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BC First Nations Justice Council Assembles Five Steering Committees to Provide Expert Advice and Strategic Guidance on the BC First Nations Justice Strategy

Bringing together Indigenous leaders, grassroots activists, academics, and community members, the Steering Committees will enrich and guide the critical justice work BCFNJC is leading across the province.

(syilx homelands, Westbank BC): The BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC) is excited to welcome our five new Steering Committees that will play a pivotal role in implementing the BC First Nations Justice Strategy.

From Indigenous leaders who have been championing the rights of their people for decades, to esteemed academics who have been carving out critical space for Indigenous research, to Elders, Knowledge Keepers and community members representing their Nations and families, to valued accomplices and allies with years of legal expertise and practice, BCFNJC's Steering Committees bring together teams of experts and changemakers in the field who hold direct knowledge and experience regarding distinct areas or "bundles" of work under the Justice Strategy.

"Through the BC First Nations Justice Strategy, BCFNJC is undertaking complex, large-scale work that not only requires ambition and vision, but a structured, culturally grounded approach. We quickly realized that to advance the Justice Strategy, we would need to move beyond colonial and institutional ways of governance and decision-making. The solution was BCFNJC's Steering Committees" stated Amanda Carling, CEO of BCFNJC. "Our Steering Committees are teams of leaders who hold strong and important ties to their communities and fields of work – individuals who can use their unique expertise and knowledge to keep accountability and community-based decision making at the forefront of our work."

Each Steering Committee will focus on supporting one of the five core areas of work under the Justice Strategy which include: Indigenous Justice Centres Services; Gladue Services; Indigenous Women's Justice Plan, Youth, and Education; Policing, Oversight and Accountability; and Corrections, Diversion and Community Based Justice Programming. Our Steering Committees also support important, collaborative relationships with our partners in the Province. Colleen Spier, the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Indigenous Justice Secretariat under the Ministry of the Attorney General, holds a seat in each Steering Committee, facilitating dialogue

BC First Nations Justice Council

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and action across ministries. Convening once a month with Council Members, BCFNJC Directors, and technical staff, the Steering Committees provide strategic guidance and expert advice on the initiatives and work being carried out.

“Our Steering Committees are here to challenge us and help us grow. Holding valuable insights and external connections that extend past our organization and into community, they will raise important questions and help us make the difficult decisions as we expand our justice services for Indigenous people across BC. They will not only help us advance the Justice Strategy effectively, but in ways that truly honour and respond to the needs of the 200+ First Nations in BC that BCFNJC holds a mandate to.” continued Amanda Carling, CEO of BCFNJC. “With the support of the Steering Committees, our unprecedented justice work can continue to unfold in BC, watched by other provinces and by the federal government who can learn from and use the Justice Strategy as the framework for action.”

Already, the Steering Committees are having positive, tangible impacts on BCFNJC’s work. Recently, BCFNJC released its [Indigenous Women’s Justice Plan](#) that builds on previous reports and recommendations to improve the justice outcomes for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people in BC. The Indigenous Women 2S+ Steering Committee played an important role in amplifying community feedback and perspectives and helping get the plan to a place that truly upheld the voices of Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+.

Moving forward, BCFNJC will continue to expand our Steering Committees and collaborate with them on important ongoing work, including the expansion of our Indigenous Justice Centres and the development of a new legal aid model for Indigenous people.

Our current Steering Committee members include:

Indigenous Justice Centres Services

- Kika Mowry
- Linda Locke
- Michelle Silongan
- Grand Chief Steven Point
- Suzette Narbonne
- James Wilson

Gladue Services

- Jonathan Rudin

Indigenous Women, Girls, 2S+ and Youth

- Darla Rasmussen
- Dr. Gwendolyn Point
- Viola Thomas

Policing, Oversight and Accountability

- Thom Swan
- Kent Roach
- Chief Jerry Jack
- Christopher Gosselin
- Marion Radawetz

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- Dr. David Milward
- Benjamin Ralston
- Darryl Shackelly
- Edith Fortier
- Maddison Sam
- Victoria Fred

Corrections, Diversion and Community Based Justice Programming

- Anna Tonasket
- Jen Metcalfe
- Jennifer Lewis - c̓ʔak̓w̓m
- Merv Thomas
- Amanda Butler
- Joanne Jefferson
- Virginia Peters

ABOUT THE BCFNJC

The BC First Nations Justice Council has been entrusted with the mandate to transform the justice system and create better outcomes for Indigenous people through implementation of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy.

The strategy, signed March 06, 2020, was jointly developed by the BC First Nations Justice Council, BC First Nations communities and the Province of British Columbia. It includes 43 actions along two paths which involve the reformation of the current system as well as the restoration of First Nations' legal traditions and structures. More information can be found on [the website](#).

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