



Indigenous Recruitment Guide

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Know the Indigenous Workforce



Before creating an Indigenous employment strategy for your organization, it's important to understand the diverse backgrounds of Indigenous professionals. The more informed you are about the Indigenous communities your company's projects may impact, the better business decisions you will be able to make.

To increase your knowledge of the Indigenous workforce, please explore the sections below:

Definitions
Demographics
Geography & Environment

Economics
Historical & Social Factors

DID YOU KNOW?

Teams with diverse backgrounds are more well-rounded and productive:

- Diversity has been shown to be a better determinant of sales revenue than the company size, age, number of employees, and number of customers
- Expect 15 times more sales revenue from companies who report higher levels of workplace diversity
- Companies who employ a more diverse workforce reported over 12.5% more customers than those with a low diverse workforce
- Sales revenue increased by 9% for every percentage increase in the rate of diversity compared to the rate of the relevant population

KNOW THE INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE

Definitions

"Indigenous peoples" is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. Often, "Aboriginal peoples" is also used. The Canadian constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people: Indians (commonly referred to as First Nations), Métis and Inuit. These are three distinct peoples with unique histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. More than 1.6 million people in Canada self-identify as an Indigenous person, according to the 2016 Census.

Indigenous communities are located in urban, rural and remote locations across Canada. They include:

- First Nations or Indian Bands, generally located on lands called reserves
- Inuit communities located in Nunavut, NWT, Northern Quebec (Nunavik) and Labrador
- Métis communities
- Communities of Indigenous people (including Métis, Non-Status Indians, Inuit and First Nation individuals) in cities or towns which are not part of reserves or traditional territories (for example, the Indigenous community in Winnipeg).

Inuit: Indigenous people in Northern Canada living generally above the treeline in the Northwest Territories, Northern Quebec, and Labrador. Although the Inuit are not covered by the Indian Act, the federal government makes laws concerning the Inuit. The federal government has also entered into several major land claim settlements with the Inuit.

Métis: People of mixed First Nation and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis, as distinct from First Nations people. The Métis have a unique culture that draws on their diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, French, Ojibway, and Cree.

First Nations: A term used to define Indigenous people of Canada's Indian Act. According to the Indian Act, an Indian is *a person who pursuant to the Act is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian*. This is a highly selective legal definition subject to historical events and legislation. The use of the term *Indian* has declined since the 1970's, when the term *First Nations* came into common usage. There are three legal



definitions that apply to Indians in Canada: Status Indian, Non-Status Indian and Treaty Indian.

Non-Status Indians: An Indian person who is not registered as an Indian under the Indian Act.

Status Indians: A person who is registered as an Indian under the Indian Act. The act sets out the requirements for determining who is an Indian for the purposes of the Indian Act.

Treaty Indians: A Status Indian who belongs to a First Nation that signed a treaty with the Crown.

Land claims: In 1973, the federal government recognized two broad classes of claims—comprehensive and specific. Comprehensive claims are based on the assessment that there may be continuing Aboriginal rights to lands and natural resources. These kinds of claims come up in parts of Canada where Aboriginal title has not previously been dealt with by treaty and other legal means. The claims are called “comprehensive” because of their wide scope. They include such things as land title, fishing and trapping rights, and financial compensation.

Specific claims deal with specific grievances that First Nations may have regarding the fulfillment of treaties.

Specific claims also cover grievances relating to the administration of First Nations lands and assets under the Indian Act.

These definitions have been sourced from the department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. For a full list of terminology visit <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/>

A YOUNGER WORKFORCE

The Indigenous workforce is young and ready for work, and untapped in comparison to other Canadians where the majority of the work force is in the retirement phase.

KNOW THE INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE

Demographics

Knowing the demographics of the community you will be working with will provide your organization with baseline information to tailor your recruitment strategy.

WHAT IS THE SIZE OF THE WORKFORCE FROM WHICH YOU ARE RECRUITING?

ABORIGINAL IDENTITY POPULATION, BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY (2016 CENSUS)				
	Aboriginal identity	First Nations	Métis	Inuit
Canada	1,673,780	977,235	587,545	65,025
Newfoundland and Labrador	45,725	28,735	7,790	6,450
Prince Edward Island	2,740	1,875	710	75
Nova Scotia	51,495	25,830	23,310	795
New Brunswick	29,380	17,575	10,200	385
Quebec	182,890	92,655	69,360	13,945
Ontario	374,395	236,680	120,585	3,860
Manitoba	223,310	130,505	89,360	610
Saskatchewan	175,015	114,570	57,880	360
Alberta	258,640	136,585	114,375	2,500
British Columbia	270,585	172,520	89,405	1,615
Yukon Territory	8,195	6,690	1,015	225
Northwest Territories	20,860	13,185	3,390	4,080
Nunavut	30,550	190	165	30,140

Source: *Statistics Canada*



QUICK FACTS

- The Indigenous identity population reached 1,673,785 in 2016 of which 58.4% First Nations, 5.1% are Métis, and 3.9% are Inuit. Overall the Indigenous identity population represents 4.9% of the Canadian population, up from 3.8% in 2006 and 2.8% in 1996.
- Since 2006, the Indigenous population has grown by 42.5%, more than four times the growth rate the for non-Indigenous population within the same period.
- Eight out of 10 Indigenous people currently reside in Ontario and the four Western provinces.
- Over half (51.8%) of Indigenous people reside in urban areas (81% for non-Indigenous). In major cities, the concentration of Indigenous people is highest in Winnipeg, followed Edmonton, Vancouver and Toronto.
- The average age of the Indigenous population was 32.1 as of 2016- almost a decade younger than the non-Indigenous population (40.9)
- Most of First Nations people with registered or treaty Indian status live off the reserve (55.8%)

younger generations more likely to have college diplomas than older generations.

