

# Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat

## MANDATE

As the Government of British Columbia's primary interface with other governments in Canada, the United States and the international community, IGRS is committed to embedding the public service diversity goals in our everyday work practices.



## EXECUTIVE COMMITMENT TO MULTICULTURALISM

IGRS is part of the Office of the Premier. As a small organization with a compliment of 25 employees, IGRS does not on its own meet the threshold established by BC Stats for a ministry-level workforce profile (i.e. minimum of 50 employees). Consequently, we are unable to conduct statistically relevant sampling on questions relating to diversity awareness.

This also precludes us from developing detailed diversity plans envisioned for each ministry based on concrete qualitative and quantitative data that leverages other corporate or organizational strategies that may be applicable in other parts of the Office of the Premier. For example, we are pleased to note that we are multi-ethnic and multi-lingual in official and foreign languages.

However, in the absence of the workforce profile for our organization, we are not able to provide a ministry-based case description of the current composition of our workforce or denote individuals within our organization as people with disabilities, aboriginal peoples, or visible minorities.

## EMBRACING MULTICULTURALISM IN THE WORKPLACE

We can report that diversity principles are strongly reflected in the current activities conducted by IGRS. IGRS actively applies a diversity filter lens in our hiring practices and takes advantage of opportunities as they arise to promote the importance of diversity in our intergovernmental activities.

We are very cognizant that we represent the face of British Columbia to representatives of foreign governments and international dignitaries, as well as stakeholders and heritage communities. Diversity practices are central to our mandate and business practices, and IGRS has been involved in cultural sensitivity training for B.C.'s elected representatives and officials from various ministries and agencies as part of our core business.

In 2013-2014, IGRS maintained an inventory of foreign country, state and city profiles and etiquette guides on BC's priority countries, which we provide to elected representatives and officials participating in outgoing trade and investment missions and receiving incoming foreign missions. The purpose of these profiles and guidelines is to inform and sensitize B.C. government representatives about the diverse political, economic and cultural situations and attributes of foreign countries with whom British Columbia has relations.

Going forward, IGRS remains fully committed to being and remaining a model for the public service by taking concrete actions to more fully reflect and respond to the interests and aspirations of the public we serve. We will do this by focusing on a select number of corporate priority action areas, identified below, and by maximizing the diverse and unique talents that our staff bring to their work in all areas of IGRS business.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF INITIATIVES

Attract, develop and retain a workforce in the public service that reflects British Columbia:

- » Apply diversity filter in new hires, building on existing practice of looking for language and cultural sensitivity skills for both Protocol and Policy staff.

Embed the principles of diversity in the practices, policies and services of government:

- » Promote aboriginal cultures through the choices of official Protocol gifts presented by the Premier or her representatives on behalf of the Government of British Columbia to international visitors.
- » Continue to arrange for Aboriginal representation and diverse faith representatives at official functions of government to reflect the diversity of the province.
- » Support the participation of B.C. elected representative at the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie that profiles the contribution of Francophone immigration to the economic, social and cultural development of Canadian society, and its role in the country's economic growth.

Remove barriers in our interactions with citizens and within the public service:

- » Work to increase cultural sensitivity among ministers, senior officials and across government in their interaction with the Consular Corps and foreign officials by organizing, delivering and participating in cultural sensitivity sessions.
- » Raise the recognition of national days of other countries (especially those represented by consulates in Vancouver) by facilitating increased presence of government representatives.
- » Increase access to government resources in language other than English by partnering with ministries responsible for health, education and justice.

# Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

## MANDATE

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (MARR) is the B.C. Government's lead for pursuing reconciliation with the Aboriginal peoples<sup>1</sup> of British Columbia.

A key component of reconciliation involves creating relationships that are mutually beneficial through collaboration and commitment. This includes working together to create a strong economy and a secure tomorrow so that all British Columbians, including Aboriginal peoples, are able to pursue their goals.

- » **Goal 1:** Immediate opportunities for improved Aboriginal participation in the economy and increased certainty for development.
- » **Goal 2:** Respectfully reconcile provincial interests with First Nations' Aboriginal and treaty rights.

