

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

DRAFT ACTION PLAN

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION



Message from the Minister

June 2021

In late 2019, the Province of British Columbia made history. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act) was passed unanimously in the B.C. legislature. This pivotal legislation establishes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) as the framework for reconciliation in B.C. It ensures the human rights of Indigenous peoples are respected and helps create clarity and predictability for all people in British Columbia on the path ahead.

Under the Declaration Act, the provincial government must develop an action plan in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples to meet the objectives of the UN Declaration. Delivering an action plan is one of the key mandates that Premier John Horgan gave me when I was appointed Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation in November 2020.

Its importance has come into sharp focus at this time, as we face our collective truth – truth of the impacts of colonial laws, practices and policies over generations, and truth in the ongoing harms Indigenous peoples across the province and the country still experience every day. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission described the residential school system as having the effect of “cultural genocide.” The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls produced an expert report characterizing the impacts of colonialism on Indigenous women and girls as “genocidal.” The truth is that we need to do better as a government and as a society.

I sincerely acknowledge the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc's leaders and knowledge-keepers as they exercise their protocols to determine the next steps to care for the children who didn't come home from the Kamloops Indian Residential School. I also acknowledge the survivors, families and communities across the country who continue to share their truth, seek justice and do the hard work of healing.

It is our hope that the proposed actions in this draft plan demonstrate our government's commitment to pursuing true and meaningful reconciliation.

The provincial government and organizations representing Indigenous peoples and nations have worked together over the past year in an effort to identify the priority goals and actions to include in this first draft. We are very grateful for the leadership, expertise and commitment of Indigenous partners who have engaged with us on this important work.

We are now looking for further input from all Indigenous peoples in B.C. so that we can ensure that the finalized action plan appropriately represents your priorities. We want to hear from Indigenous peoples about your thoughts on this draft action plan.



In developing this draft, our engagement has been extensive. We have worked with representatives from ministries across the provincial government to hold more than 80 separate meetings, with over 75 First Nations and Indigenous partners, to identify potential actions. We also received 30 written submissions and input from engagement with 11 First Nation organizations carried out by the First Nations Leadership Council (which represents the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs).

The draft action plan also draws from priorities identified through a variety of agreements with First Nations and Indigenous organizations and in response to the advocacy and leadership of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples over many years. The results of all this engagement form the foundation of this draft action plan. The collaboration between Indigenous leadership and ministries has been invaluable. We appreciate the wisdom and perspectives that everyone has brought to the table as part of these discussions.

Now we want to hear from you. Please visit engage.gov.bc.ca/declaration for information on how you can share your thoughts on the draft action plan.

Thank you for taking time to provide your input. Feedback from Indigenous peoples throughout B.C. is essential so that we develop the best possible action plan. This plan will help guide the provincial government's work with Indigenous peoples over the next five years, to make sure that we continue to make real progress on reconciliation.



Murray Rankin
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation



Introduction

The Government of B.C. unanimously passed the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) (Declaration Act) in the Legislative Assembly in November 2019. British Columbia was the first jurisdiction in Canada to adopt the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UN Declaration) through legislation, recognizing in law the human rights of Indigenous peoples. The Declaration Act was developed jointly with Indigenous leaders and legal staff, and was introduced through a historic ceremony.

The Declaration Act established the UN Declaration as the Province’s framework for reconciliation, as called for by the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#). Section 4 of the Declaration Act requires the development and implementation of an action plan, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, to meet the objectives of the UN Declaration.

The UN Declaration is a “universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of Indigenous peoples.”¹ The provincial government is committed to implementing these human rights in its institutions, laws, policies and practices to advance reconciliation and address the legacy and harms of colonialism on Indigenous peoples.

This draft action plan provides an outline of significant actions the Province and Indigenous partners have cooperatively identified and propose to pursue over the next five years. The Province has released this draft action plan to seek input and feedback from Indigenous peoples before finalizing it.

