



Native Women's  
Association of Canada

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L'Association des  
femmes autochtones  
du Canada

# Strategic Plan

## 2018 – 2021

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**Head Office**

155 International Road Unit #2  
Akwasasne, Ontario K6H 5R7  
Toll-free: 1-800-461-4043

**Satellite Office**

1 Nicholas Street, 9th Floor  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B7  
Tel: (613) 722-3033 | Fax: (613) 722-7687  
Toll-free: 1-800-461-4043 [reception@nwac.ca](mailto:reception@nwac.ca)



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# MISSION STATEMENT:

Advocate for and inspire women and families of many Indigenous nations.

# VISION STATEMENT:

We envision an inclusive world that understands and respects the diversity and uniqueness of all Indigenous women and families

## Elements of Vision:

- ◇ We have a vision of Indigenous communities where all individuals have an opportunity to develop their talents in order to achieve their full potential.
- ◇ We see communities where all people can lead healthy lifestyles by maintaining balance in their spiritual, emotional, mental and physical health.
- ◇ To build a sense of pride and a strong identification of who they are. They constantly seek to broaden their knowledge of the things that affect them and their relationship with the environment and the land.
- ◇ We see communities where all our people have an opportunity to learn our history and traditional ways while attaining a high level of academic education with children to be proud of who they are and to be comfortable in a predominantly non-Indigenous environment.
- ◇ We see a community where all Indigenous people accept and exercise their responsibilities to contribute to a strong community. We also envision an Indigenous community that understands and respects the diversity and uniqueness of all Indigenous nations.
- ◇ A community which communicates with each other and works in unity with all Indigenous organizations to ensure a strong voice in maintaining Indigenous and treaty rights. This is a community which assumes responsibility in selecting leaders who will be youth and following generations.
- ◇ Finally, we see an Indigenous community which determines how our natural resources are utilized and can co-exist in co-operation with society – free of racism and discrimination.

## Values:

- ◇ Love
- ◇ Respect
- ◇ Humility
- ◇ Truth
- ◇ Courage
- ◇ Bravery
- ◇ Wisdom





# THE CURRENT CONTEXT

## Introduction

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) is founded on the collective goal to enhance, promote, and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of First Nations, Inuit, Métis and non-status women and gender diverse people within First Nation, Métis, Inuit and Canadian societies. NWAC is an aggregate of thirteen Indigenous women's organizations from across Canada and was incorporated as a national non-profit organization in 1974. Today, NWAC engages through grassroots initiatives to promote equality for Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ people.

The principles or objectives of NWAC are as follows:

- ◆ To be the national voice for Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people;
- ◆ To address issues in a manner which reflects the changing needs of Indigenous women and gender diverse people in Canada;
- ◆ To assist and promote common goals towards self-determination and self-sufficiency for Indigenous peoples in our role as mothers and leaders;
- ◆ To promote equal opportunities for Indigenous women and gender diverse people in programs and activities;
- ◆ To serve as a resource among our constituency and Indigenous communities;
- ◆ To cultivate and teach the characteristics that are unique aspects of our cultural and historical traditions;
- ◆ To assist Indigenous women's organizations, as well as community initiatives in the development of their local projects; and to advance issues and concerns of Indigenous women and gender diverse people; and to link with other Indigenous organizations with common goals.

## The NWAC Environment

NWAC is in the midst of significant change and growth, and therefore must be well-positioned to respond to both its members' needs and the opportunities that are currently available in the broader Canadian context. Building on its solid foundation in policy advocacy for Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people, it is well positioned to expand its role in the areas of service provision, legal advocacy, and gender-based research and analysis.

Since its founding, key issues within NWAC's mandate have been supported by advancements made by a number of Canadian and international institutions:

- ◇ Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognized that existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada are recognized, affirmed, and guaranteed equally to male and female persons;
- ◇ In 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples called for the assurance of the full and fair representation of women in decision-making;
- ◇ The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted in 2007, recognized that particular attention needed to be focused on the rights and special needs of women;
- ◇ The renewed commitment by the federal government in 2015 to a nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples;
- ◇ The launching of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2016.

As a leading Indigenous institution in Canada, NWAC has the opportunity to end the systemic marginalization of Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people and work to advance the health and well-being of current and future generations of Indigenous women, children, gender diverse people and the communities and nations in which they live through a nation-to-nation relationship with Canada.

# STRATEGIC GOALS, OBJECTIVES & MEASURES OF SUCCESS

The Native Women’s Association of Canada will strive to achieve its strategic goals and objectives by overcoming risks and challenges to harness opportunities that build on its strengths.

## Strategic Goal # 1: Building a strong, resilient organization through internal capacity building

| Key Strategic Objectives                                                                                                                       | What Success Looks Like in 2021                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Improve internal and external communications through integration and utilization of both traditional and digital communication technologies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ An effective communications strategy and associated practices are in place to ensure regular communications about NWAC’s work are shared between NWAC and PTMAs</li> <li>◆ NWAC has a robust social media presence</li> </ul>           |
| 2. Elders and Youth are enabled to make a key contribution                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Resources are provided to support Elder and Youth programming and training</li> <li>◆ Development of a proposal to fund 20 youth in job shadowing opportunities</li> </ul>                                                              |
| 3. Funding is secure, stable and more diverse                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ 5-year funding federal government appropriations replace fiscal year funding</li> <li>◆ NWAC increases its gross revenues from non-government sources by 50% from 2017 levels</li> </ul>                                                |
| 4. NWAC governance is modernized, effective and reflective of those it serves                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ A communications protocol guides engagement between NWAC and the PTMAs</li> <li>◆ Annual general meetings are well-planned and executed</li> <li>◆ NWAC and PTMA by-laws are up-to-date and available</li> </ul>                        |
| 5. Staff have access to multiple development opportunities that incorporate traditional knowledge                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Training modules have been developed and are periodically updated</li> <li>◆ Staff development plans and succession plans are in place</li> <li>◆ At least 10% of staff have progressed into new roles with the organization</li> </ul> |

