



2019

TO

2021

REPORT TO  
THE COMMUNITY

MÉTIS CROSSING

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Celebrating 10 Years  
of Opening Doors  
to Education, Training  
and Research



The Rupertsland Institute (RLI) – Métis Centre of Excellence operates under the mandates of education, training and research. The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) entrusted the RLI Board of Governors with this mandate in 2010.

The RLI Board earns this trust through effective policy governance and through RLI's innovative program design and approach to professional, transparent, and accountable service delivery.

RLI's vision for a skilled, knowledgeable and self-reliant Métis Nation is integral to enhancing the self-sufficiency and well-being of Alberta Métis through quality education, training and research.

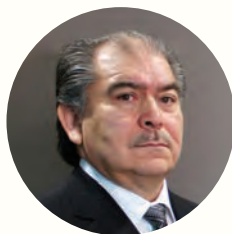
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# Message from the CEO



As the founding CEO of Rupertsland Institute – Métis Centre of Excellence, Lorne Gladu alongside his team has transformed the lives of Métis people through the support provided by Rupertsland Institute and its mandates in Education, Training and Research.

Lorne has worked to further the Métis Education Foundation as a partner to Alberta post-secondary institutions by creating 19 endowments that began disbursing funds through the Métis Scholar Awards in 2009. To support the Alberta Métis Education and Training Strategy, Lorne and his team secured a labour market funding agreement with the government of Canada amounting to \$170M over ten years.

A visionary community advocate and bridge-builder, Lorne is a tireless advocate for Métis people in general and Métis learners in particular.

Greetings to fellow Citizens of the Métis Nation:

This report to the community spans two years (2019-20 and 2020-21) due to the global disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. While METI-Service locations continue to remain closed until further notice, virtual service delivery is available through online and telecommunication modes of operations.

In this challenging time, RLI has re-aligned services to meet client obligations and has collaborated with the MNA to assist Métis Citizens by offering financial assistance to MNA Regional Councils and its sister affiliate, Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc. This required a decision to push aside RLI’s corporate business plan, re-allocate funds and expand remote-based “online” services through METI-Services.

More specifically, we created new programs to address immediate needs of the Métis community. First, we ensured that post-secondary students could access distance-learning supports. Second, the MNA and RLI created the Community Emergency Support Program to provide targeted wage-subsidy funds to support Métis communities impacted by COVID-19. Third, RLI launched the Rupertsland Student Emergency Program (RSEP) through a partnership with the MNA and the Métis Capital Housing Corporation. Fourth, RLI partnered with Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc. to provide subsidies for eligible Alberta Métis entrepreneurs. Rupertsland Institute also faced the welcome challenge of designing a program delivery system for its brand new Post-Secondary Education (PSE) program. The new PSE program had to be implemented in relatively short order. During a two-week period once Métis Citizen access became available, our team processed more than 700 student applications and reached maximum program applications by November 16. The community response and student demand indicated a huge need for Métis post-secondary support.

As with all new programs, there is always the “live-and-learn” period and we quickly learned RLI will need to address staffing constraints to deliver this new program. The terms of the funding agreement restrict RLI’s ability to hire the appropriate staff complement to service the huge community demand for the PSE program, so we intend to work closely with the funding agency to correct this problem.

Furthermore, we have been very busy enhancing community connections. This has been done by developing online resources and leveraging the Rupertsland Métis Student Association. We are continuing development on the RLI Alumni Asso-

ciation. Additionally, we celebrated the educational and professional success of RLI clients with an Evening of Excellence in June 2021.

In terms of organizational changes, I would also like to share that RLI has restructured its staff into three functional areas: a) Executive Team Services (ETS) – consisting of Chief Executive Officer, Senior Executive Officer, Senior Director of Operations, HR Director, and Communications Director. b) Senior Team Services (STS) – consisting of Directors/Associate Directors. c) Regional Team Services (RTS) – consisting of Regional Managers, MTE/PSE Counsellors, Intake Personnel, Online Services, Rupertsland Métis Student Association, Métis Student Services, and service-delivery sites (formerly known as “Métis Training to Employment”) now called “Métis Education Training and Information Services”.

ETS sets the strategic direction via Board priorities and business plan objectives. It monitors RLI’s annual workplan and has oversight over RLI’s policy-based approach to services. The STS works closely with ETS to implement the annual workplan. The RTS is the face of RLI and leads our front-line service network. Challenges aside, the past two years were fruitful. I am very pleased to highlight the continued success of the RLI-administered Métis Education Foundation (MEF) and the Rupertsland Centre for Métis Research (RCMR). The RCMR is a long-standing initiative and a recent beneficiary of a tripartite funding agreement between the Métis Nation of Alberta, the Rupertsland Institute, and the University of Alberta. It forms part of the MOU between these parties and is led by Métis academics. Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, the RCMR has recently published a book stemming from the Daniels Conference in 2017.

In closing, I want to thank the Board and staff at RLI. Everything done at RLI is a team effort, and all would not be possible without good governance, a dedicated staff, senior team leadership, and most importantly, regional team services.

I look forward to reopening our facilities in a post-COVID Canada.

Sincerely,

Lorne Gladu  
CEO, Rupertsland Institute

This year, Rupertsland Institutes founding CEO, Lorne Gladu, received the 2021 Indspire Award for Education. The Indspire Awards honours 12 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis individuals who exemplify Indigenous excellence and whose stories inspire, uplift, and educate Canadians about the contributions Indigenous people make to our country.

We are extremely proud of Lorne and grateful for the work he does for RLI and the Métis community.

To watch and learn more about the 2021 Indspire Awards you can visit [www.indspire.ca/events/indspire-awards/](http://www.indspire.ca/events/indspire-awards/).

# Message from the Chair



Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) President, Audrey Poitras is one of the highest profile Métis women in Canada. Audrey was elected as the first female President in 1996, becoming the longest-serving President of the MNA; A strong statement displaying the trust and leadership she has gained.

Audrey has been a strong advocate for Métis rights and will continue to move the Métis rights agenda forward with the help of the Daniels Supreme Court decision in 2016. President Poitras successfully negotiated partnerships with colleges and universities, for Métis Endowment funds of \$30 million.

It has never been a better time to pursue post-secondary education for Métis Citizens in Alberta. Rupertsland Institute (RLI) has opened its doors to all years of post-secondary study for eligible students enrolled in university and college, thanks to the Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategy that supports Métis Citizens pursuing higher learning.

Launched in November 2020, the newly created RLI Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Program has provided broad annual supports to more than 700 Métis Citizens enrolled in post-secondary institutions. Specific supports based on individual needs are also available under the new Métis Student Services (MSS) Program. The new PSE and MSS supports have been aligned with the Métis Training to Employment (MTE) Program, which has provided support for the final year of studies in a post-secondary program since the 1990s. The new post-secondary programming came to fruition during the global pandemic that has tested RLI’s ability to adapt and grow under extraordinary circumstances. In fact, RLI has launched a number of programs to support Métis Citizens struggling with the impacts of COVID-19.

Much of this support came during the early weeks of the pandemic when uncertainty about the deadly COVID-19 virus gripped the Métis Nation in Alberta, and I want to acknowledge and thank all of the brave Métis Citizens who stepped up during this grave period to help our most vulnerable Citizens. We may never know how many lives were saved by this action. However, I am certain the support provided to our Métis families, Elders, and infirmed Citizens illuminated a path forward during this dark period so that we could collectively rise above the fear and helplessness many faced in isolation early on.

Over 3,000 Chromebook devices were given to Métis K to 12 students to facilitate virtual learning. In July 2020, RLI also launched the Rupertsland Student Emergency Program (RSEP). In co-operation with the MNA and the Métis Capital Housing Corporation, RLI has provided more than \$1.1 million in emergency supports for rent, food and urgently needed equipment, such as laptops. As of March 31, 2021, more than 1,300 RSEP supports have been given to Métis Citizens enrolled in post-secondary institutions.

The MNA, RLI and the University of Alberta (U of A) renewed their commitment to the Rupertsland Centre for Métis Research (RCMR) during an official signing ceremony on the RCMR’s 10th anniversary on May 31, 2021. The tripartite agreement will result in support for Métis scholars to publish peer-reviewed academic research that meets the rigorous standards of the U of A through the RCMR.

Publications produced by the RCMR may be used in the future for the creation of a Métis-run post-secondary institution in Alberta, similar to Saskatchewan’s Gabriel Dumont Institute. This is the long-term goal.

RLI will introduce a new mentorship model program to help high school students transition into post-secondary institutions. The Métis ACCESS to Post-Secondary Program will be launched this fall and will provide mentorship opportunities for RLI alumni looking to give something back to the Métis community. In 2019, the Michif Language Revitalization Program began to engage the Métis community through various social media platforms and virtual sessions during the pandemic. Ongoing engagement will continue to help create Michif teaching and learning resources largely aimed at early childhood and kindergarten students.

The Métis Education Foundation (MEF), an affiliate of the MNA that is administered by RLI, has grown to more than \$29 million and has provided 1,865 Métis Scholarship Awards valued at \$7.4 million since its inception in 2008. We are proud of the fact that we have established 17 endowments with Alberta post-secondary institutions, which have demonstrated their own trust in MEF by providing matching funds to top up the endowments. We are close to finalizing three additional endowments with Keyano College, Red Deer University, and Olds College.

All of the endowments are designed to stand the test of time and will be in place in perpetuity so that Métis Nation students attending a post-secondary institution in Alberta will always have a place to turn for help in the future. This is a positive legacy that will have a lasting generational impact.

Respectfully,

Audrey Poitras  
RLI Chair & MNA President

This past April, the Alberta Métis Education Council (AMEC), in coordination with RLI and led by the MNA, challenged the Province’s draft K-6 curriculum with respect to Métis content and consultation.

This challenge resulted in a meeting with a technical team from Minister Adriana LaGrange’s Education Department to detail concerns about the draft curriculum. We called on Minister LaGrange’s Government to recognize RLI as the formal Education Authority for the Métis Nation in Alberta. We insisted on adequate funding for the foundational work of RLI’s K-12 staff, who have developed authentic Métis resources and provided professional development sessions for 8,200 Alberta teachers to learn about Métis culture.

This activity supports reconciliation and is worthy of UN praise. Considering the mood of Métis Citizens in light of the Kamloops recovery, we called on Minister LaGrange to restore full funding for K-12 activities, and advocated for the need to decolonize Alberta’s draft K-6 curriculum with our recommendations to remain on the right side of reconciliation.

# Board of Governors & Executive Team

RLI was established in February 2010 by the MNA and entrusted with three mandate areas — Education, Training, and Research. RLI's head office oversees the administrative functions of the Institute's operations with the CEO and staff providing support to the RLI Board of Governors and administering the funding to carry out the Institute's mission — "To enhance the well-being of Métis people through education, training and research."

As an affiliate of the MNA and a registered non-profit entity under the Alberta Companies Act, RLI is governed by a community-based Board of Governors.

● Board of Governors Member  
(two vacancies)

The Executive Team collectively ensures that RLI's mandates are carried out effectively and efficiently.

● Executive Team



**Audrey Poitras**  
*President, Métis Nation of Alberta  
RLI Chair*



**Preston Huppie**  
*Teacher,  
James Fowler High School*



**Maureen Moneta**  
*Executive Vice President, Finance & Technology, University Hospital Foundation*



**Dr. Florence Glanfield**  
*Vice-Provost, Indigenous Programming & Research, University of Alberta*



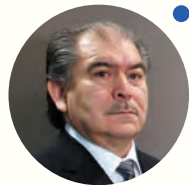
**Lawrence Gervais**  
*President, Métis Nation of Alberta - Region 3*



**Dr. Laura Beard**  
*Associate Vice President (Research), University of Alberta*



**Dr. Chris Andersen**  
*Dean, Faculty of Native Studies, University of Alberta*



**Lorne Gladu**  
*Chief Executive Officer*



**Guido Contreras**  
*Senior Executive Officer*



**Mark McCallum**  
*Senior Director of Operations*



**John Beke**  
*Senior Director of Operations*



**Candice Foreman**  
*Director of HR and Staff Development*



**Alex Di Pietro**  
*Director of Communications*

# COVID-19 Pandemic Response

Looking back on 2020, we see a year defined by the COVID-19 pandemic. Like many workplaces, we modified our operations to continue providing programs and services remotely.

