



BC FIRST NATIONS  
JUSTICE COUNCIL

BC FIRST NATIONS JUSTICE COUNCIL

# CELEBRATING THE HARVEST

Evaluating Implementation Planning for  
the Indigenous Women's Justice Plan

November 2025

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge and extend our gratitude for the financial support of Women and Gender Equity Canada (WAGE) during the Implementation and planning phase of the Indigenous Women's Justice Plan from June 2024 - December 2025. These funds were essential to furthering Indigenous-led justice for women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

We also give thanks to our partners, including Indigenous-led and allied organizations, who have strengthened the Indigenous Women's Justice Plan through their shared expertise, aligned advocacy, and community-grounded action. The insights and perspectives shared have been essential to help us better understand the realities of those on the front lines working to increase access to justice and safety within our First Nations communities.

Finally, we acknowledge the strength of the Indigenous Women 2SLGBTQIA+ Justice Team (The Women's Team). We extend deep gratitude to Tina Miller, Kristi Den Admirant, and Katisha Paul for leading this essential work.



BC FIRST NATIONS  
JUSTICE COUNCIL



Women and Gender  
Equality Canada



CELEBRATING THE HARVEST

Evaluating Implementation Planning for the Indigenous Women's Justice Plan

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Project Overview

In 2024, the British Columbia First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC) released the Final Draft of the Indigenous Women's Justice Plan, called for under Strategy 11 of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy and rooted in the MMIWG2S+ Inquiry and Calls for Justice. The IWJP uplifts ongoing work to improve safety and wellbeing for Indigenous women, girls, and 2-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Plus (2SLGBTQIA+) peoples.

In 2025, BCFNJC began implementation planning for the IWJP, led by the BCFNJC's Indigenous Women 2SLGBTQIA+ Team (the Women's Team). To meet funder requirements, the Women's Team undertook an evaluation of implementation planning work completed to date.

## Evaluation Methods

The Women's Team co-developed an evaluation framework with Firelight (the evaluator) grounded in Indigenous Gender-Based Analysis Plus framework. Methods included:

- **Document review** of BCFNJC project-related work;
- **Sharing circles** to engage BCFNJC staff, government, and Indigenous partners, and;
- **A survey** open to all Indigenous peoples in BC.

These methods supported the evaluation team to better understand the successes and challenges, along with the goals and opportunities associated with the development and implementation of the IWJP, while creating space for those involved to reflect, share knowledge and lessons learned, and celebrate the work completed to date.

## Summary of Findings

### Strengths and Successes

- The Women's Team strengthened relationships with First Nations communities, Indigenous organizations, and government Ministries. Partners consistently recognized the care, relational approach, and commitment demonstrated by the Women's Team.
  - The Women's Team are a great example and reminder that relationship building is not a deliverable or simple indicator of success relative to implementation; rather, it is the heart of the work.
- Engagement with project partners focused on shared responsibility for systems change, identifying links between 42 IWJP actions and 29 areas of government.
- The Public Reporting Platform *Tracking Justice* has been a helpful tool to support advocacy, trust-building, and transparency by publicly reporting on commitments within the Indigenous Justice Strategy.



### *Challenges and Barriers*

- The timeline to plan for the implementation of all 15 strategies and 24 lines of action within the IWJP was unrealistic given the Women's Team capacity.
- Short-term, grant-based funding created instability, constrained planning, and impacted staff wellbeing.
- Bureaucratic systems slowed progress and often prioritized reporting over relationships, creating misalignment with the IWJP's community-driven foundation. Staff morale was affected by navigating colonial processes that hinder timely, meaningful action.
- Despite progress in relationship-building, government partners were generally not ready to commit to IWJP implementation, citing limited funding and competing priorities.
- Some partners reported difficulty locating the Tracking Justice page following website updates, reducing accessibility.
- Some government partners were uncertain about when to engage BCFNJC or misunderstood the Council's mandate as solely legal advocacy, rather than holistic justice and community wellbeing.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

- Advancing readiness requires sustained investment in relationships and financial support for implementation.
- Increased funding is needed to build internal capacity, maintain partnerships, and strengthen community-facing tools such as Tracking Justice.
  - Funding agreements should reflect the iterative nature of Indigenous-led work.
  - The Women's Team should engage BC's Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity to support long-term funding efforts.
- Stable resources will enable the IWJP to respond to current gaps and advance the vision held by Indigenous women, families, and communities.
- To address workload pressures, BCFNJC can consider partnering with post-secondary institutions to bring on students or interns.
- Regular check-ins from BCFNHC leadership are also recommended to better understand the needs and pressures facing the Women's Team, and ensure appropriate supports are in place to promote workforce wellness.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>GLOSSARY.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1. PREPARING FOR THE HARVEST.....</b>	<b>12</b>
1.1 Report Organization.....	13
<b>2. GATHERING OUR TOOLS.....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 Indigenous Approaches to Evaluation.....	14
2.2 Methodology.....	14
2.3 Limitations.....	16
<b>3. THE ROOTS AND THE BRANCHES.....</b>	<b>18</b>
3.1 The Roots.....	18
3.2 The Branches.....	19
3.3 Ready to Pick Berries.....	20
<b>4. LEARNING FROM WHAT WE GATHERED.....</b>	<b>23</b>
4.1 Strengths and Successes.....	23
4.2 Challenges and Barriers.....	25
4.3 Public Reporting Platform Tracking Justice.....	28
4.4 Engagement and Relationships.....	29
4.5 Recommendations.....	31
<b>5. PREPARING FOR THE NEXT GROWING SEASON.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: ABOUT FIRELIGHT.....</b>	<b>37</b>



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Where Survey Respondents Heard about the IWJP.....	25
Table 2: Supports Needed to Improve Justice for Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People.....	27

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Poem submitted by an anonymous survey respondent.....	9
Figure 2: BCFNJC Circle Process.....	20
Figure 3: Medicine wheel, submitted by anonymous survey respondent.....	29



# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>BCFNJC</b>	British Columbia First Nations Justice Council
<b>IWJP</b>	Indigenous Women's Justice Plan
<b>2SLGBTQIA+</b>	2-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Plus
<b>MMIWG</b>	Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
<b>WAGE</b>	Women and Gender Equality Canada
<b>The Women's Team</b>	Indigenous Women 2SLGBTQIA+ Team
<b>UBCIC</b>	Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs
<b>UNDRIP</b>	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples



# GLOSSARY

<b>2SLGBTQIA+</b>	Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Plus and Two-Spirit Plus. The Plus in each acronym represents other sexual and gender identities not explicitly named. The term “2SLGBTQIA+” is used inclusively throughout this report to reflect the full spectrum of gender and sexual diversity among Indigenous peoples.
<b>Community</b>	Broadly speaking, “community” refers to a group of people who share geographic, cultural, or relational ties. In the context of this evaluation, “Indigenous community” refers to First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and urban Indigenous peoples, including grassroots organizations and networks grounded in shared identity, values, and responsibilities. Where relevant, a distinctions-based approach is used to recognize the unique rights, governance structures, and lived experiences of each group. For example, specificity is applied to refer explicitly to a “First Nations community” to avoid conflating First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or non-Indigenous municipalities, and to honour the self-determination and diversity of Indigenous peoples.
<b>Data Source</b>	The origin of information used to measure progress toward an indicator of success in an evaluation. Data sources can be quantitative (numerical) or qualitative (descriptive) and come from documents, surveys, interviews, observations, or other records.
<b>Evaluation</b>	A systematic process of assessing a program, initiative, or strategy to determine its effectiveness, impact, and areas for improvement. Evaluations involve collecting and analyzing data to inform decision-making and strengthen accountability.
<b>Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)</b>	An analytical process used to assess how diverse groups of women, men, and non-binary people may experience policies, programs, and initiatives. The “plus” acknowledges that GBA+ considers many identity factors, such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, and disability, in addition to sex and gender.
<b>Indicator</b>	Measurable signs that an outcome is being achieved. Indicators provide evidence of progress and help track whether the intended impact of a program or strategy is being realized. They can be either qualitative (e.g., level of satisfaction) or quantitative (e.g., number of participants).



