

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SOLICITOR GENERAL  
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION  
INFORMATION BRIEFING NOTE**

**PURPOSE:** For **INFORMATION** for Mike Farnworth,  
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General and Deputy Premier.

**ISSUE:** Update on BC's action in response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People (MMIWG2S+).

**SUMMARY:**

- In September 2016 the federal government established the National Inquiry into MMIWG2S+. The final report of the inquiry was released on June 3, 2019. The federal government accepted all 231 recommendations, and confirmed they accept the finding of the report that the deaths of Indigenous women and girls amounts to genocide. They committed to implementing the report and outlining an action plan.
- On June 3, 2021, the second-year anniversary of the release of the report, the National Action Plan, a path towards ending violence against Indigenous Women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples was released. On that day, BC also released its own plan, *A Path Forward: Priorities and Early Strategies for BC* (the Path Forward).
- The Path Forward includes a funding commitment of up to \$5.5M this fiscal,<sup>s.12</sup>  
s.12  
s.12 In 2019 and 2021, BC hosted Indigenous-led engagement sessions that set priorities for the Path Forward.
- The number one priority identified at these sessions is the need for safe spaces and safety plans, increased community capacity in planning as central to self-determination, so that Indigenous communities can create and implement their own solutions. The community fund will provide funding that will be accessible to First Nations communities, urban / off reserve communities, Métis citizens and 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities to meet these needs.
- To support an Indigenous-led approach, a lead Indigenous Agency will be determined that will develop the program and administer individual grants to communities and Indigenous organizations. Since the release of the Path Forward, the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch (CSCP) have been consulting with Indigenous organizations and community to identify the best approach to determine the lead Indigenous Agency.
- In order to ensure the funds are transferred to the lead Indigenous Agency by the end of the fiscal year, CSCP intends to post a call for applications for the lead agency that will develop and distribute the grant funds by December 2, 2021. Throughout Summer, Fall, and Winter 2022 CSCP then expects the selected organization to develop the grant program and distribute the funds to community.

- To develop the selection process CSCP partnered with Alderhill Planning Inc. to facilitate community engagement sessions on October 13 and 22, 2021. Participants identified guiding principles, a model for governance and administration, and provided guidance for the future should additional funding be available. (Please see Appendix A – Path Forward: Phase 3).
- While CSCP is incorporating recommendations as possible, some of the suggestions are not possible to implement given the time constraints and requirement to disburse funds by March 31, 2021.
- CSCP has developed an open call for one Indigenous organization to develop and manage the community fund. Applicants will need to demonstrate how they meet key recommendations identified at the October 2021 community sessions.
  - For example, applicants will need to demonstrate knowledge / expertise of the Calls for Justice and gender-based violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, the capacity to develop and administer a grant process with fair and appropriate criteria and review process, and to demonstrate how they will utilize a distinctions-based approach to ensure the funds are accessible to rural, urban, and 2S+ populations.
  - The successful organization will also need to commit to adhering to Guiding Principles that arose at the community sessions in the management of the fund, as well as to bringing together a representative governance committee to oversee the program (e.g. 2SLGBTQQIA+, urban, rural, etc.).
- The proposal is an attempt to craft an approach that is responsive to the recommendations from the consultations, and practical / realistic given restraining timelines. While the approach will mitigate some of the risks mentioned above, it is still likely to raise criticism in that it does not completely honour what was heard at the October 2021 sessions (i.e. establish a committee to develop and oversee the selection process and transfer of funds out of government).
- Alderhill will continue with the next stage of work including finalizing the Applicant Guide and Application Template, hosting a webinar for applicant information, and participating in the evaluation process.
- Participants in the engagement sessions expressed dismay in both the short-term nature of the fund (i.e. current commitment is this fiscal only) and that it remains embedded in colonial structures. Feedback from the consultations was that in order to truly meet the intent of the intent of *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* changes are needed to address the policies and practices through which governments disperse funding to Indigenous communities that do not rely on communities competing for support within strict governmental timelines. In an effort to ensure participants feel heard, the call for applications will include an acknowledgement section that responds to these comments generally.

## **BACKGROUND:**

- Since 2019, the Ministry has been collaborating with the Indigenous planning firm, Alderhill Planning, Inc., in the development of the Path Forward. The initial phase of this work saw twelve sessions hosted by Alderhill in which participants from Indigenous communities around the province were invited to come together in a safe space to collaboratively develop strategies and initiatives related to systemic violence against Indigenous women and girls in B.C. That year, over 300 people joined the sessions, sharing fears, uncertainties, hope, feelings of empowerment, ideas for solutions and possible steps forward.
- The result of these first 12 sessions was a What We Heard Report, where four core themes were identified:
  1. Safe spaces and safety plans
  2. Healing support
  3. Strengthening relationships with our partners
  4. Access to resources and recommendations
- In 2021, five additional sessions were hosted by Alderhill to identify further detail to shape prioritized actions that emerged during the 2019 sessions as well as to provide an opportunity for communities to connect. During these five sessions, the four core themes from 2019 were built upon.
- The community fund intends to address the number one priority identified across all community engagement sessions – the need for safe spaces and safety plans so that Indigenous communities can create and implement their own solutions. Examples of projects that the lead agency may fund include engagement and facilitation services to host planning sessions, support to develop crisis response plans, mechanisms and materials for information sharing and communications plans, culturally appropriate safety training, and other healing and cultural supports.

## **NEXT STEPS:**

- Engage GCPE to develop communications plan – November 19, 2021.
- Post call for applications – December 2, 2021.
- Review applications – February 2022.
- Announce lead agency – March 2022.

## **OTHER MINISTRIES IMPACTED/CONSULTED:**

- CSCP has been working with the Ministry of Attorney General & Housing (AGH) throughout the implementation phase of the community fund as a liaison given their relationship with the First Nations Justice Council, as well as to gain lessons learned in their experiences developing the Indigenous Justice Strategy and the Metis Justice Strategy. Staff of AGH also participated in the October 22, 2021 community session.

