



ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS
Special Chiefs Assembly

December 5-7, 2023

Shaw Centre – Ottawa, Ontario

Ottawa is located on the unceded unsundered Territory of the Algonquin People.

ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS
Assemblée extraordinaire des Chefs

Du 5 au 7 décembre 2023 - Centre Shaw - Ottawa (Ontario)

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ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS (AFN) SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY (SCA)

Update on Panel 13 Report Recommendations

Background:

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 13/2020, *Becoming A Role Model in Ending Sexual Orientation and Gender-Based Discrimination Within the Assembly of First Nations*, passed by First Nations-in-Assembly at the AFN Annual General Assembly (AGA) in December 2020, established the imperative of conducting an independent review to assess and combat systemic gender- and sexual orientation-based discrimination within the AFN. The primary objective was to eradicate various forms of violence, including sexualized violence and bullying. To realize this, a three-member independent Panel was designated to investigate and provide recommendations for action. The final report was presented at the July 2023 AGA, offering a comprehensive set of directives for the AFN to address.

Workplan and Steering Committee:

Following the Panel 13 Report's recommendations, the AFN developed a comprehensive workplan. This workplan provides a framework for carrying out the Panel's recommendations. It offers a systematic, step-by-step guide to ensure the successful implementation of these changes.

Additionally, a Steering Committee, comprising AFN Directors and Human Resources (HR), along with sub-working groups involving AFN employees, has been established to guide and oversee this process effectively, promoting inclusivity and collaboration in the decision-making process.

The objective of the Steering Committee is to provide expert guidance and effective oversight throughout the implementation of the Panel 13 Report's recommendations, to ensure a unified and results-driven approach to bringing about the necessary transformations.

Documents:

In line with the Panel 13 Report's recommendations, the AFN has undertaken a comprehensive review and revision of several key policies to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and best practices. These policies include:

- **Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy:** Revised to address and prevent workplace harassment and violence effectively.
- **Workplace Accommodation Policy:** Updated to accommodate the diverse needs of AFN employees.
- **Return-to-Work Policy:** Enhanced to facilitate the reintegration of employees following leave.
- **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Policy:** Altered to foster a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable work environment.



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In addition, a new Code of Conduct for AFN Event Participants was developed to ensure that AFN events are safe, respectful, and inclusive spaces for all participants.

Health and Safety:

The AFN formed a Workplace Health and Safety Committee (WHSC) in compliance with the Canada Labour Code, which mandates the establishment of a workplace health and safety committee (WHSC) for federal workplaces with 20 or more employees. The committee, comprising management and employee representatives, has held several meetings and undergone specialized training, tailored to the specific needs of federally regulated workplaces. The training encompassed various aspects of health and safety, including:

- Health and Safety Committees and Representatives
- Managing Hazards
- Inspecting Your Workplace
- Hazardous Occurrence Investigations

The training also included components related to psychological hazards and employee well-being, and investigations into incidents and occurrences. The committee is also slated for further training, specifically focused on violence and harassment prevention.

Additionally, AFN has collaborated with a consultant to draft several health and safety policies, including:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Workplace Health and Safety Committee Policy
- Hazards and Risk Assessment Policy
- Workplace Inspections Policy
- Incident Reporting and Investigation Policy
- Work Refusal Policy
- Fit for Duty Policy

The next step is to have these policies reviewed by external legal experts to ensure their legal compliance.

Training:

A significant effort has been made to enhance the knowledge and skills of AFN Directors and employees. The majority of AFN Directors have completed a full day of *“Human Resources Training for Leaders: From Hire to Retirement. The Employment Lifecycle – What Every Manager Should Know.”*



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This training offered a wide range of topics for effective leadership and management, including:

- Maintaining Good Employee Relations
- The Duty to Accommodate
- Respectful Workplace: Human Rights
- Harassment and Violence in the Workplace
- Attendance Management
- Employment Standards
- Discipline and Discharge

The Director of HR has also received specialized training through York University to obtain the Osgoode Certificate in Workplace Mental Health Law, which focuses on workplace mental health.

Mental Wellness:

Support services provided by the Mental Health Support Counsellor's support services has increased, with a growing number of staff utilizing both one-time consultations and formal counseling sessions.

Additionally, the Mental Health Support Counsellor has initiated a weekly series of mental wellness videos, released every Monday, aimed at delivering psychoeducational content to staff, covering topics such as burnout and vicarious trauma.

The Mental Health Support Counsellor has reached out to Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health to explore additional mental wellness resources that can be extended to SCA participants to broaden the reach of support. This reflects a commitment to expanding the array of mental health resources available to AFN employees.

The Mental Health Support Counsellor has also completed training in various areas, including:

- Dialectical Behaviour Therapy
- Vicarious Trauma
- Grief
- Managing Mental Health in the Workplace

These training sessions were conducted in collaboration with the Crisis and Trauma Resource Institute and the Achieve Centre for Leadership. Additionally, the Mental Health Support Counsellor actively engages in clinical supervision to ensure the highest level of service delivery and continuously seeks out additional training opportunities that could further benefit AFN employees. This proactive approach underscores our commitment to providing the most effective and up-to-date support to the AFN.



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Conclusion:

In conclusion, the AFN has made significant strides in addressing the recommendations of the Panel 13 Report, focusing on workplace policies, health and safety, mental wellness, and comprehensive training for AFN Directors and employees. The AFN is committed to creating a safer, more inclusive, and equitable working environment for all its members.