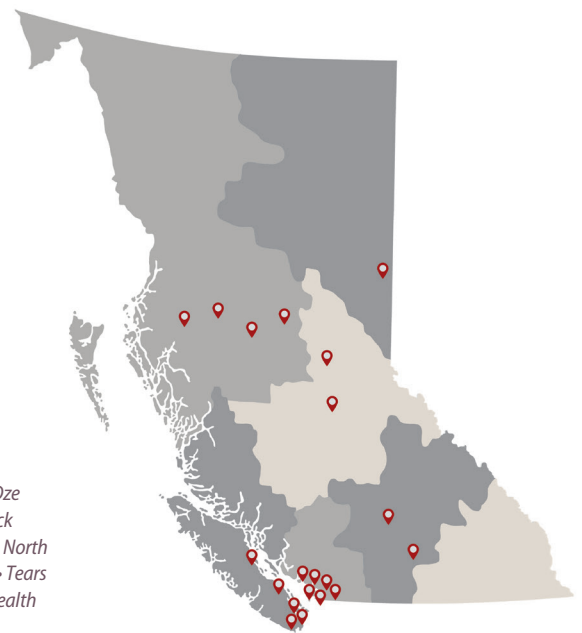


Figure 2: Location of Round 1 Funded Projects

To date, investment totalling \$10.84 million in the Fund has supported 51 Indigenous-specific, anti-violence programs.

Featured Success Stories

From Recipients of the Path Forward Community Fund – Round One

Skwxú7mesh Úxwumixw - Squamish Nation

As part of its Integrated Public Safety Action Plan, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) created a Public Safety Task Force (PSTF) to make recommendations on how to improve public safety in Squamish communities. Extensive community consultation led to greater understanding about the relationship between community safety and Squamish values, principles, and cultural practices. Combining this feedback with research from across North America resulted in identifying prevention and community healing as key areas of focus.

The Public Safety Task Force developed a framework and recommendations for community planning using a Xíxtsem (cedar bentwood box) model. The framework includes four Xíxtsem: *Nexwniw* (Behaviour on land and in waters): looking to the past for ways of

being and imagining how they might be expressed in the present and the future; *Téywilhntm na7 ta emut* (Be protected at home): within a generation, housing for every Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) person, as well as adequate resources to support their health and wellness; *Téywilhntm na7 ta Úxwumixw* (Be protected in the community/villages): fostering neighbourly relationships to strengthen a sense of belonging and increase capacity to prevent and respond to crisis; and *Téywilhntm na7 ta temíxw* (Be protected on the land): honouring the land and support people to connect to each other, the land, and the waters in a safe and healthy way.

Along with current work on community safety, the themes gathered from community engagement led to the development of 11 Big Ideas. The 11 Big Ideas will be supported by the Public Safety Department (*Ta na wa Téywilhayhem*, the Ones Protecting the Descendants). The Public Safety Task Force believes the 11 Big Ideas provide the best opportunities to advance the objectives outlined in the 4 Xíxtsem community safety framework.

The 11 Big Ideas include:

1. Establish a Community Justice System
2. Increase capacity to enforce Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw laws, bylaws, policies and values
3. Address disparities and ensure equitable protection
4. Take immediate action to address toxic drug crisis
5. Require an anti-racism and cultural safety course
6. Develop a transportation plan that provides safe transportation
7. Design for community safety
8. Address family violence and Elder abuse
9. Create a trauma-informed Community Safety Team Program
10. Build housing as fast as possible
11. Outreach to those most at risk



The 4 Xíxtsem framework and 11 Big Ideas were presented to Council (Nexwsxwníwntm ta Úxwumíxw) in August 2023 and were approved unanimously. The Public Safety Department also incorporated the framework and recommendations to its five-year strategic plan, which will impact 4,100 Squamish Nation members living on and off reserve.

Tears to Hope Society

Formed in Terrace, B.C. in 2019, the Tears to Hope Society is an organization that provides education and awareness about Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls on the Highway of Tears. It also supports the families of MMIWG and facilitates activities that foster health, wellness and healing. In addition to these activities, the Tears to Hope Society raises awareness around community safety planning by addressing Indigenous-specific causes of gender-based violence.

The Path Forward Community Fund provided support for a two-day conference that hosted 240 participants as well as healing activities and self-defence workshops. These activities also provided opportunities for empathy and understanding. Many participants reported the way bringing their stories and experiences to light allowed for healing.

Lii Michif Otipemisiwak Family and Community Services

Lii Michif Otipemisiwak Family and Community Services is the second delegated Métis child and family services agency in British Columbia and works to develop and deliver a culturally safe, Métis specific practice model to transform and improve outcomes for Métis children and families involved in the child welfare system.

The Path Forward Community Fund allowed Lii Michif to create Survivor Care Kits with traditional medicines and sacred feminine cards illustrated by Michif artist Leah Dorian, and actor and advocate Andrea Menard. Ms. Menard also led a workshop that included traditional teachings and techniques for survivors and their families. Staff from Lii Michif shared

information about this project at the Our Children, Our Way Conference, which also gave service providers an opportunity to speak about culturally safe responses for those working with survivors of gender-based violence.



Wachiay Friendship Centre

Located on Vancouver Island, in Courtenay, B.C. Wachiay Friendship Centre's most successful Path Forward Community Fund activities centered on culture. The "Hummingbirds," a parent-child program, collaborated with an Elder to make ribbon skirts for the female children in the group. Ribbon skirts symbolize resilience, survival and cultural identity and made evocative gifts for families, as many of the parents in the "Hummingbirds" program are survivors of intimate partner violence. Jingle Dress Dancers performed in a small ceremony where families were gifted the skirts.



Women of all ages and backgrounds gathered for a Women's Circle and Paint Night led by a community Elder and a local artist. The Circle provided an opportunity for participants to share their experiences of intimate partner violence in a safe and supportive space. This also allowed program facilitators to identify participants who would benefit from counselling.

These participants were given the opportunity to attend five counselling sessions free of charge.

Due to the tremendous success of these events, plans are currently underway for three additional Women's Circles.

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

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 Peoples and the multi-layered 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. Justice & Public Safety
5. Child Welfare & Education
6. Reconciliation & Indigenous Rights
7. Transportation & Connectivity

Progress on three key broad cross-government actions include:

Anti-Racism Data Act

In June 2022, the provincial government introduced the Anti-Racism Data Act to combat systemic racism. The legislation aims to utilize 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. In June 2023, the Province introduced the “Anti- Racism Data Act Research Priorities 2023-2025” which were developed in partnership with First Nations and Métis Peoples using a distinctions-based approach, as well as with the provincial Anti-Racism Data Committee. The B.C. Demographic Survey was fielded from June to October 2023 to collect information to help identify systemic racism and improve public services for everyone in B.C. Research has begun in priority areas of education, health and racial diversity in the B.C. Public Service.



Anti-Racism Legislation

In April 2024, the Ministry of Attorney General, on behalf of the provincial government, introduced the *Anti-Racism Act*. The *Anti-Racism Act* establishes a whole of Government approach to dismantling systemic racism and advancing racial equity, with a specific focus on addressing Indigenous-specific racism. Government has made identifying and dismantling systemic racism in public sector policies, programs, and services a priority. The *Anti-Racism Act* builds upon the *Anti-Racism Data Act*, enacted in 2022, by establishing a Government-wide Anti-Racism Action Plan informed by Indigenous Peoples and racialized communities. The development of this Act was informed by engagements that occurred in 2022 with the *Anti-Racism Data Act* as well as continued extensive consultations with Indigenous and racialized communities in 2023 and early in 2024 with over 7,000 people involved.

