



FIRST NATIONS POLICING AND PUBLIC SAFETY

OVERVIEW

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Joint Priorities in June 2017, which identified policing and community safety issues affecting First Nations as the first joint priority. To accomplish this task, the AFN has initiated discussions with Public Safety Canada (PSC) and Emergency Preparedness to ensure the interests of First Nations are kept safe, while protecting the rights of First Nation citizens.

The Justice Portfolio, held by BC Regional Chief Terry Teegee, is focused on reducing the high rate of First Nations individuals involved in the criminal justice system as well as eliminating gaps in government services provided to First Nations.

First Nations policing and public safety has been championed by AFN Quebec-Labrador Regional Chief Ghislain Picard. He has advocated for program and funding enhancements to the First Nations Policing Program to enable First Nations police agencies to provide services comparable to that of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and other provincially regulated agencies.

At present, PSC is currently funding the First Nations Policing Program (FNPP) in the amount \$522.5 million. There are 185 police service agreements covering 1,299 negotiated police officer positions in over 450 First Nations and Inuit communities across Canada.

UPDATE

On January 10, 2018, the Honourable Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, announced that the federal government will invest additional funds for the FNPP. An additional \$291.2 million became available in 2018 to address past chronic underfunding for equipment, salaries and infrastructure. The federal funding commitment is long-term in scope and will include a 2.75% annual escalator to address inflation.

In addition, \$44.8 million is slated for release beginning in the fiscal year 2019–2020 to recruit up to 110 additional officer positions. Of this amount, a portion over five years will be provided to the RCMP to pay for policing services provided pursuant to Community Tripartite Agreements. The remaining portion over five years was added to Self-Administered Agreements and Municipal Agreements to ensure their continued operations.

ISSUE UPDATE

November 2019

On November 15, 2018, Minister Goodale announced at the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Justice and Public Safety in St. John's that \$80 million will be provided for First Nations policing infrastructure. Further, Minister Goodale stated that he is open to discussions about transforming the FNPP into a legislated essential service.

In October of 2019, the AFN and Assembly of First Nations Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL) intervened in the *PGC c. Sylvain Picard et al (Picard)* case, at the Federal Court of Appeal. The *Picard* case involved the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions' unilateral decision to transfer certain First Nation pension plans to provincial regimes.

NEXT STEPS

- As directed by Resolution 107/2017, *Support of the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association Resolution Calling for First Nations Policing to be Entrenched as an Essential Service* and Resolution 44/2018, *Enhancing and Supporting Tribal Police Services in First Nations in Canada*, AFN urges the federal government to classify First Nations policing as an essential service and fund First Nations police services equitably when compared to other police agencies.
Continue to participate in discussions regarding the First Nations Policing Program in order to advance the Joint

- Priority identified in the AFN-Canada Memorandum of Understanding signed in June 2017.
- Continue to engage with the RCMP on developing a strategic response to the issues of racism and discrimination as outlined in the AFN-RCMP Relationship Building Protocol (Protocol). This is further supported through the recent agreed upon deliverables outlined in the AFN-RCMP 2018 Annual Report.
- Develop a strategic working relationship with the new RCMP Commissioner, Brenda Lucki, to continue to implement initiatives outlined in the Protocol.

