



**OPTIONS
BYTOWN**

**Reconciliation Action Plan
2022 to 2025**

In Gratitude

The development of this Reconciliation Action Plan would not have been possible without the contributions of Options Bytown staff, board members, tenants and clients. We would also like to thank Allan Clarke, the key consultant for our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.

We thank our partner organizations in the homelessness and housing sectors for their support and contributions to our work.

We are deeply indebted to the Indigenous people and organizations that offered their time and knowledge to support this work.

We thank Anishinaabe/Haudenosaunee artist Simon Brascoupé for providing artwork that meaningfully reflects our work and intentions of this document and provides the visual identity of our Reconciliation Action Plan.

We acknowledge the work of Spruce Creative for their integration of Simon's vision for reconciliation and creating a beautiful document which lays our foundation for years to come.

We acknowledge the generous financial support of the Ottawa Community Foundation, without whom this document wouldn't exist.



Mural at Options Bytown's 380 Cumberland location

Land Acknowledgement



Options Bytown acknowledges that the land upon which we live and work is the traditional unceded, unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg Nation.

For generations this land has been governed and inhabited by Indigenous Peoples practicing traditional ways of doing, knowing and being. We are grateful to have the opportunity to be present on their territory.

Options Bytown kinötī-kiskiyítamīkowāwak ūma askiy, īta kā-toskiyāk mēna kāwīkiyāk kayās ūci ūma otaskīwāw Anishnaabewiniwak, namōya wīkāc kī-pakitīyítamwak kayās ūci ūma otaskīwāw Anishnaabewiniwak, namōya wīkāc kī-pakitīyítamwak.

mitoni kayās oci Anishinaabeyiniwak kākī-pī-tipīyimisocik mēna kākī-pī-pimācīhikocik öta otaskīwāw mwahi āpō mōniyāw kākītakosīk anohc ninanāskomonān iyapacītāyāk öma askiy kā-itötamāk nitatoskīwinān.

የዚህ የሰው ተስፋይ ስለሚያደርግ ነው እና ይህንን የሚከተሉት ደንብ
በመሆኑ የሚያሳይ የሚከተሉት ደንብ የሚያሳይ ይችላል

Options Bytown ikidiwag ashidj ogikenindànawà iyo akì endaniziwadj ashidj endanàkìwadj, taje padakasin ondaje odakìwa ogo Màmiwininì Anishinàbeg, ogo kàn wìkad ka-ondji-mìgiwewadj konima adawewadj iyo akì.

Ako wayeshkàt ondaje aking kibì-abiwag ogo Anishinàbeg kabì-ijichigewadj kakina kego kakikenindamawadj ashidj pimàdiziwadj. Nimìgwechiwiyànànig kipagidinigewadj kidji taniziyàng ondaje odakìwang.

Options Bytown y r'konna ke la tére, divou ksa vi pi ksa travaye, lita l'téritwerre tradjisyonnel d'la Nasyon Algonkenne Anishnabé, ki lonva pâ lessi alli, oubindon danni.

Pandan di jinirasyon, lava dju mond Otoktonne ki viva pi k'yita an sharj di ste téritwerre-sitte, ke prachika avek di manyerre tradjisyonnel di ferre, di sawerre pi d'êt. Sa l'ita bin kontan d'awerre la shans d'êt isitte dan leu téritwerre.

Options Bytown mdaadendaan maanda aki
aandi dzhi bmaadzidying miinwaa nokii'ying
yaawan Algonquin Anishnaabeg Gimaawiwin
wi'dakiimwaan gaawiin gii bginaadesii miinwaa
gii winitoowiisinaawaa.

Gchi zhaazhi maanda kiing gii bi gimaakaade miinwaa dnizwag anishnaabeg zhaazhi pane anishnaabe zhichgewin,, gikenjigewin, minwaa aadziwin. Nmiigwechendaamin bi zhisemigoo'aan bi yaa'aang (w) d'aki'm'ong.

About The Artist



Simon Brascoupé

Anishinabeg /Haudenosaunee
– Bear Clan

simonbrascoupe.com
simonbrascoupe@hotmail.com

Aboriginal Peoples traditionally have learned by listening and observing the animal and natural world for their profound insight and knowledge. The ability to observe is central to the artist's vision of living in harmony with nature.

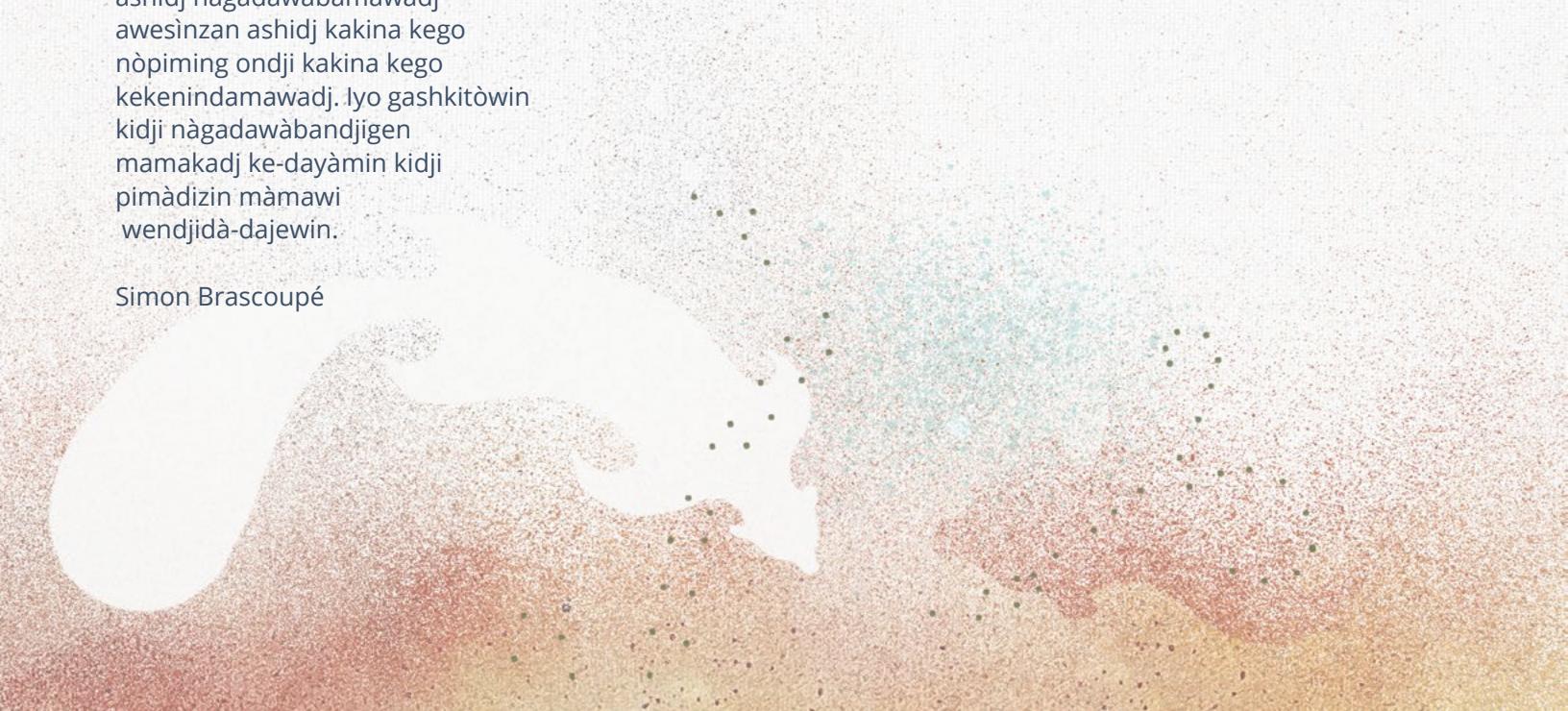
Kakina Anishinàbeg
kibìkikinamàgozig pizindàwawadj
ashidj nàgadawàbamàwadj
awesìnzan ashidj kakina kego
nòpiming ondji kakina kego
kekenindamawadj. lyo gashkitòwin
kidji nàgadawàbandjigen
mamakadj ke-dayàmin kidji
pimàdizin màmawi
wendjidà-dajewin.