Corporate Services works to provide equipment to all RLI offices across the Province. Throughout the pandemic, they provided us with a strong and secure computer network that allowed our staff to work from home and use technology to the best of their ability. They upgraded copiers, phone systems, and desktops for both staff and clients. Video conferencing was installed between all offices to connect our staff in all locations. It is thanks to their great work that we were able to seamlessly transition to a remote work environment and focus on the needs of Métis citizens.

A number of supports were introduced, in collaboration with the MNA and its affiliates, to provide COVID relief to different segments of the MNA population. For example, more than 3,000 Chromebooks have been provided to K-12 Métis students to pursue virtual learning. In July 2020, RLI also started accepting applications for the Rupertsland Student Emergency Program (RSEP). This program was administered in partnership with the MNA and Métis Capital Housing Corp., and supported more than 600 eligible post-secondary students with rent subsidies, grocery subsidies, distance learning, tutoring, and counselling.

Additionally, RLI and the MNA, alongside its affiliate Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc., provided support to nearly 250 Métis owned businesses to bridge the economic crisis caused by the global pandemic. The Métis Business Emergency Loans and Subsidy Program distributed loans up to \$40,000, and up to 50% of the amount was offered as a subsidy that does not have to be repaid.

Finally, the MNA and RLI combined to provide emergency community support to community-driven initiatives. These initiatives aimed to hire essential workers to deliver badly needed supplies such as groceries, potable bottled water, and PPE to community members. Clerical staff were also hired through the community-driven initiatives to assist Métis Citizens applying for government sponsored COVID relief programs including those provided by the MNA government.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult and isolating for many of us. As Métis people, it is with the strength of our community and relationships that we navigate challenging times. We acknowledge that many in our communities lost their lives, their family members, and their friends. We stand with you in mourning.



Working with the Métis Nation of Alberta, Compugen, and Best Buy, RLI provided Chromebooks for K-12 students. The Chromebook program helped more than 3,000 families and students. This included Jacee.

"His mom wanted to come and get it from me but Jacee was so pumped that he came himself. I can not tell you how big his smile was. When I told him that it was his forever, he started tearing up. He must have said 'thank you' 20 times in the 2 minutes that we spoke."



# Celebrating 10 Years of Opening Doors

In 2020, Rupertsland Institute celebrated its 10th anniversary. We have a lot to be proud of since our founding in 2010, none of which would have been possible without the hard work of our staff and leadership, our relationship with the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA), our partnerships in the public and private sectors, and the support of our community. Here we celebrate some milestones of our first ten years and beyond.

TIMELINE KEY

- Organizational Milestones
- Awards
- Education, Training, Research

February 2010

Rupertsland Institute – Métis Centre of Excellence incorporates and is granted the triple mandate in education, training, and research by the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA).

October 2010

The Rupertsland Institute (RLI) becomes a signatory to the Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Strategy (ASETS) Agreement securing roughly \$12.5 million per year for five years.

May 2011

Rupertsland Institute and the University of Alberta announce the creation of the Rupertsland Centre for Métis Research (RCMR), the country's first Métis-specific academic research centre.

February 2015

The Métis Education Foundation (MEF) Board creates an internal endowment valued at \$2 million for Métis students.

November 2015

MacEwan University announces the establishment of the Rupertsland Reading Room in the Library atrium in recognition of the partnership and the endowment created in 2008.

June 2014

Negotiations with the federal government begin to finalize a new Indigenous employment and training strategy.

April 2012

The MNA-PC formally extends the RLI education mandate to include Kindergarten to Grade 12.

September 2015

RLI receives the Senator Thelma Chalifoux Award from NAIT for its commitment to Métis student success.

September 2016

RLI receives a Global Best Award for the many unique and impactful partnerships created by the International Partnerships Network and the Conference Board of Canada.

April 2017

The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) along with other governing members of the AWC sign the Metis Nation Accord.

March - May 2020

RLI launches several initiatives to assist Métis citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic.

March 2019

The ASETS agreements officially come to a close, replaced by the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program (ISETP), increasing RLI's funding to \$17 million per year.

August 2019

RLI receives the Aboriginal Role Model of Alberta Award for Preservation of Traditions, Culture and Languages from Senator Patti Laboucane-Benson.

April 2019

The Rupertsland Centre for Teaching & Learning (RCTL) is formed to implement transformational education through a vision of Métis research-informed practice.

November 2020

RLI introduces the new Post-Secondary Education (PSE) to fund eligible students.

May 2021

A long-standing partnership to provide quality education, training and research to the Métis people of Alberta is renewed by MOU with the University of Alberta, the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) and the Rupertsland Institute.

June 2021

RLI founding CEO Lorne Gladu is awarded an Indspire Award for Education and is among 12 distinguished Indigenous professionals who are recognized nationally by their communities and dignitaries.



On June 10, 2021, RLI held its inaugural Rupertsland Evening of Excellence to celebrate the great academic and professional success stories of Métis citizens, and highlight RLI's programs and partnerships that help support such success.

The virtual event had guests from across Canada, and included interactive bannock making and live trivia. Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras and Edmonton Mayor Don Iveson brought opening greetings, and the event was hosted by RLI Alumna Tania Kruk. Musical performances included Métis Canadian Country Music artist Teri Clark, whose mother Linda Clark was very active with the Medicine Hat Métis Local, and up-and-coming Métis artists Brianna Lizotte and Robin Cisek.

The RLI Education Division consists of the Métis Education Foundation (MEF), the Alberta Métis Education Council (AMEC), the Rupertsland Centre for Teaching and Learning (RCTL), Early Learning Education and Childcare Training (ELECT), Post-Secondary Education (PSE) programs and supports, and Indigenous Languages for Education (ILE) – Michif Revitalization Projects. The Métis Education Division fulfills the mandate of life-long learning for the Métis community.

## Alberta Métis Education Council

The Alberta Metis Education Council (AMEC) is a Standing Committee of the RLI Board and serves as a K-12 advisory body to the RLI Education Division. It was formed to enhance Métis representation in provincial education. AMEC is composed of highly accomplished Métis academics who have knowledge and expertise in the education field, and who are appointed by RLI to represent the collective voice of Métis education in Alberta.

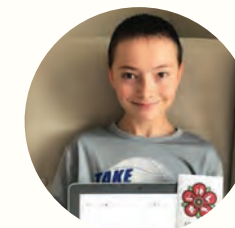
AMEC's mission is to support the development of Métis education through collaboration, curriculum development, building educator capacity, and Métis research-informed practice.



### Education Stats

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Métis Education Division has gone from strength to strength during 2019 - 2021. From responding to community needs by developing a unique Early Learning Education and Childcare Training (ELECT) program, to supporting Métis students in their continuing education through the RLI Métis Student Association (RMSA) and extensive post-secondary supports, RLI continues to walk with Métis citizens through their lifelong learning journey. Some highlights include:

- Registered over 2,000 Métis students (including 245 high school students) with the newly formed RLI Métis Student Association (RMSA), enabling them to access our comprehensive suite of student funding and supports.
- Supported over 700 Métis Students in the third quarter of 2020 through the RLI Post-Secondary Funding Program (launched in November 2020).
- Provided 74 Métis Student Services (MSS) supports as of March 31, 2021, including registration fees & technology and sundry supports.
- Supported over 3,000 Metis families with access to technology through the Chromebook initiative during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Thank you so much for providing me with this new Chromebook. It will make learning for me online much easier. My family and I greatly appreciate your generosity.

— Kale Malmquist

### AMEC MEMBERS

**Preston Huppie, MEd**  
*RLI Board and AMEC Council Chair,  
Calgary Board of Education*

**Betty Letendre, Kehtayah**

**Yvonne Poitras Pratt, PhD**  
*Associate Professor and Director,  
Indigenous Education,  
University of Calgary*

**Cindy Swanson, PhD**  
*Teacher, Edmonton Public Schools*

**Kimberley Brown, MEd**  
*Online Teacher, North Star Academy*

**Aubrey Hanson, PhD**  
*Professor, University of Calgary*

**Erin Reid, MA**  
*Indigenous Resource Teacher  
District 23, Central Okanagan*

**Adam Browning, EdD**  
*Director of Learning,  
Palliser School Division*

# Teaching & Learning

RCTL's foundational themes were developed in consultation with AMEC and MNA Leadership, and by engaging with Alberta Métis citizens, archival resource analysis, and academic papers published by scholars in Métis academia. These themes will help teachers develop their foundational knowledge to meet the new 2019 Teaching Quality Standards.

What do you think educators should know about our Métis story in Alberta?

The RCTL needs your story! If you would like to answer this question, send an email to: [education@rupertsland.org](mailto:education@rupertsland.org). Your Métis voice is important!

## Rupertsland Centre for Teaching and Learning

The Rupertsland Centre for Teaching and Learning (RCTL) was established in 2019 to advance education about the Metis across the province. The RCTL's mission is to implement transformational education founded on Métis research-informed practices.

The RCTL ensures RLI fulfills its mandate for education and supports Métis K–12 educators in interpreting provincial Teaching Quality Standards (TQS). In 2016, RLI contributed to the new TQS, and the inclusion of the Métis in the updated TQS (2019) is a historical moment for the Métis Nation.

The RLI Education Division, while working closely with the AMEC, the MNA culture team and past/present Provincial Council members has developed foundational knowledge themes that will be instrumental in sharing the Metis story in the classroom. The five themes are extensive and contain enough information to publish a book on the following: 1) Metis Languages; 2) Metis Culture and Traditions; 3) Homeland History; 4) Metis in Alberta; and 5) Metis Nation Governance.

To create effective teaching tools for educators across the K–12 spectrum, the RCTL is developing strong foundational knowledge resources, engaging lesson plans, meaningful professional development opportunities, and authentic classroom learning tools. For example, the RCTL has taken steps to develop a comprehensive online course along the lines of five themes that represent the Métis story in Alberta.

Over the last two years, the RCTL team has delivered over 50 Professional Learning sessions provincially and nationally to support all levels of the Professional Learning Standards. The two most popular sessions are: Métis Identity and History, and Authentic Métis Resources in the Classroom. Since 2018, nearly 8,200 of Alberta's 42,000 teachers have completed professional learning sessions.

Building capacity is an ongoing goal for the RCTL. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit last spring, the Train-the-Trainer program was launched. Métis educators were invited to participate in this training to support them as community leaders who can create networks where they can learn from and share with one another.

The RCTL now has over 15 professional learning facilitators across the province. In addition to the online curriculum, the K–12 team developed an extensive collection of lesson plans, digital classroom resources, videos, and an interactive augmented reality (AR) app. Visit this link (<https://www.rupertsland.org/teaching-learning/resources/>) to explore the authentic Métis education resources created by Métis educators. Download the app from your phone store and hold it up over the theme icons to bring Métis history and culture alive!



Métis in Alberta



Language



Governance



Culture & Traditions



Homeland History

## ONLINE LEARNING SUPPORTS

The RCTL is continually developing new resources to engage learners of all ages with Métis education. For example, with the support from the MNA, RLI has launched an online space for students to connect: the Rupertsland Education Community Connections (RECC) Room. RECC provides a space for early learners to visit and play, guided children's readings by Métis artists, tutoring support for all grades, along with an educators' space where Métis educators can gather virtually to ask questions and share ideas and resources. Additionally, the RTCL has made mobile tutors available for remote learning during the course of the 2019-2020 school year, when many students have been unable to access in-person education.



# Teaching & Learning

The Michif Revitalization Project received funding in 2019 from the Government of Alberta's Indigenous Languages in Education (ILE) Grant Program, which serves to support Indigenous language and culture programs through two funding streams:

Resource Development: to increase the number of teaching and learning resources of Indigenous languages in Alberta aimed at early childhood education, and kindergarten to grade 12 (K–12).

Instructor Development: to increase the number of Indigenous language training opportunities for instructors and teachers of early childhood education and kindergarten, and grades 1-12.

## Michif Revitalization Project

Throughout the past year, RLI's Education Division has been working to reclaim, maintain, and strengthen Métis language and culture through our Michif Revitalization Project. It is anticipated that the knowledge gained from this language revitalization project will contribute to improved outcomes for Métis students and enhance the experiences of Métis families and communities in the Alberta school system.

The Michif Revitalization Project team has led ongoing engagement sessions with Métis people across Alberta. These engagement sessions identified Métis culture and language priorities specific to the following ILE projects: Teacher/ Instructor Programming; Michif Mentorship Meetings; and Language Rich Learning Experiences for K–12.

Work is underway to build a cohesive Michif revitalization network in Alberta. The Michif Revitalization Project team is working with Métis people and communities wherever possible, including through social media, in an effort to facilitate ongoing community engagement.



