



Implementing UNDRIP

Insights from an Urban Indigenous Organization
and the Role of Planners

May 15, 2025

Outline

- **Hear** from Hereditary Chief Chad Stump on Traditional Governance
- **Learn** about the Urban Indigenous Context
- **Understand** UNDRIP Commitments for Urban Indigenous
- **Case Study:** ECHEN Social Needs + Gaps Assessment
- **Reflect** on the Role of Planners in Implementing UNDRIP

Our Goal

- Planners start or continue to build relationships with the **urban Indigenous community**.
- As a profession, seek a better understanding of our urban Indigenous community.
 - Develop an **urban Indigenous baseline** to inform current and future planning.
- Walk away inspired to **embrace UNDRIP** in your work.

Chad Stump

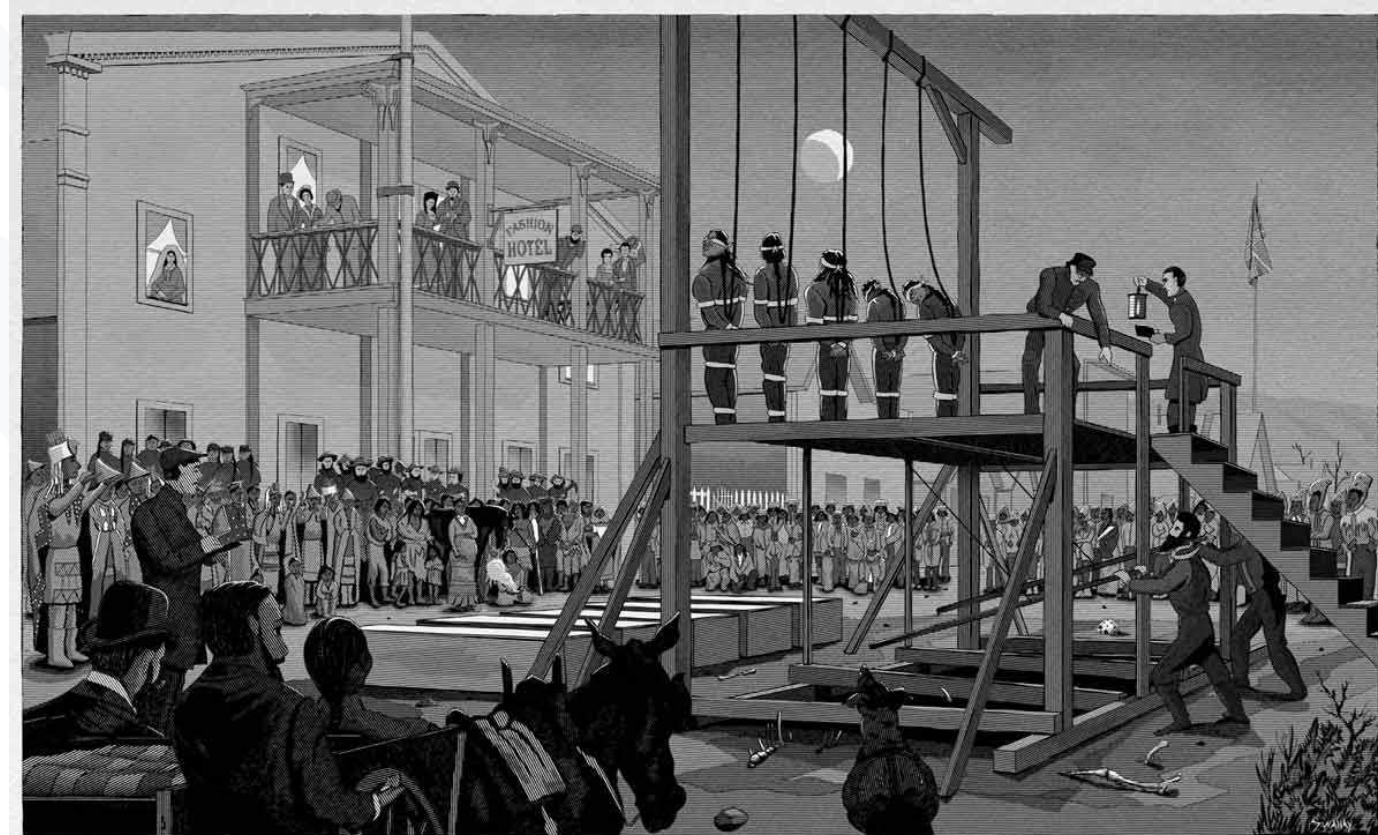
Hereditary Chief, ECHEN Deni

- Elected council and chiefs are an enacted system via the Indian Act (1876).
- Traditional hereditary chiefs → form of **Indigenous governance** that pre-dates colonialism, passed down through family lineage.
- Each Indigenous community/family has their own decision-making processes on traditional leadership.



T̓silhqot'in War Chiefs – Our Legacy

- The T̓silhqot'in people took care of a vast land in interior B.C since time immemorial.
- In 1864 the Chilcotin War erupted as settlers **encroached on T̓silhqot'in land**.
- After being devastated by the **smallpox epidemic (70% of population)**, T̓silhqot'in warriors stood against further road construction.
- **Six T̓silhqot'in War Chiefs** were wrongfully arrested and hung. Five in Quesnel, one later in New Westminster.
- In 2018, Canada **recognized and exonerated** the War Chiefs: Tellot, Klattasine, Tah-pitt, Piele, Chessus, ʔAhan



MARTYRDOM OF "THE CHILCOTIN CHIEFS" BY THE COLONY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA AT QUESNELLE, OCTOBER 26TH, 1864.

— Drawn by Shawn Swanky

ECHEN Deni

Lineage of T̓silhqot'in

- The T̓silhqot'in peoples' social structure → organized around families governed by a hereditary chief. Each family names a chief.
- The hereditary chief → head of the family, passing down Traditional Laws, leading in business and other aspects of life.
- This governance system involved nomadic economic interaction pre-contact.

