



Indigenous
Services Canada

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 TO 2025



Indigenous Services
Canada

Services aux
Autochtones Canada

Canada 

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DEPUTY MINISTERS' MESSAGE

We are pleased to present the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 for Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

Since ISC was created in the fall of 2017, extensive engagement has been undertaken with its employees and with partners across the country. This plan reflects what we heard during this engagement, and gives shape to the identity and the guiding principles of this new department. The vital information gathered during the engagement informed the department's vision, mandate and values, and the 4 priorities which will be put into action within the next 5 years:

1. transferring control of services to Indigenous partners
2. championing a culturally appropriate and high-quality service approach
3. transforming our practices
4. nurturing an engaged, respectful and healthy workforce

This plan is a strategic roadmap that defines our future vision and how we get there. It guides us in an organized, flexible and aligned manner for the delivery of our mandate. The vision, values and mandate will hold the department accountable in ensuring it efficiently and effectively supports Indigenous partners on their path to self-determination. We look forward to continuing our journey together.

To advance this vision, we will leverage the [Beyond2020](#) framework to develop an agile, equipped and inclusive public service that supports Indigenous governments and institutions as they assume control over the design and delivery of services. We recognize our collective responsibility to change our mindsets and behaviors to uphold our Indigenous-centric outlook within and outside the department.

Jean-François Tremblay
Deputy Minister

Sony Perron
Associate Deputy Minister

VISION

We envision ISC being a trusted partner that respects Indigenous perspectives and supports First Nations, Inuit and Métis in controlling the delivery of high-quality services for healthy, prosperous and thriving communities.

VALUES

ISC employees are to uphold the [Values and Ethics Code of the Public Sector](#), and are encouraged to reflect on how to live up to Indigenous ways of knowing and doing. Traditional Indigenous teachings will help guide our work. In all of our actions, we will be driven by excellence, trust, empathy, humility and kindness.



EXCELLENCE

We are honoured to serve Indigenous peoples and have a moral and personal responsibility to strive for excellence in our work. We take pride in continuously improving ourselves and our organization.



TRUST

We work to eliminate barriers and to create conditions of prosperity and opportunity. We live up to our commitments, take ownership of our mistakes, and are accountable to Indigenous peoples for our actions and decisions. We are committed to building trust through these actions. We respect Indigenous rights, including inherent and treaty rights.



EMPATHY

We understand that the past informs the present. We recognize the deep and complex impacts of colonialism. We are committed to honouring the history of Indigenous peoples and applying this knowledge to our context and our relationships.



HUMILITY

We seek to learn and grow from our interactions with others and to build self-awareness. We believe that solutions for Indigenous services are better developed by Indigenous peoples. Our role is to support them in developing services that meet their ambitions.



KINDNESS

We conduct ourselves with respect, caring and courtesy at all times. We are tough on issues and easy on each other. We are mindful of our personal health, for to serve others, we must care for ourselves.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The way we work is grounded in two guiding principles. We respect the **diversity of Indigenous cultures** and see their influence in the way we work. We recognize that good and honest **partnerships** are at the core of how we do things.



CULTURES

We respect the diversity and vibrancy of Indigenous cultures and listen to worldviews from coast to coast to coast. We recognize that Indigenous traditions and knowledge systems are sources of strength, wisdom and guidance. We reflect Indigenous cultures in our workplace and in our work practices.



PARTNERSHIP

We don't act alone. We co-develop with rights holders, organizations and institutions initiatives that affect Indigenous peoples. We work in partnership with Indigenous peoples, and this can only be achieved through strong, respectful, effective and ethical relationships. In the spirit of treaties and land claims, these relationships are founded on the recognition of Indigenous rights and respect the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and the *Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action*. They are also founded on honesty and dignity.

MANDATE

ISC works with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to:

- **improve access to high-quality services**
- improve well-being in Indigenous communities across Canada
- support Indigenous peoples in assuming **control of the delivery of services** at the pace and in the ways they choose.

To advance this mandate, the strategic plan outlines actions to be undertaken over the next 5 years.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PRIORITY 1:

Transfer control of services to Indigenous partners

Transferring control to Indigenous partners is the best way to improve services. Indigenous partners have expressed that they want ISC to recognize and support their inherent right to self-determination with flexible approaches that are inclusive and responsive to the diversity of Indigenous peoples.

