



113 Pathways to Justice:

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
ALBERTA JOINT WORKING GROUP
ON MISSING AND MURDERED
INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS



On the cover: The Red Dress

Emily Taylor, the designer of the red dress, is an Irish, Métis, and Swampy Cree woman whose lineage comes from the Fisher River Cree Nation in northern Manitoba and the Red River Métis. She graduated from the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Native Studies. Coming from a long line of artists, Emily's love for beading and design started as a youth and was encouraged through her attendance in community programming. Her work at Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society has allowed her to help other families connect with their culture through sharing her love and knowledge of beading, sewing, and traditional handicrafts.


Photo of dress taken by Josie Nepinak.

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These recommendations are intended to honour the lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people (MMIWG2S+) in Alberta and their families who continue to carry the grief and pain of the loss of their loved ones.

The Alberta Joint Working Group on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (AJWG) is dedicated to the many Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, families, and communities who have long advocated for meaningful action and change.

Thank you to Elder Jackie Browley and Elder Francis Whiskeyjack for starting the AJWG meetings off in a good way with ceremony, for keeping the group grounded in a culturally responsive and safe way, and for generously sharing their wisdom and knowledge.

A note on terms: The AJWG agreed to definitions for terms used throughout this document, such as ‘trauma-informed’, ‘culturally responsive and safe’, etc. **Appendix A: Glossary** identifies all the intended meanings of important terms used throughout this Report. Also, unless it is part of a direct quote or reference to a piece of research that used a particular term, the AJWG uses the term “Indigenous” throughout this Report to encompass First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples.

Elders' Voices



"Governments need to implement policies that will protect our women and girls while addressing the underlying societal issues."

- Elder Jackie Bromley

It is reported that many Indigenous women and girls have either gone missing or have been murdered in Canada. All Governments across Canada need to implement the Calls for Justice set forth to address this crisis. Governments need to implement policies that will protect our women and girls while addressing the underlying societal issues. The Alberta Joint Working Group on MMIWG has developed specific recommendations for the Government of Alberta. These recommendations must be actioned to address the violence.

Indigenous people continue to suffer at great lengths because of oppression, inequality, racism and discrimination. As a result of colonization, Indigenous women and girls continue to be exposed to violence in Canadian society. Indigenous women have a difficult time finding employment and housing. Indigenous women leaving the reserve are in search of jobs and social services, but they find little aid and are faced with violent experiences of racism. Living in poor conditions with limited access to education, increases their chances of being involved with law enforcement, becoming homeless, suffering from addictions and experiencing violence and racism at higher rates.

There needs to be a specific focus on understanding the underlying issues of human trafficking of Indigenous women and girls. They must be seen as victims of sexual exploitation rather than their choice of employment. Human trafficking is a very dangerous environment requiring not only more security and protection for them but also, action to address the causes of Indigenous women and girls being susceptible to this environment. We need to remember that these women and girls are someone's grandmother, mother, sister, and daughter and that they are loved.

Traditionally, Indigenous cultures are matriarchal societies placing women in high regard. This is why it is important to implement the Working Group's recommendations, to centre and restore the power and place of Indigenous women and girls in society.

- Elder Jackie Bromley

Elders' Voices



"It is imperative the Government of Alberta and the justice system recognize the seriousness of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls."

- Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack

It is imperative the Government of Alberta and the justice system recognize the seriousness of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. To refrain from being complacent and take action on the recommendations that have been made.

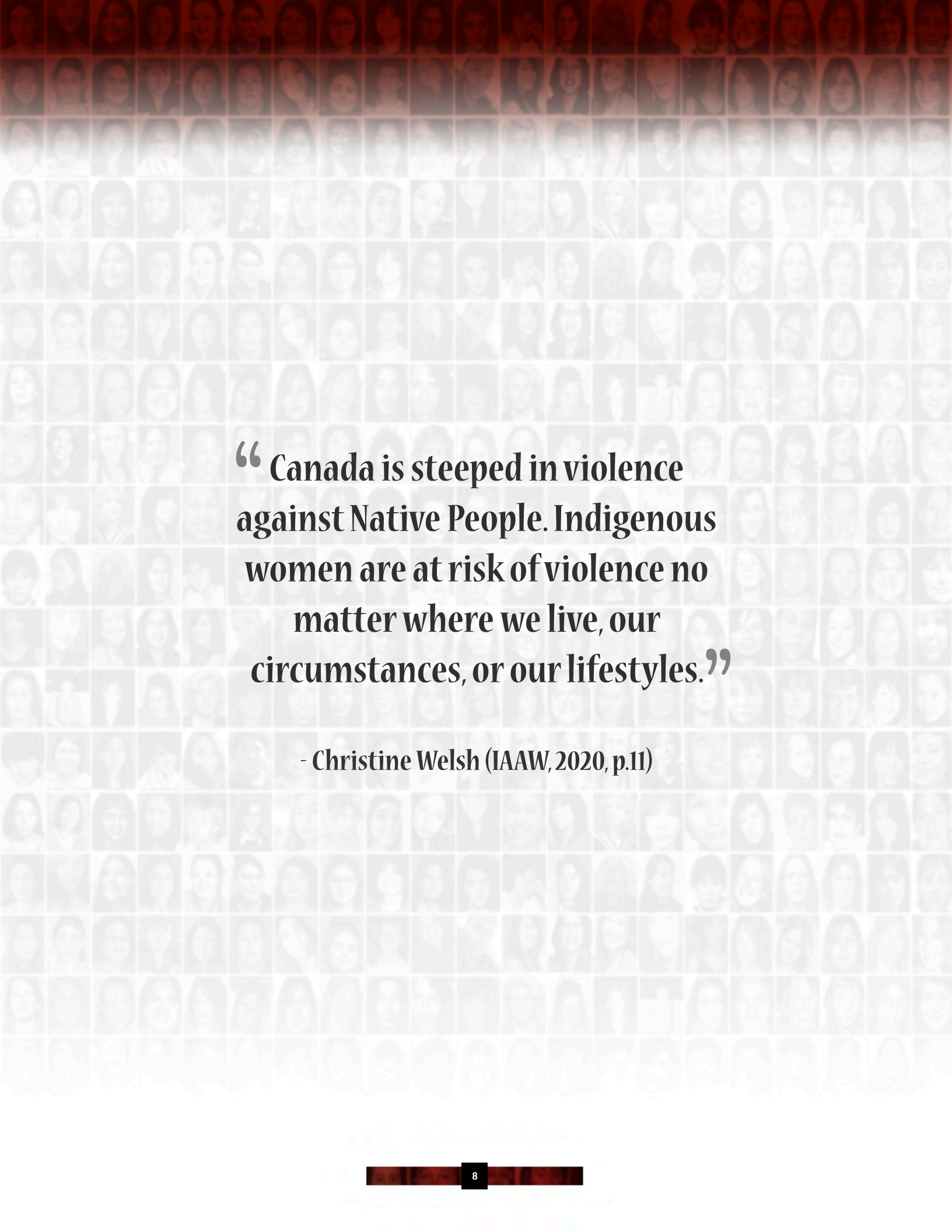
The government should try to find empathy for the families that have lost their loved ones and think about, if it happened to your own family and you lost a loved one, how important would it be for you, how concerned would you be, what would you do to get justice? So often we hear, the justice system approach is inadequate in the way missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls investigations are not prioritized. They become statistics and there is a lack of consideration for the families that are grieving and trying so hard to find closure in the experience of losing a loved one.

We are very passionate as Indigenous people, caring for our loved ones through the kinship systems. Many times, the only kind of closure we have is in the memories of our loved ones. To heal ourselves, for us and for me personally, is to go back to ceremony and let my belief and spirituality with the Creator help me carry the strength to continue on.

It is so disheartening that the past is always in the present. I can't say it more clearer than that. I find that the only way I can support as an individual is to know the stories. To support by prayer, to support by going to the demonstrations for continuance of the raising awareness and action for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

It is also important to recognize that the work this committee has done, has been done with great care. Many hours have been spent making the recommendations and providing evidence to justify their statements.

- Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack



**“Canada is steeped in violence
against Native People. Indigenous
women are at risk of violence no
matter where we live, our
circumstances, or our lifestyles.”**

- Christine Welsh (IAAW, 2020, p.11)

Executive Summary

The Alberta Joint Working Group on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (AJWG) was appointed in spring 2020 by the Minister of Indigenous Relations. The Minister directed the AJWG provide advice, direction, and input into the Government of Alberta's (GOA's) response to address the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report "Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls" (National Inquiry)¹ including:

- Advising on options to address issues of violence and the Calls For Justice;
- Making recommendations on how to work with Indigenous communities, other governments, and the private sector to implement the GOA's final action plan; and
- Providing input on the GOA's draft action plan and final action plan.

The genocide of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ (2S+) people in Canada must be considered within historic and contemporary Canadian experience. Mass killings, residential schools, forced removal of children, and forced or coerced sterilization are acts of genocide. Ongoing paternalistic policy serves to perpetuate the genocide and leaves Alberta on a path to continued violence by dismissing these realities. "Research presents statistical and qualitative descriptions on how a number of historical, socio-economic, and

legal realities have come together to generate the conditions that allow for the persistence of violence against Aboriginal women and girls." (Government of Alberta [GOA], 2016, p.11) The National Inquiry Final Report frames these experiences with input from more than 2,300 people in public hearings and years of work to gather and analyse qualitative and quantitative information.

Over the course of their work together, the AJWG received heart-breaking information and identified disturbing trends about the path Alberta has been following regarding Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2S+ people (MMIWG2S+). Statistically, Indigenous women in Alberta are seven times more likely to be murdered than non-Indigenous women, and across Canada rates of self-reported assault by Indigenous women (8.9%) are double those of non-Indigenous women, at 4.1%. (Mahony et al., 2017) However, there is a notable lack of disaggregated data across all sectors, programs, and services in Alberta that makes it impossible to know the true scope of the violence Indigenous women, girls, and particularly 2S+ people experience in the province. Further, some attempts to chart a new course to uphold the rights of Indigenous people, such as Jordan's Principle, have not been implemented in Alberta the way they were intended and therefore the intended impact has not been realized.

Violence and abuse rates that Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people experience is an epidemic and

1. See <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>

Executive Summary

surely calls for a proportionate response. (Bopp et al., 2003) The current approach to anti-violence initiatives by the GOA is not as effective as it should be. Currently, different Ministries develop different initiatives based on their mandate area and with little to no coordination with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, or other Ministries. Efforts by the GOA require improved coordination, engagement, careful review and adaptation, and increased resource investment to truly save lives and decrease the number of MMIWG2S+ in Alberta. Incorporating an Indigenous lens by collaborating with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, and taking a trauma-informed approach to this work, will significantly improve these efforts.

Inaction in some areas and inadequate action in others by governments, including the GOA, is directly contributing to the increased risk of violence,

systemic insecurities, and institutional racism that leads to the ongoing challenges facing MMIWG2S+. (Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women [IAAW], 2020) Jurisdiction can no longer be an excuse for Alberta not acting. The GOA has a chance to show real leadership moving forward in a new, successful way in partnership with Indigenous people across the province.

MMIWG2S+ family members and survivors advocated for decades for the National Inquiry and have supported the work of the AJWG to inform Alberta actions by completing surveys and engaging in conversations. Every Albertan now has a part to play in charting a new path that ends violence that results in Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people going missing and being murdered at such alarming rates. These recommendations are tangible first steps if the GOA truly intends to do better.

Messages from Alberta Joint Working Group Members

The MMIWG2S+ report is important because it can save and change the lives of Indigenous women. It also can give a voice to the families and women who have been affected by violence. Implementation of the recommendations will provide evidence that Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals matter and are worth saving. Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ are at such a high risk of experiencing violence, that there is not only a need to have these recommendations implemented, it is imperative to saving lives.



- Lisa Higgerty



This report is important to me because my family has been directly affected; I want to ensure that no family has to go through what we did. There is a lack of support to MMIWG2S+ families in Alberta; we have made direct recommendations that cover some of these gaps.

Genocide has been used in many different ways in Alberta and Canada; three are Residential Schools, the Sixties Scoop and MMIWG2S+. Knowing the truths of the past will ensure that we grow as a province in a good way. How can you work together to prosper, if you don't know each other's histories?

The National Inquiry into MMIWG2S+ concluded in their report that, "...this violence is the result of historical and ongoing race-based genocide against Indigenous peoples." United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Article 7, "Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group."

Let's work together to make Alberta a safe place for MMIWG2S+ people to live in. The above is a snapshot of our history, let's work together to educate Alberta so we can make it a better place for everyone to live in.

- Suzanne Life-Yeomans

Messages from Alberta Joint Working Group Members

It has been an extreme honour to have served as a member of the Alberta Joint Working Group on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

The more I have learned throughout the process of providing recommendations to this report, the more I realize how much I still must learn.

I will be eternally grateful for the amazing Indigenous women who were part of this working group. They graciously and openly shared their histories, their lives, and their perspectives.

As they shared their thoughts and lived experiences on difficult topics like cultural genocide, maintaining Indigenous culture and languages, racism, and historical trauma, it opened my eyes to begin to see our world through an Indigenous lens.

This task, for me, will prove to be a small step in a continuous journey of learning more about our Indigenous sisters and brothers, so I can be a true ally in changing conversations moving forward.

- Mr. Martin Long, M.L.A



This is the most important work taken that addresses the violence and killing of Indigenous women in Alberta. We cannot ignore that immediate action must take place to save lives. The recommendations must be implemented now for real substantive change.

- Josie Nepinak

Messages from Alberta Joint Working Group Members

It was truly an honour to be a part of the Alberta Joint Working Group on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (AJWG). I acknowledge the many, many family members and advocates that have tried to get their voices heard over the years; some passed on without seeing change. The recommendations contained in this report are a roadmap for the Government of Alberta to improve life chances for Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in Alberta. We know the root causes, we have talked and talked about what needs to change for years, now we have the recommendations. All we have to do now is implement!

- Rachelle Venne





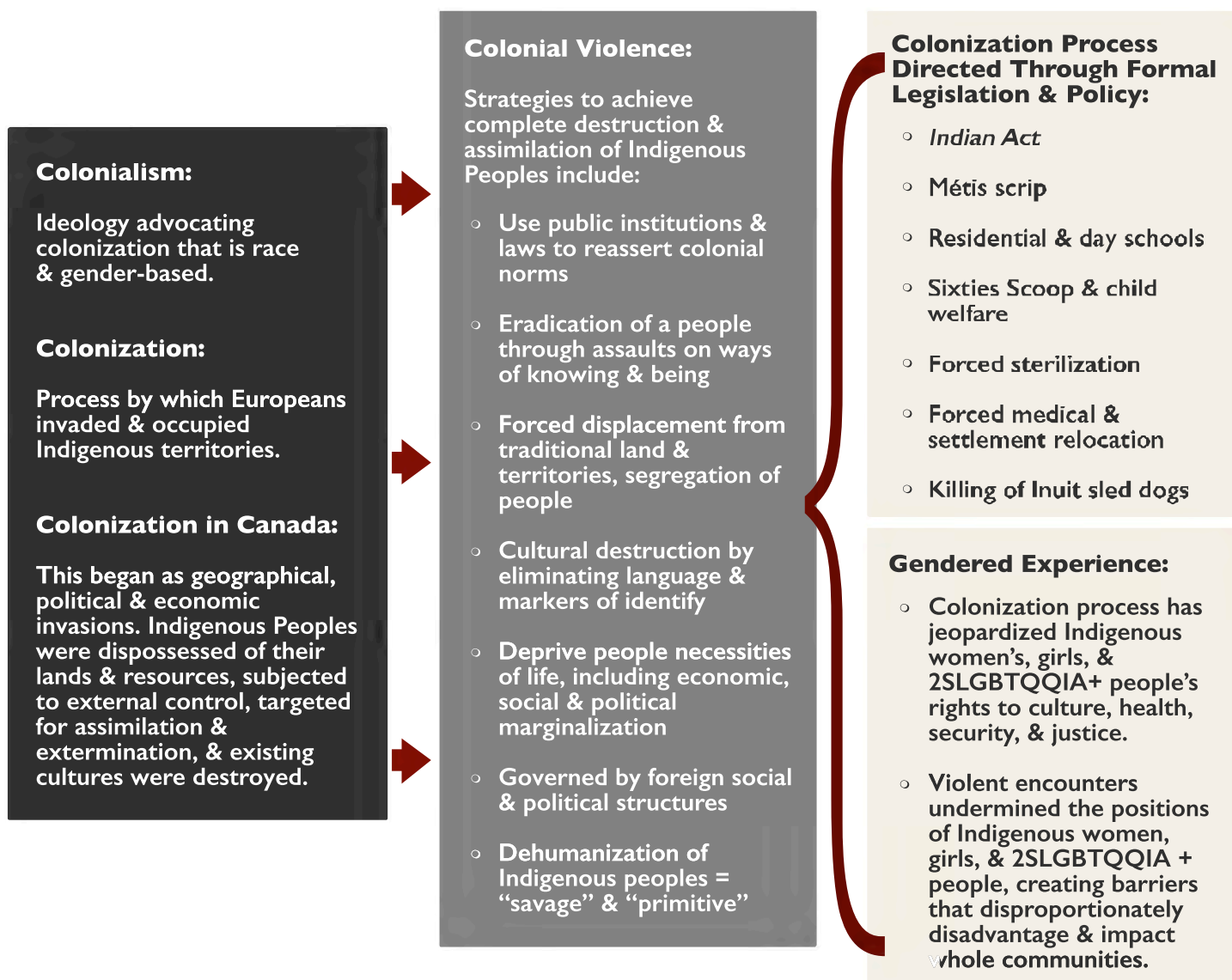
**“Educate the perpetrators of violence
against Indigenous women.**

**Increase the penalties for those who are
caught harming their fellow human
beings. Introduce sentencing circles so
that those who do the harm have to face
the victims and the families.”**

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

Impacts of Colonization on Indigenous People in Canada

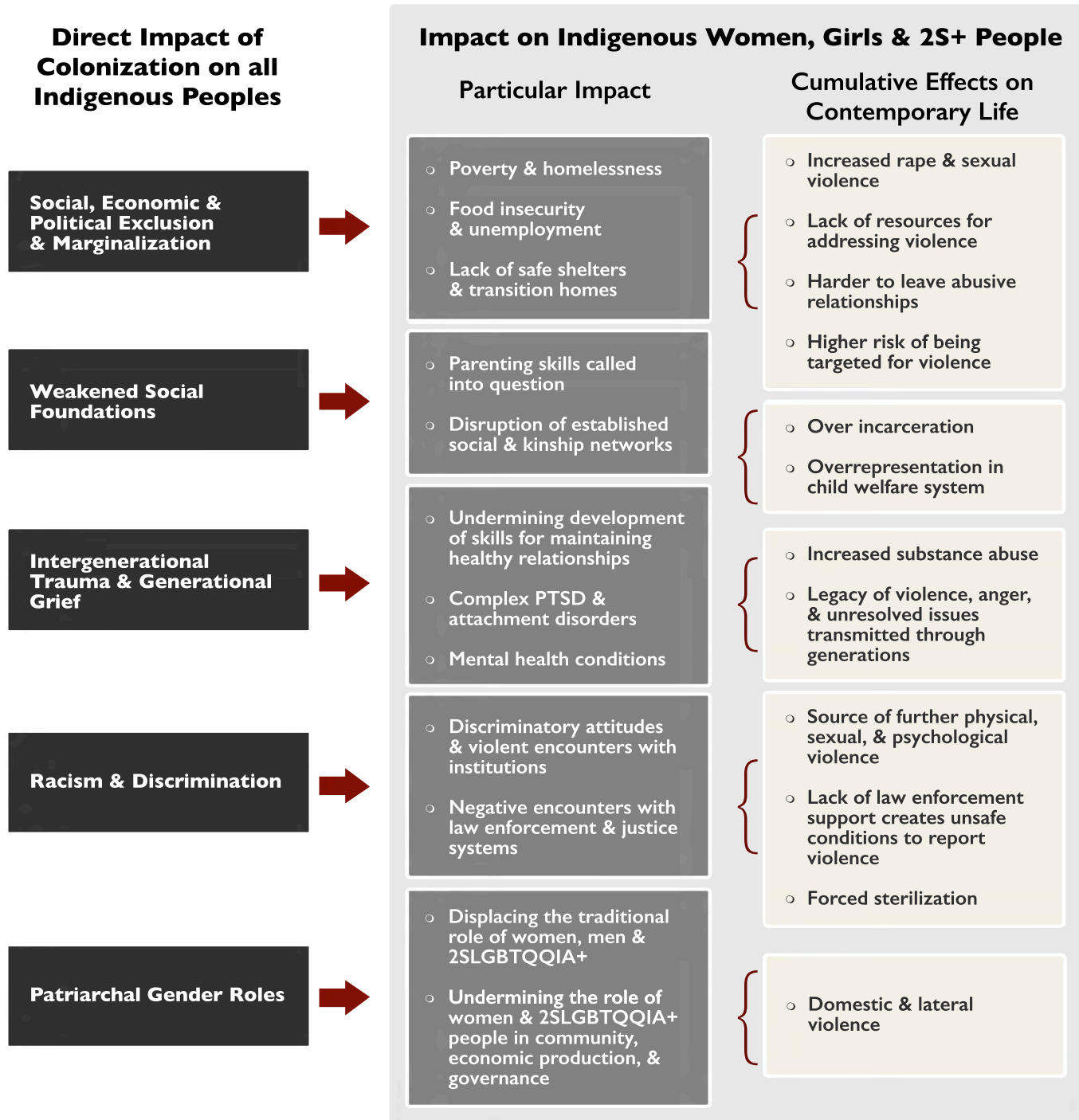
Colonialism has and continues to be demonstrated in federal, provincial, and municipal governments' legislation and policies, and all public institutions' policies and procedures. In Alberta, practices such as birth alerts and other actions that lead to high child apprehension rates are one example of current colonial beliefs and approaches that target Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, putting them at increased risk of violence and death: AJWG members heard from several Indigenous people and organizations that in some cases Children's Services arrives before babies are even born to apprehend them. Many Indigenous governments, particularly those required to administer services and organize themselves according to colonial structures, also perpetuate violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.²



2. This visual is a compilation and summary of information presented in "Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Volumes 1A and 1B" (see Appendix B: References).

Impacts of Colonization on Indigenous Women, Girls, & 2S+ People in Canada

The cumulative effects on the contemporary lives of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people (far right-hand column) identified here are not mutually exclusive nor are they exhaustive.³



3. This visual is a compilation and summary of information presented in "Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Volumes 1A and 1B" (see Appendix B: References).

Their Lives Matter: Pathways to Justice

Alberta stands at a crossroads. The choices we make today will either save lives or knowingly allow violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to continue unabated.

Indigenous women, communities, 2SLGBTQQA+ (2S+) people, and advocacy organizations have long said that Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are going missing and being murdered at an alarming rate, especially in Alberta.

Their message has been unheard and dismissed.

This race-based violence is a result of systemic and historic inequities, and consequent intergenerational trauma (see Colonization visuals on the previous two pages). This violence will continue - and likely get worse - if we continue to make decisions about everything from legislation to program intake approaches as we are today.

However, if we want to save the lives of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people so that more families don't have to go through the heart-ache of having someone they love go missing or be murdered, there is a pathway open to us. It requires a specific and concerted response from the Government of Alberta (GOA), municipal governments in Alberta, law enforcement agencies, and across all segments of society.

Alberta is currently the second most dangerous place in Canada for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to live and work. Out of all the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) cases in Canada, Alberta is home to 16% of them, and 42% of

those cases remain unsolved. (Native Women's Association of Canada [NWAC], 2010) Considering that at the time of this Report, the 2011 National Household Survey (Statistics Canada, 2018) showed that 4.3% of the Canadian population identified as Aboriginal but represented roughly 16% of all female homicides - and "Statistics Canada has concluded that the homicide rate for Indigenous women and girls is at least 6 times higher than for non-Indigenous women and girls" (Eshkakogan et al., 2019, p.24) - it is clear that Indigenous women and girls are over-represented among missing and murdered women in Canada.

What is even more concerning is the reality that police in Canada do not consistently record the Indigenous identity of victims of crime. For example, in 2009 Statistics Canada (O'Donnell & Wallace, 2011) reported that out of 610 homicide police records, 384 failed to note whether the victims of crime were Indigenous or non-Indigenous.

Homicide, though, is only one form of violence perpetrated against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people at an alarming rate. "In a 2014 survey by Statistics Canada, the reported rate of sexual assaults against Indigenous women and girls aged 15 years and older ... was more than three times higher than the national average." (Eshkakogan et al., 2019, p. 24).

For many Canadians, if they were experiencing any form of violence, they would call the police for help.

Their Lives Matter: Pathways to Justice

However, when it comes to justice, as demonstrated by the statistics above and throughout this Report, complacency on the part of the RCMP and other police agencies with regard to the issue of targeted violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people is one of the biggest challenges on the pathway forward. (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls [NIMMIWG] Ia, n.d.) For example, a 2014 RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police [RCMP], 2014) report on the issue of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people - though generally referenced as a source of information, and demonstrating that this race- and gender based-violence is a significant issue in Canada - is not acknowledged as having much validity by Indigenous communities or organizations. (Legal Strategy Coalition on Violence Against Indigenous Women (LSC), 2015)

Not only does the report not include unexplained and suspicious deaths of 2S+ people, but questions from Indigenous people about the information in the report has gone unacknowledged. Unfortunately, this lack of responsiveness and associated lack of concern for Indigenous people in general, is a hallmark of most institutions in Alberta and Canada.

Many factors contribute to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people being more vulnerable to the type of violence that results in them going missing or being murdered. According to a 2019 Vital Topic Report, 19% of Indigenous women in Alberta are low income compared to 9% of all women in Alberta - that's more than double - and 12% of Indigenous women are single mothers which is almost double the rate of 6.2% of non-Indigenous women. (Edmonton Community Foundation [ECF], n.d.) In June 2018 the GOA identified that 70% of all children and youth in care are Indigenous. (Government of Alberta, [GOA], n.d.) Low income or being a child or youth in care are examples of factors that raise the risk of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people being more vulnerable to experiencing violence.

These alarming statistics must motivate us to immediately set out on a new pathway forward; if they are ignored, or the associated recommendations in this Report dismissed, it will be a blatant continuation of the racial and gendered violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta.



**“ The loss of women should NOT
become a new industry.**

Action is needed.

**Dollars are needed to support a
culture shift to once again value
Indigenous women.”**

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

7 Principles for Change

The National Inquiry Final Report sets out seven principles for change that must inform implementation of the 231 Calls for Justice in order for actions addressing the genocide against First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women, girls, and 2S+ people to be effective and meaningful. (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls [NIMMIWG] 1b, n.d.)

All seven principles are central to the Alberta Joint Working Group's (AJWG) recommendations and must

inform any and all efforts in Alberta to implement these recommendations.

From early sense-making and prioritization conversations about the recommendations, to design and implementation of them, these principles must be followed, otherwise there is high risk the causes of the violence Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people experience will continue.

The Seven Principles

- | ***A focus on substantive equality and human and Indigenous rights*** means understanding and taking positive action to address the needs of people or groups using historical, legal and social contexts. It involves “refram[ing] issues of importance related to Indigenous women and girls [and 2S+ people] as a ‘denial of rights’ instead of ‘unfulfilled needs’. Exposure to violence would then be seen as a systemic violation of the rights to gender equality and non-discrimination requiring broad structural changes (i.e. policing practices, judicial), instead of a symptom of service gaps requiring temporary solutions.” (NIMMIWG 1b, n.d., p.169)

In Alberta this means...

In Alberta, the GOA, all law enforcement services, the justice system, and all social service agencies must review and revise all regulations, policies, and procedures with an Indigenous lens. They must ensure that all policies and procedures are anti-racist, trauma-informed, and consider gender and other intersectionalities. This is how root causes of the violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people will be addressed.

7 Principles for Change

2 **A decolonizing approach** is a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic, and psychological divesting of colonial power. (Smith, 2012) It requires non-Indigenous Canadians, governments, and institutions to recognize and accept Canada's colonial history, how it continues to harm Indigenous Peoples, and the systemic root causes of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. It "acknowledges the rightful power and place of Indigenous women and girls" (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls [NIMMIWG], 2017, p.22) and 2S+ people. Further, it requires we create the space and provide the support requested by Indigenous Peoples for them to reclaim what was taken from them.

In Alberta, the GOA and Albertans must recognize that Indigenous Peoples have the right to govern themselves in relation to all matters internal to their Nations and communities. The GOA must resource those efforts appropriately. Additionally, it involves respecting and incorporating Indigenous values, philosophies, knowledge systems, and ways of doing, as well as centering the resilience and expertise of Indigenous individuals and communities, in all efforts.

