



Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion
Centre canadien pour la diversité et l'inclusion

www.ccdi.ca

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation/Orange Shirt Day September 30, 2024 Commemoration Guide

This guide has been created to help organizations who are planning on recognizing and honouring September 30th in their workplaces. The guide aims to tell the story of the origins of colonization on the land that Canada is situated on and provide ideas for how organizations can establish their role in reconciliation with Indigenous communities. While we intend to provide helpful examples and information for organizations looking to bring reconciliation into the workplace, we want to acknowledge that the information contained in this guide is not exhaustive. Every Canadian's journey with reconciliation will be personal, and we hope this guide contains ideas that can encourage individuals along this journey.

Orange Shirt Day has been observed on September 30th since 2013, when Phyllis Webstad shared her story at the St. Joseph Mission (SJM) residential school commemoration event in Williams Lake, BC. At six years old, Phyllis was proud to wear her new orange shirt, given to her by her grandmother, to her first day of residential school. However, her shirt was taken from her when she arrived, and she never saw it again. [Read more about Phyllis' story here.](#)

In 2021, the federal government passed Bill C-5, recognizing September 30th as a federal holiday under a new name: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The information gathered in this guide is a short collection of educational and action-based resources, including resources from our community partner Indigenous Works as well as various Indigenous organizations. The guide was curated with Employer Partners in mind, to support them on their truth and reconciliation journey. CCDI's commemorative guides for Employer Partners are collaboratively created by staff across all departments and in consultation with subject matter experts as needed. Collectively, they provide a diverse range of identities as well as lived and professional knowledge and experience. The goal of the guides is to highlight and reference the work already created by individuals, groups, and organizations who are experts in the topic presented.

Note: A magnifying glass icon (🔍) indicates that a resource is available in the CCDI Knowledge Repository. An asterisk () indicates a recently added resource.*

The information and resources below contain information that may be disturbing to some individuals, especially to residential school survivors. If you or someone you know needs support, please call the 24-Hour National Survivors Crisis Line at 1-866-925-4419.

Additionally, the Hope for Wellness Help Line offers immediate help to all Indigenous peoples across Canada. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to offer immediate support and crisis intervention. Call the toll-free Help Line at 1-855-242-3310 or connect to the online chat at www.hopeforwellness.ca.

Colonization in Canada's history

Indigenous Peoples throughout the area now known as Canada have thrived on these lands for millennia before European contact was made. Due to the vast number of Indigenous nations, each with their own cultures, languages, and traditions, it is impossible to group together their history. However, one common thread existed amongst them – all physical and spiritual needs were met using the resources given to them by the land. This is why valuing land and nature is a central tenet of all Indigenous communities, and this sets the stage for why the post-colonial actions that separated Indigenous Peoples from the land were intentional and deeply traumatizing.

Listed below is an abbreviated timeline of key decrees, acts, policies, reports, and events that contributed to the genocide of the Indigenous Peoples faced in Canada as background for moving forward. For more detailed information, please visit [the Canadian Encyclopedia website](#).

1400s – Doctrine of Discovery: A means of legitimizing the colonization of lands outside of Europe. Christopher Columbus arrives in the Americas.

1763 – The Royal Proclamation: Signed by King George III giving limited recognition of title to Indigenous communities and providing guidelines for negotiating treaties on a nation-to-nation basis.

1880s – Beginning of federal residential school system: While the federal residential school system began around 1883, the origins of the residential school system can be traced to as early as the 1830s — long before Confederation in 1867 — when the Anglican Church established a residential school in Brantford, Ontario. Prior to this point, churches had built schools specifically for Indigenous children since the mid-1600s. For more information, visit the [Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada](#).

1982 – Canadian Constitution Act, 1982: The [Canadian Constitution](#) is patriated, and thanks to the advocacy of Indigenous Peoples, Section 35 recognizes and affirms [Aboriginal titles](#) and treaty rights.

1997 – Last residential school closes: The last residential school to close was [Kivalliq Hall](#) in Rankin Inlet in the land now known as Nunavut. Kivalliq Hall was only recently recognized as a residential school, and until then Gordon Residential School in Punnichy, Saskatchewan, which closed in 1996, was known to be the last residential school.

2008 – Formal apology: Prime Minister Stephen Harper, on behalf of the Government of Canada, delivers a formal apology to residential school survivors and their families.

2015 – Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Report published with 94 calls to action.

2021 (May) – First public confirmation of residential school graves: 215 unmarked graves were detected at Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia.

2021 (June) – Creation of a federal statutory holiday: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30.

2022 (March) – Papal apology in Rome: Over 30 members of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis delegations pleaded for and received a [private apology](#) from the Pope for the Roman Catholic Church's actions in the creation of the residential school system. The Pope promised to deliver this apology on Indigenous land.

