

# Working with Indigenous Partners to Address Gender-Based Violence

The Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, Ontario Native Women's Association, and the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition



**OFIFC**

Ontario Federation of  
Indigenous Friendship Centres



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# PANELISTS AND FACILITATOR



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# Indigenous Women and Indigenous Communities in Municipalities

- First Nations (status and non-status), Métis, and Inuit
- Rapidly growing population - **88%** of Indigenous peoples in Ontario live off-reserve, in cities and towns across the province.<sup>1</sup> **There are Indigenous community members in every municipality.**
- Hold **inherent rights**, which are affirmed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- Have the **right to be involved** in decisions-making on the issues that impact us
- **Experts in our lives** and our organizations are uniquely positioned to respond our needs
- Each urban Indigenous community is **unique**, organizes differently and partners based on trust level, capacity and the specific issues.
- Requires that we develop different forums for working together and we **shift relationships** so that Indigenous people are true partners, working in ways that recognize and incorporate Indigenous knowledge and frameworks as part of the solutions

# Indigenous Women and Gender Based Violence

- Indigenous women experience significantly higher rates of gender-based violence and have unique and distinct experiences because of colonization
  - **63%** of Indigenous women in Canada have experienced violent victimization in their lifetime (vs 45% of non-Indigenous women)<sup>2</sup>
  - **12 times** more likely to go missing or be murdered than any other women in Canada<sup>3</sup>
  - **3 times** more likely to be murdered than non-Indigenous women in Ontario<sup>4</sup>
- Intersecting forms of discrimination place some Indigenous women at even greater risk of experiencing gender-based violence – child welfare involvement, homelessness, disability, 2SLGBTQIA+<sup>5</sup>
- National Inquiry into MMIWG2S+ → violence against Indigenous women and girls is a national crisis and a “**race-based, gender-based genocide**” rooted in colonization and Canada’s assimilation policies, historical/ongoing trauma, racism, and sexism<sup>6</sup>
- Urban areas have been identified as having highest proportions of missing and murdered Indigenous women cases<sup>7</sup>
- Indigenous women are often revictimized by the systems that are intended to support them

# The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition

- 8 Indigenous service organizations in Ottawa
- Annually serving 20,000 Indigenous community members in Ottawa
- Employ approx 550 staff in Ottawa, most are Indigenous
- Property assets are estimated at \$200M across Ottawa
- Research team that informs our priorities
- Works with the City of Ottawa on eight mutual priorities through committees and processes that we have jointly created or are led by the OAC.

**The OAC is a wise practice and model for Indigenous women's leadership and urban Indigenous community collaboration with municipal partners**







# Indigenous Women's Safety Table

- Collaborative initiative focused on addressing the safety and well-being of Indigenous women within Ottawa in response to the MMIWG National Inquiry Calls for Justice
- Led by the OAC with 15+ partners including City of Ottawa, Ottawa Public Health, Ottawa Police Service (OPS), Ottawa CAS, Ottawa Hospital, and United Way
- Works to identify and address systemic issues and respond to key gaps in the City through four working groups:

## **Law Enforcement**

- Training 150 OPS members
- Joint Workplan (OAC/OPS)

## **Health and Wellbeing**

- Family Healing Lodge

## **Residential Services**

- Aging Out Initiative
- Violence Against Women Inuit Shelter

## **Housing and Homelessness**

- Indigenous Housing & Homelessness Strategy

# VAW Inuit Shelter



## **Our collective success:**

- \$6.4M for the building of the Shelter (CMHC)
- \$2.8M for pre-development funding (ISC)
- \$1.8 annually for 20 years for the operations of the Shelter.
- The transfer of the land from the City to the OAC.

**We have successfully brought \$55M into the City for the next twenty years to support the building and operations of the Shelter**

# Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin – I am a Kind Man

## A Wholistic Approach to Prevention and Healing

- Everyone has a part in ending gender-based violence
- Centering culture and healing
- Program offered in 20+ municipalities across Ontario
- A designated **Indigenous-Specific** Intimate Partner Violence Prevention (IPVP) Program





# SHARING OUR STORIES



What barriers do Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people continue to face in accessing safety and support, and how are your organizations responding to these challenges?

# SHARING OUR STORIES



What actions can municipalities take to become true allies and helpers in this work?

# WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU



What will you commit  
to doing to become  
allies and helpers in  
this work?

How are you  
supporting Indigenous  
women's safety in  
your municipality?



Thank You Nakurmiik

Meegwetch

Niá:wen  
Merci





# References

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4. Statistics Canada. (2023). [Table 35-10-0156-01 Number, percentage and rate of homicide victims, by gender and Indigenous identity;](#) and Statistics Canada. (2015). [Table 8: Total female victims of homicide, by Aboriginal identity, Canada, provinces and territories 2001 to 2014.](#)
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