3 **Inclusion of families and survivors** ensures that people with lived experiences are informing all aspects of this work. Those with the clearest understanding of how systems, policies, programs, and services are received and experienced in real life, and those most impacted by this work, have the expertise and perspective necessary to ensure action is meaningful and that we don't repeat the same mistakes.

In Alberta, the GOA must do more than organize a special 'Indigenous session' when it is engaging on policy and programs. All levels of government and the bureaucracy need to build relationships with Indigenous people, communities, and organizations and have regular conversations with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people as well as MMIWG2S+ survivors and their "...biological families, chosen families, and families of the heart." (NIMMIWG 1b, n.d., p.171) True partnerships and meaningful engagement with people with lived experience is required.

"Nothing about us without us."

7 Principles for Change

4 ***Self-determined and Indigenous-led solutions and services*** will be critical to making meaningful change. Partnerships between Nations and federal and provincial governments are seriously damaged due to successive colonial and paternalistic laws, policies, and decisions. However, Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982⁴ guarantees Indigenous Peoples their inherent right to self-government.

In Alberta, the GOA must build better partnerships between elected officials and leaders with Indigenous governments, Knowledge Keepers, and other Indigenous community leaders and people with lived experience to co-create solutions and deliver better services. This includes prioritizing Indigenous-led, designed, and delivered solutions and sustainably and equitably resourcing them.

5 ***Recognition of distinctions (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit)*** is critical to informed decision-making and ensuring actions are equitable, non-discriminatory, and addressing people's real and unique needs. Distinctions include self-identification, geographical- and regional-specific information, and residency.

In Alberta the elected officials and bureaucracy of the GOA must appreciate that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people across the province have distinct cultures and have had unique experiences over time. This includes understanding the differences and diversity among 2S+ people and applying an intersectional lens to ensure the unique impacts on women, girls, and 2S+ people are considered. Recognition of distinctions involves building relationships with the specific geographic, cultural, and gender communities and people who are the recipients of the policies, programs, etc. being developed and delivered. It also includes flexibility for large-scale programs and services to be adapted for regional-specificity and a spectrum of gender identity.

4. See <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/committees/inan-jan-28-2021/inan-section-35-constitution-act-1982-background-jan-28-2021.html>

7 Principles for Change

6 **Cultural safety** describes systems, programs, and communities that are free of racism and include Indigenous languages, laws, governance, spirituality, etc.

In Alberta it is no longer sufficient for the GOA to have one-off conversations with organizations about how to make programs and services more culturally responsive and safe. Instead, the GOA must engage with and learn about Indigenous languages, laws and protocols, governance, spirituality, and customs, and weave those cultural features into policies, procedures, and programs.

7 **A trauma-informed approach** recognizes the full range of potential impacts of all forms of trauma and responds appropriately to signs of trauma. It is characterized by open-mindedness and compassion and promotes a culture of safety, empowerment and healing.

In Alberta the GOA must apply this approach to legislation, regulation, policy, and program development, from engagement to Cabinet Reports, and to procedural development and training. It should also inform how government leaders and officials communicate with Indigenous people. Implementation of any and all solutions, programs, and services must ensure that Indigenous people will be treated with respect and receive appropriate supports delivered through a trauma-informed lens.

4 Pathways That Perpetuate Violence

The National Inquiry concluded that violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Canada amounts to genocide. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) The history of colonization in Canada and Alberta paved the way for all forms of violence against First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women, girls, and 2S+ people. It also laid the foundation for systemic violence and “targeted policies designed to sever ... cultural and kin connections” (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls [NIMMIWG], n.d., p.23) and further destroy the culture and identity of Indigenous people.

The National Inquiry identified four pathways that continue to enforce historic and contemporary colonialism and in turn lead to the violence

Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people experience today. All types of violence addressed by the Alberta Joint Working Group (AJWG) in this Report - whether physical, social, spiritual, mental, emotional, or otherwise - are signs that Alberta continues on these pathways to violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people and violates their rights to culture, health, security, and justice. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)

Alberta is at a crossroads. The path the Government of Alberta (GOA) is on now will continue to lead to increasing violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. However, Albertans have a choice. The GOA has a choice. We can choose to forge a new path away from this violence, towards a stronger, healthier, and safer Alberta.

Four current pathways that uphold colonial violence today⁵	Four examples of new pathways that would address violence against Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people
Historical, multigenerational, and intergenerational trauma	Trauma-informed cultural connections and supports
Social and economic marginalization	Equitable access to supports and resources that lead to employment and education
Maintaining the status quo and institutional lack of will	Culturally responsive and safe policies, procedures, regulations, programs, and services
Ignoring the agency and expertise of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people	Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people leading strategies and initiatives

5. From “Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Volume 1a,” p.111-116 https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a-1.pdf

4 Pathways That Perpetuate Violence

Alberta is at a Critical Juncture

Historical, Multigenerational, & Intergenerational Trauma

This includes the collective emotional, spiritual, and psychological pain Indigenous people endure as a result of traumatic events, such as surviving residential school or the violent death of a loved one, and of historic and current policies, such as the criminalization of poverty. This trauma can affect all family and community members and be passed down and carried by the next generation. In some cases it can be a catalyst for further violence. Almost all of the witnesses for the National Inquiry described a surrounding context marked by multigenerational and intergenerational trauma from multiple forms of colonial violence.

In Alberta our crossroads is with **trauma-informed cultural connections and supports**. This new path requires reviewing government policies, procedures, programs, and services in areas including but not limited to health, addictions and mental health, law enforcement, and social services to ensure they are trauma-informed, engage Indigenous communities and organizations, and connect Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people with their cultures. It also involves building relationships with local Indigenous communities and significant training in trauma-informed approaches for all staff in these sectors.

Social & Economic Marginalization

Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people experience some of the highest rates of poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, unemployment, and barriers to education and employment. This marginalization is especially significant in terms of the violence that stems from it. Contemporary systems of oppression that have been carried forward from structures of the past are at the root of this violence. In particular; the ongoing dispossession through policies that maintain or worsen poor living conditions demonstrates how, in many rights areas, social and economic marginalization is a direct contributor to violence. These conditions make it difficult to meet one's basic needs and are a direct result of colonial governments, institutions, systems, and policies.

In Alberta our crossroads is with **ensuring equitable access to the supports and resources that lead to employment and education**. This new path requires addressing the assumptions and beliefs Albertans - public servants, MLAs, teachers, bus drivers, oil workers, children, farmers, everyone - hold, sometimes unconsciously, about Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people that in turn impact how they treat them personally and professionally. They can be addressed by changing how Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are portrayed in the media; public and professional awareness campaigns and unconscious bias and anti-racism training; and appropriately funding Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people accessing employment-related educational and training opportunities.

4 Pathways That Perpetuate Violence

Maintaining the Status Quo & Institutional Lack of Will

Governments and institutions have long failed to implement many existing recommendations from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, advocates, community organizations, and government commissions, indicating a lack of moral or political will for real change. When they delay or question changes, they choose to maintain the status quo. In the justice system, health care system, education system, child welfare system, and all other systems and institutions, the failure to even recognize let alone address contemporary systemic and institutional racism is a choice to maintain targeted violence, harassment, and discrimination against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people as well as institutional violence against MMIWG2S+ family members and survivors.

Alberta is at a Critical Juncture

In Alberta our crossroads is with **culturally responsive and safe policies, procedures, regulations, programs, and services**. No longer can Indigenous cultures and people's lived experiences be add-ons to existing programs and services, brushed over as something that needs to be acknowledged but doesn't warrant extensive consideration. Governments and institutions must incorporate Indigenous ways of being and knowing, and culturally responsive and safe approaches, into all systems with the recognition that they are invaluable to all current efforts to address the economic and social challenges Alberta is facing. This means considering Indigenous cultures and lived experiences as the first step in all work, from writing legislation to developing procedures.

Ignoring the Agency & Expertise of Indigenous Women, Girls, & 2S+ People

Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people described to the National Inquiry that in their encounters with governments, institutions, and agencies, as well as within individual relationships and communities, more often than not people or institutions deny them the space to bring their solutions forward and create meaningful change.

In Alberta our crossroads is with having **Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people leading strategies and initiatives**. Agencies, institutions, and governments must be willing to work with those who hold the most expertise – those with lived experience and impacted directly by the violence, and Indigenous service providers and organizations – and to recognize and implement the solutions they present. Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, communities, organizations, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers must, to end the violence, have a seat at the table.

“Nothing about us without us.”

Methodology

This Report is the result of years of advocacy work by survivors and families of MMIWG2S+ at provincial and national levels in their efforts to see meaningful action taken. It is also an important first step to inform Alberta's response to the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice to make the province a safer place for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

The Alberta Joint Working Group (AJWG) was comprised of four Indigenous women and three Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), though specific MLAs changed over time depending on changes in appointments and roles within Caucus.

Elders Jackie Bromley (Blackfoot Treaty 7) and Elder Francis Whiskeyjack (Cree Treaty 6) guided and grounded the work of the AJWG from the beginning. Throughout their work together learning about and discussing the experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta, as well as the programs and systems that are supposed to support them, all AJWG members:

- Followed the Seven Sacred Grandfather Teachings;
- Were grounded in a families-first perspective to ensure families' voices were captured and respected, as these actions are going to greatly influence their lives; and
- Centered the agency and expertise of Indigenous survivors, families, organizations and allies.

The AJWG also practiced the dedication and hard work needed by the GOA, institutions, and society to work collaboratively with Indigenous people to implement the 231 Calls for Justice and end the genocide of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. This included:

- 46 full-day meetings totalling approximately 337 hours with over 100 hours of preparation work; and
- Five meetings with Government of Alberta Ministers including Minister of Indigenous Relations; Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women; and Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

These recommendations are informed by teachings offered by Elders during the meetings and throughout the entire process, an engagement initiative by the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW) and Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society (Awo Taan) in 2020⁶, and multiple presentations received about the current state of programs, services, and funding in Alberta. In addition, a survey was distributed to understand and build into recommendations priorities and solutions from families, survivors, and allies to improve safety, security, and well-being for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta.

It is important to note that though the AJWG reached out to 2S+ people and organizations to

6. Specifically, "Engagement on a National Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Alberta: Final Evaluation Report". See Appendix B: References.



Methodology

inform these recommendations, all members acknowledge there is still significant work to do in this regard. Therefore conversation and collaboration with 2S+ Indigenous people will be critical to the design and implementation of these recommendations.

Recommendation development was iterative. Ideas were brainstormed and refined many times over many months as new information was gathered and incorporated. Between each refinement, AJWG members received information from presenters and families and had time to speak with community Elders, friends and families, colleagues, and social service organizations and to reflect on what they were trying to achieve.

This process allowed the AJWG to successfully engage with each other on the difficult and often emotional conversations needed in Alberta around genocide, lived experiences, intention versus impact, and the reality of how trauma can show up in people's lives.

The result of this work is 113 recommendations for concrete actions the GOA must take to save the lives of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta by addressing the systemic issues that cause them to be vulnerable to violence.

Nothing about us without us.

Overarching Recommendations

“We need to start the healing process and reconciliation in order to fully embrace that we are in fact a giant community, and we shouldn't be complacent about these issues.”

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

These overarching recommendations mark a new path for Alberta, one that ends the violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in the province.

They are overarching because they address the prevalent systemic, cultural, and institutional challenges that maintain the status quo violence, marginalization, and intergenerational trauma in Alberta. Issue area recommendations will

incorporate these. They provide a strong foundation for the success of all of the recommendations in this Report. It is critical that the Government of Alberta (GOA) begin work on these immediately.

The seven principles for change (p.20) will guide decision-making in both the sense-making and implementation of these recommendations.

Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee

“Indigenous people need to be placed in positions of power to help run programming and training for non-Indigenous people.

There needs to be a change in thinking from the top down. If leaders are not educated or have uneducated views on Indigenous history/culture that view trickles down throughout the entire organization.”

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

MMIWG2S+ has never been given the necessary or appropriate attention or support required from the Government of Alberta (GOA) or other governments in Canada. Now the situation is dire. At the same time as Canada is becoming safer for non-Indigenous women and girls, homicide rates for Indigenous women and girls are increasing. In fact in Alberta they face higher homicide rates than in any other province in the country. (Mahony et al., 2017) Collaboration and engagement is imperative to allow for new approaches that will save the lives of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+.

Real lasting change in Alberta, including sustainable solutions to the countless forms of violence resulting in Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people going missing and being murdered, minimally requires two commitments from the GOA. The first is full

engagement and partnership between the GOA and Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, MMIWG2S+ survivors and families, communities, and services providers. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) The second is prioritization and resourcing of actions to eliminate social, economic, cultural, and political marginalization of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people when developing budgets and determining government’s focus.

This recommendation addresses both commitments. It is imperative to all of the recommendations in this Report. If it is not accepted or actioned immediately it will negatively impact the outcomes possible with the other recommendations.

“Nothing about us without us.”

Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee

Recommendations

I.

Establish an Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Committee to oversee, advise on, and measure all Government of Alberta (GOA) work to implement these Alberta Joint Working Group recommendations and address violence against and safety for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

The Committee will be accountable to the Premier through the Minister of Indigenous Relations. Of the members, 75% will be Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, families, MMIWG2S+ survivors and families, and service providers representing the full diversity of distinctions-based Indigenous Peoples in Alberta. Relevant Executive leaders from across the GOA will compose the other 25%.

The Committee will develop a GOA Framework with details on addressing violence and increasing safety for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people including:

- Identifying how the GOA will monitor and report on the implementation of the recommendations and actions being taken;
- Outlining how Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people will be engaged in the development and implementation of all of these recommendations;
- Setting regulations, policies, and otherwise that ensure programs and services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are provided by Indigenous-led organizations, including ensuring these organizations receive related grants; and
- Describing how distinctions-based perspectives (one of the seven principles for change, see pg.20) will be incorporated into the work.

Further, the Committee will support all Ministries in their development, review, and revision of new and existing legislation, regulations, policies, frameworks, programs and services, including assessment tools and data collection methods, to ensure they are culturally responsive and safe and incorporate Indigenous women's, girls', and 2S+ people's perspectives. The lead Ministry will engage the First Nations and Métis Women's Councils on Economic Security as well as other Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people and share what they learned with the Committee. The Committee will also examine and make detailed recommendations to the GOA regarding core, sustainable, multi-year funding to Indigenous organizations.

In addition to this Committee, all new related/relevant committees, task forces, working groups, etc. struck by the GOA must include at minimum one Indigenous woman, girl, 2S+ person, and/or MMIWG2S+ survivor or family member.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Historical, multigenerational, & intergenerational trauma

Social & economic marginalization

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: I.3, I.6, I.8

SHORT TERM

Supports for Families & Loved Ones

“We need trauma response services that are culturally appropriate and community approved, with the ability to access ongoing supports to deal with the murder and impacts on the family.”

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

The devastating effects when Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are murdered or go missing are multiple and immeasurable. Yet families are often unable to receive information about their loved ones and they aren't offered adequate services and supports to heal from the emotional, mental, or spiritual impacts, let alone cope with the financial impacts of having a family member missing or murdered. Moreover, families often experience racism and discrimination in their interactions with police and service providers when they are seeking information and justice.

According to the National Inquiry Final Report, "...family members shared countless stories of their attempt to contact the investigative officer, the coroner, or the police to seek out information, and of never receiving a call back in return, being told information was unavailable, or even, in some cases, being threatened if they were to continue to seek information." (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.672)

"... Families have talked about the uncertainty about where to gather the information, and which agency among many would hold the information they're seeking. Families in this position are seeking information from multiple agencies and departments and struggling to navigate this system. Information request procedures across those agencies can be very difficult, intimidating, and confusing. At the same time, many families live in a jurisdiction that is different from where their loved one went missing or was murdered, and that can create another layer of barrier for access to information for families..." (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.672)

"Families, speaking for loved ones, reported many encounters with service providers in the aftermath of a death or disappearance that also reveal assumptions about families based on factors such as education, income, and ability, in addition to Indigeneity." (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.104)

Supports for Families & Loved Ones

In two engagements with families, survivors and allies in Alberta, families shared that they wanted, “more fully funded Indigenous support groups.” (IAAW, 2020, p.23) Families said they needed, “a central location/hub with support services and workers for vulnerable populations,” and “expanded support services in place, people to connect with, and on-site family support for family violence and MMIW2GS”. (IAAW, 2020, p.24) For these families, community

connections are essential, and community is understood to extend beyond simply a group of people living in the same place. (IAAW, 2020)

The Alberta Joint Working Group (AJWG) recognizes that the current victim services and supports are lacking, inaccessible, not culturally responsive or safe, not rooted in community, and have not adequately served families and loved ones.

Recommendations

2.

Work with all police services in Alberta to increase transparency, trust, communication, and flow of information to families of MMIWG2S+.

This includes:

- Establishing police liaisons to help families navigate communication with police and service agencies.
- Establishing a provincial Indigenous Advisory Panel with MMIWG2S+ members to provide advice to all police services.
- In collaboration with families of MMIWG2S+, developing policies and procedures for communication with the families of MMIWG2S+ for when women, girls, and 2S+ people go missing or are murdered.

This work should be tied to the funding police services receive (see Law Enforcement recommendations).

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.6 ii, 9.2 iv, 9.5 ii, 17.28

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

SHORT TERM

3.

Provide financial support to communities to commemorate and honour MMIWG2S+. Further, the Government of Alberta must attend ongoing community events and gatherings that commemorate and honour MMIWG2S+.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.6

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

SHORT TERM

Supports for Families & Loved Ones

4.

In partnership with families of MMIWG2S+, develop and deliver programs and services that provide resources and supports for families of MMIWG2S+.

This includes:

- Implementing a 24-hour helpline for families that provides the option to receive support in Alberta Indigenous languages. (See Housing and Homelessness recommendations for more detail.)
- Providing financial support to families including funeral costs, transportation, supports and assistance to access respectful burial processes, and other benevolent support expenses (e.g., Elder’s honorarium, gifts, feast, wakes etc.). (See Income Supports recommendations.)
- Supporting families during the grieving process and providing programming on grief and loss.
 - Opportunity will be given to Indigenous communities and organizations first to provide programs and services in their communities.
 - Programs and services will be close to communities and will include but not be limited to: peer supports, prevention, empowerment and resilience, youth-specific opportunities, family healing retreats, land-based healing, and restorative justice.
 - Programs and services will use trauma-informed practices and policies and a client-first/ client-centered approach to healing that considers historic and contemporary experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.
 - Programs and services will include access to Elders and Knowledge Keepers, traditional medicines, ceremony, and natural supports.
- Developing a continuum of support services that support families with safety planning and accessing and navigating support services.
- Adopting the Aboriginal Healing Foundation’s definition of “family violence” and “trauma-informed” for all programs and services related to the above supports, as well as for all other Government of Alberta (GOA) programs for victims and families. (See Appendix: A Glossary for definitions.)
- Transitioning the Family Information Liaison Unit and victims support programs to Indigenous communities and ensuring they are Indigenous-led and delivered. (See Victim Services recommendations.)

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.6

SHORT TERM

Absent Perspectives

“Ensure consultation with families and [all] communities to make sure we are meeting their needs in culturally safe and relevant ways.”

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

The Alberta Joint Working Group (AJWG) heard that one of the significant limitations of the National Inquiry engagement process was the lack of opportunities for the inclusion of all First Nations, Métis, Inuit and gender-diverse perspectives. There were barriers and limitations to participation in the National Inquiry events, including timelines and not having the resources to attend Inquiry events. In Alberta, Metis settlements, Aseniwuche Winewak Nation, and 2S+ individuals were among those who had limited opportunities to contribute.

The AJWG’s engagement strategy consisted of reaching out to representatives for their perspectives; creating and distributing an online survey; referring to previous Alberta-specific family/stakeholder engagements by Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society (Awo Taan), the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW), and others; face-to-face conversations; emails; telephone calls; and one-on-one conversations with organizational representatives, individuals and family members. However, more can and should be done.

As in any community engagement, there are often barriers to including all voices. The AJWG realizes more can and must be done to build and sustain ongoing dialogue. The Government of Alberta (GOA), law enforcement agencies, institutions, businesses, and agencies must strike a new path forward and meaningfully engage with Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and MMIWG2S+ families and survivors. This commitment can only be demonstrated with concrete actions, such as significant policy and procedure changes, in order to ensure absent perspectives are heard and involved in the policy, legislation, program, and other decisions that impact them and their communities.

The seven principles for change were identified as an imperative part of the implementation of all of the recommendations in this Report (see p.20). Here we highlight again the absolute necessity that the GOA include diverse distinctions-based perspectives in the implementation of these recommendations.

Absent Perspectives

Recommendations

5.

Engage the 2S+ community in Alberta to identify specific actions that can be taken to address National Inquiry Calls for Justice related to violence against 2S+ people.

This notably includes the 2SLGBTQQIA-Specific Calls for Justice, 18.1 through 18.32 inclusive.⁷

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 18.1 through 18.32

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

SHORT TERM

6.

Ensure inclusion of diverse First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and 2S+ perspectives when implementing actions, strategies, or initiatives related to these recommendations.

This diversity will include but is not limited to self-identification of gender, geography, and residency.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE:

46 Inuit-specific Calls for Justice 16.1 - 16.46⁸

29 Métis-specific Calls for Justice 17.1 - 17.29⁹

32 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific Calls for Justice 18.1 - 18.32

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

SHORT TERM

7. See Calls for Justice document <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/> p.46-50

8. See Calls for Justice document <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/> p.33-40

9. See Calls for Justice document <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/> p.42-45

Anti-Racism

"Racism for Indigenous peoples in Canada is not just about enduring stereotypical insults and name-calling, being turned away for employment, or being vilified in the media by government officials – racism is killing our people."

Pam Palmater (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.53)

Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are human and Indigenous rights holders (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.): "Indigenous Peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other people ... and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their Indigenous origin or identity." (United Nations [UN], 2007, p.4) Their human rights are those fundamental rights that should be protected by the Government of Alberta (GOA), as the GOA protects them for other people in the province. Indigenous rights are those upheld "by confronting racism, discrimination, and stereotypes." (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.182)

Racism is commonly defined as prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized. It is "practices ... grounded in systems that serve to target Indigenous Peoples over generations, undergirding intergenerational and multigenerational violence, and contribute to economic, social, and political

marginalization; lack of will; maintenance of the status quo; and the denial of agency, expertise, and value." (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.76) Across Canada, this racism has led to what the National Inquiry refers to as the ongoing genocide¹⁰ of Indigenous Peoples.

Across the country including in Alberta, racist ideas of colonial law makers and governments over time combined with historic and contemporary racist policies have produced and normalized racial inequities (Kendi, 2019) for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people (see Impacts of Colonization visuals p.15-16). They experience this systemic racism in Alberta in day-to-day interactions with Albertans, law enforcement agencies, courts, financial institutions, government programs and services, and Alberta Health Services, as well as when seeking employment, housing, and services from individuals, businesses, or public services.

As an example, in Alberta there have been concerns and complaints for years about the discriminatory behaviour and language of several judges. For example,

10. For further context on this read the National Inquiry's Supplemental Report on genocide https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Supplementary-Report_Genocide.pdf

Anti-Racism

stories were shared of how some judges edit court transcripts prior to public release, replacing any instance where they used the word “Indian” with “Indigenous person”. Recently, one such Alberta judge lost his job over “‘completely inappropriate’ beliefs and behaviours involving his views on Indigenous people and victims of domestic and sexual assault.” (Grant, 2019) The National Inquiry “submitted that widespread racism and discrimination against Indigenous women exists and that the courts must take judicial notice of such systemic bias against Indigenous women complainants.” (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.73)

There is increased understanding that acknowledging and addressing discrimination and racism in systems and institutions is necessary to ensure all can thrive in a fair and inclusive society. Institutions in Alberta have not achieved these goals and there is growing pressure from citizens to do this work. Current social norms, government, and institutions in Alberta have a long way to go to achieve this though: homicide rates for Indigenous women and girls are increasing over time at the same time rates for non-Indigenous women and girls are declining, and in Alberta Indigenous women and girls face higher homicide rates than in any other province in Canada. (Mahony et al., 2017)

The first step is acknowledging broadly and completely that discrimination and racism exists and that it exists in part because of systemic processes and policy choices made by those in power over time. Some of these recommendations serve to begin that work of truth-sharing. The next step is to deliberately evaluate and replace systems within government’s power – policies, processes, laws, regulations, standards, etc. – to ensure equitable opportunities for

Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in all public, private, and non-profit institutions, systems, programs, and services, so that they can help influence and change systems in positive ways.

Also needed are tools to hold the GOA, organizations, businesses, and individuals accountable for their actions that deny or infringe on the human and Indigenous rights of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. Families and individuals told the National Inquiry that the processes to access human rights supports weren’t working and that basic tools to hold governments and communities accountable were urgently needed. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) “Understanding how various human rights instruments can help promote the rights of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people is an important part of thinking about how to address the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls” (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.182) and 2S+ people in Alberta. *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, international human rights instruments, and the *Alberta Human Rights Act* can be critical accountability instruments¹¹, but they are not currently being used in Alberta to protect the rights of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

As holders of both human and Indigenous rights, Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta have been denied their rights in both historical and contemporary contexts which has perpetuated the violence they experience. It is paramount that both Indigenous rights and fundamental human rights of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people begin to be upheld in Alberta in order to prevent and stop the colonial, systemic, and gender-based violence that results in the high rates of violence they experience.

11. Relevant International conventions or covenants include the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Declaration on Human Rights; and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

Anti-Racism

Recommendations

7.

Apply anti-racism and decolonization approaches to the review and implementation of all recommendations in this Report.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.1, 5.11, 15.2

SHORT TERM

8.

Apply an Indigenous lens to the review and implementation of all Alberta Anti-Racism Advisory Council (AARAC) recommendations. This includes highlighting the intersectional experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people and the institutions and spaces where they experience racism.

To aid this work:

- National and international reports on Indigenous Peoples (such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*) will be reviewed and utilized as tools to inform the implementation and enhance the impact of AARAC's recommendations aimed at Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.
- There must be at least one seat reserved on AARAC for an Indigenous woman, girl, 2S+ person, and/or MMIWG2S+ survivor or family member.
- All detailed findings and outcomes of all AARAC's work and related GOA efforts will be publicly released on an annual basis.
- Current and future GOA anti-racism grants will be structured to enable capacity building for small Indigenous-led organizations. (e.g., approving grant applications by large organizations looking to support small Indigenous-led organizations with delivering their projects and programs.)

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 2.6

SHORT TERM

Anti-Racism

9.

Address systemic and institutional racism and create accountability to address racism in the public sector, public spaces, and public service provision.

This work includes:

- Creating public education campaigns and utilizing social media for real time education and awareness raising about racism utilizing the seven principles for change from the National Inquiry and in this Report.
- Encouraging municipalities, law enforcement agencies, public institutions, etc. and Indigenous communities to collaborate on education and awareness initiatives to address racism in public settings.
- Working with Indigenous communities, women, girls, and 2S+ people; human rights commissions; and law societies to educate Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people about their rights and mechanisms to address racism perpetuated against them.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.8, 1.9, 2.6

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

SHORT TERM

10.

Fund Indigenous communities and organizations to address racism, bullying, and all types of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. This includes funding Elder-led conversations regarding the impacts of racism within communities and addressing messaging, comments, and language that is self-deprecating.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 2.6

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

SHORT TERM

11.

Collaborate with Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, communities, and organizations, as well as the federal government on anti-racism initiatives. This must include implementation of the Canadian Anti-Racism Strategy and implementation of mechanisms to ensure regulation, accountability, and enforcement of anti-racism in all sectors.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 2.6

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

MEDIUM TERM

Anti-Racism

12.

Fund Indigenous-led organizations to develop tools that support Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people pursuing non-profit and public leadership roles. This includes identifying systemic and organizational barriers and creating tools for addressing them as well as skill and knowledge development for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

Priority will be given to roles that influence decision-making around MMIWG2S+. Tools developed may include policy and procedure review templates, coaching programs, and career development and preparation programs.

Funding must be reliable and long term.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.3, 1.4, 1.6

13.

Work with all provincial court services and court staff, including judges, to address racist actions, rules, and procedures in court rooms.

This includes:

- Prohibiting judges from making changes beyond grammatical to court transcripts prior to public release. If necessary, judges will provide a separate document providing clarity and explanation to transcripts. If additional documents are released in conjunction with transcripts, Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people will be reviewing them prior to release.
- Establishing mandatory comprehensive and ongoing anti-racism and anti-sexism training for staff in all sectors of the court system.
- Creating clear accountability mechanisms for courtroom staff who engage in or receive complaints about racist acts.
- Increasing awareness of the provincial and federal judicial complaint processes amongst Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people and survivors and families of MMIWG2S+.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 9.1, 9.2

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

SHORT TERM

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of

SHORT TERM

Awareness & Training

“The lack of knowledge [of those working in the system] allows for much of the abuse and stigmas perpetuated.

