



Medicine Hat



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Indigenous Advisory Circle

City of Medicine Hat
Community Development

January 2026

Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Indigenous Advisory Circle conducts its work in and recognizes that the City of Medicine Hat is located on the traditional territories on Treaty 7; the traditional lands of the Siksika (Blackfoot), Kainai (Blood), Piikani (Peigan), Stoney Nakoda, and Tsuut'ina (Sarcee). Neighbour to Treaty 4 territory; Cree, Sioux, and the Saulteaux bands of the Ojibwa people. Homeland to the Métis Nation District 2 Battle River Territory.

HISTORY

The City of Medicine Hat acknowledges the dedication and valuable contributions of the Truth and Reconciliation Recommendations Committee. The committee was comprised of committed Medicine Hat residents - both Indigenous and allies. Together they developed Walking the Path to Truth and Reconciliation 2022-2025, which identified five areas of focus:

- Education & Training
- Recognition & Awareness
- Relationship Building & Engagement
- Advocacy
- Reporting

PURPOSE

The Indigenous Advisory Circle is guided by intention and purpose to build respectful relationships, provide education and advocacy for the residents of Medicine Hat and the City of Medicine Hat, and ensure Indigenous worldviews are included in conversations and decision-making.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Members of the Indigenous Advisory Circle shall abide by the following guiding principles:

1. Members will declare at the first opportunity any conflict of interest they or any close relative who may have as it relates to the Indigenous Advisory Group's work. The members will excuse themselves from the meeting while the matter is being discussed and will not have a vote on the matter.
2. Members will not use information designated as confidential for their personal gain or that of another person.
3. Standards with respect to confidential information shall apply forever.
4. Members will not use their position on the Indigenous Advisory Circle to secure special privileges, favors or exemptions for themselves or any other person.
5. Members shall act ethically in all situations and assume that unethical activities are not acceptable.
6. Failure to abide by these guiding principles may result in dismissal from the Indigenous Advisory Circle. Members are encouraged to have any of their questions about these guiding principles addressed by the Indigenous Relations Coordinator.
7. All members of the Indigenous Advisory Circle are expected to honour and follow cultural protocols as guided by Elders, Knowledge Keeper and/or the Indigenous Relations Coordinator. This includes and is not limited to:
 - Respecting ceremony, teachings, and traditional practices appropriate to the Nations represented within the Circle.
 - Reciprocity – members will engage in two-way exchange of knowledge, time and effort. The members recognize the importance of meaningful relationships and require giving back in ways that honour Indigenous teachings, support community wellbeing and uphold shared responsibilities.
 - Holistic decision making – advisory follows culture/traditional protocol.
 - Honouring the territory City of Medicine Hat is on (Treaty 7) and neighboring Treaty 4 territory, Métis District 2 Battle River territory.
 - Maintaining cultural safety, confidentiality, and respect for shared knowledge.

Terms of Reference

VISION

The Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC) is guided by the recommendations in the Walking the Path to Truth and Reconciliation plan. The vision of an advisory circle is to build meaningful, respectful relationships, and feel heard and valued within the community of Medicine Hat. The journey to walk together as a community in reconciliation involves honouring Indigenous cultures, traditions and worldviews in municipal decision-making. The Advisory Circle works towards a future where Indigenous people feel seen, heard and empowered through respectful communication and collaborative partnerships.

RESPONSIBILITIES

At the request of departments, the Indigenous Advisory Circle will offer support, guidance and/or advice about inclusivity of Indigenous ways of living and being.

- Review municipal policies, planning, programs and services to ensure Indigenous voices and perspectives are heard and considered such as;
 - Policies, processes and/or procedures such as smudging, land acknowledgement, artifacts, honourariums, etc.
 - Plans – Bylaws, Parks & Recreation Masterplan, etc.
 - Events – e.g. Indigenous histories month, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Métis week, etc.
- Support reconciliation and providing recommendations for the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action for municipalities.
- Strengthen relationships with local First Nations, Métis, and Inuit organizations and residents.
- Promote recognition, respect and relationship building between City of Medicine Hat and the Indigenous community.
- Create a Reconciliation Action Plan for the City of Medicine Hat.

GOALS

- Strengthen relationships with Indigenous nations.
- Provide recommendations on cultural and historical guidance to IRC.
- Support reconciliation efforts.
- Enhance Indigenous inclusion in municipal policies and programs.
- Create culturally safe municipal environments.
- Support community engagement.
- Provide guidance on cultural and traditional ceremonies and protocols.
- Promote Indigenous culture, education and visibility.

CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP

1. Advisory Circle membership will be up to 12 members, with a minimum of 75% of membership being individuals that are of First Nation, Métis or Inuit descent.
2. Minimum 1 reserved committee seat each specifically for Indigenous youth and an Elder or Knowledge Keeper.
3. Public invitations for membership applications will be released to the community with details of goals and responsibilities. Indigenous Relations Coordinator (IRC) will receive and review applications with another community development staff to select individuals for open positions. These selections will go to the Director of Community Development for approval.
4. The remaining 25% of members if need be, will be formed of a member of the Community Vibrancy Advisory board and Indigenous allies.
5. Members will typically serve for a two-year term. However, one year term for the initial year, then move to 2-year terms ongoing. If a member has vacated their position prior to completion of term, the Advisory Circle may request that the Director of Community Development appoint a temporary member for the remainder of the term.

OFFICERS and COMMITTEE

- The Chair and Co-Chair(s) will serve 1 year term, the chair(s) will be from the Indigenous community.
- The Committee will elect the Chair and Co-Chair(s) at the first regular meeting of the year or the first regular meeting following the annual appointment of new members.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

Members can be disqualified from serving on the Indigenous Advisory Circle if:

- Members are expected to attend all meetings. If a member cannot attend, it is important to notify the Staff Liaison (IRC). In the event a member misses more than 50% of the meetings within a calendar year, the members' term will end. In the event a vacancy is created, the Director of Community Development, with the support of the Indigenous Relations Coordinator, can temporarily appoint an individual to the vacant position.

MEETINGS

1. The Indigenous Advisory Circle will hold meetings every other month for a minimum of 6 meetings per year.
2. A quorum shall consist of 50% of the membership.
3. Motions shall be considered carried out if approved by fifty present (50%) of those in attendance.
4. To acknowledge the commitment of Indigenous members, an honorarium of **\$100** in the form of gift card will be provided by the City of Medicine Hat for each Indigenous Advisory Circle meeting members actively attend.
5. If an Indigenous member participates as a representative of a community partner organization, the honorarium will be issued to that organization.
6. If a member is a City employee, their work schedule will be flexed to allow their participation for meetings during work hours, however no additional compensation will be provided if City staff who conduct IAC business during working hours.

COMMUNICATION

All information will be coordinated through the Indigenous Relations Coordinator to and from City departments. Where appropriate, department representatives may be invited to Indigenous Advisory Circle meetings to request support, share updates, and clarify information.

GOALS

The Indigenous Advisory Circle shall not:

- Enter into contracts or agreements connected to the City of Medicine Hat.
- Spend or offer money.
- Make purchases on behalf of the City of Medicine Hat.
- Give directions to City employees.

- Obligate or bind the City of Medicine Hat in any manner whatsoever.
- Act in an advocacy capacity or make direct requests or recommendations to provincial, federal or other municipal governments on behalf of the City of Medicine Hat.

BUDGET

The Indigenous Advisory Circle will be provided with an annually operating budget funded by the City of Medicine Hat. The Indigenous Relations Coordinator will manage the budget.

RECORDS

The Indigenous Relations Coordinator will maintain the minutes and other documents of the Indigenous Advisory Circle.

MEDIA

Official communication on behalf of the organization is made through the City of Medicine Hat's Communications, Engagement and Marketing department. Indigenous Advisory Circle members are not authorized to speak on behalf of the City of Medicine Hat. If approached by the media and asked to comment, members are asked to politely decline the opportunity to be interviewed.

On occasion, and with the knowledge and guidance of the Indigenous Relations Coordinator, an Indigenous Advisory Circle member may be asked to speak to the media. Examples of this may include;

- Speaking with regards to a City of Medicine Hat Indigenous awareness event.
- Offering support or acknowledgment to local Indigenous organizations or associations.
- In conjunction with one or more City of Medicine Hat departments where Indigenous perspective strengthens the message (ex. Flag raising relevant to Indigenous matters).

AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

These Terms of Reference may be amended by the Director of Community Development without notice and at the Director's sole discretion.

An amendment to the Terms of Reference may also be initiated by the Indigenous Advisory Circle member(s) using the following procedures:

1. At least 30 days' notice in writing to the Indigenous Relations Coordinator is given.
2. The amendment request is agreed upon by at least 75% of the Indigenous Advisory Circle members at a regularly scheduled meeting.
3. The amendment is approved by the Director of Community Development.

STAFF LIAISON / SUPPORT

The Indigenous Relations Coordinator will be a liaison between the Indigenous Advisory Circle and municipal departments and City Council. The Indigenous Relations Coordinator will be responsible for fostering and promoting collaborative relationships between the municipality and Indigenous communities. The Indigenous Relations Coordinator will focus on building trust, respectful relationships, learning, reviewing and advancing internal initiatives that reflect the values of reconciliation.

The Community Development department will supply administrative support to the Indigenous Advisory Circle that includes the preparation and circulation of agendas, minutes and annual reports.