



MÉTIS NATION  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

# LI VRAA PARLEE

---

## TRUTH-TELLING

### PROVINCIAL MÉTIS CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE FORUM

*Métis Nation British Columbia envisions a future where Métis people, communities and children thrive. One where we are connected to our rich Métis culture, heritage and languages; we achieve strong socio-economic outcomes; and our Métis rights as an Indigenous people are recognized.*





THE PELLETTIER BOYS

Métis Nation British Columbia would like to recognize the Chartered Métis communities. Their hard work and tireless efforts make a difference for Métis families every day. The Ministry of Children and Families is truly grateful for their willingness to be a part of the forum and for their truth-telling.

We recognize that this work cannot be done alone and thank the Métis children and family service providers who care for Métis families who walk through their doors every day. Métis Family Services, Métis Community Services Society of BC, Niwîkôwin Métis Family Services, Lii Michif Otipemisiwak Family and Community Services, and Island Métis Family & Community Services Society.

The resilience of Métis families is extraordinary, and you are the ones guiding us. Your truth-telling will help create a Métis-led family service system that honours your lived experiences and past injustices. We honour the children. You are the Nation.

Aansaamb atooshkaytaahk [Let’s work together]

Presented by  
Métis Nation British Columbia,  
Ministry of Children and Families



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Tracing the Journey . . . . . .2

    The Call to Action: The 2023 AGM in Kamloops . . . . . .2

    The Voices That Guided Us: Engagement Across 2024 . . . . . .2

    The Provincial Métis Child and Family Service Forum . . . . . .3

        Designation . . . . . .4

        Breakout Sessions. . . . . .4

Listening Deeply: How We Held and Worked With the Truths Shared . . . . . .6

Truths Shared: What We Heard Across the Forum . . . . . .7

    Promoting Cultural Wellness and the Best Interests of Métis Children . . . . . .7

    Improving Service Delivery and Access . . . . . .9

    Métis Citizenship, Identity, and Belonging . . . . . 11

    Prevention Strategies for Métis Families . . . . . 12

Common Themes that Cut Across. . . . . 15

    Culture and Community . . . . . 15

    Poverty and Basic Needs . . . . . 15

    Geographic Location . . . . . 16

    Mental Health. . . . . 17

Next Steps . . . . . 18

Conclusion . . . . . 20

# TRACING THE JOURNEY

---

## The Call to Action: The 2023 AGM in Kamloops

Métis people have never forgotten the truth we carry about our children, our families, and our Nation. The well-being of our children and families is deeply connected to our rights and responsibilities as a Nation. In September 2023, it was our citizens who brought this truth forward. At the Annual General Meeting, they affirmed what has always been known. MNBC holds the inherent right to care for our own. They gave MNBC a clear mandate to create Métis child welfare law, to deliver child and family services, and to enter into legal agreements that recognize this truth and confirm this authority.

## The Voices That Guided Us: Engagement Across 2024

In 2024, after the resolution passed by our citizens, MNBC began a journey rooted in listening. We gathered with families and individuals who needed space to speak their truth. What we heard were stories of strength, pain, and the deep desire to build something grounded in Métis ways. This was more than consultation. It was truth-telling. It was an invitation to share truths held over generations and to shape a future rooted in them.

To ensure the work was grounded in both cultural integrity and rigorous research, MNBC partnered with Data Stories, a consulting firm with expertise in qualitative research and analysis. The lead consultant worked closely with MNBC's Ministry of Children and Families to co-lead every phase of the work, from developing engagement questions to analyzing the findings.

The research focused on the voices of Métis families, youth, service providers, and sector professionals, and was carried out through three core projects: the Métis Family Service System, Restorative Interventions and Supports for Youth (RISY), and Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN). The Children and Families team travelled across regions throughout the province and engaged a total of



544 people, making this one of the most extensive research efforts MNBC has undertaken in this area.

Each project resulted in a standalone report, with findings that were distinct yet deeply connected. These reports became the foundation for the inaugural Provincial Métis Child and Family Services Forum, where participants reviewed the findings and helped shape the path forward. Their voices added further depth to the work, and that contribution is reflected throughout this report.