It was not until I researched the situations AFTER my encounter did I find out, my human rights had been violated. There are too many people with these kinds of powers that inflict more trauma on Indigenous women.”

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

Within the National Inquiry and through the short time the Alberta Joint Working Group (AJWG) was convening and working together, MMIWG2S+ survivors and families shared important truths. Much of what they shared was about their struggles with ongoing systemic barriers and racism. It forces us to acknowledge where the roots of the violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta lie and consequently to reconsider our actions to address violence and sustainable solutions. Acknowledging and accepting these truths also raises our collective consciousness and awareness, and we begin to understand that Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people’s lives matter as much as anyone else’s and more than what our past and current actions suggest.

Notably, much has been revealed about the relationships through which violence takes place and the critical moments in encounters between people

that can either harm or help. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) This means there is a critical role for all Albertans - Alberta Public Service staff, Alberta MLAs, law enforcement personnel, health care staff, social service providers, reporters and media producers, large and small business owners, Indigenous people, etc. - in reducing violence and reducing the number of MMIWG2S+ in Alberta. Initial encounters by Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people have in hospitals (Bell & Stewart, 2021), with police (CTV News, 2021), in schools (Fowler, n.d.), with emergency and women’s shelter providers, in the income support system, and everywhere else are currently characterized primarily by derision, racism, and dismissal from the very people who should be helping them. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)

It is absolutely undeniable that addressing violence involves substantive efforts to educate all Albertans on Indigenous women’s, girls’, and 2S+ people’s lived experiences and systemic issues.

Awareness & Training

Recommendation

14.

Design and implement significant, ongoing awareness and training initiatives for the public, elected leaders, the Alberta Public Service, partners, service delivery organizations funded by the Government of Alberta (GOA), and others. These initiatives must involve Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people as well as local Indigenous communities to ensure lived experiences and local knowledge, wisdom, and teachings are incorporated.

Education and awareness initiatives will include:

- Embedding details about the health-related issues affecting Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in existing health programs, training, institutions, etc.
- Increasing awareness of the human and Indigenous rights held by Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people amongst Albertans and Indigenous people, communities, and organizations.
- Educating all Albertans, including the Alberta Public Service, on Indigenous Peoples' history in Alberta including actions taken that have resulted in historic and contemporary violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ in Alberta (see Impacts of Colonization visuals p.15-16).
Increasing awareness amongst Indigenous communities and organizations
- of the human rights complaints processes, including changes to address barriers (see Human Rights recommendations p.51-52).
Indigenous-specific human trafficking public awareness campaigns and education opportunities that reflect and incorporate Indigenous individuals' and communities' realities and experiences (see Human Trafficking recommendations p.129-132).
- Public awareness campaigns and training seminars for Indigenous communities and people focused on supporting families and friends and identifying signs of grooming practices used by human traffickers.
- A public awareness campaign informing the public, especially Indigenous people, communities, and organizations, about the Missing Person Alert and its purpose (see Missing Person Alert recommendation p.145-146).

(Recommendation continued on following pages.)

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

Awareness & Training

Training initiatives must include:

- For all service agencies across the province connected to the child welfare system: trauma-informed and culturally responsive and safe practices through a hub-and-spoke model (see Child Welfare recommendations p.83-89).
- For all judges and other courtroom officials: the lived experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people and cultural practices to improve safety in the courtroom (see Court Services recommendations p.98-101.)
- For all school officials and staff: recognizing signals of experiences of violence amongst students and how to respond appropriately (see Education recommendations p.102-106).
- Everyone involved directly or indirectly in the delivery of healthcare: trauma-informed care, anti-bias, anti-racism, decolonization, and recognizing signs and signals that patients may be experiencing violence.
- All emergency shelter, women's shelter, affordable housing, assisted living, and all other housing and homelessness service providers: the lived experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people and culturally responsive and safe practices.
- All family violence wellness workers and crisis intervention workers: Indigenous family violence training (see Family Violence recommendations p.107-110).
- All sectors, from hospitality to transportation, where aspects of human trafficking are regularly occurring: recognizing signs of trafficking and responding to trafficked individuals and trafficking incidents with Indigenous content (see Human Trafficking recommendations p.129-132).
- All Alberta Income Supports and Alberta Works staff: trauma-informed and culturally responsive and safe practices and approaches (see Income Support recommendations p.133-135).
- Law enforcement personnel, including First Nation Police agencies, both sworn and civilian members: anti-racism; anti-bias; historical and contemporary issues facing Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people; and how to implement the Calls for Justice (see Law Enforcement recommendations p.136-140).
- All GOA communications and media personnel, including press secretaries and others in MLAs' and Ministers' offices: the current racist portrayal of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in public media (see Media Relations recommendations p.141-144).
- Doctors, dentists, pharmacists, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists and all other addictions and mental health personnel: prescription drug use and self-medication and how to deliver trauma-informed care (see Addictions & Mental Health recommendations p.76-79).

(Recommendation continued on following page.)

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

Awareness & Training

Training initiatives continued:

- All GOA staff reviewing funding proposals, grants, and/or contracts in any form, independent of role in the Public Service: understanding the lived experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people (see Programs & Services: Indigenous Lens & Funding recommendations p.59-63).

All awareness and training initiatives must be undertaken in a manner that implements the seven principles for change, as outlined in this Report (see pg.20). Specifically for awareness and training this involves:

- *A focus on substantive equality and human and Indigenous rights:* Initiatives must be human- and Indigenous-rights based, focusing on addressing the root causes of violence and addressing the needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people using historical, legal, and social contexts.
- *A decolonizing approach:* Initiatives must challenge colonial influences and dismantle and replace assumptions, biases, mindsets and beliefs that perpetuate the status quo and foster racism, oppression, discrimination, and other forms of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. They must also include Indigenous perspectives. (See “Decolonizing Approach” and “Decolonizing Mindset” in Appendix A: Glossary.)
- *Inclusion of families and survivors:* Those with lived experience must inform all aspects of the initiatives, from outcome identification to design and implementation.
- *Self-determined and Indigenous-led solutions and services:* These initiatives require building better partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations as well as proper and equitable resourcing.
- *Recognition of distinctions (First Nations, Métis, Inuit):* First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people in the province cannot be treated as homogenous groups. The differences and diversity that make them each distinct must be considered and included in all initiatives.
- *Cultural safety:* These initiatives must be anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia, and have Indigenous languages, protocols, customs, and ways of knowing and being woven throughout.
- *A trauma-informed approach:* All initiatives must consider and address the acute (e.g., rape), chronic (e.g., domestic violence), and complex (e.g., historic and intergenerational) trauma that Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people experience. They must also consider how to support Indigenous people involved in the design and delivery of these initiatives with the trauma responses they may have themselves.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.9, 6.1 i, 7.6, 8.1, 9.2 iv, 9.3 v, 10.1, 10.1 i, 11.1, 12.12, 15.6

SHORT TERM

Data & Research

The consequence of a lack of comprehensive data about issues affecting Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people is in an erasure that effectively permits violence against them to continue, results in policy and program decisions that are not well-informed or effective, and profoundly impacts the ability of Indigenous organizations and communities to meet people's needs.

The importance of disaggregated data collection within Indigenous populations that describes the diverse experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people cannot be overstated. This includes differences between various Indigenous populations, regions (urban, on/off-reserve, rural), age, and gender. “The lack of detailed, disaggregated data as well as shortcomings in the consistent collection, measurement, reporting and analysis of data [is] an underlying factor contributing to racism.” (Government of Canada [GOC], 2019)

The Alberta Joint Working Group (AJWG) consulted with law enforcement, courts, community organizations, and multiple Government of Alberta (GOA) Ministries. Everyone consulted said that data, if available at all, is not disaggregated nor is it classified or collected in a way that it can be combined with other (currently incomplete) sources of data to create a more comprehensive understanding of the systems impacting MMIWG2S+. This has effectively made

Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people invisible in Alberta both by not being able to identify them in the data and by excluding intergenerational trauma and systemic inequities rooted in sexism, racism, and colonialism from the data analysis. This erasure of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people effectively permits the violence against them to continue, results in policy and program decisions that are not well-informed or effective, and profoundly impacts the ability of Indigenous organizations and communities to meet Indigenous people's needs.

Fully disaggregating data will begin to expose hidden trends and to identify the scope of how to take aim and measure achievements in fulfilling the goals set forth by the National Inquiry Calls for Justice and these AJWG recommendations. Data will also serve as a prevention tool to reduce red tape in Alberta by improving decision-making, thus making programs and services more effective and efficient.

Data & Research

Recommendation

15.

Create and fund a Centre of Research Excellence on topics relevant to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. Collaborate with Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and academics to establish this Centre of Excellence. The framework developed by the Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee as well as Indigenous methods of collecting information and data through community-based participation including sharing circles, oral histories, and traditional storytelling must be utilized.

As this research is critical for informed policy development, the Centre must minimally develop a) a provincial data strategy to measure and evaluate progress towards eliminating all forms of violence against and increasing safety for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta; and b) an Indigenous women's, girls', and 2S+ people's research strategy.

The provincial data strategy will measure and evaluate progress towards eliminating all forms of violence against and increasing safety for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta. Methods for collecting information and developing data indicators must align with Indigenous women's, girls', and 2S+ people's perspectives and be relevant and useful to them.

Minimally there are four areas of focus for the provincial data strategy:

1. Increasing available disaggregated data by:

- Identifying existing data sources relevant to MMIWG2S+ and Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.
- Identifying gaps in data and where more accurate disaggregation and collection of data specific to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people is required.
- Designing an indicator framework addressing current realities in data sources that allow for monitoring progress on increasing safety and reducing violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.
- Recommending methods for more integrated and efficient data collection, analysis, and dissemination on issues relevant to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people across GOA Ministries.

(Recommendation continued on following pages.)

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

Data & Research

Areas of focus for the provincial data strategy (continued):

2. *Interpreting data through an Indigenous lens by:*

- Engaging Indigenous feminist scholars, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and MMIWG2S+ families and survivors;
- Centering Indigenous women's, girls' and 2S+ people's experiences and advocacy for recognition of their rights and interests as well as the gendered and racial nature of social experiences; and
- Examining how race and gender identities and other intersectional factors overlap to create conditions in which Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are subjected to forms of social disempowerment that lead to social patterns that disproportionately affect them.

3. *Addressing root causes to eliminate violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people by:*

- Monitoring and publicly reporting on the effectiveness of legislation, policy, programs, and any initiatives or efforts intended to contribute to implementation of these recommendations and any resulting Action Plans or other responses to the National Inquiry Final Report.

4. *Increasing safety for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people by:*

- Creating a GOA-wide Indigenous Peoples' Statistics Initiative to collect and share data relevant to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people that supports informed policy development within and outside the GOA. This Initiative will be informed by the provincial data strategy.
- Making accurate race and gender disaggregated data, including ethnicity, on violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people publicly available. Examples of data that will be made available include but are not limited to forced police stops, human trafficking, and intergenerational effects of residential schools and the Sixties Scoop.
- Eliminating "either-or" gender options and including gender neutral and nonbinary options in all data collection.
- Funding and supporting Indigenous governments, communities, and organizations to develop, access, and collect their own data on a variety of topics that help them make informed decisions about how their communities can reduce violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

(Recommendation continued on following page.)

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

Data & Research

The Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people research strategy will minimally include:

- Developing principles for research involving survivors, victims, and families of MMIWG2S+. This includes addressing the way research is conducted with survivors, victims, and families of MMIWG2S+ to better consider their lived experiences, reflect their ways of knowing and being, and ensure defined outcomes for their inclusion in the research. It also includes being guided by decolonizing and Indigenizing methods and approaches.
- Ensuring use of culturally responsive and safe gender-based intersectional comparative analysis that also considers historic and intergenerational trauma, the impacts of colonization, and natural and inherent ways of perceiving and interpreting information from the perspective of Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, families, and communities.
- Clearly identifying key priorities for research relevant to survivors, victims, and families of MMIWG2S+.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.3, 1.6, 5.24, 18.4 ii

MEDIUM TERM

Human Rights

“Indigenous peoples do not feel safe generally in our communities due to racism and discrimination, so how will they feel safe to access resources? They also don’t see themselves or their culture in our community buildings and social services. Alberta in general is not a safe place for Indigenous Peoples. We need to do better and that starts with more resources and education.”

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

In Alberta there are two primary ways for people to bring forward their human rights issues and complaints: the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the Alberta Human Rights Commission. Though we do not know what the utilization rates are for the Alberta Human Rights Commission as they do not collect disaggregated data, we do know anecdotally that the system results in many Indigenous peoples’ concerns falling through the cracks and fails to uphold their human rights.

These system issues are numerous. A few of the most serious issues in Alberta include:

- Confusion about which body has jurisdiction over which human rights breaches means Indigenous people don’t know where to go or who to talk to, or they get turned away.
- Mechanisms and processes that Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people can access are often culturally unsafe and insensitive, which makes it difficult to work through the system.

- Limited availability of these services in some parts of Alberta, especially rural, remote and north, prevents a lot of Indigenous people from being able to access them.

Upholding the rights of Indigenous people, especially Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, requires transparency and accountability to ensure Indigenous people have confidence and trust in the Alberta Human Rights Commission and will come forward with their complaints and issues. It also requires examination of systemic discrimination in the provision of provincial human rights programs and services in order to decrease Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ peoples’ incidents of systemic and colonial violence.

This work involves engaging Indigenous communities, organizations, and people, which is a critical step in assessing how systems and processes are accessible and responsive to Indigenous people’s needs.

Human Rights

Recommendations

16.

Establish a Provincial Indigenous Human Rights Ombudsperson and a Provincial Indigenous Human Rights Tribunal.

They will review human rights aspects of the Calls for Justice ensuring Alberta is meeting them and addressing jurisdictional gaps between provincial and federal human rights bodies that are harming Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people by denying access to services and supports. They will also identify areas that require immediate intervention.

The minimum standards for survival, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous Peoples outlined in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* must be used as a guide for this work.

**ALBERTA
MANDATES**

Options to address
Calls for Justice

**NATIONAL
PATHWAYS**

Maintaining the
status quo &
institutional lack of
will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.7

MEDIUM TERM

Human Rights

17.

Review the Alberta Human Rights Commission’s policies and processes to identify and address barriers to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people accessing their services. This review will be completed annually and be guided by the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* minimum standards.

The review will include:

- Engaging the recently established Indigenous Advisory Circle as well as Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in the evaluation of the current state to determine which structures and systems are meeting the needs of Indigenous people and which are not;
- Ensuring the Indigenous Advisory Circle is meeting the needs of Indigenous people;
- Examining systemic discrimination in the provision of services;
- Developing culturally responsive and safe, trauma-informed, and decolonized processes and mechanisms for Indigenous peoples’ complaints;
- Implementing improved processes for collecting disaggregated data on complaints from Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people (see Data & Research recommendation);
- Ensuring Indigenous cultural practices are firmly understood as being protected under the *Alberta Human Rights Act* in the same way other religious practices are;
- Identifying and implementing initiatives to increase public awareness of Indigenous human rights (i.e., increasing awareness of racism, discrimination, stereotyping, historical events, contemporary impacts of historical events, etc.);
- Identifying and implementing initiatives to increase Indigenous women’s, girls’, and 2S+ peoples’ awareness of human rights complaint processes, access, etc.; and
- Identifying and implementing initiatives for increasing the number of Indigenous people, especially Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, employed by or members of the Alberta Human Rights Commission and Tribunal.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.7

LONG TERM

Policy & Legislation Development

Involving the voices of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people during the development of Alberta legislation and policy is a critical step towards the change required to dismantle colonialism within Alberta and our institutions.

Indigenous peoples have never been meaningfully included in the development of policies, regulations, or legislation that impact their lives, nor have the interests and voices of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people been reflected or represented in the ranks of elected officials. Opportunities have been limited for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to be involved in policy decision-making.

There have been many laws and policies, federally, provincially, and municipally that have been detrimental to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, perpetuating the issue of MMIWG2S+ by creating stereotypes, poor living conditions, inability to pursue home ownership, violence, and other barriers. These range from the *Indian Act* (Federal) and Métis Scrip (Federal), to the *Child, Youth, and Family Enhancement Act* (Alberta) and the *Sexual Sterilization Act* (Alberta), to residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and birth alerts.

The 1876 federal *Indian Act* has long been used as a

tool of exclusion for Indigenous women and girls. The original Act tied Indian status to the male bloodline, despite many Nations tracing lineage through the mother or both bloodlines. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) Status women who married non-status men lost their Indian status and were placed into dangerous situations as they were evicted from their community. Amendments to the *Indian Act* were made in 1985 (Bill C-31), 2011 (Bill C-3), and in 2017 (Bill S-3) with the express intent of addressing the gender-based discrimination in the Act. However, several problems still exist, including hierarchy of status between men and women, unstated parentage, and band membership issues. (Indian Act, n.d.) The *Indian Act* had many additional ways of disconnecting First Nations women, girls, and 2S+ people from their communities including the reserve system, restrictions on cultural practices, and the pass system. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)

Alberta's *Sexual Sterilization Act* (1928) allowed for sterilization of persons who were deemed "mentally

Policy & Legislation Development

defective”. A 1937 amendment allowed the sterilization without the individual’s consent. The Act disproportionately impacted Indigenous women and was not repealed until 1972. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)

Child welfare policies and legislation are within the Government of Alberta’s (GOA’s) jurisdiction and have caused direct harm to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. Child welfare laws have not historically included Indigenous laws, values, or world views. There is a direct link between the current child welfare systems and violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)

Government policies and legislation, in areas ranging from child welfare to policing and law enforcement to human rights and health care, “perpetuate violence against Indigenous girls, and beg for new approaches for exposing intersecting colonial discourses and practices embedded in mainstream government strategies”. (Clark, 2012, p.133)

Involving the voices of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people during the development of Alberta legislation and policy is a critical step towards the change required to dismantle colonialism within Alberta and our institutions.

Recommendations

18.

Ensure policy developers and elected officials are regularly informed and educated on issues facing Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, including MMIWG2S+ issues, through both briefings from front-line public servants and meeting directly with Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and other community members and leaders. Policies that impact Indigenous communities, especially Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, requires direct engagement with Indigenous people, communities, and organizations early and often in the policy development process. Indigenous women’s, girls’, and 2S+ people’s stories and voices must be a foundational part of the engagement.

This includes MLAs preparing for their roles by receiving training immediately after they are elected on Indigenous culture, history, and current realities, challenges, and opportunities. Issues for Indigenous people and communities need to be understood and addressed regardless of jurisdictional issues.

Methods to ensure broader awareness by government decision makers could include:

- Caucus information sessions about broad Indigenous issues; and
- Indigenous cultural training for MLAs (see Awareness & Training recommendation p.42-45).

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.3, 1.4, 1.9

SHORT TERM

Policy & Legislation Development

19.

Develop a made-in-Alberta Indigenous intersectional policy analysis framework in partnership with Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and organizations.

The framework will be used to inform all proposed policies and legislation that may have an impact on Indigenous communities, women, girls, and 2S+ people. The framework will include engagement directly with Indigenous communities and MMIWG2S+ organizations on policies of concern. The framework will be violence- and trauma-informed as well as culturally responsive and safe.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.3, 1.9

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls For Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

SHORT TERM

20.

Review existing government legislation, regulations, and policies with the Indigenous intersectional policy analysis framework. (See recommendation 19 regarding framework.)

This review includes all existing government policies and legislation that impact Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. Where issues are identified, amendments will be proposed based on the input of Indigenous communities and organizations. Updated legislation, regulations, and policies will demonstrate consideration of MMIWG2S+ perspectives.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.3, 1.9

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls For Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

MEDIUM TERM

Programs & Services: Evaluation

It is critical for Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people and organizations to be directly involved as partners for the development of evaluation plans and indicators to ensure that they are meaningful and align with the values and needs of Indigenous communities.

Jurisdictional coordination is an on-going issue for Indigenous peoples in Alberta. Federal and provincial governments tend to be concerned with jurisdictional issues, which affect all Indigenous people but can be a particular challenge for Indigenous peoples living off-reserve, who are non-status, or who are not members on their reserve of residence. Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people become caught in jurisdictional gaps that make it difficult or impossible to access necessary and culturally safe programs and services.

The National Inquiry Final Report also points out that the jurisdictional gaps result in, “a significant lack of data collection and information sharing across jurisdictions (especially with Indigenous jurisdictions) ... including the exact incompatibilities and underperformance of programs. The result is that there is no consistent evaluation of existing programs and services across jurisdictions.” (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.563-564)

An additional issue impacting Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people is government program evaluation approaches that tend to be concerned with “checking boxes” and working within rigid government frameworks on government-determined indicators, which often do not align with the values and or address the needs of Indigenous people or communities.

To ensure program evaluations are effective and of maximum benefit, it is critical for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, and organizations to be directly involved as partners in the development of evaluation plans and indicators to ensure that indicators are meaningful and reflective of what matters to Indigenous communities. (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health [NCCA], 2013) It is essential that “program evaluations are culturally sensitive and include important contextual factors (historical, social, cultural, and environmental.” (NCCA, 2013, p.5) The development of meaningful indicators must start with community participation and be built from the ground up. (Fox, 2018)

Programs & Services: Evaluation

Recommendations

21.

Partner with Indigenous women, 2S+ people, and organizations to develop and implement an evaluation framework for government programs and services delivered to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

This work includes:

- Creating indicators that are culturally responsive and safe and meaningful to Indigenous organizations and communities to measure program outcomes.
- Creating a regular program evaluation schedule to ensure ongoing review of impact for and involvement of Indigenous women and 2S+ people.
- Involving Indigenous women and 2S+ people as both evaluators and service users during routine program evaluations.
- Ensuring program evaluations are available to Indigenous communities and organizations.
- Ensuring outcomes are aligned with Indigenous women's, girls', and 2S+ people's experiences with historic and contemporary situations.
- Ensuring culturally responsive and safe indicators in the realms of violence prevention (including all issue areas addressed in this Report) as the GOA implements these recommendations.
- Collaborating with the Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee and aligning with the provincial data strategy (see Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee and Data & Research recommendations).

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.3, 1.6

SHORT TERM

Programs & Services: Evaluation

22.

Partner with Indigenous women, 2S+ people, and organizations to develop and implement an evaluation framework to inform enhancements and track and report on the progress of all Government of Alberta actions to support MMIWG2S+ survivors and families.

This work includes:

- Collaborating with the Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee and aligning with the provincial data strategy (see Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee and Data & Research recommendations).
- Aligning the Framework with the 2021 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People National Action Plan: Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People¹² reporting requirements, but also include Alberta-specific indicators.
- Creating indicators that are culturally responsive and safe and meaningful to Indigenous organizations and communities to measure program outcomes.
- Creating an evaluation schedule to ensure review of the impact of government actions on Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people happens at least annually and that they are regularly engaged in evaluation activities.
- Ensuring the results of the evaluation are made publicly available.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.3, 1.6, 7.1, 18.2

SHORT TERM

12. See <https://mmiwg2splus-nationalactionplan.ca/>

Programs & Services: Indigenous Lens & Funding

“Accessibility to resources and increased funding that is sustained long-term is needed. One-year funding is not sufficient for these types of services. A network for First Nations and municipalities with joint-funding opportunities would be helpful to create resources and safe healing spaces for people to access.”

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

In describing the factors and contexts that led to violence in their own or their loved ones' lives, families and survivors pointed to the role institutions and systems play in creating conditions that make violence possible. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) "... [W]itnesses regularly pointed to encounters that denied the knowledge, expertise, and agency held by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people." (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.116) Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people have solutions to ending violence in their lives. "Despite this ... more often than not other people or institutions actively deny them the opportunity to bring these solutions forward and create meaningful change." (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.116)

Governments and institutions actively put Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in danger, and to date little if anything has been done about it. Governments across Canada have a poor track record of working with Indigenous Peoples, particularly on issues that affect Indigenous people directly. Indigenous

organizations are not properly funded to do the work necessary to reduce violence. Further, governments often fail to review or change processes required to address the systems or processes that at best don't address the real lived needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, and that at worst, in some cases, even cause harm.

"[T]he security of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people [i]s directly compromised by deficits in the following areas: accessibility; funding; cultural training and culturally relevant services, particularly related to trauma; policies and procedures in legislation; and lack of moral and political will to change. Ultimately, institutional response – or lack thereof – and lack of political will for changes to relevant legislation and policies related to anti-violence have a direct bearing on the rights to safety and security of Indigenous women and girls" (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.575) and 2S+ people.

Programs & Services: Indigenous Lens & Funding

Central to addressing violence and finding sustainable solutions for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people is addressing the root causes of that violence. This requires actively addressing historic and contemporary racism in systems (i.e., the issue areas identified in this report) that lead to social and economic marginalization as well as centering their

knowledge and lived experiences in all work that aspires to shape and adjust all associated programs, services, processes, policies, regulations, and legislation. In this work, national and international human rights documents¹³ will be used as a guide to equitable program and service development.

Recommendations

23.

Collaborate with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to create and implement standard Government of Alberta program and policy development processes. These processes will involve the requirement that all policy and program review and development initiatives incorporate at least:

- A decolonizing approach (see Appendix A: Glossary).
- A families-first approach (see Appendix A: Glossary).
- Trauma-informed (see Appendix A: Glossary) and harm-reduction approaches.
- Meaningful, sustainable inclusion of the voices of those with lived experience in the issue area.
- Indigenous-determined solutions to policies and programs aimed at or including Indigenous people, especially women, girls, and 2S+ people.
- Honouring the agency and expertise of Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and MMIWG2S+ survivors and families by involving them from the beginning and throughout the program development process.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.3

MEDIUM TERM

¹³ Relevant International conventions or covenants include the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Declaration on Human Rights; and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

Programs & Services: Indigenous Lens & Funding

24.

Review and revise all existing programs and services, including grants, addressing violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people and/or supporting MMIWG2S+ survivors and families to enhance effectiveness and impact. The review and revisions must consider the Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee's Framework as well as:

- How existing programs and services incorporate Indigenous women's, girls', and 2S+ people's knowledge, expertise, and agency into their design;
- Engaging Indigenous organizations and communities in the review and revision activities;
- Aligning program, service, and granting outcomes with the historic and contemporary lived experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people;
- Partnering with Indigenous women and 2S+ people to identify culturally responsive and safe outcome indicators in the realms of violence prevention;
- Gaps in programs and services that make it difficult for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people around Alberta to access them or don't properly address their needs and experiences;
- Opportunities for funded program and service providers, both non-profit and private, to collaborate to increase system capacity, including developing new programs and addressing existing gaps; and
- Whether existing dollars can be allocated differently to better address needs and issues. This will involve ending or cutting back money for existing programs, services, and grants that have not adapted sufficiently to current circumstances, needs, issues, and knowledge of the experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

The review and analysis of results will be shared with the Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee to provide feedback and direction.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.4, 1.6, 3.6

MEDIUM TERM

Programs & Services: Indigenous Lens & Funding

25.

In collaboration with Indigenous women, 2S+ people, and organizations, review and revise all funding policies, processes, and applications for both grants and contracts. This work includes:

- Using a decolonizing approach to ensure equitable opportunities for Indigenous organizations and communities to access funds, including allowing for oral application and report submissions.
- Ensuring flexibility for Indigenous communities and organizations to define their own outcomes based on what works in their communities in order to have the most impact. (See Programs & Services: Evaluation recommendations.)
- Developing flexible funding criteria and guidelines to ensure programs and services address community priorities and needs as defined by Indigenous people, organizations, and communities.
- Requiring all grant applications, funding agreements, and contracts demonstrate consideration of Indigenous women’s, girls’, and 2S+ people’s perspectives and understanding of the systemic issues in their service area that lead to them going missing or being murdered.
- Ensuring consistent simplified processes, including application and reporting requirements, across all Ministries.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.3, 1.6, 3.6

LONG TERM

26.

Fund Indigenous women and 2S+ organizations to lead, develop, deliver, and evaluate programs and services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. Funding must be multi-year, long term, and sustainable to support culturally responsive and safe programs and services. It will focus on:

- Preventative programs and services including safety planning;
- Saving the lives of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people;
- Working with federal, provincial, municipal, and Indigenous governments and organizations to increase safety in communities; and
- Outcomes evaluation.

(See Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee recommendation for further context.)

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.8

SHORT TERM

Programs & Services: Indigenous Lens & Funding

27.

Engage Indigenous women and 2S+ people and organizations to develop and implement collaborative granting processes in all Ministries. These new processes will include Indigenous people, organizations, and the recommended Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee having a role in reviewing and adjudicating applications to determine what MMIWG2S+ initiatives and projects are funded in their communities.

Existing collaborative granting processes in Alberta and Canada will be used as a starting point to inform what this process could look like in the Government of Alberta.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.8

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

MEDIUM TERM

28.

