



Government of British Columbia

Key Highlights

Key accomplishments from June 2021 to June 2022 included release of *A Path Forward: Priorities and Early Strategies for BC* (the Path Forward) in conjunction with the release of the *2021 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People National Action Plan: Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People* on June 3, 2021, more funding provided to increase the number of emergency sexual assault response services grants, and release of the five-year Declaration Act Action Plan.

Path Forward

The Path Forward reflects priorities identified in Indigenous-led dialogue sessions with survivors, family members and communities held in 2019 and 2021. It sets a solid foundation with early strategies and a foundational investment of over \$5 million in 2021/22 to develop and implement the Path Forward Community Fund. The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCA AFC) will manage the Fund to help Indigenous communities and organizations expand safety planning capacity. The Fund is a key part of the Path Forward, BC's response to the *Reclaiming Power and Place: the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* (the Final Report).

Supports for Sexual Assault Response

In March 2021, BC provided an additional \$10 million in funding to enhance the Emergency Sexual Assault Services multi-year grant program (administered by the Ending Violence Association of BC) supporting the delivery of co-ordinated, community-based emergency sexual assault response services throughout B.C. until March 2023. In recognition of the substantial need for locally relevant and culturally safe supports for survivors in Indigenous communities in B.C., more than 40% of the grant funding was allocated to Indigenous service providers.

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Action Plan

On March 30th, 2022 BC also introduced a five-year Declaration Act Action Plan to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration). The Action Plan achieves one of the early actions in the Path Forward and is a commitment in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act), but it is much more than a legislative requirement. It provides a collectively identified long-term vision for the implementation of the UN Declaration in B.C. including 89 priority actions that will be taken towards that goal over the next five years.

Progress/Successes

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 National Action Plan – a path towards ending violence against Indigenous Women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples was released. On the same day, BC released *A Path Forward: Priorities and Early Strategies for BC* (the Path Forward).

The Path Forward is grounded in the Province's participation in the National Inquiry, research and review of historic reports and more than 3,000 recommendations, and engagement with Indigenous leadership, survivors, family members and community organizations undertaken in 2019 and 2021.

The number one priority identified across all community engagement sessions since 2019 is the need for increased capacity so that Indigenous communities can create and implement their own culturally safe and appropriate solutions to the systemic issues resulting in violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. In a first step to meet this need, the Province made a foundational investment of more than \$5 million in 2021-22. With these resources, BC is investing in a [new Path Forward Community Fund](#) – accessible to First Nations communities, urban/off reserve communities, Métis, Inuit citizens and 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities – to support capacity to develop safety plans. A cornerstone of this work includes taking a distinctions-based approach (i.e., an approach that recognizes the diversity of Indigenous communities across BC) that honours and respects the expertise, agency, and leadership of Indigenous peoples throughout all stages of planning and implementation.

The Path Forward Community Fund

The BCAAFC will manage the Community Fund, including developing and administering the grant program, defining criteria, reviewing applications and distributing grants to Indigenous communities and organizations throughout the Province. As part of this work, the BCAAFC will engage communities and work collaboratively to inform and develop the objectives, intended outcomes and key indicators of the Fund. This will include making best efforts to establish an advisory committee that reflects regional representation, on and off reserve, Elders, First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and non-status communities.

Next Steps/Priorities

Moving forward, BC will continue to work in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples across the province to implement actions identified in this plan, reflecting our mutual commitment to work together in partnership.

As we reflect on the third anniversary of the release of the Final Report of the National Inquiry, BC's continued focus on addressing the systemic causes of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples remains unchanged. The resiliency and innovation in community, and the leadership and expertise of Indigenous women in particular, must be acknowledged and supported.

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan five-year plan represents a significant milestone towards fulfilling our shared responsibility for meaningful reconciliation through enhancements that support the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples, and brings significant provincial investments to housing, child welfare, justice and public safety, cultural preservation, transportation and connectivity to the forefront of our government's work in the next five years.

Ending violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people requires sustained commitment and efforts by all, with the flexibility to adapt based on emerging needs and priorities. Our government has strongly renewed its commitment to doing its part to ensure that its legislation, policies, programs and services meet the needs of those they are intended to serve.

This update has provided examples of some of the key recent initiatives BC has undertaken to advance this agenda – we know there is significant work left to do and our path forward will be guided in partnership with community, collaboration with Indigenous leadership, and coordination with all provincial stakeholders and the federal government.

Moving forward, BC will be keenly focused on working collaboratively on all relevant initiatives intended to respond to the Final Report and fulfill provincially relevant Calls for Justice, and to align our efforts towards meaningfully implementing the Declaration of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan.

Reports/Publications

Recent inquiries, reports, and other publications are posted publicly on the BC Government's webpages. The following link includes the Path Forward, BC's submissions to the commission of the National Inquiry into MMIWG, reporting related to the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, and other key inquiries and reports: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/about-bcs-justice-system/inquiries>.

Additionally, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Action Plan can be found at the following link: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/ministries/indigenous-relations-reconciliation/declaration_act_action_plan.pdf.