



# **Summary Report: Building an Urban Indigenous Engagement Model**



***March 2026***

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# Summary Report: Building an Urban Indigenous Engagement Model

**March 2026**

## Executive Summary

Between September and November 2025, four regional gatherings were held with more than 50 urban Indigenous leaders who serve and engage with 18 urban, rural, and remote communities in and around Kamloops, Fort St. John, Prince Rupert, and Nanaimo. Hosted by local Friendship Centres in partnership with Strong Circle Leadership & Governance Society, the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, and the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, these gatherings were convened to inform the development of a provincial engagement model with urban Indigenous peoples, as outlined in B.C.'s *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act) Action Plan*.

**Leaders at all four regional gatherings described shared systemic challenges, including the ongoing marginalization of urban Indigenous voices in decision-making, deteriorating and transactional relationships with municipal, provincial and federal levels of government, and inadequate, short-term, and inequitable funding models.** These challenges are occurring in the context of sharply increasing service demand related to housing insecurity, food security, health, education, child and family services, and crisis response – pressures that urban Indigenous organizations are frequently expected to absorb without corresponding resources.

**Despite these challenges, urban Indigenous leaders emphasized that meaningful, Indigenous-led, and relationship-based engagement is both necessary and achievable.**

Participants consistently highlighted the importance of strengthening collaboration among urban Indigenous leaders at regional and provincial levels, deepening relationships with local First Nations, and establishing sustained, accountable engagement with all levels of government. Across all gatherings, there was a clear and consistent interest in forming regional coalitions, networks, and regular gatherings of urban Indigenous leaders. Central to this work is the need for Indigenous-controlled urban data to support planning, funding, advocacy, and policy development, while respecting Indigenous data ownership and autonomy.

**Drawing on the combined insights from all four gatherings, leaders articulated a clear vision for an Urban Indigenous Engagement Model that is Indigenous-led, relationship-based, and structured through interconnected regional and provincial tables:**

1. **Ongoing Engagement must be grounded in Indigenous values** and ways of being, with relationship-building understood as long-term, intentional, and trauma-aware.
2. **Regional Urban Indigenous Tables** with dedicated capacity funding to address region-specific priorities and realities, including rural and remote contexts, and:
  - a. Collaboration among urban Indigenous leaders, local First Nations, and local governments;
  - b. Support for development and maintenance of an annually updated directory of urban Indigenous organizations.
3. **Provincial Urban Indigenous Network Table** with dedicated capacity funding to support consistent, accountable engagement between government and urban Indigenous leadership, monitoring of the *Declaration Act Action Plan* commitments, and:
  - a. Regular quarterly meetings;
  - b. Annual in-person gatherings with ministers and senior officials;
  - c. Federation of all urban Indigenous organizations serving off-reserve populations.
4. **Indigenous-controlled urban data strategy** that provides access to reliable, community-governed data to support collaboration, funding applications, planning, advocacy, and policy decisions. Data systems should be governed by Indigenous principles and reflect the diverse realities of urban Indigenous communities across regions.
5. **Dedicated provincial urban Indigenous affairs office** within the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, with decision-making authority and responsibility for ongoing engagement, coordination across ministries, Indigenous-led data collection, and liaising with urban Indigenous communities and regional tables.

Together, these recommended actions provide a practical, Indigenous-led pathway for strengthening engagement, accountability, and collaboration between the Province of British Columbia and urban Indigenous peoples. Implementing these next steps will support more equitable, informed, and effective decision-making and contribute to the meaningful realization of the *Declaration Act* for Indigenous people living off reserve or away from their homelands.

# Summary Report: Building an Urban Indigenous Engagement Model

**March 2026**

## Introduction

Between September and November 2025, four gatherings were held with more than 50 urban Indigenous leaders<sup>1</sup> representing 18 urban, rural and remote communities<sup>2</sup> in and around Kamloops, Prince Rupert, Fort St John and Nanaimo. The gatherings were hosted by local Friendship Centres and in partnership with Strong Circle Leadership & Governance Society, the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, and BC's Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. Leaders were asked to help inform the design of an urban Indigenous engagement model with the Province of British Columbia, representing the interests of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, status and non-status people living off reserve.