Simon Brascoupé

Simon Brascoupé, Anishinaabe/Haudenosaunee – Bear Clan is a member of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, Maniwaki, Quebec and is now living in Algonquin territory here in Ottawa. His artwork is displayed across the city, including the Algonquin Birch Bark Basket at Abinan Place, a large mural for the University of Ottawa Heart Institute and a mural at the Carleton University Ojigkwanong Indigenous Student Centre. One of his most well known projects is displayed in Pimisi Station, Mamawi : Together, The Algonquin Paddle Project installation painted by one hundred Algonquin artists. Simon's artistic vision is to create a significant presence of Algonquin and Indigenous art and culture in public art and institutions.

Simon communicates traditional teachings and values through the continuity of imagery and narrative. His artwork has been exhibited across the United States, Canada, Europe, China, Japan and Cuba. His art is represented in the collections at the Canadian Museum of History, the Smithsonian Institution and major corporate and private collections. His work is presently displayed at the National Gallery of Canada's Canadian and Indigenous Art exhibition.

Simon Brascoupé's artwork reflects his respect for the Algonquin territory and land. From his perspective, animals teach humans how to see the world through their eyes and actions. Simon's father taught him that the bear, when it's wounded, will use the sap from a pine tree as medicine and that even though the bear is large it lives lightly on the land.





About The Artwork

Returning Home: The Beaver and Otter

The beaver and the otter teach us about reconciliation through listening, recognition of difference and peaceful sharing and cohabitation. These teachings of reconciliation are symbolized in the painting by the beaver and otter swimming around the beaver lodge in the centre of the painting, with their relationship symbolized by the wavy lines around them

The land is our teacher. We can learn about home from observing nature.

*Iyo akì, mì owa kekinàmàgedj.
Kidàkikendindànànàndanàking eta-godj
nàgadawàbandaman wendjidà-dajewin.*

The beaver's ability to build its own home from trees, branches and soil is a great example of wisdom and creativity. The beaver and the human are two beings that can alter the natural world. For Anishinaabe or Algonquin the beaver or amik is a symbol of wisdom. The beaver teaches us to use our inherent gifts wisely and to recognize differences in a kind and respectful way. Wisdom teaches us to listen carefully and to live in a good way that will focus our listening abilities.

The otter or nigig teaches humans how to live together in harmony and peace. The otter, because of its character and nature, teaches humans to help the people to work together in creation and the world. By its behaviour, it educates and instructs people to protect their family and community.

The beaver shares its home or lodge with the otter as a symbol of balance and reconciliation. Balance because the beaver eats plants and the otter eats fish. Reconciliation because the beaver can share its home despite being quite different from the otter.

The otter tail design is often found in beadwork as two parallel wavy lines. This is shown in the painting, and depicts relationships as parallel but with ups and downs on the path of life.



Mural at Options Bytown's 380 Cumberland location

Table of Contents

In Gratitude	3
Land Acknowledgement	5
About The Artist	6
About The Artwork	7
A Message From Options Bytown Leadership	10
Options Bytown's Statement Of Commitment	11
Canada's Call To Action	12
Options Bytown Who We Are	14
Indigenous Homelessness In Ottawa	16
Where We Are Now	19
Our Vision for Reconciliation	21
Our Values	23
Our Reconciliation Action Plan	25
Join Us On The Path	34
Acknowledgements	35

A Message From Options Bytown Leadership

As the President of Options Bytown, I am proud to be a part of the launch of Options Bytown's first Reconciliation Action Plan.

Options Bytown is aware of Canada's history of colonialism, and we acknowledge the devastating impacts it has had on Indigenous people and culture. Our decision to develop this Reconciliation Action Plan was based on our belief that as a non-Indigenous organization, we have a role to play in righting past wrongs and forwarding reconciliation.

Through the implementation of this Reconciliation Action Plan, we are embarking on a journey that will see Options Bytown take concrete steps toward ensuring that Indigenous people have equal access to housing in our community.

This plan is a first step. Our Reconciliation Action Plan is a living document. It will inform our work in the long term. We will assess our progress and adapt as necessary. We will learn and change and grow through this process.

We are excited to begin. We look forward to working with our partners in the community over the next three years to reach the goals set out in this first Reconciliation Action Plan.



Annie Carruthers
President
Options Bytown

As a grateful inhabitant of the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg Nation, and as leader of Options Bytown, I feel a deep responsibility as both an individual and organization to take meaningful and concrete actions towards reconciliation. This includes acknowledging the colonial roots and practices upon which Options Bytown has been established and committing to actions that will see us work to address the vast inequities faced by Indigenous people in Ottawa, particularly those living with the realities of housing insecurity and homelessness.

In that spirit, this Reconciliation Action Plan is a public acknowledgement and commitment on behalf of Options Bytown staff and board, and we offer it up to others who may want to build their own path towards a more equitable and just community for us all.

I am so grateful to all those who have guided us in the development of this Reconciliation Action Plan, including local Indigenous organizations, the Ottawa housing community, the Ottawa Community Foundation and especially the many people with lived experience of homelessness and housing instability. This is not a journey we take alone, and with your guidance and wisdom we look forward to what is now possible.



Catharine Vandelinde
Executive Director
Options Bytown

Options Bytown's Statement Of Commitment

Options Bytown is committed to making a meaningful contribution to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

We are aware of the history of colonial policies and practices that have had destructive and devastating impacts on Indigenous people, culture and language. We also recognize the role that social service agencies have played, both historically and in the present day, in the ways that colonization practices have directly resulted in homelessness and displacement from land, culture and communities.

