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Urban Aboriginal
Knowledge Network

Réseau de connaissances des
Autochtones en milieu urbain

Atlantic Research Centre

The Urban Aboriginal Service Delivery Landscape in Atlantic Canada: Gaps, Trends & Strengths

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Urban Aboriginal service delivery landscape has developed over the last half century to address the unique and changing needs of Aboriginal people living off-reserve and in urban settings. In Atlantic Canada, a constellation of Aboriginal organizations exists with varying purposes and mandates to collectively offer a wide range of services to meet the needs of Aboriginal communities in the region. These organizations do not provide services in isolation. A crucial, and often over-looked aspect of these organizations, is that they provide the invaluable service of social service navigation to those who access their services. Within every organization there are individuals who act as connectors, directing people to the organizations and agencies who can best meet their needs.

Though greater numbers of Aboriginal people in Atlantic Canada are living off-reserve than on-reserve (Source: Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) Indian Registry System (IRS), “Indian Register Population affiliated with First Nations by Gender and Residency”, December 31, 2014.), Aboriginal-specific organizations offering services off-reserve and/or in urban areas are challenged by a continuing decline in governmental core or core-like funding. In addition to this, organizations may be confined to a very specific framework for service delivery depending on the type of organization and its organizational capacity. Aboriginal-specific organizations may be competing with non-Aboriginal organizations for funding. Funding stream changes and/or funding termination have intensified gaps within the service delivery landscape.

Aboriginal organizations, their partners and stakeholders have created a grass-roots infrastructure that is continually evolving to offer social services and advocacy to urban and off-reserve Aboriginal communities. Despite this, the organizational infrastructure is widely unknown by those who do not directly use or support the services. This timely study seeks to examine this organizational infrastructure through the development of an inventory of organizations and their service areas with a view towards the identification of gaps or areas requiring additional attention or development.

Purpose

The Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network commissioned this study in each of the four regional research regions to develop an inventory of Aboriginal organizations in Canada whose mandate is to provide social services to Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in urban areas. The purpose of the study was to consider the social services offered by the organizations and

provide an analysis of gaps, trends and strengths throughout the region. Of particular significance to this study, are those services that facilitate participation in the economy and to the innovative and emerging partnerships between Aboriginal organizations and their stakeholders.

Methodology

The data was collected by conducting hour-long face-to face and telephone interviews with representatives from Aboriginal service organizations in each of the four Atlantic Provinces. Sixteen interviews with fifteen organizations were conducted between April and June 2015. Participants were asked questions regarding the services and programs offered by their organizations, partnership development, gaps in services and organizational funding. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and underwent a basic qualitative data analysis that included a thematic analysis.

In the Atlantic region, each of the four Atlantic Provinces were appointed a provincial representative who were recruited because of their positions as UAKN Atlantic Executive Committee members. These provincial representatives formed the project sub-committee and worked to guide the researcher in identifying the Aboriginal organizations serving Aboriginal, Inuit, Innu and Métis people off-reserve or in urban areas.

Criteria for which organizations would be selected to participate in the interview process included those organizations that provided services *primarily* to Aboriginal people living off-reserve and/or in urban areas. In some cases, the provincial representative suggested an organization with a mandate to serve Aboriginal people living off and on- reserve who were also making a significant effort to include services to those living off-reserve or in urban areas. Given the selection criteria for inclusion in the interview process, there have been some organizations omitted from the interview process. These organizations are included on a list of organizations that offer limited services to off-reserve and urban Aboriginal communities.

Findings

6 General Categories of Aboriginal Organizations

The inventory of organizations serving primarily Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in urban areas includes a collection of organizations operating with varying mandates to offer wide-ranging services in a number of social service areas. In general, Aboriginal service delivery organizations in Atlantic Canada fall into one of six categories: Friendship Centers (wide-ranging

service/ program providers), Aboriginal Representative Organizations (ARO's) (political advocacy organizations providing wide-ranging services/programs including the Native Councils), Housing Associations/Corporations (providing supportive, subsidized, or transitional housing options), Aboriginal Women's Associations (providing some services and advocacy for Aboriginal women), Specialized service/program providers (providing services to address a specific social service concern or target group), and Aboriginal Head Start or Family Centers (providing care for young Aboriginal children and support for families).

Gaps

Aboriginal Social Service Delivery organizations have branched out over the last decade to offer programming that responds to the needs of the communities they are serving. Through funding stream changes and evolving needs of Aboriginal communities, many of these organizations have adapted well to accommodate these funding changes and the needs of the communities they collectively serve.

While this adaptive nature is clearly but one of the major strengths of these organizations, there are certain times where funding requirements or streams shift so radically that it becomes very challenging for these organizations to meet the funding criteria. The inability to meet the criteria may give root to, or magnify, some of the gaps in services. A number of government funded programs that have undergone significant changes regarding funding requirements or streams include the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI), Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth (CCAY) and funding programs related to providing Aboriginal-specific employment and training in-house. Organizations indicated that some of the gaps identified were directly related to changes in funding requirements and streams.

The service delivery gaps identified by the organizations interviewed in this study include but are not limited to:

- Shortage of Aboriginal-specific health services (specifically diabetes programming after the termination of ADI).
- Shortage of Aboriginal-specific mental health and addictions services in all provinces (no Aboriginal-specific programming exists in New Brunswick or Newfoundland). There are no Aboriginal-specific inpatient treatment centers located off-reserve or in an urban setting.
- Lack of support and early intervention for Aboriginal children in the child welfare system living off-reserve or in urban areas.

- Shortage of Aboriginal-specific transitional housing options and a complete lack of Aboriginal specific homeless shelters in all provinces with the exception of the city of St. John's.
- Shortage of Aboriginal-specific early learning and day care options in rural areas, lack of available early learning spaces in urban areas, most notably in Fredericton and St. John's (though St. John's Native Friendship Centre is in the process of opening an early learning centre in the near future).
- Lack of youth programming within school age population.
- Educational disparities including a lack of after-school support for Aboriginal children (with the exception of St. John's) and challenges in obtaining in-school supports for Aboriginal children attending public school off-reserve and in urban areas.
- Shortage of men's programming (only the St. John's Native Friendship Centre offers men's programming).
- Lack of Aboriginal justice options/support for Aboriginal people off-reserve and in urban areas within the criminal justice system, challenges in obtaining meaningful support through Aboriginal Justice Programs available through on-reserve organizations.
- Regional disparities in social service delivery including a lack of Aboriginal-specific employment and training offered in-house in Newfoundland and Labrador, an absence of Aboriginal-specific economic development supports in every province except New Brunswick.
- Absence of Aboriginal-specific social services in Moncton (with the exception of rent-subsidized housing units made available through a housing association based in Fredericton).

Trends

Through the consideration of the service delivery landscape in Atlantic Canada, there emerged a number of trends and goals similar across the region. Various factors affect the capacity for organizations to realize these goals, including: administrative capacity, type of organization (ARO or Friendship Centre), location and partnerships. And while some organizations are closer to organizational goals than others, most are generally working towards the same aims. These trends and goals include:

- Working Toward Long-term Program Funding (Funding cycles of limited duration restrict the ability of Aboriginal organizations to develop the long-term strategies required to address the needs of the communities they serve).

- Development of Social Economy (Development of a more robust social economy translates into less dependency on government funding. Almost all of the organizations expressed a desire for a degree of financial autonomy independent from funding agencies).
- Economic Development and Increased Participation in the Economy (Most of the multi-service organizations in Atlantic Canada offer various programs to increase participation in the economy).
- Basic Needs Approach to Economic Participation (Organizations across the region suggested that Aboriginal participation in the economy can only be attained if the basic needs of Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in urban centers are being met).
- Industry Partnership and Economic Participation (Aboriginal organizations are working with large industry leaders to facilitate a more thriving industry and workforce).

Strengths

Through the ongoing increasing number of Aboriginal people migrating to urban centers and off-reserve, changing needs and, in some cases, decreased funding, service delivery organizations continue to offer essential social services, act as a political voice and are places where Aboriginal cultures and languages are practiced and celebrated. The fact that many of these organizations continue to thrive despite challenges is perhaps the greatest strength and a testament to the individuals and teams who run the organizations. The strengths of the organizations highlighted in the report include:

- Ability to Develop and Maintain Innovative Partnerships (consistently work together with other organizations and governments to offer a wide-range of services and programs).
- Promotion of Cultural Sensitivity Training Packages (many organizations can and do offer this training).
- Act as Aboriginal Cultural and Language Centers (organizations foster strong Aboriginal identity and connection to community).
- Broad Knowledge of the Social Service System (provide navigation and direction to social service agencies and other organizations to provide a continuum of care).

