

One Union, Many Nations

an HEU handbook and
resource guide on Aboriginal peoples
for HEU members

FIRST NATIONS





The Hospital Employees' Union
Summer/Fall 2008

One Union. Many Nations

an HEU handbook and resource guide on
Aboriginal peoples for HEU members

A true measure of the strength of any union is the diversity of its membership. Time and again, the HEU First Nations Standing Committee has used education and action, at the workplace and in our union, to raise awareness of the uniqueness of the First Nations culture in order to improve equality within HEU and the community-at-large.

Contact the First Nations Standing Committee at the HEU Provincial Office – **604-456-7192**, option two (toll-free at **1-800-663-5813**, extension 7192, option two)

FIRST NATIONS



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traditional native code of ethics

1. Give thanks to the Creator each morning upon rising and each evening before sleeping. Seek the courage to be a better person.
2. To show respect is a basic law of life.
3. Respect the wisdom of people in council. Once you give an idea, it no longer belongs to you; it belongs to everyone.
4. Be truthful at all times.
5. Always treat your guests with honour and consideration. Give your best food and comforts to your guests.
6. The hurt of one is the hurt of all. The honour of one is the honour of all.
7. Receive strangers and outsiders kindly.
8. All races are children of the Creator and must be respected.
9. To serve others, to be of use to family, community, or nation is one of the main purposes for which people were created. True happiness comes to those who dedicate their lives to the service of others.
10. Observe moderation and balance in all things.
11. Know those things that lead to your well-being and those things that lead to your destruction.
12. Listen to and follow the guidance given to your heart. Expect guidance to come in many forms: in prayer, in dreams, in solitude, and in the words and actions of Elders and friends.

www.surroundedbycedar.com



this handbook is for YOU

- Minority members are an important part of the union. The union depends on your contribution.
- Some members of the First Nations Standing Committee are new to unions. We've set out some basic information about unions to help you get started.
- English is not a first language for some HEU members. This handbook gives you basic information about unions in plain language.
- Finally, this book is for our allies – our friends. It gives information to help people who are not part of the First Nations Standing Committee to understand the issues, and to bring new activists into our movement.



mission statement

To raise awareness on the uniqueness of First Nations culture in order to improve equality within the Hospital Employees' Union and the community-at-large.

Terms of Reference

This committee shall be known as the First Nations Standing Committee.

Purpose of Committee

- Educate all HEU members on First Nations' issues to promote equality.
- Promote improved working conditions of Aboriginal peoples within the union through education.
- Educate ourself, and then others.
- Promote and defend the rights of all Aboriginal workers in our union and communities – locally and internationally.
- Recognize and respect all Aboriginal cultural teachings.
- Educate others by breaking down barriers of misinformation such as housing, education, taxes, land claims.
- Share, educate and work with all equity groups within HEU.



Composition of Committee

- All Aboriginal peoples including all regions whenever possible.
- Committee consists of one chairperson and one vice-chairperson and members elected at the equity conference.

Duties of the Chairperson

- Provides leadership and coordination of activities that the committee has agreed upon, and sets agendas.
- Follows HEU constitution.
- Reports to standing committee and Equal Opportunities Committee (EOC).

Duties of the Vice-Chairperson

- Assumes responsibilities of the chairperson in his/her absence.

Duties of Other Standing Committee Members

- To encourage full involvement with:
 - > opening prayer
 - > sharing circle
 - > recording minutes
 - > closing prayer



mission statement... continued

- Participate in ideas and views among First Nations members, coalitions and building our communities, both in celebration and mobilization.

First Nations Representatives to Other Committees

- Chairperson or vice-chair (in the chair's absence) attends Equal Opportunities Committee (EOC) meetings, and reports back to the First Nations Standing Committee.
- Two members from the First Nations Standing Committee sit on the CUPE National Aboriginal Committee and report back to the First Nations Standing Committee and Equal Opportunities Committee

Action Plan

- To continue to raise awareness about health care issues, mobilization of upcoming elections (municipal, provincial and federal).
- Correlate plan of action according to HEU's issues.

Meetings

- Meet three times a year within the allotted budget.
- Equity conference every second year.



First Nations Standing Committee

A First Nations person is anyone who self-identifies as being native, Aboriginal, Métis or Inuit. This does not mean you must have a government-issued status card. Any First Nations member (off or on-reserve, status or non-status) is asked to participate in our caucus. We want to educate HEU members about our culture and make ourselves visible within the union.

We're interested in ideas for educating our members, issues regarding land claims, spirituality, self-government and treaty negotiations, and anything important for recognition. We aim for unity and a sense of belonging in our union.

At Convention 1994, HEU members established four equity caucuses – including the First Nations Standing Committee – “to increase the involvement of their members through the many integrated programs of the union and propose and advise on programs to eliminate discrimination and inequality within the union and the workplace.”

When we met in April 1994, we realized that there were a lot of men and women that, for various reasons, grew up without an understanding of their culture. Our goal was to explain and teach our own people our culture. Only then, could we teach someone else.

At our first equity conference in 1995, we nominated our standing committee. We nominated on the basis of:

- making sure all regions were represented,
- members could be status or non-status, and
- members could live on or off-reserve.

Since 1995, HEU has had an equity officer on staff to coordinate the work of the equity committees.



In 1996, HEU members at the biennial convention voted to amend the constitution to recognize four standing committees, including First Nations Standing Committee, The Committee for Ethnic Diversity, the Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee and the People with disAbilities Committee. The mandate for the committees includes outreach and advice on education in various programs and activities of the union.

In April 2007, members of the equity groups gathered at the most recent equity conference to elect standing committee members and develop concrete action plans.

The First Nations Standing Committee meets regularly to address issues, such as racism and discrimination in the workplace. Our educational activities have included speakers at various local meetings, workshops and seminars, as well as a video produced by HEU on discrimination in the workplace. The committee's other work to raise visibility and awareness, and promote sharing, includes the First Nations Standing Committee book of traditional recipes, which contains recipes from committee members across the province.

We have also worked in solidarity with other social justice groups on issues of race and discrimination.

The committee also provides support to First Nations members at HEU workplaces.

To find out more about the First Nations Standing Committee, contact us through the Provincial Office.

When we go into our caucus meetings, we sit in a sharing circle. Depending on place and climate, we smudge. This gives each of us a safe place to be in. We say our prayer and ask our people gone before us – our grandmothers, our grandfathers – to be with us. The eagle feather, or the rock, is passed around the circle, giving each of us the opportunity to express how we are feeling at that time. This is also a safe place for healing. Our emotions are left in the room, and not discussed once we leave the circle.



solidarity knows no boundaries

The First Nations Standing Committee works in solidarity with other HEU equity committees to help build a stronger union.



The Committee for Ethnic Diversity aims to break down barriers to develop a better understanding among HEU members. The committee provides support to ethnic diversity members, and education on issues of race and discrimination



The Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee works to improve and enhance awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues. The committee provides support to guarantee HEU members a safe, positive and harassment-free workplace.



The People with disAbilities Committee is for HEU members who are visibly/invisibly disabled in the workplace, on Long-Term Disability (LTD) or Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) programs, or who have been off sick for a long time. The committee also works to help people recognize the contributions of workers with disabilities.

To set up an awareness session about equity issues for your local, contact the HEU Provincial Office.

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*Following the footsteps of our
ancestors while building a future for
our children*

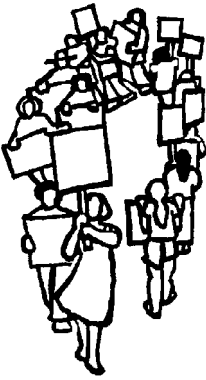
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This quilt was presented to the Hospital Employees' Union November 2003. It was designed and created by Trudy Spiller (Gitxan) Victoria – with the help of the following First Nations Standing Committee members:

Minnie Dennis (Wet'su'weten) – Penticton
Linda McNamara (Cree-Métis) – Kamloops
Susan Paquette (Kwakwiltl) – Campbell River
Joanne Foote (Ojibway) - Rama Reserve





about unions

a beginner's guide for new activists

When a worker acts alone in the workplace, they have the power of only one voice. If a worker wants better working conditions, a fair wage, or if they are treated unfairly by an employer, going to the boss on their own may mean that they are ignored, treated worse, or even lose their job.