Today

- ECHEN Deni honor the War Chiefs' legacy and follow traditional governance structure derived from the family lineage.
- **ECHEN provides support in the urban setting, filling a gap.**

Other Traditional Leadership Example

Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs

- Wet'suwet'en follow a clan system where people belong to a particular Tribe or House; there are five Wet'suwet'en clans:
 - Gil_seyhu (Big Frog)
 - Laksilyu (Small Frog)
 - Gitdumden (Wolf/Bear)
 - Laksamshu (Fireweed)
 - Tsayu (Beaver Clan)
- The Wet'suwet'en remained in one place and developed long houses, governing a specific area.



Source: Indigenous Climate Action. Art of Art of Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs by Christ Belcourt

ECHEN Healing Society



- ECHEN is a non-profit organization based in Quesnel, British Columbia on the unceded, traditional territories of the Southern Dakeh and Tshilqot'in.
- The organization's mandate is to **support the rural and urban Indigenous populations.**
- ECHEN currently has a strategic vision to be a One-Stop Support Centre providing wrap around services.

ECHEN Impact

- Objectives:
 - Encourage planners to **embrace urban Indigenous community planning**.
 - Increase **understanding of colonial barriers** to Indigenous development.
 - **Implement UNDRIP** in planning practices and community plans.
 - Establish a baseline for **Indigenous living standards**.
 - Seek **municipal recognition** of hereditary leaders and urban Indigenous representation.



Urban Indigenous Context in Canada

What do we mean by Urban Indigenous?

- **On-reserve:** Living on a federal reserve under the Indian Act.
- **Off-reserve:** Living in urban and rural areas accessing services under provinces / territories and municipal governments.
- **GAP:** Indigenous governance off-reserve representing urban Indigenous people and hereditary leaders.

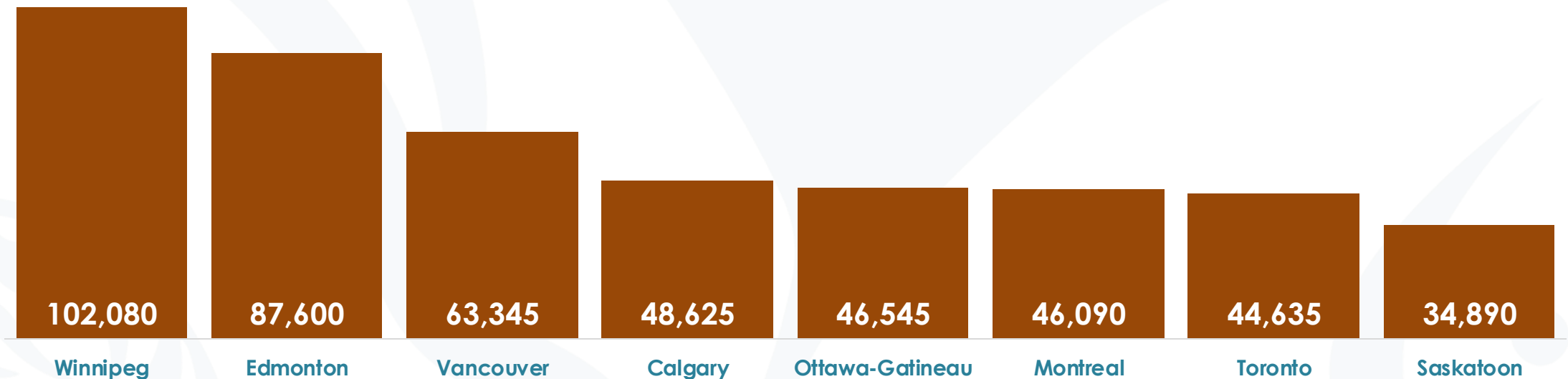
We recognize **Metis** and **Inuit** Peoples have unique histories and relationships with land that do not fit into the on/off reserve context.

Urban Indigenous Organizations

- **Friendship Centres** have historically served urban Indigenous, representing on-reserve nations via Indigenous Services Canada.
- **Other Urban Indigenous organizations** serving Indigenous Peoples **need mechanisms** to ensure government accountability to support them in self-determination.

Urban Indigenous Landscape

- Most Indigenous Peoples (**around 80%**) live off-reserve / out of Indigenous-governed territories.
- In 2021, **1,090,240** Indigenous Peoples were living in urban areas (CMA and CA) in Canada; this number has increased by **11.5%** since 2016.

