



NÎSOHKAMÂKEWIN COUNCIL

HANDBOOK

**WELCOME TO THE NÎSOHKAMÂKEWIN
COUNCIL**

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Welcome Message

On behalf of the Edmonton Police Service, I am honored to extend a warm welcome to you as a new member of our nîsohkamâkewin Council. Your willingness to serve and contribute to our community's well-being is both commendable and essential to fostering a positive and collaborative relationship between the Edmonton Police Service and the diverse Indigenous communities we are privileged to serve.

The nîsohkamâkewin Council plays a pivotal role in our ongoing efforts to enhance public safety, build mutual trust, and ensure our policing strategies reflect the diverse needs of our community. Your unique perspectives, experiences, and insights will be invaluable as we work together to address complex challenges and identify opportunities for positive change.

As a member of the nîsohkamâkewin Council, you will be part of a dynamic team of community leaders, advocates, and residents who share a common goal: to create a safer, more inclusive Edmonton. Through open dialogue, collaborative problem-solving, and shared initiatives, we can achieve lasting impacts that benefit all Edmontonians.

You will be attending your first nîsohkamâkewin Council meeting, where you will have the opportunity to meet fellow council members, learn more about our current initiatives, and discuss how we can collectively contribute to the betterment of our community.

Please know that your voice is important to us. The insights and feedback provided by the nîsohkamâkewin Council are instrumental in guiding our policies, practices, and community engagement efforts. Together, we can build a model of community policing that is responsive, equitable, and effective.

Once again, welcome to the nîsohkamâkewin Council. I look forward to working closely with you to make Edmonton a safer and more connected community



Warren Driechel
Chief of Police

The Community Relations Section (CRS)

The Community Relations Section (CRS) is situated in the Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights (EIHR) Branch at the EPS. The CRS functions as the secretariat and coordinates logistics operations for the Council. The secretariat is the primary contact for the council members.



Lori Lorenz
Executive Director, Value and Impact Division



Gina Daus
Director, EIHR



Michelle LaRue
Manager, Community Relations



Aleen Lenana
Community Relations Advisor



Abby Sly
Indigenous Relations Advisor



Christie Pace
Indigenous Relations Advisor



Lane Gagnon
Equity and Inclusion Advisor



Ekta Lakha
Equity and Inclusion Advisor



Chelsea Elmquist
Community Relations Constable

History: From CAC to nîsohkamâkewin

The Chiefs Advisory Council (CAC) was developed in 2004 to engage the EPS and Edmontonians in a proactive dialogue centered on developing mutual trust, information sharing, and relationship building.

As part of the CAC Framework, eight subcommittees known as Community Liaison Committees (CLCs) were created representing the following diverse communities: African, Black, Chinese, Indigenous, Jewish, Muslim, Sexual and Gender Minorities, and South Asian. These communities were selected based on those that experienced the highest levels of hate crimes at the time.

In November 2013, the Centre for Race and Culture was contracted to conduct a review of the Chiefs Advisory Council (CAC) and consult with stakeholders within the EPS and the community. The key findings of the review were as follows:

- There was a lack of awareness about the CAC and CLCs both within the EPS and in the communities which they are intended to support.
- Respondents wanted a stronger set of accountability measures to ensure that the CAC and CLCs were meeting their goals and objectives.
- Concerns were raised from the broader community about representation and participation on the CAC and CLCs.
- There was a strong desire to shift the activities to achieve more action oriented outcomes.
- Communities facing similar challenges and barriers had limited opportunities to engage regarding shared experiences (lack of acknowledgement of intersectionality).



There was a specific emphasis on the idea that the community should work collectively on issues affecting numerous groups while understanding the solutions for specific communities will be unique and tailored based on individual community needs.



In 2021, the nîsohkamâkewin was formed. A diverse group of Indigenous People, a council of 16 members that broadly represented the diverse Indigenous experiences of Edmonton. The council was mandated to advise on policy, process, operations, and engagement with the EPS.

EPS hosts 4 additional councils:

- **nîsohkamakewin Council (CCC)**
- Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) Advisory Council
- Elders Council
- Youth Advisory Council

The nîsohkamâkewin Mandate

Purpose

The following terms outline the operations of the Council as one of the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) Community Advisory Councils. The Council provides feedback, guidance, and recommendations to the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) on policies and procedures and initiatives that directly impact Indigenous Peoples.

The feedback and suggestions from the Council will draw upon members' lived experience and knowledge to support innovative delivery. The Council will provide feedback to EPS relating to safe and inclusive policies and practices that are developed by reviewing necessary documents and building collaborative relationships as well as future engagement efforts that may impact Edmonton's diverse Indigenous communities.