When workers act together, they have the power of many voices. Organizing together – by forming a union – workers can decide together what is good for *all* workers, and go to the employer as a group. Union workers stand in solidarity with each other and don't allow a boss to single-out one person.

The union's job is to represent the needs of its members. It does this in many ways:

- negotiates a collective agreement with the employer;
- acts for all workers to make sure the collective agreement is enforced;
- acts for each worker to make sure they are getting what they need in the workplace;
- provides services to members to help them in their workplace;
- advances the needs of its members with the government and other institutions, and
- works in solidarity with other organizations – in the community and around the world – to advance the goals of all workers.

All members should have some basic documentation about HEU:

- a copy of the collective agreement – explains your rights and responsibilities in the workplace;
- a copy of the HEU constitution and by-laws – explains your rights and responsibilities in the union;
- a members' kit – the *HEU, YOU are the union!* members' kit gives you basic information about the union, and
- information on HEU equity standing committees.

how unions work

Unions start with you.

As a worker, you have rights and responsibilities in your workplace through the collective agreement. The collective agreement is made by union members, who decide together what their priorities will be. Then the members elect a bargaining team to represent them in negotiations with the employer. When an agreement is reached, it goes back to the members to vote on it.

Union members have stewards to represent them and help them get what they need from the employer or the union. Some workplaces have several kinds of stewards – for example, a steward who is responsible for health and safety in the workplace. There may also be committees in your workplace – for example, a committee that meets with the employer about training for members. You can ask your steward for more information.

Workplaces often organize together into locals, and the locals are often organized into a provincial or national union.



the Hospital Employees' Union

HEU represents 43,000 members in 500 health care facilities and agencies. It is the oldest and largest union in health care in B.C., and now represents people in all kinds of health care fields.

Since it began in 1944, workers organized in the Hospital Employees' Union to achieve a number of gains:

- better working conditions;
- better wages;
- shorter work week;
- medical and dental plans, long-term disability insurance, life insurance and pensions;
- health and safety protection and safe workload levels;
- paid leaves of absence for personal or family emergencies;
- paid leaves of absence to get married, celebrate the birth of a child (father), or welcome an adopted child;
- seniority rights that help protect workers from being treated unfairly;
- employment security, and
- many other gains for its members.



HEU has also been a leader in fighting to protect vital social services like medicare and education, and plays an active role in bringing progressive change to provincial health care reform.

Because government decisions have an impact on the lives of health care workers, HEU members have supported their union leaders getting involved in politics. HEU leaders and staff work hard to protect members' interests by lobbying politicians and educating the public through the media.

HEU education

The union offers a number of workshops in the regions for members who are interested in learning new skills and gaining knowledge to be active in HEU and the labour movement.

For instance, members can take introductory shop steward workshops, advanced shop steward workshops, and occupational health and safety workshops. There is also a provincial summer school where a wider range of workshops are offered.

HEU also coordinates other educational opportunities for its members, paid for by the employer. For instance, the Basic Skills Program offers a learning opportunity for workers to study literacy, numeracy, English-as-a-Second Language (ESL), and communications. The 24-week program is offered on-site during working hours.

HEU also works with other unions and labour organizations to provide educational opportunities. The union provides some scholarships for members who wish to pursue labour-related studies at colleges and universities. The Provincial Office has a library with resource and reference materials for members, including a video library.

Look for notices on the union bulletin board at your work site.

HEU structure

At HEU, every member is part of a local. The local has one or more shop stewards, and an elected local executive.

Members of the locals elect a Provincial Executive at a convention every two years. The Provincial Executive is made up of a president, financial secretary, vice-presidents, members-at-large, trustees and regional vice-presidents who meet regularly between conventions to conduct the business of the union.

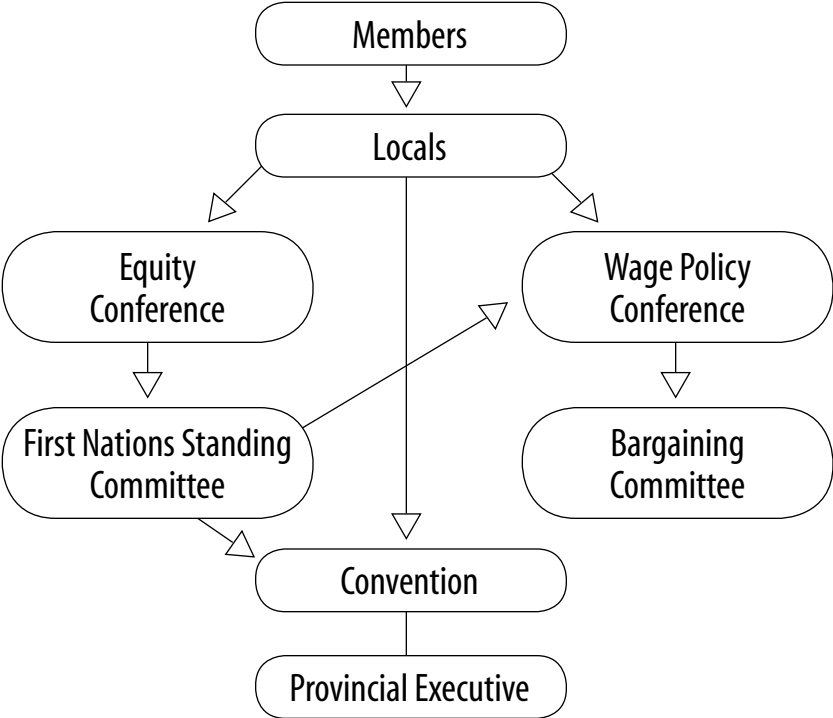
Convention ratifies the Provincial Executive appointment of a full-time secretary-business manager to be the chief administrative



officer and the main spokesperson for the union. The secretary-business manager is a member of the Provincial Executive and sits on all subcommittees.

The provincial union has full-time, paid staff who work hard to represent members' interests at the bargaining table, in arbitrations and with government.

The union holds a provincial wage policy conference before collective agreements are negotiated. Locals and committees can tell this conference what they think is important for the next round of bargaining. Through the conference, the agenda is set by the members.



you are the labour movement

Unions work in solidarity with each other in a number of ways, such as working together to support workplace goals, respecting picket lines when other union members are off the job, joining together to lobby governments for progressive change, or conducting international solidarity with workers and unions around the globe.



The Hospital Employees' Union is B.C.'s largest health care union. HEU works in solidarity with other unions on issues of joint concern.



HEU is now part of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the largest union of health care and public-sector workers in Canada.



HEU is a member of the British Columbia Federation of Labour, which represents 450,000 members of affiliated unions in more than 1,100 locals. The goals of "The Fed" are best exemplified by its slogan: "What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all."



Canadian Labour Congress
Congrès du travail du Canada

Through the B.C. Federation of Labour, HEU is also a member of the Canadian Labour Congress, Canada's largest labour organization. The CLC has a number of district labour councils in B.C. communities.



how to get involved

Attend union meetings. The union has a fund to pay for the costs of accommodating members with disabilities. Contact your steward or the event organizer in advance. If the day, time or place is a problem, or if you require childcare or a translator, ask your local executive for help.

Know your rights. Make sure you have a copy of the collective agreement and your constitution. If you have questions, ask your steward.

Know your sisters and brothers. Don't be afraid to introduce yourself. Get to know your stewards and local executive officers – you can set a time to meet with them privately if you like. And talk to your fellow union members!

Become a steward, or run in the elections for the local executive.

Talk to your steward or your local about when and how to get involved.

Join or form a committee. You can volunteer to be on a committee, or if a group of workers wants a new committee, present the idea at a membership meeting or to the local executive.

Participate in union education. As explained on page 13, HEU offers a number of education opportunities for members.

Be a delegate. You can run to be a delegate representing your workplace or your local at HEU conventions or in solidarity work with other parts of the labour movement, or with local coalitions.