- The Indigenous population aged with a university degree is steadily increasing, although they are more likely to have trades and college certificates.
- Common barriers to furthering education or training include time constraints, cost, personal and/or family responsibilities and a perceived lack of confidence or preparedness.

Source: [Stats Canada](#)

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

ECO Canada's BEHR Program offers environmental workforce training programs for Indigenous Communities.

Contact behr@eco.ca for more information or visit our website at www.eco.ca/behr

WHAT ARE THE EDUCATION LEVELS AND GENERAL EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES OF THE INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE AND HOW WILL THESE AFFECT YOUR RECRUITMENT?

- Almost half (48.4%) of Indigenous people aged 25 to 64 have a postsecondary qualification, with

ARE THERE LOCAL SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, OR UNIVERSITIES FROM WHICH TO RECRUIT GRADUATES?

Statistics Canada's 2016 Community Profiles are searchable by province and town. You can also use this tool to find out education levels and areas of specialization, spoken languages, and household salary levels.

WHAT ARE THE LOCAL EMPLOYMENT ORGANIZATIONS OR COMMUNITY GROUPS?

The Canadian Encyclopedia has a user friendly service that lists community group web pages according to province and community name:

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-people>

AN OVERVIEW BY AREA

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada has produced a wide range of maps on Indigenous Peoples called the "Map Room." Visit their website to view them.

KNOW THE INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE

Geography

In some cases, knowing about the geography and environment of the area ahead of time will save your organization time, money, and resources. The following questions address issues you may want to consider:

- Is the area remote? How accessible is it? Are there year-round roadways? Are the nearby communities fly-in only?
- Will the local climate impact your employee operations? How?
- What are the main environmental impacts experienced in the area? Will these affect your recruitment?

KNOW THE INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE

Economics

Knowing the economic factors that impact Indigenous communities and potential candidates will help your organization more accurately define mutually meaningful areas of business.

- What are the primary industries or forms of employment in the area?
- How do these industries affect the workforce?
- What jobs currently exist in the community? Who is employed in those jobs? Is the labour pool depleted?
- Are there informal ways people are making a living and are the communities committed to these seasonal activities? (E.g., fishing and hunting)
- What are the wages in the area?

Statistics Canada can help you find some answers to these questions. [Click here](#) to get started.

KNOW THE INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE

Social Factors

Understanding the historical and social aspects of the area will help your organization develop a context relevant to the people or communities with which you are working. This context forms a foundation for understanding, so that decisions and strategies are made from an informed stance rather than one based on assumptions. This will break down the barriers—especially culturally based barriers.

- Have the people in this area been recruited by other organizations?
- Are there historical factors that might influence the community's receptiveness to recruitment? (E.g., Has the community been relocated several times?)
- What type of local political structure is in place?
- Are there any other cultural issues that ought to be considered? (E.g., How is business conducted by the people from the area?)

SOME HISTORICAL FACTORS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO CONTEMPORARY ISSUES:

The Indian Act imposed many laws that are being overcome. For example, with the right to vote only coming into place 45 years ago (in 1960) Aboriginal people are catching up in the mainstream political system to ensure their voice is included in the decisions of this country.

- The banning in 1884 of Indian ceremonies is being reclaimed. Although many were lost, practices are returning along with the pride of many nations.
- As a result of Residential Schools open from 1800-1996, the attempt to assimilate Aboriginal children has had a negative result on Aboriginal people today. The separation of families, abuse and the loss of language and culture has resulted in many issues, including lack of parental experience, self-worth and esteem, and cultural identity issues.
- According to the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada, most residential schools closed in the mid-1970's and the last one closed in Canada was in 1996.

These are just a few examples of the historical impacts that have led to the contemporary issues Indigenous people face today. As an employer, it may seem at times

that the contemporary issues are slow to overcome. However, if we consider it took 100 years to accumulate the issues, then we must assume that it is going to take more than a few years to overcome them. We can surmount the time it takes if we all, as Canadians, work towards common goals to address these unjust realities.

This information is beneficial when challenges and issues Indigenous people face today are discussed. Building the foundation today for Indigenous people to participate in the Canadian economy is a benefit for all Canadians.

More historical information can be found at <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/>

DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIGENOUS POLICY OR STRATEGY

An Indigenous policy should consider a more holistic approach to achieving success. A holistic approach requires involving Indigenous people in the process of developing an Indigenous policy or strategy for your workplace.

Create an organizational commitment:

Write a business case, vision statement, or the reason for the policy or strategy. Find a senior executive champion to carry the message



through the organization and ensure the creation of opportunities for this person to build meaningful relationships with Indigenous community leaders.

