



National Day for Truth and Reconciliation/Orange Shirt Day

**September 30, 2022
Commemoration Guide**



**Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion
Centre canadien pour la diversité et l'inclusion**

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation/Orange Shirt Day

This guide has been created to help organizations who are planning on recognizing and honouring September 30th in their workplaces. The guide aims to tell the story of the origins of colonization on the land that Canada is situated on, outline the present-day impacts of this colonization on Indigenous peoples, and provide ideas for how organizations can establish their role in reconciliation with Indigenous communities. While we intend to provide helpful examples and information for organizations looking to bring reconciliation into the workplace, we want to acknowledge that the information contained in this guide is not exhaustive. Every Canadian's journey with reconciliation will be personal, and we hope this guide contains ideas that can encourage individuals along this journey.

Colonization in Canada's History

Indigenous peoples throughout the area now known as Canada thrived on these lands for millennia before European contact was made. Due to the vast number of Indigenous nations, each with their own cultures, languages, and traditions, it is impossible to group together their history. However, one common thread existed amongst them – all physical and spiritual needs were met using the resources given to them by the land. This is why valuing land and nature is a central tenet of all Indigenous communities, and this sets the stage for why the post-colonial actions that separated Indigenous peoples from the land were intentional and deeply traumatizing.

Listed below is an abbreviated timeline of key decrees, Acts, policies, reports, and events that contributed to the genocide of the Indigenous Peoples faced in Canada as background for moving forward. For more detailed information, please visit [The Canadian Encyclopedia website](#).

1400s - Doctrine of Discovery

A means of legitimizing the colonization of lands outside of Europe. Christopher Columbus arrives in the Americas.

1763 - The Royal Proclamation

Signed by King George III giving limited recognition of title to Indigenous communities and providing guidelines for negotiating treaties on a nation-to-nation basis.

1880s - Beginning of federal residential school system

While the federal residential school system began around 1883, the origins of the residential school system can be traced to as early as the 1830s — long before Confederation in 1867 — when the Anglican Church established a residential school in Brantford, Ont. Prior to this point, churches had built schools specifically for Indigenous children since the mid-1600s. For more information, visit the [Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada](#).

1982 - The Canadian Constitution Act, 1982

The [Canadian Constitution](#) is patriated, and thanks to the advocacy of Indigenous peoples, Section 35 recognizes and affirms [Aboriginal title](#) and treaty rights.

1997 - Last residential school closes

The last residential school to close was [Kivalliq Hall](#) in Rankin Inlet in the land that is now known as Nunavut. Kivalliq Hall was only recently recognized as a residential school, and until then Gordon Residential School in Punnichy, Saskatchewan, which closed in 1996, was known to be the last residential school.

2008 - Formal apology

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, on behalf of the Government of Canada, delivers a formal apology to residential school survivors and their families.

2015 - Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Report published with 94 calls to action.

2021 (May) - First public confirmation of residential school graves

215 unmarked graves were detected at Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia.

2021 (June) - Creation of federal statutory holiday

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30.

2022 (March) - Papal apology in Rome

Over 30 members of First Nation, Inuit and Métis delegations pleaded for and received a [private apology](#) from the Pope for the Roman Catholic church's actions in the creation of the residential school system. The Pope promised to deliver this apology on Indigenous land.

2022 (July) - Papal visit to Indigenous lands

The [Pope visited Indigenous lands in Alberta](#), Quebec and Nunavut and offered apologies for the church's involvement in residential schools.

Assimilation and the Roman Catholic Church

Since the first European contact on the land now known as Canada, European colonizers have intended to separate Indigenous peoples from their sacred lands and traditions in order to gain power over them. These efforts include the creation of residential schools, which were meant to forcibly assimilate Indigenous children into European society by means of cultural genocide. These church-run institutions operated for over 100 years, and the traumatic effects are still being felt by their survivors and descendants of survivors.

Orange Shirt Day has been observed on September 30th since 2013. It is an Indigenous-led grassroots commemorative day that honours the children who survived residential schools and remembers those who did not. In 2021, the government of Canada chose this date to be the date of the newly created National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. To learn more about the history Orange Shirt Day, please visit the official [Orange Shirt Day website](#).

What do allies need to know about meaningful reconciliation work?

