



# ayisīnowak

## A Communications Guide

kâ-isi-pîkiskwâtayahk



**ayisīnowak**

[a/ee/see/ni/wak, the people]

**kâ-isi-pīkiskwâtoyahk**

[the people are talking to each other, communicating]

1st Edition: May 2017



City of Saskatoon [*misâskwatôminihk*]  
in partnership with



 **Office of the  
Treaty Commissioner**

# Foreword

tanisi kahkiyaw [Hello Everyone]

I am very grateful for all of the people who have helped write ayisinowak: A Communications Guide.

As a non-Aboriginal person, I have had many situations where I have wanted to ask for advice, invite people to a meeting, enter into a ceremony, or ask for an Elder's support, but I haven't always known the right way and have sometimes been embarrassed to ask. I know many others have had similar experiences. When I read this Guide I had a number of "aha" moments. It is a thoughtful and hopeful booklet to help answer those questions and build understanding.

All of us here on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis people have important work ahead of us to establish a true Treaty Relationship for the next century. Many Saskatoon people, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, have already been working hard on Reconciliation, on overcoming colonial thinking, and forging a path of partnership.

The journey of Reconciliation will take time, open hearts and open minds. We all have different norms and practices for building relationships and conducting affairs. If we are open to learning and respecting each other's protocols and practices, we will grow stronger as individuals and as a community. This land, Treaty 6, has seen many changes. Each of us is walking here for only a short time, but we each have an opportunity and a responsibility to shape our relationships with each other and make life better for those who will come after us.

hiy hiy.

**Charlie Clark**  
**Mayor, City of Saskatoon**

# Foreword

On behalf of the Board of Governors and the Elders Council of the Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre (SICC), I commend the City of Saskatoon for providing this Guide. It was a pleasure working with the City of Saskatoon staff who were passionate and excited to work with us on this Guide. The SICC was established in Saskatoon in 1972 to be the leading institution of the Indigenous nations of Saskatchewan for cultural matters. The founding leadership and Elders sought as well through the SICC to promote intercultural relationships and sharing of values.

In cooperation with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC), the staff and cultural advisors of the SICC assisted in the preparation of this Guide. I would like to acknowledge the contributions to the terminology, review of Indigenous concepts and design support for the Guide. With the assistance of these individuals and the role of the OTC, users of this Guide can be assured that what they are learning is valid and insightful.

The City of Saskatoon has long played a leading role in supporting and enhancing relationships with First Nations peoples in a wide range of areas. Saskatoon has led in the development of urban reserves that have mutually benefited economic advancement and community level engagement. Through this Guide, the City of Saskatoon is furthering their leadership role by encouraging civic administration to practice an appreciation of the Indigenous cultures of the region (Treaty 6 Territory).

The Guide provides details on important cultural considerations and concepts including an understanding of the position that Elders play in day-to-day life. The acknowledgement of the central role of Elders is a fundamental step to conducting relationships with First Nations peoples.

As well, the Guide provides information on aspects of First Nations lives that are traditional practices that reflect a mindset and worldview that goes beyond the mundane and into the spirit of life. These aspects should not be judged as entirely spiritual or a practice of faith, but as reflective of the cultures from which they spring; a way of life.

At the foundation of this Guide is an acknowledgement of the need for reconciliation that stems from the historic Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls for Action. This Guide is in the spirit of making Reconciliation more than just words, but a journey as well. Take this Guide as a starting point on that journey and an invitation to develop a deeper understanding about the ancestral values that have filled this place called Saskatoon for countless generations.

**Wanda Wilson**  
**President, Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre**

# Foreword

The Indigenous Elders of this Territory teach about the responsibility of choice. Then they back up their teachings with lessons on the laws and guidelines of acceptable behaviour towards those around us. We can choose to make relations and see the beauty of our neighbour's smile and recognize the potential of their presence. Or we can look at our neighbour and see only what she wears or how different she looks. The effort of creating a tool by which to make these choices is a responsible approach for any government to take to its citizens. Saskatoon has been moving in this direction for its peoples and the Guide will be a valuable asset for organizations and City Administration as the community journeys in the spirit of Reconciliation. Make this Guide part of the personal action plan for the way forward.

**Harry Lafond**

**Executive Director, Office of the Treaty Commissioner**

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City of Saskatoon Project Team

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## Preface

The goal of *ayisinowak: A Communications Guide* is to increase understanding, respect and awareness of Aboriginal culture to facilitate improved relationship building. This is a living document that will continue to develop as our relationships and understanding grows.

For the purpose of this document, 'Aboriginal' refers collectively to First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. This term is defined in the S 35 (2) of the *Constitution Act*, 1892 as follows: "Aboriginal Peoples of Canada includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada."

Many of the practices and teachings in the following document belong to the Cree people, as the majority of Aboriginal People on Treaty 6 Territory are Cree. As you read this Guide, it is important to acknowledge that respectful engagement protocols, language, and teachings, will differ from nation to nation. For example, Regina, Moose Jaw and Yorkton are located on Treaty 4 Territory where many Ojibwa people live, and not all of the content in this Guide may be appropriate to replicate on this Territory. It will be up to you to gain a deeper understanding by working directly with Aboriginal Peoples.

**"We Are All Treaty People"**



# The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the City Of Saskatoon



Reconciliation

From June 21 to 24, 2012, a national Truth and Reconciliation event was held in Saskatoon [misâskwatôminihk]. It was one of seven national events held across Canada between 2010 and 2014.



“The national events were intended to engage the Canadian public and provide education about the history of the residential schools system, the experience of former students and their families and the ongoing legacies of the institutions within communities. It is an opportunity to celebrate regional diversity and honour those touched by residential schools.”<sup>1</sup>

In 2016, the City of Saskatoon (City) committed to responding to the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s (TRC) Calls to Action*. This response began with a proclamation by City Council on June 22, 2015, declaring a ‘Year of Reconciliation’ beginning on July 1, 2015.

## What is Reconciliation?



“Reconciliation is about exploring the past and choosing to build a better future. It’s understanding each other and building trust. It’s recognizing that We Are All Treaty People.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Website, [trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=92](http://trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=92).

<sup>2</sup> Office of the Treaty Commissioner, (2016). “What is Reconciliation?” [Online]. Available: [www.otc.ca/pages/what\\_is\\_reconciliation.html](http://www.otc.ca/pages/what_is_reconciliation.html) [2016, July].



In keeping with the City's Strategic Plan (2013 – 2023) goal to enhance relations with Aboriginal organizations through development of educational opportunities, the City has collaborated with several key individuals and groups to develop the First Edition of *ayisinowak: A Communications Guide* “*the people are speaking.*” The development of the Guide was made possible, in part, through a summer employment partnership opportunity between the City and the Saskatoon Tribal Council. The content is presented as an adaptive and living document, and is intended to assist City employees with building successful partnerships with First Nations and other Aboriginal organizations. The Guide provides a basic outline of Aboriginal understandings and governance systems to bridge gaps, build more collective understandings and create positive change together in an innovative and collaborative fashion.

For the purpose of this document, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples will be referred to collectively as Aboriginal Peoples unless otherwise stated.



The City of Saskatoon is located on Treaty 6 Territory and the Traditional Homeland of the Métis.





