

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

**2016-17 Year End Summary**



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# OFF-RESERVE ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN (ORAAP)

## *2016-2017 YEAR END SUMMARY*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

In British Columbia 78 percent of all Indigenous and Métis peoples live off-reserve. The October 3, 2011 Speech from the Throne acknowledged the importance of the off-reserve Indigenous and Métis 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 Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) led the development of ORAAP and set up a Provincial Coordination Team (PCT). The PCT is comprised of the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC), the Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC), MIRR, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). The PCT has been acknowledged as a best practice within Canada for collaboration and partnership between urban Indigenous communities and governments.

For the past six years ORAAP has focused on supporting urban Indigenous and Métis communities in identifying strategic priorities and opportunities to improve socio-economic well-being. A particular focus was given to supporting greater participation in the economy.

MIRR and participating provincial ministries invested a total of \$421,000 to support ORAAP activities in 2016-17. During the same period, INAC invested \$838,000 to support ORAAP-related activities including \$400,000 to support its Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) for investment in activities related to Indigenous and Métis participation in the economy.

ORAAP is helping to increase public awareness of Indigenous and Métis culture and history and to address the long-term systemic challenges faced by urban Indigenous and Métis peoples. The capacity of Indigenous citizens, community agencies and ORAAP partners is increasing and as a result they are becoming more resilient.

## II. KEY OUTCOMES

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 Indigenous and Métis peoples in BC.

In 2016-17 ORAAP partners directed their activities to the four areas of focus in the PCT Terms of Reference (TOR):

1. Indigenous Community Capacity Building - Indigenous and Métis communities and organizations to develop the means they require to build the relationships, structures, processes and projects necessary to achieve their objectives.
2. Socio-Economic Development - Enable and support social development at the community, family and individual level to support economic development.
3. Indigenous Participation in the Economy - Remove systemic educational and employment barriers and create new safe and supportive learning and working opportunities that encourage full participation of Indigenous and Métis people in the economy of BC.
4. Reconciliation - Promote a “cultural shift in relations” among Indigenous and Métis and non-Indigenous and non-Métis citizens of BC.

### **Indigenous Community Capacity Building**

*Facilitating a better understanding of the critical need and business case for mobilizing investment in Indigenous and Métis communities and organizations to develop the means to build relationships, structures, processes and projects necessary to achieve their objectives.*

Examples of capacity building initiatives in 2016-17 include the following:

- a) The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres hosted its second BC Indigenous Funding Conference. This was a two and a half day event held September 21-23, 2016 in Richmond. The event was designed for program managers, financial controllers, executive directors and board members from Indigenous agencies and First Nations. Innovative networking and information sharing were facilitated through presentations, evening receptions and one-on-one conversations. The conference provided a simple, effective and innovative opportunity for funders and community members to connect and learn about one another’s goals and make positive local change. BC First Nations and Indigenous agencies discovered new funding opportunities and sixty funders, foundations and corporations realized their charitable goals. Over 200 delegates representing 108

organizations and agencies attended. In addition to this initiative, the BCAAFC took steps to promote ORAAP activities at the Gathering Our Voices Indigenous Youth Conference 2016, the largest such youth gathering in the province.

- b) MNBC hosted an evening and day meeting to explore challenges faced by Métis children and families in British Columbia. The main focus was to ensure identification of the issues and possible solutions leading to continued improvements in the quality of life for Métis children and families.
- c) Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (MVAEC) produced three key documents:
  - i. The Psychology of Poverty, providing understanding, knowledge and tools on how to best undo impacts from residential schools and other federal policies.
  - ii. A background paper on how to improve linkages between cultural programming and workforce development by describing how the provision of cultural programming, soft skills and formal trade or other programs need to factor in the psychological impacts from multi-generational poverty. In addition, MVAEC developed a collective impact framework.
  - iii. An Evaluation Report that supports the organization's overall effort to establish and operate within a Collective Impact Model with its twenty-three membership organizations.

