

The Aboriginal Perspective
on Human Rights in Alberta





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Introduction



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Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice

The Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice was established to advocate for Aboriginal human rights in Alberta. It has heard the stories and seen the impact of human rights violations against Aboriginal people – particularly through discrimination. It has witnessed the complexity in addressing discrimination that exists in subtle and not-so-subtle ways, including personal attitudes, which is difficult to name and to address. It has also seen discrimination in systems and structures such as public policies, which is equally difficult to address. The Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice is aware of the frequency of incidences of discrimination, but it has also noted that Aboriginal people tend not to report discrimination through formal mechanisms currently available to all Albertans.

It is because of this gap between occurrence and reporting of human rights injustices and discrimination that the Commission initiated this research to inform and engage Aboriginal people and all Albertans on this significant issue.

The goal of uncovering, addressing, and ending discrimination is to ensure that Aboriginal people can contribute and participate fully in the social, cultural, political, and economic life of the province while maintaining unique identities, histories, traditions, languages, and rights that characterize First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people and communities throughout Alberta and Canada. The lessons from Aboriginal people in Canada can also strengthen human rights collaborations with Indigenous peoples around the world – perhaps through the now ratified Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

This research is a first step in creating a more complete Aboriginal human rights story in Alberta that will be used to expose issues, to develop policy, and to inform community race relations. It will create a foundation from which meaningful community strategies and programming can be created to address Aboriginal human rights issues.

Executive Summary

Aboriginal populations are growing in Alberta, with more Aboriginal people showing pride in their cultures and traditions. Yet, these populations continue to experience discrimination. This report examines the frequency and types of discrimination and why resolution mechanisms have not been able to keep pace in addressing discrimination, experienced disproportionately in Aboriginal communities. By utilizing the report's research and recommendations, Aboriginal people, and all Albertans, can become more informed on issues of human rights and initiate change through public education and policy recommendations.

For the purpose of this research, a survey of Aboriginal people from across Alberta was conducted to bring the voices of Aboriginal people into a conversation on how to identify and eliminate discrimination in Aboriginal communities. A literature review of Alberta-based research on discrimination in Aboriginal communities was used to support findings and recommendations.

This report provides an overview of the discussions and ideas generated by participants, summarizes dominant themes and opinions that emerged, and highlights suggestions offered for moving forward. Themes emerging from the study include:

1. **Awareness** - Aboriginal people in Alberta are aware of their human rights, however; awareness about human rights does not equate to empowerment to act on or resolve the violation.

2. **Frequency and Types** – Discrimination against Aboriginal people is frequent and occurs in multiple forms and locations. Aboriginal people in Alberta are exposed to racist comments or jokes and receive differential treatment at work or school and are often denied access to services. Much discrimination is described as between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people; however, there is also discrimination among and between Métis, First Nations, and Inuit people and communities.

3. **Barriers in Addressing Discrimination** – Very few Aboriginal people in Alberta seek help to address discrimination beyond the support of family or friends. For the minority who do seek help, many feel that resolutions processes are ineffective resulting in very little change.

This report proposes recommendations in these areas:

1. **Public Education** – Public education is needed and should address multiple aspects of discrimination including private attitudes and public policy. Through education, Aboriginal people can build unity, understand issues, and create solutions specifically targeted to the problems.

2. **Advocacy by and for Aboriginal People** – Culturally-specific solutions are required because of the nature, depth, and pervasiveness of discrimination against Aboriginal people. Because of the unique knowledge base of Aboriginal people, the governance and administration of Aboriginal human rights education and resolution processes better fits within Aboriginal communities.

3. **Ongoing Research** – This survey is a rich source of data with great potential for further research to understand the full complexities of Aboriginal human rights violations. Ongoing research is required to monitor the human rights story in Alberta to ensure progress for Aboriginal communities.

Opening Remarks

Muriel Stanley Venne,
C.M., Chair

Casey Eagle Speaker has stated “Human Rights was never meant for Aboriginal people. It was meant for everyone else but never for Aboriginal People.” This was a response to a discussion I had with this respected and intelligent Elder. The lack of consideration for the human rights of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people has meant loss of land, identity and dignity and a deliberate policy of the government of the day to assimilate, integrate and exterminate. Harsh words for the Canadian people to bear; however, it is the truth.

Every single act of discrimination that has been perpetrated on the Aboriginal people of Canada has been government legislated. The apology from Prime Minister Stephen Harper regarding the treatment of Aboriginal children in the Residential Schools was a sign of the realization of this violation of fundamental human rights, as was the “I’m sorry” statement made by the then Minister of Indian Affairs during the Chretien era. You may say that all is past and we are progressing.

Yes, however, the path towards the true recognition of the Métis, First Nations and Inuit peoples is yet to be accomplished. It must begin with the realization within ourselves that the discussion, the power we feel when we know our Human Rights and the ability to exercise our rights in this democratic country is yet to come. This report begins this process.

As you may know, the first edition of “The Rights Path – Alberta” was published several years ago and is now in its third edition and available to any one who requests this booklet. The booklet flows from the work previously done by the Aboriginal Human Rights Committee.

As I participated in the workshops and forums I felt that there was truly a new door opening. The people told us that being treated with respect and without discrimination was truly important to their well being and their dignity and happiness in their own country.

I believe this is our starting point and the wonderful launch towards a fresh and bright future with dialogue, forgiveness and understanding on both sides. It means that the path towards our collective rights as human beings encompasses the whole community and involves us all.



Lewis Cardinal, Co-Chair Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice

During this whole process of surveying and meeting with members of Aboriginal communities across Alberta, from the rural to urban, it quickly became apparent that racism and discrimination continues to be an every day event: the Alberta race reality. While “stranger” racism is still abundantly evident and in many cases unchanged, the Aboriginal community was quick to point out that discrimination is alive and well in their own communities and practiced by our own people on our own people. This acknowledgement demonstrates willingness from the Aboriginal community to look inward first and recognize its own discriminatory faults and not just an “us and them” game, however a problem that we must also be held accountable. As one community member put it, “how can we expect change, from the outside, if we don’t make the change on the inside?”

What the community also revealed is that information and process is desperately lacking in our communities and in our public institutions when it comes to an individual protection of their rights. There is virtually no place to turn, and if there is, then there is usually no resolution or justice to the matter. Bad news travels faster than good news in our community, which sponsors the whole notion of “kiam” (Cree: “leave it alone”).

Yet, amidst the many negative revelations in this report, there is a strong optimism from the community that we can make the changes we wish to see. Given enough access to educational resources and training, responsive public institutions, and Aboriginal-based advocacy we can change the future for our grandchildren. As another community member put it, “let’s work real hard to make sure that this is the last generation that will have to fight so hard to protect our dignity.” This report, and its findings, gives us a chance to draw a road map to a better future in Alberta and where we will place our first steps on the long journey ahead of us.



Background



International Human Rights

In 1945, a common dialogue of human rights emerged in the international community. An awareness of appalling discrimination prompted the realization that individuals could be denied rights because of group associations and group differences. The atrocities of the Holocaust, for example, showed that civil rights concepts were inadequate for individuals to preserve their identities without fear of “loss of life, liberty, or the pursuit of happiness”.

What emerged from this new international dialogue was a remarkable consensus found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, often named the great triumph of the 20th century. The Declaration of Human Rights counseled universality of rights and asserted human rights principles as an index for which both government and peoples can be measured.

The Declaration provided the impetus for international instruments, introduced within the UN system, such as the covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, among others. The Declaration also provided the impetus for domestic legal documents such as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights created an international human rights movement that ensured state acknowledgement of the universality of rights, state acknowledgment that rights can be violated, but are never given nor taken from an individual, and that individuals are free to assert their rights against the state without fear of reprisal, and that there be free, independent, and impartial forums for the resolution of human rights issues.