The Council will fulfill its mandate by guiding EPS as it implements recommendations from but not limited to the "Roadmap: Systemic Issues facing Indigenous Peoples" comprised of four reports: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, The Broken Trust Report, and The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The Council will also serve to identify, inform, discuss, and address common issues and trends, which may affect the quality and effectiveness of community policing and public safety in relation to Edmonton's Indigenous community, as well as additional recommendations from current and future public engagement efforts.

TOR

Terms of reference (TOR) outline how the nîsohkamâkewin Council agrees to work together to accomplish common goals. The TOR can be found in the shared drive. [Click here to view them.](#)

Meeting Logistics



Dinner

Dinner will be provided by a restaurant or catering service. If you'd like to suggest a restaurant that can accommodate a variety of dietary restrictions, please provide them to the CRS team.

Smudge

We will start each meeting in a good way with a Smudge and Prayer. Smudge and prayer may be lead by any council member willing. Protocol (Tabacco) will be offered when a member or guest is asked to do so on behalf of the Council.

Location

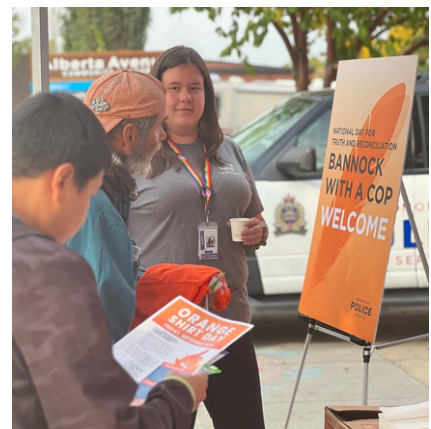
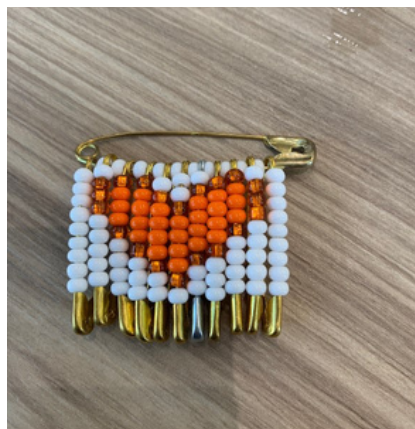
Meeting locations TBA, there is always the possibility to meet in community spaces where and when (logistically possible). If you have suggestions for meeting spaces, please provide them to the CRS team.

Attendance

With only 4 meetings per year, we ask that members make every effort to attend every meeting in person. There are 11 Council members. Senior leadership and the secretariat comprise an additional 5 members, and up to 5 other EPS members may attend to observe or present information.

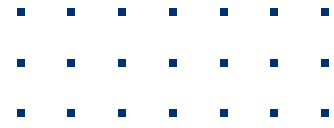
Documents

The Council uses google drive to share meeting agendas, the TOR and other supporting documents. [Click here to access the google drive.](#)



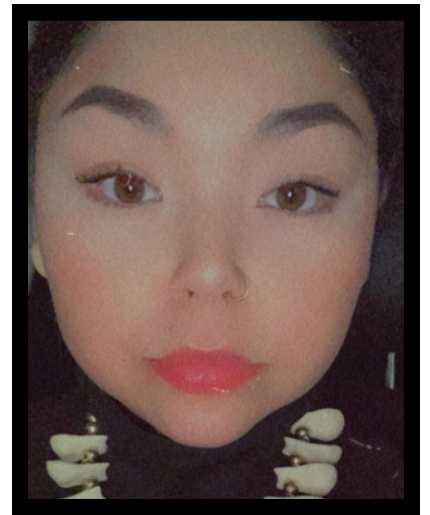
Orange Shirt Day - Bannock with a Cop-2022

nîsohkamâkewin Council Members



1 Courtney Auger

Tansi, I am standing bear woman. I come from treaty 8 territory but have planted roots in treat 6 where I have dedicated my career to supporting, advocating, and uplifting our indigenous communities. Living in Edmonton my entire life I have faced, witness and challenged adversity. It is through my lived experience that I found my voice. A voice that I believe was meant to help my people. I believe this to be my purpose, and I am so honoured to be able to live within my purpose.