We are aware of the disproportionate number of Indigenous people that experience homelessness, both across Canada and in Ottawa specifically. This disparity is emblematic of the lasting effects of harmful colonial practices that continue to create vast inequities that impact every aspect of Indigenous Peoples' lives.

As an organization made up of individuals, we commit to learning how to practice reconciliation in our everyday lives. By listening to and learning from Indigenous partners and community, we will incorporate reconciliation into all aspects of our organization. Our action will be based on our clients' needs for safe, secure and supportive housing that responds to the specific cultural needs of Indigenous communities.

In adopting this Reconciliation Action Plan, our goal is to cultivate an organizational culture that listens to Indigenous people and respects the culture and needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples. Options Bytown is committed to finding long-term, Indigenous-led solutions to the homelessness crisis that disproportionately affects these communities.

Our hope for reconciliation is that Indigenous Peoples come to know Options Bytown as a community that listens to their lived experiences and responds by providing a safe space to live and heal.



Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group :
Darryl, Annie, Lindsay, Alexandra, Catharine, Hany, Allan, Daniel (not pictured) and Lauren.

As a white person, I think we need to recognize that it's not helpful to provide any more lip-service, but rather, our time to do the work, listen to and prioritize Indigenous voices, in the housing sphere and elsewhere. Read and follow their words, not mine.

Lindsay Trainor
Options Bytown Housing First Practitioner
and RAP working group member

Canada's Call To Action

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

"Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. For that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes and action to change behaviour."

The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Despite the promise of the early treaties upon which the relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples was based, Indigenous people have been the target of colonial policies and practices designed to exploit, assimilate and eradicate them. These actions taken throughout the years have created systematic barriers and the effects from colonial policies are still ongoing. We cannot start to fix the problems in our own organizations and institutions without first examining the true realities of what Indigenous people have faced and continue to face to this day.

In 2008, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created to document the effects of residential schools on Indigenous Peoples. In 2015, it released its final report.

The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission included 94 Calls to Action directed to governments, churches, organizations and all Canadians. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action are sweeping, and propose actions in areas such as child welfare, education, health, justice and culture.

Through open, transparent and collaborative relationships with their Indigenous partners, all Canadians can contribute to reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.



Reconciliation involves both sides building a meaningful relationship between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people. A healthy relationship would involve building trust with the Indigenous people by the non-Indigenous community.

Kwayakosidòwin nandawenindàgwad nenij kidji ojitowadj wewenind inanokìwin màmawi Anishinàbeg ashidj kodagag pemàdizidjig. Mino-pimàdizi-inanokìwin nandawenindànavà ogo kodagag pemàdizidjig kidji-tebweyenindàgoziwadji ondji kakina Anishinàbeg.

Gail Gallagher, Facilitator,
Expert Steering Table – Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa



Options Bytown

Who We Are

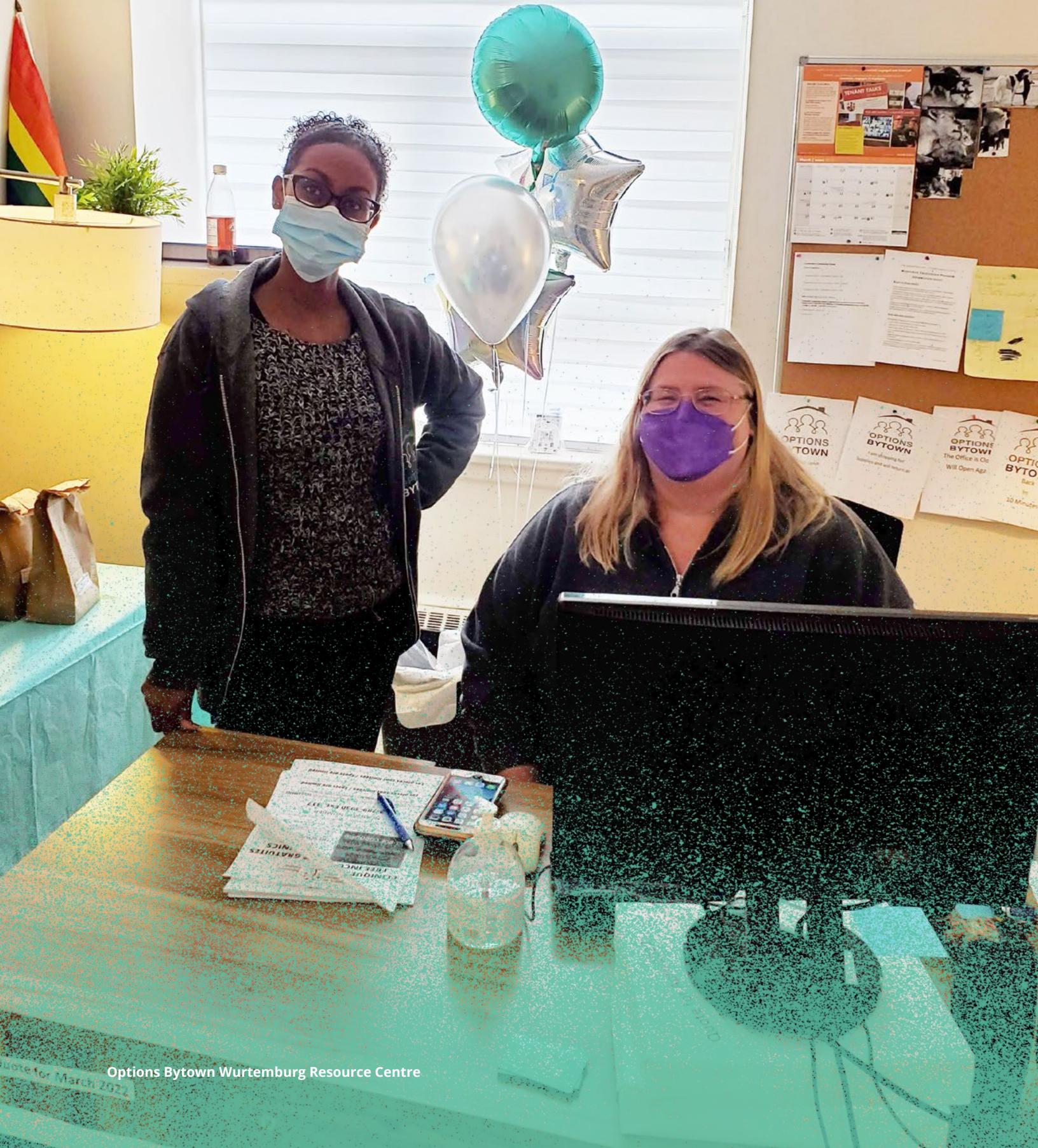
Options Bytown was founded in 1987 by a collective of Ottawa residents and organizations who had a vision for a city free of homelessness. Since the first Options Bytown building opened its doors in 1989, the organization's work has been grounded in a simple belief that we all deserve a home. All Options Bytown programming is in service of one goal: creating sustainable, permanent solutions to homelessness.