## **Socio-Economic Development**

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

- The BCAAFC, through the Five by Five Aboriginal Jobs Strategy and a memorandum of understanding with MIRR, entered into an agreement to develop and administer a Northern Corridor Initiative that supports Indigenous and Métis peoples to participate in the northern economy. The primary purpose of this ongoing initiative is to increase the skills and knowledge of Indigenous and Métis peoples in the north to more fully take advantage of employment opportunities. The BCAAFC brought in additional staff support to ensure success in this initiative and to advocate for similar opportunities in other Friendship Centres. BCAAFC's continued implementation of the Five by Five Aboriginal Jobs Strategy has resulted in the following seven BC Aboriginal Friendship Centres receiving supports: Prince Rupert, Terrace, Smithers, Prince George, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John and Fort Nelson. The Centres were funded to fill the following critical gaps:

- establish an employment support within their respective Friendship Centre;
- develop employee advancement and placement plans to ensure client specific supports;
- collectively develop a client tracking system to chart client progress; and
- develop partnerships with local First Nations and industry.

## **Indigenous 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 Indigenous people in the economic life of BC.*

- a) INAC's UAS funds focus on increasing economic participation among urban Indigenous peoples. 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 were made in youth-related partnership building and programming. ORAAP activities for the year focussed on removing systemic educational and employment barriers and creating new safe and supportive learning and working opportunities that encourage full participation of Indigenous and Métis peoples in the economic life of BC.
  
- b) MVAEC partnered with the Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society (ACCESS) and the Native Education College to continue the development of an Urban Indigenous Workforce Development Strategy. Tools were developed to conduct workforce assessments and to develop and manage relationships with partners with the aim of developing customized Aboriginal Workforce Recruitment and Retention Strategies. The package included a communication and a guide for Indigenous cultural competency training. MVAEC signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the City of Vancouver in 2016, the first corporate partner to assist in the ongoing process of hiring, training and mentoring new Indigenous employees. The second corporate partner was the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association (ICBA). Kwantlen College, in anticipation of signing on as a corporate partner, has joined MVAEC's ongoing education, training and employment roundtables as a result, as did the ICBA.

## **Reconciliation**

*Promoting a "cultural shift in relations" among Indigenous and Métis and non-Indigenous and non-Métis citizens of BC requires an understanding of the legacy of conditions that promote racism, violence and intergenerational trauma experienced by Indigenous and Métis peoples. A reconciliation focus also requires increasing opportunities to build the respect, awareness, competencies and cultural safety that Indigenous and Métis peoples require from*

*governments and other non-Indigenous and non-Métis organizations that are publicly resourced to serve them.*

- a) To celebrate Louis Riel Day during the week of November 16, 2016, MNBC coordinated with Métis Chartered Communities and held public events around the province including flag raisings at municipal offices, potlucks and presentations at local community centres. These events featured jigging, fiddle playing and storytelling. These celebrations were open to the public and well-attended, and helped to raise awareness among British Columbians about the nearly 70,000 Métis peoples in the province, and the contribution that Métis have made to British Columbia and Canada's history.

### **III. ACTIVITIES OF ORAAP PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

#### **BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres**

BCAAFC was provided with \$100,000 in 2016-17 which led to investments in the following activities:

1. Support up to eighty-nine Indigenous and Métis youth in care and their support workers to attend the Honoring Indigenous Youth in Care event at the 2017 Gathering Our Voices (GOV) Indigenous Youth Conference held in Kelowna in March 2017. Indigenous children who have either aged out of care or are a year or two from aging out of care were honoured at a special feast during the conference. There is no other organization in British Columbia that provides this kind of support and recognition to 'aging out of care' youth. The intent of the evening was to honour each of these youth and ensure they felt connected to and supported by the Indigenous and Métis community. The event saw participation from eighty-nine Indigenous youth in care and forty-eight support people, guardians and chaperones.
2. Continue to work with Reconciliation Canada and Union of BC Municipalities to host reconciliation dialogue sessions in BC Friendship Centres including Williams Lake, Prince George, and Victoria. All three Reconciliation Dialogue Workshops (RDW's) were hosted by a local Friendship Centre.