## The Provincial Métis Child and Family Service Forum

In March 2025, MNBC hosted a groundbreaking provincial forum in Kelowna, BC that truly captured the power of collective action. Picture this: a room filled with leaders from Métis Chartered Communities, MNBC, Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), and key professionals in child and family services, all gathered with a shared purpose to transform the future for Métis children, youth, and families. This forum, the first of its kind, was rooted in Métis culture and values, with every aspect thoughtfully designed to centre the well-being of Métis children, youth, and families.

Over two days, participants immersed themselves in Métis culture, the heartbeat of our people, while engaging in a working panel and four workshops. These sessions created a space for truth-telling and collaborative problem-solving. MNBC shared insights from recent community engagements, interviews, focus groups, and online surveys, providing a foundation for discussion. In these workshops, attendees were invited to validate and build upon the findings, exploring the strengths, barriers, and service gaps that impact Métis families.

The goal of this forum was to bring together those who work with and hold responsibility for Métis children, youth, and families. The aim was to create a



space for deep engagement and collective problem-solving to identify solutions for the future. Attendees expressed deep appreciation for the opportunity to participate in such a meaningful and culturally grounded forum. Many emphasized the importance of having a dedicated space to discuss the issues affecting Métis children and families. This report brings together the truths shared at the forum, which reinforced what was heard throughout the 2024 engagements.

### Designation

In answering the direction of our citizens, MNBC has continued on a path rooted in truth and responsibility. Designation has been a central focus throughout 2025, as we work with the province to secure a formal agreement that affirms our place in the care and decision-making for Métis children.

Being named as a designate under the Child, Family and Community Service Regulations would ensure that MNBC is informed whenever a Métis child enters the system. This gives us the opportunity to act early and to wrap our arms around their family. It allows us to shape care that is grounded in Métis culture, and to honour the truth our people have always held about how our children deserve to be cared for.

Chartered Community perspectives were central to this process. At the Forum, one of the key agenda items was a set of four dedicated sessions where MNBC and the MCFD met directly with Chartered Community leaders and delegates. These one-hour consultations created space for open dialogue, with MNBC and MCFD staff available to respond to questions. Every leader present took part and together they reached a clear conclusion, that MNBC should become the designate and that the path forward must be shaped in partnership.

### Breakout Sessions

In addition to the sessions focused on designation, breakout sessions were created using data gathered from all engagements, interviews, focus groups, and surveys. The topics reflected some of the most urgent concerns raised by participants, with real impacts on their lives and on many Métis families across the province. Each session was designed to create space for truth-telling and to focus on building practical solutions.



HONOURABLE JODIE WICKENS, MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

The breakout session topics included:

- *Promoting Cultural Wellness and the Best Interests of Métis Children:*  
This session explored participants' roles in advancing cultural wellness and how to ensure culturally grounded permanency.
- *Improving Service Delivery and Access:*  
This session focused on reducing barriers such as waitlists and system navigation challenges, while promoting inclusive and responsive services.
- *Métis Citizenship, Identity and Belonging:*  
This session explored how citizenship and identity influence a sense of belonging, and examined the application process, with a focus on creating a clearer path for applicants.
- *Prevention Strategies for Families:*  
This session looked at proactive, culturally safe approaches to keep Métis families out of the system and ensure timely support.

## LISTENING DEEPLY:

### HOW WE HELD AND WORKED WITH THE TRUTHS SHARED

From the outset, each breakout session was carefully designed to create a culturally safe space where participants felt comfortable speaking their truth and sharing lived experiences. Some sessions were held in a circle format to support openness and connection, while others followed a less structured process, creating space for participants to feel at ease and shape the direction of the conversation themselves.

Participants were informed that sessions would be recorded to ensure accurate documentation. Upon consent, recordings were stored securely on MNBC's private SharePoint, with access limited to the consultant and select MNBC staff. The MNBC Ministry of Children and Families is working with the Information Technology team to ensure all data handling aligns with participant consent and MNBC's data retention policies.

All recordings were transcribed using NVivo Transcription software. To ensure accuracy, transcripts were reviewed alongside the original audio. The finalized transcripts were analyzed using NVivo 14, a widely used qualitative research tool that helps identify themes, patterns, and evidence-based insights. Breakout session data were coded by session and organized into key themes.

