

2025-2026

Annual Report

Office of Indigenous
Relations and
Reconciliation





MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Minister Responsible for the Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (the office), I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2025-26. This report outlines the office's activities between April 1, 2025 and March 31, 2026 in achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the 2023-2026 Activity Plan. This report was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the **Transparency and Accountability Act** under which the office is a Category 3 entity. As Minister, I am accountable for the report and the results reported.

This report highlights important work completed during 2025-26 and identifies opportunities and challenges for the upcoming fiscal year. In 2025-26, the office demonstrated its commitment to advancing reconciliation through continued collaboration with Indigenous Governments, organizations, communities and people.

I look forward to continued progress in 2026-27.

Sincerely,

Hon. Lela Evans

Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

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Departmental Overview

Organizational Structure

The Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation supports the Premier and Minister in advancing Reconciliation and building principle-based relationships with Indigenous Governments, Organizations, communities, and people.

The Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation works towards advancing Reconciliation with Indigenous people in Newfoundland and Labrador and has three core functions: Reconciliation; Policy, Planning and Consultation; and Negotiation of Land Claims, Self-Government and Other Agreements.

For more information on the Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, please see our website at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/irr/>.

Staff and Budget

Division	# of Employees	Budget
Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation	11	\$1,936,328

As of March 31, 2026, the Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation had a staff complement of 11. Of the 11 staff, 6 were female and 5 were male.

The Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is located on the sixth floor of the Confederation Complex, East Block, in St. John's.

Vision

The vision of the Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is to advance the social and economic aspirations of Indigenous people in the Province.

Mandate

The Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation focuses on fostering strong relationships with Indigenous Peoples, characterized by mutual respect. This approach is the foundation for sound Government policies and programs which support vibrant and prosperous Indigenous communities.

Lines of Business

The Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is responsible for the following Lines of Business:

- Reconciliation
 - o Work with Indigenous Governments and Organizations (IGOs), Provincial and Federal departments and agencies and other stakeholders with respect to issues of importance to Indigenous Peoples to advance Reconciliation.
- Policy, Planning and Consultation
 - o Support the development and delivery of Provincial Government policies and programs that are culturally sensitive, meaningful, and appropriate.
 - o Provide advice to Provincial Government departments and agencies on the conduct of Indigenous consultations.
- Negotiation of Land Claims, Self-Government and Other Agreements
 - o Negotiate and implement land claims, self-government and other agreements to promote the self-sufficiency, self-governance, and autonomy of Indigenous Peoples and to provide clarity and advice on Indigenous rights in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Highlights and Partnerships

The following outlines the Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation's Highlights and Partnerships for the reporting period.

Ongoing Engagement: The Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation continues to facilitate regular discussions between the Premier, the Minister for Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and Indigenous Leaders. These discussions support and promote ongoing communication and help to ensure the priorities of Government are aligned with the priorities of Indigenous Peoples.

Innu Roundtable: The Innu Roundtable is an Innu-led initiative that includes representation from Innu Nation (including Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation and Mushuau Innu First Nation), the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Federal Government, and is mandated to address Innu community health and healing initiatives. The Innu Roundtable and its subcommittees met regularly during the reporting period to advance Innu priorities.

Trail of the Caribou Pilgrimage: Each year, students participate in the Trail of the Caribou Pilgrimage, a partnership between the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Royal Canadian Legion Newfoundland and Labrador Command, Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the 5th Canadian Ranger Patrol Group. In July 2025, ten youth representing the five IGOs in the Province (Nunatsiavut Government, Innu Nation, NunatuKavut Community Council, Miawpukek First Nation and Qalipu First Nation) participated in the pilgrimage.

Consultation and Engagement: Throughout the reporting period the office continued to provide consultation advice on resource developments, mineral exploration, environmental assessments, and other regulatory matters to provincial government departments and project proponents. The office also provided advice and guidance to

all departments on relationship building, engagement with and participation of Indigenous Peoples and IGOs in government policy and decisions.

Land Claims: The office continues to lead provincial negotiations on the Innu land claim and the provincial implementation of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement.

