



Métis Nation
of Ontario 



The Urban Indigenous Action Plan Discussion Paper

***An Action Plan to guide urban Indigenous community
planning, service delivery, investments, relationship building
and reconciliation***

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**Call for Submissions and Feedback
Fall 2016**

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INTRODUCTION

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Report and Calls to Action set clearly the direction that must be taken by governments and Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and organisations to close the gaps in outcomes for Indigenous people(s) and recognises the role of Indigenous organisations and communities effecting positive change.

In May 2014, Ontario announced a commitment to develop an Action Plan to address the unique needs, strengths and priorities of Indigenous people living in urban settings and the urban community-based organisations which serve them. The Action Plan is intended to be an overarching framework which guides approaches, policies and actions in the province of Ontario, formalising the engagement and co-development processes currently under way that have included Indigenous partners in an effective, substantive and meaningful way.

Aligned with the TRC's understanding of the strengths of urban Indigenous communities, cultures and traditions, the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC), Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), and Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) have consistently advocated for the central role of urban community-based Indigenous organisations in policy development, program design, delivery and evaluation, and local planning.

The Action Plan is being co-developed with the provincial urban organizations; OFIFC, MNO and ONWA, and is being informed by input from urban communities across Ontario. Since 2015, OFIFC, MNO and ONWA have been facilitating engagement activities with communities across Ontario.

This *Urban Indigenous Action Plan Discussion Paper* is the result of what has been heard to date and how the Action Plan can address the complex socio-economic issues and priorities across the province. As presented in this document, the Action Plan will seek to:

- Enhance the involvement and control of urban Indigenous partners, organizations and communities in the planning, delivery and evaluation of programs and services;
- Support community-based approaches, focusing on local strengths and assets to provide culturally-relevant services;
- Coordinate and align urban Indigenous programs and services between all levels of government to increase the reach and impact of services provided; and,
- Measure progress and outcomes and to guide future investments in urban Indigenous programs and services.

The purpose of this document is to seek feedback from urban Indigenous communities, organizations and others to ensure that the final Action Plan, to be released in 2017/18,

is responsive to the priorities and needs of communities.

Navigating the Urban Indigenous Action Plan Discussion Paper

This Discussion Paper outlines the proposed foundational elements and direction for the Action Plan and includes questions for discussion and consideration by communities and organizations at the end of the document.

Submitting Feedback on the Urban Indigenous Action Plan

In addition to the community engagement sessions taking place across the province, feedback on the Urban Indigenous Action Plan can be submitted:

Online at: www.ofifc.org
www.metisnation.org
www.onwa.ca

Or, by email to any of the following addresses:

uiap@ofifc.org
uiap@metisnation.org
uiap@onwa.ca
uiap@ontario.ca

Please include your main contact information and any organization you are affiliated with. **The deadline for submissions is Friday, February 17, 2017.**

Notice on Terminology

For the purposes of the Discussion Paper, the term “urban Indigenous” is not synonymous with “off-reserve First Nation”. It is a term that is inclusive of First Nation (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit peoples, communities and/or organizations living in or serving urban off-reserve locations in Ontario.

Geographically, “urban Indigenous” is not exclusive to Indigenous people living in large urban population centres; it also describes Indigenous communities comprised or within smaller urban/rural population centres.

Similarly, it is recognized that “urban Indigenous” is inclusive of the experiences of Indigenous people of all genders.

