



IFMO Program and Service Development: National Fire Support for Indigenous Communities

The IFMO is developing a series of programs and services based on the outcomes of the technical engagement sessions. At this stage of development, data is being collected to determine the applicable best practices. As part of this, existing provincial and territorial training programs are being examined to see how these programs can support communities on a national scale.

Current trends in fire protection programs are sporadic. Every region has a different model or delivery mechanism. While some systems work well, there are nonetheless some challenges. From funding to recruitment and retention, firefighter training to community preparedness and fire protection, there are many areas that need to be addressed. The IFMO will work with communities to identify and meet their individual needs.

The goal of developing programs and services that meet the needs of Indigenous communities and address the multitude of challenges in effective and culturally appropriate ways is no small feat. The IFMO project team has been tasked with research and development, and progress is being made. The outcome of this phase is to develop national programs and services that support Indigenous communities with the best in industry practices and develop networking and data collection for Indigenous communities, fire departments, prevention teams, and community members for use and sharing.

Using appropriate content and language, the IFMO is developing sustainable, culturally appropriate programs that can be delivered to communities by communities.



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It has been a busy summer and fall for the IFMO project. The technical engagement report was released highlighting important expertise and insight. Eight community engagement sessions were held this fall and we are continuing our work on developing programs and services and the National Database. This newsletter tells you a bit about what we have been doing.



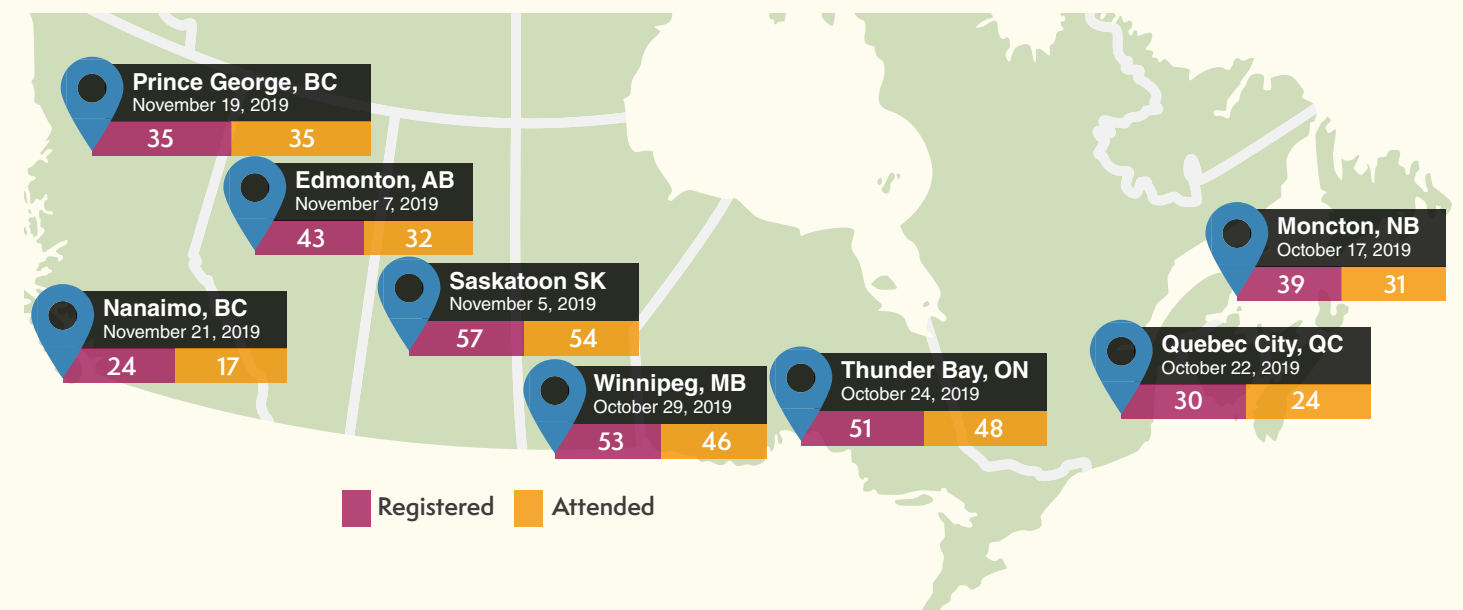
IFMO Community Engagement Summary

Eight community sessions were held throughout October and November. These sessions were an opportunity for community representatives to gather and share their voices to help bring about positive changes for Indigenous communities from coast to coast.

