



Assembly of First Nations

5th Annual National Forum on Income Assistance:

From Surviving to Thriving

AGENDA

September 10-12, 2024

In Treaty 7 Territory of Calgary, Alberta



The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is a national advocacy organization that works to advance the collective aspirations of First Nations individuals and communities across Canada on matters of national or international nature and concern. The AFN hosts two Assemblies a year where mandates and directives for the organization are established through resolutions directed and supported by the First-Nations-in-Assembly (elected Chiefs or proxies from member First Nations).

In addition to the direction provided by Chiefs of each member First Nation, the AFN is guided by an Executive Committee consisting of an elected National Chief and Regional Chiefs from each province and territory. Representatives from five national councils (Knowledge Keepers, Youth, Veterans, 2SLGBTQQA+ and Women) support and guide the decisions of the Executive Committee.

© Assembly of First Nations, July 2024

50 O'Connor Street, Suite 200, Ottawa, ON K1P 6L2
Telephone: 613-241-6789 | Toll-free: 1-866-869-6789
www.afn.ca

Assembly of First Nations
5th Annual National Forum on Income Assistance:
From Surviving to Thriving



SEPTEMBER 10-12, 2024 • IN TREATY 7 TERRITORY OF CALGARY, ALBERTA



Dear participants:

On behalf of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), I am pleased to welcome you to the Assembly of First Nations Fifth Annual National Forum on Income Assistance, taking place on the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani, and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations).

The theme of the Forum is "*From Surviving to Thriving*" which will continue the important work of First Nations-led reform of the Income Assistance Program.

The Forum will be a safe place for our case managers and administrators from across Turtle Island to identify regional considerations and discuss core program elements for a reformed IA Program.

Throughout the Forum, Income Assistance case managers and administrators will be given the opportunity to identify key priorities, needs and considerations for the various components of IA Program reform. The knowledge and unique perspectives shared over the next few days will start charting the roadmap towards the implementation of a culturally appropriate IA Program.

Your participation and commitment to advancing the wellbeing of our Nations is difficult work that does not go unnoticed. Thank you, for all you do in supporting our people.

I look forward to seeing the positive changes that come from the knowledge and discussions over the course of the Forum.

Sincerely,

National Chief Cindy Woodhouse
Assembly of First Nations





Assembly of First Nations
5th Annual National Forum on Income Assistance:
From Surviving to Thriving

SEPTEMBER 10-12, 2024 • IN TREATY 7 TERRITORY OF CALGARY, ALBERTA



Dear participants:

As the Manitoba Regional Chief and Social Development Portfolio Holder at the Assembly of First Nations, it is my honour to welcome you to the Fifth Annual National Forum on Income Assistance: From Surviving to Thriving, taking place in Treaty 7 Territory of Calgary, Alberta. The Forum comes at a pivotal time for continuing reform of the Income Assistance Program. This Forum will provide an important opportunity to gather case managers and administrators from across Turtle Island to network, discuss key priorities, core program elements, and share best practices for the reformed Income Assistance (IA) Program.

The work that you do with your clients within your communities is crucial to the wellbeing and future of our Nations. As the subject-matter experts, your participation and wisdom is integral to advancing socio-economic outcomes for First Nations. The knowledge and insights shared during the Forum will advance First Nations-led reform of the Income Assistance Program. I look forward to learning alongside you during the Forum and thank you for your hard work and dedication to this important work.

Sincerely,

*Manitoba Regional Chief Willie Moore
& Social Development Portfolio Holder*





SEPTEMBER 10-12, 2024 • IN TREATY 7 TERRITORY OF CALGARY, ALBERTA

AGENDA

PRE-FORUM: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2024

Time (MT)	ACTIVITY/SESSION
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Pre-Registration

DAY 1: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2024

Time (MT)	ACTIVITY/SESSION
8:15 am – 9:00 am	Breakfast (provided)
9:00 am – 9:40 am	Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drum Group • Elder Ivy Raine, Louis Bull First Nation, Alberta • National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak • Manitoba Regional Chief Willie Moore, Portfolio Holder • Luc Laine, Facilitator
9:40 am – 10:00am	Overview of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Advocacy on Income Assistance Program Reform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torri Weapenicappo, Senior Policy Analyst, AFN
10:00 am – 10:30 am	Updates from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) on Income Assistance Program Reform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nathalie Thiffault Director, Social Policy and Programs Branch, ISC
10:30 am – 10:45 am	Wellness Break
10:45 am – 12:00 pm	Plenary Presentation: Identifying hidden costs for IA Clients <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torri Weapenicappo, Senior Policy Analyst, AFN <p style="text-align: center;">Breakout Questions: Defining Needs-based Funding</p>
12:00 pm – 12:45 pm	Lunch Break (provided)
12:45 pm – 2:15 pm	Panel Discussion: Best Practices for Case Management and Pre-employment Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvey Bitternose, Pre-employment Support Program Manager, Touchwood Agency Tribal Council • Calla Moore, Income Assistance/Pre-employment Coordinator, Meadow Lake Tribal Council • Glenda Louis, Community Employment Lead, Okanagan Indian Band