Recommendations

Aboriginal organizations are providing invaluable services to a growing population of Aboriginal people within Atlantic Canada. Barriers to basic services such as housing, Aboriginal-specific employment and training, mental health and addictions treatments and physical health must be addressed using holistic and long-term approaches. Without a meaningful and adequate commitment to addressing these barriers, programs designed to increase participation in the economy and economic development will be underused and less effective. It is the hope of Aboriginal organizations that funding agencies will act on the following recommendations:

- Economic development initiatives designed for Aboriginal people in urban areas are only effective if/when the basic needs of the target group are being met. Funding agencies must ensure that basic needs are being addressed to increase the effectiveness of skills training, economic development and employment programs in urban areas and off-reserve.
- Funding agencies must engage meaningfully and consistently consult with urban/off-reserve Aboriginal organizations in the development of program/project requirements and criteria to increase the effectiveness of the programs/projects.
- Funding agencies must focus on youth programming geared towards building the cultural competency, self-esteem, self-worth, and supports for Aboriginal youth living in urban areas and off-reserve. Increased youth programming will help influence healthier life choices in family, education, health, and employment.
- Funding agencies must move from short-term funding to multi-year funding to enable urban and off-reserve Aboriginal organizations to develop more effective long-term relationships with partners and community members.
- Agencies should recognize the value of offering intensive and consistent mental health and addiction services through urban/off-reserve Aboriginal organizations. Aboriginal-specific mental health and addiction services should be readily available and accessible within urban areas.
- Aboriginal child welfare and early intervention supports should be extended to children living in urban areas and off-reserve. Disparities between child welfare supports offered to families on reserve vs those offered in urban areas and off-reserve must be addressed.
- A social service needs assessment should be conducted within the city of Moncton and surrounding areas.
- Policy makers have a duty to implement recommended changes to ensure gaps in services are being addressed. Further, policy makers must engage in regular review of implemented changes to adjust for successful service delivery outcomes.

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Background

The Urban Aboriginal service delivery landscape has developed over the last half century to address the unique and changing needs of Aboriginal people living off-reserve and in urban settings. In Atlantic Canada, a constellation of Aboriginal organizations exists with varying purposes and mandates to collectively offer a wide range of services and programs to meet the needs of Aboriginal communities in the region. These organizations do not provide services in isolation. A crucial, and often over-looked aspect of these organizations, is that they provide the invaluable service of social service navigation to those who access their services. Within every organization there are individuals who act as connectors, directing people to the organizations and agencies who can best meet their needs.

The number of Aboriginal people making the transition from reserve to urban has been growing steadily since the 1950's (National Association of Friendship Centers website). At this time, the need for services for groups of migrating Aboriginal people included those focused on housing, health, counseling, and employment. Native Friendship Centers responded to the urban migration and began opening centers all across the country starting in the 1950's to address the needs of Inuit, Innu, First Nations and Métis people in every region. Friendship Centers became a place for Aboriginal people to connect with their culture, with their communities and a place to access essential services.

Migration from reserves to urban centers and off-reserve continued to increase throughout the 1970's. Of particular importance within this context, were discriminatory provisions in the *Indian Act* which gave root to the creation of Aboriginal organizations designed to serve those Aboriginal people who – as a result of the discriminatory provisions – had less connection to the reserve system or had been excluded from benefits afforded to those with official Indian status under the *Indian Act*. Organizations were created to act as political advocates on behalf of these individuals, to provide a place to connect with their cultural traditions and to provide social services. Organizations known as Non-Status and Métis Associations were formed in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. These organizations would later become known as Native Councils or in the case of New Brunswick, the Aboriginal Peoples Council. The need for these political organizations was intensified during the 1970's, when a spirit of change and activism was present in both the general Canadian population and within Aboriginal communities. The Aboriginal women at the forefront of these organizations were often those who had lost their status due to *Indian Act* provisions and, as a result, could not access housing or essential services for themselves or their children on their home reserve. Most of these

discriminatory provisions have since been amended; nonetheless, these organizations continue to offer a range of social services and a political voice for Aboriginal people living off-reserve.

Other Aboriginal organizations were formed during the 1970's and 80's to address more specific needs of Aboriginal communities or to provide services to targeted groups. Native Housing Associations and Transition Houses were created to address a lack of affordable housing, supportive and transitional housing in the Atlantic region. Aboriginal Women's Associations were created to address the needs of Aboriginal women living on and off-reserve and in urban areas. Aboriginal Head Start and Family Service organizations were created to address the needs of Aboriginal children and families. And later, organizations were created to deal with specific health concerns of the Aboriginal communities including organizations like Healing Our Nations, whose purpose is to address issues related to HIV and Hepatitis prevention and awareness. Many of these organizations are still in existence and are offering the same type of services and operate with the same purpose and goals as they did upon their inception. Atlantic Canada is dotted with a myriad of organizations with varying purposes and mandates that work together to provide wide-ranging social services and political advocacy to Aboriginal, Inuit, Innu and Métis people across the region.

Over the past half century, Aboriginal organizations have become adept at partnering with other organizations within a broad network to ensure the needs of communities are met. Further, Aboriginal organizations have evolved to offer services beyond those designed to address immediate and acute needs. Services are being offered to enrich the cultural traditions of Aboriginal people and may include language classes, drumming and traditional healing methods. And while Aboriginal organizations are largely funded through outside federal and provincial governmental agencies, many organizations are developing social enterprises with the goal of achieving greater financial and administrative autonomy. Branching out into the social economic nexus is considered necessary by most organizations as funding agencies are requiring non-profits to rely less on governmental funding and because the organizations themselves wish to have more control over the programs and services they offer.

Though greater numbers of Aboriginal people in Atlantic Canada are living off-reserve than on-reserve (Source: Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) Indian Registry System (IRS), "Indian Register Population affiliated with First Nations by Gender and Residency", December 31, 2014.), Aboriginal-specific organizations offering services off-reserve and/or in urban areas are challenged by a continuing decline in governmental core or core-like funding. In addition to this, organizations may be confined to a very specific framework for service delivery depending on the type of organization and its organizational capacity. Aboriginal-specific organizations may be competing with non-Aboriginal organizations for

funding. Funding stream changes and/or funding termination have intensified gaps within the service delivery landscape. Some of the gaps include, but are not limited to: a lack of health and mental health programming, services for youth, men's programming, housing services and Aboriginal justice.

Aboriginal organizations, their partners and stakeholders have created a grass-roots infrastructure that is continually evolving to offer social services and advocacy to urban and off-reserve Aboriginal communities. Despite this, the organizational infrastructure is widely unknown by those who do not directly use or support the services. This timely study seeks to examine this organizational infrastructure through the development of an inventory of organizations and their service areas with a view towards the identification of gaps or areas requiring additional attention or development.

Purpose

This study was undertaken to develop an inventory of Aboriginal organizations in Atlantic Canada whose purpose is to provide social services to Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in urban areas. The study considers the social services offered by the organizations and provides an analysis of gaps, trends and strengths throughout the region. Of particular significance to this study, are those services that facilitate participation in the economy and to the innovative and emerging partnerships between Aboriginal organizations and their stakeholders. The findings of this study will work to improve off-reserve/urban Aboriginal economic participation, highlight underserved areas and to expand relationships between urban Aboriginal organizations and their stakeholders and partners.

Methodology

The Urban Aboriginal Service Delivery Landscape: Themes, Trends, Gaps and Prospects is national in scope. There are four research centers undertaking their respective regional inventories including; The Prairie Research Center, Western Research Center, Atlantic Research Centre and Central Research Circle. All of the aforementioned centers worked with the same guiding Ethical Principles, study framework and the same set of interview questions to ensure continuity of content. The UAKN Atlantic Research Center hired an independent research contractor in Atlantic Canada (Carolyn Taylor) to manage the project, conduct the research and to write the report.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected by conducting hour-long face-to face and telephone interviews with a representative from Aboriginal service organizations in each of the four Atlantic Provinces. Individuals who were employed by an organization that delivers services to Aboriginal people living off-reserve and/or in urban areas and who were fluent in English were sought as project participants for the personal interview phase. Participants were provided with the interview guide prior to their interview to better prepare them for what was asked during the course of the question/answer period. The interview provided the chance to address a social issue close to their hearts while offering them the opportunity to participate in a process that could result in their influencing the creation and implementation of social policy. The participants were also provided with a letter of invitation and consent form prior to the interview to give ample opportunity to understand the nature of the study and their rights as participants. (Please Appendix A for the complete list of interview questions).

