

Downtown Eastside Women's Centre



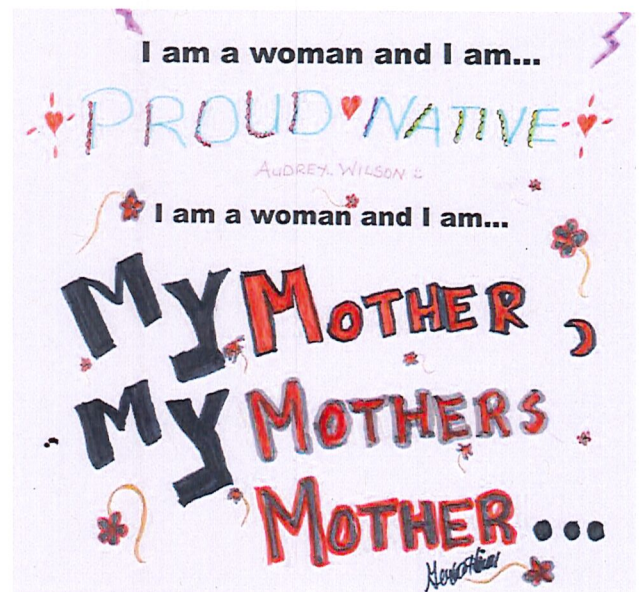
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTER

Presented to the National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

for the Oral Closing Submissions Hearings, November 2018

PRESENTED BY:

Carol Martin and Harsha Walia
Advocates on behalf of
Downtown Eastside Women's Center
302 Columbia Street
Vancouver BC V6A 4J1
Phone: 604-681-8480



Unceded territory of x^wməθkwəyəm, Skwxwú7mesh and Səlilwətaʔl nations

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	p. 2
About the Recommendations	p. 9
Recommendations to End Violence Against Indigenous Women in the DTES	p. 10
Anti-Violence Services in the DTES	p. 11
Support for family members	p. 13
Policing protocols	p. 14
Recommendations to End Indigenous Women’s Displacement from Land	p. 15
On-reserve	p. 16
Band Councils	p. 17
Recommendations for Indigenous Women’s Economic Security in the DTES	p. 18
Provincial Income Assistance	p. 18
Employment Security	p. 20
Universal Public Services	p. 21
Recommendations for Safe and Affordable Housing in the DTES for Indigenous Women	p. 23
Social Housing and Transition Homes	p. 23
Legislative Protections	p. 24
Recommendations to Keep Indigenous Families Together in the DTES	p. 27
Ending Child Apprehensions	p. 28
Supports for Indigenous Families	p. 29
Accountability	p. 30
Recommendations to End Criminalization of Indigenous Women in the DTES	p. 31
Policing	p. 31
Legal and Judicial Reform	p. 32
Access to Justice	p. 33
Correctional Facilities	p. 34
Recommendations for Indigenous Women’s Wellness in the DTES	p. 37
Culturally safe health care	p. 37
Expanded health services	p. 39
Annex: List of Contributors	p. 41

Executive Summary

1. The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC) is located in the heart of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). Since 1978, DEWC has provided support to women and their children through a drop-in centre and a low-barrier emergency night shelter for all self-identified women who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or at risk of violence. DEWC provides basic necessities such as hot meals, laundry, phone access, showers, and legal advocacy, as well as long-term skills development and political advocacy through a peer-driven volunteer program, Indigenous Elders Council, healing circle, and a social justice group. DEWC also provides specialized legal advocacy through victim services, housing outreach, and mental health advocates. DEWC provides practical support, basic necessities and meals to 500 women and children a day.
2. **DEWC has been named by 54 percent of women in the DTES as the place they feel safest.** This is because while there are 250+ service providers in the DTES, there are only 3 women-only spaces. Over 70 percent of the women who access the DEWC identify as Indigenous. As a result, DEWC is a space that a vast majority of missing and murdered Indigenous women accessed. As far back as the 1980's, DEWC provided police forces with names of women who had gone missing. Ten years ago, DEWC files showed 129 women missing from the area over nine years, while the police statistics were under 50 names. Indigenous members of DEWC have been powerful voices in advocating for the community, including calling for a national inquiry for the past 26 years.
3. Indigenous women and girls in Canada have been murdered or have gone missing at a rate four times higher than the rate of representation of Indigenous women in the population in Canada. Indigenous women's rate of violent victimization is double that of Indigenous men, nearly triple that of non-Indigenous women, and more than triple that of non-Indigenous men. Two-spirit and trans people are violently victimized nearly five times as often.
4. The gruesome murder of an Indigenous mother in the DTES in 1992 catalyzed the annual Women's Memorial March, which continues today to honour all women's lives lost in the DTES. Many homicides and disappearances are still unsolved, including the recent murders and disappearances of DEWC members Lisa Arlene Francis, Angeline Pete, Ashley Machiskinic, and Verna Simnard. Violence against Indigenous women, girls, trans, and two spirit people continues to be the most

pressing concern in the DTES. In the DTES, where approximately 8,000 women live and work, incidents of violence are double the rates of the rest of the city. **In a DTES women’s safety audit, 87 percent of women reported feeling unsafe in the DTES, with 48 percent of women experiencing violence within the last two years.**

5. Understanding and remedying the causes of and institutional responses to violence against Indigenous women in the DTES requires disrupting the pattern of talking about Indigenous women from the DTES without their expertise and leadership. DEWC’s submission to the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls uses a participatory approach where Indigenous women in the DTES are treated as experts of their own lives. **Our full submission and 195 recommendations are based on direct collaboration and input from 112 Indigenous women and in-depth narratives from thirty Indigenous women.** Gendered colonialism of family trauma, child welfare, homelessness, policing, welfare system, and the opioid crisis all contribute to the targeted insecurity and violence experienced by Indigenous women in the DTES
6. Indigenous women in the DTES are stigmatized for having “high-risk lifestyles” and blamed for violence committed against them, when in fact colonial poverty and patriarchy are the highest risk factors in Indigenous women’s lives. 64 percent of all Indigenous women live off-reserve, and the impoverishment of Indigenous women in inner cities like the DTES is glaring when juxtaposed to the revenues generated by multinational and Crown corporations extracting resources from Indigenous lands. Indigenous women’s and two-spirit peoples role as decision makers, holders of traditional knowledge, and matriarchal governance through house groups and clan systems in many nations was disrupted through colonization. Over the past 150 years, structural injustices - ranging from the *Indian Act* to forced removal of Indigenous children - have denied Indigenous women self-determination, Title to their lands, and civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. **Our full submission explores how violence upon Indigenous women’s bodies is connected to loss of land, poverty, homelessness, child apprehension, criminalization, and health disparities.**
7. A persistent barrier in the DTES is lack of access to safe spaces. While there are hundreds of agencies in the DTES, there is **not a single Indigenous women’s drop-in center** operated by and for Indigenous women. In addition, there is a paternalistic relationship that often defines the nature of service provision. Indigenous women report feeling the need to perform politeness, civility and gratitude in order to receive services, which actively undermines Indigenous women’s rights and

political mobilization. The construction of Indigenous women as ‘victims’ in need of ‘help’ is a continuation of the civilizing/saviour mentality that further marginalizes Indigenous women.

8. **Indigenous women’s poverty in the DTES is one of the main factors magnifying vulnerability** to abusive relationships, sexual assault, child apprehension, exploitative work conditions, unsafe housing, food insecurity, poor health, and social isolation. The poverty rate for Indigenous women is 36 percent, which is more than double the percentage of non-Indigenous women. In a women’s safety audit in the DTES, 57 percent of women said that they had felt forced to do something they were not comfortable with in order to survive and make ends meet. In a separate study, one-third of women on welfare reported staying or returning to an abusive partner for financial reasons, and one-fifth of women reported engaging in the survival sex trade due to welfare rules.

9. Social assistance and disability benefits in B.C are low: \$710 for a single person and \$1033 (plus a \$52 transportation subsidy) per month for a person with a disability. Meanwhile, the average rent in single room occupancies in the DTES is \$687 per month. **For someone on income assistance, this leaves \$23 per month to meet all other living costs including food, clothing and transport.** Eligibility criteria for income assistance are also a barrier including the three-week work search, the two-year independence test, and low asset thresholds. Employable single parents are expected to work when their youngest child is three years old, which is unrealistic for many Indigenous single mothers especially in the absence of affordable childcare. Recipients of income assistance cannot attend post-secondary education without losing all their income assistance benefits, and must instead apply for student loans. This means that Indigenous women on income assistance are more likely to enter into cycles of short-term, low-wage work and limited training programs.

