



What's First Nations Court?

If you identify as Aboriginal, and plead guilty to a **crime**, you may be able to go to one of BC's First Nations Courts for sentencing. Aboriginal includes status and non-status Indians, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

First Nations Court is a criminal sentencing court that uses **restorative justice** and traditional ways to reach balance and healing.

You must accept you're responsible for your actions. Then the judge looks at:

- the harm you caused to victims,
- your background,
- your needs now, and
- how a healing plan can be made for you and your community.



How do I get into First Nations Court?

You or your lawyer can call First Nations Court **duty counsel** to see if you can go to First Nations Court. They can tell you how to get your case transferred there. They can answer any questions you have about First Nations Court.

604-601-6074 (Greater Vancouver)
1-877-601-6066 (elsewhere in BC)

It's *your choice* to have your matter heard in First Nations Court. Talk to your lawyer or First Nations Court duty counsel about what's best for you.

Where are First Nations Courts?

First Nations Courts are in Duncan, Kamloops, Merritt (Nicola Valley Indigenous Court), New Westminster, North Vancouver, and Prince George. There may be more locations in the future.

First Nations Court is usually held once a month at each location. For dates, see:

provinciacourt.bc.ca (in the search bar, type First Nations Court dates)

For maps of all First Nations Courts in BC and more information about who can help you, see **aboriginal.legalaid.bc.ca**.

Who's at First Nations Court?

You work with a team of people to come up with a healing plan. Your team includes:

- Elders,
- your lawyer (or **duty counsel** if you don't have a lawyer), and
- the judge and **Crown counsel** (government lawyer).

Your team can also have:

- Aboriginal community members,
- social workers,
- Native courtworkers,
- probation officers, or
- victim services workers.

You can bring family, friends, community members, and other support people to First Nations Court with you. They don't have to speak out in court. But everyone has a chance to be heard.

What's a duty counsel lawyer?

Duty counsel lawyers are at each of the First Nations Courts. They give free legal advice before court and are there during court.



What's a healing plan?

A healing plan is a way to help you, your community, and the victim of your crime to move on. You have to work on issues that got you into trouble with the law in the first place.

For example, you may have to go to sweats or a healing circle, or do community service. Your healing plan gives you the help and support you need.

