

# MÂMAWÔ AYÂWIN

INDIGENOUS SERVICES AT EPL



# WORKING ALONGSIDE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

This framework reaffirms Edmonton Public Library's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation while recognizing the territory on which we operate. Edmonton, home to the second largest urban Indigenous population in Canada, is located on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homelands of the Métis Nation—a territory rich with Indigenous history. We aim to provide library services that cater to the needs of Indigenous customers or potential customers and offer opportunities for everyone to learn about our shared history and future.

## OUR FRAMEWORK

Guided by EPL's Mandate, Values, Mission, Vision, Strategic Goals, and Community-Led Service Philosophy, this document establishes a framework for delivering services to Indigenous Peoples, as well as non-Indigenous Peoples. In alignment with the City of Edmonton's Indigenous Framework, our framework supports the City's vision to build better relations by addressing the question, **“How can the City of Edmonton best support and build strong relationships with Indigenous Peoples in Edmonton?”**

Below: PĪYĒSĪW WĀSKĀHIKAN name gifting ceremony



# WE ARE ALL TREATY PEOPLE

On August 23, 1876, representatives from the Plains Cree, Woods Cree, Nakota, Saulteaux, and Dene people met with Crown representatives to enter into Treaty 6. On this date, Treaty 6 came into being, and Edmonton became part of Treaty 6 Territory. EPL acknowledges that as a non-Indigenous organization, we must work to honour this agreement, fostering positive relationships among all who live on this land.

Additionally, EPL gratefully provides library services to Enoch Cree Nation, in accordance with its mandate from the Public Libraries Services Branch, Alberta Municipal Affairs.

Below: Moose Hide Tanning event



**“Together, Canadians must do more than just talk about reconciliation; we must learn how to practise reconciliation in our everyday lives—within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools, and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.”**

**TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION OF CANADA COMMISSIONERS**

## **EPL is well positioned to support work with Indigenous communities because:**

### **EPL continues its collaboration with Indigenous communities to implement the relevant Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Calls to Action through services and staff training.**

In 2018, the Canadian Federation of Libraries Association Indigenous Matters Committee released *Truth and Reconciliation Report and Recommendations*, which EPL endorsed and incorporates into our service delivery approach.

As a public institution and a gathering place for people and ideas, EPL commits to facilitating ongoing dialogue about residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, murdered and missing Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirits to honour survivors and intergenerational survivors. This includes commemorating the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, Indigenous Peoples' Day, and Red Dress Day, among others.

### **EPL is grounded in its foundational Community-Led Service Philosophy.**

This foundational framework works to build relationships and to improve our ability to identify and meet customer needs, including the needs of Indigenous individuals and communities. Our primary focus is breaking down barriers to library services by connecting, consulting, and collaborating with communities to better understand their needs and to inform the direction of our library services.

EPL is dedicated to creating inclusive experiences, services, and spaces for all customers from all walks of life. EPL recognizes that Indigenous people may face barriers to using library services. The Library is committed to providing learning opportunities about Indigenous history and cultures, an important part of contributing to Truth and Reconciliation.



# SERVICE APPROACH

EPL's Indigenous Service Framework is inspired from the City of Edmonton's Indigenous Framework and is rooted in our Community-Led Service Philosophy. We adapted the City of Edmonton's seven commitments to fit the unique context of a public library and Edmonton Public Library specifically, underscoring our dedication to our values, our Community-Led Service Philosophy, and our ongoing commitment to reconciliation and relationship building with Indigenous peoples.

At EPL, we encourage and support our staff in building meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples to learn about their experiences, histories, and cultures. The EPL Indigenous Service Framework informs EPL policies, programs, and services.

## **Supporting the Journey of Reconciliation:**

Identify opportunities where EPL can contribute to the implementation of the *CFLA-FCAB Truth and Reconciliation Report*, the *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice*, and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

## **Ensure Belonging through Spaces That Foster Kinship:**

Through EPL's EDI Framework, ensure we strive to create a sense of belonging and trust for Indigenous customers and employees. Identify and implement ways to make EPL buildings welcoming and inclusive for Indigenous Peoples, ensuring they can see themselves reflected in EPL.

## **Removing Barriers:**

Identify and remove barriers that exist for Indigenous people across the employee lifecycle creating meaningful career opportunities as is practiced with EPL's Community-Led Service Philosophy.