## The Symbol of Reconciliation

*Graphic Elements/Rationale*



### **Star/Star Blanket**

Journey, Comfort

### **Flower**

New growth

### **Colours**

Four Directions, Four Seasons, Four Colours of Man

### **Individual Shapes**

Gather and unify to create one shape



### **The Space in Between**

Represents the “gap” that can be addressed through reconciliation





### **Books**

Different ways of knowing  
Reference to Treaties

### **Arrows**

Individual diverse groups



### **The Circle**

The Circle of Life

A meeting circle creating a safe place for dialogue

Seven Sacred Teachings: Love, Respect, Courage, Honesty,  
Wisdom, Humility, Truth

Introducing an eighth dot, a new Shared Fire:  
The Reconciliation Project

Please visit [otc.ca](http://otc.ca) for additional information on the Reconciliation graphics.



The number 4 is sacred to many Aboriginal People. It is no coincidence that the medicine wheel has 4 parts, that there are 4 seasons, 4 elements, 4 directions, or 4 stages of life. Often, giving thanks to the Creator mentions the 4 elements (earth, air, wind and fire), the 4 seasons, 4 directions, 4 human races, 4 chambers of the heart, 4 quadrants of the body, and 4 sections of the brain. 4 puffs are taken when the ceremonial pipe is smoked and water is poured 4 times over the hot rocks in the sweat lodge, etc.



# I

## Introduction



kiskinowâpisk, *Treaty Medal*

Source: the late Charlie Burns from nihtâwikihcikanisihk - James Smith Cree Nation.

## Aboriginal Peoples

Historically, there have been many different First Nations and Métis communities living in and around the city. Archaeological evidence indicates that this area of Saskatchewan has been a gathering place for First Nations or Aboriginal North American Great Plains Peoples for over 6,000 years.

The Aboriginal Peoples represented within the Treaty 6 territory of Saskatchewan include:



Treaty 6 is also known in Cree as “kistêsinaw-tipahamâtowin” [the Elder Brother Treaty].



## Métis

The Métis peoples are descendants from mixed ancestry of Aboriginal and European background whose origins can be extended to the earliest days of settlement. Uniting Aboriginal culture with that of the French and English resulted in a unique and blended language often referred to as Michif, the language of the Métis people of Canada. There are two main dialects of Michif: northern (closer to Cree) and southern (with more French).

For more information on Michif language, please visit [cumfi.org](http://cumfi.org).

The Métis predominantly settled in Western Canada and have a strong political connection to the Prairies dating back to the late 1800's.

Section 35(2) of the *Constitution Act, 1982* defines “Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples” as Aboriginal Peoples. Until very recently (2016), Métis people were not recognized as Status Indians under federal legislation, and therefore were not eligible for the same funding and programing that other groups were. This interpretation has put the Métis people at a disadvantage, as they have struggled to retain their identity over time.

There are a large number of Métis people who continue to reside on the Prairies, including in and around Saskatoon. According to the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) Saskatoon has an Aboriginal population of 10.4% which is comprised of 6.2% First Nations and 4.2% Métis based on reported ethnic identity.

	Saskatoon (City)	Saskatoon (CMA)
First Nation single identity	10,680	11,750
Métis single identity	10,095	11,515
Inuk (Inuit) single identity	75	85
Multiple Aboriginal identities	145	155
Aboriginal identities not included elsewhere	345	385
	<b>21,340</b>	<b>23,890</b>

Source: 2011 Census, Stats Canada



## Urban Reserves & Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) Land Holdings

Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) claims are intended to settle the land debt owed to those First Nations who did not receive all the land they were entitled to under historical treaties signed by the Crown and First Nations. During treaty negotiations, promises of land were made, but were one-sided and in the favour of the government. First Nations did not receive all of the land that they were promised, and the TLE process has been enacted to resolve the shortcomings of the initial land negotiations.

For more information on TLE, please visit [sicc.sk.ca](http://sicc.sk.ca).

Saskatoon was the first Canadian city to create an urban reserve. In 1988, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation established Asimâkanisihkân Askîy [Asimâkanisihkân-askîy] (Cree-literal translation: Soldier/Veteran Land) and Cattail Centre in the Sutherland industrial area. The designation made it the first Canadian reserve to be designated on land previously set aside for city development. The land deal itself was brokered with the shake of a hand and is now home to dozens of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses. There are now over 120 urban reserves across Canada established under Specific Claims Settlements, Additions to Reserve Policy and TLE Framework Agreements.<sup>3</sup>



Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Urban Reserve

<sup>3</sup> Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, (2017). "Urban Reserves" [Online]. Available: [www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100016331/1100100016332](http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100016331/1100100016332) [2016, July].





## What is an Urban Reserve?

An urban reserve is land that has been designated reserve by the Federal Government and is located within the boundaries of an urban municipality. A First Nation can purchase land on the open market in an urban setting, for the purpose of settling outstanding land claims under the Canada-Saskatchewan TLE Framework Agreement; this process is referred to as a 'land selection.' Initially, this land is held in 'fee simple,' just like any other private property. If the First Nation decides to designate the property as reserve, a review process is initiated by the Band.

For more information on this process, please visit [saskatoon.ca/business-development/planning/regional-planning/urban-reserves-treaty-land-entitlement](https://saskatoon.ca/business-development/planning/regional-planning/urban-reserves-treaty-land-entitlement).

Prior to reaching reserve status, agreements are established between the First Nation and the municipality to ensure compatibility is achieved, as the parcel is no longer subject to municipal policies and bylaws under reserve status.

## What is an Urban Holding?

An urban holding is land within the limits of an urban municipality that has been purchased on the open market by a First Nation but has not transferred to reserve status, thus remaining under the jurisdiction of the City and subject to all City bylaws and property taxes. A Municipal Service Agreement or bylaw compatibility is not needed at this time but are negotiated prior to reserve designation. First Nations acquire TLE lands as part of an obligation by the Federal Government.

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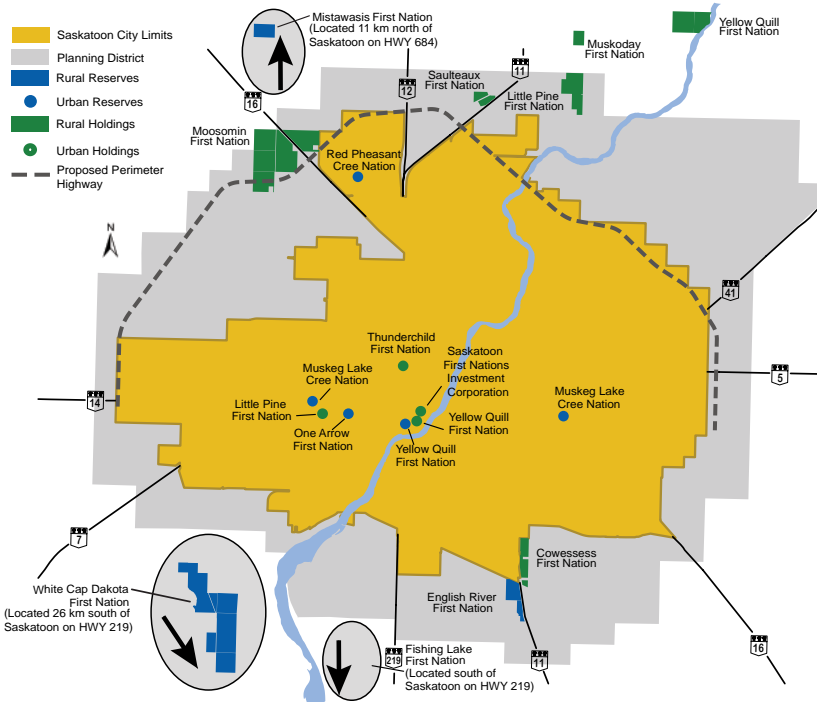
### **Municipal Services, Land Use Compatibility, and Protocol Agreement:**

The City of Saskatoon's agreements with First Nations provide for all municipal services in exchange for a fee-for-service. The fee-for-service is calculated in the same way as property taxes and is equal to the amount that would be billed for municipal and library taxes.

