

# Alberta's Path to Reconciliation

February 2019



Rachel Notley's government has worked to make life better for Indigenous people, one of the fastest growing and most culturally diverse populations in the province.

Over the past four years, the Alberta government has strengthened partnerships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, organizations and people.

## Taking Responsibility for the Past



**Reconciliation means coming to terms with the past, including failed government policies and practices.**

After the 2015 election, Premier Rachel Notley apologized for Alberta's failure to stop the federal Indian Residential School system. She also voiced support for a national inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Both steps were public acknowledgements of historic abuse, violence and intergenerational trauma experienced by Indigenous peoples in Alberta.

Following months of collaboration with survivors of the Sixties Scoop, Premier Notley also apologized for a decades-long practice of removing Indigenous children from their homes, their families and their culture. Alberta is continuing to work with the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Alberta to raise awareness and improve government policies and practices.

The Premier's commitment remains strong. This summer, she signed an agreement with the Lubicon Lake Band and the Government of Canada, settling a longstanding land claim and empowering this northern Alberta First Nation.

## United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples



Following the 2015 election, Alberta began implementing the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The province is incorporating Indigenous perspectives and concerns in government policies and practices.

### Actions include:

- Alberta's new K-12 school curriculum better reflects Indigenous contributions and history, including residential schools and the Sixties Scoop.
- Alberta was the first province to make a commitment to equal access to health care under Jordan's Principle and sign an agreement with First Nations and the Government of Canada.
- Alberta has committed \$200 million for clean water on First Nations and for improved housing for a growing Indigenous population in Alberta's urban centres and Metis Settlements.

For more information about Alberta's work on reconciliation and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, visit [www.indigenous.alberta.ca](http://www.indigenous.alberta.ca).



## Health and Wellness

Reconciliation requires understanding the pressing needs of Indigenous people and communities.



### Actions include:

- A \$100-million commitment is bringing clean drinking water systems to reserves. Projects are complete at Paul First Nation and Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation.
- A maternal health pilot program in Maskwacis, Little Red River Cree Nation and inner-city Edmonton.
- Pregnancy Pathways program that provides housing and neonatal care to pregnant, homeless Indigenous women.
- The Kind Heart Project at Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation and the Metis Settlements Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Network Project.
- Over \$600,000 for Indigenous student mental health supports at 15 post-secondary institutions.
- \$5M in new funding for Indigenous community-based opioid responses, and more than \$2 million for a safe withdrawal site at Kainai First Nation (Blood Tribe).
- Staff training for Alberta Health Services to help staff better understand Indigenous history and culture.
- The Building Communities of Care grant program will help address the continuing care needs of Indigenous communities.

## Education

Reconciliation involves helping children understand the past while preparing them for the future.

Since the 2015 election, Alberta has worked to ensure Indigenous students have opportunities to succeed while using traditional skills and language.

### Actions include:

- Alberta's new K-12 school curriculum better reflects Indigenous contributions and history, including residential schools and the Sixties Scoop.



- New quality standards for teachers require knowledge and competency of Indigenous history and culture.
- More than \$50 million to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit students attending provincial schools. Historic agreements with the Maskwacis education authority and Kee Tas Kee Now Tribal Council for providing support and resources.
- Nearly 4,500 free municipal library cards were issued to residents of First Nations and Metis Settlements for the first time in Alberta's history.
- Nearly \$10 million to protect and promote Indigenous languages, including Calgary's first ever Indigenous Languages Resource Centre.
- More than \$40 million in supports and scholarships for Indigenous students.
- The Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada were distributed to every junior high and high school in Alberta.

## Supporting Indigenous Children and Families



Reconciliation is more than a gesture, it is action to reduce poverty and support families.

### Actions include:

- \$100 million for Indigenous owned and operated housing in urban centres.
- Minimum wage increased to \$15/hr, highest in Canada.
- New Alberta Child Benefit provides a benefit to families earning less than \$41,220 per year (up to \$2,740).