First Nations people have lived, governed and thrived on the lands now known as British Columbia since time immemorial. Colonization drastically disrupted the self-determined lives and cultures of Indigenous peoples across Canada. The Declaration Act is both an acknowledgment of these histories and a commitment by the Government of B.C. to affirm and restore the human rights of Indigenous peoples.

If history is a teacher, meeting this collective responsibility will require a different approach from what has been done before. This draft of the action plan has been built through discussion with Indigenous peoples in B.C. on the best approach to taking on this work together. It proposes initial actions for the Province to take in collaboration with Indigenous peoples over the next five years. Through the action plan, the Province is committed to changing the trajectory of history through coherent, concrete and co-operative action.

¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Indigenous Peoples). Available at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>



Overview

This draft action plan is intended to provide a province-wide, whole-of-government roadmap. It describes shared long-term goals and outcomes for the provincial government to meet the objectives of the UN Declaration over time.

The proposed actions have been identified through collaboration and consultation between the provincial government and Indigenous peoples to support changes in beliefs, behaviours and systems that will begin to shift the status quo, address Indigenous-specific racism and establish new foundations of government that reflect the human rights of Indigenous peoples.

The action plan is meant to help everyone who lives in British Columbia to understand the importance of reconciliation for B.C. and how it will help the province achieve its greatest social, cultural and economic potential.

The draft action plan outlines proposed actions to be taken in cooperation with Indigenous peoples between 2021 and 2026, with progress reviewed on an annual basis and publicly reported.

The actions identified in the draft action plan build on priorities brought forward through decades of advocacy and leadership by Indigenous peoples. These include existing priorities identified in current agreements between the Province and Indigenous organizations.

The 2018 [Implementing the Commitment Document - Concrete Actions: Transforming Laws, Policies, Processes and Structures](#) is one existing document between the First Nations Leadership Council and the Province that sets out priorities with First Nations, including with respect to policy and legislative changes that reflect the recognition and implementation of title and rights.

The [Métis Nation Relationship Accord II](#) between Métis Nation British Columbia and the Province is another critical existing document that sets out priorities with the Métis people, including with respect to a wide range of social, cultural and economic topics.

The actions also address priorities and commitments set out in treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements with Indigenous peoples.

It is important to note that the draft action plan does not include all provincial initiatives to advance reconciliation in B.C. Further, while closely linked to work under section 3 of the Declaration Act to ensure laws are consistent with the UN Declaration, the action plan is a separate and distinct obligation. Actions proposed in this draft plan do not replace, limit, change or stop existing initiatives or related commitments. These efforts will continue alongside the development and implementation of the action plan.



The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act contributes to the implementation of the UN Declaration in B.C. by:

- requiring the Province, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, to take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of B.C. are consistent with the UN Declaration (section 3);
- requiring the development and implementation of an action plan, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration (section 4);
- requiring the Province to report annually on progress made toward alignment of laws and achievement of the goals in the action plan (section 5); and
- enabling agreements with Indigenous governing bodies, including joint or consent-based decision-making agreements that reflect free, prior and informed consent (sections 6 and 7).

The action plan will be updated within five years, identifying new actions in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples that reflect emerging opportunities and build on progress made.



Shared Understandings

The action plan and its implementation are informed by the following understandings:

Comprehensive The articles of the UN Declaration are interrelated and interdependent, intended to be read together and understood as an indivisible whole.

Distinctions-based The design and implementation of the action plan reflects that First Nations, Métis and Inuit are distinct peoples with unique cultures, histories, rights and legal traditions in what is now B.C., and the Province's relationship with each will reflect their respective rights, interests, priorities and circumstances.

Diverse The action plan reflects the principle of diversity amongst Indigenous peoples as stated in section 1(2) of the Declaration Act, which includes meeting the standard in article 37(2) that nothing in the UN Declaration “may be interpreted as diminishing or eliminating the rights of Indigenous peoples contained in treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements.”

Legally Plural The action plan is grounded in the affirmation, consistent with the UN Declaration, that upholding the human rights of Indigenous peoples includes recognizing that within Canada there are multiple legal orders, including Indigenous laws and legal orders with distinct roles, responsibilities and authorities.