Each month, Options Bytown serves approximately 1,400 people across the City of Ottawa who experienced homelessness or housing instability through the following programs:

- 1. A Supportive Housing program that provides permanent and affordable housing to over 130 people across four residential communities.** All Supportive Housing tenants have lived experience with homelessness, and many live with complex mental and/or physical health challenges. Supportive Housing staff work to ensure tenants maintain stable housing, access other services and resources, and plan social and skill-building activities to build community and enhance quality of life.
- 2. Eight Resource Centres that support over 1,000 Ottawa Community Housing tenants each month.** Resource Centre staff focus on supporting the tenants in these buildings by providing crisis intervention, counselling and community development with the overarching goal of homelessness prevention. More than 1,000 tenants access Resource Centre services every month.

- 3. A Housing First team that supports over 150 people experiencing chronic homelessness to find and maintain permanent housing.** Housing First Practitioners work with clients to secure permanent housing, create individualized support plans and provide ongoing case management. Over 92 per cent of Housing First clients remain housed after 12 months.
- 4. Providing direct housing support to over 100 people accessing treatment for substance use disorders.** In partnership with Recovery Care, an Ottawa-based harm reduction clinic, Options Bytown provides housing support to individuals who use substances and are accessing safe supply services.

Options Bytown has a diverse team of over 50 staff, with a wide variety of lived and professional experience. These staff are skilled in crisis intervention, case management, eviction prevention, life skills training and much more, and they maintain close partnerships with other services and organizations across the city to build comprehensive support networks for every person that uses our services.



Options Bytown Wurtemburg Resource Centre

Indigenous Homelessness In Ottawa

"Indigenous homelessness is not about not having a structure to live in; it runs much deeper than that—it's about not having healthy social, physical, spiritual and emotional relationships. It's about not having one's indigeneity. And these relationships—known in the Anishinabek worldviews as All My Relations—have been eroded and/or destroyed by processes of colonization since Euro-style settlement began on Turtle Island in the 1600s."

Jesse Thistle, *Reframing the Discussion: An Indigenous Definition of Homelessness*

In 2021, over 700 Indigenous people used the overnight shelter system in Ottawa. In the 2021 Point-in-Time Count, 32 per cent of people experiencing homelessness identified as Indigenous, while Indigenous people represent four per cent of the population in Ottawa (City of Ottawa, 2021).

In Ottawa's shelters:

- 12.8 per cent of all single men identify as Indigenous *
- 18.6 per cent of all single women identify as Indigenous *
- 10.7 per cent of all youth (18 and under) identify as Indigenous *

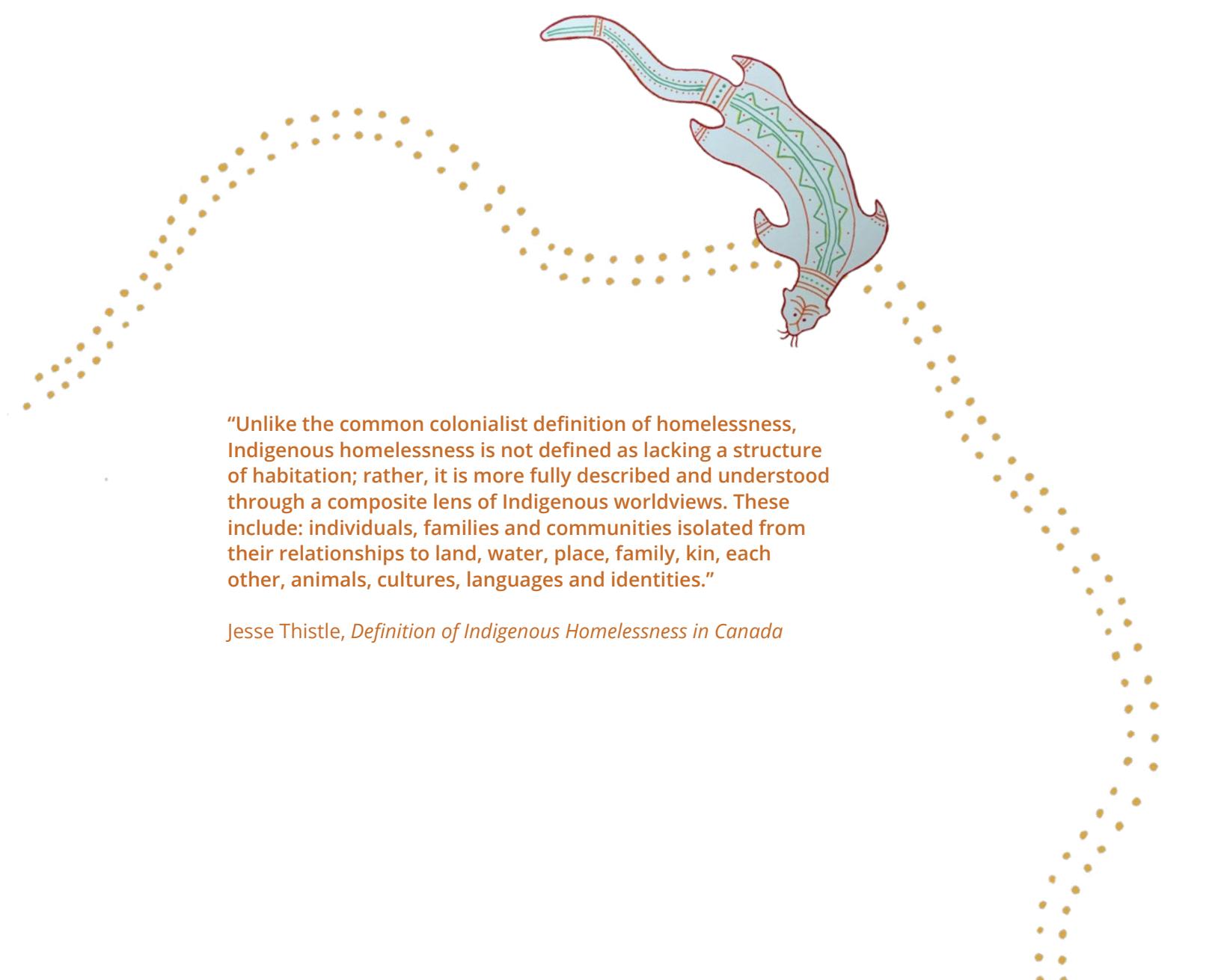
It is clear that Indigenous Peoples in Ottawa are disproportionately affected by homelessness.

Due to known discriminatory attitudes among some landlords and service providers, as well as trauma connected to large institutions, many individuals who require housing or other supports are reluctant to identify themselves as Indigenous. It stands to reason that the percentage of homeless people who are Indigenous may be higher than our current figures.

There are several housing providers in the city that cater specifically to Indigenous people, though nowhere near enough to adequately meet the community's need. Indigenous-designed and run solutions offer the best range of services for Indigenous clients. It is fair to assume, however, that due to the relatively small number of housing units reserved for Indigenous clients as well as the reluctance to self-identify discussed above, many Indigenous people enter the social / supportive housing system through organizations like Options Bytown which serve the general population.