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## There are currently five urban reserves and five urban holdings located within the city.



The main difference between urban and rural holdings and reserves, which includes those in the Corman Park - Saskatoon Planning District (Planning District) and beyond, is that urban reserve creation requires negotiating Municipal Services and Land Use Compatibility Agreements. These Agreements do not apply to reserve creation outside urban boundaries, thus it does not apply to the Planning District or beyond. It is possible to encourage agreements as part of a ‘Good Neighbour’ policy, but this is not mandated. The following table lists all reserves and holdings in Saskatoon and area.



<b>First Nation Land Holdings, Saskatoon and Region, 2017</b>				
<b>Urban Reserves</b>	<b>Urban Land Holdings</b>	<b>Rural Reserves</b>	<b>Rural Land Holdings</b>	<b>Within the P4G* Study Area</b>
Muskeg Lake Cree Nation (2)	Battleford Tribal Council (BTC) and member nations	English River First Nation	Cowessess First Nation	Moosomin First Nation, Saulteaux First Nation, Muskoday First Nation, Little Pine First Nation, Yellow Quill First Nation, English River First Nation, Cowessess First Nation
One Arrow First Nation	Little Pine First Nation	Mistawasis First Nation	Fishing Lake First Nation	
Red Pheasant Cree Nation	Thunderchild First Nation	Whitecap Dakota First Nation	Little Pine First Nation	
Yellow Quill First Nation	Yellow Quill First Nation		Moosomin First Nation	
	Sakimay First Nation (pending)		Muskoday First Nation	
			Saulteaux First Nation	
			Yellow Quill First Nation	

\* The Saskatoon North Partnership for Growth (P4G) is a recently formalized collaborative which includes political and administrative representation from the partnering municipalities. For more information, please visit [partnershipforgrowth.ca](http://partnershipforgrowth.ca).



## II

# Meetings and Protocol

## Meeting Etiquette

Within First Nation Communities, there are protocols that should be followed during meetings or visitations. Just as we respect the homes of our friends, or the offices of our co-workers, we must respect the land and/or territory on which meetings with Aboriginal groups occur. Mutual respect [manâcihitowin] and humility [tapâhtêyimowin] are prevalent values that encourage relationship building.

An in-person meeting is often referred to as a visit [kiyohkêwin] or a gathering. This is a significant tool in the building and strengthening of relationships.



Respectful meeting etiquette includes:

1. Acknowledging guests by shaking hands and flowing in a clockwise direction;
2. Option to add in a Cree expression: *tânisi kahkiyaw* [hello everyone] or *kitamiskâtinâwâw* [I greet all of you];
3. Ensuring that all attendees understand the intent of the meeting;
4. Ensuring that all attendees have a copy of the agenda;
5. Acknowledging the Territory/land on which the meeting is occurring\*; and
6. Properly introducing guests, including addressing the Chief as, “Chief [Surname].”

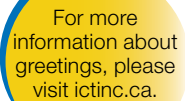
\* In Saskatoon this is Treaty 6 territory and Homeland of the Métis, to the north is Treaty 10 territory and to the south is Treaty 4.



For example, the University of Saskatchewan's University Council unanimously passed inclusive and respectful language that you can use when opening a meeting with Aboriginal Peoples:

*“As we gather here today, we acknowledge we are on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.”<sup>4</sup>*

Please note that there are other methods to greet and acknowledge your hosts or guests. If you have questions about how to proceed, contact the First Nation(s) you are working with to confirm proper protocol as greetings vary amongst communities. Genuine spirit and sincerity are highly respected during meetings and conversations, so if attending a meeting without any formal knowledge, be respectful and kind.



For more information about greetings, please visit [ictinc.ca](http://ictinc.ca).

## Suggestions for Civic Employees Working with First Nations

- Remember that you are building a government-to-government relationship and including First Nations as partners is encouraged.
- First tell an Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Storyteller what you would like to know from them, or what you would like to ask them to do. Then present tobacco to an Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Storyteller when asking for any kind of information, guidance or advice. It may be appropriate at times to also offer wêpinâsowina [prayer cloth]. For more information on tobacco offerings, please refer to pages 22 to 23.
- Encourage the speaking of an Indigenous language at meetings.
- Attend anti-racism and **cultural awareness training**.

<sup>4</sup> University of Saskatchewan – Aboriginal Initiatives (2016). “Land Recognition” [Online]. Available: [aboriginal.usask.ca/land-recognition.php](http://aboriginal.usask.ca/land-recognition.php) [2016, July].



- Have a team briefing prior to the meeting to review what will be discussed to ensure a consistent approach to items being covered.
- Arrange for food, coffee, tea, and/or water to offer prior to introductions. This is an act of respect. It helps all attendees feel welcomed and enables constructive discussions.
- Be well informed about the internal processes of the civic and First Nation governance structures and administrative processes.
- Be familiar with the *TRC Calls-to-Action*. #57, specifically, refers to municipal government: “We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal Peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Aboriginal law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.”
- Be familiar with the **cultural background**, needs and priorities of the specific First Nations. For instance, Dakota in contrast to Cree or Métis.
- Have champions of the project amongst the elected officials and senior management.
- Acknowledge that world views may be different. For instance, First Nations seek to be autonomous from each other, there is no one common voice or position that necessarily represents a collective view point, no different than mainstream political views<sup>5</sup>.

The complete list of Calls to Action is available at [trc.ca](http://trc.ca).

Please visit [sicc.sk.ca](http://sicc.sk.ca) or more information.

<sup>5</sup> Further reading: [www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-peoples-worldviews-vs-western-worldviews](http://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-peoples-worldviews-vs-western-worldviews)



- Avoid trying to build a relationship with a First Nation through a third (provincial) order of government. Instead, engage with the First Nation directly.
- Guests may arrive late as they could be travelling from outside of Saskatoon. If possible, allow extra time, be patient, and do not rush discussions.
- Provide opportunity for everyone to be heard. If someone is talking, be courteous and let them finish before responding.
- Understand the Urban Reserve designation process. For more information, please visit [saskatoon.ca/planning](http://saskatoon.ca/planning).
- Recognize that each First Nation is a sovereign nation with specific interests. Attendees may not be comfortable disclosing information with other First Nations present. Multiple meetings may be necessary.
- Be familiar with civic policies and resources, like the First Nation Community Profiles<sup>6</sup>.
- Know location of First Nations lands before entering the meeting: Is the property within the city, Planning District or RM? Please visit the Saskatoon North Partnership for Growth page on [saskatoon.ca/regionalplanning](http://saskatoon.ca/regionalplanning) for more information.
- Understand service/tax dollar allocation. Please visit [saskatoon.ca/propertytax](http://saskatoon.ca/propertytax) for more information.

<sup>6</sup> Community Profiles are viewable and downloadable here: [www.saskatoon.ca/business-development/planning/regional-planning/urban-reserves-treaty-land-entitlement](http://www.saskatoon.ca/business-development/planning/regional-planning/urban-reserves-treaty-land-entitlement)



**The following points would apply for any meeting and are being included for reference:**

- Be a good listener. Let people speak what is important to them. Sometimes knowledge keepers/kêhtê-ayak [Elders] “speak in stories” and it is important to let them finish what they need to say.
- Make a conscious effort to provide time and space for all guests to have their voices heard. This shows both honour and respect.
- Focus on common ground, goals and opportunities.
- Be mindful and keep responses straightforward.
- Answer questions to the best of your ability. If you don’t know the answer to a question, acknowledge as such, make note and follow up.
- Be honest and direct.
- Know your audience. Refrain from using overly technical and bureaucratic language in discussions. At the same time, do not be patronizing or “talk down” to people.
- Avoid acronyms and be cognizant of your word choices.
- Find appropriate, contributive ways to communicate. Mailing an invite to a First Nation and requesting they travel to City Hall on a specific date and time is inappropriate. Instead, make a phone call, arrange face-to-face meetings, and/or consider meeting over a meal. The focus of meetings is building personal relationships and building trust.