Together, the four gatherings provided region-specific perspectives on the realities facing urban Indigenous organizations and the communities they serve, while offering clear, consistent direction on how provincial engagement with urban Indigenous peoples can be strengthened in alignment with BC's *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act)*.

## Background and Methodology to this Report

**Background:** The primary purpose of the leadership gatherings was to inform the development of a provincial engagement model with urban Indigenous peoples, as outlined in B.C.'s *Declaration Act Action Plan* (see [Appendix B](#)). Specifically, the gatherings were intended to support actions related to:

- establishing a framework for engagement with urban Indigenous people;
- creating regular opportunities for Indigenous nonprofit leaders to gather to share experiences, information and concerns;
- reviewing urban Indigenous programs across government; and

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<sup>1</sup> Please see [Appendix A](#) for list of participants

<sup>2</sup> Communities included Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Kamloops, Kelowna, Lillooet, Merritt, Penticton, Vernon, Campbell River, Duncan, Nanaimo, Port Alberni, Hazelton, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Terrace, and Kitwanga.

- identifying pathways to expand and stabilize funding for urban Indigenous organizations.

**Methodology:** To ensure consistency across regions, urban Indigenous leaders at each gathering were asked the same set of core questions, focused on identifying shared challenges, strengths, and priorities for engagement with the provincial government. Following each gathering, a regional summary report was produced capturing local context, key issues, and region-specific perspectives (see Strong Circle for individual summaries).

The following report was developed through a review and analysis of the perspectives of participants from communities in and around Kamloops, Fort St. John, Prince Rupert and Nanaimo, with the purpose of identifying cross-cutting themes, systemic issues, and shared recommendations - particularly as they relate to the design of an effective engagement model between the Province and urban Indigenous peoples.

The questions guiding the discussions included:

What are the top 2–3 issues currently facing your organization and/or the community you serve?

What is working well in terms of collaborating with other organizations or entities in your community or region, and what could be improved?

What supports are needed to work effectively together as urban Indigenous organizations, and what are the barriers to collaboration?

What are the top 2–3 messages you want to share with the BC Government and/or specific ministries?

How do you envision an ideal, meaningful, and effective approach for urban Indigenous leaders to communicate and engage directly with the BC Government and/or specific ministries?

## Summary of the Findings: *Realities for Urban Indigenous Leaders*

Across all four regions, despite differences in geography and local context, leaders described a shared set of systemic challenges, including decreased opportunities for urban Indigenous leaders to participate in decisions that affect their community, broken relationships with local governments, and insufficient and unstable funding.

### ***Lack of Opportunities for Urban Indigenous Voices in Decision Making***

Participants across all regional gatherings spoke to the persistent marginalization of urban Indigenous people in policy, funding, and governance spaces. Engagement often prioritized on-reserve Nations or mainstream organizations, while urban Indigenous organizations, despite serving a significant proportion of the Indigenous population, were excluded from decision-making tables at municipal, regional, and provincial levels. In general, leaders reported an overall lack of understanding about who urban Indigenous people are and where they reside.

Urban Indigenous leaders emphasized that they must be recognized as meaningful and essential to urban Indigenous governance and that true engagement involves an ongoing relationship, not just project-based consultation.

*“Urban Indigenous voices are Indigenous voices. There’s always that pitting against between First Nations on-reserve and off reserve piece. Urban Indigenous people are Indigenous people, their voice does matter in these conversations.”* (Fort St John Gathering Participant)

For example, in the city of Kamloops, the municipality only recognizes the Kamloops Indian band and looks exclusively to them when they need to consult. In the past, many urban Indigenous leaders had strong relationships with local governments, but the focus now is holding relationships solely with on-reserve First Nations governments. In Nanaimo, city counsellors historically responded to invites from urban Indigenous community, including issuing invitations to council meetings, but this relationship no longer exists.

*“City Council used to come and meet with our organization but not anymore. A city counsellor used to be a representative on [our society]. They used to respond to invites – they even came on tribal journeys.”* (Nanaimo Gathering Participant)

Urban Indigenous leaders who gathered from in and around Prince Rupert talked about how there used to be space at their local government tables (municipal councils and regional districts), but that this is no longer the case.