On October 4-5, 2016 in Williams Lake, RDW's were delivered at the Cariboo Friendship Centre Longhouse, and two RDW's at the local secondary schools. In total, 115 community members and young adults were engaged. This included: 15% municipal and regional government; 10% Indigenous governance; 28% Indigenous non-profit; 18% health and wellness; 5% Industry; 8% justice; and 16% educational and community non-profit.

In Prince George on November 8-9, 2016, two half-day RDW workshops were held at the Prince George Native Friendship Centre and two RDW's were held for young adults at the two secondary schools. In total, 130 participants were engaged which included: 10% community non-profit; 33% municipal and regional governments; 23% education institutions; 9% health; wellness and justice; 11% business and industry; and 14% Indigenous governance and non-profit.

And in Victoria on December 5, 2016, a one-day RDW was held at the Victoria Native Friendship Centre with forty community members in attendance. The affiliation of participants included: 25% municipal; regional and provincial government; 25% education institutions; 18% Indigenous governance and non-profit; 15% health and wellness; 3% business; and 3% tourism.

### **Métis Nation BC**

MNBC was provided with \$100,000 in 2016-17 which led to investments in the following activities:

1. Address the challenges faced by Métis children and families in British Columbia including poverty, health and education. A one and a half day gathering was held in Kelowna to discuss the issues faced by Métis children and families including health, housing and education. Fifty-five participants from each MNBC Chartered Community were invited to participate, along with Métis service providers, the Métis Commission and representatives of government. Taking a strengths-based approach, discussions focussed on reducing the number of Métis children in care and ensuring that Métis children in care remain connected to their culture. Eighty-five percent of participants committed to participate in future meetings as MNBC goes forward in developing a volunteer base to support vulnerable Métis children and families. Future meetings will:
  - a) Ensure the continued development of a Métis support network throughout the province;
  - b) Enhance relationships between the Métis Child and Family Service Agencies, the Métis Commission, MNBC and MNBC's Chartered Communities; and,
  - c) Develop localized, community-based solutions focused on prevention, for vulnerable children and families.
2. Carry out projects in 7 Métis Chartered Communities to address one or more of the ORAAP goals under Indigenous Community Capacity Building, Socio-Economic Development, Indigenous Participation in the Economy and Reconciliation. The projects benefited Métis peoples in each of the communities by assisting them in

improving economic and social opportunities through specific projects and initiatives. The funds were used to start projects in partnership with other community organizations or provide one-time funding to single time-limited projects.

MNBC provided 11 Métis Chartered Communities with \$1,500 to \$3,500 in one-time funding to support the implementation of Community Action Plans completed earlier in 2016 that met one or more ORAAP goals. The Community Action Planning Sessions brought together Métis citizens, local industry leaders, service sectors and local/regional employers to initiate the development of a Community Action Plan f to foster economic and employment opportunities. The goal was to support communities in identifying actions that would enhance and improve economic participation through employment initiatives.

Despite limited funding and volunteer workload, the implementation of these plans helped to breathe new life into the Chartered Communities. There was an influx of young members who participated in the process. Another positive indicator was the increased visibility of the Métis citizens in their wider communities. Increased capacity was reported in pursuing new funding opportunities and there was an overall surge of renewed energy within communities.

