



FIRST VOICE
Urban Indigenous Coalition

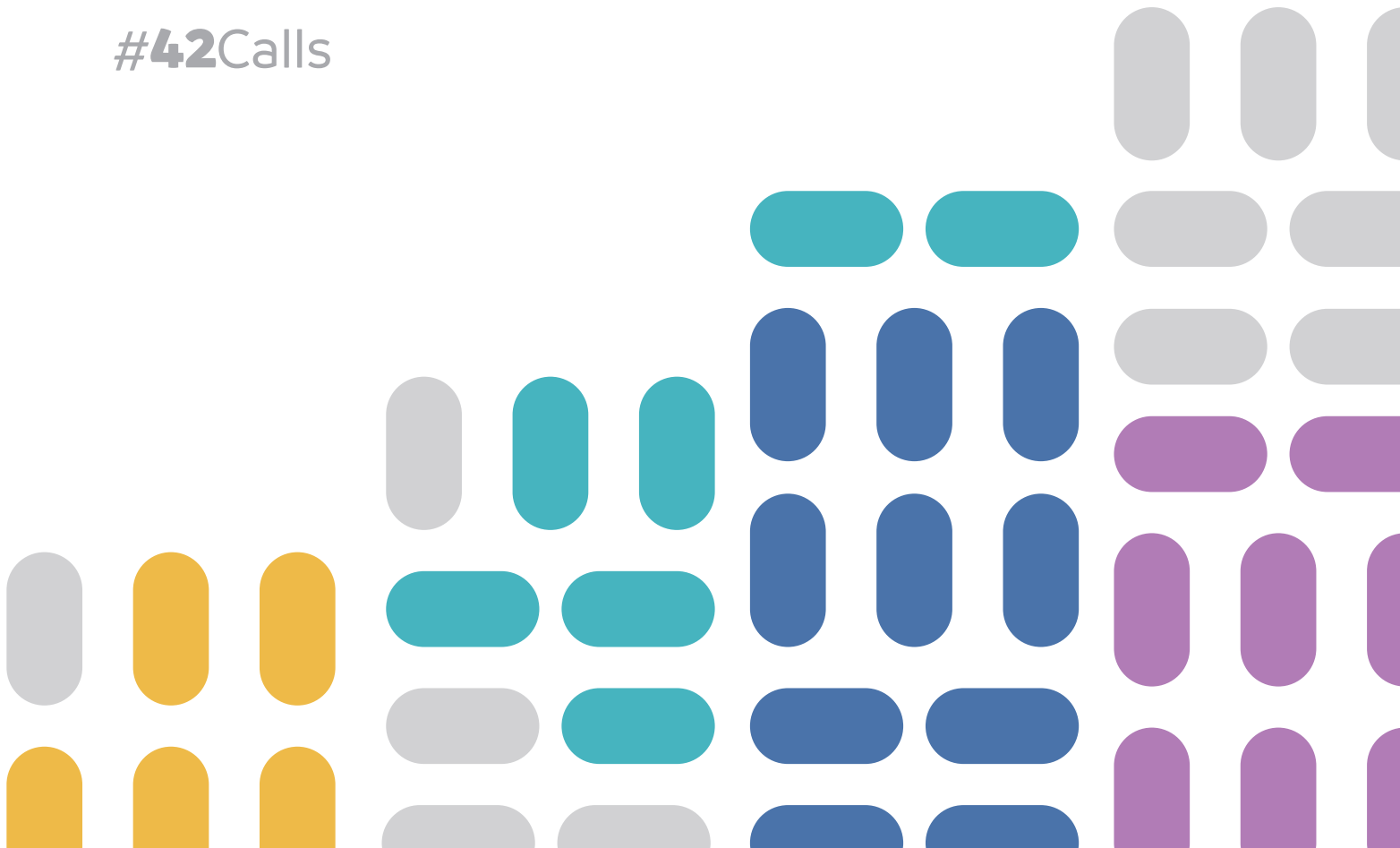
Reconciliation Report 2024

Steps Taken, Miles to Go

Progress toward Truth and Reconciliation in St. John's,
Newfoundland and Labrador, 2023-2024

September 2024

#42Calls



About This Document

This *Reconciliation Report* has been prepared under the leadership of the First Voice Partnership Table by and on behalf of its organizational Partners. These include the following:



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- Government of Canada
 - First Light: St. John's Friendship Centre
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Land Acknowledgement

First Voice, its Partners, Contributors, and Community Advocates acknowledge that St. John's is home to a rich, diverse, and vibrant urban Indigenous community. Located on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Beothuk, the lands and waters in and around the City have traditionally served as a gathering place for the Mi'kmaq. The broader region of Newfoundland and Labrador continues to be home to diverse Indigenous Peoples, including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis from across Turtle Island. We honour and pay respect to the past, present, and future caretakers of these territories.



SPIRIT SONG FESTIVAL 2023

SPIRIT SONG FESTIVAL 2023

Message from the Partnership Table

With the launch of *Our Shared Vision* in February 2023, First Voice put forward an ambitious plan to promote positive systemic change for the urban Indigenous community in St. John's. That plan was the result of more than three years of sustained community and stakeholder engagement. During that time, we worked with the urban Indigenous community in St. John's to identify their aspirations, challenges, and priorities – and to craft a vision of what truth and reconciliation could look like in St. John's.

Reconciliation Report 2024: Steps Taken, Miles to Go presents a comprehensive status report on our 42 Calls for Change. We have made significant progress building partnerships with like-minded individuals and organizations. We have created collaborative, solution-oriented spaces in the form of two Action Circles and a Joint Coordinating Committee with the City of St. John's. Allies and supporters have added their voices to our own, promoting our vision for change within their own circles of influence.

Yet these last 18 months have also been a time of challenge. We have faced resistance from some senior decision-makers who are best positioned to initiate the kind of change that is most urgently needed. The K-12 curriculum remains in dire need of redevelopment. Our system of police oversight and governance lags behind the rest of the country. Our province has yet to follow the example set by the City of St. John's in recognizing and committing to respect the most fundamental human rights of Indigenous Peoples. Until these obstacles are addressed, they will slow the pace of progress.

From the very beginning, we recognized that we would face challenges. Change is hard and it takes time. That is why we presented a ten-year plan in *Our Shared Vision*. After 18 months, we have taken many steps together on our shared journey of truth and reconciliation in St. John's. But we still have many miles to go. *Reconciliation Report 2024* shows us where we are now, where we are headed, and how to get there.

Join us as we continue that journey.

Executive Summary

This document provides an update on the state of truth and reconciliation in St. John's. It is based on the First Voice Urban Indigenous Coalition's Community Action Plan, called *Our Shared Vision: A Path toward Truth and Reconciliation in St. John's, NL, 2023-33*. Released in February 2023, the Community Action Plan was developed to support First Voice's main goal of advancing truth and reconciliation at a local level in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. Now, 18 months after the release of the Community Action Plan, we are pleased to provide updates on each of its 42 Calls for Change. These updates are provided in detail in the body of this report and are also available online through the First Voice website.

First Voice is pleased to celebrate new partnerships and progress made throughout the past 18 months. Main themes in progress include the following:

- The formation of an **Indigenous Justice Action Circle** and an **Indigenous Health Action Circle** which are facilitating important partnerships and collaborative efforts to benefit the urban Indigenous community in the justice and health systems.
- The **Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights** formed between First Voice and the City of St. John's which has begun working towards coordinated efforts to benefit urban Indigenous people in St. John's. Despite meeting for only nine months so far, the City of St. John's has already acted on the committee's advice to formally recognize the "June holiday" as "National Indigenous Peoples Day (observed)"

(responding to Call for Change 20) and to collaboratively host the Indigenize Downtown Community Feast to gather insight on the Downtown Neighbourhood Plan. Through the committee, First Voice and the City of St. John's are continuing to work towards action on 18 Calls for Change which fall partly or exclusively within the City's jurisdiction.

- First Voice has been able to support many other initiatives to benefit the urban Indigenous community. Work in this area includes a promising Gladue Pilot Project led by the Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network, a letter supporting publicly funded Gladue programs initiated by the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, and advocacy for a guaranteed annual livable income¹ led by Food First NL.

Many organizations, highlighted throughout this report, have made significant progress in forwarding truth and reconciliation. Yet, there remains much to be done. Three themes characterize the barriers that hinder progress in every Call for Change:

- **Gaps in public education.** The general public lacks a basic understanding of Indigenous Peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador. This hinders all advocacy efforts discussed throughout this report.
- **Inadequate resources.** Reconciliation cannot happen without resources to make change. First Voice has seen an increased interest in consultation of Indigenous people without adequate

¹ This report prefers the term "guaranteed annual livable income" because it aligns with the language used in the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). Other commonly used terms include "Universal Basic Income (UBI)" or more simply "Basic Income". First Voice is committed to supporting all such initiatives, regardless of the precise terminology used. See our progress updates on Call for Change 16 for more details.

funding allocated to make changes that Indigenous advisors recommend.

- **Failure to recognize urban Indigenous Peoples.** Urban Indigenous people are consistently excluded from government efforts to consult Indigenous governments and organizations. This is an issue facing many urban Indigenous groups in Canada, but it is amplified in St. John's due to the historic erasure of Indigenous people from government policies (e.g. Terms of the Union at Confederation).

We have chosen three priority Calls for Change where urgent action is needed to address these barriers as of September 2024:

1. Promote and support the redevelopment of the K-12 curriculum so that it includes appropriate content on Indigenous histories, cultures, stories, and languages as well as a discussion of colonialism and its legacy in the province. This process must be undertaken with the collaboration of all Indigenous groups in the province, including urban Indigenous people. (Call for Change 1)
2. Advocate for the implementation of stronger civilian oversight of police services, including the creation of a Police Oversight Board that is independent of police, civilian-led, politically neutral, and representative of the province's diverse communities. (Call for Change 39)
3. Advocate for the adoption and full implementation of UNDRIP at all levels of government. (Call for Change 40)

We encourage the general public to advocate for these changes by using their own voices to promote these priority Calls for Change, contacting their government representatives, and working towards progress in their own circles of influence.

The 2023-2024 year has seen some exciting successes in truth and reconciliation, but Indigenous people in St. John's face major inequities in each of our four action areas. Every resident of the City has a role to play in implementing the Calls for Change.

Truth and reconciliation require sustained action. Everyone in our city and province must keep pushing for change.

How We Got Here



In 2019, what was initially called the St. John's Urban Indigenous Coalition was launched as a loose network of 30 organizations comprising Indigenous groups, service providers, federal and provincial government departments, and the City of St. John's. Under the leadership of First Light Friendship Centre working in collaboration with Indigenous Services Canada, the coalition – now known as First Voice – has grown into a tight partnership of eleven² local, provincial, and national organizations working alongside nine Community Advocates to promote truth and reconciliation in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Operating on the basis of consensus, the Partnership Table has committed not to make any substantive decisions unless a majority of Indigenous members are present and have had the opportunity to share their thoughts and perspectives on the issues at hand. Our fundamental values and principles are described in our Coalition Charter, which can be found in [Appendix A](#). A full list of our Partners, Community Advocates, and Contributors can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Our name in English is *First Voice*. In Mi'kmaw it is *Amskwesewey kelusik*. In Inuktitut, *Sivullipâk Nipilik*. In Innu-aimun, *Ueskat Kaeimit* (Sheshashiu dialect) and *Uskatsh kaianmuetsh* (Mushuau dialect). Our name was chosen to reflect our coalition's guiding principle: **prioritize the voices of the urban Indigenous community**.

Development of *Our Shared Vision*

Our Community Action Plan, called *Our Shared Vision*, was developed in pursuit of a world where the inherent rights of the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador are respectfully recognized and actively supported by all. Published in February 2023, *Our Shared Vision* was

² *Our Shared Vision* was developed in partnership with 12 organizations. The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network (NLHNN) has relocated to central Newfoundland and therefore withdrew as a member of First Voice in early 2024.

developed based on the following sources, prioritizing the voices and lived experiences of urban Indigenous people living in St. John's:

- First Light's own assessment of the community's needs, based on nearly 40 years of experience working with and serving the urban Indigenous community;
- Direct input gathered at a Community Feast held on September 18, 2019;
- The results of facilitated discussions held during the Decolonize YYT virtual policy conference on November 5-6, 2020; and
- Nearly two years of sustained discussions carried out at four Standing Committees working in the areas of education, training, and employment; health and wellness; housing and homelessness; and infrastructure and service delivery.

In its 42 Calls for Change, *Our Shared Vision* is intentionally aligned with the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). These documents represent decades of work and the voices of Indigenous Peoples from across Canada and around the world. The consensus of the community is that there is no need to reproduce the work that led to these documents; instead, we must breathe life into their Calls and principles.

Development of *Reconciliation Report 2024*

First Voice continues to prioritize the voices and lived experiences of urban Indigenous people living in St. John's. Developing our 2024 *Reconciliation Report* therefore involved extensive consultation, including with the following groups:

- First Light staff who manage and deliver frontline programs and services for Indigenous people in St. John's;
- Community Advocates;
- Members of the Partnership Table;
- Members of the Indigenous Justice Action Circle and Indigenous Health Action Circle; and
- Outreach to organizations working in areas related to one or more of the 42 Calls for Change.³

At the time of publishing *Our Shared Vision*, First Voice acknowledged that advancing the Calls for Change would depend in part on the willingness of policy- and decision-makers to take action as well as opportunities for First Voice to engage with those who have the resources and authority to make meaningful change. First Voice continues to be steadfast in our commitment to walk the path of truth and reconciliation with any and all willing partners. We will continue to build and strengthen partnerships with those who share our vision of a world where the inherent rights of the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador are respectfully recognized and actively supported by all.

³ Wherever we were made aware of organizations working in areas related to any of the 42 Calls for Change, we contacted representatives from those organizations to gather feedback on our written descriptions of their work. Contacts included 10 members of the Partnership Table, 31 Contributor organizations, 9 Community Advocates, and 5 organizations not previously associated with First Voice.

The State of Truth and Reconciliation in St. John's, September 2024



The updates below are intentionally structured based on *Our Shared Vision*. As such, updates are grouped into each of the four Action Areas and address all 42 Calls for Change. These updates celebrate fruitful partnerships by showing the progress that has been made. At the same time, we are also facing challenges in several key areas and recognize the need for ongoing advocacy with policy- and decision-makers who may not have been fully responsive to our Calls for Change.

Celebrating Progress: Highlights from 2023-24

First Voice is proud to celebrate new partnerships and progress made throughout the past 18 months. Main themes in progress include the launch of two Action Circles,⁴ a deepening partnership with the City of St. John's, promoting antiracism in justice and policing, and supporting new initiatives to advance positive systemic change.

Launch of Two Action Circles

The formation of an Indigenous Justice Action Circle, co-chaired by the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission, and an Indigenous Health Action Circle, co-chaired by Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services, mark significant progress for First Voice in building partnerships and taking action. These Action Circles are facilitating important collaborative efforts to benefit the urban Indigenous community in the justice and health systems. Their work will continue in the upcoming year.

⁴ Terms of Reference for each Action Circle can be found online at firstvoicenc.ca/action-circles/.

A Deepening Partnership with the City of St. John's

In January 2024, First Voice and the City of St. John's formed the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights.⁵ This group has begun coordinated efforts to benefit Indigenous people in St. John's. Despite meeting for only nine months so far, the committee has already made the following noteworthy achievements:

- Responding to Call for Change 20 by formally renaming the "June Holiday" in the City as "National Indigenous Peoples Day (Observed)".
- Collaboratively hosting the Indigenize Downtown Community Feast to gather urban Indigenous-specific insights on the Downtown Neighbourhood Plan

The Joint Coordinating Committee continues to meet regularly to advance work on 18 Calls for Change that fall partly or exclusively within the City's jurisdiction.

Promoting Antiracism in Justice and Policing

Since its early days, First Voice has been working in the areas of justice and policing to address systemic racism that continues to harm the urban Indigenous community. The First Voice Working Group on Police Oversight, formed in 2020, conducted extensive research on police oversight mechanisms across Canada and even internationally. Using a robust public engagement process, the Working Group produced 26 specific recommendations to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.⁶ These recommendations centred on the need to create a civilian-led Police Oversight Board for the province, strengthen the public complaints process, and improve trust and confidence in the Serious Incident Response Team (SIRT-NL).

First Voice has continued to be active in promoting the recommendations of the Working Group on Police Oversight. We have created collaborative solution-oriented spaces through the Indigenous Justice Action Circle and have freely shared advice with policy-makers. Our Partners, Contributors, and supporters have allocated significant resources in this essential area of reconciliation, and the work we have done has contributed to progress in other areas, including sector-specific antiracism training (Call for Change 6) and urban Indigenous inclusion on advisory boards (Call for Change 31).

While we have seen greater public understanding of the need for systemic changes in justice and policing, our Calls for Change that are most directly associated with these areas (predominantly 35-39) have unfortunately seen little uptake among elected officials and policy-makers in the past 18 months. The roadblocks that we have encountered demonstrate that systemic racism against Indigenous Peoples, including in the urban context, is deeply entrenched in our systems of justice and policing. Nevertheless, we are committed to continuing our advocacy to ensure that Indigenous people have equal protection of the law and equal access to justice.