## Cultural Information for Working Together

When working with First Nations you may see or be invited to participate in cultural ceremonies which are integral to the process of working together and relationship building. While this may be new or unfamiliar to you, it's important to have an understanding of these cultural practices and traditions.

There may also be instances where participating in a cultural ceremony is recommended to initiate a project or affirm First Nations participation. For instance, prior to partnering with a First Nation on a project, you may be advised to approach an Elder or representative from the First Nation and ask for their help with the project.

While it may be a bit daunting or intimidating at first to complete some of these actions, the resulting benefit and the respect it shows towards the relationship far outweigh any inconvenience. The effort shown in attempting the actions will be appreciated and respected, and if you don't do it perfectly the first time, that's ok.

Items that may be important to have knowledge and understanding of include:

- Elders/Knowledge Keepers/Story Tellers
- Tobacco/Offering Tobacco
- Pipe Ceremony
- Eagle Feathers
- Smudging
- Sweat Lodge Ceremonies
- Pow Wow

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**Knowledge Keeper**  
is a modern term,  
stemming from academic  
use, which can be used  
interchangeably with Elder.

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More details about each of these items are provided below on behalf of the *Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre* (SICC). The City acknowledges their contributions to this Guide and its role in informing and educating our workplace.



## Who is an Elder?

An Elder [kêhtê-aya] is any person recognized by a First Nation Community as having knowledge and understanding of the traditional culture of the community, including the physical embodiment of the culture of the people and their spiritual and social traditions. Knowledge and wisdom, coupled with the recognition and respect of the people of the community, are the essential defining characteristics of an Elder. Some Elders have additional attributes, such as those of traditional healer, or specialize in certain knowledge area such as education. Some Elders may also be specialists in oral history and stories.

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Not all Elders are keepers of the same knowledge, nor can all Elders perform the same ceremonies. When requesting an Elder's presence, be sure to indicate your intent, and if you are unsure of what you require, ask.

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In addition to having led an exceptional life based on the traditions, customs and culture of First Nations, an Elder is expected to have qualities such as:

- Knowledge of First Nations' and Métis heritage and history;
- Knowledge and support for traditional First Nations' and Métis ceremonies, protocols and songs;
- Possess fluency and competency in a First Nations' language;
- Be an advocate of traditional leadership, traditional governance and traditional law;
- Be aware and supportive of Treaty rights and history;
- Acknowledge the diversity of First Nations' cultures, languages and traditions in Saskatchewan;



- Work to ensure the intergenerational transfer of traditional First Nations' knowledge, history, culture, language and practices to the youth;
- Support and observe the sacredness of First Nations' traditions, ceremonies, sites and practices;
- Have an understanding, be supportive and play a leading role in their kinship ties; and
- Have a knowledge of First Nations' traditional healing that may include the use of traditional plants.

Please note that this list is a starting point towards answering the question of, "Who is an Elder?" Each First Nation has a term that defines these wisdom keepers, knowledge keepers, medicine people, healers and ceremonial persons. The term Elder is a contemporary English word commonly used for these individuals. Many of these individuals are not comfortable with this term, as it does not adequately describe their role. Today, many of these individuals are reverting to the traditional term in their own language. Being an Elder is not just about reaching a certain age but includes many principles.

Photographs, audio, and/or video recordings are often not acceptable when an Elder is conducting a spiritual ceremony. Explicit consent must be received from the Elder before any recordings are taken. Consent must be sought in a way which does not put pressure on a kêtê-aya to consent if they do not want to. Often Elders will carry sacred items, such as pipes, eagle feathers, medicine pouches, etc. – do not touch these items unless the Elder gives you permission.

In respect of the Elder, always ask permission and seek clarification if there is something you do not understand. It is sometimes the custom amongst English people to interrupt people as they talk to ask questions. However, in Cree culture it is better to wait until the kêtê-aya is done their story or indeed even part of the ceremony in question.



## Why is Tobacco Important to First Nations People?

Tobacco is one of the sacred gifts the Creator gave to the First Nations people. Tobacco has been used traditionally in ceremonies, rituals and prayer for thousands of years for its powerful spiritual meaning. Tobacco has a variety of medicinal purposes. Tobacco establishes a direct communication link between a person and the spiritual world. It is sometimes said that the tobacco helps to open the doors of knowledge.

## What is a Tobacco Offering?<sup>7</sup>

Tobacco is one of the four sacred medicines, and a tobacco offering is a universal protocol among First Nations people. If the Elder accepts your request for assistance, then the tobacco is given. Other gifts may accompany the tobacco including blankets, cloth (print), guns or horses. Many knowledge keepers or Elders teach that the gifts given are at the discretion of the person making the request. The more contemporary gift is monetary, especially for meetings or other such events when prayer is needed from Elders. Most Elders will accept tobacco signifying their willingness to offer assistance. Tobacco offerings are given when we gather medicines, roots and berries; when we take anything from Mother Earth including the animals; and it is used in hunting practices as well.

## Instructions for Offering Tobacco to an Elder<sup>7</sup>

Tobacco is offered when making a request, and can be in the form of a cigarette, pack of cigarettes, or ideally, a tobacco pouch. As the pouch is being acquired it is good to think about what you are asking for, and put good thoughts and prayers into the offering. When making a request, offer the tobacco and state your request (be specific) and if the Elder accepts the tobacco your request will be honored.

The exchange of tobacco/gift is similar to a contract between two parties where the Elder is agreeing to do what is asked, and the one

<sup>7</sup> Source: [carleton.ca/aboriginal](http://carleton.ca/aboriginal)



offering is making a commitment to respect the process. Ask the Elder if there is anything they need for the event/request so you can make arrangements ahead of time. It is considerate to make the tobacco offering at least 5 days in advance of the event or meeting, or earlier if time allows. This provides time for those Elders who wish to smoke the pipe and pray to seek guidance in performing the task you have asked them to participate in or lead.

Preferably, requests are made to Elders in person and not by mail, phone or through social media. However, many Elders also accept requests by phone or email. If you are making a request to an Elder by phone or email, let the Elder know you have tobacco or a gift to offer when you see them, then make your request.

If the Elder agrees to accept the request, you must follow-up with a call a few days before the event to ensure they are still available for the occasion. Be prepared for the possibility they may change their mind if an unforeseen circumstance arises making it not possible for them to be in attendance. In this case, you can contact the SICC to determine whether another Elder may be available.

**Note: If you are unsure about when or how to offer tobacco to an Elder, please contact the Director of Aboriginal Relations for the City of Saskatoon who will provide guidance.**

Further instructions for offering tobacco to an Elder can be found online at [carleton.ca/aboriginal](http://carleton.ca/aboriginal).

### What is an Elder's Helper?<sup>7</sup>

As a sign of respect, it is important to ensure that you coordinate a host or escort for the Elder while they attend your event/meeting. The host/escort is responsible for: ensuring appropriate transportation to and from event; greeting and meeting the Elder upon arrival; and taking care of the Elder until their departure (i.e. offer and assist with getting drinks, food, etc.).