10. **For Indigenous women who are seeking work, the primary barrier is discrimination by employers.** Indigenous women in the DTES are stratified into low-wage work, and the minimum wage in B.C of \$12.65/hour per hour leaves Indigenous women living far below the poverty line. Work is part-time, casual, shift-based or seasonal with no employment benefits including no sick time and no long-term job security. Indigenous women are also vulnerable to workplace violations including racist and sexualized harassment, wage theft, unpaid training, and overtime hours of work without pay. A particular challenge for Indigenous women in the DTES is that their work in non-profit agencies is often considered ‘volunteer hours’ and compensated with free meals or gift cards,

even though they are expected to show up on shift, undertake primary job responsibilities such as serving food or cleaning, and often work full shifts ranging from 4-8 hours.

11. Enforced poverty means that Indigenous women are more likely to suffer from lack of safe and affordable housing. The DTES rate of change of new unaffordable housing units (condos, market rental, social housing with rents above social assistance-shelter rate) to units affordable to those on social assistance or pension is 46:1. In the DTES, 1 in 18 people are homeless. The average life expectancy of a homeless person in B.C is between 40 and 49 years old, and homeless people are also twice as likely to die by accident, suicide, or homicide. **Indigenous women represent 45 percent of homeless women in the Metro Vancouver** region, and all of DEWC's Indigenous members have been homeless at some point in their lives. Indigenous women with children and survivors of violence are the most likely to experience "invisible homelessness," such as staying temporarily with family or a friend. Indigenous women often have to make the impossible decision between staying in an abusive relationship, or becoming homeless and having their children apprehended. Indigenous trans youth are also particularly vulnerable to homelessness with one in three trans youth reporting rejection from shelters as a result of policies that police gender presentation. Finally, single Indigenous women elders are a fast growing demographic amongst Metro Vancouver's homeless, with all seniors representing 23 per cent of the homeless population.
12. **In a DTES women's survey, one quarter of women reported feeling unsafe in their place of residence.** Indigenous women report a number of issues with their private landlords or government-funded housing providers: discrimination by landlords who refuse to rent to Indigenous women on social assistance, illegal rent increases, substandard or no maintenance, negligence from staff and management, building staff who extort sex in exchange for maintenance services, constant bedbug and rat infestations, shared bathrooms and kitchens with no privacy, poor sanitation, illegal entry into suites, illegal rules such as not being allowed to use the backyard or not being allowed to have guests, room checks, curfews, requiring guest identification, no overnight guests allowed, being renovicted or demovicted, refusal to return security deposits, and evictions without cause.
13. **Every Indigenous woman in the DEWC membership has been embroiled in the child welfare system.** Today there are three times more Indigenous children forcibly removed from their parents and placed into foster care than at the height of the residential school era. Indigenous children and youth in B.C are 15 times more likely to be in government care than their non-Indigenous

counterparts. The rate of investigations of Indigenous children was 4.2 times the rate of non-Indigenous investigations and Indigenous families are being investigated for ‘neglect’ at 6 times the rate for non-Indigenous families. In 2016, 120 youth died in the B.C. child welfare system, and 117 children died in the B.C child welfare system last year. The B.C. Representative for Children and Youth’s office receive 200 critical injury and death reports for kids in care every month.

14. The connection between the child welfare system and violence against Indigenous girls is stark. **Indigenous girls in the B.C. child welfare system are four times more likely to be victims of sexual violence than non-Indigenous girls.** Over 60 percent of children and youth who report sexual violence in government care are Indigenous girls. And when they become adults, Indigenous survivors of childhood sexual abuse are 10 times more likely to be sexually assaulted. Approximately 1000 youth in B.C. age out at the age of majority and are cut off from support every year. Across Canada, kids in and from the foster care system make up 60 per cent of homeless youth, and two-thirds of all Indigenous people in prison have been involved in the child welfare system. Youth in-care in B.C graduate high school at less than half the rate of their peers, and 40 percent rely on income assistance to survive.
15. Another barrier to ending violence against Indigenous women girls is the failure of the entire criminal justice system to take violence against Indigenous women seriously. **Many Indigenous women enter the criminal justice system because of their experiences as survivors of violence.** However rather than receiving protection, the criminal justice system constructs Indigenous women as ‘risks’ to be contained, makes Indigenous women more unsafe, and exacerbates Indigenous women’s inequality. Compared to non-Indigenous women, Indigenous women are more likely to be attacked by their abusers and are more likely to be counter-charged by police in responses to domestic violence. Most violent charges like murder are in relation to Indigenous women defending themselves or their children from violence. Indigenous women in the federal correctional system are, on average, younger than non-Indigenous women, 90 percent report using drugs or alcohol the day they offended, and 91 percent report histories of physical and/or sexual abuse.
16. As detailed in the Final Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, the **Vancouver Police Department (VPD) failed to prevent and protect Indigenous women from violence**, and failed to diligently investigate violence when it occurs. One recent attempt by the VPD to improve relations is the Sister Watch program. While it is significant that several agencies now have greater

organizational trust with the VPD, an independent evaluation found that the program is not successful in building trust between the VPD and DTES women residents. In a DTES women's safety audit, only 15 percent of 157 women said they would go to the police if they felt unsafe.

17. Indigenous women and girls are not only denied support from the police, **Indigenous women are also subjected to police harassment and brutality.** Members of DEWC recount routine street checks (Indigenous women account for 21 percent of all VPD street checks of women), detention, arrests, search and seizure, bylaw tickets, use of force, extortion of information, use of police dogs, escalation during a mental health crisis (a majority of police-shooting deaths in B.C. involve individuals experiencing a mental health crisis), entry into their homes, and 'catch and release' as a form of intimidation – often without legal cause. It is also noteworthy that private security in the DTES has dramatically increased, and due to presumed authority they illegally move people off public property, seize property, issue tickets, or use force.
18. **Once Indigenous women are arrested, they are more likely to be charged, held in pre-trial detention, rack up further charges from violations, plead guilty, and be sentenced to prison.** Indigenous women are also the least likely to have full and appropriate legal representation. Gladue report programs remain underfunded, and Indigenous women are nine times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be sentenced to prison. During sentencing, the use of mandatory minimum sentences has increased and has removed judicial discretion to deliver sentences, for example for minor drug-related offenses, that reflect the unique circumstances of Indigenous women.
19. In the Pacific and Prairie regions, Indigenous women make up more than 50 percent of the federally incarcerated female population. In the provincial custody system, 41 percent of women are Indigenous women. Approximately 75 percent of women in provincial prisons are sentenced for administrative crimes or fraud, possession of stolen property, and theft – all of which are essentially poverty-related offenses. **Discrimination against Indigenous women in the prison system is a series of compounding discriminations.** Indigenous women serve disproportionately more of their sentence behind bars before first release and are more likely to remain in prison until their statutory release date or warrant expire date, are over-classified in maximum security institutions and under-represented in community supervision populations or Healing Lodges, are disproportionately placed into segregation, have less access to rehabilitative and culturally-relevant programs in prison, are generally excluded from the Mother-Child Program, are more likely to return to prison

on revocation of parole, and are often labeled ‘dangerous offenders’ or ‘hard to manage’ because of offenses in resistance to prisons.

20. A final and critical factor in ending violence against Indigenous women in the DTES is the urgent need to address Indigenous women’s well-being. The life expectancy of Indigenous women is 5.2 years shorter than the average life expectancy of non-Indigenous women. Suicides are seven times higher among Indigenous women than among non-Indigenous women. **Indigenous women’s health in the DTES is inseparable from the intergenerational trauma of colonization overlapping with the specific health challenges that are concentrated in the DTES.** Indigenous women in the DTES report a number of barriers to accessing health care: having no family doctor; illnesses going untreated and refusal of pain medication because of ‘drug-seeking’ narratives; fear of judgment, child apprehension, and forced institutionalization if Indigenous women choose to disclose personal information such as abuse, substance use, or mental health challenges; and routinely having security and police called on them by hospital staff (in one year, there were 907 reports of incidents where security guards were called to respond to patients at St. Paul’s Hospital).
21. The municipal government declared a mental health crisis in the city and the BC Provincial Health Officer has declared the opioid crisis a public health emergency. There is a correlation between the mental health crisis and the opioid crisis in the DTES. According to findings of a September 2018 report by the BC Coroner’s Service, more than half of the people who died as a result of drug overdose in the province during 2016 and 2017 had a clinical diagnosis or anecdotal evidence of a mental health disorder, and 79 percent who died were in contact with health services in the year prior to their death. **Indigenous women are being disproportionately impacted by the opioid crisis.** Indigenous women are experiencing eight times more overdoses and five times more fatal overdoses than non-Indigenous women. A recent study found that less regulated drug use settings like the street increase predatory drug scene violence against women.
22. In conclusion, Indigenous women’s over-representation in statistics on poverty, homelessness, child apprehensions, police street checks, incarceration, opioid overdose fatalities, and health inequities is connected to the disproportionate violence that Indigenous women face. Settler-colonial state practices target Indigenous women for removal from Indigenous lands, tear Indigenous children from their families, enforce impoverishment, and create the conditions for Indigenous peoples dehumanization.