As part of each session, participants were also invited to write down barriers, solutions, and innovations they had encountered in their personal or professional lives. These written reflections were reviewed by the MNBC Children and Families team and included in the overall analysis. All quotes included in this report are anonymized unless participants provided explicit, informed consent. Identifying details such as names, locations, ages, and workplaces have been removed.

## TRUTHS SHARED:

### WHAT WE HEARD ACROSS THE FORUM

While each breakout session centred on a theme that emerged from prior engagements, they were first and foremost an opportunity for participants to share their truths. As participants began to tell their stories, certain aspects resonated more strongly with the groups than others. Facilitators were eager to let the conversations flow, only redirecting when necessary. Facilitators had a set of guiding questions but sometimes the most impactful and insightful answers come from the most organic moments. With this sentiment in mind, this section highlights the most discussed themes from each section.

#### *Promoting Cultural Wellness and the Best Interests of Métis Children*



"THERE WERE A COUPLE OF YOUTH IN CARE THAT WERE IN OUR JIGGING GROUP, AND WHEN THEY WERE ASKED ABOUT WHAT WAS MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR LIVES, THEY DIDN'T TALK ABOUT THEIR SOCIAL WORKERS, THEY DIDN'T TALK ABOUT PSYCHOLOGISTS OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT. THEY TALKED ABOUT JIGGING; THEY TALKED ABOUT THE CULTURE."

The biggest topic during this session centred around how culture can be used as a core part of permanency. For Métis families, permanency means knowing who a child belongs to, who walks with them, and how they are supported to thrive in culturally grounded, loving environments. Cultural wellness and permanency focus on ensuring continuity, culturally connected placements, and early planning that prioritizes belonging, not just crisis response, strengthening outcomes, and restoring the collective responsibility of raising Métis children and youth within their Nation.

For participants, there was a strong emphasis on how schools can support cultural identity and help children feel a deeper sense of belonging. Currently, MNBC and its Chartered Communities are not informed about which children in care are Métis.





Many participants discussed how they use public community events to connect with foster families and at-risk Métis children. *“A lot of times, the foster parents will attend our outreach programs and identify the Métis children that they have, they’ve found us in advertisements because we advertise in the local paper that we have outreach programs for not only our members, but for people that believe that they are Métis to attend.”* and

*“What we do, our agency has jigging lessons for the little ones, and it’s for the whole community, so the Métis community. But the social workers encourage their caseload kids to be involved, and the little kids in care are interacting with Métis community kids.”* These informal channels of finding Métis children in care showcase the ingenuity of Métis Chartered Communities when it comes to connecting with their children, despite a system that works against them.

Indigenous Support Workers (ISWs) were a point of debate for participants.

Most agreed that the idea of an ISW is a good thing and that the work they do is meaningful. *“So we have a number of Indigenous workers in our schools that are Métis, and they are very passionate about bringing out culture and practices. We have one, and she’s teaching jigging, and it’s not focused necessarily on just Métis children, but it’s people in her care as she’s teaching culture through jigging. So, she’ll take them to other schools, it’s a group of 12-15 kids, and they’re young. They’re learning how to jig, and there’s a number of Métis kids in that.”*

Participants felt that cultural safety plans have been changing for the better. *“Well, I’ve noticed a shift...even though culture was a consideration and a permanency plan, other things trumped that, like attachment... And I really am seeing now that it is a primary consideration.”* However, there is still a long way to go before meaningful changes in cultural safety plans are fully implemented, with some participants voicing frustration with current cultural safety plans. *“We are still seeing some copy and paste. They have a living document, and they’ve condensed it into this, like a two-page summary. [We are supposed to] Read it as quickly as possible...copy and paste from another sibling and put*

*it in there. They don’t even change the photo, sometimes they don’t even put a photo in. It’s the same photo of one kid. And then for all the siblings, they have the same photo and the same information, and sometimes they don’t even change what the [pronouns] or whatever.”* Cultural wellness is deeply crucial for Métis children and families. *“I do believe strongly that cultural wellness starts in the family, not when children come into care.”* Evidently, prevention is key to ensuring strong cultural continuity throughout generations.

