



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

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MEMORANDUM TO THE DEPUTY MINISTER AND THE ASSOCIATE DEPUTY MINISTER

RECONCILIATION AT IRCC

FOR INFORMATION

SUMMARY

- The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with information on current initiatives at IRCC to advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.
- Departmental efforts to change the Oath of Citizenship and the Citizenship Guide, and to develop new policies enabling residential school survivors to reclaim their names, coupled with our anti-racism efforts, provide an opportune moment to engage the Department in the conversation around reconciliation and the importance of IRCC's role in contributing to reconciliation efforts.
- As a next step, the attached narrative on reconciliation and IRCC (see Annex A) could be presented through governance, or internal messaging, to raise awareness of IRCC's role and serve as a catalyst for further reflection and engagement with regard to fulfilling our responsibility under the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Call to Action (CTA) #57 (education for public servants), bringing Indigenous lenses to IRCC's work and to the recruitment and retention Indigenous employees.

BACKGROUND:

- Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is a key Government of Canada and ministerial mandate commitment. The Minister is also a member of the Cabinet Committee on Reconciliation.
- The Department has the responsibility to understand the connections to reconciliation and Indigenous peoples across all lines of business – even those not yet directly implicated. This includes recognizing the role IRCC has played in colonization, as well as in honouring and integrating Indigenous perspectives in policy and program development, advancing Indigenous recruitment and retention, and increasing professional development for intercultural and sensitivity training.

- Since 2016, several efforts have been underway across IRCC to contribute to reconciliation. IRCC's main efforts to advance reconciliation have been focused on responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, including advancing changes to the Citizenship Guide (CTA #93) and the Oath of Citizenship (CTA #94) to better reflect Indigenous perspectives, including the recognition of treaty rights. IRCC is also responding to CTA #17 to enable residential schools survivors and their families to reclaim family names. Finally, there is government-wide movement to encourage educating the public service on Indigenous issues (CTA #57).

CURRENT STATUS:

- A narrative on reconciliation and IRCC (see Annex A) has been co-developed by the following branches: Citizenship, Admissibility, Strategic Policy and Planning, Settlement and Integration Policy, Human Resources, Citizenship and Passport Program Guidance, and with representatives from the Indigenous Peoples Circle. Legal Services and Communications have also been consulted. The narrative was presented to the Policy Committee.
- The narrative on reconciliation and a supplementary summary of work the Department has undertaken towards reconciliation (see Annex B) illustrates how many of IRCC's policies, programs and initiatives intersect in different ways in the lives of Indigenous peoples in Canada. It is expected that this, in conjunction with anti-racism efforts, will serve as a catalyst for further reflection and engagement on the importance of reconciliation and Indigenous perspectives at IRCC.
- Moreover, as IRCC advances reconciliation objectives such as educating newcomers and promoting knowledge of Indigenous peoples and their contributions to Canada as part of the process of becoming citizens, promoting knowledge among staff regarding the importance of reconciliation to the Department's broader project of nation-building will also enable more mindful inclusion of Indigenous perspectives for our mandate and work.
- A more in-depth summary of IRCC's current efforts can be found at Annex B; some key efforts include:
 - IRCC's Indigenous Peoples Circle, a volunteer-based network of employees that helps increase non-Indigenous employees' awareness of Indigenous culture; create a welcoming environment for Indigenous employees; and offer guidance on effective engagement with Indigenous communities;
 - Building connections between newcomers and Indigenous peoples in the Settlement Program;
 - Collaborating with stakeholders to facilitate border travel for Indigenous peoples; and
 - Working with Indigenous youth to raise awareness about the benefits of work and travel abroad through International Experience Canada.
- The Citizenship Branch has provided a principal point of contact for IRCC for interdepartmental coordination of reconciliation efforts led by CIRNA. The Policy Committee has expressed interest in IRCC establishing a centre of expertise on Indigenous issues.

- Departments such as ESDC, DFO, and PSPC have established dedicated divisions to coordinate efforts within their departments. Several, including the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, have developed reconciliation frameworks to apply this lens to their policies and programs. Additional resource investments would likely be required to develop and implement such an approach at IRCC.

COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS:

- Media attention to the changes to the Citizenship Guide and the Oath (CTA #93 and CTA #94, respectively) is intermittent, though has been critical in nature, mostly on the delays in publishing a new guide. Media attention to reconciliation in general, however, is ongoing.
- An internal IRCC statement of commitment to reconciliation is unlikely to garner media attention.
- If the document is put on IRCC's public website, responsive lines would be drafted, as needed.

NEXT STEPS:

- While work continues on specific reconciliation-related files, the attached annexes will be used to socialize IRCC's contributions to reconciliation, including as a reference document for correspondence or communications.
- To further promote reconciliation at IRCC, if you agree, these documents, or versions of them, could be shared with senior management governance tables and IRCC employees, such as through Today@IRCC, and published on Connexion to demonstrate IRCC's connections and ongoing commitment to reconciliation, and encourage the Department to understand Indigenous issues and build meaningful engagement with Indigenous peoples.
- Should you be interested in further information, a briefing can be provided at your request.



Annexes (2):

A: Reconciliation at IRCC

B: Summary of work on reconciliation at IRCC