

## Indigenous Advisory Circle Terms of Reference

### Purpose

The Indigenous Advisory Circle (the Circle) provides support and strategic guidance in partnership with the Manitoba College of Social Workers' (MCSW) Board of Directors and Executive Director/Registrar to facilitate and build a path towards reconciliation – a path inclusive of Indigenous self-determination and informed through cultural safety. Recognizing Indigenous way of knowing, including the principles Two-Eyed Seeing, the Circle advises on the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems, governance, and practices into MCSW decision-making, including matters related to regulatory legislation, policies and practices.

The Circle supports MCSW's alignment with key frameworks and commitments, including:

- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- Bill C-92: An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families
- The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Calls for Justice
- The Spirit Bear Plan
- Principles of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

### Guiding Principles

- **Respect** for Indigenous worldviews and protocols.
- **Reciprocity** in relationships between MCSW and Indigenous peoples.
- **Responsibility** to support truth, reconciliation, and decolonization.
- **Relationality** in how decisions are made and knowledge is shared.

### Composition

The Circle will strive to include representation from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples from urban, rural, and northern regions of Manitoba. This includes Two-Spirit, gender-diverse, and LGBTQIA+ individuals, as well as people with diverse experiences, people with disabilities, youth, and Elders. The Circle will include at least one Elder or Knowledge Keeper to share and offer the circle cultural guidance.

The Chair of the Circle shall be selected from among Advisory Circle members. The Circle shall be supported by a MCSW staff representative.

## Nomination & Selection Process

Nominations are invited from:

- MCSW Board, Committees and general membership
- Indigenous governing bodies and communities
- Indigenous-led community organizations
- Indigenous social workers from diverse geographic and professional backgrounds
- Indigenous representatives with a demonstrated commitment to reconciliation, Indigenous self-determination and lived experience

A selection committee comprised of Indigenous representatives and MCSW leadership reviews nominations with an intention to promote equitable representation across disciplines, regions, and lived experiences.

The selection process includes evaluation and verification of Indigenous identification considering a combination of the following:

- written documentation and identification issued by accepted federal, provincial, and Indigenous governments and organizations
- genealogical information
- a signed declaration that demonstrates community connection or involvement with a specific First Nation, Inuit, or Métis Nation community

To honour the oral traditions of Indigenous Peoples, MCSW may consider alternative mechanisms for verification such as oral submissions (e.g. testimonials in collaboration with communities and nations)

## Scope and Responsibilities

- Advising on MCSW's governance, regulatory processes, and organizational culture.
- Supporting the understanding and application of Two-Eyed Seeing
- Reviewing the continuing competence program to support inclusion of Indigenous healing practices, intergenerational trauma, and culturally appropriate care, and providing guidance on the development of mandatory Indigenous cultural safety training for all social workers.
- Supporting understanding of Bill C-92, including Indigenous jurisdiction, sovereignty, and cultural continuity, and advising on policy alignment with Jordan's Principle in social work standards and practices.
- Recommending strategies to increase Indigenous participation in social work leadership, governance, and regulation.
- Advising on inclusive engagement practices to ensure that Indigenous organizations are actively involved in decision-making processes related to social work regulation.
- Supporting partnerships between MCSW and Indigenous-led social work organizations to promote culturally informed, Indigenous-led practice.
- Monitoring and evaluating implementation of the Advisory Circle's recommendations.
- Contributing to MCSW's annual reporting by summarizing key initiatives, progress, and reconciliation outcomes, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Terms of Reference established in partnership with [Indigenous Strategy Alliance](#).  
Approved by the MCSW Board of Directors June 19, 2025

Through this mandate, the Indigenous Advisory Circle strengthens the MCSW's commitment to reconciliation and cultural safety, while guiding meaningful systemic transformation rooted in Indigenous knowledge, rights, and leadership.

The Indigenous Advisory Circle shall maintain current Terms of Reference (TOR) approved by the Board.

### **Decision-Making**

The Circle uses a consensus decision-making model, promoting collaborative and culturally respectful discussions. When consensus cannot be reached, a cultural mediation process will be facilitated by Indigenous Knowledge Keepers or Elders.

### **Reporting and Accountability**

The Circle is an advisory body that works in partnership and collaboration with the MCSW Board of Directors and leadership with a shared, formal decision-making model that includes a binding consultation and formal response model.

The Board of Directors and/or the Executive Director/Registrar must formally respond to all recommendations from the Indigenous Advisory Circle within 90 days, outlining:

- Implementation steps
- A reason for why the recommendation is not being implemented, with an alternative action or explanation

Members of the Circle will contribute to the redevelopment and ongoing review of the MCSW Code of Conduct and will support its values and principles, recognizing its role in fostering respectful and ethical engagement.

### **Confidentiality**

Members of the Circle may be privy to personal stories, cultural knowledge and internal organizational matters. All such information will be treated with respect and confidentiality.

Attendance at meetings is open only to members of the Circle unless expressly invited by the Chair. Discussion and decisions occurring in a meeting of the Circle are disclosed to the Board of Directors in a manner that respects individual confidentiality.

### **Quorum**

Quorum shall be determined by members of the Circle.

### **Terms**

Members shall serve for a period of three (3) years and may be renewed for successive terms of three (3) years, at the discretion of the Circle. The first Indigenous Advisory Circle will include staggered terms of one, two and three years to ensure continuity and succession planning.

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Approved by the MCSW Board of Directors June 19, 2025

## Meetings

The Advisory Circle will meet at least four times per year, with preference for at least one in-person meeting annually. At least one representative of the Advisory Circle will participate in an annual strategic session with the Board of Directors to review progress and advise on reconciliation priorities and objectives.

Minutes of each meeting will be maintained in the College records.

## Cultural Protocols

- Tobacco offering or other appropriate gifts will be offered to Elders/Knowledge Keepers at each in-person meeting.
- Ceremonial practices (i.e. opening prayers, smudging) will be supported by MCSW
- Meetings spaces will be as respectful, safe and culturally appropriate as possible

## Expenses & Honoraria

Members of the Circle will be compensated for expenses (i.e. mileage, meals, accommodation) in accordance with the Manitoba College of Social Workers Expense Policy.

Members of the Indigenous Advisory Circle will be provided with \$100 honorarium for meetings under three (3) hours in length and \$200 honorarium for meetings over three (3) hours in length.

Confirmation of hours of attendance by the Chair and/or MCSW staff representative and completion of the Honorarium Reimbursement form are required for reimbursement.

## References:

<https://umanitoba.ca/indigenous/supporting-indigenous-consultation-working-group>

[https://www.fnuniv.ca/wp-content/uploads/25-A-Indigenous\\_Identity\\_Substantiation\\_Policies\\_April\\_2024.pdf](https://www.fnuniv.ca/wp-content/uploads/25-A-Indigenous_Identity_Substantiation_Policies_April_2024.pdf)

<https://uwaterloo.ca/indigenous/indigenous-verification/indigenous-citizenshipmembership-verification-guidelines>

<https://www.wlu.ca/about/discover-laurier/indigenization/indigenous-identity-verification-process.html>