### Improving Service Delivery and Access



**“MY KID HAS BEEN ON A WAITLIST FOR TWO YEARS. DO I TELL HER TO STOP NEEDING SUPPORT UNTIL THE SYSTEM CATCHES UP?”**

Service access for Métis families means being able to receive timely, appropriate, and culturally safe support across all areas of MCFD services. It’s not just about whether services exist but it also involves navigating complicated systems, facing challenges such as long wait times, strict eligibility requirements, and systemic gatekeeping, all while seeking care that honours Métis cultural values and relational ways of being.

The biggest barrier cited by participants was lengthy waitlists for important services, *“Long waitlists. You know, you’re being told things that are critical to get done. You thought you should have had this done yesterday, but then you’re being told that it would be a two to three year wait list. Then you’re left with a financial toll, having to pay out of pocket. A lot of the service providers are two to three hundred dollars an hour. When you’re having to make the choice, dinner or speech therapy? So a lot of parents pay out of pocket for a lot of services for their children just because the waitlists in our areas are just way too long.”* Long waitlists delay access to critical programs for childhood development and preventative services, creating a financial disadvantage for families who pay out of pocket. *“So, Métis in the context of those families and being in that poverty, it puts up those huge barriers for people who want that help. Because those who need help most have to wait the longest time.”*

While there are many existing services, supports, and programs available for families, participants were quick to identify how confusing it can be to navigate them, especially for families dealing with child welfare. *“I think that the role of*



DEBRA FISHER, MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, MÉTIS NATION BRITISH COLUMBIA

*navigator or advocate is needed in health care. It's needed for child welfare. It's needed in so many venues.*" Participants called for more than navigators but Métis people, who are able to provide culturally safe support. *"Just navigating your own personal stuff is difficult because you're trying to care for a lot of people. So, when you do have people that are to be in these roles, there needs to be more recognition that it's not just Indigenous, that we have to have Métis-specific."* There were calls for Métis-specific addiction support, crisis lines, childcare, and health care advocates. These calls tell a broader story, that culture and identity are critical when considering service access, allowing Métis families to feel safe and understood during difficult times.

Rather than allowing Métis families to wait months for essential services or go without due to barriers like cost, distance, or limited availability, many Chartered Communities across the province have stepped up in remarkable ways to fill the gaps. As one participant expressed, *"We don't want anyone to go without, so we offer what we can."* The spirit of innovation and resiliency was evident throughout the sessions.

Chartered Communities through their volunteers are offering a range of supports for Métis families to access when needed. These offerings include drop-in parenting groups, guidance through the citizenship process, traditional medicine walks, and organizing clothing drives. Some communities provide practical supports such as gas gift cards to help families attend appointments or operate local food banks to ensure no family goes hungry. When access to services requires travel or private care, Chartered Communities have even organized fundraisers to support Métis families in need. These efforts go beyond service delivery; they represent acts of love and a determination to care for one another in the absence of accessible systemic support. The hard work and dedication of Chartered Communities stand as shining examples of what is possible when solutions are led by and for Métis people.

## Métis Citizenship, Identity, and Belonging



"I THINK THE OFFER OF CITIZENSHIP IS REALLY THE OFFER OF CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY, AND THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE LOOKING FOR CITIZENSHIP ARE ACTUALLY LOOKING FOR THAT."

Engagement with Métis families and Métis professionals emphasized that citizenship is not just status but a way to actively ensure that Métis children and youth remain connected to their families and communities, which is vital for their holistic well-being.

The biggest barriers cited by participants to obtaining citizenship were cost, waitlists and general confusion over what documents were required *"Not having enough money to order the documents or not having the capacity to do the research like that. They don't have the access to programs or just navigating census documents."* and *"We're all sending in a lot of applications; we have some kids that were waiting for three years. So that's the backlog, plus you have new people who are coming in."*

Support for the citizenship process was a core part of the discussion. Participants expressed the need for personalized support for those in the process of applying for citizenship. For those with a citizenship navigator, the experience had been largely positive. *"We just received our citizen navigator, which has been a delight... it makes all our lives so much easier...that's the number one question that people reach out to me for is about citizenship. I just make it clear, very right from the get-go, that I cannot say anything about citizenship or help with citizenship, but then I can just basically put them in touch with a navigator and then let the navigator work with them. So, it's been very, very helpful for us."* The importance of having support from a member of the community during the application process was emphasized, *"It's that human connection when someone isn't sure, they don't know where the next step is. Helping them get to the application, because a lot of times, if people are unsure, they're like, well, I guess I can't apply because I don't know... where that reassurance from the community is so helpful in getting people to start the first steps."*