⁵ Terms of Reference for the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights can be found online at firstvoiceni.ca/action-circles/joint-coordinating-committee-on-indigenous-rights/.

⁶ The Final Report of the First Voice Working Group on Police Oversight, called *Building Trust, Restoring Confidence*, can be found online at firstvoiceni.ca/publications. Printed copies are also available.

New Initiatives to Advance Positive Systemic Change

When able to obtain adequate resources, community-based and Indigenous-led organizations can do great things to advance truth and reconciliation. In this report alone, we are able to celebrate the creation of new paid positions, such as an Indigenous Housing Navigator and multiple Gladue writers, as well as a promising pilot that was able to provide traditional foods to Indigenous residents in a long-term care facility. The need for such services, however, greatly outpaces the available resources. Availability of sustained long-term funding will be needed until positive systemic changes reduce the overall need (e.g. policy changes which alleviate the housing crisis).

In the past 18 months, First Voice has been pleased to join with other organizations in their projects contributing to truth and reconciliation, including a promising Gladue Pilot Project led by the Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network, work to promote publicly funded Gladue programs led by the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, and advocacy for a guaranteed annual livable income led by Food First NL.

Facing Challenges

First Voice has identified barriers in three major thematic areas that limit progress in all four of our Action Areas. Progress on each Call for Change has been hampered by persistent gaps in public education, inadequate resources to support reconciliation efforts, and a consistent failure to recognize the rights of urban Indigenous Peoples.

Gaps in Public Education

First Voice has heard from partners across many fields that colleagues and decision-makers regularly misunderstand basic concepts about Indigenous Peoples in NL. This includes disbelief that Indigenous Peoples are a current presence within the province, a lack of knowledge about which Indigenous groups exist here, and misunderstandings about the distinct needs of Indigenous people. These basic misunderstandings are directly related to the longstanding need to revise the K-12 curriculum and the exclusion of Indigenous Peoples from the Terms of Union at Confederation in 1949.

Inadequate Resources

Reconciliation requires systemic change. *Our Shared Vision* identifies systemic problems that perpetuate harms to Indigenous people in St. John's, including in education, health, justice, housing, and infrastructure. Dedicated and sustained funding is required to make necessary changes to enact truth and reconciliation at the local level.

Many established public services were not designed with consideration of Indigenous people. For instance, most healthcare facilities in our province were not designed to accommodate culturally-relevant ceremonies to support Indigenous patient wellbeing. The justice system was not designed to accommodate restorative justice programs, Gladue reports, or cultural connection for Indigenous inmates. Currently, the work of providing these services has largely fallen to community-based Indigenous organizations without dedicated or sustained funding to ensure that these services continue. Enacting truth and reconciliation in these systems of public service provision requires that the system itself fund existing programs to support Indigenous wellbeing.

Similarly, First Voice has seen an increased interest from organizations and decision-makers to consult Indigenous people without allocating enough funds for Indigenous people to meaningfully contribute to decision-making. Barriers in this regard include:

- Inadequate resource allocation to facilitate Indigenous participation on advisory boards, such as funding for travel to in-person meetings, which limits meaningful participation.
- A lack of training for other individuals involved with Indigenous advisors or Indigenous members of advisory committees, which increases the risk that the Indigenous person will experience discriminatory remarks and a culturally unsafe environment.
- Insufficient attention paid to the need for trauma-informed approaches, given that many Indigenous advisors are expected to work from their experiences of trauma (e.g. counselling or paid leave time).
- Inadequate resource allocation, which means that the organization or decision-making body is unable to follow through on changes that an Indigenous advisor or advisory committee may recommend.

Failure to Recognize Urban Indigenous Peoples

Despite a significant Indigenous population in the city, there is a widespread belief among residents that there are few Indigenous people who live in St. John's, or even other parts of the province. The 2021 Census recorded 7,050 Indigenous people in the St. John's metro area. From 2006 to 2016, St. John's experienced the fastest growth rate among Canadian Metropolitan Areas, with an increase of 237.3% in its Indigenous population.⁷ Yet the view that there are “no Indians in Newfoundland,” as Joey Smallwood declared in 1949, remains disturbingly common.⁸

The lack of recognition – and even outright denial that diverse urban Indigenous people live in St. John's – often results in their exclusion from critical decision-making processes. When urban Indigenous people are barred from meaningful participation in decision-making, they will continue to face significant inequities. This is an issue that faces many urban Indigenous organizations in Canada, but especially so in a province where, at the point of joining Canada, the presence of Indigenous people was erased. Increased visibility and recognition of urban Indigenous people in St. John's is essential to safeguard the inherent rights of the community and to advance every single one of our Calls for Change.

7 Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released November 15, 2023. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed August 13, 2024).

8 See, for example: John Nick Jeddore, “Getting Recognized,” *The Independent*, October 21, 2011. Available online at <https://theindependent.ca/traditional-voice/getting-recognized/>.

Priority Calls for Change in 2024

First Voice has identified three priority Calls for Change which relate strongly to each of the overarching barriers named above. Immediate action on these Calls for Change has the potential to make significant progress in truth and reconciliation for the urban Indigenous community in September 2024. With each priority Call for Change, we include the key decision-makers responsible for advancing truth and reconciliation in that area.

We encourage the general public to advocate for these changes by using their own voices to promote these Calls for Change, contacting their government representatives, and working towards progress in their own circles of influence. (Tasks for all relevant decision-making parties across all Calls for Change are listed in [Appendix C.](#))



1. REDEVELOP THE K-12 CURRICULUM

Promote and support the redevelopment of the K-12 curriculum so that it includes appropriate content on Indigenous histories, cultures, stories, and languages as well as a discussion of colonialism and its legacy in the province. This process must be undertaken with the collaboration of all Indigenous groups in the province, including urban Indigenous people. (Call for Change 1).

KEY DECISION-MAKER: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Hon. Krista Lynn Howell
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Deputy Minister of Education

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Full details on the status of this Call for Change, including next steps for the above-noted decision-makers, can be found on pages 15-16.

2. STRENGTHEN CIVILIAN-LED POLICE OVERSIGHT

Advocate for the implementation of stronger civilian oversight of police services, including the creation of a Police Oversight Board that is independent of police, civilian-led, politically neutral, and representative of the province's diverse communities. (Call for Change 39).

KEY DECISION-MAKER: DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Bernard Davis,
Minister of Justice and Public Safety

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Denis Mahoney,
Deputy Minister of Justice and Public Safety

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Full details on the status of this Call for Change, including next steps for the above-noted decision-makers, can be found on pages 64-66.

3. ALIGN WITH INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS RIGHTS STANDARDS

Advocate for the adoption and full implementation of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) at all levels of government. (Call for Change 40).

KEY DECISION-MAKER: GOVERNMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Hon. Dr. Andrew Furey,
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Hon. Scott Reid,
*Minister of Indigenous
Affairs and Reconciliation*

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Full details on the status of this Call for Change, including next steps for the above-noted decision-makers, can be found on pages 66-67.



Progress on Our Calls for Change

Below we offer updates on each of the Calls for Change from *Our Shared Vision*. For a list of relevant tasks for the upcoming year, organized by each relevant decision-making group, see [Appendix C](#).

Action Area 1: Education, Training, and Employment

We envision a city where all residents have a sound understanding of the diverse histories and cultures of the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador and where they mobilize such understanding to close gaps in education and employment outcomes.

Focus Area A: Curriculum Development and Deployment

CALL FOR CHANGE 1

Promote and support the redevelopment of the K-12 curriculum so that it includes appropriate content on Indigenous histories, cultures, stories, and languages as well as a discussion of colonialism and its legacy in the province. This process must be undertaken with the collaboration of all Indigenous groups in the province, including urban Indigenous people.

STATUS: Roadblocks Encountered



First Light: Project proposed to NL Schools

In conversation with NL Schools, First Light has developed a proposal to train educators with foundational knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures, histories, and perspectives, as well as adapting and customizing content from First Light's Indigenous Cultural Diversity Training for teens. This would be an integral interim step while the K-12 curriculum continues to underrepresent and misrepresent Indigenous Peoples in NL.

Department of Education: Unclear on what, if any, progress has occurred

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has had an advisory committee of Indigenous representatives to give recommendations on improvements to the K-12 curriculum since 2015. First Voice was not able to find evidence that the curriculum has changed since then. In 2017, the Premier's task force cited a review of the Indigenous content in the provincial K-12 curriculum, which found the depiction of Indigenous peoples and events as "inconsistent and contradictory".⁹ In 2018,

⁹ Godlewska, Anne, John Rose, Laura Schaeffli, Sheila Freake, and Jennifer Massey. "First Nations, Métis and Inuit Presence in the Newfoundland and Labrador Curriculum." *Race Ethnicity and Education* 20, no. 4 (July 4, 2017): 446–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2016.1248825>; Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes, Alice Collins, David Philpott, Marian Fushell, Margaret Wakeham, Charlotte Strong, and Sheila Tulk-Lane. "Now Is the Time: The Next Chapter in Education in Newfoundland and Labrador," 2017.

the Government of Newfoundland Labrador formed the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC), as an expansion of the former Aboriginal Educational Advisory Committee (AEAC) within the Department of Education. The Province claims in its Indigenous Education Framework that the IEAC includes “full participation from the Indigenous communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.”¹⁰ However, the committee does not have any urban Indigenous representation. First Voice submitted a request to have First Light join the IEAC, which the Department of Education was reported to have brought to the table on October 4 and 5, 2023. This request was denied in communication received from the Department in February 2024.

On June 25, 2024, the Minister of Education announced that the Department of Education will review the high school curriculum for Newfoundland and Labrador Studies 2205 to more accurately reflect Indigenous history and that the Department will “begin consultation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations through meaningful discussion and conversation on the proper inclusion of Newfoundland and Labrador’s Indigenous heritage.”¹¹ It is unclear whether the IEAC is or was involved with this initiative. The commitment was included in an announcement that the course, which is currently elective, will become mandatory in September 2027, but it is unclear whether the course will more accurately reflect Indigenous history by this date. It is also unclear whether alterations to the course will include information about the current landscape of Indigenous Peoples in the province or exclusively “Indigenous history” and “Indigenous heritage” as described in the news release.

First Voice contacted the Department of Education in July 2024 to request both an update from the IEAC and more information regarding plans for engaging Indigenous communities in updating NL Studies 2205. The response, delivered in August 2024, gave no information beyond the updates above and offered no evidence of any work accomplishments within the last 18 months.

NEXT STEPS

For the Department of Education:

- Expand representation on the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee so that it includes the full range of diverse Indigenous perspectives and experiences in the province, including urban Indigenous Peoples.
- Conduct a full review of the curriculum to identify the most severe areas of Indigenous misrepresentation and prioritize areas in most urgent need of changes. This work should be done with full public transparency.
- Develop and publish a plan, with appropriate timelines, to complete the redevelopment of the K-12 curriculum.
- Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle so that NL Schools, as an interim measure, can provide training for all teachers and make available to them additional educational materials that have already been developed by Indigenous Peoples.

¹⁰ Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. “Indigenous Education Framework.” Accessed July 16, 2024. <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/IndigenousEducationFrameworkDraft2.0.pdf>.

¹¹ Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. “Newfoundland and Labrador Studies Course to Become Graduation Requirement for High School Students.” News Releases - Department of Education, June 25, 2024. <https://www.gov.nl.ca/releases/2024/education/0625n06/>.

CALL FOR CHANGE 2

Promote and support the addition of appropriate Indigenous content in early childhood education, including cultural practices, stories, languages, and land-based activities.

STATUS: Work Underway



AECENL & First Light: Training developed and more in progress

The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador (AECENL) has been an active partner with First Light on training early childhood educators (ECEs). AECENL and First Light had already begun providing foundational training to all early childhood educators in the province, which created significant momentum. Building on this, AECENL and First Light established a formal agreement in November 2023 to develop specialized training for ECEs which aims to (1) address ECEs' understanding of the distinction between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation; and (2) enhance professional development opportunities for ECEs by helping them to gain knowledge about Indigenous cultures, improve self-awareness, and introduce effective strategies for working with Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and families. Phase one of the project is well underway, and the launch of specialized training is due to begin in Fall 2024.

Two further phases have been proposed to support the training created in partnership between AECENL and First Light. Phase 2 will involve researching, creating, and distributing activity kits for ECEs to use culturally-appropriate and age-appropriate learning activities in their work. Phase 3 will involve refreshing and expanding the activity kits on an annual basis along with quarterly support sessions for child care operators. Funding for these stages of work has not yet been secured.



College of the North Atlantic: Course developed and made mandatory in ECE degree program

College of the North Atlantic (CNA) launched their degree program in Bachelor of Applied Arts in Early Childhood Education in Fall 2023, which includes the course EE4040, "Indigenous Peoples and Education". Developed during the 2022-2023 academic year, EE4040 was designed alongside numerous First Nations and Inuit contributors in the province, instructors in Indigenous Studies at Memorial University, representatives from three post-secondary institutions elsewhere in Canada which run similar courses, and individual ECEs working in diverse communities. The course had a high level of uptake in its first year and CNA is continuing to revise the course in response to feedback from various Indigenous contributors, including Indigenous students in the program.

First Light: Research conducted on needs

First Light has conducted research to help guide initiatives in ECE training. This has involved a review of models of Indigenous-led ECE programs and a survey of existing Indigenous cultural teachings in ECE in NL which was conducted in April 2024. Survey respondents reported that the most common challenges to incorporating Indigenous content were the lack of resources, gaps in knowledge, and concerns about cultural sensitivity. These results confirm that developing culturally appropriate resources and training for ECEs must be priority areas for the upcoming year.

Department of Education: Relevant requirement added for daycare licensing

The Department of Education now requires that operators, licensees, ECEs and administrators working in regulated childcare settings under the Operating Grant Program must attend community-based anti-bias training. This training must be completed each year and documentation of participation must come from an approved organization. First Light's Indigenous Cultural Diversity Training is named on a list of eligible training programs that early childhood educators can take to meet this requirement.

NEXT STEPS

For the Department of Education:

- Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle for the creation of Indigenous-specific professional development and curriculum resources for ECEs.
- Acknowledge the training that AECENL and First Light have developed specifically for ECEs and support phases 2 and 3 of resource and training development.

CALL FOR CHANGE 3

Collaborate with post-secondary institutions to ensure that programs in essential areas such as health, law, education, engineering, and public policy incorporate mandatory content on antiracism and the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples.

STATUS: Work Underway

College of the North Atlantic: Courses developed and launched in 5 programs

College of the North Atlantic launched the course EE4040, "Indigenous Peoples and Education", in Fall 2023, which is now a mandatory course within their degree program in Bachelor of Applied Arts in Early Childhood Education. (See Call for Change 2 for more information.)

Although not directly related to these essential areas, CNA also currently offers four other courses focused on Indigenous histories, cultures, and antiracism:

- Covering Indigenous Communities (mandatory within the Journalism program);
- Indigenous Peoples of North America (in Comprehensive Arts and Science transition college-university program);
- Indigenous Arts & Culture (in College Bridging and College Transition programs); and
- Indigenous History of NL (in College Bridging and College Transition programs).

Memorial University: Indigenous Health Initiative making progress

Memorial University's Indigenous Health Initiative has begun working on a continuum of content to be used to educate students throughout the Doctor of Medicine (MD) program on antiracism, creating a culturally safe learning environment for Indigenous people, and a culturally safe clinical practice for Indigenous patients.



Current content offered by the Indigenous Health Initiative which addresses this Call for Change includes: a module in the Certificate in Local and Global Health Equity; a 30-45 minute presentation for incoming medical students about colonialism, which aims to be a first exposure to Indigenous content for medical students and directly address misconceptions that contribute to an unsafe learning environment for Indigenous students in the Faculty of Medicine; and a module called “Providing Equitable Health Care for Indigenous Peoples of Canada: Honouring the Medicine Chest”, which is being updated and offered in the first year of medical school as foundational knowledge for increasingly meaningful learning throughout the program.

Memorial University is a Partner Organization in First Voice, which will help facilitate action in this area.

NEXT STEPS

For post-secondary institutions:

- Begin working towards collaborative relationships to co-develop content on antiracism and the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples.

CALL FOR CHANGE 4

Promote and support the development of post-secondary courses and degree programs in Indigenous languages.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken

First Light: In planning stages

First Light is working on a plan to support Indigenous language learning, access, and use in St. John's. Relationships are being strengthened between First Voice and other Indigenous organizations in the province to ensure that language revitalization efforts in St. John's are both aligned with and reciprocally beneficial to the language supports offered elsewhere in the province.

Memorial University is a Partner Organization in First Voice, which will help facilitate action in this area.

Focus Area B: Professional Training and Development

CALL FOR CHANGE 5

Support and promote the establishment of designated Indigenous seats in essential post-secondary programs such as health, law, education, engineering, and public policy.

