

Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan (ORAAP)

2014-15 Year End Summary



“Looking Forward” 2015-2016

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British Columbia's OFF-RESERVE ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN

2014-2015 YEAR END SUMMARY

Executive summary:

With the theme of “jobs, training and youth” continuing as key community priorities in 2014-15, the focus of the Off Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan (ORAAP) work for the past year has been to advance a range of activities across a broad continuum to close the socio-economic gaps for Urban Aboriginal and Métis people and promote their greater participation in economy.

This summary highlights the activities that were conducted as a direct result of the 2014-15 ORAAP/Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) funding while also continuing to track the indicators of systemic change captured over previous year end evaluations. These evaluations highlighted the organizational shifts within government and our partner Aboriginal organizations that have underpinned the positive movement for reconciliation and socio-economic wellness within urban Aboriginal communities. While this summary conveys this year's achievement for the ORAAP initiative, it is helpful to understand these achievements within the broader context of ORAAP, and the strategic approach taken by the Provincial Coordination Team (PCT) to advance the vision and goals of ORAAP.

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 PCT. The PCT is comprised of the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC), the Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC), MARR, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). The PCT has been acknowledged as the best example of collaboration and partnership between urban communities and government 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 service (general and Aboriginal specific) which support the urban Aboriginal population. The PCT determined that what was needed was not 701 services, but rather a process to coordinate, collaborate and innovate cross the complex system(s) focused on improving socio-economic conditions for urban Aboriginal peoples. ORAAP has thus 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” that captured the systems level innovations and improvements that ORAAP has achieved over the last number of years.

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, capacity of citizens, community agencies, and ORAAP partners are growing and becoming more resilient.

A total of \$1.8 million was invested to support ORAAP/UAS activities in 2014-15. .

Accomplishments and outcomes in 2014-15 included:

- Continued design refinement of the BCAAFC’s Five by Five Aboriginal Jobs Strategy and an “Overcoming Education and Employment Barriers Best Practices Education Forum”.
- Completion of a comprehensive MNBC Strategic Plan and comprehensive business case to leverage funding to provide, education, skills and training to achieve greater participation in economy for Métis people.
- Support for the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (MVAEC) to refine and enhance the community engagement process for the 24 Aboriginal Service provider members of MVAEC in the metro Vancouver area to increase efficiencies with cross ministries ORAAP work and promote greater participation in economy for urban Aboriginal people living in the greater metro Vancouver area.

- Support for the Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society (ACCESS) to conduct a jointly funded two day Ship Shape (Ship Building) Conference in Vancouver March 2 and 3, 2015. The conference was designed to bring Aboriginal service providers together to increase awareness and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in the ship building industry.
- Support was provided to the Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (FRAFCA) for a community/industry engagement event.
- Projects also supported youth/industry engagement by BCAAFC, and Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Association (PGNAETA).

Key highlights from 2014-15 include:

The drafting of an ORAAP/UAS: Interim BC Regional plan - A Framework for Economic Participation. This plan identifies key barriers to greater participation in the economy for Aboriginal people and provides recommendations for moving forward will be used to guide decision making for further provincial and federal investment of ORAAP/UAS funding to promote greater participation in economy and close the socio-economic gaps for Aboriginal people in BC.

The Plan will also inform the allocation of project funds held by the BCAAFC under the new Urban Aboriginal Strategy. Note, in 2014 the federal government announced it was transferring administration of its UAS project funding historically managed by AANDC, to the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC).

In BC this resulted in approximately \$3 million available to allocate to eligible organizations in support of UAS projects. Given this, BCAAFC put out a call in March 2015 for proposals for 2015-16 based on three eligible streams:

1. Youth – for 16-24 age people to enhance capacity, self-advocacy, develop life skill, skill acquisition, and to remove barriers.
2. Innovation –for a high impact initiative that will increase self-reliance and systems change.
3. Social Enterprise – projects that facilitate learning and capacity building of social enterprise initiatives, start-up, pilot projects, and knowledge transfers to aspiring social business entrepreneurs

In October 2014, Minister Rustad of MARR and the BCAAFC signed an updated Protocol Agreement designed to strengthen the relationship and bring greater focus on the link between the BCAAFC Five by Five Aboriginal Jobs Strategy and the BC Skills for Jobs Blueprint.

