

Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan (ORAAP)

2013-14 Year End report Synopsis



“Looking Forward” 2014-2015

British Columbia's OFF-RESERVE ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN
*FROM PLANING TO ACTION: BUILDING CHANGE FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA'S URBAN
ABORIGINAL PEOPLE*
2013-2014 YEAR END UPDATE SYNOPSIS

With the theme of “jobs, training and youth” emerging as a key community priority in 2012 /13 the focus of the ORAAP work for 2013 /14 embraced the transition from Planning to Action.

OFF-RESERVE ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN: AT A GLANCE:

The Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan (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 British Columbia (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: increasing employment recruitment and retention; education and training opportunities; and engaging the growing youth population. Also, 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 matters are in place.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Through ORAAP, we are seeing signs of 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, capacity of citizens, community agencies, and ORAAP partners are growing and becoming more resilient.

In 2013-2014, ORAAP achieved significant progress in demonstrating its value and innovation in moving the Off-Reserve Aboriginal agenda from talk to action. Following last year's rich process of deep consultation and listening to the voices of Aboriginal people, communities are starting to build new or strengthening existing networks of coordination and services. ORAAP and its partners are seeing signs of promising change, despite only really beginning work at the community level on ORAAP less than two years ago.

Key highlights from 2013/14 include:

1. Intersectoral Planning and Support: *A Model for Government Collaboration*

As lead coordinating body, the ORAAP Provincial Coordination Team is responsible for building effective work together across the sectors. In doing so, it is creating a unique model

worth replicating and attracting the interest from Aboriginal and government counterparts in other provinces.

2. Surrey: *A Success Story – Jobs, Skills and Training for BC Aboriginal People – Models for the Future*

The Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association is establishing an innovative and successful program called Individual Opportunities (IO). The program uses an intake process to better inform the complex needs of clients and the employment staff. This complex assessment assists in planning the training program based on the individual barriers and challenges they face with respect to readying themselves for the workforce.

This model of pre-employment development was applied to **64 individuals** in a short two-month intake period while **48 youth** obtained training in various areas. As of May 2014, 13 graduates (20 percent of the initial cohort) decided to further their education in career track programs at various levels, and eight obtained employment since progressing through the IO program.

3. Vancouver: *Service Delivery Coordination Model*

The need for more information to circulate in the community on what services and events are available to Aboriginal, Métis, and non-Aboriginal peoples is a constant in ORAAP. One innovative approach to bridge this gap between Aboriginal peoples and services is Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council's (MVAEC) Community Navigator program. Under ORAAP, MVAEC is employing two community navigators to assist in store front-like service coordination for Aboriginal people particularly those affected by chronic addiction and/or homelessness. In some cases, these navigators are also helping to strengthen community-based Aboriginal organizations to stabilize their funding base or service provision. One Aboriginal community member noted: "*MVAEC Navigators (are good at) seeing where the need is and making them known to each organization based on what they offer. We see they are making an impact already*".

4. Duncan: *Becoming Job-Ready*

In Cowichan, youth are being given great opportunities for growth and grounding with a full suite of training programs addressing multiple aspects of their lives to achieve job-readiness outcomes. A portion of this includes practicums with local businesses and organizations. Mentorship is emerging as a clear theme across all ORAAP communities.

In 2013-2014, accomplishments include:

- 12 youth aged (15 to 30) entered, and 11 successfully completed the STEP program.
- 9 youth aged (15 to 20) completed the Kitchen Connections pre-employment and healthy living program.

5. Kamloops: *Creating Community Partnerships*

The Friendship Society in Kamloops founded and convened the Kamloops Off-Reserve Advisor Council (KORAC). This brings together 12 permanent member representatives from various sectors—including health, education, employment and training, housing and homelessness, arts, language and culture, justice, as well as children, youth and families—that meet once a month to discuss key community issues and priorities. KORAC is using a terms of reference and operational guidelines to formalize its long-term commitment. The Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society also struck up a partnership with the Thompson Region Division of Family Practice to better understand urban Aboriginal experiences and perspectives with family doctors.

6. Prince George: *Honouring Partnerships, Culture and Tradition*

By convening Elders Circles of Wisdom, Circles of leadership, Eighth Fire Cultural nights, a Community wellness Fair and events for youth, the Prince George Native Friendship Centre (PGNFC) has been able to **bring together 590 individuals and generate closer relationships** with a multitude of actors and communities, including non-traditional partners like the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and business leaders as well as Métis associations and Band Councils. Culture valuation has played a central role here, as well as that critical connection between the youth and elders. This constructive engagement in Prince George did not go unnoticed by the Federal Government. As a result of ORAAP, among many other important PGNFC service contributions, Public Safety Canada is partnering with PGNFC to conduct a Community Safety Plan. This is an unexpected result.

7. BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC): *Creating Jobs through Coordination and Capacity development – 5 X 5 Strategy*

The BCAAFC is responding to a call to action to create and/or place 5,000 British Columbian Aboriginal citizens in jobs within a five-year time frame, hence the Five by Five Aboriginal Jobs Strategy.

This BCAAFC Aboriginal Jobs Plan comes after commissioning an extensive Labour market survey for the cities of Prince George, Kamloops, Surrey, and Duncan to serve as a baseline of the Aboriginal labour market in those communities and measuring stick for the future. Access and support to participate in the economy is recognized as a significant opportunity for both Aboriginal people and the province of BC.

As an organization, representing 25 urban Aboriginal service delivery agencies, the BCAAFC is uniquely positioned to develop an integrated strategy to implement evidenced-based solutions contributing to a greater number of Aboriginal peoples able to find and maintain gainful employment in the coming years. The business case for this ambitious plan is rather simple: invest in getting Aboriginal people ready, able to work, and stay in jobs >> leads to >> saving more in the long term from the decrease in Aboriginal persons needing social assistance and other forms of income support by multiple levels of government.

8. Métis Nation BC (MNBC): *Building Capacity through Workshops and Micro-Grants*

The MNBC Proposal Writing and Social Enterprise Workshop was a direct response to the need identified last year concerning a desire to gain skills and a strengthened capacity in Proposal Writing and Project Management. Participants found the workshops to be “very helpful”. MNBC is leveraging this capacity building by distributing up to \$40,000 in community-based funding grants to successful Métis participants at the Proposal Writing Workshop. This is helping not only to apply new skills but allow participants to contribute to their community through tangible action.

9. Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM): *Year of Reconciliation*

The UBCM engaged ORAAP partners to conduct a successful workshop in the lead up to the UBCM Annual Convention in Vancouver last September. During this workshop, over 60 provincial and municipal leaders from across BC participated. Momentum developed during the convention that culminated in the endorsement of a motion calling for a Year of Reconciliation with Aboriginal people across BC. This motion was presented as part of UBCM’s Expression of Reconciliation at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s National event on September 19, 2013.

UBCM bringing together BC’s municipalities with Aboriginal people also led to a commitment to partner with MARR, BCAAFC, and Reconciliation Canada to organize one hundred (100) Aboriginal reconciliation sessions in dozens of BC communities over the next year.

LEARNING AND INNOVATION

In 2013-14, learning focused on the strengths, challenges and innovations emerging from the initiative. Key lessons included:

- Learning that, in the Aboriginal context, many adults beyond the age of 30 could also use the same services provided by agencies preparing youth for entry into the labour market.
- Sustainable, meaningful change occurs when diverse partners—especially urban Aboriginal people—are involved in all aspects of designing, implementing, and evaluating programs and services designed to meet their needs.
- Strong cohesiveness in shared values and an intercultural perspective are critical in understanding the urban Aboriginal realities and commitments among partners.
- Culture needs to be carefully woven into all aspects of the initiative, including the design, implementation, and evaluation of ORAAP.

LOOKING FORWARD:

On February 6th, 2014, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), announced the renewal of an improved Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) that will continue to focus on encouraging partnerships and collaboration to help increase the participation of urban Aboriginal people in the economy.

To identify priorities for removing barriers to increasing participation in the economy for urban Aboriginal people, AANDC is leading the development of a ‘BC Regional Plan’

(Plan). The development of the Regional Plan will include engaging communities across British Columbia (BC) using a comprehensive survey tool and using the survey data to inform the development of the Plan.

How does this fit with the Off Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan (ORAAP)? Since 2011, ORAAP has supported five communities in BC to undertake community development pilot projects that sought to identify key themes and priorities to achieve the vision of ORAAP.

Using the information captured through ORAAP ensures that we are building off existing community engagement data and that we are now able to extend opportunities in other areas of the province to provide feedback into the development of a Plan. The information captured, through this survey, will also inform the future direction of ORAAP as the federal and provincial government work, in partnership, with Aboriginal organizations and local government to achieve similar outcomes for increased economic participation and increased employment readiness.