STATUS: Work Underway



Memorial University Faculty of Medicine: Three designated Indigenous seats

There are three designated seats for Indigenous students in the Memorial University Faculty of Medicine.¹² Partners at the Faculty of Medicine communicated that many people misunderstand the system of designated seats. Information about this process is provided below.

Only applicants who meet the admission requirements for the Doctor of Medicine program are considered for admission. Of these applicants, those who meet the requirements to be considered as a resident of Newfoundland and Labrador are considered within the provincial pool. Applicants in this pool are screened by an interview committee that selects applicants for interviews based on a holistic review of their application. Interviewed applicants are evaluated and ranked by the admissions committee in consideration of their academic performance, MCAT scores, personal references, interviews, extracurricular activities, and volunteer and work experience.

Candidates with exceptional ranking are recommended first for matriculation to the class. The Admissions Committee then selects the most suitable candidates to fill the remaining seats. Three of these remaining seats are designated for applicants who wish to be considered within the Indigenous Admissions Program competition. Those wanting to be considered for a designated Indigenous seat must have identified themselves as First Nations, Inuit, or Métis on their application and provided supplementary documentation. The Admissions Committee considers these applicants for assets that are sometimes overlooked in standardized admissions processes.

At times, designated Indigenous seats may go unfilled, but this does not mean there is an absence of Indigenous students in the program: there are often Indigenous medical learners who did not self-identify on their application and/or learners who were matriculated as exceptionally ranked candidates from the provincial pool and therefore would not have been considered within the Indigenous Admissions Program competition. If the Indigenous seats are not filled, they are awarded to other candidates in the pool.

Discussions regarding the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's new residency criteria for the Doctor of Medicine program are ongoing. If one or more designated Indigenous seats

¹² Indigenous Applicants. 2024. "Faculty of Medicine." Memorial University of Newfoundland. 2024. <https://www.mun.ca/medicine/administrative-departments/admissions/undergraduate-md-program/competition-pools/indigenous-applicants/>.

is not filled by an Indigenous applicant who meets the definition of a Newfoundland and Labrador resident, should priority be given to applicants who are Indigenous but who do not meet the definition of a Newfoundland and Labrador resident? Prioritizing Indigenous applicants from outside of the province would support a more diverse student population and would be more in line with Indigenous concepts of place, which are not limited to provincial boundaries. On the other hand, prioritizing non-Indigenous applicants who meet the definition of a Newfoundland and Labrador resident could increase the likelihood that students will practice medicine within the province after graduating from the Doctor of Medicine program.



Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission: Special Program designation can be useful for post-secondary institutions implementing designated seats

Post-secondary institutions interested in introducing designated seats should be aware of the possibility of applying for a Special Program designation with the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission.¹³ Programs like designated seats are important ways to support Indigenous people in overcoming systemic barriers, but many people in the general population lack an understanding of the barriers that Indigenous people face in our society. (See Calls for Change 1-3.) This can lead to misunderstandings about why a limited number of seats would be designated for Indigenous applicants. Special Program designation prevents any person or group from filing a human rights complaint against the institution for the Special Program.

NEXT STEPS

For post-secondary institutions:

- Consider the NL Human Rights Commission's Guidelines for Special Programs to protect the institution from human rights complaints being filed against the institution for the use of designated seats in the admissions process.

¹³ "Guidelines for Special Programs - Human Rights Commission," Human Rights Commission, August 17, 2022, <https://thinkhumanrights.ca/resources/procedural-guidelines/guidelines-for-special-programs/>.

CALL FOR CHANGE 6

Build strategic partnerships to support the development and delivery of sector-specific antiracism training in essential areas such as health, law, education, engineering, and government services.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



Barrier: Foundational training needed in most sectors

First Voice has identified a central barrier to developing and delivering sector-specific antiracism training: many sectors lack foundational knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, their histories, and current realities. Newfoundland and Labrador has a history of erasing the presence of Indigenous Peoples in the province, which has led many people in positions of leadership to believe that no Indigenous people exist within their sector. Even those who are aware of the current Indigenous presence in the province often have little understanding of the current realities Indigenous people face. Sector-specific antiracism training cannot be effective without this foundational knowledge and adequate resources to ensure the training reaches all workers. Foundational training can better equip the sector to work with Indigenous clients and share accurate information about Indigenous Peoples of the province, laying the groundwork for effective sector-specific training.

First Light: Restructuring training to support sector-specific training initiatives

First Light is currently in the process of restructuring its Indigenous Cultural Diversity Training which will provide a process for organizations wishing to develop sector-specific training. This will involve a structured process by which organizations can build foundational knowledge and, if adequate funding is secured, support partnerships to co-develop sector-specific training sessions.

Association of Early Childhood Educators & First Light: Partnership to develop sector-specific training and resources

The partnership between the Association of Early Childhood Educators NL (AECENL) and First Light (see Call for Change 2) is a leading example of a sector-specific organization working with an Indigenous organization to ensure workers in the field have foundational knowledge on Indigenous Peoples. It also shows how sector-specific training and resources can be developed to equip those in that field to work more effectively with Indigenous clients. It is equally important for ensuring that members of the organization are able to share accurate information about Indigenous Peoples in the province with non-Indigenous clients.

Royal Newfoundland Constabulary: Taking foundational steps to support training

In collaboration with First Light, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC) has committed to fully funding the delivery of full-day training for 160 of its members on the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador, including the history and ongoing impact of residential schools. The rollout is planned to begin in late Fall 2024 in the Northeast Avalon region, which includes RNC Provincial Headquarters in St. John's.

First Voice: Working towards sector-specific training in the justice system

First Voice formed the Indigenous Justice Action Circle which first met in November 2023. Antiracism training in the Justice system is one of the early priorities for this Action Circle.

First Light has submitted a proposal to the Department of Justice and Public Safety to increase cultural and system navigation support for Indigenous inmates at Her Majesty's Penitentiary (HMP) and the Clarenville Correctional Centre for Women (CCCW), which includes proposed funding for training of staff at both institutions. If approved in the upcoming budget cycle, staff will receive foundational training, which can then lead to sector-specific training for correctional facility staff.

NEXT STEPS

For the Department of Education:

- Prioritize Call for Change 1, which would ensure all young residents in the province are exposed to accurate information about Indigenous Peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador. This will support foundational knowledge in the general population and build support for sector-specific training.

For professional associations:

- Prioritize building foundational knowledge among professionals working in essential areas by providing adequate training on the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador.

For employers:

- Implement policies mandating that all new hires complete foundational training on Indigenous histories, cultures, and sector-specific content as part of the onboarding process.

CALL FOR CHANGE 7

Collaborate with professional licensing bodies in essential areas such as health, law, education, and engineering to establish appropriate requirements that encompass antiracism and the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



Progress from the Law Society, the Association of Early Childhood Educators, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons

The Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador's Indigenous Education and Action Committee (IEAC) continues to work with Indigenous communities to access and promote Indigenous legal traditions and knowledge, to educate members of the legal community, and to collect and promote resources and tools to help ensure the Indigenous cultural competency of members of the bar in Newfoundland and Labrador.

AECENL's partnership with First Light (see Call for Change 2) is a leading example of a sector-specific organization working with an Indigenous organization to ensure workers in the field have foundational knowledge on Indigenous Peoples. It also shows how sector-specific training and resources can be developed to equip those in that field to work more effectively with Indigenous clients. It is equally important for ensuring that members of the organization are able to share accurate information about Indigenous Peoples in the province with non-Indigenous clients.

The course, "Providing Culturally Safe Health Care for Indigenous Patients in Newfoundland and Labrador," was developed as a collaboration between instructors in the Faculty of Medicine and Indigenous community leaders and knowledge keepers.¹⁴ This course is now offered for free by the College of Physicians and Surgeons NL and is a mandatory requirement for receiving and renewing a medical license with CPSNL.¹⁵

NEXT STEPS

For First Voice and its organizational Partners:

- Continue making connections with licensing bodies in essential areas, focusing first on those where Action Circles are Established (i.e. justice and health).

¹⁴ "Providing Culturally Safe Health Care for Indigenous Patients in Newfoundland and Labrador," www.mdcme.ca, 2022, https://www.mdcme.ca/course_info/cultural_safety_2022.

¹⁵ "Determine Your Eligibility - CPSNL," CPSNL, August 2024, <https://cpsnl.ca/licensing-and-registration/licence-eligibility/>.

Focus Area C: Employment Equity

CALL FOR CHANGE 8

Promote and support the development, implementation, and enforcement of inclusive human-resources policies.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



First Light: Conducted research to support partnership-building

First Light has conducted preliminary research on economic reconciliation and how it may apply to the context of St. John's. This will be a point of discussion and strategic planning for the First Voice Partnership Table in the upcoming year.

First Light and Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC): Conducting research on Indigenous youth employment

In collaboration with researchers at Dalhousie University in Halifax, First Light and MNFC are conducting research to explore how educational institutions and workplace readiness programs have decolonized their learning spaces for the delivery of education, training, and programs aimed at increasing the number of Indigenous youth preparing for the workplace or entrepreneurial pursuits. The project seeks to address the need to shift from a colonial approach to one that is more culturally-informed and is supportive of Indigenous cultural practices.

Businesses: Introducing antiracism training

Many businesses are beginning to introduce HR policies related to antiracism training, many of which require training specifically about Indigenous Peoples. This is an important step in reducing the discrimination that Indigenous people often face in employment and when interacting with businesses in everyday life. In connecting with our community, we have been made aware that both the Public Health Agency of Canada and Cenovus have internal onboarding policies requiring some foundational training to understand Indigenous Peoples and Culture. As well, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development and Newfoundland Power have developed similar policies and connected with First Light to have all employees engage in foundational Indigenous Cultural Diversity Training.

Barrier: Loss of funding to support training

Adequate training for staff members can reduce the discrimination that many Indigenous individuals face in employment. Employers, particularly small businesses and nonprofit organizations, benefit from support to be able to provide appropriate and adequate training for their employees. The Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador Job Grant was recently discontinued, which has created barriers for some employers to be able to provide antiracism training opportunities for their staff members.

Stella's Circle: Conducted antiracism audit

First Voice organizational Partner Stella's Circle has engaged Future Ancestors to conduct an antiracism audit. This process, paired with training for staff and leadership, has yielded insight on policies and practices which they plan to integrate into their future strategic planning. This is one example of an employer taking meaningful steps to advance reconciliation in their own organizational policies and practices.

NEXT STEPS

For the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills and the Government of Canada:

- Restore funding to the Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador Job Grant which would provide employers with resources to support adequate antiracism and Indigenous-specific training for employees.

For First Voice:

- Continue to build partnerships with local businesses interested in advancing this Call for Change.
- Publish research findings on decolonizing workplaces to support businesses and employers in creating inclusive spaces for Indigenous people.

For employers:

- Foster more inclusive workplaces by undertaking foundational training for all employees on cultural humility and the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples.

CALL FOR CHANGE 9

Create and support a network of businesses and business stakeholders to promote training and the sharing of wise practices in alignment with TRC 92.

STATUS: No Progress Identified



First Light has conducted preliminary research on economic reconciliation in the form of a policy brief which will be shared with the First Voice Partnership Table. (See Call for Change 8.)

NEXT STEPS

For First Voice and its organizational partners:

- Begin discussions in the upcoming year on enacting economic reconciliation in response to Call for Change 9.

For businesses:

- Implement policies mandating that all new hires complete foundational training on Indigenous histories, cultures, and sector-specific content as part of the onboarding process.
- Build partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and support efforts to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).



CALL FOR CHANGE 10

Support the recruitment and retention of Indigenous people into essential industries and professions such as health, law, education, engineering, and government services.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



Barrier: Need for training and workplace policies

First Voice has identified a number of barriers to addressing this Call for Change. Workplaces which have not taken foundational steps to improve their working conditions and HR practices in regards to Indigenous people may not be adequately prepared to launch recruitment and retention initiatives.

The main identified barrier to retention of Indigenous individuals is that workplaces are often not inclusive or culturally safe, meaning Indigenous workers are at risk of discrimination once hired. Addressing this requires workplaces to provide antiracism training for their existing employees and/or for licensing bodies to require such training.

These barriers are all related to other Calls for Change. First Voice and the Indigenous Health Action Circle are exploring collaborative solutions to these issues in the specific area of healthcare services.

Law Society: Launches scholarship

In 2023 the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador's Indigenous Education and Action Committee (IEAC) launched a scholarship for Indigenous law students who are pursuing a Juris Doctor degree, a Master of Laws degree, or a Ph.D. in law. Up to three scholarships in the amount of \$5,000 are awarded annually. Two recipients received the scholarship in 2023 and three recipients received the scholarship in 2024.

Action Area 2: Housing and Homelessness

We envision a city where all members of the urban Indigenous community enjoy access to safe, secure, and affordable housing.

Focus Area A: Service and Program Development

CALL FOR CHANGE 11

Lead, support, and coordinate research on the demographics of homelessness in St. John's.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



End Homelessness St. John's: Conducting point-in-time counts

In consultation with First Light, End Homelessness St. John's has taken steps to ensure that the realities of Indigenous individuals are more fully captured in the organization's point-in-time (PiT) counts. Improved data collection methods mean that End Homelessness St. John's has more robust data on the demographics of homelessness which can then be used to drive more targeted program delivery.

At the same time, the PiT counts currently survey only those presenting at shelters and those encountered outdoors. There are limitations to such an approach. Indigenous people may be less likely to present at shelters due to discrimination faced in those settings. End Homelessness St. John's acknowledged in their most recent PiT count report (November 2022) that the count of Indigenous persons experiencing homelessness was likely an underrepresentation of the true number.¹⁶ The next PiT count by End Homelessness St. John's is planned for November 2024.

NEXT STEPS

For End Homelessness St. John's:

- Continue to collaborate with Indigenous organizations like First Light to improve the accuracy of demographic data on homelessness and to ensure its ongoing availability to policy-makers.

¹⁶ "End Homelessness St. John's," End Homelessness St. John's, 2022, <https://wecanendit.com/everyonecounts>.

CALL FOR CHANGE 12

Ensure that demographic data drives program evaluation and delivery of services to the homeless population in St. John's.

STATUS: No Progress Identified



Progress on this Call for Change will depend on progress on Call for Change 11.

CALL FOR CHANGE 13

Collaborate with service delivery agencies to ensure that Indigenous residents in nonmarket housing have access to culturally appropriate programming and spaces.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



Barrier: Issues with utility of funding

First Light has identified a number of barriers to ensuring that Indigenous individuals have adequate housing.

First, many funding sources have restrictive policies on how funding may be used. This can place strain on an organization's ability to support Indigenous individuals in need. Providing holistic support to Indigenous people ensures the recipient has both the direct source of support (e.g. physical shelter) and the cultural and social supports that will enable them to benefit fully from the direct support. For example, an Indigenous person in crisis who needs housing may not be able to benefit from the availability of shelter without supports for their mental, physical, cultural, and spiritual wellbeing. Restrictive limitations on how funding may be spent can prevent an organization from providing holistic care, which can render the funding inefficient or ineffective.

Second, reporting structures often value quantitative measures of services provided over qualitative outcomes. This approach can be at odds with the relational and reciprocal ways of knowledge sharing that are more common among Indigenous cultures. Quantitative data do not necessarily represent the true benefits of services and may be cumbersome to collect and report. Allowing for qualitative and storytelling approaches to reporting would be more representative of the effects of funding on Indigenous recipients.

Third, times for funding support can be slow, which can create downstream problems and amplify the need for funding and service provision. For example, if a person is applying for support for their cost of housing and the application processing takes too long, they may lose their existing housing in the interim.

First Light: Opening transitional housing space

First Light is scheduled to open a transitional housing space for Fall 2024. This project includes 10 accessible, affordable one-bedroom units and a vibrant communal space. Residents will have access to on-site support services and cultural programming to help them on their path to self-sufficiency.

End Homelessness St. John's: Added Indigenous Housing Navigator position

End Homelessness St. John's hired an Indigenous Housing Navigator in partnership with First Light which will help to advance this Call for Change.

City of St. John's & First Light: Knowledge shared during Indigenize Downtown Community Feast

The City of St. John's, in close partnership with First Light, hosted the Indigenize Downtown Community Feast on March 21, 2024 to gather perspectives of the urban Indigenous Community in St. John's on the Downtown Neighbourhood Plan. The purpose of the Downtown Neighbourhood Plan is to create a land-use plan to guide future development of the downtown core, define opportunities for growth, protect and enhance cultural and historic assets, and identify opportunities for economic development and community connections. Conversations included discussion of the need for affordable and supportive housing in the downtown area, which has helped improve City Councillors' understanding of the needs of Indigenous people with housing downtown. Safety and inadequate policing were also identified as related challenges.¹⁷

NEXT STEPS

For agencies providing funding to address housing and homelessness:

- Work towards decolonizing reporting processes, which includes a reduced focus on quantitative data and flexibility in reporting the effectiveness of programming.
- Allow greater flexibility for funding recipients on budget allocations, to ensure the availability of holistic services and resources for Indigenous people.
- Coordinate more closely with service delivery agencies to ensure that funding targets the root causes of homelessness.