## **Building Cultural Competence:**

Support EPL staff to build relationships through their interactions with Indigenous peoples and increase staff's knowledge of Indigenous cultures, traditions, and worldviews through education and learning opportunities.

## **Fostering Relationships:**

Host and participate in events that foster relationship building between staff, customers, and Indigenous Peoples, and celebrating our shared journey together.

## **Awareness and Engagement:**

Ensure EPL staff, customers, and Indigenous Peoples are informed about and engaged (when appropriate) in EPL's Indigenous Service Framework and related actions.



Above: *The Gathering*, Lance Cardinal (Bigstone Cree Nation); image also appears on the front and back cover

## SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

At EPL, we know bringing this framework to life means engaging with the breadth of resources and strengths throughout our library system, including our **people**, **services**, **spaces**, and **collections**. This section outlines each of these in relation to Indigenous Services.

# PEOPLE

EPL staff throughout the system cultivate relationships with Indigenous communities, offer customer service, coordinate and facilitate classes and events, engage in outreach activities, drive collaborative initiatives, and contribute resources while responding to the needs of Indigenous Peoples within EPL's Community-Led Service Philosophy.

In collaboration with EPL's Elder-in-Residence and the Indigenous Services Lead, EPL builds relationships with Indigenous communities to learn about their needs and interests and to inform the direction of library services.

Below: Lance Cardinal (Bigstone Cree Nation), artist of *The Gathering* (shown on cover)





## SERVICES

**Mâdawô ayâwin** means “all being together” in Nêhiyawêwin (Plains Cree) and reflects EPL’s intention to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples together to learn, discuss, and celebrate. Following in the footsteps of PÎYÊSÎW WÂSKÂHIKAN, Mâdawô ayâwin brings visibility to Indigenous languages within EPL and is the banner used for major events coordinated by the Indigenous Services Team.

EPL offers diverse classes and events related to Indigenous history and culture, including Nêhiyawêwin language classes, pipe ceremonies, and film screenings, often in partnership with Indigenous organizations or community members. Staff and community members are also encouraged to bring forward their own ideas for programming, events, collections, and resources.

Below: Moose Hide Tanning event





## SPACES

EPL branches are important public spaces to gather, hold ceremonies, attend programs, and find support and resources. EPL works to ensure that Indigenous customers feel welcome in our spaces. As such, smudging is supported in our branches.

EPL develops and implements digital exhibits, projects, and displays where appropriate, that incorporate Indigenous Peoples, cultures, and protocols around the sharing of information.

**PĪYĒSĪW WĀSKĀHIKAN**, also known as Thunderbird House, is a dedicated Indigenous space at the Stanley A. Milner Library. It is the result of years of engagement with Indigenous communities, Elders, and knowledge keepers, serving as a sacred space for ceremonies, cultural gatherings, and other community events. When not in use for an EPL-led class or event, the space is available for public use, including private ceremonies and events.

Below: PĪYĒSĪW WĀSKĀHIKAN, Joi T. Arcand (Muskeg Lake Cree Nation)



**“Attending a ceremony in a space specifically cultivated for Indigenous peoples in an urban setting is profound, especially for the younger generation. Amidst the bustling cityscapes, this space serves as a sanctuary of culture and identity, where the stories and traditions of ancestors resonate.”**

**EPL CUSTOMER**



## COLLECTIONS

The Indigenous collection reflects the rich tapestry of cultures, traditions, and contemporary life of Indigenous Peoples. It also serves to celebrate Indigenous language revitalization and learning while highlighting Indigenous authors, artists, and musicians through digital and physical promotion.

EPL possesses a significant Indigenous art collection that is on permanent display in EPL branches. EPL works with the community to curate and acquire Indigenous artworks for capital building projects.



Above: *Their Spirits Dance with Us*, Jerry Whitehead (James Smith Cree Nation)

# APPENDIX

## RESOURCES

**Indigenous Services at EPL are informed by major reports on Indigenous rights and Indigenous library services including:**

- [The City of Edmonton Indigenous Framework](#)
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's [Calls to Action](#)
- The Canadian Federation of Library Associations [Truth and Reconciliation Committee Report](#)
- The United Nations [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [The National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Final Report](#)

Below: *Eli Hirtle: Voices on the Rise event*