Principled The goals, outcomes and actions in the action plan and the process of implementing them will be consistent with “the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being” of Indigenous peoples in the UN Declaration.

Cooperative The action plan has been developed and will be implemented in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples.

Enabling The action plan must enable and support government-to-government relationships between Indigenous peoples and the Province based on recognition and implementation of the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Impactful The implementation of the action plan must make tangible improvements to Indigenous peoples' social, physical, cultural and economic well-being.

Transparent Progress under the action plan will be reviewed and publicly reported on annually.

The Province of British Columbia recognizes that a distinctions-based approach is needed to ensure that the unique rights, interests and circumstances of Indigenous peoples in B.C. are acknowledged, affirmed and implemented. Throughout the draft action plan, references to First Nations, Métis and Inuit are made very intentionally to reflect these distinctions. Goals, outcomes and actions in the draft plan are similarly aligned with the unique priorities and interests of each people. Feedback on the draft action plan is being sought to ensure that these priorities have been accurately reflected, and to provide an opportunity for Indigenous peoples to shape the plan further before it is finalized.



2021 – 2026 Actions

Actions to be taken between 2021 and 2026 are organized in the following four themes:

1. Self-determination and inherent right of self-government
2. Title and rights of Indigenous peoples
3. Ending Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination
4. Social, cultural and economic well-being

The proposed actions are introduced by statements of **Goals** that will be achieved through implementation of the UN Declaration and **Outcomes** that will demonstrate that the objectives of the UN Declaration are being successfully met throughout B.C. The Goals and Outcomes describe the long-term vision for this work, providing guidance for assessing progress and developing future actions.

The ministry or ministries responsible for leading the work on each action are noted in brackets.

1. Self-Determination and Inherent Right of Self-Government

GOAL

Indigenous peoples exercise and have full enjoyment of their rights to self-determination and self-government, including developing, maintaining and implementing their own institutions, laws, governing bodies, and political, economic and social structures related to Indigenous communities.

OUTCOMES

A British Columbia where:

- ◆ Indigenous peoples are fully supported in their work of freely determining and implementing their systems and institutions of government, through their internal processes of nation-rebuilding.
- ◆ Indigenous governments are recognized and engaged with as governments with formalized and predictable relationships with the Province and are exercising their jurisdictions and laws.

2021-2026 ACTIONS

The Province recognizes that the work of nation-rebuilding is internal to Indigenous nations, to be conducted in accordance with Indigenous legal processes, rights, cultures, traditions and standards, and undertaken as part of expressing, building, strengthening and implementing an Indigenous nation's freely chosen governance systems. To advance this, the Province will take the following actions in collaboration with Indigenous peoples from 2021 to 2026:

- 1.1** In partnership with the Government of Canada, establish a new institution designed and driven by First Nations to provide supports to First Nations in their work of nation- and governance-rebuilding and boundary resolution in accordance with First Nations laws, customs and traditions. (*Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation*)



