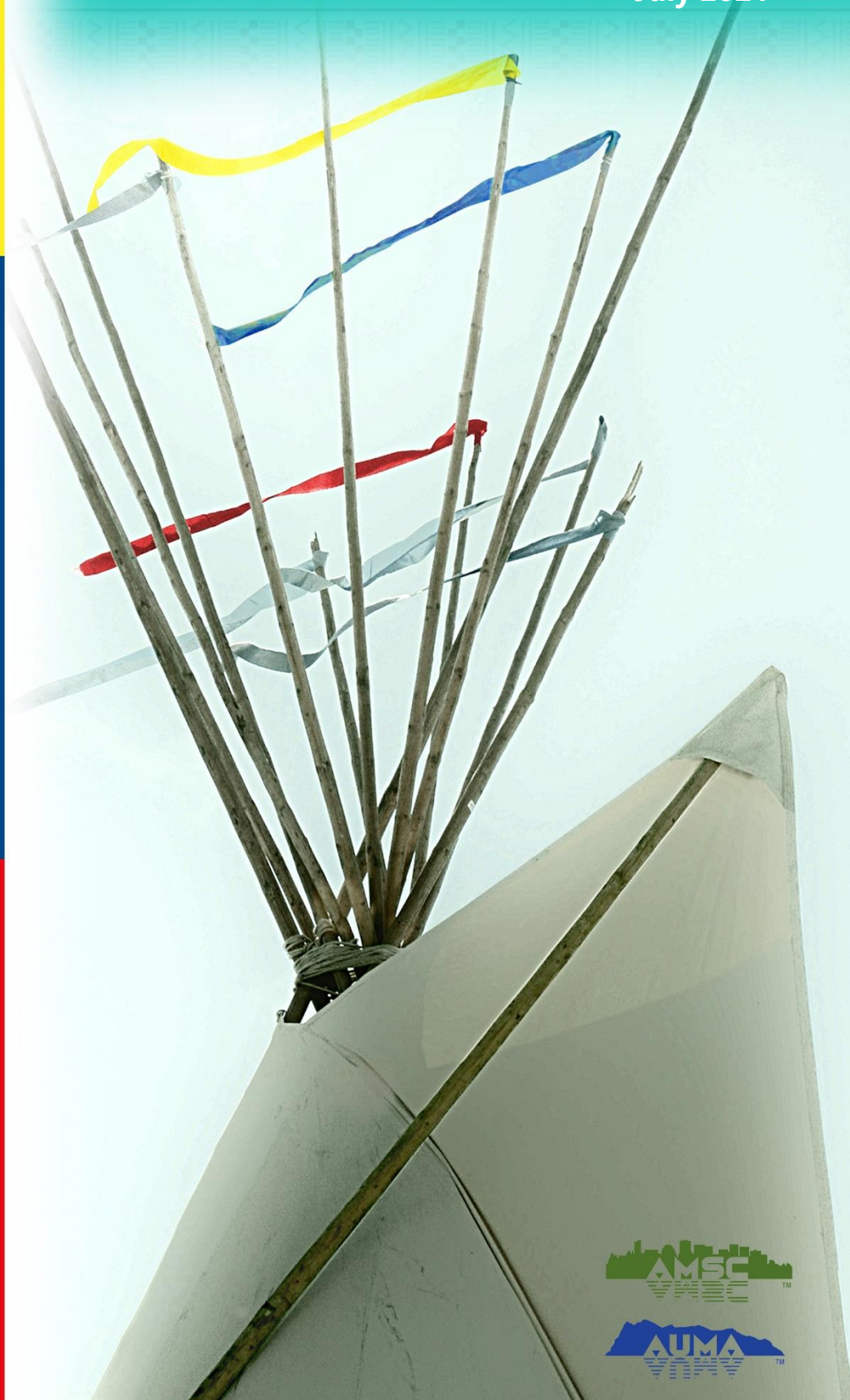


# A Municipal Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action

July 2021



# Land Acknowledgement

The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) acknowledges the traditional land on which we are headquartered is in Treaty Six Territory. We honour and respect the history, languages, and culture of the diverse status and non-status Indigenous peoples who call this territory home such as the nêhiyaw (Cree), Dené, Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Nakota Isga (Nakota Sioux), and Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) peoples. We also acknowledge this land as the Métis' homeland and the home of many Inuit.

As the voice for urban municipal governments situated across the province of Alberta, we encourage all municipal governments to be informed about the traditional lands, Treaties, and history and cultures of Indigenous peoples local to their region.