Having a permanent or dedicated space for community gatherings was discussed throughout multiple sessions. Participants spoke about the constraints a lack of space has on their community, *"I think the biggest thing that we struggle with is not*



having a space. And I feel like we could be doing so much more...even rental spaces are really hard to come by. So, I just dropped that just because I know funding is tight all the way around. The idea of doing satellite offices so that communities could use the space would be a really great thing to aim for, for the future, because I think we could be doing so much more if we had somewhere for people to go to." Not only a space for community gatherings, but a place for those working on their citizenship application to receive in-person help. "It would be wonderful to have an office in every major center. For the locals, so that they could do the work and the navigator to help them." and "I also work with a child welfare agency and like the others were saying, every day we get people coming in thinking that we are at the Métis community and asking for things."

Participants highlighted that a sense of belonging is deeply rooted in connection to community and identity, with Métis citizenship playing a central role. How it serves as a powerful validation of Métis identity that supports resilience and overall well-being, "When I got my citizenship card, it was very affirming. Yes, it made me feel just great because it seemed like for years, I was always trying to prove who I was. And you're searching your genealogy, and you're getting scrip records and all this kind of stuff. And so, the card receiving your citizenship is just very important to us. Personally, at least it was for me." and "People have asked me why I got my citizenship. I said it's my identity and my culture; I don't care about the rest. The rest is a perk, but it's about identity. Connection to culture and connection to community. There's so much more."

### Prevention Strategies for Métis Families

"WE NEED TO STOP PULLING OUR KIDS OUT OF THE RIVER, AND WE NEED TO GO UPSTREAM AND FIND OUT WHY THEY'RE FALLING IN."



Participants repeatedly pointed out that, although there have been some changes in practice, early intervention and preventative measures are still not receiving the attention they deserve. To truly execute a successful preventative approach, participants felt strongly that poverty was the starting point. "A lot of the time, our kiddos and our families are getting involved in the system because of poverty reasons." Existing structures tend to intervene only once a crisis has occurred, which often results in broken relationships, more profound trauma, and a greater likelihood of family separation. A participant was quick to point out the complex intergenerational



history Métis people have with poverty, "Poverty, Métis families and Métis culture and that it's intergenerational control which goes back in our history." It was pointed out that MCFD primarily deals with families in poverty, "And poverty underlies the two that are biggest at MCFD, our bread and butter. Like what we're dealing with 99% of the time." Poverty encompasses a wide range of issues a family might have to deal with, such as homelessness, food insecurity, or intergenerational trauma. "When you look systematically at lots of different cases, it's all what MCFD considers poverty-related neglect. So it's not people leaving the children. It's poverty-related neglect issues." It was clear to participants that many families become involved with MCFD not because they don't love their children, but because they have become entrenched in poverty and the child welfare system, making it so much more difficult to get themselves out.

Relationship building and advocacy were seen as foundational by participants. General awareness of Métis people in BC is limited, and relationships and advocacy are essential in ensuring Métis families have their culture and identity validated. Preventative strategies rely on these relationships to spread awareness of Métis culture and advocate for Métis representation. "I think that we need to get out there and be advocates for our people...in all social sectors." Especially in times of financial uncertainty, building and maintaining relationships are more important than ever. "Like, I don't have access to all that funding, but you can create relationships with the school district and with the Chartered Communities and all of those services. So, coming together like this does make a difference." The importance of community gatherings as a way to build relationships and provide preventative services was mentioned. "About community gatherings, make it about regular gatherings so people look forward to something. You know that consistent schedule, they're going to have a lunch every day because it's about building relationships. That's where you connect with people by trusting somebody because this is a face they have met. And as a result, it creates other opportunities for when you have an open heart, especially for youth." While relationship





building with service providers and school districts is critical, the importance of connecting Métis people to their Chartered Communities cannot be overlooked.