Build collaborative relations:

Develop collaborative partnerships with communities and work together to improve employment strategies. Putting in the effort to build ongoing trust with the community is important to Indigenous culture.

Create a learning environment:

Build knowledge and understanding through cross-cultural or Indigenous awareness training. Learn about the Indigenous people who live locally, their culture, history, values and beliefs.

Build commitment through internal capacity and employee engagement:

Assign resources to implement Indigenous initiatives. Integrate Indigenous employment and initiatives into the business planning processes. Promote employee engagement by increasing awareness of local Indigenous communities, cultural and social events.

Promote and create a positive working environment:

Having fun does not reduce productivity; in fact, it has been shown to increase productivity. People like to come to a workplace that promotes healthy holistic living.

CHALLENGING MYTHS

Despite progressive advances in the cultural mindset, it is important to be aware of harmful myths and misconceptions may still exist today.

- Indigenous people do not want to work.
- Indigenous people do not pay taxes.
- Indigenous people receive free education.
- Indigenous people do not have business experience.
- Indigenous business decision-making is too slow.
- Indigenous people cannot keep politics out of business decisions

Changing Perceptions: In the workplace, employers may be asked questions by non-Indigenous employees that require demystifying and are specific to the hiring, recruitment, and retention practices targeted at Indigenous employees. It is especially important to ensure non-Indigenous employees do not generate resentment towards Indigenous employees.

WHAT TOPICS WOULD BE HELPFUL TO LEARN?

- The diverse demographics of Indigenous people, including terminology.
- The historical and legal issues in attempting to assimilate and colonize Indigenous people over the past 100 years.
- The loss of rights, language, and culture.
- The contributions of Indigenous people to Canada.
- The impact of 100 years of accumulated issues.

CONDUCTING YOUR RESEARCH

Much of the above information can be found from third-party sources, and by no means is a full portrayal of the information available to you. The best source of information about a community is often the community itself. For more research resources, check out the websites below. Once you've gathered all appropriate information, review the section titled Know Recruitment Needs to ensure job descriptions are in tune with the Indigenous population.

Indigenous Student Services	https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033679
Indigenous Works	https://indigenousworks.ca/en
Chart of funding options	www.centralalberta.ab.ca
Indigenous Services Canada	www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/emp/index-eng.asp
Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada	https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/
CAHRMA (Canadian Aboriginal HR Management Association)	http://www.cahrma.ca/
Spirit Staffing	https://www.spiritstaffing.com/
Turtle Clan HR	https://turtleclan.ca/indigenous-hr
Mining Industry HR Portal for Indigenous Communities	https://www.mihr.ca/diversity-inclusion/aboriginal-people-in-mining
CAHRD Employment Services	https://cahrd.org/
Diversity Canada	www.canadastop100.com/national
Canadian Human Rights Commission	https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/indigenous-peoples
Canadian Labour Congress	https://canadianlabour.ca/
Services for Indigenous Entrepreneurs	https://businesslink.ca/starting-a-business/indigenous-services/
Alberta government training program	https://www.alberta.ca/training-work-programs.aspx
Indigenous Link	https://indigenous.link/

Finding Qualified Candidates



Now that you have completed your research on Indigenous professionals and communities, it is important to make sure your organizational goals and cultural fit are aligned to recruit the best candidate. In addition, it is essential to know what resources are available to you to find qualified Indigenous professionals.

How to tailor your recruitment strategy to find Indigenous professionals:

- Know Your Organization
- Recruiting Resources and Tools
- Looking Internally/Externally
- Building Networks
- Getting Assistance

DID YOU KNOW?

Community Profiling can be helpful in the planning process for recruiting Indigenous employees. Profiles may include:

- Demographics of the community businesses: band-owned, individual Associations, networks, other companies working in the area.
- Who are the community contacts for employment or education?
- Is the area remote? How accessible is it? Are there year-round roadways? Are the nearby communities fly-in only?
- Will the local climate impact your employee operations? How?
- What are the main environmental impacts experienced in the area? Will these affect your recruitment?

FINDING QUALIFIED CANDIDATES

Know Your Organization

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: HOW DOES YOUR BUSINESS COMPARE?

An organization's culture influences recruitment practices. Which applicant pools are tapped, which methods of recruitment are used, and the nature of monetary and non-monetary inducements offered, all reflect an organization's culture.

From a potential employee's perspective, perceptions around an organization's culture through informal and formal networks (i.e., their reputation) can strongly influence whether he or she will pursue employment opportunities with them. An organization that, through its business practices, demonstrates a set of values that aligns with those of a potential recruit's, is likely to be considered favourably.

For example, an organization that demonstrates a commitment to employee work-life balance through flexible start times and family leave policies could influence a candidate's decision to move forward with their application.

ATTRACTING CANDIDATES: WHAT MIGHT INDIGENOUS JOB SEEKERS BE LOOKING FOR IN AN ORGANIZATION?

