

Making a Difference:

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN



October 2013

Progress of the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

On behalf of the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women, we are pleased to present our second annual progress report to the leadership of the Aboriginal caucus, the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Since the establishment of the Joint Working Group in 2010, important initiatives have been undertaken to contribute to ending violence against Aboriginal women. In 2012, we presented our first progress report that outlined the varied and numerous programs and initiatives underway by Aboriginal organizations and ministry partners. This second report highlights new initiatives implemented by the Joint Working Group, as well as complementary activities and accomplishments to address violence against Aboriginal women. It is our hope that the report generates discussion on how best to capitalize on the success of the Joint Working Group.

The formalization of the Aboriginal caucus, through a relationship agreement between the Aboriginal partners, has resulted in more initiatives moving forward by caucus consensus. Further, the Chiefs of Ontario's resolution in June 2013 endorsed a Declaration made by First Nations political leadership to support an end to violence within their communities and this has strengthened the response to end violence against Aboriginal women. The establishment of the Chiefs of Ontario's First Nations Women's Caucus has enhanced their capacity to reflect their communities' perspectives at the Joint Working Group and has assisted in moving the *Strategic Framework* forward. The enhanced engagement of ministries has aided in the process, including the work of the Ministry of Education to address the recommendations emerging from *Summit V, For Generations to Come*.

There has been increased interest in Ontario's Joint Working Group process by jurisdictions and organizations across Canada. The Joint Working Group has provided input into Ontario's contributions to the Provincial/Territorial Aboriginal Affairs Working Group. The Joint Working Group welcomed the July 2013 Council of the Federation's support for a national public inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

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This second annual progress report comes at an interesting point in the evolution of the Joint Working Group. As we continue to pursue our priorities, it has become clear that there is a need to both formalize our structures and support the capacity of Aboriginal caucus to participate in the process. Supporting organizational capacity and innovations in programs, services, and policies will advance our shared agenda to end violence against Aboriginal women.

We look forward to building on this momentum with a renewed commitment to ending violence against Aboriginal women.

Sylvia Maracle
Executive Director, Ontario
Federation of Indian Friendship
Centres

Susan Seaby
Executive Director, Ontario
Women's Directorate

Hanita Tiefenbach
Director, Aboriginal and Ministry
Relationships Branch, Ministry of
Aboriginal Affairs

QUOTES FROM JOINT WORKING GROUP ELDERS



“Open communication is very beneficial for the province and the Aboriginal partners as well as creating initiatives that are mutually beneficial. Coming from the communities, we know what works so we can bring that to the Joint Working Group meetings to develop those programs. There are opportunities for all voice to be heard.

I was there as part of the First Nations Women's Caucus. It is good to explain how the First Nations Women's Caucus does things to the main Joint Working Group, just to help set the tone and to explain a little bit of our world view. I think it has to be a collaborative effort to identify what the issues are. The Joint Working Group allows a culturally relevant perspective to be present at the meeting and makes it relevant.”

— *Donna Debassige*

“It was quite a day for me listening to what was going on. It was a wonderful experience and I sat there in awe as I listened to the different partners. Goodness knows something's needed after the injustices women have endured – people murdered and dumped on the side– a lot of women getting battered. I feel more can be done at the community level where we do outreach, to have people realize that we do care and we are concerned. It's good to explain how we do things to the main group just to kind of set of the tone of the Joint Working Group and to explain a little bit of our world view; I think it has to be a collaborative effort to identify what those issues are and to bring culturally relevant perspectives. Certainly, the Joint Working Group is something that should be continued.”

— *Senator Ray Bergie*



“Native women are missing because of the way they live. Live in abject poverty, not educated well enough to get a job that pays them enough to survive. Most of them are single moms who raise children – what do they do? Go and become prostitutes. These women work for whatever they can get. The idea that they can do that plays on their mind – what do they do? Drink and drugs. It's a lose-lose situation.

I get involved with Aboriginal youth and talk to them about their identity – if you can show people their identity, they have something to hang on to. I think more people need to know that in order for Aboriginal people to get on their feet, we have to start looking at children in the elementary schools. We have to work together to make sure that the history of Canada, for instance, is properly written and shows what actually happened to Aboriginal people. Human Trafficking is at the basis of a lot of troubles for the Aboriginal women. The system doesn't work for them, it works against them. We have to start looking at education for Aboriginal students. Once Aboriginal students get their diploma, they can go to college. Somebody needs to do the foot work.”

— *Elize Hartley*

BACKGROUND

Violence Against Aboriginal Women

The landscape in Ontario depicts a shocking disparity in the level of violence experienced by First Nations, Métis and Inuit women when compared to non-Aboriginal women. Statistics clearly indicate that Aboriginal women are significantly over-represented as victims of assault, sexual assault, spousal abuse and homicide. First Nations, Métis and Inuit women are three and a half times more likely to experience spousal violence than non-Aboriginal women. The rate of spousal homicide for Aboriginal women is eight times greater than that of non-Aboriginal women. In some northern Ontario Aboriginal communities it is estimated that 75 to 90 percent of women experience violence.

Contributing to the high rates of family violence experienced by First Nations, Métis and Inuit women is the ongoing effects of the residential school system. The cycle of intergenerational trauma resulting from a legacy of mistreatment and systemic abuse continues to further exacerbate the situation, leaving generations of Aboriginal women particularly vulnerable to acts of violence and crime. Intergenerational trauma increases the likelihood that children are exposed to violence, which in turn, perpetuates this cycle of violence.

Aboriginal women are too often the victims of racialized, sexualized violence, a fact highlighted by the Sisters in Spirit Initiative that brought attention to the alarmingly high numbers of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada. Indeed, sexual assaults account for more than one-third of violent incidents involving Aboriginal victims, at a rate of 70 incidents per 1000 Aboriginal people versus 23 incidents per 1000 non-Aboriginal people. Aboriginal women and girls can be particularly vulnerable to other forms of sexual violence, including human trafficking.

Over the past year, significant national and international events have brought heightened awareness to violence against Aboriginal women in Ontario and in Canada:

- The Native Women's Association of Canada and the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action requested the United Nations' Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) launched an official inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women. In September 2012, CEDAW made a request to the Government of Canada seeking permission to allow three CEDAW Committee members to visit Canada in 2013. In addition, the United Nations Human Rights Universal Periodic Review has received 14 separate recommendations from member states urging Canada to address issues of violence against women in general, and Aboriginal women in particular.
- At the federal level, the Special Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women, was created in February 2013 to conduct hearings on ending violence against Indigenous women and girls. At the time of this report, the Committee has been dissolved due to the prorogation of Parliament.