Keep informed about union issues. Look for the union bulletin board at your facility, read *The Guardian* – HEU's award-winning newspaper, visit the website (www.heu.org) and, during contract talks, call the bargaining hotline.



“
*Drawing from the past to
 inspire the present.*
 ”

This is the First Nations Standing Committee's eagle feather. It is passed among the committee members while in our sharing circle.

The person with the eagle feather will speak and then pass the feather on to the person beside him/her. The person holding the feather is not interrupted.

If a woman in the circle is on her moon time (menstruating) she will have someone hold it for her while she speaks. When a woman is on her moon time, she is considered to be more powerful than the medicine of the eagle feather.



First Nations

HEU First Nations Standing Committee has representation at CUPE National.

National Aboriginal Council

Introduction:

The National Aboriginal Council was established at the CUPE National Convention held in Winnipeg on October 31, 2005. Support was given to assist our Aboriginal members in the regions to form Aboriginal councils and strengthen our National Aboriginal Council structure by formalizing it within CUPE's structure.

The Council's composition has ensured that it reflects the Aboriginal Traditions of Governance where we ensure gender parity, Elder advice, Aboriginal representation and consensus decision-making.

With regard to consensus decision-making in the terms, this is traditional decision-making. It is one of the eight Aboriginal Traditions of Governance that the Royal Commission stated:

Consensus in decision-making – Many Aboriginal peoples speak of the principle of consensus as a fundamental part of their decision-making processes.

The other important component to the terms is gender parity from regions/divisions. Again, deeply entrenched in Aboriginal history. If you read the Royal Commission, you will find examples of specific bands and how they had traditionally included our women in all life decisions. This too is one of our eight Aboriginal Traditions of Governance – we believe:



In many Aboriginal societies, women's roles were significantly different from those of men in governance. According to the commission, women must play a central role in the development of self-governing entities.

We would be remiss if we did not entrench our Elders in the terms of reference. We have utilized Elders within our structure. In our circle, our Elders are our foundations as they are the experienced ones, the ones who can say the right thing at the right time as they have been there. One of our eight Aboriginal Traditions of Governance lists:

The role of Elders – Elders are the trusted repositories of learning on history, medicine and spiritual matters. Their roles include making of decisions on certain matters, providing of advice and vision, and resolving disputes.



top misconceptions about Aboriginal peoples

MISCONCEPTION 1: HISTORY

The history of North America began with the arrival of Europeans to the shores of this continent.

Facts:

Long before the first explorers landed on the shores of the “New World”, there were many different Indigenous nations living in various regions of what we now know as “Canada”. Each nation had its own tribal customs, political organization, language, and spiritual beliefs, and had developed vast trade and economic systems. In fact, the advanced medical knowledge of the Iroquois people helped save the lives of many newcomers to North America.

There is a long history of this country prior to European arrival, and First Nations recorded it orally. The newcomers, however, set down their version of history in writing. It is only in recent years that mainstream Canadians are learning of the true history of First Nations and their contribution to building this country.

MISCONCEPTION 2: TERMINOLOGY

The terms “Aboriginal” and “Native” are used to define one homogenous group of people in Canada.

Facts:

The terms “Aboriginal”, “Native” and “Indigenous” are used as general terms to collectively describe three distinct cultural groups known as the “Inuit”, the “Métis” and “First Nations”.

Each of the three groups has its own unique historical background,



culture and political goals.

Within the group known as “First Nations” or “Indians”, there are 633 First Nations bands, representing 52 nations or cultural groups, and more than 50 languages. Each nation has its own spirituality, traditional political structure, and history. As a general rule, most individuals prefer to be referred to by the specific nation to which they belong (Blackfoot, Cree, Dene, etc).

The term “Aboriginal” should be used only as an adjective to describe individuals or mixed groups of First Nations or Indians, Métis or Inuit people. It has been wrongly used by the news media as a noun, as in: “The Aboriginals are...” The proper usage is: “the Aboriginal peoples are...”

MISCONCEPTION 3: RIGHTS AND BENEFITS

First Nations are the only peoples to have special rights and benefits above other Canadians.

Facts:

First Nations people enjoy the same fundamental benefits as all other Canadians, including Child Tax Benefit, Old Age Security, and Employment Insurance.

Where Constitutionally-protected Aboriginal rights exist, First Nations people do have priority over others (for example, the right to hunt and fish for subsistence), but even these rights are subject to regulation.

Some registered Treaty Indians and Aboriginal peoples enrolled under comprehensive claim settlements also enjoy certain rights or benefits, including reserve lands, hunting and fishing rights, and payment of annuities (depending on the terms and conditions of their treaty agreement).

The government provides housing and post-secondary assistance to First Nations so they may achieve the same standard of living as other Canadians.

Because of the division of powers in the Constitution, many services provided by provinces to other Canadians are provided to Indians living on-reserve by the federal government. Provincial standards are generally



adopted, but there may be some local differences.

In Canada, the government also provides assistance to those people who cannot afford housing, medical aid and social assistance. As well, a tax rebate is given to low-income families.

Foreign diplomats to Canada are able to take advantage of the provincial sales tax exemption, and other benefits as a special group of people living within Canada's border.

MISCONCEPTION 4: CONDITIONS IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

First Nations people are better off than most Canadians.

Facts:

Although each year the United Nations ranks Canada among the best places in the world to live, the fact remains that many First Nations people in Canada still live in conditions that fall far short of the basic standards most Canadians have come to expect.

Statistics from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People final report revealed:

- Participation rate by Aboriginal peoples labour force (57%) was below that of all Canadians (68%).
- Earned income per employed Aboriginal person in 1991 was \$14,561 compared to \$24,001 for all Canadians, and declined by 1,000 over the decade 1981 to 1991.
- 19% of inmates in federal penal institutions are Aboriginal peoples (rising to 49% in Manitoba and 72% in Saskatchewan provincial institutions).
- Tuberculosis and diabetes are respectively 17 times and three times higher among Aboriginal peoples.

While no database dealing specifically with suicide rates among Aboriginal peoples and First Nations is currently available in Canada, according to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, the suicide rate within First Nations and Inuit communities is much higher than in the Canadian population. It could be from two to seven times more frequent.



In 1996, the general infant mortality rate was 6.1 deaths for 1,000 births within the Canadian population, compared to 11.6 for First Nations.

The same year, 1.7% of all housing units in Canada were occupied by more than one person per room, compared to 18.6% in First Nations communities.

According to a study conducted by Health Canada in 1997 on drinking water safety in First Nations communities, at least 171 water systems out of 863, that is 20%, could be a threat to human health.

MISCONCEPTION 5: TAXATION

All Aboriginal peoples are tax exempt.

Facts:

Inuit, Métis, and non-status Indians are required to pay tax.

The origin of tax exemption for registered Indians is found under section 87 and 90 of the *Indian Act*.

Income earned by registered Indians working on-reserve for a company which is located on-reserve are exempted from federal and provincial income taxes.

Generally, First Nations individuals must pay income tax if they work off-reserve or for a company located off-reserve whose business is not specifically geared toward Aboriginal peoples.

Depending on the province, some registered Indians do not pay provincial sales tax. Even within a province, there is often uneven application of this right.

Registered Indians do not have to pay the GST on goods delivered to the reserve. If the goods are purchased off-reserve and not delivered to the reserve, the GST must be paid.

MISCONCEPTION 6: FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

First Nations are incapable of administering their own finances.



Facts:

Every First Nation in Canada is required to submit an annual audit to the federal government before receiving next year's funding. Significant improvements in financial management systems have been made:

- 83% of First Nations have fully met federal audit requirements (61% submit their audits within 120 days).
- 15% of First Nations with federally approved audits require remedial management in some problem areas.
- 2% of First Nations who have received qualified audits are considered to be experiencing severe financial problems.