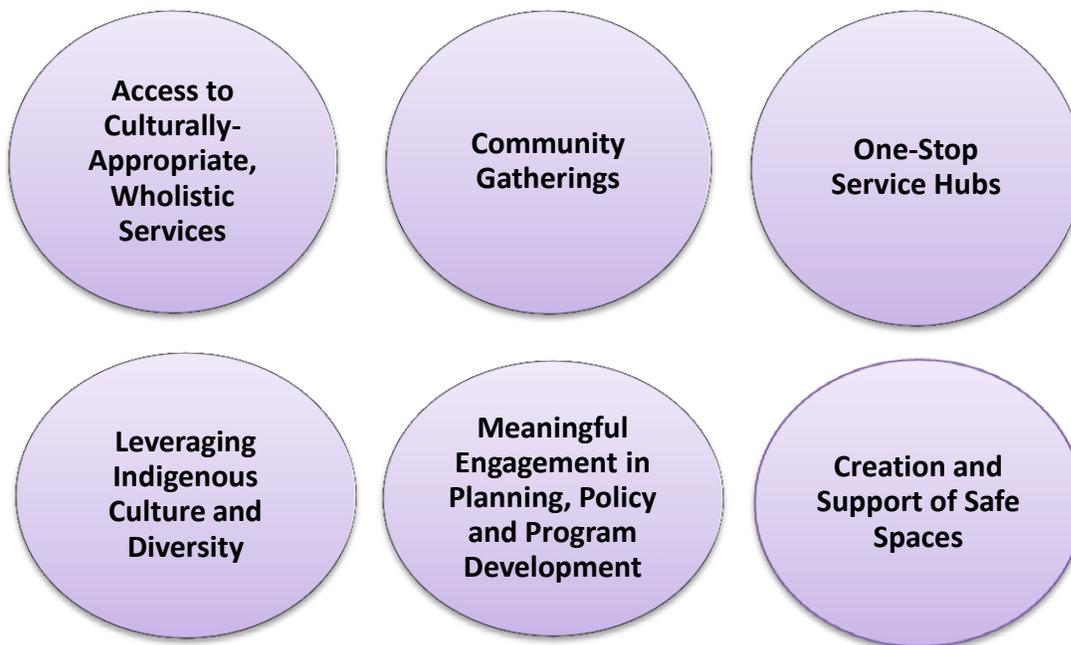
Service delivery organizations indicates urban Indigenous community-based organizations delivering programs and services and includes and recognizes the Métis Nation of Ontario governance structure and program and service delivery network.

DEVELOPING THE URBAN INDIGENOUS ACTION PLAN

What We've Heard So Far: What's Working

Community input was gathered through nine community engagement fora, including Timmins, Fort Frances, Thunder Bay, Kenora, Dryden, Sault Ste. Marie, Midland, Ottawa, and Hamilton. In addition, the Provincial Urban Aboriginal Forum held in March, 2016 was an opportunity to share community driven service provision approaches addressing community challenges through collaboration and partnership. The following section highlights what was heard during these sessions.

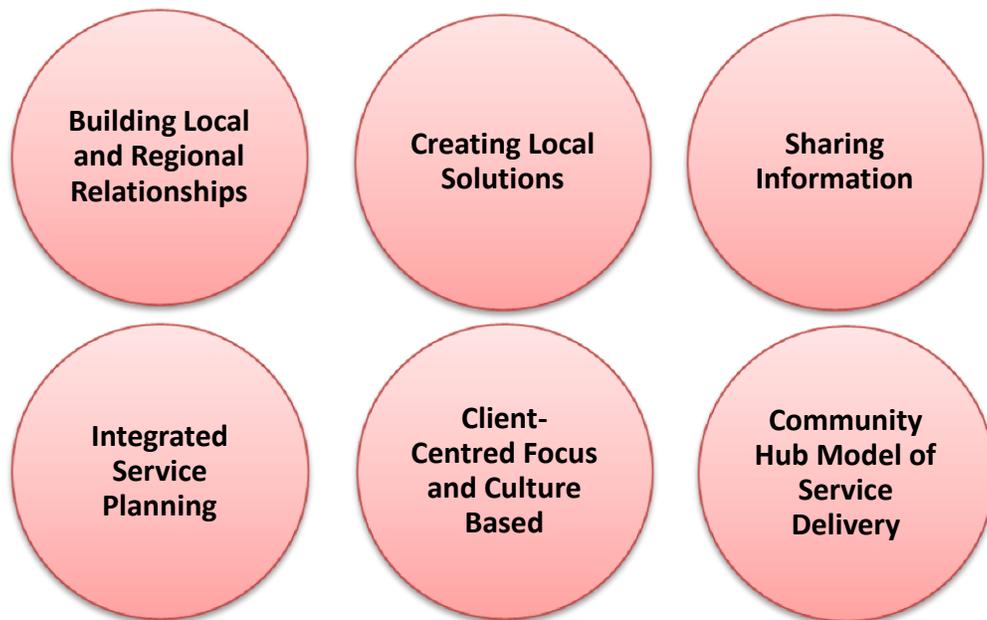
What's Working for Urban Indigenous Community Members



- ***Access to Culturally-Appropriate, Wholistic Services*** – Services and programs are most effective when delivered by organizations and staff that recognize the distinct cultural traditions and needs of Indigenous community members.
- ***Community Gatherings*** – Coming together as a community allows for greater networking, community building, and development.
- ***One-stop Service Hubs*** – Integrated service delivery facilitates improved access to a range of services for community members.
- ***Leveraging Indigenous Culture and Diversity*** – Builds on the strengths and local assets of a community rather than only seeking to focus on community deficits and needs; highlights areas in which communities can be leaders and drivers of change.

