

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (“MOU”)
BETWEEN
The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (“AMO”)
AND
The Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (“OFIFC”)**

1.0 PREAMBLE

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres recognize the importance of continuously establishing and maintaining respectful relationships between municipal governments and Indigenous communities. It is with this understanding that the OFIFC and AMO enter into a partnership agreement to forge new ways of working together in the spirit of reconciliation to advance the wellbeing of Indigenous residents in urban and rural communities.

2.0 CONTEXT

The OFIFC and AMO began working together in 2018 in the interest of identifying areas of mutual interest and potential collaboration between our member organizations. This relationship-building recognizes the vital role local Indigenous Friendships Centres and municipal governments play in creating strong and diverse communities that celebrate and welcome the contributions of Indigenous people while providing services to meet the unique needs of Indigenous residents.

The OFIFC and AMO are collaborating on initiatives that create tangible opportunities and outcomes for our respective member organizations to engage and work together in local initiatives advancing the well-being of our communities. It is our common objective that this MOU build a foundation for a strong, mutually-beneficial relationship between AMO and the OFIFC for many years to come.

The following guiding principles provide the foundation for this positive and productive relationship as AMO and OFIFC work together to advance the wellbeing of urban and rural Indigenous communities:

- **Equity and Access:** Equitable access requires working to address barriers to ensure all urban and rural Indigenous people are able to receive services, regardless of geographic or physical location.

- **Collaboration and Co-development:** The value of Indigenous expertise and knowledge to design, plan, implement and evaluate public policy and programs that impact the wellbeing of Indigenous people is recognized.
- **Indigenous Leadership:** Urban and rural Indigenous communities have involvement and responsibility over planning and development of policies and services for urban and rural Indigenous people.
- **Responsiveness to Community Priorities:** Community-identified needs and priorities provide the basis for policy and program development.
- **Respect for Indigenous Diversity and Cultures:** The distinctions and diversity of Indigenous people across Ontario are recognized and respected, with additional consideration given to gender, sexual orientation, age, language, ability, religion and socioeconomic difference.

3.0 BACKGROUND

OFIFC

Founded in 1971, OFIFC is a provincial Indigenous organization that represents the collective interests of twenty-nine (29) member Friendship Centres. Its Friendship Centres improve the quality of life of Indigenous people living in an urban and rural environment by supporting self-determined activities which encourage equal access to and participation in Canadian society and which respects Indigenous cultural distinctiveness.

The OFIFC administers several culture-based programs and services which are delivered by local Friendship Centres in areas such as health, poverty reduction, homelessness, ending family violence, justice, family support, and employment and training. OFIFC member Friendship Centres currently deliver culture-based programs and services in most of these areas, which has had a positive impact on Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities across Ontario. Friendship Centres do not operate in a vacuum, and often develop meaningful relationships and innovative partnerships with local municipalities to ensure that urban and rural Indigenous people are receiving equitable access to culturally-based services. As such, Friendship Centres are recognized as Indigenous community hubs in the cities and towns in which they are located, providing services in a self-determining, holistic, and integrated manner to local Indigenous people and communities.

AMO

The Association of Municipalities is a non-partisan non-profit organization representing almost all of Ontario's 444 municipal governments. AMO's mandate is to support and enhance strong and effective municipal government in Ontario by working together on shared goals and common challenges.

AMO promotes the value of the municipal order of government as a vital and essential component of Ontario and Canada's political system.

Strengthening relations with Indigenous partners to promote neighbourly relationships and to better serve Indigenous residents is an AMO priority. AMO recognizes that as service providers, municipal governments must be responsive to the needs of Indigenous residents and those accessing municipal services.

4.0 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This MOU is a statement of intent to communicate, work together, and exchange program and policy information to advance the interests of our collective memberships across Ontario.

5.0 SCOPE OF AGREEMENT

This MOU does not create any binding legal obligations on the parties or any authorities for one party or another.

6.0 SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

a) Relationship-Building and Maintenance

- i) OFIFC and AMO policy directors will meet annually to share information about potential partnership opportunities and to update one another on joint initiatives, with further meetings as required.
- ii) AMO and OFIFC policy staff will communicate regularly on items of mutual interest or shared concern

b) Information Sharing

- i) OFIFC and AMO staff will share information when relevant opportunities arise for joint advocacy in influencing or shaping the policy landscape.

c) Collaboration

- i) Policy Development and Implementation: OFIFC will have representation on AMO’s social services task forces, and others as deemed fit.
- ii) Training and Professional Development: OFIFC and AMO will share educational opportunities on issues of mutual interest and support mutual access to these opportunities as deemed fit by both parties.
- iii) Joint Initiatives: OFIFC and AMO will consider opportunities to advance mutually-beneficial joint initiatives, as appropriate.

7.0 DURATION


This MOU takes effect on the date it is signed by both parties, until it is terminated.

8.0 TERMINATION


Either the OFIFC of AMO may terminate this agreement with 90 days written notice to the other party.

9.0 CONCLUSION

In signing this agreement we, the undersigned agree upon the elements set out in our MOU. It is further agreed that should additional activities and areas of collaboration be identified, they will be included in the spirit and intent of this agreement.




 Jennifer Dockstader,
 President, OFIFC



 Graydon Smith,
 President, AMO
 Mayor, Town of Bracebridge



 Witness



 Witness

6th day of November 2020

 Signed this [X] day of [Month, Year]

9th day of November 2020

 Signed this [X] day of [Month, Year]