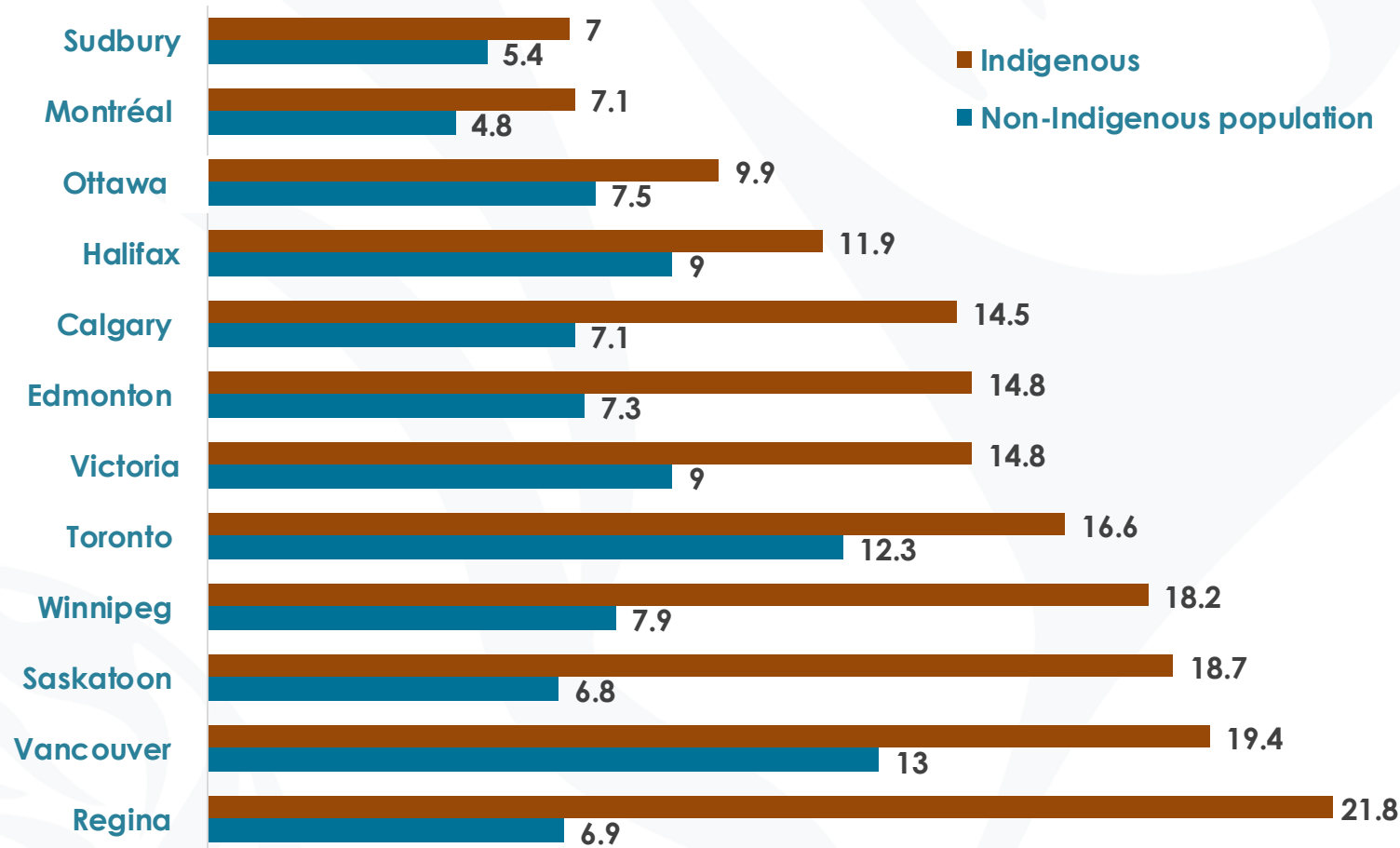


Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021, and Guide to the Census of Population, 2021

Source: National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Inc. 2023. Fact Sheet.

Higher Rates of Housing Need

Percentage of Urban Indigenous vs. Non-Indigenous Population Living in Core Housing Need, 2021



- In three CMAs, the **majority** of those experiencing homelessness identified as Indigenous: Saskatoon **86%** (2018), Regina **79%** (2021), and Winnipeg **66%** (2021).

B.C. Indigenous Context

- British Columbia is home to **202 First Nations**, one third of all First Nations in Canada!
- **78%** of Indigenous People in B.C. live off-reserve

In 2019, the BC Government website stated “There is **no formal system or entity** in-place to enable dialogue between urban Indigenous interests and government.”

Current Systems

Federal

- Constitution Act
- Charter of Human Rights
- Indian Act
- Employment Insurance
- Mortgages
- National Resources
- RCMP
- Criminal Law

Provincial

- Health Services
- Housing
- Child + Family Services
- Property + Civil Rights
- Education
- Social Services
- Infrastructure

Municipal

- Planning + Development
- Local Services
- Public Transit
- Water, Sewer, Fire, Police

GAP: Urban Indigenous Governance

- Recognition of Hereditary Governance Structure
- Urban Indigenous Representation
- Direct Funding Mechanisms
- Off-Reserve Indigenous-Led Services (Schools, Hospitals, etc.)

Indigenous Funding Landscape

- Most Federal funding for Indigenous Peoples is targeted to **on-reserve** or via modern treaty government-to-government agreements.
- **Key Investments in First Nations Priorities Since 2015**
 - \$29 billion for child welfare services
 - \$7.2 billion to support primary care and public health on reserve
 - \$6.1 billion for elementary and secondary education on reserve
 - \$6.3 billion to address critical infrastructure gaps on reserve
 - \$4 billion to support First Nations housing on reserve
 - \$2.5 billion to support community infrastructure on reserve
 - \$1.4 billion to Self-Governing and Modern Treaty First Nations
 - \$2.5 billion to early learning and childcare system
 - \$991 million for First Nations and Inuit policing and police facilities
 - \$417 million targeted for First Nations post-secondary education
 - \$8.1 billion to Jordan's Principle (jurisdictional disputes)

Urban Indigenous Funding

- \$118 million Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples (UPIP)
- \$75 million Community Support Fund
- \$300 million Urban, Rural, Northern (U.R.N.) housing funding (\$4B TBD)
- \$3.9 million urban Indigenous safety and wellbeing projects

Indigenous Funding Landscape

- Urban Indigenous funding is often **application-based and limited.**
- This funding structure leaves **80% of Indigenous People** fighting for small amounts.



Urban Indigenous and UNDRIP



How does **UNDRIP** address urban
Indigenous?

What **level of government** is responsible?

United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

ARTICLE 21

- “Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the **improvement of their economic and social conditions** [...].”

ARTICLE 23

- “Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development.
- In particular, Indigenous peoples have the right to be **actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programs** affecting them and, as far as possible, to **administer such programs through their own institutions.**”

Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action #57

“We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and **municipal governments** to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal Peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.”

Canada's United Nations Declaration Act (UNDA)

SECTION 84

- Continue to support Friendship Centres and other **urban Indigenous organizations** and coalitions in their work to identify and address **local needs and priorities of urban/off reserve Indigenous peoples** in a manner that is safe, secure, accessible and culturally-relevant.

SECTION 88

- Significant gaps exist in addressing the **housing needs of Indigenous peoples living in urban, rural and northern areas**. The Government of Canada is committed to implementing a co-developed Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy with Indigenous partners.

SECTION 90

- Address policy, program, and socio-economic gaps, and strengthen interdepartmental and intergovernmental relations, **in full partnership with Métis, non-status, off-reserve, and urban Indigenous peoples**, consistent with the CAP / Daniels decision.

BC Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)

SECTION 4.21 - 4.22

- Bring together key Indigenous urban leaders to create a **provincial urban Indigenous advisory table** to develop and implement a five-year plan to address the priorities of urban Indigenous Peoples, including a focus on Elders, youth, children, women, men, 2SLGBTQQIA+, and persons with disabilities.
- Ministers and executives across the provincial government social sector will **meet annually with urban Indigenous service organization leaders**, such as the provincial urban Indigenous advisory table (see Action 4.21), to discuss successes, innovations, and challenges of **supporting the social, cultural, and economic needs of urban Indigenous Peoples.**

BC Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)

SECTION 4.23 – 4.24

- Undertake **a cross-governmental review** of provincial supports and services for **Indigenous Peoples in urban settings** and develop a plan with clear timelines that will provide greater collaboration and coordination to meet needs.
- **Expand support** to Aboriginal Friendship Centres and **other urban Indigenous organizations** that serve the needs of urban Indigenous people in B.C. while also acknowledging that Aboriginal Friendship Centres and other urban Indigenous organizations play a vital role for those that wish to connect to their cultures and traditions.

