

NI'N AQ NO'KMAQ

2024 ENGAGEMENT UPDATE WHAT WE HEARD



WHAT IS NI'N AQ NO'KMAQ?

Ni'n aq No'kmaq is a process by which the **Mi'kmaq** of Epekwitk (PEI) will determine who the rightful heirs of the Peace and Friendship Treaties are in PEI, and who can exercise Aboriginal and Treaty rights like harvesting, hunting, and fishing. **This process is one step in moving towards Mi'kmaq self-determination of who they consider to be Mi'kmaq.**

It is not about Indian status as defined in the Indian Act. It is about our family roots and connections, and our collective identity as a Nation. It's about ensuring we uphold our place as Treaty people, and we take care of the lands, waters and resources that have sustained us for generations. This process is up to us to determine who is Mi'kmaq in Epekwitk. It is not up to the federal and provincial governments to decide for us.

KEY PURPOSE

L'nuey, on behalf of the Mi'kmaq leadership in Epekwitk, wants to ensure that:

- ✓ We all have a collective understanding on who we consider to be Mi'kmaq in Epekwitk.
- ✓ Rights are being advanced by the Mi'kmaq, the rightful treaty holders in this territory.
- ✓ Resources are being protected and used properly - as with rights come responsibilities.
- ✓ Future generations of Mi'kmaq are protected, connected and are able to enjoy these resources.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As Mi'kmaq from Epekwitk, Ni'n aq No'kmaq is your process. Every step of the way, L'nuey is engaging with Mi'kmaq across this Island - returning to you at each stage to ask if we heard you correctly and only then are we proceeding. We have conducted engagement since 2020, shortly after L'nuey launched in September of 2019.

Our most recent phase of engagement was completed in the Summer of 2024. This engagement focused on getting clarity from members of Lennox and Abegweit on how individuals define the terms "**community member**", "**citizen**", "**band member**" and "**beneficiary**".

The reason we sought feedback on these specific terms is:

- during engagement over the years, people used these terms interchangeably, such as “community member” and “band member”. Our 2024 phase of engagement sought clarity in how terminology is used and understood.
- in the past, we also were asked questions by some people as to why we were not working on citizenship. While the work of citizenship is not within our mandate at L'nuey at this time, it is still important that we understand how individuals understand the concept of “citizenship”, and if community members feel that it is an area of importance, we report this feedback to the Mi'kmaq leadership (Epekwitk Assembly of Councils).

In the last year, we engaged with 324 members of Lennox and Abegweit, having 68 surveys completed.

SO, WHAT DID WE HEAR IN 2024?

Most participants feel that a **Mi'kmaq Rights-holder is explicitly a band member and/or Mi'kmaq**. They said that a Rights-holder can also be the child of a band member, a grandchild or a great grandchild.

A **community member is often understood as the spouse or common-law partner of a band member**. Others said a community member could also be someone living in the community or actively participating in community events, even if they are not a band member.

A **citizen has privileges in the community but cannot exercise Aboriginal and Treaty-rights**. An example of a citizen is the spouse of a right-holder. When asked to clarify their responses, participants responded similarly: to be a citizen, an individual must pass specific criteria like participation in community, knowledge of culture and history, etc.

Importantly, the response and feedback on the concept of citizenship gave clarity to L'nuey that members of Lennox and Abegweit see a clear difference between who is a Mi'kmaq Rights-holder and who is a citizen, and that the priority is to determine who is a Mi'kmaq Rights-holder.

In previous years of engagement, the two utmost important factors that continue to be expressed in determining who is Mi'kmaq in Epekwitk is *familial connection (ancestry)* and *acceptance by the PEI Mi'kmaq nation*.


NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Finalize enrollment criteria.
- ✓ Get feedback on the draft enrollment process.
- ✓ Hold a vote to ratify the draft enrollment process.
- ✓ Implementation of process and set up of Enrollment Committee to review applications.


YOUR VOICE MATTERS

This is your Process. We want to hear from you. Let us know if we heard you correctly. Do you agree with what was shared in this round of engagement? Would you like to learn more or get involved?

LEARN MORE AND JOIN IN

 www.lnuey.ca/governance-development

 info@lnuey.ca

 902-569-2150