## Early Learning Education and Childcare Training

RLI is developing a unique Early Learning Education and Childcare Training (ELECT) program to support existing Early Learning Diploma holders who seek training in Métis-centric ways of knowing, being, and doing for early learning education. Métis culture, language and land-based learning will be woven into the fabric of the ELECT program. ELECT will support early learning and childcare providers seeking to work in Métis communities and/or start their own day homes, daycares, or early learning centers.

## Lifelong Learning

The RLI Board of Governors prioritized Lifelong Education in the RLI Strategic Business Plan 2018–2022. RLI is committed to providing Métis citizens with access to lifelong learning and employment opportunities through a holistic approach that supports Métis students and clients at all levels of education and training. To ensure we are able to meet the needs of Métis citizens wherever they are in their journey, we are implementing lifelong learning initiatives for early learning, K–12 supports and resources, labour market training, and post-secondary programming.



### COMMUNITY HISTORY & ENGAGEMENT PROJECT: MÉTIS MEMORIES

In 2020, the Métis Education Division facilitated an intergenerational collaboration between Mrs. Angie Crerar, a widely-respected Métis artist, elder, and MNA member, and other Métis citizens. Together they are working on creating images that reflect the stories shared in the book Métis Memories which will be made into a mural with art cards. The art cards and mural will be used as an educational tool for K-12 students to learn about the colonial school experience many Métis citizens endured.

Elder Elsie Paul sharing culture with her grandchildren at St. Albert Métis Fest 2019.



# Métis Education Foundation



Tyr Thompson is a Métis student athlete studying Engineering at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. This year, he is a recipient of the Métis Scholar Awards, and looks forward to bringing Métis values into his work with green power and energy.

“The opportunity to represent the Metis Nation of Alberta while in the United States to pursue my athletic and academic careers is something I am proud to do each semester. I hope that I am able to portray a positive role model for younger Metis student athletes when they are considering opportunities available to them to pursue both school and sports in their future.”

— Tyr Thompson

Established in 1991 by the MNA, the Métis Education Foundation (MEF) was incorporated as a non-profit charitable foundation with the goal of improving education outcomes for Alberta Métis. In 2006, the MNA and Rupertsland Institute’s predecessor (the Labour Market Development Unit – LMD) began to capitalize the MEF and started the process of negotiating Métis endowments with post-secondary institutions across Alberta with funds derived from the Federal Indigenous Labour Market Program.

Today the Métis Education Foundation holds an endowment portfolio with a market value approaching \$30 million dollars, and supports 17 post-secondary and two MEF internal endowments. In 2020-2021, \$600,000 was added to the endowment portfolio and disbursed to post-secondary partners as follows:

|                      |           |   |                       |
|----------------------|-----------|---|-----------------------|
| NAIT                 | \$230,000 | Amounts to supplement Existing Endowments | \$2,070,000 endowment |
| Bow Valley College   | \$50,000  |   | \$400,000 endowment   |
| Medicine Hat College | \$70,000  |   | \$130,000 endowment   |
| MacEwan University   | \$250,000 |   | \$2,500,000 endowment |



## 2019-2021 in Review

In 2019, the MEF reached two major milestones, it fully capitalized the internal MEF endowment with \$2 million and it capitalized the ELCC endowment with \$1.48 million. This was made possible from a one-time contribution from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNA) who invested \$2.5 million in Métis post-secondary education.

MEF endowments held at 17 post-secondary institutions also disbursed endowment funds to students in the form of Métis Scholar Awards. Through this program, students can access support up to the final year of their post-secondary studies. Once students reach the final two semesters, they are eligible for funding through RLI’s Métis Training to Employment program. Since its inception, the Métis Education Foundation has awarded more than \$7.4 million and provided 1,865 Métis Scholar Awards.

ENDOWMENT VALUE CHART

| ENDOWMENT                       | YEAR EST. | MEF-RLI CONTRIBUTION | PARTNER CONTRIBUTION | ENDOWMENT AMOUNT | MARKET VALUE |
|---------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------|
| MacEwan University              | 2008      | 1,750,000            | 1,000,000            | 2,750,000        | 3,245,056    |
| University of Alberta           | 2008      | 3,250,00             | 2,500,00             | 5,750,000        | 6,809,450    |
| NorQuest College                | 2008      | 625,000              | 375,000              | 1,000,000        | 850,000      |
| NAIT                            | 2009      | 1,300,000            | 1,070,000            | 2,370,000        | 3,032,889    |
| Portage College                 | 2009      | 500,000              | 500,000              | 1,000,000        | 1,193,169    |
| Grande Prairie Regional College | 2011      | 250,000              | 250,000              | 500,000          | 399,721      |
| University of Calgary           | 2012      | 1,750,000            | 750,000              | 2,500,000        | 2,783,277    |
| Mount Royal University          | 2012      | 250,000              | 250,000              | 500,000          | 661,060      |
| Lethbridge University           | 2012      | 500,000              | 500,000              | 1,000,000        | 1,319,662    |
| Lethbridge College              | 2013      | 250,000              | 250,000              | 500,000          | 531,255      |
| Athabasca University            | 2014      | 250,000              | 250,000              | 500,000          | 583,569      |
| Northern Lakes College          | 2015      | 175,000              | 25,000               | 200,000          | 142,394      |
| Lakeland College                | 2015      | 100,000              | 30,000               | 130,000          | 410,399      |
| Bow Valley College              | 2015      | 250,000              | 200,000              | 450,000          | 488,889      |
| MEF Endowment Trust Fund        | 2015      | 2,000,000            | ---                  | 2,000,000        | 2,000,000    |
| Medicine Hat College            | 2018      | 170,000              | 30,000               | 200,000          | 130,000      |
| SAIT                            | 2018      | 500,000              | 500,000              | 1,000,000        | 1,000,000    |
| Concordia University            | 2018      | 500,000              | 500,000              | 1,000,000        | 2,470,500    |
| ELCC Endowment Trust Fund       | 2020      | 1,400,000            | ---                  | 1,400,000        | 1,400,000    |
| SUB-TOTAL                       |           |                      |                      | \$24,750,000     | \$29,451,290 |
| Keyano College pending          | 2021      | 500,000              | 500,000              | 1,000,000        | 1,000,000    |
| Red Deer University pending     | 2021      | 250,000              | 75,000               | 325,000          | 325,000      |
| Olds College pending            | 2021      | 250,000              | 100,000              | 350,000          | 350,000      |
| TOTAL                           |           | \$16,770,000         | \$9,655,000          | \$26,425,000     | \$31,126,290 |

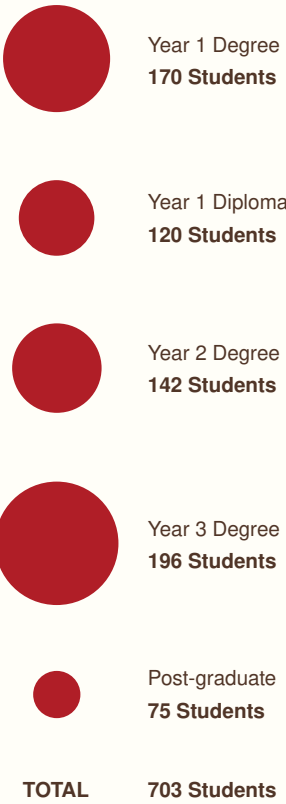
2020-2021 MÉTIS SCHOLAR AWARDS DISBURSEMENTS

| INSTITUTION                      | TOTAL FUNDS | AWARDS |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--------|
| University of Alberta            | 24,000      | 25     |
| University of Calgary            | 85,000      | 14     |
| Lakeland College                 | 21,000      | 7      |
| Lethbridge College               | 14,000      | 4      |
| MEF ELCC                         | 10,000      | 6      |
| MEF MSA                          | 94,000      | 19     |
| Concordia University of Edmonton | 2,500       | 1      |
| Grande Prairie Regional College  | 6,000       | 3      |
| SAIT                             | 6,000       | 2      |
| MacEwan University               | 102,000     | 22     |
| University of Lethbridge         | 47,500      | 13     |
| Medicine Hat College             | 8,000       | 2      |
| Bow Valley College               | 10,000      | 2      |
| Northern Lakes College           | 10,5000     | 5      |
| Mount Royal University           | 25,200      | 7      |
| Athabasca University             | 7,500       | 3      |
| NAIT                             | 116,000     | 28     |
| Portage College                  | 30,000      | 10     |
| NorQuest College                 | 15,500      | 9      |
| TOTAL                            | \$854,700   | 182    |



# Post-Secondary Education

NUMBER OF STUDENTS SUPPORTED, NOVEMBER 2020 - MARCH 2021



RLI launched several new Post-Secondary Education (PSE) programs and services in November 2020 and is now offering annual support for eligible students in all years of study in recognized Canadian universities and colleges.

RLI provides post-secondary financial aid to Métis students to reduce the overall cost of education and the financial burden with the objective of increasing the number of Métis students who successfully complete post-secondary studies. With time, these efforts will close the gap in post-secondary educational attainment between Métis and non-Indigenous Albertans.

## Rupertsland Métis Student Association and Métis Student Services

The Rupertsland Métis Student Association (RMSA) launched in November 2020 and currently has over 2,000 students registered (including 245 high school students). The RMSA is a place for Métis students to become engaged with their community and to participate in a broad array of MNA activities and initiatives. Through the RMSA, Métis students are able to access support through Métis Student Services (MSS) at every stage of their education. MSS serves as a link between RLI, MEF, MNA, post-secondary institutions, and other community agencies that clients may need to access from time-to-time in order to be successful in their PSE journey.

In a student's first year, application and fees, as well as technology supports, may be provided to encourage enrolment in post-secondary institutions. Professional fees can be paid for recent graduates joining a professional association. Student need is identified and assessed with assistance from a PSE student advisor or other appropriate RLI counsellors. Sundry supports are also available for students and can assist them with staying in school when facing unforeseen circumstances. Eligible applicants may access each of the MSS program supports once annually as needed for up to the total maximum amount specified for each support. As of March 2021, 74 MSS supports have been accessed, including 15 registration fees, 49 technology supports, and ten sundry supports.

## Métis ACCESS to Post-Secondary

RLI is excited to launch the new Métis ACCESS to Post-Secondary (MAPS) program in the fall of 2021. This program aims to provide support to Métis high school students in choosing a meaningful career and PSE program, decrease barriers, and increase pathways to higher education for Métis learners in Alberta.

The intention of MAPS is to draw on existing school district models for students transitioning from high school to post-secondary and to develop a mentorship model between RLI post-secondary funded students and high school students. The mentorship will ultimately encourage a successful transition from high school to post-secondary institutions and promote intergenerational community support.

## RLI Alumni Association

The RLI Alumni Association (RAA) is a digital community platform in the final stages of development. The RAA will bring together all Métis citizens who have accessed RLI's funding to create a community of RLI graduates, offer opportunities for Métis graduates to stay connected to one another and their community, and help recruit new students. By mentoring others, RLI alumni will have an opportunity to give back to their communities.

RLI is excited about this new and long overdue initiative. Our graduates are the Métis Nation's greatest resource; they are allies, mentors, and ambassadors who can encourage and promote higher education.



Keith King is taking the Doctorate of Philosophy-Nursing at the University of Alberta. He has completed a Masters of Public Health and has 11 different certificates or certifications in health related fields.

He is currently working at the U of A as a Faculty Lecturer in Mental Health, Leadership, Indigenous Health and Sexual and Gender Diversity. He is also a sessional instructor for Human Sexuality. He led an entire course redesign at the University. At this moment Keith is part of the MNA group that is travelling to Ft Mac, Lac La Biche and Calgary to provide and administer the COVID vaccine.



*Program of study: Master of Business Administration, University of Alberta (2nd Year)*

Andrew is enrolled in his second year of study in the University of Alberta MBA program. Upon graduation Andrew wishes to seek employment in leadership consulting focusing on skill development for young business professionals.



*Program of study: Bachelor of Human Services Administration, MacEwan University, Edmonton (3rd year)*

Upon graduation from the Bachelor of Human Services Administration Degree program from MacEwan University Kyla wishes to seek employment working with Métis youth and adults in community programs.



RLI delivers its training mandate to Métis citizens province-wide via the Métis Training to Employment (MTE) program. The service delivery network is decentralized through community-based programming, dividing the province into four geographic regions. Client services are provided through eleven Métis Education and Training Information Services (M.E.T.I.S) offices and Mobile Employment Services.

