



EDMONTON POLICE SERVICE

**Indigenous Community  
Engagement Strategy  
2018-2022**

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# ORGANIZATIONAL MESSAGE

The mission of the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) is to increase public safety through excellence in the prevention, intervention and suppression of crime and disorder. This mission can only be achieved through cooperation and collaboration with the communities we serve. Partnership, stakeholder ownership, and ongoing teamwork are key variables that influence our operations and directly contribute to the accomplishment of our broader strategic goals.

Since its inception in 2012, the EPS Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy (formerly the Aboriginal Strategy) has evolved and expanded to focus on a series of key areas that will ensure we optimize our organizational effectiveness specific to this important and unique community.

In line with the EPS Core Values of Integrity, Respect and Community, this strategy was developed in consultation with the Indigenous Community in Edmonton through the Indigenous Community Liaison Committee, as part of the Chief of Police Advisory Council (CAC). We recognize that the success of this strategy can only be realized by inclusive partnerships, mutual respect and the sustained effort and contribution of all of our communities.

## INTRODUCTION

Located on Treaty Six Territory, Edmonton is one of Canada's fastest growing municipalities and home to one of Canada's largest urban Indigenous populations.

Between 2011 and 2016, the Indigenous population in Edmonton increased in size by more than 23% (approximately 14,500 residents). This growth was far greater than the non-Indigenous growth rate of around 13%. The majority of this growth occurred within the urban Indigenous population under the age of 25 years.

As the urban Indigenous population continues to grow, it is crucial to have

a collaborative policing strategy in place based upon open communication, understanding, and trust.

The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy (2018) is the foundation for police to build trusting community partnerships based upon mutual respect, recruit more police officers and civilian members from the Indigenous community, create Indigenous policing policies that are meaningful to the Indigenous community and in line with community needs, increase cultural awareness within the police service, and provide support to police operations.

## CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

According to the 2016 Canadian National Census, the number of people that self-identify as having an Indigenous identity in Edmonton was 76,205 or approximately 6.2% of the city's total population.

Edmontonians of Métis descent are the largest Indigenous group in the city. They make up 52% of the total Indigenous population of Edmonton.

First Nations residents make up the second largest Indigenous group in the city at 45% of the Indigenous population.

Inuit residents make up the smallest Indigenous group in the city at 1.5% of the Indigenous population.

Approximately 60% of the Indigenous population lives within the inner-city.

Almost a quarter of Indigenous residents of Edmonton live below the poverty line and Indigenous people in Edmonton experience homelessness at a rate nine times higher than the overall population according to the 2016 Homeless Count.

Indigenous people represent 27% of the national incarcerated population, while only representing 4.8% of the total Canadian population.

Compared to Non-Indigenous people, individuals from the Indigenous community are two times more likely to experience violent victimization such as assaults, sexual assaults, or robbery.

According to Statistics Canada, Indigenous people are also much more likely to become victims of homicide than Non-Indigenous people.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada Report findings (2015) assert the tragic history of Canada's Indigenous population and government attempts at assimilation. In the report, government and social community agencies were called upon to implement a variety of recommendations in an effort to reconcile with the Indigenous people of Canada. The goal of many of these "calls to action" is to increase awareness around Indigenous history in Canada and eliminate the over-representation of Indigenous people in the justice and prison systems.

## A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

The EPS Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy (2018) has five specific goals:

1. Develop strategic community partnerships;
2. Increase education and cultural awareness;
3. Increase recruiting efforts with the Indigenous community;
4. Develop and implement Indigenous policing policies in accordance with recommendations from the TRC (2015) report findings; and,
5. Keep informed on issues affecting the Indigenous community.

These goals have been developed in consultation with the EPS Indigenous Community Liaison Committee (ICLC). They encompass the needs of both the police and the community it serves.

## GOAL 1: DEVELOP STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

*The EPS recognizes the need to partner with the Indigenous community, in order to understand the challenges and successes facing the community.*

The EPS currently has positive, productive working relationships with Indigenous-based community groups and recognizes the value of these relationships.

It is essential for the EPS to maintain these existing partnerships and to continue to generate and grow new ones in order to meet the changing dynamics of the population and of the city it serves. The role that the Chief's Advisory Council's ICLC plays in relationship building is recognized as vital and the EPS remains committed to working with those committee members to foster a climate of safety, security and mutual respect.

The EPS will continue to liaise with the RCMP Aboriginal Policing Unit, the City of Edmonton Indigenous Relations Office, and any provincial or federal bodies that work with the Indigenous community.

## GOAL 2: INCREASE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND CULTURAL AWARENESS

*The EPS recognizes the need to better understand the culture, history, experiences, and dynamics of the Indigenous community.*

The diversity of the cultures in Edmonton contributes to the richness of the city. These differences can also lead to miscommunication, misunderstanding, and frustration. Through training, EPS members will become more culturally aware and empathetic to ensure the organization can improve service to all populations.

Through a variety of mediums, the EPS will:

- educate their members on the history of Canada's Indigenous people with specific focus on the residential schooling era and trauma associated with it;
- train members to work more effectively with the Indigenous community;
- work to increase awareness in Indigenous communities regarding the role of police officers; and
- provide members with opportunities to develop individual, sustainable working relationships with members of the Indigenous community.

The EPS will also ensure that the EPS Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy (2018) is accessible to all EPS members.

## GOAL 3:

### INCREASE RECRUITING IN THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

*The EPS recognizes the need to build a diverse and culturally representative police service in order to reflect the community it serves.*

By increasing the diversity of its workforce, the EPS is better able to continually improve its capacity to deliver effective and responsive service to meet the needs of all Edmontonians.

Effective strategies will include Indigenous-specific recruiting initiatives in the overall EPS recruitment plan and involve the Diversity Positive Recruiting Advisory Committee when possible to help shift perspectives through education, clear communication and consistent messaging to inspire people to consider a career with the EPS.

## GOAL 4:

### DEVELOP INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES IN POLICING

*The EPS understands that engagement with the Indigenous community needs to be based upon practices which consider the history and culture of Indigenous people.*

The EPS supports the development of best practices and procedures that will help to

achieve the recommendations outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (2015) in a manner which is transparent and inviting of community input. Feedback from the Chief's Advisory Council's ICLC and community partners will contribute to the EPS's ability to reach these outcomes.

In answer to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's "calls to action," the EPS is committed to working with recognized criminal justice system partners to help reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous persons in Canada's correctional system.

## GOAL 5:

### KEEP INFORMED ON ISSUES AFFECTING THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

*The EPS is committed to staying informed on challenges affecting the Indigenous community.*

Maintaining awareness of the issues affecting the Indigenous community will enable the EPS to make informed decisions relating to Indigenous-based engagements, major gatherings, celebrations, rallies and protests.

The EPS will continue to monitor media, seek input from its Indigenous community partners, collaborate with academia and connect with related Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and federal and provincial groups in an effort to gather information which will facilitate appropriate service delivery.

## REVISIONS

The EPS will revisit this strategy in consultation with the ICLC once every five years and make revisions as deemed necessary by the stakeholders identified.

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Canada Census 2016

<sup>2</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada-Call to Action Report-2015

<sup>3</sup> 2016 Homeless Count

<sup>4</sup> Vital Signs Report 2017

The logo for the Edmonton Police Service is located in the bottom right corner of the page. It features the word "EDMONTON" in a small, white, sans-serif font at the top. Below it, the word "POLICE" is written in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the word "SERVICE" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The background of the logo is a blue geometric pattern with various shades of blue and a red-to-blue gradient band at the top.

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