Gender-Based Violence Action Plan

The development of [*Safe and Supported: B.C.'s Gender-Based Violence Action Plan*](#) was a mandate commitment of the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity and the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General. *Safe and Supported* was informed by engagements in 2022 with community partners, service providers and advocates, and further shaped through focused engagement in 2023 with First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and urban and rural or remote Indigenous participants and organizations. *Safe and Supported*, released on December 10, 2023, sets out important steps the Province is taking to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

“Lifting Up Indigenous-led Approaches,” a key priority under the Action Plan, includes actions that respond directly to advice and recommendations from participants in the 2023 engagements and from First Nations leadership and Indigenous organizations. Through this priority, the Province firmly commits to supporting Indigenous self-determination by placing resources in the hands of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban and rural or remote Indigenous communities to determine how best to move forward on preventing

and addressing gender-based violence in their communities and in ways that build on Indigenous strengths and knowledge.



Gender-Based Violence and the Natural Resource Sector

The Environmental Assessment Office is contributing to the Provincial 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 mandating all future natural resource and industrial projects with workforce accommodations to develop a gender and cultural safety plan to enhance the security and well-being of women, girls and 2SLGTBQQIA+ individuals residing or working in nearby communities.

COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORTS

The Province delivers services and programs to enhance community safety, and also partners with or provides funding opportunities to Indigenous organizations for initiatives that support the safety, health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples, families, and communities. Several of the funding opportunities highlighted below reflect the linkages between employment and economic security, connection to culture and community, and ultimately the independence and safety of Indigenous women and girls.

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 (TogetherBC). The First Nations Public Service Secretariat administers the fund on behalf of the First Nations Summit. There have been three rounds of funding, each with two funding streams. In the community projects stream, funding has supported local projects including food security, training, building skills and employment opportunities, 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, 70 projects have been funded, with over \$2.3 million in total project support. The application intake for Phase 3 (\$15 million grant) closed on December 31, 2023, and applications are currently under review.

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. Four types of organizations are to be supported by this new funding: B.C.'s community foundations; large, multi-service "lighthouse organizations" with provincial or regional reach; small, local non-profits affected by the pandemic; and organizations run by and supporting people in the Indigenous, Black and people of colour communities.

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 2022/23 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.

Civil Forfeiture Crime Prevention Grant Program

The Civil Forfeiture Grant Program supports projects that prevent crime, enhance safety, address gender-based violence, and support restorative justice and healing in Indigenous communities. The Civil Forfeiture Office was established to remove the tools and proceeds of unlawful activity. After administrative expenses are covered, remaining funds are distributed back to communities to prevent and respond to crime and violence. More information about the Civil Forfeiture Grant Program and the application process can be found here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/crime-prevention/community-crime-prevention/grants> or by contacting: CFOgrants@gov.bc.ca

Civil Forfeiture Grants Program: Indigenous Healing Stream – The program funds community-led projects that promote healing from the impact of intergenerational trauma, crime or victimization. In March 2023, 36 Indigenous healing projects totalling over \$1.3 million were funded, including projects to support the safety and healing of Indigenous women and girls.

Examples include:

We are Sacred – Rise Up Indigenous Wellness Society

This project is a decolonized, trauma informed program designed to reduce the incidence of sexual victimization of Indigenous girls and women by incorporating culture, social emotional learning principles and traditional knowledge into a nine-week lesson series.

'Mom and Auntie' Circles – Protecting Our Indigenous Sisters Society

This project will provide a trauma-informed, culturally safe place for Indigenous women in the Vancouver area to gather and support personal safety with bi-weekly circles and workshops.

Matriarch Picnic and Hope & Healing Sister Circles - reGEN Impact Media Inc.

This project includes in person and virtual components to bring women of the Splitsin Nation, surrounding Nation guests, and non-Indigenous allies to provide space to find their voice, provide healing opportunities through giving and receiving of spoken word, drumming, creativity, and storytelling, witnessing and amplifying hopeful resilience while remembering our MMIWG Sisters who are no longer with us in physical form.

Sexual Violence Survivor Support Program – Carrier Sekani Family Services

This project offers traditional healing to survivors who reside in 11 Member Nations. This program serves adults and is not exclusive of any gender identity. The proposed project looks to fund 300 contact hours over one year for Traditional Healers to work with survivors of sexual assault.

Indigenous Health and Safety – WISH Drop-In Centre Society

This program is a low-barrier program for Indigenous women and gender-diverse street-based sex workers.

Holistic Indigenous Practices on Campus – Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO).

This project directly supports Indigenous survivors and students at UBCO. The program will provide trauma informed, decolonizing, cultural programming for Indigenous folks of all gender identities, prioritizing Two-Spirit, Trans, and other marginalized genders at UBCO.

Seeking Safety & Healing – Phoenix Transition Society

This project targets Harmony House residents and outreach clients from along the Highway of Tears and other regions of Northern B.C. All are survivors of intergenerational trauma and at risk of abduction, murder, or incarceration and government apprehension of their children.

Moose Hide Campaign

Since 2011, the Moose Hide Campaign has engaged men and boys to act in ending violence against women and children 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 and children 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.



Figure 3: Logo for the Moose Hide Campaign

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Health is a holistic state of well-being that includes physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional elements that can be protective in nature. However, social inequalities are often reflected in the health and well

being of marginalized groups. More than **six in ten (or 63%) Indigenous women have experienced physical or sexual assault in their lifetime.¹ Only 35% of Indigenous women and girls in rural areas report having regular access to a healthcare provider.²** Despite representing just 3.4% of the total population in Canada, **First Nations people account for 17.7% of overdose deaths. First Nations women are 11.9% more likely to have a fatal overdose** than non-First Nations women, and First Nations men are 6.0 times more likely to have a fatal overdose than non-First Nations men.³ These realities reflect the need for stronger health and wellness supports for Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, and gender diverse people and the initiatives listed below are responsive to this need. Working towards anti-racist, culturally safe, and empowering healthcare options that address the harmful legacies of colonialism is part of the path toward a British Columbia that keeps Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, and gender diverse people healthy and safe.

Addressing Racism in Health Care

In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-Specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care

From May 2021 to June 2023, the Ministry of Health In Plain Sight Task Team (which includes representation from the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), Métis Nation B.C., provincial health authorities, and other ministries and health system partners) collaborated on advancing implementation of the 24 recommendations of the [In Plain Sight](#) Report to eliminate racism and discrimination against Indigenous people and address systemic and structural barriers to culturally safe health care in B.C., including the disproportionate impacts on Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. The Task Team released a [full public report on progress towards implementation of the 24 recommendations](#) in October 2023.

1 [Statistics Canada, 2022.](#)

2 [Statistics Canada, 2022.](#)

3 [First Nations Health Authority: FIRST NATIONS AND THE TOXIC DRUG POISONING CRISIS IN BC](#)

The Task Team members' knowledge, experience, and wisdom have achieved considerable progress on the recommendations, and have laid the groundwork with the necessary partners, organizations, and teams to ensure that this collaborative work continues to move forward. Monitoring of progress towards full implementation of the In Plain Sight recommendations will now happen under Action 3.7 of the [Declaration Act Action Plan](#), which includes annual reporting to ensure accountability.