First Nations are improving their financial administration capabilities through a number of local and national initiatives. Some of the national initiatives include:

- Signing a Memorandum of Understanding on March 30, 1998 between the Assembly of First Nations and the Certified General Accountants' Association of Canada (CGA – Canada).
- The development of the First Nation Financial Management Board (FMB). One of four fiscal institutions being developed by the First Nations – the FMB – is a First Nation-led response to concerns about First Nation financial management systems and accountability. It is intended to be a long-term solution to First Nation capacity development and not a quick legislative fix.
- The FMB will act as a financial management service institution for First Nation governments and institutions. It will work with First Nations to develop a financial management policy framework, develop standard practices, and certify First Nation management systems as requested.

MISCONCEPTION 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Because of the remote location of many First Nations communities, economic development is non-existent on reserves and there are very few Aboriginal businesses.



Facts:

Recent statistics from Industry Canada revealed that there are more than 20,000 Aboriginal businesses in Canada active in every sector of the economy.

The Aboriginal Business Survey of 723 Aboriginal businesses conducted by Aboriginal Business Canada and Statistics Canada 1996, found that:

- An estimated 20,000 Aboriginal peoples have been identified as owning a business.
- The majority of Aboriginal businesses are solely-owned; are owned by North American Indians; and are twice as likely to be owned by men than women.
- Only 3.9% of all Aboriginal adults (over 15 years) own a business versus the Canadian average of 7.9%.
- 70% of Aboriginal businesses surveyed were full-time operations, while the remainder were seasonal.
- 57% of Aboriginal businesses are located on-reserve.

Many are located in First Nations communities and have brought increased employment as a result of joint business ventures with non-Aboriginal companies.

The Assembly of First Nations, through its Economic Development Secretariat, is working in partnership with the federal government to increase economic development opportunities in all First Nations communities.

Economic development on remote reserves is not based on location – as many First Nations communities have witnessed large non-Native companies removing the natural resources from their areas for many years. Businesses are needed to create economies, and start-up capital is needed in order to create a business.

Under ordinary circumstances, a business person could go to a local bank and get a loan to purchase the necessary equipment and assets. Not so for First Nations people living on-reserve.

Section 89 of the *Indian Act*, which was supposed to protect First Na-



tions land from seizure, paradoxically prohibits First Nations land from being mortgaged. It prevents First Nations people living on-reserve from using their land as collateral.

MISCONCEPTION 8: LIVING CONDITIONS

All First Nations communities face living conditions similar to those of Third World countries.

Facts:

No two communities are the same. There are many factors that determine the standard of living and level of economic development in First Nations communities.

Work with First Nations leaders to improve living conditions on-reserve continues to bring the standard of living up to par with the rest of Canadians. First Nations are working to increase their land-base and are seeking fair and equitable access to resources. The total accumulated size of all Indian reserve land south of 60 in Canada (2,676,496.9 hectares) would fit into the great Navajo reservation (6,477,732.8 hectares) in the United States.

MISCONCEPTION 9: SELF-GOVERNMENT

First Nations are not ready for self-government.

Facts:

The Haudenosaunee (Six Nations Confederacy) existed since the beginning of time as distinct people with their own laws and customs, territories, political organization and economy. Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, the fathers of the U.S. confederation, were so impressed with the *Great Law of Peace* which the Six Nations Confederacy followed that they used it as a model for the *United States Constitution*.

Some First Nations were operating under various systems of self-government before the *Inherent Right of Self-Government* policy was announced in 1995 (including, the Sechelt Band's *Self-Government Act* in B.C., Cree Naskapi (of Quebec) and the *Yukon Self-Government Act*).



MISCONCEPTION 10: HOUSING AND EDUCATION

All Aboriginal peoples receive free housing and post-secondary education

Facts:

Métis and non-status Indians do not receive free housing and education assistance.

Housing and education are important legal benefits of some treaties for Treaty First Nations.

Under DIAND's on-reserve housing policy, status Indians living on-reserve obtain funds through their band councils to build or renovate their homes. In many cases, they repay these loans over a number of years.

Low-income, non-Aboriginal families in various regions of Canada seeking housing assistance from governments may also receive assistance through various programs offered by the federal and provincial governments.

DIAND provides elementary education assistance for on-reserve status Indians, and post-secondary education assistance to Inuit and status Indians to help improve their standard of living.

While status Indian students receive post-secondary assistance through their band councils, they can also receive provincial financial assistance in the form of grants or loans that must be repaid.

Federal funding for post-secondary education has remained the same since 1987, except for the two to three per cent increase per year approved by the Treasury Board. At the same time, the number of Inuit and status Indians applying is up, and tuition fees keep rising, so fewer and fewer students access education funding.

MISCONCEPTION 11: LAND CLAIMS

Aboriginal land claims are settled by government based on political guilt over past injustices committed against the original inhabitants in Canada.



Facts:

Land claims are based on outstanding legal obligations to the original inhabitants of this land, and on the basic principle of British common law that there can be no confiscation of land without compensation.

In some areas of Canada, the question of Aboriginal land title has not been addressed.

Land claims are well-researched and subject to validation by the federal government and Department of Justice before any negotiations toward settlement can begin.

Treaties and other agreements provided that land would be set aside for First Nations communities. Over the years, land was improperly confiscated from First Nations. First Nations were forcibly relocated from their original location to other areas, and were subject to various other improper and illegal treatment by the Crown.

The settlement agreement of each land claim is based on existing, outstanding legal obligations of the federal and/or provincial or territorial governments. Compensation and other settlement issues are based on individual land claims.

These long-standing debts to First Nations must be paid if Canada hopes to clear its obligations to the original landowners of this country and render a debt-free country for future generations.

The rights of non-Aboriginal landowners are always considered in the negotiation of any resolution to First Nations communities' outstanding land claims.

MISCONCEPTION 12: DEPENDENCY

First Nations are living at Canada's expense.

Facts:

The country was built on lands and resources that belong to the First Nations and, in theory, one could argue that Canada is living at



First Nations' expense. Canada's economic production would not have reached its present-day scale if the government had not seized the resources and ancestral lands of the First Nations.

In recent years, First Nations have been urging the government to implement the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People recommendation for the re-distribution of land and resources between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, therefore allowing First Nations to become self-sufficient again.

The ancestors of First Nations citizens agreed to share part of their territory and resources with the non-Aboriginal arrivals. To that end, they reached nation-to-nation agreements.

Over the years, First Nations citizens have also made valuable contributions to Canada. Although military service for First Nations is voluntary, many of them willingly enlisted in the Canadian armed forces and participated in various conflicts to fight racism and discrimination.



residential schools

HISTORY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

At their peak, there were 82 Indian Residential Schools (IRS) operating in Canada. The first residential schools were set up in the 1840s with the last residential school closing in 1996.

In 1991, Statistics Canada estimated that there were approximately 105,300 former residential school children survivors. By 2004, that number had dropped to approximately 87,500. Of the original 13,044 claims:

- The average age of claimants is 57 years old.
- 11,315 former students have unresolved claims against the Government of Canada.
- This means that there are approximately 76,185 claims that have not been filed.
- 1,729 settlements have been reached with individual claimants.
 1. 1,052 claimants settled before going to trial.
 2. 198 claimants settled in pilot projects.
 3. 15 trial decisions.
 4. three resolved through the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process.
 5. 461 dismissed or discontinued.
- \$74.8 million has been spent to-date on settlements.
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP), established in 1991, issued its final report in 1996 that called for a renewed relationship with First Nations, Inuit and Métis.
- The Law Commission (1997) stresses that approaches to provide redress for survivors has to take the needs of survivors, their families and their communities as a starting point, and be grounded in respect, engagement and informed choice.



- Joint dialogues created the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (2001), and the Alternative Dispute Resolution (2003) process.
- Canadian Bar Association in August 2004 issued a press release in support of fair compensation to IRS survivors.
- Canada (1988) paid 22,000 Japanese-Canadians a \$300 million (M) settlement for wrongful imprisonment and confiscation of property during World War II. Survivors received \$21,000 each, \$12M for a Japanese community fund, and \$24M to create a Canadian race relations foundation to ensure racism never happens again.
- Supreme Court of Canada granted Canada leave to appeal B.C. Court of Appeal decision in the Frederick William Barney (AKA Blackwater) case, in which Canada was ruled to be 100 per cent liable for compensation to IRS survivors.
- There are five major Class Actions seeking certification before the courts: 1) Cloud Class Action, 2) Baxter National Class Action, 3) Dieter Class Action, 4) Pauchay National Class Action, and 5) the Straightnose Class Action.