TRAINING



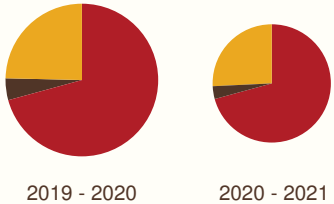
Employment Outcomes

In 2019, employment in Alberta’s natural resource sector dropped. Still, Alberta Métis outshone forecasted employment outcomes: The Métis unemployment rate fell from 12.2% in January 2019 to 7.5% in December 2019, and the gap between Métis and non-Indigenous employment/participation rates dwindled. In 2020, however, the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected Métis relative to non-Indigenous Albertans. The difference in the unemployment rate between Alberta Métis and the overall Albertan population increased from 4.3 percentage points to 5.2 percentage points between Q1 2020 and Q1 2021.

Guided by our training mandate, the Métis Training to Employment (MTE) program improves participants’ access to employment. In 2019-2020, we helped 896 clients secure jobs, up 46 from last year. Our MTE team has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by quickly establishing innovative strategies to continue providing services to Métis citizens and employers, albeit remotely. In 2020-2021, MTE programs, services, and outreach helped 1,230 Alberta Métis overcome last year’s challenges through access to training and employment opportunities. Through the MTE program, we invested \$819,149 in employment opportunities through the summer student program, creating jobs for 170 Métis students throughout the province.

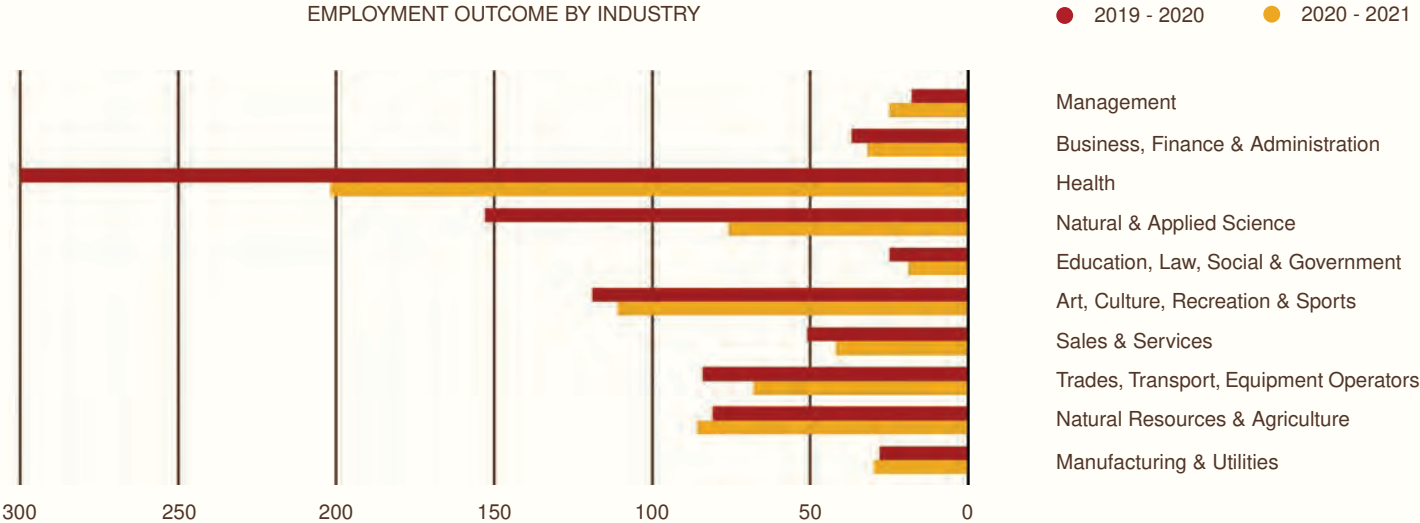
The graph below shows the increasing diversity in our clients’ employment types. The proportion of clients working in health and education, law, social, community, and government is growing. Further, we helped 1,188 Alberta Métis in 2019-2020, and 934 Alberta Métis in 2020-2021 find employment, pursue self-employment, or return to school.

TRAINING TO EMPLOYMENT  
OUTCOMES



|               | 19 / 20 | 20 / 21 |
|---------------|---------|---------|
| Employed      | 842     | 661     |
| Self Employed | 54      | 33      |
| In School     | 292     | 240     |
| TOTAL         | 1188    | 934     |

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME BY INDUSTRY



# Alberta Métis Education & Training Strategy



After earning my Red Seal Journeyman Electrician ticket I started to think about how I got to this milestone in my life and who got me here. My venture as an electrical apprentice began and ended with the help of Rupertsland. They helped me from the beginning by getting my foot in the door with my first employer, and, by being that support system when I was in my final year of my four year apprenticeship. Rupertsland Institute is the springboard that catapulted my life to where it is at right now and I cannot thank you enough.

— Devon Chalifoux

The Alberta Métis Education and Training Strategy (AMETS) guides our training and employment programs, helping expand our reach to include high schools and early learning programs. AMETS emerged as a result of the Canada - Métis Nation of Alberta “Advancing Reconciliation” Framework Agreement and strategic planning, and is designed to meet the diverse needs of Métis communities across the province.

The foundation of AMETS rests on four pillars that match the strategic priorities of the RLI Board of Governors and the Strategic Business Plan: Lifelong Learning; Enhanced Client Services; Research, Policy and Informed Practice; and Partnerships and Shared Responsibility. We first implemented this strategy in 2019 under the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training program to close the employment and earning gap between Métis and non-Indigenous peoples. We are working to achieve this goal through a suite of programs that promote learning and education, skills development, and long-term career success.



AMETS'S FOUR PILLARS

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Lifelong Learning</b></p> <p>Broaden client support by bringing a holistic approach to Métis education and training.</p>  | <p><b>Enhanced Client Services</b></p> <p>Bring a wide range of supports to RLI clients, including: project-based training; programs that match the skills needs of Métis clients with labour markets; &amp; higher learning support.</p> |
| <p><b>Research, Policy &amp; Informed Practice</b></p> <p>Develop and maintain standards in service delivery and strive for administrative excellence. RLI will implement policies through good governance, quality research &amp; informed practice.</p> | <p><b>Partnerships &amp; Shared Responsibility</b></p> <p>Leverage education and training initiatives through partnerships with appropriate stakeholders to promote RLI services and bring the client base closer to the employer.</p>    |

# Métis Training to Employment Division

Under the training mandate, the Métis Training to Employment Division (MTE), the largest division within RLI, is responsible for managing and delivering programs that enable Métis individuals to pursue an education, enhance their skill level, and find productive employment. Métis Training to Employment provides employment and training services, programs, and financial support to clients through a regional service delivery structure. This structure is composed of four regions and 11 full-time offices, with itinerant services to smaller communities provided primarily through a regularly scheduled mobile service.

In spite of the pandemic in 2020-2021, Métis Education Training and Information Service centres (METIS) continued to provide online and tele-service to clients. Staff continued working online to deliver the following services: job search counselling, work placements, in-take assessments, and creation of employment opportunities through partnerships.

Since 2010, RLI's Mission, Vision, and Values have supported strong, outcome-focused and client focused employment services that have been built in response to community and labour market need. MTE has provided pathways to training, employment or self-employment for individuals while also supporting the business community. These pathways are framed by the Board of Governor's strategic goals, research and need, and focus on innovative programs and services. MTE has a diverse client base which includes those with specialized needs, such as youth with complex needs and persons with disabilities requiring additional supports.

The mix of programs and services available provides a wide range of support for all Métis in Alberta (including youth facing barriers to employment, mature workers looking for new employment opportunities, and persons with disabilities requiring extra support in the labour market). Strong employer linkages ensure that the employers get the qualified staff required to support the local labour market and meet key industry sector needs. The next few pages of this report will highlight the accomplishments of the MTE Division, the four service delivery regions, training to employment initiatives and partnerships that facilitated the success of RLI.



Last fall I heard about a Job Readiness Program that was being offered through Rupertsland Institute and decided to apply for it as I wanted to better my chances of finding permanent employment. It was a four-month program that focused on Life Skills, a Carpentry Project, Safety tickets/PPE and résumé writing/Interview skills. The instructors were very engaging and did everything they could to help the class be successful.

The last month was a practicum where I worked with the MD of Big Lakes. Working with the MD was great; I loved that every day was different and the staff were terrific to work with, they taught me a lot about running different machines and how a water treatment plant operates. I really enjoyed this program. I found every aspect of this program was very helpful in assisting me to find full-time employment.

Following the program, I had all my safety tickets, proper work boots, and a better resume to find employment. I was hired in a public works position which was similar to what I was doing at the MD through my practicum. Rupertsland gave me an opportunity to better my life; I am really happy I took it. Thank you Rupertsland!

— Fred Gauchier-Mearon

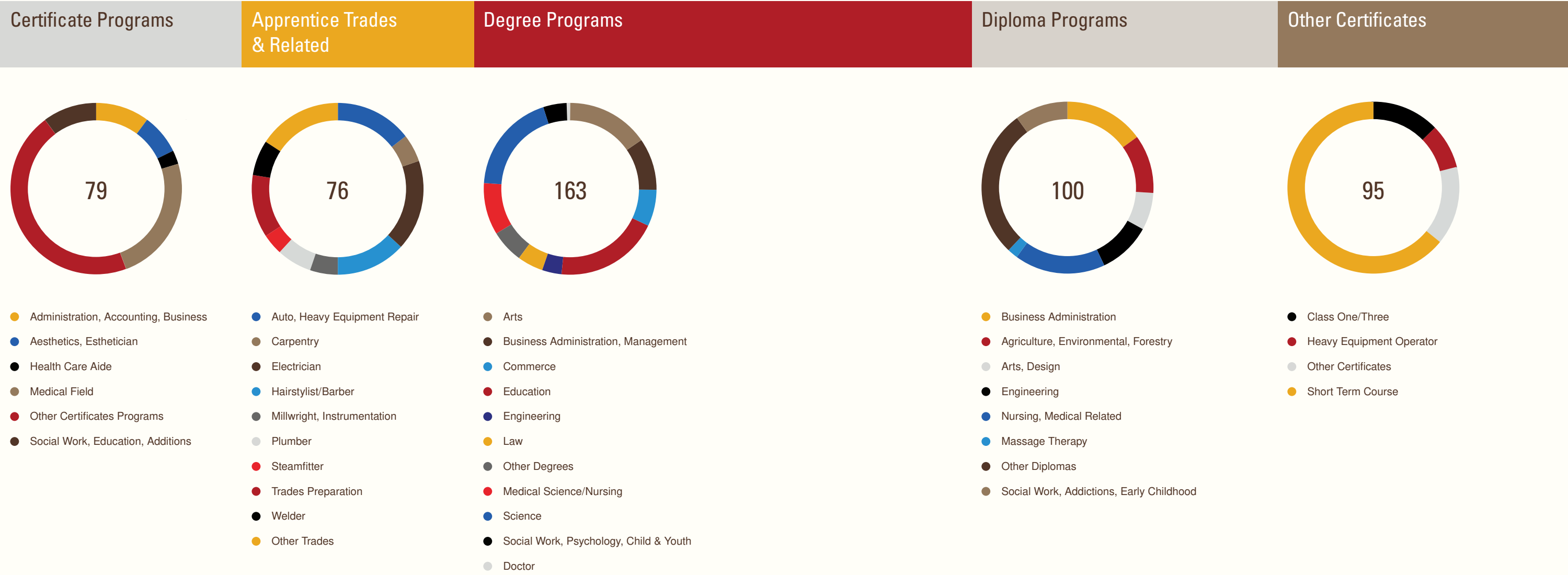


# MTE Program Completions 2020-2021

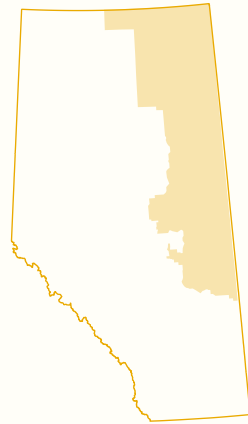
The pandemic challenged MTE to provide a mix of service delivery approaches that included virtual client meetings to complete assessments, coaching, follow-ups, and secure online document sharing. MTE staff did an outstanding job adapting and providing services through a new way of doing business. The new online service delivery methods allow MTE to meet our clients' varied needs, enhance our potential for resiliency when dealing with change, and provide MTE with the ability to meet targets and outcomes successfully.