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oskâpêyos [male helper]  
okihcitaw-iskwêw [female helper]

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<sup>7</sup> Source: [carleton.ca/aboriginal](http://carleton.ca/aboriginal)



In some cases, Elders may be accompanied by an “Elder’s helper.” Elder’s helpers can be either male or female. This person will have an established relationship with the Elder and will be available to assist the Elder with whatever they need. Nevertheless, a host/escort should be arranged since the Elder and helper likely will not know their way around the facility.

Further information about Elder Helpers can be found at [carleton.ca/aboriginal](http://carleton.ca/aboriginal).

## What is a Pipe Ceremony?

The most powerful way of communicating with the spirits is to smoke tobacco in a Sacred Pipe. Even before the tobacco is put into the pipe the prayers have already begun. When used in a Sacred Pipe ceremony, the smoke from the tobacco carries the prayers to the Creator and it is offered to the Creator and the four directions. Generally, four puffs of the pipe are taken. This creates an avenue of dialogue between the human world and the spirit world. Prior to the European tobacco distribution, First Nations people had their own tobacco that was used in ceremony. This tobacco was a mixture of Red Willow Bark and other plants that are referred to as Kinnikinnick. Tobacco is also an important part of medicine bundles that are used for protection, in keeping one safe.

When shaking hands in a group of people, or passing the sacred pipe during a ceremony, the movement will be in a clockwise manner.

## What is the Protocol for Eagle Feathers?

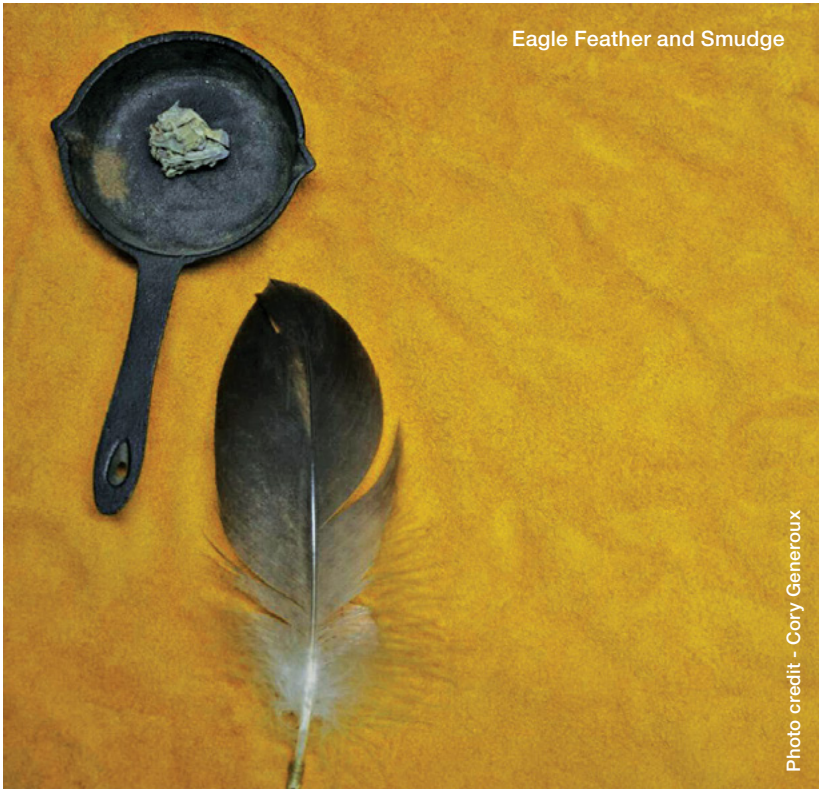
The Eagle feather is the most sacred and honoured gift given to an individual. Respect is key in relation to Eagle feathers. Certain people are able to take Eagle feathers from the Eagle if they have been given the right to do so. Eagle feathers are obtained from Elders who have the ability to give them to individuals. A feast is held to honour the feathers.

The Eagle is the most sacred of birds because the Eagle carries prayers to the Creator and is therefore heard. The Eagle is also our relative and is part of our family. As a part of our family we must care for and respect that it has given up its life so that a person may carry its feathers.



The care and responsibility that comes with carrying an Eagle feather must be taught. To care for Eagle feathers is an honour and means you must follow certain protocols and procedures:

- Always keep your Eagle feather in a clean and safe place.
- Smudge your Eagle feather on a regular basis with prayers to give thanks to our relative the Eagle who gave its life so that you may be honoured with it.



Eagle Feather and Smudge

Photo credit - Cory Generoux



## What is Smudging [miyaskâsikêwin]?

Smudging is a protocol that has long been observed and performed by many First Nations. When First Nations gather for meetings, ceremonies or for personal prayer, smudging is conducted. First Nations in Saskatchewan generally use sweetgrass, sages, cedars and other plants for smudging. When preparations are made to smudge, the sweetgrass, sages, cedars and other plants are lit with matches or hot coals. The smoke is then used with the person's hands in a 'washing' manner by pushing or cupping the smoke towards them. Sweetgrass is often braided because it signifies the hair of Mother Earth. The importance of sweetgrass at every level of ceremonial life has long made it a valued item. At times, braids of sweetgrass are carried for protection. The sweetgrass, sages, cedars and other sacred plants are from Mother Earth. Tobacco is placed on the ground as an offering and permission is asked from Mother Earth before gathering these items. To smudge is an act of purifying the mind and physical surroundings.

## What is a Sweat Lodge [mâtotisân] Ceremony, and what is the Proper Etiquette for Sweat Lodge Ceremonies?

First Nations Elders recommend that each person enters the Sweat Lodge with appropriateness, kindness, and with prayers. Participants have their own reasons for participating in a Sweat Lodge ceremony and participants should undertake the Sweat Lodge ceremony with positive energies, feelings and emotions. Elders are role models that exemplify this behaviour and mindset. As in any ceremony, appropriate dress and attire is needed. It is suggested that women wear a long dress, covering the upper and lower body, and carry a towel to cover one's self. It is suggested that men wear shorts with a towel wrapped around their waist. Most Elders suggest that women sit to one side (usually the left of the lodge and up to the middle) and the men sit to the other side. Speaking is not recommended unless the participant has a reason such as asking for prayers, healing or other such matters. It is suggested that those seeking prayers or healing bring tobacco and wêpinâsowin





[cloth (print)] to the Sweat Lodge. Whatever else the person brings as a gift is up to the individual. It is widely considered inappropriate to walk between the Sweat Lodge and the fire used to heat the stones. Glasses, jewelry, earrings and cellphones should be removed. There will be berries, fish or other food offered during or after the Sweat Lodge. A participant should not refuse the food offered unless there are health reasons such as allergies.

Sweat Lodge protocols and methodologies vary among First Nations. In the past, among the Nêhiyaw and Nahkawe, men and women normally had separate Sweat Lodges. Among First Nations today, it is more common for men and women to share Sweat Lodges. The individual leading the Sweat Lodge will give guidance on this matter. The First Nations Elder or Knowledge Keeper conducting a Sweat Lodge will bear in mind the health and well-being of the participants. All First Nations Sweat Lodge ceremonies are intended for prayer and healing. Participating in a Sweat Lodge ceremony can be difficult. In general, each person may leave the Sweat Lodge if they are feeling unwell or feel that they are not able to finish.

During their menstrual cycle, referred to as 'moon time' in Aboriginal cultures, women do not participate in Sweat Lodges. This is often interpreted by settlers as sexism or misogyny, but is quite the contrary. Moon time is a female's natural purification process and is highly respected. It is during this time where a woman's power is renewed; she is recharging energies and powers. It is important that she avoids sacred ceremonies so her power does not draw away from the sacred Sweat Lodge. Participation is withdrawn out of respect for the ceremony and its participants.

