



NATIVE JUSTICE COALITION
TRUTH & RECONCILIATION
COMMISSION



STRATEGIC PLAN
2022-2027



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TRUTH & RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

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FORWARD

Native Justice Coalition grew out of a need for the Indigenous communities across the Great Lakes region to come together to confront intergenerational trauma, systemic oppression, and collectively heal. Since the time of European contact, colonial institutions in what is known as the United States and Canada have built systems of oppression that have led to poverty, health disparities, socio-economic injustice, and racial violence. **Native Justice Coalition's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and 2022-2027 Strategic Plan** outlines a focused plan to surface the truth associated with Indian boarding schools and create healing opportunities that disrupt cycles of oppression.

Since 2016, Native Justice Coalition, an Indigenous led nonprofit organization dedicated to social justice and the healing of historic trauma for Native people, has worked with over 1,000 community members, their families, and several Native communities across the Great Lakes region. Programs provide space to share stories, support healing, and facilitate cultural practice that strengthens Native identity.

Native Justice Coalition has traveled throughout the region hosting **Healing Stories**, a program that brings Indigenous people together to share their stories of survival and resilience. The outcome has been tremendous, creating a network of support for healing, providing a safe space to share, and strengthening the community's sense of resilience to confront oppression directly.

Over the next five years, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will expand its reach to strengthen relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in an effort to seek the truth behind the Indian boarding school policies and corresponding actions taken by the government and church. Our goals are to create an Indigenous led process that is grounded in mutual respect, culturally sensitive, and focused on meeting clearly defined, jointly agreed upon metrics. To achieve measurable change, our goal is that these metrics are publicly reported and aligned with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Strategic Plan.

We know healing is critical to breaking the cycle of oppression and achieving a new positive, healthy reality in our communities. It is incredibly difficult for people to move on with basic aspects of life if they continue to face the impacts of trauma. We are committed to truth and healing. We will ensure the actions laid out in this plan are achieved and will continue to advance healing through the work of the Native Justice Coalition.

The strength of the Native Justice Coalition comes from working with the community. Our network of Indigenous and non-Indigenous community partners will work to improve the quality of life for our communities. Our accomplishments are dependent on the commitment and passion of others. We would like to thank our partners and their efforts to face oppression and disrupt the patterns that have threatened Indigenous people, their communities, and our culture.

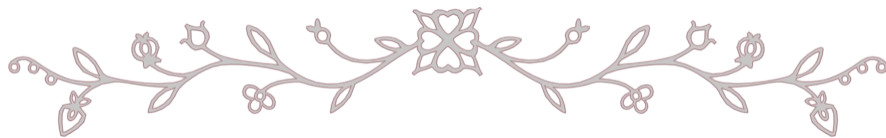


CECELIA R. LAPOINTE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LORI SHERMAN
BOARD PRESIDENT



NATIVE JUSTICE COALITION



OUR VISION

Native American, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities in the Great Lakes are empowered to celebrate who we are as Indigenous people, observe our cultural practice, and exercise our agency to heal from colonial oppression and intergenerational trauma. We are confident in who we are as strong Indigenous people and no longer are held captive by the power of oppressive systems. We see our culture flourish, our people thrive, and our communities heal as we create new opportunities for our children and their children.

MISSION

The Native Justice Coalition serves as a platform for healing, social, and racial justice for all Native American people. Our goal is to bring resources, initiatives, and programming into our tribal communities that are creative, engaging, and transformative.

We are a grassroots, community based, and progressive Anishinaabe Native led coalition. How we define being progressive is based on centering Native people in racial justice or harm reduction that has culturally sensitive supports for healing.

VALUES

Native Justice Coalition centers our work on the following core values. These values guide our approach to our work with Anishinaabe communities and inform the development of programs and services.

Embody Indigenous healing practices and values.

Empower Indigenous people to be heard and to take action to address social and racial injustice.

Working as a coalition, in collaboration with Native and non-Native partners, provide strength in unity and collaboration.

Actions are taken with empathy to heal and revitalize.





NATIVE JUSTICE COALITION



OUR STORY

The Native Justice Coalition is a grassroots coalition that was birthed out of an event held in the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community in 2015. Since this time, we have grown by leaps and bounds. We embrace and center Native American people in our work in social and racial justice so we are not left at the margins. At the Native Justice Coalition, we are changing this narrative. Our organization and governance reflect the amazing diversity that exists in Ojibway - Anishinaabe communities in the Great Lakes.

