



Native Women's  
Association of Canada

L'Association des  
femmes autochtones  
du Canada

44TH  
ANNUAL  
GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY  
HEALTH AND WELLNESS 2018

**45th Annual General Assembly**

ANNUAL REPORT 2018–2019

RESILIENCY





## 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.*







# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>A Message from the Interim President</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Message from the chief executive officer</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Message from the chief Financial officer</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Message from the senior director of policy, HR &amp; operations</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Message from the senior director for legal, communication &amp; business</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Policy development framework</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>NWAC Accord</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Operational Overview</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Our legislative, policy &amp; advocacy work review</b>	<b>16</b>
Our legislative work	16
Our policy work	20
Our advocacy work	21
NWAC recommendations	23
<b>Advocating for Health Equity</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Advocating for Indigenous Students</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>On the International Front</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>The Social and Cultural Innovation centre</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>The Resiliency Centre</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Individual Projects</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>AWBEN</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Looking ahead</b>	<b>38</b>

# GOVERNANCE

## Board of Directors / Executive

The NWAC Board of Directors is responsible for the overall governance of NWAC and passes all resolutions concerning new initiatives undertaken by NWAC personnel and its members. The Board meets on a regular basis to evaluate, review and provide direction to the President, PTMAs and national office.

NWAC's Board of Directors consists of 22 members:

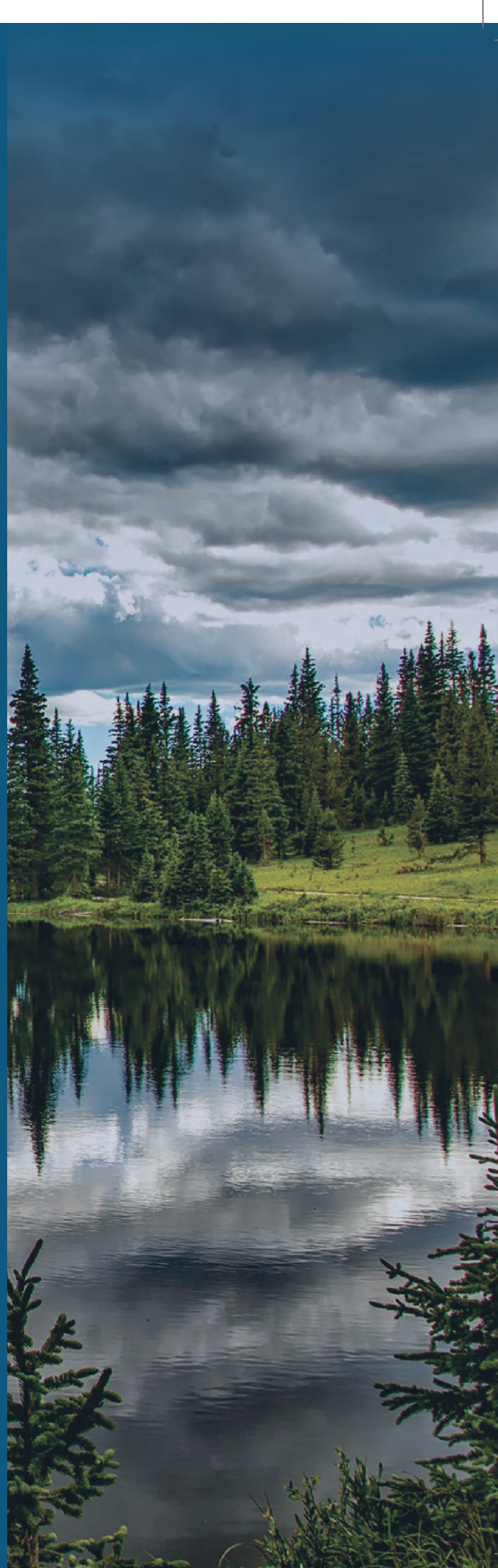
- One president
- 13 regional representatives, four of whom are also regional executive leaders
- Four regional Elders
- Four regional youth representatives, elected by the NWAC Youth Council

## Highlights

It's been a busy year for the NWAC Board of Directors, Chief Executive Officer, senior management and staff. The following items are a sample of the work that was accomplished in 2018–19:

- Chief Executive Officer and representative from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNA) visited Manitoba, Saskatchewan and BC Provincial and Territorial Members Associations to discuss core and project funding needs.
- Developed Strategic Plan.
- Reviewed audited statements, HR policies and organizational chart.
- Prepared submission for core/project funding to CIRNA.
- Drafted governance policies.
- Implemented social media 'stop discriminating' campaign.
- Finalized core budget request for 2019–20 for submission to Minister of Finance.
- Met with Minister Carolyn Bennett and Deputy Minister Daniel Watson on NWAC's relationship with the Crown.
- Sent core funding agreements to PTMAs.
- Held a Métis consultative meeting.
- Met with the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Minister Carolyn Bennett and Minister Gina Wilson to discuss the Canada - NWAC Accord, Indian Act and Resiliency Centre.
- Signed Accord on February 1, 2019.
- Participation in National Inquiry into MMIWG hearings.
- Worked with Global Affairs Canada on a plan to send faceless dolls on a world tour and to have an honouring place within 71 Canadian missions.
- Worked on building project, with discussions held with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Canadian Heritage, CIRNA, Justice Canada and Health Canada.
- Developed new website.
- Attended numerous UN and related international meetings with European parliamentarians, Indigenous groups and representatives, U.S. Embassy personnel, ambassadors, etc.

- Topics:
- o **Systemic discrimination of Indigenous women in Canada**
  - o **Global warming**
  - o **CETA trade negotiations**





# MESSAGE FROM INTERIM PRESIDENT GAIL PAUL

NWAC is the national Indigenous organization representing the political voice of Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse Indigenous people (inclusive of First Nations on and off reserve, status and non-status, Metis and Inuit). As such, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) works to enhance, promote and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of Indigenous women within their respective communities and Canadian societies.

Our core values, love, respect, humility, truth, courage, bravery and wisdom, inform our advocacy, policy and legislative work designed to preserve Indigenous culture and advance the well-being of all Indigenous women, girls Two Spirit and gender diverse people and their families and communities.

Over the 2018–2019 fiscal year, thanks to the incredible work of our board of directors, dedicated staff, and volunteers across the country, we have made considerable progress on many fronts and at many levels.

From Ottawa to Geneva, NWAC participated at federal and international tables advocating and lobbying for measures and reforms that promote equality for and advance the well-being of Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people. On the national front, we pushed for changes to the proposed Bill S-3, to amend the colonial legislation known as the Indian Act, specifically to eliminate sex-based discrimination. NWAC submitted briefs and position papers to the House and Senate committees studying Bill C-69, engaged in talks with the Senate Standing Committee looking into amendments to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and provided policy papers and recommendations focused on climate change and the environment. We applied for intervenor status for a number of court hearings and diligently advocated for the health care rights of incarcerated Indigenous women.

On the provincial and territorial front, we made our presence known at the meeting of Canada's Council of the Federation, lobbying for changes to child and family services with respect to Indigenous children in the foster system.

At the international front, we travelled to New York, South America and Geneva to meet with United Nations representatives, pushing for gender equality and lobbying against the systemic discrimination against Indigenous women in Canada.



Our advocacy and policy efforts over the last year were occupied by the topics of employment, labour, health, homelessness, violence prevention and safety, justice and human rights, the environment, early learning and child care, and forced and coerced sterilization practices. Only by adopting a culture and gender-based lens will we be able to address and end the systemic violence that impacts Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit, gender diverse people, and their families and communities.

I am proud of all our success and accomplishments. From the signing of the historic Canada - NWAC Accord to the ground-breaking for our new Social and Cultural Innovation Centre and its Resiliency Centre, with its focus on traditional medicines for healing and connection to the land, there is so much to be proud of.

Throughout the pages of this annual report, you will see examples of the work we have done nationally and internationally. These examples underscore the breadth and depth of our work, and demonstrate the steps we are taking together to ensure the voices of Indigenous women are heard, to enhance the well-being of Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people across this country and to move the yardstick that much closer to a time when all women, all girls, all Two Spirit and all gender diverse people can enjoy the freedom of living in a world free from violence and discrimination.

