

# **Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan (ORAAP)**

**2015-16 Year End Summary**



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## British Columbia's OFF-RESERVE ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN (ORAAP)

### *2015-2016 YEAR END SUMMARY*

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

In British Columbia (BC), 78 per cent of all Aboriginal people live off-reserve. The October 3, 2011 Speech from the Throne acknowledged the importance of the off-reserve Aboriginal population in BC and committed that:

“Government will work with Aboriginal partners, the federal government and local governments to develop an off-reserve Aboriginal action plan to achieve better education and job training, healthier family life, and strengthened cultures and traditions.”

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (MARR) was tasked with coordinating and leading the development of ORAAP and worked to set up the Provincial Coordination Team (PCT). The PCT is comprised of the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC), the Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC), MARR, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). The PCT has been acknowledged as a best practice for collaboration and partnership between urban communities and governments within Canada.

As an initial step in developing ORAAP, the PCT undertook evidenced-based research that identified that there are over 700 provincial programs and services (general and Aboriginal specific) which support the urban Aboriginal population. The PCT determined its role would best be served by supporting the collective impact of those servicing the urban Aboriginal population. This could best be done by providing a process to support coordination, collaboration and innovations across the complex system(s) focused on improving socio-economic conditions for urban Aboriginal peoples.

ORAAP has focused on supporting urban Aboriginal communities to develop strategic capacities and opportunities to create coalitions and innovations for achieving socio-cultural reconciliation and better social economic well-being, with a particular focus on supporting greater participation in the economy. With this “social innovation” frame, ORAAP has conducted two in depth “developmental evaluations” (2012-13 and 2013-14) that captured the systems level innovations and improvements that ORAAP has achieved over the last number of years.

These can be found at:

- [Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan \(ORAAP\) Year-end Report - 2013/14](#)
- [Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan \(ORAAP\) Year-end Report - 2012/13](#)

***OFF-RESERVE ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN AT A GLANCE:***

The ORAAP is a government-community partnership initiative focused on bringing together collective resources, knowledge, and creativity—at local and provincial levels—to contribute to positive changes for urban Aboriginal people living in BC. The partnership involves a network of over 70 organizations that range from Aboriginal organizations, businesses, education institutions, health care providers, law enforcement, youth-led organizations, and all levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal).

ORAAP engages urban Aboriginal peoples by bringing together collective resources, knowledge, and creativity at local, provincial, and federal levels to focus on three shared priorities:

1. increasing employment recruitment and retention;
2. education and training opportunities; and
3. engaging the growing youth population

It is important to note that these priorities are seen within a holistic context whereby success in jobs and training can happen only when foundational supports such as housing, health, child care, and justice-related supports are also made available.

***KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:***

ORAAP is increasing awareness of Aboriginal peoples (culture and history) as well as contributions to address the long-term systemic challenges faced by urban Aboriginal peoples. Also, the capacity of citizens, community agencies, and ORAAP partners are growing and becoming more resilient.

All activities were based on the Terms of Reference drafted for the PCT in 2015 and the four domains articulated therein.

A total of \$761,000 was invested to support ORAAP/Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) activities in 2015-16. Total INAC UAS investments for last year were \$376,000 for activities related to Aboriginal participation in the economy. MARR and partner ministries invested a total of \$385,000. Accomplishments and outcomes in 2015-16 included:

- Implementation of the BCAAFC's Five by Five Aboriginal Jobs Strategy, Indigenous Social Innovation activities, and increased promotion of ORAAP activities;

- Completion of a comprehensive Métis Youth Health in BC report, as well as the launch of a Métis youth career website, and regional Youth Community Navigators; and
- Support for the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (MVAEC) to conduct a gap analysis to create strategies and engage corporate partnerships supporting Indigenous participation in the economy. A corporate partnership engagement strategy was developed to enhance identification of participation in economy for urban Aboriginal people living in the greater metro Vancouver area by identifying new opportunities.

In addition, the following five projects (funded through the federal UAS contribution) focused on planning and partnership building to increase urban Indigenous participation in the economy. These projects were undertaken by the following organizations:

#### **Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association**

- Developed and implemented an Industry Engagement Strategy to identify specific employment opportunities in two industry sectors and implement tailored training and mentoring programs.

