

TRUE DIALOGUE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CENTRE (RJ Centre)

Alberta Indigenous Restorative Justice in Action: “Stakeholder Advisory Committee”

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Name of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee

The Alberta Indigenous Restorative Justice in Action (AIRJA) Stakeholder Advisory Committee (Committee) shall be known as the “AIRJA Committee.”

2. Background and Context

The Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Metis Nation within Alberta led a province-wide engagement initiative to explore the development of culturally relevant and sustainable restorative justice (RJ) services in Alberta. This initiative was rooted in the principle of “Nothing About Us, Without Us,” emphasizing community-led research, knowledge-sharing, and relationship-building.

Over several months in 2024, the project team facilitated eight online sharing circles, gathered input at the Alberta Restorative Justice Association (ARJA) conference, and hosted multiple stakeholder meetings. These engagements revealed a clear and urgent need for RJ practices that honour Indigenous knowledge, address systemic barriers, and promote community healing and empowerment.

Participants voiced significant concerns about intergenerational trauma, practitioner burnout, inadequate funding, and a lack of culturally appropriate training and certification. The insights gathered from the “What We Heard Report” highlighted the importance of embedding restorative justice practices that are deeply intertwined with Indigenous cultural values and societal structures. The initiative underscored the necessity of systems that do not merely accommodate Indigenous perspectives but are fundamentally shaped by them. This community-centric approach aims to ensure that restorative justice processes are not only effective but also resonate with the lived experiences and values of Indigenous peoples.

Creating the AIRJA Committee is a pivotal step in addressing the needs and aspirations identified during the engagement initiative. Funded by Alberta Justice, an AIRJA Committee, under the auspices of the True Dialogue Restorative Justice Centre (RJ Centre), shall support the second year of this project.

The AIRJA Committee will play a crucial role in transforming insights into actionable strategies by leveraging its members' collective wisdom and experiences. The committee's focus will include advocating for sufficient funding and supporting training and certification processes that reflect Indigenous justice cultural values. Additionally, it will prioritize the well-being of practitioners by addressing burnout and promoting sustainability within the restorative justice framework. Through its multifaceted approach, the AIRJA Committee will contribute to the evolution of restorative justice practices that honour and empower Indigenous peoples, fostering healing and reconciliation across the province.

3. AIRJA Committee Objectives

3.1 Foster Collaboration and Relationship Building

Provide a culturally safe platform for practitioners to share their knowledge, experiences, and stories, and provide mentorship support for wellness and learning.

- Create opportunities for practitioners to collaborate on RJ referrals in real time and reflect on their RJ experiences through regular networking.
- Plan AIRJA Engagement Gatherings dedicated to relationship building, providing input into the GOA RJ Indigenous Engagement Strategy for culturally relevant facilitation competencies, and training curriculum.
- By actively engaging with restorative practitioners, being inclusive, strengthens collective understanding of restorative justice and fortifies the commitment to creating just, equitable services deeply rooted in Indigenous cultural values.
- Advise on communications to promote inclusive engagement across various media platforms.

3.2 Building Bridges

Another key aspect of the committee's role is building bridges.

- Review findings from the GOA Engagement Strategy for Indigenous RJ to determine themes and advise on recommendations.
- Consult with ARJA and other stakeholders to explore mutually beneficial areas of collaboration.

3.3. Culturally Relevant Facilitation Skills Training

- The RJ Centre will endeavour to develop training in partnership with the University of Alberta Wahkohtowin Law and Governance Lodge. Restorative Justice may be one of the required courses for a developing Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Law. This course can also be offered as a stand-alone TD RJ Centre certificate training.
- The committee will advise on core training modules tailored to Indigenous restorative justice practice to ensure the cultural integrity and relevance of the training content.
- Support the planning and delivery of one pilot training event in 2026.
- Advise on a train-the-trainer program to identify Indigenous RJ practitioners interested in being trainers.

3.4 Project Continuance

- Advise on the continuance of AIRJA initiatives and priorities for the 3rd project year.
- Identify and pursue long-term funding and resource development opportunities to support Indigenous RJ services, training, support systems, mentorship opportunities, and peer networks to ensure Indigenous RJ practitioners are well-supported, safe, and effective.

4. Committee Membership and Operations

Membership & Structure

The AIRJA Committee will comprise 5 – 7 members, Indigenous restorative justice practitioners and allies from across the Province of Alberta, and 2 Elders. A co-chair will be selected from the Advisory Committee.

- People wishing to serve on the committee are asked to submit an email expressing their interest and biography to rjcentre@truedialogue.ca by June 9, 2025.
- Committee members will be selected based on their expertise, commitment to Indigenous restorative justice, and ability to contribute to the AIRJA initiatives. The Selection Committee shall comprise members from AB Justice and the RJ Centre.
- Members will receive compensation as an honorarium to attend Advisory Committee meetings along with travel expenses.
- Ad hoc subcommittees may be formed involving social-justice-education practitioners for a specific project initiative, to be chaired or co-chaired by an AIRJA Committee member.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Foster a collaborative environment where members can share insights, experiences, and strategies to advance Indigenous restorative justice practices.
- Walk the talk as peacemakers/restorative practitioners. Model traditional teachings in advisory committee work. If a relationship with a committee member or a community stakeholder breaks down, take responsibility for repairing the harm to restore healthy working relationships.
- Support AIRJA Project engagement initiatives.
- Regularly attend meetings and support subcommittee work.

Meetings

- The meeting dates and times will be the first business day of every month or at other times determined by the committee. They will take place from July 2025 to March 31, 2026, with a possibility of extension until the end of June 2026. There will be approximately 10 to 12 advisory meetings in total.
- The Committee members may be required to attend additional meetings to carry out project related activities.

Management and Administrative Support

True Dialogue Restorative Justice Centre (TDRJC) will facilitate Advisory Committee meetings and provide administrative support for the to include:

- Project management and coordination services.
- Send online meeting invitations, agendas, and supporting information to members.
- Taking meeting minutes to be circulated to members within two weeks of the meeting.
- Support knowledge gathering engagement events such as AIRJA Engagement Gatherings.
- Be the fiscal agent for grant funding with the Alberta Community Justice Grant and secure other funding sources to support AIRJA initiatives.
- Coordinating compensation and reimbursement of project-related costs and honoraria.
- Obtain organizational insurance for this project initiative.