**Gail Paul, Interim President**



# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

## LYNNE GROULX

The Native Women's Association of Canada envisions an inclusive world that understands and respects the diversity and uniqueness of all Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit, gender diverse people and their families.

As a leading Indigenous organization in Canada, NWAC embraces and harnesses opportunities on both the national and international stage that will help advance the health and well-being of current and future generations of Indigenous women, children and the communities and nations in which they live.

### Such work encompasses:

- Service provision—meeting the needs of our members
- Legal advocacy
- Gender-based research and analysis—including human rights, colonialism, violence, gender equality, and the rights and special needs of women

### Strategic Plan for 2018–2021

To help advance our mission and realize our vision, the NWAC Board of Directors approved a multi-pronged, three-year strategic plan for 2018–2021. After the initial year, I am pleased to report that NWAC is well on its way to realizing the plan's four strategic goals:

1. Build a strong, resilient organization through internal capacity-building
2. Be a full and equal participant on key issues of relevance to Indigenous women and their families in Canada
3. Increase the communication and resource capacity of PTMAs
4. Build the leadership capacity of Indigenous women enhance the PTMAs capacity.

#### 1. Build a strong, resilient organization through internal capacity-building

As NWAC is the voice for Indigenous women in Canada, it's important that we be a strong, resilient organization. This means building internal capacity, which hinges on securing core (stable) and project (diverse) multi-year funding. The signing of the historic Accord with the Government of Canada accomplishes far more than providing a funding mechanism through



which NWAC can offer more programs and services to Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people

across Canada. This also lends credibility to NWAC and the work we are doing to realize an inclusive world for Indigenous women and their families.

Our recent ability to apply for and secure specific grants for projects has leveraged our ability to engage with federal, provincial, territorial and international partners and organizations. These include:

- Legal and climate change advocacy initiatives
- formal and full participation in significant hearings and tribunals, such as the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
- Federal/provincial/territorial tables at the United Nations level
- Engagement activities such as phase two of the Faceless Dolls project, which saw outreach to Canadian embassies and missions globally

From a staffing perspective, we have been able to enhance our internal capacity by hiring key personnel, including a chief financial officer, in-house Elders and an entire team dedicated to resiliency.



## 2. The Accord with the Government of Canada has amplified our voice.

### Be a full and equal participant on key issues of relevance to Indigenous women and their families in Canada

By recognizing NWAC as a full participant in decision-making processes at the national and international levels, the Canada - NWAC Accord represents a significant milestone in our ability to be a full and equal participant on key issues affecting Indigenous women and their families. A few of the issues we tackled in 2018 include:

- ◆ Violence against women, as articulated during our participation in the National Inquiry and our continuing advocacy around the Calls for Justice
- ◆ Our work on Section 6 registration amendments to the colonial Indian Act
- ◆ Our lobbying efforts around child and family services legislation and human rights issues related to Indigenous women who are incarcerated

The Accord enhances our ability to achieve economic development and employment opportunities for Indigenous women, Two Spirit and gender diverse people, to strengthen Indigenous cultural and language identity, and to advocate at the international level.

## 3. Increase the communication and resource capacity of PTMAs

The 2018 realization of core funding for our Provincial and Territorial Members Associations (PTMAs) means increased capacity for Indigenous women at the provincial and territorial levels. This financial support gives many of our PTMAs the ability to offer services and assistance to Indigenous women in their own region. Having a safe, secure place to go for guidance is monumental for our women. It reinforces our ability as a national organization to advocate on a wide range of issues affecting Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people, and enhances our communication and engagement activities in regions across Canada.

## 4. Build the leadership capacity of Indigenous women

Leadership and advocacy training, that extends beyond the basics, to focus on providing effective leadership at national and international levels is one objective identified in our strategic plan. This involves working with federal ministers and at international tables such as the United Nations. Over the course of 2018 and into 2019, NWAC successfully increased our efforts to build a presence in these arenas. We are now in discussions with the Federal Government about developing and providing programs to build the leadership capacity of Indigenous women. Through these discussions, we have submitted an ecosystem proposal to provide management and training programs. The soon-to-be-realized Social and Cultural Innovation Centre with its Resiliency Centre, represents a tangible avenue through which Indigenous women entrepreneurs will receive business support.

As Canadian and international governments embrace true reconciliation with Indigenous people, the requirement for NWAC to be well-resourced in both human and financial resources, and well-researched in policies that shape a world that understands and respects the diversity and uniqueness of all Indigenous women and families, is more important today than ever before. NWAC will need to be responsive in its engagement of key decision-makers and agile in its communication with public- and private-sector stakeholders.

Senior management and all board members will need to work collaboratively to help further advance the goals of NWAC's three-year strategic plan. With the support of the members of NWAC's team, I am enthusiastic and excited about working to advance the health and well-being of current and future generations of Indigenous women, children and the communities and Nations in which they live.

**Lynne Groulx**

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

2018-2019 has been a very successful year for NWAC's finances, with a \$363,000 surplus at year end. As a result of this surplus, NWAC's general fund is now in surplus. NWAC's deficit had built up over several years, had been reduced with the 2017-2018 year-end surplus, and has now been eliminated. This has left us with a surplus of \$282,000.

We have made significant changes over the past year to the finance team and procedures. We recruited a new accountant and introduced a new project streamlining process. Through this new accounting system, project managers are matched with a dedicated accountant to develop and monitor their spending plans and work plans. We are currently implementing a new accounting software program that will more efficiently track project expenses and provide timely reports to management and staff. We are working to streamline the processing of payments to ensure they are issued in a timely, efficient manner, with payments issued every two weeks.

We are now transitioning the purchase order system to an online platform to streamline our processes. We are working with NWAC senior staff on a new travel policy, moving to an advance system for travel.

For 2019-2020, we have introduced a new format for planning and reporting our financial results. We have proposed a format that demonstrates NWAC engagement in a number of activities in support of our mandate and mission. We hope the new format will be meaningful to both NWAC staff and the funders that support our work.

NWAC's new systems will bring positive change to our financial reporting, better reflecting our work and creating a clearer picture of NWAC's activities and finances. The finance team has worked very hard to implement all the changes and I would like to thank them for their dedication and flexibility.

ALAN MCRAE

## MESSAGE FROM SENIOR DIRECTOR OF POLICY, HR & OPERATIONS

Over this past year, NWAC has been working hard to strengthen our internal capacity to work within various intersecting policy areas. Through the establishment and implementation of NWAC's grassroots policy framework, led by an interdisciplinary team of seasoned policy analysts, we have successfully influenced legislative and policy reform. We have briefed the Senate on multiple occasions and have travelled to speak with several international entities at the United Nations. Within and beyond Canada's borders, NWAC has advocated for the rights and well-being of Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people, travelling to countries including Brazil, Bolivia, Germany and the United States.

NWAC is committed to operationalizing a human resources framework that integrates cultural practices and traditional knowledge into the workplace. We strongly believe that the inclusion of a holistic, culturally safe and trauma-informed framework in the workplace is essential for fostering and maintaining a healthy work environment.

As our organization continues to grow, we are focusing on recruiting and retaining Indigenous employees to ensure our advocacy, policy and research continues to be Indigenous-led and -driven. Moving forward, we are taking steps to become an employer of choice through the maintenance of a healthy environment combined with the ability to advocate for meaningful change.

NWAC is in a state of rapid growth and inevitably, with growth comes change, including the relocation to a new building. During this period of growth, we are focused on improving our internal operations to maximize efficiency, while ensuring a stable and healthy work environment throughout our migration to a new building. As operations is the backbone of any successful organization, we are working to create seamless operations so we can ensure our focus remains on promoting equality and advancing the well-being of all Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit, gender diverse people and their families and communities.

CHRISTIAN PASCAL BOUCHER





## MESSAGE FROM SENIOR DIRECTOR FOR LEGAL, COMMUNICATIONS & BUSINESS

Now in our second year of operation, the staff of the Legal Group worked tirelessly throughout the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). This involved attending National Inquiry hearings, submitting recommendations and developing report cards on the National Inquiry into MMIWG. Throughout the National Inquiry, NWAC has advocated for a families-first approach in all aspects and continues to call for the Government of Canada to prioritize recommendations coming from the families who testified before the Inquiry. NWAC submitted 61 recommendations alongside implementation procedures to the Inquiry and is deeply invested in the implementation of the Inquiry's Calls for Justice.