Additionally, we strive to maintain our Anishinaabe led focus which embraces traditional clan leadership, matriarchal leadership, Two-Spirit leadership, and decolonizes mainstream community organizing. We plan to maintain an Anishinaabe Racial Justice Coalition within our larger coalition as a model for other communities outside of our territory. We believe in the strength of our communities and the transformation we are all a part of.

Based in Michigan, we work by and for our Anishinaabe and Native communities mostly in the Great Lakes. Our focus on social and racial justice is essential to the cultural, social, and economic wellbeing of these rural and remote Indigenous communities where there is little grant or philanthropic dollars. We look to bring new voices to the table, including youth, Two-Spirit, elders, disabled, and those recovering from addiction. Over time, our goal is to expand to Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Ontario. We are willing to go the extra mile for our people by bringing our projects to the community so then the community can lead this work.

Native led racial justice is about healing our communities and empowering our people through our programs. We give voice to our people through stories as a form of greater community collaboration. We believe that by bringing healing to our people and communities we can be better equipped to deal with systemic injustice and racism from the majority culture. Our work has a path of healing and ultimately, we hope this leads to greater self-determination and building community strength.





FOUNDATIONS OF OUR WORK

1

HEALING JUSTICE

We provide a safe space for healing to occur in Native communities. We believe that in order for Native people to heal from historical trauma and racism, it is important to create this space and provide the resources for our people to heal. Some forms of healing justice may come in storytelling, which is something we want to practice and emphasize through this organization. Similarly, healing justice can address multiple issues; including racism, sexism, addiction, abuse, gender violence, and historical trauma.

2

RACIAL JUSTICE

We center Native American people in racial justice and equity work. So often in anti-racism initiatives, Native people have been left out of the conversations. In the United States, the Black and White racial binary has not only ignored other groups but ignores settler colonialism on Native lands. We seek to change this narrative around and center our people in our work. Addressing current traumas, disparities, historical, and generational trauma is a key part of our work.

3

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

We address the root cause of historical trauma. Restorative justice emphasizes healing the harm done by the offense and rehabilitating the offender to avoid future harm. Such processes are in line with traditional Aboriginal views of justice. In a sense, this work is about returning to the teachings and decolonization. *This is an example of restorative justice in a remote [Ojibway community - Hollow Water First Nation.](#)*

4

GENDER JUSTICE

We seek to redefine what gender justice means based on decolonizing gender roles and identities. Gender justice is about decolonizing and also embracing modern times in the many identities we share.

This work may include:

- Restoring Matriarchy
- Decolonizing Masculinities
- Honoring Two-Spirits
- Healthy Native families and individuals





IMPACT

NATIVE JUSTICE COALITION

Our work is firmly based on our strong cultural foundations and teachings and is led by our people and communities.

Native and First Nations communities have always considered the shorter-term and intermediate future by considering future generations. It is a part of our philosophy and everyday life. Our cultural teachings and beliefs inform program design and shape impact. Our accomplishments since our founding in 2017 and initial grant funding are a result of four main highlights that serve as the roots of our efforts and propel our work forward.

Over the next five years, achieving impact for the Native Justice Coalition is tied to healing, revitalizing, and transforming Native lives and communities.

We continue to build on the success of the first year and continue to attract philanthropic support that has allowed us to expand our reach and achieve a greater lasting impact. Our intention is to positively impact Native and non-Native communities, policies, and practices. While colonial borders may not necessarily be dissolved, we could however achieve a new relationship based on Native Nation's relationships with colonial governments. Current efforts from Idle No More, Land Back, and Native justice across the US and Canada have paved this path for us to walk down. Boldly, we will build our path to impact our people and communities emphasizing community collaboration, partnerships, and the community voice. Our work is built upon the amazing resilience of our ancestors and the path they paved for our people in surviving genocide. Finally, it is our intention to restore our communities, so we are all thriving together.