3. Celebrate Louis Riel Day - November 16<sup>th</sup> is the day that commemorates Métis leader Louis Riel's passing. Métis people in MNBC Chartered Communities throughout British Columbia commemorated this day by holding public events and flying the Métis flag. Thirty-six Chartered Communities were provided with up to \$500 to assist with commemorations for Louis Riel Day. These gatherings were intended to build pride in culture, heritage, and language and in community. They also assisted in raising the profile of Métis with non-Métis residents. Most events included flag raisings at municipal and other public buildings, resulting in media coverage. Events included dancing, jigging, music, potlucks, storytelling, art classes, historical lessons and displays. The activities were a tremendous success in building new and enduring relations between Métis and non-Métis people across the province.

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

MVAEC was provided with \$100,000 to explore barriers to employment, particularly among Indigenous youth that included the following:

1. Preparation of a paper on the Psychology of Poverty, which describes decision-making, risk-taking and associated stressors. The eventual objective is to develop tools to strengthen linkages between cultural programming and the provision of

softer life skills to support Indigenous youth in pursuing and staying with higher learning opportunities.

2. Plan and host its first policy conference with a focus on Collective Impact. The purpose was to bring all stakeholders together to set a common agenda, collaborate with other urban Indigenous coalitions to share MVAEC's experience and increase opportunities to collaborate and produce a summary proceedings report.
3. Plan and host eight roundtable meetings with member and non-member organizations on the themes of employment, education and training, housing and homelessness, children youth and families, justice, health and wellness, and arts, culture and language. Eighteen to thirty agencies were represented in each category.
4. Continue the development of an Urban Indigenous Workforce Development Strategy (UIWDS). An MOU was signed with the Independent Contractors and Business Association (ICBA) which has 1800 members including 300-400 in Metro Vancouver. Two committed industry employer partners, the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Police Department, engaged in collaboration with ACCESS. UIWDS includes a monitoring and evaluation component, which was part of MVAEC's overall goal to establish and operate within a Collective Impact Model. The key aim of the strategy is to increase the number of urban Indigenous peoples working with industry partners by supporting a healthy workplace for Indigenous peoples, ensuring cultural competency within industry, and ensuring the Indigenous community is aware of opportunities with partner companies.

### **Union of BC Municipalities**

UBCM is a non-funded ORAAP partner. In 2015-16 UBCM defined reconciliation as one of its key organizational priorities. Several initiatives have been supported including:

1. Jointly planning, with the First Nations Summit, a June 6, 2017 Provincial Community to Community (C2C) Forum, which brought First Nations and local government representatives together from across the province to encourage dialogue and explore areas of common responsibility and mutual concern. UBCM and the First Nations Summit also continued to administer the C2C Forum Program, supported by funding from the Province, and will continue this work going forward.
2. Working with the Provincial Health Services Authority to promote San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety (ICS) Training for BC elected officials and local government staff.

The creation of several online resources housed on UBCM's web page for local governments interested in pursuing reconciliation. These include links to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report and Calls to Action, as well as links to information on ICS training and the C2C program. The webpage also includes a list of reconciliation initiatives undertaken by local governments, complete with contact information.

### **III. OTHER ORAAP ACTIVITIES**

In 2016-17 the PCT allocated funding to six grassroots community projects. These projects were selected on the basis of regional representation and the ability to demonstrate wholistic, innovative and empowering approaches to building community capacity.

#### **Necamat: The Indigenous Women's Village of Wellness**

A 'Village of Wellness' day-long event for Indigenous women residents on the downtown eastside of Vancouver was convened by a coalition of thirty-seven participating agency partners. Three hundred Indigenous women participated in the event that featured diverse speakers, performers, drumming and dancing. Services included blood pressure testing, self-defense training, yoga, HIV testing, haircuts, manicures, pedicures and Indigenous traditional healing services. An important aim for the day was to conduct research with the participants to build grass roots capacity to engage Indigenous women in the downtown eastside and develop relationships to support a strengthened network of agencies and improved efficiencies for the benefit of Indigenous women in the downtown eastside.