About the Recommendations

Our recommendations are based on women's leadership, lived experience and expertise of our membership who struggle and survive in the DTES. One hundred and twenty five members of DEWC are contributors to our final submission and developed the 195 recommendations in this report. The annex includes a full list of contributors.

Over a period of three months and hundreds of hours, Indigenous women peer facilitators and DEWC staff gathered input from 112 Indigenous women in the DTES who are survivors of violence. Many are also family members, including families of the heart, of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. We also gathered input from 15 non-Indigenous women in the DTES who are friends or street families of Indigenous women who are missing, or have overdosed or died from violence in the DTES.

The recommendations are based on three core principles:

* Violence against Indigenous women and girls is a violation of inherent, constitutional, and internationally-protected Indigenous rights. Implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* at all levels of government, assertion of Indigenous Title over lands and jurisdiction over law-making, and restoration of collective Indigenous women's rights and governance is the only meaningful way to end violence against Indigenous women.

* Increased state enforcement alone cannot eliminate violence against Indigenous women and girls because structural violence is connected to individual acts of male violence. A comprehensive plan to end violence against Indigenous women must address socio-economic factors including equitable access and self-determination over land, culture, language, housing, childcare, income security, employment, education, and physical, mental, and spiritual health.

* Indigenous women in the DTES are not silent victims or stereotypes. Indigenous women in the DTES come from diverse nations and families, and have unique stories and dreams. Indigenous women in the DTES are all leaders who contribute countless hours to the community and will never stop fighting for justice. Any policies, services and solutions must be based in Indigenous women's collective input and leadership. "*We are red women rising!*"

Recommendations to End Violence Against Indigenous Women in the DTES

1. Adopt a national-level integrated action plan to eliminate violence against Indigenous women and girls that:
 - a. Addresses all the socio-economic factors impacting Indigenous women's, girls, trans and two spirit safety including equitable access and self-determination over land, culture, language, housing, childcare, income security, employment, education, and physical, mental, sexual and spiritual health.
 - b. Incorporates the specific needs of extremely marginalized communities like the DTES.
 - c. Sets public timelines for implementation of existing recommendations from CEDAW, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, UN Human Rights Committee, Assembly of First Nations, B.C Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Highway of Tears Symposium, and Native Women's Association of Canada.
 - d. Establishes a national database on murdered and missing Indigenous women with accurate data collection on rates of violence against Indigenous women and girls.
 - e. Prioritizes a public education campaign in schools, transit system, media outlets, and community centers on Indigenous rights and systemic racism that amplifies Indigenous women's voices.
 - f. Immediately establishes public bus transportation system between each town and city located along the entire length of Highway 16 with a number of safe homes and emergency phone booths along the length of the highway.
 - g. Ensures adequate human, technical and financial resources allocated for implementation, monitoring and assessment of such a plan.

2. All policies at all levels of government impacting Indigenous women must meet the requirements set out in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*. This includes full implementation of Indigenous jurisdiction over Indigenous lands, justice systems, and all areas of law-making.
3. Strengthen and support solutions that restore the role of Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people as Title-holders of their lands, traditional knowledge keepers, sacred life-givers, and matriarchs within extended kinship networks. All levels of Canadian government, national aboriginal organizations, and non-profit agencies must ensure the active leadership of Indigenous women in the design, implementation and review of programs and policies that are directed to increase the safety of Indigenous women.
4. Remove discrimination from the *Indian Act* by making women and men equal in the ability to pass on status, repair situations where discrimination against women has disadvantaged those claiming status through the mother's line, and remove the two-parent rule for transmitting status and the 6(2) cutoff that withholds status from the children of many women who are unable or unwilling to provide the father's name.

Anti-Violence Services in the DTES:

5. At least one multipurpose Indigenous Women's Center in the DTES that is run by and for Indigenous women with long-term funding and wrap-around supports including healing support, communal kitchen, childcare facility, elder accompaniment, artisan training and vending, and 24/7 educational, cultural, recreational, and empowerment-based programming to bring Indigenous women together collectively. This would also serve as a single point of access for Indigenous women in the DTES to connect to integrated services.
6. Fund more 24/7 low-barrier emergency shelters, transition homes, and drop-ins for women with long-term funding and full wrap-around supports including culturally-centered and holistic victim services, healing supports, counseling, legal assistance, programming and recreational activities for Indigenous survivors of violence.

7. Fund an Indigenous street intervention team that is staffed with counselors and emergency services and available 24-7 for Indigenous women in the DTES.
8. Fund an Indigenous-people led Bear Clan Patrol in the DTES. While there are many service-based outreach workers, a Bear Clan Patrol would be led by Indigenous residents of the DTES and based in Indigenous traditional responsibilities of safety, security, and kinship.
9. Fund training and certification for Indigenous women in the DTES to form a number of Indigenous Crisis Response Teams including search and rescue, family support, and community coordination to be ready to serve in the DTES when an Indigenous women or girl goes missing.
10. Fund more Indigenous-centered and community-based, rather than police-based, victim services programs. These programs should provide holistic support, including connection to land-based healing, cultural programs, counseling based in Indigenous practices, and guidance from elders.
11. Create community-based violence prevention programs based in teachings of egalitarian gender roles - including of two-spirited people, and teaching about consent, power, healthy relationships, emotional skills, and sexual health.
12. All service providers, police, prosecutors, and judges receive mandatory and ongoing training in the causes and consequences of violence against Indigenous women and girls. This includes training on the duty to protect Indigenous women from violence and training on dealing with bereaved and grieving loved ones with compassion and sensitivity.
13. All agencies in the DTES must:
 - a. Provide mandatory training to staff and management in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, anti-racism, colonization, cultural competency, trauma-informed support, and Indigenous women's human rights.
 - b. Prioritize Indigenous women's safety and needs in allocating resources and services.

- c. Guarantee appropriate services for Indigenous trans, lesbian and two spirit women by operating specific programming that supports their needs, and ensuring that the historical and cultural importance of two-spirit identity is widely understood, supported, and promoted in all agencies.
- d. Shift from providing services towards empowering the collective leadership of Indigenous women within decision-making roles as hired workers, management, peer-based governance, and elders councils.
- e. Implement an ongoing Warriors Against Violence program for men and masculine people in the community.
- f. Be subject to regular independent oversight and audits that include direct input from Indigenous women clients to ensure they are being pro-actively included and respected, and not disproportionately marginalized, discriminated against, or excluded by the agencies' practices.

Support for family members:

- 14. Provide access to free and independent legal representation, victim services, healing supports, counseling, and financial restitution to the families of missing or murdered Indigenous women, including street families and families of the heart.
- 15. Provide accessible information for families such as a toolkit on missing persons investigations, how to access legal and emotional support, and dealing with the media.
- 16. Provide annual local, regional and national opportunities for families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and families of the heart in the DTES to spend time together, support each other, and guide a national action plan.
- 17. Establish an annual healing retreat for children of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

18. Establish a legacy fund for the children of missing and murdered Indigenous women that supports the children till at least the age of 25 years with housing, education, healing programs, recreational programs, and cultural connection.

Policing protocols:

19. Ensure that all cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women are duly investigated and prosecuted by standardizing protocols for police handling of cases, including coordination of police investigations into long-term missing persons cases and unsolved murders of Indigenous women and girls.
20. Review and repair police policies and procedures that are conducive to violence against Indigenous women, girls, trans and two-spirit people.
21. Ensure that family members and relatives are regularly contacted and have access to information about the development of investigations, and are informed about their rights in any legal proceedings.
22. Implement independent civilian oversight of officials responsible for responding to and investigating violence against Indigenous women, and ensure that administrative, disciplinary or criminal measures are available to hold such officials accountable when officers are found to have failed to act on reports of missing women or to have carried out biased or inadequate investigations of violence against Indigenous women.
23. Provide Indigenous women, their families, and community advocates with an available and effective procedure to file complaints in the case of noncompliance or negligence by officials, and information on how to initiate and pursue that procedure.
24. Ensure adequate support and protection for witnesses.

