

FIRST NATIONS CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Canada is committed to reforming the First Nations Child and Family Services Program for First Nations children on reserve. We would engage with our partners to design and execute a robust engagement plan that allows us to hear from youth and families, communities, First Nations agencies, leadership, and provinces and the Yukon.

There are a number of processes in place to start the engagement process.

- 1) **Minister's Special Representative (MSR)** - Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux has been appointed. The MSR will provide advice on the engagement process, and hold meetings on Program reform ideas. She will visit each region in the country, accompanied by senior INAC officials. Tentatively scheduled visits include:

- Weeks of November 21 and 28, 2016 – British Columbia
- Week of January 16, 2017 – Yukon and Alberta
- Week of February 6, 2017- Ontario
- Week of February 20, 2017 – Atlantic
- Week of March 6 – Saskatchewan and Manitoba

She will hold meetings with key partners during these weeks, and alongside other meeting opportunities up to March 31, 2017.

- 2) **Regional engagement activities** including:

- **surveying all agencies** so that INAC can better understand their unique and individual needs and circumstances
- **Tripartite meetings** with provinces/Yukon to discuss technical issues (e.g., funding calculations)
- funding **Indigenous Regional Organizations** to hold meetings and gather strategic information that can inform the reform process
- meetings with child advocates and other provincial/Yukon stakeholders

- 3) **National engagement activities** including:

- **National Advisory Committee** to provide advice on the engagement process and the reform of the program, involving representatives from the federal government, the Assembly of First Nations, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, Agency Directors, and an Elder and youth representative

- a **National Summit on Indigenous Child Welfare**, bringing together key stakeholders, over two days, to hear from youth, service providers, First Nation community representatives, researchers and others to share information about wise practices in prevention, and how best to support children and families (tentatively planned for January 2017)
 - a **Federal/Provincial/Territorial working group**, involving senior officials who work on child and family services, to share information and best practices
- 4) **Communications engagement activities** including:
- **interactive website** on engagement activities as they unfold
 - an **online survey** to expand the reach of the process and seek input to guide the reform of the program (tentatively scheduled to be open between December 2016 and February 2017)
 - a strong **communications strategy** in order to share information and demonstrate progress as the process proceeds.
- 5) **Research** activities will address gaps identified throughout the process
- 6) **Deliverables** would include:
- a. Public summaries of what we heard posted online – report for April 2017
 - b. Research reports
 - c. Summary of the Summit
 - d. Minutes of the National Advisory Committee