Community, culture, and belonging are essential for creating preventive strategies that work for Métis families. *“So when a family, even if they’re struggling, especially when the child is in poverty, they have to have a strong support system around them. That’s really what prevention looks like”. “When I look at all the things that have been suggested, what underlies all of these ideas is connection and community.”* When asked what preventative services Chartered Communities offered, the list seemed endless. Participants listed everything from drop-in tea, jigging nights, parenting classes, community food banks, and more. These offerings may seem small compared to bigger service providers or agencies, but they provide something deeper, a connection to community and culture that serves as a necessary preventative strategy for Métis families. *“You know what I see when beading, especially when people come together with beads. That conversation happens; it’s a great way to just create a conversation. It’s medicine, it’s healing, all that good stuff. It’s just a different feeling.”*

## COMMON THEMES THAT CUT ACROSS

---

While the discussions were organized around key themes, several cross-cutting issues emerged consistently across all sessions. These recurring elements surfaced regardless of the specific topic being addressed, highlighting their significance to participants. Their presence across every conversation shows the foundational role they play in shaping the experiences of Métis children, families and Chartered Communities.

### *Culture and Community*

Throughout every session, the critical role of culture and community was a recurring theme. For Métis children, youth, and families, culture was not only seen as a source of pride but also as a foundational and stabilizing force capable of supporting healing, resilience, and long-term positive change. Cultural connection helps to build a stronger sense of identity, belonging, and self-worth. These elements are essential for individual and community well-being. Participants spoke at length about the importance of maintaining and strengthening ties to one’s Chartered Community. These communities serve as central hubs, offering a range of culturally grounded programs, services, and supports. They provide spaces for families to engage in community gatherings and celebrate shared identity. In addition to cultural programming, as highlighted earlier, Chartered Communities play a critical role in helping families access essential services and funding, particularly for those who may be facing difficult circumstances or are considered at risk. The collective strength and unity within these communities were consistently identified as key protective factors in the lives of Métis children, youth, and families.

### *Poverty and Basic Needs*

In every session, concerns around poverty and the ongoing struggle to meet basic needs such as access to safe housing, appropriate clothing, and nutritious food were voiced with urgency. Participants stressed that without these fundamental needs being addressed, Métis families remain vulnerable and overburdened, making them



more susceptible to involvement with child welfare, MCFD. Métis families cannot be expected to immerse themselves in healing and community while facing the pressures of economic instability and the threat of child apprehension. Ensuring equitable access to housing, food security, clothing, and financial support was identified as a necessary first step in preventing system involvement and in creating the conditions where Métis children and families can thrive.

### *Geographic Location*

A persistent concern raised across all sessions was the unequal access to programs and services, particularly for Métis families living in Northern and rural regions. Participants consistently voiced frustration over the geographic disparities that limit access to essential supports. Families residing outside of major metropolitan areas often face significant barriers due to the uneven distribution of services across the province. While urban centers may offer a broader range of programs, services, and supports, they are also considerably more expensive to live in. As a result, relocating to access these resources is not a realistic or sustainable option for many Métis families, especially those already facing financial hardship. Additionally, inconsistent or non-existent public transportation infrastructure further compounds the problem, leaving families in remote or rural communities without reliable means of travel. This lack of accessible transportation makes it even more difficult for families to attend appointments, access support services, or participate in community and cultural activities. Participants emphasized the urgent need for service delivery models that are flexible, inclusive, and responsive to the unique realities of Métis families in every region, particularly those in the North.



### *Mental Health*

Mental health emerged as a critical concern throughout all sessions, deeply intertwined with broader issues such as child apprehension, poverty, and the ongoing impacts of intergenerational trauma. Participants consistently emphasized that many Métis families are navigating mental health challenges that stem from systemic inequities, historical displacement, and a lack of culturally safe support. When basic needs such as stable housing, food security, and financial stability go unmet, mental health concerns are exacerbated, increasing the likelihood of involvement with child welfare systems.

A recurring theme was the harm caused by mental health practitioners who lack cultural competency or understanding of Métis history, identity, and ways of being. Participants shared that interactions with culturally unsafe service providers often lead to feelings of judgment, misunderstanding, and re-traumatization. This further alienates Métis children, youth, and families from seeking the support they need, reinforcing cycles of silence and distrust toward mainstream mental health systems.

