

Empire's Indigenous Relations Policy

VISION

Empire's *Indigenous Relations Policy* strives to promote Reconciliation in the pursuit of Call to Action 92 of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* of Canada.

Business and reconciliation are comprised of relationship building, increasing Indigenous inclusion across our business lines including employment and procurement, and embedding Indigenous perspectives in culturally respectful ways throughout our company.

Empire operates on the traditional territories of many Indigenous nations across Canada, commonly referred to as Turtle Island. As a purpose-led company, we have the potential to create more resilient relationships with Indigenous people and communities.

As one of Canada's largest grocery retailers, ongoing Indigenous engagement is our way forward in supporting reconciliation, understanding our role in food access, and in Strengthening Our Communities.



COMMITMENTS

To strengthen and support the many Indigenous individuals, families, communities, and organizations across the traditional territories of Indigenous nations, Empire commits to the following:

- We recognize the unique legal and constitutional rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and will seek to understand and respect their historical and contemporary realities.
- We will deliberately engage and purposely collaborate with Indigenous communities to build relationships throughout the company's spheres of influence, including the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and Métis National Council.
- We will work with Indigenous communities to overcome barriers to accessing healthy, culturally relatable, and affordable food.
- We will foster continuous improvement and put Indigenous community feedback mechanisms in place.

FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS

Our company-wide commitments are built on four pillars that work together to nurture and sustain positive and progressive relationships:

Leadership Actions	Employment	Business Development	Community Relations
Reinforce an organizational focus on Indigenous relations.	Deploy targeted resources to achieve equitable representation of Indigenous persons in the workplace.	Establish sustainable business relationships with Indigenous-owned businesses through intentional resourcing and actions.	Develop, invest, and sustain positive relations with Indigenous communities, members and stakeholders, prioritizing critical access to healthy and affordable food.

We will engage with Indigenous Peoples and communities to progress on this collective journey in several ways:

- **Indigenous Visibility** - Creating welcoming spaces in our stores, offices, and distribution centers through acknowledgement of the lands and waters of the respective Indigenous culture(s) where we are located across the country.
- **External Indigenous Relations** - Starting with the Communities of Interest, deploying needs-based listening with potential partners and acting with swift responsiveness. Partnerships might include employment, mentorships, health & wellness, opportunities to become wholesale customers, and for ongoing learning purposes. Initiatives arising organically should also be well managed for timeliness such as in food security situations or new Indigenous product vendor prospects.
- **Empire Indigenous Governance** - The Progressive Aboriginal Relations Working Group and the Indigenous Steering Committee have been implemented. On the horizon is the formation of an External Indigenous Advisory Council and Internal Indigenous Advisory Group.
- **Internal Indigenous Relations** - Community-building internally operates on an annual cycle of Sharing Circles with additional virtual (live or recorded) and in-person activities and celebrations to complement the Indigenous employee experience. Regular communication with respectful use of Indigenous knowledge and feedback is encouraged for continual improvement in growing, retaining, and attracting Indigenous Peoples.
- **Environmental and Sustainable Indigenous innovation** - We recognize the close cultural ties that Indigenous Peoples have to the land, waters, and the environment. We accept our own obligations toward the land and to conduct our business in an environmentally responsible way.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To consider along the Indigenous path forward:



Encompasses an understanding and practice of Indigenous community protocols.

Means Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are both learning in process together.

Honours that the integrity of Indigenous people and Indigenous communities must not be undermined or disrespected when working with Indigenous people.

Centres meaningful and sustainable community engagement.

REFERENCES:

In the spirit of this journey, the Empire Indigenous Relations Policy is informed by the following:

- Empire Diversity Equity & Inclusion Strategy and Commitments.
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
- Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report → Call to Action #92
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals → #s 4, 8, 10
- *Indigenous Peoples* has been used by the Supreme Court of Canada to refer to Canada's First Peoples and their descendants. Legal definitions of Aboriginal peoples of Canada include the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada (Constitution Act, 1982. Section 35).

The Indigenous path forward for Empire is a commitment to a generations-long journey ahead that we are proud to pursue.