

# Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women

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## Vision

Ontario and Indigenous communities are coming together to end the threat of violence against women and families and ensure future generations of Indigenous women can be safe.

## Message from the Premier

In every act of violence against an Indigenous woman, there is a singular tragedy and a collective failing.

One act of violence submerges victims in pain and despair — a heartbreaking, life-altering reality for too many Indigenous sisters, mothers, daughters, aunts, grandmothers and their families. Countless acts of violence, spread over time and across communities, submerge us all. This is the moving water that surrounds us — a current that sweeps Indigenous lives away and erodes the bedrock of a fair and prosperous society.

We want Ontario to be a place of fairness. And yet, violence affects First Nation, Métis and Inuit women more than any other group in our society. We want Ontario to be a place of opportunity. And yet, the fastest-growing segment of our population is Indigenous youth and, when they witness violence, it robs them of the opportunity to succeed. We want Ontario to be a place of equality. And yet, inequality due to misogyny, sexism, poverty, racism and discrimination from Canada's colonial past persists, making Indigenous women especially vulnerable to violence and preventing entire Indigenous communities from reaching their full potential.

For too long, Indigenous cries for justice went unheard by governments and mainstream society, but that silence is finally broken. Now, we can begin to break the cycle of violence and build the Ontario we want for our children and grandchildren.

By coming together with Indigenous communities, the Ontario government is acknowledging the ways in which our shameful past has contributed to the inequalities of the present and we are working as partners to build a better today and a brighter tomorrow.

I want to thank Indigenous communities for their resilience. This new strategy to end violence against Indigenous women and their families builds upon years of Indigenous activism and initiatives and adds new initiatives to raise awareness of and prevent violence, help make Indigenous communities safe, improve socio-economic conditions and help heal deep wounds.

This strategy embodies the Ontario government's commitment to working hand in hand with First Nation, Métis and Inuit leaders, as well as with the federal government and other provinces to drive coordinated action and make real progress.

Thank you for helping to end violence against Indigenous women and their families. Together we can create hope for a bright future in every community in Ontario.

Kathleen Wynne  
Premier of Ontario



## Message from Ministers MacCharles and Zimmer

We are pleased to join with the Premier and with Indigenous partners to present this strategy to end violence against Indigenous women.

This strategy is a collaborative effort of Indigenous partners across the province, including the members of the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women.

This unique provincial initiative brings government leaders together at one table with representatives of Indigenous organizations. These include the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, Ontario Native Women's Association, the Métis Nation of Ontario, Independent First Nations and Chiefs of Ontario.

We applaud their commitment to work together to create a more effective, better informed and comprehensive approach that respects Indigenous culture and perspectives.

Strong collaborative relationships help us build on the important work of Indigenous people to raise awareness of and heal from violence, and the initiatives the government has already undertaken to end violence against women, including action plans on domestic violence and sexual violence and harassment.

The province's *Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment*, launched in March 2015, started a conversation about sexual violence in this province. In it, we announced our commitment to developing a long-term strategy to end violence against Indigenous women.

We are proud to build on this momentum and launch this strategy for change.

The goals reflect our commitments: to end violence against Indigenous women, to strengthen relationships with First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities, and to improve outcomes for Indigenous people — and, in turn, for all Ontarians.

Tracy MacCharles  
Minister of Children and Youth Services  
Minister Responsible for Women's Issues

David Zimmer  
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

## **Executive summary**

### **Ontario's strategy to end violence against Indigenous women**

Violence against Indigenous women has been tearing apart the lives of women, their families and communities for generations. It is a legacy of colonialism that continues to breed poverty, social isolation and insecurity. With this strategy, Ontario and Indigenous communities are coming together to end the cycle of violence and ensure future generations of Indigenous women can live the way they deserve — with safety and respect.

#### **1. Supporting children, youth and families**

- \$80 million  
over three years
- New funding: \$80 million over three years.
- Introduce a new **Family Well-Being Program** to support Indigenous families in crisis and help communities deal with the effects of intergenerational violence and trauma.