- CSCP also works closely with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation for general advice, as well as to make connections and presentations to the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women regarding the Path Forward.

**PREPARED BY:**

Rebecca Salpeter  
a/sr. Manager Policy and Strategic Initiatives  
Community Safety & Crime Prevention Branch  
250-507-5168

**APPROVED NOVEMBER 19, 2021 BY:**

Taryn Walsh  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Community Safety & Crime Prevention Branch  
778-572-5231

**APPROVED NOVEMBER 22, 2021 BY:**

Mark Sieben  
Deputy Solicitor General

**ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A – Path Forward: Phase 3 What We Heard Report

# The Path Forward: Phase Three

November, 2021

*Alderhill Planning, Inc., in collaboration with the  
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General*

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# The Path Forward: Phase Three

## 1. Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the difficulty inherent in this work, particularly for the families and steadfast advocates who pour their spirit into making change each and every day. We are grateful for everyone that took the time to provide their knowledge, advice, feedback and words. We acknowledge that at the time this work was carried out, Indigenous peoples in the Province of British Columbia (BC) continue to live with the negative legacy of colonization and policies of assimilation. As we worked, the unmarked graves of children who attended Residential Schools continued to be identified; Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQIA2S+ peoples continued to be murdered and go missing. Communities also continue to deal with the impacts of Covid-19. Everyone prioritized working in a good way and we hope that everyone reading this report can use it to carry the work forward in a good way as well.

## 2. Executive Summary

In October 2021, the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (MPSSG) brought community members and past participants of the Path Forward together to get advice on how to deliver a fund of just over \$4 Million dollars (the Fund). The objective of the Fund is to address community safety related to missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples (MMIWG2S+). This objective was established by participants in previous Path Forward discussions.

The Fund duration is one year and it must be transferred out of MPSSG by March 31, 2022 or it will be lost. While there is hope that further monies will be dedicated to this objective, it is not confirmed at the time this report was written.

The feedback from participants was recorded through two engagement sessions in October 2021, and an online survey. The feedback gathered is set out here and this report outlines what was heard, identifies guiding principles, suggests a model for the governance and administration of the Fund in the short term (2021/2022), and provides guidance for the future should more money be allocated.

It is important to note that participants gave strong and clear feedback that the (1) short, one year commitment, (2) the deadline of March 31, 2022 for moving the dollars, and (3) the limited amount of money to address a very complex issue, were not aligned with the Province of BC's commitment to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous*

Peoples (UNDRIP)<sup>1</sup>, British Columbia's *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA)<sup>2</sup>, *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (Calls to Action)<sup>3</sup>, and the *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' 231 Calls for Justice* (Calls for Justice)<sup>4</sup>. There is more on this issue in **Section 4** of this report, but it was a repeated and common narrative in all the discussions. Participants expressed significant disappointment that they have said these things before, and that the governments have made promises, yet they experience little in terms of changes in the way governments deliver funds.

### 3. Background of the Path Forward

Since 2019, the MPSSG has been collaborating with the Indigenous planning firm, Alderhill Planning, Inc., in the development of The Path Forward. Phase One of this work engaged over 300 people from across 12 communities in BC and saw the development of a What We Heard Report (WWHR). Four core needs were identified:

1. Safe spaces and safety plans
2. Healing support
3. Strengthening relationships with our partners
4. Access to resources and recommendations

Phase Two of this work included coming back to communities to confirm what was heard during Phase One and saw the development of a Community Safety Toolkit that individuals or organizations could use as a guide to undertake MMIWG2S+ work in their communities.

However, during Phases One and Two, it became apparent that groups across the province were facing different challenges and had varied needs, experience, capacity, and resources, and that these inequities needed to be addressed.

Participants identified a need for access to funding without explaining, justifying, validating, reporting back, or being constrained by government regulations/policies. They shared that Indigenous communities could no longer wait for the government to respond. Instead, they

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<sup>1</sup> The United Nations. *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, 2007. [https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Province of British Columbia. *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, 2019. <https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/legislation-debates-proceedings/41st-parliament/4th-session/bills/third-reading/gov41-3>.

<sup>3</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, 2015. [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls\\_to\\_action\\_english2.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. *231 Calls for Justice*, 2019. [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls\\_for\\_Justice.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls_for_Justice.pdf).



need to be able to work from a place of self-determination and self-governance. In hearing this feedback, The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General worked to access \$4 million in order to fund work in communities (the Fund).

Discussions about the rollout of the Fund make up Phase Three of the Path Forward. This Phase is an attempt to answer questions that emerged during Phases One and Two:

- What would an Indigenous, women-led organization(s) look like that could administer this funding?
- How can funding be distributed to communities?
- How can grassroots and other community groups without band/nation/centre representation be supported?
- How can people be supported to do this work in decolonized ways?

To help answer these questions, Alderhill and the Ministry invited a broad group of people to participate in Phase Three, including Phase 1 and 2 participants, family members of victims, funders, grassroots organizations, and individuals. The information gathered at the sessions on October 13th and 22nd, in combination with the online survey responses, forms the basis of this WWHR.