NWAC has continued to advocate for justice and the human rights of Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people. Alongside Amnesty International, Action Canada and Inter Pares, NWAC has worked to bring national attention and to advocate for immediate action ending the forced and coerced sterilization of Indigenous women.

NWAC successfully applied to the Human Rights Tribunal for intervenor status in the Acoby matter and to the Court of Appeal for intervenor status in the Sharma matter. Both matters involve the application of the Gladue principles.

Our Communication Team has gone above and beyond to bring attention to the issues impacting Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people. The most recent change has been the roll out of our newly designed website, providing the public with a clear and compelling look into our advocacy and programming activities and efforts.

On the business development front, we are happy to report the signing of several multi-year projects working on issues including agriculture, Indigenous youth engagement on gender equality, supports for 2SLGBTQIA survivors of gender-based violence and Indigenous women's entrepreneurship. These multi-year agreements help stabilize NWAC's funding and will allow us to provide consistent supports and services in the coming years. As we further diversify our funding sources, we build further capacity for NWAC to engage on issues impacting Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people.

STEVEN PINK

### OUR NEW WEBSITE

*NWAC is excited to announce the launch of our newly redesigned website, which went live August 2019. The eye-catching new layout features bright colours that match our logo and an easy-to-navigate format. As visitors land on the main page, they are greeted by pictures of Indigenous women before scrolling down the page to learn about recent news and upcoming events. The left drop-down menu brings visitors to a comprehensive list of policy priorities, resources, press releases and other key information. NWAC's resources, position papers and reports are all available on the website. We encourage everyone to explore the many programs and activities we have completed in past years.*



The Strategic Policy Unit approaches its work through the full implementation of the Policy Development Framework to help to frame its strategic policy work. Our guiding principles, methodology and ethics inform this Framework, which outlines how the policy unit identifies, researches and responds to different policy issues. Grassroots women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people are at the centre of this Framework as we go through a continuous engagement, research, development and impact cycle.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Informed by our guiding principles, methodology, and ethics, this framework outlines how NWAC identifies, researches, and responds to different policy issues.





**On July 12** NWAC and staff celebrated the commencement of work for our new culturally relevant Indigenous hub for social and cultural innovation at 120 Promenade du Portage, Gatineau, Quebec. The ground-breaking ceremony featured a speech from CEO Lynne Groulx, a blessing of the property by Elder Roseanne Martin and closing remarks by Interim President Gail Paul. The event provided an opportunity to showcase the new building site and to cultivate shared excitement for NWAC's future.









## CANADA - NWAC ACCORD

ON FEBRUARY 1, 2019, THE NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION SIGNED A HISTORIC ACCORD WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA, RECOGNIZING NWAC AS A FULL PARTICIPANT IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS. THIS HISTORIC ACCORD WILL ALLOW NWAC AND CANADA TO COLLABORATIVELY ADDRESS POLICY PRIORITIES, INCLUDING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO MENTAL HEALTH), ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT, YOUTH WELL-BEING AND LEADERSHIP, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, HOUSING, EDUCATION, OVER-REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN PRISONS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS. THESE ISSUES DIRECTLY AFFECT THE LIVES AND RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS, TWO SPIRIT AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE. NWAC AND THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA AGREED IT IS A SHARED PRIORITY TO EMPOWER INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS, TWO SPIRIT AND GENDER-DIVERSE PEOPLE, AS LEADERS, IN THE DESIGN AND THE CO-DEVELOPMENT OF LAWS, PROGRAMS, SERVICES, OPERATIONAL PRACTICES AND POLICIES. THIS ACCORD IS A SIGNIFICANT STEP TOWARDS HEALING AND RECONCILIATION. IT'S TIME TO END THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM, COLONIAL ATTITUDES AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE WHEREVER THEY REMAIN IN ALL FEDERAL LEGISLATION, INSTITUTIONS, POLICIES AND OPERATIONAL PRACTICES.





## OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW

NWAC’s Strategic Plan for 2018–2021, developed in February 2018 by the Board of Directors, sets out four strategic goals:

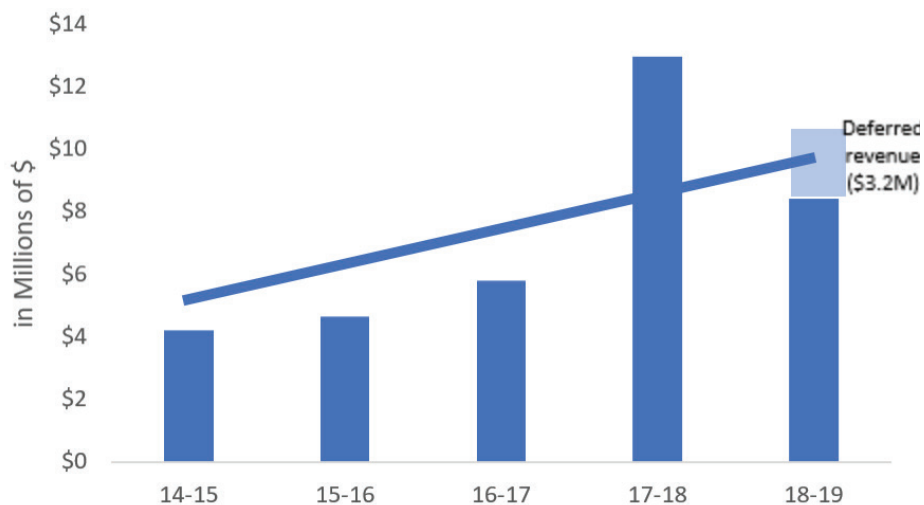


We have made progress in pursuing our strategic goals by having recently signed the Accord with the Government of Canada, obtained capacity funding for the PTMAs, diversified sources of government funding, signed multi-year funding agreements and purchased a permanent location at 120 Promenade du Portage. This will decrease operating costs and provide a stable non-governmental source of revenue to the organization.

Through implementing modernized approaches, diversifying funding and obtaining multi-year project funding, NWAC has been able to build capacity for expanded programming, services and advocacy.

Our new strategy has yielded impressive financial outcomes. For several years, NWAC’s revenues were declining, however, this directional change increased revenues from \$4,000,000 in 2016–2017 to \$12,000,000 in 2017–2018 and \$11,000,000 in 2018–2019.

### Total NWAC Revenue for the Past 5 Years



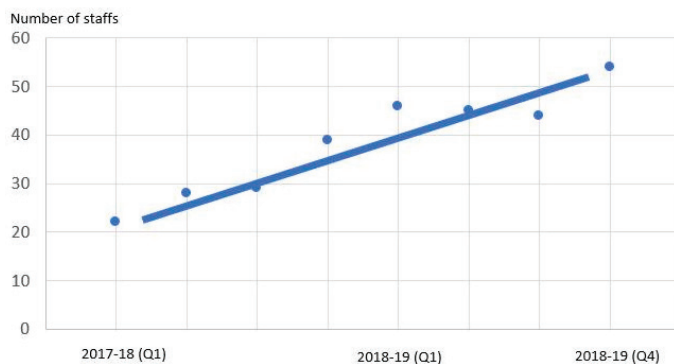


While several projects ended March 31, 2018, NWAC signed several new multi-year agreements and finished the 2018–2019 fiscal year with a surplus, setting the organization up for a stable future.

While the program-based funding continues to drop at the beginning of each year, NWAC has maintained consistent growth and capacity-building. As more projects are funded, particularly multi-year agreements, NWAC is able to build its staffing and operational capacity.

This sustained growth will allow NWAC to continue growing its advocacy programming and services, continuing to advance the health, well-being and prosperity of Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people across Canada.

Total NWAC Number of Staff for the Past 2 Years



NWAC will soon be opening its Indigenous Women's Resiliency Centre, providing counselling, navigation, traditional healing and traditional teachings. We are expanding our employment and entrepreneurship programming, having recently signed a four-year program with full-time mentors/navigators and resources to develop and offer workshops and online resources tailored to the needs of Indigenous women, Two Spirit and gender diverse entrepreneurs.