## 2. Community safety and healing

- \$15.75 million  
over three years
- New funding: \$15.75 million over three years.
- Ensure Indigenous women and communities have **effective supports** when dealing with the justice system.
- Develop a survivor-centred strategy to assist in the identification, intervention and prevention of **human trafficking** in Ontario.
- Expand a **counselling helpline** for Indigenous women experiencing violence, building on the Talk4Healing Indigenous Women's Helpline.
- Support Indigenous men with **healing and violence prevention programs**, including Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin (I Am A Kind Man).

## 3. Policing and justice

- \$2.32 million  
over three years
- New funding: \$2.32 million over three years.
- Introduce legislation to **assist police in investigating missing persons** cases.
- Enhance **training for Crown Attorneys and police**.
- Provide new tools for **First Nations policing**.

## 4. Prevention and awareness

- \$1.15 million  
over three years
- New funding: \$1.15 million over three years.
- Develop and deliver **mandatory Indigenous cultural competency and anti-racism training** to all Ontario public service staff.
- Work to help launch a **national public awareness and prevention campaign** to change attitudes and perceptions on the issue of violence against Indigenous women and girls.

## 5. Leadership, collaboration, alignment and accountability

- \$500,000  
over three years
- New funding: \$500,000 over three years.
- Host the **fifth National Aboriginal Women's Summit** in 2016.
- Support and **align provincial initiatives with federal commitments** to end violence against Indigenous

women.

- Establish a **Ministerial Steering Committee** to oversee implementation and accountability of this plan to ensure it delivers.

## 6. Improved data and research

- \$750,000

over three years

- New funding: \$750,000 over three years.
- Support **research on the prevalence of violence against Indigenous women** and successful practices to combat it.
- **Develop key performance indicators** and data collection mechanisms to measure the success of individual initiatives and monitor progress.

## Why Ontario needs a strategy to end violence against Indigenous women

First Nation, Métis and Inuit women in Ontario experience domestic violence, assault, homicide and sexual exploitation at significantly greater rates than other women in the province.

Indigenous women make up only 1.2% of Ontario's population yet 6% of female homicide victims.

This violence tears at the fabric of lives, families and communities. It ruptures the bonds that hold people together. The trauma spills over to the community and other generations, exacerbating poverty, social isolation and insecurity. It's no way to live.

Violence against Indigenous women puts families and children at risk. Too often, it takes children off the path to success and into substance abuse and crime.

More than a quarter of children under age 14 in Ontario's child welfare system are Indigenous. Family breakdown and limited opportunities contribute to the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in Ontario's justice system. Too few have a certificate, diploma or degree to be able to get better jobs. First Nation, Métis and Inuit women and their families commonly have access to less education and employment opportunities than others in Ontario. That, in turn, lowers family income for too many.

These conditions make Indigenous women and children even more vulnerable to poverty and violence. That includes increased vulnerability to human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Ontario is one of the major hubs for sex trafficking in Canada. This type of sexual exploitation affects vulnerable people everywhere. Those most at risk are young women, many of them Indigenous women and girls.

These circumstances drive an ongoing cycle of violence.

Again, it's no way to live.

Failure to address the roots of violence against Indigenous women jeopardizes future generations and weakens all Ontarians.

## Complex roots

The extreme level of violence against Indigenous women in Ontario has complex roots stemming from deep-seated

colonial attitudes that perpetuate racism and discrimination.

These factors are compounded by the misogyny and sexism feeding violence against women across Ontario.

Colonialism imposed patriarchal attitudes on traditional societies. These views disrupted Indigenous cultures that had long honoured and respected women in their balanced roles with men.

As Canada evolved, colonialism increasingly led to the attempted assimilation of Indigenous people, including the abuses of the residential school system. These schools operated in Ontario for more than 150 years. This system cut generations of youth off from their cultures, values, families and communities. The lingering impact continues to affect families and communities to this day.

Post-colonial attitudes continue to foster ongoing indifference to Indigenous communities and their cultures. That makes them vulnerable to further violence.

With this Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women, Ontario, together with Indigenous partners, intends to confront and eliminate the root causes of this violence. Ontario and Indigenous communities will come together and work to end the threat of violence against women and families and ensure future generations of Indigenous women can be safer and stronger.