It is also possible to assist as an oskâpêyos [helper] if you cannot, for instance, go into a mâtotisân [sweat lodge] due to medical conditions. However, you can still participate meaningfully in a ceremony.



## What is a pwâtisimowin [Pow Wow]?

For many First Nations people across North America, the Pow Wow has become an expression of First Nations identity. For First Nations people in Saskatchewan, it is also a statement of their ability to survive as a people. The Pow Wow in Saskatchewan is an ancient tradition. Pow Wow dancing conveys important traditional teachings. One teaching is that dancers dance not only for themselves but also for all First Nations people. They dance for the sick, the Elderly and those who cannot dance.

The SICC is an amazing resource for First Nations cultural information. The ceremonial information shown here was provided in partnership with SICC to help raise awareness of First Nations culture.



Pow Wow Grand Entry Flag Carriers





Pow Wow Drum Group



Pow Wow regalia



## Cultural Differences in Non-Verbal Communication

It is important to be aware of cultural differences relating to non-verbal communication practices, as cultural expectations can vary between mainstream culture and First Nations or Métis (Aboriginal) cultures.

Non-verbal communication elements include things like: eye contact; personal space; body language; sense of time; gender equality; and voice volume, tone or cadence.

The following are examples of cultural difference in elements of non-verbal communication.

### Example 1: Eye Contact

In mainstream culture, eye contact when speaking to another person is considered a sign of respect and conveys interest, concern and honesty.

In Aboriginal cultures, lack of eye contact, can sometimes be considered a sign of respect as someone may lower their head to focus their hearing on what is being said instead of maintaining eye contact.

### Example 2: Cadence

In mainstream culture, a person may speak in a firm tone and medium volume to convey a sign of respect. The response may be brief and concise.

In Aboriginal cultures, a person may speak slowly and deliberately, in a soft tone of voice and low volume to signal a sign of respect. Their response or comment may include a story that conveys values, perspective, and/or emotions.



### Example 3: Hand Shakes

In mainstream culture, children are taught from a young age to have a firm handshake to convey trust, respect, and confidence.

In Aboriginal culture, the firmness of a handshake is also important, but a gentle handshake is preferred and too firm of a grip may be considered as rude.

### Example 4: Humility vs. Bragging

Mainstream culture often encourages bragging and boastfulness.

In Aboriginal cultures, boasting and bragging is discouraged as these expressions lack humility.

### Example 5: Responsiveness

Generally, conversation in mainstream culture does not have a pause, or only a short pause, in between people speaking. When one person stops talking, the other person usually starts talking right after with little to no pause in between.

In Aboriginal cultures, the pause between two people speaking may be longer than in mainstream culture. This can be for a variety of reasons.

- Understand that they may need more time to think about it or discuss with one another.
- Sometimes a lack of response may mean that the Elder or knowledge keeper does not want to discuss the topic at hand, as it may be a private matter.
- If an Elder or knowledge keeper does not respond to an email or social media message, it maybe be because that is the not the appropriate way to talk to them about what is in question.



## Glossary

This Glossary was provided by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) to supplement the content of this Guide. Here, you will find definitions compiled by the OTC from different organizations to assist you with the use of ayisiṇowak.

The following definitions were taken from various sources including: "Definitions" (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, March 2000), *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, *Saskatchewan Education Curriculum Guides*, Indian Claims Commission, *Knots in a String* (Peggy Brizinski, 1993), *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan* (Cardinal and Hildebrandt, 2000), Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Center and various internet sites.

**Aboriginal Peoples:** The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal People: Indian [see *First Nations*], Métis and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

**Aboriginal rights:** Those rights which Aboriginal Peoples have because of their status as Aboriginal People in their own land.

**accommodation:** A convenient arrangement; a settlement or compromise.

**adhere:** To behave according to; follow in detail; to give support or allegiance.

**adhesion:** An addition made to a Treaty when a new band signs onto an existing Treaty; the new band then comes under the Treaty rights and gives up its rights to all but reserve lands. Individuals also adhere to Treaty by accepting annuities.



**agreement:** The act of agreeing; a contract legally binding the contracting parties.

**Anishinabé:** A Saulteaux term describing themselves as the First People that came down from the Creator; coming down to be man.

**annihilation:** To completely destroy; defeat utterly; make insignificant or powerless.

**annuity:** An annual payment. Most treaties provided for annual payments, paid in perpetuity to each Treaty Indian.

**Assembly of First Nations (AFN):** The Assembly speaks for First Nations peoples all across Canada, working with the federal government on political, social, economic and healthcare issues.

**assimilation:** Becoming part of another society; adapting to the society and taking on the characteristic or quality.

**authority:** The source of power of individuals and organizations that hold positions of high status by virtue of such conditions as legal appointments, high education, job situation and experience.

**autonomous:** Having self-government, acting or existing independently or having the freedom to do so.

**Band:** A group of First Nations peoples for whom lands have been set apart and money is held by the Crown. Each band has its own governing band council, usually consisting of one or more chiefs and several councillors. Community members choose the chief and councillors by election or sometimes through traditional custom. The members of a band generally share common values, traditions and practices rooted in their ancestral heritage. Today, many bands prefer to be known as First Nations.

**belief:** What is held to be true; something believed; opinion.





**British North America Act, 1867 (BNA, 1867):** Canada's original Constitution, supplemented later by additional laws. It was the Charter of Confederation for the British colonies and established the powers of the federal government, the provinces and the territories.

**Canadian Confederation:** The federal union of provinces and territories forming Canada, originally including Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and subsequently expanding to include the present provinces and territories.

**cede:** Give up one's rights to or possession of.

**cession:** The act of ceding; a giving up, as of territory or rights, to another. The underlying principle of cession is that it is based on consent, usually acquired through negotiated agreements such as Treaties.

**citizen:** A person who lives in a given place, such as Saskatchewan or Canada, and has both a formal and informal relationship with other people in that place.

**citizenship:** The fact of being a citizen of a country; the qualities considered desirable in a person viewed as a member of society, the exercising of rights, privileges and responsibilities as a member of a particular society.

**colonization:** The act or policy of colonizing; to bring settlers into a country; to make a country into a colony.

**constitution:** The body of fundamental principles or established precedents according to which a state or other organization is acknowledged to be governed.

**Constitution Act 1982:** The Constitution of Canada created and repatriated from Great Britain in 1982, wherein the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees specific rights and freedoms for Canadian citizens.





**contract:** A written or spoken agreement between two or more parties, intended to be enforceable by law, a document recording this.

**covenant:** An agreement between God and a person or nation.

**Creator:** The First Nations believe in a Great Spirit or God who was the Creator of all things. This spirit was often referred to as the Creator in the First Nations languages.

**Cree:** The European name for the First Nations living in central Canada. The Cree were divided into three main groups: the Plains Cree, the Woodland Cree and the Swampy Cree.

**Crown:** The monarch, especially as head of state; the power or authority residing in the monarchy. This term denotes the British government, as led by the monarchy.

**cultural diversity:** Most commonly refers to differences between cultural groups, although it is also used to describe differences within cultural groups, (e.g. diversity within the Cree culture includes Plains Cree, Woodlands Cree and Swampy Cree). Underlying current usage is an emphasis on accepting and respecting cultural differences through the recognition that one culture is not intrinsically superior to another.

**culture:** The customs, history, values and languages that make up the heritage of a person or people and contribute to that person's or peoples' identity. First Nations peoples use the term culture to refer to their traditional teachings: beliefs, history, languages, ceremonies, customs, traditions, priorities (how life should be) and stories.

