



One-Year Progress Report

The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

Message from Minister Zimmer

One year ago, Ontario released *The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*. This plan details programs and actions focused on addressing our shared past and making a positive impact in the lives of Indigenous people in Ontario.

The legacy of residential schools continues to echo across generations and in our society. It is evident in the prejudice and in the socio-economic challenges Indigenous people in our province continue to face.

We cannot change the past, but by understanding how it continues to shape the present, we have an opportunity to change course and move toward a better future. Working in partnership with Indigenous leaders and communities, Ontario is taking action and building that future today.

Meaningful progress has been made over the past year on the commitments in *The Journey Together*. This document shares some key activities and milestones on the path of healing that Ontario and Indigenous peoples are walking together.

Step by step, day by day, we are building

relationships based on trust, understanding and mutual respect. We are working in partnership with Indigenous people and their leaders to improve social, economic and health outcomes and create lasting change.

I look forward to continuing this journey we've only just begun. Together, we are moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and creating a better Ontario for everyone.

Chi-miigwetch; nia:wen; marsi; thank you.



David Zimmer

Minister of Indigenous
Relations and Reconciliation

One-Year Progress Report

On May 30, 2016, members of provincial parliament invited Indigenous leaders from across the province to share their perspectives on Ontario's colonial history. Their perspectives were marked by stories of tragedy, broken promises and a legacy that lingers to this day. Following a traditional opening by Elder Jim Dumont, those assembled heard from residential school survivor Andrew Wesley. He shared his very personal story of abuse, but also his hopes for reconciliation and how, by understanding the wrongs of the past, we can all make change.

Ontario's political leaders also shared their own thoughts on reconciliation. As part of her remarks, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne apologized for the role played by the provincial government in this painful history, and presented *The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*.

As part of the province's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) final report, Ontario also announced that it was investing \$250 million over three years to implement the plan.

In the year since its release, Ontario and Indigenous partners have been moving

forward on the path of reconciliation, taking action and advancing new initiatives in five key areas:

- Understanding the Legacy of Residential Schools
- Closing Gaps and Removing Barriers
- Creating a Culturally Relevant and Responsive Justice System
- Supporting Indigenous Culture
- Reconciling Relationships with Indigenous Peoples

Reconciliation...

The town of Sioux Lookout in north-western Ontario proclaimed 2017 as the "Year of Truth and Reconciliation" to express its commitment to honouring reconciliation. The town has held roundtable sessions to hear from the public about how they can support reconciliation in their community.

...a shared journey

Understanding the Legacy of Residential Schools

Throughout our history, colonial governments have made systematic attempts to wipe out Indigenous languages, cultures and traditions. In Canada, residential schools were central to these efforts, playing a key role in attempting to strip Indigenous people of their history and identity.

As part of efforts to sever connections with their Indigenous cultures and identities, it was common for Indigenous children attending residential schools to be forced to take non-Indigenous names. This included enforcing the use of both a first and last name, which was unfamiliar to children from Indigenous communities where a single name was the accepted way of identifying someone.

Recognizing that some Indigenous cultures have a **tradition of single names**, recent legislative changes mean parents can now register the birth of their children with a single name. For the next five years (until January 2022), the Ontario government is **waiving name change fees** for Indigenous people who are residential school survivors and family members of survivors (spouse, direct descendant's spouse) seeking to reclaim a name changed by the residential school system. Fees are also waived for any Indigenous person who is reclaiming a single name if that name is in accordance with their traditional culture.

The province is also supporting the Six Nations of the Grand River and the Woodland Cultural Centre with \$10 million in funding over three years as they lead efforts to **restore the former Mohawk Institute Residential School** in Brantford. Preserving one of Ontario's oldest residential schools will help educate Ontarians about their history. The first phase of roof and structural repairs to the building were completed in spring 2017. The restoration will transform the school into an interpretation centre where visitors will learn the history of the approximately 15,000 students who attended the Mohawk Institute Residential School from 1828 to 1970.