- 1.2** Shift from short-term transactional arrangements to the co-development of long-term agreements that recognize and support reconciliation, self-determination, decision-making and economic independence. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 1.3** Utilize sections 6 and 7 of the Declaration Act to complete government-to-government agreements that recognize Indigenous self-government and self-determination. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 1.4** Co-develop with Indigenous peoples a new distinctions-based fiscal relationship and framework that supports the operation of Indigenous governments, whether through modern treaties, self-government agreements or advancing the right to self-government through other mechanisms. This work will include collaboration with the Government of Canada. *(Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 1.5** Co-develop and implement new distinctions-based policy frameworks for resource revenue-sharing and other fiscal mechanisms with Indigenous peoples. *(Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 1.6** Enhance treaty implementation infrastructure for effective and fully resourced implementation of responsibilities related to treaties across government. This will include a comprehensive approach to educating public servants about treaty rights and obligations. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 1.7** Demonstrate a new and more flexible funding model and partnership approach that supports First Nations to plan, design and deliver mental health and wellness services across a full continuum of care and to address the social determinants of health and wellness. *(Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)*
- 1.8** Prioritize the implementation of the First Nations Justice Strategy, and the Métis Justice Strategy once it is finalized, to reduce the substantial overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples involved in and impacted by the justice system, affirm Indigenous self-determination and enable the restoration of traditional justice systems and institutions. *(Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)*
- 1.9** Co-develop an approach to deliver on the BC Tripartite Education Agreement commitment: “The Ministry of Education and First Nations Education Steering Committee co-develop legislation that requires local education agreements (LEAs) with First Nations where a First Nation wants one, and that requires the application of the provincial LEA at the request of a First Nation.” *(Ministry of Education)*
- 1.10** Recognize the integral role of Indigenous-controlled post-secondary institutions in the province through the development of legislation and provision of core funding. *(Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training)*
- 1.11** Strengthen culturally appropriate post-secondary educational opportunities for urban Indigenous learners in the Lower Mainland. *(Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training)*
- 1.12** Co-develop an updated Emergency Program Act with Indigenous peoples. *(Emergency Management BC)*
- 1.13** Support inclusive regional governance by advancing Indigenous participation in regional district boards. *(Ministry of Municipal Affairs)*



2. Title and Rights of Indigenous Peoples

GOAL

Indigenous peoples exercise and have full enjoyment of their rights, including the rights of First Nations to own, use, develop and control lands and resources within their territories in B.C.

OUTCOMES

A British Columbia where:

- ◆ The distinctions-based rights of Indigenous peoples are upheld and exercised.
- ◆ The rights of Indigenous peoples, including First Nations title, are exercised, recognized and respected, and co-operatively implemented including through treaties, government-to-government agreements and other constructive arrangements.
- ◆ The Province's laws, policies and practices recognize and respect the distinctions-based rights of Indigenous peoples.
- ◆ Dispute-resolution and relationship-building with Indigenous peoples are supported through co-operatively established institutions and processes that are fair, just and accessible, integrate Indigenous laws and protocols, and use the court system only as a last resort.
- ◆ First Nations benefit socially, culturally and economically from land and resources in their territories, including having access to multiple and diverse streams of revenue to finance their governments and deliver services to their citizens.
- ◆ Indigenous governments exercise their autonomy to set their own priorities, allocate fiscal resources and determine how to deliver programs and services to their citizens.

2021-2026 ACTIONS

The Province recognizes the need to shift from patterns of litigation and expensive and slow negotiations about title and rights to cooperative implementation through effective government-to-government relationships. To advance this, the Province will take the following actions in collaboration with Indigenous peoples from 2021 to 2026:

- 2.1** Create a dedicated secretariat to coordinate government's reconciliation efforts and to ensure new legislation and policies are consistent with the Declaration Act. (*Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation*)
- 2.2** Finalize the [Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples](#). (*Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation*)
- 2.3** Issue guidelines from the Attorney General of B.C. to the Ministry of Attorney General legal counsel regarding the conduct of civil litigation involving the rights of Indigenous peoples. (*Ministry of Attorney General*)