Initiate mandatory ongoing training for all grant program staff to understand the historical and contemporary context of the experiences facing Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta.

This includes learning about trauma-informed approaches to reviewing grant applications.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 7.6, 9.3 v, 11.1, 12.12

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

SHORT TERM



“Stop putting abused women and their children into shelters.

Remove the abuser. Uproot the abuser. Put the abuser through heavy counselling.

Of course, counsel the abused as well, but do not disrupt their lives any more than they already have been.”

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

Recommendations Summary

Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls identifies that “a permanent commitment to ending the genocide requires addressing the four pathways” (NIMMIWG 1b, n.d., p.167) through which violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people is perpetuated and maintained.

The AJWG considered how to address these root causes of the violence Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people experience in all of the overarching issues they identified (recommendations in previous section, p.30-63) and each of the issue area-specific (recommendations in next section, p.76-154) they explored. As a result, all of the recommendations in

this Report address one or more of these four pathways. This section provides a high level summary of all 113 of the recommendations in this Report and how each of the pathways are addressed.

All recommendations are intended to be read, considered, and implemented by the Government of Alberta in full collaboration with Indigenous people, communities and organizations; demonstrating the seven principles for change; and aligning with the overarching recommendations.

Recommendations Summary

Historical, Multigenerational, & Intergenerational Trauma

In Alberta our crossroads is with **trauma-informed cultural connections and supports**. This new path requires reviewing government policies, procedures, programs, and services in areas including but not limited to health, addictions and mental health, law enforcement, and social services to ensure they are trauma-informed, engage Indigenous communities and organizations, and connect Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people with their cultures.

"The enfranchisement of Indigenous people was not asked for and the systems that ensure our continued trauma and structured genocide must be decolonized."

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

SHORT TERM

- Establish an Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Committee to oversee, advise on, and measure all Government of Alberta (GOA) work to implement these Alberta Joint Working Group recommendations and address violence against and safety for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (1) (Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee)
- Adjust all mental health, addiction, and treatment policies, procedures, and models to reflect the needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (29) (Addictions & Mental Health)
- Develop and implement mobile trauma and addictions recovery teams across Alberta. (30) (Addictions & Mental Health)
- Adequately resource trauma-informed healing and prevention programs for survivors, children, and families of MMIWG2S+ and other unresolved traumas. (75) (Health Care)

MEDIUM TERM

- Develop trauma-informed and culturally responsive and safe training for health professionals and Indigenous communities on the use of prescription drugs and self-medication. (32) (Addictions & Mental Health)
- Co-develop and implement with Indigenous families, communities, and organizations, healing, support, and safety programs for all children and youth of MMIWG2S+. (37) (Child Welfare)
- Build and fund Indigenous-specific children's cottages for caregiver respite. (44) (Child Welfare)
- Ensure the opportunity to complete a Gladue Report is provided to every Indigenous woman, girl, and 2S+ person going through the provincial justice system in Alberta. (51) (Corrections)
- Incorporate Indigenous justice systems into Alberta court services. (53) (Court Services)
- Develop Indigenous-specific prevention programs that support Indigenous girls and 2S+ children and youth to stay in school. (57) (Education)
- Develop an Indigenous Family Violence Framework. (60) (Family Violence)
- Coordinate and integrate Indigenous anti-violence programs and initiatives across the GOA. (64) (Family Violence)
- Recommend the Lieutenant Governor in Council require through regulation (section 61(1)(f) of the *Police Act*) that all national, provincial, municipal, and First Nation law enforcement officers in Alberta have mandatory and ongoing Indigenous awareness training. (95) (Law Enforcement)

LONG TERM

- Establish an MMIWG2S+ Advisory Council that reports to the Minister of Education. (58) (Education)

Recommendations Summary

Social & Economic Marginalization

In Alberta our crossroads is with **ensuring equitable access to the supports and resources that lead to employment and education**. This new path requires addressing the assumptions and beliefs Albertans - public servants, MLAs, teachers, bus drivers, oil workers, children, farmers, everyone - hold, sometimes unconsciously, about Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people that in turn impact how they treat them personally and professionally.

"Addressing this lands lack of support and on going racism toward Indigenous people. Shift and change of how we take care of ourselves and one another."

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

SHORT TERM

- **Address systemic and institutional racism and create accountability to address racism in the public sector, public spaces, and public service provision. (9) (Anti-Racism)**
- **Fund Indigenous communities and organizations to address racism, bullying, and all types of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (10) (Anti-Racism)**
- **Fund Indigenous women and 2S+ organizations to lead, develop, deliver, and evaluate programs and services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (26) (Programs & Services: Indigenous Lens & Funding)**
- **Ensure equitable access to and availability of addictions and mental health supports and services across Alberta for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (31) (Addictions & Mental Health)**
- **Include Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people's perspectives in the *Alberta 2030 building skills for jobs: A 10-year strategy for post-secondary education* implementation plan. (35) (Advanced Education)**
- **Provide legal support services for Indigenous mothers trying to regain access and custody of their children. (42) (Child Welfare)**
- **Develop an Indigenous services hub-and-spoke model (similar to Family Resource Networks) to focus on developing appropriate assessment tools, delivering Indigenous cultural training to agencies, and delivering services to Indigenous people. (43) (Child Welfare)**
- **Educate all children and youth in Alberta on the issues of violence and human trafficking through curriculum. (55) (Education)**
- **Develop family violence training curriculum as a mandatory entry level requirement to work in emergency shelters and women's shelters in Alberta. (61) (Family Violence)**
- **Establish a new emergency Indigenous women's shelter in Edmonton to address the gap in services and supports for Indigenous women not accessing emergency shelters. (63) (Family Violence)**
- **Amend the *Fatality Inquiries Act* to require at least one Indigenous person be a member of the Fatality Review Board. (65) (Fatality Inquiries)**
- **Develop communication protocols between the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and the families of Indigenous victims. (66) (Fatality Inquiries)**
- **Expand the women fleeing violence benefit to include families of MMIWG2S+. (91) (Income Support)**
- **Apply a regional cost of living adjustment to income support payments and align with the guaranteed annual liveable income. (92) (Income Support)**
- **Develop a toolkit to assist all employers with educating and raising awareness of the issue of MMIWG2S+ and how to maintain a safe workplace free from violence and harassment. (101) (Occupational Health & Safety)**

Recommendations Summary

Social & Economic Marginalization

SHORT TERM (CONTINUED)

- Partner with Indigenous women and 2S+ people and health and safety associations to increase safety and reduce violence on worksites. (102) (Occupational Health & Safety)
- Ensure all resource development projects have culturally responsive and safe programs and services available at the worksite and in surrounding communities. (105) (Occupational Health & Safety)
- Work with police services to ensure law enforcement is visible and accessible where accommodation camps are located and in surrounding communities. (106) (Occupational Health & Safety)
- Make the Occupational Health and Safety Department ultimately responsible for all accountability aspects related to the safety of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in accommodation camps in Alberta. (109) (Occupational Health & Safety)
- Improve access to paid leave, disability benefits, and wrap around support services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people who are victims of criminal or traumatic circumstances. (110) (Victim Services)

MEDIUM TERM

- Collaborate with Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, communities, and organizations, as well as the federal government on anti-racism initiatives. (11) (Anti-Racism)
- Build infrastructure for reliable and affordable high-speed internet in rural and remote areas of Alberta. (36) (Advanced Education)
- Co-develop, fund, and implement multi-year preventative strategies to reduce Indigenous child apprehension. (40) (Child Welfare)
- Develop a provincial Indigenous Childcare Strategy to revitalize Indigenous childcare practices based on natural supports and a grandmother model where Elders and Aunties are involved in childcare provisions. (41) (Child Welfare)
- Increase and improve healing and rehabilitation programs for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people incarcerated in any provincial facilities. (47) (Corrections)
- Establish sufficient transition housing and wrap around services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to reintegrate back into communities. (49) (Corrections)
- Establish an Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2S+ People Subcommittee of the Family Violence Death Review Committee. (62) (Family Violence)
- Increase accessibility and availability of Indigenous Health Liaisons throughout Alberta. (77) (Health Care)
- Amend the *Alberta Housing Act* to include an Indigenous woman on the Alberta Social Housing Corporation board of directors and establish Indigenous Management Bodies regionally. (84) (Housing & Homelessness)
- Establish a unit for media to access information regarding Indigenous context, history, issues, perspectives, etc. to inform their reporting and stories. (97) (Media Relations)
- Develop education and training for all GOA media personnel, including press secretaries, on the importance and need to humanize and accurately portray Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in communications. (98) (Media Relations)
- Collaborate with institutions, corporations, and organizations to address the perpetuation of stereotypes and racism in media coverage of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta. (99) (Media Relations)

Recommendations Summary

Social & Economic Marginalization

LONG TERM

- Review the Alberta Human Rights Commission's policies and processes to identify and address barriers to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people accessing their services. (17) (Human Rights)
- Provide multi-year funding to Indigenous-led organizations to deliver culturally responsive and safe, community-specific prevention and intervention child services. (38) (Child Welfare)
- Increase availability and accessibility of Indigenous health and wellness staff. (76) (Health Care)
Ensure all health facilities in Alberta have culturally responsive and safe spaces. (78) (Health Care)
- Provide emergency women's shelters, detox and addictions shelters, family shelters, and drop-in shelters the necessary cultural resources to properly serve families of MMIWG2S+ and survivors. (79) (Housing & Homelessness)
- Develop and fund an Indigenous 24-hour crisis line for emergency program and service referrals. (80) (Housing & Homelessness)
- Work with the Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee, Indigenous-led housing management bodies, and Indigenous organizations to implement *Stronger Foundations: Alberta's 10-year strategy to improve and expand affordable housing* with an Indigenous lens. (85) (Housing & Homelessness)
- Partner with industry to support Indigenous-led research on social and economic marginalization of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, their families and communities, as a result of resource development projects in their territories. (108) (Occupational Health & Safety)

Recommendations Summary

Maintaining the Status Quo & Institutional Lack of Will

In Alberta our crossroads is with **culturally responsive and safe policies, procedures, regulations, programs, and services**. No longer can Indigenous cultures and people's lived experiences be add-ons to existing programs and services, brushed over as something that needs to be acknowledged but doesn't warrant extensive consideration.

"When we remove systemic barriers as simple as this then we are truly working in the spirit of reconciliation!"

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

SHORT TERM

- Work with all police services in Alberta to increase transparency, trust, communication, and flow of information to families of MMIWG2S+. (2) (Supports for Families & Loved Ones)
- Provide financial support to communities to commemorate and honour MMIWG2S+. (3) (Supports for Families & Loved Ones)
- In partnership with families of MMIWG2S+, develop and deliver programs and services that provide resources and supports for families of MMIWG2S+. (4) (Supports for Families & Loved Ones)
- Apply anti-racism and decolonization approaches to the review and implementation of all recommendations in this Report. (7) (Anti-Racism)
- Work with all provincial court services and court staff, including judges, to address racist actions, rules, and procedures in court rooms. (13) (Anti-Racism)
- Design and implement significant, ongoing awareness and training initiatives for the public, elected leaders, the Alberta Public Service, partners, service delivery organizations funded by the Government of Alberta (GOA), and others. (14) (Awareness & Training)
- Ensure policy developers and elected officials are regularly informed and educated on issues facing Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, including MMIWG2S+ issues, through both briefings from front-line public servants and meeting directly with Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and other community members and leaders. (18) (Policy & Legislation Development)
- Initiate mandatory ongoing training for all grant program staff to understand the historical and contemporary context of the experiences facing Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta. (28) (Programs & Services: Indigenous Lens & Funding)
- Ensure Indigenous communities design and deliver children's services for their families and children. (39) (Child Welfare)
- Develop culturally responsive and safe standards for transition plans for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people leaving correctional facilities. (48) (Corrections)
- Evaluate the impacts of Gladue principles on sentencing equity for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (50) (Corrections)
- Mandate school boards to train all school officials and staff to identify markers and respond appropriately to Indigenous students who are experiencing violence, sexual exploitation, and/or human trafficking. (56) (Education)
- Make identification of ethnicity of deceased individuals a priority for the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and law enforcement agencies. (67) (Fatality Inquiries)

Recommendations Summary

Maintaining the Status Quo & Institutional Lack of Will

SHORT TERM (CONTINUED)

- Develop protocols between all national, provincial, municipal, and First Nation law enforcement services in Alberta to ensure requests for assistance from First Nation Police Services are responded to in a timely, respectful, effective, and efficient manner. (71) (First Nation Policing)
- Update all primary care policies and procedures to be culturally responsive and safe. (73) (Health Care)
- Develop an Indigenous-led oversight body independent of Government to evaluate housing and homeless services for and to receive complaints from Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (82) (Housing & Homelessness)
- Establish a Human Trafficking Secretariat with a minimum 50% Indigenous membership for implementing, monitoring, and reporting on Alberta's Plan to Combat Human Trafficking. (86) (Human Trafficking)
- Update the *Protecting Survivors of Human Trafficking Act* to harmonize it with Indigenous ways of knowing and being and to address the specific needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (88) (Human Trafficking)
- Ensure all income support policies, programs, services, and procedures are delivered in trauma-informed, culturally responsive and safe ways and are tailored to the circumstances of the families of MMIWG2S+. (90) (Income Support)
- Ensure annual provincial funding for law enforcement services in Alberta includes as a condition, both immediate implementation of National Inquiry Calls for Justice as well as consistent disaggregated data collection. (93) (Law Enforcement)
- Integrate a community-based policing model into all law enforcement services in Alberta. (96) (Law Enforcement)
- Immediately work with law enforcement agencies, broadcast platforms and other relevant partners to develop and implement a Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MIWG) Alert to provide timely information on Indigenous women and girls who are reported missing. (100) (Missing Person Alert)
- Advocate to and engage with the Government of Canada for funding for Family Information Liaison Units (FILU) to be renewed past March 2023 and to flow through Indigenous community agencies rather than provincial service providers. (113) (Victim Services)

MEDIUM TERM

- Create and fund a Centre of Research Excellence on topics relevant to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (15) (Data & Research)
- Establish a Provincial Indigenous Human Rights Ombudsperson and a Provincial Indigenous Human Rights Tribunal. (16) (Human Rights)
- Review existing government legislation, regulations, and policies with the Indigenous intersectional policy analysis framework. (20) (Policy & Legislation Development)
- Collaborate with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to create and implement standard Government of Alberta program and policy development processes. (23) (Programs & Services: Indigenous Lens & Funding)
- Review and revise all existing programs and services, including grants, addressing violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people and/or supporting MMIWG2S+ survivors and families to enhance effectiveness and impact. (24) (Programs & Services: Indigenous Lens & Funding)

Recommendations Summary

Maintaining the Status Quo & Institutional Lack of Will

MEDIUM TERM (CONTINUED)

- Collaborate with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to evaluate the relationship between Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, and Indigenous communities and take steps to improve the relationship. (33) (Addictions & Mental Health)
- Update policies on monitoring cameras in facilities to ensure safe, timely intervention and violence prevention for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (46) (Corrections)
- Research options for sentencing diversion of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta and share the report outlining those options with judges, defence lawyers, the Law Society of Alberta, and crown prosecutors. (52) (Corrections)
- Extend the *Police Act* to include all First Nation Police Services in Alberta and advocate for the federal government to do the same with the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act*. (69) (First Nation Policing)
- Amend Alberta Justice and Solicitor General audits of all law enforcement services in Alberta to include metrics around MMIWG2S+. (70) (First Nation Policing)
- Establish regional Indigenous-led housing management bodies and homelessness authorities to receive all Indigenous housing and homelessness funding from governments for the region and to distribute it appropriately for Indigenous service delivery. (83) (Housing & Homelessness)
- Co-develop, fund, and implement Indigenous-led programs and services designed for the specific and unique experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people who are victims of human trafficking. (87) (Human Trafficking)
- Revise the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and Regulation to require employers to address safety for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in their existing safety plans. (104) (Occupational Health & Safety)
- Require all resource extractive companies to report all incidents involving safety for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to Alberta OHS. (107) (Occupational Health & Safety)

LONG TERM

- In collaboration with Indigenous women, 2S+ people, and organizations, review and revise all funding policies, processes, and applications for both grants and contracts. (25) (Programs & Services: Indigenous Lens & Funding)
- Develop correctional facilities specifically for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (45) (Corrections)
- Support revitalization and implementation of Indigenous justice systems. (54) (Court Services)
- Design culturally responsive and safe curriculum pathways specific to children of MMIWG2S+. (59) (Education)
- Immediately undertake a review of all cold cases where Indigenous women, girls, or 2S+ people are victims and for all victims of unknown ethnicity. (68) (Fatality Inquiries)
- Enhance the design and delivery of all health and wellness services in Alberta to improve health outcomes for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (74) (Health Care)
- Transition victim services provision to a community model. (111) (Victim Services)

Recommendations Summary

Ignoring the Agency & Expertise of Indigenous Women, Girls, & 2S+ People

In Alberta our crossroads is with having **Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people leading strategies and initiatives.** Agencies, institutions, and governments must be willing to work with those who hold the most expertise – those with lived experience and impacted directly by the violence and Indigenous service providers and organizations – and to recognize and implement the solutions they present.

‘Consultation with those impacted and meaningful action to address concerns raised by them and to continue practices that meet their needs is crucial.’

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

SHORT TERM

- Engage the 2S+ community in Alberta to identify specific actions that can be taken to address National Inquiry Calls for Justice related to violence against 2S+ people. (5) (Absent Perspectives)
- Ensure inclusion of diverse First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and 2S+ perspectives when implementing actions, strategies, or initiatives related to these recommendations. (6) (Absent Perspectives)
- Apply an Indigenous lens to the review and implementation of all Alberta Anti-Racism Advisory Council (AARAC) recommendations. (8) (Anti-Racism)
- Fund Indigenous-led organizations to develop tools that support Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people pursuing non-profit and public leadership roles. (12) (Anti-Racism)
- Develop a made-in-Alberta Indigenous intersectional policy analysis framework in partnership with Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and organizations. (19) (Policy & Legislation Development)
- Partner with Indigenous women, 2S+ people, and organizations to develop and implement an evaluation framework for government programs and services delivered to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (21) (Programs & Services: Evaluation)
- Partner with Indigenous women, 2S+ people, and organizations to develop and implement an evaluation framework to inform enhancements and track and report on the progress of all Government of Alberta actions to support MMIWG2S+ survivors and families. (22) (Programs & Services: Evaluation)
- Examine and reduce barriers to post-secondary education for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (34) (Advanced Education)
- Implement services to ensure proper health and wellness supports for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people who are sexually exploited and/or engaged in sex work. (72) (Health Care)
- Create Indigenous-specific human trafficking public awareness campaigns and education opportunities with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people that reflect Indigenous individuals’ and communities’ realities. (89) (Human Trafficking)
- Engage Indigenous people, especially women, girls, and 2S+ people, in law enforcement oversight mechanisms. (94) (Law Enforcement)
- Support the Métis Women’s Council on Economic Security’s ongoing examination of worksite safety and ensure they are engaged in the implementation of these recommendations. (103) (Occupational Health & Safety)

Recommendations Summary

Ignoring the Agency & Expertise of Indigenous Women, Girls, & 2S+ People

MEDIUM TERM

- Engage Indigenous women and 2S+ people and organizations to develop and implement collaborative granting processes in all Ministries. (27) (Programs & Services: Indigenous Lens & Funding)
- Engage with Indigenous sex workers, particularly Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, to better understand and identify solutions for the housing needs of those in sex work or transitioning out of sex work. (81) (Housing & Homelessness)
- Retain an independent auditor to identify what Indigenous-specific victim services and programs are already provided within Alberta, who is providing them, what their processes are, and what gaps exist. (112) (Victim Services)

Issue Area Recommendations

“When we remove systemic barriers as simple as this then we are truly working in the spirit of reconciliation!”

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

All of these issue area-specific recommendations are intended to be read, considered, and implemented by the Government of Alberta in full collaboration with Indigenous people, communities and organizations, and demonstrating the seven principles for change as well as the overarching recommendations.

Issue Areas:

- | | | | |
|---|---------|--------------------------------|---------|
| ○ Addictions & Mental Health | 76-79 | ○ First Nation Policing | 114-116 |
| ○ Advanced Education | 80-82 | ○ Health Care | 117-121 |
| ○ Child Welfare | 83-89 | ○ Housing and Homelessness | 122-128 |
| ○ Corrections (Correctional Facilities / Prison Supports / Relapse Supports / Sentencing Diversion) | 90-97 | ○ Human Trafficking | 129-132 |
| ○ Court Services | 98-101 | ○ Income Support | 133-135 |
| ○ Education | 102-106 | ○ Law Enforcement | 136-140 |
| ○ Family Violence | 107-110 | ○ Media Relations | 141-144 |
| ○ Fatality Inquiries | 111-113 | ○ Missing Person Alert | 145-146 |
| | | ○ Occupational Health & Safety | 147-150 |
| | | ○ Victim Services | 151-154 |

Addictions & Mental Health

“There is clearly a critical need to expand mental health and trauma services and supports for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people within Indigenous communities that do not neglect Indigenous perspectives.”

(NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)

The National Inquiry heard many testimonials about health issues facing survivors and families of MMIWG2S+ and their experiences in seeking and accessing services. They indicate that addressing Indigenous women’s, girls’, and 2S+ people’s right to addictions and mental health support will help them heal from and even address the violence they face. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)

Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people have unique addictions and mental health needs. If they attended residential schools they are more likely to experience mental health challenges and may suffer “residential school syndrome,” which has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) -like symptoms with specific cultural impact. (Brasfield, 2021) If they experience and survive violence their health-related challenges can include addiction and self-harm. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are also statistically overrepresented in the opioid crisis due to intergenerational trauma as well as long wait lists for, limited access to, and racism within, the addictions

and mental health treatment systems. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)

COVID-19 has made things worse. In a Statistics Canada crowdsourced data collection, 60% of Indigenous participants reported their mental health as either somewhat or much worse and 48% of Indigenous women participants “reported symptoms consistent with moderate or severe generalized anxiety”. (Statistics Canada, 2020, p. 1)

The health system is failing Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. There is seemingly an ignorance about or refusal to acknowledge Indigenous healing models, the efficacy of these models, and the importance of culturally responsive and safe services that address and improve all aspects of wellness, including physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) Indigenous people also describe troubling experiences with systems and staff that worsen rather than heal their mental health challenges, including racism and colonial relationship

Addictions & Mental Health

styles highlighting hierarchy and power. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)

There is clearly a critical need to expand mental health and trauma services and supports for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people that do not neglect Indigenous perspectives. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) “Existing research on mental health interventions with Indigenous Peoples points to the indelible link between cultural continuity and positive health outcomes (Bombay et al., 2009; Chandler & Lalonde, 2008), and the need for community-based interventions that are rooted in cultural models of

health and healing and control of resources by Indigenous Peoples.” (Panofsky et al, 2021, p.5) Priority must therefore be on mental health services developed and delivered by Indigenous organizations and on trauma interventions that focus on increasing understanding of historical trauma along with improving personal empowerment and self-determination. (Panofsky et al, 2021) Investment in academic research into traditional healing modalities, such as is being done by the University of Calgary Indigenous Health Education Pathways to Healing,¹⁴ will also be critical.

Recommendations

29.

Adjust all mental health, addiction, and treatment policies, procedures, and models to reflect the needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. Programs will provide opportunities to reconnect Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people receiving treatment for mental health and/or addictions issues with their culture and traditional healing practices. Supports must be trauma-informed, anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and culturally responsive and safe. Elders must be included and those with lived experience will deliver the programming. Services must be provided for the duration of the individual’s healing journey, not based on a prescribed timeframe.

Two critical needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are the ability to access mental health, addiction, and detox in-residence and day treatments as soon as they are ready, and being able to either bring their children or having access to childcare. Therefore, ensuring policies and programs are family-friendly and include providing supports for their children as well as reducing wait time for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to receive these services are paramount.

ALBERTA
MANDATES

Options to address
Calls for Justice

NATIONAL
PATHWAYS

Historical,
multigenerational,
& intergenerational
trauma

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.4

SHORT TERM

14. See <https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/community/projects-and-initiatives/indigenous-health/indigenous-health-education>

Addictions & Mental Health

30.

Develop and implement mobile trauma and addictions recovery teams across Alberta.

These will be developed in partnership with local Indigenous communities, Indigenous service providers, and Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. Based on the needs of each individual, these teams will partner with Elders and other services providers including those focused on mental health, addictions and/or supporting victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.2, 3.4

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Historical, multigenerational, & intergenerational trauma

SHORT TERM

31.

Ensure equitable access to and availability of addictions and mental health supports and services across Alberta for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. Services and supports must be available throughout the province, taking into account rural locations and the impacts of COVID-19. Further, they must be accessible when Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are ready to access them: wait lists are currently excessive. All services must utilize a harm-reduction model and include different harm-reduction options for those individuals that choose that approach.

Culturally responsive and safe wrap-around supports must be established prior to discharging Indigenous women, girls, or 2S+ from hospitals, treatment centres, etc. where they were receiving mental health, addictions, and/or physical health treatment.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.2, 3.4

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

SHORT TERM

Addictions & Mental Health

32.

Develop trauma-informed and culturally responsive and safe training for health professionals and Indigenous communities on the use of prescription drugs and self-medication.

Training will be developed with professional bodies and colleges of doctors, dentists, pharmacists, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other health care professions to better support Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. Training will include knowledge building around appropriate referrals and service providers and capacity building activities for better supporting Indigenous people addressing addictions.

Working with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, community training will take a strengths-based approach and focus on developing peoples' ability to recognize signs of prescription drug use and self-medication, support friends and family with addictions and mental health concerns, and develop healthy relationships within communities.

(See Awareness & Training recommendation.)

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Historical, multigenerational, & intergenerational trauma

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 7.1, 7.2, 7.6, 12.12

MEDIUM TERM

33.

Collaborate with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to evaluate the relationship between Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, and Indigenous communities and take steps to improve the relationship.

Indigenous-led organizations, service providers, and Elders must be included in these conversations. The evaluation will prioritize how to repair and rebuild relationships with mental health service providers.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 7.6

MEDIUM TERM

Advanced Education

Closing the education gap would not only reduce the number of MMIWG2S+ in Alberta, it would also positively influence Alberta's economy by lowering unemployment, addressing labour shortages, and reducing demand for health and social services.

Research shows that “[f]ormal education leads to better employment opportunities, improved coping skills, and better participation in social institutions” (Deonandan, 2019, p.2) and that the earlier women exit the education system the greater the risk of violence they experience. Therefore, addressing the systemic education gap for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta is critical for increasing their security and addressing the root causes of the violence they experience. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)

It wasn't until the late 1960's that First Nations individuals could participate in higher education without having to give up their status as a First Nations person. (Pidgeon, 2019) Today, however, Indigenous people, especially women, girls, and 2S+ people, still encounter many barriers trying to access higher education. These barriers include:

- Having to leave their home communities and travel long distances to access post-secondary institutions in larger urban centres which directly creates a risk for violence. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)
- A substandard quality of secondary education in Alberta for Indigenous people as well as a lack of academic preparation and guidance. (Arriagada, 2021)
- Racism and racial exclusion within post-secondary institutions (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) and the higher education system in Alberta and a lack of understanding of Indigenous history and the impacts of colonialism by post-secondary staff, including instructors, administrators, and executive leaders, as well as government officials reviewing, editing, writing, and implementing policy and regulations that guide the sector.
- The high costs of post-secondary education including tuition fees and child care as well as rent and other daily living costs if they need to move away from their home communities.
- A lack of access to appropriate post-secondary and training opportunities and lack of funding. (Deer et al., 2015)
- Lack of community engagement and opportunities for community involvement in post-secondary institutions. (Deer et al., 2015)
- Institutions are not culturally responsive or safe. Indigenous perspectives are not “integrated in a reasonable manner” (Deer et al., 2015, p.15) into post-secondary institutions, their organizational cultures, their curricula, or their courses.

Advanced Education

Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people make up a pool of unrealized talents, abilities, and knowledge. They are particularly under-represented at the highest levels: 14% of Indigenous women hold a bachelor's degree or higher, but the proportion of non-Indigenous women holding the same is almost double at 32%. (Arriagada, 2021) Closing this education gap would not only reduce the number of

MMIWG2S+ in Alberta, it would also positively influence Alberta's economy by lowering unemployment, addressing labour shortages, and reducing demand for health and social services. One study estimated addressing the systemic education gaps for Indigenous people would result in economic gains of \$500 billion for Canada. (Deonandan, 2019)

Recommendations

34.

Examine and reduce barriers to post-secondary education for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. Overall access (geographic, financial, etc.) as well as physical and emotional safety within institutions and on campuses will be priorities in this work. Engage Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to identify Alberta-specific barriers. Indigenous communities, Indigenous academic institutions, and Indigenous-led agencies in Alberta and across Canada will also be engaged to identify wise practices that could be implemented in Alberta to address identified barriers and otherwise increase access.

The Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee (see associated recommendation) will be accessed as a support for this work.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 4.4

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

SHORT TERM

Advanced Education

35.

Include Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people’s perspectives in the *Alberta 2030 building skills for jobs: A 10-year strategy for post-secondary education implementation plan.*

Ensure Indigenous representatives are included on the associated Advisory Councils. Implementation plans will utilize Indigenous expertise in training, trades, and academic programming from across Alberta, Canada, and North America to create opportunities for Indigenous high school students to experience different trades and opportunities to help them make wise post-secondary choices. These opportunities will include:

- In-depth, long-term exposure programming;
- Apprentice-type programming;
- Prioritization of rural, remote, and Indigenous high schools; and
- Career fields outside of typical low-wage jobs.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 4.4

36.

Build infrastructure for reliable and affordable high-speed internet in rural and remote areas of Alberta.

When Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in all parts of Alberta have reliable digital access it increases their safe access to education and training opportunities, community-based initiatives, and individual and family services and programs.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 4.2, 4.4, 5.5 i

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

SHORT TERM

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

MEDIUM TERM

Child Welfare

When Indigenous children are removed from their natural families they are further traumatized and put at greater risk of violence and death.

In Alberta, Indigenous children make up only 10% of the child population. (Statistics Canada, 2019) Yet in March 2021, 65% of all children and youth receiving child intervention services in Alberta were Indigenous (6,905 Indigenous children and youth). (Government of Alberta [GOA], 2021) At the same point in time, 71% of all the children and youth receiving services in care in Alberta were Indigenous. In other words, 5,874 Indigenous children and youth were away from their parent(s) or guardian(s). (GOA, 2021) In both cases, this is a 2% increase over the year prior.

In 2019-2020 only 46% of Indigenous children and youth in care were placed with Indigenous families through either foster care or kinship care. For the 54% of children, especially Indigenous girls and 2S+ children and youth, not placed with Indigenous families and not receiving culturally responsive and safe services, children's services can be experienced as a form of trauma through the loss of connection to their community and culture, and violation of cultural rights. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)

Further, Indigenous people are at much higher risk of dying when receiving child intervention services in Alberta than non-Indigenous people. From April 1, 2021 to October 31, 2021 (7 months) 23 of the 30 deaths (76.7%) were Indigenous children, youth, and young adults. (Government of Alberta [GOA], 2021) The lack of disaggregated data and lack of data sharing amongst governments, police, and service providers again challenges deeper understanding of the reality of the situation. Sixteen of the overall 30 deaths were female, but the data doesn't demonstrate how many of those females were Indigenous. And there's absolutely no data on 2S+ children and youth. Worse, 17 of the 23 Indigenous deaths are still of undetermined causes and three are not being investigated by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME). All of which means we do not know how many of those 23 deaths will be added to the tally of MMIWG2S+ in Alberta. (GOA, 2021)

Why are Indigenous children ending up in care at such high rates? Based on research by Cindy Blackstock

Child Welfare

and the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society, “it’s poverty, poor housing, and substance misuse.” (Children’s Health Policy Centre, 2013) Often the child welfare systems then further disadvantage Indigenous children by not adequately preparing them for life after care and directly contributing to lower graduation rates from high school, greater mental health issues, and a greater likelihood of becoming involved in the youth criminal justice system. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)

Despite all of this evidence, and years of advocacy for equitable public services for Indigenous children, rather than funding to provide proper support to families so the apprehension of children can be prevented, systems are designed to provide funding for children only once they are in care. Further, Indigenous children don’t receive the same level of support as non-Indigenous children. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)

The Child Welfare system today is an updated continuation of the Sixties Scoop, which saw more than 20,000 Indigenous children taken away from their

families and communities. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) This extension of the intergenerational trauma Indigenous Peoples have experienced during colonization - either by being apprehended as a child or having a child die in care or while receiving child intervention services - greatly increases Indigenous women’s, girls’, and 2S+ people’s vulnerability to violence, human trafficking, and unhealthy relationships. All of which increases the chances of them going missing or being murdered.

This over-representation, under-funding, and vastly increased vulnerability to violence of Indigenous girls and 2S+ people who end up in these systems, highlights the need for significant and immediate changes. Meaningful engagement with Indigenous leaders, organizations, Knowledge Keepers, and communities is needed to examine why Indigenous children - especially girls, 2S+, and those of MMIWG2S+ - are ending up in the child intervention system, how to prevent children and youth being apprehended, and approaches to better support Indigenous families and communities caring for these children.

Child Welfare

Recommendations

37.

Co-develop and implement with Indigenous families, communities, and organizations, healing, support, and safety programs for all children and youth of MMIWG2S+. Advocate to the federal government for funding to support this work, especially where there are jurisdictional matters or concerns, and reduce red tape by having provincial and federal funding flow directly to Indigenous communities and organizations to deliver the programming.

These programs will include but are not limited to:

- Resources to ensure culturally responsive and safe care for children and youth of MMIWG2S+ experiencing grief, loss, and trauma.
- Access to trauma therapists and Elders for children of MMIWG2S+ and their guardian(s).
- Culturally responsive and safe resources, programming and financial support for families and community members caring for the children of MMIWG2S+ to prevent the children being apprehended.
- Funding for ‘outside the system’ fostering for family caregivers that recognizes Indigenous community and family structures and provides funding for care prior to apprehension.
- A program built with the Ministries of Education and Advanced Education that supports Indigenous children of MMIWG2S+ to stay in school and to complete post-secondary education.
- Funding for Indigenous children in kinship care and children of MMIWG2S+ to complete post-secondary, similar to the funding received by children who age out of care.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.7, 7.4, 12.2, 12.3, 12.5, 12.7, 12.10

38.

Provide multi-year funding to Indigenous-led organizations to deliver culturally responsive and safe, community-specific prevention and intervention child services. This funding will support long term stability in programming including:

- Supporting and evaluating programs and building Indigenous-specific outcomes;
- Attracting more Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ participants since the programming will be available for an extended period of time; and
- Supporting consistency and quality in Indigenous organizations’ staffing through increased staff retention with competitive salaries, health benefits, training, and other supports.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 12.2, 12.5, 12.10

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls For Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Historical, multigenerational, & intergenerational trauma

MEDIUM TERM

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

LONG TERM

Child Welfare

39.

Ensure Indigenous communities design and deliver children’s services for their families and children. These services will focus on prevention, particularly supports to preserve families and connections to community and culture, rather than apprehension and intervention which the current system practices.

This work includes:

- Partnering with Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGBs) as defined under *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families (Canada)* and actively participating in the development of trilateral coordination agreements with the federal government to ensure Indigenous communities design Indigenous laws to deliver child and family services.
- Re-designing any and all child intervention programs and services that do not work for Indigenous people and ensuring those same programs and services are adapted for the specific cultural practices of different Indigenous communities.
- Advocating to the federal government for funding to support this work, especially where there are jurisdictional matters or concerns.
- Reducing red tape by having provincial and federal funding flow directly to Indigenous communities and organizations to deliver the programming.

This also includes fully implementing the Spirit Bear Plan¹⁵ to end inequalities in public services for Indigenous children, youth, and families:

- Advocating the federal government to immediately fulfil their obligations such as complying with all rulings by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.
- Making it mandatory for all Alberta Public Service members, including those at senior and executive levels, to attend training to identify and determine how to address ideology, assumptions, regulations, policies, and government and program procedures that prevent implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action. This training must be co-developed and co-delivered with Indigenous people.
- Children’s Services immediately engage Indigenous stakeholders to evaluate the relationship between the Ministry and Indigenous communities and organizations. This evaluation must be undertaken in a culturally responsive and safe way and be flexible to the unique cultural approaches of diverse Indigenous Peoples. The results will identify where and how the relationship needs to be repaired and rebuilt.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 7.4, 12.1, 12.5, 12.13

SHORT TERM

¹⁵ See <https://fncaringociety.com/spirit-bear-plan>

Child Welfare

40.

Co-develop, fund, and implement multi-year preventative strategies to reduce Indigenous child apprehension. This will be done through legislative and policy changes in partnership with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. The changes must be made using an Indigenous lens.

These strategies will include, but are not limited to:

- Keeping children with their natural families. Remove parents instead of children. Child welfare is the new residential schools for traumatizing children and separating them from their culture. Removing children will be a very last resort.
- Ensuring equitable funding for Grandmothers and Aunties who take on kids in a 'foster' role (e.g., money for recreation activities will be equal to what foster families get).
- Ensuring that as soon as the parent is healthy, the children are returned.
- Revising the *Alberta Child, Youth, and Family Enhancement Act* and the *Child, Youth and Family Regulations* to be culturally responsive and safe and appropriate for Indigenous families. Recognizing Indigenous community and family structures, the Act must be changed to include funding support for 'outside of the system fostering' for family caregivers. For example, extended family members, grandmothers and aunties do not want children to be apprehended and will often embrace the care of those children prior to their apprehension or a file being opened. However, this then limits the resources and supports available to them.
- Ensuring children aren't being apprehended for issues of poverty in the family.
- Resolving issues of poverty, inadequate and substandard housing, and lack of financial support for families, and increasing food security and prenatal services for Indigenous families.
- Reviewing and amending all assessment tools used by child welfare programs and services to ensure they are anti-bias, culturally responsive and safe, and aren't leading to apprehension of children because they are Indigenous. Children will be kept with their families as long as they can be safe and secure.
- Reviewing and amending all assessment tools used by Government and Government-funded programs and services to ensure they use a trauma-informed approach.
- Updating the transition out of care policies to ensure Indigenous youth, especially Indigenous girls and 2S+ youth, transitioning out of care develop and have a localized, personalized, and detailed transition, support, and success plan.
- Providing adequate funding and supporting the development of natural supports for family members (grandparents, aunties, etc.) looking after the children of MMIWG2S+ to prevent those children from being apprehended and ending up in care.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.7, 12.2, 12.4, 12.10

MEDIUM TERM

Child Welfare

41.

Develop a provincial Indigenous Childcare Strategy to revitalize Indigenous childcare practices based on natural supports and a grandmother model where Elders and Aunties are involved in childcare provisions. The Strategy will set out a clear plan for ensuring sufficient affordable, accessible, high quality licensed child care spaces are available for Indigenous children, especially those of MMIWG2S+, including on reserve and in Métis communities. It must include clear outcomes from an Indigenous perspective and a robust process for evaluating whether and how outcomes are achieved. Alignment with the provincial data strategy and collaboration with the Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee will be necessary. (See Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee and Data & Research recommendations.)

The outcomes will include:

- Supporting current and building new natural supports for children;
- Providing structure and consistency for children and their families, thus allowing parents to complete their education and/or maintain reliable employment;
- Supporting parents building nurturing environments at home and strong healthy relationships with their children; and
- Staff recognizing early warning signs of struggles within families and working with them to prevent child apprehension.

Advocating for appropriate equal funding from the federal government and reducing red tape by having both provincial and federal funding flow directly to Indigenous governments and organizations to implement the Strategy will be critical.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.7, 7.4, 12.2, 12.4, 12.7, 12.10, 12.12

42.

Provide legal support services for Indigenous mothers trying to regain access and custody of their children.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 12.3

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

MEDIUM TERM

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

SHORT TERM

Child Welfare

43.

Develop an Indigenous services hub-and-spoke model (similar to Family Resource Networks) to focus on developing appropriate assessment tools, delivering Indigenous cultural training to agencies, and delivering services to Indigenous people.

Right now, Family Resource Networks (FRNs) would say they have cultural components. The hub-and-spoke models work, but some cultural components require further support and development and increased implementation.

The model will be implemented province-wide, particularly in rural and remote areas. In Edmonton, Calgary, and wherever else possible, the central hub will be an Indigenous organization with Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations as the spokes.

Further:

- The Signs of Safety assessment tool needs to be immediately re-developed for Indigenous women, children, and families with a protection lens that is long-term focused, embracing the TRC Calls to Action, and allowing for consistent relationships and adequate resources to support families to heal and stay together. The current tool is punitive to families that can't produce healthy natural supports, does not recognize complex multi-generational trauma, misses key safety considerations, and only supports some, not all, of the family members in a home.
- Agencies will fill in for gaps in natural supports for families until the family develops appropriate natural supports.
- Parents need to be meaningfully involved in governance and decision-making within the organizations, much like parent advisory groups attached to family resource centres.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 12.7, 12.12

44.

Build and fund Indigenous-specific children's cottages for caregiver respite. This includes advocating for appropriate and equal funding from the federal government. Reduce red tape by having both provincial and federal funding flow directly to Nations for Child Welfare programs and services.

Caregivers, including parents and especially single mothers, need to be able to access culturally responsive and safe, high-quality respite care in times of stress and when at risk of apprehension, police involvement, or other interventions.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 7.4, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

SHORT TERM

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Historical, multigenerational, & intergenerational trauma

MEDIUM TERM

Corrections

“Ensuring that law enforcement have relevant and appropriate training about trauma-informed practice, cultural awareness, and safety to ensure policies and practices meet the needs of the community being served.

Ongoing consultation with community and families is one way to determine where gaps exist and to create solutions together.”

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

Indigenous people are over-represented in prisons across Canada, particularly in the prairie provinces in both provincial and federal systems. A 2021 policy brief shows that in Alberta, Indigenous people make up 6.5% of the provincial population but on average represent over 45% of those housed in Alberta’s provincial and federal prisons (Ricciardelli et al., 2021) (more than seven times their proportion of the population). This over-representation is even higher for Indigenous women. Nationally, Indigenous women make up 4% of the population but account for 43% of prison admissions. At the Edmonton Institution for Women (a federal prison), Indigenous women make up on average 65% of the population. (Ricciardelli et al., 2021)

The mass imprisonment of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people cannot be understood outside the

historical and contemporary colonial attitudes that target them, particularly in an attempt to undermine and tear down Indigenous Peoples, communities, and families. (Marques & Monchalin, 2020) In addition to being over-represented, they are more likely than non-Indigenous Canadians to be incarcerated at a younger age, and for some, limited access to health care, education, cultural programming, food, and shelter due to systemic racism and other issues, makes prison their main or even only source of “help”. (Ricciardelli et al., 2021)

The over-incarceration of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, particularly for issues related to poverty and social marginalization, needs to be immediately addressed, and for those who do find themselves in facilities, there are significant improvements that can be made.

Corrections: Correctional Facilities

Alberta's corrections system is built on a punitive approach that does not allow for access to any effective type of healing for the offender. Nor does it allow for healing and reconciliation between the offender and the victim, which is central to most Indigenous justice systems.

Further, the buildings are designed for men, not women, and the structures and layouts are

re-traumatizing to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people who experienced residential schools directly or are living with the intergenerational trauma of residential schools.

Different types of provincial facilities designed to meet the needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, similar to provisions in the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, are needed in Alberta.

Recommendations

45.

Develop correctional facilities specifically for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. These spaces and facilities could be within existing institutions or at new sites. They will focus on trauma-informed healing and rehabilitation of those incarcerated and on restoring balance within families and home communities. Design of these spaces and facilities will:

- Be based on input from, and carried out in collaboration with, incarcerated Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people; and
- Limit interactions and visual sight lines between men and women to reduce violence and re-traumatization.

The facilities needing to be developed include but are not limited to:

- New healing lodges for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in provincial correctional facilities;
- Culturally responsive and safe spaces for housing Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people with their babies while incarcerated; and
- Cultural spaces and structures (e.g., tipis, sweat lodges, etc.).

These facilities also require respectful spaces for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people waiting for professional meetings or waiting for transfer.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 9.2 i

46.

Update policies on monitoring cameras in facilities to ensure safe, timely intervention and violence prevention for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo and institutional lack of will

LONG TERM

ALBERTA MANDATES

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

MEDIUM TERM

Corrections: Prison Supports

Indigenous adults make up 5% of the adult population in Canada, but account for 28% of admissions to provincial prisons across the country. Further, “research in provincial prisons in Alberta demonstrates that incarcerated Indigenous individuals are more likely to have been victims of sexual and violent crime than non-Indigenous incarcerated persons, and are more likely to have been victimized at a younger age when these crimes occurred against them.” (Ricciardelli et al., 2021) Indeed, for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in particular, prison could be the safest place for them to access healing and training services up to that point in their life.

Due to the high number of Indigenous people in prisons with an array of acute, chronic, and complex

trauma,¹⁶ in particular women, girls, and 2S+ people, correctional facilities and institutions need culturally responsive and safe, trauma-informed healing and skills training programs to increase their likelihood of successful reintegration into their communities. In addition, increased engagement of Indigenous communities and organizations earlier in offenders’ sentences would reduce recidivism.

Ensuring that Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers are involved in decision-making regarding programs and services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in prisons is critical. (Ricciardelli et al., 2021)

16. Acute trauma results from a single incident, e.g., a sexual assault. Chronic trauma results from repeated and prolonged events, e.g., domestic violence. Complex trauma results from exposure to varied, multiple events, e.g., intergenerational trauma from the Sixties Scoop and residential schools.

Corrections: Prison Supports

Recommendation

47.

Increase and improve healing and rehabilitation programs for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people incarcerated in any provincial facilities.

These programs will include but are not limited to:

- Culturally enriched programming.
- Connection with their culture, including time with Elders, cultural teachings, and access to Indigenous medicines for ceremonies and for health issues.
- Connection with Aunties and Grandmothers to learn about and re-engage with traditional and cultural parenting and childcare.
- Supports and placement options for women to keep their children with them while in prison.
- Parenting, childcare, and early childhood development.
- Trauma-informed addictions and mental health services based on needs, not tied to duration of incarceration.
- Access to meaningful paid work.
- Career and educational development opportunities, including certificated programs.
- Supports for determining how to complete additional training as needed after release if they are unable to complete the training while in prison.
- Bridging programs and employment opportunities provided in partnership with universities and post-secondary institutions.
- Teaching the history of colonization and the effects it has had on individuals and communities in order to enhance individual understanding of behaviours and actions while also assisting in overcoming behaviours or actions which are destructive to the individual involved.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 7.4, 14.6, 14.8, 14.9, 14.11

MEDIUM TERM

Corrections: Relapse Supports

Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people released from incarceration are vulnerable. Accessible culturally responsive and safe wrap-around transitional services, including supports aimed at reclaiming their children, would decrease the vulnerability of released Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, thereby assisting them in reclaiming their lives and decreasing the risk of them going missing, being murdered, or being trafficked.

There are also benefits to connecting released Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people with services to support positive mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health, as well as successful reintegration into communities. These benefits range from reducing recidivism and preventing acute health care needs to increasing employment.

In 2007/2008, a cohort of Indigenous women in the prairie provinces had a 55% recidivism rate over five years, more than double the rate of a cohort of non-Indigenous women in the same time period. (Stewart et al., 2019) This clearly indicates that current systems aren't working and a new path

forward must be sought. Career and education development, housing, childcare, and other mental and emotional supports are protective factors that would help reduce this recidivism in Alberta. Further, a new study found that within 30 days of release, the leading cause of death is toxic drug overdoses. (McLeod et al., 2021)

Coordinating access to a trauma-informed family physician with robust referral resources within 30 days of release would help meet existing healthcare needs and decrease the likelihood and intensity of addictions and mental health challenges.

Indigenous people are disadvantaged throughout the criminal justice system, including when it comes to release decisions. (Ricciardelli et al., 2021) Consequently, significant effort must be made to provide more equitable release supports to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, including maximizing “the Gladue factors in all decision making concerning Indigenous Peoples in the criminal justice system.” (Ricciardelli et al., 2021)

Corrections: Relapse Supports

Recommendations

48.

Develop culturally responsive and safe standards for transition plans for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people leaving correctional facilities. These standards will be developed with Indigenous communities and organizations.

Standards will include but not be limited to:

- Completing culturally responsive and safe comprehensive assessments of the likelihood of recidivism and plans to prevent recidivism.
- Flexibility in plans and expectations that account for transitions in life (e.g., needing to move back to home communities, needing to secure childcare, etc.).
- Ensuring Gladue Reports not completed during sentencing are offered again as part of individual healing and prison exit plans.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.15, 14.6

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

SHORT TERM

49.

Establish sufficient transition housing and wrap around services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to reintegrate back into communities. This housing security will allow them to pursue training or education and/or find reliable sustainable work.

Supports that will be offered and coordinated will include but not be limited to:

- Healing supports, including cultural teachings and time with Elders;
- Access to family and children; and
- Building healthy community connections and natural supports that increase community integration and decrease isolation.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 4.4, 4.7

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

MEDIUM TERM

Corrections: Sentencing Diversion

In 2020 it was reported that in the previous decade, while the incarceration of non-Indigenous people in Canada decreased by 14%, “the Indigenous population in prison increased by 43%”. (Ricciardelli et al., 2021) Many of these Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are incarcerated for reasons connected to poverty, social issues, and trauma reactions. Front line service providers in Alberta have heard from clients that Indigenous women in abusive situations at home, who are unable to buy medicine or afford an LRT or bus ticket to see a doctor for their sick children, have sometimes been arrested, sentenced, and incarcerated for shop-lifting children’s cough medicine or using public transit without a ticket. Further, considering “95% of all federally sentenced women have experienced either physical or sexual victimization, or both” (Ricciardelli et al., 2021) it is safe to assume that in many if not most of these instances, an appropriate combination of community, social, mental health, and addictions supports would be much more effective in

healing the offender and reducing recidivism than incarceration.

Poverty and being unable to access proper social supports, combined with intergenerational trauma and resulting trauma reactions, should be referred to social service intake systems rather than the criminal justice system. Although in 2020-2021, 595 Gladue Reports were created for the Alberta courts (Government of Alberta [GOA], 2021), there is no disaggregated data on how many of those were for Indigenous women, girls, or 2S+ people; no indication of the quality of the reports and if or how they were utilized; and no data to indicate how many individuals weren’t offered or even declined Gladue Reports. It is critical that Gladue Reports are being offered, completed in trauma-informed ways and in safe settings, and carefully considered in sentencing decisions. (Ricciardelli et al., 2021)

Recommendations

50.

Evaluate the impacts of Gladue principles on sentencing equity for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. The evaluation will be completed in collaboration with Indigenous women and 2S+ people and the federal and provincial governments and focus on:

- How Gladue Reports will become more inclusive of the lived experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.
- How to consider intersectional factors of racism, systemic barriers, poverty, homelessness, addictions, trauma, and the experience of colonial violence in Reports for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.
- Identify what the root causes of overrepresentation of Indigenous people, especially Indigenous women and 2S+ people, are in the justice system and how to address them.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.17

MEDIUM TERM

Corrections: Sentencing Diversion

51.

Ensure the opportunity to complete a Gladue Report is provided to every Indigenous woman, girl, and 2S+ person going through the provincial justice system in Alberta. It must be mandatory that the opportunity be given for completion of a Gladue Report for all sentences 2 years -1 day. The option to include a clinical perspective of how trauma impacts the health and well-being of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people must be included in the Report opportunity.

A concerted effort to increase the number of Indigenous women and 2S+ people able to write Gladue Reports is critical. All Gladue Report writers in Alberta must receive trauma-informed training.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.15

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Historical, multigenerational & intergenerational trauma

MEDIUM TERM

52.

Research options for sentencing diversion of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta and share the report outlining those options with judges, defence lawyers, the Law Society of Alberta, and crown prosecutors.

The research will include:

- Examination of circumstances leading Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to become involved in the justice system (e.g., homelessness, food insecurity, etc.);
- Identification of successful diversion methods across Canada; and
- Identification of mitigating factors that will be consistently applied in all cases involving Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to address underlying causes of their over-incarceration.

When the research is published publicly it will include critical consideration of the evaluation of the impacts of Gladue principles on sentencing equity (see recommendation 50) and clearly outline sentencing diversion options for Alberta.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.15, 5.17

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

MEDIUM TERM

Court Services

There is a need for systemic change in Alberta courts.

Court officials need greater understanding of the lived experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, and knowledge of cultural practices to improve safety in the courtroom and uphold their right to justice.

(GOA, 2018, p.15)

Canadian laws and legal systems have been and continue to be discriminatory against Indigenous women. (McMahon, 2017) Historically, under the federal *Indian Act*, 1876 Status Indian women lost their status rights if they married a man who did not have status.

Indigenous women's reproductive rights were violated in Alberta through The *Sexual Sterilization Act, 1928*¹⁷, though forced or coerced sterilization has been reported as recently as 2018. (Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, 2021) Today, some courts fail to protect Indigenous women from domestic and sexual assault because, for example, some Alberta judges have "demonstrated attitudes and publicly express[ed] personal views regarding Indigenous accused, female victims of domestic assault, and consent in sexual assault cases which caused significant concerns for the perception of trial fairness." (Grant, 2019)

The Supreme Court of Canada has concluded on three occasions that the criminal justice system is failing Indigenous people. (Rudin, 2018) Notably, two of these conclusions focused on judges and the desperate need for them to be better educated on circumstances facing Indigenous people and to look for alternatives to incarceration, which the public also increasingly expects. Testimonies before the National Inquiry indicated that court officials and others in the criminal justice systems in Canada are responsible or "complicit in the violation of the rights to justice held by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people who experience violence." (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.625)

There are many examples of discrimination in the justice system in Alberta, besides the racism and sexism often shown by judges. The initial 2015 Edmonton trial on the killing of Cindy Gladue was so flawed, including being littered with racist and sexist stereotypes about Indigenous women by members of

17. See <https://www.canlii.org/en/ab/laws/astat/sa-1928-c-37/latest/sa-1928-c-37.html>

Court Services

the court including the crown prosecutor, that in 2019 the Supreme Court of Canada ordered a new trial for the accused. (Women's Legal Education and Action Fund [LEAF], 2021) Also in 2015, the provincial justice system failed to protect Angela Cardinal, a victim of a "serious sexual assault," when they incarcerated her for five days, forced her to testify in shackles, and forced direct contact with her attacker by transporting them together in the same prisoner van. (Government of Alberta [GOA], 2018)

A growing body of research and literature highlights the need for systemic change in Alberta courts (GOA, 2018) and for court officials to have a greater understanding of the lived experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, and knowledge of cultural practices to improve safety in the courtroom and uphold their right to justice.

The legal system in Canada is based on western concepts of justice and colonial values, beliefs, and policies. It has been imposed on Indigenous Peoples. It has forced them to relinquish their traditional justice systems without considering whether they agree to

the system being forced upon them. The National Inquiry heard countless stories of how Canadian and provincial justice systems, including the courts, have not allowed them to meaningfully participate in the justice process.

In Alberta the justice system generally fails to include Indigenous concepts or approaches to justice, though initial efforts are being made (e.g., Indigenous drug courts in Calgary and Edmonton). Indigenous people value restorative justice which places emphasis on healing the harm done by the offence and rehabilitating the offender to avoid future harms.

Community plays a significant role in facilitating the justice process, including developing consensus on how to repair the harmful results of the offence and restoring balance in the relationships that exist in the community. Developing Indigenous courts or courts that focus on cases involving Indigenous offenders and victims based on Indigenous cultural practices and systems of justice, would greatly improve how Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are treated by the legal system.

Court Services

Recommendations

53.

Incorporate Indigenous justice systems into Alberta court services. This work must be done in partnership with Indigenous communities, especially Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

This work includes but is not limited to:

- Identifying dedicated Indigenous Courts throughout the province that incorporate aspects of Indigenous concepts of justice within their policies and procedures. These could be separate buildings or dedicated space(s) in existing buildings. The location of these Courts will be prioritized based on criteria, needs, interest, etc., similar to the criteria used to determine the opening of alternative court models.
- Mandatory training of all judges and other courtroom officials in the Indigenous Courts on the lived experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people and cultural practices to improve psychological, emotional, physical, and spiritual safety in the courtroom. This training will also include the rights to justice held by Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people and address the hyper-sexualization perception of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.
 - Training will include solid understanding of national and international human rights documents and reports.
 - Training will be implemented with any new judges, court officials, and other court services staff as part of orientation and commencement of duties. Knowledge of these issues will be a component of screening for new staff.
 - Ongoing training and skill development regarding these issues will be expected as part of an annual learning plan for all new and existing staff. These competencies will be assessed on a regular basis to ensure knowledge and awareness of MMIWG2S+ is becoming enhanced and being regularly utilized over time.
- Organizing meaningful and culturally responsive and safe emotional and financial supports for victims and families of MMIWG2S+.
- Incorporating local Indigenous communities' expertise, cultural practices, and cultural protocols in court services, policies, and procedures.
- Identifying alternate spaces such as First Nations or Metis settlement offices for first court appearances via videoconference for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Historical, multigenerational, & intergenerational trauma

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.6 ii, 5.11, 7.6, 9.2, 9.2 i, 9.2 iv, 9.3 v, 10.1, 10.1 i, 11.1, 12.12

MEDIUM TERM

Court Services

54.