Given the high number of Indigenous individuals in Ottawa who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, it is important that available services respond to the unique needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples. Indigenous Peoples face significant challenges in the process of accessing existing urban housing resources. These include the high cost of housing, lack of adequate rental stock, long waitlists and onerous eligibility requirements for social housing. While these barriers are also present for non-Indigenous people, they are exacerbated by the ongoing realities of anti-Indigenous racism, which increase their severity for Indigenous people.

*City of Ottawa, 2021



“Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include: individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities.”

Jesse Thistle, *Definition of Indigenous Homelessness in Canada*

Options Bytown should be commended for its leadership in developing the first Reconciliation Action Plan in Ottawa's social service community. Option Bytown's sincere commitment to reconciliation is a great inspiration for other organizations willing to take the necessary steps to improve their relationship with Indigenous Peoples and be truly respectful and inclusive of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples. I am honoured to have contributed to this work and, as a First Nation person, welcome Option Bytown's efforts to promote reconciliation.

Options Bytown daa maamiikwendgaade onji niigaaniwaad maajiigitoowaad ntam Anji Mino-ganoonidwinaan waa zhichigeng naakonige Ottawa Shangewin E-bmiitoowaad ngodenaaziwin. Option Bytown waawindmaage onji Anji mina-daapnigewin aanoozmaad geyaabi e-bmitoojigewin wiijitoon daapnamwaad dakokiinan zoongitood mino-wijjikiwed Anishnaabeg minwaa gwek mdaadendmaad miinwaa bebezhig Anishnaabeg, Metis, minwaa Inuit. Ndi'mndaadendam gii-bi-naadmaage'aan maanda nokiiwin, anishnaabe ndi yaaw, miigwech Option Bytown nookiitoo'in Anji mina-daapnigewing.

Allan Clarke, Volunteer Consultant

Where We Are Now

Options Bytown provides permanent housing with supports to people coming out of homelessness, or who are at risk of becoming homeless. Our services are available to all individuals.

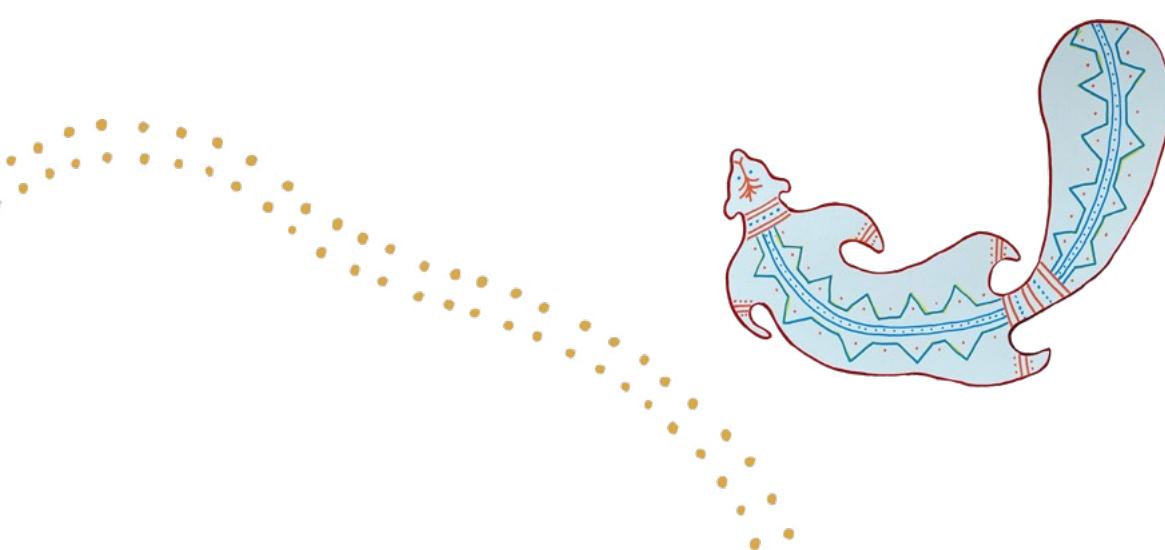
Options Bytown does not require that clients report their Indigenous identity. However, staff observe that in 2022, the proportion of Indigenous Peoples in our client groups range from about 2 per cent (Housing First, Resource Centres) to 4 per cent (Supportive Housing) to 8 per cent (Safe Supply Program). It is likely, however, that the Indigenous population seeking our services is higher.

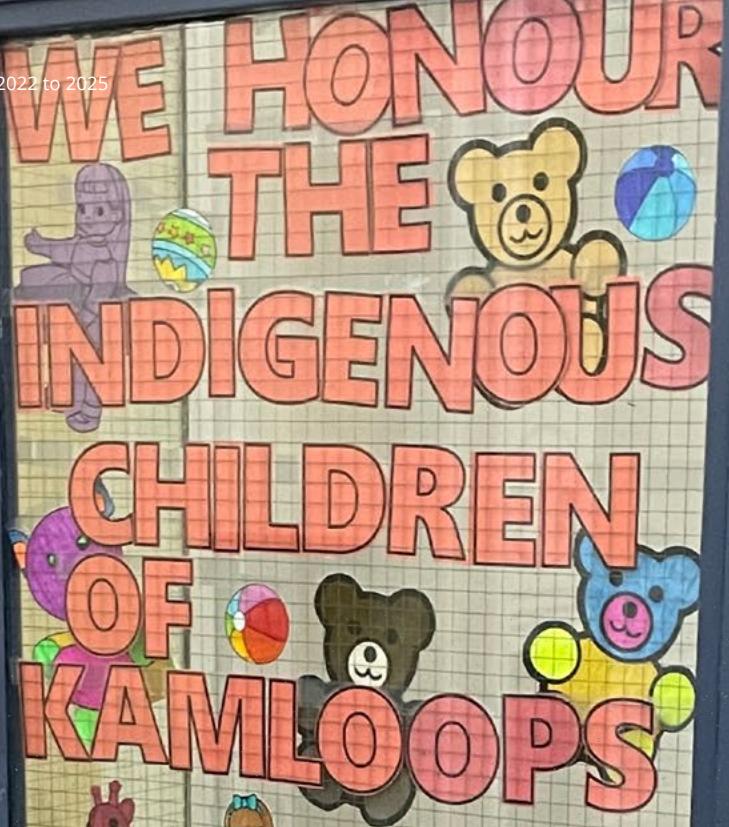
Options Bytown is committed to ensuring that our services are available to First Nation, Inuit and Métis Peoples, and that we respond to their specific needs.

