



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

Committee Report

To: Chair and Members of the Administration, Finance and Human Resources Committee
From: Susan Farrelly, Director of Human Resources
Date: Tuesday, September 19, 2023
Subject: **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – September 30, 2023**

Background:

In 2021, the federal government designated September 30 as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This law is in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action #80 which urged the federal government to create a statutory holiday to commemorate survivors, their families and communities. The day has been created to give everyone an opportunity to recognize and commemorate the legacy of residential schools, which more than 150,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit children were forced to attend between the 1870s and 1997.

The date of September 30 has additional significance due to being recognized as Orange Shirt Day which is intended to raise awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of Canada's residential schools, and to promote the concept of "Every Child Matters". The orange shirt is a symbol of the stripping away of culture, freedom and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children over generations.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation at the County of Wellington

The County of Wellington's Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) will be providing resources as a day of learning and reconciliation. This also aligns with Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action #57 calling upon governments to provide education to public servants on this history.

On Friday, September 29, 2023 at 1:00 pm, the Indigenous Advisory Committee will host a Lunch and Learn over Zoom on the subject of Indigenous Allyship. The dictionary definition of Allyship is the state or condition of being an ally and the supportive association with another person or group. This session will focus on ReconciliACTION and how individuals can turn intentions into actionable specifics rather than passive learning.

This Zoom recording will also be saved to the IAC webpage for those employees who would like to participate, but cannot due to work and coverage needs, so it can be viewed at a later time. This is an important component of the IAC's goal to grow their library of reference material to help with new County employees who may have missed sessions and are wanting to learn more. This recording will also be made available for County Councillors.

There will also be continued promotion of Indigenous Canada training to all County of Wellington employees. This training comprises of a 12-lesson Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) from the Faculty of Native Studies at the University of Alberta that explores the different histories and contemporary perspectives of Indigenous peoples living in Canada. From an Indigenous perspective, this course explores complex experiences Indigenous peoples face today from a historical and critical

perspective highlighting national and local Indigenous-settler relations. Indigenous Canada is for anyone with an interest in acquiring a basic familiarity with Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships. While this course is free, there is a small fee to obtain the certificate of completion. The County of Wellington has approved the cost to obtain this certificate.

The September IAC newsletter will also focus on this subject of Indigenous Allyship as ReconciliACTION.

Additional resources are also available through The Orange Shirt Society, which is a non-profit organization with its home in Williams Lake, BC where Orange Shirt Day began in 2013. The website provides an opportunity to shop for Orange Shirts / pins and visit the videos links to Phyllis Webstad. Phyllis is the woman who, as a child, had her orange shirt removed from her upon entering residential school. There are excellent educational resources on this website if individuals are looking to understand more or want to share with community members looking for information or shirts / pins.

It is important to note that the communication surrounding all of the activities relating to these initiatives are framed as invitations that are suggestive and voluntary – never one of guilt and requirement. Language matters.

These activities of the IAC are in alignment with the 2023 County of Wellington Strategic Action Plan to continue implementing and growing the County's Wellness Strategy.

Recommendation:

That the report titled National Day of Truth and Reconciliation – September 30, 2023 be received for information.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan Farrelly
Director of Human Resources

Resources: [Indigenous Canada | University of Alberta \(ualberta.ca\)](https://www.ualberta.ca/indigenous-canada/)
[Orange Shirt Society – Creating Awareness \(orangeshirtday.org\)](https://www.orangeshirtday.org/)