<b>Indigenous Gender-Based Analysis Plus (IGBA+)</b>	Unlike mainstream GBA+ frameworks, which tend to compare differences in outcomes across population groups without addressing their root causes, an Indigenous GBA+ approach examines the systems that produce inequalities. It situates evaluation within the broader context of colonization and recognizes the diversity of Indigenous gender identities and the realities and strengths of Indigenous communities. Grounding evaluation in an Indigenous GBA+ framework ensures that indicators and findings reflect Indigenous worldviews and priorities, leading to insights that are more meaningful, accurate, and useful to the communities that the programs are intended to serve.
<b>Justice</b>	A concept that includes fairness, accountability, healing, and equity. In the context of this report, justice reflects a vision grounded in Indigenous worldviews – emphasizing relational accountability, the revitalization of traditional legal systems, and the safety and dignity of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples.
<b>Meaningful</b>	In this evaluation, “meaningful” refers to intentional, value-driven efforts that result in positive impact toward a defined goal. Meaningful actions are guided by Indigenous values, promote Indigenous-led solutions, and are measured by the positive change they create.
<b>Outcome</b>	The changes or impacts that result from the delivery of programs or initiatives. Outcomes describe what success looks like in concrete terms and are often measured over time through defined indicators.
<b>Relational Worldview</b>	An Indigenous framework that emphasizes interconnectedness, relationships, and balance between people, communities, and the land. This worldview guides the IWJP’s emphasis on trust, mutual accountability, and collective healing.
<b>Tracking Justice</b>	A public reporting platform developed by the BC First Nations Justice Council to support transparency and accountability in implementing the BC First Nations Justice Strategy and the Indigenous Women’s Justice Plan. It serves as a space to share progress, challenges, and commitments.
<b>Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+</b>	This phrase is used to intentionally include individuals with diverse and intersecting gender and sexual identities who are impacted by colonial and systemic violence. It reflects the IWJP’s commitment to inclusive and intersectional justice approaches that center those most affected.



### As an Indigenous Girl

I learned to run before I walked  
I learned to scream before I sang  
I learned to fight before I danced  
I learned to put armour on before regalia  
I learned to hide instead of being seen  
I learned what bad touch was before a warm and safe embrace  
I learned to look back before I could look forward  
I learned to watch for shadows behind me before finding  
the constellations in the night sky  
I learned to watch for reflections of others before looking at myself  
I learned to protect myself before I could live

Today our work environments perpetuate these lessons and more.  
We are taught we are less than for any given reason.

He is louder, so I must be quiet  
He is smarter, so I must be dumb  
He has a degree, so my education doesn't matter  
His life will be ruined, so I must not fight  
His position is bigger, so I must be smaller  
Things come easier to him so I must work harder  
He's more important, so I must be fired

- An Angry Mohawk Woman



Figure 1: Poem submitted by an anonymous survey respondent



# 1. PREPARING FOR THE HARVEST



In 2024, the British Columbia First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC) released the Final Draft of the Indigenous Women's Justice Plan (IWJP). The IWJP was called for under Strategy 11 of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy in response to the MMIWG2S+ Inquiry Final Report and Calls for Justice, and to uplift the work already being done to improve experiences of safety and wellbeing for Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Plus and Two-Spirit Plus (2SLGBTQIA+) people.

In 2025, focus shifted to implementation planning for the IWJP. To meet requirements from the funder, Women and Gender Equity Canada (WAGE), the BCFNJC partnered with [Firelight](#)<sup>1</sup> (an Indigenous-owned consultancy) to support the development of an evaluation framework for the implementation of the IWJP. Now, Firelight is helping the BCFNJC carry out the evaluation.

Recognizing the limited funding, time, and staff capacity for implementation planning, the Women's Team knew that completing 15 full implementation plans was unrealistic. So, they identified three “ready-to-pick berries”, or strategies within the IWJP, which would be the most feasible and impactful to bring forward in this season of implementation:

1. **Strategy #8: Man Camps, Resource Extraction and Land Exploitation;**
2. **Strategy #9: Crisis Response; and**
3. **Strategy #15: Legislation and Policy (specific to strategy #8 and #9).**

Drawing on this metaphor of the berry patch, each priority identified within the IWJP represents a berry. Some are ripe and ready to be picked, others are still forming on the branch and require specific conditions to grow. This evaluation is a chance to look at what has grown, to reflect on the conditions that supported it, and consider what will sustain the next season of growth.

As such, the goals of the evaluation are to:

- Measure progress towards implementation planning of the three ready to pick berries/ IWJP strategies;
- Evaluate relationship building with Government Ministries and Indigenous organizations;
- Assess the IWJP as a living document that reflects ongoing learning;
- Examine awareness building and mobilization efforts; and
- Evaluate the project's ability to meet WAGE-funded deliverables.

Further details about the evaluator (Firelight) are attached in Appendix A.

---

<sup>1</sup> Firelight has decades of experience providing research and technical support services, including program evaluations, to Indigenous communities and organizations across Canada.



## 1.1 Report Organization

This report and findings presented within trace the rhythm of a growing season, from preparation to harvest. The report is organized as follows:

- **Section 1 - Preparing for the Harvest:** introduces the evaluation and report structure.
- **Section 2 - Gathering our Tools:** describes the importance of evaluation, Indigenous approaches to evaluation, and the methodology that informed the evaluation.
- **Section 3 - The Roots and the Branches:** summarizes the development of the IWJP to date, and how the BCFNJC sustains this work, along with partners to support it.
- **Section 4 - Learning from What We Gathered:** presents evaluation findings from engagements with BCFNJC staff, leadership, and project partners, including government and Indigenous organization partners.
- **Section 5 - Preparing for the Next Harvest:** highlights recommendations and areas for ongoing implementation of the IWJP.



## 2. GATHERING OUR TOOLS



Before picking berries, it is important to gather the tools you need to support your harvest. Evaluation similarly requires tools to support gathering insights and findings. It is a systematic process of assessing programs, initiatives, or policies to determine their effectiveness, impact, and areas for improvement, and using both qualitative and quantitative tools can help an organization measure progress and identify what has flourished and what needs more attention. This can help inform decision-making for the next season of work. By incorporating the perspectives of partners and communities, evaluations can also ensure that the insights gathered foster inclusivity and transparency in program development and implementation.

### 2.1 Indigenous Approaches to Evaluation

An Indigenous approach to program evaluation requires the co-creation of evaluation approaches and the involvement of participants in a respectful and culturally sensitive way (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health 2013). It also means thinking critically about how success is defined and measured. Conventional, quantitative indicators may not accurately capture the outcomes of Indigenous-led programming. For example, Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals may experience forms of victimization that do not fit neatly, or at all, into conventional measures of crime and safety. These groups often have different perspectives on, and experiences of, reparation and reconciliation commonly prioritized by justice programs. Evaluation strategies and processes that take such differences into account may capture more meaningful, and useful, data regarding the program or service in question.

Applying an Indigenous Gender Based Analysis Plus (IGBA+) framework can support this type of critical inquiry. Unlike mainstream GBA+ frameworks, which tend to compare differences in outcomes across population groups without addressing their root causes, an IGBA+ approach examines the systems that produce inequalities in the first place. It situates evaluation within the broader context of colonization and recognizes the diversity of Indigenous gender identities and the realities and strengths of Indigenous communities. Grounding evaluation in an IGBA+ framework ensures that indicators and findings reflect Indigenous worldviews and priorities, leading to insights that are more meaningful, accurate, and useful to the communities that the programs are intended to serve.

### 2.2 Methodology

The methodology for this evaluation was co-created between Firelight and the BCFNJC Women's Team, grounded in Indigenous approaches and values. The methodology relied on document review, sharing circles to engage BCFNJC staff and other project partners, as well as a survey open to all Indigenous peoples in BC. Details about each approach are outlined below.



## Document Review

The work began with a document review to help clarify the current state of IWJP implementation planning and identify key insights for moving forward. Documents were compiled into a database for easy access and tracking. These included, among other documents:

- The IWJP and related work plans and briefing notes;
- Funding and contribution agreements; and
- Meeting notes and email communications with Indigenous, Allied and Government partners.

