



# **Resources on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action**

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August 23, 2021

Recent discoveries of remains and unmarked graves across Western Canada has led to increased calls for all levels of government to address the recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC's) Calls to Action.

All Canadians and all orders of government have a role to play in reconciliation. The TRC's 94 Calls to Action are addressed primarily to the federal, provincial, and territorial governments but also to municipal governments, the corporate sector, and the broader Canadian society. They cover a wide range of government responsibilities, including child welfare, education, language and culture, health, justice, commemoration, museums and archives, training for public servants, and a number of specific initiatives related to reconciliation.

*Through the work of the AMO Indigenous Relations Task Force (IRTF), various approaches for responding to the Calls to Action will come forward. It is important to note that this is only the beginning of our work on responding to the TRC's Calls for Action. AMO will continue to update this resource document as municipalities share their experiences and we can incorporate responses across the province into this work.*

*Approaches include the following:*

- AMO support for Council and Staff training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
- AMO encouragement of its members to recognize September 30<sup>th</sup> as National Orange Shirt Day and the flying of the *Every Child Matters* flag for the month of September at municipal offices.
- AMO exploration of the form and scope of formal and informal relationship agreements between municipal governments and First Nations.

AMO's ongoing work with Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) under our 2020 MOU on policy matters of mutual interest supports these recommendations.

## **Background:**

On June 2, 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Committee released its final report which included 94 Calls to Action to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada was constituted and created by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement agreement, and the Commission spent six years travelling across the country to hear the stories of survivors and their families.

As summarized in the opening Executive Summary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report,

*"Canada's residential school system for Aboriginal children was an education system in name only... These residential schools were created for the purpose of separating Aboriginal children from their families, in order to minimize and weaken family ties and*

cultural linkages, and to indoctrinate children into a new culture – the culture of the legally dominant Euro-Christian Canadian society”.

In the six years since the Calls to Action were published, there have been only incremental changes and attempts by all levels of government to implement the recommendations.

### *Recent Discoveries at Former Residential Schools*

In May and June 2021, more than 1500 graves have been uncovered in Kamloops, British Columbia; Brandon, Manitoba; Marieval, Saskatchewan; and Cranbrook, British Columbia. Investigations are planned or underway at multiple other sites, and there are calls across the country to investigate the grounds of all former residential schools.

There are 18 former residential school locations in Ontario. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, at least 426 children died while attending these schools, and an unknown number of children are still missing. The TRC has identified 12 unmarked burial sites in Ontario but there are likely more.

AMO, in partnership with the Woodland Cultural Centre, presented a special screening of a virtual tour of the Mohawk Institute Residential School on August 18<sup>th</sup> as part of the AMO 2021 Conference program.

### **Municipal Impact and Role to Play in TRC Calls to Action**

TRC Call to Action #	Call to Action	Staff Comments
3.	We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle.	Jordan's Principle makes sure all First Nations children living in Canada can access the products, services and supports they need, when they need them. Funding can help with a wide range of health, social and educational needs, including the unique needs that First Nations Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA children and youth and those with disabilities may have.
17.	We call upon all levels of government to enable residential school Survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving administrative costs for a period of five years for the name-change process and the revision of official identity documents, such as birth certificates, passports, driver's licenses, health cards, status cards, and social insurance numbers.	Could be costs at the municipal level associated with commissioning documents (10\$ to 25\$ for example) to facilitate this process.
47.	We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and <i>terra nullius</i> , and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.	Rights based discussion with respect to land claims, etc. Municipal role could vary based on local experiences and situations with recognition that municipal governments have no authority or expertise in areas regarding Indigenous rights. That is in the domain of the Crown – Provincial and/or Federal
57.	We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the <i>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)</i> , Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.	AMO could facilitate this or encourage development of training for municipal staff and elected officials.  Many cities have adopted UNDRIP
77.	We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.	Municipalities with archives and museums
80.	We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to establish, as a statutory holiday, a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour Survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.	The Federal Government has announced September 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2021, as the first National Orange Shirt Day. AMO has committed to recognizing September 30 <sup>th</sup> . AMO members are encouraged to do the same.

87.	We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.	Role for municipalities with recreation programs.
88.	We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.	Role for municipalities with recreation programs.

Municipal governments across the country are implementing various responses to the recommendations. Below please find samples of municipal activities undertaken.