Recommendation 5: Improve the patient complaint processes to address individual and systemic Indigenous-specific racism.

Complaints processes throughout the health system are being modified and improved at the regional and provincial levels to create better pathways for responding to complaints from Indigenous patients. A collaborative Restorative Circle was created to advance the structural changes needed to improve B.C.'s patient care and quality processes, and Health Quality BC in partnership with the Task Team published a [report outlining core principles of a safe, accessible, and meaningful patients complaint process](#).

Recommendation 7: Métis Partnership/Working Table.

Métis Nation B.C. has signed Letters of Understanding with all health authorities. Métis Nation B.C., in partnership with the Ministries of Health, Mental Health and Addictions, and Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation have established a Health, Mental Health and Wellness, and Harm Reduction sub-table under the broader provincial Métis Relations Table.

Recommendation 8: B.C. adopt an accreditation standard for achieving Indigenous cultural safety.

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and the Health Standards Organization recently received funding from Health Canada to support changing the B.C. Cultural Safety and Humility Standard from a reference standard to an assessment standard (which may be used in organizational accreditation

processes). Implementation discussion and planning is continuing with health authorities, the Ministry of Health, and health system and education sector partners.

Recommendation 9: Systems-wide measurement framework/Indigenous data governance.

The Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), Providence Health, regional health authorities, FNHA, Métis Nation B.C., and the Ministry of Health are working collaboratively to develop this framework. 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 across the system, and develop a standardized systemic performance monitoring dashboard.

Recommendation 19: Centre for anti-racism, cultural safety and trauma-informed standards, policy, tools, and leading practices.

The National Collaborating Center for Indigenous Health, in association with B.C. health system partners including the Ministry of Health, is working to develop tools, strategies, training, and resources to enhance culturally safe service delivery and practices. The Vice-Presidents of Indigenous Health embedded in the health authorities, including PHSA and Providence Health Care, have dedicated teams focused on hard-wiring cultural safety, cultural humility and Indigenous-specific anti-racism within each of the health authorities.

Recommendation 20: Anti-racism, cultural humility, and trauma-informed training for health workers.

Many health system partners have mandated cultural safety and humility training for employees. Health Quality B.C. and the Ministry of Health hosted a provincial dialogue in Spring 2023 on cultural safety and humility training and education with the aim of developing a guide with standardized learning expectations and outcomes at a provincial level. This guide is currently in development.

First Nations Health Authority

The First Nations Health Authority 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 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.

Mental Health and Substance Use

Expand Access to Affordable Community Counselling

The Community Counselling Grants funded by the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions are 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 49 community-based non-profits including 12 First Nations, Métis, and urban Indigenous organizations to deliver counselling services. Since 2018/19 the province has provided a total of \$35 million to support community counselling through the Community Counselling Grants. Since the Community Counselling Grants began, funded organizations have supported 65,000 individuals and families with low-barrier, inclusive counselling services across urban and rural geographies.

Indigenous Treatment, Recovery and Aftercare Services Fund

As part of Budget 2023, the Province committed \$171 million towards a new investment fund for Indigenous-led treatment, recovery, and aftercare services. This investment will enhance cultural and land-based healing modalities emphasizing Indigenous-led treatment, recovery, and aftercare services. As the Province continues to work with partners on this new program, projects in areas of critical need in the province will continue to be funded, such as the recently announced support towards Lheidli T'enneh Northern Centre of Excellence for Children and Youth (Prince George/northern B.C.).

Peer Assisted Care Teams (PACT)

Peer Assisted Care Teams, or PACTs, are mobile teams that respond to mental health crisis calls. PACTs provide crisis support over the phone, by text, and dispatch mobile responders as needed. PACTs 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. In 2023, PACTs in New Westminster, Victoria, and the North Shore responded to 3,830 calls, with fewer than 1% of calls requiring police. In 2024, new PACTs will launch in the Comox Valley, Kamloops, and Prince George. Each of these new teams will be operated by or in partnership with an Indigenous organization.

HOUSING

According to the 2021 Canadian Census⁴, over **one in six Indigenous people (17.1%) lived in crowded housing** that was considered not suitable for the number of people who resided there. Furthermore, **Indigenous people were almost three times more likely to live in a dwelling in need of major repairs** (16.4%) in 2021 than the non-Indigenous population (5.7%).

4 Statistics Canada. 2022. [Housing conditions among First Nations people, Métis and Inuit in Canada from the 2021 Census.](#)

For the first time, the 2020 Homeless Count⁵ survey included a question specifically about race and found that **Indigenous people were disproportionately represented in the counts at 39%** of respondents, despite Indigenous people representing just 6% of B.C.'s total population. Indigenous people experiencing homelessness may live on or off reserve, in rural or urban areas, and include First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, as well as Indigenous people disconnected from their identity, culture, or community. Homelessness amongst Indigenous Peoples can be traced back to historical trauma, oppression, racism, and discrimination – all of which contribute to a lack of safety and protection for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

Preventing and Reducing Homelessness

Belonging in BC, the Province's collaborative plan to prevent and reduce homelessness, is grounded in prioritizing cultural safety, First Nations, Indigenous and community partnerships, and the inclusion of people with diverse identities and needs. The plan includes immediate actions backed by \$1.5 billion in Budget 2023 (and \$633 million in Budget 2022 over three years) to help thousands of people maintain and access housing and supports. Through this plan, government is working with First Nations, Indigenous people and organizations, people with lived experience of homelessness, local governments, service providers and other partners to create a province where everyone has a community and a place to call home.

Indigenous Housing Fund

In June 2018 the Province announced a new \$550 million investment over 10 years to build and operate 1,750 units of social housing for Indigenous people living both on and off reserve. This is the first provincial housing fund in Canada that includes on reserve housing in addition to off reserve housing; Indigenous Housing Fund housing may be operated by First Nations both on and off reserve, or by

Indigenous organizations off reserve who serve First Nations people living away from their reserve communities, as well as Métis and other Indigenous people living in B.C. The Indigenous Housing Fund received an additional \$1.3 billion, through Budget 2023, to double the number of Indigenous Housing Fund spaces both on and off reserve, bringing the total to 3,500. BC Housing recently issued a Request for Proposals which closed May 15, 2024.

Women's Transition House Funding

The B.C. 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. This includes transition housing, safe homes, second-state 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.

B.C. Indigenous Homelessness Strategy

*The Province supports the external-to-government, Indigenous-led **B.C. Indigenous Homelessness Strategy** that was developed by the B.C. Indigenous Homelessness Steering Committee which is comprised of 18 Indigenous-serving organizations through engagement with Indigenous Peoples across the Province. The Strategy makes 33 Recommendations to Government that align with the strategic pillars and goals of *Belonging in BC*, including establishing an Indigenous Advisory table. The Strategy can be accessed at <https://www.ahma-bc.org/bcindigenoushomelessness>.*

*The Indigenous Advisory Committee was formed in 2023 as a key action of *Belonging in BC* and provides input on implementation and development of future phases, as well*

5 BC Housing. 2021. [2020-2021 BC Homeless Counts](#).

as advises on additional matters relating to homelessness and impacts on Indigenous people and communities. The Indigenous Advisory Committee is comprised of 15 Indigenous organizations, Indigenous people with lived experience of homelessness, and Elders.