## Our Legislative, policy and advocacy work Review and Political Advocacy

NWAC is actively engaged in national and international advocacy measures aimed at legislative and policy reforms that promote equality for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA people. Through advocacy, policy and legislative analysis, we work to preserve Indigenous culture and advance the well-being of all Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people, and their families and communities.

### Our Legislative Work

- ◆ **Bill S-3:** Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Indian Act in response to the Superior Court of Quebec decision in *Descheneaux c. Canada* (Procureur general), requires the Government of Canada to consult with First Nations and other interested parties to address ongoing issues related to registration and band membership under the provisions of the Indian Act. NWAC engaged in various activities during the Bill S-3 consultation processes related to eliminating sex-based discrimination from the registration provisions of the Indian Act. These activities included hosting a national symposium that brought together Indigenous women leaders, scholars, legal professionals, civil society and government representatives to discuss ongoing inequities under the registration provisions of the Act and propose remedies to these discriminatory issues.

#### Outcomes:

As a member of the Indigenous Advisory Panel for Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, provided advice and guidance with respect to the Bill S-3 consultations.

- Secured funding for our PTMAs to undertake grassroots consultations with people directly affected across Canada and prepared a survey for PTMAs to distribute at their engagement sessions.
- Organized a National Symposium on First Nations Membership and Indigenous Rights November 24-25, 2018, convening Indigenous leaders, legal experts, law-makers and government officials to identify issues including ongoing inequities under

NWAC and the Government of Canada have signed a historic Accord, which will contribute to building, maintaining and enhancing a Nation-to-Nation relationship based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

*Simplified and accessible versions of the Indian Act should be made available to First Nations people to enhance public awareness and understanding of this legislation.*

*Federal Government should work with Indigenous partners to undertake further community-level research on the effects of the Second-Generation Cut-off Rule on the sustainability of status populations in First Nations communities.*

*Community healing circles can help promote healing, positive relationships and psychological health among Indigenous people affected by membership and identity issues. Federal Government should provide accessible interpretations of all provisions of the Indian Act and better communicate the Section 6 provisions and their related benefits and restrictions under which applicants are granted status.*

*Further Nation-to-Nation consultations with First Nations governments will advance understanding of how the principles of international law and Charter rights will be incorporated in the new legislative framework.*



the registration provisions, and the needs and challenges related to the remaining provisions in Bill S-3.

- The results of these consultations helped inform our final report to the Federal Government on a range of issues, including:

*o the 1951 cut-off date*

*o other inequities such as the second-generation cut-off rule and unstated paternity*

*o the continuing role of the Federal Government in determining the status of First Nations individuals.*

- Continuing to advocate for legislative and policy reforms to eliminate inequities under the Indian Act and to have the Act replaced with instruments that comply with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and that are based on the principles of reconciliation, respect and Nation-to-Nation relationships.

◆ **Bill C-69:** Bill C-69 is An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts. NWAC has been heavily involved in the overhaul of Canada's environmental impact assessment legislation. We submitted briefs to the House and Senate committees studying Bill C-69, lobbied senators and worked with other organizations to affect appropriate legislative reforms.

## Outcomes

- Contributed to a number of amendments to Bill C-69:

*o adding a reference to the government's commitment to implement UNDRIP*

*o protecting the consideration of gender factors in project assessments and expanding the consideration of gender factors to regional and strategic assessments*

*o clarifying that Indigenous rights cannot be abrogated or dismissed as a result of future decisions made under the legislation.*

- Withdrew our support of the Bill following amendments to the proposed Impact Assessment Act, by the Independent Senators Group, which will undermine judicial oversight of decision-makers.

## COMMUNICATIONS

An important aspect of our media strategy is to develop strong relationships with the media and to issue media releases on important issues affecting Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people.

On June 12, 2019, following the tabling of the report on the government's consultations under Bill S-3 by the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, NWAC issued a media release calling for the timely implementation of the provisions that would remove the 1951 cut-off, an important success for the rights of Indigenous women and their families.



◆ **Bill C-81:** Bill C-81, an Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada, not only presented an opportunity for NWAC to advocate for the rights of Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people with disabilities, but also to raise awareness around violence against Indigenous women, coerced sterilization, poverty and housing affordability/safety/security challenges, and child and family services issues. Through its Voice of Indigenous Women and the New Accessibility Legislation projects, NWAC considered the experiences and needs of Indigenous women. It also noted that Bill C-81 “does not address the issues of violence committed against Indigenous women with disabilities by the state or by settlers, nor does it acknowledge the abnormally high rates of disabilities among Indigenous women and youth in particular.”

### Outcomes

- Recommendations developed that highlight intersections between education, child and family services, youth and Eeder centres, health care system discrimination, over-incarceration rates (particularly for those with mental health disorders), housing and 2SLGBTQQIA issues.
- Called for more inclusive and intersectional policies instead of one-size-fits-all approaches.
- Raised awareness on the complexities of barriers to inclusion for Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people with disabilities.
- Despite our advocacy work, none of our recommendations were reflected in Bill C-81.
- Received project funding for further work on accessibility.
- ◆ **Indigenous Child and Family Services Legislation:** Since the revision of the Indian Act in 1951, provincial child and family agencies were granted legal authority on reserve. First Nations children were removed from their homes and placed with non-Indigenous families. In January 2018, NWAC helped facilitate the Children and Families Together:

An Emergency Meeting on Indigenous Child and Family Services to address the child welfare crisis in Canada. Out of this meeting came a six-point action plan. To fulfill part of the third point of this plan, which is to explore the co-development of federal child and family services legislation, NWAC organized an Indigenous Women’s Advisory Circle.

### Outcomes

- Submitted the Indigenous Child and Family Services Reforms Final Report to the Federal Government.
- Developed 15 recommendations on the engagement process, principles and values for child and family services, jurisdiction, training and enforcement, and data collection and reporting.
- ◆ **Corrections and Conditional Release Act:** NWAC engaged in consultations with respect to Section 81 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. Section 81 allows a person to serve their federal sentence in an Indigenous community rather than a federal prison and provides Indigenous communities with greater control over criminal justice issues that affect them. It enables federal prisons to work with Indigenous communities to provide services that are not available to Indigenous people in prisons. These services are more culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs of Indigenous prisoners.

### Outcomes

- Attended the Senate Standing Committee dealing with amendments to the Act, and submitted the following recommendations:
  - o *abolish the practice of segregation by any name*
  - o *meaningfully engage with S. 81 of the Act so it may better fulfill its legislative intent*
  - o *establish and support community-based, culturally safe and trauma-informed alternatives to incarceration for Indigenous women.*





## Canada's Council of the Federation 2019 Meeting in Saskatchewan

NWAC participated in high-level meetings with Canada's premiers to advance reconciliation among Indigenous people in Canada. At the 2019 summer meeting in Saskatchewan, Indigenous leaders, including NWAC leaders, discussed priorities related to Indigenous child welfare. NWAC called upon the premiers to engage and consult with Indigenous women when creating and developing services for Indigenous children, and to mandate that Indigenous women be present at all decision-making tables dealing with Indigenous children services.

*"Canada's premiers must recognize that Indigenous women are the primary caregivers of Indigenous children and, therefore, Indigenous women's voices must be heard and respected when discussing services for Indigenous children." – CEO Lynne Groulx*

NWAC was the only Indigenous women's association present at the meeting of Canada's Council of the Federation. The Federation was created in 2003 to promote provincial-territorial cooperation and closer ties between members, foster meaningful relations between governments based on respect for the Constitution and recognition of the diversity within the federation, and show leadership on issues important to all Canadians.



**BIG RIVER**  
FIRST NATION 118





## Our Policy Work

Climate Change and the Environment: NWAC provided recommendations and advice on legislative and policy changes related to climate change, the environment and resource extraction to Environment and Climate Change Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Natural Resources Canada. Examples of environment-related files included:

- Impacts of extractive industries on Indigenous women
- Food loss and waste, and Indigenous country food industries
- The regulation of toxic substances, particularly with regard to cumulative and synergistic effects on Indigenous women and children

To enhance our input on these important files, we are seeking funding from a number of avenues, including the Climate Action Fund. If our grant application is successful, we intend to develop a low-carbon entrepreneurship toolkit to help Indigenous women plan, start and grow businesses that contribute to climate change mitigation and/or adaptation.