**ANISHINAABE
RACIAL JUSTICE
CONFERENCE**

**ANISHINAABE
HEALING
STORIES ON
RACIAL JUSTICE
PROGRAM**

**TWO-SPIRIT
PROGRAM**

**MMIWG2S
PROGRAM**



ANISHINAABE RACIAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE

We had held two previous successful conferences in the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (Baraga, MI) in 2018 & 2019. We worked in collaboration with Native and non-Native local, statewide, and regional organizations. On average we had about **32 speakers** per conference as well as some amazing panels! In 2018 we had 200 attendees and out of those attendees we had **60 walk in's** which were mostly from the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and other communities like the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. The number increased in the 2019 conference to **63 walk in's** and again from mostly the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community.

ANISHINAABE HEALING STORIES ON RACIAL JUSTICE PROGRAM

This program was launched in 2018. We have held **6 events across our rural and remote Anishinaabe communities in Michigan**. A total of **53 Story Sharers and 195 event attendees** have participated in this important work for our people and communities. We held these events in the following communities: Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (2018 & 2019), Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians (2018 & 2019), Hannahville Indian Community (2018), and Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians (2019).

TWO-SPIRIT PROGRAM

We officially launched this program in May 2019. We held our first Two-Spirit Healing Stories in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in September 2019. For this event, we had a total of **13 Story Sharers and 60 event attendees**. We also held Two-Spirit Talking Circles in the Oneida Nation (Wisconsin) and Grand Rapids, Michigan.

MMIWG2S PROGRAM

This program was launched in August 2019. The MMIWG2S abbreviation stands for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People. Since the launch, we have successfully run the MMIW awareness billboard in **12 locations and a total of 20** times from August 2019 to the present.

Some of these locations were repeats such as Grand Rapids or Manistee, Michigan. These locations include Manistee, MI (Little River Band of Ottawa Indians), Rudyard, MI (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians), Baraga, MI (Keweenaw Bay Indian Community), Petoskey, MI (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians), Rapid River, MI (Hannahville and Sault Tribes), Grand Rapids, MI, Ludington, MI, Grand Haven, MI, Green Bay, WI, Appleton, WI, Superior, WI, and Duluth, MN.

We hosted our inaugural **Healing Around the Lakes - MMIWG2S Justice, Action & Advocacy**, in Rapid River, MI, June 2021. We had 80 attendees throughout the day and a total of 7 amazing speakers. We had vendors, crafts, and a community walk that went to the MMIW awareness billboard located on US-2 in Rapid River, MI.

PROGRAMS

1 MICHIGAN TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

Native Justice Coalition is committed to launching the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that recognizes the historic trauma Anishinaabe communities face associated with the nearly 150-year practice of forcibly removing Indigenous youth and placing them in boarding schools or with adoptive families. The TRC, through Healing Stories, provides an accurate account of history, facilitates healing, and establishes public policy to sustain healing, revitalization, and ongoing Nation rebuilding.



2 ANISHINAABE HEALING STORIES ON RACIAL JUSTICE PROGRAM

At the Native Justice Coalition, we are passionate about sharing our stories, healing, and racial justice. This program emphasizes public story sharing on racism to bring voice and visibility to our people and communities. With increased grant funding, we plan to digitally record all the stories into documentaries for community resources. If requested by the community, we will offer private story sharing opportunities as some people may not feel safe sharing publicly.



3 ANISHINAABE RACIAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE

Our annual conference offers workshops, presentations, and coalition building on racial justice. For 2022 we are collaborating with 10 statewide and regional organizations.

4 TWO-SPIRIT PROGRAM

Two-Spirit is a pan-Native American term that focuses on decolonial gender roles, gender identities, and sexual orientation that existed in our communities prior to colonization. Our program seeks to engage in decolonizing gender roles and identities within our communities. We will do this work through healing stories, talking circles, community forums, gatherings, and workshops.



5 HARM REDUCTION PROGRAM

Our Harm Reduction Project will initially focus on partnering with organizations such as Gwayakobimaadiziwin Bad River Harm Reduction. As a new program, we will be offering talking circles and art workshops that are geared towards providing a truly safe and supportive space for Anishinaabe and Native people on their recovery journey.

6 MMIWG2S PROGRAM

The Native Justice Coalition officially launched our MMIWG2S Project in August 2019. The MMIWG2S abbreviation stands for Missing and Murdered Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People. To elevate MMIWG2S as one of the most significant, largely unaddressed challenges facing Native communities, we installed a series of outdoor billboards throughout the Great Lakes with the goal of raising awareness and decreasing the incidence of MMIWG2S.



SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

We have engaged in special projects with other organizations since our inception. Some of these projects have included events around MMIWG2S. Additionally, we have grown and maintained our organization during a global pandemic which includes a blend of virtual, outdoor, and our Cultural Care Package initiative. Currently, we are also partnering with the University of Wisconsin-Madison on a research project on Great Lakes Native American identity and racial justice.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Native Justice Coalition's Theory of Change is grounded in a collaborative approach that is centered on community engagement and designed to facilitate healing and strengthen self-determination.

We work across our rural and remote Native American communities throughout Michigan and Great Lakes Native communities. Positive, sustained change is dependent on an engaged, broad coalition of Native and non-Native partners working for the common good of social and racial justice. To restore cultural identity and transform Native communities, positive change occurs when healing is locally driven, adequate resources are available to provide consistent, ongoing support, and policy is aligned with action.





THEORY OF CHANGE



INPUTS

- ☪ The Native Justice Coalition's staff, volunteers, and community partners work together to center Native voices in our racial justice program, conference, and work towards decolonial efforts across Michigan.
- ☪ Native communities in Michigan and the broader Great Lakes region are provided with programming and resources that facilitate healing, cultural restoration, and access to better systems of care.
- ☪ Non-Native communities are educated on ongoing systems of colonial oppression and are given the tools necessary for them to become allies that respect Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty.

OUTPUTS

- ☪ Community resources address systems of oppression. The resources help create spaces that address longstanding oppression, build in Native led solutions, contribute to cultural revitalization, systems change, as well as social, healing, and racial justice.
- ☪ Collaboration with our community partners to help support Indigenous initiatives that facilitate change.



THEORY OF CHANGE

SHORT-TERM CHANGES

- Creation of safe, supportive, welcoming places to heal, strengthen our community, as well as empower individuals in personal change and transformation.
- Networking across Native Nations with our community partners to strengthen the coalition, reach our programmatic goals, and build community support systems.
- Engage in our conference events, projects, and initiatives to support and uplift the broader community in truth-telling, story sharing, talking circles, gatherings, and other coalition building activities.



LONG-TERM CHANGES

- Ensure Indigenous rights and sovereignty are protected, known, and respected within the United States and beyond.
- Policy changes on the federal, state, and tribal levels that prioritize addressing the systematic oppression of Indigenous peoples and seek to remedy these issues through Native led and community-based solutions.
- Cultural revitalization that includes but is not limited to language revitalization, preservation of traditional practices, traditional governance, and food sovereignty.
- Education that doesn't enforce Indigenous erasure but uplifts and teaches Native history and culture. This includes changing core curriculum in K-12, implementing general education requirements in universities, better training in the health field, and cultural sensitivity on gender diversity in Indigenous communities.

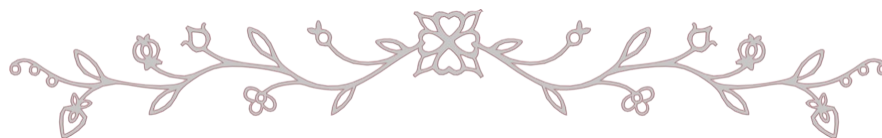
INTERMEDIATE CHANGES

- Healing that reverberates beyond just our programs and gives participants experiences and techniques to delve deeper into mental, spiritual, and physical wellbeing.
- Creating access to services that typically aren't available to rural and remote Native communities. This includes more comprehensive health services, harm reduction, reproductive justice, and culturally sensitive programming for our Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ community members.
- Community engagement that allows for collective healing of both Native and Non-Native communities.





OUR FOUR KEY PRIORITIES



FOR 2022 - 2027

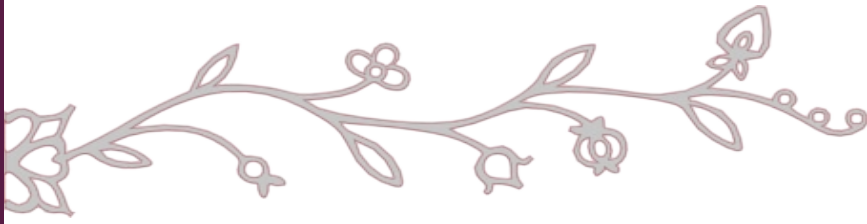
- 1 Truth and Reconciliation
- 2 Healing Our People and Our Communities
- 3 Strengthening ICWA and Ensuring a Cultural Identity for our Children
- 4 Building a Strong Ecosystem Through Investment in Native Justice Coalition



Native Justice Coalition's first three priorities for 2022 to 2027 reflect the Theory of Change and reinforce the commitment to healing Anishinaabe people and their communities. The fourth priority is to ensure the Native Justice Coalition is strong, healthy, and well positioned to lead this important work well into the future.