Indigenous job seekers vary in their values, wants, and experiences. Although they come from a unique cultural mix (urban, rural, assimilated, and traditional), they seek employers who offer the following working conditions:

- An accepting, respectful, and non-judgmental work environment
- Equality of treatment
- Pay equity
- Cultural diversity in the workplace
- Stability and longevity
- Potential for increased responsibility
- Competitive salary and benefits
- Opportunities for professional growth and development

In the environmental sector specifically, potential Indigenous employees may be interested in:

- Working conditions—including length of time spent on-site and amount of time off; hours of work; accommodations and sustenance allowances; transportation support; flexibility around combining contract work and other community obligations.
- Monetary value—including compensation package (base pay or base pay + incentives pay).
- Acknowledgement of cultural or community factors—cultural factors may include concepts of extended kinship. For example, in many Indigenous communities a ‘death in the family’ may mean anyone who is part of the extended family and community network. Community factors may include concepts of seasonal hunting/gathering practices in which individuals, families, and communities engage. If these are historical practices, potential employers need to be aware of and accommodate them.

FINDING QUALIFIED CANDIDATES

Looking Internally

INTERNAL JOB POSTINGS

Hiring from within is a way to demonstrate your organization’s commitment to its staff and their professional development. Further, it provides an opportunity for staff to move laterally or to more senior positions.

EMPLOYEE REFERRALS

Encouraging current employees to communicate vacancies to their network of environmental professionals is another way to tap into your internal resources. Your existing employees can play a large role in developing your organization’s reputation within communities. Through strong internal communications, employees will be aware and supportive of the organization’s commitment to Indigenous inclusion.

RÉSUMÉ POOL

Your organization’s résumé pool is developed through both unsolicited résumés, as well as solicited résumés from past employment opportunities.

By welcoming Indigenous environmental professionals to submit unsolicited résumés, you open your organization to potential employees.

Your organizational culture is reflected in how potential employees are greeted when they walk in with their résumés, and in the quality of the organization’s informational literature provided.

Many employers find it useful to retain résumés from past applicants for future consideration. On reviewing the résumés, employers find that they have several ideal candidates without having to look externally.

DID YOU KNOW?

ECO Canada attends Indigenous events, conferences and career fairs.

Visit our [events page](#) regularly to be updated on these events.

FINDING QUALIFIED CANDIDATES

Looking Externally

BUILDING NETWORKS

Networking is the most effective method to recruit Indigenous environmental practitioners. Much of the Indigenous population, whether living in urban, rural, or remote locations, stays connected through what the mainstream businessperson might refer to as networking. From a mainstream perspective, networking often focuses on a specific goal, such as finding an employee for a job. From an Indigenous perspective, networking is about developing relationships.

The key here is that establishing relationships takes time. Rather than rushing into a new relationship, Indigenous people take the time to get to know the other person. They spend some time together, until eventually a trust relationship is established.

In the context of recruiting, an organization will know that a trust relationship is established when the Indigenous community extends invitations to community events or meetings.

Building Networks

What are the benefits to building networks?

- Increases your ability to reach Indigenous environmental professionals
- Builds your understanding and perspective of the diversity among Aboriginal people from various areas
- Increases your comfort in working with Indigenous people, which helps break down barriers of communication
- Builds a reference point from which trust can occur
- Provides cultural and territorial context for future recruiting and business development
- Supports future partnerships (E.g., workforce agreements, training agreements and land use agreements)
- Creates a resource group that can offer cultural guidance. For example, community representatives could facilitate the consultation process with the organization and their own community.

WHEN IS IT MOST APPROPRIATE TO USE THIS RECRUITMENT METHOD?

Networking is the most effective recruitment method for any situation when the desired outcome is to increase the Aboriginal workforce. While this process takes more time in the initial stages, it can be invaluable in the long-term, as developing relationships with these communities will add value in many areas of your business.

HOW DO I INITIATE RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS AND COMMUNITIES?

Here are some suggestions to get you started:

- 1) Connect with the network of **Indigenous Works**. This organization helps bridge Canadian employers with Indigenous workers and also provides environmental employers with the best link to begin the networking process.
 - <https://indigenousworks.ca/en>
- 2) Community profiling can be helpful in the planning process for recruiting Indigenous employees. They are beneficial when developing community agreements that often include employment, training, and contracting opportunities.

Community Offices: There are hundreds of community

offices. Check out **Indigenous Services Canada** and **CIRNAC** for more in depth information.

Inuit regions will have local community hamlet offices with staff positions, such as Mayor, Senior Administrative Officer, Economic Development Officer(s), and Employment Counsellor(s). [Click here](#) for a map of Inuit communities in Canada.

Métis regions or settlements will have regional offices with staff positions, such as Senior Administrative Officer(s), Economic Development Officer(s), and Employment Counsellor(s).

First Nations territory will have tribal council offices with staff positions, such as Chief, Council Members, Economic Development Officer(s), and Employment Counsellor(s). [Click here](#) for a map of First Nations communities in Canada.

3) Access Indigenous directories, maps, and website directories.

- Statistics Canada
- Indigenous Maps
- Indigenous Business Directory
- Indigenous Tourism Canada

4) Subscribe to the local Indigenous digital and print news sources in your area. This will keep you informed of events and happenings relevant to communities and will provide possible contact names.

There is a wide range of Native and Northern newspapers available for online subscriptions. A few of the most prominent include:

- Wawatay News
- APTN News
- Nation Talk
- Windspeaker

5) Let everyone know you want to employ Indigenous people. Be honest and open about what you are looking for and be willing to listen.