While the Universal Declaration of Human Rights instilled an international culture of human rights, it was recognized that issues of indigenous peoples are unique and require particular attention. In 1985, a working group began preparing the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which represented one of the most important developments in the protection of human rights for this population. Dialogues that



emerged from the 1995-2004 International Decade on World Indigenous People highlighted commonalities of indigenous peoples such as exploitation of lands, and substandard living conditions. The 1998 Working Group on Indigenous Peoples released the Cabo Report that voiced concerns for the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights to land and resources, rights to continue traditional economic activities, and concerns that treaty negotiations are submitted to indigenous peoples through non-indigenous, non-oral negotiators, in foreign languages, making it largely impossible to produce a common understanding of the rights and obligations established in the treaty instruments.

The September 2007 ratification of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples marked a milestone for the UN and for the world's Indigenous people. While the declaration is not legally binding, it sets an international standard of mutual respect. The Government of Canada, however, did not support the Declaration.

Human Rights in Canada



The Canadian Human Rights Commission administers the Canadian Human Rights Act and enforces employers' obligations under the Employment Equity Act. Both laws seek to advance equality, respect for human rights, and protection from discrimination through three channels: human rights knowledge development and dissemination program, discrimination prevention program, and human rights dispute resolution program.

It is recognized that Aboriginal people continue to be denied full protection from discrimination that other citizens take for granted. For example, Section 67 of the Canadian Human Rights Act denies First Nations full access to human rights redress under Canadian Human Rights Act by providing an exception for the Federal Indian Act regime and any regulations under it. Though the Canadian Commission on Human Rights advocates the repeal of Section 67, parliamentary debate on its' repeal continues.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission consulted with Aboriginal communities and produced the 2005 report, *A Matter of Rights*, and the 2008 report, *Still a Matter of Rights*, highlighting themes of:

- » Duty to consult on matters that could affect treaty or Aboriginal rights¹.
- » Recognition of self-government and nationhood — Some Aboriginal people have rejected the extension of human rights legislation, not on the basis of human rights principles, but on the basis that the legislation is not their own and therefore is not consistent with Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, which recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and treaty rights.
- » Respect for collective rights — Some Aboriginal people could not concur that individual rights should supersede collective rights since Aboriginal and treaty rights are experienced collectively. Land is held collectively, historical and legally recognized rights are collective, such as the right to fish.
- » Trust — Because of a precedent of inaction or harm done by Canadian governments and bureaucrats, there is no trust that the human rights protections are truly in the interests of Aboriginal peoples.
- » The urgency to act — There were varying responses on the time factor in repealing section 67. Some felt urgent action necessary; others preferred a thoughtful transition period to plan for the effects of repeal.
- » Together, on a New Path — Almost all consultations voiced willingness to work together to improve the circumstances of First Peoples.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission acknowledges principles to ensure a process of rights redress serves the needs of Aboriginal people that include:

- Freedom from discrimination
- Respect for Aboriginal and treaty rights
- Respect for self-government
- Adequate resources
- Adequate transition period
- Discrimination prevention.



¹ As determined by the Supreme Court in *Haida Nation v. British Columbia*, 2004, the legal duty to consult on matters relating to treaty rights rests with the Crown though it is unclear whether this extends to legislative actions.

Human Rights in Alberta

The Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission administers the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act that prohibits discrimination in the following areas:


- Public statements, publications, notices, signs and other representations
- Public services, goods, accommodation or facilities
- Tenancy
- Job advertisements and applications
- Employment practices
- Membership in trade unions, employers' organizations, or occupational associations.

This Act also includes legislated protection for Albertans under grounds of race, marital status, religious beliefs, family status, colour, age, gender, ancestry, physical disability, place of origin, mental disability, source of income, and sexual orientation. Individuals who feel discriminated against in these areas may seek advice or file a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission whose mandate includes public education through various methods.

While a 2006 survey of Albertans, conducted by the Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship, and Multiculturalism Education Fund, suggests endorsement of a goal for all Albertans to participate in the social, cultural, political, and economic life of Alberta, the achievement of this goal has not kept pace with the social and economic developments in the province because of discrimination.

Aboriginal people in Alberta have played a special role in bringing awareness of critical human rights concerns to international human rights audiences. The Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations (CT6FN), led by Chief





Wilton Littlechild, works closely with the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), an organization of world Indigenous peoples that supports indigenous struggles for human rights and became the first NGO with Consultative Status to the United Nations. Together, they have brought focus to glaring abuses of international human rights obligations, treaty rights, and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous peoples as well as legally binding obligations affirmed by the Canadian constitution and legally-binding treaties such as the right to effective participation in public life, the right to free, prior and informed consent on development matters, and self-determination. A primary case study used to highlight the abuses of international human rights obligations, cited in the joint submission to the UN Human Rights Council, is Alberta's licensing of oil extraction from tar sands which has caused health, environmental, subsistence, and social harm for Indigenous peoples in Alberta.

The CT6FN and IITC have also called attention to the Government of Canada's attitude toward the Nation to Nation Treaty Relationship affirmed by the Canadian Constitution. Their submissions to the UN also affirmed their interest in Canada's pursuit of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a guideline to assess and review compliance with the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Honouring A Leading Advocate of Aboriginal Human Rights: Chief Wilton Littlechild

Biography

Chief Littlechild has the distinction of being the first Treaty First Nation person to acquire his law degree from the University of Alberta in 1976. He received his Bachelor of Physical Education Degree in 1967 and his Master's Degree in Physical Education in 1975. The University of Alberta bestowed the Doctor of Laws Degree to Chief Littlechild for his outstanding achievements June of 2007.

An avid sportsman and athlete, Chief Littlechild has won more than fifty provincial, regional, national and international championships. He has served as a Coach and organizer of sports event – being a founder of the North American Indigenous games; and has been inducted into seven Sports Walls of Fame. He is currently working on the World Indigenous Nations Games scheduled for 2012 in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Chief Littlechild is a respected lawyer and operates the law firm of J. Wilton Littlechild Barrister and Solicitor situated in the Ermineskin Reserve. He is a strong advocate for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and promoter of implementation of the Treaties between the Indigenous Peoples of Canada and the Crown, now represented by the federal government. Chief Littlechild also served as the Chairperson for the Commission on First Nations and Métis Peoples and Justice Reform, mandated to review the justice system in the province of Saskatchewan.

Chief Littlechild served as a Member of Parliament from 1988 – 1993 for the riding of Wetaskiwin-Rimby. He served on several senior committees in the House of Commons and was a parliamentary delegate to the United Nations.



Chief Littlechild organized a coalition of Indigenous Nations that sought and gained consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. He was re-appointed by the E.C.O.S.O.C. President to represent North America and has completed his second and final term as the North American representative to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Chief Littlechild was honoured by being appointed the Honourary Chief for the Maskwacis Crees and also honoured by the Chiefs of the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations as the International Chief for Treaty No. 6 Confederacy.

Elected by the Chiefs of Treaties 6, 7, 8 (Alberta) as the Regional Chief for the three Treaty territories in October of 2006 to serve a three year term. He is married to Helen Peacock, and is the father of three children: Teddi, Neil and Megan.

Human Rights in Alberta – Literature Review

The survey conducted for this research is intended to “tell the story” about Aboriginal Human Rights in Alberta. However, other sources were reviewed to compare or contrast our findings. After reviewing literature sources such as conference proceedings, consultations, reports, and articles that addressed issues of Aboriginal Human Rights, several themes emerged.

Aboriginal people are showing pride in their heritage and traditions.

- The 2006 census enumerated 188,365 Aboriginal people in Alberta or 6% of the provincial population. This indicates a 20% population increase since 2001, more than double the rate of the non-Aboriginal population.
- The Aboriginal population is much younger than the non-Aboriginal population. Children and youth under 24 made up 50% of all Aboriginal people in Alberta.
- Traditional Aboriginal methods and theories are increasingly recognized as valid and legitimate and Aboriginal people are inviting sectors to becoming more culturally relevant.



Aboriginal people are disproportionately targets of discrimination issues such as racism, hate, and bias but do not report.