### ***Broken Relationships with Government***

Relationships with municipal, provincial, and federal governments were described as inconsistent and, in many cases, deteriorating. Leaders expressed frustration with transactional, project-based consultation approaches and emphasized the need for sustained, relationship-based engagement that recognizes urban Indigenous organizations as essential partners rather than service contractors of last resort.

Across regions, leaders emphasize that urban Indigenous people are rights holders, regardless of residency or status. Distinctions-based approaches, eligibility rules, and funding criteria often exclude Métis, non-status, Inuit, or off-reserve First Nations people, creating gaps in education, health, and social supports.

For example, urban Indigenous nonprofits have historically provided community-based services designed to support urban Indigenous people. However, gathering participants noted that the health authority and school district are now terminating these contracts and taking them “in house”, while shifting the focus away from urban Indigenous people. For example, in Nanaimo, the health authority clawed back a long-standing health liaison contract for urban Indigenous people and took the service “in-house”, providing generalized liaison services that are not urban Indigenous specific.

*“Government needs to understand they’re not in a place of trust that replicates our services. It’s not helpful. Our people do not want to access a government health liaison, instead, they still come to [our organization] where there is longstanding trust”*  
(Nanaimo Gathering Participant)

Many local school districts used to partner with urban Indigenous organizations to run cultural events and activities. In some communities, this has now been taken “in house” and urban Indigenous organizations are no longer invited to participate.

Participants spoke about the fact that Indigenous Education Committees (IECs) adhere to the “Distinctions Based Approach” which means they are made up of representatives from local Nations only, and any other Indigenous person, including First Nations who are not from the local Nation, Métis or Inuit, are not permitted to attend or vote on decisions that impact all Indigenous children.

*“There is concern for the lack of representation...there are so many students from different nations who aren’t part of the land-based nation because of migration and because their families have to move, but they aren’t represented.”* (Prince Rupert Gathering Participant)

### **Decreased Funding and Increased Service Needs**

Urban Indigenous leaders consistently reported that current funding models are inadequate, short-term, and inequitable. Service contracts do not often reflect the true cost of delivering programs and are inadequate to meet rising demand, particularly in northern and rural regions where travel, housing, and operational costs are significantly higher. Accessing funding for services for Indigenous people living off-reserve was frequently cited as limited or inaccessible compared to on-reserve First Nations. Funding that reaches urban Indigenous people

frequently flows through other entities (e.g., Nations or mainstream organizations), resulting in administrative losses, delays, and reduced autonomy for urban Indigenous providers. Overall, funding instability makes long-term planning difficult and contributes to staff burnout and organizational fragility.

*“The health authority used to contract directly with us as an urban service provider, but now the money flows through the nation to our organization ... We used to have a direct relationship with the health authority and now this is no longer.” (Kamloops Gathering Participant)*

All four gatherings reported sharp increases in demand for housing, food security, health, child and family services, and crisis response; often driven by homelessness, climate impacts, migration, and downloading government responsibility onto community organizations. Despite this, funding levels remain static or are being reduced, leaving organizations overstretched and staff burnt out. Urban Indigenous organizations are frequently expected to absorb this growing demand without corresponding increases in funding or resources.

*“There is very little money for food so we rely on donations from grocery stores. Food security is what props up these programs we’re running in our organizations, and food demand is up by 20% or more this year.” (Prince Rupert Gathering Participant)*

*“Our stats for the North Peace region, Treaty 8, for Indigenous youth in care- there were 202 of our Indigenous children and youth in care in 2025, 26 percent from Treaty 8 nation, and 52 percent were null - couldn’t identify their nation. They are expecting us [urban Indigenous service providers] to care for all of these kids.”(Fort St. John Gathering Participant)*

## Summary of the Findings: *Strengthening Engagement with Urban Indigenous People*

Urban Indigenous Leaders in Kamloops, Fort St John, Prince Rupert, and Nanaimo frequently noted the correlation between urban Indigenous engagement and successful collaboration. They emphasized the importance of improving collaboration with other urban Indigenous leaders at both regional and provincial levels, as well as with local First Nations and all tiers of government. Central to successful collaboration is having access to and guidance from data that is controlled by Indigenous communities.