## **Path to a strategy**

First Nation, Inuit and Métis leaders across Ontario have identified violence against women in their communities as one of their most pressing concerns.

## **Community-led change**

Indigenous women in the province continue to lead efforts to end violence. Many are participating in provincial and national efforts to bring attention to the alarmingly high numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

Between 2007 and 2012, Indigenous organizations led five provincial summits on ending violence against Indigenous women to highlight these community voices. With the support of government, numerous community leaders expressed the problems they faced and sought input on many related issues, from justice reforms to enhanced education opportunities and revamped child welfare.

As a result of the first provincial summit, in September 2007 the Ontario Native Women's Association and the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres released the **Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women**. The framework recommended wide-ranging strategies and focused on eight specific areas of change: research, legislation, policy, programs, education, community development, leadership and accountability.

The Métis Nation of Ontario, Independent First Nations and Chiefs of Ontario endorsed the framework and partnered to take action on violence.

Ontario adopted the Strategic Framework as a guiding document and has worked since 2010 across ministries and with Indigenous partners to address violence against Indigenous women.

## **Collaboration is key**

Since 2010, the government and Indigenous partners have worked hand in hand through the **Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women**. This unique provincial initiative is a first in Canada. It brings together representatives of five provincial Indigenous organizations and government leaders from ten ministries to address violence against Indigenous women.

The Aboriginal Caucus of the Joint Working Group includes:

The Joint Working Group's mandate is to define priorities and identify opportunities to support, develop and implement policies, programs and services that prevent and reduce violence against Indigenous women and their families.

It developed priorities for government action that were collaborative, coordinated, culturally appropriate, community-led and accountable. Since its first meeting, the members of the Joint Working Group have worked together to develop initiatives that were identified as priorities under the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women.

This strategy, with new initiatives and enhancements to existing programs, represents the next step in this vital partnership.

### **Joint efforts already underway**

First Nation, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous organizations have taken the initiative to confront violence and its underlying issues together with local partners.

Some have developed their own approaches specific to their unique community and culture. Others have created innovative interventions including public education and training initiatives supported by government. Many of these respond to priorities identified in the 2007 Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women and by the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women.

### **Examples of Indigenous-led public education and training initiatives**

- [Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin](#) (I am a Kind Man) campaign (OFIFC) inspires Indigenous men and boys to stop violence towards Indigenous women and engages Indigenous men involved with the corrections, probation and parole systems.
- [Building Aboriginal Women's Leadership](#) initiative trains and supports Indigenous women to take on leadership roles in their communities.
- Honouring Métis Women Campaign (MNO) The Ending Violence Against Aboriginal Women campaign's Ending Violence campaign is a strength and culture-based program that is promoted province-wide.
- The [Safe and Accepting Schools Initiative](#) funds culturally relevant projects to address bullying, healthy relationships, trauma and mental health support and leadership development. (Indigenous partners, coordinated by Chiefs of Ontario)
- A [First Nations Draw-the-Line](#) sexual violence prevention campaign in Nishnawbe Aski Nation shows bystanders how to challenge sexual violence and harassment and intervene safely and effectively.
- [Kanawayhitowin](#) (Taking Care of Each Other's Spirit) campaign (OFIFC) helps those closest to an abused Indigenous woman recognize the signs of abuse and understand what they can do to help.

In recent years, Ontario has expanded the range of Indigenous-led programs and services. For example:

- [Talk4Healing](#) is a help line that provides culturally appropriate crisis counselling and supports for Indigenous women throughout Northern Ontario, including in remote and isolated communities, affected by violence. It is a partnership between Beendigen of Thunder Bay and the Ontario Native Women's Association.
- the Ending Violence Against Aboriginal Women (EVAAW) Fund helps Indigenous organizations deliver community-based services and programs that prevent victimization and aid victims in ways that are culturally relevant. Examples of EVAAW-funded programs include:

- The Children Who Witness Violence Program, delivered by the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC), supports children and younger youth in healing from the effects of witnessing family violence.
- Services to Métis women victims of violence and their families delivered by the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) staff.