¹⁷ A full summary of findings from the event is available at firstvoicenc.ca.



Design for the First Light 716 Water Street Renovation, view from the parking lot at night

WOODFORD
ARCHITECTURE



Design for the First Light 716 Water Street Renovation, view from the sidewalk

WOODFORD
ARCHITECTURE

CALL FOR CHANGE 14

Collaborate with service providers, including those in the private rental market, to ensure that Indigenous people have equal access to secure and affordable housing that is free of discrimination.

STATUS: No Progress Identified



City of St. John's & First Light: Knowledge shared during Indigenize Downtown Community Feast

Themes from the Indigenize Downtown Community Feast held on March 21, 2024 which relate to this Call for Change include the need for affordable and supportive housing in the downtown area. (See Call for Change 13 for more information on the event.)

CALL FOR CHANGE 15

Promote the implementation of a no-discharge-into-homelessness policy by the provincial government.

STATUS: No Progress Identified



Barrier: Lack of discharge planning in corrections

First Light provides cultural and system navigation support for Indigenous people who are involved in the corrections system. Through this work, First Light staff have noted a complete absence of discharge planning for inmates prior to release. Many have been released from the criminal justice system with little advance notice and without basic resources to support their successful reintegration into society. This often means inmates are discharged without arrangements even for temporary housing, without appropriate clothing (e.g. being released without appropriate outerwear in the middle of winter), and without adequate notice to external support programs like the one at First Light. Additionally, inmates who apply for public assistance (e.g. income support) before their release cannot have their applications processed until they are no longer incarcerated, leaving weeks of wait time during which the former inmate may be homeless.

Location and time of day are often not considered in decision-making at the time of release. As a result, individuals may be released from custody at a time of day when all shelters in the area are already full or in a location far from any supports that would otherwise be available. Indigenous inmates are often (though not always) from areas of the province far from the correctional facility



where they have been held. Personal connections who might be willing to help may therefore be unable to provide any practical support at the time of release. Despite delivering programming directly within the criminal justice system, organizations like First Light are typically not given enough notice of an inmate's discharge to be able to plan appropriately to support the individual being released, which contributes to their likelihood of homelessness and recidivism upon release.

A lack of discharge planning increases the likelihood that the person being released will become homeless,¹⁸ and being homeless increases the likelihood of reoffending.¹⁹ For this reason, appropriate discharge planning has the potential to decrease crime rates while also addressing overcrowding in correctional facilities.

Barrier: Inadequate support for inmates, poor working conditions for staff in corrections

Inadequate cultural, mental health, and addictions supports in correctional facilities creates circumstances which increase the risk of mental health problems for Indigenous inmates, making them more likely to be discharged into homelessness. Programming to support inmates' mental health is often cancelled due to short staffing, which is closely linked to challenges retaining correctional staff due to poor working conditions.²⁰ Mental health supports for inmates are lacking and many report inconsistencies in receiving their critical medications.

18 Backer, Thomas E., Elizabeth A. Howard, and Garrett E. Moran. "The Role of Effective Discharge Planning in Preventing Homelessness." *The Journal of Primary Prevention* 28, no. 3-4 (July 2007): 229-43. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10935-007-0095-7>.

19 Gaetz, Stephen, and Bill O'Grady. "The Missing Link: Discharge Planning, Incarceration and Homelessness." *The John Howard Society of Ontario*, 2006.

20 Ricciardelli, Rosemary, Brittany Mario, Marcus Sibley, and Matthew Johnston. "Correctional Worker Experiences and Ideas for Future Design at Her Majesty's Penitentiary." *Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees*, 2023.

Although an Indigenous Liaison Officer position exists at the Clarenville Correctional Centre for Women (CCCW), it is currently unfilled. Challenges with recruitment are likely due to poor working conditions for the person who would hold this position. (See Call for Change 27 for more details on recruiting full-time, paid Indigenous advisory positions.)

Barrier: Unsafe shelter system

The shelter system in St. John's is not safe for Indigenous people. Many experience racism and threats to their physical safety in these spaces, or know others who have, and so do not seek access to a shelter. Some choose instead to sleep rough (e.g. in a park). The lack of safety in shelters and potential vulnerability in sleeping alone outdoors pushes many to return to abusive domestic situations. This risk is especially high for women and 2SLGBTQQA+ people.

NEXT STEPS

For the Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS):

- In collaboration with community service providers, develop and implement a policy requiring that comprehensive discharge plans for all inmates be put in place before their release date. This policy must explicitly prohibit anyone from being discharged into homelessness.
- Require that all correctional facilities designate consistent and predictable programming space to facilitate cultural supports for Indigenous inmates, such as an Elders program. This is already being done for pastoral care programming. (See Call for Change 35.)
- Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle to reduce Indigenous overincarceration by expanding the availability of alternative sanctions programs, including in urban areas. (See Call for Change 37.)

For the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD):

- Update policies on applying for income supports and other social programs to allow for processing of applications from individuals while they are incarcerated, with benefits to begin immediately upon release. Coordination with JPS staff involved in developing discharge plans will be required.

For Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services (NLHS):

- Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle to ensure the consistent availability of mental health and addictions programming, including counselling, for all inmates in the provincial corrections system. (See Call for Change 33.)

For providers of shelter space:

- Ensure all staff complete mandatory training on cultural humility, Indigenous cultures and histories, intergenerational trauma, anti-oppressive practice, and antiracism intervention.

Focus Area B: Poverty Reduction

CALL FOR CHANGE 16

Support provincial and national efforts to implement a guaranteed annual livable income.

STATUS: Work Underway



First Voice has revised the wording of this Call for Change to read “guaranteed annual livable income” from the former wording “Universal Basic Income”. This wording is more aligned with other efforts, including Call for Justice 4.5 of the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

First Voice: Published policy brief

First Voice publicly released a policy brief on April 30, 2024, proposing that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador consider implementing a Universal Basic Income (UBI) to address the growing cost-of-living crisis. The policy brief was shared with the provincial government as part of the biannual minimum wage review process and in a meeting between First Voice and the All-Party Committee on Basic Income on May 13, 2024.

Food First NL: Joint submission to All-Party Committee on Basic Income

Food First NL led a submission to the All-Party Committee on Basic Income in May 2024. This submission referenced First Voice’s policy brief described above and was co-signed by six additional community organizations including First Light. Food First is also supporting the basic income movement locally by connecting with national organizations and providing secretariat support to Basic Income NL, an informal network of community organizations working to advance basic income.



CALL FOR CHANGE 17

Support efforts to ensure that Indigenous people and members of other racialized and marginalized communities have access to safe, affordable, and reliable transportation throughout the city.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



First Light: Expansion of medical transportation service

First Light's medical transportation services have grown to six full-time staff who provide transportation 24 hours per day to and from medical appointments for Indigenous patients who are in St. John's temporarily for medical care. These patients would otherwise need to navigate the complex local transportation infrastructure, which may be unfamiliar or unsafe for patients from outside St. John's. Even with the growth of this important service, demand for medical transportation exceeds the capacity of the current team. Further funding and additional staff could allow First Light's team to provide medical transportation services to Indigenous people living in St. John's and/or to help patients living outside of St. John's navigate the city (e.g. crossing a busy street) or attend to other basic needs (e.g. going to the bank) which are often difficult for those from rural and remote communities.

City of St. John's & First Light: Knowledge shared during Indigenize Downtown Community Feast

Themes from this event which relate to this Call for Change include challenges with the current public transit system (e.g. unreliable, time consuming, difficult to navigate), downtown streets which are not accessible for those with mobility issues, and challenges to mobility in winter months when snow and ice clearing is inadequate. (See Call for Change 13 for more information on the event.)

Needs identified: Training for service providers and improved accessibility

Access to safe transportation requires that transportation service providers (e.g. bus drivers, taxi drivers) be adequately trained in antiracism and in the specific context of Indigenous Peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador. Adequate training would reduce the amount of discrimination that Indigenous people face in accessing transportation services, both for those who live in St. John's and for those who are visiting St. John's from other communities in the province.

An additional theme identified by First Voice this year is the lack of accessible transportation, for example, for those using wheelchairs or for those navigating the city with small children. Improving the accessibility of available transportation will be an important component of this Call for Change going forward.

CALL FOR CHANGE 18

Promote and support efforts to improve access to safe, stable, nutritious, and affordable food sources for the urban Indigenous community. This includes wild game, country foods, and other culturally significant sources of nutrition.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



Needs identified: Systems for sustainable country food provision in community programming for urban Indigenous people

Traditional foods are nutritionally and culturally significant for Indigenous people. Access to traditional foods is particularly difficult in urban areas. Organizations like First Light face barriers to providing traditional foods to the urban Indigenous community, including a lack of retailers selling traditional foods in bulk; the cost of the traditional foods which are available from retailers; and regulations regarding how food can be obtained, transported, and served. While First Light's programming contributes to food security for urban Indigenous people, systems-wide solutions need to be found.

Food First NL: Concludes a promising pilot and explores scaling initiative to other areas

Food First NL, through the Labrador Anchor Collective, is making significant progress in providing country foods in health services facilities in the Labrador-Grenfell zone of Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services and is working to scale this work to other regions.²¹ This work has included pilots which integrated traditional meat into menus at two healthcare facilities (the Labrador Health Centre and Happy Valley–Goose Bay Long Term Care), along with supporting means to process the locally harvested game and to support sustainability of the local caribou population. The Impact Report from this project suggests that momentum from this initiative will support current and future initiatives to provide access to country food in healthcare facilities.²² This initiative is an important example to lay the groundwork for similar initiatives in healthcare facilities in other areas of the province.

In St. John's, a new facility that is being operated in partnership between Food First NL and Stella's Circle includes space for a community freezer and/or other infrastructure to support access to country foods, with details to be developed through consultation with community partners in the coming months.

²¹ "Labrador-Grenfell Health & Food First NL," Nourish , 2014, <https://www.nourishleadership.ca/ac-team-labrador>.

²² Labrador-Grenfell Health, "Reconciliation in Action: Country Foods on Plates in Labrador, Nourish Anchor Cohort," 2023, <https://20441233.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/20441233/Final%20AC2%20Reports/23-10%20Final%20Labrador%20Impact%20Report.pdf>.

First Voice: Formed an Indigenous Health Action Circle which is identifying barriers and building partnerships

First Voice formed an Indigenous Health Action Circle which first met in February 2024. The Action Circle has identified a number of barriers to increasing access to wild game, country foods and other culturally significant sources of nutrition. Primarily, food regulation systems (e.g. the Canadian Food Inspection Agency) have policies which restrict how food can be obtained, transported, and served. These policies have developed alongside market food supply chains (e.g. large scale farms and grocery stores) and cannot easily apply to how culturally significant food (e.g. wild game) would be obtained. This means that community organizations and health institutions face regulations which cannot easily be overcome when attempting to offer country foods. Institutions, such as hospitals, may additionally face restrictions on procurement, where all food for the institution is sourced through a single entity.

CBC & First Light: Episode of First Light Fridays discussed urban Indigenous food security

In May 2023, an episode of First Light Fridays with the CBC discussed issues facing the urban Indigenous population of St. John's regarding food security and access to country foods.²³ Advocacy like this helps increase public awareness of issues facing the urban Indigenous community and will help support action on this Call for Change.

²³ "First Light Fridays | the Signal with Adam Walsh | Live Radio | CBC Listen," CBC Listen, 2024, <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-89-the-signal/clip/15985946-first-light-fridays>.

Action Area 3: Infrastructure and Service Delivery

We envision a city that reflects the histories and cultures of the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador and one where members of the urban Indigenous community are able to access essential services free of discrimination.

Focus Area A: Expanding Cultural Spaces

CALL FOR CHANGE 19

Decolonize the City of St. John's municipal plan and all related processes, procedures, and policies, including the heritage bylaw.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



City of St. John's & First Light: Formal partnership to coordinate action

A Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights between First Voice and the City of St. John's was formed, first meeting in January 2024. The committee will support City Council in the decolonization of the municipal plan and related processes, procedures, and policies. The scope of this Call for Change is significant, however, and can be expected to take many years to complete. The formation of the Joint Coordinating Committee will support longer term efforts in this regard.

The Indigenize Downtown Community Feast was an important source of knowledge sharing to inform the Downtown Neighbourhood Plan. (See Call for Change 13 for more information on the event.)

As a part of increasing visibility of the urban Indigenous population, the Joint Coordinating committee on Indigenous Rights is working on reviewing artwork at City Hall to identify existing artwork by Indigenous artists and problematic depictions of Indigenous people, as well as procuring new Indigenous artwork for the Council chambers. These efforts intend to remind City Councillors of the current and growing presence of urban Indigenous people in St. John's when they are making decisions that affect the citizens of St. John's.

NEXT STEPS

For St. John's City Council:

- Allocate appropriate resources in the upcoming budget cycle to provide research and policy development support for the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights to create a comprehensive multi-year work plan, prioritizing Calls for Change 19 and 40.

CALL FOR CHANGE 20

Work with all levels of government to ensure that National Indigenous Peoples Day is recognized as an official and statutory holiday.

STATUS: Partly Achieved



City of St. John's: Renamed former "Discovery Day" to "National Indigenous Peoples Day (observed)"

The City of St. John's has renamed the "June holiday" to "National Indigenous Peoples Day (observed)".²⁴ The date of this holiday remains on the Monday nearest to June 24, a date previously called "Discovery Day". The former name of the holiday was intended to commemorate the date on which John Cabot was believed to have "discovered" the island which was already inhabited by Indigenous people including the Beothuk and Mi'kmaq. The provincial government removed the problematic name "Discovery Day" in 2020 stating, "Until consultations with the Indigenous governments and organizations are concluded, going forward the June 24 holiday will be temporarily recognized as the June Holiday."²⁵

In addition, First Light's 2024 celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day (NIPD) was held at Bannerman Park for the first time. This setting increased the public engagement with the event and the total attendance throughout the day.

Provincial and Federal Governments: Little progress

To date, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has not yet recognized National Indigenous Peoples Day nor moved the date of the holiday to align with NIPD. Provincial inaction means that municipal governments and other organizations face legislated barriers in fully aligning the newly renamed holiday with June 21.

The Government of Canada has likewise not recognized June 21 as an official statutory holiday.

NEXT STEPS

For the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador:

- Pass appropriate legislation in the House of Assembly to replace the June Holiday with National Indigenous Peoples Day. In order to align fully with NIPD, the official statutory holiday would therefore fall on June 21 rather than the Monday nearest June 24.

²⁴ City of St. John's. "June Holiday to Be Renamed National Indigenous Peoples Day (Observed)." Media Release - St. John's, May 28, 2024. <https://www.stjohns.ca/en/news/june-holiday-to-be-renamed-national-indigenous-peoples-day-observed.aspx>.

²⁵ Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. "Premier Ball Announces Changes Related to 'Discovery Day' Holiday," June 18, 2020. <https://www.gov.nl.ca/releases/2020/exec/0618n08/>.

For municipalities across the province:

- Follow the example set by the City of St. John's by officially renaming the June Holiday to mark National Indigenous Peoples Day in their own jurisdictions.

For labour unions

- Ensure that National Indigenous Peoples Day is recognized in place of the June Holiday in all collective agreements moving forward.

CALL FOR CHANGE 21

Work with the City of St. John's to Indigenize place names.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



The Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights between First Voice and the City of St. John's has included this Call for Change within its scope of work. First Voice is working on a plan to support Indigenous language learning, access, and use in St. John's. (See Call for Change 4 for more information.)

City of St. John's & First Light: Knowledge shared during Indigenize Downtown Community Feast

Attendees expressed that it is a priority to decolonize the place name where the residential school survivors monument is placed. (See Call for Change 24.)



CALL FOR CHANGE 22

Work with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reclaim Indigenous place names.

STATUS: No Progress Identified

No progress has yet been made in building partnership with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for advancing this Call for Change. In the process of reclaiming Indigenous place names, we will take note of lessons learned from the provincial government's efforts to rename what is now called Beothuk Lake.

CALL FOR CHANGE 23

Promote and support formal Indigenous stewardship of public green spaces in the City of St. John's, such as parks and gardens.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken

City of St. John's & Parks Canada: Initial steps towards a National Urban Park with Indigenous stewardship

The City of St. John's and Parks Canada announced in July 2024 that they intend to work together toward establishing a National Urban Park in St. John's. These parks are meant to "foster meaningful partnerships and enable leadership by Indigenous peoples based on their level of interest. This includes supporting a renewed approach to Indigenous stewardship centered around a vision of management and governance that is respectfully aligned with Indigenous ways of stewarding lands, water, and ice. National urban parks will support culture-based programming and activities to facilitate learning opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples."²⁶

²⁶ Government of Canada, and Parks Canada. "Parks Canada and Partners Take First Step toward Creating a National Urban Park in St. John's," July 8, 2024. <https://www.canada.ca/en/parks-canada/news/2024/07/parks-canada-and-partners-take-first-step-toward-creating-a-national-urban-park-in-st-johns.html>.

