



Our Commitment to Reconciliation

Land Acknowledgment

The offices of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada (“Federation”) are located on the historic, unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg people - the original custodians of the land now known as Ottawa. We acknowledge and extend our respect to the Algonquin peoples who have lived on this land since before memory, as well as the other First Nation, Metis and Inuit peoples with whom we share these lands.

Each year our member law societies welcome the Federation to gather in the province or territory in which they are situated. The Federation is honored to visit, and learn about, the historic Indigenous lands across Canada. We acknowledge the diversity of Indigenous peoples from coast to coast to coast and we recognize the enduring relationship that exists between them and their lands.

Importance of Truth and Reconciliation

The Federation acknowledges the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization and residential schools on Indigenous peoples across Canada. In particular, we recognize and understand that the traumas and inequities stemming from Canada’s history continue to contribute to Indigenous peoples’ experiences with the law and the legal system.

We also acknowledge that First Nations, Metis and Inuit people had their own systems of law and justice prior to the implantation of common and civil law in Canada. The Indigenous legal orders and traditions stemming from those systems continue to exist today and are important threads in Canada’s legal fabric.

The Federation is the national coordinating body of the 14 law societies mandated by provincial and territorial law to regulate Canada’s legal professionals in the public interest. Legal regulators and legal professionals play an integral role in the administration of Canada’s justice system. Their participation in fostering reconciliation is vital to ensuring an inclusive justice system that respects the rights, interests, and unique realities of Indigenous people in Canada.

In its [Final Report](#), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (“TRC”) Call to Action 27 specifically called on the Federation to:

[E]nsure that lawyers receive appropriate cultural competency training, which includes 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 inter-cultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

Individual law societies are directly responsible for the continuing professional development of legal professionals practicing in their jurisdictions. They have been actively developing diverse, locally-driven responses to Call to Action 27 since 2015. The Federation supports and

encourages these efforts while also recognizing the desirability for national cohesiveness in light of law societies' shared public interest mandates and the national mobility of lawyers.

Law schools also have an important role to play in ensuring that future generations of lawyers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to competently serve Indigenous clients. The TRC recognized this role in [Call to Action 28](#). In response, law schools across the country have been developing creative academic initiatives. We recognize the continuum of legal education and the resulting shared responsibility of the Federation, provincial and territorial law societies and law schools in transforming the relationship between legal professionals and Indigenous peoples.

Our Commitment

The Federation of Law Societies of Canada is committed to the broad goals of truth and reconciliation advocated by the TRC. We are committed to fostering reconciliation in all aspects of our work and have adopted [Guiding Principles](#) to ensure Indigenous perspectives inform our progress.

We are also committed to supporting the efforts of law societies and law schools to enhance the knowledge and competency of future and existing legal professionals across Canada. The Federation will build upon, and complement, these efforts in ways that are in keeping with its mandate and responsibilities as the national coordinator of Canada's law societies.

How we will demonstrate our Commitment

In support of our commitment, the Federation will:

- 1) Ensure all aspects of our work are informed by our Guiding Principles and reflect our commitment to reconciliation.
- 2) Become the National Information Hub for law societies and law schools to share resources and information about their initiatives in response to the TRC.
- 3) Identify opportunities for relationship-building and collaboration including with national Indigenous organizations.
- 4) Urge all law societies to adopt a broad interpretation of, and approach to, reconciliation when developing regulatory initiatives.
- 5) Collaborate with, and support, law schools and the legal academy.