Development of Gender-Based Violence Training for Shelter and Housing Staff

Launching in 2024 in partnership with BC Housing, work is underway to update and develop shelter, supportive housing, and transition housing protocols to better meet the needs of survivors of gender-based violence. The Homelessness Services Association of BC (HSABC) is working in partnership with BC Housing, the BC Society of Transition Houses and sector partners to create training resources and protocols for housing and shelter staff to build capacity to identify gender-based violence, support survivors when they come forward, and have awareness about the experience of gender-based violence.

Cedar Blankets: Building Wraparound Supports & Reducing Barriers for Indigenous Women and Children to Transition Houses and Safe Homes

Cedar Blankets is a five-year project funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada aimed at reducing barriers for Indigenous women and their children accessing transition houses and safe homes. Informed by the lessons learned through BC Society of Transition Houses' Increasing Access for Aboriginal Women, Cedar Blankets will assist transition houses and safe homes to develop culturally safe spaces and practices. Through a women and children-centred framework, Cedar Blanket's wraparound service delivery model supports Indigenous women and children and promotes meaningful stays at the houses for the healing of Indigenous gender-based violence survivors.

Women and Homelessness Research Project

To support the development of homelessness supports and services for women, through the

Belonging in BC Provincial Homelessness Plan a \$150,000 grant was issued to the Social Planning and Research Council of BC for research on women's experiences of homelessness across B.C. While this project is inclusive of all women experiencing homelessness, care has been taken to ensure focus groups reflect the disproportionate representation of Indigenous women among those experiencing homelessness. Data collection is underway with a final report anticipated Spring/Summer 2024.

Complex Care Housing

Launched in 2022, Complex Care Housing provides low barrier housing alongside intensive 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 housing, 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. Indigenous organizations such as the Aboriginal Housing Management Association and First Nations such as the Ktunaxa Nation are key partners for the development, delivery, and evaluation of these projects.

Construction of an Indigenous-led and focused development in the Downtown Eastside underway

*The building, named **Ho'-kee-melh Kloshe Lum**, will bring nearly 170 mixed-use homes (143 rental, 25 supportive housing units) and 80 shelter beds to the Hastings Street area in Vancouver. All the homes and shelter spaces will be operated by the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre. Supported by a combined investment of more than \$97 million, the project is a partnership between the Province (through BC Housing), the Federal government, the City of Vancouver, the Aboriginal Housing Management Association and Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre.*

JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Colonization and systemic oppression have caused Indigenous Peoples to be over-represented within the criminal justice system as both victims and offenders. According to self-reported data from the 2019 General Social Survey on Canadian's Safety (Victimization)⁶, about **four in ten Indigenous people experienced sexual or physical violence by an adult before the age of 15**. Similar results from the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS)⁷ reveal that almost **six in ten Indigenous women have experienced physical or sexual assault in their lifetime**.

Indigenous women and girls are overrepresented as victims of gender-based homicide. Between 2011 and 2021, **21% of all gender-related homicides reported by police involved Indigenous women and girls**, despite their comprising only 5% of the female population in 2021.⁸ Last, according to the Homicide Survey⁹, between 2015 and 2020, **the average homicide rate involving Indigenous victims was six times higher** than the homicide rate involving non-Indigenous victims (8.64 versus 1.39 per 100,000 population).

This section highlights initiatives intended to improve public safety and community well-being and address the systemic challenges facing Indigenous Peoples, particularly women and girls.

Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women (MACIW)

Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, has appointed three new members to the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women (MACIW).

Audrey Lundquist, Jenny Morgan and Taylor Behn-Tsakoza are the newest additions to MACIW. They are joining Barb Ward-Burkitt, Coreen Child, Dr. Lorna Williams, Patricia

Barkaskas, Raven Lacerte, Kristy Joe and Lauren Petersen on Council. 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, launching an IGBA+ toolkit in 2023. MACIW's advice has also been critical in the development of Safe and Supported: B.C.'s Gender Based Violence Action Plan. Community-driving healing initiatives, such as MACIW's Giving Voice grant program, will be expanded as part of this new three-year action plan released in December 2023.

B.C. First Nations Justice Strategy

In partnership with the B.C. First Nations Justice Council, work is underway to advance initiatives expressed in the B.C. First Nations Justice Strategy. Achievements in 2023 include:

- B.C. First Nations Justice Council held their second annual Justice Forum in Vancouver in March 2023. Indigenous leaders, rightsholders, service organizations, and government partners gathered to hear updates on the progress of the B.C. First Nations Justice Strategy and to set priorities for the year ahead.
- The Province created the Indigenous Justice Secretariat in March 2023, fulfilling Strategy 9 of the B.C. First Nations Justice Strategy.

6 [Statistics Canada, 2022](#)

7 [Statistics Canada, 2022](#)

8 [Statistics Canada, 2023](#)

9 [Statistics Canada, 2022](#)

- B.C. First Nations Justice Council undertook significant community engagements in the fall of 2023 on items including Indigenous Justice Centres, Legal Aid Transition, the Federal Indigenous Justice Strategy, the Indigenous Women’s Justice Plan, and the Indigenous Youth Justice Plan.
- B.C. First Nations Justice Council continues to build capacity to support Gladue services in B.C. The volume of Gladue Report requests increased to well over 500 requests in FY 2023/2024.

Indigenous Justice Centres

Indigenous Justice Centres 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 opening an additional 10 Indigenous Justice Centres bringing the total number of Indigenous Justice Centres in the Province to 15. As of January 2024, there are nine physical Indigenous Justice Centres (Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo, Surrey, Kelowna, Merritt, Prince George, Prince Rupert, and Chilliwack), as well as the virtual Indigenous Justice Centre. Consultations were undertaken in the fall of 2023 to assist in the selection process of the remaining six centres to be opened in late 2024 and 2025, which will be located in more rural settings. Expressions of interest in hosting an Indigenous Justice Centre were sought from First Nations as part of this process.

B.C. Prosecution Service - Indigenous Justice Framework

In December 2023 and February 2023 the B.C. Prosecution Service announced policy changes aimed at increasing fairness and reducing overrepresentation of Indigenous persons in the criminal justice system as part of the B.C. Prosecution Service Indigenous Justice Framework. Policies revised to add specific guidance respecting Indigenous persons include policies on sexual assaults ([SEX 1](#)), hate crimes ([HAT 1](#)), providing information to victims ([VIC 1](#)), and others.

B.C. has nine Indigenous courts: *New Westminster First Nations Court • North Vancouver Chet wa nexwníw ta S7ekwí7tel 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 • Chilliwack Indigenous Court*

Policing

Policing and Public Safety Modernization Initiative

The Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act released its findings in April 2022, and made 11 broad and transformative recommendations. The recommendations address topics such as an enhanced continuum of response to mental health and addictions crises, improvements to police education and training, community and Indigenous input into policing services, the transition away from the RCMP to a new provincial police service, and co-development of the new policing legislation with Indigenous Peoples and municipal governments.

