

# TRUE DIALOGUE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CENTRE

## Alberta Indigenous Restorative Justice in Action (AIRJA)

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### Advisory Committee - Terms of Reference

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#### Background Overview

This project was made possible through funding received by the Honourable Mickey Amery, Minister of Alberta Justice, and the support of the Integrated Justice Initiatives Unit.

In April 2024, the Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Métis Nation in Alberta led a provincewide engagement effort to develop culturally relevant, sustainable restorative justice services. This project was based on the principle of “Nothing About Us, Without Us.” It represents an Indigenous-led inquiry approach and a culturally safe platform for Indigenous, racialized practitioners and allies to voice their concerns, feel heard, and participate in restorative (non-adversarial, culturally safe) dialogues to understand systemic issues hindering development.

In the fall, the project team facilitated online sharing circles, gathered input at the Alberta Restorative Justice Association Conference, and convened multiple stakeholder meetings. These engagements confirmed the importance of ensuring that Indigenous peoples' unique cultural values and governance practices guide efforts to support Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action to reduce the over-representation of Indigenous and racialized youth and adults in the social-justice system, for the benefit of all Albertans.

The insights from the [What We Heard Report](#) substantiate the relevance of Indigenous cultural values, customary law (note below), and societal structures in shaping restorative justice practices. What we heard emphasizes the need for models that go beyond mere reference to the origins of restorative justice. Instead, they must be fundamentally shaped by them, including standards of practice and training. Self-determination is a restorative justice strategy for healing and reconciliation. This project represents a collective effort to break the cycle of violence, offering a powerful decolonization process by which to address the issues connected to unresolved intergenerational trauma and over-incarceration.

***Indigenous peoples view restorative justice not merely as a program but as a way of life for reclaiming healthy relationships within a framework of cultural safety and mutual respect.***

In April 2025, True Dialogue Restorative Justice Centre received funding from Alberta Justice and formed the AIRJA Committee to guide the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of this restorative journey. These terms of reference have been updated to incorporate changes that have transpired since the committee was formed in June 2025.

Customary law - refers to the set of unwritten rules, practices, and beliefs that a community accepts as legally binding and that have been established through long-standing tradition and usage. It is based on what is observed and believed to be a legal requirement within a community, and it is often passed down through oral tradition or lived practice.

## **COMMITTEE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. Foster Collaboration and Relationship Building**

Provide a culturally safe platform to share knowledge, experiences, and receive mentorship support.

- Create opportunities for practitioners to collaborate on RJ referrals in real time and reflect on their RJ experiences through regular networking.
- Provide mentorship support focused on practitioner well-being.
- Plan a provincial AIRJA Gathering.
- Identify funding opportunities to support organizational development and the delivery of culturally relevant restorative justice services.
- Promote engagement across various media platforms.

### **2. Bridging Capacity and Promoting Awareness**

Another key aspect of the committee's role is bridging capacity.

- Review findings from the 2024 Alberta Justice Indigenous Engagement Strategy to determine themes and deepen collective understandings to address the issues.
- Consult with stakeholders and referral authorities to promote awareness and mutually beneficial areas of collaboration.

### **3. Indigenous Restorative Justice Training**

- Support the development of restorative justice training with the University of Alberta Wahkohtowin Law and Governance Lodge, Faculty of Law. The course will be one of the required courses for a Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Law.
- Provide and support feedback mechanisms to gain input from Elders and practitioners regarding core training modules to ensure cultural integrity.
- Support the delivery of a pilot training event in fall/winter of 2026 (dependent on project funding continuance for a 3<sup>rd</sup> year).
- Develop a preliminary framework for a mentorship train-the-trainer model for Indigenous agencies who want to build capacity within their agency, Nation or Settlement to deliver training (dependent on project funding continuance).

## **AIRJA ADVISORY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

The Committee will include 5–7 Indigenous and racialized restorative justice practitioners and allies throughout the Province of Alberta.

- Alberta Justice and True Dialogue select committee volunteers based on their expertise, commitment to Indigenous restorative justice, and ability to contribute to AIRJA.
- Volunteers will receive an honorarium as compensation for attending regular monthly Advisory Committee online meetings. Travel expenses for attending events and conferences will be reimbursed.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Foster a collaborative environment where members can openly exchange insights, experiences, and strategies to advance Indigenous restorative justice practices.
- Model restorative principles. If a relationship with a committee member or stakeholder breaks down, engage in a restorative dialogue to address it in a good way.
- Support AIRJA engagement initiatives and funding applications.
- Regularly attend meetings and support project-related activities.

## **PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

True Dialogue Restorative Justice Centre will provide overall project management services:

- Prepare meeting agendas, facilitate committee meetings, and provide meeting minutes.
- Manage the website and develop promotional materials.
- Coordinate the Provincial Gathering and attend other events and presentations to raise awareness of AIRJA and promote engagement.
- Serve as the fiscal agent.
- Apply for other funding sources to support AIRJA initiatives.
- Ensure appropriate organizational insurance coverage.
- Connect with stakeholders to promote engagement and awareness.