

Métis Nation of Ontario Women's Council (MNOWC)

YEAR IN REVIEW

MNOWC Annual Report 2024-25

Presented at the MNO's 32nd AGA, August 2025



Name: MNOWC	Region / Position
Prepared by: President Lynne Gouliquer with the Council	Entire Province of Ontario

Introductory Message about the MNOWC's work across the Province in 2024/25

The MNOWC is a province-wide council that works to bring the voices of the women of the MNO to the PCMNO and, in reverse, bring the voice of the PCMNO to MNO women. The Council advocates and promotes the culture and heritage, equality, values, and rights of Métis Women, their children and their families within and outside the MNO (e.g., Provincially and Nationally). The MNOWC has an inclusive understanding of women. Women experience their lives differently based on their culture, home life, territory, age, gender/gender identity, sexual identity, religion, education, health, leadership, and many other factors. Thus, the MNOWC values each woman's experience and seeks to create a respectful space that includes Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Inter-Sex, Asexual (2SLGBTQIA+) women. In short, all MNO citizens who identify as women are welcome. The Council also works toward recognizing and affirming our existing Aboriginal and treaty rights, including our inherent right of self-determination and self-government.

Honouring Métis women is an integral part of the MNOWC and recognizes the historically special roles and places Métis women held in the family, community and governance structures. Many historians' research notes that Métis families and communities were historically matriorganized and matrilocal (Brown, 1983; Campbell, 2012; Macdougall & St-Onge, 2013; Van Kirk, 1983).

The MNOWC comprises 11 council members (nine elected voting Regional Women's representatives, an elected President and an appointed non-voting Elder). However, we also work with all the Community Council Women's representatives who help bring their local Métis women's concerns to us.

Since last year was an election year, three-quarters of the council are new, and this year represents our first year of working together. In addition, since then, some council regional representatives have had to step away. The MNOWC gratefully acknowledges the work of both Rebecca Toman of Region 6 and Tina Nicole of Region 3 during their time with us. We appreciate their dedication and time and wish them the best in the future. We look forward to working with the new Regional

Representatives as they come aboard. We have recently filled the vacancy in Region 6 and welcome Shannon Fitzgerald Smith as the new Women's Representative.

Highlights and Key Achievements

The following are some of the important works that the MNOWC engaged in. Given our mandate to reach out to various levels within the MNO, from the Métis women citizens (Provincially and Nationally), through to Community Councils, and the PCMNO, you will note that we have engaged in activities representing MNO women at all of these levels.

Indigenous Health Advisory Council (IHAC) - HSN Sudbury Regional Cancer Plan for Mobile Screening & Indigenous Cancer Strategy/Health Sciences North/Wellness Lodge Tour

Remembrance Day 2024 - The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 76, Wreath Laying Ceremony of the Métis Veterans & Métis Citizens

Simcoe Muskoka Indigenous Circle and Simcoe Muskoka Indigenous Health Forum

Indigenous Health Advisory Council (IHAC) - HSN Sudbury virtual gathering Noojmowin-Teg Health Centre, Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation, Little Current, ON - In-person gathering

Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre, Sudbury, Women's Wellness Gathering

Workshops in which MNO Métis women made Ribbon Skirts to gift

Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle Board of Directors
 Georgian Bay Traditional Territory Consultation Committee
 Native Women's MMIWG Vigils
 MNO Grandparent Group online
 MNC Health Forum, Ottawa
 MMIWG Day at Toronto Police Headquarters
 Indigenous Peoples Day at the Ontario Science Centre
 National Indigenous Peoples Day, Nathan Phillips Square Sunrise Ceremony
 Oshawa Heritage Days
 Louis Riel Day celebrations
 Remembrance Day celebrations
 MNO Early Learning workshop online
 Métis Women's Health Forums
 National Indigenous Roundtable Discussion and Input on Métis women in Mining for Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR)
 Self-Governance consultation meetings (virtually and in-person)
 MNOWC Indigenous Women's Advisory Council (IWAC) In-Person Gathering (2-days): Training on MNO services, MMIWG2S+, and social status indicators for Métis women, and Self-Governance Introduction

Meetings / Projects / Partnerships / Committee Participation / Other Activity

The MNOWC reached out on several occasions to engage with MNO women:

- Held two separate educational workshops on food security, bringing 25 women for each workshop together from various places across Ontario virtually to meet, socialize and learn.
- Held two virtual Fireside Chats, bringing together Community Council women's representatives and women sitting on local community councils to discuss self-governance and Métis women's role.
- Applied for funding opportunities and we were successful on one of those opportunities, which was the MNO Food Security funding. However, we were not funded by the other opportunity through the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund (IPRF).

Other Comments

As explained in the introductory message, the MNOWC reaches across the nation with representation from all nine regions of the MNO. It is an enormous mandate for a group of 11 Métis women to connect with and liaise/network back and forth with 15,000+ MNO women-identified citizens, the PCMNO, and other services. Part of the challenge includes a limited or inadequate financial and structural support. Not to mention “time” needed, as the council is 100% **volunteer** based. We hope the two support positions (administrative and fund-raising) and continued communication support will enable us to better fulfill our role and responsibility. We also hope that with the help of the MNO/PCMNO, we can make more connections and acquire positions on their councils with other Indigenous women’s groups (First Nations or Métis provincial and national groups, e.g., Indigenous Women’s Advisory Council (IWAC)).

When we examine social, health, and economic indicators (e.g., food security, MMIWG2S+, family violence, earnings), Métis women are located at the bottom of all these indicators. While many of the MNO positions (elected and staffed) are filled with strong, capable Métis (and non-Métis) women, none of the positions politically or specifically represent or take care of women (their issues, their histories). History is important, as is honouring the deep historical roots of its maternal Indigeneity. Honouring Métis women historically and in contemporary times necessary to balance the inequities and disadvantages Métis women face. Hence, this is why the MNOWC is looking for a place on the PCMNO, via this year’s Special Resolution. The MNOWC also believes that specific positions within the new self-governance structure (e.g., community, regional and national) should be created and put in place. The positions would have a specific mandate to represent and advance Métis women in the long-standing areas where inequities exist, while upholding Métis women and their cultural importance. The MNOWC firmly believes that honouring the forgotten matrilineal histories and advancing a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) perspective should underpin the heart and soul of the new self-governance and constitutional structures towards which the Métis Nation of Ontario is moving.