STRATEGY 1



TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

GOAL

1

Native Justice Coalition and its partners engage the State of Michigan, its communities, citizens, and political leaders in a process of truth and reconciliation for its role in Indian boarding schools to ensure indigenous people are seen, heard, respected, and treated equitably; to heal indigenous people and their communities of historic trauma through empowerment, care, and investment; and to tell healing stories that reflect an accurate history.

OBJECTIVE

Through a process of healing, surface the historical truth about Indian boarding schools and the adoption practices of Indigenous youth in Michigan and develop school curricula, public outreach programs, and media campaigns to educate the broader public about the injustice committed to Native people.

ACTIONS

- ☪ Aligning History
- ☪ Healing Stories
- ☪ School Curriculum

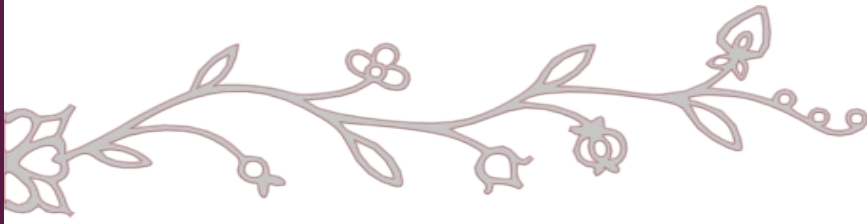
OBJECTIVE

Establish strong advocacy for programs, services, and public policies that lead to the truth, healing, justice, and reconciliation associated with the Indian Boarding School policy and adoption practice of Indigenous infants and children.

ACTIONS

- ☪ Communications campaign to advocate for change.
- ☪ Education of elected officials and key stakeholders that have power and influence to achieve impact.

STRATEGY 2



HEALING OUR PEOPLE AND OUR COMMUNITIES

Establish communities of care designed to provide treatment and ongoing support to survivors, families impacted by the Indian Boarding School policy and adoption practices, and Native communities struggling with historic trauma and the social, emotional, spiritual, and cultural impacts of the systematic process of assimilation.

OBJECTIVE

Ensure survivors and descendants have access to the resources needed to heal from intergenerational trauma that is centered on Indigenous culture, follow sound evidence-based practice, and recognize human, civil, and Indigenous rights.

ACTIONS

- ☪ Access to quality care – behavioral, physical, emotional, and spiritual.
- ☪ Restore/strengthen cultural practice that is a source of pride and identity for survivors, descendants, and Indigenous communities.

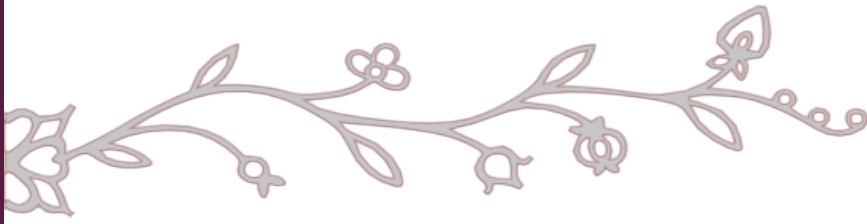
OBJECTIVE

Build capacity and understanding in the care and support systems that work with Indigenous people that lead to healing, self-determination, and agency.

ACTIONS

- ☪ Design and deliver caseworker training that is grounded in cultural humility and supports the healing of intergenerational trauma.
- ☪ Expand access to treatment and support services for survivors and descendants by eliminating barriers, minimizing stigma, and achieving measurable outcomes.

STRATEGY 3



STRENGTHENING ICWA

AND ENSURING A CULTURAL IDENTITY FOR OUR CHILDREN

GOAL

3

Protect Indigenous children from abuse, neglect, and trafficking by strengthening the State of Michigan’s compliance with the Michigan Indian Family Preservation Act (MIFPA) and the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). This will ensure the long-term commitment by the State of Michigan to support healthy family systems and positive youth development in Native American families.