Government is taking a structured and measured approach for the Policing and Public Safety Modernization Initiative, which includes making progress on Government’s response to the Special Committee recommendations. This approach allows for adequate time to meaningfully engage and consult. As part of the first step of the initiative, targeted, interim legislative changes to the existing *Police Act* were introduced in Spring 2024 to lay a foundation towards broader legislative reform. The changes will address topics related to municipal governance and oversight, and the law enforcement continuum. All 200+ First Nations were invited to consult on the Phase 1 amendments. Uptake was limited due to the scope of the amendments focusing on municipal policing and not changes to RCMP policing. Four First Nations and two Modern Treaty Nations participated in consultation on the Phase

1 amendments generally. Additionally, four First Nations and four Modern Treaty Nations participated in targeted engagements regarding the proposed creation of the Community Safety Officer model through the Phase 1 amendments.

Starting in 2023, the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General initiated comprehensive and broadscale engagement with partners on policy that will form the foundation of new policing and oversight legislation. Co-development of the policies and new legislation with Indigenous Peoples and local governments will be a key focus of this second phase of the initiative. For Phase 2, a technical Working Group has been established with the BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC) and First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC). Government will establish co-development tables with interested First Nations. To support Rightsholders' meaningful participation in the Policing and Public Safety Modernization Initiative, 48 First Nations, four Modern Treaty Nations, one treaty society, BCFNJC, and FNLC have received capacity funding.

B.C. Provincial Policing Standards and Training for Police on Investigations of Sexual Assaults

In July 2023, the [B.C. Provincial Policing Standards 5.4](#) on police investigations of sexual assaults were approved and made public. In July 2024, the standards will take effect at which time police agencies will be required to take steps to ensure trauma-informed practice, victim-centered approaches, and cultural safety during investigations of reported sexual assaults. In addition to perspectives from community-based groups, the standards benefitted from input from the First Nations Justice Council and representatives from the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, Metis Nation B.C. and the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General has also initiated a project to determine requirements for police training on sexual assault investigations. The Ministry is engaging with police agencies, community-based anti-violence organizations, Indigenous organizations

and police training institutes to gather feedback on the content and delivery of training on this topic.

Situation Tables

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. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General continues to implement Situation Tables across B.C. in line with the 2023 mandate letter commitments. Currently, there are 40 Situation Tables across B.C.

Intervention Circles

Intervention Circles are a modified version of Situation Tables designed in consultation with and led by First Nations communities to deliver culturally safe intervention and supports. There is one active Intervention Circle (Esk'etemc) and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General is in discussion with two other communities to pilot Intervention Circles.

Corrections

Youth Justice

Work is underway to develop and facilitate engagement with Indigenous communities across B.C., and to ensure engagements with Indigenous communities and service providers include a distinctions-based approach that respects the priorities of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation BC. Information from engagements will inform a re-investment strategy aimed to increase high priority community-based programs intended to improve outcomes for Indigenous youth connected, or adjacent, to the justice system. Ongoing consultation is also intended to contribute to identifying opportunities to better support Indigenous youth to reconnect with their culture and communities.

SPOTLIGHT: BC Corrections is deeply committed to addressing the over-representation of Indigenous Peoples in the justice system, transforming BC Corrections and healing broken relationships.



Photo: Fish being prepared in smokehouses at Prince George Regional Correctional Centre.

Each provincial correctional centre is supported by an Indigenous Cultural Liaison and Elders that provide culturally informed support, ceremonies, individual and group counselling, crisis intervention and connect Indigenous individuals with groups that help them reintegrate into their communities. Indigenous Cultural Liaisons also participate in client case planning and provide training to correctional centre staff to increase understanding and the delivery of culturally safe services.

Indigenous Cultural Liaisons and Indigenous Elders take staff and residents on a cultural learning journey to foster understanding and healing, break down barriers and let participants connect with the traditional teachings in ways that are uniquely meaningful to them.

Listening to the teachings and connecting with culture has fundamentally changed the way staff work with people under provincial supervision, and this approach was recently recognized with a Premier's Innovation and Excellence Award in the category of Organizational Excellence for BC Corrections' work to heal through culture.

At Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre, Indigenous Cultural Liaison Max Henry envisioned a totem pole to recognize what was once a meeting place for the Tsawout, Songhees and Pauquachin First Nations to trade goods and information. Max reached out to Elders Tom and Aubrey La Fortune, who agreed to source a log and guide carving.

Elder Tom spent hundreds of hours carving side-by-side with residents on the pole at the Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre. As they chipped and etched away at the 340-year-old cedar log to form the pole's shapes and figures, Elder Tom says the men connected with their culture and developed self awareness about the circumstances that led them to be in custody. They returned to their living units with new attitudes, eager to share with others what they learned.

"The experience was life changing," said one carving participant who is now working as an artist in the community and successfully selling his creations. "We were there because we did something wrong or had something traumatizing happen. We took a wrong path. This was a step in taking the right path."

At Prince George Regional Correctional Centre, residents at the centre now prepare food in two smokehouses they built under the guidance of the Indigenous Cultural Liaison and Elder Marcel Gagnon. While preparing fish for Elders in the local Indigenous community, one woman who had spoken few words during her time at Prince George Regional Correctional Centre suddenly opened up by sharing stories about the way her grandmother prepared fish the traditional way and about how she hoped to share these teachings with her children. The conversation gave staff insight into her needs, which led to connecting her directly with Marcel and Leona Wright, the second Indigenous Cultural Liaison at Prince George Regional Correctional Centre. This environment of culturally based sharing and

support allowed the corrections team to break down lifelong barriers that prevented meaningful progress in her case planning. Due to this, Prince George Regional Correctional Centre staff were able to assist with the women's release planning tailored to her cultural needs, connect her with mental health supports in the community, and begin the long journey of reconnecting with her family for the first time in her life.

At Okanagan Correctional Centre, woodshop instructors had an idea to build a large canoe with the intention of gifting it to the Osoyoos Indian Band, a strong community partner. They reached out to the Osoyoos Indian Band with this idea and learned about a youth paddling program that could use the nine-seat canoe on its trips on waterways throughout B.C. Okanagan Correctional Centre staff and residents gifted their hand-crafted canoe to the Osoyoos Indian Band's youth program in a beautiful welcoming ceremony that included Osoyoos Indian Band Chief Clarence Louie.



Photo: Nine seat canoe built by residents at Okanagan Correctional Centre

Following this, at Ford Mountain Correctional Centre, Elder Earl Moulton and Indigenous Cultural Liaison Carlos Garibay led the building of a trail that leads down to a spirit bath in the Chilliwack River below the centre where residents can participate in guided, healing water ceremonies. With the blessing of the Stó:lō First Nation, the trail has been named the "All Nations Spirit Trail" and participants make their way along the trail, downhill into the cool river water to experience ceremony that provides a cleansing of their physical bodies and reawakening of their spirits. Residents at Ford Mountain Correctional Centre can also participate in ceremony in a small, dome-shaped sweat lodge on the centre's wooded grounds.

These are just some examples of how BC Corrections and Indigenous Peoples are creating a new story together, as we move forward with open hearts and open minds to new ways of helping the people in our care.

Photo: Totem pole carved by residents at Vancouver Island Correctional Centre.



Victim Services

Core Funding for Sexual Assault Services

Budget 2022 provided \$10 million in stable ongoing funding starting in 2023 for on-going community-based sexual assault response services to provide trauma-informed, culturally safe, and coordinated sexual assault response programs to support survivors throughout the province. Ongoing funding is now provided to 70 sexual

assault services programs that deliver co-ordinated, community-based services to victims of sexual and gender-based violence throughout British Columbia. 18 programs are Indigenous-focused programs, including a program at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre. \$1.4 million is dedicated to Indigenous Sexual Assault Service Programs. Core funding has also been provided

to five sexual assault centres located in the urban areas of Victoria, Vancouver, Surrey, Kamloops and Prince George, which will provide wraparound services to survivors of sexual assault, including trauma-informed space for police interviews and medical forensic examinations among other services available if the survivor chooses them.

