



Government of New Brunswick

Key Highlights

The Government of New Brunswick focused on developing its response to help improve outcomes for Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. New Brunswick held engagement sessions with the NB Advisory Committee on Violence against Indigenous Women and several First Nation communities, Indigenous peoples, and Indigenous organizations. They identified as critical needs: a focus on youth, the provision of culturally safe and appropriate supports, addressing gender inequality, mental health and addictions, and increasing meaningful opportunities. They also identified the uniqueness of each Indigenous community and the diverse realities of Indigenous persons depending on whether they live in community or off, rural or urban. The Government of New Brunswick's response is currently being developed and will reflect the community engagement sessions, and positive government actions underway, as part of the government's commitment to address violence against Indigenous women and girls and the Calls for Justice. The following principles for change were articulated as part of the community engagement sessions and guided government's work, together with its partners:

- Indigenous Woman Centered
- Valuing Culture
- Working in Partnership
- Building Trusting Relationships
- Family Participation and Peer Support
- Respect, Dignity & Compassion
- Interdisciplinary Systemic Approach

Progress/Successes

The following examples highlight some of the work completed or underway:

- The Indigenous Domestic Violence Outreach Pilot Program, an Indigenous led and culturally sensitive service, is making a difference in supporting women living in or leaving abusive relationships in three First Nations communities and off-community in the Miramichi region. This program has been expanded to reach eight additional First Nation communities in New Brunswick.
- Ongoing training sessions on intimate partner violence, the Danger Assessment tool and the *It's Your Business: A Domestic & Intimate Partner Violence Workplace Toolkit* with Indigenous communities, organizations and service providers working with Indigenous people.
- Awakening Cultural Identity and Spirituality (ACIS) - Is an activity and ongoing program within the Crime Prevention Branch. This is a voluntary program that links Traditional Elders with adult offending individuals requesting culturally distinct services for effective reintegration.
- Courage to change Indigenous Journals – These are to be implemented as evidence-based programming in Community and Institutional Corrections and have been edited by a New Brunswick First Nations Committee to ensure the cultural content is accurate for New Brunswick.
- Eagle Feather – Justice and Public Safety has an option for offenders to be able to use Eagle Feathers in oath taking processes in courts in New Brunswick.



- Coroner Inquest related to the death of a member of an Indigenous community – Whenever possible the inquests are held in a location where an Indigenous community is included in the area from which the jury will be polled. The following considerations have also been made in the inquest planning process:
 - An Indigenous Elder has been acting as an independent resource to the inquest team to provide cultural context and advice.
 - An eagle feather is made available as a choice for swearing in witnesses.
 - Cultural ceremonies such as smudging are facilitated.
 - Relationship building takes place during the planning stages of the inquest with the Indigenous communities involved and/or are near the location where the inquest will be held.
- Improving the provision of community-based mental health and addiction services to First Nations communities, on and off-reserve.
- Developing mobilization primary care units to serve First Nations communities and the off-reserve population. Regional Health Authorities focused on implementing a team-based model of primary health care, consisting of a doctor, nurse practitioner, social worker and mid-wife working in a mobilization unit to serve First Nations communities and the off-reserve population.
- Regional Health Authorities and Department of Health, in collaboration with First Nations, developing training tools and cultural safety/awareness activities to enhance culturally appropriate approaches for health care.
- The provincial government, on October 29, 2021 announced the discontinuance of its birth alert practice, with more emphasis being placed on supporting expectant mothers. The elimination of birth alerts is intended to support healing of all families and communities; it is also important to focus on prevention efforts and furthering education about programs and services that are available to parents and expectant mothers, fathers and families.

Next Steps/Priorities

The Government of New Brunswick is developing its own response to the National Inquiry and will continue to move forward on the identified priority areas: safety and security, health and well-being, justice and policing, education and employment and culture and rights.

New Brunswick's path forward will respect the principles for change identified in partnership with the NB Advisory Committee on Violence against Indigenous Women, build on the perspectives learned through engagement and improve on current initiatives to create measurable change.

The Government of New Brunswick is taking an interdisciplinary systemic approach to change. New partners and priorities will be identified and added as we move forward together. As progress is achieved, initiatives and actions will be measured as to how they are achieving outcomes and help identify future work. We also recognize the need for transparency and accountability in this work. We will work in partnership with Indigenous peoples, Indigenous communities and the Advisory Committee to make change happen and will measure and report on progress on the implementation of these goals, outcomes and actions.