OBJECTIVE

Develop a model for advancing the core principles of MIFPA and ICWA that places Indigenous children at the center, protects them and their interests, and ensures cultural identity is strengthened and valued.

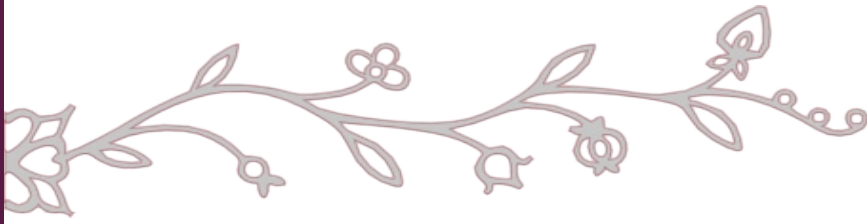
ACTIONS

- ☛ Evaluate MIFPA and ICWA Compliance in Michigan and make recommendations for change based on exemplars from Native American and First Nations communities.
- ☛ Redesign MIFPA and ICWA policies and procedures that position the State of Michigan as a leader in protecting Indigenous children.

ICWA In 1978, Congress enacted the **Indian Child Welfare Act**, 25 USC 1901-1963, (ICWA) in recognition of the fact that Indian children were being removed from their homes at a much higher rate than non-Indian children. ICWA is the federal law that governs the removal and out of home placement of Indian children. ICWA established minimum federal requirements that apply to state agency and court proceedings involving Indian children who are members, or eligible for membership, in a federally-recognized tribe.

MIFPA 2012 Public Act 565, which created the **Michigan Indian Family Preservation Act** (MIFPA), took effect on January 2, 2013. MIFPA codifies the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) into state law and clarifies the court proceedings subject to the Act. MIFPA amended the Juvenile Code by adding section MCL 712B.1 – 712B.41.

STRATEGY 4



BUILDING A STRONG ECOSYSTEM

THROUGH INVESTMENT IN NATIVE JUSTICE COALITION

GOAL

4

Establish the Native Justice Coalition as a thought leader and global exemplar seeking truth, healing, justice, and reconciliation for the intergenerational trauma experienced by survivors and descendants of the Indian Boarding School policy and adoption practices of Indigenous infants and children.

OBJECTIVE

Build staff capacity and organization systems that advance the mission of the Native Justice Coalition as it emerges as a leader in Indigenous healing.

ACTIONS

- ☞ Establish a 5-year staffing plan that reflects the strategic growth of Native Justice Coalition programs and services.
- ☞ Develop the necessary organization systems that increase efficiency, improve evidence-based decision-making, and facilitate strategic growth.
- ☞ Establish a strong communications strategy that raises the Native Justice Coalition's national profile and raises its voice in support of Indigenous rights and social justice.

OBJECTIVE

Achieve financial health and sustainability through diversified sources and sound fiscal management.