*Note: The term **funder(s)** is used throughout this report as a placeholder to describe the entity(ies) that might govern/administer this fund; no entity or entities have been chosen at this time (November, 2021). The goal of this process is to start the discussion about what that term might mean and/or establishing another term or terms that more accurately capture the identity and activities of that individual, group of individuals, organization or group of organizations. In **Section 6** of this document, a model that was suggested by participants is explored that views this entity(ies) as some combination of an Advisory Body(ies) and/or Governing Body(ies), and Administrative Body(ies) that together manage the Fund.*

## The Phase Three Process

Throughout all phases of this work, Alderhill used the Syilx planning approach, *Enowkinwixw*, which is a decision-making model that encourages people to be present in space in ways that feel comfortable to them. The approach is based on the Syilx creation story called “How Food was Given” or “The Four Food Chiefs’ Story”. This story tells us that every voice matters and that you cannot conduct your work or decision in a good way unless you include every one’s voice and perspective. *Enowkinwixw*, therefore, is not a system in which we come together to discover something new, but rather to rediscover what we already know. By dividing groups into four perspectives (*Tradition, Relationship, Action, and Innovation*), the process allows for holistic expression of ideas. It is important to note that while dividing into the four perspective groups helps capture all voices, it does not mean that the process arrives at consensus. Because of this, some of the information in this document may be conflicting or ambiguous. People from different perspective groups might interpret it differently. Just as it was important to involve all people in the development of

this document, *Enowkinwixw* tells us that it will be important to involve all people in this document's application, since each perspective will have something different but essential to contribute.

## 4. Disconnect between the Fund and UNDRIP, DRIPA, 94 Calls to Action, 231 Calls for Justice

While this work has been done in an attempt to create safe spaces and respect Indigenous ways of being and knowing, it remains embedded in, and largely controlled by, colonial structures. The limited amount of money available and the short term nature of the funding (only a one year commitment and a looming government fiscal year end) were particularly troubling to participants. Participants were clear that when the Government of BC voices support for self-determination but then continues to prioritize limited and short term solutions to address MMIWG2S+, it causes significant harm. Participants voiced significant frustration that they have to say this over and over again. They said that this approach causes division between Nations, communities, organizations, families, and individuals; it is like dangling a carrot in front of them and making them fight over it. This element was a significant challenge for participants and feedback was very clear that this must change. Resoundingly, the feedback to the Province of BC was to provide more money to address the issue and to stop enforcing deadlines that are arbitrary to the people impacted by the issue and only dictated by the Province of BC. Feedback was clear that changes to the policies and practices through which the provincial and Canadian governments disperse funding, as well as changes that reflect more tangible evidence of their implementation of the *Articles*, *DRIPA*, *Calls to Action*, and *Calls for Justice*, must be made. Participants said that work to address MMIWG2S+ must always be rooted in the language of the *Inquiry's (2019) Calls for Justice* and their Principles for Change:

- **A Focus on Substantive Equality and Human and Indigenous Rights**
  - All actions and remediations must be based in human and Indigenous rights and focus on substantive equality (true equality of outcomes) for Indigenous peoples.
- **A Decolonizing Approach**
  - An approach that aims to resist and undo colonial forces that is rooted in Indigenous values, philosophies and knowledge systems.
- **Inclusion of Families and Survivors**
  - Family here is understood as a broad word that encompasses biological families, chosen families, and families of the heart.
- **Self-Determined and Indigenous-Led Solutions and Services**
  - Solutions must be Indigenous-led based on articles three and four of UNDRIP.
- **Recognizing Distinctions**
  - The Calls for Justice must be interpreted and implemented in a way that acknowledges the distinct needs of various Indigenous groups, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

- **Cultural Safety**
  - Services and processes that empower Indigenous peoples must be applied in this work
  - This means (at a minimum) inclusion of “Indigenous languages, laws and protocols, governance, spirituality, and religion”<sup>5</sup>.
- **Trauma-Informed Approach**
  - An understanding of trauma must be built into all processes undertaken in this work.

## 5. Guiding Principles: Now and in the Future

*Note: Because of the complicated nature of the discussion and, following the Enowkinwixw protocols, the presence of many voices and perspectives in these conversations, some data are inherently contradictory, and other data are incomplete or are not rooted in consensus. Please consider this as you read through this report.*

Participants identified guiding principles and said that these guiding principles should be at the heart of work addressing MMIWG2S+ peoples. This is a list of nine guiding principles; it is not comprehensive, but participants were clear that the elements of this list should be prioritized; in other words, this work is still ongoing.

### 1. Indigenous-Women and LGBTQQIA2S+ Led

Participants felt strongly that the process of establishing and dispersing the Fund should be led by Indigenous women and LGBTQQIA2S+ people with a deep understanding of and connection to the decades of work that has been done in the MMIWG2S+ space—not by the government of BC. Participants expressed that representation of LGBTQQIA2S+ people should be well established at all scales and phases of development of this work. Further, they expressed that the Fund should be distributed in a way that allows for diverse expertise to be applied to reach communities and address their needs.

### 2. Accessible

Participants demanded that the application process to receive funding be accessible. They felt that people should receive help and support to get through the process, and that the funder(s) should have a track record of providing support for people in the application process. Further, access to funding should not be prohibitive for anyone, particularly because many of the people who need funding the most have the least access to technology, the least capacity, or the least power in their communities. To this end, participants shared that applications in many formats should be accepted, including applications by phone or letters of intent instead of the traditional request for proposal

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<sup>5</sup> National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. *231 Calls for Justice*, 2019, p. 173. [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls\\_for\\_Justice.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls_for_Justice.pdf).

(RFP) process, which is restrictive in its overemphasis on check-box criteria that tend to exclude those who should be prioritized (those with limited access).

### 3. An Equitable, Regional Approach

Participants strongly expressed that this work must take a regional and/or multi-scalar approach in order to reach those hardest to reach. They pointed out that across the province of BC, there are many communities who lack communication with outside agencies and miss out on funding opportunities. In these communities, violence against women, girls, and LGBTQIA2S+ people is difficult to address.

Additionally, this province is not a melting pot of Indigenous peoples, where one funder at the provincial level can adequately distribute funds and meet everyone's needs. Rather, it is a geographically and culturally diverse mosaic of Indigenous peoples, each with different needs, processes, ceremonies, and protocols that should be respected through good communication and cultural sensitivity. Participants stressed that these differences must be acknowledged, and work must be done by the funder(s) to connect with all communities in culturally appropriate ways.