- In April 2013, the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group, which consists of Provincial/Territorial Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and leaders of National Aboriginal Organizations, called upon the federal government to hold a National Public Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls. The Ontario Women's Directorate and Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs represent Ontario on the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group. Along with others across the country, the Aboriginal caucus has advocated for a national inquiry and is providing advice and feedback to inform Ontario's approach to responding to violence against Aboriginal women at the provincial/territorial and national level.
- In July 2013, the recommendation for a national public inquiry was endorsed by the Premiers at their annual meeting with the national Aboriginal Leaders.
- In September 2013, the federal government rejected the recommendation of a United Nations human rights body to develop a national plan of action to end violence against Aboriginal women. Ontario's Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs issued a joint statement expressing disappointment with the reluctance of the federal government to convene a national inquiry as called for by the Aboriginal Leaders in Ontario and Canada.
- In November 2012, British Columbia's Missing Women Commission of Inquiry released its final report. The report presented extensive recommendations to improve the police and justice sector response to violence against Aboriginal women.

There has been increased public awareness about Indigenous issues in Canada through campaigns such as the Idle No More movement and other grassroots initiatives. These activities have highlighted the need to raise awareness and educate the Canadian public about Aboriginal issues, and to promote a greater understanding of the ongoing impact of colonialism on Aboriginal peoples.

Public education plays a role in increasing understanding and awareness, and in changing the attitudes and behaviours that contribute to violence against Aboriginal women. As Ontario strengthens relationships through the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women (the Joint Working Group), the *Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women* continues to guide the development of successful approaches to ending violence against Aboriginal women.

The Joint Working Group On Violence Against Aboriginal Women

The Joint Working Group was convened in 2010 with a mandate to: “identify priorities and opportunities for support, development and implementation of policies, programs, and services that prevent and reduce violence against Aboriginal women and their families”. The Joint Working Group consists of five Aboriginal organizations and ten provincial ministries and is guided by the *Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women* (the *Strategic Framework*). The Strategic Framework proposes an integrated approach to end violence against Aboriginal women and sets out eight specific areas for change:

1. Comprehensive Research and Data Collection
2. Legal Reform and Legislative Change
3. Policy Development
4. Program Development
5. Public Education and Awareness
6. Community Development and Capacity Building
7. Building Community Leadership
8. Ensuring Accountability

The Joint Working Group has convened two sub-committees since first meeting in 2010. The sub-committee on Human Trafficking is examining research and best practices to develop options to prevent and respond to the human trafficking of Aboriginal women and girls. The sub-committee on Data Collection and Information Sharing was mandated to examine current data collected on violence against Aboriginal women and to explore issues and challenges in data collection practices. The sub-committee was also tasked with making recommendations on how data collection being undertaken by ministries and by various Aboriginal organizations could be improved. Using the Aboriginal Sexual Violence Action Plan (ASVAP) as a guiding document, the Sexual Violence Coordinating Committee, a sub-committee of the Aboriginal caucus, was convened to oversee the Aboriginal Sexual Violence Community Response Initiative (ASVCRI).

Aboriginal caucus participated in three Leadership Sessions between January and April 2013. These sessions formalized the working relationship within the Aboriginal caucus through a Relationship Agreement, built capacity within their organizations, and solidified an approach for moving forward with the eight strategic directions of the *Strategic Framework*. Aboriginal caucus presented their report from these sessions, Immediate Priority Actions Identified in A *Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women*, at the July 2013 Joint Working Group meeting to identify important priorities for the Joint Working Group moving forward.

The 2013 Progress Report

The 2013 Progress Report outlines new activities and accomplishments that have been informed by discussions at the Joint Working Group over the past year. Common priorities for moving forward and guiding future work are also discussed. The appendices present additional new and ongoing initiatives that are supporting efforts to end violence against Aboriginal women.

NEW JOINT WORKING GROUP INITIATIVES

Improving Data Collection and Information Sharing

The Data Collection and Information Sharing sub-committee presented its preliminary findings and recommendations to the Joint Working Group in April 2013. Their draft report provides an overview of key issues related to the collection of data on violence against Aboriginal women and considers the implications of current data collection practices in supporting a better understanding of violence in Aboriginal families. The sub-committee presented five recommendations for consideration by the Joint Working Group:

1. An analytic paper on current data collection practices: this report would identify actions, such as the introduction of standard terminology and definitions, to improve comparability and develop standard data collection practices/processes.
2. An online portal: explore the feasibility of creating an online portal that would provide ministries and organizations access to research that is relevant to violence against Aboriginal women and girls.
3. Access to data: explore ways to increase the access of Aboriginal organizations to data collected by ministries, agencies, and organizations.
4. Study of violence against Aboriginal women indicators and data sources: consider funding a study to further assess the quality of data and sources for the various indicators identified in the sub-committee’s report.
5. Examination of “mixed method” approaches to research: a qualitative and “mixed method” approach could supplement the limited quantitative data available on Aboriginal populations.

Responding to Human Trafficking

Over the past year, the sub-committee on Human Trafficking has reviewed the recommendations of ONWA’s draft report, *Sex Trafficking of Aboriginal Women and Girls*, to identify potential actions that can be taken by the Joint Working Group. This work has been complemented by environmental and jurisdictional scans that have identified an inventory of best practices to help inform activities in Ontario. Ministry partners to the Joint Working Group are working to identify steps that can be taken in response to the recommendations presented in the ONWA report. The sub-committee is currently working on a comprehensive research proposal to further examine the human trafficking of Aboriginal women and girls in Ontario.

Culturally-Relevant Victim Services

Ministry and Aboriginal partners are working to advance the *Strategic Framework* through the establishment and enhancement of victim services.

In 2012/13, ONWA, OFIFC, MNO and IFN continued work on program pilots directed towards the development of culturally-relevant victim services for Aboriginal women and children victimized by violence. With support provided through the Ending Violence Against Aboriginal Women (EVAAW) Fund, each Aboriginal partner is undertaking an initiative suited to the unique interests, concerns and needs of the communities it represents. The initiatives range in focus. For example, one is directed toward women and girls who have experienced sexual violence while another

is centred on children who have witnessed domestic violence. They all demonstrate the integration of Aboriginal values, beliefs and ways of knowing and doing into services for victims, and work to promote knowledge about the effectiveness and importance of culturally-relevant services. Ontario Victim Services (OVS), Ministry of the Attorney General has secured approval to extend the EVAAW Fund for a further two years, 2013/14 and 2014/15. The additional resources will enable the Aboriginal partners to continue developing culturally-relevant services.

In 2012/13, nine Aboriginal-directed shelters in First Nations communities received funding through the EVAAW Fund for time-limited projects, such as minor repairs and maintenance, and capacity building initiatives.

In addition, Aboriginal organizations in northwestern Ontario have received multi-year funding from the OVS (secured through Justice Canada) to enhance and/or expand their services to better support Aboriginal women and children victimized by violence. With these funds, ONWA is providing comprehensive, culturally-relevant victim services in Thunder Bay and Kenora to families of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and to Aboriginal women who have experienced violence. The Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Service Corporation expanded its Victim Witness Liaison Program to provide culturally-relevant, court-based services to victims in 34 First Nations communities in the northwest.

OVS's Financial Assistance for Families of Homicide Victims program addressed previously unmet needs in Aboriginal communities touched by violence. As a result of special, targeted program outreach efforts undertaken with the assistance of community organizations, the families of five murdered Aboriginal women received support in 2012/13.