Support revitalization and implementation of Indigenous justice systems.

Traditional and contemporary Indigenous world views, holistic philosophies, thought paradigms, and systems of justice would be the basis of the court system and all its processes.

Considerable consultation with various Indigenous people and communities, especially Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, would need to be undertaken to inform this system.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.11

LONG TERM



Education

Indigenous children in Alberta do not get the same level of educational opportunities as other children in Alberta. Success for Indigenous students includes cultural safety and responsiveness, a balanced curriculum, languages, staff, counselling, transportation, and adult education.

The current economic and social conditions and limited opportunities for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are factors that contribute to their disproportionate disappearances and deaths. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) For Indigenous girls and 2S+ students as well children of MMIWG2S+, this marginalization manifests as lack of safety supports, poor accessibility to quality teaching and learning tools, and racism amongst some teachers, school systems, other students, and social systems in the larger population.

Education in rural and remote communities, including on reserves, is generally sub-standard. Further, First Nations schools receive less funding per student than provincial schools and no funding for libraries, computers, language classes, or extracurricular activities. (Fowler & McDermott, 2020) Failing infrastructure, poor equipment in classrooms, a general lack of learning resources, and lack of or unaffordable recreation opportunities fail to set Indigenous students up for success. Indigenous

children in Alberta do not get the same level of educational opportunities as other children in Alberta.

Curriculum in all schools is also problematic. A balanced perspective on the history of relations, including Indigenous Peoples' interpretation of historical events, is sorely lacking. Residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, forced sterilization, and other events and experiences are not accurately or appropriately covered.

School cultures are currently also a significant challenge. Indigenous children are often segregated into 'resource rooms' intended for students with learning challenges. However, Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society (Awo Taan) and other Indigenous organizations have been told innumerable times that often all the children in these rooms are Indigenous. Alberta Education's outdated funding model requires students to be coded for schools to access more funding, however this segregation separates the Indigenous students from their peers and often

Education

results in significant bullying from other students as well as being treated differently by teachers.

The Assembly of First Nations report “Indian Control of Indian Education” (1972) made policy recommendations for changes to the education system that would support Indigenous student success. These included the importance of cultural responsiveness and safety, curriculum, languages, staff, counselling, transportation, and adult education. Similar recommendations were made 16 years later in the four-year study on Aboriginal education, “Tradition and Education” (1988). (LaPierre, 2019) At the time it demonstrated a notable continuity in the challenges facing Indigenous people in education systems.

More than three decades since the second of those reports, has anything fundamentally changed? Research shows that in Canada 25% fewer Indigenous students complete high school compared to non-Indigenous students. (Steeves, 2019) In Alberta, Rocky View Schools data suggests 30% of Indigenous students are chronically absent, with on-reserve students demonstrating an alarming 80% chronic absenteeism. (Fowler & McDermott, 2020) Calgary Board of Education data shows that only 50.1% of Indigenous students graduate high school within five years, significantly lower than the 65% provincial average. (Ferguson, 2021)

Two pieces of research published in 2019 outline that based on lived experiences and perspectives of Indigenous Grade 12 students, schools need to

improve their professional development opportunities, (LaPierre, 2019) increase community involvement, and “focus on cultural awareness and privilege within schools and the larger community” (Steeves, 2019 p.ii) to better support high school completion by Indigenous students. Today, the lack of focus on families; racism within the education system; and a lack of knowledge and understanding on the part of teachers, other school staff, school district staff, and Alberta Education staff about the history and impacts of colonialism still hinder Indigenous student success. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)

Further, many Indigenous women, girls and 2S+ people are forced to leave their home communities and travel long distances to access high school education (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.), which directly increases their risk of being targets for violence, racist acts, and homicide. (Kassam, 2016) However, “enabling women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people to access education as a way to increase security is an important way to combat violence at its very root,” (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.550) because school completion is correlated with greater ability to secure well-paying jobs and other factors that improve social and economic conditions. This makes preventing drop-out and safe access to quality education for Indigenous girls and 2S+ children and youth, as well as the children of MMIWG2S+, of critical importance.

Education

Recommendations

55.

Educate all children and youth in Alberta on the issues of violence and human trafficking through curriculum.

Curriculum content will include:

- Recognizing signs of violence;
- Safety planning;
- ‘Grooming’ tactics used by traffickers;
- How trafficking manifests in communities including differences between urban, rural, and remote communities; what it may look like; and where it may happen;
- How social media is used by some traffickers to identify and recruit victims, particularly in rural areas;
- “Who do you tell” resources;
- How the experiences of Indigenous girls, children, youth, and 2S+ students and their markers for exploitation are different from other children and youth; and
- Characteristics of healthy relationships, differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships, and warning signs of relationships that are becoming unhealthy.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 11.1, 11.2

SHORT TERM

56.

Mandate school boards to train all school officials and staff to identify markers and respond appropriately to Indigenous students who are experiencing violence, sexual exploitation, and/or human trafficking. This training will be developed and delivered in ways that are culturally responsive and safe and survivor-informed because markers for Indigenous students show up differently than for other students. Content will include trauma-informed approaches to interacting and working with students.

It is vital that all adults in the education system in Alberta have the trauma-informed training necessary to create stable and safe environments at schools for Indigenous students.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.3, 4.4, 11.1

SHORT TERM

Education

57.

Develop Indigenous-specific prevention programs that support Indigenous girls and 2S+ children and youth to stay in school. To inform these programs, research must be conducted in Alberta to identify the specific markers for Indigenous children and youth who drop out of school. Once the markers are identified, prevention programs must aim to ensure all children succeed in school and be developed with input from Indigenous students, particularly Indigenous girls and 2S+ students.

Prevention programs may include:

- Addressing basic needs, such as food and clothing;
- Safe, no-barrier, meaningful access to culture and language;
- Meaningful parent and community engagement in the school and in programming;
- Emotional, mental, and spiritual healing and cultural supports;
- Full or partial language and culture immersion programs;
- Access to extracurricular activities and field trips; and
- Access to appropriate and necessary learning tools.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Historical, multigenerational, & intergenerational trauma

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.6, 2.3

MEDIUM TERM

Education

58.

Establish an MMIWG2S+ Advisory Council that reports to the Minister of Education. The Council will be comprised of, at minimum, two Indigenous women, two Indigenous 2S+ people, and an Elder. This Council will be responsible for engaging with school districts around the province to assist in the development and implementation of:

- Appropriate curriculum content on Indigenous Peoples' lived experiences including MMIWG2S+;
- Culturally responsive and safe, survivor-informed educational assessment tools and supports and services for Indigenous students;
- Cultural enrichment programming that celebrates Indigenous cultures and identity;
- Training, workshops, and other learning resources for school staff (see Awareness and Training recommendation);
- A data collection plan ensuring appropriately disaggregated data is being collected to assist in improving educational outcomes for Indigenous children and youth, especially Indigenous girls and 2S+ students (Note: this plan should be informed by the provincial data strategy, see Data & Research recommendation);
- Indigenous-specific assessments for diagnosing and providing appropriate supports for Indigenous girls' and 2S+ students' learning challenges; and
- School district-specific MMIWG2S+ Advisory Councils.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 4.2, 4.4, 11.1

LONG TERM

59.

Design culturally responsive and safe curriculum pathways specific to children of MMIWG2S+. The pathways will address and reduce the number of barriers to these children completing school and encourage all trades. Access to, and school credit for, Indigenous language classes, including full and half-day immersion programs and courses, will be developed to support this. These pathways will provide a broader range of opportunities in a variety of career fields, beyond the typical gender-normative options.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 2.3

LONG TERM

Family Violence

“Indigenous families that experience violence are more likely to have their children apprehended because of experiencing violence. It is important that by speaking out, they are not treated at fault and are enabled to keep their children safe from harm, including from the systems that make such judgements and apprehend children.”

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

Colonial violence, historic trauma, and ongoing paternalistic policies have created socio-economic and health inequalities that perpetuate violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to this day. They have created risk factors such as systemic barriers, racism, neglect, and disregard for human rights that contribute to the high numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta.

In 2004, according to the General Social Survey (GSS), Indigenous people were three times more likely to experience a violent victimization than non-Indigenous people (319 versus 101 incidents per 1,000 population) (Brzozowski et al. 2006) and Indigenous women were three times more likely to experience spousal assault. (NWAC, 2010) 54% of Indigenous “women reported severe forms of family violence, such as being beaten, being choked, having had a gun or knife used against them, or being sexually assaulted, versus 37% of” non-Indigenous women. (NWAC, 2010, p.3) Further, while the number of

women overall reporting this severe violence declined from 1999 (43%) to 2004 (37%) in Canada, the number of similar attacks against Indigenous women remained unchanged. (NWAC, 2010) Some statistical estimates suggest minimally one-quarter of Indigenous women experience intimate partner violence. (Bopp et al., 2003) Indigenous women are simply more at risk of violence from a spouse and more at risk of the most severe forms of this violence. (Heidinger, 2021)

Unfortunately, we don’t have more up-to-date, better disaggregated, Alberta-specific statistics, but there is no reason to think these rates have substantially changed given few if any changes have been made to systems that are supposed to support Indigenous women.

While family violence in Indigenous communities has many characteristics in common with family violence in other communities and cultures, it is important to note there are some distinct differences and nuances.

Family Violence

(Bopp et al., 2003) Family violence in Indigenous communities impacts the whole community, not just the family members or people living in the home. Systemic racism, mistrust in the police, and other factors such as living in rural and remote communities create barriers that prevent Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people from accessing services following violence. (Bopp et al., 2003) (Refer to the family violence definition in Appendix A: Glossary for more details.)

In many cases, there is a real lack of resources and services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to turn to and if they have nowhere to go, they often won't report. When there are supports available, risk assessment forms are often not culturally responsive or safe and staff are not well trained: Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society (Awo Taan) and other Indigenous organizations have heard from Indigenous women and girls that they feel unsafe in many women's shelters in Alberta due to the racist treatment they are subjected to. And these are just the women who are seeking out services and reporting.

We don't know the true number of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta who are victimized by family violence; how many of them are seeking support and are being turned away from shelters; or how many are choosing housing insecurity

rather than seeking support because of racist experiences with service organizations in the past.

In the current *Framework to End Family Violence in Alberta*,¹⁸ the word "Aboriginal" appears 19 times: four of those are in relation to the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations, two to Government of Alberta (GOA) teams and initiatives, six to communities in general. Only one of the mentions is specific to Aboriginal women and only one to 2S+ people. A Framework such as this has little value when it isn't inclusive of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people and the historic and contemporary traumas they experience.

Research has been done about principles for Indigenous family violence initiatives that the GOA must consider in their work: (Peters et al., 2018)

1. Recognize ongoing colonialism and dispossession.
2. Locate risk within colonial systems.
3. Foster self-determination of individuals, families, and communities.
4. Indigenous gender-based analysis.
5. Localized solutions.
6. Kinship systems as integral to Indigenous law.

18. See <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/eb45b09a-ed93-4b7e-bae7-6885a3615d84/resource/3a7ca3f6-aba1-497f-bfc2-1cdd3865ce7b/download/family-violence-hurts-everyone.pdf>

Family Violence

Recommendations

60.

Develop an Indigenous Family Violence Framework. This Framework will be developed by Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers with support from the GOA. It will parallel the *Framework to End Family Violence in Alberta*. This Indigenous Framework will include but is not limited to:

- Revising the Alberta Women’s Shelter Standards to ensure they are culturally responsive and safe, framed within a human rights model, and keep women, aunties, and grandmothers with their children and grandchildren when they seek shelter services.
- Requiring all shelters deliver programs and supports developed for and by Indigenous women.
- Requiring shelters provide ceremonial medicines and cultural space for women to engage in cultural practices and ceremonies with Elders, etc..
- Revising shelter funding contracts to include outcomes specific to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.
- Updating intake, assessment, yearly reporting, contracts, etc. to tie them to Indigenous outcomes for shelters especially in regards to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.
- Recognizing Elders and Knowledge Keepers as essential services and funding shelters appropriately to cover these costs.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Historical, multigenerational, & intergenerational trauma

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.5, 4.3, 4.7, 5.6 ii

MEDIUM TERM

61.

Develop family violence training curriculum as a mandatory entry level requirement to work in emergency shelters and women’s shelters in Alberta. Work with Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, organizations, and Knowledge Keepers to develop the curriculum. Consider existing training on MMIWG2S+ issues in the development of this curriculum. The training will include but not be limited to:

- Awareness of the human and Indigenous rights held by Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people;
- Details about the health-related issues affecting Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people;
- Indigenous Peoples’ history in Alberta resulting in historic and contemporary violence;
- Trauma-informed care, anti-bias, anti-racism, and decolonization; and
- Culturally responsive and safe practices and approaches to intake, assessment, and service provision.

(See Awareness & Training recommendation.)

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 7.6, 9.3 v, 11.1, 12.12

SHORT TERM

Family Violence

62.

Establish an Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2S+ People Subcommittee of the Family Violence Death Review Committee. This Subcommittee will analyse all cases of family violence resulting in the death of an Indigenous woman, girl, or 2S+ person. Their analysis will include identification of systemic issues, trends, risk factors, and patterns in these cases. The Subcommittee will report and make recommendations directly to the Minister for prevention and intervention strategies, law and policy development and amendments, and public education campaigns for reducing family violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

Membership of the Subcommittee needs to be minimum 50% + 1 Indigenous individuals.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.5, 1.9

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

MEDIUM TERM

63.

Establish a new emergency Indigenous women’s shelter in Edmonton to address the gap in services and supports for Indigenous women not accessing emergency shelters.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 4.7

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

SHORT TERM

64.

Coordinate and integrate Indigenous anti-violence programs and initiatives across the GOA. Establish a specific Indigenous Unit to oversee this work. Coordination and integration work includes funding and supporting culturally responsive and safe:

- Local programs to build community to respond to violence with a focus on building safe communities and homes;
- Age-appropriate programs teaching healthy relationships for all Indigenous girls and 2S+ children and youth;
- Age-appropriate programs teaching how to identify violence and unhealthy relationships;
- Personal safety and well-being and parenting skills programs for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people; and
- Supports for families.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.8, 1.9

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Historical, multigenerational, & intergenerational trauma

MEDIUM TERM

Fatality Inquiries

“In most cases of missing people, the semantics behind finding a missing person is dismissed. When finding someone is murdered or has gone missing, there is little to no investigation and victim blaming takes the reins.”

“Missing persons reports need to be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.”

(AJWG Survey Respondents)

Statistics Canada reported in 2015 that across Canada “the rate of homicide for Aboriginal people was about seven times higher than for non-Aboriginal people”. (Mulligan et al., 2016, p.4) In 2017 they reported that, while rates of homicide for non-Indigenous women and girls have declined over time, the homicide rate for Indigenous women and girls has actually increased, and that Aboriginal women in Alberta face higher homicide rates than in any other province. (Mahony et al., 2017) Studies further show that the Indigenous homicide rate is 14.77/100,000 in Calgary and 9.87/100,000 in Edmonton. (ECF, n.d.)

Alberta has a higher number of unsolved MMIWG2S+ cases than the national average. (NWAC, 2010) This makes Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people

invisible in their deaths when those deaths remain unsolved or are not validated by quality, disaggregated data. Collection and publication of this data is something the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) currently does not undertake (although the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) does provide this data in their death reviews¹⁹). There is a need in Alberta to conduct a more specific comprehensive analysis and investigation into the murder of Indigenous women, girls and 2S+ people to determine root and systemic causes in order to inform and develop effective prevention strategies, including those recommended in this Report. There is also an immediate need for more thorough, comprehensive disaggregated data collection (see Data & Research recommendation).

19. For an example of an OCYA death review see https://www.ocy.a.alberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/InvRev_19-Year-Old-Dakota_2018October.pdf

Fatality Inquiries

Recommendations

65.

Amend the *Fatality Inquiries Act* to require at least one Indigenous person be a member of the Fatality Review Board. Criteria for selecting the Indigenous board member will prioritize Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and survivors and families of MMIWG2S+.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.4 ii, 9.2 iii

SHORT TERM

66.

Develop communication protocols between the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and the families of Indigenous victims. These protocols will be developed in partnership with Indigenous women, 2S+ people, and MMIWG2S+ survivors and families, and ensure culturally responsive and safe services and information are provided to families.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.6, 5.6 ii, 9.2, 9.2 i, 9.2 iv, 9.5 ii

SHORT TERM

67.

Make identification of ethnicity of deceased individuals a priority for the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and law enforcement agencies.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

SHORT TERM

Fatality Inquiries

68.

Immediately undertake a review of all cold cases where Indigenous women, girls, or 2S+ people are victims and for all victims of unknown ethnicity. Criteria for the review and analysis will be developed with Indigenous women and 2S+ people and will be applied to all deaths of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people going forward.

The review and resulting report will be modelled after the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. It will include extensive information on the victim's years before death as well as identify circumstances leading to and surrounding individuals' deaths, including mapping a timeline that details circumstances before the death and highlighting systemic barriers that may have contributed to the death. Once all individual reviews are completed, they will be reviewed collectively to identify trends and patterns. The results of the review will be shared first with immediate families, then made available to the public. It will result in detailed recommendations for addressing systemic barriers and challenges that result in MMIWG2S+ and continual ongoing monitoring and reporting on those trends and patterns over time and if/how they change.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.7, 9.5, 9.5 ii, 9.5 iv, 9.9, 9.10

LONG TERM

First Nation Policing

“Information systems between Tribal Police, RCMP and municipal Police need to improve on ways in which they share information with one another and can hold one another accountable to do so in a timely manner.”

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

There is significant systemic racism within law enforcement institutions as well as intergenerational distrust by Indigenous people towards law enforcement services. This is a result of a historic and contemporary events ranging from non-Indigenous police officers’ roles in removing children from their families and placing them in residential schools (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC], 2015) to the “violence, racist, and transphobic treatment” (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.97) Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people receive from police today.

The AJWG met with some First Nation Police Service Chiefs of Police in Alberta. They discussed barriers and challenges First Nations Police Services in Alberta face in addressing and reducing violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2S+ people and responding to and solving MMIWG2S+ cases.

These barriers and challenges included:

- Staffing shortages and funding not in parity with other municipal and federal police forces.
 - There are not enough officers to cover vast territories, such as the area the Lakeshore Regional Police Service is responsible for.
 - This leads to dangerous working conditions, such as working alone and suffering burn out.
 - It results in lengthened emergency response times.
 - Not enough staff for police intervention work means there are no resources for proactive policing efforts focused on violence prevention.

First Nation Policing

- High staff turnover undermines abilities to build and strengthen relationships between the police services and community members, which is integral to shaping how MMIWG2S+ cases and cases of violence are resolved.
- Insufficient resources for collecting and reporting disaggregated data on police calls and cases. This lack of information hinders informed decision making about the real scope of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2S+ people and the number of MMIWG2S+ cases.
- Bringing in specialized RCMP personnel for major crimes investigations, which often results in
 - Delays in the investigation which in turn negatively impacts the ability to solve cases of MMIWG2S+ people.
- Communication and investigation challenges when the external investigators do not involve or under-involve local officers, particularly when local officers may understand the community better.
- Uncertain funding and lack of legislative authority.
 - Not being considered an essential service makes future funding uncertain.
 - Funding provided jointly by the Government of Canada and Government of Alberta can lead to unpredictability in funding.

Recommendations

69.

Extend the *Police Act* to include all First Nation Police Services in Alberta and advocate for the federal government to do the same with the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act*. This will ensure First Nation Police Services are treated as equal law enforcement agencies to other national, provincial, and municipal law enforcement services. In addition:

- Advocate for First Nation Police Services to be designated an essential service either with the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness or through federal-provincial-territorial processes. Note: Timeframe for this is short term.
- Provide adequate financial and other resources to First Nation Police Services in Alberta to ensure equity in the number of staff, both law enforcement and civilian, and their pay rates with other law enforcement services.
- Ensure Indigenous women and 2S+ people have a seat on First Nation Police Commissions to ensure their voice is heard and reflected in annual strategic plans and accountability audits submitted to the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.4, 5.4 i, 5.4 ii, 5.5, 5.7, 9.2 iii

MEDIUM TERM

First Nation Policing

70.

Amend Alberta Justice and Solicitor General audits of all law enforcement services in Alberta to include metrics around MMIWG2S+. These metrics must include:

- All law enforcement services' strategic and business plans include actions to reduce the number of MMIWG2S+, increase success rate and speed at finding missing individuals, identify and charge individuals in murder cases, and resolve unsolved cases.
- Produce yearly audit reports on progress and lessons learned implementing these actions and how actions will be refined and improved in the subsequent year.
- All law enforcement services' strategic and business plans include methods for ensuring accountability to community (e.g., community representation on police commissions; police performance surveys completed by communities; etc.).
- All law enforcement services' strategic and business plans include long term training and learning strategies on issues pertaining to MMIWG2S+ for all officers and civilian members.
- Annual reports on the number of officers and civilian members who participated in various Indigenous awareness training opportunities, future Indigenous awareness training opportunities, and how the service is ensuring all members receive ongoing training. (See Law Enforcement and Awareness & Training recommendations.)

Further, First Nation Police Service audits must be made public to the communities they serve.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.4 ii, 5.7 iii, 9.2 iii, 9.5, 9.5 iv, 9.5 vi

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

MEDIUM TERM

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

SHORT TERM

71.

Develop protocols between all national, provincial, municipal, and First Nation law enforcement services in Alberta to ensure requests for assistance from First Nation Police Services are responded to in a timely, respectful, effective, and efficient manner.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.5 ii

Health Care

“Racism in health care. It’s out of control and requires immediate attention.

Our lives as Indigenous peoples are not less valuable than white lives. So stop treating us as ‘less than’.

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

Good health is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It includes physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social safety and well-being. The right to health and wellness is a universal and inalienable right for all people, including Indigenous Peoples. (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner [UNHROHC], n.d.) To date the rights of Indigenous Peoples to receive and enjoy good health has not been upheld or respected by the federal or provincial governments. Historically this was evidenced by legislation such as the *Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act*. Today this is evident in failure to address important policy issues negatively impacting Indigenous Peoples as well as a patchwork of program delivery and inappropriate and inaccessible services.

Despite widespread recognition that Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and survivors of MMIWG2S+ face significant health challenges, including the trauma of interpersonal and intergenerational violence and the resulting chronic health problems, the health systems and institutions often fail to properly support them. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) Indigenous approaches to health and wellness and the wisdom of Elders and Knowledge Keepers

are not included or integrated in any meaningful way. In addition, trauma healing programs, when available at all, are often not designed or delivered by Indigenous people, are time-limited, and do not involve families or communities in the healing process.

Worse, though, is the racism Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and MMIWG2S+ survivors face from staff and systems that sometimes results in the complete absence of care. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) “Racist, dismissive, or otherwise inadequate responses to their needs occurred not only in health care facilities, such as hospitals, but also extended to those times when, after experiencing violence, they reached out for emergency health care to the police or other emergency responders.” (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.469) The systems these service providers work within are racist, sexist, and discriminatory foundations allowing for this wholly inappropriate behaviour by public servants to Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and survivors of MMIWG2S+. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) These are only some of many reasons why Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ are more likely to access services from someone who understands their culture.

There are many barriers to accessing these systems

Health Care

and institutions in the first place though. Many Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta have to travel long distances to access services and many services and supports are not available outside of regular office hours making them highly inaccessible.

The National Inquiry noted that, “the health of Indigenous Peoples must be contextualized within

historical, social, and economic factors connected to the cumulative impacts of colonization, as well as persistent and harmful policies that serve to harm communities and individuals.” (NIMMIWG Ia, n.d., p.432) While poor health and wellness services persist, they will continue to exacerbate the social and economic marginalization that puts Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people at increased risk of violence. (NIMMIWG Ia, n.d.)

Recommendations

72.

Implement services to ensure proper health and wellness supports for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people who are sexually exploited and/or engaged in sex work.

These programs need to be designed with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people with lived experience in the sex industry. Goals include promotion of safety and security as well as proper health and wellness supports. Programs need to be sustainably funded, culturally responsive and safe to access, and available on evenings and weekends as well as weekdays.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.1, 3.2, 4.3

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

SHORT TERM

73.

Update all primary care policies and procedures to be culturally responsive and safe. Priority will be given to working with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people on:

- Revising hospital intake questions on safety, human trafficking, and domestic violence.
- Updating palliative and end of life care procedures and processes to accommodate families’ cultural needs for palliative and end of life care.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 7.1, 7.4

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

SHORT TERM

Health Care

74.

Enhance the design and delivery of all health and wellness services in Alberta to improve health outcomes for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. Collaborate with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to identify changes that will have the most impact.

Enhancements will include:

- Increased number and accessibility of Indigenous-led, community-based, and culturally responsive and safe health and wellness services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people as well as MMIWG2S+ families and survivors.
- Grounding health and wellness delivery mechanisms for Indigenous people in the practices, world views, cultures, languages, and values of Indigenous communities.
- Increasing availability and accessibility of health and wellness services in Indigenous communities and wherever Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people reside by establishing reliable long-term funding for Indigenous community-based services. These services could include a mobile clinic.
- Embedding Indigenous-led prevention initiatives around health and community awareness in all provincial health programs including but not limited to programming:
 - For Indigenous men and boys,
 - Related to suicide prevention strategies for youth and adults,
 - Related to sex trafficking awareness and no-barrier exiting,
 - Specific to safe and healthy relationships,
 - Specific to mental health awareness, and
 - Related to 2S+ issues and sex positivity.
- Mandatory training for all health and wellness service delivery staff on the history of MMIWG2S+ and trauma-informed approaches to ensure Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people feel welcome and respected when accessing health care.

Adequately resource and train communities to provide after care and transition supports for all mental, physical, and addictions health treatment programs to all Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. This could include support groups for specific health challenges. (Refer to Addictions & Mental Health recommendations.)

Coordinate with Indigenous communities and organizations to implement the enhancements.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 7.1, 7.3, 7.6

LONG TERM

Health Care

75.

Adequately resource trauma-informed healing and prevention programs for survivors, children, and families of MMIWG2S+ and other unresolved traumas. Unresolved traumas include acute, chronic, and intergenerational, multigenerational, and other complex traumas. Working with MMIWG2S+ survivors and families, programs will include but are not limited to:

- Grief and loss;
- Addictions, both prevention and relapse;
- Anti-gang education and information;
- Healthy relationships;
- Cultural enrichment;
- Land-based healing programs;
- Family healing retreats;
- Arts and recreation; and
- Those that centre children in community and connect them with their culture, community, and family.

Programs must not be time limited and must be highly accessible by Indigenous people wherever they live. This work will involve coordinating reliable funding to Indigenous-led organizations and communities to recruit Elders, Grandmothers, and other Knowledge Keepers to support trauma-informed programming as well as updating funding models to recognize Elders and Knowledge Keepers as essential workers.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 7.1, 7.2, 7.4, 7.5, 7.7

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Historical, multigenerational, & intergenerational trauma

SHORT TERM

76.

Increase availability and accessibility of Indigenous health and wellness staff. Ensure Indigenous patients and family members have evening and weekend access to Indigenous service providers. Improve recruitment of, training of, and retention efforts for Indigenous staff in all health and wellness programs and institutions. Encourage Indigenous health care professionals to work within rural, remote, and northern communities by implementing incentive programs.

This also involves working with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to establish culturally responsive and safe wellness teams in all five health zones across Alberta. These teams will work to support needs as identified by the Indigenous woman, girl, 2S+ person, family, and/or community after they or a loved one experiences violence or is missing or murdered. All police services must collaborate with these teams so that these teams, rather than the police, respond to all mental health calls.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.4, 3.5, 7.1, 7.7, 7.8

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

LONG TERM

Health Care

77.

Increase accessibility and availability of Indigenous Health Liaisons throughout Alberta. Begin by evaluating the program with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to review program outcomes based on Indigenous people's needs and revise policies and procedures accordingly. Revisions will ensure Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people meet with an Indigenous Health Liaison while in any primary care setting. They must also ensure that prior to discharge wrap-around services are in place and Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people receive proper referrals and follow-up information.

The following changes must also be made to the Indigenous Health Liaison program to increase accessibility:

- Immediately remove Indigenous Health Liaisons from Child and Family Services offices within any primary care settings, including hospitals. Provide the services in a distinctly separate space.
- Provide Indigenous language and translation services.
- Extend services to 24 hours.
- Focus on supporting Indigenous patients coming from rural and remote areas navigating large health care systems and institutions.

Increasing the number of Indigenous Health Liaisons in Alberta and increasing awareness in all care facilities and patient rooms about this program will be critical.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.2, 3.6, 7.5

78.

Ensure all health facilities in Alberta have culturally responsive and safe spaces. Facilities include all primary care settings such as hospitals, addictions and mental health treatment centres, etc. This work involves reviewing and updating all existing Government infrastructure policies as well as retrofitting existing buildings and adjusting designs of new buildings. Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people must be engaged early in building design and building and policy review conversations. Culturally distinct First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people and communities must also be engaged to prevent pan-Indigenous cultural displays in buildings misrepresenting Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, and ensure respectful and accurate representation is achieved.