## Strategic Goal # 2: Be a full and equal participant on key issues of relevance to Indigenous women, gender diverse and their families in Canada

| Key Strategic Objectives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | What Success Looks Like in 2021                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. The NWAC Government of Canada Accord is secured, recognizing NWAC as a full participant in decision making processes at the national and international levels                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The Accord is signed</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 2. Proactive engagement and advocacy on behalf of Indigenous women, gender diverse people and families on the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ UNDRIP and the Indian Act</li> <li>◇ Economic development and employment opportunities</li> <li>◇ Strengthening cultural and language identity</li> <li>◇ Child and Elder welfare</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ 3 or more NWAC representatives actively engaged at relevant tables</li> <li>◇ More program funding dedicated to each topic</li> <li>◇ Greater control over programming by Indigenous women's organizations</li> </ul> |
| 3. Advocate for removal of section 6 discrimination                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Indigenous individuals that have lost their status through section 6 will have regained it</li> <li>◇ Cut off dates within section 6 have been eliminated</li> </ul>                                                  |

## Strategic Goal # 3: Increase the communication and resource capacity of PTMAs

| Key Strategic Objectives                                                                                                                                          | What Success Looks Like in 2021                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. PTMAs have the resources, data, offices and technology to meet contemporary administration and communication demands                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Each PTMA has an operating board of directors and at least one FTE</li> <li>◇ NWAC has submitted applications for funding to INAC to support PTMA capacity</li> <li>◇ NWAC has provided staff capacity to support PTMA funding proposal development</li> </ul> |
| 2. PTMAs have developed the knowledge, skills and perspectives to sustain and fulfill the needs of Indigenous women, children, gender diverse people and families | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ 50% increase in membership for each PTMA within 3 years</li> <li>◇ Training is available and frequently accessed by PTMA leaders in meeting processes and rules of order, media savvy, proposal writing</li> </ul>                                             |

# Strategic Goal # 4: Building the leadership capacity of Indigenous women and gender diverse people

| Key Strategic Objectives                                                                                                                                     | What Success Looks Like in 2021                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. NWAC offers leadership and advocacy training that moves beyond the basics to focus on providing effective leadership at national and international levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ NWAC leadership is confident working with federal ministers and at international tables such as the United Nations</li> </ul>                                            |
| 2. NWAC offers management training to encourage women and gender diverse people into senior roles                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ NWAC has submitted a proposal for funding to develop and deliver a management training program</li> </ul>                                                                |
| 3. A national, online resource centre is established                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Best practices are captured and shared</li> <li>◆ Proposal templates are available</li> <li>◆ An interactive website has videos that celebrate PTMA successes</li> </ul> |





# CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

**Multi-Year Resourcing Plan** – Moving beyond reliance on annual core funding to a multi-year funding stream supplemented by other revenue streams will likely require investments in building, or acquiring, additional resource development capacity and an increased focus on partnership-building. In addition, providing support to PTMAs as they seek funding, and ensuring proper accountability for any funds secured, will be important.

**Staff Resourcing & Accessing Expertise** –As the organization continues to deliver on its core mandate it will all develop and deliver new or additional areas of programming and activity, effectively and efficiently utilize existing staff and build their capacity, add staff on an incremental basis, and/or acquire key skills and expertise from contractors etc. This all may be required to achieve the organization’s objectives. In addition, the organization will need to involve external expertise, including legal and some of the pioneers, in order to effectively develop positions etc.

**Securing the Accord** – For NWAC to effectively fulfill its mandate as an advocacy organization, it must be recognized as a full and equal participant at all tables. Attention to moving this issue forward, and getting a final Accord negotiated and signed, is a priority for the organization.

**Effective Governance** – An actively engaged Board, at a strategic level, will be critical to attainment of the organization’s strategic imperatives. In particular, Board support and the engagement of key Board member champions, to support the organization’s advocacy efforts, as well as NWAC PTMA engagement efforts, will be critical to the achievement of the organization’s strategic goals. Finally, transparency in NWAC governance, including clarity in roles and responsibilities of Board, staff and members, and a focus on audits and regular reporting, are essential.



**Building and Maintaining Relationships with Key Communities and Stakeholders** – As NWAC works to expand, it must always be aware of the communities and other stakeholders who have an interest in what NWAC does or who may be impacted by NWAC advocacy efforts or program offerings. An effective stakeholder relations program will be essential in building and sustaining relationships that will support NWAC growth and mitigate potential risks. In particular, NWAC recognizes the need to reach out to Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ community to understand the issues that affect them and how NWAC can engage with them.

**Identifying and Building Partnerships and Other Collaborative Arrangements** – As NWAC moves to increase its profile and sphere of influence it will likely find the need to develop collaborative arrangements who bring necessary skills, resources, networks and expertise that cannot be found or built in-house. Finding and securing those critical external partnerships or other arrangements that will help NWAC achieve its strategic goals and help mitigate some of the risks associated with expansion.

**Addressing Lateral Violence** – NWAC has identified lateral violence as an issue that inhibits its ability, and that of the women, gender diverse people and families it serves, to effectively work together. Going forward, NWAC will work with its members and communities to develop strategies to address lateral violence so that the energy and focus of those involved in NWAC are appropriately focused on the needs of Indigenous women, girls, gender diverse people and families in Canada.



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