- Aboriginal people experience more verbal attacks and threats than any other group but also experience discrimination in subtle ways such as indirect comments and jokes.
- Aboriginal people are the most targeted groups for hate and bias from law enforcement, work, school, and government.
- Discrimination impacts Aboriginal women more than other Aboriginal groups.
- Systemic discrimination continues to be present in Alberta. There is a lack of diversity on boards, in government, institutions, and in high-level employment positions.
- Aboriginal people do not report hate crimes for fear of victimization by the justice system.

Aboriginal people experience discrimination when accessing services.

- Services are not culturally-appropriate.
- While there are increased private and public efforts to reach diverse groups, these efforts are not always meeting the needs because of internal discriminatory practices.
- Barriers such as cost, transportation, location, and appropriateness of services, language, and having to decode the rules impede service accessibility.

Discrimination is cited as a reason for some of the socio-economic challenges faced by some Aboriginal people.

Housing:

- Up to 35% of the homeless population in Alberta is Aboriginal.
- Societal attitudes about Aboriginal people create housing challenges such as discriminatory rental practices.

Education:

- According to Alberta-specific 2006 Statistics Canada Census, 67% of First Nations People living on reserve aged 20-24 did not have a high school diploma (57% for those aged 25-34).
- 46% of First Nations people living off reserve aged 20-24 did not have a high school diploma (33% for those aged 25-34).
- 29% of Métis people aged 20-24 did not have a high school diploma (25% for those aged 25-34).
- 16% of non-Aboriginal people aged 20-24 did not have a high school diploma (12% for those aged 25-34).
- Lack of education among Aboriginal populations accounts for higher incidence of poverty.
- Educational attainment is the most significant determinant of employability among all Aboriginal people.
- High drop-out rates have been attributed to factors such as: Aboriginal people do not see themselves in educational curriculum, children are often targeted (or tokenized) by teachers and administrators, and peer bullying against Aboriginal children.

Employment:

- Unemployment rate for Aboriginal people in Alberta is 7.7%, over twice the unemployment rate for all Albertans.
- Aboriginal people have low employment retention rates because of feelings of isolation at work, lack of workplace role models, and lack of Aboriginal people in management.
- Employers lack knowledge on how to be culturally competent. Employers lack the expertise to understand the barriers and issues diversity groups face.
- Discrimination against Aboriginal people in the workforce is common from co-workers and management in the form of racial slurs, inappropriate behaviours, and resistance to diversity initiatives.
- Poverty is a key issue to be addressed in human rights initiatives.

Some Aboriginal people have normalized racism as a social practice.

- Political developments and policies within Aboriginal communities have excluded Aboriginal people from financial or political benefits and divided Aboriginal communities.
- Aboriginal people who have been oppressed can repeat patterns of violence and, in turn, become oppressors through various forms of lateral violence.

Aboriginal People have unique consideration in the concept of human rights.

- In contrast to the Canadian conception of rights, with individuals being at the core of the philosophy, Aboriginal people emphasize group identity and collective rights.
- Human rights violations against Aboriginal people occur within a wide historical and social context that include, but are not limited to, residential school experiences, the child welfare “scoop,” and the efforts for harvesting rights that are unique to Aboriginal people in Canada.
- Alberta’s Aboriginal peoples are not an ethno-cultural group, and their needs are not reflected in multicultural theory or practice.



Research



Research Summary & Methodology

Aboriginal populations are growing in Alberta, with a young age median, and more Aboriginal people are showing pride in their cultures and traditions. Yet, these populations continue to experience discrimination in communities, the labour force, education, social services, justice system, and in obtaining required services and supports. It would appear that for many Aboriginal people, the ability to contribute to and benefit from this society is out of reach. This report examines the frequency and types of discrimination faced by Aboriginal people and why mechanisms for resolution have not been able to keep pace in addressing discrimination, including racism, hate and bias crimes, harassment, and prejudice that are experienced disproportionately in Aboriginal communities. By utilizing the research and recommendations within this report, Aboriginal people and, in fact, all Albertans can become more informed on issues of human rights and initiate change through public education and policy recommendations.

This research was guided by an obligation to respect dignity and provide mutual benefits by developing specific research guidelines related to ownership, control, access, and possession protocols in conducting the research. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used. A survey of Aboriginal people from across Alberta was conducted through community forums, an Alberta-based environmental scan, and an on-line survey, evaluated by a six-member review team and distributed electronically using a number of media programs. Forums were organized in the communities of Edmonton, Calgary, and Grande Prairie and an electronic survey was completed for a total of 330 participants. The purpose of the survey was to bring the voices of Aboriginal people into a conversation about how we can help support the changes necessary to identify and eliminate discrimination in our communities. A literature review of Alberta-based research on discrimination against Aboriginal people was used to support findings and recommendations.

This research summarizes dominant themes and opinions that emerged during the engagement processes, provides an overview of the discussions and ideas generated by participants, and highlights suggestions offered for moving forward to combat discrimination against Aboriginal people in Alberta. Themes emerging from the study included:

Awareness

What do Aboriginal people in Alberta know about human rights? Where did they learn about it? How have they used this knowledge?

Aboriginal people in Alberta who responded to this survey are aware of their human rights because of exposure through formal mechanisms such as school and work, and through informal mechanisms such as friends and family, or personal research. However, awareness about human rights does not equate to empowerment to act on or resolve the violation.

Frequency and Types

If Aboriginal people in Alberta have experienced discrimination, on what grounds and in what areas?

Aboriginal people experience discrimination at any time and in any place – while walking, shopping, dining, while working, while at school, or while trying to access public services. It is common for Aboriginal Albertans to be exposed to racist comments or jokes, to receive different treatment, or to be denied access to services.



Much discrimination is described as between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, the latter having attitudes based on stereotypical beliefs about Aboriginal people. However, there is also discrimination among and between Métis, First Nations, and Inuit people and communities due to kinship ties, political or religious associations, or lifestyles.

Barriers in Addressing Discrimination

If Aboriginal people in Alberta have experienced discrimination, what actions, if any, did they take to address it? What were some key reasons that Aboriginal people did not address discrimination?

Discrimination against Aboriginal people is frequent and occurs in multiple forms and locations. However, very few Aboriginal people in Alberta seek help to address discrimination beyond the support of family or friends. For the minority who did seek help, many felt there was no action taken to address it and no change for either party after the process. The majority who did not seek help felt reporting did not yield positive results.

Successes in Addressing Discrimination

If Aboriginal people did seek to address discrimination, such as with government-administered services, did they achieve the desired results? Why or why not?

The Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice acknowledges the contributions of those who responded with insight and honesty about personal (and often painful) experiences of discrimination and sincerely hopes the broad summaries and recommendations presented in this report are reflective of the collective voices of the participants. The Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice recognizes the stories cannot be adequately conveyed in a report but encourages readers to review the summary of individual comments and suggestions where the voice of the human rights story emerges. And we also hope that this report reflects collective voices in strengthening our knowledge of Aboriginal human rights as well as offering a path to restore these rights.

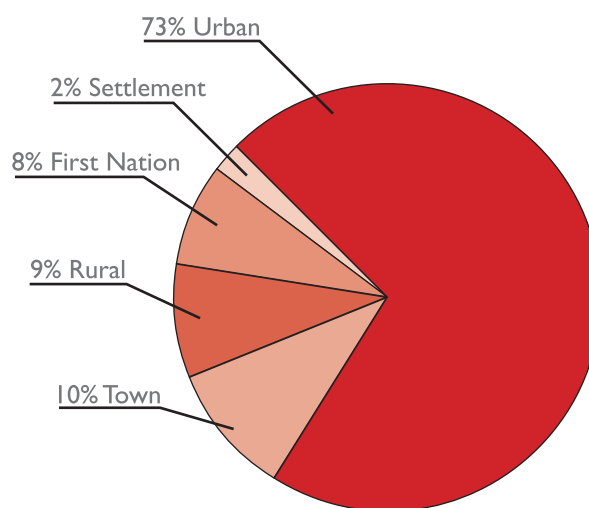


Research Data

Information presented in this section relates to data collected from both the survey and forum discussions. It is presented in an order that corresponds to the four main research objectives outlined in the foregoing methodology section. All forum participants completed the survey and responses are included as “survey participants”.

