

# Provincial Indigenous Women's Reconciliation Council Annual Report 2024 - 2025

The Provincial Indigenous Women's Reconciliation Council serves to prevent violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people through addressing existing challenges and barriers in the areas of **culture, human security, justice, and health and wellness.**

The Council arose from the Provincial Indigenous Women's Steering Committee's (PIWSC) 2021 report '*Hear Our Voices: MMIWG Policy Recommendations of the First Women of Newfoundland and Labrador*' (NL). Guiding the work of the Council is the 196 policy recommendations contained in this report, as well as the 231 Calls for Justice set out in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The Council is a collaborative relationship between Indigenous Women and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, with 11 members sitting on the council, appointed by the PIWSC and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

## Areas of Priority

### Culture

- 5. (A. Systemic Change)** Open meetings with Indigenous Peoples with ceremony and have Elders, knowledge keepers and knowledge sharers in attendance at meetings.
- 19. (B. Legislative Change)** Collaborate with Indigenous communities and groups to reduce administrative obstacles – the red tape.
- 27. (B. Legislative Change)** Expand indigenous cultural sensitivity training to annual or bi-annual training, not a onetime event or requirement.
- 55. (F. Training)** Implement mandatory and on-going Indigenous cultural sensitivity training and cultural diversity training for NL Government employees.

### Health & Wellness

- 58. (A. Systemic Change)** Ensure cultural practices are available for Indigenous Peoples when requested.
- 73. (C. Funding and Investments)** Immediately initiate an aggressive recruitment and retention program, including housing assistance, to assist health professionals and support staff.
- 115. (E. Facilities)** Provide designated well-ventilated areas in hospitals and health centres for Ceremony, for example smudging and use of the Kullik.

### Justice

- 137. (A. Systemic Change)** Ensure that existing anti-racism policies are enforced in policing and justice.
- 164. (C. Funding and Investments)** Provide more funding for affordable housing to reduce the number of Indigenous homeless people and fund support services that are compassionate – being homeless is not a choice nor a crime.
- 166. (D. Partnership Building)** Acknowledge the need for a civilian oversight board for the police services.
- 173. (F. Training)** Implement on-going cultural competency and cultural diversity training for the judiciary, court officers, court workers, police officers and others so they understand where, how, and why culture matters, and how culture influences the ways Indigenous people communicate.

### Human Security

- 180. (A. Systemic Change)** Set up a provincial anti-racism committee to study Indigenous racism, outline a plan of action to address this, and appoint an Indigenous Advocate to police the effectiveness.
- 187. (C. Funding and Investments)** Provide funds for Indigenous organizations and groups to design and provide wrap-around accessible and culturally appropriate victims services.
- 192. (D. Partnership Building)** Meet with Indigenous women and representatives from various women's groups to ask them what they need and how the Government may provide this.
- 193. (D. Partnership Building)** Engage with women from Indigenous groups and other supporting women's organizations to discuss the issues and develop solutions.

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## Progress

The Reconciliation Council met three times in the fiscal year, connecting Indigenous Governments and Organizations (IGO) and the Government of NL to discuss reconciliation for Indigenous peoples in NL:

- 4th RC meeting – May 30 & 31, 2024 – St. John's
- 5th RC meeting – November 13 & 14, 2024 – Stephenville
- 6th RC meeting – February 13 & 14, 2025 – St. John's

### Recommendations

**#5 & #180:** The Provincial Government has collaborated with Indigenous Governments and Organizations to develop cultural sensitivity training for elected officials and public service employees. This initiative builds on a call from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which called on all levels of government to provide their employees with understanding of the histories of Indigenous peoples.

**#19:** Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network (NAWN) hired a Technical Lead in April 2024, supporting the work of the RC to work to reduce administrative obstacles, funded by the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

**#27, #55 & #173:** The eLearning module course on Indigenous histories continues to be mandatory learning for public service employees. The Provincial Government codesigned this foundational module with Indigenous Governments and Organizations (IGO) and plans to develop additional e-learning modules specific to each of the five IGOs in the province is underway, beginning with the Nunatsiavut Government.

**#58 & #115:** NL Health Services (NLHS) introduced a policy, allowing ongoing access to Smudging and the use of a Kullik within all NLHS facilities and grounds: [https://nlhealthservices.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Indigenous-Ceremony-Policy\\_II-PH4\\_6500-001.pdf](https://nlhealthservices.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Indigenous-Ceremony-Policy_II-PH4_6500-001.pdf)

**#73:** 3 childcare sites, specifically for health care professionals, are under development and will be operational in St. John's, Bonavista, and Corner Brook. These sites will create approximately 160 childcare spaces.

**#137:** The Policing Transformation Working Group learned about priorities, ways to enhance community safety, and policing in the communities.

**#164:** New NL Disability Benefits funding and services available, aimed at improving health outcomes for people with disabilities: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/sswb/newfoundland-and-labrador-disability-benefit/>

**#166:** The RNC and RCMP have civilian oversight responsible for investigating public complaints. NL has its own Serious Incident Response Team (SIRT-NL) responsible for conducting investigations into incidents involving police officers from the RNC or RCMP. In accordance with legislation, the director of SIRT must be a civilian.

**#187:** The Indigenous Violence Prevention Grants Program supports NL's Indigenous Governments and Organizations' efforts to prevent violence against Indigenous women and children and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. In 2024-25, 14 projects were awarded a total of \$316,583 through this program.

**#192 & #193** The Reconciliation Council invited organizations to discuss their work on human trafficking prevention, intimate partner violence reduction, supports, and services.

## Opportunities

- Identifying and pursuing partnerships with government departments and agencies, including the Health Accord and the Policing Transformation Working Group.
- Continued efforts to strengthen the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and government through the implementation of the 196 recommendations outlined in the *Hear Our Voices* report.
- Fostering further relationship building between Indigenous Governments, organizations and peoples and the Government of Newfoundland & Labrador.
- Assist and advise with new government programs and policies.
- Engaging with those with lived experience – Elders, knowledge keepers, Indigenous women, etc.
- Engaging with Indigenous Governments and Organizations for further education on their needs.

## Challenges

- Securable, permanent funding.
- Recommendations are not easily solvable and are often complex.
- Provincial Government representation at Federal Indigenous meetings.

Information on both sides of this placemat has been summarized

Want to know more about the Provincial Indigenous Women's Reconciliation Council?

visit <https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/wge/aboriginalwomen/#aboriginal> or contact the Reconciliation Council Technical Lead at [tlrc.nawn@gmail.com](mailto:tlrc.nawn@gmail.com)