New, integrated victim services have also been established in remote communities in Northern Ontario. Efforts are being directed towards an integrated victim service model in which multiple, interconnected supports and services are housed in, or provided through, one comprehensive service. Aboriginal women and children who are victims of violence are a focus of service delivery.

Two regions are receiving particular attention. On the James/Hudson Bay coast, the Mushkegowuk Council and OVS have been collaborating on the establishment of a new community-based service that was operationalized in 2013. This program is designed to provide

culturally-relevant support to victims in six First Nation communities (the Moose Cree, Fort Albany, Kashechewan, Attawapiskat and Weenusk First Nations and the Mocreebec Council of the Cree Nation), the part of Moose Factory not under First Nation jurisdiction, and the Town of Moosonee. In the 'Ring of Fire' region, the Matawa First Nations and OVS held discussions in 2012/13 and began preliminary, collaborative work towards establishing a new service supporting victims in the tribal council's nine member communities.



ONWA'S Talk4Healing launch in October 2012.

Norine Carroll (representing Bill Mauro MPP), Elder Agnes Hardy, Cindy Cade (ONWA), Robin Haliuk (Beendigan), Patricia Jurivee (Beendigan) and Jerry Woods (MCSS Northern Region).

Talk 4 Healing Helpline

In October 2012, ONWA and Beendigan launched, Talk 4 Healing, A Helpline for Aboriginal Women. Supported with funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the helpline provides culturally appropriate crisis support and referral services for Aboriginal women affected by violence in remote and isolated communities. The helpline is toll-free and accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Services are available in English, Ojibway, Oji-Cree, and Cree. The helpline was designed, developed and is being delivered by Aboriginal women for Aboriginal women. The helpline recognizes that all people affected by violence against Aboriginal women, including the victim, abuser, their families, and community members, need supports to respond to, and heal from, violence.



Members of the Women's Secretariat of the MNO (WSMNO) and MNO staff with their healing blankets at the MNO Victim Services training.
 Back row: Pearl Gabona, Kim Powley, Bridget Brown, Marilyn Hew, Susan Vander Ras-sel, Kelly Camacho, Joanne Hamelin.
 Front row: Barbaranne Wright, Clair Kearns, MNO Vice-Chair Sharon McBride, Karen Derocher, Jennifer Barr and Marsha Depotier.

Evaluation of the three-year pilot is underway and will continue through 2014/15. The evaluation findings will inform opportunities to expand the helpline province-wide.

Aboriginal Sexual Violence Community Response Initiative

In late 2012, the Aboriginal Sexual Violence Community Response Initiative, a pilot project, started to examine existing institutional responses and supports for Aboriginal women and girls who have experienced sexual violence in four communities (Six Nations of the Grand River, Hamilton, Thunder Bay, and Sudbury) across the province. Opportunities to improve service coordination, promote prevention, and strengthen community responses to sexual violence are being explored. This project is a collaborative effort of Aboriginal caucus and is funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD).

Sexual Violence Training

The MNO is leading, on behalf of Aboriginal caucus, the development and delivery of sexual violence training for Aboriginal service providers. Delivered in person and through distance learning, the training provides an opportunity for front-line staff in Aboriginal organizations to increase their knowledge about sexual violence trauma to support Aboriginal women in healing from abuse. The initiative received funding from the OWD.

Safe and Accepting Schools Initiatives

In 2013, the Ministry of Education is providing support to the five members of the Aboriginal caucus to respond to the education-related recommendations of Summit V, "*For Generations To Come: A Summit to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women*". The funding will support activities that focus on education and on supporting students who are at risk of violence and/or disengagement from school. There is flexibility in this funding to account for differences (for example, cultural and/or geographic) between and amongst First Nations, Inuit and Métis students as well as varying community needs and circumstances.

Promoting Gender-Based Cultural Competency

In the last year, cultural competency activities have been undertaken to raise awareness about violence against Aboriginal women. These activities have promoted understanding of the root causes of violence against Aboriginal women.

In 2013, the OFIFC delivered cultural competency training in nine district school boards across the province. This training was funded by the Ministry of Education and was provided to education system leaders and administrators

to support capacity building and First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) student success and well-being. This training builds capacity within the district school boards associated with the Alternative Secondary Schools Programs in Friendship Centers across Ontario. Through the training, board staff increased their understanding of historical trauma and barriers that FNMI children, youth, families, and communities face in Ontario. Participants also increased their awareness of effective strategies to improve student achievement and well-being.

Government staff also participated in cultural competency training delivered by the OFIFC. In May 2013, training was provided to Ministry of Education staff. Participants received demographic, historic and cultural information on Aboriginal people in Ontario, with an emphasis on the impact of education on urban Aboriginal people. The Ministry intends to expand this training. In July 2013, staff at the OWD received training which was an interactive session that encouraged participants to critically analyse their values and behaviours, and engage in activities that helped reframe their thinking. It provided a historical context from the perspective of Aboriginal people in Ontario about the root causes of violence against Aboriginal women.

With funding from the OWD, the OFIFC has developed a gender-based analysis document that discusses teachings about gender from an Aboriginal perspective. The OFIFC will work with Aboriginal caucus to refine this work into a culturally relevant gender based analysis tool and to develop an approach to working with government ministries towards its implementation. This tool will be used to prevent and end violence against Aboriginal women, as well as help communities heal from violence.

Relationship Building and Strategic Planning

New initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen the capacity of Aboriginal organizations and communities.

In the last year, COO established their First Nations Women's Caucus (FNWC). It supports the *Strategic Framework* and will be adopting this model in the development of approaches that support ending violence against First Nations women and girls. The FNWC also acts as an advisory body for COO's input into the Joint Working Group. The FNWC is composed of representatives from the Grand Council Treaty #3, the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, the Union of Ontario Indians, the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians and is in partnership with the Independent First Nations. The OWD provided resources for the FNWC



September 24 2012 meeting between Ministers and Aboriginal Leaders of the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women.

Betty Kennedy (Executive Director) and Dr. Dawn Harvard (President) of ONWA, Sheila McMahon (President) and Sylvia Maracle (Executive Director) of OFIFC, Laurel Broten (former Minister Responsible for Women's Issues), Kathleen Wynne (former Minister of Aboriginal Affairs), Gary Lipinski (MNO President), France Picotte (MNO Chair), Grand Chief Harvey Yesno (Nishnawbe-Aski Nation and Chiefs of Ontario Justice Portfolio Holder), and Doug Wilson (MNO Chief Operating Officer).

to hold three Strategy Sessions throughout the Summer of 2013 to develop approaches to end violence against First Nations women and girls.

In January 2013, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs provided funding to ONWA for the *Leadership Planning Among Aboriginal Partners* project to help the Aboriginal partners of the Joint Working Group formalize their relationship and build capacity within Aboriginal partner organizations.

Contributing to Dialogue to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women

Through the Joint Working Group, the Aboriginal caucus has provided feedback and advice to inform Ontario's approach to responding to violence against Aboriginal women at a national level.

