



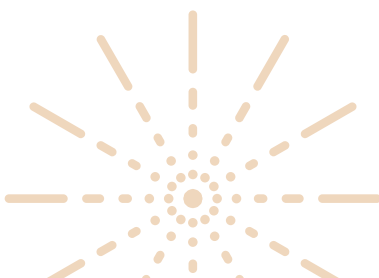
# Government of Saskatchewan

## Key Highlights



Since the release of the *National Action Plan: Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People*, the Government of Saskatchewan (Saskatchewan) continues to engage with Indigenous communities to better understand their concerns and priorities regarding matters related to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-spirited, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and other gender-diverse people (MMIWG2S+).

- In Fall 2021, the province held an engagement session to focus on the safety of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people, and on relationship building through economic reconciliation. The session was primarily led by Indigenous women, and the presenters discussed Indigenous entrepreneurship and community safety.
- Ongoing funding will be provided, starting in 2022-23, for the *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Community Response Fund*. This program funds initiatives created by Indigenous communities and organizations that address the Calls for Justice (CFJ). Saskatchewan is currently working with Indigenous representatives to co-develop the criteria, application process, and evaluation tools. This fund, which responds to CFJ 15.6, will enable applicants to generate self-determined solutions and increase safety within their communities.
- Addressing the root causes of violence and victimization is paramount for long-lasting change. This past year, Saskatchewan provided funding to Kineepik Métis Local #9 for the Muskwa Lake Wellness Camp. The camp is a grassroots community-directed program that provides land-based health intervention to address alcoholism, suicide rates and overdose deaths in northern Saskatchewan communities and includes Western addictions education and traditional Indigenous teachings. This responds to CFJ 7.3 and 7.4. The project will focus on developing a culturally responsive model that can inform future programming. Part of the grant will also go toward winterizing the camp, which will allow the program to run year-round and enable the camp to increase the number of people it serves.
- Cowessess First Nation signed off on the first Coordination Agreement in Canada in July 2021 related to *An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*. Cowessess' service authority, the Chief Red Bear Children's Lodge, is building capacity to assume delivery of child and family services to members of their Nation. Working protocols between the Lodge and Child and Family Programs continue to be developed. In response to CFJ 12.1, the Ministry of Social Services works closely with Indigenous communities and First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies to help keep families together, build capacity for extended family caregivers and keep children connected to their culture and community.



## Progress/Successes

Work continues within the themes of Culture, Health and Wellness, Human Security, and Justice.

### Culture, Health and Wellness

- To provide culturally safe culture and language programs for Indigenous children, Early Years Family Resource Centres have begun to offer programming in Indigenous languages. To date, Nipawin Early Years Family Resource Centre is offering programming in Cree (CFJ 2.3, 12.7).
- Saskatchewan hosted a public Solstice Speakers Series consisting of four events focused on MMIWG2S+ and reconciliation. The second event in late 2021 was a panel discussion on MMIWG2S+ as a form of gender-based violence, its impacts on families and community, and available supports. This event provided an opportunity for the public and community to connect, heal, and learn together, which supports the National Action Plan goal of achieving societal change by knowing the root causes of violence against MMIWG2S+ (CFJ: 11.1).
- Access to cultural spaces supports the principle of reclaiming Indigenous cultural identity and traditional practices. The incorporation of dedicated cultural spaces within health care and corrections facilities is one way to increase cultural awareness and connection. For example, four new cultural centres have been built within corrections facilities since 2021 to ensure First Nations and Métis ceremony and culture is available for adults and youth (CFJ 15.2).
- Saskatchewan continues to support families of MMIWG2S+ and survivors of violence. For example, the Saskatchewan Family Information Liaison Unit (FILU) takes a family-centred approach which includes attending and helping families organize events and activities and linking families to trauma and grief supports. This past year, FILU enabled inmates in custody to access FILU supports (CFJ 5.6).

### Human Security and Justice

- Saskatchewan continues to address the CFJ within the justice system, including calls related to trauma-informed and inclusive programming. These initiatives are designed to support women in their healing journey through increased access to relevant supports and training opportunities. This includes supporting entrepreneurial training in correctional centres for female inmates (CFJ 4.4).
- Saskatchewan recognizes the importance of increasing supports for Indigenous women and girls to access economic opportunities, which can aid in breaking the cycle of violence. In 2021, Saskatchewan signed onto the Canada-Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. One of the key priorities in 2022-23 is to engage with First Nations and Métis organizations to develop a plan for a coordinated system that reflects the needs of First Nations and Métis peoples in Saskatchewan (CFJ 1.3, 4.1, 4.4).
- As part of ongoing awareness and education, phase two of Saskatchewan's multiyear public awareness campaign, Face the Issue, launched in 2022. The campaign challenges beliefs that normalize interpersonal violence. The initial phase was designed to spark conversations, increase awareness of services, and focus on prevention. The second phase focuses on subtle forms of abuse, asking the question: "Would you know abuse if you saw it?" The campaign was translated into Cree and Dene and has had over 2.2 million views (CFJ: 1.9).
- The Protection from Human Trafficking Act came into force on April 20, 2022 to provide further safeguards for victims and survivors of human trafficking. The Act streamlines the process for victims to seek a protection order. It adds new provisions for protection orders, including one that prohibits traffickers from contacting their victims directly or indirectly. Victims can apply for a protection order on their own or be assisted by a shelter worker, a medical professional, or another prescribed individual as defined in the Act. The legislation includes significant penalties to discourage violations of protection orders. These changes respond to CFJ 3.4.

## Next Steps/Priorities

While efforts to address the CFJ are ongoing, the following remain priorities for Saskatchewan:

- Increasing the number of Indigenous employees across the public service to reflect and address Indigenous priorities, including the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and the MMIWG2S+ CFJ. Within several ministries, Indigenous Advisors guide government work and often work with Indigenous organizations and communities to address priority areas such as missing persons (CFJ 1.3, 1.4).
- Ongoing commitment to training and continued awareness across the Saskatchewan public service addresses the calls for health providers, police, employees in the judicial system, child protection workers, and all Canadians to learn about the history of Indigenous people and the impact of colonial policies. The Saskatchewan Police College employed its first Indigenous Executive Director and its first Indigenous female training officer. The Police College has also begun including Indigenous presenters and perspectives into its recruit training program (CFJ 7.6, 9.2, 9.3, 10.1).

The root causes of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people are deep and complex. Saskatchewan is committed to bridging community-led solutions and government services to address the social and economic marginalization experienced by Indigenous communities and make progress on reconciliation. The province recognizes the resilience of Indigenous peoples and respects their leadership and continued partnership in addressing violence within our communities. This collaborative work must continue to better support Indigenous women, gender-diverse people, and communities across Saskatchewan.

When someone dies, there is often a gravesite, a place to gather and remember; when someone vanishes, there is a void. Created by Indigenous artist, Lyndon Tootoosis, the Place of Reflection in Regina, Saskatchewan began with a small group of community members who shared a concept that grew into the existing place of hope.