The process established a solid foundation for the evaluation by clarifying existing information and identifying key gaps. This understanding guided the development of an engagement plan directed at filling those gaps, which included sharing circles with BCFNJC staff and partners and a survey open to all Indigenous peoples in BC.

## Sharing Circles

Five virtual sharing circles were held to gather insights, stories, ideas, and perspectives from project leads and partners. Sharing circles were designed to identify and clarify strengths and gaps in BCFNJC's work to date on the IWJP, and to gather insight into Indigenous-led justice strategies for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals.

Groups engaged included:

- BCFNJC Leadership and Staff, including the Women's Team;
- Government Partners; and
- Indigenous Partners (e.g., Coalition Members).

Sharing circles supported the evaluation team to understand the successes and challenges, along with the goals and opportunities associated with the development of the IWJP, while creating space for those involved to reflect, share knowledge and lessons learned, and celebrate the work completed to date. Sharing circles were culturally grounded and trauma-informed by centring Indigenous voices and experiences, as well as honouring diverse forms of expression, and leaving space for storytelling to support qualitative data collection.

## Survey

A survey was launched from September 3rd to October 17th, 2025. It included 15 core questions and was open to all Indigenous peoples in BC. The survey featured an optional creative element, where respondents could upload a photo or words reflecting on the meaning of the IWJP to them. Some responses are woven throughout this report (see the poem on page 8, and images on page 28-29).



The survey was promoted through BCFNJC's social media as it was designed to reach and gather insight from BC First Nations community members on their knowledge and awareness of the IWJP and perspectives on justice and safety for Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit individuals. In total, 33 First Nations community members completed the survey.

Demographic information about survey respondents is as follows:

- Most identified as First Nations (88%), while 6% identified as Métis, and 6% as Inuit.
- A majority identified as woman/female (82%), while 9% identified as man/male, and 9% identified as Two-Spirit.
- Most lived in BC's interior region (55%), while the remainder lived in the Vancouver Coastal region (12%), in Northern BC (9%), Vancouver Island (9%), or the Fraser Valley (6%). Two respondents (6%) preferred not to identify the region they lived in.
- Respondent ages varied between 18-65+, with the largest group of respondents identifying as 45-54 (33%).
- 85% of respondents indicated that they had lived or professional experience with the justice system. Only five respondents (15%) reported no lived experience or interactions with the justice system personally or professionally.

Survey responses were analyzed quantitatively and thematically. The responses and findings related to the IWJP are woven into *Section 4: Learning from What We Gathered*.

## 2.3 Limitations

Acknowledging methodological limitations is like noting the conditions of a growing season, essential for understanding the harvest that follows. Identifying these limitations supports transparency and acknowledges what can realistically be accomplished within the parameters of the evaluation project. Below is a list of limitations that shaped and impacted the insights that could be gathered in this evaluation.

- **Funding:** Funding allocated towards the IWJP evaluation created limitations on the reach of the evaluation team's engagements.
- **Time:** In addition to budget limitations, time constraints on the evaluation and the busy schedules of those we sought to engage, limited in the number of individuals engaged.
- **Data:** The data collected for the evaluation was limited by what each participant was willing and able to share. However, it is important to note that the absence of data does not signify an absence of experience or value.
- **Survey responses:** While the survey offered an accessible way to gather a broad range of perspectives, promoting it through social media introduced a few challenges. Open online distribution increased visibility but allowed for spam and potentially AI-generated



responses. Data cleaning was necessary to remove these entries and ensure that only relevant input informed the findings.

This report itself should be considered one step in an ongoing cycle of learning and reflection to improve and refine areas of growth for the implementation of the IWJP. Future evaluations will continue to nurture the roots of the IWJP, building on the lessons gathered here and tending the conditions needed for the next season of work.



### 3. THE ROOTS AND THE BRANCHES



Every berry patch depends on strong roots and healthy branches. If the IWJP represents a berry patch, its roots are the work that led to its development, including the BC First Nations Justice Strategy and the MMIWG2S+ Inquiry and final Report, among others. The branches are the organizations, partnerships, and relationships that carry the commitments within the IWJP forward and translate them into action.

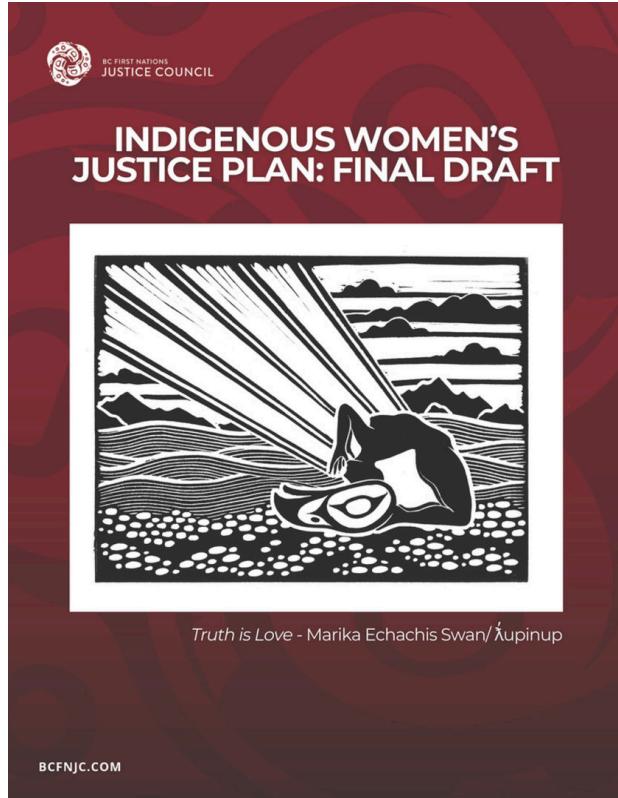
#### 3.1 The Roots

The Indigenous Women's Justice Plan ('IWJP') was called for under Strategy 11 of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy ('the Strategy'), which states:

*There is a clear imperative for us all, coming out of the MMIWG2S+ Inquiry and taking into consideration its Final Report, to set out clear and shared approaches to ending the grim reality faced by First Nations women as victims of crime (BCFNJC 2024).*

From these roots, BCFNJC developed the IWJP in partnership with many who have long tended to the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. The Plan honours and uplifts decades of advocacy from grassroots organizations, Elders, and knowledge holders who have long called for justice and systemic change.

The IWJP was designed as a pathway to bring about action to the calls for justice and recommendations that have sat with little to no action for many years (BCFNJC 2025a). In 2024, the IWJP was endorsed by various organizations that represent all 204 First Nations in BC, including the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations resolution 38/2024, First Nations Summit resolution 624.09, and Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) resolution 2024-21. However, the transition to Phase 1 implementation planning revealed several areas where more effort and support was needed to set the work of implementation up for success. Key gaps included the need for enhanced decision-making authority, more cross-government alignment, and long-term, sustained funding for BCFNJC to support implementation. The creation of the Leadership Table composed of BCFNJC and senior government executives to oversee implementation decisions and clarify the project's governance mechanisms are major outcomes of this phase, setting the stage for Phase 2 implementation.



In 2025, the IWJP received another endorsement through the UBCIC Resolution 2025-53. As the work of implementation continues, the responsibility is on those who will carry the plan forward. The IWJP's vision now extends beyond its roots into the branches, and to the people, partnerships, and organizations that will help bring its vision to life.

## 3.2 The Branches

### BCFNJC

BCFNJC is a First Nations non-profit organization created in 2015 by the BC Assembly of First Nations, the First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (BCFNJC 2023). BCFNJC was established to serve all 204 First Nations in BC and was given a clear mandate to:

- Challenge approaches that contribute to the growing over-representation of First Nations children and youth in care of government and First Nations men and women in incarceration; and
- Productively engage with the government to advance effective strategies that can achieve better outcomes for Indigenous people in the justice system.