- 2.4** Address the need for non-derogation clauses universally either in the Interpretation Act or some other means. *(Ministry of Attorney General)*
- 2.5** Negotiate new joint decision-making and consent agreements under section 7 of the Declaration Act that include clear accountabilities, transparency and administrative fairness between the Province and Indigenous governing bodies. Seek all necessary legislative amendments to enable the implementation of any section 7 agreements. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 2.6** Co-develop and employ mechanisms for ensuring the minimum standards of the UN Declaration are applied in the implementation of treaties, agreements under sections 6 and 7 of the Declaration Act and other constructive arrangements with Indigenous governments. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 2.7** Co-develop and enhance strategic-level policies, programs and initiatives reflecting collaboration and cooperation on stewardship of the environment, land and resources. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation, BC Oil and Gas Commission)*
- 2.8** Engage with First Nations in matters related to the sustainable management of water including, for instance, the development of the Watershed Security Strategy and associated Watershed Security Fund. *(Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy)*
- 2.9** Engage with Indigenous partners on issues related to conservation and biodiversity in B.C. including the protection of species at risk. *(Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy)*
- 2.10** Lead work with the federal government to develop new strategies to protect and revitalize B.C.'s wild salmon populations, including the development and implementation of a cohesive B.C. Wild Pacific Salmon Strategy. *(Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries)*
- 2.11** Reform forest policy in consultation with First Nations to ensure shared prosperity while protecting the environment. *(Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development)*
- 2.12** Integrate traditional practices into current practices by supporting the reintroduction of cultural fire across all types of natural landscapes to enable First Nations to use traditional knowledge to care for and protect their lands and communities, in particular from wildfire. Partner with First Nations to build understanding about the importance of the traditional and cultural uses of fire, and the benefits of reviving traditional and cultural burning on the land base as part of wildfire prevention and land management. *(Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development)*
- 2.13** Advance reconciliation discussions on historical road impacts and road accessibility with First Nations on reserve, treaty and title lands. *(Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure)*



3. Ending Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination

GOAL

Indigenous peoples fully enjoy, express and exercise their rights without interpersonal, systemic and institutional interference, oppression or other limitations associated with Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination.

OUTCOMES

A British Columbia where:

- ◆ All citizens have a constructive and respectful understanding of the distinct history and unique rights of Indigenous peoples in B.C.
- ◆ The overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the justice system is eliminated.
- ◆ Indigenous peoples feel safe accessing the health-care system, knowing that they will receive high quality care, be treated with respect and receive the culturally safe and appropriate services that they deserve.
- ◆ Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+² people enjoy full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.

2021-2026 ACTIONS

The Province recognizes that systemic racism and discrimination against Indigenous peoples exists throughout British Columbia and that fundamental changes to systems, behaviours, attitudes and beliefs are needed. To advance this, the Province will take the following actions in collaboration with Indigenous peoples between 2021 and 2026:

- 3.1** Provide essential training across the B.C. public service and other public institutions and corporations to build foundational competence and understanding of the rights of Indigenous peoples, the UN Declaration, the Declaration Act, Indigenous history, treaties, Indigenous-specific racism, the dynamics of proper respectful relations and meaningful reconciliation. *(Public Service Agency, Ministry of Finance – Crown Agencies and Board Resourcing Office)*
- 3.2** Establish and pursue targets for Indigenous representation in the public sector, including at senior levels. *(Public Service Agency, Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat)*
- 3.3** Develop and implement an anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination strategy in the K-12 system to address the “racism of low expectations” reported by the Auditor General in 2015, including formally exploring how to implement a mandatory course or bundle of credits related to First Peoples as part of graduation requirements in B.C. *(Ministry of Education)*

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² 2SLGBTQQIA+ refers to two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual and other sexually and gender diverse people.