## Outcomes

- Submitted policy papers on matters related to renewable energies and the need for increased representation of Indigenous women in low-carbon economic sectors.
- Received funding from Transport Canada to engage with communities on marine safety and environmental protection of the oceans and waterways.
- Completed fact sheets on Environment and Biodiversity, and Land Justice is Gender Justice.
- Engaged with Environment and Climate Change Canada on climate change and the environment.

## HEARINGS

*BCCLA and JHSC v Attorney General of Canada Re: Intervenor Application: NWAC intervened at the British Columbia Court of Appeal with West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund (WC LEAF) in November 2018.*

*Our submission highlighted the distinct ways that federally imprisoned Indigenous women experience the harms of solitary confinement due to the intergenerational effects of colonization.*

*Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies and Acoby v Correctional Service Canada: NWAC has asked for permission to make a formal submission at the upcoming Canadian Human Rights Tribunal hearing of Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies and Acoby v Correctional Service Canada. Our submission will focus on the ways in which security classification tools over-classify Indigenous women, resulting in insufficient access to culturally and spiritually informed programming and mental health services.*

*R. v Sharma Re: Intervenor Status Application: NWAC has applied for intervenor status to the Ontario Court of Appeal, which hears this case in November 2019. An Indigenous woman was convicted of importing drugs due to desperate financial circumstances and received a mandatory minimum jail sentence. We will be arguing that the mandatory minimum sentence takes away criminalized Indigenous women's rights to substantive equality under section 15 of the Charter.*





## Our Advocacy Work

### Advocating for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

On June 3, 2019, the Final Report from the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was released. The report included 231 Calls for Justice which the Inquiry calls on Canada to implement. It concluded that the acts of violence against Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people in Canada constitutes genocide.

On June 21, 2019, seven years after the initial launch of the Faceless Dolls Project, NWAC launched Phase Two Putting a Face on Justice: From Calls for Justice to Action. In light of the Final Report on MMIWG and to honour their lives and stories, NWAC put faces on the faceless dolls to give a voice to the voiceless women.

From the moment the Government of Canada established the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in September 2016 until the release of Reclaiming Power and Place, the Inquiry's final report, on June 3, 2019, NWAC issued report cards on the Inquiry and its progress.

*We created an Honouring Project bag containing a toolkit, guide, colouring book and pencils, coloured felt sheets, doll patterns and accessories, all the materials necessary to create and give a face to our faceless dolls. We sent an Honouring Project bag to every Member of Parliament serving in the House of Commons.*

The report cards itemized 15 actions and graded the Commission on each using a colour grading system: **green**—PASS **yellow**—ACTION REQUIRED **red**—FAIL **grey**—INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION.

Action	September– December 2016	January– April 2017	May 2017– March 2018
develop and adhere to timelines regarding operational/ administrative structure	yellow	red	red
develop and adhere to communication that provides information, transparency and accountability	yellow	red	red
develop and build community relations that include families, survivors and external stakeholders of plans, interview dates, etc.	yellow	red	red
develop and build capacity to ensure that all those involved are compensated to a degree that ensures their ability to meaningfully engage in the Inquiry process	yellow	red	red
recommend concrete actions to remove systemic causes of violence and increase the safety of Indigenous women and girls in Canada	grey	grey	grey
recommend ways to honour and commemorate missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls	grey	yellow	green
provide recommendations to the Government of Canada through an interim report by November 1, 2017	grey	yellow	green
provide recommendations and a final report by November 1, 2018	grey	grey	grey
set up an inquiry process that is informal, trauma-informed and respectful of the individuals, families and communities concerned	yellow	red	yellow
set up an inquiry process that respects the diverse cultural, linguistic and spiritual traditions of Indigenous peoples	grey	yellow	yellow
set up an inquiry process that promotes and advances reconciliation	grey	red	green
set up an inquiry process that contributes to public awareness about the causes of violence and solutions for ending it	grey	red	yellow
set up an inquiry process that provides opportunities for individuals, families and community members to share their experiences and views, including their views on recommendations for promoting safety and preventing or eliminating violence	grey	red	yellow
establish regional advisory bodies, composed of families, loved ones and survivors to advise on issues specific to various regions, within the scope of the independent inquiry	grey	red	yellow
acted on its authority to establish issue-specific advisory bodies composed of Elders, youth, family members of victims, as well as representatives of national, Indigenous, local and feminist organizations, to advise on regional matters that fall within the scope of the independent inquiry	grey	red	red



## NWAC recommendations:

- ◆ Engage with communities through a culture and gender-based lens to address and end the systemic violence that impacts Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people, and their families and communities.
- ◆ Provide Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people with the option and opportunity of removing themselves from abusive relationships through community and network support.
- ◆ Enhance, promote and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people.

## Outcomes

- ◆ Continuing to advocate for the acceptance and recognition of the findings of the National Inquiry.
- ◆ Met with Luis Almagro, UN Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS), on June 24, 2019, to provide support to the OAS in establishing an expert panel to review the findings of the National Inquiry.
- ◆ Invited Mr. Almagro to visit Canada to see firsthand the challenges that Indigenous communities face.
- ◆ Met with UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples, Mrs. Tauli-Corpuz, to review the definition of genocide and expand it to be consistent with the definition contained in the Final Report.

### Communications

*Following the release of the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, NWAC:*

- launched a social media campaign advocating for the acceptance and recognition of the Inquiry's findings
- regularly communicates through social media calling on the Federal Government to recognize the acts committed against Indigenous people constitute genocide and for the meaningful implementation of the 231 Calls for Justice set out in the Final Report





## Advocating for Health Equity

Our Health Department advocates for health equity for Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people by highlighting best practices and providing Indigenous communities across the globe with the opportunity to adapt and implement these interventions to suit their needs and improve health outcomes.

Using a strength-based, trauma-informed, community-led and community-driven approach, our team develops health projects, resources, recommendations and policies. Rather than focusing on deficits, we focus on the strengths and resiliency of Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people. Our team is well aware of the existing gaps

and barriers to accessing health services, and the disproportionate burden of chronic and infectious diseases, and the poorer health outcomes affecting Indigenous populations across the country. However, we are equally aware of the inspiring resiliency and strength that exists among Indigenous people and the remarkable work that is taking place within communities and at the grassroots level.



## Overall Outcomes

- ◊ Working with health and social service providers to reduce the stigma and systemic discrimination within the health care and social service systems by providing education and ensuring that services provided to Indigenous people are trauma-informed.
- ◊ Continuing to advocate for an upstream, social determinants of health approach, one that aims to eliminate poverty, housing insecurity, food insecurity and precarious employment among Indigenous populations.
- ◊ Forging new connections and partnerships through active participation in health conferences and on roundtables, advisory committees, steering committees and working groups across the globe. This work will ensure the voices of Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people are represented and their experiences are considered when health policies, frameworks and action plans at the federal, provincial, territorial and international levels are being developed.

## Pathways Partner for Engagement and Knowledge Exchange (PEKE):

Pathways PEKE, an initiative funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), aims to promote gender equity in health among First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in four priority areas: oral health, tuberculosis, mental wellness and diabetes. Pathways PEKE acknowledges that Indigenous ways of knowing are essential when designing needs-driven and culturally appropriate health research and community interventions. Through this initiative, NWAC PEKE facilitates partnerships between communities and health researchers in the four priority areas, develops actionable solutions that will produce real change in communities and creates opportunities for Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people to be leaders in the research process.

Indigenous communities across Canada have unique health needs and priorities that are specific to their location and individual circumstances. To this end, NWAC is advocating for a national community engagement strategy to connect with and get a better understanding of the health needs and priorities of Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people. Our team held regional engagement sessions and will conduct a national survey on their health needs, priorities and service gaps. The knowledge gathered through the engagement sessions and the survey will enable NWAC to better represent and advocate for Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people, and will directly inform the work of NWAC, PEKE, and our health unit.