6) Once you have connected with the community, investigate how your company can participate in events to increase your company's visibility. For example, you could be a presenter at school career days or sponsor an event or sports team.

7) Offer to host a presentation to community members to familiarize them with your organization.

8) Ask advice of the group or groups with which you are working. For example, perhaps a community leader could sit on a hiring panel or provide advice on cultural awareness training.



STEPS TO BUILDING NETWORKS WITH INDIGENOUS GROUPS

1) Become or appoint an Indigenous liaison skilled at developing relationships.

The Indigenous liaison is responsible for building relationships with Indigenous community members, business groups, employment centres, and schools, with the intent of:

- becoming a contact point,
- identifying common interests,
- establishing common ground,
- identifying potential employees and
- communicating employment opportunities in your company.

The best person for this role will be someone who is genuinely interested in expanding the company's Indigenous workforce and was involved in the development of the company's Indigenous employment policy.

Although it may be helpful for this person to have had some Indigenous awareness training, it is not essential. If Indigenous inclusion is given high priority in your company, you will achieve greater success and staff members will be more supportive of the Indigenous liaison.

Support this individual by making senior managers available to meet members of the Indigenous community and by allocating funds for holding meetings with outside groups and for public relations activities.

3) Research the history and contemporary context of the local Indigenous communities from which you hope to recruit candidates.

Understanding who you are working with will aid in establishing common ground to build strong and beneficial business relationships.

- Follow local Indigenous news sources and/or publications to gain a sense of the types of activities that communities are involved in, what is important to them, who is building partnerships, etc. Band councils or regional offices of many Indigenous communities produce newsletters that can be a rich resource to aid your organization in understanding the local community and business context. In addition, these publications may provide contact information for key community members.
- Make contact with the Economic Development Offices in Indigenous communities, as they can

refer you to specific people and resources relevant to your area of interest. In addition, they know the community and business leaders and the formal and informal mechanisms they use to meet and make decisions.

- Investigate which local resources Indigenous people use to find employment and receive training.
- Talk to community leaders, as well as business and employment resource groups. Take the time to learn about one another. Let them know your intentions. This may be as simple as saying, "I don't have much experience working with Indigenous people but I am interested in increasing my Indigenous workforce. I am willing to learn but I am not sure what the best approach to take is. Could you offer some support?"

3) Tap into resources already established to support employers.

Having access to people who understand employers needs for Indigenous recruitment and retention is critical to the bottom-line of your business. This is why it is important to access resources that already have

well-established networks. Indigenous Careers is a national network that links employers to: Indigenous job seekers, over 400 Indigenous employment centers, and post-secondary institutions. This organization is dedicated to providing resources that increase Indigenous inclusion in the Canadian workplace. Use the Indigenous Careers to identify key contacts in local communities by visiting www.indigenouscarers.org/.

DID YOU KNOW?

Human Resource Skills and Development Canada has a list of development offices you can check out:

<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1461940615477/1461940651472>

4. Seek advice and introductions.

As you become more familiar with members of local Indigenous communities, you may want to invite members whom you trust and who are appropriate for specific topics to act as advisors to your organization.

This may help you add more appropriate cultural context to some of your business practices. These advisors can be very valuable for the following reasons:

- They live close to your business.
- They know and trust you.
- They have strong connections to the Indigenous community.

For example, individuals may be able to provide culturally relevant support in the following areas:

- Cultural practice advisory panel
- Indigenous hiring advisory board
- Territorial protocol advisors
- Culturally relevant employee support

The Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative is a national program developed and maintained by Crown-Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC). They have coordinators located across Canada who can provide employers with guidance, support, and ideas to effectively connect to Indigenous communities and resources in the areas in which they are located. Finally, use your internal employees as a resource, as some may already have ties to the community.

5) Become involved in community activities to build relationships of trust.

- Network with Indigenous organizations, businesses and community groups by participating in community events and activities.
- Volunteer for a community board or committee.
- Sponsor community events and activities, such as school events.
- Employers can sponsor training programs or give

DID YOU KNOW?

There are numerous resources that employers can use to support Indigenous Recruitment:

Indigenous Link Careers Centre:
<https://careers.indigenous.link/>

Windspeaker Job Board:
<https://windspeaker.com/job-board>

Aboriginal Job Board:
<https://aboriginaljobboard.ca/>

Canada Job Bank
https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/report_note.do?cid=12026

a presentation in an area they are interested in hiring in.

- Allow time for building relationships of trust; don't expect them to develop overnight.
- Continue to maintain the relationship over time, even after it is firmly established.

6) Identify the mutual needs, strengths, and interests of your business and the community. For your company, identify:

- Your strengths in terms of what you have to offer the Indigenous community (E.g., jobs, training, financial support, goods, and services)
- Your needs (E.g., positions to be filled, qualifications required, help in finding and screening suitable candidates, help in building trusting relationships with local workers, help in training individuals)
- Your interests (E.g., a partnership to fulfill long-term recruitment and retention needs, community acceptance of your company, learning how to be most effective at doing business with Indigenous communities)

For the community, identify:

- Their strengths in terms of what they have to offer your company (E.g., workers willing to be trained, qualified candidates, access to new graduates)

- Their needs (E.g., opportunities for jobs they value, increased support for their local economy)
- Their interests (E.g., a partnership to fulfill long-term employment needs or possible joint ventures)

Identify ways in which you might mutually benefit by helping each other build on strengths and meet needs.