The efforts of the Joint Working Group helped Ontario take a leadership role at the 2015 national Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. There, Ontario proposed 10 actions to improve the situation for Indigenous women and girls, including the creation of a pan-Canadian public awareness campaign and a socio-economic action plan for Indigenous women and girls. This proposal is summarized at the end of the strategy.

Ontario is committed to continuing to build positive relationships with Indigenous partners. In August 2015, the province signed a historic Political Accord with the Chiefs of Ontario. It reinforced a shared commitment to work in a spirit of mutual respect and collaboration to improve the quality of life in First Nation communities.

Indigenous leaders have shown they have the knowledge and willingness to help their communities. However, they can they lack resources, supports and the means to coordinate them.

This strategy builds on existing coordinated action with Indigenous groups. It will support community-led change to end violence against Indigenous women and provide support to their families.

Ontario will continue to work with partners to ensure that the implementation of the strategy is informed by a breadth of voices from First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities across Ontario.

## **The way forward**

Ontario's strategy promotes community safety and healing and addresses root causes of violence across six areas:

1. Supporting Children, Youth and Families
2. Community Safety and Healing
3. Policing and Justice
4. Prevention and Awareness
5. Leadership, Collaboration, Alignment and Accountability
6. Improved Data and Research

### **1. Supporting children, youth and families**

#### **New funding: \$80 million over three years**

Indigenous youth are the fastest-growing segment of Ontario's population and labour force. They need access to opportunities to grow and shape their own futures so they can contribute to their communities and to the province.

To support these opportunities, children need to grow up in safe, supportive environments. When faced with crisis, early intervention is essential. They need the support of their family and should have every opportunity to stay in their own community to get the supports they need.

To this end, Ontario is investing \$80 million over three years for a Family Well-Being Program to reduce the effects of violence on Indigenous families by making community supports available for families in crisis. This program will be designed, developed and delivered by and for First Nation, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous partners in their own communities. It will offer supports that respond to the root causes of violence, inter-generational trauma and over-representation of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous children and youth in child welfare and youth

justice systems.

These supports will include:

- **more front-line service workers to provide families with increased access to services.** This will help ensure existing services complement one another and make the most of available resources. The program will support training for frontline service workers in their own communities, providing new jobs and new services close to home.
- **community-based programming for children and families who have experienced violence.** Children who witness violence bear that burden for the rest of their lives. New service providers will be able to design and deliver early intervention programs and provide improved supports for children, youth and families who need them.
- **safe places.** Many families do not trust police stations, band offices and child protection agencies to provide culturally sensitive, holistic supports. The program will provide funding for welcoming, safe spaces for victims and family members to support prevention and early intervention efforts.

The new program marks a shift from prescriptive approaches towards providing flexible, holistic services that more effectively support Indigenous communities. It will also help support Indigenous families and communities heal from the wide effects of intergenerational trauma.

Along with the new program, Ontario will continue to support access to employment training and apprenticeship programs for Indigenous women and support Indigenous learners' access to postsecondary education and training.

## 2. Community safety and healing

### **New funding: \$15.75 million over three years**

Breaking the cycle of violence means supporting the cultural, mental, emotional, spiritual and physical health of everyone involved: victims, family and community members and even the perpetrators of violence. The Long-Term Strategy will develop and expand programs to better support the full range of individuals impacted by violence.

### **Providing effective supports**

- **Develop a survivor-centred strategy to address human trafficking in Ontario.** From identifying causes to developing preventative and intervention-based strategies, this strategy will also meet the cultural needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities.
- **Improved justice system supports.** Current programs will be reviewed to ensure effective supports are available to Indigenous women and communities. This includes research and engagement to support improvements for Indigenous shelters and counselling agencies to better support the needs of women on- and off-reserve.
- **Expand Talk4Healing into a province-wide, culturally appropriate counselling helpline for Indigenous women experiencing violence.** The expansion will be informed by the success of Talk4Healing, the helpline for Indigenous women in Northern Ontario.