NEW NATIONAL FRAMEWORK DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) was set up in November 2003 by Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC). To date:

- 900 plus claims have been filed.
- There have been three resolutions.
- Three reviews have been requested by claimants.
- One review was requested by government (Elder Flora Merrick case).
- Their current process takes approximately nine months from initial application to the date of the hearing.

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS ROYAL COMMISSION

The budget for the National Resolution Framework is \$1.69 billion (B)



over seven years to resolve 12,478 claims received.

- \$954.2 M is targeted for settlements.
- \$725M is for overall operations:
 1. \$335 M ADR – Adjudication
 2. \$285 M – Litigation
 3. \$74 M – Health Support
 4. \$10 M – Commemoration
 5. \$31 M – IRSRC Operations and Maintenance for seven years.

For several generations, to ensure that Indian children would be brought up in a civilized manner, they were removed from their homes and communities and sent to residential schools. They were punished there if they spoke their language or exhibited other signs of “being Indian”.

Native religious traditions were also forbidden. Ceremonies like the Potlach, the Sun Dance, etc. were made illegal and those who practiced them were jailed.

The residential school legacy has left deep and lasting scars – Residential School Syndrome – upon Native communities in Canada.

The following are examples of the type of punishments given to Aboriginal children at the residential schools:

- For failing a test – no food for a day.
- For not working hard enough – four hours of extra work (in school or garden).
- For disobedience, and rude or disorderly conduct – no food or water for a day, a beating (with a stick on the back), extra garden work.
- For speaking native language – (first offense) no supper; (second offense) no supper and beating; (third offense) considered disobedience and punished as such.
- For going off by yourself (without another student present) – several hours of kneeling alone on a rock floor where all can see.



There are many similarities between these punishments and the treatment received by prisoners-of-war. Research some prisoner-of-war camp experiences and compare them to those of Indian children in residential schools.

Consider the following poem by Rita Joe, a Mi'kmaq poet, about attending the residential school in Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia:

I lost my talk
I lost my talk
The talk you took away.
When I was a little girl
At Shubenacadie school

You snatched it away:
I speak like you
I think like you
I create like you
The scrambled ballad, about my world

Two ways I talk
Both ways I say,
Your way is more powerful

So gently I offer my hand and ask,
Let me find my talk
So I can teach you about me.





Sharon McIvor - equality for Aboriginal women

In an historic court victory for Aboriginal women and their descendants, Sharon McIvor – a First Nations woman from Merritt, British Columbia – has successfully challenged the continuing sex discrimination in the sections of the 1985 *Indian Act* that determine Indian status <www.courts.gov.bc.ca/Jdb-txt/SC/07/08/2007BCS0827.htm>.

Sharon McIvor’s case challenges the continuing preferential treatment given to males and those whose Indian status is traced from male ancestors, as a violation of section 15, the equality guarantee of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Amendments were made to the *Indian Act* in 1985 when section 15 of the charter came into force. The stated purpose of these amendments was to remedy long-standing discrimination against First Nations women. However, the 1985 amendments were flawed, because they still carried forward much of the earlier discriminatory treatment of First Nations women and their descendants.

The 1985 Act established a hierarchy for registration status. Women and their children who has been disentitled to status because of “marrying out”, or non-Indian paternity, were granted status, but not full Indian status. The 1985 Act still reserves full registration entitlement for

those who trace their ancestry along the male line. The Act continues to limit the registration rights of First Nations women and their children who trace their ancestry along the maternal line, by relegating them to inferior classes of status – the sex discrimination that is inherent in this continuing registration hierarchy.

Sharon McIvor was born in 1948. Because her Indian lineage was through the women in her family – her grandmother and her mother – she was not entitled to registration as an Indian at birth. Also, as an adult, Sharon married a non-Indian man. Consequently, her children were also not entitled to be registered. Under the 1985 Act, Sharon was finally granted Indian status, but it is still an inferior category of status, because Sharon can only transmit half-status to her children. And Sharon's grandchildren are not entitled to status at all.

In contrast, the 1985 Act entitles Sharon's brother, his wife and his children and grandchildren to full-status, even though his lineage and family status are identical to Sharon's. Under the 1985 Act, Sharon continues to suffer discrimination as a result of her gender. Although she now has status as an Indian, she does not have equal registration status. Because of discrimination carried forward from previous acts, she is only able to transmit inferior status to her son and no status to her grandchildren.

In *McIvor v. Canada* 2007 BCSC 827, the British Columbia Supreme Court ruled that the government must remove the sex discrimination clause. This is a ground-breaking judgment that the government itself estimates will affect the status of thousands of Aboriginal women and their descendants.

McIvor's important legal challenge would not have been possible without the Court Challenges Program. For 20 years, this federally funded program provided resources to historically disadvantaged individuals and groups to take test cases into the courts to challenge federal laws based on the equality rights in the charter. It was the first in the world and often lauded as one of Canada's key commitments to protect our basic human rights.

But in October 2006, with no warning or public discussion, Prime Minister Stephen Harper cancelled the Court Challenges Program,



claiming that Canadians no longer needed it. The McIvor case proves that Mr. Harper is wrong.

In June 2007, Judge Carol Ross of the B.C. Supreme Court ruled in favour of Sharon McIvor and her son Jacob. The federal government is appealing this ruling. The case will probably not be finally resolved until it is decided by the Supreme Court of Canada.

For more information, please listen to Sharon McIvor's interview on Vancouver Co-operative Radio at the following link: <www.rabble.ca/rpn/episode.shtml?x=62679>.

ten identity questions

that every Aboriginal child has a right to have help to answer

1. Who are my people?
2. Where did my people come from?
3. Where did my people come from to get here?
4. Where and when did my people move? How many of my people moved?
5. Where are my people now?
6. What have my people contributed?
7. What happened to my people? When? How?
8. What are the responses of my people to what happened to them?
9. What are my people like culturally? Physically?
10. How are my people now? Where are my people today? What are they doing?

Aboriginal children, families and communities have entitled rights under the *Child, Family and Community Services Act* of British Columbia. These rights include the right to be involved in the planning of Aboriginal children-in-care, the right of children to – whenever appropriate and/or possible – remain in the care of their parents. When this is not appropriate and/or possible, Aboriginal children have the right to be placed in the care of their extended family, community and/or Nation.

For more information, please visit <www.surroundedbycedar.com>.



Stolen Sisters, Sisters in Spirit and the Highway of Tears

The Amnesty International Canada (2004) report, “*Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women in Canada*” estimated that 500 Aboriginal women had gone missing or had been murdered in Canada.

In the same year, the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) launched the National Sisters in Spirit Campaign (SIS) to raise public awareness of the alarmingly high rates of violence against Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. The purpose of the SIS campaign is to develop a comprehensive strategy for work at both the national (federal government) and international (United Nations) levels on issues relating to improving the human rights of Aboriginal women and girls.

An unsolved series of murders and disappearances of young women in the vicinity of Highway 16 has earned the route the nickname “the Highway of Tears”. Since 1988, at least 32 women – 31 of them Aboriginals – have been killed or suspiciously disappeared along the 800 km section of highway between Prince Rupert and Prince George.

Our grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters and daughters are the givers of life. We must honour, respect and protect each and every one.

These campaigns and initiatives can be accessed at the following websites:

www.stolensisters.com

www.sistersinspirit.com

www.highwayoftears.com

www.nwac-hq.org



traditional medicines and practices

THE SMUDGING CEREMONY

Our Native Elders have taught us that before a person can be healed or heal another, one must be cleansed of any bad feelings, negative thoughts, bad spirits or negative energy – cleansed both physically and spiritually.

Ceremonies, tribal or private, must be entered into with a good heart.

One common ceremony is to burn certain herbs, take the smoke in one's hands and rub or brush it over the body "smudging".