Demographics of Survey Participants

Of the 330 respondents of the survey, 73% were urban, 10% were from a town, 9% were rural, 8% were First Nation and 2% lived on a settlement (note there may have been multiple answers). Approximately 49% were First Nations, 47% were Métis, and a small portion were Inuit (1%) and non-status Aboriginal people (6%). Most respondents were female (74%). In terms of ages, 30% of responders were between the ages of 41-50 years, 25% were between 31-40, and 24% were between the ages of 51-60.



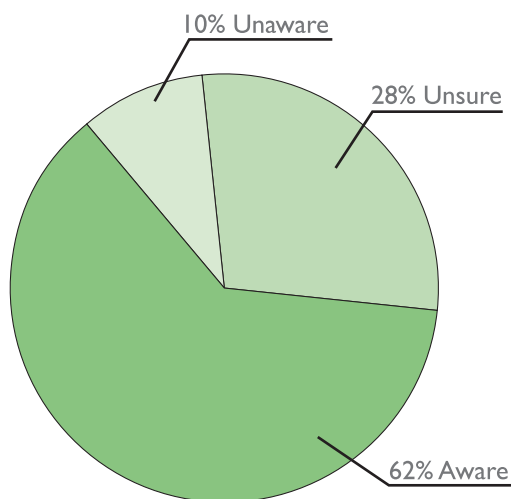
RESPONSE SUMMARY BY RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Awareness

When asked the question “Are you aware of your human rights?” most survey participants answered yes. Comments suggested that while survey participants indicated they were aware of their human rights, most recounted stories when something felt hurtful or wrong but did not connect the wrongdoing to a specific act (areas or grounds) of discrimination. Many suggested that while they knew of rights they did not know how to exercise them – they lack the support to be able to fully implement their rights. Other participants suggested a generational difference in learning about human rights – that the younger generation is more knowledgeable about these issues.

The most common responses to the question of where participants learned of human rights were: school, work, or family, noting that this question allowed for multiple responses. When asked to identify how or from whom survey participants learned about their human rights, there were 250 responses indicating informal means such as family, friends, community members, or Elders, 297 indicated institutions such as school, work, community organization, government, or church, and 118 identified the Albertan, Canadian, or Aboriginal Commissions on Human Rights.

The majority of survey participants had heard of Human Rights Commissions, citing provincial, national, and international bodies as well as the Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice. Just under half were aware of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



When asked if there were unique considerations for human rights for Aboriginal people, opinions were divided. (see chart). This question generated many comments such as Aboriginal rights do not fit the “rights-mold” set by Euro-Canadians because of unique cultural, historical considerations. Treaty rights and rights to the land (as First Peoples to the land), and land use (harvesting rights) were commonly cited as unique considerations in the rights of Aboriginal people. The right to traditional customs, ceremonies, and knowledge, and language was cited as unique to Aboriginal people. Several respondents indicated the rights to free, prior, and informed consent, full and meaningful consultation, self-determination and self-government as unique considerations.

Summary and Comments Regarding Awareness – Aboriginal survey participants are aware of their human rights and are able to name various human rights commissions including the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, the Canadian Human Rights Commission, and the Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice. Exposure to human rights is largely from school and work, though many cited family, friends, or personal research. Aboriginal Albertans who responded to this survey are less sure about unique considerations for human rights for Aboriginal people but those who did respond provided rich insights into areas based on unique cultural and historical identities.

While the survey did not ask why an Aboriginal person would not consider themselves to have special rights, some comments from some participants suggested that Aboriginal people constantly have to counter the common stereotype that they receive “handouts” such as free school, free medicare, and that they live tax free – they do not want to be seen as having “special rights” as it is often not the case. On the other hand, many Aboriginal people may have internalized the notion that treaty rights are a government handout rather than part of a wide rights package determined during historic treaty negotiations.

Frequency and Types of Discrimination

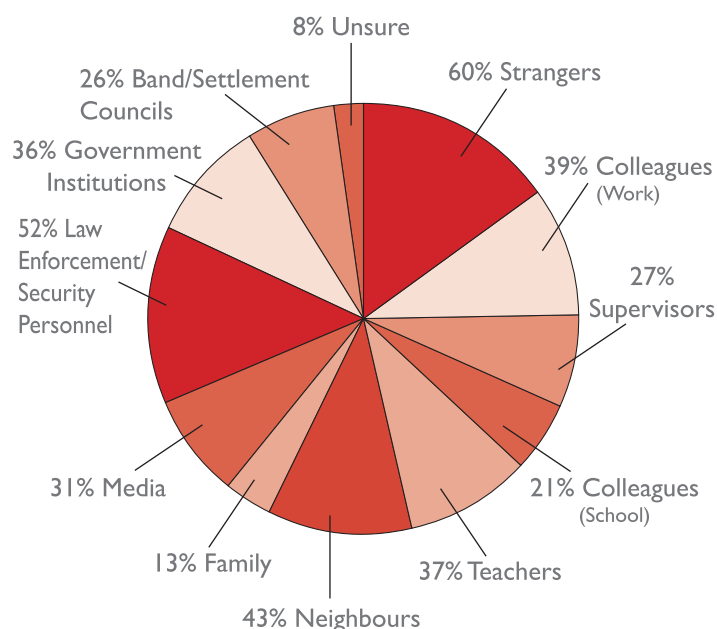
When asked about personal experience of discrimination, all of the survey participants had experienced it in the past month, past year, or past ten years. When asked if family or community members experienced discrimination, 85% said yes.

When asked about the reasons for this discrimination, the top three reasons were race, ancestry, and colour. When asked why family or community members experienced discrimination, the same top three reasons were identified. Other reasons cited related to political or religious affiliations, personal history or lifestyle choices, or between Aboriginal peoples within the same community.

When asked where they experienced discrimination, most survey participants identified employment, education, or police. When asked where family or community members experienced discrimination, the same three areas were identified. Other areas of discrimination frequently cited by survey participants were in informal settings such as public places (in shopping centres, in a bar, at a friend’s house, while attempting to rent a hotel room, on the street, at a car dealership, etc.) and through informal approaches such as jokes

or off-hand comments, or tone of voice when being spoken to.

While survey participants identified strangers, law enforcement, or neighbours as being the most common perpetrators of discrimination, comments revealed that discrimination from and within the Aboriginal communities was common such as Status Indians discriminating against people of Métis ancestry, discrimination because of having fair skin, or discrimination in receiving supports from chief and band councils.



Summary and Comments Regarding Frequency and Types of Discrimination

The vast majority of survey respondents have experienced discrimination or have seen family or community members experience discrimination. Visible characteristics such as race, colour, or ancestry were the most common reasons cited for discrimination. While systemic discrimination was considered the most common on the survey, the majority of comments indicated experiencing discrimination in public places because of individual attitudes or behaviours. Discrimination within and among Aboriginal community members and leaders was also common.

Barriers in Addressing Discrimination

When asked if survey participants sought help after experiencing discrimination, 73% said no, citing fear that reporting would not result in help or action, fear that the claim would not be taken seriously, or fear that the process would be too stressful.

Of the survey participants who did seek help after experiencing discrimination, an overwhelming majority sought help from family or friends. Four survey participants sought help from the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, seven from the Canadian Human Rights Commission, and five from the Aboriginal Commission for Human Rights and Justice. Other survey participants commented that they tried to address the discrimination by writing complaint letters to boards or head offices, writing newspaper editorials, or joining community organizations that addressed similar issues.

Of the survey participants who sought help to address discrimination, 55% indicated that no further action was taken, 49% felt there was no change for themselves after the process to address the discrimination, and 55% felt there was no change for the other party.

When asked why discrimination is not resolved effectively, survey participants suggested that there is not enough public education on the issue, there is a lack of services specifically targeted to discrimination and human rights, and there is a lack of professionally trained Aboriginal advocates. Other comments revealed that discrimination is not resolved effectively because it is subtle and not recognized, and that individuals

lack funding to pursue discrimination issues because discrimination is so deeply ingrained in systems and personal attitudes.

