



Anishinaabe Governance is... **ABOUT CITIZENSHIP, IDENTITY AND BELONGING**

Strengthening the Circle

Anishinaabek have an opportunity to strengthen the circle and heal our communities by putting citizenship laws in place that recognize our family members as “those who belong.”

Only we can change the outcome of living under Indian Act rules that govern Indian status: extinction. The circle is broken but our people are our greatest strength and our hope for the future.

The basis for Anishinaabe Law is One Anishinaabe Family – Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe. Our Grandmothers know who belongs, who is Anishinaabe. It is time to re-matriate all our relations.

Disconnection and Division

Anishinaabe women and children were denied inclusion in their home communities because of the Indian Act; thousands of Anishinaabe children were taken away from their families and placed in foster homes. Thousands were placed in residential schools. These were deliberate actions of the Government of Canada to assimilate and get rid of status Indians. This is our legacy under the Indian Act.

There is discrimination among ourselves between those who live on reserve and those who do not. Yet, an average of 75% of our First Nation citizens and our family members live off reserve. There is a great untapped resource of language speakers, cultural leaders, professional and skilled workers, Elders and youth, who are waiting to be recognized.

The Distinction Between Indian Registration (Indian status) and First Nation Citizenship

Registration under the Indian Act provides eligibility for services and benefits delivered through federal departments.

Citizenship defines a collective, a sense of belonging.

Citizenship carries political rights to vote and run for Council and in many First Nations, it is a condition to access programs and services administered by the First Nation.

Citizenship and Indian Status are about a different set of rights, entitlements, and benefits.

2010 and 2017 Indian Act Amendments (Bill C-3 and S-3)

In response to Superior Court rulings (“McIvor” and “Descheneaux”) Canada amended the Indian Act provisions affecting Indian registration entitlement.

In Ontario, the impacts of the two amendments (estimates as of July 2016) are that roughly 27,415 individuals are expected to become entitled to Indian registration, an increase of 13%.

Increases in the population entitled to registration on reserve are expected to occur for two generations, then decline. The off-reserve population entitled to registration is projected to decline within 10 years.

Niigaan Zhaamin-Forward Together

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