Culturally responsive and safe spaces include:

- Areas for large families to gather and share food, grieve, and support one another.
- Areas for ceremonial practices, including smudging, inside buildings.
- Offices and/or meetings spaces for Indigenous Health Liaisons.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.1, 7.1

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

MEDIUM TERM

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

LONG TERM

Housing & Homelessness

The lack of shelter space in Alberta for Indigenous women means they are often either remaining in unsafe living conditions or experiencing a significant risk of homelessness in their efforts to escape violence.

In Alberta, Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are more vulnerable than other women to housing insecurity and becoming homeless. Housing insecurity and homelessness are complex intersectional issues. Major contributing factors include poverty and not being able to afford a house, lack of affordable housing and long wait lists in Alberta for affordable housing, as well as systemic racism. However, many other factors impact housing security. Addiction and mental health challenges may impact their ability to manage having a house. Having children taken away disqualifies them from subsidized housing, which makes housing more unaffordable. They may not be aware of housing options when relocating between communities, and if they are escaping family violence they may require support.

While these may be contributing factors for all people, Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people not only face those factors, they also experience additional barriers. Marginalization, discrimination, intergenerational trauma, and racism further negatively impact their ability to secure housing. (See Impacts of Colonization visuals p.15-16.)

In Alberta, there is an overall 40% pay gap between men and women (Government of Alberta [GOA], n.d.), making it more difficult overall for women in the

province to avoid poverty and the associated intersectional challenges related to it, such as housing stability, accessing affordable child care, health and well-being, etc. However it's even worse for Indigenous women: 19% of Indigenous women are low income, compared to only 9% of all other women, and those who aren't low income earn significantly less: the median income in 2015 was \$43,781 for First Nations women and \$48,929 for Métis women, while it was \$54,276 for all women. (ECF, n.d.) This tenuous economic security was made worse by COVID: in July 2020 Statistics Canada found that "Indigenous participants more often reported that COVID-19 had a strong or moderate impact on their ability to meet financial obligations or essential needs than non-Indigenous participants." (Arriagada et al., 2020, p.3)

Statistics show that during the last five years, 15% of Indigenous women in Alberta reported spousal abuse, compared to only 6% of non-Indigenous women (ECF, n.d.), and in some regions during COVID-19, domestic abuse has risen 30%. (Haig, 2020) Shelters with ties to Indigenous communities or organizations in Canada have the highest occupancy rate amongst provinces, 101% meaning they literally have more women staying with them than they have beds available. (Maxwell, 2020) Other than First Nations shelters, there is only

Housing & Homelessness

one urban Indigenous women's shelter in Alberta, Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society (Awo Taan) in Calgary. The lack of shelter space in Alberta for Indigenous women means they are often either remaining in unsafe living conditions or experiencing a significant risk of homelessness in their efforts to escape violence.

Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people also experience extreme rates of overcrowding in homes, often resulting in unsafe home conditions. Overcrowding is a contributing factor towards experiences of violence and increases the likelihood of becoming housing insecure and ending up homeless. The 2003 Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect reports that in 24% of First Nations child investigations housing conditions were deemed "unsafe" and in 21% they were deemed "overcrowded". (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) This is compared to only 7% of non-Indigenous child investigations where housing conditions were described as unsafe and/or overcrowded.

Statistics Canada reported in 2016 that 18.5% of the Indigenous population lived in overcrowded housing. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) Again, COVID-19 has made things worse. (Arriagada et al., 2020) Studies are showing greater negative mental health and economic impacts on Indigenous people compared to non-Indigenous people. Further, in April and May 2020, 41% of Indigenous questionnaire respondents reported they were "very" or "extremely" concerned about the impact of stay-at-home orders and the potential for negative impact on family stress, compared to only 28% of non-Indigenous respondents. Of these Indigenous respondents, Indigenous women were more likely to report this concern, at 47%, than Indigenous men, at 33%.

Housing insecurity and homelessness puts Indigenous

women, girls, and 2S+ people in even more vulnerable situations, such as having to stay in abusive situations to avoid being homeless or experiencing housing insecurity and consequently increasing their vulnerability to predators, such as human traffickers. All of which increases their chances of going missing or being murdered.

Despite all of this, the GOA seems to have overlooked Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in *Stronger Foundations: Alberta's 10-year strategy to improve and expand affordable housing (2021)*²⁰. The document barely mentions Indigenous people, and when they are mentioned they are characterized as users of the system and clients, rarely as active agents helping deliver the system. Indigenous people need to be sitting at these planning tables given the number of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people requiring affordable housing.

The Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW) and Awo Taan heard the priorities for action from Indigenous women and girls they recently engaged in Alberta. (IAAW, 2020) Two of these priorities are covered by the housing and homelessness recommendations below, further indicating how vital they are to implement quickly and in collaboration with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people:

- Increased access to culturally informed service providers who apply a decolonizing, anti-racist, trauma- and violence-informed approach.
- Create a 24-hour crisis line, as well as long-term community-based trauma- and violence-informed programs for families of MMIWG2S+ and survivors of trauma and violence, including women, girls, and 2S+ people who have been found.

20. See <https://www.alberta.ca/stronger-foundations-affordable-housing-strategy.aspx>

Housing & Homelessness

Recommendations

79.

Provide emergency women’s shelters, detox and addictions shelters, family shelters, and drop-in shelters the necessary cultural resources to properly serve families of MMIWG2S+ and survivors. These resources include a full time cultural worker or Elder and appropriate training for staff. They also include a review of all assessment tools in housing and shelters and amending them to be culturally responsive and safe for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 4.7

LONG TERM

80.

Develop and fund an Indigenous 24-hour crisis line for emergency program and service referrals.

This crisis line will help ensure access to any required services, whether that be supports for families and loved ones of MMIWG2S+, income support, victim services, shelter space, affordable housing, etc. and be empowered to follow up with callers in-person outside the office when and where feasible and safe. The option to receive support in Alberta Indigenous languages will be provided.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.5, 5.6 ii, 5.6 v

LONG TERM

81.

Engage with Indigenous sex workers, particularly Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, to better understand and identify solutions for the housing needs of those in sex work or transitioning out of sex work.

This ongoing dialogue will discuss the discrimination they experience trying to access housing and shelter, barriers to housing, and how their housing and shelter needs are evolving and changing. These conversations must happen across the province as the experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people who are sex workers and human trafficking victims are different in rural and urban settings and different between the north, central, and south areas of Alberta.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 4.3

MEDIUM TERM

Housing & Homelessness

82.

Develop an Indigenous-led oversight body independent of Government to evaluate housing and homeless services for and to receive complaints from Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

In this ongoing work, this oversight body can also:

- Evaluate and report on how well the housing needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are being met across Alberta and how those needs are evolving and suggest corresponding system improvements.
- Receive complaints from Indigenous communities in relation to housing concerns for their communities and community members.
- Review and make recommendations for government funding for Indigenous-led low-barrier shelters, safe spaces, transition homes, second stage housing, and housing and homelessness services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people throughout the province to ensure it is sustainable and effective.
- Collaborate on the implementation of *Stronger Foundations: Alberta's 10 year strategy to improve and expand affordable housing* to ensure the housing needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are considered and addressed.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls For Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 4.1, 4.7

SHORT TERM

Housing & Homelessness

83.

Establish regional Indigenous-led housing management bodies and homelessness authorities to receive all Indigenous housing and homelessness funding from governments for the region and to distribute it appropriately for Indigenous service delivery.

To increase the number of Indigenous people, especially Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, accessing services, these authorities must:

- Implement a governance model that is transparent and focuses on increasing capacity and accountability of service providers in the region.
- Ensure all of their regulations, policies, and procedures properly demonstrate active and rigorous Indigenous participation and decision making, trauma-informed approaches, and cultural responsiveness and safety.
- Establish outcomes that include decreased homelessness and housing insecurity, decreased vulnerabilities to homelessness and housing insecurity, and increased housing security amongst Indigenous people, especially Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, in the region.
- Evaluate and report whether funding for housing and homelessness services is going directly to Indigenous-led organizations and achieving positive outcomes for Indigenous women, girls and 2S+ people.
- Make it mandatory for all staff in these authorities, regardless of role, to be trained in trauma-informed practices and de-colonizing approaches and to renew that training every 2 years.
- Make it mandatory for all staff in front line service roles to participate in ongoing and regular training. Training will focus on building understanding and better supporting Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people with complex needs resulting from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), intergenerational trauma, family violence, addictions and mental health challenges, food insecurity, poverty, etc.
- Work with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to develop culturally responsive and safe indicators and outcomes for all housing and homelessness programs and services in the region and to review and update them at least every five years.
- Improve Indigenous access to housing and increase community capacity and wrap-around supports for keeping Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people housed.
- Develop and implement a red tape reduction strategy to streamline community-based housing solutions for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. These solutions need to be culturally responsive and safe as well as creative and flexible to respond to the unique and evolving needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people who are already homeless or at risk of homelessness, including dealing with food insecurity, poverty, and/or family violence. These solutions may include shelters, transitional housing, second-stage housing, communal or group homes, house-sharing, etc.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls For Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 4.7

MEDIUM TERM

Housing & Homelessness

84.

Amend the *Alberta Housing Act* to include an Indigenous woman on the Alberta Social Housing Corporation board of directors and establish Indigenous Management Bodies regionally. (Refer to Indigenous-led housing management bodies recommendation 83.)

In partnership and dialogue with Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and communities, this review and amendments to the Act will include:

- Ensuring all components of the Act are culturally responsive and safe; and
- Ensuring affordable, accessible housing for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people throughout the province.

After the Act is amended, updating Regulations and policies will be done in partnership with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people as well as the new Indigenous-led housing management bodies. This work will include:

- Establishing explicit provincial outcomes for equitable, timely access to housing for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.
- The Ministry partnering with the new Indigenous-led housing management bodies to develop governance processes for all Housing Management Boards in Alberta that ensure compliance with regulations and policies requiring equitable access to housing for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. These governance processes will include quarterly reporting on explicit provincial outcomes.
- Ensuring all affordable housing in Alberta is culturally responsive and safe for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people as part of the implementation of *Stronger Foundations: Alberta's 10 year strategy to improve and expand affordable housing*.
- Reviewing and amending all housing and shelter policies at provincial, regional, and local levels to address housing barriers for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people including elimination of policies that discriminate
 - Based on gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation; and/or
 - Against people with experiences in the sex trade and/or as human trafficking victims and to prioritize safe housing for these vulnerable people.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options for Addressing the Calls for Justice

Opportunities for Collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 4.7

MEDIUM TERM

Housing & Homelessness

85.

Work with the Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee, Indigenous-led housing management bodies, and Indigenous organizations to implement *Stronger Foundations: Alberta's 10-year strategy to improve and expand affordable housing with an Indigenous lens.* (Refer to Indigenous-led housing management bodies recommendation 83 and Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee recommendation.)

Indigenous people and organizations will be funded and lead solutions for Indigenous people and it is not clear when the Strategy refers to 'Indigenous groups' whether they are Indigenous-led organizations or other organizations that provide services to Indigenous people. Meaningful, long-term collaboration with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people will ensure implementation is informed by lived experience and responsive to their needs to prevent MMIWG2S+.

Priority for this collaborative implementation of the 10-year strategy will be given to:

- Setting 10-year targets for funding Indigenous-led organizations to train staff in local Indigenous cultures and trauma-informed practices.
- Actions 1.5 and 1.6 in Key Action Area: Support Albertans most in need. Addictions & Mental Health as well as Housing & Homelessness recommendations in this Report will be considered in this work.
- All actions in Key Action Area 2: Improve access to affordable housing. Minimally Awareness & Training, Family Violence, Victim Services, and Income Support recommendations in this Report will be considered in this work.
- Ensuring collaboration with Indigenous-led organizations and Knowledge Keepers on the implementation of Action 3.1.
- Adding the need for minimum one Indigenous board member to Action 3.6.
- Ensuring two Indigenous populations – Indigenous seniors and Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people – are clearly considered.
- Involving Indigenous-led housing management bodies in capital projects and ensuring they are also receiving some of the increased number of operating agreements promised in Action 3.7.
- Ensuring safe opportunities across the affordable housing spectrum for Indigenous 2S+ people.
- Increasing the number of affordable housing spaces in Alberta, particularly long-term supportive housing and subsidized housing spaces specific to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people across the province.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 4.1

LONG TERM

Human Trafficking

Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are at particular risk of human trafficking due to barriers and racism within various systems, institutions, policies, and communities in Alberta resulting from historic and on-going colonialism.

According to Statistics Canada, over the last decade, the number of police-reported human trafficking incidents in Canada has steadily increased reaching 511 incidents in 2019 and an 11-year total of over 2,400 incidents. (Statistics Canada, 2021) Statistics Canada also found that 95% of human trafficking victims in Canada are women and girls, and 1 in 5 of those are young girls under age 18. (Public Safety Canada [PSC], 2021)

Alberta police reports of human trafficking offences between 2009 and 2016 made up 8% of the total reported in Canada. (Ibrahim, 2018) We can't assume, though, that this means there is less trafficking in Alberta. These numbers are highly impacted by the programs and policies enacted in Alberta to combat human trafficking locally. The detection techniques and training used by local forces, hospitality, transportation service providers, and others are falling short in their effectiveness. In addition, there is little to no disaggregated data in Alberta to indicate the true scope of the problem for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are at particular risk of human trafficking due to barriers and racism within various systems, institutions, policies, and communities in Alberta resulting from historic

and on-going colonialism. This includes, among many other things:

- Substandard education opportunities and lack of access to proper educational opportunities (see Education recommendations context);
- Lack of access to and limited availability of affordable housing in cities and on reserves (see Housing & Homelessness recommendations context);
- Inequitable and racist hiring practices;
- Family dynamics eroded by experiences with Child Welfare and other government programs; and
- The wage gap between not only women and men overall in Alberta but also between Indigenous women and non-Indigenous women (see Income Support recommendations context).

Disconnection from culture and community and the intergenerational trauma of residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and other historic and contemporary events further increase Indigenous women's, girls' and 2S+ people's vulnerability to human traffickers. So too does the presence of traffickers and pimps waiting outside bus depots as well as at group homes and youth detention centres, where Indigenous people are over-represented in Alberta. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.)

Human Trafficking

Social media has also become a significant challenge. While bringing positive potential for strengthening communities and addressing the isolation of rural and remote communities, including First Nations reserves and Metis Settlements, it has, however, also become a widely-used tool of traffickers in identifying and grooming potential victims and a leading contributor to recruitment into sexually exploitive activities.

There is not a lot of research or data available on human trafficking, particularly trafficking of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, though reports indicate it's become more widespread during the current pandemic, and according to Paul Brandt, Chair of the Alberta Human Trafficking Task Force, "that really makes our work ... much more urgent." (Krugel, 2021) When Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people do escape human trafficking situations, the supports and programs they need must be properly resourced

in order to be accessible, culturally responsive and safe, and trauma-informed. The Alberta Joint Working Group (AJWG) found that the picture of what's available is cloudy at best, which limits the ability of agencies, communities, law enforcement, and others being able to make referrals.

Informed Indigenous communities, strong cultural connections, and intact families are strong tools for preventing human trafficking. This requires educating people about trafficking, including 'grooming' tactics; ensuring children be kept with their families or returned if they've been taken into Child Welfare; and connecting people with their languages and cultures. It is critical that these along with other recommendations in this Report, particularly the overarching recommendations and Child Welfare recommendations, be implemented in order to address human trafficking of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

Recommendations

86.

Establish a Human Trafficking Secretariat with a minimum 50% Indigenous membership for implementing, monitoring, and reporting on Alberta's Plan to Combat Human Trafficking.

- The Secretariat will be comprised of both Government of Alberta (GOA) and community members.
- The Secretariat must include officials from across government as they all, in some way, have the mandate to address the issues and challenges that lead to human trafficking, both creating increased vulnerabilities amongst Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people as well as allowing for gaps in regulations, procedures, etc. that make it easier for traffickers to operate.
- All relevant Ministries must not only identify and address their individual responsibilities, they must work together to identify, examine, and implement systemic changes that would positively impact multiple contributing causes.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.3, 1.6, 3.4, 3.6, 7.3, 12.12

SHORT TERM

Human Trafficking

87.

Co-develop, fund, and implement Indigenous-led programs and services designed for the specific and unique experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people who are victims of human trafficking. Funding for these programs and services must be equitable to the overall number of Indigenous victims of human trafficking, as well as the ratio of Indigenous victims to other victims of trafficking in Alberta.

The programs must:

- Be culturally responsive and safe and delivered in a trauma-informed way;
- Be designed with the understanding that the needs of adult and child victims of human trafficking are different from the needs of those who have experienced other forms of violence; and
- Acknowledge and address the differences in urban and rural experiences.

These programs and services will include:

- Designated emergency beds;
- Barrier-free 24/7 wrap-around services that are highly accessible everywhere in the province;
- Fast, simple, and highly trauma-informed intake;
- Victim-led access of services; and
- Regional Indigenous Coordinators to assist victims with navigating the service system.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.4

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

MEDIUM TERM

88.

Update the *Protecting Survivors of Human Trafficking Act* to harmonize it with Indigenous ways of knowing and being and to address the specific needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. This requires engaging and collaborating with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people with lived experiences; Elders; and Knowledge Keepers.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.3, 1.6, 8.1

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

SHORT TERM

Human Trafficking

89.

Create Indigenous-specific human trafficking public awareness campaigns and education opportunities with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people that reflect Indigenous individuals' and communities' realities. These knowledge building and prevention efforts will include but not be limited to:

- Revising the Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculums to include content on human trafficking (see Education recommendations).
- Broad public awareness campaigns that educate all Albertans on the realities of human trafficking in the province including:
 - Recognizing the signs of violence;
 - 'Grooming' tactics used by traffickers; and
 - Where and when trafficking is occurring which many people may be unaware of.
- Specific information for all staff, from front line service delivery to management and executive leadership, in industries where aspects of human trafficking are regularly occurring in Alberta, whether recruiting, transporting, holding, and/or exploiting victims. Initiatives need to include details on how to identify and respond to sexual exploitation and human trafficking in ways that are culturally responsive and safe, survivor-informed, and safe for the victim and the intervener. The initiatives need to be developed in partnership with Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, communities, and organizations and created for:
 - The hospitality industry, including hotels, restaurants and bars;
 - Airport staff, in particular security staff, shuttle drivers, valet services for cars and luggage, etc.;
 - Outfitters, guides and related companies;
 - Transportation service providers including the drivers and the administrative, policy, and leadership teams with taxi services and companies, ride-hailing companies, public transit, inter-city buses, etc.;
 - Emergency hospital departments, including medical personnel as well as janitors, administrators, etc.;
 - Family physicians and other primary care health providers as well as their office staff;
 - Emergency services including police forces, fire services, ambulances, etc.;
 - Industries where temporary and camp-style accommodation is prevalent ("work camps"); and
 - Sexual assault and domestic violence treatment centres.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 7.3, 7.9, 8.1, 11.1, 11.2, 12.12

SHORT TERM

Income Support

“The basic rights of human security of Indigenous women, girls and 2S+ people needs to be a priority. This includes a liveable income and funding for culturally-appropriate programming and supports for them.”

(Congress of Aboriginal Peoples [CAP], 2020)

In Alberta, there is a 40% pay gap between men and women (GOA, n.d.), making it more difficult overall for women in the province to avoid poverty. However, it's even worse for Indigenous women: 19% of Indigenous women are low income, compared to only 9% of all other women, and those who aren't low income earn significantly less: the median income in 2015 was \$43,781 for First Nations women and \$48,929 for Métis women, while it was \$54,276 for all women. (ECF, n.d.)

However, there are many other systemic barriers and impacts of intergenerational trauma that push Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people into lower levels of income:

- Substandard education opportunities and lack of access to proper educational opportunities make it more challenging to secure higher-paying, sustainable employment.

- A single income makes it more challenging to cover the costs of housing and food, let alone the costs of childcare, school supplies, etc., and the lack of accessible, affordable childcare can make it difficult to maintain employment. Lone-parent households are more likely to live in poverty than any other family type (Edmonton Social Planning Council [ESPC], n.d.) and in Edmonton, 12% of Indigenous women are single mothers (compared to 6.2% of non-Indigenous women).
- Poorer mental, physical, and spiritual health impacts individuals' abilities to find and maintain employment; 46.5% of female First Nations adults report comorbidities. (ECF, n.d.)

This tenuous economic security was made worse by the current pandemic: in July 2020 Statistics Canada found that “Indigenous participants more often reported that COVID-19 had a strong or moderate

Income Support

impact on their ability to meet financial obligations or essential needs than non-Indigenous participants.” (Arriagada et al, 2020, p.3) Further, women have been disproportionately impacted by layoffs and lack of childcare during the pandemic. (RBC Economics, 2020)

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples heard from their membership in 2020 that the basic rights of human security of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people needs to be a priority and that this includes a liveable

income and funding for culturally-appropriate programming and supports for them. (CAP, 2020) The Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW) and Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society (Awo Taan) were told the same by Indigenous women in Alberta that priorities for actions to address MMIWG2S+ need to include increased access to culturally-appropriate, trauma-informed, and 24-hour access to services and programs, which these recommendations address. (IAAW, 2020)

Recommendations

90.

Ensure all income support policies, programs, services, and procedures are delivered in trauma-informed, culturally responsive and safe ways and are tailored to the circumstances of the families of MMIWG2S+.

This process will include three steps:

1. Reviewing all current income support program policies and procedures, program descriptions, related forms, and other program information (both internal and external documents) with an intersectional Indigenous and MMIWG2S+ lens.
2. Working with Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and organizations, to revise and decolonize all internal and external program policies, procedures, descriptions, forms, and related information to be trauma-informed and culturally responsive and safe for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people and the families of MMIWG2S+.
3. Developing trauma-informed and cultural training with Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and organizations specific to the needs and experiences of MMIWG2S+ people and families and mandating all Alberta Supports and Alberta Works staff, including service delivery, administrative, and management staff, undertake the training. (See Awareness & Training recommendation.)

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.3, 1.6, 4.2, 4.4, 7.6, 9. 3v, 11.1, 12,12

SHORT TERM

Income Support

91.

Expand the women fleeing violence benefit to include families of MMIWG2S+. This will include providing funds to support Indigenous individuals and families when they have a family member missing or a family member who has been murdered. (See Supports for Families & Loved Ones recommendations.)

These services must be available and accessible outside of regular office hours.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.6, 4.5, 5.6 ii

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

SHORT TERM

92.

Apply a regional cost of living adjustment to income support payments and align with the guaranteed annual liveable income. This will reduce the vulnerability of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. Income support payments include income support, disability supports, and other Alberta support programs.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 4.5

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

SHORT TERM

Law Enforcement

As long as policing agencies ignore or fail to amend their policies, procedures, training, and expectations to account for the historic and contemporary factors that put Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people at greater risk of violence, the law enforcement system will continue to contribute to MMIWG2S+ in Alberta.

Historically and currently, policing agencies in Canada are often used not to protect Indigenous Peoples' human and Indigenous rights, but to suppress them. (Mahony, n.d.) Significant systemic racism pervades all law enforcement institutions in Alberta and Canada. (House of Commons Chambre des Communes Canada, 2021) Just this year a report commissioned by the British Columbia Human Rights Commissioner found that systemic racism is real and its effects are pervasive and severe. (Wortley, 2021)

Along with intergenerational distrust by Indigenous people in law enforcement services, this results in police being far from the trusted protectors they should be. In fact, most Indigenous people are reluctant and actually feel unsafe contacting the police because "the police themselves might also inflict further violence." (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.115) This is not a long-ago historic perception, but a lived experience for the majority of most Indigenous people, especially women, girls, and 2S+ people, today. In Edmonton Indigenous women are nearly 10 times

more likely to be street checked. (Huncar, 2017) There are regular reports of Indigenous people being physically injured and poorly treated by police (CTV News, 2021), and both the National Inquiry and Alberta Justice and Solicitor General heard testimony that police often treat Indigenous people as if they and their concerns are unimportant, including their concerns about missing daughters, sisters, mothers, aunts, and 2S+ family members. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d.) (Government of Alberta [GOA], 2015)

As long as policing agencies ignore or fail to amend their policies, procedures, training, and expectations to account for the historic and contemporary factors that put Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people at greater risk of violence, the law enforcement system will continue to contribute to MMIWG2S+ in Alberta.

Community based policing (the relationship between police services and communities) is a critical part of improving safety for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. All law enforcement services must prioritize

Law Enforcement

acknowledging historical trauma and building positive relationships with Indigenous people, especially women, girls, and 2S+ people. Without this trust and collaboration, law enforcement services and staff will be challenged to serve Indigenous people in an equitable, unbiased, respectful way.

The lack of available data from any and all law enforcement services on the incidence of MMIWG2S+

in Alberta must be addressed. Accurate data will allow for a comprehensive analysis of the incidents in Alberta to determine patterns and implement targeted preventative strategies to avoid further Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people going missing or being murdered.

Recommendations

93.

Ensure annual provincial funding for law enforcement services in Alberta includes as a condition, both immediate implementation of National Inquiry Calls for Justice as well as consistent disaggregated data collection.

These funding requirements will hold law enforcement services in Alberta accountable for their actions and inaction. Requirements of annual funding will include:

- Alberta law enforcement services act immediately to implement all National Inquiry Calls for Justice related to justice and policing services. This will include multi-year strategic implementation and evaluation plans for National Inquiry Calls for Justice.
- Detailed plans for immediate implementation of consistent disaggregated data collection, including ethnicity and other demographic information, across all services.
- Ensuring all data collection and sharing processes and systems adapt over time to evolving best practices in data collection and use. (See Data & Research recommendation.)
- Proper data confidentiality is maintained while still collecting and sharing more detailed demographic information regarding MMIWG2S+ with Indigenous communities and Albertans. (See Data & Research recommendation.)
- Annual reporting to Indigenous communities on their implementation of the National Inquiry Calls for Justice related to policing and law enforcement.
- Annual reporting on the training and education initiatives sworn officers and civilian members undertake regarding anti-racism, anti-sexism, and the historic and contemporary lived experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. (See Awareness & Training recommendation.)
- A clear, barrier-free mechanism for regularly collecting and implementing feedback from community on data collection, data reporting, and effectiveness of implementation of the National Inquiry Calls for Justice.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.5, 9.5

SHORT TERM

Law Enforcement

94.

Engage Indigenous people, especially women, girls, and 2S+ people, in law enforcement oversight mechanisms.

Involvement in oversight will promote accountability and help decrease discrimination, racism, and misconduct in law enforcement services provided to Indigenous people. Actions to ensure appropriate participation of Indigenous people in oversight include but are not limited to:

- Establishing an Indigenous oversight advisory committee pursuant to section 3.1(iii) of the *Police Act*;
- Prescribing police commission standards including participation of Indigenous peoples on police commissions (section 62(1)(g) of the *Police Act*);
- Designating a minimum of one seat on the Law Enforcement Review Board to be filled by an Indigenous person, with a focus on Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ peoples;
- Including Indigenous police officers and civilian officials on the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) (section 46.2 of the *Police Act*) and in their investigations, particularly related to Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. To help achieve this, a mechanism must be developed for engaging Indigenous people in ASIRT processes and a list of potential Indigenous law enforcement and civilian officials who could assist ASIRT officials with investigations must be developed.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.4 ii, 5.7, 5.7 i, 5.7 ii, 9.2 iii

SHORT TERM

Law Enforcement

95.

Recommend the Lieutenant Governor in Council require through regulation (section 61(1)(f) of the *Police Act*) that all national, provincial, municipal, and First Nation law enforcement officers in Alberta have mandatory and ongoing Indigenous awareness training.

This includes having law enforcement services develop long-term training and learning strategies for developing skills and knowledge in all sworn and civilian members, including senior and executive leadership and all members of police commissions, around issues pertaining to MMIWG2S+ and how and why to implement the National Inquiry Calls for Justice and the recommendations in this Report.

This regular, ongoing training will be developed with local post-secondary institutions and Indigenous communities, organizations, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, women, girls, and 2S+ people. Participation will be a mandatory component of individual annual training plans for all sworn and civilian members and a requirement for recognition as police officers, sheriffs, and/or peace officers in Alberta. Annual training will be relevant to the geographic area, distinctions-based and relevant, and include:

- Anti-racism and anti-bias;
- Historical and contemporary factors as well as lived experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people that can lead to MMIWG2S+;
- Historical events before and after colonial contact specific to the local Indigenous communities of their service area and how they lead to contemporary issues; and
- Work with local Indigenous communities to participate in community training focused on local culture and ways of knowing and being.

