

MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL RELATIONS

Alberta's first stand-alone Ministry of Aboriginal Relations was created in 2008 with the Hon. Gene Zwozdesky as Minister. The Ministry provides leadership on Aboriginal issues and builds relationships with Aboriginal communities, the federal government, industry and other partners to strengthen social and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people in Alberta.

Alberta is home to one of the largest, youngest and fastest-growing Aboriginal populations in Canada. Nearly 250,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit people play an important role in the social, cultural and economic fabric of the province.

MINISTER'S MANDATE PRIORITIES:

- Review the *Aboriginal Policy Framework* and provincial programs and services for Aboriginal people and communities to enhance their ability to increase the well-being and self-reliance of Aboriginal communities.
- Review *Alberta's First Nation Consultation Policy on Land Management and Resource Development* to increase the effectiveness of consultation processes.
- Conclude long-term governance and funding arrangements with Métis Settlements focusing on effective governance, enhanced accountability and sustainability.

Engaging First Nations

The *Protocol Agreement on Government-to-Government Relations*, signed by Alberta and the Grand Chiefs and Vice-Chiefs of Treaty 6, 7, and 8 in May 2008, commits the Premier and Grand Chiefs to meet annually to discuss matters of mutual concern. Ministers responsible for consultation matters will also meet with the Grand Chiefs twice a year.

Aboriginal Policy Framework

Strengthening Relationships: The Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework outlines Alberta's approach to Aboriginal relations. Its goals include improved well-being and self-reliance for individuals and communities and a commitment to clarify federal, provincial and Aboriginal roles and responsibilities. Currently under review, it also emphasizes effective consultation regarding resource and economic development.

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Alberta's Ministry of Aboriginal Relations has two primary divisions:

Consultation and Land Claims co-ordinates initiatives related to First Nations consultation on land and resource development, manages consultation capacity and helps build Aboriginal self-sufficiency.

- **First Nations Consultation Capacity Investment Program** helps ensure First Nations are able to respond to consultation requests and work effectively with industry and government to address consultation issues.
- **Traditional Use Studies** enable First Nations to identify their interests on Alberta Crown land to better inform resource development decision-making, while increasing certainty for industry and government.

First Nations and Métis Relations works with First Nations, Métis and other partners to strengthen participation in social and economic opportunities in Alberta. The division oversees agreements between the Alberta government and Aboriginal groups and is responsible for administration of Métis Settlements legislation.

- **First Nations Economic Partnerships Initiative** helps increase First Nations participation in the economy by supporting partnerships between First Nations, industry, government and other stakeholders; strengthening First Nations economic capacity; and supporting development of a viable First Nations private sector.
- **First Nations Development Fund** supports First Nations economic, social and community development projects and helps achieve the Aboriginal Policy Framework goal of enhancing the well-being and self-reliance of First Nations communities. The Fund receives a percentage of government-owned slot machine revenue generated at Alberta's five on-reserve casinos.
- **General Grants** support provincial, federal and municipal governments, Native Friendship Centres and other organizations to support urban Aboriginal initiatives.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations:

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www.aboriginal.alberta.ca



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