



Métis Nation of Ontario

# GOVERNANCE

How can we get our Métis citizens  
more engaged in MNO activities and  
initiatives at the local, regional and  
provincial levels?

A PLAINSPEAK DOCUMENT

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## MESSAGE FROM THE MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO PRESIDENT



The MNO's entire governance structure has been successful because it was built by Métis communities and citizens and is based on fundamental Métis values and principles.

Our MNO Statement of Prime Purpose continues to guide everything that we do, in particular in our focus on nation building. Our communities and citizens continue to be the heart and soul of the Métis Nation of Ontario. Métis Nation of Ontario citizens need to understand the MNO, what it can do and how citizens can fully participate.

The MNO has a unique governance structure that is different from that of other Indigenous peoples, the provincial government, or the federal government. These differences are by design. It is a governance structure built by Métis people in Ontario for Métis people in Ontario. It has governance structures at the local level (Chartered Community Councils), at the regional level (Regional Councilors, Youth Representatives, and Captains of the Hunt), and at the provincial level (Provisional Council of the MNO (PCMNO)).

These governance structures work in concert to implement the direction provided by the MNO Annual General Assembly (AGA). All citizens can attend the AGA and vote on resolutions that will guide the MNO's direction for the coming year. These governance structures also work to ensure that the voices of its citizens and communities are heard, both inside the MNO, and by those outside the MNO.

The Métis Nation of Ontario also has governance structures that ensure that the viewpoints of women, Senators, youth, veterans, and Captains of the Hunt are taken into account in decision making, which is essential to ensure the balanced, thoughtful decision making that our citizens and their future generations deserve.

The Métis Nation of Ontario Commission on Métis Rights and Self-Government is another important step forward for the MNO. It will provide an opportunity for the voices of our citizens to be heard on these important issues. It will also allow our citizens to gain a better understanding of the MNO and its Statement of Prime Purpose, as well as to see how important each and every citizen is to moving the Métis Nation forward.

**Margaret Froh**

*MNO President*

February 2017



## **Where would I go if I want to express my support, concerns or suggestions with the general political direction, actions or policies of the MNO?**

All Métis citizens are welcome to attend the MNO's Annual General Assembly. This is held in different locations in August of each year.

At the AGA Métis citizens hear the Report from the President and from the MNO Secretariat – our Métis public service. There is time for people to support, question, or raise concerns before each report is accepted.

Any Métis citizen may propose a **Special Resolution** in advance of the Assembly on any major changes to policy or governing documents, like our bylaws. Once debated and passed, it becomes a formal direction to the MNO, its elected officers, and staff. Proposed Special Resolutions must be submitted to the MNO head office 35 days before the Assembly so everyone can have notice. There are updates on past Special Resolutions at the AGA as well.

Any Métis citizen can propose an **Ordinary Resolution** at the Assembly. If passed after debate, they give general direction to the MNO about its policies, priorities, and political direction.

**Where would I go if I want discuss the MNO’s input into future negotiations or to have input into MNO policies or a proposed development in my region? Where would I go to get answers to my questions?**

Métis citizens are welcome to speak at the various public meetings and formal consultations held from time to time in our communities.

Examples are the MNO Commission on Métis Rights & Self-Government’s meetings in 29 communities in 2017 and those held in the communities in 2010-2011 on Métis Identification and Registry. After consultations, reports are written to relay “what we heard”, so that Métis citizens’ questions and concerns can guide future MNO actions.

Public meetings and consultations with Métis citizens are always announced in the *Métis Voyageur*, on the MNO website, and in the communities.

When any development is proposed that might have adverse effects on Métis rights, interests and way of life in a region, the Regional Consultation Committee -- made up of the Regional Councilor, the Council Presidents and Captain of the Hunt -- must be consulted and represent Métis citizens’ views, consider the possible impacts, and make recommendations.

## Where would I go if I want a Harvesters Certificate or have questions about how the MNO Harvesting Policy applies to me?

There is a Chief Captain of the Hunt (the MNO President or her designate), a Deputy Chief Captain of the Hunt, and regional Captains of the Hunt as well as Captain of the Hunt Liaisons.

Métis citizens who want to apply for a Harvesters Certificate or who have questions about their applications or harvesting should contact their regional Captain of the Hunt.

To contact the regional Captain of the Hunt: Start with the MNO website. Go to “**Registry**”. Select “**Harvesting**”. Then select “**Captains of the Hunt**”. Contact information is listed under “**Contact Captains of the Hunt**”. The Harvesters Certificate application form is on the same website page.

Each regional Captain of the Hunt manages the Métis harvest in their region’s traditional harvesting area through implementation of the MNO’s Harvest Policy. The regional Captain of the Hunt also reviews Harvester Certificate Applications prior to them being assessed by the MNO Registry. The Captain of the Hunt also answers inquiries about Métis harvesting and the current MNO Harvesting Policy.