Assembly of First Nations
5th Annual National Forum on Income Assistance:
From Surviving to Thriving

SEPTEMBER 10-12, 2024 • IN TREATY 7 TERRITORY OF CALGARY, ALBERTA

AGENDA

DAY 1: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2024

Time (MT)	ACTIVITY/SESSION
2:15 pm – 2:30 pm	Wellness Break
2:45 pm – 4:20 pm	Plenary Presentation: Identifying First Nations Priorities for Case Management and Pre-employment Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kerri Commanda, Strategic Administrator, Niigaaniin Breakout Questions: Identifying Culturally Appropriate Wrap-around Supports for IA Clients
4:20 pm – 4:30 pm	Day 1 Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Luc Laine, Facilitator

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2024

Time (MT)	ACTIVITY/SESSION
8:15 am – 9:00 am	Breakfast (provided)
9:00 am – 9:10 am	Day 2 Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Luc Laine, Facilitator
9:10 am – 10:40 am	Professional Development Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carol Hopkins, Chief Executive Officer, Thunderbird Partnership Foundation
10:40 am – 10:55 am	Wellness Break
10:55 am – 12:30 pm	Plenary Presentation: First Nations Indicators of Poverty and Well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helaina Gaspard, Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy Breakout Questions: Identifying First Nations Indicators for Determining Success for IA Client Success
12:30 pm – 1:15 pm	Lunch Break



SEPTEMBER 10-12, 2024 • IN TREATY 7 TERRITORY OF CALGARY, ALBERTA

AGENDA

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2024

Time (MT)	ACTIVITY/SESSION
1:15 pm - 2:30 pm	<p>Plenary Presentation: Supporting IA Case Managers and Administrators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tischa Stefanowski, Executive Director, Saskatchewan First Nations Families and Community Institute <p>Breakout Questions: Identifying priorities for training, resources and supports</p>
2:30 pm – 2:45 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellness Break
2:45 pm – 4:20 pm	<p>Plenary Presentation: Defining First Nations Disability Supports for the reformed IA Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marie Frawley-Henry, Senior Policy Analyst, AFN <p>Breakout Questions: Identifying priorities for implementing disability funding within the IA Program</p>
4:20 pm – 4:30 pm	<p>Day 2 Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Luc Laine, Facilitator

DAY 3: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2024

Time (MT)	ACTIVITY/SESSION
8:15 am – 9:00 am	Breakfast (provided)
9:00 am – 10:10 am	<p>Day 3 Opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Luc Laine, Facilitator
9:10 am – 10:00 am	<p>Housing, Infrastructure and Income Assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Fischer, Senior Research Policy Analyst, AFN, Housing and Infrastructure Dan Gaspe, Senior Policy Advisor AFN, Housing and Homelessness Matthew George, Senior Policy Analyst, AFN, Infrastructure
10:00 am – 11:30 am	<p>Panel Discussion: Building Sustainable Income Assistance Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victoria Marchand, Policy Analyst, National Association of Friendship Centers Ruth Levi, Executive Director, Elsipogtog First Nation Mike Randall, Executive Director, Lennox Island First Nation



Assembly of First Nations
5th Annual National Forum on Income Assistance:
From Surviving to Thriving

SEPTEMBER 10-12, 2024 • IN TREATY 7 TERRITORY OF CALGARY, ALBERTA

AGENDA

DAY 3: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2024	
Time (MT)	ACTIVITY/SESSION
11:30 am – 11:45 am	Looking Ahead <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Torri Weapenicappo, Senior Policy Analyst, AFN
11:45 am – 12:15 pm	Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak• Elder Ivy Raine, Louis Bull First Nation, Alberta• Drum Group• Luc Laine, Facilitator
12:15 pm – 1:00 pm	Lunch (provided)





SEPTEMBER 10-12, 2024 • IN TREATY 7 TERRITORY OF CALGARY, ALBERTA

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Overview of Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Advocacy on Income Assistance Program Reform

The AFN will set the stage for the National Forum with an overview of advocacy and recent mandates for the reform of the Income Assistance (IA) Program including, updates on national-level work towards reforming First Nations social supports and programming, and the vision for the path forward.