- 3.4** Conduct 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. *(Ministry of Education)*
- 3.5** Develop full-course offerings in First Nation languages and implement the educational Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the K-12 system. *(Ministry of Education)*
- 3.6** Introduce anti-racism legislation that addresses Indigenous-specific racism. *(Ministry of Attorney General)*
- 3.7** Recognize the [In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination in B.C. health care](#) report as a blueprint for action to address systemic racism in the health-care system and collaboratively implement associated recommendations, striving for a health-care system in B.C. that is culturally safe and free of Indigenous-specific racism. *(Ministry of Health)*
- 3.8** Collaboratively finalize and initiate implementation of the Province’s plan to address the [Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) and the upcoming strategy to end gender-based violence, so that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people enjoy equal protection against all forms of violence and discrimination. *(Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Finance - Gender Equity Office)*
- 3.9** Engage with First Nations to identify and implement multi-modal transportation solutions to support safe and reliable transportation services for communities. *(Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure)*
- 3.10** Seek legislative amendments to add Indigenous identity as an enumerated ground in the B.C. Human Rights Code. *(Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)*
- 3.11** Implement improvements to public safety oversight bodies and complaints processes, such as enhanced investments in the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal and new models for including Indigenous laws in complaints resolution. *(Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Ministry of Attorney General)*
- 3.12** Develop and implement comprehensive policing reforms to address widespread concerns about systemic biases and racism within policing, including updating the Police Act to reflect today’s challenges and needs, implementing updated Provincial Policing Standards, contributing to the modernization of the federal First Nations Policing Program, and enhancing community-based prevention programming for at-risk individuals. *(Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Ministry of Attorney General)*
- 3.13** Advance the collection and use of disaggregated demographic data, guided by Indigenous data governance, and support the establishment of an Indigenous-governed and mandated regional data centre and alignment with the Data Governance Strategy. *(Ministry of Citizens’ Services)*
- 3.14** Broaden the Province’s adoption of an inclusive digital font that allows for Indigenous languages to be included in communication, signage, services and official records. *(Ministry of Citizens’ Services)*
- 3.15** Review, evaluate and improve B.C.’s Indigenous Youth Internship Program. *(Public Service Agency)*



4. Social, cultural and economic well-being

GOAL

Indigenous peoples in B.C. fully enjoy and exercise their distinct rights to maintain, control, develop, protect and transmit their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, languages, food systems, sciences and technologies, which are supported by initiatives that promote connection, development, access and improvement, as well as full participation in all aspects of B.C.'s economy.

This includes particular focus on the rights of Indigenous women, youth, elders, children, persons with disabilities and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

OUTCOMES

A British Columbia where:

- ◆ Indigenous peoples, communities and nations in B.C. are thriving and prospering as full participants in the social, cultural and economic landscape of the province.
- ◆ Indigenous nations design, control and set the standards and policies for the services that support and facilitate the well-being of Indigenous citizens.
- ◆ Indigenous communities care for their own children and youth, and Indigenous nations exercise jurisdiction over their own child and family services through systems and practices they determine for themselves, with family preservation prioritized and children and youth kept connected to their communities and culture.
- ◆ Indigenous children in need of protection are cared for by their community and where they cannot be cared for by their community, they are connected to community and culture.
- ◆ Health, social and education systems apply an intersectional lens to meet the needs and honour the worldviews, cultures, lived experiences, knowledge and histories of Indigenous peoples.
- ◆ Indigenous languages are living, used, taught and visible throughout their respective territories, including in the provincial public school system.
- ◆ Indigenous food systems are recognized and supported in their foundational and interconnected role in providing for cultural, social, environmental and economic well-being.
- ◆ Indigenous learners lead graduation rates, are supported to pursue their own excellence, and can access relevant and responsive post-secondary education and skills training.
- ◆ Government functions in such a way that distinct Indigenous cultures and identities are understood, upheld and respected, including how Indigenous peoples access and interact with all government services.
- ◆ Respect for Indigenous cultures is tangibly demonstrated through Indigenous maintenance, control, protection and development of their cultural heritage resources, intellectual property, art, spiritual traditions, knowledge systems, economic systems, food systems and spiritual and sacred sites.



2021-2026 ACTIONS

The Province recognizes that social and economic disparities exist in British Columbia with particular impacts on Indigenous peoples, and that addressing these disparities while supporting the cultural distinctiveness of Indigenous peoples is fundamental to upholding human rights. To advance this, the Province will take the following actions in collaboration with Indigenous peoples from 2021 to 2026:

Social

- 4.1** Identify and undertake concrete measures to increase the literacy and numeracy achievement levels of Indigenous students at all levels of the K-12 education system. *(Ministry of Education)*
- 4.2** Develop and implement an effective recruitment and retention strategy to increase the number of Indigenous teachers in the public education system. *(Ministry of Education)*
- 4.3** Co-develop expectations for the involvement of Indigenous Education Councils in school district financial planning and reporting. *(Ministry of Education)*
- 4.4** Identify, develop and implement mechanisms and approaches to enable boards of education to better support Indigenous students, including increasing and ensuring equitable access to education and safe environments. *(Ministry of Education)*
- 4.5** Co-develop, with Indigenous post-secondary and skills training partners, a framework for Indigenous post-secondary education and training, including: revising and expanding the Aboriginal Service Plan program to all 25 public post-secondary institutions; prioritizing Indigenous representation on public post-secondary institution boards; and ensuring adequate and culturally appropriate housing for Indigenous post-secondary students. *(Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training)*
- 4.6** Continue to strengthen and evolve the First Nation health governance structure in B.C. to ensure First Nations are supported to participate as full and equal partners in decision-making and service delivery at local, regional and provincial levels, and engage First Nations and the Government of Canada on the need for legislation as envisioned in the tripartite health plans and agreements. *(Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)*
- 4.7** Advance the implementation of Primary Care Networks, the First Nations-led Primary Health Care Initiative, and other primary care priorities, embedding Indigenous perspectives into models of care to increase Indigenous peoples' access to primary care and other health services, and improve cultural safety and quality. *(Ministry of Health)*
- 4.8** Strengthen the continuum of Indigenous-led and community-based social services and supports that are trauma-informed, culturally safe and address a range of holistic wellness needs, for those who are in crisis, at-risk and have experienced violence and trauma. *(Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)*



- 4.9** Build on collaborative efforts to address the disproportionate impact of the overdose public health emergency on Indigenous peoples, including fast-tracking the move toward decriminalization by working with police chiefs to push the federal government to decriminalize simple possession of small amounts of illicit drugs for personal use, as a way to end stigma and shame associated with addiction. In the absence of prompt federal action, develop a multi-pronged made-in-B.C. solution that will save lives and ensure there are adequate recovery beds and evidence-based, culturally appropriate services to meet the needs. *(Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Ministry of Attorney General)*
- 4.10** Increase access to culturally safe substance use services, including through the renovation and construction of Indigenous-run treatment centres and the integration of land-based and traditional approaches to healing. *(Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)*
- 4.11** Support Indigenous partners in COVID-19 pandemic health and wellness planning and response, including the implementation of the [Rural, Remote, First Nations and Indigenous COVID-19 Framework](#) to deliver more immediate and culturally safe care closer to home. *(Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)*
- 4.12** Co-develop a B.C.-specific fiscal framework, in consultation with Indigenous peoples, to support Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services *(Ministry of Children and Family Development)*
- 4.13** Continue efforts to reduce the number of First Nation, Inuit and Métis children and youth in care and support increased family preservation. *(Ministry of Children and Family Development)*
- 4.14** In collaboration with Indigenous partners, continue planning for long-term systemic change in the delivery of culturally safe Indigenous-led child care and improve access to culturally relevant child care for Indigenous families who want or need child care. *(Ministry of Children and Family Development)*
- 4.15** Advance a collaborative, whole-of-government approach in the partnership between Métis Nation British Columbia and the Province of B.C., respecting Métis self-determination and working to establish more flexibility and sustainability in funding. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 4.16** Create a provincial urban Indigenous advisory table to address priorities identified by urban Indigenous communities that represent the interests of Elders, youth, women and persons with disabilities. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 4.17** Undertake a cross-government review of provincial supports and services for Indigenous peoples in urban settings and develop a plan that will provide greater collaboration and coordination to meet needs. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 4.18** Expand support to Aboriginal Friendship Centres that serve the needs of local Indigenous communities while playing a vital role in connecting Indigenous peoples in urban settings to their home communities. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 4.19** Build more housing for Indigenous peoples both on- and off-reserve and pursue new federal contributions. *(Ministry of Attorney General)*



