Did you know?
Canada still discriminates on the basis of sex when it comes to the Indian Act. Early in 2019 the United Nations called on Canada to remove the sections that do not give First Nations women the same rights as First Nations men. While consultations have begun with the First Nations, the UN says there needs to be an end date.

Unless otherwise stated, “Edmonton” refers to Census Metropolitan Area and not solely the City of Edmonton.

Edmonton Vital Signs is an annual checkup conducted by Edmonton Community Foundation, in partnership with Edmonton Social Planning Council, to measure how the community is doing. Vital Topics are a quick look at a single issue and are timely and important to Edmonton.

Sources for these statistics are available at ecfoundation.org
**Education**

Enrolment of *Indigenous students* in post-secondary education is on the rise:

Increasing by 1,176 students in 2016/17 to 1,261 in 2017/18 at the University of Alberta and from 624 to 733 students at the University of Calgary.

2,027 Indigenous individuals completed their program in the Alberta post-secondary education system.

**IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 2017-2018:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>752</td>
<td>1,275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ECF@Work** Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton (EFS) received $40,000 per year for 3 years for healthy housing supports for *Indigenous Women* to help them reintegrate after a period of incarceration. These housing options provide Indigenous cultural supports, opportunities for the women to live with their children, and connections to the wider host of programming available through Elizabeth Fry Society, reducing recidivism.

**Income & Employment**

19% of Indigenous women are low income, compared to 9% of all women.

**MEDIAN INCOME FOR ALBERTA WOMEN IN 2015:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Nations</th>
<th>Métis</th>
<th>All Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$43,781</td>
<td>$48,929</td>
<td>$54,276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indigenous women are more likely than Indigenous men to hold jobs in *business, finance and administration, sales and services occupations.*

23.5% v.s. 5.4%

A larger proportion of Indigenous women hold jobs in *education, law and social, community and government services* compared to the total female population.

16.6% v.s. 14.8%

Indigenous women are likelier to hold *jobs in the trades* compared to all women.

5.3% v.s. 2.9%

In 2016 there were 58,720 female Indigenous workers in Alberta.

**THE TOP 3 AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT IN 2016 WERE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health care and social assistance</th>
<th>Retail trade</th>
<th>Accommodation and food service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10,720</td>
<td>7,350</td>
<td>6,115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Economic Resilience**

According to a report from University nuhelot’îne thiyots’î nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills, economic well-being of women is holistic when *it is not tied just to income but participation in living off the land and subsistence activities.*

In 2012,

- 11.9% of Indigenous women made clothing or footwear that year.
- 33.6% made arts or crafts.
- 20.0% of Indigenous women were interested, but cited a lack of time or resources to do so.

According to a report by IAAW and Status of Women Canada 2016, the impact of intergenerational trauma creates barriers that affect income.

- Saving and planning are *traditional values that have been lost.*
- The knowledge of *how to run a household, to parent,* and to be parented have been lost.
- These impacts have led to *ill health (mental, physical, spiritual) among Indigenous people,* as they were severed from knowledge of self-care and health-giving lifestyles.
- These factors make Indigenous people less ready to become employed and to stay employed.
- Reduced economic prosperity results in fewer Indigenous people who can qualify for home-ownership.
- We have an over-representation of Indigenous people in *sub-par housing situations.*

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW) is a non-profit organization that recognizes the role, value, and achievement of Indigenous women in society and raises awareness about the challenges and obstacles faced by Indigenous women. IAAW is based in Edmonton and operates in chapters across Alberta. Their programs include:

- IAAW ESQUAO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM for Indigenous women to become more involved in their communities.
- ESQUAO YOUTH LEADERSHIP focusing on safety, healthy relationships, current events and public speaking.
- ESQUAO AWARDS that honour the significant role women play in healing and development of their communities.

*Esquao* is the stylized version of the Cree word for *woman.*
In Canada, Indigenous women and girls are nearly 3X more likely to experience physical or sexual violence than non-Indigenous women and girls.

**MMIWG**
- 16% of all missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls cases are from Alberta; second only to B.C. (28%).
- 84% of Alberta cases are for murder; 14% are missing cases.

**SPOUSAL ABUSE**
- Approximately 15% of Indigenous women reported spousal violence by a current or former marital or common-law partner in the past five years, compared to 6% of non-Indigenous women.
- Indigenous women were also two times more likely (34%) to report having experienced emotional or financial abuse than non-Indigenous women (17%).
- Indigenous women experience more serious forms of spousal violence than their non-Indigenous counterparts.
- But, Indigenous women are less likely to be murdered by a spouse than a non-Indigenous woman (29% compared to 41%).