Eighteen Aboriginal organizations were selected as potential participants. The researcher made every effort to engage all of those selected for the interview process. Two of the organizations selected did not participate. Sixteen interviews (one interview was conducted with two representatives from the same organizations) were conducted between April and June 2015. Four interviews were conducted via telephone and twelve were conducted face-to-face. During the recruitment of participants, the researcher requested an interview with the Executive Director, Chief, President or General Manger. All of the interviews were conducted with representatives with a broad knowledge of the organizations programs and services. Participants were given the opportunity to keep their identity and/or the identity of the organization confidential. Many of the organization representatives expressed the desire to be named and were proud of the work that their organization was doing for their respective communities.

Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and underwent a basic qualitative data analysis that included a thematic analysis. The thematic analysis included an examination of both the written notes taken during the interview and the transcribed interviews. Participant responses to questions focused on services that enhance participation in the economy, partnerships and gaps in services were carefully investigated. The final transcripts are being stored in the UAKN Atlantic Research Centre office, in a locked file cabinet. All files created by the research assistant have been deleted; however, all files have been encrypted and burned onto USB Flash Drive and filed with the transcripts in a locked file cabinet. The data will be held for 5-7 years after publication of the report at which point it will be destroyed/deleted.

Selection of Organizations for Interview Process

In the Atlantic region, each of the four Atlantic Provinces (Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia) were represented by a provincial representative who were recruited because of their positions as UAKN Atlantic Executive Committee members. These provincial representatives formed the project sub-committee and worked to guide the researcher in identifying the Aboriginal organizations serving Aboriginal, Inuit, Innu and Métis people off-reserve or in urban areas. The process for identifying organizations that primarily serve Aboriginal people living off-reserve and in urban centers involved consultation between the researcher and the provincial representative. The list was developed further through “word of mouth” during the interview process. Criteria for which organizations would be selected to participate in the interview process included those organizations that provided services *primarily* to Aboriginal people living off-reserve and/or in urban areas. In some cases, the provincial representative suggested an organization that had a mandate to serve Aboriginal people living off and on- reserve that were also making a significant effort to include services to those living off-reserve or in urban areas. The selection of organizations to participate in the interview process was clear in cases where an organization’s mandate and purpose indicated that the organization provided services primarily off-reserve or in an urban setting.

In cases where an organization provided limited services to Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in an urban setting, the researcher relied on both the guidance from provincial representatives and an analysis of the organizations’ programs (through web search and telephone inquiries) to determine the extent to which the organization served the off-reserve and urban community. Given the selection criteria for inclusion in the interview process, there have been some organizations omitted from the interview process. These organizations are included on a list of organizations that offer limited services to off-reserve and urban Aboriginal communities. This list is included as an Appendix B. It is important to note, that this list is considered a working list and is not meant to be a definitive inventory of organizations offering limited services. For example, there are examples of First Nations Bands providing services and programs for members living off-reserve and in urban areas. First Nations organizations and those that represent First Nations are not all included on the working list of organizations providing limited services.

Urban/Off-Reserve

For the purpose of this project, the consensus among the project sub-committee (provincial representatives from each province) was that the organizations on the list should include those

organizations serving primarily Aboriginal people living in urban centers or off-reserve. However, given that the project aimed to provide an inventory of *urban* organizations, the definition of urban was expanded to include off-reserve. Compared to other regions in the country, there are fewer cities and towns in the Atlantic region that are truly considered urban. To this point, we assume that within the Atlantic Canadian context and within this study, urban may be used to describe a small town or any area outside of the 46 reserves in the region.

Consideration of Employment Programs by Province

For the purpose of this project, various employment and training programs have been referred to as simply “employment and training programs”. Within each province, these services have similar goals and purposes but are described with different names and have may have slightly different delivery models. This is most evident in the context of employment, training programs and education programs. For example, programs through the Joint Economic Development initiative (JEDI), Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Strategy (ASETS) and Aboriginal Peoples Training and Employment Commission (APTEC) all work to support Aboriginal people in securing meaningful employment to participate in the economy.

JEDI is a non-profit organization that works in the spirit of partnership to foster economic and workforce development for Aboriginal people and communities in New Brunswick. JEDI is very active in areas focused on youth employment and industry involvement. ASETS allows Aboriginal Agreement Holders (including some Aboriginal Representative Organizations) to deliver employment programs and services best suited to the unique needs of their clients, focusing on supporting demand-driven skills development and upgrading skills. ASETS is designed to help Aboriginal people prepare for and secure high-demand jobs. APTEC offers the target group a range of employment and training services with the goal to obtain and maintain long term sustainable employment. Each of these programs differs slightly in terms of funding agencies and delivery but are designed to increase meaningful participation in the workforce.

Types of Aboriginal Serve Delivery Organizations

In general, Aboriginal service delivery organizations in Atlantic Canada fall into one of six categories:

- Friendship Centers (wide-ranging service/ program providers)
- Aboriginal Representative Organizations (ARO’s) (political advocacy organizations providing wide-ranging services/programs)
- Housing Associations/Corporations (providing supportive, subsidized, or transitional housing options)

- Aboriginal Women's Associations (providing some services and advocacy for Aboriginal women) *
- Specialized service/program providers (providing services to address a specific health concern or target group)
- Aboriginal Head Start or Family Centers (providing care for young Aboriginal children and support for families)

* Aboriginal Women's Associations are considered ARO's by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development criteria. However, because the nature of the services vary greatly between ARO's in Atlantic Canada, Aboriginal Women's organizations will be considered separately within this section.

Services/Purpose/Organizational Infrastructure: Friendship Centers

These organizations offer a range of services and programs to Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in urban settings. Services often include employment and training programs, Elder and youth programming, cultural programs, addictions and mental health services and housing services. These programs can be short (6 months to 2 year) or ongoing. Many of these organizations offer most of their services and programs in a central location, with programs being administered and implemented at that location. Often, the individual served accesses more than one program.

These are service organizations with no political aim or purpose of political advancement. Their purpose is to offer social services to improve the lives of Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in urban settings. Access to programs and services is not dependant on membership or affiliation. These types of organizations consider themselves "status blind" meaning they do not limit services based on registered Indian status. While these organizations develop their programs based on the target population (urban Aboriginal) they do however serve some non-Aboriginal people.

These organizations function under the direction of an Executive Director with guidance from a volunteer Board of Directors. Core-like funding may be provided in part through various governmental agencies and associations including Community Capacity Funding through the National Association of Friendship Centers. Some are generating their own source revenue to fund programs. Program funding may be provided by other partners including Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, or through other private and public sector partnerships. These organizations generally have a core staff holding permanent positions and a number of program staff that may be employed on a temporary basis to administer shorter-term programming dependent on project funding.

Services/Purpose/Organizational Infrastructure: ARO's (excluding Aboriginal Women's Associations)

The Native Councils of Prince Edward Island (NCPEI) and Nova Scotia (NCNS) and the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council (NBAPC) all fall into this category. These organizations offer a range of services and programs to Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in urban settings. Services often include employment and training programs, Elder and youth programming, cultural/language programs, addictions and mental health services, housing and some health programming. These programs can be short (6 months to 2 years) or ongoing. These organizations offer their services and programs in a head-office location and some also offer services in satellite offices in more rural parts of their respective provinces. Often, the community members served access more than one program. Some of these organizations have organizational arms or stakeholders who may offer lending opportunities for Aboriginal businesses. Some of these organizations have special agreements with federal or provincial departments which allow them to be considered *agreement holders*. Acting as agreement holders allows the organization to offer funding for post-secondary education and skills training. These organizations may also provide commercial and communal fishing/harvesting licenses.

NCNS, NCPEI and NBAPC provide a level of support, advocacy and administration of Aboriginal fishing and harvesting activity to promote Aboriginal fishing or Treaty Rights. These services may be offered through agreements with governing bodies such as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. These organizations may also administer traditional Harvesting Commissions by developing and maintaining regimes for responsible harvesting activity. Both NCPEI and NCNS have self-sustaining commercial fishing fleets to support and fund new ventures, to upgrade fishing gear and to generally support economic development in the community. Both also have a communal fishing component whereby licenses are granted for food, social and ceremonial purposes.

NCNS, NCPEI and NBAPC are sister organizations and the provincial affiliates of one of the National Aboriginal Representative Organizations, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP). As such, part of the purpose and mandate of these organizations is to promote or advance Aboriginal and Treaty Rights. This type of organization may accomplish this purpose through political negotiations, advocacy, legal challenges and research activities. To this point, they also offer community members access to natural resource harvesting to promote self-sustenance and economic growth based on their position as heirs to Aboriginal and Treaty Rights. Some of the services (most notably fishing and harvesting opportunities) may be limited to those with registration or membership with the organization. All of these organizations have a

membership requirement unique to each organization based on Aboriginal ancestry. Members do not need have registered Indian status under the *Indian Act* to secure membership with these organizations. As part of their vision, these organizations offer a range of services and programs for the benefit of the off-reserve Aboriginal community.