Recommendations to End Indigenous Women's Displacement from Land

1. All levels of the Canadian government must fully implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and apply its principles, norms, and standards including the right to self-determination and the right to exercise free, prior, and informed consent.
2. Change federal, provincial and municipal policies to uphold Aboriginal title and Indigenous jurisdiction over all areas of law-making that impact on reserve and off reserve nation members.
3. All levels of government must respect and honour historic Treaty relationships.
4. All levels of Canadian government must repudiate *terra nullius* and the Doctrine of Discovery, and end policies of assimilation of Indigenous peoples and policies of extinguishment of Aboriginal title.
5. All levels of government and police forces must end the criminalization of Indigenous peoples who are asserting their jurisdiction and rights to lands, resources, and self-determination.
6. All Canadian and Aboriginal governments must ensure that Indigenous women are engaged fully and have equitable access to decision-making on issues of governance, land, culture, language, housing, childcare, income security, employment, education, health, and other areas impacting Indigenous women.
7. Remove discrimination from the *Indian Act* by making women and men equal in the ability to pass on status, repair situations where discrimination against women has disadvantaged those claiming status through the mother's line, and remove the two-parent rule for transmitting status and the 6(2) cutoff that withholds status from the children of many women who are unable or unwilling to provide the father's name.
8. Compensation for the disenfranchisement and lack of protections for women and their descendants as a result of the discriminatory Indian Act and matrimonial real property laws.

On-reserve:

9. Canada must guarantee clean drinking water; food security based on a traditional diet; critical infrastructure including roads and sanitation systems; and essential health, education, child care, housing, transport, recreational, cultural and emergency services on all reserves.
10. Safe, affordable and livable housing for every Indigenous woman on her reserve that is independent of her matrimonial status.
11. Affordable childcare and licensed day care options on every reserve.
12. Complete complement of maternal and infant/child health services on-reserve to enable women to remain closer to home to give birth.
13. Free public transport between each town and city located along the entire length of Highway 16 with a number of safe homes and emergency phone booths along the length of the highway.
14. Increased funding on all reserves for community-run programs and services that strengthen cultural knowledge and identity and grounded in grounded in Indigenous laws and practices.
15. Range of anti-violence services including preventive programs, crisis intervention, victim services, advocacy, restorative justice, shelters, transitional housing, and second-stage housing.
16. Cultural sensitivity training for all first responders such police, health care professionals, and social workers who directly assist Indigenous survivors of violence on reserve.
17. Implementation of overarching substantive federal legislation to protect the rights of women and children living on reserve in the interim until First Nations communities can develop their own laws to replace matrimonial property laws. This legislation should include opt-out clauses.
18. Implementation of federal Indigenous Child Welfare legislation with full funding to ensure that Indigenous nations resume sole jurisdiction over child welfare for child-members of the nation who are on-reserve and off-reserve.

19. End the apprehension of Indigenous children due to poverty or Eurocentric ideas of neglect.
20. All levels of government should fully implement Jordan's Principle.
21. The federal government must eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves, and provide sufficient funding to close educational attainment gaps.
22. Increase funding for the Indigenous Languages Act to preserve, revitalize and strength all Indigenous languages. This includes efforts to hire and accredit language speakers to teach the language as credit courses for Indigenous students.
23. Close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities and focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.
24. Annual transport allowance for Indigenous women in the DTES to travel to their home community.

Band Councils:

25. Women's shelters on reserve should have the option to incorporate as non-profit organizations and receive funding directly from INAC to maintain the privacy of those accessing the shelter.
26. Aboriginal governments should provide mandatory training for band council and community leaders to ensure that violence against women and two-spirit people is treated as a high priority.
27. Aboriginal governments should increase funding for education and programs regarding violence prevention with an emphasis on consent, sexual education and healthy relationships.
28. Aboriginal governments should adopt the principle of equal representation of women in governing councils and decision-making bodies, and introduce pay-equity policies on reserve.

Recommendations for Indigenous Women's Economic Security in the DTES

1. Implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action.
2. Implement a human rights, Indigenous rights, and gender based analysis in the conception and implementation of all poverty reduction strategies, policies, legislation and decision making.
3. All levels of government must coordinate an Indigenous specific poverty reduction plan, within a decolonizing lens, complete with specific goals, targets, timelines and accountabilities.
4. Increase the federal Old Age Security (OAS), the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), Canadian Pension Plan (CPP), and B.C. Seniors Supplement.
5. Provide all residential school survivors with an annual guaranteed livable income.
6. We support existing recommendations from the B.C Poverty Reduction Coalition for a whole-of-government poverty reduction strategy.

Provincial Income Assistance:

7. Increase income and disability rates to the Market Basket Measure to reflect the cost of an adequate standard of living, and index them to inflation.
8. Provide grandparents raising grand children, and all kinship care providers, with incomes and benefits comparable to foster parents. This includes a living wage and full access to childcare and respite support.
9. Eliminate barriers to accessing income and disability assistance by reducing unnecessary eligibility criteria and simplifying the application processes. This includes:
 - a. Removing the two-year financial independence requirement for income assistance.

- b. Basing income assistance eligibility on current income only.
 - c. Removing the penalty clawback for failure to work search for income assistance.
 - d. Removing the work search requirement for mothers with children over the age of 3.
10. Restructure the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, including
- a. Bringing back individual caseworkers and timely individualized assistance
 - b. Ensuring there are computers and Ministry support staff at every Ministry office for the purposes of helping applicants
 - c. Modifying the online application for income assistance so that it is not mandatory to create an email address and BCeID.
11. End clawbacks of income and disability assistance including clawbacks of Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefits and penalties for cohabitation.
12. Increase earnings exemptions for those on provincial income and disability assistance program, and any clawbacks must be incrementally tied to income.
13. Raise all asset limitations for those on income assistance to bring them in line with asset limitations for those on disability benefits.
14. Amend income and disability benefits assessments so that only relationships that display significant financial dependence or interdependence are relevant for the purposes of eligibility, and remove financial interdependence by default on the basis that a person indicates parental role for a child unless a spousal relationship can be established.
15. Allow recipients of income assistance to remain on assistance while attending post-secondary education.

16. Provide income supports to youth transiting out of government care until the age of 25 years.
17. Remove the age cap and the two-year eligibility requirement for income assistance for the Tuition Waiver Program for youth aging out of care.
18. Eliminate the prohibition on accessing Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) housing subsidies for people on income and disability assistance.
19. Extend coverage for health supplements for people accessing income or disability assistance such as counseling services that are particularly relevant for Indigenous women.

Employment Security:

20. Increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by January 2019 for all workers with no exemptions, and increase it annually till it reaches a living wage that matches the cost of living.
21. Free skills training, retraining, and apprenticeships for Indigenous women in the DTES.
22. Rectify Indigenous women's exclusion from the economy by:
 - a. Developing equitable and inclusive hiring policy and standards.
 - b. Creating a diversity of low-barrier jobs in the DTES with priority hiring and support for Indigenous women of the community.
 - c. Creating peer-based employment programs including navigations positions throughout the housing, mental health, substance use and income support systems.
 - d. Ensure Indigenous women peer workers are paid a living wage, have full benefits, and have the right to unionization.

- e. Creating jobs that value and compensate Indigenous-based skills such as weaving, beading, making drums, food harvesting, and traditional healing, and support the creation of an Indigenous Women's Cooperative in the DTES.
 - f. Improving employment supports and workplace accommodations for Indigenous women who are single parents and/or in recovery to ensure that they are not setup to fail in their employment due to systemic barriers.
23. Expand the Individual Placement and Support model for all employment support programs.
24. Recognize the role and contribution of volunteers in the DTES and create appropriate and accredited volunteer programs to transfer skills and enable access to employment opportunities.
25. All levels of government should pay living wages to all direct and contracted government employees, and encourage other employers to do the same.
26. Enact stand-alone proactive pay equity legislation that requires public and private sector employers to pay women equal pay for work of equal value.
27. Restore the coverage and enforcement of employment standards at the Employment Standards Branch including effective proactive investigations and enforcement for wage theft and other employment violations, and providing benefits such as paid sick leave to all workers.