Day for Truth and Reconciliation: On September 30, the Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Newfoundland and Labrador, and in keeping with the spirit and intent of Call to Action #80 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Provincial Government encouraged all residents to take time to reflect on the cultures and experiences of Indigenous Peoples and to remember the importance of listening, understanding, and mutual respect on the journey to Reconciliation.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ People: The goal of the Provincial Indigenous Women's Reconciliation Council is to coordinate and lead meaningful action to address existing challenges and obstacles in the areas of culture, health and wellness, justice and human security that impact Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. The Council, comprised of 11 members, including six Indigenous women representatives, and five Provincial Government representatives; one of which is from the Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation held meetings throughout the year to discuss a variety of challenges and obstacles.

By engaging with the Calls for Justice regarding missing and murdered women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, fostering collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, and heightening public awareness about the imperative for reconciliation, the Indigenous Women's Reconciliation Council is just one example of the Provincial Government's commitment to advancing a more equitable and inclusive future for all residents.

Honouring Indigenous Culture: Government has been collaborating with the five IGOs throughout the Province for the selection and procurement of culturally significant pieces of artwork to be displayed in the Confederation Building. Unveiling ceremonies

were held with the Qalipu First Nation in April 2025 and in August 2025 with the NunatuKavut Community Council along with representation from the Province, and the respective Indigenous artist. The acquisition and display of Indigenous artwork in the main lobby of the Confederation Building reflects actions which respect and honour the culture and heritage of Indigenous Peoples. It is an important step on the path towards Reconciliation and is part of a broader objective to promote symbols that better reflect the diversity, resilience and history of the Indigenous peoples of the Province.

Report on Performance

Advancing Reconciliation with Indigenous Governments, Organizations and Peoples and Enhancing Relationships

The Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation works to advance Reconciliation and enhance relationships with IGOs. To achieve this, the office:

- Works with IGOs and Provincial and Federal Government departments to advance Reconciliation and enable access to programs and services designed for and provided to Indigenous people in the Province;
- Works with IGOs and Provincial Government departments and agencies to provide advice on policies, programs, and legislation to better meet the needs of the diverse Indigenous peoples and communities of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- Provides leadership and advice with respect to the Duty to Consult IGOs; and
- Leads all Provincial Government negotiations of land claims and self-government agreements, and supports Provincial Government departments and agencies in their implementation of those agreements.

Goal

By March 31, 2026, the Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation will have continued to advance Reconciliation and enhance the Provincial Government's relationship with Indigenous Governments, Organizations, communities, and people.

2025-26 Objective

By March 31, 2026, the Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation will have continued to support initiatives to advance Reconciliation and build positive relationships with Indigenous Governments, Organizations, communities, and people of the Province.

Results Achieved:

Indicator 1: Provided advice and support to Provincial Government departments and agencies relating to public policy, programs, legislation and consultation obligations.

The Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation worked to ensure the Provincial Government's consultation obligations with IGOs were met in relation to land and resource development projects. This is an important responsibility and included providing consultation advice and support on all regulatory permits issued across government departments and on new and potential resource development projects.

The office also supported departments with a mandate to provide health, social and educational services by helping them engage relevant IGOs on a variety of policies, programs and initiatives impacting their communities and work with departments to include an Indigenous lens in their work. This included supporting the development of public engagements and consultations plans, and engagement with IGOs.

The office also collaborated with the Nunatsiavut Government, Innu Nation, Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation, Mushuau Innu First Nation, NunatuKavut Community Council, Qalipu First Nation, and Miawpukek First Nation on issues and matters of importance to them. This included regular meetings at the Premier, Ministerial and officials level; facilitating meetings with other government departments to discuss and address specific areas of interest and issues requiring a timely response; and collaboration with the IGOs and the federal government on matters requiring a trilateral approach.

Indicator 2: Participated in committees and forums with IGOs and other partners to advance the priorities of Indigenous Peoples and communities.

The office continued to participate as the Province's representative in the Innu Roundtable, a forum where the Innu Nation, Provincial Government, and Federal

Government discuss issues of mutual importance. Quarterly working group meetings were held throughout the year to advance Innu priorities.