Options Bytown formalized its commitment to reconciliation on September 29, 2021, with the release of our Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation (page 11). The Statement was released the day before Canada's first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, and was presented to staff with an invitation that they take that day to reflect upon how they would incorporate the principles of reconciliation in their practices and their lives. The staff was then led in a KAIROS Blanket Exercise as a first step in an ongoing commitment to learning about Indigenous history, culture and tradition.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan builds upon this preliminary commitment. It is informed by 18 months of deliberation by the Options Bytown Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group. The group, comprising members of Options Bytown staff and Board of Directors, engaged with partner organizations in the housing and homelessness sector, and with Indigenous organizations in the housing, healthcare and cultural sectors. It sought the views of Indigenous people that have experienced homelessness and precarious housing, and listened to their views on services that would respond to their needs. With the launch of our Reconciliation Action Plan, the working group will assume responsibility for its implementation and for monitoring our actions and reporting on our progress.

The release of our Reconciliation Action Plan is only the first step. It is a commitment to reconciliation on an ongoing basis, and a concrete plan to practice reconciliation in all aspects of our operations.





Our Vision for Reconciliation

Our Vision for Reconciliation

Options Bytown is committed to reconciliation in every aspect of the services we provide. We will walk alongside Indigenous communities to close the gap on the disproportionate number of Indigenous people who are homeless.

kā-isi-wāpātamāk ōma miyo-wīcihitowin

niyanān ūma Options Bytown na-sītatoskātīnān miyo-wīcihitowin kākiyaw kīkwāy kātoskātamāk nawītatoskīmānānak nīhiyawak, Anishnabemiwiniwak, namāmawi-pimōtānān, kāwīcihayak, kapasikonāyak kākiyaw nēhiyaw kīkānāntawita kakī wīkit.

ՀՐԱՄԱՆԸ ԱՇԽԱՏԵՈՒՄԸ ՑԱՀԱՅՐԸ

Ewàbandamang Ondji Kwayakosidòwin

Options Bytown onisidawinàdjigeg ashidj kidakwayakosidònawa kakina kego kedijé-inanokìwadj. Nigapimosemin opimehì kakina Anishinàbeg kidji-kibàmang ejì-tawàg ige mânnewadj Anishinàbeg ega eyàmawadj mìgiwàman kidji-abiwadj.

Ndi'niigaanwaabmjigewin Anji Min0-Ganoonidwinaan

Options Bytown zongzi anji mina-daapnigewing
kina nekayaa nina naadmaagewinan
e-miigwe'aang. Nga bimosemin shawayhiing
Anishnaabe ngodenaaziwinan gbaakmawaang
woshme mnik Anishnaabeg wiigwaamsiiwaad.

Kousé ksa wè pour la rikonsiliasyon

Options Bytown li angaji a la rikonsiliasyon dan toutte li ditaye di sarviss ke sa danne. Sa vâ êt a kôti di komunôti Otoktonne, pour kyèye bein mwein d'mond Otoktonne ki l'onva pâ d'mizon.





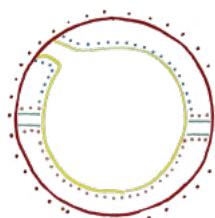
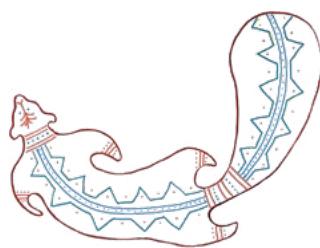
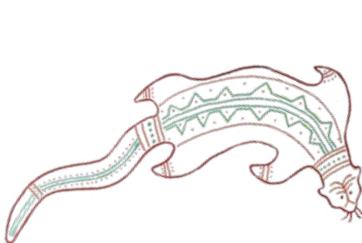
KAIROS blanket exercise at all-staff meeting on September 29, 2021.

Our Values

As an organization made up of individuals, we commit to learning how to practice reconciliation in our everyday lives. By listening to and learning from Indigenous partners and community, we will incorporate reconciliation into all aspects of our organization. Our action will be based on our clients' needs for safe, secure and supportive housing that responds to the specific cultural needs of Indigenous communities.

Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation Options Bytown

In order to support this commitment, our Reconciliation Action Plan is guided by the following three values:



RESPECT

Options Bytown is respectful of Indigenous Peoples, their histories and their cultures.

We acknowledge the diversity within the Indigenous community and are committed to learning about Indigenous languages, practices, traditions and experiences.

RECOGNITION

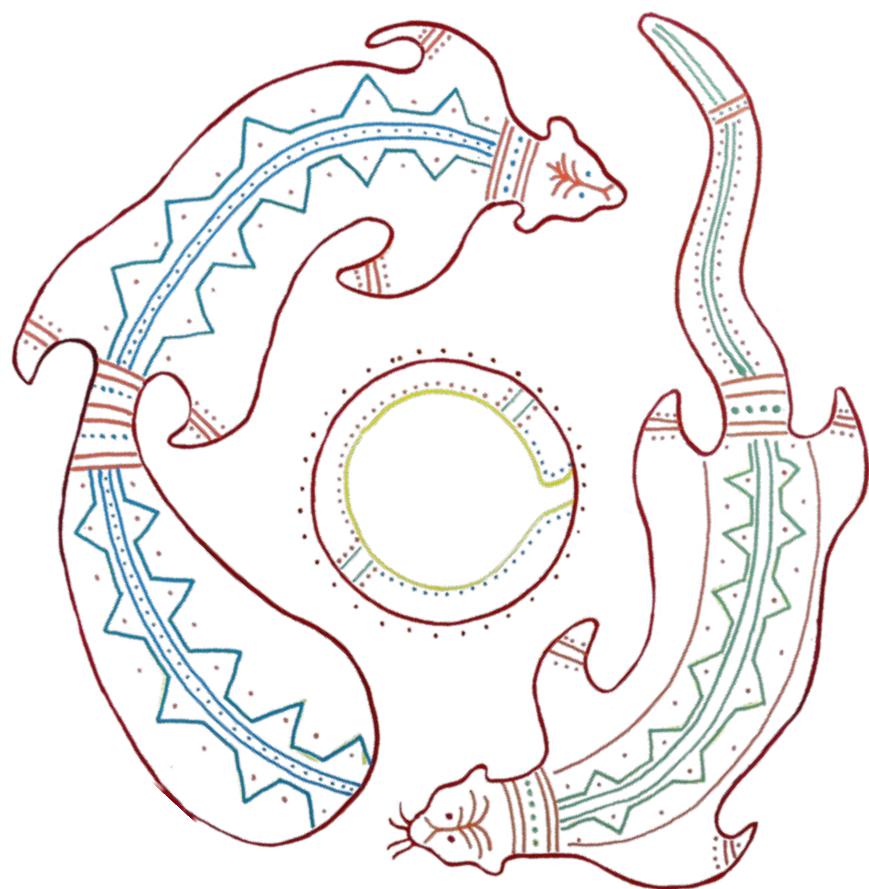
Options Bytown recognizes that Indigenous Peoples are self-determining peoples with distinct rights.

Options Bytown recognizes that Indigenous Peoples determine their own needs with regard to homelessness and housing.

INCLUSION

Options Bytown is committed to working in collaboration with Indigenous partners in the design and delivery of our programs to ensure that they respond to the distinct needs of our Indigenous clients.