Cultural Heritage

- 4.20** Establish a working group to develop a strategy for the preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages in B.C., including potential legislative supports. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Education)*
- 4.21** Support cultural preservation and revitalization by funding key projects designed to preserve and respect Indigenous cultures and revitalization of First Nations languages. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 4.22** Co-develop a K-12 First Nation Language Policy and associated implementation plan for the public education system, including ensuring that the language and culture of the local First Nation(s) on whose territory(ies) a board of education operates schools are the ones primarily reflected in any First Nations language and culture programs and services of the board. *(Ministry of Education)*
- 4.23** Co-develop a policy framework to support First Nations repatriating cultural belongings. *(Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport)*
- 4.24** Reset the relationship between the Royal BC Museum and First Nations in B.C. by ensuring that Indigenous voices are prioritized and inform the development of narratives, exhibitions and learning programs at the Collections and Research Building and new museum in order to advance public understanding of Indigenous history, rights, cultures, languages and the negative impacts of Indigenous-specific racism. *(Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport)*
- 4.25** Engage First Nations across B.C. in a dialogue on the Heritage Conservation Act to ensure consistency with the UN Declaration and the protection of Indigenous heritage sites and objects, including an enhanced role for First Nations in decision-making. *(Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development)*
- 4.26** Reflect Indigenous peoples' histories and cultures in provincial parks and wilderness areas through re-naming parks and associated geographic features using Indigenous languages. *(Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy)*

Economic

- 4.27** Ensure every First Nations community in B.C. has high-speed internet services. *(Ministry of Citizens' Services)*
- 4.28** Provide funding to assist Indigenous tourism businesses that have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in order to further support recovery of the Indigenous tourism sector in B.C. *(Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport)*
- 4.29** Establish new investments in Indigenous tourism in B.C. *(Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport)*
- 4.30** Provide funding and strengthen partnerships for the delivery of community-based skills training and post-secondary education programs to enable more Indigenous people to upgrade their skills, obtain credentials and secure employment. *(Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction)*



- 4.31** Working with Indigenous partners, develop economic metrics to help evaluate progress as reconciliation is advanced. The baseline data will begin to address the persistent gap in Indigenous-specific economic metrics and through this co-designed effort, build a comprehensive set of data to measure Indigenous economic well-being and track progress over time. *(Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 4.32** Prioritize and increase the number of placements for Indigenous peoples and other groups currently under-represented in B.C.'s technology sector. *(Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation)*
- 4.33** Improve economic supports for Indigenous workers and employers by increasing access for Indigenous clients to the Ministry of Labour's services and programs, including employment standards, workers' compensation and workplace safety. *(Ministry of Labour)*
- 4.34** Engage First Nations to identify and support clean energy opportunities related to CleanBC, the Comprehensive Review of BC Hydro, and the B.C. Utilities Commission Inquiry on the Regulation of Indigenous Utilities. *(Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation)*
- 4.35** Engage with Indigenous peoples on relevant elements of CleanBC including, for example, the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy. *(Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy)*
- 4.36** Advance a collaborative approach to cannabis-related governance and jurisdiction between First Nations and the Province that reflects common objectives to protect youth, prioritize public health and safety, strengthen First Nations governance capacity and secure economic benefits for First Nations. *(Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)*
- 4.37** Work with the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food and other Indigenous partners to identify opportunities to strengthen Indigenous food systems and increase Indigenous participation in the agriculture and food sector. *(Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries)*
- 4.38** Review existing provincial mandates to enhance treaty and self-governing Nations' fiscal capacity to deliver services to their citizens. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*



Accountability and Implementation

The Province's development of the draft action plan was undertaken in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, and centred around the shared understandings outlined previously. The process to finalize and implement the action plan will be approached in the same way – comprehensive, distinctions-based, diverse, legally plural, principled, cooperative, enabling, impactful and transparent.

Once the action plan has been finalized, ministries across government will continue to work in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples to effectively manage the implementation of action items identified in the plan. Ministries will be responsible for managing oversight of actions they are leading and ensuring effective monitoring and reporting on progress. As the action plan is provincial in scope, it requires an all-of-government approach to support success in its implementation.

The Province will work with Indigenous peoples to identify suitable tools, indicators and measures for monitoring, assessing and reporting out on progress on implementation in the annual report of the Declaration Act.

The action plan will be reported on in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples through the annual report and will be comprehensively updated within five years.