When asked about established government administered services to address discrimination for Aboriginal people, the majority of survey participants responded that the Alberta Human Rights Commission, the Canadian Commission on Human Rights, the RCMP, local police services, and school boards are very important in addressing discrimination for Aboriginal people. However, these services were rarely used. Responses were mixed on the effectiveness of these services to address discrimination, with the majority of responses occurring as “neutral” or “very ineffective”.

Summary and Comments Regarding Barriers – While nearly all of survey participants had experienced discrimination, very few had tried to seek help and, if they did, help was sought from family or friends. Very few survey participants used the established commissions to address discrimination citing their lack of confidence that the process would yield changes. Given the amount of informal discrimination, formal processes were not seen as appropriate avenues to pursue resolution.

Successes for Aboriginal People in Addressing Discrimination

While the survey did not probe specific indicators for success in addressing discrimination, focus group participants did offer some insights on this research question. Participants suggested that public education such as workshops by Aboriginal people for non-Aboriginal people and Aboriginal people alike are effective because cross-cultural teaching and learning provide insight on how others experience and address discrimination. Others identified the value of becoming personally educated about human rights and advocating for the rights of others. Several participants revealed that young people are much more informed and interested in their human rights and are more empowered to contest the discrimination they encounter.



Recommendations



Recommendations

Based on information gathered in the literature review, survey, and forum discussions, a number of ideas emerge that merit thoughtful consideration and action.

Public Education

Public education on issues of discrimination against Aboriginal people remains inadequate. Education programs should address multiple aspects of discrimination including attitudes and public policy, and should also include sharing stories among and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. Creating safe places for sharing stories makes it easier to define experiences of discrimination and to initiate personal and community resolutions. Aboriginal people can be educators to build unity, understand issues, and create solutions specifically targeted to the problems.

- Public awareness and education is required relating to both obvious and concrete forms of discrimination such as institutional and policy-related discrimination, as well as less obvious and more intangible forms such as social attitudes and behaviours.
- Education on discriminatory practices and barriers in targeted systems, public institutions, organizations, and legislation is the most effective method of removing these discriminatory practices and barriers. The best means of changing systems is by influencing public policy.
- Strategies to change personal attitudes and behaviours include public awareness efforts on hate crime legislation, laws, and prevention practices but also require motivational strategies such as educating on value of diversity and inclusive communities and workplaces.
- Education for children and youth is vital to a long-term strategy of ending racism and discrimination.
- Culturally-appropriate education programs encourage understanding, unity, and targeted solutions.
- Education programs that ensure safety to share stories make it easier for Aboriginal people to feel empowered to define experiences of discrimination and to initiate personal and community resolutions.



Advocacy by and for Aboriginal People

Complex bureaucratic and time-consuming processes have few tangible results and deter many Aboriginal people from addressing discrimination. Unique solutions are required because of the nature, depth, and pervasiveness of discrimination against Aboriginal people. Given the frequency of informal discrimination based on social attitudes and behaviours, as well as discrimination that occurs within Aboriginal communities, culturally-specific mechanisms for healing are important aspects of Aboriginal human rights programs. Aboriginal people have a unique knowledge base from which to help other Aboriginal people. Human rights violations might be more effectively addressed if Aboriginal people govern and administer processes for education, resolution, and policy standards around Aboriginal human rights.

- Aboriginal communities require unique services to address discrimination that may be achieved through self-governance of these services. The emergence of traditional cultural elements can reduce barriers and ensure more effective service delivery.
- For discrimination that occurs from band council or other Aboriginal community members, resolution mechanisms should be unique and specific to the community to prevent provincial or federal jurisdictions from dismissing these allegations.
- Increasing mentorship, collaborations, and education can ensure that Aboriginal people are qualified to help each other and that Aboriginal community organizations are sustainable.
- Aboriginal people are the most likely victims of human rights violations, but are the least likely to use government-administered services to resolve the violations. This suggests that government-administered services require awareness of cross-cultural issues and approaches as well as flexibility to respond to culturally-specific processes.
- Working relationships between Aboriginal / non-Aboriginal people and governments built on principles of respect, responsibility, trust, and accountability can ensure mutual benefit for sustainable outcomes.



Ongoing Research

This survey is a rich source of data with great potential for further research to understand the full complexities of human rights violations. The indicators for the types and frequency of discrimination could be probed further. For example, employment has been identified as one of the most common areas for discrimination; there could be research on the most common areas of tension and how employment-related supports such as human resources departments, unions, or diversity offices could be more effective in supporting Aboriginal people. Further, research could probe how Aboriginal world-views can inform human rights education programs and how education programs can ensure individual empowerment so that human rights can be realized by more Aboriginal people. Research could also highlight potential benefits of collaborations within Aboriginal communities, and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, in Alberta and beyond. Finally, ongoing research is required to monitor the human rights story in Alberta to ensure progress for Aboriginal communities.



- Human rights programs and services must be based on current, community-based research. Discrimination is complex and occurs on multiple levels, in different frequencies and in different locations. Understanding these complexities is essential in creating localized solutions.
- Human rights violations and mechanisms for resolutions are not static and require constant monitoring to ensure appropriate problems are named and appropriate resolution processes are implemented.
- Human rights in Alberta should be monitored to gauge Aboriginal community awareness of their human rights, to watch trends in frequency and types of discrimination, and to ensure that barriers in addressing discrimination are addressed effectively.


Next Steps



Consideration of these main conclusions opens a number of possibilities for leadership by Aboriginal community organizations such as the Alberta Commission on Human Rights and Justice to offer tools to address human rights for Aboriginal people in this province.

The Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice has conducted various research and training workshops on Aboriginal human rights. It has developed a legally endorsed Rights Path Booklet, and has remained up-to-date on the Aboriginal human rights story in Alberta through surveys and social media avenues. There is potential for further research to develop expertise relating to a number of areas: band/nation governance to reduce discrimination within communities, legal instruments/processes to address unique considerations of Aboriginal human rights such as nation-to-nation treaty rights, and media techniques to draw public awareness of human rights issues.

The Rights Path – Alberta is in its third edition and used as an educational resource. There is potential for further curriculum development, including a train-the-trainer component, around the themes presented in the current Rights Path handbook that are affirmed by this research, such as how to recognize and respond effectively to discrimination in employment, education, and the justice system.



The Aboriginal Commission for Human Rights and Justice offers a web of supports to assist Aboriginal people in responding effectively to human rights violations from emotional supports to collaborations with human rights avenues such as the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations and the International Indian Treaty Council. There is potential for further development of its advocacy role in creating a permanent office with trained Aboriginal human rights advocates to address community needs. There is also potential to collaborate with current Alberta or Canadian Human Rights Commissions through providing Aboriginal advocates to define Aboriginal protocol within these systems, equipping current commissions on how to address Aboriginal issues such as complaints against own leadership, how to reach Aboriginal communities, and protocol when addressing Aboriginal human rights.

The Aboriginal Commission for Human Rights and Justice works across sectors and in close collaboration with diverse organizations and community groups. It plays an important role in educating non-Aboriginal populations and organizations such as multicultural, immigrant, new arrivals, non-Aboriginal CEO and executives on issues of race relations. There is potential for further collaborations in endorsing racism-free principles and in fulfilling requirements to ensure that Alberta can act as a model of successful human rights initiatives.

Appendix



Appendix

Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice Survey and Responses

Narrative responses were generated at the community forums, and many survey questions offered room for comments. These were Q 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 32, 33. While this provides an exceptional amount of data, it is often where the heart of the story lies. A summary of responses for each of these questions is provided below the respective question.