### *Collaborating with local First Nations*

Working with local First Nations was consistently identified as critical to the effectiveness and legitimacy of urban Indigenous organizations, particularly in advancing shared priorities, strengthening community support, and ensuring urban initiatives are understood and respected within broader Indigenous governance contexts. Strong relationships with Nations were seen as essential to reducing resource fragmentation and reinforcing urban Indigenous perspectives in decision making with local governments.

However, participants discussed the challenges in initiating and sustaining relationships with local First Nations due to limited capacity, leadership turnover, and competing demands.

Leaders emphasized that relationships with Nations directly influence the level of support urban Indigenous organizations receive and can affect how their work is perceived. However, these relationships were described as inconsistent and, at times, strained by competition for limited resources or concerns about overlapping mandates.

Participants stressed that relationship-building must be long-term, intentional, and trauma-aware, particularly given historical harms and mistrust. One participant underscored that trust cannot be assumed or rushed:

*“Relationships with the local nations are not formed with a one-time meeting. They must be authentic, real—you need to ‘show up’ repeatedly.”* (Nanaimo Gathering Participant)

Practical approaches were identified to strengthen collaboration, such as involving local Nations’ leadership on the boards of urban Indigenous organizations and ensuring services are accessible to local band members.

On Vancouver Island, a delegated child and family service entity led by local First Nations has extended voting rights to urban Indigenous service providers, demonstrating how governance structures can meaningfully include urban Indigenous voices even where broader policy environments present barriers.

*"There is no other option but to work together."* (Kamloops Gathering Participant)

### ***Collaborating with Urban Indigenous Leaders***

Across all gatherings, there was a clear and consistent interest in forming regional coalitions, networks, and regular gatherings of urban Indigenous leaders. Participants emphasized that collective voice, shared learning, and coordinated advocacy are essential to breaking down silos, reducing competition, and strengthening relationships with both First Nations and governments. In the absence of formal networks, organizations often work in isolation and compete for limited funding.

*"If we had a relationship network, we could better connect with these organizations to learn from them and mitigate the risks of expanding our services to areas already covered by them."* (Kamloops Gathering Participant)

Leaders shared concrete examples of collaboration already happening in communities, including interagency health and wellness meetings hosted by band offices (Duncan, Prince Rupert), regional training initiatives that have strengthened the Indigenous workforce (Prince Rupert), and partnerships between Friendship Centres and Indigenous food-growing initiatives to support community food security (Smithers, Kitwanga). These examples demonstrate the potential of collaboration when relationships and resources are in place.

At the same time, participants identified significant barriers to collaboration, including limited awareness of the range of Indigenous nonprofits operating within regions, limited leadership capacity to step away from day-to-day service delivery, and funding restrictions that constrain collaborative work, particularly for activities that take place off reserve.

Finally, leaders underscored that collaboration is closely tied to leadership development and succession planning. Many Indigenous leaders' step into senior roles with limited mentorship or formal training, and opportunities for peer support are scarce.

*"We need to rebuild connection and consider community relationships as a part of succession planning."* (Nanaimo Gathering Participant)

Participants recommended peer networks, mentorship opportunities, and tools such as an annually updated directory of urban Indigenous organizations to strengthen connection, visibility, and continuity across regions.

### ***Collaborating with Government***

Participants highlighted the need for more opportunities for collaboration and engagement with all levels of government. Leaders noted that urban Indigenous organizations are often excluded from provincial decision-making tables, despite serving large Indigenous populations. As one leader from the Prince Rupert gathering stated,

*“We are not recognized as an Indigenous organization when sitting at the provincial table... yet we represent 8,000 [Indigenous] clients, but because we don’t sit on reserve, our voices are excluded.”*

Participants stressed that this exclusion runs counter to the intent of B.C.’s *Declaration Act* and underscored the need for the Act to be implemented, enforced, and monitored in a way that is accountable to Indigenous people living both on and off reserve.

Leaders reflected on current engagement practices with government, noting that collaboration is often not prioritized and that urban Indigenous organizations are frequently consulted only when government “needs something.” For example, a leader in Fort St John noted that the last time someone from the provincial Ministry of Children and Family Development’s office visited their community was in 2008.