## Outcomes

- ◊ Produced Walking the RED Path: Re-forging Connections, Empowering Indigenous Women to Heal and Driving Change for a Healthy Future, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, to develop sustainable, evidence-based and culturally relevant HIV, hepatitis C and related sexually transmitted blood-borne infections (STBBIs) interventions for Indigenous women in federal correctional institutions:

- o Completed literature review and resource scan*

- o Held engagement sessions with incarcerated Indigenous women in three federal correctional facilities: Fraser Valley Institution for Women, Edmonton Institution for Women and Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge, and Buffalo Sage Wellness House*

- o In process of synthesizing the results of the literature review, resources scan and engagement sessions to develop project activities and resources that will increase knowledge and awareness, reduce stigma and dispel misconceptions.*

**Historic Métis people, those who lived and moved with the fur trade, continue to exist. Many Métis people also live outside these traditional communities, across Canada and beyond, where they continue to support one another.**

**Our grandmothers, grandfathers, parents, siblings and ancestors lived in relationship with the land, their First Nations relations, Christianity and the Creator. Their communities were and are heavily influenced by the Catholic Church and assimilation policies. They have diverse identities based on where they were and how they survived. Their stories are valuable and need to be heard. We, as Métis people living today, need to hear them. In order to know where we are going, we need to know where we have come from.**

## Understanding Aging in Indigenous Populations:

Indigenous populations in Canada experience higher than average rates of age-related health challenges at younger ages. The complexity of these multiple health challenges at younger ages can have a major impact on quality of life and the ability to age well. In partnership with Dr. Jennifer Walker at Laurentian University, NWAC is applying an Indigenous determinants of health lens to data culled from the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging and incorporating Indigenous knowledge and worldviews, to compile an accurate health and sociodemographic profile of older Indigenous populations in Canada. The project will be Indigenous-led, community-informed and guided by the lived experiences of older Indigenous women. This research is crucial to NWAC's ability to advocate for policy that addresses the unique needs and barriers experienced by this population.

## A Trauma-Informed Approach to Culturally Specific and Gender-based STBBI Interventions for Indigenous Women and Girls:

Through this First Nations and Inuit Health Branch-funded project, NWAC has developed culturally safe, gender-based and trauma-informed STBBI resources for Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender

diverse people. To pilot the resources, ensure their appropriateness, relevance and utility, and to inform future work, NWAC held two engagement sessions: one with the youth members of NWAC's Board of Directors and one with Indigenous women living at Buffalo Sage Wellness House, a facility in Edmonton, Alberta, for federally sentenced minimum-security female inmates and those on statutory release.

### Outcomes

- ◆ Holding ongoing engagement sessions with Indigenous women, Two Spirit, gender diverse and youth community members impacted by STBBIs in order to identify priorities, concerns, barriers and unique needs.
- ◆ Held a Decolonizing Stigma, Reclaiming Healthy Sexuality workshop, and produced fact sheets on STBBIs and how service providers can deliver trauma-informed, inclusive care, with emphasis on cultural safety and gender inclusivity while addressing stigma and fear.
- ◆ Disseminated resources online across NWAC's networks and to Indigenous communities.
- ◆ Developing future resources aimed at improving the sexual and reproductive health of Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people using Indigenous knowledge, humour and imagery to relay information on STBBIs.





## Advocating for Métis People

Amplifying Métis Stories: Our Elders hold our histories and culture safe in their memories. Youth in our Métis communities are seeking connection to these stories. There is strength in the knowledge that we share lived experiences and the need to reconnect with our past; to honour our Elders by seeking the knowledge they hold. It is possible for us to care for each other as we walk along this journey, toward finding and seeking change and healing for all Indigenous people.

NWAC is working to collect and amplify the stories of the Métis people. Doing so will enable NWAC to meaningfully advocate for issues that are of importance to Métis women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people, and complement the good work being done by other organizations serving the Métis people.

### Outcomes

#### Advocacy

- ◆ Hired a senior Métis advisor to expand upon previous work undertaken by NWAC.
- ◆ Developed a strategic plan, including a scan of stakeholders and issues, identifying and tying Métis-specific issues to our global vision.
- ◆ Formed the Métis Working Circle to broaden NWAC's reach into Métis communities.
- ◆ Creating an educational program to teach Métis culture and history.
- ◆ Addressing Métis-specific needs and issues outlined in the historic Accord signed with the Government of Canada and included in the Final Report of the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
- ◆ Providing feedback to legislation to ensure Métis-specific issues are addressed (similar to our feedback on Bill C-91, an Act Respecting Indigenous Languages, and Bill C-92, an Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families).

#### Services

- ◆ Offering access to on-site health and healing services upon completion of the Social and Cultural Innovation Centre.
- ◆ Planning entrepreneurial development and active learning opportunities.



## Advocating for Indigenous Students

The intertwined legacies of colonialism and racism have been detrimental to the transmission of Indigenous cultures and languages. Through the chronic underfunding of Indigenous-led schooling, childcare and other community programs, these legacies continue today. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action include a call to the Federal Government to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education. As part of its reconciliation efforts, the Federal Government is reviewing all federal programs and supports for Indigenous students.

Through an engagement process, NWAC's Youth Advocacy and Development Unit and Strategic Policy Division sought input into current supports and programs offered to Indigenous post-secondary students, including direct funding, statutory funding, research grants, support for community partners, targeted education bursaries, sector-specific programs and labour market skills development. NWAC held four PTMA engagement sessions in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Prince Edward Island, sent out a national online survey over the course of one month and organized a two-day national engagement session attended by 14 national students and six local

students. The students explored the following topics:

- Indigenizing academia, curricula updates, traditional knowledge in contemporary settings, national credit recognition and decolonizing teaching;
- Government supports, funding, training and preparation courses;
- Key success factors, accessible education; and
- Location, language and gender barriers to pursuing post-secondary education.

### Outcomes

- ◆ Produced the Indigenous Women's Engagement on Federal Post-Secondary Education Programs: Final Report, which reflects the lived experiences of more than 200 Indigenous women and gender diverse people interested in pursuing post-secondary education.
- ◆ Submitted 10 recommendations to the Federal Government.



## On the International Front

As NWAC grows and innovates new ideas and new NWAC is actively working to grow its international reputation and to make connections with Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people, and their communities and organizations worldwide. NWAC has made it a priority to strengthen its engagement with different international entities at the United Nations and regional levels to advocate for Indigenous women's rights.

### Human Rights:

NWAC is active in international outreach. Over the past year, we attended and participated in international events to ensure the voices of Indigenous women in Canada are heard. At the United Nations level, forums attended included those organized by the UN Human Rights Council, UN Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) and UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). The UNCSW event, #DoneWaiting: Organizing for Rural and Indigenous Women in Canada, focused on the challenges faced by rural, remote and Indigenous communities in Canada, including food insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, poor access to public services and decent work.

In anticipation of the Human Rights Council's periodic review of Canada's human rights record in May 2018, NWAC submitted a position paper highlighting our principal concerns: gender discrimination in the Indian Act, child welfare and Jordan's Principle issues, and prevalence of imprisoned Indigenous women in solitary confinement/segregation.

We liaised with top UN human rights experts during their fact-finding missions to Canada, including Dubravka Šimonović, Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, and Dainius Pūras, Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The experts received written submissions detailing our concerns about the situation of Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

### Outcomes

- ◆ Strengthened our engagement with different international entities at the United Nations with the purpose of advocating for Indigenous women's rights.
- ◆ At the UNPFII side-event MMIWG: Dispossession of Land, Loss of Collective and Human Rights, highlighted the plight of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, directly drawing on the considerable expertise of our provincial and territorial representatives.
- ◆ Availed ourselves of the UN's human rights advocacy tools to influence domestic policy and draw close attention to the vital importance of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- ◆ Government of Canada issued a formal response in September 2018 to the UN Human Rights Council's 275 recommendations.







## Climate Change:

**NWAC is engaged at the domestic and international levels in climate action. Domestically, we have conducted research and provided policy papers to government on matters related to renewable energies and the need for increased representation of Indigenous women in low-carbon economic sectors.**

Internationally, we have engaged in negotiations at meetings under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to advocate for the rights and interests of Indigenous women and ambitious action on climate change.

