



# British Columbia

## Introductory Statement

On behalf of the Province of BC, I am pleased to contribute to the National Action Plan, by highlighting key priorities and progress related to ending violence against Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people. Through the information shared in this contribution, including links provided to key resources, we hope to provide greater understanding of BC's approach to ending violence and to demonstrate our commitment to meaningful change.

We understand that this is complex work that requires a holistic approach to addressing the intergenerational trauma and inequity faced by Indigenous communities since colonization. Addressing this trauma and its systemic causes will require real, intentional collaboration not only with Indigenous communities, but with all British Columbians.

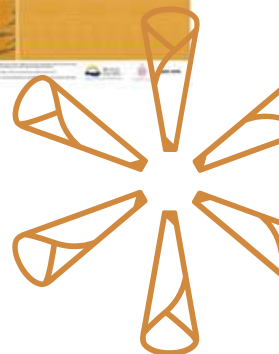
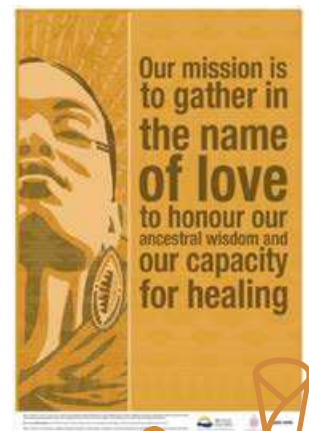
On behalf of my provincial government colleagues, I would like to recognize the wisdom, advocacy and ongoing action of family members, survivors, community leaders and partners. Their dedication to identifying and actioning solutions to prevent, protect and respond to violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples has had an immeasurable impact on all British Columbians.



## Highlights/Current Progress

In February 2019, the Province of BC committed to the development of a path forward to ending violence. The term 'path forward' was an intentional one, reflecting an understanding that our work together would change direction over time based on challenges and successes – that our shared history and the complex issues that have come from it could not be fully addressed in a single, point in time response. It was critical that family members, survivors, community representatives, and others, identified key priorities and opportunities to inform the foundation for the path forward.

During the summer of 2019, 12 community dialogue sessions were held across British Columbia to bring together individuals from communities across the province. The final report of these dialogue sessions, *"Path Forward Women & Girls Safety Community Sessions Action Plan and Toolkit"* was released in Autumn, 2019. The report outlines the main themes from each of the twelve sessions along with short-term, medium-term and long-term goals, action items and a toolkit of resources for communities to use in their own work moving forward.





Through these sessions, participants helped to articulate four key priority themes:

- ★ Safe Spaces and Safety Plans
- ★ Healing Support
- ★ Strengthening Relationships with Partners
- ★ Access to Resources and Recommendations

The Path Forward community dialogues were continued in Spring 2021. As with the first round of community dialogues in 2019, these sessions used the same process of traditional Indigenous decision-making to create a safe space for participants.

In response to the perspective and input shared by family members, survivors and community members, the Province acknowledges key components that are critical for success:

- ★ Increased community capacity, and recognition of the agency of Indigenous communities
- ★ ‘Re-centering’ Indigenous women
- ★ Re-imagining of ‘safe spaces’
- ★ Meaningful collaboration across all levels of government.
- ★ Respecting diversity and distinction

In addition to this work, significant progress has been made to address systemic causes of violence and fulfill provincial commitments to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. For example:

- ★ In March 2019, [TogetherBC](#), BC’s first ever poverty reduction strategy, was released;
- ★ In June 2019, the Province of BC released [A Pathway to Hope: A Roadmap to Making Mental Health and Addictions Care Better for People in British Columbia](#);
- ★ In November 2019, Government passed the [BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#), making BC the first jurisdiction to pass legislation to bring the UN Declaration into effect; and,
- ★ In March 2020, the Province of BC and BC First Nations Justice Council signed the [First Nations Justice Strategy](#).

These foundational strategies, and resulting initiatives, by the Province have been developed in collaboration with Indigenous partners, and serve as only a few examples of our government’s commitment to address the systemic causes of violence, and the impact of this violence on Indigenous communities.

## Priorities and Next Steps

Reflecting community-based priorities, and to set a solid foundation for a path forward to ending violence, the Province of BC is making an initial \$5.5M investment in 2021/22, with a commitment to additional, multi-year funding. Specifically, the Province will invest directly in a community fund - accessible to First Nations communities, urban/off reserve communities, Métis citizens and 2SLGBTQQIA communities – to support capacity to develop safety plans.

Additionally, the Province will make a number of aligned investments to increase the impact of the community fund. These include:

- ★ An Indigenous-led technology initiative;
- ★ An Indigenous data and evaluation initiative; and,
- ★ The development of 2SLGBTQQIA training and education resources for the public service.

The Province will also invest in commemoration and honouring of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples who have gone missing or been murdered, and their family members.

As we continue to build the path forward, the Province remains committed to ongoing engagement with community, and to honouring and respecting the expertise, agency and leadership of Indigenous women. The Province will also continue to be a strong collaborator with the federal government and provincial and territorial partners in order to develop meaningful responses to the National Action Plan.

## Closing Statement

The contribution of family members, survivors, community members and government partners has laid a solid foundation for meaningful action. We are committed to ongoing collaboration as we build and implement the path forward together.

This National Action Plan provides additional opportunities to identify meaningful solutions to systemic causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people. We are committed to continuing this work in meaningful collaboration with community, government and sector partners.

## Links

Additional Information and resources related to community input and early Provincial priorities can be found at:

### **BC Path Forward:**

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/about-bcs-justice-system/recent-inquiries>

### **Community Dialogues and Community Toolkit:**

[www.pathforward.ca](http://www.pathforward.ca)

### **BC Reflection (June 3, 2020):**

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/about-bc-justice-system/inquiries/mmiw/mmiwg-overview-report.pdf>