Learn more through resources such as:

- [Government of Alberta's map](#) of the Treaty territories, First Nations reserves, and Métis Settlements.
- Visit [www.native-land.ca](http://www.native-land.ca) for an interactive map of territories, languages, and Treaties.
- Download the [Whose Land](#) app for mobile use.

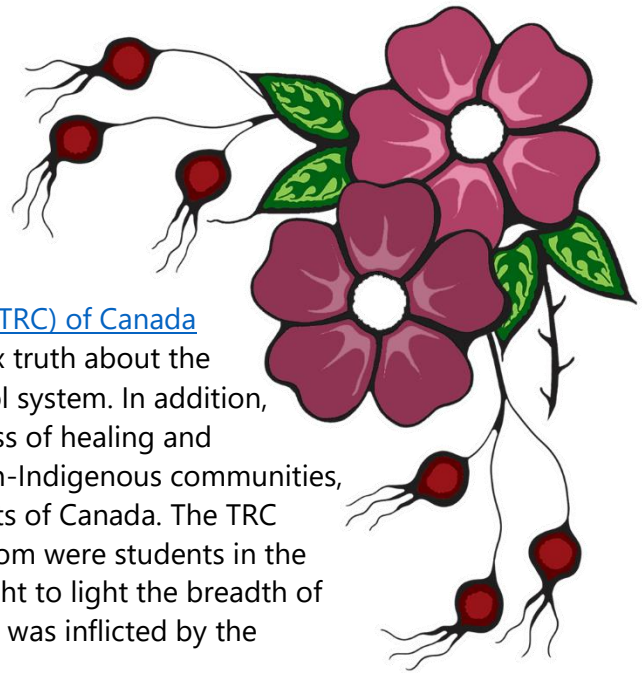
*Imagery by Cree-active Vision*



## Background

For over 100 years, Indigenous children in Canada were removed from their families and sent to institutions known as residential schools.

In 2008, the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\) of Canada](#) was established to reveal to Canadians the complex truth about the history and ongoing legacy of the residential school system. In addition, the TRC was intended to guide and inspire a process of healing and reconciliation between Indigenous families and non-Indigenous communities, churches, governments, private sector, and residents of Canada. The TRC heard from more than 6,500 witnesses, most of whom were students in the residential school system. Witness testimony brought to light the breadth of physical, sexual, spiritual, and emotional abuse that was inflicted by the residential school system.



In 2015, the TRC released a [six-volume report](#) that documents the experiences of the survivors and the legacy left by residential schools. One of the reports outlines [94 Calls to Action](#) on how governments of all levels, institutions, and residents of Canada can support the process of reconciliation.

## Purpose of this Guide

Since the release of the TRC reports, AUMA members have increasingly sought guidance on how to support reconciliation. The purpose of this guide is to assist municipal leaders to understand the calls to action that are most relevant to Alberta municipal governments in terms of scope of responsibility and applicability to municipal service delivery. While we encourage readers to review all [94 Calls to Action](#) made by the TRC, this guide narrows the list down to 12 calls to action that can serve as a starting point for your municipal government.

It is important to note that each municipal government will be at a different point in its journey to support reconciliation and that this document should not be considered a source of definitive guidance, but a resource of suggestions for municipalities that are starting out. As you move forward, ensure that you work closely with local Indigenous leaders throughout the process and for additional resources, visit [AUMA's Welcoming and Inclusive Communities](#) initiative.



## What does reconciliation mean?

The term 'reconciliation' often has different interpretations, but for the purposes of this guide, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada refers to reconciliation as:

*An ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships. A critical part of this process involves repairing damaged trust by making apologies, providing individual and collective reparations, and following through with concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change.*

In its simplest form, reconciliation is about Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples coming to terms with the events of the past in a manner that rebuilds trust and respectful relationships. This will enable people to work out historical differences and build healthy relationships with a focus on bettering future generations in Canada.