UNDRIP + Municipal Governments

- **Municipal governments** are a full order of government in Canada.
- Only a few municipalities have either **adopting or endorsed UNDRIP** formally.
 - **Vancouver** > UNDRIP task Force (2021), UNDRIP Strategy (2022), UNDRIP Action Plan 2024.
 - **Montreal** > appointed a Commissioner for Indigenous Peoples.
 - **Toronto, St John's, Surrey, and Yellowknife** > note UNDRIP in their reconciliation plan/strategies.

UNDRIP + Municipal Governments

Municipal governments may consider the following **strategic actions**:

- Policy + Plan Review
- Meaningful Engagement
- Accountability + Monitoring
- Urban Indigenous representation

How is
YOUR COMMUNITY
implementing UNDRIP?



Case Study: EChEN Social Needs + Gaps Assessment



**What does urban Indigenous
look like at a local level?**

Purpose

- ECHEN initiated a Social Needs + Gaps Assessment to understand overall wellbeing and **establish a baseline** – how are urban Indigenous doing?
- A way to identify **service gaps** as well as **understand local priorities**.

Acknowledging Systemic Impacts

- Data does not tell the whole story!
- Legacies of colonialism, historical trauma, and systemic racism have **undermined Indigenous autonomy and governance.**

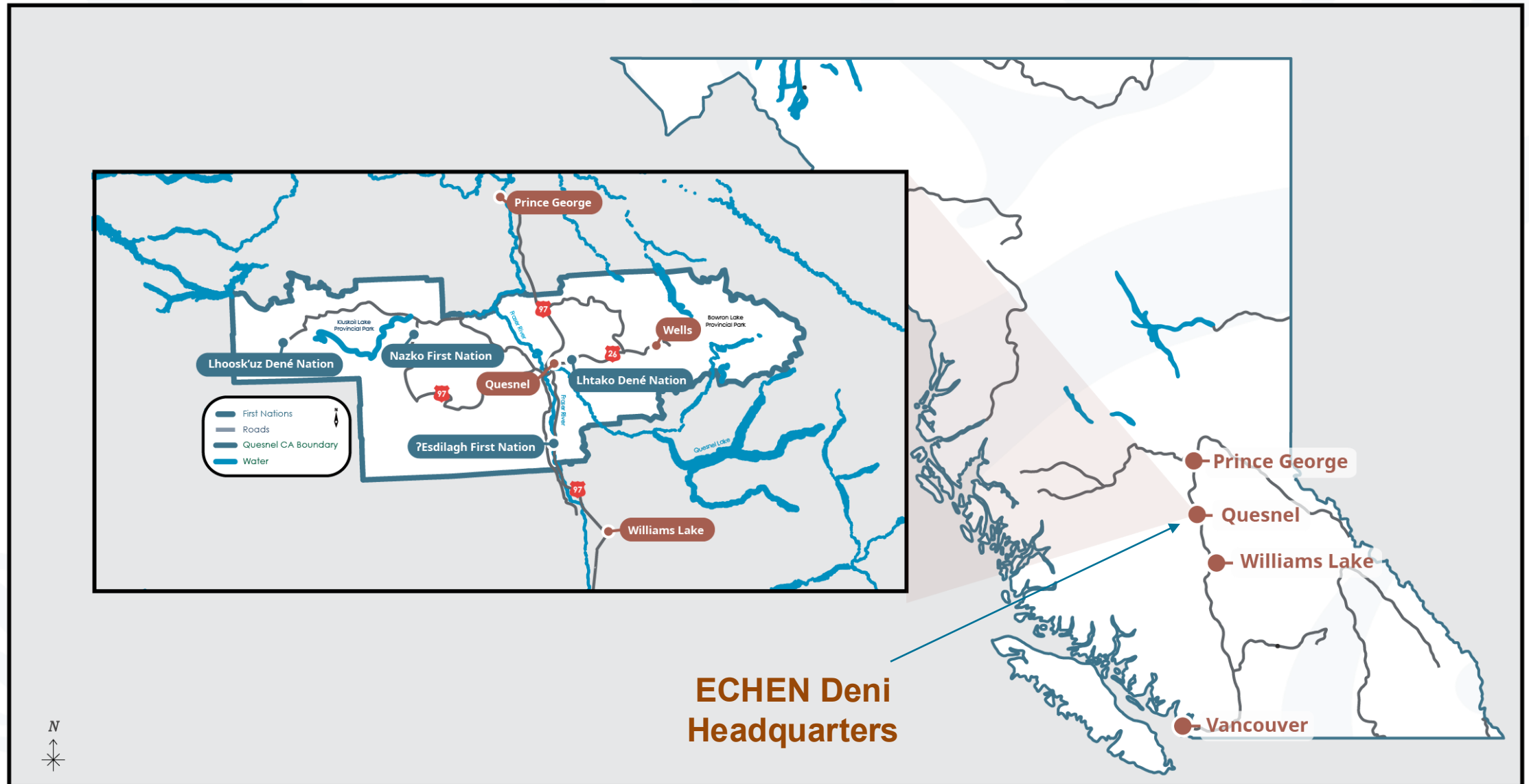
Indigenous Data Gaps

- **First Nation OCAP – Ownership, Control, Access, Possession**
 - Indigenous-led data collection and data sharing agreements
- **Data on Indigenous peoples is not uniformly collected**
 - Statistics Canada Census – CA Indigenous population, Population Centre, Reserves
 - Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) – registered Indian population
 - Provincial Health Authority – Northern Region
 - First Nations Health Authority – Northern Region
 - Directly from Indigenous Governments