#### **Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council**

- Supported delivery of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in the BC Region, two engagement sessions with Elders and youth to identify culturally-relevant solutions to increase urban Aboriginal participation in the economy, six sectorial engagement sessions with recommendations for the UAS Regional Plan and a proposal writing session tailored to urban Indigenous communities.

#### **MNBC**

- Conducted Community Employment Planning sessions involving employers and community members in each of MNBC's seven regions in order to develop strategies to increase employment.

#### **Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment & Training Society**

- Developed a set of best practices for Aboriginal recruitment and retention and conducted a workshop with industry, training and education providers and First Nations representatives to develop strategies for Aboriginal recruitment and retention.

#### **BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centers project**

- Engaged key stakeholders to finalize industry-specific strategies and partnerships that will to increase Indigenous participation in urban economies.

## ***Key highlights from 2015-16:***

In March of 2015, the ORAAP/PCT began work on a new set of Terms of Reference (TOR) to better articulate the work going forward for 2015-16 as well as guide future funding decisions. Four primary areas of focus emerged:

### **1. Aboriginal Community Capacity Building:**

Facilitating better understanding of the critical need and strong business case for mobilizing investment in Aboriginal communities and organizations to develop the means they require to build the relationships, structures, processes and projects necessary to achieve their objectives.

For example: the BCAAFC convened the first two meetings of a Social Innovation Collective to engage Aboriginal thought leaders in BC to develop a shared agenda that focuses on impacting change in Indigenous communities, similar to the BC Partners for Social Impact.

The BCAAFC also convened a 'fundings conference' that brought together representatives from Indigenous communities/organizations and funders from all levels of government, foundations, and the private sector. The purpose of the funding conference was to promote funding opportunities available to Indigenous communities and provide networking opportunities between funders and Indigenous communities. The November 2015 funding conference brought over 70 funders and 400 Indigenous community representatives to Victoria for two days. The 2016 conference will be held in Richmond, BC in September.

### **2. Socio-Economic Development:**

Supporting increased participation of Urban Indigenous people in the economy enabling and supporting social development at community, family and individual levels required for economic development to occur. This includes promoting understanding that success for Indigenous people may be different than mainstream definitions.

For example, the MNBC proposed Business Development Program, designed to promote support for Métis businesses, increase own source revenue to reduce dependency on government and to develop social enterprise opportunities (i.e., Thrift stores, daycares, etc.) that re-invest in Métis people.

In addition, the BCAAFC, through the Urban Partnerships program supported the development of social enterprise start-ups in Aboriginal communities. The purpose

of social enterprise is to provide own source revenue that can be reinvested in social programs while reducing dependence on government support for said programs.

### **3. Aboriginal Participation in the Economy:**

INAC's UAS funds focus on increasing economic participation among urban Indigenous people. The BC UAS Regional Plan includes Indigenous youth as a priority. Within the two UAS funding programs (Urban Partnerships and Community Capacity Support), significant investments are made in youth-related partnership building and programming. ORAAP activities this year have focussed on removing systemic educational and employment barriers and creating new safe and supportive learning and working opportunities that encourage full participation of Aboriginal people in the economic life of BC.

For example, the BCAAFC coordinated and convened a distance education conference in partnership with Royal Roads University to showcase a variety of tools that can be utilized for distance education learning, and to identify what other supports are available to support this type of learning, and bring together stakeholders across a number of sectors to identify opportunities for collaboration.

### **4. Reconciliation:**

Promoting "cultural shift in relations" among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal citizens of BC requires an understanding of the legacy of conditions that promote racism, violence and intergenerational trauma experienced by Aboriginal people. A reconciliation focus also requires increasing opportunities to build the respect, awareness, competencies and cultural safety that Aboriginal people require from governments and other non-Aboriginal organizations that are publicly resourced to serve them.

For example, the BCAAFC partnered with the BC Union of Municipalities and Reconciliation Dialogue Circles in some communities across BC. More dialogue sessions are intended for 2016-17. Given the intention of the new federal government, reconciliation should become more of a focus throughout 2016-17 and beyond.

The Terms of reference underpinned all the ORAAP work of 2015-16, and will continue to guide the work going forward.