A delegation consisting of government and Aboriginal caucus representatives attended the third National Aboriginal Women's Summit in November 2012. The Summit engaged key decision makers across jurisdictions and National Aboriginal Organizations in discussions about a National Framework that would address the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. The OWD and Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs worked collaboratively with the Aboriginal partners to select delegates and develop common priorities and messaging.

2012 Meeting between Ministers and Aboriginal Leaders

On September 24, 2012, the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, and the Leaders of the Aboriginal caucus met at Queen's Park to discuss progress made by the Joint Working Group and priorities for moving forward. The Ministers and Leaders received the 2012 Joint Working Group Progress Report at this meeting. Through these annual meetings, Ministers and Aboriginal Leaders demonstrate their accountability for the Joint Working Group and their commitment to end violence against Aboriginal women.

Discussions at the meeting included reinvigorating the Joint Working Group with more senior-level staff from partner ministries. The Aboriginal caucus advocated for the need to work together to implement a provincial 'wide policy statement on ending violence against Aboriginal women, and to develop a road map of "benchmarks of success" to end violence against Aboriginal women.



October 21 2013 meeting between Ministers and Aboriginal Leaders of the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women.

Back Row: David de Launay (Deputy Minister of Aboriginal Affairs - MAA), Mark Breen (MAA), Aisha Khaja (MAA), Karen Restoule (COO Justice Coordinator), Jessica Keeshig-Martin (COO Justice Policy Analyst), Wenda Watteyne (MNO Director, Healing and Wellness), Tobias McQuabbie (Councillor, Shwanaga First Nation), Doug Wilson, (MNO Chief Operating Officer), Grand Chief Harvey Yesno (Nishnawbe-Aski Nation and Chiefs of Ontario Justice Portfolio Holder), Deputy Grand Chief Denise Stonefish (Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians and member of the Chiefs of Ontario First Nations Women's Caucus), Shauna Shiels (OFIFC Violence Against Aboriginal Women Policy Analyst), Lyndia Jones (IFN Health Policy Analyst), Kathy Jones (Councillor, Chippewas of Nawash Unceded (Cape Crocker)), Lucille Kewayosh (Independent First Nations), Chief Burton Kewayosh (Bkejwanon Territory (Walpole Island)), Anam Kidwai (OWD), Lynda Lynch (Councillor, An Imbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek First Nation (Lake Nipigon Ojibway)), Danielle Maheu (OWD), Hillary Thatcher (Assistant Deputy Minister, MAA), AND Delaney Waddell (MAA).

Front Row: Jessica Hill (OFIFC Manager, Healing and Wellness), France Picotte (MNO Chair), Betty Kennedy (ONWA Executive Director), Teresa Piruzza (Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and Minister of Children and Youth Services), David Zimmer (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs), Sylvia Maracle (OFIFC Executive Director and Joint Working Group Co-Chair), Sheila McMahon (OFIFC President), Dr. Dawn Harvard (ONWA President), Hanita Tiefenbach (Director, MAA, and Joint Working Group Co-Chair), Susan Seaby (Executive Director, OWD, and Joint Working Group Co-Chair).

MOVING FORWARD

Since its first meeting in 2010, the Joint Working Group has worked collaboratively on a number of initiatives aimed at ending violence against Aboriginal women. Still, we recognize that much remains to be done and we must continuously work to improve our efforts in responding to the *Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women*. Moving forward, we are committed to building upon our collective strengths and promising initiatives, while addressing the concerns that arise from the complexities involved in ending violence against Aboriginal women.

The July 2013 report by the Aboriginal caucus, *Immediate Priority Actions Identified in A Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women ("Immediate Priority Actions report")*, highlights important issues that require the attention of the Joint Working Group. Now is the time for commitment and participation from all parties to ensure that responses to the Strategic Framework are relevant, ongoing and reflect the interests of Aboriginal peoples. The Joint Working Group will be renewing its work plan to move towards achieving its objectives within its five year mandate. A long-term approach to advance the *Strategic Framework*, with well-defined priorities, will help us achieve our goal of ending violence against Aboriginal women.

In moving forward, the priorities outlined for each strategic direction, as well as a focus on capacity building for the Aboriginal caucus, will help create a stable foundation for addressing violence against First Nations, status and non-status, Métis and Inuit women in Ontario.

Comprehensive Research and Data Collection

Comprehensive research and data collection continues to be a priority of the Joint Working Group. Evidence-based research and relevant data that provides information on the prevalence of violence against Aboriginal women in

Ontario and the underlying systemic barriers contributing to those rates is necessary to support collaborative efforts towards meaningful policy and program development.

Moving forward, the draft report and recommendations of the Data Collection and Information Sharing sub-committee will be the starting point for discussions. The sub-committee will identify action areas for the Joint Working Group to consider in planning future activities. In addition, the sub-committee on Human Trafficking has developed a draft research plan to help support a better understanding and response to the trafficking of Aboriginal women and girls in Ontario and across provincial and international borders. The Joint Working Group acknowledges that data collaboration between ministries and Aboriginal partners, as well as the adherence to Indigenous research design and methodologies and the principles of OCAP (ownership, control, access and possession), are fundamental considerations when designing and funding research projects.

Legal Reform and Legislative Change

The *Strategic Framework* recognizes the potential effect legislative reform can have on violence against Aboriginal women. Any proposed new legislation or legislative changes that may have an impact on violence against Aboriginal women may be brought to the Joint Working Group for comment. Moving forward, the Aboriginal caucus encourages the government partners to engage in discussions on legislation that prohibits violence against women, with a particular focus on Aboriginal women.

Policy Development

The Aboriginal caucus continues to promote the adoption of the *Strategic Framework* as government policy. Moving forward, the ministry partners will consider opportunities to formalize the Joint Working Group process within government, using the *Strategic Framework* as a guide for

government policy on violence against Aboriginal women.

Policy development to end violence against Aboriginal women requires community-based approaches developed through collaboration between government and Aboriginal partners and communities. The Joint Working Group provides the opportunity for government and Aboriginal partners to advance the *Strategic Framework* by working collaboratively to revise existing policies or develop new ones. Future discussions will explore how Aboriginal caucus and the Ministry of Education can work together to support the continued incorporation of Aboriginal perspectives in the Ontario curriculum and support educators to better understand and integrate Aboriginal histories, cultures, contributions and perspectives into teaching and learning. The Aboriginal partners have requested funding to support their internal policy capacity so they may provide input to government ministries and better address the needs of Aboriginal communities.

Program Development

Moving forward, the Joint Working Group will identify opportunities to support funding to develop and enhance programs to address violence against Aboriginal women. The Aboriginal caucus has requested long-term funding for existing successful pilot projects on ending violence against Aboriginal women. More specifically, they have recommended that the *Talk 4 Healing Helpline* be enhanced and expanded province-wide. Through the sub-committee on Human Trafficking, the Joint Working Group will work towards identifying opportunities for program development, training initiatives for on- and off- reserve communities, and research to respond to human trafficking in Ontario.