BCFNJC provides culturally-grounded legal services, advocacy, and support navigating the justice system to Indigenous peoples in BC, including on child protection matters, while also connecting Indigenous peoples in BC with holistic, community-based supports (BCFNJC n.d.). Through justice system reform and transformation, BCFNJC works to restore Indigenous laws, governance, and healing practices, supporting Indigenous peoples and communities to be empowered to self-govern. BCFNJC doesn't just want to change the justice system, they work to restore Indigenous laws, structures, and ways of healing (BCFNJC 2023).

Within this structure, the Indigenous Women's Team is dedicated to the development and implementation of the IWJP, centering the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. With three dedicated staff, their work builds upon the advocacy and wisdom of those who have championed this work before them, and who continue to centre the safety, wellbeing, and dignity of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

### Government Partners

In BC, provincial Ministries are responsible for public policy, government functions, and service delivery. As they approve local actions, joint services and assistance programs, they are responsible for supporting the implementation of several Lines of Action in the IWJP. From June to September 2024, the Women's Team hosted 28 meetings with Ministry and Government partners resulting in 25 out of the 42 Lines of Action mapped to ministerial areas. These meetings were held to ensure that there was understanding and commitment to the IWJP. To build these relationships, the team reviewed related reports, action plans, mandate letters, and services plans to identify potential areas for ministerial support. Connections were identified between 42 Lines of Action within the IWJP and 29 areas of government.



## Indigenous Partners

BCFNJC's work on the IWJP has been strengthened through relationships with Indigenous and allied organizations that share a commitment to uplifting Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. BCFNJC works with several Indigenous-led and community organizations to support this work, including the Moose Hide Campaign, Ending Violence Association of BC, West Coast LEAF, BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, and the Ministry Advisory Council on Indigenous Women.

From November 2024-February 2025, BCFNJC held eight formal meetings with these organizations to support the implementation of the IWJP through shared expertise, advocacy, and action. Throughout 2024 and 2025, the Women's Team continued to attend events to promote the IWJP and engage with Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. This included hosting workshops such as the BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH) Annual Training Forum, presenting at the AFN National Virtual Forum on Advancing MMIWG2S+ Calls for Justice, having a booth at Lillooet Domestic Violence Conference, and providing a keynote at the EVA BC Training Program. These were meaningful opportunities to share progress, gather feedback, and build collaborative relationships.

A Steering Committee was also formed to oversee the development of the IWJP and the work of implementation. The Committee, made up of Indigenous partners and subject matter experts, provided direction and advice to ensure that implementation planning stayed aligned with Indigenous community priorities and the broader goals of the BCFN Justice Strategy. Their oversight helped refine approaches and ground decision-making in lived experience. While time and capacity limited the number of meetings that could be held, the guidance and feedback shared by the Steering Committee was instrumental in keeping the work on course and responsive to the needs of Indigenous communities.

The Union of BC Indian Chiefs MMIWG2S+ Coalition (hereafter, "the Coalition") also invited The Women's Team to be a part of their process and share the work of the IWJP. The Coalition is an advocacy group made up of grassroots advocates, government representatives, and Provincial/Territorial Organizations (PTOs), formed by the UBCIC. Though the Coalition initially began as a roundtable, it has evolved into a strong support network of partners and mentors that support the Women's Team to share their work more broadly and stay accountable to the implementation of the IWJP as a living document.

Looking forward, BCFNJC is seeking additional resources through provincial Gender-Based Violence (GBV) funds to sustain the involvement of Indigenous partners through the Steering Committee and the Coalition in future phases of the work.

### 3.3 Ready to Pick Berries

Following a collaborative approach to setting priorities, the BCFNJC Council released two guiding documents for staff: a Technical Version and Coyote's Version. Both help organize the strategies and lines of action from the BC First Nations Justice Strategy into short-, medium-, and long-term goals. The Technical Version tracks priorities directly against the specific strategies in the Justice Plan, while Coyote's Version uses storytelling to help guide prioritization

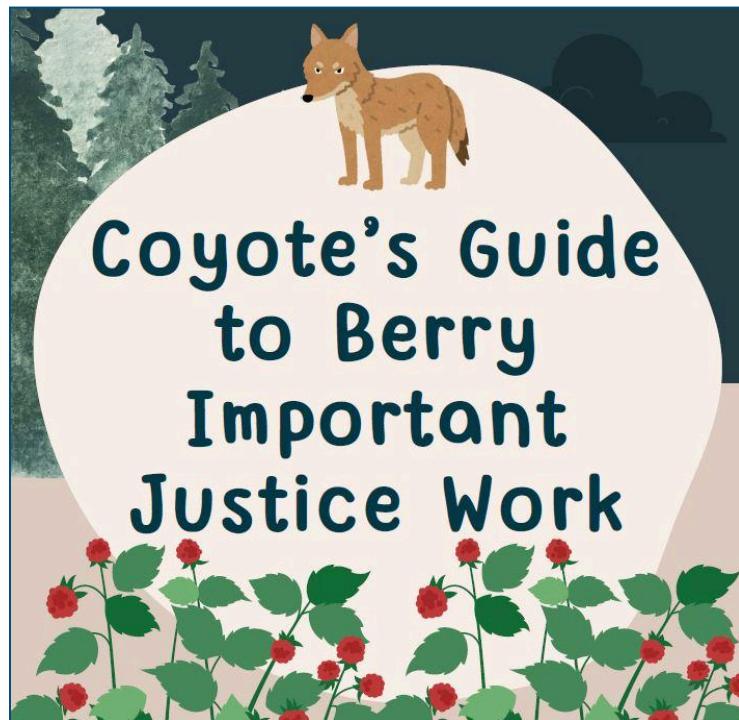


by grouping priorities into “The Berry Patch of Justice,” with short-term berries (ripe and ready for action), medium-term berries (patience required), and long-term berries (for those big dreams).

These two versions helped the Women’s Team decide which berries to focus on first in implementation planning. Given the limited funding and short timeline for implementation planning, along with limited staff capacity and wide scope of work, the team knew that completing 15 full implementation plans was unrealistic. So, they chose three ready-to-pick berries, or strategies, which would be the most feasible and impactful to bring forward in this season of implementation (BCFNJC 2025b).

The three ready-to-pick berries, or priority strategies, included:

4. **Strategy #8: Man Camps, Resource Extraction and Land Exploitation;**
5. **Strategy #9: Crisis Response; and**
6. **Strategy #15: Legislation and Policy (specific to strategy #8 and #9).**



## Pick These Berries Now—They’re Ripe for Action (Short-Term Priorities)



These berries are ripe, ready, and practically jumping into my paws. The Elder said, “Pick these first, Coyote.” Naturally, I agreed, after all I have excellent taste. These are the “act-now” priorities.

This approach sought to ensure the delivery of high-quality implementation plans that could be actioned within the 2025-2026 period. Each strategy was selected based on feasibility, potential for impact, and alignment with available capacity and timelines. Given the inconsistent nature of funding received to date, directing limited resources toward a smaller number of ready-to-pick berries, or well-developed strategies, provided a more responsible and sustainable use of funding, while still meeting the core objectives of the project (BCFNJC 2025b).



The Women's Team has engaged in the following activities to support implementation planning for the three priority strategies:

- Attended virtual and in-person events to advise and promote IWJP and progress;
- Held virtual information and engagement sessions on the IWJP;
- Developed ongoing relationships with engagement participants, rights and title holders, grassroots activists and justice professionals;
- Coordinated ministerial engagements with impacted ministry partners and BCFNJC with the goal of relationship development, resource and funding commitments and sharing of Implementation Plan;
- Finalized Implementation Plan for three key strategies of the IWJP, including government commitments to progressing work
- Engaged with ministerial partners to support development and refinement of Implementation workplan;
- Contributed to BCFNJC's Public Platform *Tracking Justice* in relation to Strategy 11 "Improving Justice Outcomes for Indigenous Women, Girls and 2 Spirit (2S+) People"; and
- Conducted a project evaluation.

A complete evaluation of these implementation planning activities is summarized in Section 4: *Learning from What We Gathered*.



## 4. LEARNING FROM WHAT WE GATHERED



Just as the harvest season invites us to gather what has grown, this section gathers and reflects on the learnings and insights that emerged through the evaluation process. Through sharing circles and a survey, partners and Indigenous community members reflected on what has worked well, where there are opportunities for tending, and where they want to see it go. The findings below highlight the strengths, challenges, and opportunities that can guide the next season of the IWJP implementation.

