



Provincial Court

Reconciliation Framework

September 30, 2025

A. Statement of Purpose

The Provincial Court's Reconciliation Framework is a commitment by the Court to learn from and better serve Indigenous peoples involved with the justice system. This includes improving access to justice by reducing the barriers Indigenous peoples face while recognizing the neutrality and independence of the Court. The Reconciliation Framework is informed by the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and the *BC First Nations Justice Strategy*.

This Framework sets out the principles that will guide the Court in choosing and carrying out specific actions to support reconciliation.

B. A Commitment to Advancing Truth and Reconciliation

The Provincial Court supports the BC Court of Appeal's Reconciliation Framework that states:

The justice system has too often failed Indigenous people and peoples in Canada. The Court of Appeal is committed to advancing truth and reconciliation so that the justice system better serves Indigenous people.

The Court of Appeal understands reconciliation to be an **ongoing process** aimed at:

- **Understanding, acknowledging, and addressing** the truth of the adverse experiences of Indigenous people within the justice system and Canadian society;
- **Learning** about Indigenous peoples, cultures, traditions, values, and concepts of justice, and the impact colonization has had on all of these;
- **Ensuring** the justice system is inclusive, responsive, and respectful to all; and
- **Building** and maintaining trust in the justice system.

Consistent with the Canadian Judicial Council's *Ethical Principles for Judges*, the Court of Appeal is committed to **advancing reconciliation** in all its work, including through:

- **Education:** Education about historical wrongs, cultural context, the experiences of Indigenous people in the justice system, and other educational priorities identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;
- **Relationship-building:** Relationship-building between the Court of Appeal and Indigenous communities through outreach, listening, and dialogue; and,
- **Access to Justice:** Improving access to justice through inclusivity, inviting input on Indigenous practices, welcoming symbols, and eliminating barriers.

C. Provincial Court Reconciliation Framework

The Provincial Court is a trial court that sits in nearly 90 locations throughout British Columbia. The Court deals with the majority of the cases in British Columbia, including most civil lawsuits for claims between \$5001 and \$35,000 (small claims), family law cases, child protection cases, provincial offence cases, traffic, ticket and bylaw matters, and criminal cases for both adults and youth (“court proceedings”). Given its unique role, the Provincial Court has identified three foundational areas of reconciliation that align with the Statement of Purpose and will guide the Court in forming concrete action items. Some action items can begin immediately while others will require funding, resources and longer term planning.

1. Relationship building

The Provincial Court is committed to relationship building with Indigenous peoples through outreach, listening and dialogue, including:

- Creating a framework for building and strengthening relationships between the Court at the regional and local level and local Indigenous peoples
- Learning from Indigenous peoples about how to approach reconciliation and sharing information about Court initiatives related to reconciliation
- Developing a plan to consult with Indigenous peoples about action items under this Reconciliation Framework

2. Education and understanding

The Provincial Court is committed to a deeper understanding of historical wrongs, cultural context, and the experiences of Indigenous peoples in the justice system, including:

- Developing cultural competency education programs for all judges, judicial justices, judicial case managers and Integrated Judicial Services (judiciary) staff. The Court will invite Indigenous guidance and teaching to assist with the design of the programs
- Creating education programs for all Provincial Court judges and judicial justices on the application of legislation and case law that are unique to Indigenous peoples, and education on the intersection of Indigenous laws with the Provincial Court
- Exploring opportunities for judges to take part in cultural activities and education that takes place on Indigenous lands or with Indigenous peoples

3. Access to justice

The Provincial Court is committed to ensuring that it provides meaningful access to justice for Indigenous peoples, including:

- Recognizing that diversity enhances the justice system and the public's confidence in that system, the Court will highlight career opportunities in the justice system and encourage Indigenous people to consider careers as lawyers, judges, judicial justices, Integrated Judicial Services (judiciary) staff including judicial administrative assistants and judicial case managers, and Court Services staff including clerks and sheriffs
- Continuing to work with Indigenous peoples to learn and understand adapted court processes and, where appropriate, implement those processes in court proceedings
- Inviting input from Indigenous peoples on accommodating Indigenous peoples, practices and cultures in court proceedings
- Exploring involvement of Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers in areas within the Court's jurisdiction that assist our court in reaching outcomes that reflect the intent of this Framework
- Reviewing Court policies, notices and practice directions to ensure they align with the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

D. Path forward

The Honourable Murray Sinclair's remarks on the Truth and Reconciliation report¹ recognized that the important work of reconciliation is a continuous process, stating:

Achieving reconciliation, as I observed in June of this year, is like climbing a mountain — we must proceed one step at a time. It will not always be easy. There will be storms, there will be obstacles, we will fall down from time to time but we cannot allow ourselves to be daunted by the task because our goal is a just one and it is also necessary for our children.

The Court will establish a Reconciliation Action Committee to ensure each year that the Court continues to work on each area of reconciliation. The Court will report out on its progress on the Court's website and in its Annual Report.

The Provincial Court recognizes that reconciliation requires continuous work, effort, communication and engagement now and into the future.

¹ *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission - December 15, 2015*, Comments by the Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, retrieved from CPAC website: <https://www.cpac.ca/cpac-special/episode/final-report-of-the-truth-and-reconciliation-commission--december-15-2015?id=52b9822f-291d-4171-8fc5-4365155b1ec9> at the 52.27 minute timestamp.