Universal Public Services:

28. Guarantee a free, public, accessible, culturally-appropriate and universal child care system for all Indigenous families, including families awaiting kinship care placements, that accommodates families' diverse schedules, children of all needs and abilities, and that is independent from child welfare services.
29. Universal public healthcare coverage to include supplements, prescriptions, counseling, dental, optical, mobility devices, adaptive equipment, and alternative treatments like acupuncture.

30. Free and extended transportation:

- a. Free transit pass for children ages 0-18 years old, for all youth transitioning out of government care till age 25, and for all adults on pensions, income assistance, and disability assistance.
- b. Expand public transit, including HandyDart and passenger van programs.
- c. Expand access to free transportation to and from medical appointments especially for those with disabilities and the elderly.

31. Better Educational Supports:

- a. Expansion of the Head Start program for Indigenous families.
- b. Guarantee a provincial school breakfast and lunch food program that is free, universal, nutritious and culturally diverse in the public school system.
- c. More Indigenous-focused schools with Indigenous teachers, Indigenous-based methodology and curriculum, and appropriate supports for urban Indigenous students.

32. Free post-secondary tuition:

- a. Free tuition for all post-secondary education for all Indigenous women and girls.
- b. Eliminate all interest on existing student loans for Indigenous women and girls.
- c. Under the Single Parents Employment Initiative, extend tuition coverage to multi-year degrees and training programs and remove the restricted list of eligible programs.

33. Adoption of low-income customer rules by BC Hydro including waiver of security deposits, late payment fees, and reconnection fees; more flexible payment arrangements; and suspension of disconnections during cold weather and for people with medical conditions.

Recommendations for Safe and Affordable Housing in the DTES for Indigenous Women

1. The *Definition of Indigenous homelessness in Canada* should form the basis of all policies on housing and homelessness with appropriate solutions to homelessness that integrates land, culture, belonging and kinship networks.
2. There must be a comprehensive federal, provincial, and municipal Indigenous Housing policy framework to specifically address Indigenous homelessness in Canadian cities.
3. Change government definitions of social housing and affordable housing to mean rates that are affordable to people on social assistance, and rents that are income-g geared not market-g geared.
4. All funding initiatives to end homelessness must be more inclusive of Indigenous women, recognizing that Indigenous women are disproportionately impacted by invisible homelessness. We support the existing recommendations of Homes 4 Women and Women's Shelters Canada on making homeless initiatives and funding structures more gender-equal.
5. Federal funding for homelessness needs to go beyond Housing First initiatives to better suit the diverse needs of Indigenous women. Housing First funding must have less eligibility criteria and longer timelines.
6. Extend the provincial Shelter Allowance for Elderly Renters (SAFER) to housing charges in non-profit cooperative housing, and extend SAFER grants to the amount of rent increases.

Social Housing and Transition Homes:

7. Immediately build 10,000 affordable social housing units per year in BC, with an additional 1000 units each year. These units must be self-contained units of at least 400 square feet with bathrooms and kitchens.

8. A minimum of 30 percent of all units funded by the current National Housing Strategy and the various Building BC Housing Funds must be designated to Indigenous women and families and be operated by Indigenous housing providers.
9. Any new social housing must consider the needs for Indigenous women such as adequate space for children and extended families, cooperative housing models, accommodating cultural and ceremonial practices, equipped for mobility devices and accessible for elders, and with integrated services such as childcare, free laundry, and programming on-site.
10. Highest priority for social housing should be given to Indigenous women fleeing violence and Indigenous mothers especially those at risk of child apprehension.
11. Provide Indigenous women with individualized options for housing that supports choice and self-determination, for example, to live in or outside of the DTES, for abstinence-based or harm reduction-based buildings, for women-only or housing that includes men, for housing that is with or without increased security and guest rules.
12. Transition homes and low-barrier shelters that are for Indigenous women-only to provide culturally safe and individual support to each Indigenous woman.
13. Fund more Indigenous housing outreach workers and advocates to support Indigenous women in securing housing.
14. All supportive housing and shelter providers should prioritize Indigenous women's participation in service delivery, as well as prioritize Indigenous women as peer workers, staff and managers.

Legislative Protections:

15. The provincial *Residential Tenancy Act* needs to be amended as follows:
 - a. The Act must cover all housing, including residents of social housing, non-profit SRO's, supportive housing, and temporary modular housing. People living in supportive housing should not be subjected to restrictive rules that violate their basic tenancy rights.

- b. The Act must tie rent to the unit, not the tenant, so landlords cannot renovict tenants to increase rents. The Act must also tie landlord rights to increase rent with obligations to maintain property and to comply with orders made by the Residential Tenancy Branch.
- c. Extend the ‘right of first refusal’ to tenants to return at their renovated unit at the previously payable rent in order to prevent renovictions. Also extend right of first refusal to all tenants, not just those living in residential complexes of more than 5 units.
- d. When evicting a tenant on grounds that they or a close family member intend to move in, require a landlord to file a statutory declaration indicating their relationship to the family member and that they intend to occupy the unit for at least six months.
- e. Extend the grace period for non-payment of rent to twenty days, eliminate the Direct Request Process for non-payment of rent, and provide arbitrators greater discretion to consider contextual factors and refuse an order of possession for failure to pay rent.
- f. Provide tenants the right to a warning before getting an eviction notice for cause and require automatic dispute resolution hearings for all evictions, where landlords initiate eviction proceedings by applying with the Residential Tenancy Branch in order to receive a registered eviction notice and schedule a mandatory hearing.
- g. Develop a property maintenance policy that outlines a breadth of health, safety and security standards.
- h. Create more robust enforcement mechanisms at the Residential Tenancy Branch to stop fraudulent evictions and to ensure landlords are adhering to maintenance obligations, amend criteria and lower the threshold for accepting investigation requests, increase the deadlines and expands the grounds for Review Consideration, and introduce a wider breadth of penalties that are imposed more often.

16. Landlords and property managers must be licensed and make licenses revocable in cases of significant misconduct. A regular audit of all landlords and property managers must be conducted to track refusal of housing and housing discrimination.
17. Amend the *BC Human Rights Code* and *Residential Tenancy Act* to make it illegal to discriminate on the basis of social condition including health status and drug use.
18. Legalize tent cities and mobile home parks.
19. Amend the City of Vancouver *Single Room Accommodation* bylaw to define SRO conversion to mean raising rents above social assistance shelter rates. Include zero–eviction conditions in all renovation and building permits.
20. Stop market housing development in the DTES to preserve land for social housing. Once adequate social housing is built, abide by the City of Vancouver’s 1:1 rate of change principle.
21. All levels of government must buy or lease SRO hotels to prevent them from gentrifying and pushing out low-income residents.

Recommendations to Keep Indigenous Families Together in the DTES

1. Implementation of federal Indigenous Child Welfare legislation with full funding to ensure that Indigenous nations resume sole jurisdiction, and not simply service delivery, over child welfare for child-members of the nation who are on-reserve and off-reserve. This is in accordance with the *United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.
2. In full partnership with First Nations, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) must immediately:
 - a. Fully redress the inequities and structural problems of funding for First Nations children.
 - b. Support other funding and policy options proposed by First Nations for First Nations child and family services.
 - c. Ensure that a formal compliance and reporting program be established specifically for the First Nations Child and Family Services Program.
3. We applaud the work of Dr. Cindy Blackstock and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society and call on the federal government to comply with the legally-binding orders of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to:
 - a. Immediately and fully apply Jordan's principle to all First Nations children living on and off reserve.
 - b. Apply Jordan's principle based on the need of the child and not limited to the normative standard of care.
 - c. Ensure that administrative delays do not delay service provision and respond to most cases within 48 hours.

4. In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of genuine reconciliation, we reiterate the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Actions on Child Welfare, recommendations in *Indigenous Resilience, Connectedness and Reunification – From Root Causes to Root Solutions* by Special Advisor Grand Chief Ed John, and recommendations in *Calling Forth Our Future: Options for the Exercise of Indigenous Peoples' Authority in Child Welfare* by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

Ending Child Apprehensions:

5. Establish national standards for child apprehension and custody cases and includes principles that:
 - a. Affirm the right of Aboriginal governments to establish and maintain their own child-welfare agencies.
 - b. Require all child-welfare agencies and courts to take the residential school legacy into account in their decision-making.
 - c. Establish, as an important priority, a requirement that placements of Indigenous children into temporary and permanent care be culturally appropriate.
6. End the apprehension of Indigenous children due to poverty or Eurocentric ideas of neglect that stem from a legacy of colonization. Poverty must not be conflated with neglect or mistreatment, and removing children from their families exacerbates cycles of trauma and poverty.
7. Immediately disallow apprehensions of Indigenous babies at birth and while they are still breastfeeding.
8. Prohibit the placement of Indigenous children into non-Indigenous foster and adoptive families, and regularly report on how many Indigenous children are in government care and how many are being placed in non-Indigenous homes.