What's more, participants explained that organizations in various settings have varied capacities to address this issue. Therefore, an approach to dispersing funding should promote equity in fund delivery by establishing pots of funding for regional, rural, on/off-reserve, urban, grassroots organizations/individuals and other groups (yet to be named).

### 4. Communicative/Collaborative

Another major theme shared by participants was that throughout this process, transparent communication is essential. Communities should be made aware of the criteria and processes by which the funder(s) are chosen. The funder(s) themselves should have strong links with communities throughout BC in order to communicate effectively across geographical distances and power structures. They should be able to demonstrate this through a proven track record.

Participants explained that the funder(s) should prioritize collaboration with relationships/networks in the space and connections to grassroots organizations, families, and communities of victims of violence. A guiding principle of this work should be "working together" and competition for funding should be reduced as much as possible through this process. In distributing the funding, the funder(s) must collaborate with communities to respectfully understand their needs and use a holistic lens to understand what constitutes a valid use of funds. One noted need in communities is added capacity to apply for funding or seek out funding opportunities - the funder(s) should be able to collaborate with and support communities through the funding application process.

Further, some participants suggested that the funder(s) might also have experience working with other funders and leveraging funds to acquire more money.

## 5. Inclusive

Participants generally agreed that the funder(s) should make every effort to include families, First Nations, Métis, Inuit, LGBTQQIA2S+, grassroots, rural, remote, on and off reserve, and urban people in the development, distribution, and implementation of these funds. The refrain “nothing about us without us” was repeated at the sessions to suggest that a bottom-up approach that focuses on those with lived experience in communities and in the MMIWG2S+ space will be necessary to do justice to the needs of the people on the ground. Participants shared that too often, certain families, organizations, or individuals automatically receive provincial attention or funding, and said this must change. There needs to be a process that accommodates the diversity of grassroots organizations and ad-hoc groups that are fighting for this issue, but who are typically excluded from colonial/government processes. Finally, participants expressed the importance of listening to everyone’s voices and perspectives in this work and above all, ensuring that survivors of violence and families of MMIWG2S+ people always have input in the process.

## 6. Holistic

Participants conveyed that Indigenous interpretations of useful applications of funding differ from colonial ones. They recognized that there is a diverse set of needs in communities and that each community or individual might have a different problem to address with regards to MMIWG2S+, therefore, a holistic approach to validating work and dispersing funds is necessary. For participants, valid uses of funds could range from immediate crisis response funding for search and rescue, to legal fees, to money for future safety planning, to funding healing circles, to taking time off work to grieve, to educating communities, and on and on. Many Indigenous communities think in nested systems, where the individual is surrounded by family, which is surrounded by community, which is surrounded by the land. Each layer of this nest relates to, ripples across, and influences all the others, and so responses to MMIWG2S+ might appear not to be directly related to the issue, but absolutely are. Participants indicated that the funder(s) must have a deep, lived understanding of the interconnectedness of things and the fund’s distribution must reflect an acceptance and validation of Indigenous knowledge, practices, and approaches to problem solving.

## 7. Decolonized

Participants felt strongly that the process of establishing funder(s) and distributing funds must be as decolonized as possible. That means that organizations distributing funding must be as unencumbered as possible by colonial timelines, regulations, and barriers. Consultation with communities on this topic must be heard, validated, and acted-upon. Participants expressed deep concern that this process is simply a token process and that the government already knows who it wants to select to distribute the funds. Instead, participants expressed a desire for Indigenous women/LGBTQQIA2S+ people and matriarchs/grandparents to be the driving force in decision making, and that decisions about and governance of the fund would benefit from being conducted in a healing circle format. Further, the application process should be simplified and decolonized to allow for creative

application techniques to accommodate the needs of communities. Reporting requirements should be scaled back as much as possible. Agencies delivering the funds should be free to disperse funding in ways that they find effective, unobstructed by colonial barriers.

## 8. Accountable - Balancing Transparency and Privacy

Participants expressed a desire for the administrators/governors of the funds to be held accountable for their decisions and administration work. Participants stressed that even this What we Heard Report should be shared back with communities and session attendees to confirm their approval. Further, some felt that there should be transparent reporting through which communities can assess the validity of this entire process; organizations distributing the funding should be able to show financial reports, terms of reference, decision-making criteria, and also be able to reveal the dynamics of their reach/networks/trusted partners. Moreover, applicants seeking funding should have a mechanism (perhaps a feedback form or phone-in option) by which to assess the administrator(s)/governing body(ies)' work in overseeing the fund's dispersal. The rollout of the fund should be compared against the principles and calls put forward in the *231 Calls for Justice* (2019), such as the rights to culture, health, safety, decolonized practices, etc., and must be rooted in respecting UNDRIP/DRIPA. On the other hand, applicant privacy was noted as something to be held sacred. Whichever processes used to uphold the accountability of the distributing/governing organization(s) must not sacrifice the safety and privacy of the Fund's applicants.

## 9. Cultural Safety and Innovation in Balance

Lastly, Participants shared that the individual(s)/organization(s) that are selected to be a part of the governance and administration of the Fund should have profound experience and a proven track record of cultural awareness and fostering safe environments. Participants indicated that in the context of safety, evaluators should be aware of the issue of lateral violence and take steps to ensure that limited funds and timelines do not contribute to perpetuating lateral violence. In any case, a balance must be struck between capacity/efficiency, cultural safety, empathy, and innovation in the governance and administration of the Fund.