The TRC called for provincial governments

across Canada to commission a residential schools monument in each capital city to commemorate the victims and survivors of Canada's residential schools. Ontario is investing \$1.5 million and working with Indigenous partners and residential school survivors across the province to establish a **residential schools legacy structure** in Toronto. Dedicated to residential school survivors and their families, the structure will be a site of learning, healing and reconciliation.

The impacts of colonialism and systemic racism are still felt today, widening the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Ontario's 3-Year Anti-Racism Strategic Plan targets government policies, decisions and programs to identify and eliminate the legacy of systemic racism and advance racial equality. This includes working with Indigenous leaders and communities to develop an **Indigenous-focused anti-racism strategy**.

As part of the strategy, a **youth-leading-youth anti-racism program** will support Indigenous youth leaders to deliver workshops in schools, post-secondary institutions and other community settings. The workshops are aimed at promoting respectful dialogue and understanding about the impacts of racism, biases and stereotypes among youth.

The province is also supporting the development of a **professional training toolkit** for use by professional organizations and post-secondary institutions. The toolkit is designed to encourage reflection and the identification of biases that can impact the way people make decisions about the design and delivery of services to Indigenous people.

Ontario is also working with Indigenous people and communities to identify priorities to reduce inequities and increase awareness across the province about the impact of systemic racism faced by Indigenous communities through targeted public education and awareness initiatives.



Walking this journey together for
a shared tomorrow.

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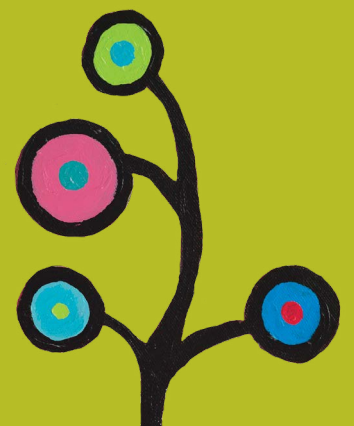
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Closing Gaps and Removing Barriers

Ontario's last residential school closed in 1991, but the legacy of attempted cultural genocide lingers. It can be seen in the socio-economic gaps and barriers that many Indigenous people must overcome to enjoy the opportunities so many others take for granted.

The province is investing \$19 million over three years in **new mental health and addictions supports** to help families and communities break the cycle of intergenerational trauma that began in the residential school system.

Ontario is also investing \$18.6 million to establish **new or expanded Indigenous Mental Health and Addictions Treatment and Healing Centres** to ensure that Indigenous youth, adults and families can access culturally appropriate treatment closer to home.

The early years of a child's life are vital to their development, well-being and future success. Ontario is supporting Indigenous children and their families by investing up to \$93.5 million over the next two years in

early years programs. This includes ongoing funding to help increase access to **culturally relevant child and family programs on-reserve** as well as **licensed child care spaces** and **child and family programs off-reserve**.

In remote communities, where it can take hours to get to the nearest urban centre, access to emergency health and social services is limited. To improve supports for remote communities during crisis situations, First Nations, provincial and federal government representatives met in March 2017 as part of a two-day **Social Emergencies Summit**. As a result of the summit, a **new social emergencies protocol** is being developed to ensure a more effective response to social emergencies in remote communities. Four community coordinators have also been hired to provide accelerated assistance to communities in crisis.

Ontario is working with Indigenous partners on locally driven prevention initiatives in remote high-need First Nations communities. As a result of these collaborative efforts, a community hub opened in Pikangikum First



Nation in April 2017. The hub offers a space where the community can come together and a central access point for a range of needed health and social services in the community.

In Sandy Lake First Nation, recreational activities were identified as priorities by the community. Playground equipment has been purchased for installation that will begin in the summer of 2017. Additional remote high-need First Nation communities are currently being identified to participate in life promotion and recreational programming for children, youth and families.