9. The provincial government must immediately review the care plans for all Indigenous children and youth currently in care and involve their Indigenous communities, especially extended family members and elders, in the care plan.

Supports for Indigenous Families:

10. Making funds available for non-Indigenous foster care services but not for supporting Indigenous families is a detrimental approach to policy that perpetuates the cycle of apprehension. Increase available supports and preventative services for mothers and families.
11. Ensure families are able to maintain a standard of living above the poverty line by raising income assistance and disability rates, ensuring safe and affordable housing, and guaranteeing food and transit allowances.
12. Increase amounts provided to caregivers under the MCFD in the Home of a Relative program.
13. Universal, guaranteed and free culturally appropriate childcare and early childhood education for all children on and off reserve, with adequate staffing ratios and support for children with special needs.
14. Provide individualized and culturally-appropriate support such as parenting programs; detox on demand; family liaison workers; and counseling for mothers with mental health diagnoses, learning disabilities, domestic violence survivors, and mothers struggling with addictions.
15. Enforce the Ministry mandate of supporting - not surveiling - families. Voluntary disclosures of personal information in order to seek support must not be used as a reason to remove children.
16. Social workers must increase communication with families about what is being investigated, clear expectations about timelines and goals, and file status.
17. Frequent family visits and family reunification must be always be the top priority and never delayed due to MCFD's own bureaucratic inefficiencies. Social workers must not be allowed to cancel family visits without written authorization from the Director.

18. Improve supports for youth and young people connected with child welfare:
 - a. Remove eligibility restrictions and increase financial and other supports for youth and young people on Youth Agreements and Agreements with Young Adults. Agreements with Young Adults should be increased to at least \$1400 per month with no clawbacks.
 - b. Remove the maximum number of months during which young people are eligible to remain on Agreements with Young Adults.
 - c. Extend the age till 25 years for how long MCFD should support young people as they transition into adulthood and continue to receive housing, food, transit, cultural and other financial supports.
 - d. Remove the age limit to be eligible for free post-secondary tuition and eliminate the requirement of months in care to be eligible for free post-secondary tuition.

Accountability:

19. Train and hire more Indigenous social workers and ensure all social workers are culturally-competent, committed to decolonizing practices, have better communication skills, and are educated about and sensitive to the intergenerational trauma of family separation.
20. Fund and guarantee independent Indigenous family advocates who can advocate for mothers and families in their dealings with MCFD.
21. Require that all child-welfare decision makers and the courts must mandatorily consider the impact of the residential school experience on children and their caregivers.
22. An independent and external process for complaints and oversight for neglect investigations, decisions to apprehend children, and for deaths of children and youth in government care.

Recommendations to End Criminalization of Indigenous Women in the DTES

1. All levels of government must recognize the inherent and constitutionally protected right of Indigenous people to establish and control Indigenous justice systems. All levels of government must also fund the establishment of Indigenous law institutes to support the restoration and advancement of Indigenous legal systems.
2. Redirect growing municipal, provincial, and federal police and prison budgets towards solutions that increase safety for Indigenous women in the Downtown Eastside including housing, childcare, income, healthcare, mental health and addictions services, and healing supports.
3. We echo the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action 25 to 42 on Justice for Indigenous Peoples.

Policing:

4. As in other jurisdictions, prohibit the police from carrying and using all lethal weapons. There is no justification for a police-involved lethal shooting even in the most escalated scenario.
5. Eliminate the use of VPD restraint devices such as the hobble restraint device and end the use of police dogs as weapons.
6. Eliminate searches and monitoring of Indigenous women and girls by male police officers.
7. An immediate independent investigation into the VPD practice of streets that disproportionately impacts Indigenous women with the goal of ending street checks that have no basis in law.
8. Reduce the number of bylaw infraction tickets issued by VPD in the DTES.
9. Develop guidelines to facilitate greater use of police discretion not to lay charges especially for minor poverty-related offences.

10. Ensure that that all policing practices conform to the *Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act*.
11. All police forces should implement Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines similar to those in Vancouver that support the safety of sex workers in police interactions.
12. Expand non-policing options for publicly intoxicated people, including civilian-operated 24 hour sobering centers providing appropriate care for Indigenous women.
13. Make it easier to file a police complaint and establish an independent civilian watchdog that conducts investigations of reported incidents of serious police misconduct, including allegations of police violence and sexual assault. Increase liability for the misconduct of police officers to include criminal charges.
14. Allow the provincial Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner to initiate its own systemic investigations or hearings, and shift investigations of misconduct within the jurisdiction of the Police Complaint Commissioner from investigation by police departments to investigation directly by the Commissioner.
15. We support the existing recommendations by Human Rights Watch in *Those Who Take Us Away: Abusive Policing and Failures in Protection of Indigenous Women and Girls in Northern British Columbia, Canada*

Legal and Judicial Reform:

16. End the counter-charging and criminalization of Indigenous women who defend themselves or their children from abuse and violence.
17. Repeal all mandatory minimum prison sentences for non-violent offences and implement legislation to allow trial judges to depart from mandatory minimum sentences and restrictions on the use of conditional sentences.
18. Repeal laws that criminalize or increase harm for women in the sex trade.

19. End the criminalization of people who use drugs for personal use or possess small amounts of illicit substances.
20. End the criminalization of homelessness by eliminating bylaw infractions and criminal charges for sleeping or tenting in public spaces, and end the displacement of tent cities.
21. Repeal the mandatory imposition of the victim fine surcharge and give judges the discretion to waive the fine for those unable to pay it.
22. Reform the drug treatment court process so as to not require a guilty plea to access the program.
23. Increase the ways in which failures to appear and other violations can be quashed early in the judicial process and take proactive steps to clear bench warrants for Indigenous women.

Access to Justice:

24. All levels of government must commit to using non-incarceration and alternative measures especially for poverty-related minor offenses committed by Indigenous women. Governments must also provide sufficient and stable funding to Indigenous communities and organizations to provide alternatives to incarceration including community-based rehabilitation, diversion, community courts, and restorative justice methods geared towards Indigenous women.
25. Fund an Indigenous legal clinic in the DTES that can support Indigenous women in all legal matters and provide regular legal education workshops.
26. Increase Indigenous women's access to justice by extending funding to guarantee all Indigenous women have access to full legal aid for criminal and civil legal matters including family, criminal, mental health, and poverty legal aid.
27. *Gladue* is a legal requirement. All levels of government have an obligation to ensure that all Indigenous women in the Downtown Eastside have timely, appropriate and high-quality access to Gladue reports when involved in the criminal justice system.

28. Expand the number and scope of courts like B.C.'s First Nations Court that emphasize healing plans over punishment.
29. Expand funding for community-based and court-based victim services.
30. Prioritize funding to train Indigenous legal advocates, court workers, and lawyers including through increased funding and capacity for Indigenous court worker programs and initiatives under the Indigenous Justice Program.
31. The Federation of Law Societies of Canada, law schools in Canada, and the Canadian Judicial Council must provide mandatory training to all law students, lawyers and judges on the legacy of residential schools, Canada's obligations under the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Indigenous legal traditions, Gladue principles, and the systemic failure of colonial legal systems to uphold justice for Indigenous peoples.
32. We support the existing recommendations of the Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission.
33. We support the existing recommendations in Justice Reform for BC by Community Legal Assistance Society, Pivot Legal Society, West Coast LEAF and BC Civil Liberties Association.

Correctional Facilities:

We want full decarceration of Indigenous women in the federal and provincial corrections system. No Indigenous woman should ever be sentenced into a colonial system. In the immediate, a number of necessary reforms can drastically reduce the incarceration rates of Indigenous women:

34. Increased resourcing, capacity and funding for section 81 Healing Lodges. Indigenous nations and urban Indigenous organizations must be able to operate Healing Lodges on a long-term basis and with full wrap-around supports. Change the policy of not allowing women with maximum-security classifications to be at CSC-operated healing lodges and increase access to all healing lodges.
35. Increased resources, capacity and funding for section 84 agreements so that Indigenous nations are compensated and can provide appropriate and full support for Indigenous women seeking section

84 releases. This includes full support for services, treatment, and employment opportunities. Indigenous communities and organizations exercise control and self-determination in the development and implementation of reintegration plans.

