



Government of Ontario

Key Highlights

On March 31st, 2022, Ontario issued the first annual progress report on Pathways to Safety: Ontario's Strategy in Response to the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, released in May 2021. The progress report outlines advancements Ontario has made to address critical gaps in supports for Indigenous women and children, and the ways we are confronting and eliminating the root causes of violence faced by Indigenous women, children and Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, plus (2SLGBTQIA+) people.

The advances are a testament to the ongoing collaboration with Indigenous partners and communities to address and help eliminate the root causes of violence, with emphasis on increasing accountability, building relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners, and increasing programming and new investments.

For example, Ontario extended the mandate of the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council to March 2025 to ensure the voices of Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people continue to be centered in all program and policy developments aimed at ending violence. The Indigenous Women's Advisory Council provided critical input on the development of Ontario's Pathways to Safety strategy and continues to guide its implementation, as well as providing advice on priorities under the Associate Minister of Women and Children's Issues portfolio. Priorities include child, youth and family well-being, anti-human trafficking and broader violence prevention.

Examples of other key actions and investments Ontario has made to address commitments in Pathways over the past year include:

- Investing over \$36 million in Indigenous community-led mental health and addictions supports
- Providing \$20 million over three years to support burial investigations by Indigenous communities at former Indian Residential Schools in Ontario
- Strengthening mandatory, Indigenous-focused content in Social Studies, Grades 1-3 through a co-development process with Indigenous partners for implementation in September 2023. These revisions will complement the mandatory learning already present in Social Studies, Grades 4-6, and History, Grades 7, 8 and 10, introduced in 2018, and complete the spectrum of learning across this curriculum.



Progress/Successes

Between June 2021 and June 2022, Ontario's continued response to the Final Report of the National Inquiry was driven by the province's commitment to transparent accountability and building meaningful relationships. Together with the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council, the province has begun designing and implementing accountability mechanisms to effectively monitor progress on the strategy's six Pathways. In early 2022, Ontario's Ministry of Indigenous Affairs also commenced work with the 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations and with Anishinabek Nation to hold targeted, culturally responsive, and community-led conversations on the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry, so their input can be used to inform future progress under Ontario's strategy.

First Nation, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous partners have told the province that addressing violence against Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people requires the creation of systems that truly foster safety and security for Indigenous communities, and clear measures and outcomes to effectively track this progress. The collaborative and transparent collection of data to meaningfully measure the reduction of violence against Indigenous peoples is a significant long-term priority for Ontario, and while work is at a preliminary stage, it is underway.

Over this past year, Ontario has also continued to build on its commitments by strengthening actions and investing in new initiatives under Pathways to Safety. Some successes over this last year include:

- Ongoing work under the Child Welfare Redesign with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples to support the development and implementation of Indigenous-led models for child and family services
- Investment to support capacity-building activities for the Indigenous women's shelter sector as well as new and expanded healing lodge services
- New investments in mental health and addictions supports for Indigenous communities
- Expanded funding to anti-racism programs and supports
- Investment to support the identification, investigation, protection, maintenance and commemoration of burials at Indian Residential Schools and surrounding areas.

Next Steps/Priorities

Ontario recognizes that much more needs to be done. The legacy of the Indian Residential School system continues to haunt Indigenous communities across Ontario and Canada. Coupled with the impacts of the pandemic, including increased violence experienced by Indigenous women, efforts to address the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry must take on a renewed urgency. Ontario will continue working with Indigenous partners to expand collaboration and strengthen our response to the Calls for Justice, including efforts to improve collaborative data collection and measurement, collect baseline data, develop relevant indicators, and track strategy progress.

Work will also continue with the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council to support Women's Circles and Family/Survivors' Circles so women's voices are amplified. These commitments are important steps in Ontario's strategy.

Ontario will also continue to work with the federal government on shared priorities, including justice and policing, mental health supports, and housing supports. Ontario also recognizes that much more work needs to be done with Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities, and we will continue to build on conversations held to date so the needs of gender-diverse Indigenous peoples are addressed and met under the province's strategy. Finally, in partnership with the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council, Ontario will continue to release annual public progress reports to highlight progress in building a province where all Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people live in safety, free from violence and exploitation.

Reports/Publications

Ontario's 2021-22 Pathways to Safety Progress Report, released on March 31, 2022, highlights advancements made on accountability and relationship commitments under Ontario's strategy and profiles progress on key initiatives and new investments made this past year.

Progress Report: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-2021-22-pathways-safety-progress-report>

Pathways to Safety Strategy: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/pathways-safety-ontarios-strategy-response-final-report-national-inquiry-missing-and-murdered>