7) Enter into formal partnership agreements, wherever possible.

Identify the specific groups that you can partner with.

- Universities, colleges, and training institutes may provide pre-employment training or build training programs to meet your needs.
- Government organizations may provide funding to support skills development. Learn about the **Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program**.
- Local businesses may be able to provide contract workers or to help fund training programs.
- Local Indigenous employment centres can advertise positions, identify candidates, and screen them.



A list of Indigenous Agreement Holders:
<https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/job-emploi/indig-autocht-eng.html>

A list of band offices:
<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100016936/1100100016940>

Discuss with these groups potential ways of working together to meet your mutual needs and if appropriate, establish formal agreements and processes. Involve senior people in your organization to visibly support the initiatives.

ON-CAMPUS RECRUITMENT

On-campus recruitment can be effective when you have specialized training or education requirements. It can occur through several methods:

1) Indigenous News Sources

While most physical newspapers are now lacking in relevancy, they are still a good strategy to use for Indigenous recruitment. Many communities still lack access to reliable WIFI, computers and smartphones, leaving more opportunities for print media.

In addition, by advertising environmental job opportunities in local Indigenous newspapers, your organization has an opportunity to reach a wide Indigenous audience and to access both urban and rural populations. Many employers don't realize that Indigenous papers have a long shelf life because they are often kept for future reference. In addition, posting advertisements in Indigenous newspapers will increase your company's profile within Indigenous communities.

Social Media and LinkedIn are also great tools to supplement your recruiting efforts.

RECRUITMENT RESOURCES

Employment and Social Development Canada is a great resource to look for Indigenous Employment Centres:

<https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/job-emploi/indig-autocht-eng.html>

Check out the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada for a list of regional band offices:

<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100016936/1100100016940>

Benefits:

- Digital and print newspapers reach Indigenous people nationally, provincially, and locally in a culturally relevant manner.
- Indigenous newspapers have a long shelf life; they are often kept for future reference.
- The content may be translated into the local Indigenous language.
- They increase your organization's profile and familiarity in Indigenous communities.

When to use:

- When you want to reach a wide Indigenous audience.
- When distance factors impact on community outreach.
- When you want to target a group who relates to print.
- When you want to access the Indigenous network -the distribution areas have been chosen specifically to reach both urban and rural populations.

How to advertise:

- Determine which Indigenous newspapers you would like to advertise in.
- The sales department of the newspaper will explain the process of advertising your position.
- Know your advertising budget then obtain

advertising rates to determine the size of ad that fits within your budget.

- Using the knowledge you have gained from networking and the advice of the sales agent, develop a job advertisement that will reflect your needs and be understood by job seekers.

Resources:

- **First Peoples' Heritage Language and Culture Council:** www.fphlcc.ca/arts/arts-toolkit/aboriginal-media-links
- **Aboriginal Job Board: For Job Seekers and Employers:** <https://aboriginaljobboard.ca/>
- **Spirit Staffing:** <http://spiritstaffing.org/>

2) Indigenous Student Services *Benefits:*

- It is an effective way to quickly and directly reach current Indigenous environmental students, as well as, recent graduates and alumni.
- It can help you learn about Indigenous students and communities, and assist you in understanding the local Indigenous workforce.
- It builds and strengthens your networks.



- Most Indigenous student service programs will support recruitment strategies and may sponsor recruiting activities.

When to use:

- When you require Indigenous environmental professionals who have specific or specialized training at the college and university level.
- When you want to hire on an ongoing basis.

How to start:

- Contact the universities and colleges that offer programs relevant to the job for which you are hiring.
- Establish a contact person within the Indigenous Student Services Centre. Maintain ongoing communication with your contact since changes may occur in your recruitment needs.
- Make job descriptions and job ads available to your contact. Many will post your job opportunities and actively recruit students who pass through their doors.

FINDING QUALIFIED CANDIDATES

Getting Assistance

PROFESSIONAL RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

Professional recruitment agencies are private companies that are contracted by environmental employers to help find suitable Indigenous environmental practitioners to fill positions. These companies may provide various levels of service from job posting to interviewing and selection.

Benefits:

- Professional recruiting agencies can handle the entire process of recruiting and hiring Indigenous environmental practitioners for your organization.
- Organizations can negotiate their level of involvement in the process (E.g., your company may want to participate in the interviewing process).
- Since there are numerous professional recruitment agencies to choose from, you can select the one that best suits your needs.
- Professional recruitment agencies with specific environmental recruitment expertise may have networks in place to access the best candidates.

Disadvantages:

- Cost for these services can range from several hundred dollars to the equivalent of a year's salary for a middle to upper management employee.
- If you are not directly involved in the recruitment process, you must communicate recruitment needs clearly at the outset.
- While objective, recruitment agencies lack an understanding of your organizational culture in order to determine the best fit of a candidate.
- There may be a lack of professional recruitment agencies with specialization in recruiting Indigenous candidates.

When to use:

- When you have located a professional recruitment agency that you trust and that can access Indigenous environmental practitioners.
- When you do not have the time and human resources to devote to recruitment.
- When you are seeking to fill a position that requires very specialized environmental skills, education, training, and personality characteristics.
- When you have the financial resources to utilize a professional recruitment agency.