## Recommendation of Calls to Action for municipalities

#	Call to Action	Rationale
3	Fully implement Jordan's Principle to ensure First Nations children are not denied or delayed in accessing essential public services.	Municipalities can review all municipal services to children to ensure access is equitable and without discrimination. Where possible, municipalities can also support local healthcare, social, and educational professionals to remedy systemic and institutional practices so that Indigenous youth can access the services and supports they need, when they need them.
17	Enable residential school survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving any administrative costs.	Municipalities that charge a fee for any name changes are encouraged to waive this fee if it is for the purpose of reclaiming a family name.
40	In collaboration with Indigenous people, create Indigenous-specific victim programs and services with appropriate evaluation mechanisms.	There are opportunities for municipal governments to advocate, create, and expand victim services programs in partnership with the Government of Alberta and local organizations.
45.iii	Renew or establish Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationships into the future.	Municipal government leaders can build relationships with local and regional Indigenous organizations and leaders to open space for conversation on issues of mutual interest.
57	Educate public servants on the history of Indigenous peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Indigenous rights, Indigenous law, and Indigenous-Crown relations.	Possibly one of the most impactful ways that municipal governments can support reconciliation is to update internal training programs to regularly educate staff about the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada, including the residential school system, and how that impacts relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people today. This training may include a focus on intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
66	Establish funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation.	While this call to action is directed to the federal government, municipalities can also partner with local organizations to raise awareness and encourage conversations with youth about reconciliation.

#	Call to Action	Rationale
69.iii	Encourage libraries to commit more resources to public education on residential schools.	Municipalities can partner with libraries to host speaker events and sharing circles and promote literature that will increase awareness about the history and legacy of residential schools.
77	Work with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system.	Municipalities can explore historical corporate and cemetery records to identify and deliver any relevant documentation to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. This may include partnering with the local museum(s).
93	Create/revise information kits for newcomers to reflect the history of Indigenous peoples, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.	Municipalities can develop a handout about the history and culture of Indigenous peoples in the region and share it with immigrant serving agencies as well as make it publicly available online. Consider developing the handout in multiple languages to better support newcomers to understand the cultural context.

**The following calls to action are most relevant to municipal governments that are located near a formal residential school site.**

75	Implement strategies for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried.	This call to action is directed at the federal government, however, due to the municipal role in oversight of land use planning and cemetery management, municipal governments can take active steps to meet this call to action.
79.iii	Implement plans to commemorate residential school sites, the history of residential schools and contributions of Indigenous peoples to Canada's history.	This call to action is directed at the federal government, but municipal governments can also implement plans to commemorate the history to build awareness and support reconciliation.
82	In collaboration with survivors and stakeholder organizations, install publicly accessible and visible monuments to honour survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.	This call to action is directed at provincial and territorial governments, but municipal governments can also support reconciliation through local installments.

A full list of the 94 Calls to Action is available at the [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](https://www.nctr.ca/).

## Examples of municipal actions in Alberta

### City of Calgary

In 2016, the City of Calgary's [Calgary Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee](#) developed the [White Goose Flying Report](#), which outlines eighteen calls to action that the City of Calgary has taken ownership to implement. It also summarizes twelve calls to action that the City will support arms-length organizations to implement and an additional thirteen calls to action where the City will call for other partners and stakeholders to take leadership of.

### City of Edmonton

Co-created with the local Indigenous community, the City of Edmonton's [Indigenous Framework](#) was broadly informed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice, and the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. The Indigenous Framework makes seven commitments and outlines four roles for City employees to embody the principles of the Framework. Prior to the release of the TRC's Calls to Action, the City of Edmonton had already implemented a human resource training program to educate employees about the history of the residential school system. To this day, thousands of City staff have participated in the training.

### City of Lethbridge

In 2017, the City of Lethbridge and the Lethbridge Indigenous Sharing Network released a ten-year [Reconciliation Implementation Plan](#). The Plan outlines five calls to action that the City will take ownership of and thirteen calls to action that will be led by the broader community. Every September, the City hosts a week of events to promote reconciliation and, in 2019, the City adopted 'Okí', the Blackfoot word for "greetings", as the [City's official greeting](#).

### Town of Canmore

In 2017, the Town of Canmore made a [commitment to advance fifteen calls to action](#). Examples to-date have included incorporating Indigenous books, art, and imagery into public spaces and social programs, installing signage highlighting the history of Indigenous peoples in the Bow Valley, and hosting blanket exercises for council, staff, and summer programs.

### Federation of Canadian Municipalities

In 2016, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) published [Pathways to Reconciliation](#), which summarizes the actions of Canada's largest cities to respond to the calls to action.

## How AUMA is responding to the calls to action

Like any organization, AUMA is on its own journey to support reconciliation. In 2019, AUMA made a commitment to implement action 45.iii and action 57. That work has started with annual training for AUMA's Board and staff on the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada including the legacy of the residential school system. This work will continue while we use our events and capacity to raise more awareness about Canada's history and how municipal leaders can be influential voices in the journey of reconciliation. For more examples and guidance, contact us at [wic@auma.ca](mailto:wic@auma.ca).