



COUNCIL TRAVEL REPORT

For Immediate Release:

Ohiarikhó:wa/July 9, 2025

AKWESASNE PARTICIPATION AT 1965 IWA ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AC-SSCU & CCOS JOINT SESSIONS **CHIEF VANESSA ADAMS**

Kawehno:ke District Chief Vanessa Adams recently attended the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement (IWA) Advisory Committee, Advisory Committee on Social Services Coordination Unit (AC-SSCU), and Chiefs Committee on Social (CCOS) Joint Sessions held in Toronto, Ontario from June 26-27, 2025.

As a long time, representative on both the CCOS and the IWA Advisory Committee, Chief Vanessa participated in meetings that focused on reforming the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement to address longstanding systemic discrimination, as identified by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Reforming the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement (IWA):

Ongoing dialogue focused on addressing discriminatory policies and practices embedded in the agreement, particularly for First Nations not included under the original terms.

Formation of a Reform Advisory Committee:

A new committee is being established to help guide the reform process and ensure Indigenous-led direction.

Work Plan Development:

Collaborative planning began on timelines, priorities, and community engagement strategies to support the reform agenda.

Jurisdictional and Systemic Complexities:

There was a significant discussion around the legal and operational challenges within the 1965 IWA, especially in relation to non-signatory Nations like Akwesasne.

Social Services Reform:

Updates were shared regarding First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS), focusing on family sustainability, prevention funding, housing, and broader community well-being initiatives.

Representation of Akwesasne:

Chief Vanessa Adams continues to offer Akwesasne's input, reinforcing the need for inclusive reform that reflects our community size, structure, and jurisdictional context.



Legacy and Continuity:

This work continues the advocacy previously undertaken by Chief Connie Thompson and Grand Chief Abram Benedict, which Chief Vanessa remains committed to carry forward.

KEY TAKEAWAYS & NEXT STEPS:

- Akwesasne's Voice Matters: Continued participation ensures that our perspectives – as a non-signatory community to the 1965 IWA – are reflected in decision-making that affects all First Nations.
- Support for Broader Reform: By contributing insights and experiences from Akwesasne, we help shape reforms that will benefit First Nations across Ontario.
- Ongoing Involvement: I will remain engaged both in-person and virtually as the Reform Advisory Committee begins its work and as the implementation of FNCFS reform continues.
- Community Benefits: This advocacy helps secure access to improved, culturally informed, and equitable social services for our families and children.
- Welcoming Space: A positive and inclusive environment was maintained throughout the sessions – notably, children were welcomed in the room, emphasizing a family-first atmosphere.

"I am truly grateful for the welcoming environment of these meetings as children were welcomed into the room. All expenses for committee members are covered and reimbursed."

— Chief Vanessa Adams