36. Start all Indigenous women prisoners at a minimum-security level and remove the requirement to automatically incarcerate Indigenous women in a maximum-security facility for the first two years of a murder sentence.
37. End the current classification scale and reassess all Indigenous women currently classified at the maximum-security level using a gender and culturally-responsive classification tool.
38. End the placement of Indigenous women in solitary confinement in all prisons and establish an independent external review of all Indigenous women in segregation placements.
39. Increase supports for Indigenous women on conditional release, particularly through income assistance, employment, counseling and childcare. Permit conditional release options that facilitate Indigenous women to be housed with their children.
40. All day-to-day programs and services at remand, provincial and federal facilities must be accessible, timely, and long term with the goal of decarceration and successful reintegration. Access must be unconditional, not contingent on classification, and not withdrawn as a punitive or disciplinary measure. Guaranteed programs and services must include:
 - a. Independent prison legal services
 - b. Health care in accordance with the Mandela rules including full and appropriate health care available twenty-hour hours; mental health counseling; access to gender-affirming surgery; detox on demand; needle exchange, heroin-assisted treatment, injectable hydromorphone therapy and safe tattooing program
 - c. Culturally appropriate healing programs that understand physical, mental, spiritual and sexual traumas as intergenerational collective traumas caused by colonization.

- d. Free phone calls
 - e. Nutritious food
 - f. Library, reading materials, and computer literacy
 - g. Increased visitation, including increased hours, more opportunities for physical contact, and decreased security checks for visitors
 - h. Access to meaningful employment and increase prisoner pay
41. Establish community alternatives to correctional facilities for all mothers who are primary caregivers or expected to give birth while in prison. In the immediate, implement child-friendly mother-child units in all correctional facilities so no child is separated from their mother.
42. For women who do not have primary custody of their children, prioritize the social bond between incarcerated mothers and their children. This includes:
- a. Funding for families to cover the costs and logistics of transportation for visits and child-friendly practices during visitation including visitation hours scheduled after school hours, no body searches of children, and allowance for physical contact.
 - b. Visitation outside the prison setting.
 - c. Free and unlimited phone calls and introduce video calling technologies.
 - d. Family reunification as a priority post-release by providing all the necessary supports including housing, childcare, and parenting support.
43. We support the existing recommendations in the Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, *A Call to Action: Reconciliation with Indigenous Women in the Federal Justice and Correctional Systems*.

Recommendations for Indigenous Women's Wellness in the DTES

1. All levels of government must acknowledge that the current state of Indigenous women's health is a direct result of colonialism and government policies.
2. Strengthen all the social determinants of Indigenous women's health by ensuring access to and governance over land, culture, language, housing, childcare, income security, employment, education, and safety.
3. Access to affordable and nutritious foods especially fruits, vegetables and meat in the DTES through more community gardens, food banks, non-profit grocery stores, and discount cards in regular super markets.
4. End the health risks associated with living in low-income racialized neighbourhoods like the DTES by ensuring healthy environments and built-environments in all buildings, residences and outdoors. This includes the right to:
 - a. Clean air and clean streets
 - b. Green space and urban ecological systems
 - c. Sanitation
 - d. Accessible and clean public washrooms
 - e. Potable water
 - f. Functioning water fountains and more access to water sources

Culturally safe health care:

1. An Indigenous Health and Wellness Centre in the DTES and more Indigenous-controlled and Indigenous-centered health programs that use Indigenous healing methods and medicines to address physical, mental, sexual, emotional, and spiritual harms.
2. End the forced sterilization of Indigenous women, and hold health professionals criminally responsible for acts of coerced sterilization including tubal ligations.

3. End the medical pathologizing and diagnosing of gender identity. Train health care professionals to provide gender-affirming care that is safe for and respectful of Indigenous trans women and two spirit people.
4. Reframe mental health and addictions services and supports so they mirror Indigenous women's social and economic realities, and worldviews and aspirations towards healing.
5. All health care workers must believe Indigenous women and treat them as credible experts about their own health.
6. All medical and nursing schools in Canada must require all students to take a course dealing with Indigenous health issues, including the legacy of colonialism and its impacts. This includes skills-based training in anti-racism, intercultural competency, human rights, cultural safety, and trauma-informed care.
7. More doctors and nurses, and especially more health care professionals who are Indigenous.
8. Recognize traditional Indigenous healing practices and have more health professionals trained in Indigenous health methodologies and practices. In particular, recognize the role and value of traditional Indigenous reproductive, pregnancy and birthing knowledge, including ceremonies related to healthy sexual development.
9. Opportunities for urban Indigenous women to learn traditional and land-based healing practices and develop peer-based holistic health support programs and activities such as regular opportunities to go canoeing, pick medicines, and harvest foods.
10. More Indigenous patient navigators and Indigenous medicine people in hospitals to bridge between Indigenous patients and the Western medical system.
11. More Indigenous healing spaces and sacred spaces in hospitals and hospices.

12. Social workers in hospitals need to ensure wrap-around support, including financial, housing, and social support, before discharging Indigenous women from hospitals.
13. Hospitals including security guards need to be welcoming and supportive, not judgmental and criminalizing, in their interactions with Indigenous patients.
14. Security guards and all emergency room healthcare providers and staff must receive mandatory culturally relevant training, mental health training, and de-escalation training.

Expanded health services:

15. Universal public healthcare coverage to include supplements, prescriptions, counseling, dental, optical, mobility devices, adaptive equipment, and alternative treatments like acupuncture.
16. Expanded access to free transportation to and from medical appointments especially for those with disabilities and the elderly.
17. Expand home support, residential care services, and the number of residential care beds.
18. More mobile health care vans and community-based clinics, street nurses, and health care providers in the DTES.
19. Ensure coordinated, timely, culturally-safe, culturally-based, person-centered and evidence-based mental health and addiction services in the Downtown Eastside, ranging from prevention, early intervention, treatment, crisis care, home visits, and aftercare.
20. Guarantee a 24/7 mental health and addictions counseling program that is low-barrier, drop-in based, available on demand, and includes overnight street-based counseling in the DTES.
21. Declare the opioid crisis a national public health emergency that disproportionately impacts Indigenous women, and expand funding for immediate health-based solutions for the opioid crisis that focus on the specific needs of Indigenous women. This includes:

- a. Full spectrum of recovery supports including immediate access to Indigenous women's detox-on-demand and treatment centers.
 - b. Indigenous-run treatment centers that use culture as treatment with Indigenous healing methods and land-based practices.
 - c. More indoor overdose prevention sites and consumption sites, including culturally safe sites for Indigenous women only.
 - d. Decriminalization and access to safer drug supply.
 - e. Opioid-assisted therapy programs and full spectrum of substitution treatment options.
 - f. Longer-term funding for range of culturally safe treatment programs.
 - g. Provincial regulation and oversight over all recovery programs and facilities.
22. Ensure that people with mental health and/or substance use-related disabilities have a means to enforce their human rights related to accessing and maintaining their housing and employment.
23. Replace the deemed consent provisions of the *Mental Health Act* and the consent override provisions of the *Health Care (Consent) and Care Facility (Admission) Act* and the *Representation Agreement Act* with a legislative mechanism that protects and respects the patient's autonomy in making health care decisions and allows the patient to include trusted family members and friends in their treatment and recovery process.
24. Create legislative standards regulating the use of isolation in mental health facilities and the use of physical, mechanical, environmental, and chemical restraints against mental health patients to ensure compliance with *Charter* rights.