### 4.1 Strengths and Successes

Women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ folks are at the heart of Indigenous communities and families, sustaining their strength, culture, and spirit. The Women's Team represents a central strength of BCFNJC's efforts to enhance justice for women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. Feedback from partners and BCFNJC leadership consistently affirmed that this is the right team to lead the IWJP. The Women's Team is made up of people who are impacted by the issues the work seeks to address, and their lived experience is a driving force behind the team's success. Identified success includes strong leadership, fostering strong and trusting relationships with partners, and staying adaptable and accountable to the goals of the work.



#### Leadership

Indigenous women are often leaders in Indigenous communities, regardless if their structures are matrilineal or patrilineal. Indigenous cultures have also long recognized 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples for their strengths and abilities that didn't require individuals fitting into gender binaries to be accepted and honoured. The Women's Team is led by incredibly intelligent and creative women who know what the solutions are, not just because it is their job, but because they live it. As one staff member explained, during a sharing circle:

*"It isn't a job, this is our lives and all of us are impacted and you need to have the passion and the lived experience. Being given the faith to lead the work is really important too." (Staff, September 2025).*

The Women's Team operates on the understanding that a relational worldview is important to their work to advance justice, and that it is connected to other social determinants of health and wellbeing influenced by colonialism, such as access to food and housing for Indigenous peoples. The work being accomplished through the IWJP is bringing other leaders in, to help paddle towards a better, safer future, together. Understanding that it is not just for "justice" but rather it's for the benefit of everyone.

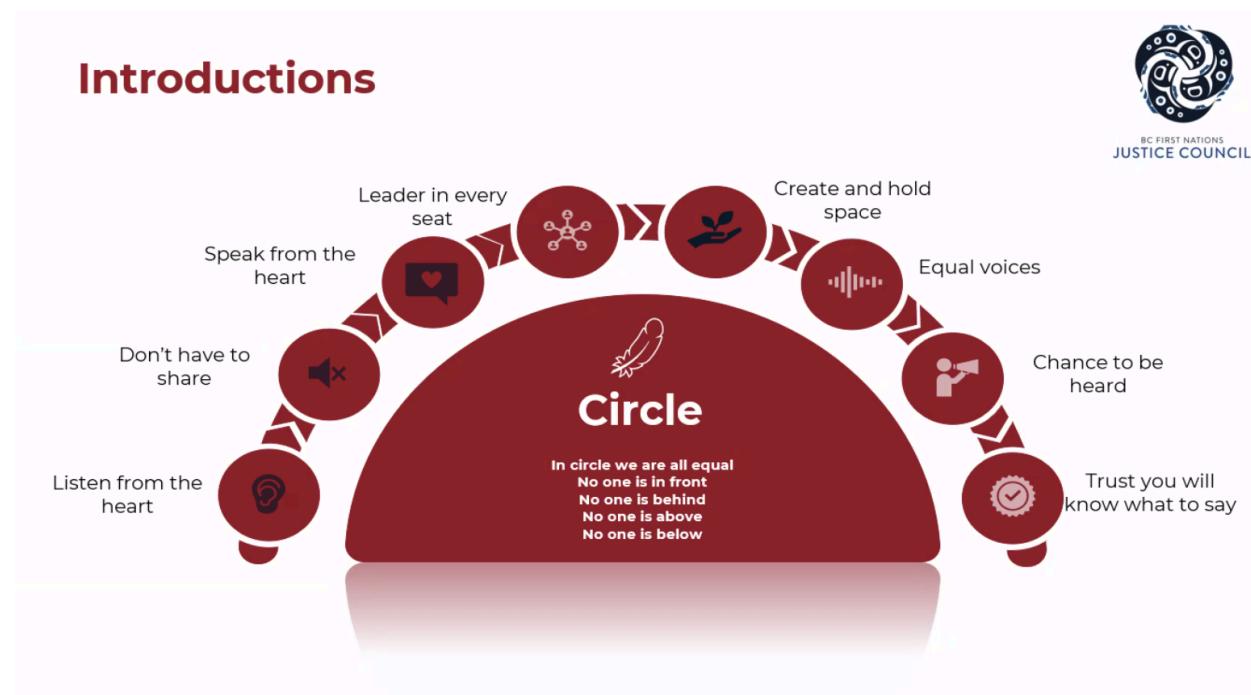


## Relationship Building

Across all engagement activities, relationship building emerged as one of the greatest strengths of the Women's Team. BCFNJC's leadership, and both government and Indigenous partners consistently emphasized the care and effort the Women's Team made to build trust and maintain good lines of communication.

For Indigenous peoples, communication is about more than a quick exchange of information. Indigenous forms of communication value verbal exchanges, which are acts of trust and vulnerability, as they often include sharing personal histories that tie individuals to place and people. Sharing where and who you come from is also expected of others, regardless of whether someone is Indigenous or not. It requires both parties to be vulnerable and trusting. The Women's Team embodies this understanding in their approach: taking time to build relationships grounded in honesty, vulnerability, and mutual accountability. Their practice of beginning meetings with personal check-ins creates space for everyone to be seen and heard, helping to balance power and ensure that all voices have a place at the table. Figure 2, which represents the process and principles the Team uses to guide meetings, demonstrates this.

Figure 2: BCFNJC Circle Process



In September 2025, the Women's Team hosted a gathering to discuss the IWJP with First Nations community members and Indigenous women, along with Indigenous organization representatives, grassroots advocates, and government officials. Relationships were a big part of the conversation in relation to advancing the IWJP. Participants spoke of the need to move beyond "us versus them" dynamics, emphasizing that meaningful progress depends on rebuilding trust between Indigenous communities, organizations, and government. Government



officials echoed this, acknowledging their role in this work, and the effort they must make to actively nurture trust with communities. As one First Nation community leader shared, “We know you have an impact in your roles. It’s so important to hear that things are happening, and again, that the relationship between us is important to you too.”

Government partners highlighted the Women’s Team’s passion and dedication as strengths, along with gratitude for longstanding relationships with BCFNJC staff beyond the Women’s Team. One government partner described how their long-standing relationship with BCFNJC staff has enabled opportunities for ongoing dialogue and shared learning. In the context of working specifically with the Women’s Team, they valued the Team’s openness to feedback and their commitment to staying connected beyond formal reporting requirements.

BCFNJC leadership affirmed that relationships are the foundation of all meaningful work. The Women’s Team’s approach reflects a strong Indigenous model of care by creating spaces where people feel valued, included, and supported. As one BCFNJC leader noted, “Nothing gets done without the foundation of a relationship. The care they put into the gathering to make sure everyone felt valued—that doesn’t happen in colonial spaces.”

The Women’s Team are a great example and reminder that relationship building is not a deliverable or simple indicator of success relative to implementation; rather, it is the heart of the work. Relationships must be continuously tended, like the soil before the next harvest season. Strong relationships will sustain the implementation of the IWJP and ensure the work moves forward in a good way and with impact.

## Accountability and Adaptability

Even with limited resources and the absence of funding to support a large in-person gathering this year with BC First Nations, the Women’s Team remained adaptable and accountable to First Nations leadership across BC throughout the planning phase for implementation. In June 2025, the Team released a province-wide update to all Nations, which outlined progress, priorities, and next steps for the IWJP. This update demonstrated transparency in implementation planning and reaffirmed the BCFNJC’s commitment to ongoing accountability to the 204 Nations they serve.

Beyond formal updates, the Women’s Team demonstrated adaptability by finding new ways to stay connected and engaged with partners, such as attending webinars and partner-led gatherings where they could advocate for the IWJP. Their ability to shift approaches depending on resources and staff capacity reflects a responsiveness and accountability to the work that has kept it steadily moving forward throughout the year.

## 4.2 Challenges and Barriers

In line with the organizational goals of the BCFNJC, the IWJP seeks to realize a future where Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ can thrive and experience a sense of safety and wellbeing in everyday life and in every generation. However, several challenges and barriers have hindered implementation planning for the IWJP, slowing progress on these goals. Several goals and objectives could not realistically be met within the timeframe of this project, due to



challenges and barriers that hindered the Women's Team ability to accomplish the work required to fully plan for and implement IWJP priority strategies. These include limited funding, time, and readiness on behalf of partners, as well as bureaucracy and communication challenges.

