



Engagement Guide for First Nations FMM Preparatory Discussions

April 21, 2026

Background

First Ministers Meetings (FMMs) are meetings called by the Prime Minister to discuss issues of national importance with provincial and territorial Premiers. These meetings are distinct from Premiers meetings organized by the Council of the Federation (where Premiers meet without the Prime Minister.) The last FMM held with full First Nations inclusion took place in 2005. Since then, First Nations participation in FMMs has been sporadic and restricted in scope despite consistent objections from First Nations leadership. The 2017 FMM on Clean Growth and Climate Change is an example of this exclusionary approach, where First Nations were invited to speak in a part of the meeting and then explicitly excluded from the balance.

During the 2025 AFN Special Chiefs Assembly, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced that a First Nations – First Ministers Meeting would be held in 2026; and that First Nations will set the FMM agenda. Considerable advocacy by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) led to this commitment. It is the first time that a First Nations-specific FMM will be held; and with an agenda determined by First Nations. A specific date or dates has not set but it is likely to take place in the fall of 2026.

The Prime Minister’s commitment presents an unprecedented opportunity for First Nations to shape a FMM agenda. This is a significant opportunity for First Nations leadership to discuss pathways to advance key First Nations priorities and to frame discussion within a rights-based framework (meaning that the foundation of any FMM outcomes must respect First Nations Treaty and inherent rights, title, and jurisdiction). The First Nations FMM presents an opportunity to heighten the national profile of First Nations issues, and to focus on action where cooperation and implementation by federal/provincial/territorial (FPT) and First Nations is needed to improve outcomes in First Nations communities.

Assembly of First Nations Engagement Activities

The Assembly of First Nations is creating opportunities for First Nations leadership to strategize with each another on priorities for the FMM agenda and matters of strategy and approach.

The AFN has launched a series of Virtual Forums for First Nations leadership. These will gather feedback to guide development of the agenda and planning of the First Nations FMM. The first National Virtual Town Hall for First Nations leadership was convened on March 11, 2026. A second Town Hall with technicians was held on April 15, 2026. A third Town Hall is scheduled for May 19, 2026. Summary Reports can be found on the [AFN website](#). The AFN AGA (July 14-16, 2026 in Ottawa) will provide the opportunity for Chiefs to formally deliberate on FMM matters and provide direction to the National Chief and AFN Executive. A national level preparatory meeting is being planned by AFN to take place before the First Nations FMM.

At the regional level First Nations organizations (PTOs) are likely to organize additional discussion and planning opportunities for First Nations leadership, and the National Chief is continuing her discussions with Chiefs across the country. The AFN has tabled a proposal with the federal government to support regional offices in their engagement activities.



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Preparing for the First Nations FMM: Emerging Discussion Themes in AFN Virtual Leadership Forums

To date, emerging themes from leadership discussions include:

- The importance of incorporating ceremony into the meeting process with the guidance of Elders and Knowledge Keepers.
- The need for an ongoing process of First Nations FMMs, not a “one and done” approach. Reconciliation and practical solutions require structured ongoing dialogue.
- Rights and title holders expect a rights-based approach (meaning respect of Treaty and inherent rights, title, and jurisdiction) to FMM preparatory work, FMM discussion and outcomes.
- This FMM offers a historic opportunity to discuss solutions to key jurisdictional challenges: Respect and implementation of First Nations rights, title and jurisdiction are pre-requisites for advancing First Nations’ well-being and prosperity; and for advancing any “nation-building” efforts by federal, provincial, and territorial governments.
- The value of First Nations strategizing and speaking in a coordinated manner while acknowledging our diverse realities.
- Collaboration among First Nations, and strategic planning around key priorities, are essential to maximize chances of securing meaningful outcomes for First Nations at the community level.
- Focusing on 3 to 4 strategic priorities and identifying key speakers (e.g. 2-4 speakers) to deliver key messages could strengthen First Nations’ influence and improve chances of achieving concrete outcomes.

Issue: Structure of First Nations First Ministers Meeting

FMMs are often scheduled for one day; but some stretch to two days. Dates have not yet been determined for this First Nations FMM. The organization of this FMM must plan for, and manage, the reality and practicalities of 14 FPT delegations (Canada, ten provinces and three territories) and the diversity of First Nations.

Discussion Questions:

1. Given the number of delegations and limited FMM time, what might First Nations representation and the designation of speakers look like?
2. What needs to be done to ensure inclusivity in approach and representation (e.g. First Nations women, youth, LGBTQTS+ people and communities facing emergencies or crises)?



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Issue: Shaping the Agenda for a Fall 2026 First Nations-First Ministers Meeting

In discussions to date, Chiefs have raised several possible FMM agenda items — all within a frame of respect and implementation of Treaty and First Nations' inherent rights, title, and jurisdiction. Suggestions include the following:

- Lands and waters (respect and implementation of Treaty and inherent rights, title and jurisdiction including the rights affirmed by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaty and NRTA issues, environmental protection, safe drinking water, and water protection)
- Closing the First Nations infrastructure gap
- Housing and homelessness
- Justice issues: Justice reform strategies, community safety and policing, implementation of the Calls to Justice
- Emergency Management
- Economic Development
- Health and Social development
- Post-secondary education and trades
- Constitutional reform
 - a constitutional amendment to include First Nations in transfer agreements to provide a constitutional base to support essential government services for First Nations
 - picking up the discussion of First Nations' place in the Constitution more broadly
- Action on Reconciliation (TRC Calls to Action)
- Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Discussion Question:

What are your top five priorities for discussion at this FMM?



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Issue: Shaping Outcomes for the 2026 First Nations FMM

There is an emerging consensus on seeking a commitment for an ongoing structured process for FMM dialogue (no “one and done” approach) because impactful outcomes cannot be achieved in a single meeting. The goal of collaboration among First Nations going into the FMM points to the need for joint preparation of mandate, positions, and supporting documents going into the FMM.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Do you support the goal of an ongoing process of First Nations FMMs (e.g. holding a First Nation FMM once a year or every two years?)
- 2) As part of preparation for the First Nations FMM, do Chiefs want to work together on a draft outcomes document for the FMM?
- 3) What steps should be taken to create and ensure accountability after the FMM? (for example, identifying targeted outcomes and establishing transparent reporting and accountability mechanisms)
- 4) What should be included in a mandating resolution from First Nations-in-Assembly at the July 2026 AGA?