City of St. John's & First Light: Knowledge shared during Indigenize Downtown Community Feast

Themes from the discussion which relate to this Call for Change include a lack of spaces where Indigenous ceremonies and land-based programming can happen, a need for more vegetation, discomfort with the exclusion of Indigenous people from the version of history presented in storyboards around Harbourside Park and the War Memorial, and a lack of Indigenous representation in downtown public spaces, particularly Bannerman Park which is well used by local Indigenous people. (See Call for Change 13 for more information on the event.)

NEXT STEPS

For the City of St. John's:

- Ensure that the establishment of any National Urban Park in St. John's aligns with the urban Indigenous community's priorities as identified through the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights.

CALL FOR CHANGE 24

Establish a highly visible monument in the City of St. John's to honour the survivors of residential schools and those who never made it home to their families.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



City of St. John's & First Voice: Exploring plans for a monument

The Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights between First Voice and the City of St. John's have begun work on this. The City of St. John's has committed to providing space and maintenance for the monument.

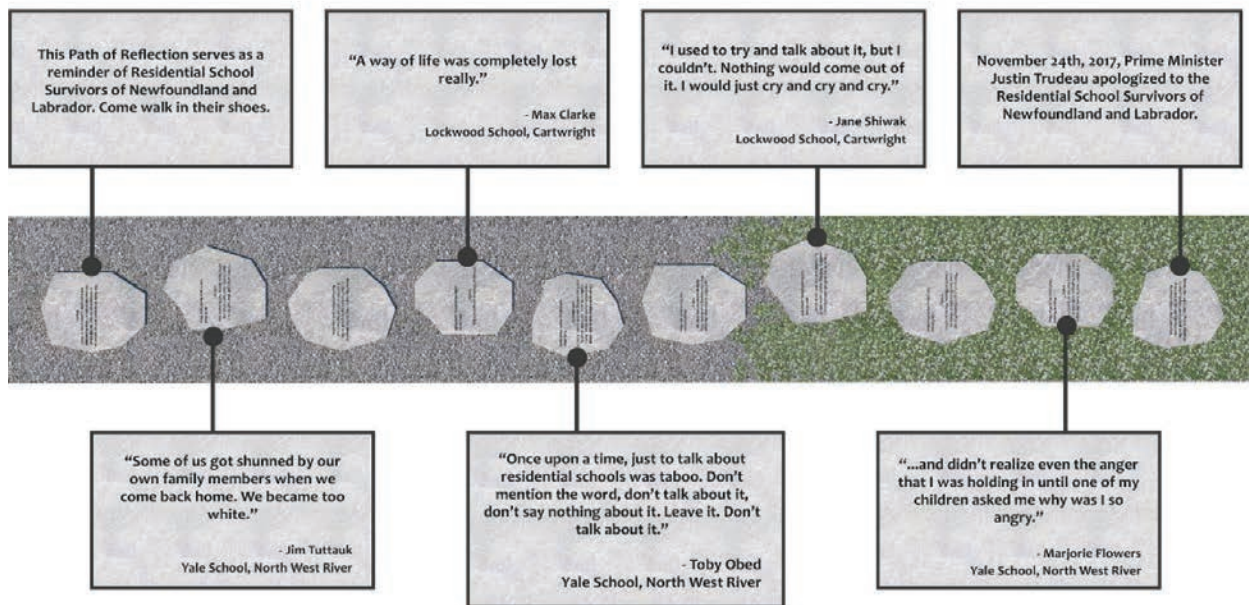
First Light: Plans to establish a residential school memorial garden

First Light is in the process of renovating their headquarters, the plans for which include a Residential Schools Memorial Garden. This project is a collaborative effort between First Light, a steering committee of Residential Schools Survivors, Mills and Wright Landscape Architecture, and Woodford Architecture. The space is designed to honour the experiences of Survivors, allowing visitors to "walk in their shoes" and learn about the profound impact of residential schools.

However, the garden is not solely a place of reflection; it also celebrates the Survivors' strength, courage, and resilience in reclaiming their cultural heritage. The garden will be filled with native plants, and at its heart will stand a structure supported by seven pillars, each representing a residential school in Newfoundland and Labrador. The central fire bowl, filled with Labradorite, will serve as a symbol of cultural resilience and connection to the ancestral lands of Labrador.

City of St. John's & First Light: Knowledge shared during Indigenize Downtown Community Feast

Attendees gave recommendations for the monument, which included decolonizing the name of the place where the monument is established, the importance of visibility and accessibility, and the need to incorporate Indigenous elements such as plants, art, ceremony spaces and storytelling. Attendees also recommended that the audience be carefully considered, as a monument of healing for Survivors would be very different from a monument to educate non-Indigenous people. (See Call for Change 13 for more information on the event.)

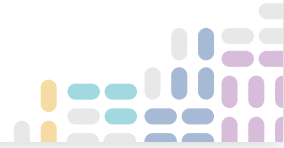




CALL FOR CHANGE 25

Promote and support the availability of Indigenous healing practices and other appropriate cultural programming within the healthcare system.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



Indigenous Health Action Circle: Working towards Indigenous ceremony policy for healthcare institutions

The Indigenous Health Action Circle has begun work towards having a policy on Indigenous ceremonies in healthcare facilities across all zones of Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services. This policy would identify areas in existing institutions where people could go to perform Indigenous ceremonies and identify infrastructure requirements for new buildings. The policy will also indicate what should be done to access ceremony in institutions where there may not be an adequate space for certain ceremonies (e.g. a need for adequate ventilation for smudging or lighting a qulliq). A smudging policy currently exists for the Western zone, but no other zone of NLHS.

First Light: Indigenous Patient Navigators support access to cultural healing practice, demand exceeds current available resources

First Light's Health Services team currently includes two Indigenous Patient Navigators (IPNs) who support Indigenous healing practices for Indigenous patients who are visiting St. John's for medical reasons. The team currently has neither the capacity nor the contractual flexibility to ensure that Indigenous patients who live in St. John's and the surrounding area are able to access the same services. A proposal for federal funding was submitted in April 2024 to create an IPN position to serve the local urban Indigenous community, but the proposal was not selected for funding.



CALL FOR CHANGE 26

Decolonize policies and regulations in early childhood education to ensure access to culturally appropriate programming. This must include expanded access to land-based programming for Indigenous children.

STATUS: Work Underway



Association of Early Childhood Educators, College of the North Atlantic, Operating Grant Program & First Light: Making progress on training

Increases in Indigenous-focused antiracism training (see Call for Change 2) are important first steps in decolonizing policies and regulations in early childhood education. As proposed sector-specific training and resources are developed and launched, ECEs will have greater knowledge and access to programming resources that will help facilitate culturally appropriate ECE programming, including land-based programming for Indigenous children. The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador (AECENL), College of the North Atlantic, and the Department of Education's requirement for annual anti-bias training under the Operating Grant Program will support future action on this Call for Change.

Sector-specific training is also needed for regulators who may or may not understand enough about culturally appropriate programming to meaningfully consider the role of Indigenous cultures during regulatory visits to regulated ECE settings.

Cloudberry Forest School, Jimmy Pratt Foundation & Lawson Foundation: Held symposium on outdoor programming in early learning and child care

The Supporting Outdoor Play and Learning in Early Learning and Child Care Symposium was held in June 2024, convening members from Government of NL Departments of Education and Digital Government and Service, the College of the North Atlantic, AECENL, local Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) programs, Indigenous communities, and parents of children in outdoor programs. Discussions included the importance for training in Indigenous land-based learning, the need for specific legislation on outdoor-based ELCC programs, and the lack of regulations around outdoor play in conventional ELCC programs.

Barrier: Access to green spaces for land-based programming in St. John's

Indigenous stewardship of public green spaces will be an important step in expanding access to land-based programming for Indigenous children, particularly in St. John's. As such, Call for Change 23 may be a prerequisite for this aspect of Call for Change 26.

NEXT STEPS

For the Department of Education:

- Mandate training on Indigenous cultures for inspectors of regulated child care settings. This will provide a foundation for the implementation of revised policies and will serve as an interim measure while efforts continue to decolonize policies and regulations in ECE.

Focus Area B: Systemic Discrimination

CALL FOR CHANGE 27

Promote and support the establishment of full-time, paid Indigenous advisory positions in essential areas such as health, law, education, engineering, and government services.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



Arts NL, The Rooms, Memorial University, & NL Health Services: Positions added, not all filled

In September 2023, The Rooms hired a full-time Indigenous Cultural Liaison. This staff member is currently working with education staff to revise school programs at The Rooms and is working with community consultants from Nunatsiavut to update sections of the Level 3 Museum exhibition, in addition to other projects to create and co-create several programs at The Rooms in partnership with Indigenous artists and academics.

In July 2023, Arts NL added a position for Indigenous Outreach Officer. Memorial University currently includes a position for Vice-President (Indigenous) and, in the Division of Population Health and Applied Health Sciences of the Faculty of Medicine, a position for Indigenous Health Coordinator.

In June 2024, Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services posted a position for Director of Indigenous Health and Cultural Safety.²⁷ This position has not been filled.

Needs identified: Respectful inclusion and support for Indigenous advisors

To fully enact this Call for Change, more respectful inclusion and support are needed for individuals in Indigenous advisory positions.

²⁷ MediSolution (2009) Inc. "Eastern Health - Careers." Easternhealth.ca, 2024. <https://employment.easternhealth.ca/erecruit/VacancyDetail.aspx?VacancyUID=000000104862>.

Many organizations now want to add an Indigenous-specific role on advisory boards. Indigenous representatives on advisory boards are often the only Indigenous person in the group, with the majority being non-Indigenous. This means that their Indigenous perspective is likely to be at odds with the majority of members on certain issues. First Voice has heard that Indigenous representatives on advisory boards often feel their contributions are not given equal consideration and are sometimes told they are being “too difficult” or “not diplomatic”. Organizations wanting to add an Indigenous advisory position should expect that a diversity of participants will result in a diversity of perspectives and consider how they hope to respond to this diversity of perspectives in respectful and inclusive ways.

Further, advisory positions often draw on lived experiences and community knowledge of harms done to Indigenous peoples. Positions which inherently draw on a person’s understanding and direct experiences of trauma require that trauma-informed supports be made consistently available. Organizations with Indigenous advisory positions should work with Indigenous people to consider what kinds of support may be needed to ensure the wellbeing of all such advisors.

CALL FOR CHANGE 28

Promote and support efforts to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery and other colonialist concepts such as *terra nullius*.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



The main identified progress on this Call for Change is the City of St. John’s renaming the “June holiday”, formerly called “Discovery Day”, to “National Indigenous Peoples Day (observed)”. See Call for Change 20 for more details.

NEXT STEPS

For First Light:

- Expand content in the Indigenous Cultural Diversity Training program that relates to this Call for Change.

CALL FOR CHANGE 29

Ensure the full implementation of the City of St. John's commitments under Council's 2020 Declaration in Support of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

STATUS: Work Underway



City of St. John's: Taking action in several key areas

This Call for Change is central to the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights between First Voice and the City of St. John's. The committee has been tasked by City Council to provide recommendations to implement the related Calls for Change that fall partly or exclusively within the City's jurisdiction. (These include Calls for Change 6, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 27, 30, 31, 34, and 40). Early highlights from the committee's work include the Indigenize Downtown Community Feast and the City of St. John's renaming the "June holiday", formerly called "Discovery Day", to "National Indigenous Peoples Day (observed)".

CALL FOR CHANGE 30

Ensure that municipal and provincial policy-making is shaped and informed by appropriate demographic data.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



Indigenous Justice Action Circle: Working towards appropriate demographic data in corrections

The Indigenous Justice Action Circle has been working towards improving the availability of demographic data on Indigenous individuals in the Provincial Corrections Offender Management System (PCOMS). A new system has been piloted as of June 2024; however, training is needed for Classification Officers to be able to appropriately use the data collection system in a way that accurately captures the complexities of Indigenous identities. In addition, the Indigenous Justice Action Circle has identified the need to do a point-in-time (PiT) count within the corrections system.

SIRT-NL: Using race-based data to identify trends in serious incidents

In April 2024, the Serious Incident Response Team of Newfoundland and Labrador (SIRT-NL) announced that it would begin collecting race-based data from affected persons in the agency's investigations

of serious incidents involving police.²⁸ All data gathered in this way is entirely voluntary. First Light provided advice to SIRT-NL related to the complexities of Indigenous identities to help ensure that the agency is able to capture full and accurate demographic data on Indigenous people. The new process is consistent with elements of Recommendation 4.4 set out in *Building Trust, Restoring Confidence*.

NEXT STEPS

For the Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS):

- Mandate foundational training on the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples for all Classification Officers in the provincial corrections system.
- Collaborate with First Light to perform an independent point-in-time count of Indigenous inmates in provincial correctional institutions.

CALL FOR CHANGE 31

Promote and support urban Indigenous participation on critical governance and advisory boards.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



City of St. John's & First Light: Representation from First Light on multiple committees and working groups

First Light holds seats on multiple committees and working groups with the City of St. John's, including the following:

- Affordable Housing Working Group;
- Anti-Racism Working Group;
- Arts and Culture Advisory Committee;
- Healthy City Advisory Committee;
- Inclusion Advisory Committee (**Currently Vacant**); and
- Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights

²⁸ "Serious Incident Response Team," 2024, <https://www.sirtnl.ca/files/News-Release-April-1-2024.pdf>.

While the City's efforts to include Indigenous perspectives in each of these areas is laudable, the plethora of committees can be taxing on the limited resources available to Indigenous nonprofit organizations such as First Light. It can also lead to the risk of tokenism in that First Light representatives are often the only Indigenous individuals serving on such committees. (See needs identified to advance Call for Change 27.)

Full and meaningful engagement by urban Indigenous people in each of these groups may therefore not be entirely realistic. Recognizing this challenge, City staff have committed to develop appropriate policies that would consolidate urban Indigenous advisory capacities within the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights.

Royal Newfoundland Constabulary: Initial steps to form an Indigenous Advisory Committee, group has yet to meet

In October 2022, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC) issued a public statement acknowledging the role that the police service has played in the ongoing harms caused by colonialism and its "responsibility to move forward in the spirit of reconciliation."²⁹ The RNC committed to "engage First Voice and other Indigenous groups to review and support the implementation" of the Section 9 Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), which are directed specifically toward police services.

Following that statement, the RNC's senior leadership held a series of six meetings with First Voice representatives between October 2022 and May 2023. First Voice proposed terms of reference for an Indigenous Advisory Committee for policing in St. John's as a way for the RNC to follow through on their public statement. The RNC declined this proposal, insisting instead on the formation of a province-wide advisory committee. First Voice and the RNC agreed on draft terms of reference for a province-wide RNC Indigenous Advisory Committee (RNCIAC). Letters of invitation, co-signed by RNC Chief of Police Patrick Roche and First Voice Partnership Table representative Justin Campbell, were shared with all Indigenous organizations in the province on June 1, 2023. The intention to form the committee was announced publicly on June 6, 2023, at RNC headquarters in St. John's. First Voice participated in that event.

By the end of June 2023, only five of the 17 Indigenous organizations that had been invited to join RNCIAC alongside First Voice and First Light had agreed to participate. No further Indigenous organizations or governments have responded to the June 2023 invitation.

Significant barriers exist to meaningful participation by confirmed and prospective Indigenous members. First Voice identified these on multiple occasions to both the RNC and the Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS). Given RNCIAC's province-wide scope, both First Voice and the RNC initially agreed that in-person meetings would be essential for relationship-building. While the RNC has confirmed funding to support its own members' in-person participation, neither the RNC nor JPS have allocated similar funding to support the full and equal participation of Indigenous members.

RNCIAC has yet to convene its first meeting or finalize its terms of reference.

29 "RNC Statement on Reconciliation and Growth - Royal Newfoundland Constabulary," Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, October 19, 2022, <https://www.rnc.gov.nl.ca/news/rnc-statement-on-reconciliation-and-growth/>.

NEXT STEPS

For the City of St. John's:

- Finalize and implement appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights is updated and consulted on the work being undertaken by other City advisory committees and working groups. This will ensure that meaningful urban Indigenous-specific advice is available to policy- and decision-makers across all functional areas at the City.

For organizations seeking Indigenous participants to serve on advisory committees:

- Allocate appropriate resources to ensure the full and equal participation of volunteer Indigenous advisors. This includes appropriate honorariums that recognize the value of their contributions.
- Provide inclusion and support for Indigenous individuals in advisory positions. See Call for Change 27 for more detail.

CALL FOR CHANGE 32

Promote and support the expansion of interpretation services that are used locally to include Mi'kmaw, Innu-aimun, and Inuktitut.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



First Light is working on a plan to support Indigenous language learning, access, and use in St. John's. (See Call for Change 4 for more information.)