## Time

Given the centrality of building and nurturing meaningful relationships, Indigenous ways of being and doing do not operate according to rigid and strict deadlines. Indigenous peoples understand time as a shift rather than a hard stop. The time that has been allotted to the Women's Team to plan for the implementation of all 15 strategies in the IWJP has proven to be a significant challenge, and simply unrealistic given the volume of work and staff capacity. More time is required to meaningfully build the trusting relationships needed to support and sustain this work, and complete implementation plans for all 15 strategies within the IWJP. While partners expressed deep gratitude and appreciation for the time and effort the Women's Team has dedicated to building relationships, it was acknowledged that more time is needed to figure out how each party can work together to support the implementation of the IWJP.

## Funding

Funding emerged as one of the most significant challenges impacting the progress towards implementing all 15 strategies and 24 lines of action in the IWJP. The ability of everyone involved to carry the work forward, including BCFNJC staff, Indigenous partners, and government partners, has been shaped by the limits and instability of available resources.

During sharing circles, both BCFNJC staff and government partners acknowledged that the lack of sustained funding has created barriers to doing this work. Ministry representatives expressed that they often feel their hands are tied by funding constraints, leaving them unable to commit to long-term action despite shared priorities. Government partners also noted that with the province facing broader economic strain, capacity issues have affected their teams given that some colleagues are on strike, and many have limited time or funding to dedicate to joint initiatives. This lack of available resources has also fostered a sense of competition among communities, non-profits, and grassroots organizations that would otherwise be working together toward shared goals.

For the Women's Team, the limitations of grant-based funding and the uncertainty surrounding contract positions created significant stress and insecurity. Team members spoke about the emotional toll of job precarity, and of being deeply committed to the work while unsure if they would have a job once the current project phase ended. Despite these pressures, staff continued to lead with integrity and care. As one team member reflected, "We were given until April. We came on in 2023 as contract workers. Before the last director left, we were told not to look for other jobs—but then we had to. Now there are so many extensions. I can't just drop this work; it means too much. But the job insecurity gives me so much anxiety."

The short-term, project-based nature of the funding structure has also restricted the type of work that could be prioritized. As one BCFNJC staff member shared, "We were limited to only working on strategy and implementation plans. It reminded me of how the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) became the Declaration Act and



then the Action Plan—toolkit after toolkit, plan after plan—but without the long-term resources to live them out.” Ultimately, a lack of long-term funding available to support this work puts it at risk of being de-prioritized. IWJP strategies will be unable to take root, grow, and have impact for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people without the ongoing support and resources needed to nurture and sustain them.

## Bureaucracy

Another barrier that emerged during evaluation was the impact of bureaucratic processes on the pace and effectiveness of implementation planning. While women and 2SLGBTQIA+ leaders across BC are already doing the work envisioned within the IWJP, progress is often slowed down by institutional systems. Participants described a sense of being “held back” by bureaucratic processes that prioritize reporting over relationships, which easily bogs down and detracts from on-the-ground work being done in First Nations communities. Bureaucratic delays and constraints hinder meaningful action, but also erode staff morale, forcing them to navigate colonial systems that are misaligned with the relational, community-driven approaches within First Nations that define the IWJP.

## Communication

Staff and partners also reported some communication challenges as a barrier to advancing the implementation of the IWJP. One lesson came from the roll out of the IWJP itself, which was announced at the First Nations Justice Council Forum without prior notice to some partners. This caught a few groups off guard and limited their ability to respond or prepare in meaningful ways. Participants noted that greater clarity and coordination in how key updates are communicated would help ensure smoother collaboration and fewer surprises going forward.

Government partners also expressed uncertainty about when and how to consult with BCFNJC, or how to align their work with the organization’s priorities. Some expressed a sense of confusion about BCFNJC’s mandate, as they seemed to view it narrowly as a legal advocacy body rather than as an organization that supports justice and community wellbeing more broadly. Strengthening relationships and ensuring the work moves forward will require government partners to deepen their understanding of BCFNJC’s holistic approach to justice, take initiative in improving communication pathways, and grow more comfortable engaging in courageous conversations, including those that involve strong Indigenous leadership, differing perspectives, or uncomfortable truths.

## Readiness

In sharing circles, both the Women’s Team and external partners reported concerns and challenges related to readiness for implementation. The Women’s Team expressed that despite ongoing conversations and relationship building efforts with partners, it was apparent that some are not ready or able to commit to implementation of the IWJP. Many government partners similarly recognized this challenge and often cited a lack of funding given to their Ministries as the largest barrier to commitment and readiness. Many government partners noted that while the IWJP sets a powerful vision, it is still too early to see significant systemic change emerging from its initial implementation.



Partners also recognized that readiness is influenced by competing priorities within the province. In many cases, other government agendas, such as economic or industrial development, can overshadow commitments to women's safety and justice. This can make it difficult to sustain the focus and resources needed to carry the work forward. As one partner noted, progress depends on the efforts of the BCFNJC and the Women's Team, but also on the willingness and ability of others within government and allied organizations to take shared action. Moving towards readiness requires ongoing investments in relationship building and financial investments to support the work.

### 4.3 Public Reporting Platform *Tracking Justice*

The Public Reporting Platform *Tracking Justice* was released in April 2024, at the same time that the IWJP was publicly released. It was presented at the 3rd Annual Justice Forum and introduced as a virtual space on BCFNJC's website for accountability, transparency and meaningful reporting on progress, challenges, and successes in justice reform for First Nations. It does this by reporting on the traction being made with the BC First Nations Justice Strategy in ways that honour protocols, medicines, and truths that First Nations and Indigenous people choose to share with us. *Tracking Justice* was envisioned as:

"A public space where there is a clear understanding of the data collected, the provision and use of funds, and the progress made by the government and BCFNJC in addressing the various recommendations, including the Calls for Justice. This will include regular reporting and assessment of practices by all social, economic, and governmental actors and their progress, or lack thereof, that is easily accessible and transparent. Additionally, a space will be included to report and uphold previous and current work being done by grassroots advocates." (IWJP)

As it relates to the IWJP, *Tracking Justice* supports tracking and monitoring progress on Strategy 11 within the BC First Nations Justice Strategy, "Improving Justice Outcomes for Indigenous Women, Girls and 2 Spirit (2S+) People."

#### Benefits and Strengths of Tracking Justice

Though still fairly new, *Tracking Justice* has shown promising engagement with over 2,300 homepage views and over 7,400 event counts (interaction with the webpage while viewing the website) within the past 4 months. While numbers may appear low in comparison to other national sites, it is important to be reminded of the approach the Women's Team takes as it relates to relationship building. Moving at the speed of trust and reporting publicly about issues that are directly to those doing the work, their families and communities means that traction and visibility will take time. However, in that time, *Tracking Justice* continues to grow, improve, and gain traction, the Women's Team works from a measure of success that states who is there is meant to be there.

For BCFNJC leadership, *Tracking Justice* has become an essential tool to support their work. As one leader described, "I don't go a full day or a few hours without dropping links for it in meetings, or sharing a QR code. I very rarely even go to BCFNJC's main webpage, but go to *Tracking Justice* because it has the information we need to support the work getting done."



Another strength of the Platform is that it creates a space that empowers Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people to speak their truth and share updates in a self-determined way. As one staff described, “We provide our voices and our updates rather than letting others put something together and it’s not aligned with our voices” (Staff, September 2025).

By taking a data- and First Nations community-driven approach, the Platform strengthens advocacy, builds trust, supports policy recommendations, and ensures that commitments under the Indigenous Justice Strategy are publicly promoted to lead to tangible improvements in legal equity and access to justice for First Nations.

## Limitations and Gaps of Tracking Justice

Some partners reported difficulty finding the Tracking Justice page within the BCFNJC website, particularly after recent website updates made the platform less visible. The Women’s Team is aware of this barrier and are working with the website design team to improve accessibility and navigation. Partners suggested simple improvements such as homepage placement, notification alerts, and more frequent updates.