The results of the 2020-2021 MTE program reflect our staff and management's commitment to excellence and dedication to providing high-quality, client-driven support in communities across Alberta. As a leader in employment services, RLI delivers a full range of career-focused counselling, project-based training, educational funding, and partnership development to prepare Alberta Métis for success in the labour market. These efforts aim to promote both economic prosperity and community well-being throughout RLI regions. Each staff member is supportive, knowledgeable, and challenges clients to make informed decisions in an effort to deliver conscientious services that support educated choices. Client satisfaction, empowerment and accountability are an integral part of the employment services provided.

In 2020-2021 RLI and the MTE supported 513 clients in graduating from the following programs:



# Northeast REGION



The Northeast Region provides service for MNA Regions 1 and 2 with offices in Lac La Biche and Bonnyville.



**Belle Dy-Reyes**  
Northeast Region Manager

Students enjoy a day canoeing at the Fort McMurray Local 1935 Summer Student Program.

For the Northeast Region, 2020-2021 was a year of resilience: On top of the COVID-19 pandemic, the region experienced flooding in the Fort McMurray area. Despite these hurdles, the Northeast Region rose to the challenge of virtual program and training delivery, and still had a productive and successful year.

In addition to our funded clients, the Northeast Region registered 30 employer partners in 2020-2021 who utilized our Summer Student Program, Employer Partnership Program, and Job Coaches. Success stories include seven Métis citizens securing good jobs with NuWave Industries and Gabbez Pipefitting, as labourers, truck drivers, and environmental monitors among other roles. To date, five out of these seven workers are still employed with the two employer partners. With the help of local communities and partners, the Northeast Region has shown resilience to overcome 2020's adversities and is grateful to be part of this amazing community.

## Summer Student Program

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# Northeast REGION

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## Community Based Environmental Monitoring



The Community Based Environmental Monitoring project is in its final pilot year. This multi-partner, multi-year environmental monitoring project combines western science and traditional land-based knowledge in the Fort McMurray, Athabasca Delta region. Participants learn about testing soil and water conditions, and explore future employment opportunities with local practicum placements. If the participants do not desire immediate employment, they are given the opportunity to continue their education.



When I graduated from the University of Saskatchewan in 2018, I was excited to start the next chapter in my life. I worked hard and got good grades, and I thought employers would be lined up to hire me as a result. However, I learned the hard way that not every path to success is linear.

I didn't understand what I had done wrong. All my life, I was told that this was the path to success, and I thought I had followed it to a tee. However, my lack of experience, coupled with the struggling oil and gas industry and eventually the pandemic, left me feeling hopeless. I needed help.

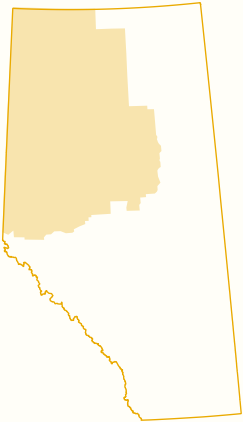
That is when I heard about the Rupertsland Institute, and I reached out. I was contacted by Thea Abdolhady, a job coach at Rupertsland, and we got to work.

I just completed my three-month probationary period with Terracon. I wouldn't have found this opportunity without Thea and RLI, and I am so thankful for the support that they gave me over the past year. They never gave up on me, even when our goal felt impossible, and I was ready to give up on myself.

— Ty Neumann



# Northwest REGION



The Northwest Region provides service for MNA Regions 5 and 6 with offices in Grande Prairie, Peace River, High Prairie, and Slave Lake.



**Carmella Mackey**  
*Northwest Region Manager*

Region 5 staff with COVID support food boxes.

In 2020-2021, the Northwest Region worked to ensure clients had ongoing access to support throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The region provided funds for a Community Emergency Support program to create jobs for Métis individuals, and hired delivery drivers and support staff to provide additional support for Elders and Métis citizens in need. The Northwest Region also supported clients with funding and virtual training, job coaching, and work experience through the Employment Supports Program, Employment Skills Development Program, and Apprenticeship Program. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, there were several student success stories in the Northwest Region.

Looking to the future, the Northwest Region is working on executing new programs for the community, including a Bookkeeper, Financial Assistant, and Administrative Assistant Project and a Job Readiness Project. The Northwest Region will continue to work toward our goal of a self-sufficient Métis Nation.



## Partnership with Northern Lakes College

The Northwest Region delivers the Job Readiness Project. Last year, the Job Readiness Project worked with Northern Lakes College to prepare the local Métis community to enter the labour market. There were 10 participants, each of whom successfully obtained full-time positions after completing the project.

# Northwest REGION

## Métis Youth Student Placement Program

The Northwest Region also partnered with employers throughout Regions 5 and 6 to provide meaningful work experience for participants of the Métis Youth Summer Placement Program (MYSPP). Some of the amazing employment partners were Northern Alberta Health Services, High Prairie Golf Course, Junction Creamery, MNA Local 1929, MNA Local 1990, MNA Local 74, the Region 6 MNA office in Peace River, and the Fort Vermillion Recreation Board. The MYSPP works with both employers and Métis youth to provide opportunities for valuable summer employment placements.



I am a proud recipient of the Rupertsland Institute Métis Employment Partnership Program (MEPP) subsidy in May 2020.

This program was a lifesaver for my family. We suffered many financial setbacks during the COVID-19 pandemic. My salary decreased dramatically. I have a career in Oilfield Business Development and Marketing, and our business suffered during the pandemic.

Accessing MEPP aided in easing our financial stress and I feel very fortunate to have received this wage subsidy during an extremely difficult time in our lives. The support of this program allowed me to meet the financial needs of my family, and to be self-sufficient without incurring any additional debt until business began to pick up again and my salary was fully reinstated.

Since MEPP I have also been encouraged to look into online and in-class courses and training that will better my employability and sustainability in an ever-changing market.

Thank you to Rupertsland Institute for your encouragement and support; I am eternally grateful.

— Niki Binks

## Métis Employment Partnership Program

Through the Métis Employment Partnership Program (MEPP), the Northwest Region supported employer partners in hiring and retaining staff, including Armor Tools, Optimum Flo, Poitras Financial Services, and Sweet Pea Express. The MEPP program was crucial in helping Métis individuals maintain employment and acquire the valuable skills needed to get them ready for full-time work.



I'm an Office Administration graduate from Grande Prairie Regional College. During my time here, I was awarded the 2021 Valedictorian Award for the Grande Prairie Campus! This has been an incredible honour and empowering experience throughout. I could have never done it without all the support I received, especially from Rupertsland Institute!

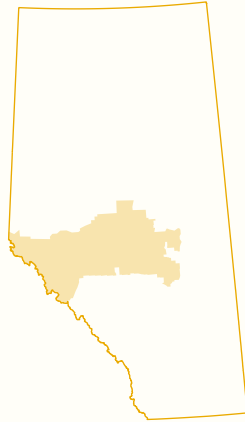
This year has been harder than ever on our students, but with the extra help through funding and my Job Coach, Tara, who helped me out and encouraged me throughout the entire academic year, I was able to focus on what really mattered most: my studies! By putting an action plan in place and being free from the stress of student loans, I excelled in my program, and achieved an overall GPA of 3.94.

I am so thankful that Rupertsland Institute is available to all Métis students looking to attend further training and education, and I highly recommend their services!

— Brooke Bjorklund



# Central REGION



The Central Region has one employment office located in Edmonton that serves all of Métis Nation of Alberta's Region 4. In 2020, due to the pandemic, our mobile units were unable to provide itinerant services to the rural communities within the region and RLI offices were closed, so clients were assisted virtually.



**Kristena Belcourt**  
Central Region Manager

Summer students at Métis Crossing

The rural areas within the Central Region have been and continue to be the most negatively impacted by the downturn in the oil and gas industry with many in the community facing unemployment and displacement. To support the local Métis community during this time of need and the limited types of training projects that could take place, in 2020-2021 the Central Region was able to successfully support 228 people to find employment, 19 self-employed and 71 people to return to school.

## Métis Crossing Summer Student Program

Métis Crossing is the first major Métis cultural interpretive center in Alberta. Métis Crossing works to preserve, strengthen, and promote Alberta's Métis people's cultural heritage through land-based learning. In the Summer of 2019, we partnered with the MNA to employ four Métis youth as Site Guide Interpreters in a Summer Student Program. The program involved research, collection, and presentation of Métis traditions, lifeways, and cultural artifacts.

To the general public, Métis Crossing offers visitors the opportunity to participate in guided cultural interpretive experiences and workshops, such as walking tours, Voyageur canoe trips, traditional Métis crafting, camping, and much more!



# Central REGION

## Central Projects

Trade Winds to Success is a partnership with Treaty Seven Community Futures, Oteenow Employment and Training Society, Pipe Trades Training Trust Fund and the Millwrights Training Trust Fund. The goal of this partnership is to increase the number of Indigenous people training and apprenticing in construction trades.



## Community Emergency Support Program

RLI and the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 4 partnered to provide funding and resources for the Community Emergency Support Program. The program assisted MNA Region 4 in hiring community members with temporary employment and giving adversely impacted Métis citizens of Region 4 a one-time grocery gift card.

Throughout 2020-2021, the Central Region developed and maintained several employer partnerships through the MEPP and MYSPP. Some partners the Central Region has worked with over the years include Alberta Health Services, University of Alberta, Western Varieties Wholesale, Apeetogosan, Arts on the Ave, Kingston Ross Pasnak, Métis Nation of Alberta, Rich Valley Public Library, Rocky Mountain Vet Clinic, The Original Spay Clinic, Whitecourt Public Library, and Métis Crossing.



One of the Central Region's initiatives is the Fresh Start School Program, which partners with the Hallway Café & Takeaway to provide high-risk, at-risk youth with 17 weeks of work experience. The program also supports and encourages students to work towards earning their high school diplomas. In 2020-2021, RLI sponsored four participants, one of which was Andy Castor.

Andy transformed throughout the program, from feeling shy, uncomfortable making friends, and unsure about his future - to opening up to staff about his family struggles and trauma, making friends with the other youth, and realizing his career goal of joining the Navy. The program helped Andy become more confident and he found his passion at the Café's baking station. Since the program, Andy has completed his high school education and is accepted into the RAVEN program at the Royal Canadian Navy for July 2022



# South REGION



The South Region is represented by offices in Red Deer, Calgary, and a partnership with Saamis Aboriginal Employment and Training Association to provide services in Medicine Hat.

We also offer services through our Mobile Employment units in Lethbridge, Pincher Creek, Bragg Creek, Airdrie, Rocky Mountain House, Sundre, Stettler, Lacombe, and Olds.



**Dylan Turner**  
South Region Manager

During this unprecedented year of restrictions due to COVID-19, the South Region transitioned to remote service delivery. This allowed the staff to continue to offer the same level of service while ensuring the safety of the community, clients, and their team. This remote delivery method was instituted within regional projects, such as the Virtual Indigenous Tourism camp that provided opportunities for youth to learn wilderness first aid, hospitality skills, and obtain their Outdoor Council of Canada certifications. The South Region also funded the Shine On remote summer camp, which allowed youth to learn about creating, developing, and implementing their own e-commerce business.

The South Region labour market was hit hard by the pandemic restrictions, as many retail workers, hospitality, tourism-based industries, and trades people were laid off work. The regional offices were faced with a surplus of job seekers and a deficit of opportunities. Partnering with the MNA Region 3 office, RLI provided funding that created administrative jobs handling the inquiries and programs related to COVID-19. The region also distributed this funding to MNA Locals to create more administrative positions and support citizens in need.



Terrance Duerks spent 30 years working in the Oil and Gas sector in various drilling positions. After repeated downturns in the industry, followed by the COVID-19 impact, he could no longer depend on supporting himself in that field. He determined his best option would be to obtain a Class 1 Operator's license and hit the road. With assistance from our Red Deer MTE Centre, he completed the arduous Mandatory Entry-Level Training (M.E.L.T.) Program through Bulldog Driver Training. He is now employed and enjoying his new life travelling across the country.

"Rupertsland Institute has been instrumental in reinventing myself. It has been a very tough 5 years for me with so many doors closing. If it was not for Rupertsland Institute and April, I would not be where I am today. I cannot thank Rupertsland Institute and April enough for great work and dedication to the Métis people." — *Terrance Duerks*

# South REGION

To address the influx of summer students and assist clients with their job search, the South Region partnered with the MNA Local 845 in Rocky Mountain House and the University of Calgary, as well as many smaller employers such as the Sundre Municipal Library, the Municipality of Crowsnest Past, and Calgary Arts Development.