First Light Health Services: Providing some interpretation services, demand exceeds resources

First Light's health services are now able to provide some interpretation services in Innu-aimun (both Sheshatshiu and Mushuau dialects) and Inuktitut. While there is limited capacity to provide interpretation services, this team provides patients the ability to understand medical procedures that they will undergo and the possibility of communicating with their healthcare providers. Without this service, patients who speak Innu-aimun or Inuktitut may be unable to make informed decisions or even consent to medical procedures, which can be a traumatic experience for the patient and also violates the physician's ethical and legal obligation to ensure the patient understands and consents to the proposed treatment.³⁰

³⁰ "Standards of Practice and Practice Guidelines - CPSNL," CPSNL, September 18, 2023, <https://cpsnl.ca/standards-of-practice-and-practice-guidelines/>.

NEXT STEPS

For the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation:

- Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle to support the revitalization of Mi'kmaw, Innu-aimun, and Inuktitut, including expanding the availability of interpretation services in essential areas like healthcare.

For First Light:

- Conduct foundational work to support the response to this Call for Change, including expanding the availability of language learning and conversation support throughout the province.

CALL FOR CHANGE 33

Work with healthcare providers and community organizations to ensure that urban Indigenous people are able to access services related to mental health, addictions, and recovery free of discrimination.

STATUS: No Progress Identified



The Indigenous Health Action Circle has been in discussion about policy development for the new mental health facility in St. John's and around antiracism training for healthcare providers.

Barrier: Lack of long-term funding for mental health supports

The current availability of mental health supports and addictions programming in Newfoundland and Labrador is inadequate. Well funded programming is scarce and those who are struggling with mental health and addictions have few options available to them in the province, including in urban areas. This contributes to higher rates of homelessness, crime, and hospitalization. For Indigenous people, the risk is amplified as the lack of mental health and addictions support intersects with experiences of racism and intergenerational trauma. There is currently no Indigenous-specific mental health or addictions programming available in St. John's through the public health system.

Many community-based organizations, such as Friendship Centres, have – out of necessity – taken initiative to provide programming to support the mental health of Indigenous people. These are typically run using resources obtained through federal health funding streams. While many such federally-funded programs see great success, the funding streams that support them are typically short-term rather than focused on sustaining program delivery over the longer term. A narrow focus on developing new and innovative programs therefore tends to overlook the importance of maintaining those that are already working. Without a more sustainable funding

model to support these kinds of programs following their launch, many can be forced to shut down even after seeing initial short-term success.

Barrier: Indigenous Patient Navigator positions unable to support urban Indigenous patients

Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services currently funds an Indigenous Health Navigator program through First Light. This program provides essential support for Indigenous patients in navigating the healthcare system in St. John's. However, Indigenous people living in St. John's cannot access this program. First Light lacks the funding necessary to expand the program to include all Indigenous people in the metro area.

NEXT STEPS

For the Department of Health and Community Services (HCS) and the Government of Canada:

- Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle to support the continuation of existing mental health and addictions programming for Indigenous people.

For the Department of Health and Community Services (HCS):

- Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle to expand the scope of the Indigenous Patient Navigator program so that it includes urban Indigenous people.

CALL FOR CHANGE 34

Promote and support the full participation of Indigenous businesses, including social enterprises, in government procurement processes at both the municipal and provincial levels.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



First Light: Conducted preliminary research to support planning

First Light has conducted research on economic reconciliation and how it may apply to the context of St. John's. This will be a point of discussion and strategic planning for the First Voice Partnership Table in the upcoming year.

Action Area 4: Justice and Human Rights

We envision a city and a province where urban Indigenous people enjoy equal protection of the law and equal access to justice.

Focus Area A: Cultural and Security Supports

CALL FOR CHANGE 35

Ensure the availability of Indigenous cultural programming within the corrections system.

STATUS: Roadblocks Encountered



Indigenous Justice Action Circle: Identified barriers, ongoing advocacy and planning

Indigenous cultural programming is a priority for the Indigenous Justice Action Circle. The Action Circle has identified the following three main barriers to ensuring the availability of Indigenous cultural programming within the correction system:

- **A lack of understanding/training among correctional officers.** No progress has yet been identified on ensuring adequate training for correctional officers. (See Call for Change 6.)
- **Difficulties in identifying Indigenous inmates.** Progress has been made towards being able to identify Indigenous individuals in the corrections system. New data collection categories to identify Indigenous individuals have been added to the Provincial Corrections Offender Management System (PCOMS). These have been piloted as of June 2024. (See Call for Change 30.)
- **A lack of standardized policies.** The *Correctional Services Act (CSA)* has yet to be proclaimed. When it is proclaimed, the CSA will consolidate and replace the *Prisons Act (1967)* and the *Adult Corrections Act (1975)*. The CSA includes new provisions to ensure access to culturally appropriate programming for Indigenous offenders.

Department of Justice and Public Safety: Lack of clarity regarding plans to implement programming given Correctional Services Act has not yet been proclaimed

In May 2024, the Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS) held a technical briefing to discuss changes to the *Correctional Services Act (CSA)*. Section 4(h) of the amended Act mandates that “policies, programs and practices will be responsive to the particular needs of... Indigenous peoples.” Section 45(b)(ii)(A) further commits that “the director shall coordinate and encourage wherever possible... both in the correctional facility and in the community... specific programming and services to reflect the needs and culture of Indigenous offenders.”

Neither the text of the CSA as amended nor the associated draft regulations specify how these commitments are to be fulfilled. There is in particular a lack of specificity as to how offenders are to identify as Indigenous and therefore be able to access culturally appropriate programming while serving their sentences. The CSA as amended also does not specify how such programming is to be arranged or who will deliver it.

In partnership with JPS, First Light has been delivering cultural programming for Indigenous offenders in provincial correctional institutions since 2010. However, JPS has consistently underfunded these services. As a result, First Light has had to cover shortfalls in funding year-to-year to ensure the ongoing availability of essential programming in institutions where the programming is provided. To date, JPS has made no commitment to allocate the necessary resources to ensure that program delivery will be available into the future as mandated by law.



First Voice has communicated its concerns to JPS that the CSA, its amendments, and the associated draft regulations are insufficient to guarantee that Indigenous people have regular access to culturally appropriate programming in provincial correctional institutions. First Voice has asked that the following be enshrined in legislation, regulations, and/or policy as appropriate:

- Methods to gather accurate demographic data on inmates, including mandatory training for those responsible for gathering such data;
- A plan to make data on the rate of Indigenous incarceration available publicly;
- A multiyear plan for organizing and delivering culturally appropriate programming to Indigenous inmates across the province;
- Budget allocations to fund the full cost of program delivery;
- Application of an intersectional lens in determining the complex/compounding needs that are listed in section 4(h); and
- Adequate training for correctional officers and other officials on critical topics such as cultural humility, Indigenous cultures and histories, intergenerational trauma, and anti-oppressive practice.

Currently, the availability of culturally appropriate programming for Indigenous inmates depends entirely on Indigenous organizations, including Friendship Centres like First Light, which are not fully funded to deliver such programming. While the *Correctional Services Act* has yet to

be proclaimed, it does specify that policies, programs and practices should be responsive to the specific needs of Indigenous Peoples.

First Light: Provides cultural support for Indigenous inmates, demand exceeds resources

First Light provides cultural and system navigation support for Indigenous people who are involved in the corrections system. The demand for these supports far exceeds the current capacity and availability of funding. At the request of the Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS), First Light submitted a proposal in April 2024 to increase cultural and system navigation support for Indigenous inmates at Her Majesty's Penitentiary (HMP) and the Clarenville Correctional Centre for Women (CCCW). The proposal included funding for cultural supports within each institution, accompaniments upon release and return to home lands, support and accompaniments with court appearances, connections and advocacy with lawyers and officers, and cultural diversity training for staff at HMP and CCCW. This proposal was rejected.

NEXT STEPS

For the Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS):

- In collaboration with appropriate community service providers, like First Light, conduct an independent point-in-time (PiT) count of Indigenous offenders in the provincial corrections system.
- Develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that demographic data is collected on inmates at the point of entry into the system. Adequate training must be provided for staff to ensure the consistency and accuracy of all such data. (See Calls for Change 12, 15, and 30.)
- Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle to ensure the reliable and consistent availability of culturally appropriate programming and supports for Indigenous inmates in the provincial corrections system.
- Ensure that all correctional facility staff complete mandatory training on the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples, with a specific focus on the context of Newfoundland and Labrador.

CALL FOR CHANGE 36

Promote and support the implementation of an Indigenous navigator position within the criminal justice and child welfare systems.

STATUS: Roadblocks Encountered



First Light: Provides cultural support for Indigenous inmates, demand exceeds resources

First Light's April 2024 proposal to the provincial government included Indigenous navigator positions within two correctional facilities in the province: Her Majesty's Penitentiary (HMP) and the Clarendville Correctional Centre for Women (CCCW). This proposal was rejected by the Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS).

NEXT STEPS

For the Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS):

- Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle to support the full cost of the services outlined in First Light's April 2024 proposal to JPS.

CALL FOR CHANGE 37

Promote and support the availability and use of restorative justice programs.

STATUS: Early Steps Taken



The main focus on this Call for Change was initially on restorative justice within the justice system, specifically to support the availability of restorative justice programs and alternative sanctions in court proceedings. The highlights below include both those initiatives that relate directly to the justice system and those that operate outside of the justice system.

Indigenous Justice Action Circle: Initial focus on Gladue reports leads to associated priority of alternative sanctions

The Indigenous Justice Action Circle has discussed this Call for Change in relation to Call for Change 38. The availability of restorative justice and alternative sanctions programs can support legal representatives and judges in making informed decisions in court proceedings that involve an Indigenous offender. While a Gladue report can inform the judge of an Indigenous offender's specific circumstances, that information alone is unhelpful in reducing Indigenous over-incarceration unless restorative justice programs and alternative sanctions are available.

NL Human Rights Commission: Supports conflict resolution and connection for conflicts outside the justice system

Community Justice Connect is a program run by the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission.³¹ This program provides conflict resolution services to Indigenous, racialized and religious minorities as well as organizations that are involved in conflict with persons or organizations from one of these designated groups and who are committed to maintaining respectful relations. Facilitators help Indigenous people in the program to connect with communities that are most important to the individual.

Relationships First: Encouraging relationality and interconnectedness

Relationships First NL is an organization which encourages relationality through professional learning, resource development, community engagement, and circle facilitation. They acknowledge the Indigenous roots of restorative justice and strive to embody a two-eared listening and a two-eyed seeing approach to their work.

NEXT STEPS

For the Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS):

- Allocate multiyear funding in the upcoming budget cycle to (a) sustain already-existing restorative justice programs in Indigenous communities across the province; and (b) support the development of similar Indigenous-led programs in urban areas, including St. John's.

³¹ "Community Justice Connect - Human Rights Commission," Human Rights Commission, June 4, 2024, <https://thinkhumanrights.ca/community-justice-connect/>.

CALL FOR CHANGE 38

Promote and support the implementation of Gladue reports in sentencing.

STATUS: Work Underway



Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network: Making significant progress on training and hiring for Gladue writers

The Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network (NAWN) started a Gladue Writer Training Program which has significantly increased the number of trained Gladue writers in the province. In June 2024, NAWN posted two employment positions for salaried Gladue writers, one in Stephenville and one in Goose Bay. They have recruited 10 writers throughout the province on a fee-for-service basis. NAWN has also launched a portal for legal representatives to request Gladue reports, which has the potential to greatly increase their use in the justice system in Newfoundland and Labrador. NAWN has identified several remaining barriers to ensuring the utility of Gladue reports: (1) the need for more capacity to complete Gladue reports in a timely manner; (2) the current lack of capacity to do Gladue reports at bail; and (3) the lack of awareness among current lawyers, Crown Attorneys and judges that Gladue writers are available.

A lack of process to connect accused Indigenous individuals with Gladue writers and alternative sanctions continues to create barriers for Indigenous individuals in the justice system. Currently, there is no long-term public funding for Gladue reports in Newfoundland and Labrador, no process in place for identifying Indigenous individuals in the justice system in order to connect them with Gladue writers and culturally appropriate alternative sanctions, and no funding for support in the pre-sentencing process. This is interrelated with the need for restorative justice programs. (See Call for Change 37.)

The Indigenous Justice Action Circle has begun work with relevant stakeholders, including NAWN and JPS, to create a process to connect Indigenous offenders to trained Gladue writers.

The Law Society: Advocating for a publicly funded Gladue report program

The Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador's Indigenous Education and Action Committee (IEAC) submitted a proposal to the Minister of Justice and Public Safety in June 2023 endorsing the creation of a Gladue Report Program for the province. Eleven other organizations, including First Light and five other Indigenous organizations and governments, submitted letters in support of the Law Society's proposal.

NEXT STEPS

For the Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS):

- Allocate long-term funding in the upcoming budget cycle to support Gladue writers as important parts of the legal system in NL.
- Develop a process to connect Indigenous offenders with trained Gladue writers.
- Mandate training for all actors in the legal system to improve awareness of Indigenous offenders' right to request a Gladue report.

Focus Area B: Law Reform

CALL FOR CHANGE 39

Advocate for the implementation of stronger civilian oversight of police services, including the creation of a Police Oversight Board that is independent of police, civilian-led, politically neutral, and representative of the province's diverse communities.

STATUS: Roadblocks Encountered



First Voice: Made recommendations, continuing to advocate for civilian-led police oversight

First Voice has completed research on how the current system of police oversight in Newfoundland and Labrador can best be brought into alignment with national and international standards. In early 2020, we launched the First Voice Working Group on Police Oversight, a community-driven project that brought together rights-holders, stakeholders, legal experts, and others. In October 2022, the Working Group released its Final Report, called *Building Trust, Restoring Confidence*, which put forward 26 recommendations to strengthen police oversight in line with the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Those recommendations describe how the province could implement a Police Oversight Board for Newfoundland and Labrador that is independent of police, civilian-led, politically neutral, and representative of the province's diverse communities. It also includes recommendations for improving the transparency, accountability, and efficacy of the RNC Public Complaints Commission (RNC PPC) and the Serious Incident Response Team (SIRT-NL).

First Voice has continued to advocate for the formation of a civilian-led Police Oversight Board. This was a core recommendation of the Final Report of the First Voice Working Group on Police Oversight, published in October 2022. When the report was published, then Minister of Justice John Hogan declared his intention to take a public position on the recommendations. To date the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has not taken any position on the



recommendations, whether publicly or in private communications. Likewise, decision-makers have taken no action to implement any of the recommendations.

In November 2023, the Minister of Justice and Public Safety announced the formation of a Policing Transformation Working Group. When announced, the group was composed of current or former employees of the RNC and RCMP, and a senior-level government official. Following widespread public criticism of the group's composition one civilian member, a civil servant, was quietly added. First Voice has communicated with the Policing Transformation Working Group on multiple occasions since its formation, asserting that a police-led working group has an inherent conflict of interest and therefore cannot impartially review police operations. The Department of Justice and Public Safety has maintained that "the Department is satisfied with the composition of the team".

In July 2024, First Voice led a joint submission to the Policing Transformation Working Group with 22 co-signers, reiterating the recommendations put forward in *Building Trust, Restoring Confidence* and asserting that police oversight must be independent of police, civilian-led, politically neutral, and representative of the province's diverse communities.

In addition, First Voice representatives presented at the Canadian Association of Police Governance (CAPG) annual conference in August 2023 and the Canadian Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (CACOLE) annual conference in May 2024.

First Voice: Promoting community trust and transparency in SIRT-NL investigations

Between October 2022 and August 2024, First Voice representatives held a total of 11 meetings with Mike King, Director of the Serious Incident Response Team of Newfoundland and Labrador (SIRT-NL), to advance the Group 4 Recommendations set out in *Building Trust, Restoring Confidence*. The focus of these conversations included (a) promoting greater understanding of SIRT-NL's mandate among members of the urban Indigenous community in St. John's; and (b) collaborating to ensure full transparency of any future SIRT-NL investigations in St. John's that may involve affected persons who identify as Indigenous.

In collaboration with First Light, SIRT-NL held an orientation session on its mandate, powers, and processes in August 2023. Twenty members of First Light staff, including those in leadership and frontline positions, attended.

Conversations to improve transparency of SIRT-NL investigations have focused on developing a shared framework for identifying and appointing Indigenous Community Liaisons under section 12(f) of the *Serious Incident Response Team Act (SIRTA)* as called for in Recommendation 4.3 of *Building Trust, Restoring Confidence*. As provided under *SIRTA*, Indigenous Community Liaisons would serve as civilian observers for investigations into serious incidents involving police while also being able to report back to community in relation to such investigations where appropriate. Parameters for a draft framework were approved by the First Voice Partnership Table on November 15, 2023. Although no framework has yet been agreed with SIRT-NL, discussions remain ongoing.

NEXT STEPS

For the Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS):

- Publicly acknowledge the need to establish a Police Oversight Board for the province that is independent of police, civilian-led, politically neutral, and representative of the province's diverse communities
- In consultation with the Policing Transformation Working Group, develop a comprehensive plan to implement the 26 recommendations for strengthening police oversight that were put forward in *Building Trust, Restoring Confidence*.