These organizations function under the direction of an elected President and Chief and are guided by a Board of Directors. Core funding may be provided in part through various governmental agencies and associations. These organizations are considered Aboriginal Representative Organizations by the federal government department responsible for Aboriginal affairs -- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). They receive funding for core operating costs and project funding through AANDC. Some are generating their own source revenue to fund programs and services. Program funding may be provided by other partners including Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, or through other private and public sector partnerships. These organizations generally have a core staff holding permanent positions and a number of program staff that may be employed on a temporary basis to administer shorter-term programming dependent on project funding.

Services/Purpose/Organizational Infrastructure: Specialized service/program providers

These organizations fall into this category as a result of offering services to a more specific, targeted group (as opposed to all Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in urban settings) or because they offer programming based on one particular service or need. Organizations that fall under this category include Education and Awareness organizations and Transition Houses for victims of intimate partner violence. Services and programs may be targeted towards Aboriginal people on and/or off-reserve.

The mandate and purpose of the organizations within this category vary according to the needs of the target population served by the organization. In the context of purpose and mandate, these organizations are similar to wide-ranging social service organizations in that the overarching goal is to improve daily living conditions and in turn, foster healthy and safe communities. These organizations advance their mandates without formal reference to goals of political advancement or Aboriginal Treaty Rights.

In Atlantic Canada, organizations in this category function under the direction of an Executive Director or General Manager with guidance from a Board of Directors. Core funding may be provided in part through various governmental agencies and associations. Program funding may be provided by other including Aboriginal and/or non-Aboriginal partners, or through other private and public sector partnerships. These organizations generally have a core staff

holding permanent positions and may have a number of program staff employed on a temporary basis to administer shorter-term programming dependent on project funding.

Services/Purpose/Organizational Infrastructure: Aboriginal Women's Associations

Aboriginal Women's Associations in Atlantic Canada offer some social service programming to Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in urban areas. In general, provincial Aboriginal women's organizations offer programs through partnerships to be administered and implemented through the partner organization more often than services or programs being administered from the head office of organization. Aboriginal Women's Associations may offer workshops and training relevant to Aboriginal women in off-reserve, remote or urban Aboriginal communities and/or may offer job-training initiatives in partnerships with other organizations.

The provincial Aboriginal Women's Associations are provincial affiliates of the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC). NWAC has a mandate to enhance, promote, and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of First Nations and Métis women within First Nation, Métis and Canadian societies. In this respect, the Aboriginal Women's Associations are concerned with political advancement and Aboriginal Rights promotion though levels of political advocacy may vary among associations.

In Newfoundland, the Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network (NAWN) has a mandate more focused on education and awareness of Aboriginal women's issues rather than political advancement. NAWN is not affiliated with NWAC but does consider NWAC a resource-sharing partner.

Aboriginal Women's Organizations generally operate under the direction of an elected President and Vice-President, and may also employ an Executive Director or Manager. The organization may employ special project or program staff on a temporary basis dependent on project funding. Core and basic operational funding may be secured through funding proposals offered by various levels of governments, other non-profits and /or private sector opportunities. Compared to other service delivery organizations in Atlantic Canada these organizations are often operating on less core governmental funding resulting in less direct programming. These organizations rely heavily on partnerships to offer services remotely. The Aboriginal Women's Associations in NS, NB and PEI are located in head offices on-reserve.

Services/Purpose/Organizational Infrastructure: Housing Associations/Corporations

Housing corporations offer a variety of housing options for Aboriginal people living in urban centers or off-reserve. Housing options offered throughout Atlantic Canada include subsidized rental housing, home ownership opportunities and supportive housing for those individuals who cannot access subsidized or market housing. Supportive housing is also considered transitional housing, a unit where an individual will reside until they can qualify for subsidized housing. Housing corporations may also administer programs designed for home repair and home ownership options. Housing Associations/Corporations in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island manage housing units across their respective provinces. Often, Housing Managers or Executive Directors provide informal social service navigation and support to those accessing services.

The purpose of Housing Associations/Corporations is to provide affordable, suitable and adequate housing to Aboriginal people who reside off-reserve and in urban centers throughout the Atlantic Provinces. Housing corporations also work to support self-sufficiency within the off-reserve and urban Aboriginal communities.

Housing Associations/Corporations are generally managed by a General Manager or Executive Director and employ administrative support staff. In most cases, funding is streamed through subsidization and operating agreements between provincial and federal governments.

Services/Purpose/Organizational Infrastructure: Aboriginal Head Start and Family Services

Aboriginal Head Start and Family Services organizations offer services targeted toward young Aboriginal children and their families. Services may include, early learning programs, school-readiness, pre-natal support and day care services. Services may be limited to individuals with Aboriginal ancestry or to non-Aboriginal individuals with Aboriginal children.

The purpose and mandate of these organizations is to meet the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical needs of Aboriginal children. The programs are developed to address the six components of Aboriginal Head Start: culture and language, education, health promotion, nutrition, social support and parent involvement.

Head Starts and Family Services organizations generally operate under the direction of an Executive Director and employ a number of program and support staff. These organizations

usually have a sponsoring agency and may be funded by a combination of agencies including the Public Health Agency of Canada and provincial governments.

Inventory of Aboriginal Organizations: Provincial Snapshot

The following section is a provincial breakdown of organizations identified as Aboriginal organizations mandated to *primarily* serve Aboriginal people off-reserve or in urban centers. It also includes those offering significant services to the off-reserve and urban communities. The description of the programs/services offered by the organizations is not definitive – it is meant to provide a general sense of program and service delivery at the time the study was completed. The description of services and programs was collected from the organization website or from hard copy documents forwarded to the researcher. For a list of organizations offering limited services to Aboriginal off-reserve and in urban centers see Appendix B.

Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia is the most populated province in Atlantic Canada. The Mi'kmaq are the founding people of Nova Scotia and remain the predominant Aboriginal group within the province. There are estimated to be 16 245 Aboriginal people living in Nova Scotia with 48% living off-reserve. A growing proportion of Aboriginal people living off-reserve reside in Halifax.

Source: Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) Indian Registry System (IRS), “Indian Register Population affiliated with First Nations by Gender and Residency”, December 31, 2014.

Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Center Halifax

2158 Gottingen Street Halifax, Nova Scotia

<https://sites.google.com/a/mymnfc.com/www/>

The mission of the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre is to provide structured, social-based programming for Urban Aboriginal People while serving as a focal point for the urban aboriginal community to gather for a variety of community functions and events.

Programs/Services:

Employment:

- Active Partnership Strategy

- Native Employment Officer
- Youth Employment Program
- Urban Aboriginal Industry Certified Tool Box

Education:

- Adult Learning Program
- Aboriginal Head Start Program
- GED Program
- Community Action Program
- Provincial Community Program
- Mi'kmaw Language Program

Health:

- Mainline Needle Exchange Program
- Direction 180 Program
- Housing Program
- Urban Aboriginal Program
- Hep C Program
- Aboriginal Mental Health

Justice:

- Seven Sparks Program
- Victims Support Navigator

Seniors:

- Seniors Programming

Other:

- Mi'kmaw Daycare Program
- Summer Daycamp Program
- Christmas Cheer Program
- Annual Powwow Project
- Back Back Program
- Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women – Dreamcatcher Project

Social Economy and Social Enterprise:

- Social Enterprise Program

Native Council of Nova Scotia

129 Truro Heights Road, Truro, NS

<http://ncns.ca/>

The Native Council of Nova Scotia is the self-governing authority for the large community of Mi'kmaq/Aboriginal peoples residing off-reserve in Nova Scotia throughout traditional Mi'kmaq territory. The goal of the Council is to operate and administer a strong and effective Aboriginal Representative Organization that serves, advocates and represents the Aboriginal community.

Programs/Services:

- Aboriginal/Treaty Rights Negotiations Facilitating Directorate
- Aboriginal Peoples Training & Employment Commission (APTEC)
- Child Help Initiative Program (CHIP)
- Education & Student Services (provides guidance , advice , intervention and resources)
- E'pit Nuji Ilmuet (Prenatal) Program
- Mi'kmaq Language Program (maintains resource library, Mi'kmaq translation services)
- Mi'kma'ki Environments Resource Developments Secretariat (MERDS)
- Mime'j Seafoods Limited
- Native Social Counselling Agency
- Netukulimkewe'l Commission (administer land and water harvest guidelines and processes)
- Rural and Native Housing Group
- Social Assistance Recipient Support for Employment & Training (SARSET)
- Taliaq Mi'kma'ki (quarterly publication newsletter)
- CPPS / Print Plus
- Micmac Benevolent Society
- Welkaqnik Next Step Shelter
- Wenjkwom Housing Commission
- Health Awareness Project
- Aboriginal Diabetes Awareness Program (ADAP)

Nova Scotia Native Women's Association

PO Box 805 Truro, NS

<http://www.nwac.ca/provincial-and-territorial-member-associations-0>

The Nova Scotia Native Women's Association aims to assist Aboriginal women to contribute ideas and skills to the social, cultural and economic development of the Mi'kmaq society.

