



Anishinaabe Governance is... **OUR OWN LEADERSHIP SELECTION LAWS**

The words “Leadership Selection” are used to make room for other ways to select our leaders. Under Anishinaabe Law our leaders were the head spokespersons selected by the Clans, our Families. Indian Act governance was imposed on Anishinabek communities to replace and destroy our culture, including our Anishinaabe governance system.

Under the Indian Act we have a recipe for instability and control by Indian Affairs. “First past the post,” also called a “simple majority,” can divide our communities because we still are a family-based society. Two-year terms for Chiefs and Councils have caused instability as an election is always in the offing. Frequent leadership changes can cause problems for implementing strategic plans. The Indian Act also determines how many councillors a First Nation can have: 1 councillor for every 100 people, up to a maximum of 12.

The Current State of Elections

Right now, when your First Nation conducts an election, it is governed under the Indian Act. The Indian Act is completely controlled by the federal government. For years, First Nations have been working to come out from under the Indian Act.

There are some First Nations that have opted to create their own Band Custom election codes. But even these election codes need to be approved by the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations in Ottawa.

The Promise, Hope and Future of Anishinaabe Leadership Selection

Self-governing Anishinabek First Nations are taking a courageous leap forward to establish their own system of selecting leaders. The governance agreement does not define what this selection or election system is. It will be up to self-governing First Nations, and you, the citizens, E'Debendaagzijig, meaning Those Who Belong.

The leadership selection system will depend on your vision. Considerations may include:

- A European democratic style of election – one person, one vote by secret ballot
- For larger First Nations, elected representation based on geographic areas
- An electoral representation based on family representation
- Including Elders, youth and women representatives
- Including off-reserve representatives
- Taking a gradual approach and maintaining similarity to current elections

To learn more about the Anishinaabe Governance ratification process call your First Nation Communications Coordinator or visit: governancevote.ca.

Niigaan Zhaamin-Forward Together
governancevote.ca