

TO Live

Indigenous Action Plan- Update

Date: November 18, 2025

To: Board of Directors of TO Live

From: President and Chief Executive Officer

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an update on TO Live's Indigenous Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The President and Chief Executive Officer recommends that the Board of Directors of TO Live receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact at the current time.

DECISION HISTORY

At its April 17, 2025 meeting, the Board of Directors of TO Live received TO Live's staff report on its Indigenous Action Plan - Key Steps.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.CT15.3>

At its September 12, 2024 meeting, the Board of Directors of TO Live received TO Live's staff report on Indigenous Community Consultations - Key Findings and Next Steps.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.CT11.3>

COMMENTS

During the third quarter of 2025, TO Live continued to advance the Indigenous Action Plan, incorporating recommendations and feedback from both TO Live staff and Indigenous community members.

TO Live met with the Ontario Native Women's Association to share ideas about opportunities for allyship and collaboration. Ongoing meetings were held resulting in their participation in TO Live's UpFRONT Festival of Indigenous Arts, as well as folks from the ONWA community. The Canada Council of Indigenous Business supported the UpFRONT Festival by promoting it to its extensive membership in Ontario, resulting in strong attendance from its members. TO Live also engaged Circadia Indigena to explore future opportunities for community-building at TO Live.

Through targeted outreach, TO Live's *Making Space* program - offering Toronto's artistic community affordable spaces for rehearsal, creative residencies, workshops, and meetings/convenings - gained increased visibility among Indigenous communities, contributing to a rise in applications from Indigenous artists. This year, TO Live was able to provide free space to Paprika Theatre festival's Indigenous Arts Program, Red Sky Performance, The National Arts Centre's Indigenous Theatre's Production of *Rose* with John Alcorn + Tomson Highway and Tanya Tagaq. Five out of the 27 successful applicants are Indigenous. Red Sky has a residency (returning in 2026) as well as free space for a rehearsal.

Now in its fifth year, TO Live's *explorations*, an initiative providing Toronto-based artists with small grants, has supported 39 artists with a total of \$300,000 in funding. As part of the 2025 jury, there was strong advocacy for Indigenous artists, which contributed to the fifth Indigenous artist being selected to date, including: Marcos Arcentales (2025), Johnathan Morrin (2024), Quentin Commanda (2023), Nyle Miigizi Johnston (2022), Gabe Maharjan (2021).

An Indigenous Cultural Rider was created and widely shared across departments and turned into an online form. It was distributed to all Indigenous Artists participating in the 2025 UpFRONT Festival, most of whom responded. TO Live received feedback from numerous artists indicating our staff was the most culturally-sensitively trained, were easy to talk to, and they felt their language, culture and concepts were clearly received with excitement by our staff. Post-Mortem feedback indicated our event was so loved by artists and community members, that we decided to offer it again in 2026.

To honour the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, TO Live delivered Indigenous cultural awareness training (*What you say matters*) on September 30, focusing on the importance of language, communication, and relationship-building with Indigenous peoples and communities. Diverse Indigenous cultures, protocols and teachings were shared at events like medicine teachings at the UpFRONT Festival, as well as during staff and planning meetings.

TO Live will continue its participation in the PAIR program, an online management and reporting program that supports progressive improvement in Indigenous relations, and a certification program that confirms corporate performance in Indigenous relations at the Commitment, Bronze, Silver or Gold-levels. TO Live will commence work in the program in January 2026.

Finally, in partnership with the Development team, TO Live successfully secured \$200,000 from the Azrieli Foundation for the Indigenous Song Project. The pilot project, launching in 2026, will collaborate with one Indigenous community in Ontario and one in Quebec to collect, perform and share Indigenous songs with Indigenous youth. The National Arts Centre has agreed in principle to serve as a potential performance site, with TO Live hosting the other.

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SIGNATURE

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