Tawaak Housing Association

6175 Lady Hammond Road, Halifax, NS

<http://tawaakhousing.org/>

Tawaak Housing Association is an Aboriginal owned and operated non-profit charitable organization serving urban Aboriginal peoples and helping to continuously improve housing and living conditions in urban areas of Nova Scotia.

Programs/Services:

- Urban Native Housing Program (129 Aboriginal households are being assisted on a rent to income basis)
- Private Non-Profit Housing Program (16 Aboriginal households are being assisted on a rent-to-income basis)
- Support Services (Referrals for Training, Education, Career development, Employment Counselling)
- Supportive Housing (2, 6-unit, self-contained and fully furnished apartment buildings in Halifax and Dartmouth)

Healing Our Nations (HON)

31 Gloster Court Dartmouth, NS

<http://www.hon93.ca/>

HON's purpose is to educate First Nation people about HIV disease and AIDS with the goal to help First Nation people rediscover their pride, traditions, and spirituality. Through HIV education and awareness programs, HON works to improve child development and eliminate family violence, substance abuse, depression, and suicide.

Programs/Services:

Community Health Educators provide workshops to communities on the following subjects:

- One-on-on support for people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Healing Our Nations provides information on treatments for HIV/AIDS.
- Financial help for First Nations People living with HIV/AIDS living in Atlantic Canada.
- Healing Our Nations has an anonymous free toll-free number for access to services.

Workshop topics include:

- Youth & HIV/AIDS
- AIDS 101
- Hepatitis ABC 101
- Sexually Transmitted Infections 101
- Aboriginal Women and HIV/AIDS
- Peer Education Training (P.E.T)
- Healthy Sexuality

Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network

21 Medicine Trail Eskasoni, Nova Scotia

<http://www.eskasoni.ca/Departments/12/>

The Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network (MLSN) exists as a justice support system for Aboriginal people who are involved in the criminal justice system in Nova Scotia.

Programs/Services:

Mi'kmaq Court Worker Program:

- Provide information to help the client understand their charge(s), rights, options and requirements in the justice system.
- Help the client find legal assistance, if needed.
- Accompany the client in court to provide an explanation of the process, events, orders, sentences, court action, etc, specific to the client's case.
- Provide referrals to services and/or agencies which may be helpful to the client.
- Offer justice support services specific to the client's circumstances.
- The court worker can speak on behalf of the client.

Mi'kmaq Customary Law Program:

- Works with Aboriginal and Mi'kmaq communities to find meaningful and culturally appropriate ways to hold wrongdoers accountable.

New Brunswick

The majority of the Aboriginal population in New Brunswick are of Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy ancestry and are widely dispersed throughout the province in villages, towns, cities and rural areas. According to the Indian Register System from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), as of December 31, 2011, there were approximately 13, 948 First Nations people in New Brunswick with 44% living off reserve.

Gignoo Transition House

Address confidential Contact 1-800-565-6878

www.gignoohouse.ca

Gignoo Transition House Staff and Board of Directors work together to eliminate the cycle of violence in our First Nation communities, off-reserve and in urban areas. Gignoo Transition House has created and adapted some programs and services that meet the need of Aboriginal women and children in crisis, that are culturally appropriate.

Programs/Services:

- On-going peer counselling
- Budget/Financial Planning
- Healthy Lifestyles Program
- Traditional Healing
- Resource Contacts
- Parenting Skills
- Victim Services
- Outreach

Skigin Elnoo Housing Corporation

366 Gibson Street, Fredericton, NB

<http://nbapc.org/links/skiginelnooghousingcorporation/>

Skigin-Elnoo Housing Corporation works to address the housing needs of Aboriginal people living off-reserve and in urban areas throughout NB. There are 257 rental units in the urban portfolio and 110 rental units in the rural and Native portfolio.

Programs/Services:

- Subsidized Housing (Program enables Aboriginal to live in adequate housing at affordable rents).
- Repair/Renovation Programs (Assists qualifying clients with assistance to repair or renovate their homes)
- Off Reserve Aboriginal Homeownership (Assists qualifying clients in securing home ownership)

New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council

320 St. Mary's Street Fredericton, NB

<http://nbapc.org/>

NBAPC is a community of Aboriginal people residing off-reserve in Mi'kmaq / Maliseet / Passamaquoddy traditional territory of New Brunswick. The community is widely dispersed throughout the province in villages, towns, cities and rural areas. NBAPC provides services, programs and a political voice.

Programs/Services:

Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy (AFS)

- Aboriginal Skills & Employment Training Strategy
- Education Assistance Program
- Youth Council
- Little Lake Summer Camp

Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI)

11-150 Cliffe Street Fredericton, NB

<http://www.jedinb.ca/main.html>

The Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI) works with partners to foster Aboriginal economic development in New Brunswick.

Programs/Services:

- Entrepreneurship
- Community economic development

- Workforce development
- Partnerships with the public and private sector

Under One Sky Headstart

303 Union Street Fredericton NB

<http://www.wellnessnb.ca/under-one-sky/>

Under One Sky (Monoqonuwicik-Neoteetjg Mosigisig, Inc) is a an independent Aboriginal Head Start devoted to meeting the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical needs of Aboriginal children and their families.

Programs/Services:

- Culture and language
- Early education
- Health promotion
- Nutrition
- Social support
- Parent involvement

Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island is traditional Mi'kmaq territory and the majority of Aboriginal people living in Prince Edward Island are of Mi'kmaq ancestry. There are approximately 1730 Aboriginal people living in PEI with 68% living off-reserve. (Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census: Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census: First Nations people).

Native Council PEI

6 FJ McAulay Court, Charlottetown, PEI

<http://ncpei.com/>

The Native Council of Prince Edward Island is a Community of Aboriginal People residing off-reserve in traditional Mi'kmaq territory. NCPEI is the self-governing authority for all off-reserve Aboriginal people living on Epekwitk (PEI).

Programs/Services:

- Alcohol and Drug
- Health and Wellness
- Kelewatl Commission
- L'nu Fisheries
- Aboriginal Housing Programs
- Supporting Young Aboriginal Mothers
- Tripartite
- Youth Program
- Hep'd Up On Life (HIV/HEPC Prevention)
- Walking the Red Road (Youth addictions prevention)

Aboriginal Women's Association PEI

172 Eagle Feather Trail, Lennox Island, PEI

<http://www.awapei.org/home/>

The Aboriginal Women's Association of PEI is committed to providing guidance and to represent the interests and concerns of all Aboriginal Women in all levels, social, economic, and political.

Programs/Services:

- Youth
- Elders
- Women's Groups
- FAS/FASD
- Sisters in Spirit
- Employment & Training
- ASETS
- Family Violence

Mi'kmaq Family Resource Center

158 St. Peter's Road Charlottetown, PEI <http://mikmaqfamilyresources.ca/>

The Mi'kmaq Family Resource Center is sponsored by Aboriginal Women Association of Prince Edward Island, operates an Aboriginal Head Start, and offers programming targeted towards Aboriginal children and their families.

Programs/Services:

- Drop in & Play
- Special Play Groups
- Mi'kmaq Tea (Community members gather together once a month for a meal prepared by the staff)
- Crafts (Bi-monthly craft groups).
- New Spirits Support Group (pre and post-natal support group)
- Community Kitchen (Parents gather together, learn new recipes and prepare a meal to take home to their families)
- Parent Support
- Clothing (Infant, children and adult clothing has been donated to the Center)
- Mother's Tent (Set up at PEI Pow Wows for the comfort of mom and baby, we offer change table, breastfeeding privacy, sun screen and insect repellent)
- Welcome Baby Baskets (Off Reserve Only)
- Workshops & Events (Offer workshops free of charge such as tooth decay, healthy weight, etc.)

Newfoundland & Labrador

The founding people of Newfoundland and Labrador include the Innu of Labrador, the Mi'kmaq, the Inuit and Southern Inuit or Métis. According to Statistics Canada, there are 35,000 First Nations people living in NL and Labrador. Approximately 82% of First Nations people in Newfoundland in Labrador live off-reserve. (Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census: Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census: First Nations people).

