



# Principles of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples

*Updated October 2024*



JIIMAAN KINOMAAGEWIN  
THE CANADIAN CANOE MUSEUM  
LE MUSÉE CANADIEN DU CANOT



# Principles of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples

From its new home on the waterfront in Peterborough Ontario, on the Traditional Territory of the Williams Treaties First Nations, The Canadian Canoe Museum cares for and stewards a collection of over 650 canoes, kayaks and paddled watercraft.

Indigenous Peoples designed, built and used the first canoes and kayaks, and the Museum has the **privilege** and **responsibility** to honour the cultural histories and stories held within the collection.

Since its inception, and guided by the collection, the Museum has prioritized working alongside Indigenous Peoples.

**The following principles make explicit the basis for our approach to engaging with and learning from Indigenous communities:**

1. The Museum will honour the intent of international and national statements regarding respecting the rights and cultures of Indigenous Peoples and their Nations, specifically the *'United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)'*, endorsed by Canada in 2016.
2. The Museum will be guided by the *'Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's: Calls to Action'*.
3. The Museum is guided by the recommendations of the Canadian Museum Association's 2022 *'Moved to Action'* Report and will integrate best practices from this Report into the Museum.

4. The Museum acknowledges that First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples are authors of their culture and stories. Through its activities, the Museum will invite individuals, communities and Nations to express their perspectives and share their knowledge across the Museum's platforms including physical and digital means.
5. The Museum recognizes our responsibilities to communities of origin tied to watercraft and cultural belongings in the collection.
6. In partnership with Indigenous Peoples, the Museum is committed to providing opportunities for multiple and differing perspectives, worldviews, languages and voices.
7. The Museum will collaborate to create an inclusive and accessible research center where Indigenous knowledge holders feel welcomed and valued.
8. The Museum will continue to foster our current relationships with Indigenous communities, while continuing to expand our outreach, ultimately finding meaningful and reciprocal ways to encourage engagement with the Museum.
9. The Museum will continue to engage with knowledge holders and subject experts as new exhibit and program content is developed.
10. The Museum will work alongside Michi Saagiig knowledge holders to inform the stewardship and care of lands and waters on which the Museum is situated.
11. The Museum will continue to refine and adjust its governance policies and guidelines to ensure they align with and reflect the principles outlined in this document.

12. The authenticity and success of our programs and offerings at the Museum depend on the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples at all levels of operations. As such, the Museum will continue to recruit Indigenous staff, volunteers, and board members.
13. The Museum will take an active role in economic reconciliation through procurement decisions and increasing opportunities for Indigenous-run businesses to be part of the Museum.
14. The Museum will continue to work to better understand the mixed provenance and origins of cultural belongings (artifacts) within the collection. This includes an ongoing responsibility to better inform the Museum's internal records while building the capacity to share more about the collection with Indigenous Peoples.
15. The Museum will continue to build capacity to feature and share Indigenous languages throughout the exhibitions in first person voice.
16. The Museum will continue to build capacity to feature and share Michi Saagiig Anishinaabemowin throughout the entire Museum and outdoor campus.
17. The Museum will invest in a variety of means, including cultural awareness training, to expand the understanding and awareness of how the staff, board and volunteers engage with Indigenous Peoples.
18. The Museum will continue to recognize that Indigenous Peoples have intellectual sovereignty over all material created or about them as defined in *UNDRIP* Article 31, and the First Nations principles of ownership, control, access and possession (more commonly known as *OCAP*). *OCAP* will continue to inform the Museum's work with Indigenous Peoples.



# Foundational Documents

[Standards for Museums: The new standards for implementing UNDRIP and supporting Indigenous self-determination in museums. 2023.](#)

[Canadian Museums Association. Moved to Action: Activating UNDRIP in Canadian Museums. A Response to Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #67. 2022.](#)

[Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. 2015.](#)

[United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. 2007 \(Endorsed by Canada in 2016\).](#)

[The First Nations Information Governance Centre Principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession of data and information collection. 1998.](#)

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**Cover Photo:**

Janique Labelle singing and drumming on The Canadian Canoe Museum's  
docks during a Grand Opening Celebration event in May 2024.