### **Preventing Violence**

- **Develop healing and violence prevention programs for Indigenous men.** Programs will be tailored to meet traditions, cultures and needs.
- **Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin (I Am a Kind Man).** The program provides public education and culturally

relevant counselling services for Indigenous men and youth. Funding will support the program's implementation across the province.

- **Increase healing programs for Indigenous female offenders** . These include rehabilitative programs grounded in Indigenous approaches to education and healing.
- **Give schools a role in preventing violence.** Engage with First Nation, Métis and Inuit partners to look at how schools and school boards can help break the cycle of violence.

When Indigenous women and their families can draw on the supports they need to be able to stay in their communities as they deal with or recover from violence, then they can start to heal and begin to realize their potential.

### 3. Policing and justice

#### **New funding: \$2.32 million over three years**

Indigenous women and communities need access to a justice system that is fair, understands their needs and provides effective supports. Ontario is committed to deliver justice reforms that meet those needs.

- **Propose new legislation to assist police in investigating missing persons cases.** The proposed new legislation would ensure police have the tools required to conduct effective missing persons investigations. Indigenous partners will be engaged in the development process to ensure consideration of specific issues and barriers faced regarding missing Indigenous women.
- **Develop new and enhanced police training curriculum to build awareness and skills for preventing and responding to violence against Indigenous women.** Through the Ontario Police College, recruits, together with select senior and specialized officers, will build their awareness and understanding of Indigenous communities, land and historical and contemporary issues, as well as competencies specific to addressing violence against Indigenous women.
- **Expand Major Case Management (MCM) software to First Nation police services.** Providing training and access to the MCM system to First Nations police services will support better identification of case overlap, which may assist in identifying serial predators.
- **Research key issues and best practices related to police responses to sexual violence and harassment.** Better data on current responses and the exploration of promising new methods can help police prevent violence and support early intervention. Drawing from the *Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment*, the government will work with partners to improve data collection and expand relationships between post-secondary institutions and police.
- **Train Crown Attorneys on issues related to violence against Indigenous women.** Specialized training will give Crown attorneys the tools they need to make the most of the enhanced prosecution model for sexual violence cases. The training will be specific to Indigenous women and girls who are victims of sexual violence.

### 4. Prevention and awareness

#### **New funding: \$1.15 million over three years**

Today there is a greater awareness of sexual violence and harassment in Ontario, thanks in part to *It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment*. The plan, released in 2015, is aimed at raising public awareness of sexual violence and harassment, challenging societal norms and beliefs and helping survivors by ensuring they get the support they need when they reach out for help.

If we are to continue to raise awareness and end violence, all Ontarians need to understand the additional challenges faced by Indigenous women and their communities. Indifference to the welfare of Indigenous women is

never okay: it creates environments where violence can go unchecked.

Together, we need to change the attitudes, perceptions and behaviours that perpetuate violence. It starts with increased awareness of the issue.

- **Mandatory cultural competency training.** 2016 is the Year of Indigenous Learning in the Ontario Public Service (OPS). The government will implement mandatory Indigenous cultural competency, gender-based and anti-racism training for all government staff. Indigenous partners have identified training for public servants as a priority and a significant step toward improving the lives of Indigenous women and their families.
- **Work with provincial Indigenous partners to support launch of a national public awareness and prevention campaign.** This was a key outcome of the first National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2015. The campaign will spark an attitude and perception shift toward celebrating, valuing and respecting Indigenous women as an integral part of their nations, communities and Canadian society. It will break down stereotypes and stigmas that perpetuate violence against Indigenous women and girls and encourage increased engagement and inspire Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities to take action to end violence against Indigenous women.

## 5. Leadership, collaboration, alignment, accountability

### New funding: \$500,000 over three years

Ontario's leadership on the issue of ending violence against Indigenous women will continue.

- **Ontario will host the fifth National Aboriginal Women's Summit in 2016 for government and community representatives.** The summit will build on previous efforts and continue the national momentum towards improving the situation for Indigenous women experiencing violence.
- **Support and align provincial initiatives with federal commitments.** Ontario will work with the federal government to better coordinate efforts and supports for partners to end violence against Indigenous women.
- **Establish a Ministerial Steering Committee to oversee the strategy's implementation and accountability.** The committee will provide government leadership and accountability by meeting annually to oversee and monitor the implementation of the Long-Term Strategy. The Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation will co-chair the committee.