2 Tonya Gardner

Ts a person who was raised in a very dysfunctional household, there was no addictions but there was a lot of abuse, I've learned to navigate my life trusting no one and only depending at myself which can be a very lonely road. However, I've always been a helper for as long as I can remember, so working with children just came naturally to me, I wanted to make change I wanted to help support, show love and kindness to those in need. The indigenous culture is beautiful, it is accepting, it is loving, it is sharing and I think that it's critical that we get back to those basics, even the seven teachings can teach so much ..not just to indigenous but to every walk of life. I have made changes in my life to become a better person to become a better listener to become a better friend, and I think if we work together, we can make great changes. I believe in meeting people where they are at ..not "expecting" change but being open to fostering relationships. we can talk about the things that we would like to do but action is what makes a difference, what we do how we do it and how we say it ...these things will start to be the catalyst to build trust and make change. I believe we will have peace one day, but the stigma needs to be addressed.



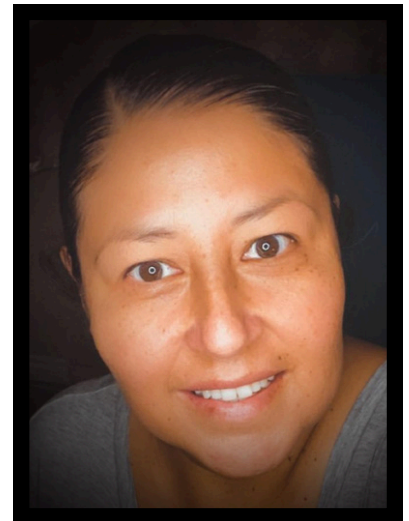
3 Shawna Jean

I am Cree woman who is First Nations from Swan River First Nation located in the Lesser Slave Lake area. I have a formal education from the University of Alberta and currently enrolled in the Masters program with a focus in psychotherapy with a trauma focus. I am a mother of 5 adult children and a kookum to 3 beautiful grandchildren. I am a family focused individual who takes great pride in passing on my cultural ties and practice's. I believe that getting involved and volunteering is important in order to gain experience as well as knowledge. I enjoy collaborating and researching to the betterment of the cause. It's my hope that I can be as asset as well as an important contributor to assisting the community/program excel.



4 Robbie Kaboni

Robbie Kaboni of Wikwemkoong Unceded Territory on Manitoulin Island. Edmonton is my home I have lived here since 1979 (tender age of 6 years old when we moved here). I have worked in the Human Services field for 25 years in a variety of roles both here in Edmonton and briefly in the Wood Buffalo Region Fort McMurray. I have been connected and employed with Bent Arrow since 1998 leaving briefly for 11 short years to live in Fort McMurray. Even while away, I remained very connected to my Bent Arrow Family so when I moved back in 2014, I picked right back up with Bent Arrow. I thoroughly enjoy the community we serve and watching their resilience flourish into building confidence in self and what they bring to the table. It's been an absolute pleasure learning and growing as a person alongside the community we serve.



5 Hailey-Emma MaRae

Hailey-Emma McRae is a Cree-Métis, a budding artisan and a musician eagerly seeking community and opportunities for learning. After spending 9 years mentoring her peers and participating in Indigenous leadership programs, Hailey-Emma was offered the opportunity to work with the Otipemisiwak Métis Government (Métis Nation of Alberta) in community engagement with Métis youth throughout Alberta. This seems like a perfect fit as she possesses a deep passion for building authentic relationships, strengthening her community, and sharing resources and knowledge to empower the next generation to preserve their cultural traditions.

Hailey-Emma has a passion for empowering others in her Indigenous community to rise above adversity. To speak Hope into their lives and to affirm that despite their circumstances, there is purpose for their life.

If not hosting a paint or games night at her place, Hailey-Emma enjoys her time being creative through artwork and composing music on her piano. Hailey-Emma also participates in the performing arts and always pursues trying new things! "



Community members partake in community conversations as part of recruit training- 2025



EPS New Hires Participating in Cultural Camp Bent Arrow 2025



Edmonton Police Recruit Class - Blanket Exercise- 2025

6 Noah Riberio

I am a proud Gitxsan man; I come from Terrace B.C. and have most of my extended family living in the reserves along the Skeena River. I believe strongly in public service and mending the long-standing issues between Indigenous peoples and Law Enforcement. I became a Peace Officer in January 2024 and have since made it a priority in my day-to-day job to make a positive impact, while also maintaining the enforcement requirement of my position. Although i am Gitxsan, I enjoy being able to explore the diversity of Alberta's Indigenous cultures. I attend many events in Enoch, Alexis, Alexander, and PoundMaker reserves. I also attend many Métis events with my Partner as she is an MNA Member. I hope to continue my contributions to public service and foster positive relationships.