Further, annual performance reviews will include whether or not this mandatory training has been completed and this will be tied to advancement within the service as well as salary increases.

(See Awareness & Training recommendation.)

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Historical, multigenerational, & intergenerational trauma

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 9.2 iv

MEDIUM TERM

Law Enforcement

96.

Integrate a community-based policing model into all law enforcement services in Alberta. The typical incident management/intervention model of law enforcement will not be successful in making meaningful change. Integrating a preventative community-based model into law enforcement services is critical to successfully implementing the justice- and policing- related National Inquiry Calls for Justice and the recommendations in this Report, as well as to reducing the number of MMIWG2S+ in Alberta.

This model must include:

- Developing strategic partnerships with local Indigenous communities as well as MMIWG2S+ survivors and families;
- Partnering with front-line organizations that work in service delivery, safety, and harm reduction,
- Proactive law enforcement presence in high human trafficking and sexual exploitation areas of Alberta to increase safety of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people;
- Integrating responses to Indigenous women's, girls', and 2S+ people's addictions and mental health issues with community safety issues;
- Ensuring local police services have access to specialized units such as Major Crimes Units on all local investigations (see First Nation Policing recommendations); and
- Developing and funding Indigenous liaison support worker roles focused on ensuring families and communities feel safe and informed throughout any MMIWG2S+ investigation processes.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.5, 5.5 ii, 5.6, 9.2, 9.2 ii, 9.5 i, 9.5 ii, 9.5 iii, 9.7

SHORT TERM

Media Relations

“If we could get proper media coverage when someone from our community goes missing that would be a good start, instead of filibustering around the issues.”

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

Media in Alberta, Canada, and North America don't treat all women who experience violence equally. The stretch of Highway 16 referred to as the “Highway of Tears”²¹ is clear proof of this. Despite women going missing as far back as 1970, the first time major newspapers like the Edmonton Journal covered the situation was when a 25 year old woman went missing in 2002 and police for the first time ever shared the race of the victim: Nicole Hoar was white. (Media Smarts Canada's Centre for Digital and Media Literacy [Media Smarts], n.d.) After that, Indigenous women who had gone missing in that area, and who make up a disproportionately high number of the victims as they do in all situations of violence in Alberta and Canada, began being mentioned by the media, but were given nothing more than “footnote status” compared to the white women. (Media Smarts , n.d.)

“In determining which victims of violence are newsworthy, the news media often presents victims of violence as a binary of either ‘good’ or ‘bad’. ... Consequently, the media's binary portrayal of violence

against women results in white missing and murdered women being framed more compassionately than Indigenous missing and murdered women.” (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.387) This ‘good’ or ‘bad’ binary extends to the lived experiences of the women. “Pure” women are newsworthy women for the media in Canada, while “fallen” women, such as those living in poverty, dealing with addictions, and coping with intergenerational trauma, are not. (Media Smarts , n.d.)

The lack of media attention Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people receive compared to Caucasian women when they go missing or are murdered is evidence that this binary is rampant in the media because Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, due to historic and contemporary intersections of racism and sexism, are often overrepresented in vulnerable living situations.

The media also glorifies the negative. They often don't celebrate the achievements and accomplishments of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people nor do they

21. For more information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highway_of_Tears

Media Relations

represent Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people with dignity or acknowledge Indigenous languages and world views. A study by Yasmin Jiwani examining seven years of Globe and Mail articles about Indigenous women, found that coverage focused on stories of violence, custody cases, poverty, and poor health status. (Jiwani, 2009) The media consistently fails to properly contextualize MMIWG2S+ reports with the historical and contemporary social inequalities and systemic issues that have contributed to the vulnerabilities Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people experience. The result is the media portraying them as almost blameworthy in their own death because they ‘chose’ a lifestyle with increased risk. (Jiwani, 2009) “This media portrayal has resulted in the

dehumanization of Indigenous Peoples, which in turn manifests and perpetuates views that Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people are ‘less than’ non-Indigenous people; that they are not worthy of the same rights and protections as non-Indigenous people; and that they are burdens on Canadian society.” (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.394)

These recommendations for Alberta echo research findings that the media portrayals of Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and MMIWG2S+ need to be improved and media needs to consult with Indigenous families to centre culturally responsive human portrayals of MMIWG2S+ survivors and victims. (Shah, 2021)

Recommendations

97.

Establish a unit for media to access information regarding Indigenous context, history, issues, perspectives, etc. to inform their reporting and stories.

This unit will be run by Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. It will include resources for Indigenous organizations and communities looking for information and advice on how to interact with media in cases of MMIWG2S+.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 6.1 i, 6.1 ii, 6.1 iv

**ALBERTA
MANDATES**

Options to address
Calls for Justice

**NATIONAL
PATHWAYS**

Social & economic
marginalization

MEDIUM TERM

Media Relations

98.

Develop education and training for all GOA media personnel, including press secretaries, on the importance and need to humanize and accurately portray Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in communications. The goal of the training is to ensure MMIWG2S+ media coverage is accurate and respectful. It will be made available free of charge to external stakeholders involved in media relations such as the Canadian Association of Journalists and highlight Indigenous media outlets including APTN, CBC North, CBC Indigenous, and independent Indigenous women and 2S+ journalists.

This training will be trauma-informed and developed and delivered in collaboration with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. Development of this training will also be informed by the outcomes of a conference focused on media's responsibilities when reporting MMIWG2S+ that includes communication personnel, media, and decision makers within Indigenous organizations.

The training will include but not be limited to:

- Trauma-informed approaches to media coverage,
- Decolonized approaches to writing and sharing stories such as including historical and contemporary experiences in the narrative,
- Understanding and respecting cultural traditions and protocols for grieving MMIWG2S+, and
- The need for consistency in media coverage for all missing persons reports regardless of gender, culture, etc.

(See Awareness & Training recommendation.)

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 6.1, 6.1 i, 6.1 ii, 6.1 iv

MEDIUM TERM

Media Relations

99.

Collaborate with institutions, corporations, and organizations to address the perpetuation of stereotypes and racism in media coverage of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in Alberta.

This will include but not be limited to:

- **Media corporations:** identify problems in reporting and editing that perpetuate racism and how to address them and create a public awareness campaign highlighting MMIWG2S+ and opportunities to address racism against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.
- **Post-secondary institutions:** develop curricula for media, journalists, and communications staff that includes Indigenous historical and contemporary experiences.
- **Police services:** using photos chosen and approved by families instead of mug shots which dehumanize Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people when releasing photos of MMIWG2S+ to the public.
- **Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and organizations:** identify how to increase the number of Indigenous reporters in Alberta and how to support media businesses and corporations hiring Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 6.1, 6.1 i, 6.1 ii, 6.1 iv

MEDIUM TERM

Missing Person Alert

An alert targeted to find Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people when they are missing could help locate individuals before they are murdered; it could save lives.

Time is a critical element in the search for a missing person. There are several public alert systems for specific segments of the population in Alberta: Amber Alerts are issued for children that have been abducted and Silver Alerts are issued for represented adults under the *Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act* or an adult with a cognitive impairment, mental disorder or medical condition that may render the person vulnerable. These Public Missing Persons advisories are issued through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Government of Alberta (Minister of Justice and Solicitor General and Minister of Municipal Affairs), Alberta Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and municipal and First Nation Police Services. The MOU outlines specific responsibilities and criteria required for the issuance of an Amber or Silver Alert.

However, there is no specific alert for missing Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. “[B]etween 2014 and 2018, 23% of all missing and murdered women across Canada were Indigenous. This is

especially concerning given that Indigenous women only account for about 4% of Canada’s female population.” (Karim, 2021)

The National Inquiry Final Report contains several testimonials from family members and loved ones on their interactions with law enforcement services when reporting their family member or loved one missing (pages 101, 621, 651, 705, 706).

An alert targeted to find Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people when they are missing could help locate individuals before they are murdered; it could save lives. This specific alert will also support increasing awareness and education about missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls amongst all Albertans. Developing an alert that is targeted for Indigenous women and girls, shows to survivors, families and communities that they are being heard by police and government, that the calls to address the over-representation of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls are being actioned.

Missing Person Alert

The Alberta Joint Working Group (AJWG) acknowledges the high numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous men and boys. The focus of the AJWG and the National Inquiry is Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

“For those families, the fact that missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people receive disproportionately less media coverage than

their non-Indigenous counterparts is a painful reality. The limited attention of the media to, and its framing of, missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people sends the message that Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people are not ‘newsworthy’ victims, contributing to the Canadian public’s apathy toward this crisis.” (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.385)²²

Recommendation

100.

Immediately work with law enforcement agencies, broadcast platforms and other relevant partners to develop and implement a Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MIWG) Alert to provide timely information on Indigenous women and girls who are reported missing.

This work includes:

- Engaging with 2S+ people to involve and include their experiences and perspectives in the development of the Alert to ensure it meets the needs of their community.
- Engaging with survivors, families, and communities of MMIWG2S+ to develop the name of the alert and the activation criteria, thus ensuring the name and criteria is appropriate to the lived experiences and circumstances of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.
 - Alert criteria to be developed include but are not limited to: when the Alert can be issued, what descriptive information will be included to enable the public to identify the victim and suspected perpetrator(s), and which victims fit the Alert so that it can be used for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people of all ages.
- Developing an awareness campaign in partnership with MMIWG2S+ survivors, families, and communities to educate Albertans on the purpose of the Alert and the importance and need for its implementation. (See Awareness & Training recommendation.)

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.6, 6.1, 9.5 ii, 9.5 v, 9.5 vi, 9.5 vii

SHORT TERM

22. See Media Relations recommendations for actions to address these issues.

Occupational Health & Safety

“Actual resources [are needed] to help empower those of us within the community, as well as sensitivity training be made mandatory at all jobs (regardless of pay, location, and management) as to make sure the people know what we as a community and society stand for.”

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

To date, social science research on extraction industries and their impacts on communities and their members has been inadequate. (Westman & Joly, 2019) This includes a lack of Alberta-specific data and research on the link between violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people at and around worksite accommodation camps in the province.

There are potential economic benefits for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people from resource extraction projects in Alberta including new opportunities for employment, though typically Indigenous women are often given lower skilled ‘feminine’ roles with much lower wages than the trades roles. (Manning et al, 2018) However, available literature suggests that currently those who are more marginalized in communities, such as Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, and those living in poverty, etc. may “actually experience worse socio-economic conditions” as a result of these projects. (Manning et al, 2018) Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people are very likely to experience intersectional forms of discrimination, harassment, and harm, and increases in violence and crime. (Manning et al, 2018) This is true

both onsite as employees where “sexualized, gendered, and racialized violence and harassment ... is not an uncommon experience for Indigenous women,” (Manning et al, 2018, p.12) and when living in surrounding communities, where there can be “rapid increases in sexual violence, which can be connected to the influx of male workers.” (Manning et al, 2018, p.12)

This increase in violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people as a result of resource extraction projects was confirmed by witnesses to the National Inquiry.²³

The Métis Women’s Council on Economic Security has been examining the issue of violence against Indigenous women and families in Alberta resulting from resource development projects near communities, including as employees. They are developing recommendations to address safety on worksites and steps to prevent violence and reduce the negative impacts on Indigenous women, their families and communities that should be implemented in conjunction with these recommendations.

23. For more information see Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, “Deeper Dive: Resource Extraction Projects and Violence Against Indigenous Women” p.584-594

Occupational Health & Safety

Recommendations

101.

Develop a toolkit to assist all employers with educating and raising awareness of the issue of MMIWG2S+ and how to maintain a safe workplace free from violence and harassment.

(See Awareness & Training recommendation.)

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 13.5

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

SHORT TERM

102.

Partner with Indigenous women and 2S+ people and health and safety associations to increase safety and reduce violence on worksites. This includes requiring employers to incorporate MMIWG2S+ perspectives in worksite safety planning and training.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 13.4

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

SHORT TERM

103.

Support the Métis Women's Council on Economic Security's ongoing examination of worksite safety and ensure they are engaged in the implementation of these recommendations.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

SHORT TERM

Occupational Health & Safety

104.

Revise the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and Regulations to require employers to address safety for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in their existing safety plans.

Revisions must include defining violence from an MMIWG2S+ perspective and extend to statutes, regulations, and codes as well.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 1.6, 1.9

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

MEDIUM TERM

105.

Ensure all resource development projects have culturally responsive and safe programs and services available at the worksite and in surrounding communities. These programs and services must address and prevent violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. They must remain in place throughout the entirety of the project and for minimally five years after it is completed recognizing that trauma arising from violence requires long term support.

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 4.1, 4.2, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.5

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

SHORT TERM

106.

Work with police services to ensure law enforcement is visible and accessible where accommodation camps are located and in surrounding communities

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 13.5

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls For Justice

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

SHORT TERM

Occupational Health & Safety

107.

Require all resource extractive companies to report all incidents involving safety for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people to Alberta OHS. Safety incidents include but are not limited to experiencing harassment, bullying, or violence. The Government of Alberta will make the data available to the public.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 13.1 , 13.2, 13.3

MEDIUM TERM

108.

Partner with industry to support Indigenous-led research on social and economic marginalization of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, their families and communities, as a result of resource development projects in their territories. The research will align with the provincial data strategy (see Data & Research recommendation) and include wise practices that:

- Address and prevent violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people on worksites and in communities near resource development projects; and
- Identify how social and economic benefits of the projects are shared with local communities, especially Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

Collaborate with industry and local communities to ensure the research results, learnings, and recommendations are used to inform the implementation of actions across Alberta to address social and economic marginalization of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 4.1, 4.2, 13.1, 13.4, 13.5

LONG TERM

109.

Make the Occupational Health and Safety Department ultimately responsible for all accountability aspects related to the safety of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in accommodation camps in Alberta. Safety includes freedom from all forms of violence, harassment, and discrimination.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Social & economic marginalization

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 13.1, 13.3

SHORT TERM

Victim Services

“Culturally specific victims service support can make a huge difference. Not having to explain the needs of the family to those who are trying to support puts less strain on the family. When you are having to explain certain protocols and ceremony over and over it get to be cumbersome and make the support become a burden.”

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

Indigenous identity is a significant factor for victimization, particularly in Alberta. The elevated risk of victimization of Indigenous people, especially women, girls, and 2S+ people, has been widely reported everywhere from the National Inquiry Final Report and the Truth and Reconciliation Final Report (TRC, 2015) to the Native Women’s Association of Canada (Native Women’s Association of Canada [NWAC], 2010) and Statistics Canada, which reported in 2015 that across Canada “the rate of homicide for Aboriginal people was about seven times higher than for non-Aboriginal people”. (Mulligan et al, 2016, p.4)

In Alberta, before carding was banned, if you were Indigenous and living in Lethbridge you were five times more likely to be carded by the police than white people. (Labby, 2017) It’s even worse in Edmonton, where Indigenous women are ten times more likely than white people to be street checked by police. (Huncar, 2017) This treatment by police isn’t confined to walking around town. Indigenous people have not only identified the crime reporting process as

confusing and that they aren’t always referred to victims services by police, they have also reported not being taken seriously or listened to by police services in Alberta when reporting a crime. (GOA, 2015)

In 2017 another Statistics Canada report indicated that while rates of homicide for non-Indigenous women and girls have declined over time, the homicide rate for Indigenous women and girls has actually increased, and that Aboriginal women in Alberta face higher homicide rates than in any other province. (Mahony et al., 2017) Studies further show that the Indigenous homicide rate is 14.77/100,000 in Calgary and 9.87/100,000 in Edmonton. (ECF, n.d.)

A 2017 Government of Canada Department of Justice report showed individuals self-reported alarmingly higher rates of violent victimization amongst Indigenous women and girls than all women and girls. (Government of Canada [GOC], 2017) For example, the self-reported rate of sexual assault is more than triple for Indigenous women (113 per 1,000) what it is

Victim Services

for non-Indigenous women (35 per 1,000). Further, more Indigenous people (40%) than non-Indigenous people (29%) self-report being physically or sexually maltreated before the age of 15, and of the Indigenous respondents almost three times as many girls (14%) than boys (5%) reported experiencing both physical and sexual maltreatment before the age of 15.

Notably, taxis and other ride sharing services can be dangerous, to the point that in Winnipeg a new Indigenous safe-ride service was developed and can't keep up with demand. (Malone, 2018) Though taxis and ride sharing are municipal responsibilities, the province can support efforts to improve safety of these services.

Current limitations of various victim services and programs in Alberta, including but not limited to Family Information Victim Units (FILU), include:

- No funding for legal services,
- Support system for missing adults is inadequate in general,
- Yearly cap on services per individual family,
- Lack of transportation options a service challenge,
- Privacy legislation prevents necessary information sharing, and
- Services are fragmented and families have to go back and forth between a myriad of service providers to get what they need.

Recommendations

110.

Improve access to paid leave, disability benefits, and wrap around support services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people who are victims of criminal or traumatic circumstances.

Wrap around support services must be strengths-based, culturally responsive and safe, involve Elders, and include and build natural supports. They will include but not be limited to supports and services for mental health, addictions, housing, food security, family dynamics and wellbeing, and health and wellness, as well as access to traditional healing programs.

Paid leave and disability benefits for victims of crime and/or traumatic events must be legislated provincially. (See Income Supports and Supports for Families & Loved Ones recommendations.)

**ALBERTA
MANDATES**

**Options to address
Calls for Justice**

**NATIONAL
PATHWAYS**

**Social & economic
marginalization**

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 3.4, 5.6 iii

SHORT TERM

Victim Services

III.

Transition victim service provision to a community model.

Planning for and executing this transition must be done in true partnership between relevant Government of Alberta (GOA) Ministries, Indigenous organizations, Elders, families, and survivors. It must also centre the experiences Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people and their families have had accessing these programs and services. The model must be independent of all police and prosecution services and provide adequate multi-year funding to Indigenous community-led organizations to deliver victim services.

This community model will be built on a families-first approach (see Appendix A: Glossary for definition) and include:

- An information sharing agreement with police services across the province, including the RCMP (see Supports for Families & Loved Ones recommendation 2 for additional context);
- A guarantee of sustainable funding for a healing component incorporating female Elders;
- Funding to provide financial supports to victims and families of victims of crime and/or traumatic incidents (see Income Supports recommendation 91 regarding the fleeing violence benefit);
- A clear agreed-upon process for victim services staff to refer clients to service providers across the province;
- An Indigenous evaluation framework including outcomes consistent with the goals and needs of Indigenous communities that aligns with the provincial data strategy (see Data & Research and Programs & Services: Evaluation recommendations); and
- A guarantee to increase the number of Indigenous people who are Indigenous Victims Outreach Specialists, including a commitment from the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General to fill the majority of vacancies with Indigenous staff.

This community model must be tested in at least one urban and one rural community in Alberta in the very near future. Learnings shared by communities, and Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, as well as robust culturally responsive and safe evaluation will be integrated into the model and then the model scaled-up around the province.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining the status quo & institutional lack of will

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.6, 5.6 ii, 5.6 v

LONG TERM

Victim Services

112.

Retain an independent auditor to identify what Indigenous-specific victim services and programs are already provided within Alberta, who is providing them, what their processes are, and what gaps exist.

This independent auditor will have conversations throughout Alberta as availability of services and programs differs across the province. Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people; families and survivors of MMIWG2S+; and Indigenous agencies that support families and survivors of MMIWG2S+ must be engaged in these conversations.

The independent auditor's process will identify in detail and with regional specificity:

- What services and programs are currently provided, who is providing them, their intake and service provision processes, and their availability and accessibility (e.g., how long are waiting lists, can they be accessed remotely, etc.);
- What gaps exist in terms of the supports needed by families, survivors, and Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people;
- What transportation Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, especially MMIWG2S+ survivors and their families, are using to access services;
- How to better coordinate and improve communication, including sharing data and statistics, between agencies and Government;
- How to ensure clients are best served and how to enhance support for families, survivors, and Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people;
- How to clearly communicate what programs and services are available to Indigenous communities to increase awareness of available supports; and
- How and within what timeframe enhancements will be made to improve Indigenous-specific victim services.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Options to address Calls for Justice

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

Opportunities for collaboration

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Ignoring the agency & expertise of Indigenous women, girls, & 2S+ people

CALLS FOR JUSTICE: 5.6

MEDIUM TERM

113.

Advocate to and engage with the Government of Canada for funding for Family Information Liaison Units (FILU) to be renewed past March 2023 and to flow through Indigenous community agencies rather than provincial service providers. Indigenous communities and organizations must be allowed to redesign FILU in a way that works for their communities and to prioritize hiring community members and Indigenous staff.

ALBERTA MANDATES

Actions to address violence & sustainable solutions

NATIONAL PATHWAYS

Maintaining status quo & institutional lack of will

SHORT TERM



Conclusion

The time for talking about taking action is over.

The time for action is now. We urge the Government of Alberta (GOA) to continue the collaborative work started here. We need the GOA and all Albertans to undertake new pathways to working with Indigenous women, girls, 2S+ people, organizations, and communities; designing and delivering programs and services; and collecting data and making informed decisions.

As these recommendations are implemented, new needs may be discovered or gaps may change, and the approach will need to be adjusted accordingly. Many things remain to be examined and there is still work to be done. The Indigenous MMIWG2S+ Oversight Committee will be instrumental in ensuring the

success of these recommendations as well as the ongoing examination of current and emerging issues and response to the same.

This is a living document. The Alberta Joint Working Group (AJWG) expects these 113 Pathways to Justice will be reviewed and updated with Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people minimally every three years as we move forward together.

The recommendations presented lay out a workable avenue towards ending the violence, addressing the systemic issues, and reducing the institutional racism that perpetuates MMIWG2S+.



**“ Stop treating women, girls, and
two-spirit folk like we are
expendable or unimportant.”**

(AJWG Survey Respondent)

Appendix A: Glossary

2S+ (2SLGBTQQA+) | Two-spirit plus, this shortened acronym is inclusive of all Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual and other gender diverse people.

Colonial Violence | Stems from colonization or colonialism, and relies on the dehumanization of Indigenous Peoples. Colonial violence is perpetuated through a variety of different strategies, including depriving people of the necessities of life, using public institutions and laws to reassert colonial norms, ignoring the knowledge and capacity of Indigenous Peoples, and using constructs that deny the ongoing presence and dignity of Indigenous Peoples. It is also linked to racism and is more than just a set of ideas, but a set of practices that are grounded in systems that serve to target Indigenous Peoples over generations, undergirding intergenerational and multigenerational violence, and contribute to economic, social, and political marginalization; lack of will; maintenance of the status quo; and the denial of agency, expertise, and value. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.76)

Canadian Genocide | Canada's past and current destructive colonial practices and cultural genocide, perpetuated by the conduct and policies of Canadian governments. These acts of violence and intent to destroy are structural, systemic, and these actions and inactions target Indigenous people as a whole. (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls [NIMMIWG] Genocide, n.d.)

Culturally Responsive and Safe | Culturally responsive and safe services and processes are holistic; spiritually, socially, emotionally safe; and allow reclaiming of power by Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. A culturally responsive and safe approach moves beyond the respectful recognition of difference to an acknowledgement of the inherent power imbalances and inequities that exist between cultural groups. It recognizes that cultural values and norms may be different for different people due to unique socio-political histories. Within a culturally responsive and safe framework the focus is on providing services that make sense from Indigenous people's perspective, clearly reflecting lived-experience and reality without any challenge or denial of identity. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and the experience of learning together with dignity. It is also about listening in a way that empowers, supports, and engages individuals in a dynamic relationship. (GOA, 2015)

Decolonization/Decolonizing | A social and political process aimed at resisting and undoing the multi-faceted impacts of colonization and re-establishing strong contemporary Indigenous Peoples, Nations, and institutions based on traditional values, philosophies, and knowledge systems. The purpose of decolonization is to create space in everyday life, research, academia, and society for an Indigenous perspective instead of this perspective being neglected, minimized, mocked, or dismissed. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.78)

Decolonizing Approach | Challenging colonial influences and dismantling and replacing structures that perpetuate the status quo, foster racism, oppression, and other forms of violence perpetrated against Indigenous people, as well as problematizing dominant discourses, and addressing unbalanced power dynamics, using Indigenous perspectives, approaches, and knowledge. (NIMMIWG Genocide, n.d.)

Decolonizing Mindset | A mindset that requires people consciously and critically question the legitimacy of the colonizer and colonization, and to reflect on the influences and outcomes of colonialism. (NIMMIWG 1a, n.d., p.78)

Appendix A: Glossary

Distinctions-based | Recognition that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people in Canada are all human and Indigenous rights-holders and each consist of distinct communities with their own histories, culture, language, world view, etc. Therefore, any and all work with them must reflect and recognize their unique interests, priorities, and circumstances. (Government of Canada [GOC], 2021)

Encounters | Powerful moments that occur within relationships that families and survivors showed to be significant. These encounters represent a time and space through which the vision, values, and principles that shape families, communities, and individual lives are created.

Families-First Approach | (1) involves early and ongoing meaningful engagement of all affected individuals and knowledge holders at every stage; (2) addresses systemic issues; (3) includes strong courageous leaders who are not afraid of advocating for the implementation of recommendations; (4) flexibility in rules of evidence to ensure inclusion of meaningful evidence and involvement of proper spiritual and religious protocols; (5) clearly identified issues to address; (6) open to a variety of methods for gathering evidence and different 'streams of action'; (7) include individuals and groups affected by the issue; (8) gives equal weight to natural laws, spiritual laws, and Canadian laws; (9) adequate and secure funding for process and implementation; (10) provides a variety of culturally appropriate and accessible supports; (11) ensures expectations are meaningful and reasonable; (12) based on consensus building; (13) clear implementation processes. (Sala & Williams, 2015)

Family Violence | (1) a multi-factoral social syndrome and not simply an undesirable behaviour; (2) that resides within Aboriginal individuals, families and community relationships, as well as within social and political dynamics; (3) typically manifests itself within families and intimate relationships as a regimen of domination that is established and enforced by one person over one or more others, through violence, fear and a variety of abuse strategies (physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, financial, etc.); (4) is usually not an isolated incidence or pattern, but is most often rooted in intergenerational abuse; (5) is almost always linked to the need for healing from trauma; (6) Aboriginal domestic violence and abuse is allowed to continue and flourish because of the presence of enabling community dynamics, which as a general pattern, constitute a serious breach of trust between the victims of violence and abuse and the whole community, and signal that the sacred circle of unity and protection has been broken; and finally, (7) the entire syndrome has its roots in Aboriginal historical experience, which must be adequately understood in order to be able to restore wholeness, trust and safety to the Aboriginal family and community life. (Bopp et al, 2003)

Feminist Indigenous Lens | An intersectional theory and practice of feminism that focuses on decolonization, Indigenous sovereignty, and human rights for Indigenous women and their families. The focus is upon Indigenous women being empowered in the context of Indigenous cultural values and priorities, rather than mainstream, white, patriarchal ones.

Genocide | The deliberate killing of people who belong to a particular racial, political, or cultural group, the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, or cultural group.

Appendix A: Glossary

Intersectionality | The recognition that a person's experience will be different than another's based on their particular interplay of race, ethnicity, Indigeneity, gender, class, sexuality, geography, age, and ability, as well as how these intersections encourage systems of oppression and, ultimately, target Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people. For Indigenous Peoples in particular, using an intersectional approach requires understanding how a history of colonization has shaped their experiences today. Intersectionality was conceptualized and coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, an American lawyer, civil rights advocate, philosopher, and a leading scholar of critical race theory.

Racism | Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism is when the power elite of one group, the white group, has the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society, while shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices. There are three expressions of racism: personal (individual acts, implicit biases), institutional (policies, practises, systems), and cultural (beliefs, values, norms). (Dismantling Racism Works Web Workbook, n.d., and GOA, 2015)

The belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.

Sexism | Prejudice or discrimination based on sex, especially discrimination against women and 2s+ people. Behaviour, conditions, or attitudes that foster stereotypes of social roles based on sex. Any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written words, practice, or behaviour based upon the idea that a person or a group of persons is inferior because of their sex, which occurs in the public or private sphere, whether online or offline.

Trauma-informed | A trauma-informed approach acknowledges that organizations and teams need to have a complete picture of people's life situation — past and present — in order to provide effective programs and services, and develop effective policies and regulations, with a healing orientation. Adopting trauma-informed practices can potentially improve program, service, and community outcomes, as well as service provider and staff wellness. It can also help reduce avoidable care and excess costs in health care, social service, and other sectors. (Trauma-Informed Care Implementation Resource Centre, n.d.)

Two Spirit (2S) | A person who identifies as having both a masculine and a feminine spirit, and is used by some Indigenous people to describe their sexual, gender and/or spiritual identity. (Re:searching for LGBTQ2S+ Health, n.d.)

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RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
ALBERTA JOINT WORKING GROUP
ON MISSING AND MURDERED
INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

December 2021

Thank you to the Government of Alberta for convening and supporting
the Alberta Joint Working Group with this important work.