St. John's Native Friendship Center

716 Water Street St. John's, NL <http://www.sjnfc.com/>

The St. John's Native Friendship Centre is a community-based, non-profit, registered charity. Set in the capital city of Newfoundland and Labrador, it serves the urban Aboriginal population. The Centre also provides a wide range of programs and services open to all people regardless of heritage.

Programs/Services:

Mental Health and Healing:

- Healing Circle

- Spirit Horse
- Counseling
- Cultural Support work
- Aboriginal Patient Navigator Program

Culture and Recreation:

- All Nations Circle
- Inuit Circle
- Mi'kmaq Women's Circle
- Tea and Sharing
- Men's Drumming
- Fitness
- Zumba
- Yoga
- Volleyball (competitive and non-competitive)

Training and Social Enterprise:

- Aboriginal Diversity Training
- Shanawdithit Shelter
- Employment and Housing services
- Art program
- Transportation

Turtle Island Youth Program:

- RBC After School Program
- Backpack program
- Eat Smart program
- Homework Program
- Turtle Island Summer camp
- Child Care Services
- Youth Employment Services
- Youth Steering Committee
- Youth Drumming
- Play Group
- Aboriginal Scholarship

Labrador Native Friendship Center

49 Grenfell Street, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Labrador <http://www.lfchvgb.ca/home/>

The Labrador Friendship Centre provides services to enrich the lives of the Inuit, Innu and Metis of Labrador through the provision and implementation of social, cultural, health, educational, employment, and developmental initiatives.

Programs/Services:

- Room Rentals
- Hostel and Cafeteria
- HIV/AIDS Project
- Community Outreach Worker
- Housing and Support Office
- Community Youth Network
- Assisted Living

Melville Housing Association

2 Terrington Lane, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador

<http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/corp/nero/nere/2013/2013-01-18-1130.cfm>

Melville Native Housing Association is a not for profit Association which operates under an agreement with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. The organization's mandate is to provide a high quality, adequate and affordable housing for aboriginal individuals and families of Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

Programs/Services:

- 75 subsidized rental properties to serve low to moderate income, aboriginal families and individuals

Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network

32 Carolina Ave, Suite 131 Stephenville, NL <http://www.nawn-nf.com/>

Programs/Services:

- Aboriginal Culture and Awareness Workshops

Gaps

Aboriginal Social Service Delivery organizations have branched out over the last decade to offer programming that responds to the needs of the communities they are serving. HON was created in response to rising numbers of Aboriginal people living with Hepatitis C and HIV, Friendship Centers and Native Councils developed programming to address Aboriginal employment and training issues, housing and counseling needs. Other organizations were created to offer culturally relevant programming to Aboriginal children or to provide transitional housing for victims of intimate partner violence. Through funding stream changes and evolving needs of Aboriginal communities, many of these organizations have adapted well to accommodate these funding changes and the needs of the communities they collectively serve.

While this adaptive nature is clearly but one of the major strengths of these organizations, there are certain times where funding requirements or streams shift so radically that it becomes very challenging for these organizations to meet the funding criteria. The inability to meet the criteria may give root to, or magnify, some of the gaps in services. A number of government funded programs that have undergone significant changes regarding funding requirements or streams include the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI), Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth (CCAY) and funding programs related to providing Aboriginal-specific employment and training in-house. Organizations indicated that some of the gaps identified were directly related to changes in funding requirements and streams. The service delivery gaps identified by the organizations interviewed in this study include but are not limited to:

- Health
- Mental Health and Addictions Services
- Aboriginal Children in the Child Welfare System
- Housing
- Youth Programming
- Education
- Men's Programming
- Aboriginal Justice Options
- Regional Disparities in Social Service Delivery

Health

Aboriginal people living off-reserve and in urban areas in Atlantic Canada receive health care through a system of services provided by the federal and provincial governments, as well as by Aboriginal organizations — a complicated system based on a mix of jurisdictional concerns, legal interpretations, policies and established practices. Aboriginal-specific health services was identified as a gap in all of the Atlantic provinces; however, access to services and available services was not consistent across all jurisdictions.

Some basic benefits are afforded to Aboriginal people with legal Indian status living off-reserve or in urban areas. This includes Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) which covers the cost of prescription drugs, over-the-counter medication, medical supplies and equipment, short-term crisis counseling, dental care, vision care, and medical transportation. In general, most Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in urban centers are accessing health services from non-Aboriginal service providers in mainstream health service centers. Most organizations indicated that Aboriginal people are more likely to access health services if they are made available within an Aboriginal organization or provided by Aboriginal service providers.

Aboriginal organizations do not have direct health services located within their organizations. The St. John's Native Friendship Center employs a Aboriginal Patient Navigator (APN) who assists Aboriginal, Innu and Inuit (and others) clients who travel to St. John's for medical services. The APN service includes but is not limited to; travel to appointments, translation services if necessary and lodging for the duration of their stay in St. John's. This service is funded through an agreement with Eastern Health (Government of NL and Labrador). The St. John's Native Friendship Center is the only organization that offers the service in an off-reserve and urban setting in Atlantic Canada.

Diabetes

The Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI) was a multi-year initiative funded by Health Canada which ended in 2015. The goal of the ADI was to reduce type 2 diabetes among Aboriginal people by supporting health promotion and primary prevention activities and services delivered by trained community diabetes workers and health service providers. ARO's in Atlantic Canada accessed funding for diabetes prevention, awareness and education programs through ADI. Funding through the ADI framework allowed the organizations to offer culturally relevant programming on a manageable scale suited to the needs of the communities. Services funded through the ADI stream were healthy cooking classes, healthy food co-operatives and exercise programs.

ARO's and multi-service providers were negatively impacted upon the termination of ADI funding. Funding for diabetes programming for Aboriginal organizations serving the off-reserve and urban community is now streamed through the Public Health Agency of Canada. Under the new funding agency, Aboriginal organizations will generally only be considered for funding if the proposed program involves a multi-sectoral partnership, is nationally applicable and can be applied to various target groups. Organizations must request funding in the amount of at least \$200,000 up to 5 million. In addition to these requirements, Aboriginal organizations are competing with non-Aboriginal organizations on a national level to receive funding. The Aboriginal organizations involved in this study report that these requirements have created serious challenges in accessing funds through this stream. The organizations that have been impacted by the termination of the ADI program indicate that the new funding requirements would be impossible to meet given the population in Atlantic Canada, the amount of funds they would be required to leverage from partners and the difficulty in managing the scale of the projects. At this time, none of the Aboriginal organizations have applied for funding through this stream. Changes to diabetes program funding has left a significant gap in culturally-relevant diabetes programming for Aboriginal people living off-reserve and in urban centers.

Mental Health and Addictions

In all of the Atlantic Provinces, mental health and addictions services was identified as a gap in the service delivery landscape. The level of culturally-relevant mental health services and of varied among the provinces. Multi-service providers off-reserve and in urban areas in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island do provide addiction services and counseling in-house. In Prince Edward Island, this in-house service is offered through the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP). In New Brunswick, only one organization, Gignoo Transition House, offers in-house mental health and addiction counseling. In St. John's, Newfoundland there were no direct mental health and addiction services offered through the Friendship Centre (though the Aboriginal Patient Navigator does provide referral and navigation service through the provincial health department). There are no Aboriginal-specific mental health and addiction services being offered through the Friendship Center in Labrador. In every region, and in most of the interviews conducted, organizations reported that there were not enough culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal people living off-reserve and in urban centers. This was also reported among those organizations that offer counseling services through in-house programs. The organizations that offer mental health and addiction service in-house also indicated that their services – while culturally appropriate and effective – are not comprehensive enough to deal with the high demands for mental health and addiction services. There are no Aboriginal-specific in-patient addictions treatment centers located off-reserve or

in urban areas (though Aboriginal people living off-reserve and urban centers are often treated at centers on-reserve).

Given the lack of Aboriginal-specific mental health and addiction services, many Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in urban centers are accessing mainstream services through provincial health departments. This poses additional challenges as some of the organizations indicated that the mental health and addiction services within the provincial health systems were not sufficiently dealing with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal demand for services. Organizations pointed to a number of challenges within the provincial system, including a lack of communication between departments and jurisdictions, and systems that were difficult to navigate. Aboriginal organizations also alluded that challenges within the provincial systems exacerbate the gap in services for Aboriginal people living off-reserve and in urban centers. An already taxed system is less likely to accommodate and treat Aboriginal mental health and addiction issues.