7 Merle Morrisseau

I live in Sherwood Park and am a grandfather /father/uncle/friend. I have sole custody of my 2 oldest grandchildren, and a fantastic dog named Roscoe. I am owner of my own HSE company and have provided pro bone support to Indigenous companies in our area and MB. I did get tickets to see the Foo Fighters and Diana Krall, so yes varied taste in music.



Oskayak Police Academy in 2025



Smudging Ceremony for new Northwest Campus Facility- 2019

8 Rebecca Visscher

Rebecca Visscher, RSW, is a social services executive with over 15 years of experience leading trauma-informed, culturally grounded programs across Western Canada. Based in Edmonton, she currently serves as Director of Programs at The Salvation Army's Centre of Hope, overseeing large-scale housing and recovery initiatives that support individuals facing homelessness, complex trauma, and substance use.

Rebecca has designed and launched innovative stabilization and residential recovery programs, secured significant grant funding, and led interdisciplinary teams of over 80 staff serving more than 200 high-risk clients. Her work is rooted in harm reduction, decolonizing practice, and a deep commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, gender equity, and Indigenous wellness.

She holds degrees in Psychology and First Nations Studies, is a TEND-Certified Trauma Trainer, and is currently completing a Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies, focusing on systems change and Indigenous-led models of care.



9 Somer Grandbois

Somer Grandbois is a survivor, truth-teller, and founder of Our Truth Enterprise Inc. Born in Edmonton and raised in the shadows of the Sixties Scoop, Somer lived through cycles of addiction, foster care, abuse, and profound loss including the murder of her brother in 2015. Her healing began when she returned to ceremony, reclaimed her name, and chose to build a life rooted in truth.

Today, Somer leads survivor-led initiatives focused on cultural revitalization, land protection, and youth empowerment. Her work is grounded in lived experience and guided by ancestral knowledge. She doesn't build with revenge, she builds with purpose, clarity, and love. Our Truth Enterprise is her offering to humanity: a call to remember who we are, to share what was left for us, and to fight for a future rooted in care.



10 Wanda Whitford

My name is Wanda Whitford, and my Indigenous roots are from the Treaty 6 territory of Saddle Lake and Goodfish First Nations, Alberta. For over 30 years, I have served my Indigenous community in leadership roles across education and the human services sector. I hold a Bachelor of Arts in Youth Counselling (2006, University of Malaspina) and have contributed to numerous boards and committees throughout my career.

For the past decade, I have worked within the Indigenous Learning Services Department of Edmonton Catholic Schools as a Community Engagement Specialist, Braided Journeys Graduation Coach, and now as an Indigenous Wellness Specialist. Beyond my professional role, I volunteer weekly at Dreamcatchers Animal Assisted Therapy Ranch and the 5 Freedoms Horse Rescue Ranch, where I also facilitate a Culture and Land Based Wellness program in partnership with this ranch and ECSD. Together, we provide 90 Indigenous ECSD students with opportunities to connect to culture, land, and the healing energy of horses.

I have also served on boards and committees including, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, City of Edmonton Indigenous Relations Committee, Edmonton Police Victim Services, Oskayak Police Academy, End Poverty Action Circle, Dreamcatchers Ranch, 5 Freedoms Ranch, and the Telus World of Science Centre (six-year term, Indigenous portfolio).



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Carla Jamison

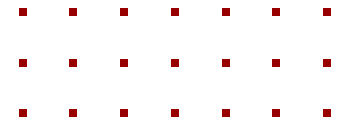
I am an Indigenous woman from Treaty 8 with European cultural ties, and this dual perspective has profoundly shaped how I understand, communicate, and bridge diverse viewpoints. Walking between these two worlds has given me the ability to empathize deeply, listen with intention, and bring cultural awareness into every space I enter. I am also a mother of two adult children and share my life with a supportive partner, all of whom keep me grounded in the values of family, responsibility, and community.

Throughout my life, I have had the opportunity to live in British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, and to work across multiple provinces including Manitoba and Ontario. These experiences have broadened my understanding of the diverse realities and strengths of Indigenous communities across Canada. My professional journey has allowed me to build relationships with a wide range of Indigenous groups—including my own—each offering its own teachings, perspectives, and stories.

These experiences have strengthened my commitment to contributing meaningfully wherever I can. I approach my work with the hope of leaving a lasting, positive impact by supporting culturally informed decision-making, fostering strong relationships, and helping create safer, more equitable spaces for Indigenous peoples and future generations.



Contact Information



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📷 [@edmontonpoliceservice](https://www.instagram.com/edmontonpoliceservice)



Top: IOF Presentation- All Councils-2025 Left: EPS CTSS Team- Blanket Exercise-2024 Right: Sisters in Spirit Day 2023