### Outcome

- ◆ Contributed to the operationalization of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform to advance gender balance and ensure the voices of Indigenous women are heard in international discussions on climate change.



# SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INNOVATION CENTRE

## The Social and Cultural Innovation Centre is the first of its kind.

NWAC's Social and Cultural Innovation Centre will be a hub for Indigenous resiliency and economic development. The new home will be a centre of excellence, focusing on the strength and resiliency of Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people. Incorporating social and cultural innovation is part of the strategic plan to support NWAC's programs, projects and advocacy, with an emphasis on promoting Indigenous women's entrepreneurship.

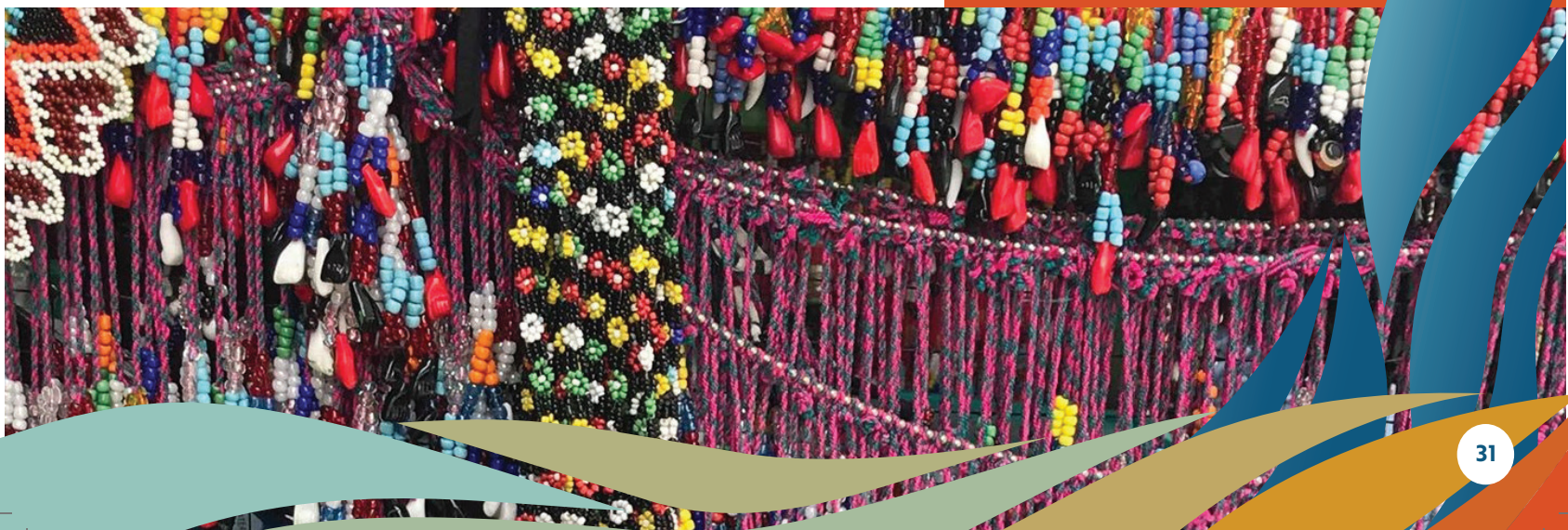
This building will launch a series of revenue-generating activities to support the financial stability of NWAC. Diversifying funding through social enterprises develops an independent revenue stream. It will increase flexibility in the provision of programs and services, and create the potential for future growth.

With this added capacity, NWAC will be scaling up its programs and projects to better support Indigenous communities. This will include year-round programming and supports for Indigenous women, Two Spirit, and gender diverse people, youth-specific programs and education, cultural programming, and greater supports for survivors and families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

The Resiliency Centre is part of the Social and Cultural Innovation Centre. It is a diverse collection of culturally inspired rooms, where workshops will be hosted, meetings will be conducted and traditional teachings will be shared.

## FROM BRICKS AND MORTAR TO PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

La création de notre Centre d'innovation sociale et culturelle est une étape majeure dans l'expansion du plaidoyer de l'AFAC pour les femmes, les filles, les Deux-Esprits et les personnes de diverses identités de genre autochtones de la base que nous représentons. L'innovation sociale et culturelle est un outil d'habilitation pour nos femmes et nos communautés. Lorsque nous donnons aux femmes les outils dont elles ont besoin pour atteindre la stabilité économique, la sécurité et l'indépendance, nos communautés et nos Nations se portent bien. Par l'intermédiaire du Centre, nous offrirons des programmes, des soutiens et de la formation à longueur d'année pour les femmes, les filles, les Deux-Esprits et les personnes de diverses identités de genre autochtones de la base et les communautés locales. Ces soutiens essentiels favoriseront la résilience pour les générations à venir et permettront d'établir les relations solides qui sont nécessaires à la réconciliation.



## THE RESILIENCY CENTRE: A PLACE FOR HEALING

*The Resiliency Centre will provide programming and specific support services to survivors and families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.*

It is important that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people have a centre for healing with access to programs that address the effects of colonization and trauma. The Resiliency Centre is NWAC's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' 231 Calls for Justice, and as such is designed to meet these needs.

For a long time, our Elders envisioned a place of healing and wellness for Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people. We are building our team with experts who will work with our communities to create a healing journey based on individual needs. It is an exciting time to be working at NWAC and to be building the Resiliency Centre. We are looking forward to opening our doors and welcoming all Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people.

### Overall Outcomes

- Signed a funding agreement with the First Nations and Inuit Health Board on March 15, 2019, to support this vision.
- Engaged with community partners and held Elders' gatherings and focus groups with community members.
- Creating programs that are based on traditional knowledge, the needs of our community and therapeutic best practices.

### Core Services

**Navigation and Peer Support:** Navigators will help people access and navigate the Non-Insured Health Benefits program and Jordan's Principle services and supports, and address other health access challenges due to jurisdictional disputes. Assistance will be provided by Indigenous women, Two Spirit and gender diverse people with experience in social services and navigation.

**Traditional Healing:** On a drop-in basis and by appointment, Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people will access traditional teachings and healing programs such as healing circles, workshops and seminars, cultural supports and life skills teachings. Indigenous women and communities across Canada who are unable to visit the Resiliency Centre will benefit from online resources and teaching materials.

**Counselling and Therapeutic Services:** The Resiliency Centre merges traditional healing with western psychology, integrating traditional medicines, teachings and healing sessions by Elders with therapeutic support from trained specialists.



- ◇ FIRST NATIONS
- ◇ CEDAR ROOM INUIT MEETING
- ◇ ROOM MÉTIS MEETING ROOM
- ◇ TRADITIONAL MEETING ROOM
- ◇ WORKSHOP AND TRAINING SPACE
- ◇ GRANDMOTHER MOON
- ◇ ROOM CHILDREN'S ROOM
- ◇ MEDICINE BATHS
- ◇ PRIVATE MEETING ROOM
- ◇ EXECUTIVE OFFICES
- ◇ ORIGINELLE – NWAC BOUTIQUE
- ◇ CAFÉ BOULEAU
- ◇ NWAC CATERING KITCHEN
- ◇ MEDIA ROOM AND LIBRARY & ARCHIVES
- ◇ ROOFTOP GARDEN

BUILDING STRENGTH AND RESILIENCY • ENCOURAGING HEALING, WELLNESS AND CREATIVITY





*"The Social and Cultural Innovation Centre is one step forward in a journey of many steps. It will provide supports and services that are created by Indigenous women for Indigenous women. A place where we feel safe, understood and empowered. It will be a place for Indigenous women to heal, reconnect and grow in the aftermath of the MMIWG findings of genocide. It is a place of hope and health. A place to celebrate our culture, our resilience and our future!"*

*Gail Paul, NWAC Interim President*

*Indigenous resiliency is about being one with yourself, putting one step in front of the other and knowing things will get better. It's about finding oneself and saying, "I am okay, I am special and I am one." This makes me resilient and knowing I can connect with the ancestors, our culture and people and be proud of who we are, proud to be Indigenous. Our shared stories and our journey will all be different yet we strive to be of one mind. Together as one, as a community, we are resilient."*

*Roseann Martin, First Nation Elder and Director of the Resiliency Centre*



## Individual Projects

**You Are Not Alone:** Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people in Canada are more likely to experience violence. In response, NWAC developed the You Are Not Alone Project to equip them with the knowledge and tools to develop safe and healthy relationships, gauge the health of their current relationship, know how to leave an unhealthy relationship and learn how to heal after leaving.