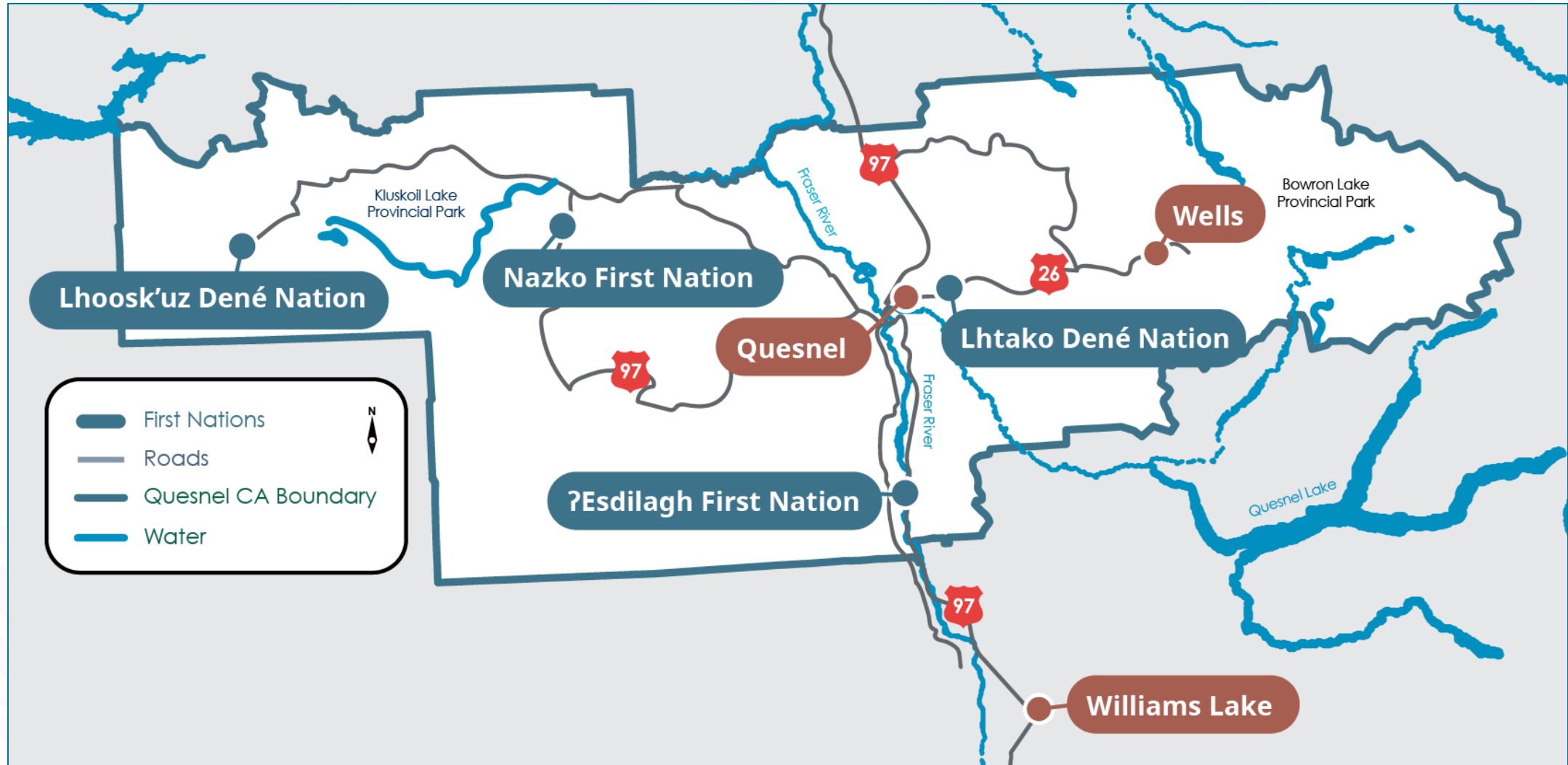
Building Evidence

- Its not what you **know**, but what you can **prove**.
- What can this data tell us?
 - In the past 5+ years, there have been **increased efforts** and funding to provide services to Indigenous Peoples, including urban.
 - Monitoring data will **assess the effectiveness** of these efforts.
 - Is the current approach working?
 - Are standards for Indigenous people improving?

Quesnel, BC



Quesnel Census Agglomeration



Target Populations

Registered Population up to December 2024

First Nation Profiles, Indigenous Services Canada

First Nation	On Own or Other Reserve (#)	Off-Reserve (#)	Off-Reserve (%)	Total Registered Population (#)
Lhtako Dene	106	103	49%	209
ꞵEsdilagh	59	219	78%	279
Nazko	129	306	70%	435
Kluskus (Lhoosk'uz Dene)	47	185	79%	232

Urban Indigenous Population

Indigenous Population, 2021

Source: Indigenous Population Profile, Census of Population, Quesnel Census Agglomeration, 2021

3,235 (14.1%)



Indigenous
Identity

Quesnel CA Boundary

Quesnel Population Centre Indigenous Identity, 2021

Source: Census Profile, Quesnel Population Centre, 2021

1,505 (12.4%)