**custom:** A tradition that is passed from one generation to another.

**Dakota:** A term used by a Dakota-speaking person in reference to themselves.

**Denesûliné [Dene]:** The Athaspaskan-speaking peoples of north-western Canada. This is their own name for themselves, "the people."



**diversity:** The state or quality of being diverse or different. Within an ethnic group, each member of the group has unique qualities and characteristics, making the group diverse. Diversity includes difference in gender, age, skills, knowledge, attributes, physical characteristics, education, etc. A situation that includes representation of multiple (ideally all) groups within a prescribed environment.

**Elder:** A person who has earned the right to be recognized as an Elder in his/her community and/or in other First Nations communities. Most have variety of special gifts they have acquired and earned. These Elders have the ability to pass on traditional teachings and provide spiritual guidance.

**entitlement:** The allotment of reserve land due to a band under Treaty; an outstanding entitlement means that the band did not get all of the reserve land that it should have.

**entrenched:** To safeguard (rights, etc.) by constitutional provision; provide for the legal or political perpetuation of.

**European:** A native or inhabitant of Europe, a person descended from natives of Europe.

**Euro-Canadian:** A Canadian of European origin or descent.

**Eurocentricism:** Label for all the beliefs that presume superiority of Europeans over non Europeans (Laliberte et al., 2000, p. 568).

**Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN):** Since its inception more than 50 years ago, the FSIN has provided strong and constructive First Nations government. The FSIN represents Saskatchewan First Nations and more than 96,000 First Nations citizens in this province.



**First Nations:** A collective term used to refer to the original peoples of North America. It is important to recognize that there are many different nations within the First Nations, each with their own culture, language and territory. Other descriptions of "First Nations" include the following: 1) usually used to refer to a politically autonomous band under the *Indian Act*, a nation of First Peoples; and 2) a term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian." Although the term "First Nation" is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term "First Nations peoples" refers to the descendants of the original inhabitants of Canada. The term "First Nation" has also been adopted to replace the word "band" in the name of communities.

**fiscal:** Pertaining to financial matters; related to public revenue, taxes.

**fur trade:** The system of trade between the Europeans and First Nations peoples in Canada. The fur trade was dominated for the most part by the Hudson's Bay Company.

**governance:** The act or manner of governing; the office or function of governing.

**Hudson's Bay Company:** A British trading company chartered in 1670 to carry on the fur trade with the Indians of North America. The Hudson's Bay Company played a great part in the exploration and development of Canada's Northwest.

**imperialism:** A policy of acquiring dependent territories or extending a country's influence over less developed countries through trade or diplomacy; the domination of another country's economic, political or cultural institutions; the creation, maintenance or extension of an empire comprising many nations and areas, all controlled by a central government.



**Indian:** A person who is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian under the *Indian Act*. A term that describes all the Aboriginal People in Canada who are not Inuit or Métis. Indian peoples are one of three groups of people recognized as Aboriginal in the *Constitution Act*, 1982. There are three definitions that apply to Indians in Canada: Status Indians, Non-Status Indians and Treaty Indians. The use of the term "Indian" has declined since the 1970s, when the term "First Nation" came into common usage.

**Indian Act:** Canadian legislation first passed in 1876 and amended many times since then; defines an Indian in relation to federal obligation and sets out a series of regulations applying to Indians living on reserves.

**Indian Reserves:** A tract of land, the legal title to which is vested in Her Majesty, that has been set apart by Her Majesty for the use and benefit of a band.

**indigenous people:** All inhabitants indigenous to their lands and territories, and their descendants; native or belonging naturally to a place; of, pertaining to, or concerned with the aboriginal inhabitants of a region.

**influence:** The power credited to individuals or an organization that uses persuasion, rational arguments, emotional appeals, rewards and/or bribes.

**inherent:** A God-given right, existing in someone or something as a permanent characteristic or quality. Also, from Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's *Native Studies 30 June 1997 curriculum guide*: A right which exists outside of the Constitution (of Canada) and does not have to be granted through agreements.

**integration:** The integration occurring between the late 1960s to the 1980s; this period replaced the previous segregation era as First Nation children were sent to nearby urban centres in search of better opportunities.



**Inuit:** People living mainly in Northern Canada, Greenland, Alaska and eastern Siberia, who are the original inhabitants of the Arctic; the Eskimo people.

**jurisdiction:** Administration of justice; legal or other authority.

**kinship (as it relates to the treaties):** The kinship which is embodied in the treaty relationship consists of three characteristics: First, the principle of mutual respect and the duty of nurturing and caring describes the kind of relationship that would exist between mother and child. Second, the principle of non-interference describes the relationship of brothers. Third, the principle of non-coercion, happiness and respect describes the relationship of cousins.

**Lakota:** A term used by a Lakota-speaking person in reference to themselves.

**language:** The method of human communication, either spoken or written, using words in an agreed way; the language of a particular community or nation.

**language/dialect:** A form of speech peculiar to a particular region; a subordinate language form with non-standard vocabulary, pronunciation or grammar (e.g. the Plains Cree word for "Cree people" is *nêhiyawak*, the Swampy Cree word is *nêhinawak* and the Woods Cree word is *nêhithawak*).

**Métis:** People born of, or descended from, both European and First Nations parents. A distinctive Métis Nation developed in what is now southern Manitoba in the 1800s, and the descendants of these people later moved throughout the prairies. There are also many other groups of mixed ancestry people who consider themselves Métis.

**Nakota:** One of the Oçeti Sakowin sub-groups, the Nakota occupied large areas of Saskatchewan. The Nakota [sometimes called Assiniboine] retained their own hunting territory and are recognized as a separate nation.



**Nation:** Community of people of mainly common descent, history, language, etc. forming a State or inhabiting a territory. A group of people with a common history, language and culture who use a particular territory—and live upon it—and a system of governance.

**Native:** A person born in a specified place; a local inhabitant; a member of an Indigenous people of a country, region, etc. as distinguished from settlers, immigrants and their descendants.

**nêhiyawak [nêhinawak, nêhithawak]:** A Cree term describing themselves as Cree.

**Non-Status Indian:** An Indian person who is not registered as an Indian under the *Indian Act*. This may be because his or her ancestors were never registered or because he or she lost Indian status under former provisions of the *Indian Act*.

**Numbered Treaties:** Treaties signed between 1871 and 1921, each numbered 1 to 11, throughout the North and West. All contained some rights conferred on Indians, such as reserves and annuities, and in return the First Nations agreed to share vast tracts of land.

**oçeti sakowin:** The seven sacred fires of the Sioux Nation: the Dakota (4 fires), the Lakota (1 fire), and the Nakota (2 fires).

**Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC):** The OTC was created by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indigenous Nations and the Government of Canada to facilitate treaty discussions between the Government of Canada and the First Nations.

**oral history:** The art of passing on the history, values and beliefs of the First Nations from one generation to the next through the spoken words of people who have knowledge of past events and traditions. Knowledge based on the experience of the person speaking, usually recollections of events the person saw, heard of or took part in.



**oral tradition:** Knowledge that goes back many generations. It may take the form of laws, myths, songs, stories or fables. It may be found in place names or phrases in a traditional aboriginal language. Weaving, masks, totem poles, carvings and other symbolic creations may be used by some First Nations to record information.

Note: First Nations oral tradition has been labeled as myths, fables, legends and stories. However each of these terms conceal the true meaning of oral tradition. For instance, the term "myth" is derogatory and is associated with fantasy and untruth. It is also assumed that the events in stories never took place. In oral tradition, it is clear that the events addressed did take place and are very real in the mind of the storyteller, who follows centuries of protocol for passing this information on.