In addition to student and youth programming, the South Region completed many employment partnerships with the University of Lethbridge, Waterline Resources, Rainy Creek Ranch, and the Highbanks Independent Living for Parenting Youth Society. These partnerships focused on job creation and supporting clients to gain the experience necessary to advance in their desired field through temporary or permanent employment.

Looking forward to 2021-2022, the South Region is planning projects designed around the return-to-work and re-opening of Alberta. The biggest project will be an academic upgrading program designed to allow participants to complete the necessary credits to earn their Alberta high school diploma. The region is also looking to support clients in finding employment in in-demand sectors, such as iron-working, commercial industrial insulating, and Class 1 & 3 Operator Training.



Bianca Beal came to us as a human resource professional, specializing in staffing, risk management, and learning in the hospitality industry. She was struggling to find employment that would provide enough income for her and her two young daughters. Her goal was to join Parks Canada and start a career with the federal government. Through Rupertsland Institute, she was able to attend the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Certificate course through the University of Alberta and begin her new role as a Human Resource Advisor with Parks Canada in Banff.

"Rupertsland Institute, and particularly Alice McDougall, played an instrumental role in obtaining my OHS Certificate and career goal. In the future, I am interested in completing a Master of Business Administration degree. In the meantime, I plan to enjoy time with my family, settle into my new role with Parks Canada, and find time to relax."

— *Bianca Beal*

Summer student at the Local 845  
Rocky Mountain House



# Mobile Employment Services

RLI operates two Mobile Employment Services (MES) units that provide services to rural/remote locations. The mobile units – named “the Métis Coureur de Bois” – are a unique and innovative means of extending Education and Employment services to small Métis communities in Alberta.

Each mobile team consists of a driver and an RLI staff member. The team travels to rural locations and works one-on-one with individuals. In addition to the regularly scheduled stops, mobile units are also present at community events to provide services wherever a number of Métis may be gathered.

RLI MES certainly looked different over the last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Regular services and live events were replaced with virtual meetings and gatherings.

As RLI migrated to the virtual world, MES assisted the communications team in gathering video footage and visual content that could be used for various virtual functions. The team travelled to Valleyview, Rocky Mountain House, Métis Crossing, Lloydminster and Fishing Lake to document the various education, employment, and training programs supported by RLI. Despite the challenges the pandemic presents, MES is committed to being active and involved in community activities!

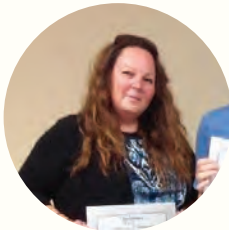


RLI's Mobile Unit can be found at all major Métis community events throughout the province.

# Disability Program Services

RLI's Disability Program Services works with clients to establish an appropriate action plan to fit their needs and determine relevant career goals. Our Disability Coordinator and applicable experts can assist with neurological and functional capacity assessments and physical demand analyses. Where there is a need, this program also provides assistive technologies and supports to facilitate access to employment opportunities, job maintenance, and success in the workplace.

The Disability Program continues to grow in its capacity to support clients in need. After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Disability Program provided assistance to Métis citizens with adapted delivery. Services included sharing information about community resources and counselling services to those experiencing additional mental health challenges, linking students to accessibility services for proper supports and accommodations, working with occupational therapists, and connecting clients to external service providers when their need was outside of the scope of the Disability Program's capacity.



Michelle Marcinowski is an RLI alumni. She shares, “I had very old hearing aids, while in SAIT I struggled a lot not being able to hear the instructor.”

Through RLI, Ms. Marcinowski was provided with the technology to support her hearing and complete her education.

“This was amazing, I was and am so thankful. I don't know how I would ever repay or say thank you enough to Rupertsland Institute for helping me along with my goals and dreams. They all are truly my angels sent from my ancestors. I believe that. I am now employed as an Education Assistant and I love my new career so much. I hope to make a difference in someone's life the way Rupertsland Institute made a difference in mine.”

— Michelle Marcinowski

Disability Program Services summer student, Gabriel Tetreault, at his job with the Sundre Municipal Library.



# Online Services



I am a Métis woman from Elk Point, Alberta. Growing up, my grandfather taught me about Métis culture and history. He believed in me and inspired me to pursue post-secondary education; my love of animals and science led me to veterinary medicine.

Going through university as an Indigenous person was challenging. I learned more about the social issues and difficulties unique to Indigenous Peoples. At the start of my educational journey, I doubted myself. The stresses that come with being a rural Métis woman made it difficult to believe that I could attain the same accomplishments as my non-Indigenous urban counterparts.

The support I accessed from different Métis organizations, such as RLI alleviated some of the stresses. In my final year of study, RLI provided support for tuition and living expenses, allowing me to focus on my studies.

My dream is to work with animals and Indigenous Peoples in rural locations, and improve public health. I also hope to inspire other Indigenous youth to pursue science and veterinary medicine careers. I would not have made it through my seven years of post-secondary without the support of RLI.

— Dr. Dayle Poitras-Oster

In 2015, RLI introduced online services to help process client applications under the Metis Training to Employment (MTE) program. Since then, Online Services has experienced growth in the annual budget and is the preferred method to process MTE supports for post-secondary students. In 2020, RLI added more responsibilities to the Online Services team by turning it into a Division and adding the mandate to deliver post-secondary supports under the new Post-Secondary Education program. The Online Application System can be accessed anywhere in Alberta providing students are connected to the Internet or a WiFi network.

## 2019-2020

From 2019 to 2020, RLI redesigned the online application service. The new design allows applications to be accessible to Métis clients from anywhere in Alberta that have access to the internet. The streamlined application process makes it easier for new applicants to navigate. Through each step of the application process, our professional Employment Counsellors are there to guide and assist applicants.

In 2019-2020 Online Services provided funding to 110 apprentices, 73 students in the final year of their Post-Secondary diploma program, and 150 students entering the final two semesters of their Post-Secondary degree program.

## 2020-2021

In March and April 2020, the pandemic forced schools and their students to transition from in-class training to online training in a matter of days. While most of our students transitioned well to this new virtual way of learning, some students struggled and had to reduce their course load to ensure the continued success of their studies.

RLI worked with those students needing accommodations to provide financial support for school and individual guidance through these stressful and uncertain times. In the past year, RLI Employment Counselors managed 324 final year students and apprentices, of which 215 students successfully found employment, and 18 students returned to school to further their education.

Although RLI staff worked remotely and many other organizations faced provincial shutdowns due to the pandemic, our student numbers increased, and we celebrated numerous successes. We thank our Online team for their dedication and commitment to making MTE Online a great success over the last two years.



Rupertsland Institute has made the biggest difference not just in my last year of technical school but all of the years. I had no stress in knowing RLI had helped me out with some of the costs involved with completing my apprenticeship. My Employment Counsellor was superb, always there for support, always very interested in how school was going. My experience with RLI was excellent. I would recommend anyone that is able to apply for funding through RLI to do so. I am very happy with the experience and journeyman status that I have achieved. I am an employed Journeyman.

— Jordan Leibel

## Online Client Breakdown

2019 — 2020



2020 — 2021



The Métis community celebrating Dr. Dayle Oster's journey towards Doctor of Veterinary Medicine.

# Provincial Projects



**Melissa Tipler**  
*Provincial Region Manager*

In order to support the four regional offices, RLI identifies key training projects that meet a demand across the entire province of Alberta. Although 2020 was a challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, RLI was able to adapt quickly and create a smooth transition in delivering projects and programs virtually.

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## Métis Entrepreneurship Workshops

In 2020, RLI continued to provide Métis Entrepreneurship Workshops for those pursuing self-employment. The transition to a virtual format saw a large increase in registrations for participants who would otherwise not have been able to attend in person. Many participants shared that they wanted to pursue self-employment for years and the pandemic provided an opportunity to finally shift their focus towards this goal.

RLI delivered seven virtual sessions to over 50 participants. These sessions taught participants about entrepreneurship, risk, business planning, and future resources. These workshops are ideal for Métis individuals with an interest in starting their own business, growing an existing business, or looking for information on effectively pursuing a potential business venture.

After completing the workshops, 37% of participants identified as self-employed, 35% identified as employed, and 18% identified as returning to school or still receiving support from RLI funding.



Camp participant Teigan Harvey shows off his solar powered toy car.

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## NAIT Science Exploration Camp

NAIT Science Exploration Camp engaged youth with career interests in computer science, robotics, and alternative energy. During the two week camp, participants were introduced to computer programming, including how to program an SD card, robotics, writing algorithms, and alternative energy sources. From these lessons and hands-on activities, students were able to complete a fully programmable solar powered toy car!

## Youth Camps

RLI developed several youth camps that seek to introduce Métis youth to high-demand occupations while learning to make informed career choices, build transferable skills, and participate in a fun summer camp! Over the past year, we were able to deliver two virtual youth camps and both reached maximum capacity.

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## SHINE ON Summer Camp

Participants explored design and technology over a week, receiving instruction on branding, website design, online business, social media marketing, and how to turn it into a career! After the camp, participants were able to design their own website, create a logo, and collaborate with peers on task-based assignments.

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## Virtual Job Fairs

Since the pandemic, RLI has continued to provide job search assistance to the Métis community across the province in an innovative way through Virtual Job Fairs. With the ten year anniversary theme of, “Providing opportunities and opening doors for our Métis community in Alberta.”

Virtual Job Fairs connected ready-to-hire employers with skilled Métis job seekers with 1:1 virtual meetings and delivered educational employment workshops on Resume Fundamentals, Identifying Transferable Skills, Interview Skills, and Métis 101: Who we are in the Workplace. The fairs also provided an opportunity to engage in panel discussions with industry professionals on relevant employment topics. Finally, Virtual Job Fairs connected job seekers with RLI job coaches who provided support with resume review and interview preparation.

RLI held two extremely successful events throughout 2020 - 2021; providing opportunities to over 600 registrants with 80+ employers attending; hiring for more than 2,500 open positions across Alberta. After the fair, 100% of participants rated the event as excellent or very good, and 96% of attendees found the event helpful in their job search.



Youth campers help pull a teammate over a climbing wall.

Thank you again for having us participate. I wanted to share that one of the candidates we met has accepted an offer and she is joining ATCO Frontec at our Two Rivers operation starting this week! A quick turnaround but a great testament to how many skilled and motivated job seekers joined the event.

— Jeff Ferguson, ATCO Frontec

This event exceeded my expectations completely. I highly recommend [it] to anyone interested in career development, finding work or learning more about looking for work.

— Shelley Alexander, Job Seeker



# RESEARCH

The year 2021 marks the 10th anniversary of the Rupertsland Centre for Métis Research (RCMR) at the University of Alberta. RLI and RCMR aim to create internally-driven studies and academic research that shed light on contemporary issues of importance to the Métis community and that enhance the individual and collective well-being of Métis citizens.

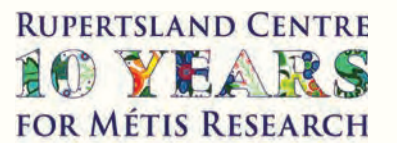


## Rupertsland Centre for Métis Research

On May 31, 2021, the Rupertsland Centre for Métis Research (RCMR) turned ten years old. The mandate of the RCMR stems from a long-standing relationship between the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) and the University of Alberta and its development originates from a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between these two parties in 2007. In 2010, the Rupertsland Institute (RLI) received the research mandate from the MNA and became responsible for Métis Nation representation on the RCMR Executive Council. The main objective of the RCMR is to address the long-standing deficit in Métis (academic) research first and foremost.

We are an expansive independent academic research centre housed in the Faculty of Native Studies, located in Pembina Hall at the University of Alberta's North Campus. Our mandate includes: building provincial and national connections with the Métis community; increasing research capacity to advance Métis-specific research; and training and employing student researchers.

We do academic research on topics of interest to Métis people in five main areas: historical research and Métis rights, institutional deficit in Métis education, land use and resources, contemporary Métis issues, and research and analysis capacity on current topics and general policy areas.



All event videos and podcasts mentioned in this report can be found on the RCMR website:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/native-studies/research/rupertsland-centre-for-metis-research/index.html>



Left: Jennine Krauchi, Métis beadwork artist, at a workshop in 2018.

Right: A quilling workshop in June 2019.

# RCMR Current Projects

The Métis Kinscapes Project seeks Métis stories about Lac Ste. Anne, Alberta that not only highlights the strong Métis attachment to homelands, but also affirms the importance that land and place occupy in those relationships. Centred in Métis Studies, the project explores historical, socio-cultural, socioeconomic, political, material, and religious lifeways that inform Métis peoplehood.