Leaders at gatherings in Prince Rupert and Fort St John expressed frustration that any engagement efforts with government typically restrict Northern voices to no further North than Prince George. They noted that many decisions affecting northern Indigenous populations are made without direct experience of local conditions such as living and working in the Northeast. As one Fort St John Gathering participant shared, *“It would be nice to have them come, see our reality, meet the people on the front lines.”* They stressed that meaningful consultation requires government to come to the region to fully understand the context in which the work is taking place.

Leaders expressed the need for deepened relationships and collaboration with government including a strong desire to welcome government representatives into their organizational spaces so decision-makers can see firsthand the community context, range of services delivered, and level of service demand. Participants emphasized that government presence in community strengthens relationships and leads to more informed decision-making. As one

Nanaimo Gathering participant stated, *“Put your boots on the ground, come and spend some time with us and see what we're doing with the money you give us.”*

Leaders emphasized the importance of meaningful, Indigenous-led face-to-face meetings with ministers and senior government executives, rather than brief “speed dating” sessions (referenced as a typical approach when a Cabinet Minister may give five minutes of their time to a small group of leaders). They suggested that sitting in a circle with officials or having them visit communities to observe ongoing work would be an effective way of building relationships.

Overall, for a meaningful engagement to take place, government must want to listen and participate in genuine dialogue, which can result in a better understanding of what is going on in urban communities and the impacts of policy or legislation on urban Indigenous people.

*“We used to do that ... meet with Ministries. It makes a huge difference when they come into our community...they get a better understanding. They seem more open to working with you, and they get it when they see the work that we do.”* (Nanaimo Gathering Participant)

### **Indigenous Data Ownership and Autonomy**

Across all four regional gatherings, leaders spoke to the importance of access to reliable, Indigenous controlled urban data that helps with collaboration, planning, funding applications, advocacy, and policy decisions. For example, Indigenous leaders shared instances in which they have been required to provide demographic data to their local government to “prove” their existence or legitimacy prior to engagement or allocation of resources.

*“We need a demographic survey completed of urban indigenous people in Kamloops. We need this data to support the conversation. To do any planning we need this data.”* (Kamloops Gathering Participant)

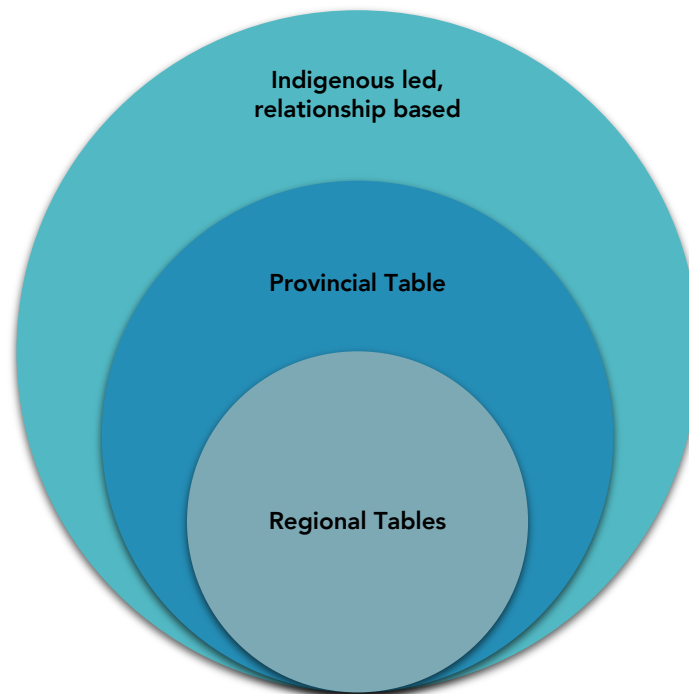
Participants emphasized the importance of Indigenous organizations maintaining ownership and autonomous use of their data, particularly in the context of pursuing funding opportunities. Nonetheless, leaders observed a persistent lack of reliable, Indigenous-controlled data on urban Indigenous populations, despite years of often redundant reporting to funders regarding community issues, trends, and statistics.

