

Outreach & Engagement

The City of Vancouver is home to a very diverse Aboriginal population that includes individuals from across B.C. and Canada, as well as the three local reserve-based First Nations that are directly connected to Vancouver. This unique population base sometimes leads to challenges in outreaching to a good representation of the community as a whole. This is also sometimes an issue within the Aboriginal communities themselves, so no one should let this issue inhibit them from doing as much outreach as they can through the ways listed below and using the contact information at the end of this manual. The following are ways that City staff may be able to reach a larger number of Aboriginal community members:

Outreach Activities

Of the numerous ways that the City conducts outreach, consultation, and information sharing, the best ways to carry these out are through the following ways:

- Partnering with established not-for-profit Aboriginal organizations to host City events, set up information tables at the organization's events (National Aboriginal Day, Family Nights, pow-wows, etc) outreach to community members, develop written materials, access their communications networks, or adhere to cultural protocols.
- Utilizing existing communication avenues and resources within the Aboriginal community.
- Developing culturally appropriate materials.
- Written surveys may not be effective due to disinterest, not reaching many community members, not being culturally appropriate, or literacy issues. Therefore, in-person presentations would work best, especially if they are not in a lecture style. Interactive sessions that allow for questions, have reading materials, posters, or models would increase participation and feedback.

Outreach through community organizations:

In general, members of Aboriginal communities are much more likely to attend public forums, workshops, or consultations if it is being hosted at and by a local Aboriginal community organization. It is important to gather the organization's input on the best way to develop print materials that will be sent out as they usually have experience in this area and know what kind of culturally appropriate materials would work best. Organizations would also be in the best position to offer advice on what communication channels information should be distributed. Flyers, brochures, or emails will likely work best if they include Aboriginal images, non-bureaucratic language, and the organization's logo and name.

The organization will likely want the City to provide snacks or food for the meeting, and may also need to adhere to cultural protocols. Cultural protocols may include a welcome by the local First Nation, an opening and closing prayer, traditional song, food, Elder inclusion, or gifts for those fulfilling cultural protocols such as the prayer or song. Possible gifts for presenters, cultural resource people, or Elders may include things such as a blanket, tobacco, or an honorarium.

In particular the following organizations have access to a broad base of community members:

- **Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre** - This not-for-profit organization is the hub of the Aboriginal communities, hosts many community events, has an electronic information kiosk in their main foyer, produces a monthly newsletter, has a bulletin board and website, hosts a bi-weekly Elders luncheon and drop-in centre, and hosts Family Nights every Tuesday and Wednesday where up to 800 people attend over the course of the evening.
- **Vancouver Aboriginal Council** - This not-for-profit community-based group hosts a community meeting every third Thursday of the month from 9:30-12:00 at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre. There are usually 20 - 60 individuals in attendance. Attendees include Aboriginal organizations from throughout Greater Vancouver (primarily Vancouver), government representatives working on Aboriginal issues, potential funders who want to consult with the community or announce funding opportunities, and individual community members. Anyone can call the Vancouver Aboriginal Council to request an opportunity to present to this group.
- **Vancouver Native Housing Society, Luma Native Housing Society, Synala Housing Co-op, United Native Nations Society** - These four not-for-profit housing providers have housing complexes throughout East Vancouver, primarily in the Grandview-Woodlands and Mount Pleasant neighbourhoods. Synala Housing Co-op and one Luma Native Housing complex are in Renfrew-Collingwood, and Vancouver Native Housing has one complex Downtown. Some also have newsletters that go out to their tenants or websites with up to date information that tenants who have internet access can view.
- **Urban Native Youth Association, Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association, Redway BC, Redwire Magazine Native Youth Media Society** - All of these not-for-profit groups have access to many Aboriginal youth up to the age of 29. Since up to 60% of the Aboriginal community is under the age of 25, it is very important to reach out to this demographic. Amongst these organizations there are websites, a youth magazine, an e-zine, newsletters, and forums that could be utilized to outreach to youth.
- **Aboriginal Community Policing Centre, Circle of Eagles Lodge, Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services, Native Courtworkers, First Nations Legal Clinic** - These not-for-profit organizations work with community members on safety and justice issues. They may be able to reach individuals who do not ordinarily come into contact with other organizations.
- **Aboriginal Front Door Society, Vancouver Native Health Society, United Native Nations** - These not-for-profit organizations work with community members in the Downtown Eastside. Their locations, near Main & Hastings, put them in a unique position to reach Aboriginal people living or congregating in the Downtown Eastside.
- **Aboriginal Mothers Centre Society, Pacific Association of First Nations Women, Helping Spirit Lodge** - All of these not-for-profit organizations work with Aboriginal

women and families. It is important to outreach to these community members as they are often isolated and could most benefit from community development activities.

- **Local First Nations** - The only local First Nation within Vancouver's boundaries is Musqueam, but all three have an interest in City activities as many of their members live in Vancouver, they have historically used the land that is now known as Vancouver, and there are still in the Treaty Process which may have them gaining access to City land. See the 'Coast Salish First Nations' section of this manual for more information.
- **Native Education Centre, First Nation House of Learning, Chief Dan George Centre for Advanced Education** - These three organization have access to Aboriginal post-secondary students who live throughout the city, but often do not have much time to become involved in community activities and events. Therefore, it is important to partner with these organizations to reach post-secondary students.
- **Vancouver Métis Community Association** - This not-for-profit organization is the only Métis organization in Vancouver. They have a large membership base.

Communication Resources in the Aboriginal Community

- The contact list found at the end of this manual has also been input into the City's Quickfind Directory by neighbourhood and Aboriginal specific organization, and will be on Social Planning's Aboriginal Community Web-pages (www.vancouver.ca/aboriginal), and in the City's Community Services Database.
- The Vancouver Aboriginal Council has an Aboriginal Community fax and email distribution list that City staff may be able to tap into.
- The Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre has newsletter, bulletin board, and an electronic kiosk in its main foyer that includes a database of services and can also be utilized for advertising.
- Kahtou Newspaper is a local Aboriginal newspaper that is widely distributed.
- There are many Aboriginal-specific radio programs through Co-op Radio.
- RedwayBC is a web-based Aboriginal youth organization that produces a monthly e-zine that is distributed to over 3,000 individuals throughout BC. They also have a website that may provide advertising opportunities.
- Most Aboriginal organizations have their own mail, email, or fax distribution lists that City staff may be able to gain access to when partnering with community organizations.
- There are increasing numbers of web, flyers, posters, and other written communications designers in the Aboriginal communities who can help to develop culturally appropriate materials. Often this information can be found on individual

organization's websites to see who their designers are. Or, simply ask in the various communities who is doing this type of work.

- See the 'Communications & Information Sharing' section of this manual for more information.