Sage is burned in smudging ceremonies to drive out bad spirits, feelings, or influences, and also to keep bad spirits from entering the area where a ceremony takes place. Some Nations wrap their pipes in sage when they are placed in pipe-bundles, as sage purifies objects wrapped in it.

Cedar is burned while praying either aloud or silently. The prayers rise on the cedar smoke and are carried to the Creator. It drives out negative energy and brings in good influences.

Smudging is a ceremony that must be done with care. We are entering into a relationship with the unseen powers of these plants, and with the spirits of the ceremony. As with all good relationships, there has to be respect and honour if the relationship is to work.

SWEETGRASS

One of the most sacred plants for the Plains Indians is sweetgrass. Sweetgrass is usually braided together in bunches, and wrapped in cloth. They are usually burnt by shaving little bits over hot coals or lighting the end and waving it around, letting the smoke spread through the air,



purifying. It is good to burn sweetgrass after the sage or cedar has driven out the bad influences. Sweetgrass brings in the good spirits and the good influences. As with cedar, burning sweetgrass while praying sends prayers up to the Creator in the smoke.

Sweetgrass is also put in pipe bundles and medicine bundles along with sage to purify and protect sacred objects. Sweetgrass is very rare today. It keeps the fields from being depleted.

SWEAT LODGE

A ceremonial sauna used by First Nations. The most commonly used tree is the willow. The lodge is aligned with the four directions and room for a doorway. A medicine person, or Elder, leads the ceremony and four songs are sung for four directions.

A fire keeper passes hot stones to the medicine person and water is poured over to fill the lodge with steam. The stones are our grandfathers. Each person entering the lodge enters on hands and knees, and crawls like a baby into the womb of the lodge.

The sweat lodge represents birth and being born out of the darkness, the red glow, the warmth, the wetness, and the small space like a womb.

One crawls out of the lodge – humbled – and like a baby. Everything is done clockwise, the same way the sun travels across the sky. Offerings of tobacco, sweetgrass, red cedar, devil's club and other plants are used for prayers of thanks. Many lodge leaders do not allow menstruating women to participate as this is a sacred time of a woman's life. These women are referred to as being on their moon-time.

THE MEDICINE BAG

The medicine bag is made from deer skin or moose hide. Once it is sewn together, you can place your personal medicine in the pouch. Your medicine can consist of what is sacred to you.

Traditionally, the Aboriginal peoples have had four sacred medicines



which are sage, sweetgrass, tobacco and cedar. Other objects, such as small stones, are also considered to be powerful energy sources that could be placed in there too.

Traditionally, once these medicines were gathered and assembled, they were placed in the pouch and then were taken through a medicine ceremony, which involved smudging of the objects, thereby cleansing them of any negativity and providing good clean medicines for the next step of taking the pouch through a ceremony which may be a fasting, pipe or sweat lodge ceremony. During this ceremony, prayers and songs are offered, and we ask the spirits to bless the pouch for us. Before this ceremony takes place, the pouch is sealed and tied with a piece of sinew or is sewn together to ensure that none of the medicines will fall out of the pouch. Once the pouch is sealed, it is sealed forever and is not to be opened or it will lose its spiritual power.

Medicine pouches are used primarily for protection from seen and unseen things. It is worn to enhance the wearer's positive attitude and keep negative things away from one's physical and spiritual being.

MEDICINE WHEEL

The Medicine Wheel is a major symbol of peaceful interaction among all living beings on Mother Earth. It represents harmony, balance and connections. Scattered across the plains of Alberta are a number of stone Medicine Wheels. Some are extremely large, greater than 12 metres across. They are the remains of special ceremonial dance and spiritual events celebrated by the Plains First Nations people.

The term “medicine wheel” was first applied to the Big Horn Medicine Wheel in Wyoming, the most southern and one of the largest in existence. That site consists of a central circle of piled rock surrounded by a circle of stone: “Rays” of stones travel out from the central core of rock and its surrounding circle. The whole structure looks rather like the wheel of a bicycle. Alberta has about 66% of all known Medicine Wheels (46) which suggests that Southern Alberta was a central meeting place for many Plains tribes who followed Medicine Wheel ceremonies (usually on and around the Summer Solstice, June 21st).



Despite their physical existence, there is a lot of mystery that surrounds the Medicine Wheel, because without written records, so little is understood as to their true meaning. Many theories abound, including: (a) the wheels contain significant stellar and cosmological alignments, specifically designed to point toward the rising sun or to certain star nation constellation(s); (b) the performance of specific rituals and ceremonies that have been lost to the mists of time.

Today, the Medicine Wheel is used for many concepts in our lives. Some of these concepts are:

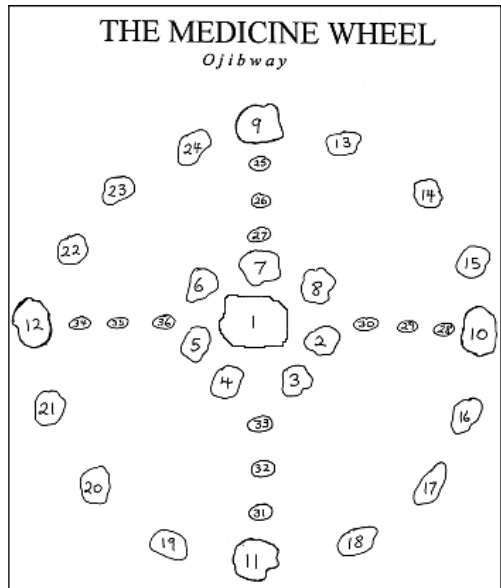
- The four elements of the earth: wind, water, earth and fire.
- The four colours of man: red, white, yellow and black.
- The four sacred animals: coyote, buffalo, eagle and bear.
- The four elements of wellness: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

The purpose of the Medicine Wheel is about balance. If one area in your life is out of balance, then when the wheel starts to roll it will get stuck and not continue in the area that is out of balance. For instance, if you are not balanced in the mental area of your life, then your wheel will become stuck until you work on your mental aspects in your life.

The Medicine Wheel can be applied to many aspects in today's society.

If we all join together and work as one unit, we will become a much stronger and healthier society for many generations to come.

We must come together and work as one unit – all being equal, none being greater than the other, then we will walk together, for all mankind.



EAGLE FEATHER

Most First Nations people attach special significance to the eagle and its feathers.

Images of eagles and their feathers are used on many tribal logos. To be given an eagle feather is the highest honour that can be awarded within First Nations cultures.

The eagle feathers are highly revered and considered sacred with First Nations traditions, culture and religion. They are honoured with great care and the deepest of respect.

They represent honesty, truth, majesty, strength, courage, wisdom, power and freedom. The eagle is seen as a symbol of both power and prestige as well as peace and friendship.

Eagle feathers are still considered sacred and are part of many ceremonies and rituals.



important dates

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY - June 21

On June 21, in many communities across Canada, people celebrate National Aboriginal Day.

It is a great day to get out and learn more about the Native culture, and to recognize and honour the first peoples of this land.

Share in the experiences, stories, songs and spirituality of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people.

June 21st is more than the first day of summer, it is a National Day of Solidarity.

NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION - June 29

The Assembly of First Nations has designated June 29th as a National Day of Action for their Make Poverty History for First Nations campaign.

The Assembly of First Nations is calling for peaceful actions that raise awareness and educate the public on the magnitude of First Nations poverty in Canada.

More information, and how you can help on the National Day of Action, can be found at <www.afn.ca>.

important resources

FIRST NATIONS CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCIES

Caring for First Nations Children Society (Victoria)

3rd Floor, 7728 Tetayt Road, Saanichton, B.C. V8M 2C3

Phone: (250) 652-9899 Toll-free: 1-800-342-4155 Fax: (250) 652-3399

Web: www.cfncs.com

First Nations Big Sisters Mentoring Program – Big Sisters of B.C. Lower Mainland

34 East 12th Avenue, Vancouver B.C. V5T 2G5

Phone: (604) 873-4525 ext. 300 Fax: (604) 873-2122

Email: info@bigsisters.bc.ca Web: www.bigsisters.bc.ca

Affiliations: Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Canada

Gitxsan Child and Family Services Society

4215 Government Street, Hazelton, B.C.

Mailing Address: PO Box 333 Hazelton, B.C. V0J 1Y0

Phone: (250) 842-2258 Fax: (250) 842-2481

Affiliations: Gitanmaax, Gitanyow, Gitsegukla, Gitwangak, Glen Vowell, Kispiox

Haida Child and Family Services Society (main office)

Location: Old Masset Office, 247 Eagle Road, Masset B.C.