## **LEARNING AND INNOVATION:**

was significant for our Aboriginal partners in that shifts within their organizations continued to emerge to streamline their work to further align more closely with the ORAAP Terms of Reference (2014-15) related values, principles and activities.

These shifts are being reflected in all aspects of the organizations' priorities and go beyond their ORAAP specific funded initiatives.

### **BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC):**

A stronger emphasis was placed on social innovation activities, ending violence against Aboriginal women, increasing the capacity for delivery of child care services, youth engagement, education, partnerships, and social enterprise development. Initiatives such as the Moose Hide Campaign, the annual Gathering Our Voices Aboriginal Youth conference, Youth Art Entrepreneurial Skills Training Program, the promotion of ORAAP, and Indigenous Social Innovation demonstrate that to achieve greater participation in the economy for Aboriginal people in BC, a holistic approach must be applied that acknowledges, and works to mitigate, the unique barriers which exist for Aboriginal people.

### **Métis Nation BC:**

MNBC reports that "making a difference in the lives of Métis people" is their main objective. Work conducted was based on gaps identified last year as a result of convened information and accountability sessions for MNBC citizens and Métis people in several locations around the province. This was undertaken with the view of increasing community capacity as well as economic opportunities for Métis people by the creation of business models for community enterprise.

Youth was another primary focus as they created and launched a comprehensive career, employment and education website specifically for Métis youth. Regional Youth Community Navigators were engaged to leverage the relationship capital and strengthen industry partnerships and employment opportunities for Métis people. An updated report on the state of health of Métis Youth in the Province was completed. ORAAP's support to MNBC ensured Métis youth attendance at Gathering Our Voices in Victoria.

In 2015-16, MNBC invested significant time and energy improving cultural relationships raising the awareness of non-Métis people of the conditions that Métis people experienced historically, while at the same time inform Métis and non- Métis people in the province of the important contributions that Métis people have made in helping build the Province since the late 1700's.

**MVAEC:**

The MVAEC, in recognition of the complexity and diversity of available programs for Aboriginal people in the greater Vancouver area, continues to seek ways and means to identify gaps to provide community members access to new opportunity by:

- Development of a process and survey instrument to identify private sector employment and economic opportunities of benefit to both urban Indigenous people and the private sector.
- Identifying gaps, opportunities, strategies and partnerships with a gap analysis to support the increase of Indigenous participation in the BC economy.
- Brokering relationships through such activities as cultural awareness and cultural competency, etc.);
- Identify a comprehensive list of programs currently providing services to Indigenous learners and job seekers to identify gaps in service.

**UBCM:**

UBCM established reconciliation as a 2015-16 organizational priority, focusing on partnership work with Reconciliation Canada and BCAAFC. These workshops will bring together First Nations, Métis community members, local leaders, and community change-makers, to develop a shared understanding of our collective history, examine what reconciliation means and take positive steps to building vibrant, resilient communities. Planning is underway for the delivery of workshops in seven communities in 2016-17.

UBCM is also working with the Provincial Health Services Authority in BC to promote San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety (ICS) Training for BC elected officials and local government staff. Four training modules will be offered for local government officials over the next year.

2015 also saw the renewal of the *MOU on Local Government Participation in the New Relationship* between UBCM and MARR. This agreement recognizes that local governments endeavor to develop positive working relationships with First Nations neighbors, and commits the organizations to continuing a process for local government participation in the negotiation and implementation of treaties; consultation and information exchange on agreements outside of the treaty process; and consultation on matters of mutual interest on matters that impact local government jurisdiction.

UBCM and the First Nations Summit also continue to administer the Community to Community (C2C) Forum Program, supported by funding from the Province of BC. C2C Forums bring together First Nation and local government elected officials, and other community leaders and members, to discuss common goals and pursue opportunities for

joint action.

***LOOKING FORWARD:***

The Calls to Action contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 2015 report have been adopted as one of the foundations for the ORAAP work going forward. Many of the calls to action fall in line with the systemic and social impacts by which ORAAP seeks to influence.

ORAAP provincial Aboriginal organizational partners have committed to working more closely together in a coordinated approach to close gaps and better advance the needs of the communities they serve.