Options Bytown will provide an environment that is safe, secure and supportive of Indigenous Peoples.



Our Reconciliation Action Plan

September 2022 - September 2025

The Options Bytown Reconciliation Action Plan is a framework for our organisation to build respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples, and to contribute to the work of reconciliation.

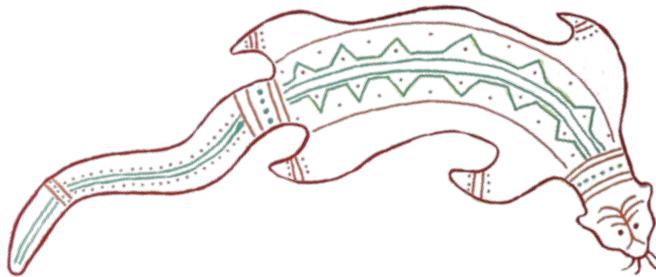
Our Reconciliation Action Plan articulates values that will guide our relationship with Indigenous people: respect, recognition and inclusion. It includes practical actions that will support our contribution to reconciliation, both internally with regard to governance and the recruitment and development of staff, and externally, with regard to its delivery of services to the communities within which we operate.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan identifies clear deliverables, tangible actions, a plan to evaluate our progress and a requirement that we remain accountable to our Indigenous partners, tenants and clients on our results.

The development of our Reconciliation Action Plan was driven by a working group made up of Options Bytown staff and board members. With the support and guidance of Indigenous partners, housing and homelessness experts and Indigenous people in the community that are current or potential users of our services, the working group is now tasked with the ongoing implementation, monitoring, evaluation and maintenance of our Reconciliation Action Plan.

This Reconciliation Action Plan will guide Options Bytown in taking respectful, appropriate and effective actions to support the specific needs of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis members of our community.

RESPECT



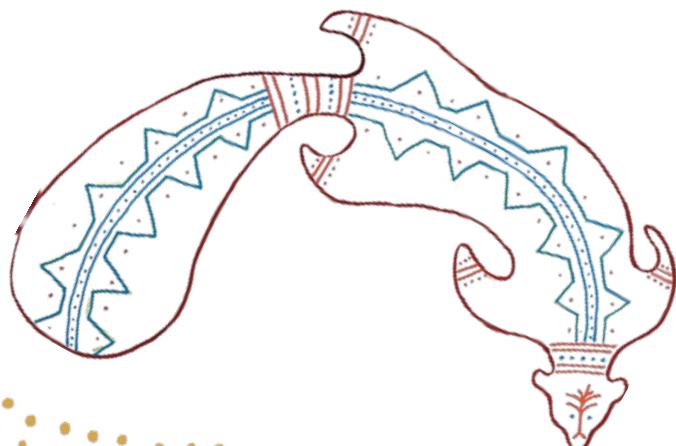
ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Indigenous identities, cultures, histories, knowledge and rights.	<p>Provide training and educational opportunities for every member of the Options Bytown team and Board of Directors.</p> <p>Share information with all staff through internal communication channels for consistent and updated access to resources and learning opportunities.</p>	Ongoing
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<p>Implement recommendations from recent workplace culture policy and practice assessment.</p> <p>Integrate Anti-Oppression/Anti-Racism training into the corporate training plan.</p>	Ongoing
Bring the Options Bytown Community together annually to recognize the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR).	<p>Annual recognition of NDTR through an all-staff meeting and learning event.</p>	September 2022 and every September going forward
Recognize National Indigenous Peoples Day.	<p>Host/promote events for tenants and clients to support the recognition and intent of NDTR and National Indigenous Peoples Day and build on learnings from year to year.</p> <p>NDTR is statutory holiday for all Options Bytown staff.</p>	June 2023 and every June going forward

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE
Observe cultural protocols and offer land acknowledgements that are meaningful and recognize the vast overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples amongst the Ottawa homeless population and the role of Options Bytown.	<p>Written land acknowledgements in physical and virtual Options Bytown spaces (inside and outside our buildings, resource centres and other sites, website, email signatures, etc.).</p> <p>Provide staff with information and tools to confidently and informatively conduct land acknowledgements in their work.</p> <p>In collaboration with Indigenous partners, review opportunities to appropriately integrate Indigenous protocol in other aspects of Options Bytown practice.</p>	September 2022 - June 2023 March 2023 - March 2024 Ongoing
Engagement of Options Bytown Staff in the delivery of the RAP.	<p>Formal mechanisms to share information on progress (newsletter, website, etc.).</p> <p>Tools for staff to support their participation in RAP outcomes (Reconciliation Library, cultural events, access to Knowledge Keepers, etc.).</p> <p>Offer informal debriefing opportunities for staff as we move through this work to support.</p>	Ongoing

RECOGNITION

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE
Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Indigenous partner organizations.	Work in partnership with Indigenous organizations in both service delivery and program development.	Ongoing
Seek ongoing advice from Indigenous partner organizations on the delivery of our RAP.	Build and maintain a roster of organizations with specialized expertise that can inform the delivery of elements of this plan.	Ongoing
Promote reconciliation with other housing providers and organizations through the sharing of our work throughout the development of the RAP.	While recognizing that we continue to learn throughout this work, share our work along with lessons learned, with other organizations in the Ottawa community & beyond.	Ongoing
Engage broadly with members of the Indigenous homeless community to inform program design and service delivery.	Hold engagement sessions to seek the ongoing input of Indigenous people with lived experience of homelessness, ensuring appropriate recognition for their work. Gain and maintain an understanding of the profile and needs of the Indigenous homeless population in Ottawa.	Ongoing