For the Serious Incident Response Team of Newfoundland and Labrador (SIRT-NL):

- Finalize and approve a framework, in collaboration with First Voice and First Light, to implement an Indigenous Community Liaison program in St. John's as called for in the Group 4 recommendations set out in *Building Trust, Restoring Confidence*.

CALL FOR CHANGE 40

Advocate for the adoption and full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) at all levels of government.

STATUS: Partly Achieved

City of St. John's: Adopted UNDRIP in principle, working on its implementation

The City of St. John's made a commitment to "support and promote the implementation" of UNDRIP as part of the Declaration in Support of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that was adopted unanimously by Council in September 2020. Since then, the City has formed the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights which has named this Call for Change as a priority.

To help inform and spark policy change at the municipal level, First Voice held its inaugural First Peoples Policy Forum in December 2022 in St. John's. The event helped to promote greater awareness and understanding of the international declaration. Organized around the theme of mobilizing Indigenous sovereignty, the Policy Forum brought together more than a dozen speakers from across Newfoundland and Labrador and three other provinces. The event was well attended by policy-makers and municipal officials.

Government of Canada: Work underway

With the passage of Bill C-15 in 2021, work is now underway to implement UNDRIP at the federal level. British Columbia was the first province or territory to pass legislation implementing UNDRIP, in November 2019. The Northwest Territories became the second, in October 2023.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador: No progress yet

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has yet to endorse or adopt UNDRIP. This lack of recognition of international efforts to support the rights of Indigenous Peoples is related to a general trend of inaction seen in other Calls for Change where the provincial government is implicated as the main decision-maker.

NEXT STEPS

For the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador:

- Make a commitment in principle to adopt UNDRIP and develop an implementation plan in collaboration with all Indigenous groups in the province, including urban Indigenous communities.

For the City of St. John's:

- Allocate appropriate resources in the upcoming budget cycle to provide research and policy development support for the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights to create a comprehensive multi-year work plan, prioritizing Calls for Change 19 and 40.

CALL FOR CHANGE 41

Advocate for the legal recognition of Mi'kmaw, Innu-aimun, and Inuktitut as official languages of Newfoundland and Labrador.

STATUS: No Progress Identified



Legal recognition of Mi'kmaw, Innu-aimun, and Inuktitut are crucial components of supporting equitable access to services for individuals for whom one of these languages is their first language. Legal recognition would support the provision of interpretation in essential services, such as healthcare. Without such services, Indigenous patients who are not fluent in English or French may not be able to understand and consent to medical procedures when the physician does not speak their language. This creates significant barriers to health equity and poses ethical and legal questions for physicians and surgeons.

Legal recognition also supports government services in translating important documentation so that all Indigenous people can have a more equitable level of access to information about government services compared to other Canadians who speak English or French.

NEXT STEPS

For First Light:

- Continue research and outreach efforts in the upcoming year to support Indigenous language learning, access, and use in St. John's. Efforts will be coordinated with other Indigenous organizations in the province to ensure that language revitalization efforts in St. John's are both aligned with and reciprocally beneficial to the language supports offered elsewhere in the province. (See Call for Change 4.)

CALL FOR CHANGE 42

Seek a formal apology from the provincial government for the legacy of harm that resulted from the exclusion of Indigenous Peoples in the Terms of Union with Canada in 1949. Such an apology must be drafted in full collaboration with all Indigenous groups in the province, including urban Indigenous people, and should become a foundation for establishing a renewed relationship between the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and Indigenous Peoples in the province.

STATUS: No Progress Identified



The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has yet to suggest any intention to make a formal apology for the legacy of harm resulting from the exclusion of Indigenous Peoples in the Terms of the Union with Canada in March 1949.

Opera on the Avalon & First Light: Partners on project, helps inform public

Opera on the Avalon produced a project called 75x75, a multidisciplinary project marking the 75th anniversary of Newfoundland and Labrador's confederation with Canada, at which time Indigenous Peoples were excluded from the Terms of the Union. Five of the videos published as a part of this project are focused on Indigenous perspectives of confederation and explicitly acknowledge the exclusion of Indigenous people in the process of confederation. First Light was involved in the production, providing space for filming, transportation, cultural support to participants and logistical support for community participation.

NEXT STEPS

For the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador:

- Convene Indigenous organizations and governments, including urban Indigenous organizations like Friendship Centres, to discuss the approach and desired outcomes for such an apology.



Looking Forward: A Writer's Vision

Title: Calling Out Colonization

Author: Amanda Gear

Date: Completed August 2023

Length: Five short stories; 2,519 words total

Commission: Writer in Residence, First Voice Community Action Plan Launch Event, January 26, 2023.

Description

This first annual *Reconciliation Report* catalogues the many meaningful steps that have been taken to advance truth and reconciliation in St. John's. At the same time, it also shows that we still have miles to go. Much work remains to be done before we will have achieved our vision of a world where the inherent rights of the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador are respectfully recognized and actively supported by all. In line with our commitment to humanize Indigenous experiences through storytelling, First Voice commissioned the following piece of writing from a member of the urban Indigenous community who attended the launch event for *Our Shared Vision*. It is the last in a collection of five short stories.³²

JANELLE – St. John's

The sun was just beginning to rise over the hills of St. John's, casting a warm orange glow over the historic buildings of the city's downtown core. But today was no ordinary day in St. John's. Today was the day that the province would begin its long journey of decolonization.

For centuries, the land of Newfoundland and Labrador had been home to Indigenous Peoples, including the Beothuk, Mi'kmaq, Inuit, and Innu. With the arrival of European settlers in the late fifteenth century, the land was violently taken from Indigenous Peoples and their ways of life were forever altered – the Indigenous nation of the Beothuk was wiped out completely through genocide and the remaining nations refused to let that be their fate in history. Now, well into the twenty-first century, the leaders of the provincial government were beginning to realize the deep wounds that colonization had left on what had become the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and its inhabitants. It was time to begin the process of healing.

Government leaders had been working for months to create a plan for decolonization as outlined by First Voice, and today was the day that the coalition's Calls for Change would be put into action. The streets of downtown St. John's were lined with people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who had come to witness this historic moment.

At the centre of it all was a small group of Indigenous leaders. They stood before the officials, who had gathered on the steps of the historic Colonial Building. The leader of the Indigenous group, a woman named Jenelle, stepped forward to address the crowd. "Today, we begin the process of healing," she said, her voice strong and steady. "For too long, the Indigenous Peoples of this land have been silenced and oppressed. But today, we take the first step towards a better future." With that, J, as her friends called her, held up a small bundle of sweetgrass, lighting it with

³² The full collection of short stories can be found online at firstvoicenl.ca.

a match. The sweet scent filled the air as she began to smudge the officials, each one holding out their hands to receive the cleansing smoke.

After the smudging ceremony was complete, the officials stepped forward to sign the decolonization agreement. The document outlined the steps that the provincial government would take to acknowledge and address the harm that had been done to Indigenous Peoples, including implementing Indigenous language and cultural programs in schools, acknowledging Indigenous land rights, and working to address the high rates of Indigenous incarceration and poverty. As the officials signed the document, the crowd erupted into cheers and applause. It was a moment of hope and healing, a turning point in the long and painful history of colonization.

Over the months that followed, the Province began to put the decolonization plan into action. Indigenous language and cultural programs were implemented in all public schools, and a new curriculum was developed that included the actual histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples in the province. The government also worked to address the high rates of Indigenous incarceration and poverty by focusing on community policing programs and restorative justice practices. A new community centre was established in St. John's that provided support and resources for Indigenous families, and partnerships were formed with Indigenous organizations to help address the root causes of these issues.

As the years went by, the effects of decolonization became more and more apparent. The streets of St. John's were filled with the sounds of Indigenous languages and the sight of traditional regalia. The city's buildings and landmarks were renamed to honour the Indigenous Peoples of the region, and Indigenous art and culture were celebrated throughout the city.

Perhaps the most significant change was the way that Indigenous people were treated in St. John's. No longer were they marginalized and oppressed, but rather they were celebrated and supported as integral members of the community. Janelle, the leader of First Voice, the coalition that helped kickstart the decolonization process, reflected on the changes that had taken place. "We have come a long way," she said, her voice filled with emotion. "But there is still much work that has to be done."



About the Author

Amanda Gear is an Inuk/Settler emerging filmmaker, writer, and journalist from Nunatsiavut. Born and raised in Happy Valley–Goose Bay, she now resides in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, with her husband and two children.

Amanda takes great pride in her culture and community and is committed to amplifying Indigenous voices. She was the director of a short documentary called *FRAMED: Spirit Song Festival (2022)*, the Director mentee on the series *Women of Labrador*, and has worked in various support roles in the film industry.

She was the Writer in Residence for *Riddle Fence Arts and Culture Journal (2022)* and is currently an Associate Producer at CBC Newfoundland and Labrador.

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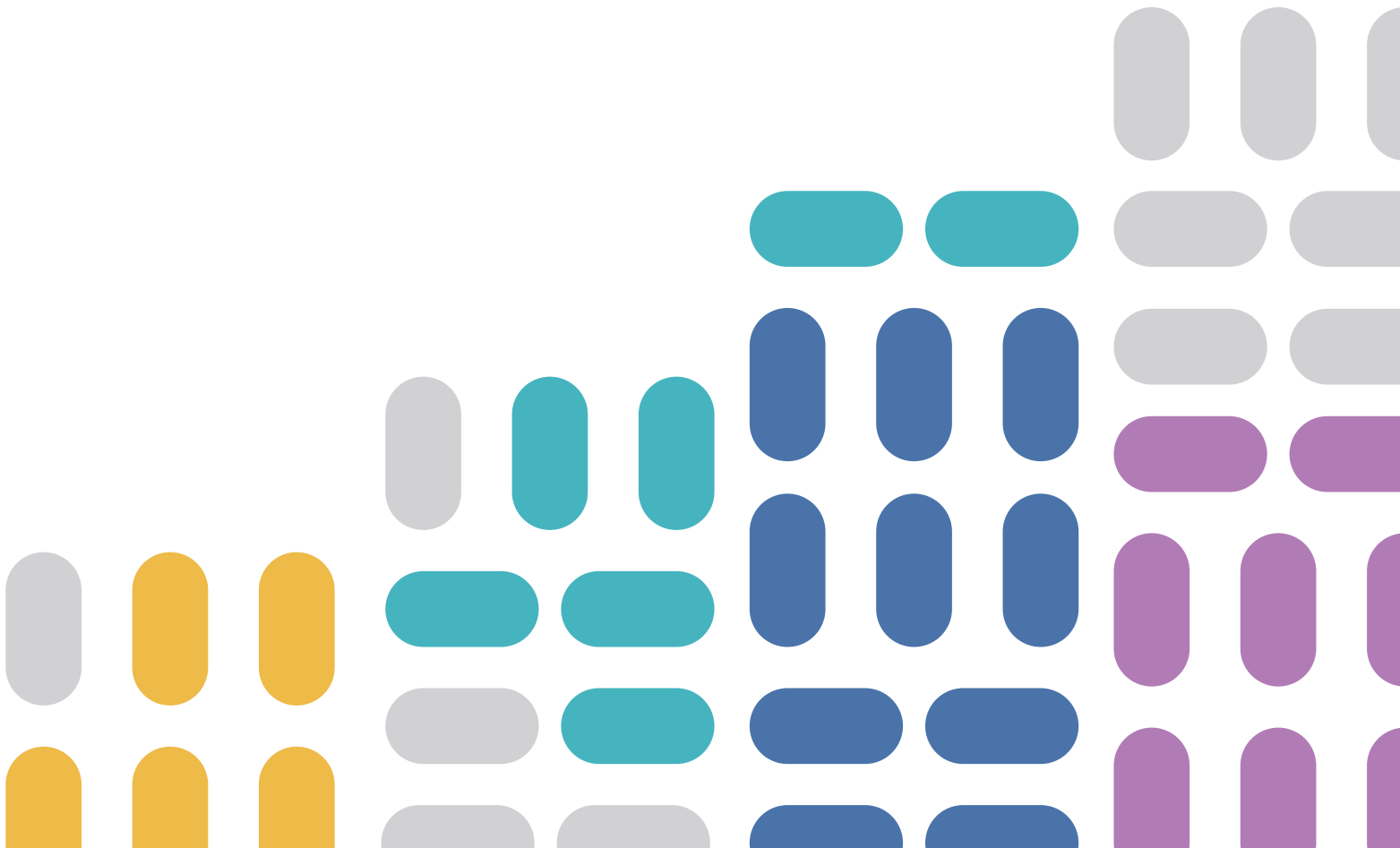
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Appendices



Appendix A: First Voice Coalition Charter

Adopted on February 24, 2020 / Updated on December 14, 2022

VISION

First Voice envisions a world where the inherent rights of the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador are respectfully recognized and actively supported by all.

MANDATE

First Voice is a coalition that exists to serve the St. John's urban Indigenous community. In carrying out its work, First Voice shall always seek to retain and prioritize the values, perspectives, and lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples.

VALUES

In pursuit of its Vision, First Voice shall be guided by the following Values:

- **Respect:** A process of honouring the land, the waters, and all the peoples and cultures who inhabit it, including Indigenous knowledge and teachings.
- **Self-Determination:** An affirmation of the inherent right of all Indigenous Peoples to determine their own futures and to participate fully and actively in all decisions that affect them.
- **Holism:** A recognition of the essential interconnectedness of all things and a striving for balance and harmony with respect to the mind, body, and spirit.
- **Collaboration:** A commitment to include all voices and perspectives and to work together in an open and transparent way.
- **Humility:** A willingness to trust, engage with, and learn from those with diverse experiences and perspectives.

OBJECTIVES

The major Objectives of First Voice include:

- Leading, coordinating, and promoting the implementation of the coalition's Calls for Change as set out in *Our Shared Vision: A Path toward Truth and Reconciliation in St. John's, NL, 2023-33* and producing annual scorecards to measure and publicize progress;
- Promoting and supporting the implementation of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP);
- Advocating alongside the St. John's urban Indigenous community for systemic change in the areas of public policy and service delivery;

-
- Strengthening relationships and sharing knowledge between and among rights-holders, stakeholders, and decision-makers; and
 - Organizing public events to engage the broader community on urban Indigenous issues.

MEMBERSHIP

i. Composition

First Voice welcomes the participation of all who are committed to advancing its Vision, Mandate, Values, and Objectives. This includes:

- Federal and provincial departments and agencies;
- Municipal governments;
- Indigenous governments and organizations;
- Community organizations;
- Businesses and business organizations; and
- Individuals.

ii. Roles

Membership in First Voice varies based on organizational affiliation and level of commitment. It consists of the following roles:

- Partners:** Organizations that agree to participate actively and regularly in the coalition, including contributing to its governance and strategic direction, for a period of at least two years. Partners may also be expected to make material contributions from time to time to support the coalition's work. Terms of membership for Partners are renewable.
- Contributors:** Organizations that agree to participate in a narrower capacity, such as serving on one or more Action Circles or Working Groups. No specific term of membership is required for Contributors.
- Community Advocates:** Individuals without specific organizational affiliations who agree to serve for a specific period of time and to participate actively and regularly in the coalition. Terms of membership for Community Advocates are renewable.
- Special Members:** Individuals with or without specific organizational affiliations whose rights, responsibilities, and terms of membership are determined by the Partnership Table on a case-by-case basis.

In addition, First Voice may from time to time invite other individuals or organizational representatives to participate in the coalition as non-member Observers. There are no specific rights or responsibilities associated with such status.

iii. Representation

All Partners and Contributors shall designate a single Principal Representative to serve on their behalf at the coalition. Principal Representatives must be either decision-makers or influencers within their own organizations. They are responsible for the following duties:

- Preparing for and participating in all meetings as required;
- Representing the interests and perspective of one's own organization at the coalition;
- Moving information shared at the coalition through one's own organization;
- Undertaking to learn about the Indigenous cultures of Newfoundland and Labrador; and
- Promoting action within one's own organization and the broader community in pursuit of the coalition's Vision and Objectives.

Principal Representatives may further designate a single Alternate Representative to carry out any or all of the above duties from time to time. This includes orienting Alternates and keeping them informed of coalition business. Neither Community Advocates nor Special Members may designate Alternates.

iv. Admission

The process for admitting new members depends on their desired role. An organization wishing to join as a Partner must be nominated by a current Partner and then be confirmed by the Partnership Table. An organization wishing to join as a Contributor must be invited by a current Partner. An individual wishing to join either as a Community Advocate or as a Special Member must be nominated by a current Partner and then be confirmed by the Partnership Table.

v. Code of Conduct

Everyone who participates in First Voice agrees to abide by its *Code of Conduct*.³³

STRUCTURE

First Voice shall carry out its work through the following bodies:

i. Partnership Table

Comprising all Partners and Community Advocates, the Partnership Table serves as the coalition's general decision-making body. It may designate from among its members up to two Co-Leads to serve as First Voice representatives on specific issues or projects. The Partnership Table shall meet on a monthly schedule, or as otherwise determined by its members.

ii. Action Circles

In the interests of efficiency and focus, work to advance the coalition's Calls for Change shall be led by designated Action Circles established at the discretion of the Partnership Table. Participation in all Action Circles shall be open to all First Voice members as defined in this *Charter* and must

³³ Available online at firstvoicenc.ca/about/.

include at least one organizational Partner and one Community Advocate. All Action Circles shall operate on the basis of clear terms of reference as defined by their own membership and as approved by the Partnership Table.

iii. Working Groups

From time to time, the Partnership Table may strike ad-hoc Working Groups to address a specific question or to coordinate specific projects or events. Working Groups are not standing committees and an end date for their work should be specified upon their formation. The composition of Working Groups shall be determined by the Partnership Table.

iv. Assemblies

Regular assemblies of all Partners, Contributors, Community Advocates, and Special Members shall be convened to share updates on the coalition's work and to engage members of the broader Indigenous community and the general public. Assemblies shall take place on a quarterly schedule, or as otherwise determined by the Partnership Table.