The Captain of the Hunt ensures that Métis harvesters can use firearms properly, maintains contact with Ontario’s field officers, and is responsible for providing information to aid in wildlife conservation.

## **Where should I go for information about (or for assistance with) programs available to me as a Métis?**

Métis citizens will find information on the various programs for Ontario Métis on the MNO website ([www.metisnation.org](http://www.metisnation.org)).

There are programs for Métis citizens on a range of issues including health, housing, well-being, parenting and children, training and education, and victim services. Our programs are constantly expanding as needs and opportunities present themselves.

Find where the nearest Métis community office is by going to the MNO website. Go to “**Programs and Services**”. Select “**Offices and Staff**” for a complete listing of offices with contact information. Visit your closest MNO community office for further information about how to access programs and services, or just call the MNO toll free at 1-800-263-4889.

## **Where would I go to find out about local Métis events and upcoming workshops, to find out more about the MNO, its services and programs, and to make my voice heard in the MNO?**

The 29 Chartered Community Councils located throughout the province serve as local governance bodies for the MNO. They organize Métis events, community gatherings and workshops, often posting information on Facebook pages and in the *Métis Voyageur*. They educate other people and groups about Métis issues. They can assist Métis with accessing programs and services, and are the best point of contact if you have an idea for a community cultural event.

Most importantly, they provide a crucial link between Métis citizens in the community and the MNO's other governing bodies. They communicate Métis citizens' concerns and help citizens understand and keep up to date with MNO programs, policies, negotiations, and actions.

These elected Councilors serve on a volunteer basis.

## **Are there ways that Métis women, veterans or people age 16 to 29 can make their voices heard and concerns known in the MNO?**

Métis citizens can get information from their local MNO community office to find the people involved in, or become involved yourself, in either the Women's Secretariat of the MNO (WSMNO), the MNO Veterans Council (MNOVC) or the MNO Youth Council (MNOYC).

You can also go to the MNO website ([www.Métisnation.org](http://www.Métisnation.org)). Select Governance. Then select Governing Structure and find the special advisory council of interest to you, WSMNO for women, MNO Veterans for those who are serving in the Canadian Armed Forces or have done military service, and MNOYC Youth for citizens between the ages of 16-29.

Each of these councils meets, discusses and represents its concerns at the Annual General Assembly and to the other governance bodies of the MNO at meetings throughout the year.

## **How do I make my voice heard on Métis issues?**

Métis citizens participate through their elected representatives in their local Community Councils, but they also participate through their elected regional representatives in the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO).

The political direction of the MNO, the general direction of the MNO in various negotiations, the final approval of all MNO policies and the establishment of most services, programs and economic development initiatives all happen only with the approval of the PCMNO.

The PCMNO includes the 5 Executive Officers, 9 Regional Councilors, 4 Senators, and Youth and Post-Secondary representatives. The Executive includes the President, Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary-treasurer and Executive Senator of the MNO. The Executive handles matters between meetings of the PCMNO and generally oversees the operations of the MNO.

The President of the MNO represents Ontario Métis on the Métis National Council, the national body of the Métis Nation.

## **Who is taking care of the day-to-day business and who is legally responsible for carrying out actions of the MNO?**

The Secretariat is the administrative and business arm of the MNO. It is legally responsible for securing funding, carrying out MNO policies and procedures, delivering services and programs, conducting negotiations, and taking actions for MNO. It hires and oversees the staff working in the MNO offices—the Métis public service in Ontario.

The head of the MNO Secretariat is the MNO President/CEO. It is governed by the Provisional Council, whose members are the Secretariat's Board of Directors.

## **What other institutions does the MNO have to support Métis communities?**

The MNO's Voyageur Development Fund supports Métis businesses in the resource sector. Métis Infinity Investments was created following the MNO Prosperity and Self Sufficiency Law, which sets out the MNO approach to economic development, and a subsequent MNO Economic Development Law. Its purpose is to generate income to help the MNO become self-sufficient. Métis Infinity Investments organizes and manages Métis economic development initiatives for the MNO, ensuring they are under independent, professional management.



## How do MNO elections work?

The members of the Provisional Council are elected in advance of the Annual General Assembly once every four years. They include Councilors elected by Métis citizens from each of the nine regions, the Youth and Post-Secondary representatives, and the Executive Officers (President, Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary-Treasurer).

Each Chartered Community Council may, during their elections, elect a Senator from among local Métis citizens, someone who is at least 55 years old.

These Community Council Senators and the Senators who were previously members of the Provisional Council (Honourary Senators) elect 4 Senators to be part of the current Provisional Council (PCMNO Senators), and from those 4 PCMNO Senators one Senator is chosen to be on the PCMNO Executive Committee.

All MNO elections are governed by approved electoral codes.