Indigenous
Identity

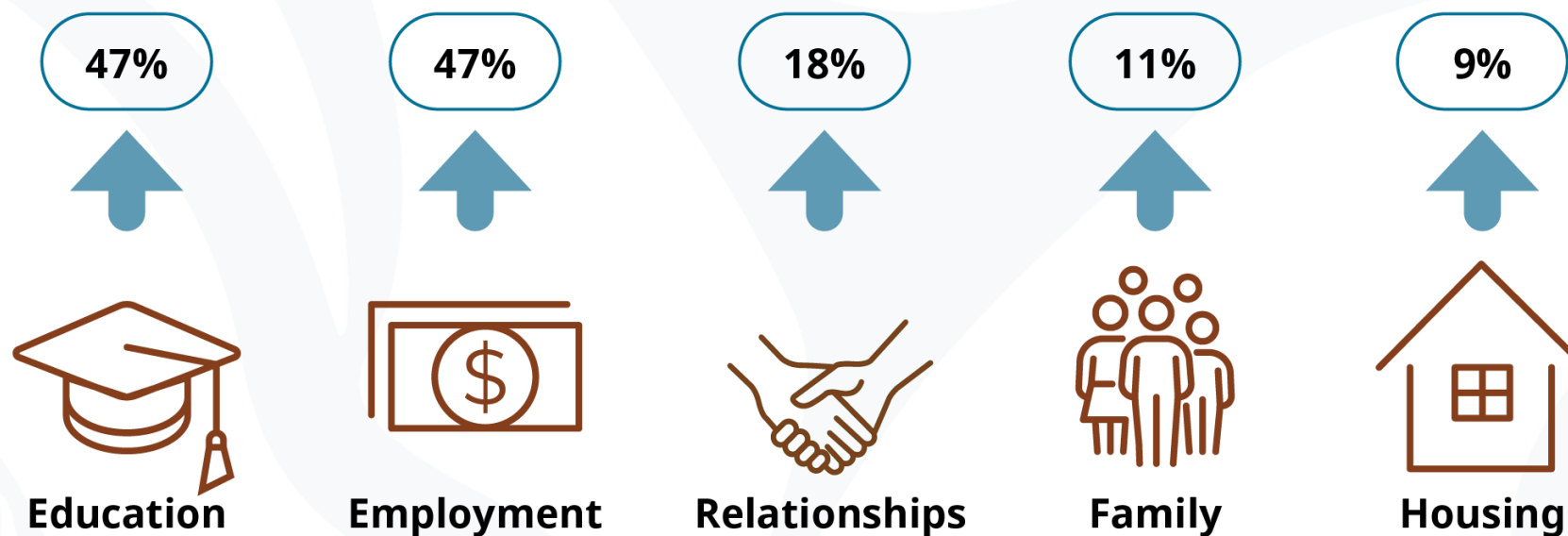
Quesnel City Boundary

46% of all
Indigenous
people living
within the CA
are living in
the city centre

Urban Indigenous Population

Reasons for Living Away from the Community, 2017

Source: First Nations Regional Health Survey, Northern Region, 2017



Priority Areas

- ECHEN has identified priority areas, guided by the World Health Organization's **social determinants of health** and First Nations Health Council's Indigenous perspective.



Community Engagement

142
PARTICIPANTS



123
ADULTS

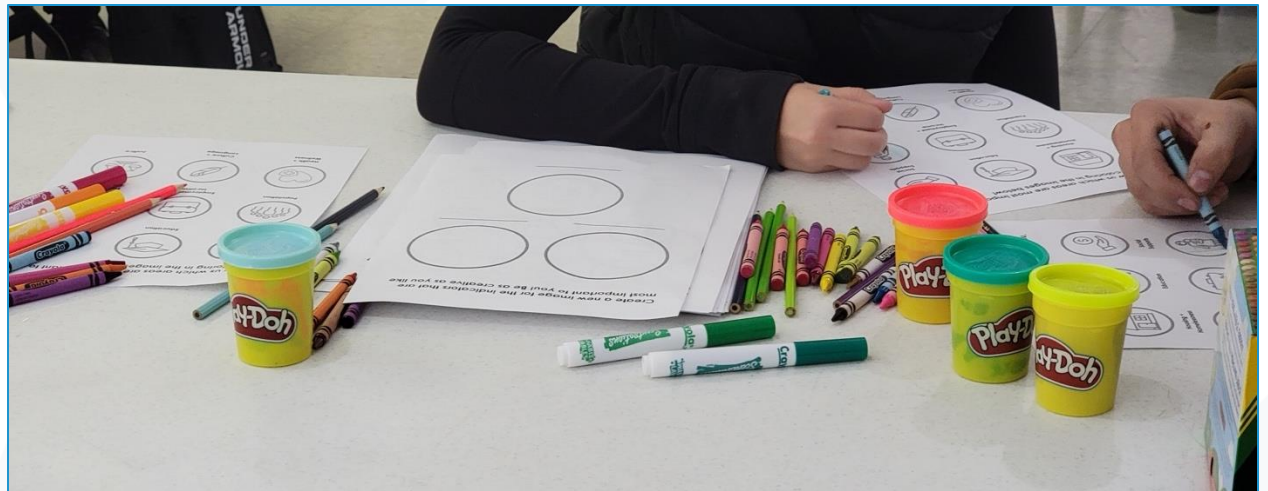


19
YOUTH



Engagement Activities

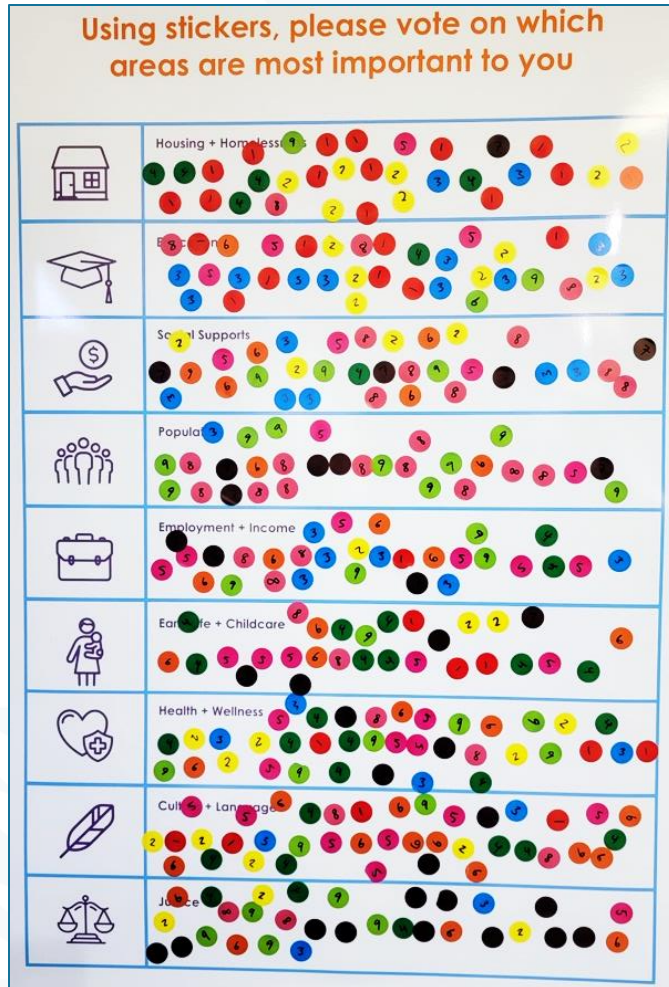
- Community Gathering
- Service Providers Drop-In
- Elders Tea
- Youth Session
- Online Survey (55 respondents)