*“It’s hard to navigate now—there’s too much scrolling.”*

*“An alert or link when something new is posted would be great.”*

Although the site remains a work in progress, partners expressed excitement about its continued development. As one government partner recounted, “Today I tried to find a couple pictures of the Justice Centres. They’re still a little behind on getting those up, but I’m excited to see it continue to build.”

## 4.4 Engagement and Relationships

*“Indigenous people know this in our hearts. Nothing gets done without the foundation of a relationship”* (Participant, September 2025).

The work of the Women’s Team is centralized through Indigenous experience that is rooted in a relational worldview which includes a strong focus on people and organizations coming together to support one another in that relationship (Hart, 2010, p.3). The Women’s Team has worked hard over the last two years to develop and maintain relationships with Indigenous organizations and communities as well as with the Ministries in the Province, grounding these relationships in active listening, open communication, and transparency.

### Indigenous-led and Allied Organizations

*“It’s important for women’s organizations to collaborate and work together”* (Participant, September 2025).

Since 2024, the Women’s Team has invited 47 Indigenous-led and allied organizations and met with eight organizations during formal meetings held between November 2024 and February 2025. These meetings were held to build relationships and discuss the IWJP’s lines of action



with the goal of further developing comprehensive implementation plans for priority areas in alignment with Ministry mandates. The Women's Team have also attended events in First Nations communities hosted by these organizations, hosted workshops, presented, set up booths and provided keynote addresses at forums, as outlined in Section 3.2.

### Community and Public Engagement

The Women's Team has also made efforts to engage First Nations community members and the public in the IWJP via promoting the links to the Final Draft of the IWJP on their website and through *Tracking Justice*. The survey conducted for this engagement showed that 30% of respondents (n=11) were familiar with the IWJP as a result of these efforts, however, 18% (n=6) were unsure if they had heard of it, and 59% (n=19) had not heard of it, suggesting that there is still work to do to further promote the IWJP and the plan for implementation. Out of the survey respondents who had heard of the IWJP prior to completing the survey, most (40%, n=7) had heard of it through social media. A further breakdown of avenues that respondents had heard about the IWJP through is provided in Table 1.

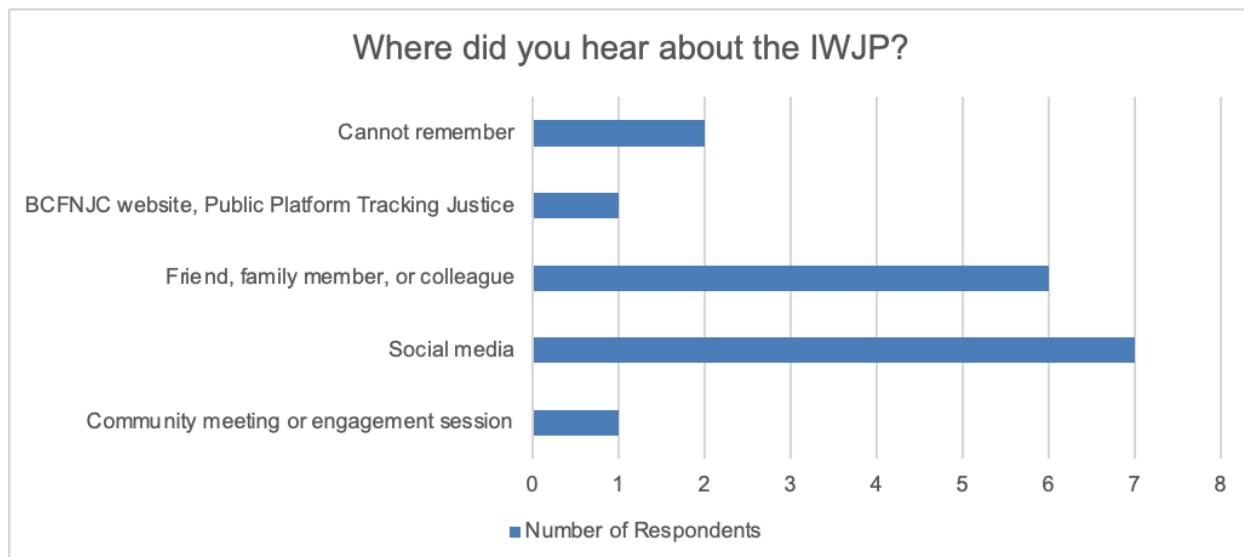


Table 1: Where Survey Respondents Heard about the IWJP



Given that the BCFNJC website and *Tracking Justice* was the lowest response, with only one respondent indicating that they heard of the IWJP through that platform, efforts can be directed towards enhancing this pathway for information sharing going forward. For example, by promoting *Tracking Justice* on social media.

## Government Partners

The Women's Team engaged over 20 Ministries starting in the summer of 2024 to discuss the IWJP and how each Ministry could help support the implementation of priority strategies. These engagements were rooted in the understanding that meaningful systems change requires trust and shared responsibility. The Women's Team worked alongside different areas of government to nurture understanding and commitment to the IWJP's implementation, identifying connections between 42 lines of action within the IWJP and 29 areas of government.

In sharing circles, Ministry partners spoke of the value of having the Women's Team lead this work:

*"It was beneficial to have them [The Women's Team] take the lead and how they operate. Culturally informed, circle protocol and I could see lights going off for my colleagues and served to build relationships with those who haven't interacted more"* (Participant, September 2025).

Building and nurturing these relationships are central to the implementation of the IWJP because they reflect a different way of working that aligns more with First Nations worldviews, where relationships are not peripheral to the work but a foundational part of it. In Western worldviews, relationships are often seen as a means to achieve a defined goal. In contrast, Indigenous worldviews tend to see relationships as both the method and the measure of success. By taking a relational approach to planning for implementation, the Women's Team is effectively moving beyond more procedural forms of engagement towards nurturing and deeper relationships with a sense of shared responsibility and accountability.