Participants emphasized that ceremony, traditions, and the definition of healing vary greatly across the province, and the organization(s) that are involved in this process must have methods of acknowledging and validating that fact. However, participants expressed a deep lack of confidence that this process can resolve the lateral violence and safety concerns implicit in funding dispersal because of the limited supply of funding and the short term-nature of the fund. They felt that though efforts have been made to avoid this outcome, there is a real chance that this process will be triggering for applicants as the limited dollar amount pits groups against one another to access the funding. The funder(s) must work with that in mind, and use a trauma-informed, holistic, Indigenous approach to make decisions and distribute resources.

Participants also hoped that the funder(s) could have an awareness and ability to address and reduce burnout in their own organization(s), perhaps by applying the use of ceremony in their practice, in order to safely and effectively distribute the fund. The chosen individuals/organizations should be able to demonstrate how they will uphold those values in this work.

## 6. The Fund in 2021 / 2022

Throughout the discussions, a possible model of how to deliver the Fund in the near-term became apparent. This model separates the delivery of funds to communities (administration) and the establishment of the broader and more long-term vision (governance).

The tension between the need for good governance and administration and the efficiency with which funds can be distributed to communities was a significant concern for participants. While participants expressed a desire for the funding to be properly governed and administered (in decolonized, equitable ways), they also feared that by using regional/equitable approaches, the administration costs might take away from the total amount of funding, meaning there would be less money for communities. This tension was not resolved during these sessions; only significant, long-term, equitable funding can do that.

With that in mind, the following section breaks down in detail an approach suggested by participants to distribute the Fund in 2021/2022.

*Note: Because of the complicated nature of this process and the evolving nature of the discussions, this proposed approach was not agreed upon in consensus by participants at the engagements; it is simply one suggested way to implement/understand this funding program within its one-year timeframe.*

### Naming the Process/Funder(s)

Participants suggested a few options for naming the funder(s) and/or this process. These suggestions included:

- Establishing a framework for this work and then determining a name;
- “Remembering our Path”;
- Taking an Indigenous name gifted by an Elder; and/or
- Using the name of the workshop (Path Forward) so people can identify with it.

### Separating Governance and Administration

Participants expressed a vision for the governance and administration components of this work to remain separate. This was in response to the perception that the administrative

burden is complex, and skills and a division of labour are needed to adequately reach the diverse groups throughout the province. The administrators of the Fund could therefore be composed of many groups/organizations that have access to different groups/communities/regions around the province.

Participants raised the concern that this format presents a decision-making challenge, however, since regional and relational biases might influence decisions. To counter this, they suggested that a Governing or Advisory Body(ies) might be established (potentially the same Governing/Advisory Body(ies) making decisions on the format and processes of this work, or potentially made up of a different group of representatives), and would meet (preferably in healing circles) to make decisions on the distribution of funds. Participants suggested that these representatives be nominated or identified by the communities they represent.

In summary, three governance/administration groups were proposed by participants:

1. Advisory Body(ies)
2. Governing Body(ies)
3. Administrative Body(ies)

Participants suggested that the Advisory and/or Governing Body(ies) would come to their funding decisions based on a set of terms of reference established based on **Section 5: Guiding Principles: Now and in the Future**. The administrators of the funds would follow the direction of the Advisory and/or Governing Body(ies) and distribute funds through their networks; in this way creating efficiencies in funding delivery and providing better access to funding for groups located in rural or remote areas or in marginalized populations.

## Advisory Body(ies)/Governance

To move the process forward, transferring responsibility for the Fund from the government of BC to the organization(s) governing and/or administering the fund, **an intermediary Advisory Body(ies)** representing diverse stakeholders from across the province was suggested. Based on participant suggestions, this group should include:

1. Indigenous women and LGBTQQIA2S+ people with connections to families and grassroots organizations;
2. Family members of MMIWG2S+ people;
3. Selected/suggested by attendees of these engagements/MMIWG2S+ stakeholders;
4. Geographically and culturally representative of Indigenous people in BC, including LGBTQQIA2S+, Métis, and Inuit representation;
5. Understand and prioritize and the *231 Calls for Justice*;
6. Collaborative, with a focus on healing; and
7. Capable of holding a trauma-informed, culturally safe space.



It was suggested that the Advisory Body(ies) would undertake the process of deciding on/selecting the Governing and/or Administrative Bod(ies) that would then take over the process of distributing the fund. **For participants, it was unclear whether the Advisory Body(ies) would, could, or should become the Governing Body(ies), or if a separate entity should be established for that part of the work. It was also unclear whether the Advisory Body(ies) would develop the terms of reference for their own processes, and/or for dispersing the Fund, or if that would be established prior to their assembly.** For participants, the selection process undertaken by the Advisory Body(ies) and/or Governing Body(ies) to choose the Administrative Body(ies) should be underpinned by the values set out in **Section 5: Guiding Principles: Now and in the Future** (which would also form the basis of the terms of reference for all of the Advisory Body(ies) and/or Governing Body(ies), and Administrative Body(ies)).

## Administration

According to participants, the logistics of administering and distributing the Funds (including the structure of the Administrative Body(ies)) should include the following characteristics:

1. Led by women and LGBTQQIA2S+ people;
2. Collaborative people/organizations with connections to communities, experience with wraparound service provision, community engagement, and with the best interests of the community in mind;
3. Able to work from a regional/nested systems approach (individual>family>community>land);
4. Effective in quickly distributing funds;
5. Capable of supporting applicants through the application process;
6. Able to maintain a balance between applicant safety/privacy and procedural transparency/accountability;
7. Conscious of and capable to manage burnout in their organization(s);
8. Work from a trauma-informed approach, able to reduce/eliminate lateral violence;
9. Validate diverse visions of healing/holistic approaches;
10. Accommodate accessibility measures throughout the process (as defined by this report and the Advisory/Governing Body(ies);
11. Demonstrably implement the *Calls for Justice* and *Calls to Action*;
12. Have an understanding of and deference to Indigenous governance and power dynamics in various communities;
13. Enforce the lowest possible reporting requirements; and
14. Adhere to a Terms of Reference established based on **Section 5's Guiding Principles**.