Aboriginal Children and Child Welfare

It is well documented that Aboriginal children are overrepresented within the foster care and child welfare system in Canada (Source: Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2008 (CIS-2008): Major Findings). The reasons for this are complex and sometimes unclear. Though the Aboriginal organizations in Atlantic Canada involved in this study do not have programming directly linked to addressing issues around Aboriginal children in care, many organizations work informally through related programs to support Aboriginal children and families.

Service providers in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick indicated that there were challenges within the child welfare system. Aboriginal organizations off-reserve face a disadvantage when dealing with child welfare authorities compared to First Nations Bands in some provinces. A number of First Nations have programs whereby – in cases where child apprehension is being considered – supportive efforts are intensified through collaboration between First Nations agencies and external service providers to decrease the chance of child apprehension. In some Atlantic Canadian provinces, Aboriginal people living off-reserve, those without official Indian status and those who have status but do not belong to one of First Nations in that particular province, are often excluded from these programs. Often, Aboriginal families off-reserve or in urban centers do not have access to Aboriginal-specific supports before child apprehension. In New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, there is a significant lack of Aboriginal-specific services available during and after child apprehension or within the child welfare system. In New Brunswick, service providers indicated

that were too many children in care, and that the agencies involved were not dealing sufficiently with the issue.

Housing

Aboriginal people off-reserve and in urban centers are overly represented in the homeless numbers and in the core housing need figures used in Canada. All of the Atlantic Provinces have varying levels of housing services for Aboriginal people living off-reserve and/or in urban areas. Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Labrador all have social housing associations/corporations. One overall challenge with Aboriginal-specific housing in Atlantic Canada is that without sufficient data regarding homelessness and housing needs, and because provinces generally only have a few options for housing (no homeless shelter but some subsidized housing for example) social housing in many areas is insufficient in accommodating the varying housing needs of Aboriginal people off-reserve and in urban areas. Aboriginal housing options may include subsidized housing, supportive or transitional housing and emergency shelter. Skigin Elnoog Housing Corporation in New Brunswick also administers and delivers all provincial housing programs (repair, home ownership) through their office to the Aboriginal community throughout that province. However, organizations in Fredericton, New Brunswick indicated that there were not enough housing units available to accommodate demand. And currently, there is no housing association that provides Aboriginal-specific subsidized housing for people living in Newfoundland and Labrador with the exception of subsidized units in Happy Valley -Goose Bay.

Funding Issues: Termination of Operating Agreements

A major challenge for the Housing Corporations in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Labrador is the impending end to the operating agreements with the provincial and federal governments after the housing units are paid off. Organizations indicated that without subsidization agreements in place for the units, it would be a major financial challenge to keep renting the units at the current subsidized rate. After the mortgages have been fully paid, the amount of rental income from the units would not cover the amount of funding required to maintain the buildings. The current housing stock is up to 35 years old and so, as a result of the age of the stock, requires an increasing amount of capital to maintain. For some housing associations, the rising maintenance costs may create a situation where owning the operating the housing stock is not financially viable. Housing associations in Atlantic Canada indicated that – across Canada and in this region, housing associations may be forced to sell housing stock upon the termination of operating agreements. This, in turn, will decrease the amount of housing available for Aboriginal people living off-reserve and in urban centers.

“Once the mortgages are paid off, the operating agreements with the government end. We're on our own then, there is no more subsidization...Our threat is the impending termination of the operating agreements with the federal government. This is going on with not just Aboriginal groups, but non-profit organizations across the country. How are we going to maintain sustainability after the operating agreements terminate, and government assistance ceases? That is a major problem for housing, for non-profit social housing across the country.” (Anonymous)

Housing corporations also face the challenge of providing housing services and rental unit maintenance with funding dollars that have not increased with the rise in housing maintenance costs. Housing corporations indicate that since 2009, subsidization levels have remained the same. Housing corporations are often tasked with making repairs and performing general upkeep with less funding.

“The costs are rising and our subsidization level is remaining the same, it's been [the same] since 2009. It makes it difficult.” (Anonymous)

Lack of Aboriginal Specific Homeless Shelters and Supportive Housing

Separate from the issue of core housing, homelessness and transitional housing services have emerged as a concern in off-reserve and urban areas in Atlantic Canada. Aboriginal people are again highlighted for a disproportionately high representation in the homeless population. Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Labrador do not have Aboriginal-specific homeless shelters operating to serve Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in urban centers. St. John's Native Friendship Center is operating the only Aboriginal-specific homeless shelter in Atlantic Canada. While the shelter in St. John's is open to all people, services are mainly targeted to the Aboriginal community traveling to St. John's for medical services. The NCNS does offer emergency housing funds to those who meet certain criteria though this is a one-time only funding option.

There is an acute lack of Aboriginal-specific shelters, temporary homes and transitional homes in Atlantic Canada. Aboriginal-specific transitional housing is only available in Halifax, Nova Scotia and Happy Valley- Goose Bay, Labrador. Existing mainstream facilities are sometimes over-capacity and many have restrictions to access that may be barriers for Aboriginal people. In cases where Aboriginal people do access mainstream services, there is a lack cultural

appropriateness and understanding of Aboriginal peoples' needs. Organizations indicated that funding options for supportive and emergency housing is often difficult to access or unavailable. Though Aboriginal-specific transitional housing options for Aboriginal women and children who are victims of domestic partner violence are available in Truro and Halifax, NS and Fredericton, NB, they exclude those who do not fit the very specific criteria.

Many of the housing association/corporation representatives indicated that there is a lack of wrap-around support available for Aboriginal people accessing their services. Local Aboriginal organizations make every attempt to assist clients and make referrals but in some provinces, the support services available to them are inadequate. Aboriginal people need appropriate levels of support through their transitions within the social housing system. For example, Aboriginal people may need aftercare, help in obtaining housing, employment services and Aboriginal-specific counselling. A number of housing associations/corporations indicated that housing services and appropriate use of housing services would be improved by also offering counselling services within the housing association/corporation.

Youth

Organizational representatives suggested that Aboriginal youth in urban areas are reluctant to use mainstream services, preferring instead to use Aboriginal community organizations as the primary service providers, or, in some instances, to act as intermediaries with mainstream agencies. All of the ARO's and most multi-serve providers offer programming targeted toward Aboriginal youth. However, a number of ARO's and some multi-serve providers indicated that a lack of funding options to support youth programming were creating challenges in offering consistent programming.

Changes to Cultural Connection for Aboriginal Youth (CCAY)

In 2012, funding for Cultural Connection for Aboriginal Youth (CCAY) was temporarily frozen to assess the effectiveness of the programs funded under this stream. CCAY programs were targeted to provide culturally relevant programming to youth living off-reserve and in urban areas. CCAY has been consolidated into the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. A number of ARO's indicated that the realignment of the CCAY funding has created a gap in youth programming. This is especially pertinent for those organizations with less administrative capacity and operating funds. In many cases, CCAY provided funding for a staff member to administer youth programming. Upon the realignment termination of CCAY, these project officer positions were terminated. Some organizations attempted to continue to offer youth programming by having core staff members take on the responsibility of youth programming – though in organizations

where staff were already working with decreased budgets – it became challenging to continue to offer these services.

“When [CCAY funded programming] was in full force, we had anywhere between 15 and 30 youth participating at a time. It wasn't just programming, but it was providing that sense of community, that safety net, and it's okay to be Aboriginal, and it's okay to want to dance, and it's okay to want to be two-spirited; it was such a healthy community to grow up in. For us to deliver that programming from that young age of 10, 11, or 12, to being supportive at 29 or 30... Cultural connections allowed us to provide that, and our other programs filtered into that and we are shaping youth to be healthy, and we just don't have that anymore. There is no funding...” (Lisa Cooper, NCPEI)

ARO representatives, Friendship Centres, Head Start and Family Service organizations indicate that there is a gap in services for youth between the ages of six and the beginning of services available after high-school. More to this point, Head Start program representatives and Family Centres have suggested that after the children “age out” of the head start program and enter the public school system, there are few programs available for culturally relevant youth programming. This gap has been exacerbated in area where the termination of CCAY funding has had a significant impact.

“...There is a gap between Head Start and the ASETS program, there is nothing for kids once they start in the education system. There are no supports for our kids going through that [age].” (Wendy Wetteland, NBAPC)

Lack of Space for Children in Aboriginal-specific Early Learning Programs

Some Aboriginal Head Start program representatives indicated that there are not enough Aboriginal-specific early childhood education programs and spaces available for Aboriginal children. One service provider in Fredericton reported that many children that are on the waiting list for Aboriginal-specific programming and a space at that particular centre do not get to access the program because of the a lack of available space.