These sessions examined three topic areas: Governance Models, Programs and Services, and Managing Expectations. Facilitation experts Innovation 7 designed the sessions to lead participants through a progressively deeper exploration of the topics. IFMO Project Lead Arnold Lazare presented the planned activities, a moderated armchair panel further explored the topics to provide greater understanding and context, and finally, the group divided into teams to examine a series of thought-provoking questions.

One of our strategies to encourage community representation was to issue travel reimbursement to participants on the day of the session. We are pleased to report that participants traveled from far and wide to ensure that their community had an active role in this important work. Representatives were from a diverse range of leadership roles, both formal and informal, and included adults of all ages. After each engagement session, we published initial summary reports on our website. We will be publishing the combined findings from all eight sessions in December.

Community Engagement Sessions





Indigenous Fire Marshal Office Project National Advisory Committee

The National Advisory Committee (NAC) for the development of the Indigenous Fire Marshal Office (IFMO) has been struck.

The NAC is in a place to provide sound advisement to the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada (AFAC) as it endeavours to co-create the development of the first Indigenous Fire Marshal's Office in Canada. In October 2019, Elder Mike Mitchell along with Frank Bighead - Technician Assembly of First Nations Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure, Lee Roy Blacksmith - James Bay Cree, and Erin Myers - Métis National Council collaborated with facilitator Michelle Sault and IFMO Project Lead Arnold Lazare to begin to co-create the governance model for the project.

A priority for the group is honouring the need to be culturally astute and considerate of all distinctions-based groups. The group also acknowledges that it is imperative to recognize the north as a unique place, with unique people and unique needs. Their work resulted in governance structure, process and model examples that were utilized in community engagement sessions to help participants visualize the complex governance considerations.

Steve Stark of Tsawwassen First Nation will join the committee for their next meeting in January 2020. Dialogue continues with the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami to determine their participation. During the two-day meeting, the group will review the findings of the community engagement sessions, devise their Terms of Reference, and examine legislation and governance options to advise the project on 2020-2021 fiscal year research and framework.



Front: Mike Mitchell - Elder. Left to right: Frank Bighead - Technician Assembly of First Nations Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure, Arnold Lazare - IFMO Project Lead, Lee Roy Blacksmith - James Bay Cree, Michelle Sault - Facilitator, Erin Myers - Métis National Council



for us, by us

This is our guiding philosophy. It means:

- > Indigenous-created organization to serve Indigenous communities.
- > Indigenous governance structure developed in collaboration with Indigenous leadership.
- > New, ongoing funding, free of political interference.
- > Fire service careers for Indigenous Peoples.
- > An organization accountable to Indigenous communities through transparent reporting.



The IFMO National Database: Information for us, by us

One of the outcomes of the technical engagement sessions that were held in 2018/19 was that there was a need for a tool that will capture fire incident data from Indigenous communities. This tool is the IFMO National Database.

Communities have differing and unique needs. The database will capture Indigenous-specific information on fire incidents, training, equipment, infrastructure, demographics, and fire prevention activities, including the causes, origins, and circumstances of fires. This paints a community-specific picture and allows for comparisons to be made on local, regional, and national levels. The information will be collected 'for us, by us' and will, therefore, help in selecting the right approach, programs, and services for each community.

The database will be an important resource for communities to learn from the successes and challenges in other communities, as well as share their own experiences, in order to manage and deliver their fire services. The development of the National Database is one more important step toward the goal of supporting capacity building for safer communities.



IFMO Talks Fire Prevention Over Fire Suppression

On October 22, 2019, Kynan O'Rourke presented on behalf of the IFMO project at Nookiwin Tribal Council's "Mamowenchige - Working Together" Conference in Thunder Bay, Ontario. The message of the importance of fire prevention before suppression was delivered. The IFMO project is based on the recognition that the fire safety needs in Indigenous communities are unique. Information was shared with conference attendees on how the IFMO is addressing these needs—the use of coast to coast to coast consultation, capacity building, the development of a national database, and the use of culturally appropriate training.

The importance of community involvement during an emergency and how to prepare for an emergency were also discussed. Using his time in Kelowna, BC during the 2003 Okanagan Mountain Park fire, Kynan provided relatable experience for community members who want to help but don't have the training to be able to support their community's needs in an emergency.



An artist's rendering of the IFMO presentation given at the Nookiwin Tribal Council's "Mamowenchige - Working Together" Conference in Thunder Bay, Ontario on October 22, 2019.

THE IFMO PROJECT PLAN