## Terms of Reference

Participants shared that Terms of Reference (that support families in a good, holistic way) should be developed for each of the Advisory Body(ies)/Governing Body(ies), and the

Administrative Body(ies). It was unclear as to whether these Terms would be developed by the Advisory Body(ies) or prior to its inception, though it was suggested that the Terms be based on the **Guiding Principles: Now and in the Future** found in this document as well as the principles found in **Section 6: The Fund in 2021/2022** of this report. It must be noted that the time limit imposed on this process has the potential to negatively impact the development of Terms of Reference and future processes should allow for longer consideration to be given to establishing foundational pieces, such as Terms of Reference/governance structures, in order to build stronger, more sustainable programs.

## Application Processes

### Assessing Applications

Feedback from participants indicated that there are four potential application processes to be considered:

- Applications to be on the Advisory Body(ies);
  - Applications to be on the Governing Body(ies);
  - Applications to be a fund administrator; and
  - Direct applications for funding.
1. Participants felt that applications to be on the Advisory Body(ies) should be assessed by attendees of the engagement sessions and other stakeholders, including families of victims, those with connections to this space, and people in communities around the province (casting as broad a net as possible to ensure this process is inclusive) based on the characteristics outlined in the **Guiding Principles** and **Advisory Body(ies)/Governance** sections above.
  2. Participants did not come to a decision on whether the Governing Body(ies) might be composed of the same individuals that comprise the Advisory Body(ies) or whether it might be a new group developed and decided upon by the Advisory Body(ies). In any case, the Governing Body(ies) should embody the characteristics outlined in the **Guiding Principles** and the **Advisory Body(ies)/Governance** sections above.
  3. Participants suggested that applications to be the fund administrator would be assessed by the Governing Body(ies) and would be based on the characteristics outlined in the **Guiding Principles** and the **Administration** section above.
  4. Participants suggested that applications by individuals and groups seeking funding might either be assessed by the Advisory Body(ies) or by a separate Governing Body(ies) established by the Advisory Body(ies). The decision-making body(ies) should, in any case, use a decolonized system to make decisions. This would include prioritizing the following qualities in applications (in addition to those outlined in the **Guiding Principles**):

- “No-one left behind”/fairness;
- Matriarchal/inclusive system;
- Minimal barriers/red tape to apply or to be successful in receiving funding;
- Oral applications accepted;
- Letter of intent applications accepted;
- Not an RFP process;
- A simple system to identify: 1. Why money is needed, 2. How much is needed, and 3. Reporting back afterwards.
- Applications from informal/grassroots groups accepted;
- Holistic understanding of applicable projects/applications;
- Acknowledgement of ceremony, traditions, unique vision of healing in various communities;
- Identification and prioritization of applications from communities that are traditionally excluded through top-down models;
- Support for capacity building/taking on work otherwise placed on applicants (helping applicants draft proposals, educating on key words/language to use, helping them apply in ways that work better for them); and
- Ability to check in with applicants.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Participants felt that once funds have been distributed, the process should seek, as much as possible, to further reduce procedural requirements, such as report backs and check-ins. If this type of work needs to be done, it should be undertaken by the funder(s) in ways that support accessibility, not by the communities themselves.

## 7. A Vision for the Future of this Fund

As has been mentioned, participants shared that the Fund as it is currently proposed reveals a disconnect with the *UNDRIP*’s Articles, *DRIPA*, the *Calls to Action* and the *Calls for Justice*—in particular the Principles for Change in *The Calls for Justice* (2019) and the requirement for self-determination and self-governance of Indigenous peoples (Articles 3 and 4 of *UNDRIP*). While participants acknowledged that the current process is preferred over having government develop everything and tell them after-the-fact, and they recognized that an effort is being made to provide funding in novel ways that induce less barriers and restrictions on applicants, the quantity of funds and their short term nature is extremely problematic. Participants expressed how unfair it was to expect communities to build towards reducing and healing from violence against women, girls and LGBTQIA2S+ people in this scenario.

To that end, participants envisioned a future **legacy fund** that would allow for work in this space to be proactive instead of reactive, and that could help people build sustainable solutions that would not suffer interruptions when funding stops. In participants’ eyes,

multi-year funding is essential because there are too many considerations to fit into a one-year time frame. A legacy fund would allow for the establishment of steady, long term governance structures, accountability measures, tiebacks to ensure activities' connections to visions, and better, more consistent communication with communities (especially in rural and remote areas that are hard to reach). These systems would establish a more decolonized and sustainable model because that time and security would allow for self-determination and enough opportunity to properly consider and address the actual needs in communities. This would also increase the likelihood that funds get to the people that need them most because it would allow for communications, community engagement, culturally safe and respectful protocols, and other essential Indigenous practices to be accommodated. For example, participants highlighted that each community has its own unique politics and power dynamics, and these influence dispersal of funds. One person in a community may purport to speak on behalf of a community, when in fact the community may not support that person or their decisions. Some communities face language barriers that prevent story-telling/law sharing, while some desire processes to involve Elders in decision-making through ceremony, or have complicated dynamics between Band Councils and Hereditary Leaders that need to be understood before funding is distributed in that community. Doing work to understand these dynamics is an essential part of distributing funding in an equitable and meaningful way and the only way to start increasing safety. A long-term legacy fund can allow for the time and space available for understanding the complexity of each situation.

In contrast, participants felt that short term funding favors a top-down approach, since the time crunch and limited supply of funding make dedicating the time needed to address these complex situations impossible. Through a short-term fund, funder(s) cannot adequately connect with the diverse groups around the province that need funding. The one-funder model (or even multiple funders from a top-down approach) also comes with its own biases that might prevent equitable distribution of funds.