#### **Indigenous Artists Market**

An Indigenous Artists Market and an Indigenous Artists Gallery were opened on a main street in Fort St. John – the first of their kind – by the North East Aboriginal Business Centre in partnership with Treaty 8 Tribal Association. Under this innovative approach, pop up shops were planned for high volume shopping seasons at local work camps. Craft and art materials were made available to artists from the gallery at cost. The aim is for the market to become self-sustaining. Funding from ORAAP supported the creation of a website and marketing and branding of the Market as a foundation for its continuing success. It also included workshops for artists on presentation and packaging, marketing and social media. Twenty-seven artists had their work for sale and the gallery sold 720 items by the end of March 2017, paying out \$18,000 to the artisans. Twenty-three participants benefitted from the workshop; they designed their individual marketing strategies and built a Facebook page for their businesses.

## **Youth Employment Readiness Skills Training**

The Rocky Mountain Métis Association, in partnership with School District #5 (representing the communities of Cranbrook, Fernie, Sparwood and Elkford) provided two training certification sessions for Indigenous and Métis youth. Training options included:

- Conservation Outdoor Recreation Education (CORE) Hunting;
- Foodsafe Leadership training;
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS);
- First Aid;
- Firearm Possession and Acquisition License (PAL);
- Conflict Resolution;
- Hydrogen Sulfide (H2S) Alive; and
- Wilderness First Aid.

In addition, twenty-six youth participated in a training session to reduce barriers to participation in the economy. To celebrate the completion of their training, youth were treated to a cultural celebration in the form of a traditional Métis kitchen party.

## **Métis Capacity Building: Writing and Winning Proposal Training**

Thompson Okanagan Métis Chartered Community in partnership with Métis Nation BC and Okanagan College held a regional training session for proposal writing. This was to address an identified need for capacity development for community leaders to generate needed funding for their communities. Salmon Arm Métis Association hosted the successful gathering for twenty-five participants from the region. Honorariums were provided to the trainees for writing and submitting proposals to the “Arts Based Community Development” open call for proposals by the BC Arts Council.

## **Cultural Workshops**

Victoria Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness (VACEH) provided five cultural/spiritual workshops for high risk, multi-barriered homeless Indigenous ‘hard to house’ participants to provide them with essential life skills. In response to feedback gleaned from the street-involved Indigenous community these workshops and cultural events focused on cultural and traditional ways of healing and health and wellness. In addition, research was undertaken with participants to identify critical gaps in services to Indigenous homeless individuals in Victoria in order to help reduce the high number of deaths in the homeless community. Fifty participants benefitted from attending inspirational and uplifting events conducted by Elders.

## **Aboriginal Family Court**

The New Westminster Aboriginal Healing Court Conference (AHCC) is a pilot to develop a culturally relevant Aboriginal family healing court process for child protection matters in

New Westminster. Developed by Elders and judges of the New Westminster First Nations Court, in partnership with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Aboriginal Child Welfare Office and the Spirit of the Children Society, goals of the pilot project include: reducing the number of Indigenous children in care; increasing the effectiveness of the court process; and improving health, social and justice outcomes for Indigenous children, youth and families. Two families benefitted from the AHCC process which included a number of steps and procedures as follows:

- a) a judge-led case conference conducted in a circle;
- b) Elders to provide input into the family's healing plan;
- c) an 'auntie/uncle' who was an advocate for the child(ren);
- d) the development of an Aboriginal Cultural Family History Report that informs the healing plan;
- e) the development of a healing plan that will ultimately be filed with the court; and
- f) regular follow-up on the healing plan involving the judge, families and other members of the circle.

#### **IV. LOOKING AHEAD**

ORAAP Indigenous and Métis partners have committed to working closely together in a coordinated approach to close socio-economic gaps and better advance the needs of the communities they serve.

In the coming year there will be a greater focus on engagement with local governments to increase awareness and recognition of the challenges faced by urban Indigenous and Métis peoples and to encourage opportunities and solutions to advance reconciliation and improve social, economic and cultural well-being.