*“We talked about our siloed reporting, so much that needs to go to so many different places, and if we had something collected then we could share our stats it could cut reporting time down a lot.”* (Fort St John Gathering Participant)

## Summary of the Findings: *Urban Indigenous Engagement Model*

The Urban Indigenous *Declaration Act* Engagement Model (Engagement Model) plays a vital role in carrying out actions 4.21 to 4.24 in B.C.'s *Declaration Act Action Plan*. The Engagement Model is designed to serve as a coordinated approach to guiding and informing consultation and cooperation with BC's Indigenous population that lives off-reserve, a statutory duty enshrined within Section 3 of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act).

Drawing from the combined feedback provided during the four gatherings with urban Indigenous leaders, participants outlined a distinct vision for a three-tiered relational engagement model with government. This model would be led by Indigenous representatives and incorporate both regional tables and a provincial table.



### ***Indigenous-Led and Relationship-Based***

The urban Indigenous engagement model must be Indigenous led and informed by Indigenous values and ways of being. Urban Indigenous leaders highlighted the importance of being acknowledged and recognized as meaningful and essential to informing decisions that impact over 81% of Indigenous people in BC that do not live on reserve<sup>3</sup> (off-reserve First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples).

*“As urban Indigenous, we don’t always have the same voice as First Nations on-reserve people...AFN, UBCIC exists, but they don’t represent us because of the difference in urban experiences”* (Fort St John Gathering Participant)

Additionally, Indigenous leaders at each of the gatherings consistently stressed the importance of being relationship-based in their work. Many Indigenous cultures hold distinct teachings about relationships that emphasize interconnectedness and relational accountability as the foundation for building and sustaining strong communities. Indigenous leaders emphasized that meaningful engagement must move beyond project-based consultation and be grounded in these values.

Meaningful relationships should be informed through an urban Indigenous framework that defines the values within the relationship and reflects the realities of urban Indigenous communities within regional and local contexts.

### ***The Provincial Table***

Participants emphasized that establishing a provincial table for urban Indigenous leaders would provide an important mechanism for both government and community to collectively identify, track, and address shared issues affecting urban Indigenous peoples across British Columbia.

Some participants described a provincial table as a “federation of Indigenous nonprofits” at both regional and provincial levels to create regular opportunities to connect, coordinate, and support one another.

The provincial table could offer quarterly meeting as well as annual in-person gatherings with urban Indigenous leaders, Ministers and senior officials to speak to shared issues and opportunities, strengthen collaboration, and build relationships.

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<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, 2021. Indigenous Population Profile, 2021 Census of Population. Profile Tables.  
<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/ipp-ppa/index.cfm?Lang=E>

Participants emphasized the need for urban Indigenous perspectives from all regions of BC, including areas north of Prince George, to be included at the provincial table.

Urban Indigenous Leaders noted that an ongoing provincial table could provide opportunities to explore shared priorities and invite decision and policy-making on issues such as:

- BC Housing operating agreements that reflect urban Indigenous realities
- Resources specific for Indigenous end-of-life care and advance care planning (supports through First Nations Health Authority and Métis Nation BC are exclusive to on-reserve and registered Métis only).
- Ongoing funding barriers for Indigenous people living off reserve

Establishing a provincial table would help to create more efficient pathways to ensuring expanded and strengthened urban Indigenous representation at various provincial tables and boards that impact urban Indigenous people, including representation from regions beyond Prince George.

To support more consistent and accountable engagement, participants advocated for an ongoing dedicated role or branch within government focused on urban Indigenous affairs, including responsibility for ongoing data collection and liaising with communities and regions. Participants noted that such a function could support coordinated engagement across ministries and produce regular reporting on urban Indigenous issues and opportunities.

*“We need an urban Indigenous affairs office to coordinate ministries’ accountability... not random consultations, but constant engagement and inclusion that we’re just not getting.” (Fort St John Gathering Participant)*

### ***The Regional Tables***

Establishing regional tables for urban Indigenous leaders was identified as a critical mechanism for strengthening engagement between communities and government. Participants noted that these tables would enable both government and community to identify and respond to unique rural and remote issues, as well as shared regional priorities and opportunities. For example, leaders noted that regional tables could meet quarterly and be an effective forum for urban Indigenous leadership collaboration and opportunities for:

- Inviting decision makers to attend and hear directly about regional trends and challenges, and co-developing solutions aligned with the *Declaration Act*
- Sharing best practices and building awareness of existing urban Indigenous services

- Establishing local procurement protocols and regionally responsive funding models such as a model that reflects northern and rural realities.