Participants indicated that other work that could be made possible through a legacy fund could include permanent crisis response groups in communities that respond to crises on a rotating basis—these groups could be supported with resources in a sustainable way. There might also be a permanent, full time “collaborator”, an individual who travels to communities to build relationships and conduct engagement and education sessions to ensure that communities get the information they need to be successful. This person or persons could also help groups apply for funding in ways that work for them (by taking down their words and bringing them to the funders table, for example) instead of in ways that burden them. This type of proactive, permanent, systems-change work is not something that can come from a one-year fund; it must stem from a long term legacy fund.

Beyond what has been mentioned, participants advised that there is also a larger conversation that needs to be had about systemic changes, including changes to infrastructure, programs, and institutions, as mentioned in the *231 Calls for Justice*. Many participants said that care and services addressing MMIWG2S+ people must be all encompassing, wrap-around services. Housing, child-care, furniture, clothing, mental health

support, food security, moving expenses, cultural healing support and other basic needs must be met in communities in order for this problem to be addressed at a systemic level. Further to this, there are already many organizations working in these spaces, and these organizations need to be educated on Indigenous cultures and safe cultural practices in more meaningful ways to leverage existing services and establish more productive relationships among service providers. These service providers and their funders should have more resources and training available to do this work beyond the scope of this funding exercise.

## 8. Conclusion

In summary, participants shared that the work being done to implement a ~\$4 million fund to reduce harm and heal from violence against MMIWG2S+ people is a start, but more significant changes need to be made to the systems and practices that continue to uphold the genocide against Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQIA2S+ peoples. Until longer term and more flexible funding is provided, Indigenous groups will continue to be burdened by the same system that purports to be trying to help them. To mitigate harm while providing the most possible benefit to communities, this Fund has to be approached with intention and careful consideration.

## 9. Participants Suggested Next Steps

Participants shared the following ideas for next steps through these dialogues:

### **Immediate - Ministry**

- Discuss suggestion of a legacy fund and report back to the Path Forward stakeholders on the outcome of those discussions

### **Immediate - Ministry in collaboration with Path Forward Stakeholders**

- Share the WWHR report with participants and communities for review and comment

### **Near Term - Ministry in collaboration with Path Forward Stakeholders**

- Establish Advisory Body(ies)
- Establish Terms of Reference for governance and administration
- Share Terms of Reference with participants and communities for review and comment
- Establish Governing Body(ies) (either Advisory Body(ies) or separate Body(ies))
- Establish Administrative Body(ies)
- Distribute the Fund under the one-year time-frame

### **Long Term - Ministry in collaboration with Path Forward Stakeholders**

- Work to make systemic changes that reflect greater commitment to UNDRIP, DRIPA, the *Calls to Action* and *Calls for Justice*.

- Maintain an ongoing commitment to the guiding principles outlined in this document

## Schedule A:

### Background on UNDRIP(2007), DRIPA (2019), 94 Calls to Action (2015), 231 Calls for Justice (2019).

*The Calls for Justice (2019)* outlines the following four pathways through which efforts should be made to end the genocide on Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQQIA2S+ people:

- historical, multigenerational, and intergenerational trauma;
- social and economic marginalization;
- maintaining the status quo and institutional lack of will; and
- ignoring the agency and expertise of Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQQIA2S+ people.

Addressing these four pathways means full compliance with all Indigenous and human rights instruments, as well as meaningful changes to the daily encounters Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQQIA2S+ people face with individuals, institutions, systems and structures that compromise their security.

Participants at the sessions strongly expressed that Phase Three of the Path Forward must centre on the Principles for change and the 231 Call for Justice, which have a basis in international and Canadian Indigenous rights laws such as the *Charter*, the *Constitution*, and the legal principle of the *Honour of the Crown*. All 231 *Calls for Justice* can be found in *The Calls for Justice* [here](#).

Further to the 231 *Calls For Justice*, the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action* outline the breadth of work that must be done in all systems that impact Indigenous peoples in order to rectify the intergenerational effects of colonialism. Those *Calls to Action* can be found [here](#).

*UNDRIP*, adopted in British Columbia in the form of *DRIPA*, outlines the following Articles that concern the work being done to prevent violence against and provide healing for Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQQIA2S+ people:

**Article 1** Indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all 8 human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights(4) and international human rights law.

**Article 2** Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity.

**Article 3** Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

**Article 4** Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.

**Article 7 1.** Indigenous individuals have the rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person.

**2.** Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group.

**Article 22 1.** Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration.

**2.** States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.

**Article 44** All the rights and freedoms recognized herein are equally guaranteed to male and female indigenous individuals.

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SOLICITOR GENERAL  
COMMUNITY SAFETY & CRIME PREVENTION BRANCH  
INFORMATION BRIEFING NOTE**

**PURPOSE:** For **INFORMATION** for Mike Farnworth,  
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General and Deputy Premier.

**ISSUE:** E-Comm 911.

**SUMMARY:**

- E-Comm, the 9-1-1 emergency communications provider that handles 99% of calls in the province, is facing significant financial and operational challenges. These challenges, in combination with emergency events experienced in the province over the past several months, have resulted in the public experiencing excess wait times when attempting to access emergency services.
- Some of these delays are resultant from pressures on BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) that are being addressed through increased resources at BC Ambulance Services which, after E-Comm transfers the initial 9-1-1 call, handles dispatching and ambulance deployment at their organization. However, strain on the 9-1-1 system is also caused by understaffing, high turnover, and low retention of call takers and dispatchers at E-Comm.
- CUPE 8911, the union representing some call takers and dispatchers at E-Comm, also found that these pressures cause mental and emotional strain on call takers and dispatchers which also impacts the public's access to emergency services.
- E-Comm operates on a cost recovery basis, funded by its shareholders, and governed by individual contracts with local governments <sup>s.13; s.16</sup>  
s.13; s.16
- In addition to the current challenges, E-Comm is also preparing to upgrade their systems to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1). (TELUS, BC's designated NG9-1-1 network provider must be ready to launch NG9-1-1 by March 1, 2022. Following this, E-Comm can begin the onboarding process).
- In BC, local governments are responsible for 9-1-1 services and will be required to enter into new agreements with TELUS for the provision of NG9-1-1. The upgrades will have financial impacts on their services, but specific costing details are not yet finalized.