Community Gathering



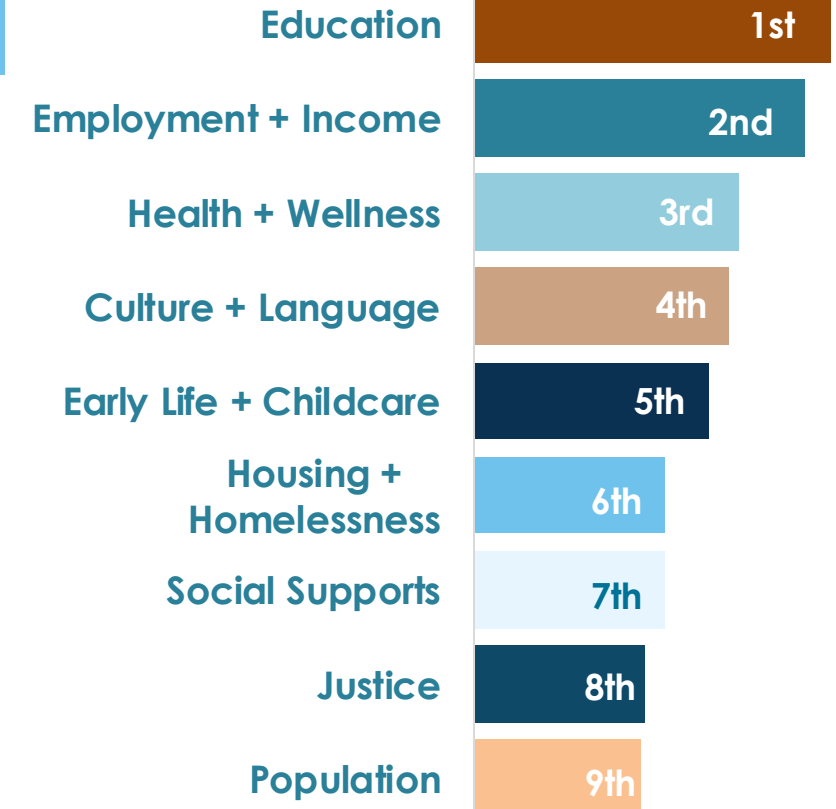
Community Priority Areas



Adults

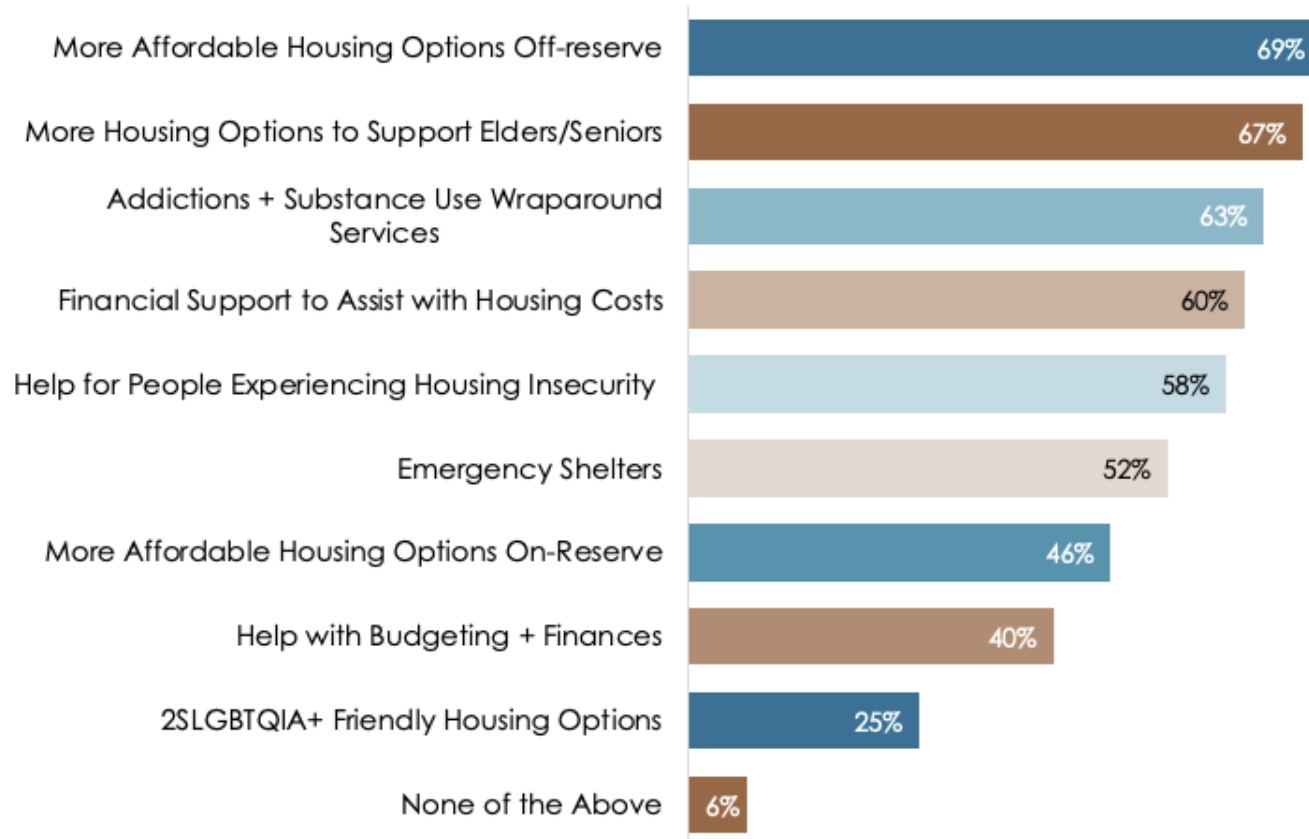


Youth



Housing and Homelessness Support Needed

Source: CitySpaces Consulting, Online Survey Results



59% of people experiencing homelessness in Quesnel are Indigenous, while making up only **14%** of the population



Housing + Homelessness Ways Forward

- Establish a framework for First Nations input on housing decisions for Indigenous People in Quesnel.
- Pursuing funding for off-reserve housing projects through the Federal and/or Provincial Governments.
- Advocate for more Indigenous homelessness funding.

