

Employment

Relevant Details

- Vancouver unemployment rate was 15.3% among Aboriginal people (Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2001).
- Since 1996, the number of self-employed Aboriginal people in Canada has increased by 30.7% - a rate nine times higher than for self-employed Canadians overall. In 2001, there were 27,195 self-employed Aboriginal people in Canada, representing 2.78% of the overall Aboriginal population. Fourteen percent of self-employed Aboriginal people resided on-reserve, while 86% resided off-reserve (Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in 2002, Industry Canada).

Labour Characteristics of the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Population in B.C. 2005/06

- Aboriginal unemployment rate was 16.8% compared to 5.2% for non-Aboriginal people
- Only 10% of Aboriginal people had attained at least some form of educational credential compared to 25% for non-Aboriginal people.
- Many Aboriginal people have post-secondary credentials that do not lead to much increased employability as they are specific credentials without vocational training (eg: adult basic education certificate).
- Due to low education levels, Aboriginal people are over-represented in the lower skilled occupations and under-represented in the high skilled occupations.

Aboriginal peoples living off-reserve in Western Canada: Estimates from the Labour Force Survey, 2005

- B.C. Aboriginal employment rate 54.5% - below the rate of 61.2% for non-Aboriginal people.
- B.C. Aboriginal unemployment rate 17.3% - twice the rate of 6.6% for non-Aboriginal people.
- In B.C., Aboriginal youth aged 15-24 who made up 26.6% of the off-reserve Aboriginal population had an employment rate of only 43.6% compared to non-Aboriginal youth at 58%.
- In B.C., Aboriginal youth aged 15-24 who made up 26.6% of the off-reserve Aboriginal population had an unemployment rate of 24% compared to non-Aboriginal youth at 13%.
- In B.C., for Aboriginal people aged 25-64 who had finished post-secondary education, the employment rate was over 79%, almost equal to non-Aboriginal people at 82%.
- In Western Canada, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal people aged 25-64 who had finished post-secondary education was 6.9% compared to 3.9% for non-Aboriginal people.
- In Western Canada, Métis people had similar rates to those of non-Aboriginal people.

Who's Involved?

Aboriginal Community Career & Employment Services Society (1607 East Hastings Street)

- Aboriginal training and employment which focuses on the continuum of employment preparedness from schooling to long-term employment opportunities
- Not-for-profit organization with a community-based Board of Directors
- Provides services through Employment Centres in a few locations within the GVRD
- Some project-based funding to Aboriginal not-for-profit organizations to offer employment related services such as computer lab, Bladerunners, and educational training in specific fields such as cook/server, hospitality industry, phone centres, and the film industry.
- The President / CEO is the Co-Chair of the BC Aboriginal Workforce Strategy, whose mandate is to foster partnerships that lead to the inclusion of Aboriginal people in government and private enterprise workforces

Bladerunners - Aboriginal Community Career & Employment Services (56 West Hastings St)

- An internationally recognized, award winning employment program assisting multi-barrier youth in gaining on the job construction training and apprenticeships. Works in partnership with employers, trades organizations, unions, community organizations, government and the Aboriginal Communities to increase opportunities for youth.

First Nations Employment Society (440 Cambie Street)

- An Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement contractor for on-reserve members, but also offers some urban support.
- Some funding to post-secondary students.
- Board of Directors made of up First Nations representatives.

Vancouver Aboriginal Skills & Employment Partnership -VanASEP (3636 East 4th Avenue)

- Overall objective is to create sustainable employment for Aboriginal people in major economic initiatives across Canada through collaborative partnerships, leading to lasting benefits for Aboriginal communities.
- VanASEP will be linking major employers and construction projects to a source of labour supply, focusing primarily on opportunities relating to the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre project, the Vancouver Port Expansion project and the Sea to Sky Highway project.

Qey-Sta:m Learning Centre (Musqueam)

- Services for members who want to improve their reading, writing, and math skills and to complete their high school education and the opportunity for students to learn and begin an apprenticeship in cooking as well as gain work experience.

Vancouver School Board

- Staying in School / Stay on Track provides life and job skills training and supervises work placements for Phase 1, 2 and 3 students as they transition into and out of secondary school. This program includes some outreach. Activities include a

spectrum of opportunities and services that ensure mental, social, and environmental factors are addressed in a systematic manner Aboriginal Youth diagnosed with FASD.

Building Opportunities with Business Inner City Society (BOB)

- Not-for-profit organization which is developing a 'one-stop-shop' in the Downtown Eastside to promote business development, mentoring, employment training, and small business loans programs, gradually expanding to include a wider range of services and initiatives.
- Their cluster strategy will bring business and industry leaders together to identify ways of attracting investment, supporting existing DTES businesses, and creating employment for area residents.

Aboriginal Business Canada (300 West Georgia Street)

- Provides support for business planning, start-up, expansion and marketing to Aboriginal entrepreneurs and organizations. Referrals to financial assistance, business info and resource materials, and referrals to other possible sources of financing or business support.

Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada (Saskatoon)

- Workforce Connex is a national forum series that will link you to new regional partners and solutions that offer resolve to employment training, recruitment and retention issues
- The forum series helps develop successful business strategies that help Aboriginal Canadians acquire the right skills and opportunities to enter new labour market sectors.

Partnerships

- Aboriginal Community Career & Employment Services Society partners with government, private sector, other AHRDAs, developers and the construction industry to develop recruitment and retention strategies for Aboriginal people.
- First Nations Employment Society partners with government, private sector, other AHRDAs, developers and the construction industry to develop recruitment and retention strategies for Aboriginal people.

Committees

- Aboriginal Community Career & Employment Services Society with government, private sector, AHRDAs, etc.
- VanASEP has a Board of Directors comprised of AHRDA holders, private business, and First Nations. Names can be found at: www.vanasep.ca.

Trends

- There are increased partnerships with government and private industry to recruit, hire, and train Aboriginal people in various fields.

- On the job training is increasing in the construction industry due to the high need for workers.

Gaps

- Since the drop out rate from high school is at 80% for Aboriginal people in Vancouver, there is a great need for upgrading opportunities and on the job training.
- Although social assistance requires that clients seek work, there are few meaningful jobs for those who do not have the education or skills to compete in today's workforce, therefore there is a great need for transitional programs for upgrading and training.
- Aboriginal women, especially single parents, are much more likely to face daily issues of poverty, housing issues, food insecurity, and have little access to education and training initiatives that can help them to find and retain meaningful employment that will bring them out of poverty. There needs to be specific training opportunities for this demographic.

Contact Information

Addresses, phone, fax, email, and website information for any of the organizations above can be found in the Contact Information section of this manual.