If your municipality has or is currently responding to the TRC recommendations that have not been captured below and you would like to share with AMO, please let us know at [Policy@amo.on.ca](mailto:Policy@amo.on.ca) so we can include as we update this resource paper.

### **1. Treaty 20–Greater Peterborough Area**

This partnership has taken a regional approach to First Nation-municipal collaboration, bringing two First Nations, two townships, a regional government, and an economic development corporation together.

- All councils and boards have passed resolutions committing to CEDI from 2017-2020.
- Curve Lake and Hiawatha First Nations now sitting as partners on the County of Peterborough's Official Plan Technical Advisory Committee.
- Co-organized an educational event about the 200th anniversary of Treaty 20 that engaged Indigenous youth and Indigenous knowledge keepers.
- Co-presented at the FCM Annual Conference and Trade Show in Quebec City, June 2019.
- Signed Ezhi-Wijikiwendiyang (Friendship Accord), November 2019.
- The partnership and the Friendship Accord are featured in a [video](#) that was filmed by Indigenous Services Canada.
- Had a Wampum Belt created in March 2020 to honour their commitment to their partnership.

### **2. The City of London**

- The City of London is developing plans to address TRC recommendations through the London Diversity and Race Relations Committee. This committee provides leadership on matters related to diversity, inclusivity, equity, and the elimination of discrimination in London.
- At a City of London council meeting, a Two Row Wampum Belt was unveiled. The belt is a replica of "the grandfather of all treaties" and was given as a gift from the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation in the presence of the Oneida Nation of the Thames. It is on display in the Mayor's office to serve as a reminder to all of the deep and abiding friendship and of the mutual duty to respect the lasting principles of the pledge made long ago.

### **3. The City of Ottawa**

- The City of Ottawa's council established an Aboriginal Working Committee in 2007 – composed of representatives from the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition, the City of Ottawa, United Way Ottawa, the Ottawa Police Service, and the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board – to provide recommendations to council and identify inter-governmental partnerships.
- The City is currently working with local Indigenous partners to review the TRC's recommendations and determine next steps for approval by city council.
- Ottawa's Police Service partners with several community groups including Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health and the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre to run a Soccer Mentorship Program, an initiative of the City's Aboriginal Working Committee.

#### **4. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**

- Toronto and Vancouver, among others, have adopted the UNDRIP as part of the cities' commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.
- UNDRIP is an international instrument adopted by the United Nations on September 13, 2007, to enshrine (according to Article 43) the rights that "constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world".
- The UNDRIP protects collective rights that may not be addressed in other human rights charters that emphasize individual rights, and it also safeguards the individual rights of Indigenous people. The Declaration is the product of almost 25 years of deliberation by U.N. member states and Indigenous groups.
- The City of Toronto and Vancouver's councils have endorsed UNDRIP.
- The City of Toronto adopted the UNDRIP as part of the City's year-long proclamation on Truth and Reconciliation 2013-2014.
- The City of Toronto in its 2003 Vision Statement on Access, Equity and Diversity acknowledged the unique status and cultural diversity of the Aboriginal communities and their right to self-determination. This aligns with Article 3 of the UNDRIP which calls for Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination. Article 11 of the UNDRIP states that Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. In the work of Heritage Preservation and other City divisions that complete environmental assessments, the City of Toronto acknowledges this right by consulting with Aboriginal peoples.

#### **5. Records and Archives**

- Toronto has asked the Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Division of the City Manager's Office, in consultation with the City Clerk, to identify records held at the city's Archives and City Divisions that are related to the history and legacy of the residential school system and that could be forwarded to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

#### **6. Sioux Lookout**

- Sioux Lookout formed a Mayor's Committee on the Truth and Reconciliation Committee and has reported a significant number of activities in their report on the action of the Mayor's Committee.
- Activities include attending meetings of the Chiefs of Ontario, Assembly of First Nations, and NAN Chiefs; advocacy for alternative justice and a community justice centre; relationship building through a Friendship Accord; First Nations Community Economic Development Hub; Urban Indigenous Action Plan; Municipal-First Nations Working Groups; and the creation of a Police Services Board with an Indigenous Chairperson, among many others.
- A report from the Committee in 2017 made recommendations on a number of Calls to Action, including Education (Recommendation #8, #11); Health (#23); Justice (#31, #41); Royal Proclamation and Covenant (#47); Public Servants (#57); Missing Children and Burial Information (#75); National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (#77); Sports (#87, #88).