Ontario is making a \$5-million investment in Indigenous child and youth life promotion and suicide prevention efforts. This funding supports holistic response and prevention. It includes the expansion of the Tele-Mental Health service to provide additional outreach to Indigenous communities, Indigenous mental health and addictions workers to support students in First Nations schools and capacity building in First Nation and urban Indigenous communities.

Reconciliation...

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities is working to honour the TRC's efforts by ensuring that the rights and aspirations of Indigenous people are acknowledged in municipalities. The federation's Pathways to Reconciliation guide contains resources to help municipal leaders support reconciliation in their municipalities and examples of reconciliation in action in cities and communities across Canada.

...a shared journey

Creating a Culturally Relevant and Responsive Justice System

Another legacy of Canada's colonial history is the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice system. The province is working with justice sector professionals to increase the appropriate application of Gladue principles, which take into account unique background factors such as the effects of the residential school system that may have played a part in bringing a particular Indigenous accused or offender before the courts. This information assists the court in making more informed decisions at bail and sentencing including considering culturally appropriate options and alternatives to incarceration.

The application of Gladue principles is important in building a justice system that is both culturally relevant and responsive to the needs of Indigenous people. Ontario hosted a three-day **Gladue Summit** to gather input from Indigenous leaders, organizations and communities, as well as justice sector representatives, on how to address service gaps and ensure consistent program delivery. Ontario is investing \$13.3 million over three years to expand Gladue services in the province. This includes increasing the number of **Gladue report writers**, as well as expanding **Gladue aftercare services** across the province.

Ontario has funded 30 new Indigenous community-based **restorative justice programs** in the last fiscal year. The province is also working with Indigenous communities to support 24 projects focused on the revitalization of Indigenous legal principles and systems, including working with

communities to establish an **Indigenous language court**. In addition, Ontario is providing funding for pilot projects related to Band by-law enforcement, Indigenous bail and remand programs.

As part of a \$16-million investment in **Indigenous-specific victim services**, Ontario is consulting with Indigenous communities and service providers to identify gaps in current supports for Indigenous victims of crime and create expanded, more accessible services.

Reconciliation...

The Hamilton Community Legal Clinic released a report highlighting the TRC Calls to Action and ways the clinic can incorporate them into their work. The clinic shared the report with other local organizations and community groups to encourage them to take action. Recommendations include honouring Indigenous laws and traditions as a guide for the development of policies, practices and procedures.

...a shared journey

Supporting Indigenous Culture

Culture and language are critical to forming personal identity and a distinct sense of self. Residential school survivors and their families have faced many challenges in this area. The forcible removal of Indigenous children from their families robbed the children of their identity and reduced parents' ability to share their language and culture with their children. This has led to intergenerational trauma in many families. That's why supporting Indigenous efforts to restore and celebrate language and culture are so important to long-term reconciliation efforts.

Ontario worked with Indigenous partners and education stakeholders to host the Gidinwewininaan No Lang Indigenous Languages Symposium at Lakehead University. "Gidinwewininaan" and "No Lang" mean "our languages" in Anishinaabemowin and Michif to honour the host nations Fort William First Nation and the Métis. The symposium is the first step in a \$13.4-million strategy to support **the revitalization of Indigenous languages** in Ontario. The symposium provides a platform for Indigenous partners and education stakeholders to co-develop the next steps in the strategy.

Ontario has committed \$5 million annually to establishing an **Indigenous Culture Fund** to be launched in 2017. The purpose of the fund is to support cultural activities and programming in Indigenous communities, increasing opportunities for Indigenous peoples to engage in and share cultural practices, knowledge and learning.

The government is investing \$2 million in

2017-18 and \$2.5 million annually starting in 2018-19 to support **youth cultural camps** in Indigenous communities. Following successful pilot camps in Fort Albany First Nation and Pikangikum First Nation, in February 2017, the province is working with Indigenous partners to expand youth cultural camps to 12 regional leadership camps and more than 40 community camps by 2019. The Indigenous-led camps include **community-based cultural programming** to expand understanding of traditional knowledge and languages among Indigenous youth and support youth leadership skills and resilience.