Family Information Liaison Unit

The Family Information Liaison Unit (FILU) was established to provide frontline victim services for families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. In 2023, the federal government increased support to allow FILU to serve family members of all 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. The FILU team travels across B.C. to connect with families, refer to local services, and help them find support to heal from the trauma of losing their loved one(s) to violence. In 2023, an area of focus for FILU was strengthening relationships and collaboration with police and other system partners.

Crime Victims Assistance Act

In October 2023, the Province made amendments to the *Crime Victims Assistance Act* to ensure that wide access to support was available to those seeking assistance. Government has further expanded support by:

- Adding new offences that vulnerable victims would receive support for, including victims of gender-based violence, conversion therapy, and online sexual exploitation,
- Significantly increasing benefit rates to ensure that key services remain accessible to victims, including funeral expenses, crime scene cleaning, and counselling services, and
- Expanding access to benefits involving extreme violence or death.

Intimate Images Protection Act

The *Intimate Images Protection Act* came into force on January 29th, 2024. This legislation provides new ways to stop the non-consensual distribution of intimate images, including a process to get images removed from the internet more quickly and a more effective way for victims to seek monetary compensation. A new specialized support unit called the Intimate Images Protection Service was also established in January 2024 to support victims. This new unit provides emotional support, information, resources, appropriate referrals, and assistance with enforcing Intimate Image Protection orders.

San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General is utilizing federal funds to purchase San'yas training seats for the Victim Services and Violence Against Women sector. Over the five-year agreement, 167 seats will be purchased in total (33 seats per year). This training provides a critical foundation for victim services by promoting cultural safety for Indigenous Peoples.

CHILD WELFARE, EDUCATION, & SKILLS TRAINING

Harmful colonial policies and practices such as the residential school system and the Sixties Scoop have culminated in an over-representation of Indigenous children and youth in government care. In B.C., **Indigenous children comprise less than 10% of the child population, yet represent 68% of the children in provincial care**¹⁰. Racist government policies detrimentally impacted and marginalized generations of Indigenous Peoples, making them more vulnerable by depriving them of the ability to learn their distinct languages, practice traditions, pass along cultural knowledge, and be part of a strong and healthy family and community. Initiatives and strategies illustrated in this section aim to keep

10 [Child, Family and Community Service Act and Adoption Act change to support Indigenous jurisdiction](#)

Indigenous children and youth connected to their families, culture and communities while harmonizing service delivery to support continuous care. **75.0% of Indigenous students completed high school in 2021-22, an increase of 8.8 percentage points from 66.2% in the 2016-17 school year**¹¹.

Improving education outcomes of Indigenous people further supports economic independence and opportunity, and ultimately the safety and security of individuals and families.

Child Welfare

Simpcw Expands Prevention Services to Urban Families through New Agreement

Simpcw First Nation is partnering with the Province on a two-year project focused on keeping families together through connections to their culture, language, families and traditional decision-making for members who live away from home. This project builds upon the Tcwesétmentem: Walking Together Agreement, B.C.'s first community agreement under section 92.1 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*. Tcwesétmentem was co-created with Simpcw and signed through a ceremony and protocol on April 12, 2022. Through this project, Simpcw away-from-home families will benefit from receiving supports from their own community. Simpcw early intervention outreach workers, based out of satellite offices in Prince George and New Westminster, co-located with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, will provide services to Simpcw children, youth and families in place of receiving services from the Ministry. The services will focus on family support, cultural connections and wellness activities.

Children and Youth with Support Needs Engagement

From March 2023 through December 2024, the Province is collecting feedback as part of its overall work to design an effective system of services for children and youth with support needs. This engagement is inclusive of families, service providers, advocates, experts, those with lived experience, and Indigenous Peoples.

Changes to Missing Child Policies

In response to the Representative for Children and Youth report called "Missing: Why are children disappearing from B.C.'s child welfare system?" the Ministry of Children and Family Development updated policies related to children in care who might go missing. Policy updates made in 2023 include a revised definition of "missing" intended to ensure all children are treated with the highest priority, and includes new expectations for a child/youth's worker, caregiver, and Care Circle or Team for:

- How to respond when a child/youth is unreasonably late and their whereabouts are unknown, or they are missing,
- How to collaborate with the police/RCMP and others to locate the child/youth, and
- How to plan appropriately once a child/youth is no longer missing.

Policies now also include specific references to the National Inquiry on MMIWG, and ensure consideration is given to whether a child/youth is an Indigenous female, Two-Spirit or gender diverse child/youth as well as contacting the child or youth's Indigenous community when determining the missing person response.

Expanding Youth Transition Support

Youth and young adults who have been in government care in British Columbia are receiving expanded supports through the Strengthening

11 [Education by the numbers September 5, 2023](#)

Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE) program. Services and supports through SAJE have been available to youth and young adults 19 and older since 2022. The program is continuing to expand and improve. Recent enhancements include optical and dental coverage, new funding for skills training, mental health supports, housing supports, unconditional income support, and expanding the maximum duration of supports for up to 84 months until age 27.

Increases in Monthly Payments that Directly Support Children and Youth

As part of Budget 2023, \$84.9 million was provided to the Minister of Children and Family Development, raising monthly payments by as much as 47% for all foster care givers and out-of-care providers. These funds are intended to directly benefit children and youth. On July 1, 2023, the Ministry again increased monthly payments, mirroring the annual Canada Child Benefit increase.

First Nations Reconciliation – Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw Nations Sign Community Agreement under section 92.1 of the Child, Family and Community Service Act

Members of Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw Nations celebrated a significant milestone on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, by signing a child and family services agreement with the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The agreement is an important step on the Nations’ journey to take back jurisdiction over protecting and uplifting their children and families based on their own laws and culture.

Community designates, appointed by Chief and Council and collaborating with the ministry, will provide 24/7 support for child-welfare matters as they arise and ensure Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw are fully involved in decisions that ministry directors make regarding their children and families.

First Nations Reconciliation – Splat-sin, Canada and British Columbia Sign Historic Coordination Agreement for First Nations Children and Families

On March 24, 2023, Splat-sin, Canada, and British Columbia signed an historic coordination agreement for First Nation children and families that supports the ongoing exercise of Splat-sin’s jurisdiction over child and family services under Spallumcheen Indian Band Bylaw #3-1980 and Secwepemc law. The coordination agreement addresses the coordination of services, the delivery of emergency services, mechanisms for First Nations children to exercise their rights, and fiscal agreements that are needs-based, sustainable and consistent with the principle of substantive equality.

Education and Skills Training

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. Teacher certification and regulation is one of the key components of jurisdiction. 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.

Bill 40 – Indigenous Education Councils

The Ministry of Education and Child Care has committed to implementing the 13 education and child care specific actions in its Action Plan. Action 4.3 involves co-developing an Indigenous Education Council policy with the First Nations Education Steering Committee, including a

provincial Indigenous Education Council Terms of Reference template. Bill 40 was passed on November 7, 2023, requiring all school districts to have an Indigenous Education Council.