Access to care is further complicated by long waitlists and high costs, which make timely and quality mental health support largely inaccessible, particularly during moments of crisis when help is needed most. Even when services are technically available, the absence of culturally relevant approaches creates significant barriers. Participants strongly called for increased investment in Métis-led mental health services that prioritize cultural safety, trauma-informed care, and accessibility. These services must be holistic, community-based, and grounded in Métis worldviews to support healing and long-term wellness effectively.



## NEXT STEPS

Based on the issues and solutions raised by Métis families, youth, Chartered Communities, service providers, and sector professionals, MNBC is taking action beyond simply listing recommendations. A Métis Family Service System is being developed to ensure these concerns are meaningfully addressed. The first step is the creation and implementation of a framework that responds directly to the barriers identified through engagement. This framework will bring the proposed solutions together in a structured, coordinated approach to support Métis children, youth, and families. It is being developed collaboratively, bringing together Métis families, Chartered Communities, Métis service providers, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development, all working toward a shared goal: to prevent Métis children, youth, and families from falling through the gaps in BC's social services.

The Métis Family Service System places Métis children, youth, and families at the centre of a coordinated network of supports. The System will combine regional service hubs in collaboration with service providers and a shared digital case management platform, allowing care teams to develop coordinated plans, track progress, and activate referrals when risk indicators appear. Once connected, families will move through clearly mapped pathways for youth justice, child welfare and intersecting systems. These pathways will be supported by interdisciplinary teams that include social workers, navigators, legal advocates, and Elders who walk alongside families through each stage of their journey.

Through collaboration with MNBC Ministries and departments, and by aligning provincial systems with MNBC systems, we will ensure families are not left to navigate fragmented services alone. The system will also work to support fast-tracked citizenship processes so that Métis children, youth, and families can quickly access the full range of benefits and entitlements available to them. Quality assurance will be grounded in measurable service standards, real-time data dashboards, and annual public reporting to identify gaps and guide future investment.



Prevention and culture will guide every program stream, with a focus on reducing the likelihood that Métis children, youth, and families become involved in crisis systems in the first place. This includes parenting programs rooted in Métis culture, regular developmental and mental health screening in early years settings, school-based wraparound supports, access to Elders and/or mentors, and youth-led programs that build belonging. Kinship care registries and customary care agreements will ensure that when intervention is unavoidable, children remain within their kinship networks, and a dedicated legal support unit will help families navigate inquiries, hearings, and orders within the boundaries of jurisdiction.

Land-based healing camps, mobile mental health teams, and peer mentorship circles will operate alongside mainstream services, creating multiple entry points that are welcoming, safe and rooted in Métis culture. Every element of the system is bound by one purpose, which is to ensure Métis children, youth, and families thrive in safe, culturally rooted environments and that families receive the right help at the right time, every time.

## CONCLUSION

---

The truths shared throughout this journey were not new to our people. They are the truths Métis families have carried and lived for generations. What this report captures is not only the resilience and challenges within our communities, but also the clarity with which our citizens spoke about what needs to change. From the call to action at the 2023 AGM, to the voices raised across the province in 2024, and the truths confirmed and deepened at the 2025 Forum, this has been a story of reclaiming responsibility for our children and asserting what has always been known, which is that Métis people know how to care for our own.

Through this work, we heard from those who have struggled to access services, those who built community-led programs to fill the gaps, and those who carry knowledge about what healing truly looks like. We were reminded that change does not begin with policy. It begins with relationships, with listening, and with the willingness to act. The stories shared in this report hold both promise and pain. They reflect the love Métis people have for their children, the strength of our Chartered Communities, and the solutions that are already being lived across the province.

The Forum and this report are not the end. It is a continuation of the story our people have been telling all along. The creation of a Métis Family Service System is a commitment to act on what was heard and to build something lasting, rooted in Métis ways. It is a promise that the truths shared will not be forgotten or filed away. Instead, they will guide the systems we create, the supports we offer, and the future we shape together. What lies ahead is grounded in what has already been lived, and what continues to be carried forward by our Nation.







**MÉTIS NATION**  
BRITISH COLUMBIA