Collaboration and shared leadership between government and Indigenous organizations marks a powerful next step in reconciliation and improving the relationship between the Crown and First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Ontario.

## 6. Improved data and research

### New funding: \$750,000 over three years

We can't measure success without a solid baseline of data. Definitive statistics and information on violence against Indigenous women will help government and partners allocate resources, identify the most effective responses and track our progress for years to come.

- **Expanded data collection and research.** Data on First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations are limited. Ontario will focus on increasing data collection and funding research so that we are better able to identify and eradicate causes of violence, from sexual assault, to human trafficking.
- **A new performance measurement framework.** Ontario will work with Indigenous partners to develop new ways to track progress on ending violence, and better understand the scope and nature of the issues. This

work will be done in partnership with Indigenous communities and leadership to develop a culturally appropriate framework.

Coordinating data collection between Indigenous organizations and government is essential. The data we capture on the use and quality of services will guide the partners in developing new programs and policies that fit the needs of Indigenous communities.

## **A vision for success**

The strategy and initiatives contained in it represent an evolution in how government and First Nation, Inuit and Métis people work together.

This is what reconciliation looks like.

Success requires sustained effort. Ontario is committed to partnering with Indigenous communities to end violence against First Nation, Métis and Inuit women and their families. Government will continue to participate in the development and delivery of programs and services and will also work to support all partners who seize the initiative and deliver programs tailored to community needs.

## **What success looks like**

*A long-term, overall decline in the prevalence of violence against Indigenous women.*

- The Ontario public and OPS staff have an increased awareness and understanding of the conditions that contribute to violence against Indigenous women and the impact of violence on Indigenous families and communities.
- Attitudes, norms and behaviours that perpetuate violence against Indigenous women are changed, leading to a decrease in violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls.
- Coordinated responses within government address the systemic issues that have resulted in Indigenous women being increasingly vulnerable to violence.
- Indigenous women and their families have increased access to a more effective and coordinated system of holistic supports (i.e., community, health, housing, education, among other system supports).
- Services, programs and policies provided by ministries and Indigenous partners are more inclusive and culturally appropriate to meet the unique needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit populations, whether they are on- or off-reserve or in rural, urban or remote and Northern communities.
- Police, Crown Attorneys, correction officers and other justice sector workers are trained to respond more effectively to issues of violence against Indigenous women.
- Indigenous women and their families feel that they are treated with respect by the justice system.
- Indigenous communities feel the justice sector has effectively responded to women who are missing, experiencing violence or murdered.
- Fewer Indigenous children are in care as a result of domestic violence or having witnessed violence.
- Data collection and development of performance measures will be a coordinated approach between government and the various partners including Indigenous women. Outcomes that measure progress will be culturally appropriate to the unique needs of Indigenous communities.

## **Appendix A: Ontario's 10 proposed pan-Canadian actions on violence against Indigenous women**

## Prevention and awareness

- Pan-Canadian prevention and awareness campaign. Building on existing initiatives, collaborate to establish a pan-Canadian prevention and awareness campaign focused on changing the public perception and attitudes on the issue of violence against Indigenous women and girls, including bullying.
- Socio-economic action plan for Indigenous women and girls. Develop a FPTA socio-economic action plan, building on existing initiatives and action plans (e.g., through the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group), for Indigenous women and girls including strategies to address access to housing, child care, education (including transitioning from reserve to non-reserve educational institutions) and economic opportunities. The plan could be reported into the 2016 roundtable.