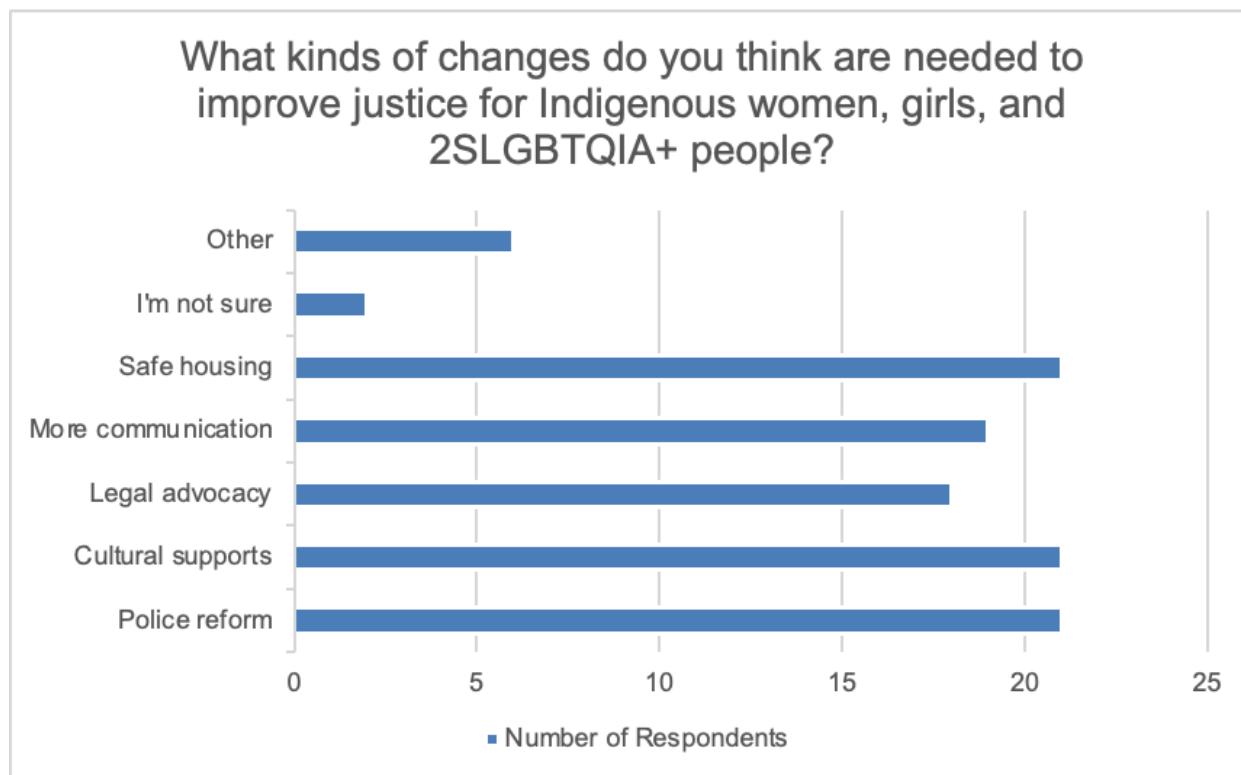
## 4.5 Recommendations

This section provides recommendations to support ongoing implementation of the IWJP as it aims to realize the vision of a better and safer world for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S people. There is much work to do going forward to realize this vision. When survey respondents were asked if they thought Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people in their community felt safe and supported in the current justice system, 65% (n=20) said no. Another 13% (n=4) said they were unsure, and 13% (n=4) said sometimes. Only 10% (n=3) said yes.

When asked what supports are most needed to improve justice outcomes for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, responses were more or less evenly distributed across safe housing, communication, legal advocacy, cultural supports, and police reform (Table 2).



Table 2: Supports Needed to Improve Justice for Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People



Within the category of “other” responses, respondents emphasized the need for stronger accountability and cultural grounded systems of safety. Respondents called for more consistent cultural safety training for professionals working across the justice system or for workers in temporary work camps on industrial projects, alongside accountability for racism within policing and the broader justice system.

When survey respondents were asked what helps them feel safe and supported in their community, they shared a range of insights including:

- **Safe spaces** to share concerns and seek help without fear of judgement or harm;
- **Compassionate, culturally-informed professionals** who listen and act with kindness and respect for Indigenous peoples lived experience;
- **Cultural safety and education** for justice system professionals and service providers
- **Accountability within the justice system**, meaning that violence against Indigenous women is responded to proactively and there are consequences for racism and discrimination;
- **Community connection and leadership**, including support from family and Elders;



- **Access to housing supports** for women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people seeking help;
- **Adequate funding** for victim services and community programs;
- **Indigenous-led governance** that ensures greater Indigenous authority in justice service decision making and service delivery; and
- **Transparency and communication**, including more consistent updates and accessible information on behalf of government and community organizations.

To bring this vision to life, as the IWJP aims to, ongoing investment is critical. More funding is needed to build internal capacity, to support ongoing relationship building with partners and allied organizations, and to expand communication and engagement tools with communities, such as *Tracking Justice*. With these resources, the IWJP can respond to current gaps while also actively moving toward the future envisioned by Indigenous women, families, and communities across BC.

## Funding

Going forward, funders must build funding agreements that are more reflective of the fluid and iterative processes involved when projects are Indigenous-led. When funding structures impose rigid timelines and parameters, they can prevent Indigenous organizations from exercising autonomy and working beyond colonial or Western planning frameworks.

It is recommended that the Women's Team engage with BC's Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity and discuss the IWJP with them. Partners believe that building this relationship could support ongoing efforts to secure funding for this work.

## Workforce Wellness and Capacity

Despite staff dedication to the work, their capacity has been strained due to the volume of work and insufficient time or resources to get it all done. It is recommended that BCFNJC partner with local post-secondary institutions to take on summer students or interns who can offset some of the workload from the team while also gaining meaningful experience in the workforce.

Staff are grateful to be given such trust and freedom with the development and implementation of the IWJP. However, due to limited staff on the Women's Team, it is recommended that BCFNJC leadership hold more check-ins with the Women's Team to better understand their needs and identify supports that can be established to support them in this important work.

## Public Reporting Platform *Tracking Justice*

Indigenous community partners and Ministry officials both agreed that it would be beneficial for there to be more Indigenous research present on *Tracking Justice* to support the aims of the IWJP. It would be beneficial for *Tracking Justice* to share survey results that have been done through regular programming and it would also be beneficial and less strenuous by lifting others up and promoting other researchers and emerging work in the field of Indigenous justice.



Participants in sharing circles for this evaluation reported wanting to see highlights of the statistical realities of funding disparities in systems. This can help increase awareness when reaching out to funders by Tracking Justice to be the online space for people to find research that works in tandem with BCFNJC and their goals.

Participants also wished to be notified when there is an update on Tracking Justice. Participants believe that having the ability to subscribe to a listserve that notifies individuals or groups when updates have been made will ensure that Tracking Justice remains front of mind.

*Figure 3: Medicine wheel, submitted by anonymous survey respondent*



## 5. PREPARING FOR THE NEXT GROWING SEASON

Throughout this evaluation, staff and partners have named key challenges shaping implementation planning for the IWJP. This includes bureaucratic barriers, funding and communication gaps, and uneven levels of readiness between ministries and partners. Going forward, there is a need for more coordination and more flexible and responsive processes that reflect the realities of Indigenous approaches to this work. BCFNJC staff also reflected on the instability of contract-based work and how job precarity and uncertainty limits their ability to sustain this work. While this evaluation does not explore these structural issues in depth, what we heard highlights that long-term, meaningful change for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people requires ongoing and permanent financial support for those carrying the work forward.

Despite these challenges, the Women's Team remains committed to this work. They continue to lead by example, adapt, build strong relationships, and demonstrate accountability to the IWJP through initiatives like *Tracking Justice*. Like any growing season, implementation planning for the IWJP continues to evolve as we learn from what has been gathered, tend to what has taken root, and prepare for what comes next. The insights gathered through this process point to the need for continued investment in people, relationships, and communication pathways. With time and proper resourcing, the IWJP will continue to yield the vision of safer, more supportive communities envisioned within it.

*Figure 4: Sunset, submitted by anonymous survey respondent*



## REFERENCES

BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC). 2025a. Indigenous Women's Justice Plan: Final Draft. <https://bcfnjc.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/BCFNJC-IWJP-2025-Revision.pdf>

—. 2025b. *Internal briefing note to Curtis Bedwell. "Ready to pick berries, 3 Strategies from the IWJP for WAGE Funding."* May 15, 2025.

—. 2024. BC First Nations Justice Strategy. <https://bcfnjc.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/The-BC-First-Nations-Justice-Council-Ju stice-Strategy-2024.pdf>

—. 2023. "BC First Nations Justice Council." YouTube video. Accessed October 15, 2025. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zb8z4B8a0x4>.

—. n.d. *Home – BC First Nations Justice Council.* Accessed October 15, 2025. <https://bcfnjc.com/>.

Hart, Michael Anthony. 2010. "Indigenous Worldviews, Knowledge, and Research: The Development of an Indigenous Research Paradigm." *Journal of Indigenous Voices in Social Work* 1, no. 1 (February): 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.37256/sce.112020123>.

National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health. (2013). Indigenous Approaches to Program Evaluation.



## APPENDIX A: ABOUT FIRELIGHT

[Firelight](#) is an Indigenous-owned consultancy (65% First Nation-owned) with decades of experience providing community-based research and technical support services to Indigenous communities and organizations across Canada and abroad with the aim of providing services specifically tailored to supporting the rights and interests of Indigenous and local communities in Canada and beyond.

Firelight has direct experience supporting Indigenous organizations and agencies in program evaluation across a diverse range of fields. This includes the evaluation of fledgling and long-established programs, where we developed and implemented both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. As part of our quantitative methods, we have experience operationalizing variables, selecting instruments for data collection, and implementing innovative data collection tools, as well as planning for statistical analysis. In terms of qualitative data collection, we have facilitated focus groups and key informant interviews with various stakeholders, including Chief and Council, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, multi-jurisdictional committees and advisories, Indigenous youth, Indigenous organizations of all sizes, academics and researchers, governments, and health authorities.