How to use:

- Use your business network to determine which professional recruitment agencies have solid reputations.
- Interview several professional recruitment agencies to determine which one best fits the recruitment needs and philosophy of your organization.
- Remember that in the recruitment process, these people will be representing your organization.

INTERNSHIPS & CO-OP PROGRAMS

Internships and co-op programs often provide students with their first work experience in the environmental sector. These programs take two primary forms:

1. Co-op programs normally take place during a student's program of study.
2. Internships are often intended for recent post-secondary graduates.

Generally, co-op programs are designed for environmental students throughout their education program. Work experience may be gained through simultaneous classroom and hands-on learning, or through alternating classroom and hands-on work semesters.

Organizations typically offer reduced salaries for these positions, as the student does not yet possess the qualifications to be considered for this position full-time.

Alternatively, internships are typically independent of education programs and are established by governments or industry. They may be summer work experience programs for students, or full-time professional “trials” for environmental graduates. Internships may or may not involve compensation. For instance, some employers may offer volunteer-type internships to assess an environmental professional’s skills prior to committing to hiring them full-time. Government sponsored internships, however, often provide employers with wage subsidies that offset the cost of hiring and training a recent graduate.

Benefits:

- They offer an excellent opportunity to introduce Indigenous environmental practitioners to your workforce.
- Candidates are supported by a school or program.
- Costs are minimal. These programs often provide wage subsidies and/or reduced salaries.
- They are a way of contributing to capacity building in the environmental sector.
- Organizations can recruit from established pools of qualified students and interns.

Disadvantages:

- More time is often required of managers to train and mentor interns or co-op students.
- Interns/co-op students may not be qualified or available for continued employment upon completion of their term with the organization.

When to use:

- When you wish to provide specific, on-the-job training for future employees that is not provided by any educational program.
- When you want to contribute to capacity building in the environmental sector.
- When there is a lack of appropriate candidates for jobs your organization must fill in the future.
- When you are seeking to fill a position that requires very specific, detailed, and specialized skills, education, training, and personality characteristics.

How to access:

- Use your business network to determine which internship/co-op programs have solid reputations for student placement and support.

DID YOU KNOW?

Under the Youth Employment Strategy program ([www.https://www.eco.ca/employment-programs/](https://www.eco.ca/employment-programs/)), ECO Canada provides Canadian employers with a wage subsidy to hire recent graduates so they can work on an environmental project and gain experience in their field of study.

- Internships range in duration from 6 to 12 months.
- Funding is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis between January and September.
- Host companies must fill out an application for eligibility. Once approved, employers can select an intern from ECO Canada’s pre-screened candidates, recruit a suitable candidate using the ECO Job Board, or simply hire someone they already have in mind.

- Contact local universities and colleges and inquire about their involvement in internship/co-op programs.
- Develop an internship/co-op program in your organization and submit your program proposal to local universities, colleges, and other relevant training programs.
- Scan government agency and other websites for internship/co-op opportunities.

Once you’ve utilized some of the resources mentioned in this section, move on to the next stage of Indigenous recruitment, “The Selection Process.”

The Selection Process



Once the job posting has closed, you will have a diverse pool of résumés and applications to review and short-list. Although some Indigenous environmental professionals will submit résumés and applications, there might be a higher rate of unfamiliarity or uncertainty with résumé writing and the employment application process. For example, an Indigenous environmental professional who is inexperienced at creating a résumé may neglect to include his or her diverse life experiences.

Another consideration might be the social history of education and its impact on potential employees. Candidates who have had negative school experiences may be less willing to fill out forms, participate in interviews, or complete tests and assessments. Factors such as these can only be ascertained in the specific context of the community. Community relationships become invaluable in interpreting this context.

To tailor your selection process for the Indigenous workforce, please explore the sections below:

[Reviewing Applications](#)
[Conducting Interviews](#)

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Reviewing Applications

WHEN ASSESSING APPLICATIONS, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- All relevant work/life experience, skills, and training that are related to your job description, regardless of how it was acquired.
- Formal and informal skills and knowledge.
- Signs of achievement and continued skill upgrading.
- The content of the résumé, without being distracted by irrelevant factors (E.g., elaborate fonts, coloured paper, unique formatting, photographs).
- The nature of your tools (E.g., application forms).
- Do they allow a wide range of experiences, knowledge, and skills to emerge or are they restrictive?

APPLICATION FORMS AND RÉSUMÉS

Choosing an Approach

When determining how Indigenous environmental professionals will apply for a job, their location may influence which approach you choose.

- In remote areas, candidates are more likely to apply for a position in an informal manner, possibly by referral of the community or in a community gathering where the company presents its job opportunities and on-the-spot interviews act as the résumé. Cultural and community-specific considerations may be a priority in remote areas.
- In rural areas, candidates are more likely to follow the mainstream résumé and application process, although community involvement and support will increase Indigenous interest.
- In urban areas, résumés and applications are commonly used by candidates, since there is more access to technology. If the urban population is generally highly acculturated, then cultural factors may be less of a consideration.