Public Education and Awareness

Public education continues to be a significant priority for the Joint Working Group. Government ministries are supporting successful public education campaigns developed and delivered by Aboriginal communities to raise awareness about violence against Aboriginal women. The Aboriginal caucus is working with the Joint Working Group and the Ministry of Education to implement education-related recommendations from *Summit V, For Generations to Come: A Summit to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women*.

Moving forward, the Aboriginal caucus encourages the Joint Working Group to discuss financial support for a province-wide, multi-year education campaign. The Aboriginal caucus is also proposing that the Joint Working Group consider a sixth provincial summit focused on public education.

Community Development and Capacity Building

The Aboriginal caucus has identified capacity building as a key challenge moving forward. The Aboriginal caucus held three Leadership Sessions this past Spring and presented their *Immediate Priority Actions* report at the July 2013 meeting of the Joint Working Group. The report recognized the importance of funding to support the capacity of Aboriginal organizations to more effectively engage and respond to Aboriginal communities. Understanding this need, government partners will explore opportunities for capacity funding so the Aboriginal partners can fully engage in the Joint Working Group and with their communities.

Building Community Leadership

The *Strategic Framework* calls for an integrated approach that promotes building leadership within Aboriginal communities to proactively address the root causes of violence and begin the healing process. Community leaders require tools and resources to enhance their understanding of violence against Aboriginal women and its connection to community development. The OWD is currently funding a program to develop Aboriginal women's leadership. The Joint Working Group will consider opportunities to revise existing programs and build violence against women tools into those programs to help ensure that efforts to end violence against Aboriginal women are driven at the grassroots level in partnership with political leadership.

Moving forward, the Joint Working Group will work to identify Ontario's delegation for the fourth National Aboriginal Women's Summit (currently scheduled to be hosted by Nova Scotia in Fall 2014). The Aboriginal caucus will play a role in determining priorities for the Summit as well as future national dialogues. The co-chairs will explore opportunities to promote the *Strategic Framework* and the Joint Working Group at national forums, given the recent success of the Joint Working Group's influence on the Provincial/Territorial Aboriginal Affairs Working Group.

Ensuring Accountability

Accountability remains an important area as the Joint Working Group moves toward more formalized structures. Ministry and Aboriginal partners must be consistent and prepared for all Joint Working Group meetings. It is the responsibility of the co-chairs to ensure that members of the Joint Working Group have the information they need to fully participate in each meeting and that reports by ministries, Aboriginal partners and others are relevant to ending violence against Aboriginal women. Ministry co-chairs will also coordinate and facilitate Ministry responses to action items identified at Joint Working Group meetings and will promote the broader implementation of the *Strategic Framework*.

Ministries and the Aboriginal partners are pursuing new and important activities which complement the work of the Joint Working Group.

Draw-the-Line Campaign

The Nishnawbe-Aski Nation has partnered with the Chiefs of Ontario on the Draw-the-line media campaign to raise awareness about sexual violence. The goal is to develop social media tools and materials to address sexual violence for First Nations peoples across Ontario. This campaign will reach the 133 First Nations communities across the province. The First Nations Women's Council acts as an Advisory Committee for this initiative and COO staff act as coordinators for the activities of the Advisory Committee. Two meetings have been held to discuss the campaign messaging and implementation. The funding for this campaign was provided by OWD.

Building Awareness of Aboriginal Women's Shelters

The Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario, through the support of the OWD, has developed public awareness initiatives for community members to provide information about services available through Aboriginal shelters for women and children who experience, or at risk of, violence. This project, which started in March 2013, will also strengthen the association's capacity to support and coordinate services between shelters.

Increasing Aboriginal Women's Economic Security

Through OWD's new Microlending for Women in Ontario Program, the Nishnawbe-Aski Development Fund is supporting Aboriginal women in Northwestern Ontario start their own businesses. Four microlending circles will be formed to provide microloans to Aboriginal women entrepreneurs. This initiative is helping to build Aboriginal women's economic security and reduce vulnerability to abuse.

Biwaase'aa Program and Evaluation

Through 2012 to 2014, the Ministry of Education is providing funding for Aboriginal Youth Outreach Workers in seven schools in Thunder Bay to deliver the Biwaase'aa Program. Youth Outreach Workers are caring adults who are trauma-informed and act as a primary source of support for Aboriginal students. Biwaase'aa contributes to preventing/ending violence against Aboriginal women through the provision of culturally-centered, in-school and after-school programs and supports for off-reserve students and families including those who may have witnessed violence or women who may be experiencing relational violence. The programs contribute to interrupting the cycle of violence as Youth Outreach Workers offer traditional teachings that promote healthy and respectful relationships among students and all members of the school community. They also provide opportunities and resources for students to seek support for complex issues such as domestic violence or bullying in a safe and inclusive environment. Most importantly, this program promotes the development of a positive personal and cultural identity, and a sense of belonging to both Aboriginal and wider communities.

Program funding will also support a comprehensive evaluation of the Biwaase'aa program to look at the impact of Youth Outreach Workers in schools on the whole-school climate and also on student engagement, well-being and achievement.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs has also provided funding to support the Biwaase'aa program. These funds were utilized to build upon the capacity of Shkoday Abinojiiwak Obimiwedoos' – Biwaase'aa program. This arrangement has allowed Shkoday Abinojiiwak Obimiwedoos to provide training opportunities and certification courses to their staff members in order to meet the mandatory requirements of the Biwaase'aa after-school program. It has also provided the Biwaase'aa program with the necessary tools to assist the organization in its capacity to adequately support and manage the program.

Accepting Schools Expert Panel

The Accepting Schools Expert Panel was established in June 2012 and is a key component of the government's Comprehensive Action Plan for Accepting Schools. The Expert Panel's mandate is to provide advice and feedback to the Ministry of Education to support building and sustaining a positive school climate in all Ontario schools. The Expert Panel has met on a quarterly basis since its inception. Among other experts in inclusive education, the Expert Panel includes Dawn Harvard, PhD, current president of the Ontario Native Women's Association. Dr. Harvard brings an Aboriginal women's perspective to key issues such as bullying prevention and parent engagement, and has provided informed advice on the development of critical resources such as the Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Going forward there is an opportunity for the Expert Panel to discuss promising approaches and resources for schools to address violence against Aboriginal women and girls, and to support student achievement and engagement.

Aboriginal Justice Strategy: Community Justice Program

Responding to violence against Aboriginal women remains a priority of the Aboriginal Justice Strategy in Ontario. Community Justice Programs offer culturally based programs focused on reducing recidivism through offender rehabilitation. While not a requirement, victims are invited to participate in the program. In the last year, the SaaSiitoniwin Community Justice Project located at Naotgamegwanning First Nation, at Whitefish Bay, introduced a domestic violence program with a focus on the offender to reduce the chances of re-offending.

The objective of the program is to prevent the commission of further offenses through culturally based programming. This is a common goal of the Aboriginal community justice programs (co-funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General, Legal Aid Ontario and the federal Department of Justice) operating in twenty communities in Ontario.