LEARNING AND INNOVATION:

2014-15 was significant for our Aboriginal partners in that shifts within their organizations began to emerge to streamline their work to align more closely with ORAAP 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.

BCAAFC:

A stronger emphasis was placed on social innovation activities, ending violence against Aboriginal women, promoting greater capacity for child care, education, partnerships, and economic development. Initiatives such as the Moose Hide Campaign and the annual Gathering Our Voices Aboriginal Youth conference demonstrated 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.

MNBC:

In their year-end summary, MNBC reports that “making a difference in the lives of Métis people” is their main objective. They convened information and accountability sessions for MNBC citizens and Métis people in several locations around the province. They identified gaps in services for Métis as compared to non-Aboriginal people in many areas including health care, health data, services for Métis children and families, education, employment and skills development. The Regional sessions specifically targeted the needs and issues impacting Métis youth and Elders.

ORAAP’s support to MNBC ensured Métis youth attendance at Gathering Our Voices in Prince George which resulted in the highest number of Métis youth in attendance.

In 2014-2015, the MNBC invested significant time and energy on Economic Development - hosting two Métis Economic Roundtable Discussions with provincial, federal and industry partners. They were successful in establishing new relationships and agreements with industry to advance the economic opportunities for Métis and Urban Aboriginal people in BC through the establishment of new Métis businesses and greater employment.

MVAEC:

The MVAEC, in recognition of the complexity and diversity of available programs for Aboriginal people in the greater Vancouver area, is seeking ways and means to increase their capacity so they can establish positions within their organization to provide community members access to:

- Education, Training & Employment Navigators who would provide information about education, training and employment opportunities to Aboriginal youth, their caregivers, teachers and school counsellors.

- Job Developers who would network and cold call employers to establish relationships and assist in locating available positions for job applicants.
- Job Coaches who would work directly with clients, assisting them to get qualifications, find and maintain employment.
- Partnership Developers who would work directly with MVAEC's twenty-four member organizations to identify partnership opportunities that would help to create a better continuum of care for children, youth, and families and ultimately help them to find and retain meaningful education, training, and employment.
- Programs and Services Navigators who would provide information to Aboriginal children, youth, and families about programs and services that would lead directly to education, training and employment opportunities or that would help them to gain the skills, knowledge, and self-esteem to pursue those opportunities in the future.
- Peer Supports/Mentors who would be Aboriginal youth who are currently in school, a training program, or employed tasked with connecting with Aboriginal children and youth in schools and community organizations.

UBCM:

The UBCM partnered with Reconciliation Canada and the BCAAFC to help deliver reconciliation dialogue workshops throughout BC. These workshops look to bring together on-reserve and off-reserve First Nations, and Métis community members, as well as local leaders and community change-makers, to develop a shared understanding of our collective history, examined what reconciliation means and take positive steps to building vibrant, resilient communities.

As part of the "Reconciliation in Action" workshop the UBCM invited the ORAAP/PCT to the 2014 Pre-Convention to host a session that updated delegates on ORAAP's progress to date, and included testimonials from PCT members. This session also saw dignitaries and local government representatives engage in discussion about key ORAAP-local government issues.

UBCM worked with MARR and the Ministry of Community Services and Community Development to promote:

- further engagement between staff working on Aboriginal issues at the local, provincial and federal orders of government;
- foster greater understanding of duties, responsibilities and expectations at different orders of government regarding Aboriginal issues; and,
- improve collaboration and outcomes at the community level when delivering services, programs and designing agreements with First Nations and Aboriginal people in BC.

UBCM participated as a member of the Metro Vancouver Municipal Technical Advisory Committee which, among other things, provided technical and strategic advice on Aboriginal

relations, and considers 'pan-municipal' matters of significance to Lower Mainland local governments that require a coordinated municipal approach.

LOOKING FORWARD:

In March of 2015, the ORAAP/PCT began work on a new set of Terms of Reference to better articulate the work going forward for 2015-2016 as well as guide future funding decisions. Four primacy 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 development 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.

2. Socio-Economic Development:

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 store, daycares etc. that re-invest in Metis people.

3. Aboriginal Participation in the Economy:

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.

Coordinating a distance education conference with Royal Roads University to showcase a variety of tools that can be utilized for distance education learning, 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. This 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.

NOTE: The recommendations contained in the 2015 report made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission should serve as the foundation for the work in this area.