To access Indigenous environmental professionals in all of these areas, diversifying your methods and combining these with established community relationships and support will provide a foundation



for ongoing successful recruitment. Local Indigenous social, political, and economic organizations are eager to assist environmental employers in finding qualified practitioners.

Screening Résumés and Application Forms

Once you have all of the submitted applications, divide them into three groups:

- YES (A List) - These résumés and application forms communicate skills and experience related to your job description and business needs. These applicants should be interviewed.
- MAYBE (B List) - These résumés and application forms should be reviewed again, as you may have missed some skills or relevant work experience.
- NO (C List) - Review these applications only if you are not satisfied with the 'A-list' and 'B-list' candidates.

In an Indigenous context, these choices may be restrictive if your application tools do not allow for elaboration of knowledge and skills, or if the individual has little experience in résumé writing and the application process.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Conducting Interviews

COMMON PITFALLS IN CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS:

- Initial impressions and emotional reactions to candidates may lead to subjective rather than objective evaluations.
- Hiring decisions may be made based on the interviewer's personal perception of the "ideal" candidate.
- Memory may be selective when interviewing multiple candidates (E.g., Regency Effect or Halo Effect).
- Irrelevant factors, such as personal appearance, gender, or hobbies, may play a part in the selection process.
- Too much emphasis may be placed on one positive or negative response by a candidate.

In an Indigenous context, allow more time for an interview than scheduled; determine which questions are effective with your target population; decide which style of interview works best in terms of location, ambiance, note-taking, multiple interviews, etc.; and consider having a translator, even if the candidate speaks English.

Ultimately, you want to develop an interview format that is effective for your purposes and tailored to Indigenous candidates. Previously established relationships with the community can be an invaluable resource in determining which values are significant in terms of interpersonal relationships and communities. This knowledge will aid in providing a relevant foundation for your interviewing practices.

DID YOU KNOW?

For many Indigenous people, oral history has taught that silence does not need to be filled with "ahs" and "hums." Moments of silence are used to reflect and think about the answer.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Consider alternative methods and approaches to interviewing. Use the knowledge you have gained through networking with Indigenous communities to build a mutually relevant approach. Be open to more informal approaches that may include Indigenous agencies or community leaders and Elders assisting you in the interview process.

Consider these Sample Questions:

1. What have you been most proud of in your work/life experience so far?
2. What have you learned from some of the jobs you have held?
3. How do you manage multiple demands on your time? How do you determine which requests to tackle first?
4. What interests you about this job? How will your work/life experience support your success in this job?

Checking References

Checking references and credentials is the best way to validate information about the candidate. Check as many references as possible, including work references and character references. In the context of community, references may be face-to-face and unsolicited. Be sure to ask questions directly relating to the required behaviours for which you are hiring. Use a standard list of questions and keep notes.

References that include at least one former employer (formal or informal employer) are the most valid, although this may vary depending upon location (i.e., remote, rural, or urban). When recruiting Indigenous environmental professionals, building a cultural context is important in assessing the value of conventional reference checking.



Closing Message

Some candidates may have relevant experience that does not conform to a standard employer/employee relationship. For example, in remote locations an individual may not have numerous previous employers upon whom they can call for references. Also, in a given community, most of the people may be related by blood or marriage, so asking applicants to provide references that do not include relatives may put them at a disadvantage. Similarly, in some communities, sharing personal information with a stranger may not be generally accepted practice.

Being aware of the specific context and how it impacts your strategies will make your recruitment practices more relevant.

TESTING AND ASSESSING CANDIDATES

While tests or assessments can be useful tools in the selection process, they should not be relied upon exclusively when making a hiring decision. Common types of assessments are ability (technical skill), aptitude, personality, and interest profiles. Assessment tools help predict a candidate's compatibility and likelihood of success in a given position. Tests are often less biased and subjective than interviews and references when assessing candidates.

However, it is important that selection instruments and procedures be administered in a standardized way. They must be presented to every applicant in the same manner and under the same conditions. As well, results must be interpreted in the same way for all applicants. Without standardization of assessment procedures, results are unreliable, which reduces the validity of the selection process.

In an Indigenous context, standardized tests can be problematic, and care must be taken to ensure that the chosen tools are culturally relevant and applicable to the population. Standardization assumes that tools can be fairly and evenly applied to all people, regardless of ethnic, cultural, or geographical background, or historical and social experience. However, rarely does a tool have true universal application. When an organization uses tests as an integral part of their hiring practices, they risk being challenged on human rights grounds.

Note that assessments or tests created in the United States may not comply with Canadian legislation, with respect to human rights, cultural biases, etc.

As a manager, you need to evaluate your resources, skills, knowledge, and perspectives. This guide is only the beginning step for enhancing your organization and supporting the positive recruitment of Indigenous environmental professionals.

Developing your skills, knowledge, and perspectives will positively influence staff to consider wider perspectives. Your creation of an inclusive workplace will contribute to your organization's recruitment of Indigenous environmental professionals and strengthen your relationship with, and reputation among, the Indigenous community. These are essential aspects of entering the Indigenous labour market now and in the future.

This guide offers a glimpse of what information is available on Aboriginal peoples, their history and how to initiate and maintain collaborative relationships with them. Hopefully you will use this resource as a stepping stone on how to include Indigenous Professionals in your organization's recruitment strategy, now and in the future.



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