Enhanced Domestic Violence Offender Policy

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services' (MCSCS) enhanced Community Services' Domestic Violence Offender Policy came into effect in October 2012. The policy is designed to enhance victim safety with evidence-based approaches to reduce the risk of re-offending for domestic violence offenders. It includes increased emphasis on identifying and addressing risk factors through use of the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment. The Domestic Violence Death Review Committee recognizes risk management as an effective tool to help address violence against women. As Aboriginal women experience higher rates of domestic violence, the identification of high risk domestic violence offenders helps to increase the safety of Aboriginal women experiencing



Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy, Métis and Urban Aboriginal Roundtable on June 10, 2013.

Teresa Piruzza (Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and Minister of Children and Youth Services), Sheila McMahon (President, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres), Gary Lipinski (President, Métis Nation of Ontario), Dr. Dawn Harvard (President, Ontario Native Women's Association), and David Zimmer (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs).

abuse. The policy also provides links to key information, programs and services relating to Aboriginal women, such as Ontario's Aboriginal Calendar and Services Directory, the OFIC and the Native Women's Association of Canada.

Provincial Aboriginal Services Advisory Council

The Provincial Aboriginal Services Advisory Council (MCSCS) continues to meet quarterly. In 2013, the Council plans to identify barriers, issues and opportunities to improve services for Aboriginal women, specifically through the Native Inmate Liaison Officer-provided services. The Council will ensure that Aboriginal women's voices and the effects of violence against Aboriginal women are considered in service delivery discussions for Aboriginal women.

The Correctional Services Aboriginal Services Advisor

The Correctional Services Aboriginal Services Advisor is consulting on the South West Detention Centre, a new facility to open in 2014, to ensure it is conducive to Aboriginal programs and services in the women's units. Through collaboration with Aboriginal partners and community members, the Aboriginal Services Advisor establishes relationships and consults with institutions and community supervision services on policies, programs and protocols related to ending violence against Aboriginal women, proactively supporting Aboriginal women offenders who may have experienced violence.

The Correctional Services Aboriginal Program Analyst

This MCSCS position is now staffed and operational. The Aboriginal Program Analyst works to enhance organizational capacity to address the programming needs of Aboriginal inmates and those under community supervision, including program development. For example, the Aboriginal Program Analyst collaborates on the completion of the women's intensive program, The Healing Journey, which will focus on the following areas:

- Providing information on the history of colonization in Canada and the current impacts on individuals, families and communities;
- Assisting clients in reclaiming Aboriginal values and beliefs as a foundation for positive identities and healthy lifestyles free of criminal activities; and,
- Providing information on domestic violence and equipping participants with understanding, skills and practice in managing their thinking and behaviour more effectively, with the goal of reducing recidivism.

The activities of the Aboriginal Program Analyst help build Correctional Services' capacity to work more effectively with Aboriginal women, communities and organizations.

Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy

Over the next 18 months, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services will work with Aboriginal partners to develop the Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy. In June 2013, the Minister of Children and Youth Services,



Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy, First Nations Leadership Roundtable on June 14, 2013.

Alexander Bezzina (Deputy Minister of Ministry of Children and Youth Services), Chief Isadore Day (Serpent River First Nation), Deputy Grand Chief Goyce Kakegamic (NishnawbeAski Nation), Councillor Clifford Tibishkogijig (Whitesand First Nation), Chief Greg Cowie (Hiawatha First Nation), Deputy Grand Chief Glen Hare (Anishinabek Nation/Union of Ontario Indians), Chief Dean Sayers (Batchewana First Nation), Deputy Grand Chief Denise Stonefish (Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians), Teresa Piruzza (Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, and Minister of Children and Youth Services), Chief Simon Fobister (Grassy Narrows First Nation), David Zimmer (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs), Youth Representative Jeff Kinew (Grand Council Treaty #3), Chief Arnold Gardner (Eagle Lake First Nation), Chief Abram Benedict (Akwasasne First Nation), Gimaa Duke Peltier (Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve), Chief Dave Paul (Northwest Angle 33 First Nation), Deputy Minister Laurie LeBlanc (formerly with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs), and John Beaucage (Facilitator).

together with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, held two roundtables with leaders of the MNO, urban Aboriginal organizations, and First Nations to formally launch the engagement for the joint development of the strategy. The Ministers also met in August with the leadership of two Inuit organizations in Ottawa to launch the engagement with the Inuit community. Supports to end violence against Aboriginal girls were raised as a priority issue at the roundtables.

For this strategy, government and Aboriginal leaders are working jointly to identify structural changes to improve the design and delivery of services to Aboriginal children, youth and families. As part of this work, the spectrum of services needed to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children and youth will be assessed, including supports to assist girls at risk of violence, trafficking, and those living in circumstances with violence.

Child Welfare Reform

In 2013, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) introduced child welfare reforms to support a responsive and fiscally sustainable child welfare system that promotes improved outcomes for children and youth in and leaving care.

For example, in April 2013, MCYS implemented a new child welfare funding model, which allocates child welfare funding based on relative need, rather than historical spending, as measured by a combination of socio-economic and volume-based factors. The socio-economic factors will help CASs address the unique needs of Aboriginal children and families. For example, Aboriginal communities have proportionately more low income families and lone parent families, both of which are socio-economic factors in the model. The number of Aboriginal children is also a socio-economic factor. The model was developed based on advice from the former Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare; children's aid societies; the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies; the Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario; and other experts.

In recognition of the unique needs of Aboriginal children and youth, a ten percent increase is provided to Aboriginal children's aid society (CAS) over the first five years of the model's implementation. This increase will be phased in at two percent per year.

The Ministry also released in April 2013, the *Formal Customary Care Practice Guide* which is intended to assist CASs and First Nations in utilizing formal customary care, which supports the culturally appropriate care of Aboriginal children in accordance with the custom of the child's band or native community. The guide has been distributed to communities, agencies, and organizations across the province. Training is also being delivered to CASs and First Nations across the province to increase the use of Formal Customary Care as a culturally appropriate placement option. The development of the guide was informed by a project steering committee comprised of representatives of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal child welfare agencies, the Chiefs of Ontario Social Services Coordination Unit and through consultations that included, among others, family support, resource and prevention workers from Aboriginal child and family service organizations, individual Aboriginal child welfare professionals and First Nation representatives.

In addition, new resources and supports for children and youth, including Aboriginal youth, in and leaving care were announced in January 2013, following the Youth Leaving Care working group which included the Association of Native Child Family Services Agencies of Ontario (ANCFSAO) and Aboriginal youth representatives. These additional resources will help support a more stable transition out of the child welfare system. They include increased financial support for young people while limiting the situations in which youth may cease to receive financial supports. New mentorship opportunities for children and youth in care will be provided as will enhanced caregiver training to foster parents and group home staff to better support children and youth. Educational supports for youth leaving care have also been introduced, including a monthly Living and Learning Grant for eligible youth enrolled in OSAP-eligible post-secondary education and training programs and 100% tuition aid for youth leaving care, a program administered by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Funds will be available for community agencies to hire workers to support young people as they transition out of care. Youth in Formal Customary Care placements are eligible for these supports.