Regional tables could include participation from different levels of government and local First Nations to enable relationship-based engagement towards improved understanding of urban Indigenous realities, co-creation of community specific solutions and collaboration between on and off-reserve communities in advancing shared priorities.

Participants suggested that regional gatherings include a government liaison backed by decision-makers to help relay priorities, support accountability, and build more meaningful relationships across ministries. For example, regional tables could include a regional government representative to listen and advocate collectively on shared issues such as housing, education, and funding reform.

*“The impact of an in-person conversation itself to show government how much we care is powerful... if we can come together as one and unite to have that opportunity it would be a good thing.” (Nanaimo Gathering Participant)*

Participants also identified the need for dedicated capacity funding for regional tables to address the barriers which included limited time, travel distances, transportation and food costs, and loss of institutional knowledge due to retirements. Capacity funds could help to support coordination and ensure collaboration does not remain “off the side of the desk”.

Urban Indigenous leaders noted that regional tables could also help to address the limited awareness of urban Indigenous services through the development of an annually updated directory of urban Indigenous organizations and their respective services. A regional service director was recommended by urban Indigenous leaders as a way to support stronger connections, coordination, and collaboration.

## Recommended Next Steps

### *Urban Indigenous Engagement Model*

1. Establish an Urban Indigenous Engagement model that is Indigenous led and relationship based and includes both regional tables and a provincial table, where:
  - Urban Indigenous leaders serving off-reserve communities are recognized as meaningful and essential to the work
  - Engagement is Indigenous led and informed by Indigenous values and ways of being.
  - Relationship building is viewed as long-term, intentional and trauma aware
2. Ensure ongoing support for dedicated role with decision making authority, within Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation that focuses on urban Indigenous affairs including responsibility for ongoing engagement, coordination across government, Indigenous-led data collection and liaising with urban Indigenous communities and regional tables.
3. Invest in an Indigenous-controlled urban data strategy that enables access to reliable, Indigenous controlled data to help with collaboration, funding, planning, advocacy and policy decisions. Data systems should be governed by Indigenous principles and reflect the realities of urban Indigenous communities across different regions.

### *Provincial Urban Indigenous Network Table*

4. Allocate dedicated capacity funding through the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation to support building a Provincial Table of urban Indigenous leaders to support consistent, accountable, and collaborative engagement between government and urban Indigenous leadership:
  - The Provincial Table should include regular quarterly meetings and annual in-person gatherings with ministers and senior officials.
  - Representation to include urban Indigenous perspectives from all regions, including northern and remote areas.
  - The Provincial Table can serve to support the monitoring of the *Declaration Act* Action Plan items for urban Indigenous community
5. Form a federation that brings together all urban Indigenous organizations serving off-reserve populations, including First Nations individuals residing in BC (regardless of their Nation), as well as Inuit and Métis people who are not registered with MNBC.

- The federation should serve as a relationship network that offers connections and support amongst Indigenous organizations including a peer leadership network and mentorship opportunities

### *Regional Urban Indigenous Tables*

6. Support the establishment of face-to-face regional tables of urban Indigenous leaders throughout BC as a core engagement mechanism to address region-specific priorities and realities, including rural and remote contexts. Additionally:
  - Tables should be structured to strengthen engagement between communities, urban Indigenous leaders and local First Nations, where possible
  - Tables should include a focus on identifying rural and remote issues, where applicable, and regional priorities and opportunities
  - Tables ideally include participation from local and regional governments and a provincial government liaison
7. Allocate dedicated capacity funding through the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation to support regional tables. Funding should address barriers such as limited staff capacity, travel distances, transportation and food costs. Resourcing coordination roles and rotating meeting locations will help ensure collaboration does not remain informal or “off the side of the desk.”
8. Build and maintain an annual directory of urban Indigenous organizations across BC to strengthen connection and visibility, including details about Indigenous organizations and service mandates within the regions.