In order to advance this priority, we will work with willing partners in the following areas:



Planning

- 1.1 Co-develop workplans with local, regional and national Indigenous partners outlining targets, as well as the timing and process to move towards their control over service delivery
- 1.2 Implement successful demonstration projects where service delivery control is transferred within the next few years and consider options to support service delivery in Indigenous languages
- 1.3 Ensure that each regional office jointly develops priorities with Indigenous partners and establishes mechanisms to allocate available resources
- 1.4 Increase the number of services controlled and delivered by Indigenous governments and organizations, including the number of:
 - a. health partnerships
 - b. First Nations regional education agreements
 - c. First Nations that benefit from flexible and predictable funding arrangements, such as 10-year grants
- 1.5 Identify opportunities for delivery of departmental functions by Indigenous organizations and communities in order to develop capacity and support economic development



Partnerships

- 1.6 Formalize partnership tables at the regional and national levels
- 1.7 Work with other government departments and other relevant partners to provide whole-of-government points of service as much as possible
- 1.8 Report annually and publicly on operational and investment plans for key areas, such as infrastructure
- 1.9 Support collective actions that advance the achievement of the *Sustainable Development Goals* and the *2030 Agenda*



Operations

- 1.10 Encourage employees to propose ways to support and facilitate the transfer of control and jurisdiction to Indigenous peoples and create a process to review and implement employee suggestions
- 1.11 As part of the audit and evaluation processes, review the measures taken to transfer control and jurisdiction over services to Indigenous peoples and increase the readiness of partners to assume control

- 1.12 Establish performance indicators to monitor and report on the transfer of control to Indigenous organizations
- 1.13 Co-develop appropriate indicators and data collection standards to measure the impact and effectiveness of the transfer of control



People

- 1.14 Involve staff who may be affected by the transfer of service delivery to Indigenous partners early in the planning process, and provide support to them throughout the process
- 1.15 Create learning events for ISC staff about transfer to Indigenous organizations and Indigenous institutional development in order to mobilize employees and create an equipped, agile and inclusive workforce
- 1.16 Create new interchange programs between ISC and Indigenous organizations, as well as promote existing ones

PRIORITY 2:

Champion a culturally appropriate and high quality service approach

Services are provided with care, fairness, respect and transparency. Services provided are culturally appropriate, high-quality, and our actions are guided by Indigenous peoples.

To support these services goals, we will work in the following areas:



Planning

- 2.1 Launch the ISC Service Strategy, to be developed in partnership with Indigenous organizations and communities, and implemented across the department
- 2.2 Publish service standards and report against them annually
- 2.3 Launch an ISC Digital Services Strategy to improve service delivery and access
- 2.4 Improve data management for better evidence-based decision-making
- 2.5 Develop and further improve client-centered, community-facing communications for direct services
- 2.6 Explore options to expand the offering of services in Indigenous languages
- 2.7 Work with partners to co-develop and implement an Indigenous-first Gender Based Analysis+ framework and tools, respectful of distinctions



Partnerships

- 2.8 Implement an ISC primary support manager approach that will maintain a regular contact with the community, coordinate departmental engagement and help navigate ISC structures and processes when needed

- 2.9 Put in place a 360-degree evaluation process with partners and communities to assess how we can improve service quality (timeliness, responsiveness, effectiveness)
- 2.10 Engage Indigenous partners to participate in evaluations, particularly the service quality aspects



Operations

- 2.11 Promote and support regional and national initiatives for service delivery innovation, such as the portal for Non-Insured Health Benefits clients
- 2.12 Explore options to implement a strengthened and transparent appeal process for direct services such as child and family services, Jordan's Principle and registration
- 2.13 Report annually and publicly on services and benefits indicators, notably through the Departmental Results Framework



People

- 2.14 Ensure all employees, especially those providing front-line services, are trained on trauma-informed and culturally appropriate service delivery, as well as local traditions and context
- 2.15 Develop and implement learning plans for all front line service staff that include a client service component

PRIORITY 3: **Transform our practices**

ISC is structured to deliver services effectively and seamlessly across regions and sectors, in order to maximize the positive impact on Indigenous peoples' well-being.