Youth Outreach Worker Program

The Youth Outreach Worker Program (MCYS) supports marginalized and at-risk youth in urban centres to better navigate and connect with services and pro-social opportunities in their communities to improve youth outcomes. Youth Outreach Workers act as mentors for youth and advocate on their behalf to improve access to services. They also work with the families of youth and communities to build their capacity to support youth. Many of the youth served by the program are Aboriginal. Under the Youth Action Plan, the program is being expanded and an additional 35 workers are being hired province-wide. Five of the new workers hired in Spring 2013 work specifically with Aboriginal youth. Four are located in Toronto and one is working in Thunder Bay. The new Youth Outreach Worker in Thunder Bay works with youth in an Aboriginal high school, many of whom come from surrounding communities and reserves.

Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy

Women diagnosed with mental illness are more likely than others to be victims of domestic violence. Investments through the Strategy will assist girls, including Aboriginal girls, with mental health challenges. By treating their illness, Aboriginal girls can become emotionally healthy and resilient thereby decreasing their risk of being victims of domestic abuse. The Strategy is providing new investments to support Aboriginal children and youth's mental health needs and help respond to Aboriginal children and youth who witness violence, are victims of violence, or who instigate violence. As part of the Strategy, MCYS is developing training supports for Aboriginal mental health and addictions workers. Funding was provided in 2012/13 for Aboriginal service providers, Political Territorial Organizations and off-reserve provincial Aboriginal organizations to purchase short-term professional development training for mental health and addictions workers to provide high quality services to Aboriginal children and youth. Funds were provided to train over 690 Aboriginal mental health and addictions workers across the province on topics such as cognitive behavioural therapy, mental health first aid and applied suicide intervention skills.

Moving forward, the Ministry has obtained input directly from Aboriginal mental health and addictions workers and their supervisors/hiring managers through two surveys that were administered in June 2013, which aimed to gather information that will help inform the development of options which meet their training and professional development needs and priorities. MCYS will continue to engage Political Territorial Organizations, Independent First Nations as well as Métis, Inuit and urban Aboriginal organizations on the development of options for training supports for Aboriginal mental health and addictions workers. The Ministry has developed an engagement plan and will be seeking feedback and advice around how best to involve and engage our Aboriginal partners moving forward.

Tele-Mental Health

In June 2013, MCYS enhanced its telepsychiatry model by announcing a new Tele-Mental Health service which will launch this Fall. It will provide children and youth in rural, remote and underserved communities access to mental health consultations through videoconferencing. All mental health professionals working with children and youth will be able to refer to the new videoconferencing service, which will better support Aboriginal children and youth's mental health needs. In addition, six coordination agencies, three of which will be Aboriginal organizations, will be selected through a competitive process to coordinate access to the service for community service providers.

“Safe Streets, Safe Community”

Community Safety Forum

Hosted by Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), this event was convened on January 15, 2013, in response to instances of racialized sexual violence against Aboriginal women in Thunder Bay. ONWA supported NAN in this event, speaking at the forum and giving out personal safety alarms to Aboriginal women in attendance. This event provided an opportunity for Aboriginal organizations to take a leadership role within the community to raise awareness of violence against Aboriginal women.

Housing and Homelessness Plans

The Housing Services Act, 2011 (the Act) requires local housing and homelessness plans to address the need for housing for victims of domestic violence. The Ontario Housing Policy Statement (OHPS) directs that the local plans will identify and consider the housing needs of Aboriginal peoples living off-reserve.

In 2011, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing helped established a Housing and Homelessness Resource Centre with the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association. The Resource Centre is designed to assist Service Managers in developing their local housing and homelessness plans. All Service Managers must approve a Housing and Homelessness Plan by January 1, 2014. Prior to Service Manager approval, the Ministry, in collaboration with eight Ministries including the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the OWD, will be reviewing each plan against the requirements of the Act and the OHPS.

Mental Health and Addictions Service Collaboratives

Members of the Aboriginal caucus (COO, OFIFC, and MNO) are represented on the Provincial Collaborative Advisory Group, established to provide strategic advice on implementation of the Service Collaboratives initiative. Service Collaboratives are collections of service providers from diverse human service organizations working together to plan and deliver a seamless continuum of mental health

and addiction services to people with mental health needs and/or addiction issues in a region or community. Service Collaboratives can serve as a mechanism to bring service providers together, to collectively address the linked issues of violence, trauma, and mental health and addictions that Aboriginal women face.

The OFIFC is currently working with Aboriginal partners, community members, service providers, and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to explore the possibility of creating an Aboriginal-specific initiative in the Timmins/Cocharne region, with a focus on issues related to violence against Aboriginal women and girls.

Strategic Direction 2: Legal Reform and Legislative Change

Program/Project	Supported By	Description	Contributes to Strategic Direction
<i>Gladue</i>	LAO, DOJ, and MAG	Four agencies currently offering Gladue Report Writers in 19 court locations in Ontario.	2.2 – Ensuring that the Aboriginal Justice Strategy makes the issue of violence against Aboriginal women a specific priority.
<i>Domestic Violence Court Program</i>	MAG	Operates in each of the 54 court jurisdictions in Ontario. Under the program, specially trained police, Crown attorneys and victim/witness staff work together with community partners to keep victims safe and hold abusers accountable.	2.2 – Ensuring that the Aboriginal Justice Strategy makes the issue of violence against Aboriginal women a specific priority.

Strategic Direction 3: Policy Development

Program/Project	Supported By	Description	Contributes to Strategic Direction
<i>Housing Services Act 2011, Special Priority Policy, and the Ontario Housing Policy Statement</i>	MMAH	The Special Priority Policy gives victims of domestic violence priority access to social housing. Regulations under the <i>Act</i> require that local housing and homelessness plans include an assessment of current and future housing needs, objectives and targets, activities, and proposed measures of progress for victims of domestic violence.	3.2 – The Special Priority Policy is designed to address violence against women, including Aboriginal women.
<i>First Nations, Métis and Inuit Perspectives in the Ontario Curriculum</i>	EDU	The Ministry of Education actively engages First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, organizations and experts during all stages of the curriculum review process to ensure that there are opportunities for students to learn about First Nations, Métis and Inuit histories, cultures, contributions, issues and perspectives throughout Ontario's curriculum.	3.3 – First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, organizations and experts are directly involved throughout the process of curriculum review.
<i>Community Housing Engagement Sessions: Respecting the Interests of Off-Reserve Aboriginal Peoples in Ontario</i>	OFIFC, ONWA and MNO	MNO, ONWA, and OFIFC conducted community consultations for off-reserve First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities across Ontario to hear their housing and related concerns. Guided by the <i>Ontario Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust Report</i> (2009) recommendation that an off-reserve innovative housing policy be developed, MNO, ONWA, and OFIFC heard from community members about ongoing barriers Aboriginal women and their families face when accessing safe and affordable housing in Ontario.	3.3 – Undertaking community consultations with Aboriginal people, specifically Aboriginal women, and involving them in policy planning and development.