Decision-Making

i. Process

First Voice shall adopt an inclusive and collaborative process that ensures all participants have the opportunity to share their perspectives with the group before any substantive decision is made. Participants shall endeavour to achieve consensus, meaning that everyone:

- Feels they have been heard;
- Understands the reasons for the decision and the need to take action; and
- Can support the final outcome, even if they personally hold an opposing view.

Observers are not entitled to participate in or be present during the decision-making process.

ii. Quorum

No substantive decision shall be made at any meeting of the Partnership Table, Action Circles, or Working Groups unless a majority of Indigenous members who are entitled to attend are present.

SECRETARIAT SUPPORT

Alongside Indigenous Services Canada, First Light is a Lead Partner in First Voice. Through its Advocacy Department, First Light shall provide all necessary secretariat support and hold accountability to all funders.

The Advocacy Department is responsible for the following duties:

- Coordinating and chairing all meetings, including compiling and circulating agendas, meeting minutes, and other meeting papers in a timely manner;
- Facilitating information-sharing between and among participants and other stakeholders, including completing and disseminating reports;

-
- Identifying funding opportunities and developing appropriate proposals;
 - Performing research to support the coalition's decision-making;
 - Implementing the decisions of the coalition;
 - Ensuring compliance with this Coalition Charter and the Code of Conduct; and
 - Serving as spokespersons for First Voice as necessary and appropriate.

AMENDMENTS

This *Coalition Charter* is intended to be a living document. It may be amended in writing after discussion at any regular meeting of the Partnership Table and ratification at the following regular meeting.

Appendix B: List of Members

The following are current Community Advocates with First Voice:

- Brooke Blanchard
- Corey Morris
- Daphne March
- Draco Dunphy
- Kelly Simms
- Lisa Smith
- Marc Humber
- Natasha Drover
- Rutanya Wynes

The following organizations are current members of the Partnership Table of First Voice:

- City of St. John's
- First Light St. John's Friendship Centre
- Human Rights Commission of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Indigenous Services Canada
- Memorial University
- Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services (NLHS)
- Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women (Newfoundland and Labrador)
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)
- St. John's Status of Women's Council
- Stella's Circle
- YWCA

In addition to the above Partners, the following organizations are Contributors to the work of one or more Action Circles.³⁴

- Department of Health and Community Services (NL)
- Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University
- Flat Bay Band
- Food First NL

³⁴ Terms of Reference for each Action Circle as well as for the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights between First Voice and the City of St. John's can be found online at firstvoicenl.ca/action-circles/.

-
- Innu Round Table Secretariat
 - Institutional Programs, Department of Justice and Public Safety (NL)
 - Justice Services, Nunatsiavut Government
 - Labrador Friendship Centre
 - Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador
 - Legal Aid
 - Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network (NAWN)
 - Nogala Law Group LLP
 - Provincial Crown Attorneys Office of Newfoundland and Labrador
 - Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PLIAN)
 - Public Prosecution Service of Canada
 - Public Prosecutions, Department of Justice and Public Safety (NL)
 - Qalipu First Nation
 - Relationships First NL
 - Serious Incident Response Team of Newfoundland and Labrador (SIRT-NL)
 - The Journey Project

Appendix C: Task List

The following table outlines the next steps First Voice has identified for each relevant decision-making group. We encourage members of the general public to advocate for these changes within their own circles of influence. Those interested in joining First Voice by advocating for our three priority Calls for Change can find template emails on our website which can be sent to relevant decision-makers.

AGENCIES PROVIDING FUNDING TO ADDRESS HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Call for Change: 13

Anti-Discrimination in
Nonmarket Housing

- Work towards decolonizing reporting processes, which includes a reduced focus on quantitative data and flexibility in reporting the effectiveness of programming.
- Allow greater flexibility for funding recipients on budget allocations, to ensure the availability of holistic services and resources for Indigenous people.
- Coordinate more closely with service delivery agencies to ensure that funding targets the root causes of homelessness.

p. 31

BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYERS

Call for Change: 6

Sector-Specific
Antiracism Training

- Implement policies mandating that all new hires complete foundational training on Indigenous histories, cultures, and sector-specific content as part of the onboarding process.

p. 23

Call for Change: 8

Inclusive Human
Resources Policies

- Foster more inclusive workplaces by undertaking foundational training for all employees on cultural humility and the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples.

p. 26

Call for Change: 9

TRC 92 Business
Network

- Implement policies mandating that all new hires complete foundational training on Indigenous histories, cultures, and sector-specific content as part of the onboarding process.
- Build partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and support efforts to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

p. 28

CITY OF ST. JOHN'S

Call for Change: 19

Decolonize Municipal Planning in St. John's

- ❑ Allocate appropriate resources in the upcoming budget cycle to provide research and policy development support for the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights to create a comprehensive multi-year work plan, prioritizing Calls for Change 19 and 40.

p. 41

Call for Change: 23

Stewardship of Public Green Spaces

- ❑ Ensure that the establishment of any National Urban Park in St. John's aligns with the urban Indigenous community's priorities as identified through the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights.

p. 44

Call for Change: 31

Urban Indigenous participation in Decision Making

- ❑ Finalize and implement appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights is updated and consulted on the work being undertaken by other City advisory committees and working groups. This will ensure that meaningful urban Indigenous-specific advice is available to policy- and decision-makers across all functional areas at the City.

p. 53

Call for Change: 40

UNDRIP Implementation

- ❑ Allocate appropriate resources in the upcoming budget cycle to provide research and policy development support for the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights to create a comprehensive multi-year work plan, prioritizing Calls for Change 19 and 40.

p. 66

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, SENIORS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (CSSD)

Call for Change: 15

No-Discharge-into-Homelessness Policy in NL

- ❑ Update policies on applying for income supports and other social programs to allow for processing of applications from individuals while they are incarcerated, with benefits to begin immediately upon release. Coordination with JPS staff involved in developing discharge plans will be required.

p. 34

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Call for Change: 1

K-12 Curriculum
Redevelopment

- ❑ Expand representation on the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee so that it includes the full range of diverse Indigenous perspectives and experiences in the province, including urban Indigenous Peoples.
- ❑ Conduct a full review of the curriculum to identify the most severe areas of Indigenous misrepresentation and prioritize areas in most urgent need of changes. This work should be done with full public transparency.
- ❑ Develop and publish a plan, with appropriate timelines, to complete the redevelopment of the K-12 curriculum.
- ❑ Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle so that NL Schools, as an interim measure, can provide training for all teachers and make available to them additional educational materials that have already been developed by Indigenous Peoples.

p. 15

Call for Change: 2

Land-Based Content
in Early Childhood
Education

- ❑ Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle for the creation of Indigenous-specific professional development and curriculum resources for ECEs.
- ❑ Acknowledge the training that AECENL and First Light have developed specifically for ECEs and support phases 2 and 3 of resource and training development.

p. 17

Call for Change: 6

Sector-Specific
Antiracism Training

- ❑ Prioritize Call for Change 1, which would ensure all young residents in the province are exposed to accurate information about Indigenous Peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador. This will support foundational knowledge in the general population and build support for sector-specific training.

p. 23

Call for Change: 26

Decolonize Early
Childhood Education

- ❑ Mandate training on Indigenous cultures for inspectors of regulated child care settings. This will provide a foundation for the implementation of revised policies and will serve as an interim measure while efforts continue to decolonize policies and regulations in ECE.

p. 49

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES (HCS)

Call for Change: 33

Access to Mental Health and Addictions Services

- ❑ Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle to expand the scope of the Indigenous Patient Navigator program so that it includes urban Indigenous people.

p. 56

DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION, POPULATION GROWTH AND SKILLS

Call for Change: 8

Inclusive Human Resources Policies

- ❑ Restore funding to the Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador Job Grant which would provide employers with resources to support adequate antiracism and Indigenous-specific training for employees.

p. 26

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY (JPS)

Call for Change: 15

No-Discharge-into-Homelessness Policy in NL

- ❑ In collaboration with community service providers, develop and implement a policy requiring that comprehensive discharge plans for all inmates be put in place before their release date. This policy must explicitly prohibit anyone from being discharged into homelessness.
- ❑ Require that all correctional facilities designate consistent and predictable programming space to facilitate cultural supports for Indigenous inmates, such as an Elders program. This is already being done for pastoral care programming. (See Call for Change 35.)
- ❑ Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle to reduce Indigenous overincarceration by expanding the availability of alternative sanctions programs, including in urban areas. (See Call for Change 37.)

p. 34

Call for Change: 30

Data-Driven Policy-Making

- ❑ Mandate foundational training on the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples for all Classification Officers in the provincial corrections system.
- ❑ Collaborate with First Light to perform an independent point-in-time count of Indigenous inmates in provincial correctional institutions.

p. 52

Call for Change: 35

Cultural Programming
in Corrections

- ❑ In collaboration with appropriate community service providers, like First Light, conduct an independent point-in-time (PIT) count of Indigenous offenders in the provincial corrections system.
- ❑ Develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that demographic data is collected on inmates at the point of entry into the system. Adequate training must be provided for staff to ensure the consistency and accuracy of all such data. (See Calls for Change 12, 15, and 30.)
- ❑ Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle to ensure the reliable and consistent availability of culturally-informed programming and supports for Indigenous inmates in the provincial corrections system.
- ❑ Ensure that all correctional facility staff complete mandatory training on the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples, with a specific focus on the context of Newfoundland and Labrador.

p. 58

Call for Change: 36

Justice and Child
Welfare Systems
Navigators

- ❑ Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle to support the full cost of the services outlined in First Light's April 2024 proposal to JPS.

p. 61

Call for Change: 37

Restorative Justice
Practices

- ❑ Allocate multiyear funding in the upcoming budget cycle to (a) sustain already-existing restorative justice programs in Indigenous communities across the province; and (b) support the development of similar Indigenous-led programs in urban areas, including St. John's.

p. 61

Call for Change: 38

Gladue
Implementation

- ❑ Allocate long-term funding in the upcoming budget cycle to support Gladue writers as important parts of the legal system in NL.
- ❑ Develop a process to connect Indigenous offenders with trained Gladue writers.
- ❑ Mandate training for all actors in the legal system to improve awareness of Indigenous offenders' right to request a Gladue report.

p. 63

Call for Change: 39

Police Oversight

- ❑ Publicly acknowledge the need to establish a Police Oversight Board for the province that is civilian-led, politically neutral, and representative of the province's diverse communities
- ❑ In consultation with the Policing Transformation Working Group, develop a comprehensive plan to implement the 26 recommendations for strengthening police oversight that were put forward in Building Trust, Restoring Confidence .

p. 64

END HOMELESSNESS ST. JOHN'S**Call for Change: 11**

Research on Homelessness Demographics

- ❑ Continue to collaborate with Indigenous organizations like First Light to improve the accuracy of demographic data on homelessness and to ensure its ongoing availability to policy-makers.

p. 30

FIRST LIGHT**Call for Change: 28**

Repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery

- ❑ Expand content in the Indigenous Cultural Diversity Training program that relates to this Call for Change.

p. 51

Call for Change: 32

Expand Local Interpretation Services

- ❑ Conduct foundational work to support the response to this Call for Change, including expanding the availability of language learning and conversation support throughout the province.

p. 55

Call for Change: 41

Legal Recognition of Indigenous Languages in NL

- ❑ Continue research and outreach efforts in the upcoming year to support Indigenous language learning, access, and use in St. John's. Efforts will be coordinated with other Indigenous organizations in the province to ensure that language revitalization efforts in St. John's are both aligned with and reciprocally beneficial to the language supports offered elsewhere in the province. (See Call for Change 4.)

p. 68

FIRST VOICE AND ITS ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS**Call for Change: 7**

Antiracism in Professional Licensing Standards

- ❑ Continue making connections with licensing bodies in essential areas, focusing first on those where Action Circles are Established (i.e. justice and health).

p. 25

<p>Call for Change: 8 Inclusive Human Resources Policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to build partnerships with local businesses interested in advancing this Call for Change. <input type="checkbox"/> Publish research findings on decolonizing workplaces to support businesses and employers in creating inclusive spaces for Indigenous people. 	<p>p. 26</p>
<p>Call for Change: 9 TRC 92 Business Network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Begin discussions in the upcoming year on enacting economic reconciliation in response to Call for Change 9. 	<p>p. 28</p>
<p>Call for Change: 26 Decolonize Early Childhood Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights will continue to work towards Call for Change 23 in support of action on Call for Change 26. 	<p>p. 49</p>
GOVERNMENT OF CANADA		
<p>Call for Change: 8 Inclusive Human Resources Policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Restore funding to the Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador Job Grant which would provide employers with resources to support adequate antiracism and Indigenous-specific training for employees. 	<p>p. 26</p>
<p>Call for Change: 33 Access to Mental Health and Addictions Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle to support the continuation of existing mental health and addictions programming for Indigenous people. 	<p>p. 56</p>
INDIGENOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEES		
<p>Call for Change: 31 Urban Indigenous Participation in Decision-Making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Allocate appropriate resources to ensure the full and equal participation of volunteer Indigenous advisors. This includes appropriate honorariums that recognize the value of their contributions. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide inclusion and support for Indigenous individuals in advisory positions. See Call for Change 27 for more detail. 	<p>p. 53</p>
LABOUR UNIONS		
<p>Call for Change: 20 Official Recognition of NIPD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that National Indigenous Peoples Day is recognized in place of the June Holiday and all collective agreements moving forward. 	<p>p. 42</p>

MUNICIPALITIES ACROSS THE PROVINCE

Call for Change: 20

Official Recognition of NIPD

- ❑ Follow the example set by the City of St. John's by officially renaming the June Holiday to mark National Indigenous Peoples Day in their own jurisdictions.

p. 42

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR HEALTH SERVICES

Call for Change: 15

No-Discharge-into-Homelessness Policy in NL

- ❑ Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle to ensure the consistent availability of mental health and addictions programming, including counselling, for all inmates in the provincial corrections system. (See Call for Change 33.)

p. 34

OFFICE OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS AND RECONCILIATION

Call for Change: 32

Expand Local Interpretation Services

- ❑ Allocate funding in the upcoming budget cycle to support the revitalization of Mi'kmaw, Innu-aimun, and Inuktitut, including expanding the availability of interpretation services in essential areas like healthcare.

p. 55

PREMIER OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Call for Change: 20

Official Recognition of NIPD

- ❑ Pass appropriate legislation in the House of Assembly to replace the June Holiday, which takes place on the Monday nearest June 24, to instead align with National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21. In conjunction, the holiday can then be renamed "National Indigenous Peoples Day".

p. 42

Call for Change: 40

UNDRIP Implementation

- ❑ Make a commitment in principle to adopt UNDRIP and develop an implementation plan in collaboration with all Indigenous groups in the province, including urban Indigenous communities.

p. 66

Call for Change: 42

Terms of Union Apology

- ❑ Convene Indigenous organizations and governments, including urban Indigenous organizations like Friendship Centres, to discuss the approach and desired outcomes for such an apology.

p. 69

POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Call for Change: 3

Indigenous Content
in Post-Secondary
Programs

- ❑ Begin working towards collaborative relationships to co-develop content on antiracism and the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples.

p. 19

Call for Change: 5

Designated
Indigenous Seats in
Post-Secondary

- ❑ Consider the NL Human Rights Commission's Guidelines for Special Programs to protect the institution from human rights complaints being filed against the institution for the use of designated seats in the admissions process.

p. 21

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Call for Change: 6

Sector-Specific
Antiracism Training

- ❑ Prioritize building foundational knowledge among professionals working in essential areas by providing adequate training on the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador.

p. 23

PROVIDERS OF SHELTER SPACE

Call for Change: 15

No-Discharge-into-
Homelessness Policy
in NL

- ❑ Ensure all staff complete mandatory training on cultural humility, Indigenous cultures and histories, intergenerational trauma, anti-oppressive practice, and antiracism intervention.

p. 34

SERIOUS INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (SIRT-NL)

Call for Change: 39

Police Oversight

- ❑ Finalize and approve a framework, in collaboration with First Voice and First Light, to implement an Indigenous Community Liaison program in St. John's as called for in the Group 4 recommendations set out in Building Trust, Restoring Confidence.

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