



Thunder Bay  
Chamber  
of Commerce

**ANTI-RACISM  
& INCLUSION  
COMMITTEE**

**Report on  
Activities:**

**March 2019 -  
June 2021**

*Submitted June 30, 2021*

On March 1, 2019, the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce became a signatory to the **Thunder Bay Anti-Racism and Inclusion Accord** which states:

***We, the undersigned,** are committed to put into action commitments established by the Thunder Bay Coalition for Anti-Racism Inclusion (Coalition), which consists of organizations, groups, and individuals in Thunder Bay. This Accord is intended to be a living document that is not a single-time event, but an ongoing responsibility accepted by the undersigned who, through collaboration and mutual respect, commit to establish goals and report on successes.*

***We acknowledge** that Thunder Bay is built on the traditional territory of Fort William First Nation, signatory to the Robinson-Superior Treaty of 1850. It is a city where diverse Indigenous Peoples have taken residence. Immigrants, from multi-generational to newcomer, have also chosen to reside in the city. Thunder Bay has a history that includes European settlement and colonization. In recognition of its diversity, we aspire Thunder Bay to be a protective and inclusive environment for all.*

***Furthermore, we acknowledge** that colonization contributes to systemic racism against Indigenous and racialized communities. Racism threatens the welfare of all community members and is compounded by discrimination that is based on sex, gender, age, creed, class, ability, sexuality, family status, and their intersections. As a Coalition, guided by the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and international human rights instruments including the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Efforts to address systemic racism and injustices committed against Indigenous and racialized persons have been examined but, for the purposes of this Accord, we draw particular attention to: (1) the Seven First Nation Youths 2016 - Inquest - Office of the Ontario Chief Coroner, (2) the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and, (3) the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (the "Three Investigations").*

***We are committed** to an inclusive society for all members of the Thunder Bay community, in keeping with the domestic and international human rights instruments named above.*

*Guided by calls to actions and recommendations made by these Three Investigations, we further commit to advancing equity and diversity in the sectors of governments, education, children & youth services, health services, municipal services, emergency services, libraries, and business, as well as at the individual level. This pledge is actualized by the following commitments of action:*

- 1. Address racism against Indigenous and racialized persons by setting short- and long-term goals to meet the calls to action or recommendations in one or more of the Three Investigations listed above.*
- 2. Support an ongoing process of truth & reconciliation throughout their organization and in our community by developing and maintaining respectful relations with Indigenous governments, organizations and individuals.*

The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce is committed to answering the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action #92: Business and Reconciliation.**

To guide the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce in putting action to the above commitments, the Anti-Racism & Inclusion Committee was established, and the Terms of Reference were approved on April 9, 2019.

The following is an update on the actions that have been undertaken by the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce through June 1, 2021.

## **APEX Speaker Series Events**

### **June 19, 2019: Businesses supporting Anti-Racism & Inclusion Efforts**

76 participants attended this breakfast event to learn about the Accord and some of the activities that have been undertaken by local businesses and organizations to support Anti-Racism and Inclusion efforts.

- Norm Gale, City of Thunder Bay Manager and David Paul Achneepineskum of Matawa First Nations provided an overview of the Accord
- Sean Spenrath of Wake the Giant explained their cultural awareness project to identify inclusive spaces and commit businesses/organizations to share education and resources to be more welcoming to Indigenous People.
- Melissa Hardy-Giles of Origin Recruiting outlined their work to help educate and prepare Indigenous community members for employment.

### **October 31, 2019: Best Practices in Inclusive Workforce Partnerships**

43 participants attended this breakfast event to hear a local best practice in Inclusive Workforce Partnerships. Representatives of Supercom and the Red Rock Indian Band provided an overview of the steps taken to develop their workforce partnership providing employment training and recruitment support to Valard on the East-West Energy Tie.

## **October 8, 2020: Success Story – The Office Supplier Partnership**

Representatives of Superior Strategies and TBXI provided an overview of the development of their partnership in The Office Supplier

## **March 25, 2021: AETS Indigenous Workplace Inclusion Event “Inspire laughs to inspire change”**

The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce was a proud supporting sponsor with Magnus Theatre and Indigenous Works of this AETS event to help groups learn about the Inclusion Continuum. The enterprise-wide Workplace Inclusion System designed by Indigenous Works helps companies climb the seven-stage Inclusion Continuum by diagnosing the organizational competencies needed to achieve increased engagements and relationships with Indigenous Peoples, businesses and organizations. Stronger Indigenous employment and workplace outcomes will be realized. Indigenous sketch comedy troupe Tonto’s Nephews brought each stage of the Inclusion Continuum to life live on stage, as they interpreted the program and principals.

## **Reconciliation Training**

The Chamber partnered with First Nations University of Canada to offer a unique 3-hour online course which promotes a renewed relationship between Indigenous Peoples and Canadians through transformative learning about truth and reconciliation. This workplace course, 4 Seasons of Reconciliation, provides the basic foundation on the relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples and helps meet the 94-Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). Employees can learn at their own pace and return to the course which tracks their progress and completion rates with reports provided to the employer.

**For Businesses:** Businesses can sign-up for the training with a 50% reduced fee through the Thunder Bay Chamber’s Reconciliation Resource page.

**Board & Staff Training:** All members of the Thunder Bay Chamber’s Board and administrative staff have completed the 4 Seasons of Reconciliation Training.

## **Business Reconciliation Resource Page on Chamber Website**

A dedicated webpage is set up at [tbchamber.ca/reconciliation](http://tbchamber.ca/reconciliation) that includes:

- Truth & Reconciliation Call to Action #92 text
- Online training for workplaces in partnership with 4 Seasons of Reconciliation
- Anti-Racism & Inclusion Accord commitments and option for on-line Accord sign-up
- Links to business reconciliation tools including: The Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business Reconciliation Guidebook, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, and Indigenous Ally Toolkit.

## **Additional Reconciliation Activities**

### **Review of organizational policies**

The Committee has completed a review of the Chamber's Administration Policies and adjusted language to ensure policies are inclusive.

### **Support Wake the Giant Initiative - 2019**

The Chamber supported the 2019 Wake the Giant music festival with a \$10,000 grant from our Economic Development fund. We also provided promotional support through our marketing channels for event volunteer recruitment and ticket sales. Two staff members volunteered at the event.

### **Business recognition**

The Chamber Business Excellence Award nomination process includes a requirement to identify inclusiveness activities. Numerous local and national organizations currently offer business recognition for inclusive practices (ie: Respect Award by Diversity Thunder Bay, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business Awards,). The Chamber is committed to sharing these recognitions of Thunder Bay businesses.

### **Resource Guide**

The City of Thunder Bay is preparing a resource guide for the community. The Committee is committed to working with the City to offer advice, support and promotion of the resources as they are prepared.

### **Connections with Aboriginal Business Associations**

The Chamber is committed to enhancing relationships with local and national Indigenous business associations. We have set-up reciprocal memberships with both the Anishnawbe Business Professionals Association (ABPA) and the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. In order to enhance communications and collaboration, the Chair of the ABPA made a presentation to the Chamber board on their organization activities, and our Chair made a similar presentation to the ABPA board.