ANNEX: List of Contributors

- 1) Amber Robinson, Haisla, in the DTES for 13 years
- 2) Annette Morris Misjee, Carrier, in the DTES for 30 years
- 3) Ashley Hanefeld, Cree, in the DTES for 18 years
- 4) Ashley Sleigh, Siksika, in the DTES for 2 years
- 5) Audrey Hill, Haida, in the DTES for 20 years
- 6) Bernice Cristine Sinclair, Pinaymootang, in the DTES for 18 years
- 7) Beverly Wesley, Slate Falls, in the DTES for 7 years
- 8) Bobbi Baker, Squamish, in the DTES for 1 year
- 9) Bonnie Ahpay, Sioux Dakota – Saulteaux, in the DTES for 24 years
- 10) Brenda Leo, Homalco, in the DTES for 25 years
- 11) Brigette Lopez, Cheslatta Carrier, in the DTES for 7 years
- 12) Bubbles, Cree Saulteau, in the DTES for 50 years
- 13) C.D, Dakota, in the DTES for 25 years
- 14) Carmaine Annette Cardinal, Saddle Lake Cree, in the DTES for 2.5 years
- 15) Catherine Moses, Makwa Sahgaiehcan Cree, in the DTES for 17 years
- 16) Cheri Bullshields, Blood Tribe, in the DTES for 2 months
- 17) Cheryl Lynn Bird, Little Black River Ojibway, in the DTES for 4 months
- 18) Chilli Bean, Shushwap, in the DTES for 30 years
- 19) Christine Stewart, Haisla, in the DTES for few years
- 20) Cindy H, Cross Lake First Nation, in the DTES for 3 years
- 21) Corinne Ducharme, Cree, in the DTES for 44 years
- 22) Crystal Lynn, Woodlands Cree, in the DTES for 14 years
- 23) Cynthia Mack, Toquahat
- 24) Danette Barton, Nisga'a, in the DTES for 35 years
- 25) Danita Lynn Bird, Ojibway, in the DTES for 25 years
- 26) Darlene Joe, Chehalis, in the DTES for 29 years
- 27) Dawn Cook, Haida, in the DTES for 30 years
- 28) Dawna Bird, Cote, in the DTES for 30 years
- 29) Debbie Miller, West Moberly, in the DTES for 32 years
- 30) Debbie Schuabach, Metis, in the DTES for 20 years
- 31) Deborah Chartrand, Ojibway-Cree Saulteau, in the DTES since 1975

- 32) Debra Leo, Homalco, in the DTES for 25 years
- 33) Edna Edgar, Kitasoo, in the DTES for 37 years
- 34) Elaine Bissonnette, Cree, in the DTES for 10 years
- 35) Elaine Durocher, Métis, in the DTES for 16 years
- 36) Ericka Michell, Carrier Sekani
- 37) Eva Kovacs, D’Nai Whitehorse, in the DTES for 42 years
- 38) Gloria Baptiste, Morricetown Wet’suwet’en, in the DTES for 33 years
- 39) Gwen Paul, Sechelt, in the DTES since 1983
- 40) Helen Worm, Cree, in the DTES for 31 years
- 41) Holly, Cherokee-Metis, in the DTES for 4.5 years
- 42) Iris Seltzer, Cree and Cherokee, in the DTES for 2.5 years
- 43) Jacqueline R. Chester, Nuu-chah-nulth, in the DTES for 5 years
- 44) Janice Brown, Haida
- 45) Jan Three Suns, Siksika, in the DTES for 20 years
- 46) Jennifer Azak, Nisga'a, just got to the DTES
- 47) Jennifer Humcitt, Heiltsuk, in the DTES for 23 years
- 48) Joleen Hansen, Tl'azt'en, in the DTES for 10 years
- 49) Jolene, Carrier Fort St. James, in the DTES for 10 years
- 50) Karen Boyd, Carrier Fort St. James, in the DTES for 24 years
- 51) Katherine Pearl Cooper, Tsimshian, in the DTES for 54 years
- 52) Kathleen Sarpi, Whitesand - Ojibway, in the DTES for 1.5 months
- 53) Kayla Fox, Sweetgrass First Nation
- 54) Kim Baptiste, Heiltsuk, in the DTES for 5 years
- 55) Lana David Collins, Metis, in the DTES for 8 years
- 56) Larissa Healey, Peguis
- 57) Leah Bullshields, Blood Tribe, in the DTES for 2 months
- 58) Lillian Wycotte, Alkalidabe, in the DTES for 44 years
- 59) Loretta Louie, Nisga'a, in the DTES for 46 years
- 60) Lori Pascal, Shushwap, in the DTES for 6 years
- 61) Louisa Starr, Kitasoo, in the DTES for 30 years
- 62) Mabel Todd, Carrier Fort St. James, in the DTES since 1960
- 63) Maggie Hussin, Gull Bay First Nation, in the DTES for 30 years
- 64) Marge Humchitt, Heiltsuk, in the DTES for 37 years

- 65) Marion Neaslass, Kitasoo, in the DTES for 16 years
- 66) Marj, Ojibway, in the DTES off and on whole life
- 67) Marlene Jack, Cheslatta Carrier, in the DTES for 20 years
- 68) Marsha M, Heiltsuk, in the DTES since 1985
- 69) Mary N Saxie, Kyuauot, in the DTES for 48 years
- 70) Mary Speck, Kwakeulth, in the DTES for 30 years
- 71) Mary-Ann Azac, Nisga'a, in the DTES since 1991
- 72) Melinda, Modeste Maliseet
- 73) Michelle Oleman, St'at'imc, in the DTES for 10 years
- 74) Myra Williams, Skatin, in the DTES for 20 years
- 75) Pearl Baptiste, Saulteau, in the DTES for 30 years
- 76) Penni Wells, Haida, in the DTES for 64 years
- 77) Priscillia Tait, Gitxsan-Wet'suwet'en, in the DTES for 12 years
- 78) Rainonyourface Rem Caprian, Carrier Lake Babine, in the DTES for 8 years
- 79) Remona Charlie, Cree-Métis, in the DTES since too long
- 80) Reta Blind, Cree, in the DTES since 1984
- 81) Rhonda Watts, Nisga'a, in the DTES forever
- 82) Richelle Woods, Dakota, in the DTES for 2.5 years
- 83) Rita Michelle, Cree, in the DTES for 45 years
- 84) Robin Raweater, Blackfoot Siksika, in the DTES for 30 years
- 85) Rose Maxime, Neskonlith Shushwap, in the DTES for 20 years
- 86) Sandra C, Saddle Lake Cree, in the DTES for 20 years
- 87) Sarah Angus, Nisga'a, in the DTES for six months
- 88) Sasha, Tlatzan Carrier, in the DTES for 24 years
- 89) Sheila Dorma, Muskowekan, in the DTES for 6 months
- 90) Sheila Venn, Nisga'a, in the DTES for 5 years
- 91) Stella August, Nuuchahnulth, in the DTES for 50 years
- 92) Susie Q, Shushwap-Salish, in the DTES for 40 years
- 93) Suzanne Kilroy, Okanagan
- 94) Tammy, Clapache Lytton, in the DTES for 15 years
- 95) Theresa Dolores Gray, Tsimshian, in the DTES all my life
- 96) Tia Hoppington-Scott, Xaxlip, in the DTES for 2 years
- 97) Tia Maria Perrault, Garden River Anishinaabe, in the DTES for 5 years

- 98) Tillie Alexie, Anaheim Lake Ulkatcho, in the DTES for 2 months
- 99) Tori S, Cree-Chippewa, in the DTES for 8 years
- 100) Valerie Manygreyhorses, Blood Reserve, in the DTES for 41 years
- 101) Veronic Caprain, in the DTES for 38 years
- 102) Veronica Butler, Anishinaabe, in the DTES since 1980
- 103) Viola Karagaoga, Cahtawshistawa, in the DTES for 32 years
- 104) Yvette Danielle Renee McMillan, Haisla, in the DTES for 4 years

+ 8 Indigenous women who prefer to remain anonymous

Non-Indigenous participants who are friends or street families of Indigenous women who are missing, or have overdosed or died from violence in the DTES:

- 1. Ava Caldwell
- 2. Darci Dickinson, in the DTES for 3 years
- 3. Debbie Ventura, in the DTES for 30 years
- 4. Deborah Strate, in the DTES for 18 years
- 5. Joan Morelli, in the DTES for 30 years
- 6. Lolita Adano
- 7. Markella Rosa, in the DTES for 8 months
- 8. Mary Mootrey, in the DTES for 26 years
- 9. Rebecca Wilkinson, in the DTES for 3 years
- 10. Shurli Chan, in the DTES for 12 years
- 11. Sue Mac, in the DTES for 2 years
- 12. Susan, in the DTES for 4 years
- 13. Syd Benjamin, in the DTES for 10 years
- 14. Teresa Ng, in the DTES since for 42 years
- 15. Trina Rumsey, in the DTES for 11 years

Exhibit: National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls		
Location/Phase: <u>Part 4: Closing oval Subs</u>		
Witness: <u>na</u>		
Submitted by: <u>Carol Martin</u>		
Add'l info: <u>P04P01 P0301</u>		
Date: <u>NOV 28 2018</u>		
Initials	I/D	Entered
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">SJ</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">5</div>