The office also participated in the Labrador Inuit Tripartite Health Committee - a committee established to work cooperatively to discuss, provide recommendations, and/or take actions that require a coordinated tripartite response to improve health programs and services for Labrador Inuit.

The office participated in all meetings of the Provincial Indigenous Women's Reconciliation Council. The Council met four times in 2025-26, July and February 2025, and in January and March 2026. The Reconciliation Council plays a pivotal role in acknowledging the historical injustices experienced by Indigenous communities in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Canada. By working in partnership with Indigenous women, their governments, and organizations, and listening to their concerns, we are making positive strides together to prevent violence.

The Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, with the Federal Government, continued to negotiate land claims and self-government agreements with the Innu Nation and Federal Government. Work continued with the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Implementation Committee, including signing of an amendment to the Nunatsiavut Government Fiscal Financing Agreement in March 2025.

In the spirit of connecting, Minister Evans met in person with Indigenous Peoples in their communities to hear about their lived experiences and priorities. This included meetings with leaders of IGOs, and other partner organizations such as First Light NL and the Reconciliation Council. Upon invitation, Minister Evans attended an Innu Round Table Meeting, a Reconciliation Council Meeting and the annual federal-provincial meeting to discuss the Missing and Murder Indigenous Women and Girls Report. The Minister also participated in other Indigenous related public events and ceremonies, such as the Provincial Indigenous Women's Steering Committee gathering,

the Purple Ribbon Campaign opening event, and the Gathering of Voices hosted by First Light NL.

Indicator 3: Worked with IGOs and Provincial Government departments to advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

Initially in November 2023, Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, in partnership with the Public Service Commission, released a foundational eLearning module titled *Toward Reconciliation: An Overview of Indigenous Histories Across Canada*. The course is mandatory for public service employees and provides an overview of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and an introduction to Indigenous Peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and the Centre for Learning and Development continued to fulfil the commitment to co-develop the IGOs' individual modules, starting with the Nunatsiavut Government. Work with the Nunatsiavut Government continued through the 2025-2026 fiscal year focusing on content development.

In addition, the office continues to work with Government Departments to report on progress of initiatives advancing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

Opportunities and Challenges

In the 2023-2026 Activity Plan, the Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation committed to advancing Reconciliation and enhancing relationships with IGOs. Actions to meet these commitments presented a number of opportunities and challenges.

Collaborative relationships with IGOs provide an opportunity to listen, understand and advance their priorities. The office continues to engage with IGOs to strengthen these relationships and better support the advancement of Indigenous priorities.

The office has continued to work with IGOs and the Federal Government to negotiate land claims, self-government agreements, and matters of mutual importance. These negotiations provide an opportunity to support Indigenous Peoples on their path to self-determination.

Delivering provincial services to remote Indigenous communities and ensuring policies and programs are reflective of the unique needs of Indigenous Peoples remains challenging. The office will continue to work with IGOs, Provincial Government departments, the Federal Government and other stakeholders to make advancements in these areas.

Financial Information

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this report are based on public information provided in the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2026.

REPORT ON THE PROGRAM EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES OF THE CONSOLIDATED FUND			
DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (CONTINUED)			
	Estimates		
	Actual	Amended	Original
	\$	\$	\$
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL			
INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION			
<i>CURRENT</i>			
2.7.01. MINISTER'S OFFICE			
01. Salaries	92,107	210,700	215,700
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	8,101	128,800	128,800
<i>Supplies</i>	1,339	2,500	2,500
<i>Purchased Services</i>	-	1,800	1,800
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	-	500	500
02. Operating Accounts	9,440	133,600	133,600
Total: Minister's Office	101,547	344,300	349,300
2.7.02. INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION			
01. Salaries	1,192,500	1,195,100	1,190,100
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	-	4,300	4,300
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	35,565	92,800	92,800
<i>Supplies</i>	5,710	10,000	10,000
<i>Purchased Services</i>	8,304	10,500	10,500
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	745	1,000	1,000
02. Operating Accounts	50,324	118,600	118,600
10. Grants and Subsidies	591,957	867,400	867,400
Total: Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation	1,834,781	2,181,100	2,176,100
TOTAL: INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION	1,936,328	2,525,400	2,525,400