2022 (July) – Papal visit to Indigenous lands: The [Pope visited Indigenous lands](#) in Alberta, Quebec, and Nunavut and [offered apologies](#) for the church's involvement in residential schools.

Working toward meaningful reconciliation

One of the key aspects of reconciliation is learning how to respect and uphold treaties. All who live on the land now known as Canada live on land that is either covered by a treaty or is unceded territory. When land is covered by a treaty, all the inhabitants of that land are responsible for upholding the guidelines of that treaty. The following links can help you learn about the treaties around your office(s), staff, and home:

- [Government of Canada – Treaties and agreements](#)
- [Government of Canada – A History of treaty-making in Canada](#)
- [Government of Canada – Maps of Indigenous Peoples and lands](#)
- [Treaties in Canada – Education guide](#)
- [*Experiences Canada Treaty and Land Claim Map \(PDF\)](#)

If the land you live or work on is unceded, that means it is not covered by any treaties. The links listed below explain what unceded territory is and what it means for the people who live on it:

- [What we mean when we say Indigenous land is “unceded”](#)
- [Unceded land: The case for Wet'suwet'en sovereignty](#)

CCDI offers many resources that are focused on reconciliation, as well as other resources that provide helpful background knowledge while committing yourself to reconciliation work. We have listed some of these resources below. Please note that you will need to log into the Knowledge Repository to access these resources.

- 🔍 [CCDI Webinar: Land acknowledgments - The why and how](#)
- 🔍 [CCDI Webinar: Moving from reconciliation to reconciliACTION: Engaging and supporting Indigenous communities](#)
- 🔍 [CCDI Webinar: Moving towards building a Reconciliation action plan: Indigenous inclusion with employers](#)
- 🔍 [CCDI Webinar: Reconciliation: Sisters on the path](#)
- *🔍 [5 actions for indigenous rights and justice in the workplace](#)
- 🔍 [Building Inclusion for Indigenous Peoples in Canadian Workplaces](#)
- *🔍 [Climbing the Mountain: Reconciliation in Workplaces](#)
- *🔍 [Decolonizing and Indigenizing your hiring process](#)
- *🔍 [Developing Best Practices - Reconciliation In The Workplace](#)
- 🔍 [Reconciliation Toolkit for Business Leaders](#)
- *🔍 [Supporting Indigenous Communities: Individual Actions](#)

Commemorating September 30

If you are employed by a federally regulated company, you are entitled to a statutory holiday for National Truth and Reconciliation Day. Some provinces have also formally recognized September 30th as a statutory holiday, so this may also be the case for organizations in [Prince Edward Island](#), [Northwest Territories](#), [Yukon](#), [Nunavut](#), [New Brunswick](#), [British Columbia](#), and [Manitoba](#). Even in provinces and territories where it is not a formal holiday, some organizations may decide that closing their office is the right choice for them. For other employers, commemorating this day may look different.

Some organizations might provide a day off work to allow individuals to attend events or participate in learning opportunities independently. In contrast, others may commemorate the day together as a team via speakers, workshops, or other activities. At CCDI, our offices will be closed on Monday, September 30th to allow our staff to spend that time on independent learning, reflection, and acts of reconciliation.

There are many reasons that an organization may decide to close or not. Still, regardless of the decision, we have listed some ideas for meaningful engagement in reconciliation work. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and many of these activities can be done regardless of whether you have the day as a statutory holiday.

If you are not required to work, you can get out in the community and get involved by:

- **Connecting with your local Friendship Centre:** Friendship Centres offer a wide number of services and programs to Indigenous People living in urban areas, as well as resources to members of the public. Use the [directory of Friendship Centres](#) to find centres across the country.
- **Taking part in a cultural event near you:** Many local groups will be hosting ceremonies or learning events to acknowledge the significance of this day. We suggest connecting with local Indigenous groups to find out what events will take place. Please note that many ceremonies will be intended for an Indigenous-only audience, and it is important to respect that you are not able to attend all events offered.
- **Volunteering with Indigenous-serving organizations:** There are organizations across Canada that are created by and for Indigenous communities, and many of these offer information about how Canadians can volunteer with them to support their causes. You can connect with your local Friendship Centre to find out about ways you can contribute to Indigenous-serving organizations. You can also reference the charities listed in the guide below under the subheading “Donating to Indigenous charities”.
- **Supporting Indigenous artists:** Art is a very important and powerful tool that gives many Indigenous People a means of self-expression. In addition to the media listed in the [educational guide \(PDF\)](#), some organizations list Indigenous artists and art such as the [National Film Bureau](#), the [Indigenous Arts Collective](#), and the [Indigenous Art Centre](#).
- **Learning about Indigenous culture and history from Indigenous perspectives:** Understanding the history of colonialism and its impact on Indigenous peoples and communities is an important first step in reconciliation. We recommend [Indigenous Canada](#) as a way to begin your learning journey. This is a free, online, certificate course from the Faculty of Native Studies at the University of Alberta.