**policy:** A definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions.

**power:** The ability to carry out decisions.

**Reinstated Status Indians:** This includes people who regained their status on the Indian register as per the Bill C-31 amendment made to the *Indian Act* effective April 17, 1985. They are required to make further application to specific bands, usually the band from which they were enfranchised, to receive band membership. In reference to this group of people, the term Status Indian is sufficient.

**Royal Proclamation of 1763:** A legal document which established British ownership over all colonies in Canada and provided protection over unsettled lands belonging to the Indians.

**Saulteaux:** Sometimes called the Ojibway, these First Nations were latecomers to what is now Saskatchewan, settling primarily in southern areas through alliances with the Nakota [Assiniboine] and Cree.



**segregation:** The separation or isolation of a race, class or ethnic group by enforced or voluntary residence in a restricted area, by barriers to social intercourse, by separate educational facilities or by other discriminatory means.

**self-determination:** The freedom of a people to decide their own allegiance or form of government.

**self-government:** Government by its own people; self-control.

**society:** A social community; the customs and organization of an ordered community.

**solemn:** Serious and dignified, formal; accompanied by ceremony, especially for religious purposes, grave, sober, deliberate; slow in movement or action (a solemn promise).

**sovereign:** Characterized by independence or autonomy, especially having the rights; concerned with or pertaining to independence or autonomy; the right to rule without any external control. Ultimate jurisdiction or power. Claiming sovereignty for the First Nations means governing themselves without any external control.

**sovereignty:** The absolute and independent authority of a community, nation, etc.; the right to autonomy of self-government; supremacy with respect to power and rank; supreme authority; a territory or community existing as a self-governing or independent state.

**sovereignty (First Nations perspective):** The Creator gave the First Nations:

- The land on the island of North America ("Turtle Island," the Peoples' Island).
- A way to communicate with Him for guidance and to give thanks.
- Laws, values and principles that described the relationships and responsibilities they possessed to and for the lands given to them.





- An interconnectedness among the sacred ceremonies, teachings and beliefs among the First Nations.
- Spiritual philosophies, teachings, laws and traditions that provided a framework for the political, social, educational and cultural institutions, and laws that allowed them to survive as nations from the beginning of time to the present.
- The "gifts" they needed to survive both spiritually and materially, given to them through their special relationship with the Creator. These gifts are the life-sustaining and life-giving forces represented by the sun, water, grass, animals, fire and Mother Earth.
- Relationships that symbolize and represent the existence of a living sovereign First Nations circle (humans, plants, animals, land, etc.).

**spirituality:** A devotion to spiritual things; a spiritual quality.

**state:** A sovereign political community organized under a distinct government recognized and conformed to by the people as supreme and having jurisdiction over a given territory; a nation.

**Status Indian (First Nation):** Three definitions are as follows: 1) an Indian person who is registered as an Indian under the *Indian Act* and thus recognized by the federal government as an Indian and accorded the accompanying rights, benefits and restrictions of the *Indian Act* and related policies; 2) Status Indians who are registered or entitled to be registered under the *Indian Act*. The act sets out the requirements for determining who is Status Indian; and 3) a commonly used term applied to a person who is registered as an Indian under the *Indian Act*; a Registered Indian is a person who, pursuant to the *Indian Act*, is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian.

**stereotype:** A generalization about a group of people; to label a person because they belong to a certain group.



**surrender:** To give up possession or control of (something) to another, especially on compulsion or demand; to relinquish, yield.

**surrender claim:** An agreed-upon transfer of Indian land to the Government of Canada, usually for money. Under the *Indian Act*, reserve land can only be sold to the federal government, which may then sell or lease the land on behalf of the Indian band or First Nation.

**territory:** An area that has been occupied in regard to use or jurisdiction.

**tradition:** The handing down of beliefs, opinions, customs, stories, etc. from parents to children.

**treaties:** Solemn agreements between two or more nations that create mutually binding obligations.

**treaty:** Formally concluded and ratified agreement between states; an agreement between individuals or parties, especially for the purchase of property.

**Treaty First Nation:** A person who obtained treaty rights through treaty negotiations. Specifically, leaders and members of the First Nations who negotiated treaty and passed on their treaty rights to their children, with exception to the *Indian Act* legislated situations.

**Treaty Indian:** Three definitions are as follows: 1) an Indian person whose forefathers signed a numbered treaty in which land was exchanged for certain listed payments, such as money, tools, and health and educational benefits. The term is often used in the prairie provinces synonymous with "Status Indian"; 2) a First Nation whose ancestors signed a treaty with the Crown and as a result are entitled to treaty benefits. Non-treaty Indians do not receive the same benefits; and 3) Indian people or descendants of Indian people who entered into treaties with the Crown or Canadian government.

**Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE):** A specific area of claims concerning fulfillment of the guarantee of reserve land in the Numbered Treaties.



**Treaty rights:** Rights that are provided for in the treaties made between the First Nations and the British Crown or the Government of Canada.

**trust obligations:** The obligations of the federal government to act in the best interests of Indians when acting on their behalf on a trusteeship capacity. These obligations, which are rooted in the treaties and the *Indian Act*, are akin to those exercised by one country to another that has been made a protectorate of the first.

**values:** The ideals and standards set by a society.

**worldview:** A comprehensive view or philosophy of life, the world and the universe. Worldview can be described as a philosophy or view of life that shapes how we interact and respond to the world around us. Our own worldview influences, shapes and interprets what we experience, and provides us with a sense of vision for the future.

**yield:** Give up, surrender, concede; comply with a demand for.



## Recommended Resources

- 1) The W̱ichitowin Elders' Council. *Authentic Engagement of First Nations and Métis Elders*.
- 2) Soonias, S., Exner-Pirot, H., Salat, M., & Shah, A. *City of Bridges: First Nations and Métis Economic Development in Saskatoon & Region*.
- 3) Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre. *Cultural Teachings: First Nations Protocol Teachings – Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre*.
- 4) *The Land is Everything: Treaty Land Entitlement* (Edited by Tasha Hubbard & Marilyn Poitras).
- 5) Joseph, Bob. *First Nation Protocol on Traditional Territory*. Indigenous Corporate Training (ICTINC). 2012. [www.ictinc.ca/first-nation-protocol-on-traditional-territory](http://www.ictinc.ca/first-nation-protocol-on-traditional-territory). August 2016.
- 6) University of Saskatchewan. *Aboriginal Initiatives – Land Recognition*. University of Saskatchewan. 2016. [aboriginal.usask.ca/land-recognition.php](http://aboriginal.usask.ca/land-recognition.php). August 2016.
- 7) Assembly of First Nations (AFN). *Description of the AFN*. AFN. [www.afn.ca/en/about-afn/description-of-the-afn](http://www.afn.ca/en/about-afn/description-of-the-afn). August 2016.
- 8) Belanger, Yale D. *Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN)*. The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan. 2006. [esask.uregina.ca/entry/federation\\_of\\_saskatchewan\\_indian\\_nations\\_fsin.html](http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/federation_of_saskatchewan_indian_nations_fsin.html). August 2016.
- 9) Brass, Mervin. *FSIN Changes Name to Include Sovereign Indigenous Nations*. FSIN. 2016. [www.fsin.com/2016/05/25/media-release-fsin-changes-name-to-include-sovereign-indigenous-nations/](http://www.fsin.com/2016/05/25/media-release-fsin-changes-name-to-include-sovereign-indigenous-nations/). August 2016.





## Notes

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