**BACKGROUND:**

- E-Comm is established under the *Emergency Communications Corporations Act* which does not extend to providing oversight on how 9-1-1 services are defined and delivered in BC. Rather, it allows for the creation of corporations with certain powers and authorities appropriate to the provision of emergency communications services.



- E-Comm is owned by its shareholders including municipalities, Police boards and BCEHS. Primary 9-1-1 service is contracted to E-Comm by the regional districts who use E-Comm as their first point of contact for 9-1-1 calls. They fund the service through property taxes and other methods such as call answer levies on landline phones.
- E-Comm provides 9-1-1 call-answer service within 25 regional districts, answering 99 per cent of 9-1-1 calls made throughout BC. E-Comm provides dispatch services for 33 police agencies and 40 fire departments across the province.
- CUPE 8911 members recently developed a report detailing these challenges, *E-Comm 9-1-1: Fixing a Broken Service, a guide for B.C. municipalities* and identified the central problem as E-Comm's current cost recovery funding model. The report demonstrates that the funding model is both unstable and not sufficiently flexible to respond to crises.
- The report also identified that the financial model has resulted in understaffing, as well as recruitment and retention issues. These challenges have limited E-Comm's ability to meet key targets, causing significant wait times a caller experiences when dialing 9-1-1 and impacting public safety and emergency response times.
  - For example, after the initial call triage (i.e., police, fire, ambulance query) the target for dispatchers to answer police emergency is 10 seconds or less. However, in January 2021 the public experienced a wait time of over 7 minutes, in March 2021 wait times exceeded 10 minutes, and in June 2021 wait times reached 47 minutes (during the record-breaking heatwave).
- On September 22, 2021, the Ministry met with E-Comm executive to relay these challenges and <sup>s.13; s.16</sup>  
<sup>s.13; s.16</sup>
- <sup>s.13; s.16</sup>
- On October 20, 2021, CUPE 8911 met with the Honourable Mike Farnworth to share the findings of their report and two key recommendations for municipalities:
  - Recommendation #1: That E-Comm receive an immediate financial infusion from all its municipal partners to "right size" operations, consistent with staffing recommendations laid out in the Price Waterhouse Cooper report commissioned by E-Comm; and
  - Recommendation #2: That the funding formula for E-Comm be reimagined so that it better reflects inflationary realities of operations and creates room to pre-empt a crisis.

### Next Generation 9-1-1

- The Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), the regulator of broadcasting and telecommunications in Canada, released their decision related to emergency communications system upgrades to NG9-1-1 on June 1, 2017.
- The decision mandates that network carriers be ready to provide 9-1-1 calls and text messaging over NG9-1-1 (Internet-Protocol) networks with deadlines throughout 2020. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the CRTC paused timelines and has recently issued new deadlines for Canada's transition to NG9-1-1 as follows:
  - March 1, 2022: NG9-1-1 networks and voice calling must be in service and available for public safety answering points (e.g., E-Comm) to connect.
  - March 4, 2025: All Enhanced 9-1-1 networks (current system in most jurisdictions) must be decommissioned.
  - Note: New deadlines for text messaging have not been established.
- The decision also impacts 9-1-1 call centres, which will require significant changes to implement NG9-1-1 such as, technological, operational, human resources, and policy, creating financial pressures.
- TELUS will be responsible for the construction, operation, and maintenance of NG9-1-1 networks in BC and has initiated consultation with local governments, First Nations, and existing emergency communications providers.
- NG9-1-1 will require negotiating new agreements, involving multiple stakeholders, including: First Nations Governments, telecommunications providers, regional districts, and municipalities. TELUS is currently gathering information from local governments to determine points of contact for the signing of these new agreements.
- In 2019, with NG9-1-1 identified as a priority, the Province established a 9-1-1 Steering Committee to, examine three key components of the 9-1-1 system: funding, governance, and standards. At that time, UBCM affirmed its support for a provincial 9-1-1 framework and a call answer levy to fund 9-1-1 services.
- In 2020, the Province informed the 9-1-1 Steering Committee, including UBCM, that new 9-1-1 legislation would not be tabled during the spring 2020 legislative session. As a result, key stakeholders, including E-Comm, UBCM, and the Association of 9-1-1 Service Providers in BC have requested updates on the status of 9-1-1 legislation including a call answer levy.

## **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CONSIDERATIONS**

- E-Comm does not currently have contracts directly with First Nations, however some regional districts in BC have made agreements to enable 9-1-1 service in First Nations communities as part of the areas they serve.
- The First Nations communities that do have 9-1-1 service provision do not have the same level of services as other BC communities. The primary contributing factor is the limited connectivity of telecommunication services in remote locations. The distance between the wireless towers is more significant in rural areas than urban areas. Even if there is wireless coverage, the distance between wireless towers is often so great that the location provided can be inaccurate.

## **OTHER MINISTRIES IMPACTED/CONSULTED:**

- The Ministry of Municipal Affairs supports local governments with their legislated financial responsibilities. Currently, most local governments fund 9-1-1 emergency communications through landline levies and property taxes. PSSG staff consult and collaborate with MUNI whenever policy and funding models for 9-1-1 emergency communications in BC are under consideration.

## **PREPARED BY:**

Rebecca Salpeter  
a/Senior Manager, Policy & Strategic Initiatives  
Community Safety & Crime Prevention Branch  
250-507-5168

## **APPROVED NOVEMBER 24, 2021 BY:**

Mark Sieben  
Deputy Solicitor General