One of the key aspects of reconciliation is learning how to respect and uphold treaties. All of us who live on the land now known as Canada live on land that is either covered by a treaty or is unceded territory. When land is covered by a treaty, all of the inhabitants of that land are responsible to uphold the guidelines of the treaty. The following links can help you learn about the treaties in the area of your office(s), staff, and home:

- Government of Canada – Treaties and agreements
- Government of Canada – A History of treaty-making in Canada
- Government of Canada – Maps of Indigenous peoples and lands
- Common myths about treaties

If the land you live or work on is unceded, that means that it is not covered by any treaties. The links listed below can explain what unceded territory is and what it means for the people who live on it:

- What we mean when we say Indigenous land is “unceded”
- Unceded land: The case for Wet’suwet’en sovereignty

Necessary education while taking actions towards reconciliation

CCDI offers many resources that are focused on reconciliation, as well as other resources that provide helpful background knowledge while committing yourself to reconciliation work. We have listed some of these resources below. Please note that you will need to log into the Knowledge Repository to access these webinars.

- Understanding your role in reconciliation
- Moving towards building a Reconciliation action plan: Indigenous inclusion with employers
- Systemic racism in the workplace: What is it and what is being done - A leaders panel
- Unconscious bias
- Safe spaces for dialogue: Encouraging authenticity in the workplace

How to commemorate September 30th

September 30th is a statutory holiday for federal organizations, but many other organizations have decided that closing their office is the right choice for them as well. There are many reasons that an organization may decide to close on this day or not, but regardless of the decision, we have listed examples below of how to meaningfully engage in reconciliation work. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, and many of these activities can be done regardless if you have the day as a statutory holiday or not.

If you are not required to work on September 30th, you can get out in the community and get involved by:



Connecting with your local Friendship Centre

Friendship Centres offer a wide number of services and programs to Indigenous people living in urban areas, as well as resources to members of the public. Use the [directory of Friendship Centres](#) to find centres across the country.



Taking part in a ceremony or event open for the public near you

Many local groups will be hosting ceremonies or learning events to acknowledge the significance of this day. We suggest connecting with local Indigenous groups to find out what events will be taking place. Please note that many ceremonies will be intended for an Indigenous-only audience, and it is important to respect that you are not able to attend all events offered.



Volunteering with Indigenous-serving organizations

There are organizations across Canada that are created by and for Indigenous communities, and many of these offer information about how Canadians can volunteer with them to support their causes. You can connect with your local Friendship centre to find out about ways you can contribute to Indigenous-serving organizations. You can also reference the charities listed in the guide below under the subheading “Donating to Indigenous charities”.



Supporting Indigenous artists

Art is a very important and powerful tool that gives many Indigenous people a means of self-expression. In addition to the media listed in the resource guide, there are some organizations that list Indigenous artists and art such as the [National Film Bureau](#), the [Indigenous Arts Collective](#), and the [Indigenous Art Centre](#).

If you are required to work on September 30th, you can take steps towards personal reconciliation and spend time learning by:



Consuming media listed in the resource guide

CCDI's [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation / Orange Shirt Day](#) educational guide features many books, movies, and TV shows that you can view outside of your workday.



Listening to the [CCDI podcast](#) to be released on September 30th, 2022

The podcast guest is Laura Arndt from the [Survivors' Secretariat](#). It will be hosted by Anne-Marie Pham, the CEO of CCDI Charity.



Wearing an Orange Shirt

You can purchase an orange shirt from an [official merchandise supplier](#) to ensure that a portion of the proceeds are going back to the Orange Shirt Society and other Indigenous-supporting organizations.



Purchasing from an Indigenous-owned business

The Government of Canada has created a [database of Indigenous-owned businesses](#) to find businesses across the country that you can support and partner with.



Donating to Indigenous charities

Canada Helps provides a [list of charities](#) that support or promote the needs of Indigenous communities. We have listed some additional charities below:

- [Canadian Charities Helping Indigenous Communities in Canada](#)
- [Native Women's Association of Canada](#)
- [Indspire](#)
- [Legacy of Hope Foundation](#)
- [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami](#)
- [Reconciliation Canada](#)
- [True North Aid](#)
- [The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund](#)
- [Indian Residential School Survivors Society](#)

Ongoing reconciliation learning

Reconciliation does not have a fixed target – it is a lifelong journey that each individual takes. While on this journey, it's important that each person continues to center Indigenous voices in all their reconciliation actions. From the continued recovery of children's graves at residential school sites to the Roman Catholic Pope's recent visit to Canada, it's necessary to seek out Indigenous perspectives on all ongoing situations. Please see the list below with some helpful news sources:

- [Nation Talk](#) – sign up to this Indigenous-owned newswire to receive regular emails
- [APTN News](#)
- [Windspeaker](#)
- Learn about the ongoing [Sixties Scoop settlements](#)