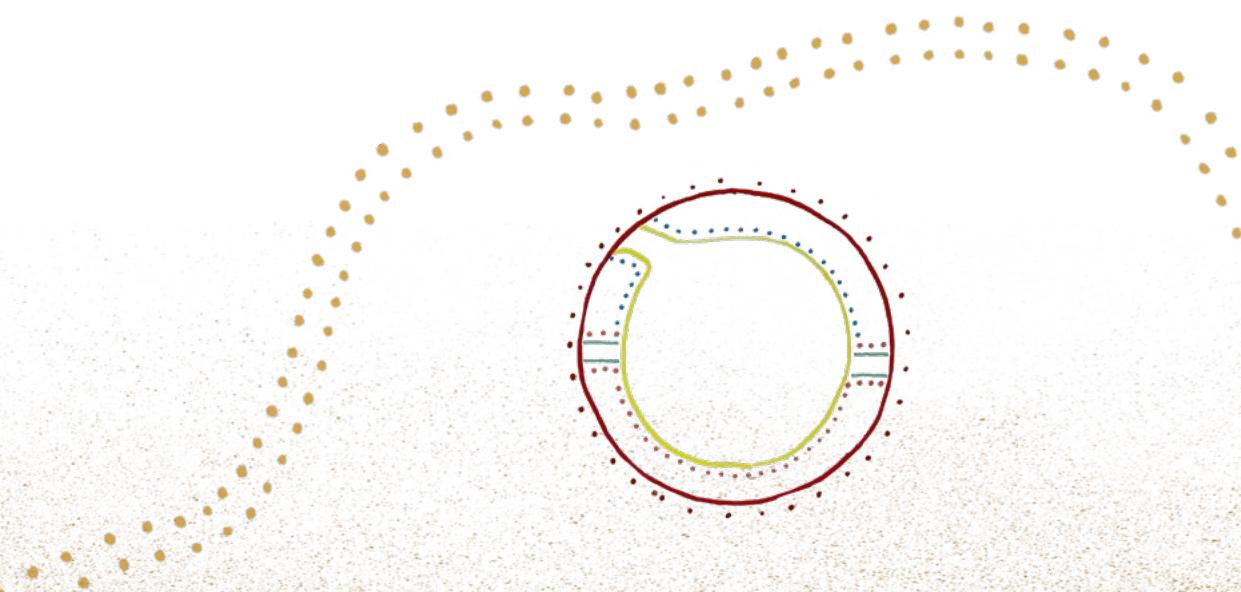
ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE
Communicate the principles set out in our plan broadly, report transparently on our results, and engage the community in reviewing our practices.	Adopt a transparent approach to communicating and reviewing our RAP, and seek the support of the community in its ongoing review and maintenance.	Ongoing
Initiate and maintain a relationship with a local Indigenous Elder and/or Knowledge Keeper.	An Elder or Knowledge Keeper will be invited to guide us in the implementation of our RAP, and provide spiritual support to our Indigenous clients.	September 2022



INCLUSION

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE
Provide support to Options Bytown staff in their application of learnings related to support for Indigenous clients.	<p>Research training options, and build a training plan to maintain staff education related to support for Indigenous clients.</p> <p>Work with staff to identify practices that could be made more inclusive.</p> <p>Facilitate access to Knowledge Keepers for ongoing support in learning.</p>	September 2022 – September 2023
Create an organizational culture that attracts and prioritizes greater diversity amongst staff and board to include Indigenous representation.	<p>Update HR and board policies to ensure recruitment of Indigenous Peoples at every level of the organization.</p> <p>Implement recommendations from recent workplace culture review to create a workplace culture that is supportive of diverse staff and board members, including Indigenous Peoples.</p>	September 2022 – June 2023
Provision of resources that support the specific needs of Indigenous tenants.	Secure funding and/or partnerships in support of Indigenous cultural activities, spiritual support and other elements to enhance supportive services delivered by Options Bytown.	January 2023 - March 2024

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE
Introduce design features into Options Bytown buildings that acknowledge Indigenous culture and support congregation and ceremony.	With input from Indigenous partners and tenants/clients, incorporate artwork, land acknowledgements and other physical design elements into Options Bytown spaces.	September 2023
Work to expand housing options for Indigenous people in Ottawa who are experiencing homelessness.	Working with Indigenous partners, explore the role of Options Bytown in expanding housing options for Indigenous Peoples.	Ongoing
Work to improve access and remove structural and systemic barriers for Indigenous Peoples to access non-profit and supportive housing.	Work with our Indigenous partners and clients to assess where changes are needed and advocate for change.	September 2023 – September 2025



GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE
Maintain RAP Working Group to drive governance and accountability for the RAP.	A working group comprising Options Bytown staff and board representatives that is tasked with oversight, review and reporting in relation to the RAP.	September 2022
Provide appropriate support for implementation of RAP commitments.	<p>Define resource needs for RAP implementation.</p> <p>Monitor and support reporting and other commitments related to funding for RAP implementation.</p> <p>Engage Options Bytown Management in RAP implementation.</p>	October 2022 - November 2022 September 2022 - September 2025 October 2022
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally.	<p>Develop clear performance measures to evaluate results.</p> <p>Define appropriate systems to monitor, evaluate (including Options Bytown's existing RBA process) and report on RAP commitments.</p>	January 2023 - June 2023
Seek feedback from our Indigenous partners on implementation and progress of RAP.	Provide annual updates and opportunities for feedback from Indigenous partners, tenants and clients.	September 2022 – September 2025
Continue our reconciliation journey by reviewing and renewing our RAP every three years.	<p>Complete annual report on RAP and post on Options Bytown website.</p> <p>Every three years, conduct full evaluation of progress, including review and renewal of RAP commitments.</p>	September 2025

TIMELINE

COMMITMENT	DELIVERY
Launch and promote our RAP through internal and external channels.	September 2022
Report on progress.	September 2023 and every September going forward
Internal communications to ensure engagement of all Options Bytown staff and board.	Quarterly
Review and refresh the RAP every three years.	September 2025
Integrate RAP commitments into Options Bytown 2023-2028 corporate strategic plan.	2023



Join Us On The Path

Options Bytown's Reconciliation Action Plan will guide us through reconciliation practices and efforts both within our own organization and the housing and homelessness sector of Ottawa.

While we view our adoption of this Reconciliation Action Plan as an important step for our organization, a greater achievement will be if others in the community join us in adopting Reconciliation Action Plans of their own.

For Canada to move forward, we must all take action to achieve reconciliation through the creation of a more equitable society built on respect for First Nation, Inuit and Métis Peoples. Options Bytown is committed to doing our part. We hope that others will join us.

Acknowledgements

The development, steering, and creation of this Reconciliation Action Plan would not have been possible without the contributions of Options Bytown staff, board members and tenants, Indigenous organizations, and members of our community.

We owe a tremendous debt to Allan Clarke, not only for the time shared with us as key consultant for the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group but also for his ongoing support of reconciliation initiatives within Options Bytown.

We also express our immense gratitude for the Indigenous individuals and organizations who allowed us to walk with them along the path to Reconciliation:

- Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa Expert Steering Table
- Cornerstone Housing for Women
- Deloitte Indigenous
- Gignul Nonprofit Housing
- Inuit Nonprofit Housing Corporation
- Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition
- Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health
- Elder James Phelan
- Elder Vince Kicknosway

Thank you to Simon Brascoupé for developing a beautiful piece of artwork that became the visual identity of our Reconciliation Action Plan, and to Spruce Creative for the integration of Simon's vision into our final report.

Lastly, thank you to the Options Bytown Reconciliation Action Working Group, including co-chairs Annie Carruthers and Catharine Vandelinde, key consultant Allan Clarke and the following members who contributed to the development of this report:

- Hany Ibrahim
- Moish Kutnowski
- Daniel LeBlanc
- Krista Lesage
- Melissa Maclean
- Shanley Matthews
- Darryl Leboeuf
- Lindsay Trainor
- Lauren Kupferschmid
- Jaime Sadgrove
- Alexandra Dinsmore



We would like to thank the Ottawa Community Foundation for their generous support of the entire Reconciliation Action Plan development process. We look forward to our continued relationship as we implement this plan and share what we have developed with sector partners across Ottawa.

