



TORONTO ABORIGINAL SUPPORT SERVICES COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 2024 - Toronto, Ontario

## Toronto Indigenous Community Unites to Tackle Long Standing Issues.

Poverty, housing and the kinds of child and family services available have negatively and disproportionately impacted the lives of Indigenous Torontonians. It's a long-standing set of problems that the Toronto Aboriginal Social Services Council (TASSC), intends to do something about.

TASSC is a collaborative circle of Executives representing 24 diverse Indigenous agencies, some serving the most disadvantaged of all community members. In 2021-2022, TASSC engaged with over 1,000 Indigenous community members and stakeholders, shedding light on critical concerns. The engagement was part of the Toronto Aboriginal Research Project, a decade long initiative that recently completed its second report, *To Higher Ground*, calling for action on long standing issues. Information about the report can be found at <https://tarp.indigenousto.ca/>

Ten years after its first report, TASSC found that things have not changed appreciably for the community. In fact, they may have gotten worse. In response to these findings, TASSC is launching an ambitious engagement process to foster open dialogue and initiate positive change, through direct action of real benefit to the culturally rich, diverse and rapidly growing Indigenous people in Toronto.

The study undertaken by TASSC has underscored the urgency of addressing the social disparities faced by Indigenous individuals and families residing in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Poverty and housing emerged as top issues of concern, posing significant barriers to the well-being and prosperity of the Indigenous community. Additionally, concerns surrounding the accessibility and quality of child and family services resonated deeply with the respondents, pointing to a dire need for improvement in this vital aspect of community support.

Recognizing the gravity of these challenges, TASSC is taking proactive steps to implement concrete solutions. The organization's commitment to collaboration, community control, and inclusivity makes it well positioned to foster transformative change.

"TASSC stands as a powerful collective force, dedicated to addressing the hardships that Indigenous individuals face in our vibrant city" Lindsey Kretschmer, Executive Director, TASSC. "Our study results have illuminated the critical areas where our community requires substantial support, and we intend to ensure that these voices are heard, respected, and acted upon."



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A key component is the creation of opportunities to those who may not be Indigenous but who may care about the community and may wish to get involved. An "Allies Table" of Toronto leaders has been organized and are committed to helping where they can. With its corporate heft and diversity, Toronto has an opportunity to lead in creating innovative and impactful solutions in partnership with the Indigenous community.

"We believe that the key to sustainable change lies in the active participation and collaboration of all members of the Indigenous community and all those who care about us" Frances Sanderson, President, TASSC. "We hope to take the conversation past simple acknowledgement of problems to actually doing something about them. Together, we seek pathways towards a more equitable, compassionate, and thriving GTA for all."

TASSC invites the media, stakeholders, and the wider public to participate in and support this crucial engagement process. By amplifying the voices of those affected and encouraging diverse perspectives, TASSC aims to build a stronger, united front against systemic inequalities and create a brighter future for Indigenous individuals living in the GTA.

Lindsay Kretchmer  
Executive Director, TASSC

For more information, media inquiries, or to get involved, please contact:

Lindsay Kretchmer, Executive Director, Toronto Aboriginal Social Services Council  
647-748-6100, lkretschmer@tassc.ca, <https://tassc.ca>

### **About TASSC:**

The Toronto Aboriginal Social Services Council (TASSC) is a cooperative and collaborative confederacy of 24 diverse Indigenous agencies, dedicated to empowering and supporting the Indigenous community in the Greater Toronto Area. TASSC is committed to fostering a culture of unity, strength, and resilience while addressing the unique challenges faced by Indigenous individuals through culturally based, community-driven, and accountable initiatives.

### **TASSC Mission Statement:**

TASSC is the leading not-for-profit research, policy, and advocacy organization that addresses the social determinants of health to improve and enhance the socio-economic prospects and cultural well-being of Aboriginal peoples living in the City of Toronto.

Note: For high-resolution images, logos, or other media resources related to this press release, please contact Lindsay Kretchmer