Indigenous Specific Racism Review

The Ministry of Education and Child Care has started internal discussions regarding the Declaration Act Action Plan's Action 3.3 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." The Ministry is in the initial stage of engaging with Indigenous partners to discuss the necessary steps to move work on this action forward.

Taking effect in 2023-24, a new graduation requirement ensures all secondary students complete Indigenous-focused coursework before they graduate from B.C.'s K-12 education system.

Indigenous Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training

The StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan aims to move from government-led to Indigenous-led post-secondary education and training programs. Initiatives include funding for First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes and for training programs delivered in First Nations communities. Funding is also being provided to support education and skills training programming led by and developed with Métis Nation of British Columbia and with the B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres.

Intersectional Sexualized Violence Project

The Ministry of Post Secondary Education and Future Skills has secured \$577,700 in funding from Women and Gender Equality Canada for a multi-year project to develop intersectional training resources to address technology-facilitated sexualized violence and the impacts of sexualized violence on Indigenous,

graduate, and international students. This project is guided by an Advisory Group of representatives from the sector, including post-secondary institutions, students, First Nations and Métis partners, subject matter experts, and sexualized violence community organizations. Resources are anticipated to be launched in June 2024.

Urban Indigenous Youth and Education Project

The Ministry of Post Secondary Education and Future Skills has committed \$2.5 million towards project development for a new Indigenous centre on the territories of the xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and selílwitlh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations in Vancouver. The centre will be the permanent home for the Urban Native Youth Association and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology's Vancouver campus. This centre will provide opportunities for Indigenous students and youth to learn and move forward in a culturally safe and supported environment and will include a youth centre, post-secondary and skills training campus, affordable homes, childcare centre, and support services.

Innovator Skills Initiative

In June 2021, the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation provided \$15 million to launch the redesigned Innovator Skills Initiative to increase diversity in the technology sector. The program resulted in 3,000 grant placements, with these grants providing a portion of employees' salary to help under-represented people, including Indigenous women, to get their first job in the tech sector. In April 2023, the Province invested an additional \$5 million to continue the success of the program. The expansion of the Innovator Skills Initiative program is expected to secure up to 500 more placements. A key priority of the program is to increase Indigenous placements. Innovate B.C. partnered with Mitacs and the First Nations Technology Council to deliver the Innovator Skills Initiative program and increase participation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit jobseekers.

Tuition Waiver Program Expansion for Former Youth in Care

The Provincial Tuition Waiver Program supports B.C. students who are former youth in care that are pursuing studies at a B.C. public post-secondary institution, Native Education College or one of the eligible union trades training centres. It does so by covering tuition and other education related fees. In August 2023, the program expanded to include all former youth in care, regardless of age, and those who turn(ed) 19 on any care status regardless of time in care.

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 the Gathering Our Voices annually for the next five years. Coordinated by the B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, the funding will allow the Gathering Our Voices to focus on ensuring the attendance of youth in care, who have fewer opportunities to attend the event.

Social Services Sector Community Pathways to Reconciliation Project

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction provided a total of \$9.6 million in grants to the B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres in 2022 to lead the development and implementation of the Community Pathways to Reconciliation Project for the social services sector over the coming five years. The Community Pathways to Reconciliation Project includes the development and implementation of a master's degree in business administration in Indigenous and not-for-profit services, an Organizational Assessment tool, a Safe Space app expansion, and San'yas 2.0 training.

Safespace is an online web app that provides a safe and anonymous way to share experiences of racism in the B.C. healthcare system. To learn more, visit: <https://bcaafc.com/help/safespace-sharing/>

RECONCILIATION, ARTS & CULTURE

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people have a wide array of unique traditions and history, including a multitude of distinct languages and dialects, cultures, customs, practices, rights, legal traditions, institutions, governance structures, relationships to land and territories, and knowledge systems. For many years, governments and religions across Canada did not recognize Indigenous people's rights, territories, cultures, and traditions – instead, Indigenous Peoples were subject to assimilationist laws and had thousands of artifacts and other property taken or coerced from their households and communities. Connections and access to culture and art can be powerful modes of healing from trauma, and this section outlines some ongoing efforts to preserve and restore Indigenous language, arts, and cultural practices.

Arts, Culture, and Language Preservation

Investment in First Nations Language, Arts, Culture, and Heritage Revitalization

In Budget 2023, the Province announced a permanent lift to the First Peoples' Cultural Council for their core operations (\$6.49 million for 2023/24, \$6.75 million in 2024/25 and \$7.17 million in 2025/26 and onwards). This funding supports the important work of First Nations' languages, cultures, arts and heritage revitalization. First Peoples Cultural Council staff support communities with coaching services, training, peer-to-peer learning sessions, linguistic expertise, technical expertise to manage online language documentation and learning, the development of resources to support communities with program delivery, assistance with reporting and data collection, as well as providing research and policy expertise.

Approximately 80% of those employed by the First Peoples Cultural Council grants are First Nations women. Many have spent years developing specialized skills to do the revitalization work required. The First Peoples Cultural Council continues to advocate for long-term sustainable funding to support this critical work.

B.C. Arts Council Funding

The B.C. Arts Council has an ongoing partnership with the First Peoples' Cultural Council providing \$1.725 million annually to support Indigenous Arts Programs, including the Indigenous Arts Scholarship Program. The partnership with the First Peoples' Cultural Council supports the implementation of the B.C. Arts Council's strategic direction to advance Indigenous Arts and Culture. Direct funding provided through B.C. Arts Council to Indigenous applicants in 2022/23 included \$259,921 to individual applicants who identified as Indigenous and \$3,698,481 million to Indigenous collectives and organizations.

There are seven Indigenous language families and 34 languages in B.C., representing sixty percent of the First Nations languages in Canada. B.C. is internationally recognized as a region with some of the highest levels of linguistic diversity and highest levels of language endangerment.

Royal B.C. Museum's New Provincial Archives, Research and Collections Building

The Royal B.C. Museum has been working closely with the Songhees and Esquimalt (Xwsepsum) Nations, including with Indigenous Liaison Officers from each Nation, to ensure the new building project from design to completion considers the host Nations' traditions and culture. Additionally, the Design-Builder has been working closely with the Indigenous Liaison Officers to provide project-related employment opportunities directly related to the project for the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

The new site will also incorporate multiple public art pieces, including two artworks and a mural incorporated into the façade of the building by Coast Salish master artists.

In September 2023, the Royal B.C. Museum launched the next phase of its multi-year Engagement and Consultation Plan, for another round of meetings with Indigenous communities to ensure Indigenous voices are reflected in the vision for the future of the museum. The Royal B.C. Museum has attended events or hosted community conversations with a number of Indigenous communities including the BC Assembly of First Nations Annual General Meeting in Vancouver, the Metis Nation BC Annual General Meeting in Kamloops, Union of BC Indian Chiefs event in Williams Lake, and the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council Annual General Meeting in Port Alberni.

Repatriation

Repatriation grants support the principle of self-determination and collaboration between cultural institutions and Indigenous Peoples.

Repatriation Funding and Programs

In 2023, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport provided an additional \$262,000 to the First Peoples Cultural Council to build on previous work including furthering research to develop a repatriation database and best practice educational resources. The Ministry also met with the First Nations Leadership Council to plan and explore its potential role before proceeding with work on a co-developed policy framework for repatriation initiatives in B.C. Engagement with First Nations, Indigenous organizations, repatriation and heritage experts and those with lived experience is planned in the undertaking of this work which will be guided by a provincial working group.

TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY

Approximately 95% of the provincial land base in B.C. is considered non-urban¹², and some residents must travel longer distances with limited modes of transportation and weak to no cell phone reception and internet connection to access services and supports. This can create significant safety risks for travel and challenges for victims of violence in accessing victim services, shelters and/or transition houses, medical care, and to safely report their victimization to law enforcement.

Safe, affordable, and reliable transportation infrastructure and cellular and internet connectivity are essential to the safety and well-being of all British Columbians, and especially for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people who live in rural and remote communities. This section outlines recent progress made by the Province to address gaps in cellular service, high-speed internet service expansion and transportation along B.C. highways, and to provide greater training and education to the transportation industry to become aware of the vulnerabilities that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people may face in rural and remote parts of the province when accessing services and supports.

Internet and Cellular Connectivity Expansion

British Columbia is making significant investments toward our goal of connecting all rural and First Nation households to high-speed internet services by 2027. Since 2017, the Province has invested over \$584 million into the expansion of high-speed broadband internet and cellular services across B.C. and leveraged funds from other levels of government and the private sector. These investments in high-speed internet will pay social and economic dividends for generations, as the expansion of broadband internet services will also support the expansion of cellular services across the province.

Cellular connectivity along highways is critical for public safety and access to emergency services – especially along rural and remote stretches. That is why in Budget 2023, the B.C. government announced an additional \$75 million, administered through Northern Development Initiative Trust, to support extending cellular services to another 550 km of highway by 2027. This builds on the government's \$15 million commitment from 2020 to support the expansion of highway cellular service and connectivity at rest areas including 252 kilometres and two rest areas along Highway 16 - the Highway of Tears.

Solving the problem of cellular gaps between communities along Highway 16 was among the Highway of Tears Symposium Report's 33 recommendations aimed at enhancing safety for Indigenous women and girls. This recommendation from the symposium was echoed in the report from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. A further provincial and federal investment (\$2.25 million each) is key to ensure women, especially Indigenous women, who are not safe can call for help and receive the services they need to ensure their safety and security.

Highway 16 Transportation Action Plan

The Highway 16 Transportation Action Plan was created in response to the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry. The B.C. Transit inter-community service was deployed as part of the action plan, and continues to provide reliable, affordable and safe transportation along Highway 16.

Ridership continued to increase with almost 20,000 in 2023 (up from just over 16,000 in 2022), bringing the total number of passengers to date to over 98,000 since the service began in 2017. The bus service allows people to travel to their nearest large community and return home the same day.

12 [Rural Health Services in B.C. \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www.gov.bc.ca/rural-health-services)

B.C. Bus North

B.C. Bus North continues to operate with funding from the Province. The service provides 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.

On May 29, 2023, the Province announced a commitment of \$5 million to the Northern Development Initiative Trust to continue B.C. Bus North and the Northern Community Shuttle Program until 2026-27. This funding will ensure the continuation of critical transportation services, including community shuttles, which connect people in rural communities to regional centres. Currently, 15 community shuttles are operating in Northern B.C. with funding from the program.

The ministry contributed \$2.5 million to three regional economic trusts (\$833K each) to conduct engagement and analysis on rural, regional and intercity passenger transportation and to support local governments and First Nations with passenger transportation initiatives.

Engagement was completed in summer 2023 and reports were published online. The regional economic trusts are administering grants to support transportation initiatives in their regions such as planning, collaboration, and enhancement of services. Thirty-six local governments, First Nation communities and not-for-profit organizations have been approved for funding for transportation initiatives.

Vision Zero Road Safety Grants

More than \$1 million in grants were distributed to 59 B.C. communities in 2023. Projects include improved crosswalk infrastructure, traffic calming, speed-limit reduction pilot projects, speed-reader boards, improved lighting, road-safety planning and more.

The projects are co-funded by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, and Regional Health Authorities. Regional health authorities distribute the funding to local governments, First Nations, and non-governmental organizations (e.g. school districts or road safety advocacy groups) for support to plan and implement projects that will directly improve the safety of the roads in their communities.

A dedicated stream of this program is for First Nations to set and direct their own road-safety priorities.

Indigenous Community Access and Resiliency Program

The Indigenous Community Access and Resiliency Program funds projects that improve safety and access for First Nations, 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, including \$40 million over the next three years, beginning in 2024/25, to support projects that improve access and resiliency for Indigenous communities.

Projects are prioritized in response to requests and input received directly from First Nations 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.

Reflections and Next Steps

As we reflect on the fifth anniversary of the release of the ***Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls***, the Province of B.C. remains deeply committed to engaging in reconciliatory work to identify and implement meaningful and lasting solutions to address the systemic causes of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. We know these solutions must be led by self-determining First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples and communities and we will continue to engage with Indigenous people - in particular, the leadership and expertise of Elders, Indigenous women and girls – to ensure their goals and priorities are acknowledged and supported throughout these processes.

Our government will continue to work and report on progress toward honouring our Path Forward priorities as well as the work of both the ***Inquiry*** and the ***Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act***. While this does not represent the full breadth of the work being done, 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 combat violence against Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit and gender diverse people.

Government will continue to provide support and resources to Indigenous people to set their own priorities and take action to end systemic gender-based violence. We will seek their guidance as we plot the Path Forward, advance provincially relevant Calls for Justice, and align our efforts towards meaningfully implementing the ***Declaration of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan***.

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
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 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
1.2	Support communities in addressing street disorder and public safety concerns by expanding mental health intervention team	Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions	1.5, 3.4; 3.5, 4.2
1.3	Identify minimum standards for sexual assault response	Ministry of Finance - Gender Equity Office & Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General-Community Safety & Crime Prevention Branch (GBV Action Plan)	1.5; 1.8; 4.3; 5.3; 16.38
1.4	Increase training related to sexual assault for police agencies, crown council and justices	Ministry of Finance - Gender Equity Office & Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General-Community Safety & Crime Prevention Branch (GBV Action Plan)	1.5; 1.8; 4.3; 5.3; 16.38
1.5	Based on recommendations of the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act, 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
1.6	Implement a homelessness strategy	Ministry of Housing	4.1, 4.6, 4.7, 12.4, 12.11, 16.1, 16.18, 16.19, 18.25
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
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
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 ComplexCare housing	Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (with Ministry of Housing and Ministry of Health support)	3.2; 4.1; 18.25
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 Mental Health and Addictions	3.2; 3.4; 18.28
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 (with Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions support)	3.2; 3.4

BC's Path Forward Priorities and Early Strategies for BC: Key Commitments		Ministry Mandate Letter	Relevant Call(s) for Justice
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 Mental Health and Addictions	3.2; 3.4
2.7	Expand support for Aboriginal Friendship Centres that serve the needs of local Indigenous communities	Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation	4.2
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
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
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
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 - Housing support)	1.2
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 – Housing - PS for Anti-Racism Initiatives' support)	18.26
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 Mental Health and Addictions support)	1.6; 4.2; 7.3
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
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
4.2	Improve transit options for people in rural communities by expanding service for the BC Bus North program	Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure	4.1; 4.8; 17.9

BC's Path Forward Priorities and Early Strategies for BC: Key Commitments		Ministry Mandate Letter	Relevant Call(s) for Justice
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 Anti-Racism Act 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
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
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
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
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
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



Ministry of
Public Safety and
Solicitor General