Mailing Address: PO Box 86 Masset, B.C. V0T 1M0

Phone: (250) 626-5257 Fax: (250) 626-5287

Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Child and Family Services

7468 Mission Road, Cranbrook, B.C. V1C 7E5

Phone: (250) 489-4563 Toll-free: 1-888-489-4563

Fax: (250) 489-4585



Email: ccapilo@kktc.bc.ca

Affiliations: Columbia Lake, Lower Kootenay, Shuswap, St. Mary's, Tobacco Plains

Kwumut Lelum Child and Family Services

7973 Chemainus Road, Westholme, Ladysmith, B.C.

Mailing Address: PO Box 928 Ladysmith, B.C. V9G 1A6

Phone: (250) 246-3336 Toll-free: 1-800-613-1777 Fax: (250) 246-4683

Affiliations: Chemainus, Halalt, Lake Cowichan, Lyackson, Malahat, Nanoose, Penelakut, Qualicum, Snueymuxw

Nezel Be Hunuyeh Child and Family Services Society

700 Stuart Drive West, Fort St. James, B.C.

Mailing address: PO Box 1180 Fort St. James, B.C. V0J 1P0

Phone: (250) 996-6806 Toll-free: 1-866-996-0015 Fax: (250) 996-6977

Affiliations: Nak'azdi, Tl'axt'en, Yekooche

Nisga'a Child and Family Services (Prince Rupert)

304-860 3rd Avenue, Prince Rupert, B.C.

Mailing Address: PO Box 21010 Prince Rupert, B.C. V8J 4P2

Phone: (250) 627-4141 Toll-free: 1-866-627-4141 Fax: (250) 627-4151

Email: ncfs@citytel.net

North Cariboo Aboriginal Family Program Society

423 Elliot Street, Quesnel, B.C. V2J 1Y6

Phone: (250) 992-9160 Fax: (250) 992-9157

Email: ncafps@longname.ca Web: www.longname.ca

Affiliations: Quesnel Tillicum Society, North Cariboo Metis Association; Member Bands: Lhoosk'uz Dene, Nazko, Red Bluff

Okanagan Métis Children and Family Services

201-2949 Pandosy Street, Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 1W1

Phone: (250) 868-0351 Fax: (250) 868-0359



Email: okmcs@telus.net Web: www.okanaganmetischildreandfamilyservices.ca

Scw'exmx Child and Family Services

85, Hwy 8, West Merritt, B.C. V1K 1N2

Phone: (250) 378-2771 Toll-free: 1-877-387-2773 Fax: (250) 378-2799

Email: info@scwexmx.com Web: www.scwexmx.com

Affiliations: Coldwater, Lower Nicola, Nooaitch, Shackan, Upper Nicola

Secwepemc Child and Family Services Agency

225-355 Yellowhead Hwy Kamloops, B.C. V2H 1H1

Phone: (250) 314-9669 Toll-free: 1-866-314-9669 Fax: (250) 314-9609

Affiliations: Secwepemc Nation, Adams Lake, Bonaparte, Kamloops, Neskonlith, North Thompson, Skeetchestn, Whispering Pines

Surrounded by Cedar Child and Family Services

1031 Vancouver Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 4T6

Phone: (250) 383-2990 Fax: (250) 383-2509

Email: assistant@sccfs.com Web: www.surroundedbycedar.com

Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (VACFSS)

745 Clark Drive, Vancouver, B.C. V5L 3J3

Phone: (604) 872-6723 Toll-free: 1-877-982-2377 Fax: (604) 872-5274

Email: info@vacfss.com Web: www.vacfss.com

Xyolhemeylh Child and Family Services

1-7201 Vedder Road, Chilliwack, B.C. V2R 4G5

Phone: (604) 858-0113 Fax: (604) 824-2518

Web: www.web.stolonation.bc.ca

Affiliations: Sto:lo Nation



HEALTH SERVICES

Aboriginal Health Services (Vancouver community)

Location: Vancouver Coastal Health,
320-1290 Hornby Street, Vancouver B.C. V6Z 1W2
Phone: (604) 633-4238 Fax: (604) 714-3477
Email: aboriginalhealthservices@vch.ca Web: www.vch.ca/community

Association of B.C. First Nations Treatment Programs

2-3003 29th Avenue, Vernon, B.C. V1T 1Y9
Phone: (250) 503-1135 Fax: (250) 303-2473
Email: abcfntp@shawcable.com Web: www.firstnationstreatment.org

B.C. Aboriginal Network on Disability Society

1179 Kosapsum Crescent, Victoria, B.C. V9A 7K7
Phone: (250) 381-7303 Toll-free: 1-888-815-5511 (TTY Accessible)
Fax: (250) 381-7312
Email: info@bcands.bc.ca Web: www.bcands.bc.ca

Central Interior Native Health Society (medical clinic)

1110 Fourth Avenue, Prince George, B.C. V2L 3J3
Phone: (250) 564-4422 Fax: (250) 564-8900
Affiliations: Northern Health Authority

First Nations Breast Cancer Society (volunteer/non-profit)

Location: c/o 309-1333 East 7th Avenue, Vancouver B.C. V5N 1R6
Phone: (604) 877-1334 Fax: (604) 875-0779
Email: echoes@fnbreastcancer.bc.ca Web: www.fnbreastcancer.bc.ca

Healing Our Spirit B.C. Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Society

100-2425 Quebec Street, Vancouver, B.C. V4T 4L6
Phone: (604) 879-8884 Toll-free: 1-866-745-8884 Fax: (604) 879-9926
Email: info@healingourspirit.org Web: www.healingourspirit.org



Affiliations: Red Road HIV/AIDS Network, Chee Mamuk Aboriginal Programs (STD/AIDS control)

Hey-Way'-Noqu' Healing Circle for Addictions Society

401-1638 East Broadway, Vancouver, B.C.

Mailing Address: 119-1989 Marine Drive North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 3N5

Phone: (604) 874-1831 Fax: (604) 874-5235

Email: heywaynoqu@telus.net

Indian Residential School Survivors Society

911-100 Park Royal South, West Vancouver B.C. V7T 1A2

Phone: (604) 925-4464 or 24-hr survivor line: 1-866-925-4419 Toll-free: 1-800-721-0066 Fax: (604) 925-0020 Web: www.irsss.ca

Interior Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Society (Round Lake Treatment Centre)

200 Emery Louis Road Armstrong, B.C. V0E 1B5

Phone: (250) 546-3077 Fax: (250) 546-3227

Email: exedir@roundlake.bc.ca Web: www.roundlake.bc.ca

Affiliations: Round Lake Treatment Centre

Native Mental Health Association of Canada

Location: Skwah First Nation, 800 Wellington Avenue, Chilliwack, B.C.

Mailing Address: PO Box 242 Chilliwack, B.C. V2P 6J1

Phone: (604) 793-1983 Fax: (604) 793-4557 Email: nmha@telus.net

Nisga'a Valley Health Authority

4920 Tait Avenue, New Aiyansh, B.C.

Mailing Address: PO Box 234 New Aiyansh, B.C. V0J 1A0

Phone: (250) 633-5000 Toll-free 1-888-233-2212 Fax: (250) 633-2512

Web: www.nisgahealth.bc.ca

Saanich First Nations Adult Care Society

77A Tsartlip Drive, Brentwood Bay, B.C.



Mailing Address: PO Box 20016 Sidney, B.C. V8L 5C9

Phone: (250) 544-1627 Fax: (250) 544-1628

Email: cooRoadsfnacs@shaw.ca

Affiliations: Pauquachin, Tsartlip, Tsawout, Tseycum

Scw'exmx Community Health Services Society

103-2090 Coutlee Street, Merritt, B.C.