Reconciliation...

The University of Toronto and Queen's University have released reports focused on actions to help faculty and students better understand the history of residential schools and support the Indigenous community and reconciliation efforts on campus. Key areas identified for action include: strengthening relationships with local Indigenous communities, increasing support for the recruitment of Indigenous faculty, acknowledging Indigenous traditions and expanding Indigenous spaces on campus.

...a shared journey

Reconciling Relationships with Indigenous Peoples

Reconciliation efforts will only succeed if they are founded on respect and understanding. Non-Indigenous people in Ontario need to re-build and revitalize relationships with Indigenous people on that basis. That's why Ontario is taking steps to apply **a model of reconciliation** to the work done every day by all public servants.

This began with a small, but meaningful change — the name of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was changed to the **Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation** to demonstrate Ontario's long-term commitment and efforts toward reconciliation.

The signing of the 2015 Political Accord was a historic step in renewing the relationship between First Nations and the Government of Ontario. To advance the new joint commitments in the Political Accord, First Nations require additional tools and resources. Ontario is providing funding to the Chiefs of Ontario and Provincial Territorial Organizations to help **establish a policy network** to ensure better policy collaboration and coordination between First Nations and Ontario ministries.

The **advice of Indigenous leaders, youth and Elders** is also being sought and incorporated into government decision-making.

Examples include:

- Ensuring Indigenous leadership participation at the Ministers' Table on Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion
- Establishing the Elders Council to provide advice to the Attorney General of Ontario and the Indigenous Justice Division to make the justice system more responsive

to the needs of Indigenous people and support the reclamation of Indigenous legal systems


- Creating a youth circle to guide the development of the youth-leading-youth anti-racism program

Treaties are acknowledged in minister's public statements, and several government documents are being translated into Indigenous languages. For example, a questionnaire to collect feedback from Indigenous communities on Ontario's food security strategy and improving access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food included the option to participate and share feedback in several Indigenous languages.

Reconciliation...

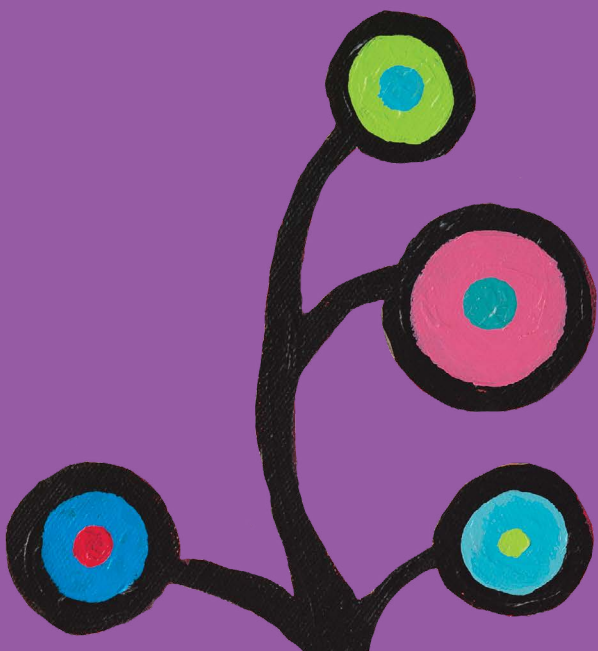
Since 2016, all Toronto District School Board schools have acknowledged traditional Indigenous territories at the beginning of each school day. In keeping with Indigenous protocol and building respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, it is also customary for schools to include Indigenous acknowledgements at the beginning of meetings and events.

...a shared journey



Walking this journey together for a shared tomorrow, Ontario and Indigenous peoples are moving forward on the path of reconciliation.

While much progress has been made in the past year, Ontario will continue to work with Indigenous partners to implement The Journey Together commitments and take action to bring meaningful change to Indigenous people and communities.



Ontario.ca/Reconciliation

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