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- Five new \$25-a-day child care centers offering Indigenous-focused programming.
- Alberta's innovative agreement with First Nations and Canada to implement Jordan's Principle for equal access to health care.
- Changes to legislation to ensure First Nations are informed about private guardianship applications.
- Guardianships for kids in care must include home studies and cultural plans.
- Increased annual funding for Native Friendship Centres. Additional funding for nearly 20 organizations and municipalities to support urban Indigenous people, including the New in Town Aboriginal Welcome Service program, provided by Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society.



In addition to addressing poverty, since the 2015 election actions have been targeted to help support Indigenous women and girls, who are three times more likely to experience violence.

**Actions include:**

- Increased funding for women's shelters by \$15 million and another \$8 million for sexual assault centres.
- Violence prevention programs in places like Peavine Metis Settlement and Wabasca.
- Establishing Alberta's Anti-Racism Initiative, which supports Indigenous organizations and communities in fighting racism.
- Annual operational funding for the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women.
- Community grants for organizations like Tsuut'ina National Police Service and the RIEL Institute.

**Climate leadership**

**Reconciliation means working to balance economic development and environmental sustainability.**

Since 2015, Alberta has partnered with Indigenous communities and organizations to reduce emissions,

create local jobs, reduce energy bills and achieve greater economic and energy sovereignty.



In 2017-18, Alberta provided \$35 million from the carbon levy to 125 projects in 66 Indigenous communities and organizations, which will result in 265,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas reductions. This funding increased to almost \$50 million in 2018-19.

As part of Alberta's commitment to reach 30 per cent renewable electricity by 2030, the province included an Indigenous-ownership requirement for over 300 MW of bids into the Renewable Energy Program. As a result, the



Paul Band, Blood Tribe and Sawridge First Nation are successfully partnering on major wind power projects worth nearly \$600 million in southern Alberta with more expected in the future.

A new \$3.3-million grant will also help Fort Chipewyan construct a 7,500 panel solar farm that will help the community reduce its reliance on diesel.

**Consultation and Engagement**

**Reconciliation involves listening, then moving towards better processes and practices.**

Since 2015, Alberta has worked to ensure Indigenous peoples have a bigger say in government policies and land use decisions impacting their communities.

**Actions include:**

- Historic protocol agreements have been signed with Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta and the Blackfoot Confederacy.



- A new 10-year Framework Agreement with the Métis Nation of Alberta has been signed.
- An historic agreement with the Treaty 8 Trappers Association in northern Alberta was ratified.
- Implementation of Alberta's first consultation policy for Metis Settlements.
- Ongoing work with First Nations and Metis Settlements has resulted in 33 revisions to the geographic areas in which consultation is directed helping enable more effective consultation.
- A commitment to cooperative management agreements for all new protected areas in Alberta, including the Piikani Nation for the Castle parks.
- Base consultation funding for Indigenous communities has increased from 7 million to \$27 million per year.
- An Indigenous Wisdom Advisory Panel now advises Alberta's chief scientist on environmental monitoring.
- The largest protected boreal forest area in the world was created through cooperation with First Nations and Métis communities in northern Alberta.
- New legislation requires First Nations and Metis Settlements to be consulted concerning the placement of polling stations during provincial elections.

**Economic Development**



**Reconciliation cannot be achieved without working towards a more equitable economic future.**

Since 2015, Alberta has increased efforts to help communities improve economic self-reliance. The Aboriginal Business Investment Fund helps Indigenous community-owned businesses build new commercial ventures including retail, communications and heavy equipment.

The province also supported the creation of Indigenous Tourism Alberta, an association that provides specialized support for Indigenous communities as they look for ways to foster and develop tourism in their communities.

**Justice**



**Reconciliation means creating a fairer, accessible and just legal system for Indigenous people.**

**Actions include:**

- New protections for victims of sexual violence, removal of time limits for civil claims, allowing victims to break residential leases to flee abusers.
- Protection through legislation of unpaid leave and job protection in cases of domestic violence.
- Three Indigenous women appointed as judges.
- Additional funding for restorative justice, youth counselling and victims of crime.
- New court houses in Red Earth Creek and Fort Vermillion include ceremonial spaces.
- A \$70-million increase over four years to Legal Aid Alberta, ensuring better representation for low-income and vulnerable people.



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