The Métis have consistent and distinct ways of knowing and being in the world that is not mixed, but grounded in relationality. One way of explaining Métis relationality is to understand kinship or how people relate to each other and to the world (seen and unseen) through their experiences at the pilgrimage of Lac Ste. Anne.

This multifaceted project combines oral histories, archival sources, genealogies, traditional economies, and geospatial mapping.

## Métis Kinscapes: Researching Métis Relations and Peoplehood at Lac Ste. Anne

In Spring 2020, the scholars of the Métis Kinscapes project, Dr. Paul Gareau, Dr. Cindy Gaudet, Dr. Shalene Jobin, Dr. Kisha Supernant, Marilyn Dumont, and Dr. Nathalie Kermoal received a Kule Research Cluster Grant. Research is ongoing but has been progressing slower because of pandemic restrictions. Summer Zoom interviews are starting now with Métis citizens willing to share their experiences of Lac Ste. Anne.

## Lii Zaanfann

On June 17, 2020, RCMR attended the kickoff meeting for a new Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) funded research project to understand the health and well-being trajectories of Métis children in Alberta. The research explores how intergenerational trauma and maternal and perinatal health impact the health and well-being of Métis children. This project is headed by MNA—Health and supported by researchers from the University of Alberta and Alberta Health Services. RCMR is supporting this project through disseminating research when it is finished and job creation through research assistant student hiring. We also hope to organize a *Métis Talks* style event on this topic in the future.

## Métis Child and Family Services

In February 2020, the Métis Nation of Alberta—Child and Family Services (MNA-CFS) partnered with RCMR to study the state of child protective services in Alberta; global models of Indigenous child welfare; and Métis kinship care for children throughout history. Today, MNA-CFS is continuing their work and developing a booklet—similar to the popular Scrip booklet—about Bill C-92 and its implications for Alberta Métis. A Métis Talks session is planned for the Fall or Spring of 2022 to present their findings.

## Materializing Indigenous Histories: Communities-University Partnerships for Indigenous-engaged Archaeological Research

From March 2021-March 2023, RCMR will be collaborating with Dr. Kisha Supernant and the Institute of Prairie and Indigenous Archaeology on a Social Science and Humanities Research Council funded project held by Dr. Andrew Martindale at the University of British Columbia. RCMR director, Dr. Nathalie Kermoal, attends biweekly meetings with Co-Investigators and Community partners as part of this project. Drs. Supernant and Kermoal are working together to develop activities with Métis communities in Alberta around archaeological research.



The Red River Cart was gifted to the University of Alberta in 2015 to signify the partnership and contributions of the Métis Nation to the university.

## Métis Social Determinants of Health

Work is ongoing with Métis Nation of Alberta—Health (MNA—Health). This research project focuses on the social determinants of health for Métis living in Alberta. Work with MNA-Health continues; a literature review on Métis and Indigenous pandemic responses was conducted in Fall 2020 and is now being reviewed by MNA.



# RCMR Events, Publications & Podcasts



*Our Foods: Chatting about Métis Food Sovereignty* is a series hosted by Devonn Drossel (MA student) who talks with Métis citizens about food sovereignty and Indigenous food sovereignty to inform what the definition of Métis food sovereignty could be. The first three episodes were developed in the context of a practicum course, NS 550: Research Practicum in Indigenous Studies. Devonn Drossel developed the concept of the podcast under the direction of Dr. Nathalie Keramoal. RCMR hired Devonn Drossel to develop another series of episodes over the summer.



The book *Métis Scrip* provides an overview of “Half-breed Scrip” in what is now Alberta. It is a brief history of Half-breed Scrip, its meaning and origins. Focusing on the community of Lac La Biche, this booklet is an overview of land scrip in what is currently Alberta.

Métis Talks has become the signature event of RCMR. Each spring and fall, we host a get-together with interested community members to talk about different academic and artistic research themes. RCMR has hosted the following sessions:



## Métis Talks Spring 2020

Our theme for Spring 2020 was Métis Experiences with Residential Schools. Before the pandemic closures, we hosted the Legacy of Hope exhibit, *Forgotten: Métis Residential School Experiences*, in collaboration with different university units, including University Libraries, Faculty of Native Studies, and Vice-Provost Indigenous Research. The theme for the Spring 2020 Métis Talks was an extension of this. We were honoured to listen to Gregory Scofield, who helped curate that Legacy of Hope exhibit, talk about his work repatriating Métis material culture pieces. We also heard from another exhibit curator, Dr. Tricia Logan, a Métis scholar from the University of British Columbia who is head of Research and Engagement at the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre at the University of British Columbia. She presented her research on Métis Residential School experiences.



## Métis Talks Fall 2020

On November 4, 2020, RCMR collaborated with the Gabriel Dumont Institute. Dr. Allyson Stevenson, GDI Chair of Métis Research at the University of Saskatchewan, presented: From rehabilitating Métis families to removing *Métis Children: The Long Sixties Scoop in Saskatchewan*. David Morin, GDI's cultural research team member, presented *Michif Language Revitalization*.



## Faculty of Native Studies Research Colloquium

On November 27, 2020, the most recent Faculty of Native Studies Research Colloquium featured a special RCMR Métis Research Student panel with presentations by four students: Molly Swain, Leah Hyrcun, Chelsea Vowel, and Dr. David Parent.

## Métis Talks Spring 2021

On April 23, 2021, RCMR collaborated with the MNA Health Department for this session. MNA Health Director Reagan Bartel with Dr. Maria Ospina presented *Misi Yehewin: Understanding Covid-19 experiences among Métis in Alberta*. The video of this event is available on our website and Facebook page. Lisa Shepherd and Krista Leddy also presented *Breath: Healing Behind the Mask*, a discussion of Banff Whyte Museums’ Breathe exhibit and the works they made for that installation. This presentation was live only and is not available to watch online.



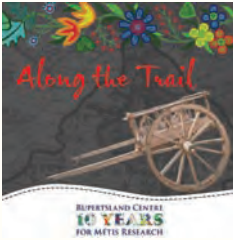
## Publications

*Daniels v. Canada: In and Beyond the Courts* was published on April 23, 2021, by the University of Manitoba Press. On May 17, 2021, a book launch was hosted by RCMR and the University of Manitoba Press. Presentations were given by the book editors Dr. Nathalie Keramoal and Dr. Chris Andersen as well as three other contributors: Dr. Brenda Gunn, Dr. Darryl Leroux, and Dr. Brenda Macdougall. The video for this event can be found on the RCMR website. Copies of this book are for sale through the University of Manitoba Press. In addition, RCMR was invited to launch the Daniels Book at the University of Manitoba on March 10, 2021. Dr. Nathalie Keramoal, Dr. Chris Andersen, and Métis lawyer Jason Madden presented and responded to questions from the audience.

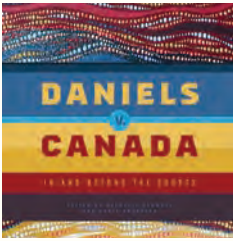


## Podcasts

In January 2021, work began at RCMR to develop two podcasts showcasing research and academic researchers to go alongside our 10-year anniversary celebration. These two podcasts, *Our Foods: Chatting about Métis Food Sovereignty* and *Along the Trail*, are a new way for us to connect and communicate with the Métis community through a different medium than before.



*Along the Trail* is a podcast featuring Métis studies researchers. In the first episode host and Faculty of Native Studies PhD student Molly Swain sits down with MNA President Audrey Poitras, RLI CEO Lorne Gladu, and RCMR Director Dr. Nathalie Keramoal, to talk about the founding of the Rupertsland Centre for Métis Research. They discuss what the vision for the centre was, is, and what the future holds.



*Daniels v. Canada: In and Beyond the Courts* can be purchased online from the University of Manitoba Press (<https://uofmpress.ca/books/detail/daniels-v.-canada>)

# RCMR Supporting Researchers



## RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

The 2020-2021 RCMR Research Fellowship Application was awarded to Dr. Gabrielle Legault, University of British Columbia - Okanagan.

This fellowship goes towards supporting Phase two of a multi-year research project. Her study explores the reconciliation of Métis-First Nation relationships through examining the history of inter-Indigenous Métis relations, the current state of Métis-First Nations relations in British Columbia and more broadly, and exploring potential recommendations for Métis peoples and organizations to reconcile these relations.

## Research Affiliates

In 2018, RCMR began a dedicated effort towards creating a network of academic research affiliates who specialize in Metis Studies and Research. These research affiliates help RLI to take up the academic research work of the Metis Nation. Research affiliates are individuals who are interested in participating in the Centre's activities and whose scholarship aligns with our five principal research areas: Historical research and Métis rights; Institutional deficit in Métis education; Land use and resources; Contemporary Métis issues; Research and analysis capacity on current topics; and general policy areas.

Our network has expanded again this year and now includes nineteen researchers across eleven Canadian universities and colleges. This year we welcomed six additional researchers:

Dr. Chelsea Gabel, *McMaster University, Department of Health, Aging & Society.*

Dr. Rob Hancock, *University of Victoria, Department of Anthropology.*

Dr. David Parent, *University of Manitoba, Department of Indigenous Studies, Department of History.*

Dr. Chantal Fiola, *University of Winnipeg, Department of Urban & Inner-City Studies.*

Dr. Daniel Voth, *University of Calgary, Department of Political Science.*

Keith King, *Assistant Teaching Professor, University of Alberta, Faculty of Nursing.*

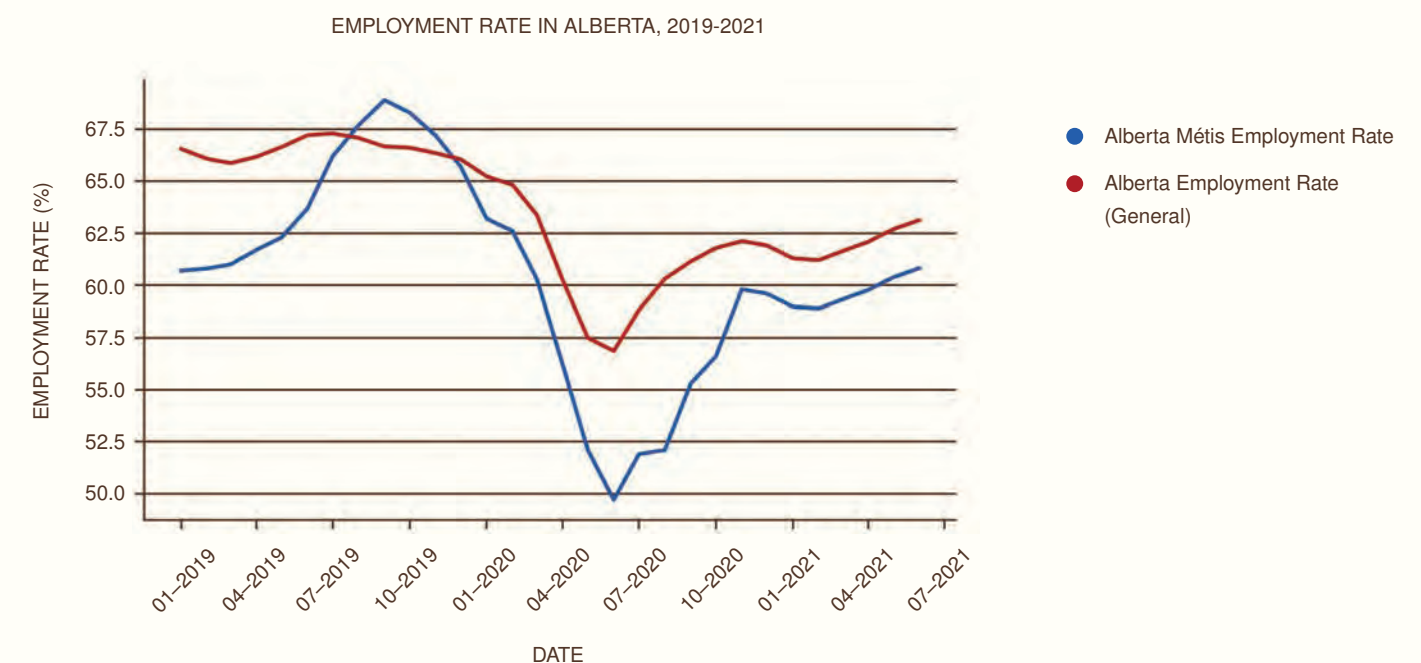
## Métis Land Based Learning Course

Finally, a really exciting initiative we are working on is a project with RLI and Métis Crossing. Together with Krista Leddy and Leon Hunter, from Métis Crossing, and U of A Métis Studies scholars, we are in the process of developing a University level Land-based learning course for students enrolled in the Faculty of Native Studies and Native Studies-Education combined degree programs. This will be a two-week intensive course where students will spend one week in the classroom learning from Métis Studies scholars at the University of Alberta and one week on-the-Land at Métis Crossing learning from Knowledge Holders. The pilot for this course is going to be delivered at the University of Alberta and Métis Crossing in August 2022.

