

Reconciliation Council

Annual Report

2023 - 2024



The Provincial Indigenous Women's Reconciliation Council serves to prevent violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ 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 2021 pivotal report 'Hear Our Voices: MMIWG Policy Recommendations of the First Women of Newfoundland and Labrador'. 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 working relationship between Indigenous Women and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, with 11 members sitting on the council, six members appointed by the Provincial Indigenous Women's Steering Committee and members appointed by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Areas of Priority 2023-2024

Culture

Priority Area A. Systemic Change:
#5 Open meetings with Indigenous Peoples with ceremony and have Elders, knowledge keepers and knowledge sharers in attendance at meetings.

Priority Area D. Partnership Building
#42 Publicly apologize for residential schools in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Human Security

Partnership Building:
#192 Meet with Indigenous women and representatives from various women's groups to ask them what they need (e.g., supplies, necessities, housing) and how the Government may provide this. Taking a collaborative approach and including the people who have the lived experience will ensure that the essentials will be covered. This means working 'with' our Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, not 'on their behalf'.

Justice

Priority Area D: Partnership Building:
#166 Acknowledge the need for a civilian oversight board for the police services.

Priority Area D:
#167 Take responsibility to address the Indigenous Peoples concerns by immediately staffing an Indigenous Ombudsperson to be the liaison between the Government and Indigenous groups and people.

Health & Wellness

Priority Area A Systemic Change:
#58 Ensure cultural practices like smudging, use of tents are available for Indigenous Peoples during palliative care, etc.

Priority Area D: Partnership Building:
#99 Acknowledge the outcomes of the Health Accord and commit to acting on all recommendations in partnership with Indigenous people.
#103 Include Indigenous women at the decision-making tables for all discussions regarding their health care, healing and wellness.

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2023-2024 Highlights

Initial priorities and successes include:

- Meaningful relationship building.
- Laying a foundation.
- Preliminary analysis

Council established, members and Co-chairs appointed.

Three meetings held:

- June 28, 2023 – St. John's
- September 26-27, 2023 – Corner Brook
- February 21, 2024 – Virtual

Progress

- The Premier issued public apologies to residential school survivors in Rigolet, Postville, Makkovik, Hopedale, Nain, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and Cartwright (September – November 2023).
- Policing Transformation Initiative announced – November 2023.
- Indigenous cultural competency training for the Public Service developed and launched.
- Thematic analysis completed of Hear Our Voices and Health Accord Recommendations.
- Continuous collaboration and consultation with Government of Newfoundland and Labrador departments and agencies with lead or supporting roles in implementing recommendations.
- Advancements in reconciliation efforts.
- Increased awareness of Indigenous concerns and subsequent improvements in government processes.

Opportunities

- Identifying and pursuing partnerships with government departments and agencies, including priority areas such as the Health Accord.
- Continued co-creation of a path forward between Indigenous people and government.
- Fostering further relationship building.

Challenges

- Increase in accurate data derived from those with lived experience needed.
- Education and communication gaps surrounding the work of the Reconciliation Council and Truth and Reconciliation.
- Developing necessary processes and learning best practices when responding to recommendations.
- Further meaningful engagement required.