

Inventory of Aboriginal Services, Issues and Initiatives in Vancouver

Sports & Recreation

Relevant Details

- There are no statistics for Aboriginal sports & recreation in Vancouver.
- “We Declare that: Sustainable commitment and investment in active living, physical activity, physical education, recreation and sport are essential to promote health and address social issues facing Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples in communities across Canada” (Maskwachees Declaration, Federal-Provincial/Territorial Advisory Committee on Fitness and Recreation June, 2000).
- “...active lifestyles play an important role in the health of individuals and their communities. That’s why [we are] working to increase recreation and sport opportunities to Aboriginal people in British Columbia by providing support to Aboriginal organizations in three areas: sport performance, sport participation and capacity / sustainability (BC Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts’ Sport & Recreation Branch website).

Who’s Involved?

Urban Native Youth Association (1640 East Hastings Street)

- Their Aboriginal Youth First Sports & Recreation Program provides opportunities to 11-23 year old Aboriginal youth living in the Eastside of Vancouver. The goal of the program is to create programs that include leadership training, skills training, and basic lifeskills. There is a special focus on encouraging youth who are not currently active to become involved.
- The development of this program included conducting a survey of 224 Native youth.
- The program has over 50 community partnerships that result in programs being offered in many locations in East Vancouver.

Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre (1607 East Hastings Street)

- Has a gymnasium that is used both for sports and recreation activities and community events. This reality decreases the amount of time that can be prioritized for such activities
- Offers youth programming, and some early childhood activities.

Warriors Against Violence Society (2425 Oxford Street)

- Offers some youth-focused outdoor recreation programming.

Musqueam First Nation

- Offers a number of activities in their gymnasium as well as their outdoor soccer field
- More info can be found at www.musqueam.bc.ca/sports.html.

Schools, Neighbourhood Houses, Community Centres

- There are a number of schools, neighbourhood houses, and community centres throughout Vancouver that offer programs that Aboriginal children and families can access, and a few are Aboriginal specific programs which are usually offered in partnership with Aboriginal organizations.
- Barriers to access include having to pay fees, transportation, childcare, and no Aboriginal staff or programming.
- Aboriginal people live mainly in the Eastside of Vancouver, so it is most likely that if they were to visit a family place, neighbourhood house, or community centre, it would be in those locations. These are the sites that should reach out to, and ensure a welcoming environment for Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Association of BC (Saanichton, BC)

- A multi-sport umbrella organization providing guidance and support to the Aboriginal people of BC through opportunities in sport, physical activities and recreation.
- Goal is to strengthen and encourage the physical, mental, cultural, emotional and spiritual aspects of community and individual life, by creating opportunities for success at every level.

Aboriginal Sport Circle (Ottawa)

- National voice for Aboriginal sport, which brings together the interests of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Established in 1995, the ASC was created through a national consensus-building process, in response to the need for more accessible and equitable sport and recreation opportunities for Aboriginal peoples.
- A collective of Provincial/Territorial Aboriginal Sport Bodies with a mandate to represent the grassroots sport and recreation interests of the Aboriginal peoples of their regions.

Partnerships

- Urban Native Youth Association's AYF Sport & Recreation Program is built on community partnerships that are built upon formal agreements. There are over 50 partnerships.

Committees

- Urban Native Youth Association's AYF Sport & Recreation Program has a Youth Advisory Council that helps UNYA to respond to the needs of Native youth.

Trends

- Urban Native Youth Association's AYF Sport & Recreation Program focuses much of its efforts on helping youth to learn transferable skills that they can use on sport/rec teams/activities, or for work in areas such as refereeing or coaching.
- UNYA's AYF Program and Warriors Against Violence offer program that focus on peer leadership activities that teach youth new skills that help them to become mentors to other youth.

Gaps

- There are very few Aboriginal people in organized sports in schools, or amateur and professional sports. The benefits of sports and recreation need to be introduced to Aboriginal youth at an earlier age, existing programs need to be more welcoming of Aboriginal people, and more Aboriginal people need to take on mentorship roles to encourage participation.
- Despite much success, there is a lack of funding to build upon the Urban Native Youth Association's AYF Sport & Recreation Program's programs and activities
- There is a lack of programming for Elders, families, and children.

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.