- **Meaningful Engagement in Planning, Policy and Program Development** – Participation of urban Indigenous service providers and communities in local planning processes and in provincial policy and program development creates the opportunity for governments to implement more effective responses to local needs, enhances Indigenous control, and leverages the expertise and knowledge in urban Indigenous communities.
- **Creation and Support of Safe Spaces** – Free from lateral violence, anti-Indigenous racism, homophobia and gender-based violence. Safe spaces for Indigenous individuals, families and communities are accepting and respectful of identities and diversity, including culture, gender, ability, sexual orientation, language, socio-economic differences, age and experience.

What's Working for Service Providers



- **Building Local and Regional Relationships** – Allows for more effective community development and opens up opportunities to address social and economic issues facing communities in more wholistic, collaborative ways.
- **Creating Local Solutions** – To more effectively respond to local needs through the recognition of the diversity of urban Indigenous communities, their histories, traditions, and priorities.
- **Sharing Information** – Builds on existing community strengths and can counter issues of guarding resources and silo-ed approaches.

- ***Integrated Service Planning*** – Aligning and planning service delivery collaboratively to more effectively leverage existing resources and identify gaps in services; creates opportunities to take multidisciplinary approaches to developing and delivering services.
- ***Client-Centred Focus and Culture Based*** – Designing services that are culturally based and responsive to the needs of clients, while meeting program objectives.
- ***Community Hub Model of Service Delivery*** – Allows for improved access to a wider range of wholistic programs and services for community members and encourages service delivery organizations to work more closely together to address community priorities.

What We've Heard So Far: Barriers and Issues

During the initial rounds of engagement, community members and organizations also shared issues and barriers facing their communities. These highlight a range of social and economic challenges that will inform the actions to be undertaken through the Urban Indigenous Action Plan.

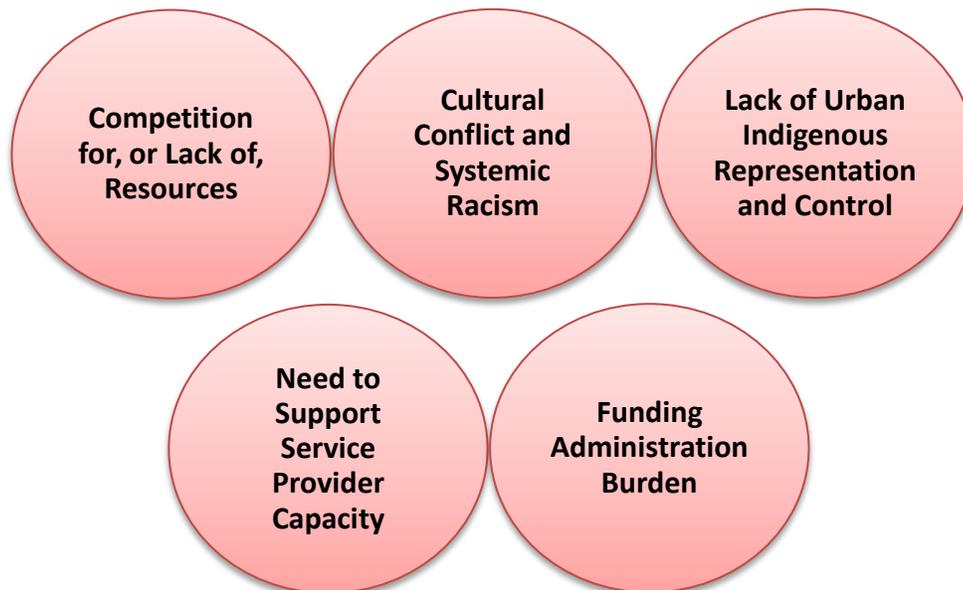
Barriers and Issues Facing Urban Indigenous Community Members



- ***Racism and Lack of Cultural Competency*** – Racism is a key interpersonal and institutional issue that not only harms the process of forming partnerships, but also limits urban Indigenous community members' access to services and/or the ability to get services that meet their needs.
- ***Homelessness and Lack of Affordable Housing*** – Access to affordable, adequate housing is a critical need in many urban Indigenous communities.
- ***Inadequate Public Transportation*** – Access to affordable, adequate public transportation has direct implications for the ability of community members to access services, including healthcare, education, and housing, among others.