### Outcomes

- Rebranded the You Are Not Alone initiative following the launch of the new NWAC logo.
- Developed a handbook, community safety plan booklet, resource guide, facilitator's guide and supports bookmark.
- Articulated the need to include more traditional knowledge information in training materials.

**Honouring Indigenous Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People:** Developed as an educational tool, this project raises awareness about the continuing impacts of colonization on the lives and traditional roles of Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people. With the release of the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls and its 231 Calls for Justice, this project will evolve to help spread the message of decolonization, acknowledge the strength of Indigenous people, and honour their historical and ongoing contributions.

### Outcomes

- Developed an Honouring book and accompanying presentation in French and English.
- Created a Faceless Dolls kit, with enough materials to create 10 faceless dolls, to highlight the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
- Held six one-day training sessions in Fredericton, Winnipeg, Wakefield and Ottawa for NWAC's Provincial Territorial Member Associations and community members, and planning additional sessions for the next fiscal year.



**Sisters in Spirit Vigils:** This annual vigil began in 2006 to remember and honour missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The annual vigils are held every October 4, and are viewed as powerful movements of social change and opportunities to provide support to families who have lost a loved one. Vigils can take many forms: a moment of silence, a rally, a community feast or however you choose to honour a loved one.

### Outcomes

- Hosted a Sisters in Spirit vigil in Ottawa.
- Sent out over 250 vigil packs to communities and organizations that hosted their own vigils in 2018–2019.

## THE NATIONAL INQUIRY CALLS FOR JUSTICE – NWAC CALLS FOR ACTION

*"The 231 Calls for Justice must be implemented. We must end all forms of violence against our women, girls, gender diverse people and communities," said Lynne Groulx, CEO at NWAC.*

*"Our families, women, girls and gender diverse people must have their human and Indigenous rights respected."*



## Employment and Business Training

It is NWAC's vision that Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people have the right to improve their economic conditions through employment, entrepreneurship, education and training.

## Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) has funded the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) since 2011–2012. Over the course of the funding agreement with ESDC, NWAC has provided tuition, a living allowance, child care services, on-the-job training and other supports to help Indigenous women and gender diverse people improve, upgrade and obtain employment.

A new ESDC-funded Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) program to help Indigenous women and gender diverse people achieve economic prosperity has replaced the ASETS program.

### Outcomes

· Achieved a 75% success rate (employed or returned to school) in 2015–2016, 2016–2017 and 2017–2018

Year	KETO Database Results		Total Results reported by ESDC	
	Employed	Returned to School	Employed	Returned to School
2011/2012	30	22	2	2
2012/2013	67	36	27	23
2013/2014	89	48	69	23
2014/2015	77	44	88	55
2015/2016	82	41	108	48
2016/2017	117	44	94	46
2017/2018	106	39	121	50
2018/2019	58	52	72	64
TOTALS	626	326	581	311

## TRAINING SESSIONS

### 2018

Aboriginal Business Match, Sudbury, ON, August  
 Aviation Labour Shortage Forum, Ottawa, ON, October  
 ISET National Data System and Support Workshop, Gatineau, QC, October  
 BDC Partner Roundtable, Ottawa, ON, October  
 CCAB Parliamentary Reception, Ottawa, ON, October  
 Supporting Women in Trades Conference, Halifax, NS, November  
 Supporting Indigenous Student Success in the Skilled Trades, Ottawa, ON, November  
 National Indigenous Cannabis & Hemp Conference, Calgary, AB, November  
 Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (potential partnership meeting), Ottawa, ON, December

### 2019

AWBEN, Ottawa, ON, March 25-26  
 Women Building Futures (potential partnership meeting), Ottawa, ON, March  
 Program Delivery Improvement Working Group monthly teleconference with ESDC and other ASETS holders.







## Business and Entrepreneurship Skills Training

In partnership with the Canadian Centre for Aboriginal Entrepreneurship, Employment and Social Development Canada funded the 18-month Aboriginal BEST training program, which provided free training to Indigenous women entrepreneurs.

Tools and support included training on building a business plan, marketing, financing and operations, which are designed to nurture the entrepreneurial spirit of people, communities and organizations. Participants met guest speakers, identified viable business ideas, determined the feasibility of those business ideas and took steps to start or grow their businesses.

The BEST program ended on March 31, 2019.

### Outcomes

- ◆ 19 Indigenous women across Canada completed the train the trainer segment to deliver the BEST program to other Indigenous women in their region.
- ◆ 18 regional BEST programs were delivered across Canada by NWAC's BEST trainers.
- ◆ 190 Indigenous women and gender diverse people started regional BEST programs.
- ◆ 151 participants, 79% of enrollees, completed the BEST program.



### Social Media

Effective social media is critical to the success of any organization. We use social media as a tool to advocate effectively on behalf of Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people.

Videos showcased the cultural activities and teachings of Elder Rosann Martin, who uses a trauma-informed approach to healing. Through beading and drumming, Elder Martin discusses and explains Indigenous culture.





## Aboriginal Women's Business Entrepreneurship Network Conference

The fifth annual AWBEN Conference, held March 25–26, 2019, is an opportunity for NWAC to help empower, educate and inspire Indigenous women entrepreneurs and business leaders. NWAC's vision for this signature event is threefold:

- Provide a safe, supportive, collaborative, empowering and culturally supportive environment where the unique challenges and aspirations of female and gender diverse Aboriginal entrepreneurs can be explored.
- Enhance, develop and accelerate growth for current and aspiring female and gender diverse Aboriginal entrepreneurs in a sustainable way through programs and resources.
- Promote community leadership through volunteerism, which is paramount to the foundational principles of AWBEN.

Day one opened with a prayer and remarks by Elder Rose Beaudoin, followed by opening remarks by Lynne Groulx, NWAC Chief Executive Officer. Guest speakers included Carol Anne Hilton, CEO/Founder of the Indigenomics Institute; Shyra Barberstock, Co-founder of Okwaho Equal Source, and Anna Cote, Founder of Birch Bite. Panel session topics were Raising the Bar: A Discussion about Entrepreneurship, Owning a Physical Location and Women in Wisdom. A question-and-answer session, Entrepreneurship in the Arts, provided an opportunity for participants to receive inspiration from a musical entrepreneur. Shopify experts provided tips on how to sell their products through this online platform.

Day two featured a panel session on Slaying the Dragons, highlighting two Indigenous women entrepreneurs who had pitched to Dragons' Den. At the popular Pow Wow Pitch competition, 26 women participants delivered a 60-second elevator pitch on their business, with Jennifer Lindell of Jenn87 Hairstyling, awarded first prize for her training youth aged 12–15 initiative. Keynote speaker Jenn Harper of Cheekbone Beauty shared her experiences as a struggling alcoholic and the inspiration she gained from an AWBEN conference to build her business.

### Outcomes

- ◆ 40 Indigenous women entrepreneurs and business leaders gathered for the signature event.
- ◆ 39 participants filled out evaluation surveys.





## LOOKING AHEAD

*In the year to come, NWAC will continue to be the national voice for Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people, bringing their voices to the forefront at both the national and international stage. We see a path towards healing and resiliency, as we work to enhance, promote and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of Indigenous women.*

*As part of this work NWAC is proud to have embarked on the construction of the new Social and Cultural Innovation Centre. Through this centre we will offer year-round programming and education, as well as the essential supports to facilitate the building of resiliency, talent and strength for the future generations. This is an exciting step in increasing NWAC's advocacy, while further diversifying funding and revenues to support Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and gender diverse people on their paths to healing.*









Native Women's  
Association of Canada

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L'Association des  
femmes autochtones  
du Canada