If you are required to work, you can take steps towards personal reconciliation and spend time learning by:

- **Wearing an Orange Shirt:** You can purchase an orange shirt from an [official merchandise supplier](#) to ensure that a portion of the proceeds go to the Orange Shirt Society and other Indigenous-supporting organizations.
- **Inviting Indigenous speakers or facilitators:** CCDI has partnered with [Indigenous Works](#), a national non-profit organization founded in 1998 as a recommendation from the 1996 Report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. For over 20 years, Indigenous Works partnered with organizations to strengthen their results in Indigenous employment, workplace engagement, and inclusion. Below are some additional organizations that offer workshops and speakers:

- [Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.](#)
 - [Indigenous Inclusion, facilitated by Nahanee Creative](#)
 - [Indigenous Training Collective](#)
 - [KAIROS Blanket Exercise](#)
 - [Kina8at](#) (education-focused)
 - [Naqsmist](#)
 - [*National Speakers Bureau: Indigenous Speakers](#)
 - [Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres \(OFIFC\) Indigenous Cultural Competency Training](#)
 - [Reconciliation Education](#)
 - [Speaker Bureau of Canada: Indigenous speakers](#)
- **Put effort toward the 94 Calls to action as they apply to your organization, industry, or sector:** Familiarize yourself and your team with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission [Calls to Action \(PDF\)](#) and the [United Nations Declaration on Rights for Indigenous Peoples \(PDF\)](#). The resources below offer some support in these efforts.
- *🔍 [A Municipal Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action](#), Alberta Municipalities
 - 🔍 [Application + Action: TRC Reading Guide for Non-Indigenous Organizations](#), Manitoba Harm Reduction Network
 - *🔍 [Bringing Reconciliation to Healthcare in Canada: Wise Practices for Healthcare Leaders](#), HealthCareCAN
 - 🔍 [Business Reconciliation in Canada Guidebook](#), Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business
 - [Call to Action #92](#), Indigenous Watchdog
 - [Delivering on Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action](#), Government of Canada
 - *🔍 [The Business Reference Guide to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), United Nations Global Compact
 - [Truth & Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action Guide](#), Reconciliation Education
 - *[Understanding and Implementing the UN Declaration on The Rights of Indigenous Peoples: An Introductory Handbook \(PDF\)](#), Indigenous Bar Association
 - [Walking the talk: A practical guide to reconciliation for CUPE locals](#), Canadian Union of Public Employees
- **Purchasing from an Indigenous-owned business:** The Government of Canada has created a [database of Indigenous-owned businesses](#) to find businesses across the country that you can support and partner with.
- **Exploring CCDI's resource guide:** CCDI's [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation / Orange Shirt Day educational guide \(PDF\)](#) features many books, movies, and TV shows that you can view outside of your workday.

- **Listening to the [CCDI podcast](#), released on September 30th, 2022:** The podcast guest is Laura Arndt from the [Survivors' Secretariat](#), hosted by Anne-Marie Pham, the CEO of CCDI.
- **Watching Indigenous made content:** [APTN TV](#) is the first national Indigenous broadcaster in the world, with programming by, for and about Indigenous Peoples, to share with all Canadians as well as viewers around the world.
- **Donating to Indigenous charities:** Canada Helps provides a [list of charities](#) that support or promote the needs of Indigenous communities. We have listed some additional charities below:
 - [Indigenous Works' Kocihta Charity](#)
 - [Alliance Autochtone du Québec Inc.](#)
 - [Indian Residential School Survivors Society](#)
 - [Indspire](#)
 - [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami](#)
 - [Legacy of Hope Foundation](#)
 - [Mikana](#)
 - [Native Women's Association of Canada](#)
 - [Reconciliation Canada](#)
 - [The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund](#)
 - [True North Aid](#)

Reconciliation does not have a fixed target – it is a lifelong journey that each individual takes. While on this journey, each person must continue to centre Indigenous voices in all their reconciliation actions. Amid [ongoing confirmations of graves on residential school sites](#) and [calls for justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA people \(PDF\)](#), it's necessary to seek out Indigenous perspectives in all ongoing situations. The following Indigenous news sources are great places to find these perspectives:

- [*Anishinabek News](#)
- [APTN News](#)
- [Eagle Feather News](#)
- [*First Nations Drum](#)
- [*Ha-Shilth-Sa](#)
- [Indiginews](#)
- [*Ku'ku'kwes News](#)
- [*mediaINDIGENA](#)
- [Nation Talk](#)
- [Radio-Canada Espaces autochtones](#)
- [*Say Magazine](#)
- [*The Eastern Door](#)
- [*Turtle Island News](#)
- [*Wawatay News](#)
- [Windspeaker](#)