- ***Need for Education, Training and Employment*** – Access to education, training and employment opportunities limits the economic participation of urban Indigenous communities and impacts overall individual and community well-being.
- ***Limited Support(s) for Youth*** – Youth are limited in the range of culturally-appropriate, wholistic supports (for example, through recreation-based programming) that are currently available across communities.
- ***Poor Access to Health and Mental Health Services*** - Urban Indigenous communities experience a number of health (including mental health and addictions) issues that are compounded by inadequate access to health services locally and regionally.
- ***Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls*** – Community safety, including violence against Indigenous women and girls, continues to threaten the well-being of urban Indigenous individuals, families and communities across Ontario.
- ***Food Insecurity*** – Inability to access nutritious, affordable food is a reality for many urban Indigenous families, contributing to negative outcomes and inhibiting their health and well-being.
- ***Involvement in the Criminal Justice System*** – Urban Indigenous people are highly overrepresented in the criminal justice system, and this has direct implications for the ability of these individuals - over the course of their lifespan - to meaningfully participate in the economy.

Barriers and Issues Facing Service Providers



- **Competition for, or Lack of, Resources** – Service providers are competing against each other for available funding, creating mistrust between agencies, making partnerships and relationship building a challenge. When funding is more limited these tensions are increased.
- **Cultural Conflict and Systemic Racism** – There is an urgent need for greater cultural competency, understanding, and awareness of Indigenous cultures in urban settings; need for awareness-raising and respecting the diversity and distinct realities of Métis, First Nations and Inuit peoples in urban areas.
- **Lack of Indigenous Representation and Control** – Indigenous service providers can be excluded from local planning processes and find that their perspectives are not incorporated in the development of government policies and programs. Frequently their involvement is strictly advisory and there is little to no accountability back to the community.
- **Need to Support Service Provider Capacity** – There is a need for greater resources to support the provision and coordination of community driven, culture-based programs and services to meet local needs, as well as for infrastructure and minor capital funding to establish and/or maintain safe community and service delivery spaces.
- **Funding Administration Burden** – Service providers receive funding from many different sources, which all may have different reporting requirements, funding timeframes and may not be flexible to align with organization mandates/needs on the ground. The administration to support multiple sources of fixed term funding is administratively burdensome.

ELEMENTS OF THE URBAN INDIGENOUS ACTION PLAN

Vision

Urban Indigenous communities and peoples across Ontario enjoy health and prosperity.

Mission

An Action Plan to guide urban Indigenous community planning, service delivery, investments, relationship building and reconciliation.

Principles

The following seven principles will guide and inform the Action Plan:

1. Indigenous Control

Respecting the governance structures and protocols of urban Indigenous partners, organizations and communities, enhancing urban Indigenous community involvement and control over planning, design, development, delivery, and evaluation of programs and services, as well as leveraging their expertise in research, policy development, implementation and review.

2. Co-Development

Opportunities for government to open the space for partnership with urban Indigenous communities and organizations to plan, develop, implement and evaluate policies and programs for urban Indigenous people.

3. Respect for Indigenous Diversity

Recognition that unique cultural differences and governance distinctions exist within and between urban First Nation, Métis and Inuit people(s), communities and organisations. Cultural competency and safety is included in research, policy development, design of services, and delivery structures, and is respectful of community, language, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic differences.

4. Transparency and Accountability

Transparent, reciprocal, and agreed-upon relationships for defining, planning, measuring, and evaluating evidence-based policies, programs and their intended outcomes. Clear roles and responsibilities are identified to support accountability to urban Indigenous people and communities, as well as funders.

5. Community Responsiveness

Flexibility to enable appropriate actions and initiatives to best respond to community-identified needs and priorities, promoting effective communication and information exchanges among local service providers, provincial-level partners and communities to inform decision-making at all levels.

6. Service Planning and Integration

Promoting cross-government and urban Indigenous service coordination, including through building on existing programs, policies and resources across government and urban Indigenous partners, and supporting collaborative service planning and evidence-based investments that are tied to outcomes.

7. Access and Inclusion

Addressing the barriers that impede access to and benefit from culture-based programs and services.

Outcomes

The Urban Indigenous Action Plan will be a driver to influence policy and program design and implementation, with the aim of meeting the following outcomes:

1. Urban Indigenous people and communities have the socio-economic supports to increase their participation in all aspects of society.
2. Urban Indigenous community members across the province have improved access to culturally-appropriate services in every community.
3. Urban Indigenous organisations are full partners in the development, design, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs and services for urban Indigenous people.
4. Urban Indigenous organizations, service providers and levels of government have wholistic and aligned approaches to service delivery, system planning and coordination.