# Program Based Research

RLI conducts ongoing program-based research to ensure our programs and services are in alignment with the changing needs of Métis people in Alberta. We are the only organization continuously producing labour market research specific to the Métis population at the sub-provincial level. Part of this ongoing research effort is in the form of quarterly labour market monitoring reports. While these reports are always informative, this continuous, ongoing effort paid off during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RLI's quarterly reports were among the first pieces of analysis documenting the differential impact of pandemic lockdowns on Indigenous relative to non-Indigenous populations. Specifically, the Métis population in Alberta was harder-hit by pandemic-related lockdowns than the non-Indigenous population in Alberta. The Employment Rate in Alberta figure, based on the same data used in the monitoring reports, demonstrates how the employment rate changed over the past 18 months for the Métis and non-Indigenous populations in Alberta. This timely information spurred RLI to act with emergency measures to support Métis workers, students, and businesses to mitigate the impacts of these labour market and business disruptions. These monitoring reports will provide additional insights into how the Métis labour market recovers from the pandemic and will allow RLI to target assistance to those regions and sectors hardest hit.





# Closing the Gaps

In 2016-2017, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) comprehensively engaged with Indigenous partners regarding the renewal of the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS). With the guidance and direction of RLI and other governing members of the Métis National Council, these efforts resulted in the creation of the 10-year Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program, which includes: a) increased funding; b) greater flexibility to design programming; c) a distinctions-based approach that recognizes, respects, and reflects Canada's three Indigenous groups; and d) performance metrics measuring the employment and occupational skill levels gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations.

An additional \$116 million is now available to ISETS agreement holders—a 40% increase over funding available under the ASETS—to “close the gap” between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employment rates and occupational skill levels. Employment rates are a good indicator of labour market health, relative to other labour

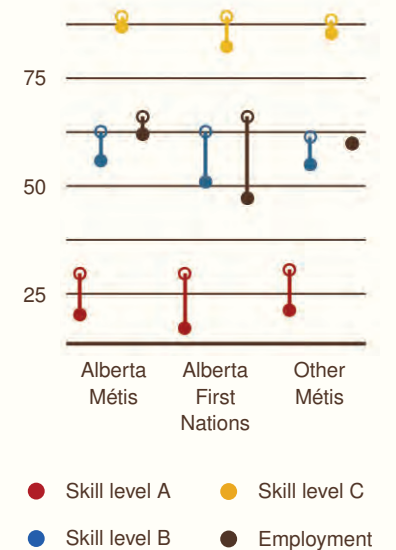
force statistics, though they fail to capture job quality. Employment rates are, therefore, supplemented by the occupational skills gap, which measures the difference in required skill levels between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in their respective occupations. Combined, these two metrics provide a simple—yet fairly comprehensive—measure of the Indigenous labour market.

These two metrics were also used to determine incremental funding allocation for each ISET agreement holder, including RLI, using 2016 Census data. In 2016, the Alberta employment rate gap between the Métis and non-Indigenous populations was 4.1% and the occupational skills gaps were 9.5% (skill level A), 6.8% (skill levels B and higher), and 2.4% (skill levels C and higher). The Employment Rate and Occupational Skill Gap figure presents a comparison of these metrics between Alberta Métis and First Nations and Métis in other provinces. In Alberta, the Métis employment rate is high relative to Métis across Canada, but so is the employment rate gap, which is likely a result of Alberta's relatively high employment rate in the non-Indigenous population. RLI is working to close this employment gap.

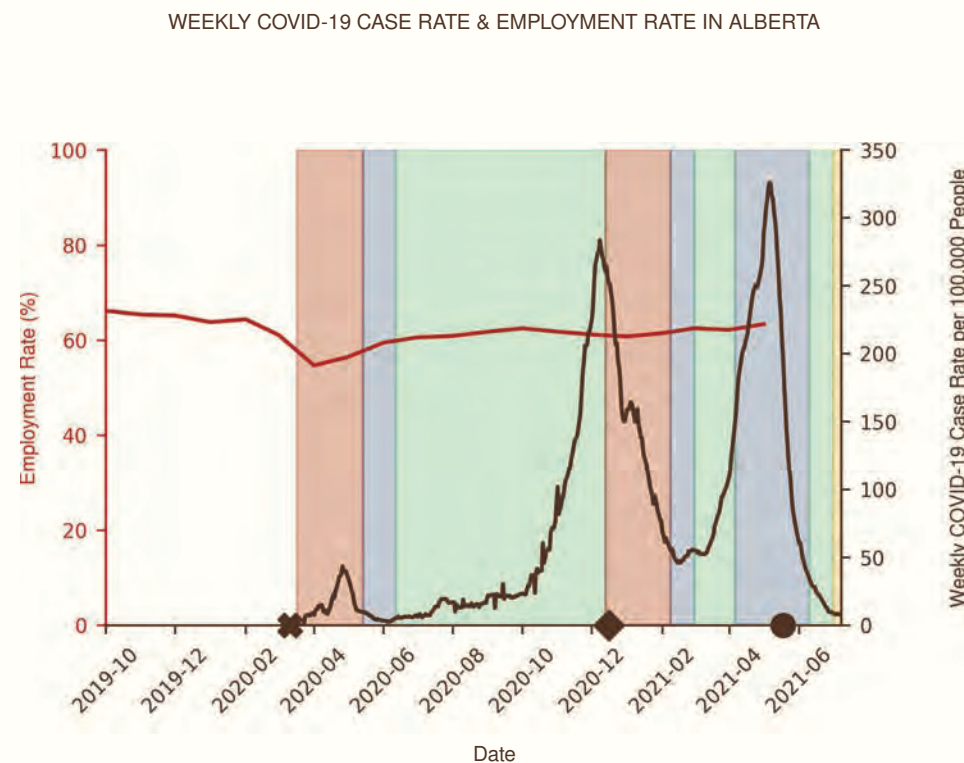
Alberta is vulnerable to labour market fluctuations due to its dependence on industrial development and natural resource extraction. The COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions and unstable commodity prices have led to volatility in both Métis and non-Indigenous employment rates. The Weekly COVID-19 Case Rate & Employment Rates in Alberta figure presents a timeline of the COVID-19 pandemic and employment rates in Alberta. The nature of rapid labour market changes makes it difficult to evaluate RLI's contribution to closing the employment and occupational skill gaps. One way to measure RLI's contribution, however, is to assess the number of job placements and skill upgrades achieved relative to the 2016 Census data. Since 2016, RLI has reconnected over 4,100 clients with the labour market and supported skill-upgrading for over 2,700 clients. Had the employment gap remained constant at 2016 levels, RLI's work would have substantially narrowed the employment and occupational skills gaps. By closing both gaps completely, Métis in Alberta would not only be employed at the same rate as the non-Indigenous population, but they would also have access to similar quality employment.

Moving forward, RLI continues to track our progress by comparing the number of successful client outcomes relative to the 2016 Census data and by keeping track of current labour market trends using Labour Force Survey data. Additionally, when the 2021 Census data are available next year, we will be able to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the changes between 2016 and 2021.

EMPLOYMENT RATE AND OCCUPATIONAL SKILL GAPS



WEEKLY COVID-19 CASE RATE & EMPLOYMENT RATE IN ALBERTA



# Future of RLI

## VISION

A skilled and knowledgeable, self-reliant Métis Nation.

## MISSION

To enhance the self-sufficiency and well-being of Alberta Métis through quality education, training, and research.

## VALUES

To work together in a spirit of openness, honesty, integrity, accountability and transparency.

To continually improve the quality of programs and services and demonstrate excellence through high performance outcomes.

To promote the ideals of self-sufficiency and self-sustainability.

To promote and invigorate Métis culture.

To develop collaborative, respectful and relevant partnerships.

The future of RLI is bright as we continue to support the growth of a skilled, knowledgeable, and self-reliant Métis Nation. Our future will be shaped by our continued efforts to support and encourage Métis learners' excellence. We look forward to collaboration and a strengthened relationship with the MNA as it embarks upon new chapters in the historic Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement signed in June 2019.

RLI is now in the final year of its 2018-22 Corporate Business Plan. The Plan and Board's strategic priorities gave a blueprint on how to move forward on a three-part mandate, while embodying the RLI mission, vision, and values. We envision our plans for growth and continued excellence in education, training, and research in the plan below. Supporting these mandates, whether they change or remain the same, will always be a priority for RLI. In doing so, our plan includes a physical space that would serve to connect RLI's programs, services, clients, and alumni with the broader Métis community.

In terms of the education mandate, RLI continues to expand the range of programs and services targeted at improving Métis education in Alberta. It is our desire to become a formal Métis education authority for Métis learners in Alberta and to expand the role of that authority for K-12 learners in Alberta. To that end, we will continue to grow the range of education programs and services to support lifelong learning. As part of that growth, it will be necessary to acquire accreditation as a post-secondary institution along the lines of the Gabriel Dumont Institute. We will continue to develop the Rupertsland Centre for Teaching and Learning, where comprehensive foundational knowledge resources, engaging lesson plans, meaningful professional development opportunities, and authentic classroom learning tools that speak accurately and meaningfully to topics in Métis education will serve to ensure the Métis Nation has a presence in all Alberta classrooms. We will continue to develop foundational pillars for the future of Métis education and will include initiatives that facilitate land-based learning opportunities and engage youth in traditional teachings. We will continue the expansion of MEF's endowment funds, and we will develop capacity to create our own credentialed education offerings.

In terms of the training mandate, the Métis Training to Employment (MTE) division quickly adapted its service delivery model to accommodate the 'new normal' of 2020-21 and was able to successfully support over 1,230 clients in advancing their education, work experience, job skills, and employment opportunities through the COVID-19 pandemic. In the coming year, RLI will evaluate its service delivery

model to consider the new reality of how services are delivered via the remote-based online environment. The current success in this type of service environment lends to the possibility of a hybrid model where the human resource function of RLI splits staff time between the office and home-based delivery. The MTE division will continue to explore its technology and data collection methodologies to ensure a more streamlined approach to capturing and storing client data while merging its technology with the post-secondary education division at RLI. Some of these changes will require new funding under the federal Métis Nation Labour Market Strategy as RLI builds greater capacity with its IT and improves its Online Application System to create greater efficiencies with client intake. Climate change and all that it entails will shape much of the training at RLI as the economy shifts to emerging sectors in robotics and new sources of energy.

In terms of the research mandate, RLI plans to continue its partnership and investment in the Rupertsland Centre for Métis Research. As part of this investment, RLI envisions developing an independent institution to support the next generation of Métis researchers in Alberta. This institution would deliver credentialed Métis education programming alongside hands-on work experience conducting research that will inform and shape RLI/MNA operations and embed data-driven decision making into the Métis Nation's programs and services. The institute will enhance RLI/MNA's statistical capacity and will teach Métis in-demand skills for the modern workforce, while enhancing the Métis Nation's capacity to create, own, and make use of its own data as it moves towards another milestone in Métis excellence.





# Bryan Hebden, 1951-2020



Bryan had decorated RV3 with various Métis crafts, sashes, flags. Prior to his passing he had asked Artist Nicole Turner to make him some beadwork that he could display. The beadwork is now proudly displayed in a souvenir box in memory of Bryan.

*“It is with great sadness that the family of Bryan Hebden announced his passing into the spirit world, on Sunday June 21, 2020, at the age of 69.”*

Bryan joined the RLI Mobile Employment Services as an RV Driver in 2015. On Bryan’s first day we introduced the newest RV (RV3) and Bryan headed out and visited the many communities throughout the province in the new Mobile Employment Office. He very quickly became more than an RV Driver. He was an RLI Ambassador and provided a safe and friendly service to his coworkers and clients as well as the Métis Community.

Bryan embraced the Métis world and always wanted to learn more. He looked forward to talking with fellow employees and clients, and had a passion for spending time learning from others, including Elders.

One of our biggest challenges with Bryan was to get him to take time off work! He loved his work and didn’t want to miss out on any opportunity to serve, listen and learn.



## RLI Senior Team Services



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*Director of Finance & Corporate Services*



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**Sharon Sawchuk**  
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## RLI Regional Team Services







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