## Community safety and healing

- Community Safety Plans. Expand the Community Safety Plan Initiative to support the development of a targeted number of community safety plans with an emphasis on healing and addressing the safety needs specific to each rural, remote, reserve, settlement and urban community.
- Pan-Canadian Justice Task Force: Establish a mechanism to bring together representatives of the regional task forces on murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls, specialized police officers, prosecutors, and victims' service workers who are assigned to respond to cases of murdered and missing women and girls, in order to improve interagency communication and coordination, share best practices and develop collaborative strategies to increase safety for Indigenous women and girls. Manitoba will host the inaugural meeting.
- The Ontario public and government staff have an increased awareness and understanding of the conditions that contribute to violence against Indigenous women and Indigenous communities.
- Attitudes, norms and behaviours that perpetuate violence against Indigenous women are changed.

## Policing measures and justice responses

- Community Engagement Protocols. Police and justice services to work with Indigenous communities to develop community engagement protocols for respectful engagement in the design and development of policies, programs and services that could impact Indigenous women and girls.
- Cultural Competency Training. Provide cultural competency training, including components focused on Indigenous history, impacts of policies, legislation and historical trauma, for police and criminal justice system workers. Training could also be extended to public servants and public-sector employees, including educators, medical and health service workers, child welfare and social service support.
- Pan Canadian Collaboration, Databases and Information Sharing. Collaborate on police procedures and improving responses across Canada, including developing accurate and reliable cross-jurisdictional data collection systems and databases on individual missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.
- First Nations Policing. Support for First Nations policing through long-term, adequate and sustainable funding agreements.

## Partner quotes

*“The alarming rate of violence and missing Indigenous women can't be swept under the rug if everybody is talking about it. This strategy encourages that discussion and takes action. Publicly supporting the research related to ending violence against Indigenous women, including human trafficking, keeps this issue on the radar.”*

*Dawn Harvard, President  
Ontario Native Women's Association*

*"When it comes to violence against Indigenous women, there has always been a gap in the system. We deserve justice that is fair and culturally supportive. The reforms outlined in this plan reflect that and will help bridge that gap. We will not tolerate violence against our mothers, daughters, sisters, aunties and grandmothers. This strategy is about sharing their story and bringing the issue of violence against Indigenous women to the forefront and let's not forget about our missing and murdered men and boys, too "*

*Deputy Grand Chief Denise Stonefish  
First Nations Women's Caucus, Chiefs of Ontario*

*"There is an alarming rate of violence directed at Indigenous women. We have to do what we can to break the cycle. The Family Well-Being Program can help do that. It's a culturally appropriate, community-led approach and that is something we have always asked for. What might work in Thunder Bay may not work in Toronto and that is why communities must lead."*

*Sheila McMahon, Board President  
Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres*

*"Ending violence against Indigenous women requires collective commitments and concrete actions. That is what the Long-Term Strategy is all about. Implementing mandatory Métis, First Nations and Inuit cultural competency training in the public service is a key commitment. Increased awareness is integral to affecting real change and to advancing our shared goal of ending violence against Métis, First Nations and Inuit women."*

*Gary Lipinski, President  
The Métis Nation of Ontario*

*"Breaking the cycle of violence starts with prevention. The Family Well-Being Program will ensure there is culturally and effective supports at home through intervention and prevention, so that our children are growing up in a strong community and out of the child welfare system."*

*Chief Fawn Wapioke, Shoal Lake 39  
Independent First Nations*

## **Maxine Noel**

Maxine Noel, of the Sioux Nation, has lived in Ontario since 1964. She is recognized and admired as one of the finest First Nations artists. Her work is visionary in its embrace of resilience, co-operation and a deep commitment to the spirit and history of her people and of all peoples.

A residential school survivor, she is active in presenting this terrible history to students throughout Ontario and Canada, encouraging a dialogue of reconciliation and empowerment across generations. Using vibrant colours and lines, her art honours Indigenous women and families and she has lent her voice and her art to projects to improve the health and well-being of Indigenous women and girls.

“Family,” displayed in the centre of the printed document, expresses the importance of talking together as the foundation on which strong, healthy families and communities are built, sharing our stories so we can create powerful new stories together. She signs her artwork with her Sioux name Ioyan Mani, which translates as “Walk Beyond.”

Maxine’s artwork appears throughout the printed strategy document. With her permission, selections from her paintings and sketches have been adapted to accompany text and section pages.

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Banner photo credit: Courtesy of Canadian Art Prints