Quality of Education in the Community

Source: CitySpaces Consulting, Online Survey Results



34% of the Indigenous population in Quesnel has no certificate, diploma, or degree

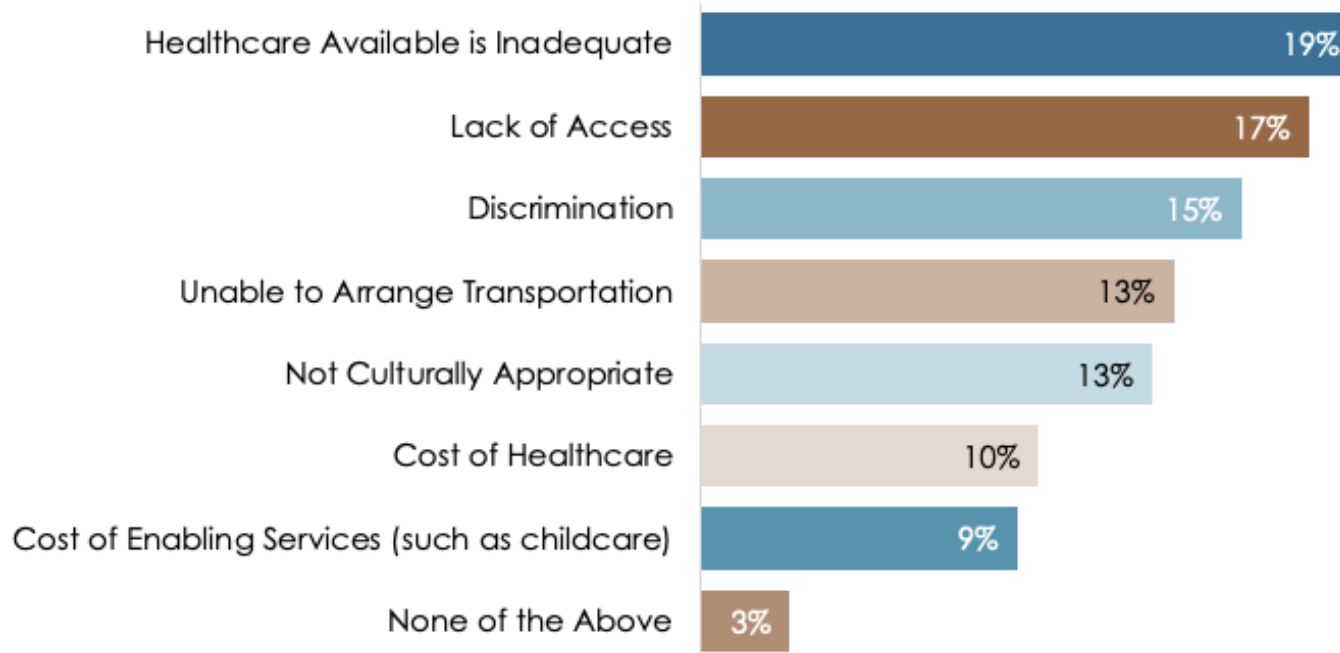


Education Ways Forward

- Advocating for the importance of language programs and cultural activities in the School District.
- Create opportunities for Elder-Youth relationship building + knowledge sharing.
- Providing more foundation training, such as life skills + tools to succeed in the workplace.

Barriers Experienced in Healthcare

Source: CitySpaces Consulting, Online Survey Results



57% of survey respondents reported experiencing discrimination from health care providers.



Health + Wellness Ways Forward

- Providing Indigenous liaisons and translators in the Quesnel healthcare system to reduce barriers and discrimination.
- Increase specialized care for Elders, youth, and neurodivergent community members.
- Improve mental health supports for youth.
- Advocate for off-reserve Indigenous-led health services, such as home care.

Lessons From our Elders

- **Early Life:** The first five years impact an entire life; it is the foundation for success.
- **Prevention:** The Indigenous way is preventative versus reactive.
- **Holistic:** Everything is connected, one aspect of life impacts another.

**“Keep my children
and grandchildren
healthy,
to have a healthy
community.”**

– Elder Response

What's Next?

- **A baseline for Indigenous Peoples in Quesnel**
 - Results demonstrate that **Indigenous community standard of living is falling short** compared to the non-Indigenous population across priority areas.
- **Advocate for policy changes**
 - Target priority areas identified by the Social Needs + Gaps Assessment.
 - Advocate for self-determination in social programming + resources development.
- **Monitor over time**
 - Are our efforts making an impact?



The Role of Planners in Implementing UNDRIP

CIP Policy on Planning and Reconciliation

- **Role of Planners**

- Understand the **historical lack of Indigenous participation in public policy** process and development, legacy of residential schools, and intergenerational impacts these have had on people and communities.
- Work respectfully with existing governance systems in Indigenous communities and understand differences between elected leadership and **hereditary/traditional governance**, where they exist.

CIP Policy on Planning and Reconciliation

- **Role of Planners**

- Understand the expectations arising from **TRC** and the principles contained in **UNDRIP** and integrate them into their professional practice.
- Create and maintain **respectful relationships** with local Indigenous communities and **seek sufficient staff time and resources** from government to support these ongoing relationships.

Key Takeaways

- ✓ Do you know how **urban Indigenous people** are doing in your city?
- ✓ Does your municipality offer **cultural awareness training**? Does it include hereditary leadership and the urban Indigenous context?
- ✓ Does your municipality have a **Reconciliation Action Plan**? Have you considered adopting an **UNDRIP** policy or plan?
- ✓ Do you provide opportunities for urban Indigenous organizations to **participate in municipal-planning processes**?
- ✓ Reach out to **ECHEN** for advice and guidance!

ECHEN Impact

- **Objectives**

- Encourage planners to **embrace urban Indigenous community planning**.
- Increase **understanding of colonial barriers** to Indigenous development.
- **Implement UNDRIP** in planning practices and community plans.
- Establish a baseline for **Indigenous living standards**.
- Seek **municipal recognition** of hereditary leaders and urban Indigenous representation.

Thank you!



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