1. Are you an Aboriginal person living in Alberta? (316 answered question)

Yes: 91.5% No: 8.5%

2. Participant Consent Title of research project, Aboriginal Human Rights in Alberta

Research Information: The purpose of this survey is to obtain information on human rights for Aboriginal people in Alberta relating to four areas: (1) awareness of human rights for Aboriginal people; (2) frequency and types of discrimination against Aboriginal people; (3) barriers Aboriginal people have in reporting discrimination; (4) successes for Aboriginal peoples in addressing discrimination. The Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice honours its obligation to respect dignity and provide mutual benefit by following Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) protocols in conducting this research. The Ethical Guidelines for this research can be obtained by contacting the Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice. Completion of this questionnaire should take approximately 15 minutes. Participation in the survey is voluntary and candidates may withdraw at any time. The identity of participants will be kept confidential by the researcher. The final report will be available to participants. Contact information: Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice Suite 201, 10812 - 178 Street, Edmonton, AB T5S 1J3 Telephone: (780) 479-8195 (279 answered question)

Yes: 97.6% No: 2.4%

3. My primary community is (297 answered question)

Rural/Country: 8.8% Town: 10.5% City: 73.4%
Settlement: 2.0% First Nation: 8.1%

4. I identify myself as being (297 answered question)

First Nation: 48.8% Metis: 47.1%
Inuit: 1.0% Non-status Aboriginal: 6.1%

5. I identify myself as being (296 answered question)

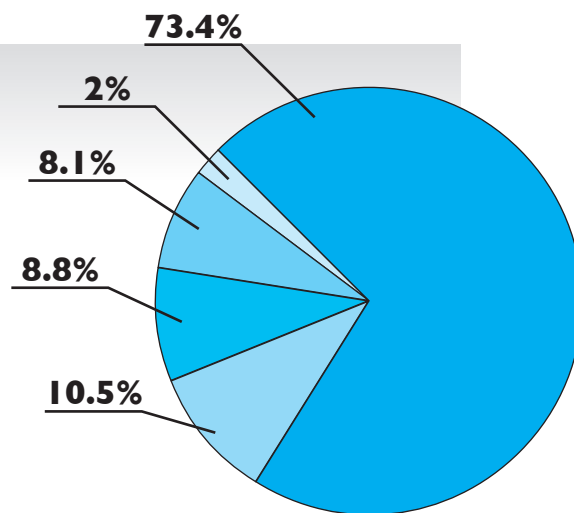
Male: 26.7% Female: 73.6%

6. My age is (294 answered question)

10-20: 1.0%	21-30: 11.9%	31-40: 25.2%
41-50: 39.6%	51-60: 24.1%	61-70: 6.5%
71-80: 1.7%	81-90: 0.0%	

7. Are you aware of your human rights (285 answered question)

Yes: 62.5% No: 9.5% Unsure: 28.1%



8. If you have learned about your human rights, how or from whom did you learn about your human rights? (231 answered question)

Family: 40.7% Friend: 26.0% Community member: 21.2%
Elder: 20.3% School: 42.4% Work: 39.8%
Community organization: 28.6% Band/Local government: 12.1%
Church: 5.6% Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission: 15.6%
Canadian Human Rights Commission: 16.5%
Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice: 19.0%

The comments suggest that media is also a source of information such as websites and TV. Personal research was also commonly cited as a means to learn about human rights. The Rights Path Booklet was mentioned by 4 participants. One participant mentioned religious sources such as the Bible. One participant named the Human Rights in the Workplace workshop offered by the Alberta Commission on Human Rights and Citizenship.

9. Before this survey, had you heard of any Human Rights Commissions?

(287 answered question)

Yes: 58.9% No: 22.6% Unsure: 19.9%

- 25 participants listed the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission;
- 19 participants listed Canadian Human Rights Commission;
- 6 participants listed U.N.; and
- 16 participants listed Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice.

10. Are you aware of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?

(287 answered question)

Yes: 44.6% No: 37.6% Unsure: 17.8%

11. All people have human rights. Are there unique considerations for human rights for Aboriginal people? (287 answered question)

Yes: 39.6% No: 15.3% Unsure: 46.2%

- There were 20 comments about land. One participant voiced that “Aboriginal human rights are connected to land rights”. Some elaborated that land rights include harvesting rights, that land rights are connected to cultural rights, rights as “keepers of Mother Earth”, and that Aboriginal people have unique considerations in being indigenous to the land.
- There were 11 comments suggesting that unique human rights for Aboriginal people include “those outlined in the Treaties”.
- There were 18 comments about “cultural and historical considerations”. Some cited historical considerations of “colonial impact on Indigenous peoples, particularly women”, “sustained genocide and indoctrination”, “residential schools”, “Indian Act”, and a history of “destruction of Indigenous culture” as part of the unique considerations for Aboriginal people. Other comments referred to the rights to maintain culture such as “the right to provide sacred knowledge through ceremonies”, “the right to have certain items such as eagle feathers” or to “maintain the unique situations that our ancestors have bestowed upon us”.
- There were 3 comments that suggested that **“human rights for Aboriginal people should include provisions for self-determination and self-government”**. Other comments around this theme included the right to self-sufficiency and sovereignty.
- There were comments about unique considerations for Aboriginal human rights related to the “high rates of social problems”, “poverty”, “membership”.
- One participant cited a comprehensive list of unique considerations including:
 - Right to self-determination
 - Right to revitalize, develop and practice their own histories and customs
 - Right to participate fully in all matters that affect their well-being
 - Right to special measures to effect immediate benefits to employment and other social and economic development
 - Right to full and meaningful consultation regarding environmental impacts, etc.

12. A human rights violation occurs when people are treated differently, negatively or adversely without a good reason – this is discrimination. Have you ever experienced discrimination? (271 answered question)

Yes, in the past month: 33.6%
Yes, before the last month but within the last year: 29.5%
Yes, before the last year but within 10 years: 39.9%
No, not ever: 4.4%
Unsure: 3.7%

13. What were the reasons for the discrimination that you experienced?

(256 answered question)

Race: 73.0%	Colour: 28.5%
Place of origin: 9.8%	Ancestry: 42.6%
Family, relationship or marriage: 18.4%	Religious beliefs: 13.3%
Age: 17.2%	Gender: 20.3%
Mental or physical disability: 5.5%	Source of income: 13.7%
Sexual orientation: 5.1%	

While most survey respondents experienced discrimination from non-Aboriginal people because of race, some of the narrative responses indicated that discrimination may occur among the Aboriginal community.

- There were 3 comments that suggested they experienced discrimination from First Nations people because they were Métis. 2 comments suggested they experienced discrimination “from within the Aboriginal community” unless they could prove linkages within First Nations or Métis communities they identified with.
- The 3 comments “my lifestyle”, “my past history” or “my past” were also cited as reasons for discrimination.
- One participant suggested they experienced discrimination because they “had a vehicle, had confidence, and pushed for my rights” another experienced discrimination because they were a “successful, well-educated single parent...”.
- One participant experienced discrimination because of “being obese”.
- One participant suggested “how women dress or arrange their hair” can be a factor in experiencing (or not experiencing) discrimination.

14. Generally, where did you experience discrimination? (221 answered question)

Child Protection: 12.7%	Youth Advocacy: 3.2%	Youth Justice: 6.3%
Education: 36.7%	Social assistance: 13.6%	
Employment: 61.1%	Judicial system: 17.6%	Police: 27.6%
Housing: 24.9%	Health: 22.6%	Media (television, newspaper, radio): 23.5%
Books, signs, or public statements: 16.3%		
Memberships in trade unions, employment organizations, or occupational associations: 11.3%		

15. In what specific locations did you experience discrimination? (239 answered question)

At work: 55.2%
At elementary/secondary school: 37.2%
At college/university: 18.8%
In a commercial place (restaurant, mail, bank, etc.): 51.5%
On public transportation (bus, train, etc.): 23.4%
At place of worship or ceremony: 5.4%
At a community building (leisure center, community league, etc.): 20.1%
In a government building (service center, etc.): 26.8%
In a medical facility (hospital, doctor's office, etc.): 29.3%

Though the survey offered choices that were mostly institutional the comments revealed that discrimination is also experienced in informal settings.

- There were 14 comments that revealed public settings for discrimination such as in stores, restaurants, hotels, sports venues, or on the bus.
- There were 6 references to social situations such as at informal gatherings or parties.
- There were 2 comments that revealed experiencing discrimination while accessing services of the food bank and a women's shelter.
- One participant experienced discrimination through threatening emails.

