



BLACKFOOT CONFEDERACY

Blackfoot Confederacy-Alberta Government Protocol Agreement Report

2019-2020

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Summary

Introduction & Background

On September 23, 2019, the Blackfoot Confederacy Protocol Agreement was renewed at Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, in Siksika, Alberta. The principles of the agreement remained the same from the original agreement:

- Provide a framework for collaboration
- Establish mechanisms by which First Nations and the Government of Alberta can work together in the determination of joint strategies to address priority areas
- Provide for regular meetings at the senior official level, the Chiefs and Ministers level, and annually between the Premier of Alberta and Chiefs.

For the 2019/20 Fiscal year, Indigenous Relations provided a \$200,000 grant to the Blackfoot Confederacy to support the implementation of this Agreement. In March 2020, Alberta was responding to the global pandemic which required Alberta and the Blackfoot Confederacy to focus all their efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect public health.

Despite the challenges faced by the pandemic, senior officials from Alberta and the Blackfoot Confederacy continued to focus on updating the priority areas of the Protocol Agreement to be approved and have work initiated by Ministers and Chiefs.



Progress in 2019/2020

Alberta and Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council senior officials collaborated on updating work plans for each of the six mutually agreed upon priority area Tables: Environment and Lands, Education, Economic Development and Employment, Political and Legal, United Nations Declaration and Truth and Reconciliation, and Health. In January 2020, a seventh table was added: Child and Family Services.

In summer 2020, Ministers and Blackfoot Chiefs signed all updated Table Work Plans with the exception of the Health Table. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Health Table was put on hold, with the Table Work Plan anticipated to be signed in Fall 2020.

As part of the Education Work Plan, Alberta Education provided a \$300,000 grant to the Blackfoot Confederacy to support a Blackfoot Language Retention Initiative program.

Mission & Vision

Our Mission

To collaborate, restore, protect, honor and enhance the collective culture, language and self-identity of the Siksikaitsitapi; and to establish political and economic sovereignty over the Traditional Territory, including natural resources, for the benefit of current and future generations of the Siksikaitsitapi People.

Our Vision

Siksikaitsitapi, honoring and utilizing the past, into the present, for the future Siksikaitsitapi way of life.



Table Updates & Highlights

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Table 1 – Economic Development and Employment

Following the re-signing of the Protocol Agreement with the United Conservative Party (U.C.P.) government in September 2019, new Table representatives were identified from the Government of Alberta. Meetings were held in the Fall of 2019 and a workplan was developed. The following areas were re-confirmed as the main features of the workplan:

- a. Leakage Study – All BFC community Leakage Studies are complete and the consolidation report is being completed. At the next Table 1 meeting the report will be presented and recommendations will be discussed.
- b. Tourism – Pursuant to the funding allocation, a Tourism Coordinator has been hired and the Blackfoot Tourism Action plan is being circulated for approval.
- c. Labour Market Initiative – Discussions have begun with Alberta Labour and Immigration to consider a Labour Market Survey and Data compilation for the BFC.

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Table 2 – Culture Language and Education

A workplan has been signed off by the Minister of Education and features the following components:

- Initiation of the Blackfoot Language Retention Initiative
- Mental Health supports in Education focused on trauma informed practices and services for students, families and communities
- Identifying why First Nation Colleges are not recognized by Alberta Advanced Education and developing a plan for Accreditation

Table Updates & Highlights

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Table 3 – Social

a. Children's Services Sub-Table

This is a new Table under the Protocol Agreement. Alberta Children's Services has agreed to provide funding and support to look at a number of key areas concerning Children's Services for the Blackfoot Confederacy.

Recent federal legislation has been enacted which may require Blackfoot Confederacy communities to reevaluate programming, authority and services.

The Children's Services Table works in collaboration with all communities to ensure effective communication, government updates and any new information is provided on a timely manner. A coordinator has been hired by the Blackfoot Confederacy to facilitate this sub-Table. A workplan has been signed off by the Alberta Minister of Children's Services in June of this year.

b. Health Sub-Table

A detailed workplan is being developed and will be circulated to the BFC Table representatives for approval. A date for the Alberta Health Minister to sign has not been set.

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Table 4 – Environment and Lands

Initiation of Working Groups focused on:

- Enhancing Blackfoot Nations' awareness and understanding around climate change
- Access to Crown land, parks and private land
- Reduction of invasive aquatic species
- Enhancing Blackfoot Nations' awareness of emergency management

Table Updates & Highlights

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Table 5 – Political and Legal

This Table is focusing on three main areas policing, corrections and the courts. A researcher has been hired to conduct an environmental scan of each of these areas within the Blackfoot Confederacy.

A comprehensive report will be complete by the end of the year and recommendations will be presented. A workplan has been signed off by the Indigenous Relations Minister.

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Table 6 – United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The Blackfoot Confederacy is moving forward on a number of recommendations concerning United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

This includes updating the UNDEC report of 2015 and providing additional research into the implications of legislation enacting UNDRIP both provincially and federally.

Protocol Agreement Funding

Protocol Agreement Funding

2019/2020:

	Funding	Alberta Ministry	Amount
1	Protocol Agreement Capacity funding	Indigenous Relations Ministry	\$300,000
2	Education	Alberta Advanced Education	\$150,000
3	Children's Services	Alberta Children's Services	\$150,000
4	Health	Alberta Health Services	\$150,000
5	Environment	Alberta Environment	\$65,000
Total Funding			\$850,000

Summary

Blackfoot Confederacy

Alberta and the Blackfoot Confederacy are proud of the progress achieved in the first year of the renewed Protocol Agreement. Both parties are looking forward to implementing key projects identified on Table Work Plans over the next fiscal year.



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