Action Areas

Guided by the *Principles* and *Outcomes* (pages 8-10), the Urban Indigenous Action Plan will facilitate and drive actions across four proposed key areas, with the goal of building on what is working and responding to the barriers and issues identified by communities and service providers. These actions will build on initiatives being driven through government strategies such as *Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples* and *Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women*.

1. Inclusive Engagement and Co-Development

- Enabling the participation of urban Indigenous organizations and communities in the development, design, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs and services.
- Establish wise practices for the participation of urban Indigenous organizations and communities in policy and program development to ensure culture-based and community driven approaches.

2. Integrated Planning and Delivery

- Supporting integrated culture-based policy development, service delivery planning, and resource allocation at the provincial and local levels, including building on strengths and existing policies and programs across levels of government and developing capacity.
- Support processes to ensure that urban Indigenous communities and service providers are partners in local planning and service delivery.

3. Facilitating Networks and Information Exchange

- Support processes and information exchanges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations, governments and service providers.

4. Evaluation

- Co-development of a Long-Term Qualitative and Quantitative Evaluation Strategy to measure outcomes and progress.

Performance and Outcomes Measurement

As part of the Urban Indigenous Action Plan, a *Qualitative and Quantitative Evaluation Strategy* will be developed to promote, facilitate effective measurement and reporting that reflects the Action Plan's *Vision, Mission, and Principles*. Measures will inform decision-making and public reporting on progress.

Qualitative and quantitative performance measures will be developed to evaluate the progress of the UIAP's achievement of its stated vision, mission, and outcomes.

The Qualitative and Quantitative Evaluation Strategy will be responsive to government priorities for performance measurement and include wise practices grounded in Indigenous cultures of Turtle Island, such as:

- Evaluation principles informed by the OFIFC's *USAI¹ Research Framework (2012)* and *USAI Evaluation Path (2016)*,
- MNO's Research Protocol and Evaluation Framework
- Principles underlying ONWA evaluations rooted in the gifting and sharing of knowledge and strengthening capacity of all those participating in evaluations.

Performance Measures

- Culturally-appropriate, community-driven performance measures of well-being will be coordinated and aligned, and will be employed across service delivery organizations, governments and Indigenous organizations to achieve identified outcomes.
- Measurement indicators will be wholistic (body, mind, heart, spirit) and culturally valid. They will incorporate/reflect Indigenous perspectives and methodologies.
- Performance measures will be efficient, effective, and relevant to short, medium, and long-term supports to address community needs.

¹ The *USAI Evaluation Path* has been developed by the OFIFC to guide all Indigenous-driven and Indigenous-based evaluation conducted by the OFIFC and the urban Indigenous communities it serves. USAI also responds to evaluation issues by offering a culturally relevant approach to measures and indicators.

Co-development of a plan for the collection and use of urban Indigenous data:

- Ministries and service providers will collect **quality, urban Indigenous-specific data** that informs planning and decision-making, and that are tied to and provide greater accountability to communities.
- High quality data are:
 - **Reliable** – Collected through indicators/measures that produce stable and consistent results.
 - **Valid** – Collected through indicators/measures that truly represent what they are purported to measure.
 - **Comparable** – Useful for a range of purposes and communities.
 - **Timely** – Captured as quickly as possible in order remain useful for the intended purposes.
 - **Complete** – Adequate amounts of data are captured in order to tell a story or provide a snapshot of current realities.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Your feedback is key to support the next phase in developing the Urban Indigenous Action Plan. The following questions relate to the elements of this document, which are proposed to form the basis of the Action Plan.

Vision / Mission

1. Do the vision and the mission of the Urban Indigenous Action Plan effectively reflect the goals of urban indigenous communities?

Principles

2. Are the principles of the Urban Indigenous Action Plan reflective of the values of your community?

Outcomes

3. Are the outcomes of the Urban Indigenous Action Plan meaningful and measurable for urban indigenous communities?

Performance Measurement

4. What are some performance measures that could contribute to measuring these outcomes?
5. What are the main challenges in collecting this data?

Action Areas

6. Are the action areas of the Urban Indigenous Action Plan relevant to providing effective results and increasing the health and prosperity of urban indigenous communities?

Other Comments or Feedback

6. Please feel free to provide additional comments or feedback alongside answers to the questions above.

SUBMITTING FEEDBACK ON THE URBAN INDIGENOUS ACTION PLAN

Online at: www.ofifc.org
www.metisnation.org
www.onwa.ca

Or, by email to any of the following addresses:

uiap@ofifc.org
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Please include your main contact information and any organization you are affiliated with. **The deadline for submissions is Friday, February 17, 2017.**

Thank-you for your review!