16. After your experience of discrimination, did you seek help? (252 answered question)

Yes: 29.8% No: 73.4%

17. If yes, where did you go to seek help after the incident of discrimination?

(87 answered question)

Family: 55.2%	Friends: 48.3%
Neighbours: 2.3%	Discrimination office at my worksite: 6.9%
Counseling/crisis support: 19.5%	Community agencies: 6.9%
Government agencies: 18.4%	Legal advocates: 16.1%
Band office or local government: 4.6%	
Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission: 4.6%	
Canadian Human Rights Commission: 8.0%	
Aboriginal Commission for Human Rights and Justice: 5.7%	

The survey question listed institutional resources that are available to help and other ideas were shared.

- There were 7 responses that indicated personal responses such as writing editorials in newspapers, writing complaint letters, becoming a member of a community organization, finding articles to share with others, confronting the individual, or using a complaint line.
- There were 2 participants who indicated going to their union.
- There were 6 participants who suggested seeking help internally, within themselves.

18. If yes, was any action taken to address your discrimination? (139 answered question)

Yes: 25.9% No: 54.7% Unsure: 20.1%

19. If yes, did you feel there was any change for you after the process to address the discrimination? (115 answered question)

Yes: 24.3% No: 48.7% Unsure: 27.8%

19. If yes, did you feel there was any change for the other party after the process to address the discrimination? (107 answered question)

Yes: 16.8% No: 55.1% Unsure: 28.0%

21. If you did not seek help, why not? (154 answered question)

Did not know where to go: 41.6%	Fear of further discrimination: 35.1%
Fear of police: 14.9%	Cultural or linguistic barriers: 5.8%
Fear that claim will not be taken seriously: 54.5%	
Fear that reporting will not result in help or action: 59.1%	
Fear the process would be too stressful: 37.7%	

- There were 7 participants who indicated that because of the social and informal nature of discrimination it "is subtle, and difficult to name or prove" and "does not warrant a human rights complaint".
- There were 2 comments that suggested that discrimination is "nothing to cry about" and something to "let go and move on".
- There were 3 additional comments about the emotional strain of experiencing the discrimination and then in seeking help to address it. For example one participant did not want "to re-live the negativity".

22. Have members of your family or community experienced discrimination?

(260 answered question)

Yes: 85.0% No: 1.9% Unsure: 13.1%

23. What were the reasons for the discrimination that your family or community experienced? (227 answered question)

Race: 85.0%	Colour: 44.9%
Place of origin: 21.6%	Ancestry: 51.5%
Family, relationship or marriage: 28.6%	Religious beliefs: 14.1%
Age: 18.1%	Gender: 18.5%
Mental or physical disability: 16.3%	Source of income: 19.8%
Sexual orientation: 9.7%	

While the survey responses showed race, colour, and ancestry for the discrimination, again, comments reveal discrimination among Aboriginal communities. Some examples were: “by chief and council members”, “other First Nations from other communities”.

24. Generally, where did your family or community experience discrimination?

(205 answered question)

Child Protection: 20.0%	Youth Advocacy: 10.2%
Youth Justice: 13.7%	Education: 59.0%
Social assistance: 32.2%	Employment: 53.2%
Judicial system: 29.3%	Police: 41.5%
Housing: 35.1%	Health: 33.2%
Media (television, newspaper, radio): 21.5%	Books, signs, or public statements: 16.1%
Memberships in trade unions, employment organizations, or occupational associations: 13.2%	

25. In what specific locations did your family or community experience discrimination?

(207 answered question)

At work: 48.3%
At elementary/secondary school: 60.4%
At college/university: 24.6%
In a commercial place (restaurant, mail, bank, etc.): 56.5%
On public transportation (bus, train, etc.): 35.7%
At place of worship or ceremony: 10.6%
At a community building (leisure center, community league, etc.): 33.8%
In a government building (service center, etc.): 38.6%
In a medical facility (hospital, doctor's office, etc.): 39.1%

Similar to questions 14/15, responses showed that discrimination was not always systemic. Numerous people experienced discrimination from family members (3 comments), in community (6), and from strangers in public places (8). There was one comment that discrimination occurred from “people in the small town surrounding the rez”.

26. In your community, who typically discriminates against Aboriginal people?

(247 answered question)

Strangers: 59.9%	Colleagues at work: 38.1%
Supervisors at work: 38.1%	Colleagues at school: 20.6%
Teachers/others teaching professionals: 37.2%	Neighbours: 43.3%
Family members: 13.4%	Media: 31.2%
Law enforcement/security personnel: 52.2%	Government institutions: 36.4%
Band/Settlement Councils: 26.3%	Unsure: 8.1%

- There were 2 comments suggesting that school classmates bully other classmates.

27. Have you noticed an increase, no change, or a decrease in the amount of discrimination in your community? (255 answered question)

Incidents have increased: 21.2% Incidents have remained the same: 39.2%
Incidents have decreased: 16.1% Unsure: 25.5%

28. Why is discrimination not resolved effectively? (244 answered question)

Lack of services specifically targeted to discrimination and human rights: 57.8%
Lack of professionally trained Aboriginal advocates: 55.3%
Lack of legal counsel: 39.3%
The onus is on the victim to understand the legal system: 37.3%
There is not enough public education on the issue: 79.9%

Lack of public education was cited as a primary reason for ineffective resolution of discrimination.

Examples of comments to why discrimination is not resolved effectively were the pervasiveness within people's attitudes and behaviours (2 comments) or within systems, laws, and leadership (5 comments).

Many survey participants identified problems with the resolutions process such as the amount of time it takes from filing a complaint to resolution (3 comments), and lack of results in filing (3 comments). General lack of confidence was expressed by one comment:

“Why try, you always lose anyway.”

29. How would you rate the importance of the following government administered services to address discrimination for Aboriginal people? (250 answered question)

	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Unsure	N/A
Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission:	79.7%	12.6%	2.0%	4.5%	1.2%
Canadian Human Rights Commission:	80.9%	12.6%	3.3%	3.3%	0.8%
Royal Canadian Mounted Police:	67.9%	19.3%	5.8%	3.7%	3.3%
Local Police Service:	69.7%	18.4%	6.1%	2.9%	2.9%
School Board:	74.5%	17.2%	4.6%	2.9%	0.8%

30. How often do you think Aboriginal people use government services to address discrimination? (248 answered question)

	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission:	2.8%	5.2%	21.4%	57.7%	14.9%
Canadian Human Rights Commission:	3.7%	4.1%	18.9%	58.0%	16.5%
Royal Canadian Mounted Police:	2.9%	3.7%	21.2%	49.8%	23.3%
Local Police Service:	3.3%	2.0%	21.2%	50.2%	23.7%
School Board:	2.9%	4.5%	26.9%	50.6%	15.9%

31. How effective are government services to address discrimination for Aboriginal people? (246 answered question)

	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Neutral	Somewhat Ineffective	Ineffective
Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission:	7.1%	17.4%	34.0%	19.1%	22.8%
Canadian Human Rights Commission:	4.6%	18.1%	31.1%	22.3%	23.9%
Royal Canadian Mounted Police:	1.3%	12.1%	27.1%	25.4%	34.2%
Local Police Service:	1.3%	10.5%	25.2%	24.8%	38.7%
School Board:	4.6%	12.9%	32.5%	26.3%	24.2%

32. Did this survey help you learn something about your human rights?

(249 answered question)

Yes: 44.2%

No: 34.1%

Unsure: 23.3%

This question was included for evaluation purposes on the survey. While the Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice wanted to learn about the human rights story in Alberta, it also wanted to inspire thought about human rights by the survey participants.

The comments were helpful in assisting how and why the survey did (44%) or did not (34%) help survey participants.

Many comments indicated the survey helped with building knowledge and awareness. For example, “you made me see there is an Aboriginal source to address human rights”, “to be more aware and more responsible”, and finally “it made me think about how many times we are discriminated against and how it desensitizes us and we accept it”.