The **Chartered Community Councils** call local meetings to determine the date of their elections. Local Métis citizens elect the members of each Community Council, including the President, Chair, Senator, both a Youth and a Women's representative and a Secretary-treasurer. All must live in the local community.

The **Women's Secretariat of the MNO (WSMNO)** has four elected women representatives, and a Provincial Secretary appointed by the President.

The **MNO Veterans Council** holds a meeting before the Annual General Assembly every four years and elect their Council, including a President, Chair, Sergeant-at-Arms, Secretary, Senator and a Women's (veteran's) Representative.

**Métis Youth citizens ages 16 to 26** elect the MNO Youth Council which is made up of the Youth Representative (President) and nine regional youth representatives, all of whom are elected during the MNO election process every four years.

The various other MNO institutions, such as the **Métis Voyageur Development Fund, Infinity Trust, Métis Infinity Investments, MNO Cultural Commission** and other bodies are each independent, and have their own Boards of Directors which are appointed by the Provisional Council.



## How We Got Here

While the Métis Nation has existed in Ontario for close to 200 years as a people, the Métis Nation of Ontario has existed as an organization since 1993. It has a democratically elected Provisional Council with representatives at the local, regional and provincial level, where Métis citizens have their voice in all aspects of governance.

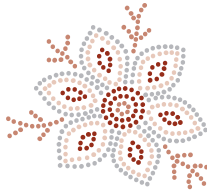
As the MNO sought to run programs and services, enter partnerships, sign contracts and support economic development initiatives, it became apparent that MNO needed to be organized so that it could not only do all these things but be held legally responsible in case something went amiss. That is why, in 1994, the MNO created the MNO Secretariat as the legal and administrative arm of the MNO.

In 2015 the Ontario legislature passed the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, receiving unanimous support from all political parties.

The Act is special to Métis. It exempts the MNO from certain provisions of provincial corporate law that are inconsistent with how Ontario Métis have chosen to govern themselves. It creates special provisions for the MNO to reflect its own unique Métis governance structure.

The Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015 is the first piece of legislation in Ontario's history that does this. The Act also provides special recognition and accommodations for the MNO Secretariat—as the legal and administrative arm of the Métis Nation—rather than treating the MNO as a mere non-profit corporation with membership not citizenship.

Lastly, the Act provides Community Councils with a process for incorporating. Although incorporation is not, and will not be required, it would allow community councils to remain part of the MNO's overall governance structure but also allow them to have greater autonomy as separate legal entities. The MNO is in the process of building the internal structure and supports to allow councils to incorporate under the Act.



## The Road Ahead

Some of the issues we need to discuss in the area of culture and identity are:

- ∞ How can we get our Métis citizens more engaged in MNO activities and initiatives at the local, regional and provincial levels? What do you see as barriers to get citizens more engaged and how can we remove those?
- ∞ We have our Métis Voyageur and website to communicate with our citizens; what more do we need?
- ∞ What can we do to ensure that Métis citizens are kept up to date about negotiations, court cases, MNO policies and initiatives?
- ∞ How can we ensure that each of our governance bodies, Councils, and citizens are active participants in the MNO?
- ∞ Are there ways to ensure our MNO website is working well for Métis citizens everywhere in Ontario?

# Notes

# Notes



We invite you to provide the MNO with your responses and feedback on these issues related to governance. Please provide your comments in writing:

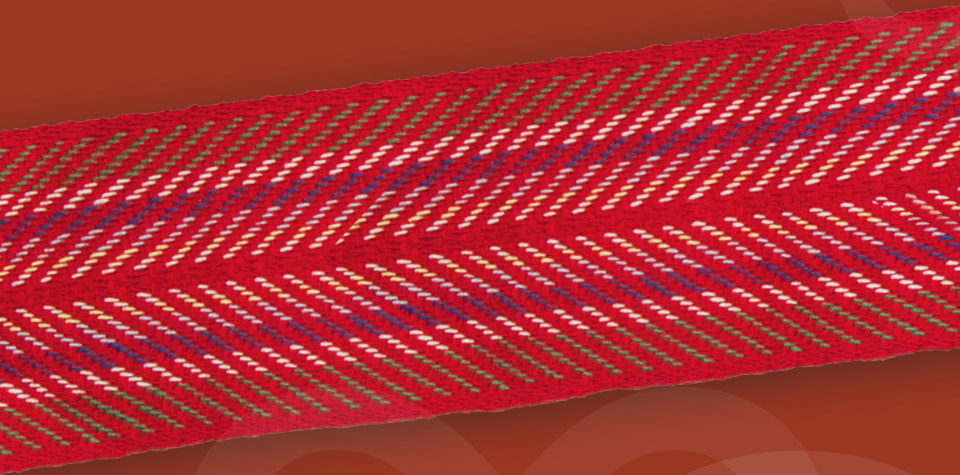
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MÉTIS NATION *of* ONTARIO COMMISSION *on*

Métis Rights  
& Self-Government