**HOMICIDE RATES**
- The rate of homicide for female Indigenous victims (3.30/100,000) was five times that of female non-Indigenous victims (0.69/100,000) in Canada.
- Indigenous homicide rate compared to the population:
  - Calgary 3% 14.77/100,000
  - Edmonton 5% 9.87/100,000

**INQURY INTO MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS**
- No one knows the exact number of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people in Canada.
- Statistics show that rates of violence against Métis, Inuit, and First Nations women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people are much higher than for non-Indigenous women in Canada.
- This violence amounts to a race-based genocide that has been empowered by colonial structures, evidenced notably by the Indian Act, the Sixties Scoop, residential schools, and breaches of human rights.

**LONE PARENTS**
- Indigenous women AND men are about twice as likely to be single parents compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts.
- 12% of Indigenous women are single mothers while 6.2% of non-Indigenous women are single mothers.

**CHILDREN IN CARE**
- Of the 10,647 children in care in June, 2018, 70% of children and youth in care are Indigenous. This is a 1% increase compared to June, 2017.

**SOURCES FOR THESE STATISTICS ARE AVAILABLE AT ecfoundation.org**
12 Indigenous Women from Alberta
you should know about...

**Pearl Calahasen**
Métis, born in Grouard, Alberta

FAMOUS FOR: being the first Métis woman elected to public office in Alberta in 1989 as an MLA for the Lesser Slave Lake riding. She served for more than 26 years.

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**Nellie Carlson**
Member of the Saddle Cree Nation

FAMOUS FOR: helping to organize the Indian Rights for Indian Women movement in the 1960s. Carlson fought tirelessly for 18 years to be recognized under the Indian Act after losing her status when she married a non-Indigenous man. This overturned oppressive laws that have harmed thousands of First Nations women and their descendants.

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**Melina Laboucan-Massimo**
Member of the Lubicon Cree First Nation

FAMOUS FOR: establishing the Pîtâpan Solar Project for her community of Little Buffalo in 2015. She is the owner and founder of Lubicon Solar, a company looking to build energy alternatives in Alberta and she is the host of the television series Power to the People, airing on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network.

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**Leona Makokis**
Member of the Saddle Creek Cree Nation

FAMOUS FOR: transforming the University nihachôte'nîhtâyots'į nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills from being only a host campus for other institutions to becoming the first independently accredited Indigenous institution to offer its own degrees during her tenure as Executive Director (1982-1988), and then again as President (1992-2010).

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**Ashley Callingbull**
Member of the Enoch Cree First Nation

FAMOUS FOR: being the first Canadian and first Indigenous woman to win Mrs. Universe in 2015. She is an actor for the Canadian television series Blackstone which is currently available on Netflix.

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**Tantoo Cardinal**
Métis, born in Fort McMurray, Alberta

FAMOUS FOR: achieving the Order of Canada in 2009 for “her contributions to the growth and development of Indigenous performing arts in Canada, as a screen and stage actor, and as a founding member of the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company”. In 2017, she won the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television’s Earle Grey Award for lifetime achievement.

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**Thelma Chalifoux**
Métis, born in Calgary, Alberta

FAMOUS FOR: co-founding the Slave Lake Friendship Centre, being the first woman to receive the National Aboriginal Achievement Award, and became the first Indigenous, female Senator in 1997.

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**Georgina Lightning**
Member of the Samson Cree Nation

FAMOUS FOR: being the first North American Indigenous Woman to direct a major feature film in 2008 (Older Than America). In 2010 she received the White House Project Epic Award for Emerging Artist. She was the first Treaty First Nations Woman to be initiated into the Directors Guild of Canada - through the Calgary Division, 2019.

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**Karen Crowshoe**
Blackfoot from the Piikani Reserve

FAMOUS FOR: being the first Blackfoot woman to be sworn in to the Alberta Bar. In 2018, she became the first female First Nations provincial judge.

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**Audrey Poitras**
Métis, born near Elk Point, Alberta

FAMOUS FOR: becoming the first female president of the Métis Nation of Alberta in 1996 and in 2018, was re-elected for her eighth term.

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**Marlene Poitras**
Member of the Mikisew Cree First Nation

FAMOUS FOR: becoming the first woman to be elected as the Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief of Alberta in 2018.

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**Muriel Stanley Venne**
Métis, born in Lamont, Alberta

FAMOUS FOR: being appointed one of the first seven commissioners of the Alberta Human Rights Commission in 1973. She is a member of the Order of Canada (2005) and recipient of the Alberta Order of Excellence (2019).