To ensure effective and seamless delivery, we will work in the following areas:



Planning

- 3.1 Develop a departmental reconciliation plan, outlining specific measures to signal the importance of our relationship with Indigenous peoples, and to move toward reconciliation
- 3.2 Increase the meaningful representation of Indigenous cultures and traditions in our workplaces (lodges, room names, plaques, etc.)
- 3.3 Institute regular, all-sectors joint regional committee meetings
- 3.4 Formalize policy committee structures that include regional and Indigenous perspectives throughout the policy cycle



Partnerships

- 3.5 Create guidelines to support co-development across policy areas
- 3.6 Develop engagement protocols where appropriate with national Indigenous organizations while balancing regional and local needs
- 3.7 Develop mechanisms for collaboration with **Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada** in all regions
- 3.8 Involve regional employees in program and policy design to better address the specific needs of local partners and emphasize local decision-making wherever possible
- 3.9 Streamline service management and delivery such as capital infrastructure to reduce the burden on partners and prepare for the transfer of services



Operations

- 3.10 Create a single window for management of funding agreements
- 3.11 Pursue concrete measures to consolidate services in regions, including corporate services
- 3.12 Implement human resources service teams within all regions across the country



People

- 3.13 Develop a human resources plan to renew the workforce to support the department's mandate, aligned with the government's **Beyond2020** vision

PRIORITY 4:

Nurture an engaged, respectful and healthy workforce

We are committed to creating an equipped, engaged, respectful and healthy workplace where all employees have opportunities to succeed. This requires nurturing a workforce that is animated by a positive attitude and motivated to provide the best services possible.

To support the development of this workforce, we will work in the following areas:



Planning

- 4.1 Launch and implement the ISC Values and Ethics code
- 4.2 Implement key actions from the *Many Voices One Mind* report, including supporting Indigenous employee networks and reviewing human resource policies and processes through the lenses of diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation, to eliminate biases that discriminate against Indigenous peoples
- 4.3 Build on existing strategies to implement an Indigenous student recruitment plan, which we will use to actively reach out to colleges and universities with strong Indigenous representation across the country

- 4.4 Create Indigenous ambassador positions to support recruitment efforts
- 4.5 Increase the proportion of the ISC workforce made up of Indigenous employees by:
 - a. establishing national, regional and sectoral targets
 - b. mandating annual reporting, by sector and level, of the proportion of Indigenous employees
 - c. reporting annually the proportion of Indigenous employees in new hires
 - d. consolidating Indigenous employee development programs across sectors



Partnerships

- 4.6 Establish a new Indigenous-led national employee secretariat that will:
 - a. support Indigenous employee networks
 - b. promote an environment in which all employees advance cultural competency
 - c. support management of Indigenous career advancement programs
 - d. explore options for the inclusion and recognition of Indigenous languages in the workplace
 - e. explore the introduction of Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms within the ISC Centre for Integrity, Values and Conflict Resolution



People

- 4.7 Implement the 2018-2021 *ISC Workplace Well-being and Mental Health Strategy*. The strategy includes measures to increase trust in the organization, access training on wellness and mental health, decrease stigma around mental illness and promote wellness in the workplace
- 4.8 Implement development programs to facilitate career progression
- 4.9 Implement a 360-degree performance evaluation program for all managers and supervisors
- 4.10 Improve the approach to employee awards and recognition to include, for example, celebrations of success and peer-to-peer options. Develop a section of the program to extend outside the department, with partners and clients
- 4.11 Promote occupational health and safety practices and identify workplace risks
- 4.12 Develop a flexible workplace that better supports employee needs such as working remotely from Indigenous communities, or from regional offices, in collaboration with federal partners
- 4.13 Offer lodges and cultural centres in the regions, and support employees attending cultural ceremonies
- 4.14 Implement an onboarding strategy for new employees that includes mandatory distinctions-based Indigenous awareness training, cultural safety and cultural competency training
- 4.15 Support career-long opportunities for employees, via their learning plans, to learn about Indigenous cultures, practices and relationships, and work-specific knowledge requirements

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- 4.16 Adopt organizational anti-discriminatory and anti-racism policies
 - 4.17 Launch a corporate-wide exit interview initiative to inform strategies needed for employee retention
 - 4.18 Support the implementation of a joint union-management Respect in the Workplace Committee to identify and roll out targeted actions to increase awareness, strengthen and promote respectful workplace practices