Update from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) on Income Assistance Program Reform

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) will share updates on the reform of the IA Program with National Forum participants including an overview of the status of IA Program reform, Budget 2024's federal commitments to reform, and next steps on implementing change to First Nations social programs.

Plenary Presentation and Breakout Session: Identifying hidden costs for IA Clients

Participants will have a brief plenary session from the Assembly of First Nations on the additional expenses IA clients have that are not accounted for in the program's current method of determining IA rates. Following the plenary session, case managers and administrators will break out into smaller groups to discuss the various hidden costs they have navigated with their clients. The conversation will focus on sharing insights, lessons learned, and the innovative solutions required to address the shortfalls within the IA Program.

Panel Discussion: Best Practices for Case-management and Pre-employment Supports

In this session, participants will hear from various First Nations and organizations on best practices for wholistic case management practices, pre-employment training and supports. The conversations will focus on sharing best practices, youth specific strategies and the different approaches to the provision of these services.

Plenary Presentation and Breakout Session: Identifying First Nations Priorities for Case Management and Pre-employment Supports

Participants will learn from leaders in the field on implementing wrap-around supports on promising practices, discuss what a First Nations social safety net and wholistic supports entail, and identify priorities to support the shift from surviving to thriving. Following the presentation, participants will break out into smaller groups to identify culturally appropriate wrap-around supports for IA Clients.





Assembly of First Nations
5th Annual National Forum on Income Assistance:
From Surviving to Thriving

SEPTEMBER 10-12, 2024 • IN TREATY 7 TERRITORY OF CALGARY, ALBERTA

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Workshop: Thunderbird Partnership Foundation

In this session participants will have the opportunity to enhance their professional development in a workshop led by the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation. The Thunderbird Partnership Foundation is leading work in culturally centered wellness, training, policy and more.

Plenary Presentation: First Nations Indicators of Poverty and Well-being and Breakout Session: Identifying First Nations priorities for determining success for IA Clients

In this session, participants will hear an overview of the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy's work on identifying First Nations poverty and well-being. The work includes identifying poverty indicators, the prevalence of missing data, and the important role indicators and data collection have in determining program effectiveness and strengthening advocacy. Following the presentation, participants will participate in smaller group discussions to identify key considerations for determining the success of IA Clients and enhancing data collection and reporting under the Income Assistance Program.

Plenary Presentation and Breakout Session: Identifying Programs to Support IA Case Managers and Administrators

IA case managers and administrators are integral to supporting clients' abilities to shift from surviving to thriving. The plenary presentation will touch on some best practices for various training and opportunities for IA case managers and administrators to support their effective delivery of client-centered services. Following the presentation, participants will participate in smaller group discussions to identify key priorities and regional considerations for training, resources and supports for IA case managers and administrators.

Plenary Presentation and Breakout Session: Defining First Nations Disability Supports for the reformed IA Program

The focus of this session is to hear about the on-going work of the Assembly of First Nations Disabilities sector on the new federal disability legislation. Further, participants will have the opportunity to discuss key considerations for defining disability within the reformed Income Assistance Program and identify priorities for implementing culturally appropriate disability benefits, programs and supports within the reformed IA Program.



SEPTEMBER 10-12, 2024 • IN TREATY 7 TERRITORY OF CALGARY, ALBERTA

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Housing, Infrastructure and Income Assistance

In this session, participants will hear from the Assembly of First Nations Housing and Homelessness sector on the AFN national action plan and the intersectional aspects to consider as we shift into implementation of the reformed IA Program. Additionally, participants will hear from the AFN's Infrastructure Sector and their work on closing the infrastructure gap, and the connection to enhancing First Nations social infrastructure.

Panel Discussion: Building Sustainable Income Assistance Programs

First Nations determination and jurisdiction is central to reform of the Income Assistance Program. Hear from First Nations and organizations implementing self-determination over various aspects of their social policies and programs, including lessons learned and promising practices for First Nations on the path towards self-determination and jurisdiction over the Income Assistance Program.





50 O'Connor Street, Suite 200
Ottawa, ON K1P 6L2
Telephone: 613-241-6789
Toll-free: 1-866-869-6789
www.afn.ca