Strategic Direction 4: Program Development

Program/Project	Supported By	Description	Contributes to Strategic Direction
<i>Increasing Aboriginal Women's Economic Security</i>	OWD	<p>The Women in Skilled Trades and Information Technology program provides training for women in communities where skilled trades and IT workers are needed.</p> <p>Through the Employment Training for Abused/At-Risk Women program, Minwaashin Lodge Aboriginal Women's Support Centre is receiving support for their "Courage to Soar" program and Nipissing First Nation is receiving support for their "True Self -Debwewendizwin Employment and Training Program".</p> <p>The Investing in Women's Futures (IWF) program supports the Native Women's Centre of Toronto, Minwaashin Lodge Aboriginal Women's Support Centre, and Nijikiwendidaa Anishnaabekwewag Services Circle.</p> <p>The Building Aboriginal Women's Leadership Program supports leadership development training for Aboriginal women to take on leadership roles in their communities.</p>	4.1 – Providing investments to support the economic security of Aboriginal women and reduce their vulnerability to violence.
<i>Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy</i>	MCYS	Since the establishment of the Strategy in 2011, 80 new Aboriginal workers have been hired and are helping high-needs communities by providing additional, direct and culturally appropriate services to 4,000 more Aboriginal children and youth each year.	4.1 – Providing investments to support high-needs Aboriginal communities.
<i>Aboriginal Courtwork Program</i>	DOJ and MAG	The Aboriginal Courtwork Program has been extended for another five years.	4.1 – Supporting programs which help Aboriginal women throughout their interactions with the criminal justice system.
<i>Fly In Courts Working Group</i>	Criminal Law Division, MAG OVS and MCSCS	<p>The Fly In Courts Working Group is identifying concrete ways to improve the delivery of justice services to offenders and victims, and to improve access to justice for remote communities in the North.</p> <p>OVS, in collaboration with MCSCS, is continuing its efforts to develop mechanisms and improve processes for victim safety and security during court proceedings. Input regarding issues and potential solutions has, for instance, been provided to the Ontario Court of Justice and MAG's Fly-In Court Working Group.</p>	4.1 – Developing mechanisms and improving processes for victim safety and security during court proceedings.

APPENDIX B - ONGOING INITIATIVES

Strategic Direction 4: Program Development (continued)

Program/Project	Supported By	Description	Contributes to Strategic Direction
<i>Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing (Trust) & The Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario Programs</i>	MMAH, Miziwe Biik, and Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services	The organizations work closely together to provide homeownership loans, home renovation loans and construct new rental buildings for the Aboriginal community through the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing (Trust) & the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario Programs. Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services has identified Aboriginal female victims of domestic violence as a target group within their affordable homeownership component.	4.1 – Supporting programs designed to address violence against Aboriginal women.
<i>Correctional Services' Aboriginal-Specific Rehabilitative Programs</i>	MCSCS	Correctional Services provides Aboriginal-specific rehabilitation programs at the orientation level ("Understanding the Journey" for women and "Eastern Door" for men) and intensive level ("Turning Full Circle" for men). The women's intensive program, "The Healing Journey" is being completed. Orientation level programs are offered regularly in various institutions and through probation services around the province, and are delivered by First Nations, Métis and Inuit facilitators.	4.1 - An Aboriginal-specific program and policy infrastructure is created and sustained, including programs designed specifically to address violence against Aboriginal women.
<i>Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy (AHWS)</i>	MCSS	AHWS combines culturally appropriate health and family healing programs through a shared commitment by Ontario (five partner ministries) and Aboriginal partners to reduce family violence and improve Aboriginal health and healing outcomes. Throughout 2012/13, MCSS and partner ministries worked with AHWS partners to develop a terms of reference to formalize new collaborative forums. Through sharing of information and knowledge, collaborative forums will help strengthen program planning and development for AHWS programs and services.	4.1 – Investment in the AHWS addresses violence against Aboriginal women through efforts to reduce family violence and improve health and healing outcomes.
<i>Nihdawin</i>	ONWA	The <i>Nihdawin</i> housing program continues to provide services to a number of women and their families fleeing violence. In supporting Aboriginal women and their families who are homeless or precariously housed, the program has helped a number of women living in situations of violence to escape.	4.1 – Supporting programs which help Aboriginal women throughout their interactions with the criminal justice system.

APPENDIX B - ONGOING INITIATIVES

Strategic Direction 5: Public Education and Awareness

Program/Project	Supported By	Description	Contributes to Strategic Direction
<i>Expanding Public Education Campaigns</i>	OWD and OFIFC	The OFIFC, through support from OWD, has two public awareness campaigns currently being delivered: Kanawayhitowin – Taking Care of Each Other’s Spirit Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin - I am a Kind Man	5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 – Supporting public education campaigns to teach communities and stakeholders about the root causes of violence against Aboriginal women.
<i>2nd Annual Honouring Missing and Murdered Women Pow-wow</i>	ONWA	ONWA will host a second annual <i>Honouring Missing and Murdered Women Pow-wow</i> in Thunder Bay. This event provides an opportunity to educate the wider community about violence against Aboriginal women. In honouring missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, the pow-wow also demonstrates healthy respect and reverence for all Aboriginal women and girls.	5.1 – Educating communities and stakeholders about the root causes of violence against Aboriginal women.
<i>Sisters in Spirit Vigil</i>	ONWA	In October 2012, ONWA hosted a <i>Sisters in Spirit Vigil</i> . These vigils are held every October 4 to raise public awareness of the alarmingly high rate of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada.	5.1 – Educating communities and stakeholders about the root causes of violence against Aboriginal women.
<i>OPP Awareness Training and Seminars</i>	MCSCS	OPP continues to provide Native Awareness Training. This training focuses on Aboriginal history and culture and includes a segment on human trafficking. From September 2012 until June 2013, over 300 persons have attended this week-long training course.	5.3 - Strengthening public knowledge and understanding of the historical context of violence against Aboriginal women.

Strategic Direction 6: Community Development and Capacity Building

Program/Project	Supported By	Description	Contributes to Strategic Direction
<i>Development of Organizational Capacity for Correctional Services</i>	MCSCS	The Offender Programs Unit continues to liaise with OFIFC on the development of an Aboriginal-specific e-learning module that will contain cultural information about Aboriginal people and domestic violence. The development of an e-learning module will allow staff providing services to Aboriginal clients access to training that is specific to Aboriginal domestic violence.	6.1 – Organizational capacity is increased by increasing information sharing and knowledge transfer.

APPENDIX C – MEMBERS OF THE JOINT WORKING GROUP

Members of the Joint Working Group include representatives from ten provincial ministries and five Aboriginal organizations:

- **Ontario Women's Directorate**
- **Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs**
- **Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres**
- **Ontario Native Women's Association**
- **Independent First Nations**
- **Métis Nation of Ontario**
- **Chiefs of Ontario**
- **Ministry of the Attorney General**
- **Ministry of Children and Youth Services**
- **Ministry of Education**
- **Ministry of Community and Social Services**
- **Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services**
- **Ministry of Health and Long-term Care**
- **Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing**
- **Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities**

For anyone interested in obtaining the 2012 Progress Report, please contact the Ontario Women's Directorate at (416) 314-0300 or by email at owd@ontario.ca.