Mailing Address: PO Box 3090 Merritt, B.C. V1K 1B8

Phone: (250) 378-9745 Toll-free: 1-888-667-2477 Fax: (250) 378-4962

Email: schss@shawcable.com

Snuneymuxw First Nation Health Care

668B Centre Street, Nanaimo, B.C. V9R 4Z4

Phone: (250) 740-2337 Toll-free: 1-866-736-4584 Fax: (250) 753-5221

Email: reception@snuneymuxw.ca Web: www.snuneymuxw.ca

Affiliations: Snuneymuxw First Nation

Sto:lo Nation Health Services

Building #7 – 7201 Vedder Road Chilliwack, B.C. V2R 4G5

Phone: (604) 824-3200 Toll-free: 1-877-411-3200 Fax: (604) 824-0276

Email: counseling.intake@stolonation.bc.ca Web: www.stolonation.bc.ca

Tsartlip Health Centre

802 Tsartlip Drive, Brentwood Bay, B.C. V8M 1N9

Phone: (250) 652-4473 Toll-free: 1-800-681-2349 Fax: (250) 652-4525

Affiliations: Tsartlip Band

Ts'ewulhtun Health Centre of the Cowichan Tribes

5768 Allenby Road Duncan, B.C. V9L 5J1

Phone: (250) 746-6184 Fax: (250) 748-8815

Web: www.cowichantribes.com

Affiliations: Cowichan Tribes



Vancouver Native Health Society

449 East Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6A 1P5
 Phone: (604) 254-9949 Fax: (604) 254-9948
 Email: vnhs@shawbiz.ca Web: www.vnhs.net

Westcoast Native Health Care Society

Location: Tsawaayuus (Rainbow Gardens)
 6151 Russell Place, Port Alberni, B.C. V9Y 7W3
 Phone: (250) 724-5655 Fax: (250) 724-5666
 Web: www.rainbowgardens.bc.ca

FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

200-506 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8W 1E6
 Phone: (250) 388-5522 Toll-free: 1-800-990-2432 Fax: (250)388-5502
 Email: admin@bcaafc.com Web: www.bcaafc.com

Cariboo Friendship Society

99 South 3rd Avenue, Williams Lake, B.C. V2G 1J1
 Phone: (250) 398-6831 Fax: (250) 398-6115
 Email: caribou.fc@shawcable.com Web: www.cariboofriendshipsociety.ca
Affiliations: B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, National Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

Fort St. John Friendship Society

10208-95th Avenue, Fort St. John, B.C. V1J 1J2
 Phone: (250) 785-8566 Fax: (250) 785-1507
 Email: friendship@solarwinds.com

Interior Indian Friendship Society

125 Palm Street, Kamloops, B.C. V2B 8J7
 Phone: (250) 376-1296 Fax: (250) 376-2275



Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society

442 Leon Avenue, Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 6J3
 Phone: (250) 763-4905 Fax: (250) 861-5514
 Email: administration@kfs.bc.ca Web: www.kfs.bc.ca

OoknaKane Friendship Centre

101-324 Westminster Avenue, West Penticton, B.C. V2A 1K2
 Phone: (250) 490-3504 Fax: (250) 490-0891
 Email: ofcreception@shaw.ca Web: www.friendshipcentre.ca

Prince George Native Friendship Centre

1600-3rd Avenue, Prince George, B.C. V2L 3G6
 Phone: (250) 564-3568 Fax: (250) 563-0924
 Email: friends@pgnf.com Web: www.pgnfc.com

Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre

1607 East Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C. V5L 1S7
 Phone: (604) 251-4844 Fax: (604) 251-1986
 Email: info@vafcs.org

Victoria Native Friendship Centre

231 Regina Avenue, Victoria, B.C. V8Z 1J6
 Phone: (250) 384-3211 Fax: (250) 384-1586
 Email: info@vnfc.ca Web: www.vnfc.ca
Affiliations: United Way of Greater Victoria

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Aboriginal Mother Centre Society

208-2019 Dundas Street, Vancouver, B.C. V5L 1J5
 Phone: (604) 253-6262 Fax: (604) 253-6263
 Email: info@amcs.ca Web: www.amcs.ca



Aboriginal Women's Council

107-1607 East Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1S7

Phone: (604) 255-1818 Fax: (604) 255-1830

Email: info@womennet.ca Web: www.womennet.ca

Atira Women's Resource Society (Aboriginal Women's Outreach Program)

204 – 15210 North Bluff Road, White Rock, B.C. V4B 3E6

AWO Phone: (604) 584-2971 Pager: (604) 320-3881

Society Phone: (604) 531-9143 Fax: (604) 581-9119

Email: awo@atira.bc.ca Web: www.atira.bc.ca

BC Native Women's Society

4213 Alexis Park Drive, Vernon, B.C. V0X 1N0

Phone: (250) 542-5029

Email: secretary@bcnativewomen.com Web: www.bcnativewomen.com

Affiliations: Native Women's Association of Canada

Cwenengitel Aboriginal Society Turtle Haven House

4915 Island Hwy North, Courtenay, B.C. V9N 5Y9

Phone: (250) 338-7652 Fax: (604) 588-5591

Affiliations: Cwenengitel Aboriginal Society

First Nations Breast Cancer Society (volunteer/non-profit)

309 – 1333 E 7th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V5N 1R6

Phone: (604) 877-1334 Fax: (604) 875-0779

Email: echoes@fnbreastcancer.bc.ca Web: www.fnbreastcancer.bc.ca

Indigenetnetwork: First Nations Women in the Arts Co-op

13-1492 Admirals Road, Victoria, B.C. V9A 2R1

Phone: (250) 383-1342 Fax: (250) 383-1345

Email: native_artists@hotmail.com



Northern Rockies Aboriginal Women Society

2B 4916-50th Ave North, Fort Nelson, B.C.

Mailing Address: PO Box 3190, Fort Nelson, B.C. V0C 1R0

Phone: (250) 233-8920 Fax: (250) 233-8921

Email: ed.nraws@northwestel.net

Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry

1855 Cliffe Street, Courtenay, B.C.

Mailing Address: PO Box 3166, Courtenay, B.C. V9N 5N5

Phone: (250) 334-9591 Fax: (250) 383-9515

Email: uiwona@telus.net

Warriors Against Violence Society – Women’s Program

2425 Oxford Street, Vancouver, B.C. V5K 1M7

Phone: (604) 255-3240 Fax: (250) 254-7673

Email: warriors@wavbc.com Web: www.wavbc.com

Xolhemet Society (for victims of family violence)

Mailing Address: PO Box 2025, Sardis Stn Main, Chilliwack, B.C.
V2R 1A5

Phone: (604) 824-0939 (Administration) (604) 858-0468 (Transition house) Toll-free 1-888-558-0468 Fax: (604) 824-0937

Email: xolhemetadmin@shaw.ca Web: www.xolhemet.shelternet.ca

For a more complete guide to Aboriginal organizations and services in British Columbia, please go to www.prov.gov.bc.ca/arr or call **Ministry of Aboriginal Relations & Reconciliation** at 1-250-387-2199.

Alternatively, you can write to:

PO Box 9100 Stn Prov Govt

Victoria, B.C.

V8W 9B1



legal protection from discrimination



The collective agreement

The collective agreement is a legally enforceable document. All HEU collective agreements include protection from discrimination and set out the process for making and resolving a complaint. If this process does not result in a satisfactory resolution, the complaint can go through a legal procedure – such as a grievance or arbitration – as set out by B.C.'s labour laws.

The BC Human Rights Code

British Columbia has a human rights code that protects from discrimination because of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, or because of unrelated convictions or offences. The code includes areas like employment, wages, accommodation and services, including unions and associations.

The Canadian Human Rights Act

The *Canadian Human Rights Act* protects from discrimination on the federal level, such as a government policy or a national employer. The Act protects on the grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, and conviction for which a pardon has been granted.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Canada's Constitution, in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, protects from all discrimination, including race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. As it is the supreme law of the land, all laws in Canada must comply with it.