ACTIONS

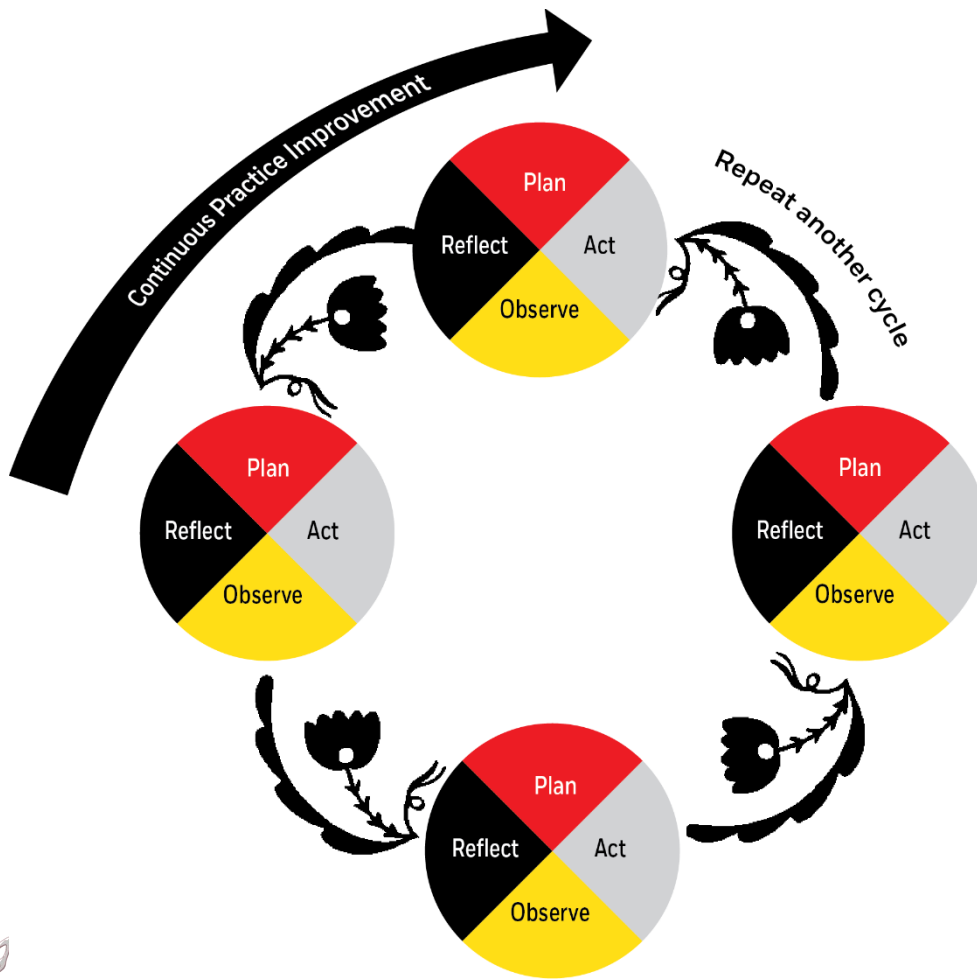
- ☞ Expand and diversify funding sources that minimize uncertainty and allow the Native Justice Coalition to advance its mission with confidence.
- ☞ Establish a fiscal stabilization plan that considers planned growth over the next five years.



MONITORING THE PLAN



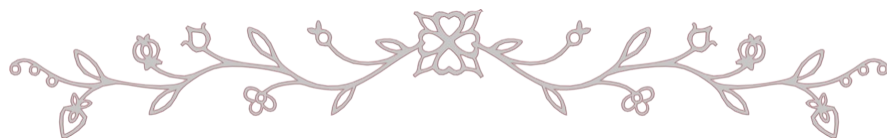
Evaluating the effectiveness of the strategic plan, assessing its execution, and measuring its impact is critical to the Native Justice Coalition realizing its goal to heal. To foster an organizational culture that embraces continuous improvement, a formal process based on a traditional action research cycle outlined below will be designed and applied to all aspects of the strategic plan. Specific metrics and key performance indicators will be defined and a process of measuring impact established.



The four priorities will serve as the basis for evaluating the strategic plan's effectiveness and measuring its impact on desired goals and objectives.



EVALUATION NOTES



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

At the Native Justice Coalition, we have a structure for community engagement metrics in our work and a long-term strategy for this as well. We provide a resource for healing, social, and racial justice. We work to bring resources to rural and remote Native communities that are traditionally underfunded and under-resourced.

COMMUNITY FOLLOW UP

We plan to follow up after each event and engage the Anishinaabe community and its members on additional projects.

We will greatly value their feedback to help guide and grow our programming for the Native Justice Coalition.

Follow up is essential to building a larger Anishinaabe Racial Justice Coalition.

With this plan, we are setting ourselves up to create and build collaborations for this work.

EVALUATION

We will offer a way for participants and community members to provide feedback after the event.

With this feedback, we will evaluate the project and then compare it with other initiatives that have taken place.

We will keep records and a detailed log of these evaluations. Finally, with a database available we will be able to assess this work to improve and alter it as needed.

CONTINUOUS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

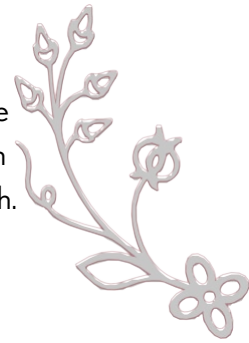
Our work is growing, and we want to be ready to grow this work and take it to the next level.

This means we believe in providing a framework for our annual conference and programs.

Ultimately, the communities we work in lead the outcomes of our projects.

We will not force ourselves into a community nor will we force projects to take place.

We will not overdo our work because this can cause things such as compassion fatigue in our staff and volunteers. We believe in continuous community engagement based in our culture by seeking community solutions from an innovative and grounded approach.





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