## Appendix A – Regional Gathering Participants

Participant	Organization
Alison Manitowabi	Treaty 8 Tribal Association
Anna Zanella (Gathering host)	Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert
Annette Morgan	Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society
Autrey Derickson	Nenan Dane Zaa Deh Zona Family Services Society
Bes Leeson	Tribal Resources Investment Corporation
Brenda Barritt	Story Tellers Society
Brody Fisher	Two Rivers Métis Society
Cal Albright (Gathering host)	Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society
Carol Camille	Lillooet Friendship Centre Society
Celeste Hayward (hosting partner)	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
Claire D'Silva	Chetwynd Tansi Friendship Centre
Cyndi Stevens	Port Alberni Friendship Center
Deanne McLeod	North East Native Advancing Society
Debbie Conlin	Okanagan Training and Development Council
Derian Young	Nenan Dane Zaa Deh Zona Family Services Society
Diane McRae	Story Tellers Society
Edie Cartwright	Mid Island Métis Nation Association
Francyne Joe	Conayt Friendship Society; BCAAFC Board Secretary
Gareth Jones	North Okanagan Friendship Centre Society
Grace Nielson	Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Society
Happy Metcalf	Aboriginal Training & Employment Centre
Herb Charlie	Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society
Hyrum Peterson	Conayt Friendship Society
Inga Cooper (Gathering Host)	Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Society
Jackie Lever	North Island Métis
Jacob Beaton	Indigenous Food Sovereignty Association
Jacqueline Johnson	Kamloops Native Housing Society
Jacquie Ridley	Tribal Resources Investment Corporation
Janice Franklin (hosting partner)	Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Joe Sam	Hiiye'yu Lelum Society
Joy Sundin	Prince Rupert and District Métis Society
Julie Robertson (hosting partner)	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
Kara Loutit (witness)	National Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
Keri Laughlin (record keeper)	Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
Laura Alfaro (record keeper)	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
Leanne Hora	Nawican Friendship Centre
Lloyd Hogue	Mid Island Métis Nation Association
Lori Bull	Sasamans Society
Mandie Furey	Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society
Mary Frohlich	Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert
Megan Boddy (record keeper)	Strong Circle Leadership & Governance Society
Miranda Kessler	Kxeen Community Services Society
Ron Rice (witness)	Victoria Native Friendship Centre
Rose Temple	Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert
Ruth Williams	Kamloops Native Housing Society
Sadie Dennis	Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert
Sam Cardinal	Chetwynd Tansi Friendship Centre
Shane Hora	Nawican Friendship Centre
Shauna Fox	Ooknakane Friendship Centre
Sheena Haaf	Nawican Friendship Centre
Sierra Wells (hosting partner)	Strong Circle Leadership & Governance Society
Amy Woodruffe (record keeper)	Strong Circle Leadership & Governance Society
Silvana Vivian Lake	Kamloops Native Housing Society
Stan Dennis	Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert
Steven Eastman (witness)	Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council
Thomas O'Brien	Island Urban Indigenous Wellness Society
Todd Morrow (Gathering host)	Fort St John Friendship Society
Victor Giyani	Dawson Creek Native Housing Society
Wal-aks Keane Tait	Kermode Friendship Society
Wukk Gye	Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert

## Appendix B – Declaration Act Action Plan

**4.21 Bring together key Indigenous urban leaders to create a provincial urban Indigenous advisory table** to develop and implement a five-year plan to address the priorities of urban Indigenous Peoples, including a focus on Elders, youth, children, women, men, 2SLGBTQQIA+ and persons with disabilities.

**4.22 Ministers and executives across the provincial government social sector will meet annually** with urban Indigenous service organization leaders, such as the provincial urban Indigenous advisory table (see Action 4.21), to discuss successes, innovations, and challenges of supporting the social, cultural and economic needs of urban Indigenous Peoples.

**4.23 Undertake a cross-government review of provincial supports and services for Indigenous Peoples in urban settings** and develop a plan with clear timelines that will provide greater collaboration and coordination to meet needs. (Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)

**4.24 Expand support to Aboriginal Friendship Centres and other urban Indigenous organizations** that serve the needs of urban Indigenous people in B.C. while also acknowledging that Aboriginal Friendship Centres and other urban Indigenous organizations play a vital role for those that wish to connect to their cultures and traditions