33. Any other comments for the Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights and Justice? (90 answered question)

There were several comments that encouraged Aboriginal empowerment:

“Please do not promote a culture of victim hood – teach people to be resilient and speak up for themselves”

“We have to see ourselves in a different light. We are the land owners that negotiated a long-term lease.”

“We need more healthy leaders like Chiefs, counselors, anybody who is in a place of power.”

Finally, there were several comments indicating a desire to see tangible results from this research process. Comments included:

“Use the results of this survey to do something proactive and effective”

“Build strategies to deal with research outcomes...”

“Be very clear of your goals...”

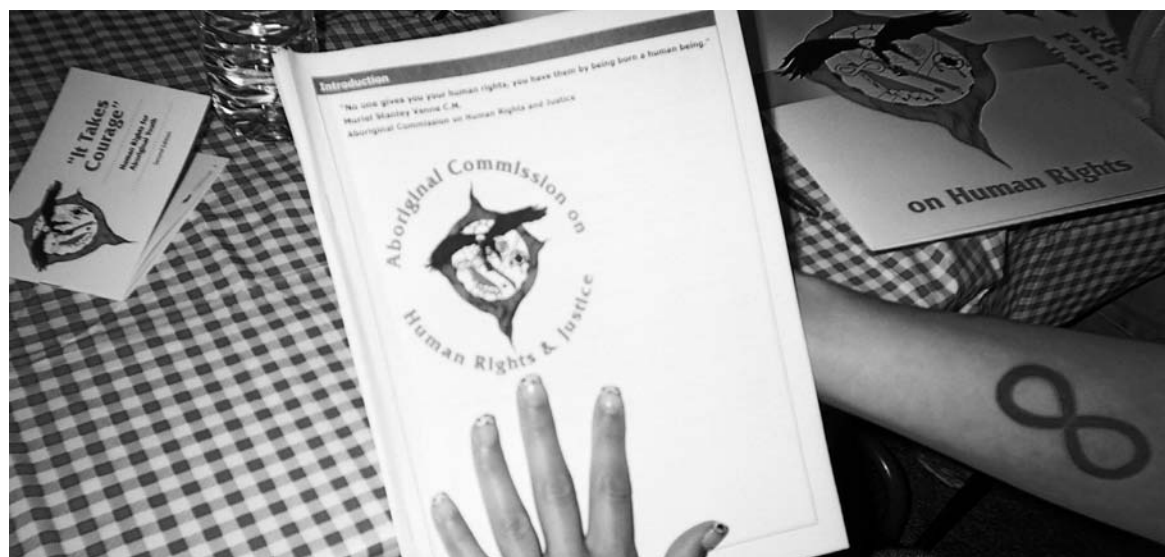
“I get annoyed when Aboriginal groups attempt to create change and often it appears to be more about getting funding support.”

“Government needs to start setting an example by seriously implementing all the recommendations of research studies and reports that state Aboriginal people need to create their own supports and services.”


“Keep up the good work as there is still a long way to go.”

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For a copy of "The Rights Path - Alberta", contact the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, 201, 10812 - 178 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5S 1L3. Telephone: (780)479-8195 Toll Free: 1-877-471-2171. email: iaaw@iaaw.ca

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Muriel Stanley Venne, Chair

Biography

Métis, born at Lamont, Alberta, mother of four grown children and grandmother of three, Muriel Stanley Venne achieved her University entrance by correspondence in order to attain her B.Ed; attended at the University of Alberta for three years, then left her studies to work for the Métis Association of Alberta as Department Head for Job Opportunities and Placement.

Premier Peter Lougheed appointed her as one of the first seven Commissioners of the Alberta Human Rights Commission in 1973 serving for four years; she was Executive Director of Native Outreach for ten years working in employment for Aboriginal people in the province; Bechtel Canada's Community Relations for the Alsands Project, Coordinator of the Métis Settlement Carpentry Training Program and General Manager, Settlement Sooniyaw Corporation; then Marketing Officer for the National Film Board in Edmonton. As Project Manager for Western Aboriginal Development Alliance "Stronger Together" an Aboriginal Strategic Initiatives project, it became one of the most successful Human Resource projects in Canada.

Currently she chairs the Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights & Justice and was instrumental in producing "The Rights Path – Alberta" a holistic booklet produced to inform Aboriginal people of their human rights, now in its third edition. In November 1998 she presented the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson with "The Rights Path - Alberta" in Hobbema, Alberta, referring to the racism involved in the Connie and Ty Jacobs killing by an RCMP officer at the T'suu Tina First Nation. She continues to bring Aboriginal human rights issues to the forefront!

Muriel received the 1998 Alberta Human Rights Award December 10th, 1998 on the 25th Anniversary of the formation of the Alberta Human Rights Commission and the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations International Declaration of Human Rights.

As President and Founder of the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women she works tirelessly and lends her expertise on the issues confronting Aboriginal Women. Under her leadership, IAAW created the I. Esquao Awards, a province wide recognition for Aboriginal Women. This annual event has grown to attract 1000 people bringing government, corporations and community together to honour the significant accomplishments of Aboriginal Women.

She has served as Director of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation and is a lifetime member of the Canadian Native Friendship Centre. She received the Queen's Medal in 2002 and the National Aboriginal Achievement Award in 2004 for her work in bringing justice to the Aboriginal community. Muriel has delivered speeches across Canada on human rights, achieving social justice and violence against Aboriginal Women. She has inspired many to follow their dreams and stand up for what they believe in.

In 2005 she received the Order of Canada and the Governor General's Commemorative Medal in honour of the Person's Case and the Alberta Government Centennial Medal. In 2006 she received the Integrity Award from the Rotary Clubs in Edmonton, Alberta and the YWCA Lois Hole Lifetime Achievement Award. Alberta Venture Magazine named her as one of the 2006 fifty most influential people in Alberta.

In February 2007 she was honoured as Global Woman of Vision. In November 2007 Canadian Ambassador McNee recognized her work at the United Nations citing her as a "Human Rights Defender" pertaining to Aboriginal women, children and families.

In September 2008 she was elected Vice President of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Lewis Cardinal, Co-Chair

Biography

Lewis Cardinal is a Wood Cree from Northern Alberta. He grew up in Edmonton and has three bachelor's degrees from the University of Colorado.

Currently he is the Vice President of the Board of Directors for Aboriginal Voices Radio (AVR), Canada's first and only national Aboriginal radio network. He is also the Chair and Coordinator of the Global Indigenous Dialogue, an international gathering of Indigenous peoples. Mr. Cardinal owns Lewis Cardinal Communication Strategies, a consulting firm, and is also a Ph.D. candidate in Education, Indigenous People's Education at the University of Alberta, where he has also served as an instructor.

Mr. Cardinal was the 2007 recipient of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation Award for Public Service as well as the recipient of the Alberta Centennial Medal for his work in the area of Human Rights and Diversity. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors of the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights, Mr. Cardinal also holds the position of Chair of the Circle Alberta Project.

Lewis has spent most of his professional life in public service. As a communicator and an educator, he has dedicated his work to creating and maintaining connections and relationships that cross cultural divides. His work has mirrored his personal vision of a socially just and responsive society.

His long track record of public service includes his involvement with the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism, the Edmonton Salute to Excellence Committee, Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee and the Aboriginal Voices Radio Network.

Lewis Cardinal has been a trusted and respected friend of Grant MacEwan University for well over two decades. He has been an advisor on Aboriginal issues relating to MacEwan's Aboriginal Education Centre, and has spoken at various Aboriginal events, inspiring two generations of Aboriginal youth (and others) by his example. And he shows no signs of letting up in pursuing his goal of creating opportunity and hope for young Aboriginal Albertans.

Through his ongoing community work and driving personal vision, Lewis has accomplished some remarkable goals. He is a role model for young people and speaks with passion and conviction about the importance of community, citizenship and education.



Human Rights,
Citizenship and
Multiculturalism

EDUCATION
FUND