“I am licensed for 6. There is something seriously wrong with that. The fastest growing population in the country – and I am licensed for 6! There is only 1 off reserve Head Start in the province of NB, and this is it... I have a waiting list between 25 and 30. We're so small. Most of the kids sit on that list and age out. We do first come first serve. They'll sit on that list until it's time to go to

school. It breaks my heart every time I turn away a child. That means there is a child that is going to entire mainstream school without the benefit of the program. The need is great.” (Patsy McKinney, Under One Sky)

The need for available spaces for Aboriginal children in early leaving centers is acute in St. John’s, Newfoundland. As of June, 2015, organization representatives reported that there was not an Aboriginal Head Start operating in St. John’s. Further, there are very few non-profit day cares operating in the city. While this is considered a gap, the St. John’s Native Friendship Centre is working to address this issue, through the development of a property to eventually house a culturally relevant non-profit day care for Aboriginal children. 32 spaces will be available for children, 6 reserved for infants.

“There are so few non-profit daycares in the province. Our board thought it was really important, and the thing is that first priority goes to students because it’s hard for students to find childcare when you might only be here for 8 months. You’re coming here and you’re worried about childcare and you want it to be culturally sensitive.” (Anonymous)

Nova Scotia also reports a lack of culturally-relevant early learning centres across the province. The Micmac Native Friendship Centre in Halifax operates a full-service culturally-relevant Aboriginal Head Start. This is the only Aboriginal Head Start and Aboriginal-specific early learning centre in the province. The Nova Scotia Native Council does offer some programming for families including prenatal care programs, support for literacy and recreation though they do not operate an Aboriginal-specific day care. Within the Atlantic Canadian region, only those living in Halifax, Fredericton, Charlottetown and Happy Valley-Goose Bay have an option of sending their children to Aboriginal-specific day care. And in those centres, available space is chronically lacking. Aboriginal families living in towns or rural areas across the region must access mainstream day care providers for care.

Attendance in an Aboriginal-specific early learning centre ensures that Aboriginal communities have some autonomy in curriculum development, that children have access to culturally relevant programming including culture and language, reinforces connections to community, offers support for Aboriginal identity and increases the chance for school success. Given the success of Aboriginal-specific early learning centers reported by community members, it is paramount that federal and provincial agencies work with Aboriginal communities to address the lack of Aboriginal-specific early learning spaces and centers that exists in the region.

Educational Gaps and Jurisdictional Issues

ARO's, Friendship Centers and other organizations reported that there were gaps in educational services including a lack of supports for children in the public school system, a lack of cultural relevancy for Aboriginal students and a lack of Aboriginal-specific after-school care.

Jurisdictional Issues and Student Supports

Aboriginal children living in urban areas and off-reserve attend non-Aboriginal public schools throughout the Atlantic Provinces. Aboriginal children generally follow the same curriculum as their non-Aboriginal peers though there are a limited number of public schools that offer some culturally relevant course options. Jurisdictional issues concerning the agency responsible for funding educational supports creates challenges for Aboriginal children who require support in the form of educational testing, classroom assistance or who require special equipment. Some Aboriginal organization representatives reported that in some provinces, educational supports may be funded by the First Nation Band that the Aboriginal child belongs to; however, this type of funding from First Nation Bands is not always easy to access and may only cover limited services. In addition to this, some Aboriginal children are living in provinces away from the First Nations Band in which they are members and parents/caregivers may not wish to contact the Band for support, especially if they have never lived on-reserve. The challenge for Aboriginal children who need extra support is intensified if the provincial school district is experiencing difficulties providing supports in general.

Cultural Relevancy in Content

Culturally relevancy in curriculum content within the public school system was identified as a gap in services by some Aboriginal organizations. Some of the challenge here lies in the lack of identification of whom and where the Aboriginal children are within the system. In some provinces, some First Nation Bands keep records of the Band members who are attending the public school system off-reserve, others do not. To this point, there are privacy issues in releasing this information. Also, a parent/caregiver may be reluctant to identify the child as having Aboriginal ancestry when registering the child in the public school system for fear of racism or judgment. So while the public school system school may be open to providing more cultural relevancy, without adequate figures regarding Aboriginal student enrollment, they may fail to see the value in supporting increased Aboriginal content. Despite the challenges in working within the school system without definitive Aboriginal student enrollment numbers, some organizations have developed relationships with public schools to offer culturally relevant educational supports and content.

“We did manage to get into the schools and working with the Aboriginal support workers, who have \$0 for resources, which makes no sense. We were able to help, in a two-month period, 179 students! We know that there is a lot more... We helped with tutoring services, bus tickets, food, access to training and employment opportunities that we had going on. We did a community gathering for the youth. That was all within a 2 month period and we got funding. We are going to continue doing that with the school.” (Pamela Glode-DesRochers, Mi’kmaq Native Friendship Center)

Aboriginal-Specific After-School Care

Culturally relevant after-school services was also identified as a gap by Aboriginal organizations. An organization in Prince Edwards Island did report having access to Aboriginal tutors through the local University though the program was done on a very small and informal scale. Aboriginal organizations reported that an Aboriginal-specific after-school program reduces barriers to both employment and education. A robust after school program offers homework help, provides a healthy snack and offers culturally relevant programming in areas of language and/or history. Given that there are so few culturally relevant language courses available in public schools, Aboriginal-specific after-school programming could potentially address this gap. Of particular importance, is that providing a place for children to go after the school day is finished until early evening allows parents and caregivers to commit to working regular office hours. Many organizations expressed an interest in providing after-school programming but felt challenged by the lack of resources available to fund and administer the service or were not able to provide the service based on the type of organization they were running.

“We have a strong cultural language component and once they hit mainstream school, what they are taught here is not supported. What they are taught here could be supported here if we get people coming back after school. It doesn’t have to end when they start school. We want to add language classes for parents so that they can support their kids’ education... If we had afterschool programming for the children that are in the schools and are slipping through the cracks, they could get off the bus here, we could have homework clubs and tutoring, special education, there is no limit, but you need to have the resources.” (Patsy McKinney, Under One Sky)

Men's Programming

Some Aboriginal organizations expressed a need for programming focused specifically on the needs of Aboriginal men. There are a limited number of Aboriginal organizations in Atlantic Canada that offer men's programming and programming has often been limited to drumming groups and short term in-house programs. Two organizations located in urban areas offer services and programming for men being released from the criminal justice corrections system. Within ARO's, Friendship Centers and other organizations, there exists a constellation of services focused on women and their children including pre-natal care, Aboriginal Head Start services, workshops devoted to decreasing violence against women and women in leadership sessions. This is not to imply that women's services are not under-funded or under-served; however, in contrast to women's services, Aboriginal-specific men's programming is almost non-existent. Some organizational representatives suggested that the lack of men's programming is tied to a lack of funding opportunities available. Other organizations suggested that there was considerable difficulty in engaging this segment of the community in culturally relevant programming on a consistent basis.

"We have the men's program, working with men coming out of corrections, and also men's drumming and other men's issues. We haven't done a lot of men's programming over the years. It's one of those illusive things, and not easy to get men in." (Anonymous)

Justice

Aboriginal people are over-represented within the criminal justice system in Canada resulting from a history of discrimination, forced assimilation, addiction issues, poverty and loss of culture. In 1996 the Criminal code was amended to address the problem of over-representation. The application of this amendment saw the creation of culturally relevant alternatives to traditional imprisonment for Aboriginal offenders. To date, some provinces and First Nations Bands have been developing Aboriginal specific alternatives to incarceration including traditional healing methods focused on helping the victim and offender. The Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network (MLSN) in Eskasoni is one such example. Though this is applauded as a step in the right direction, some organizations in Atlantic Canada expressed the need for a more intensive effort to address the unique needs of Aboriginal offenders within the criminal justice system in Atlantic Canada.

As previously noted, Friendship Centers in Halifax and St. John's offer programming for individuals involved in the criminal justice system; however, no such programming exists in other Aboriginal off-reserve/urban organizations in Atlantic Canadian cities or towns. Some organizations indicated that while alternative justice options are available through some First Nations Bands or First Nations organizations, they are sometimes limited and/or geared to those living on-reserve, leaving those living in urban centers or off-reserve underserved.

Regional Disparities

As expected, the range and variety of services available to Aboriginal people living in urban centers or in larger towns was greater than those available in rural areas simply due to the increased population and corresponding demand for services. In the capital city of each of the four Atlantic provinces considered in this study, a range of services existed in most areas of social services programming including, but not limited to, housing, cultural programming, family services and addictions counseling. The range and scope of services offered varied among each province due to a variety of factors such as population, organizational infrastructure and funding.

Aboriginal Specific Social Services in Moncton

Despite that fact that the city of Moncton has a population of more than 60,000, there are no Aboriginal organizations located in the city offering social services to Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people in Moncton may access some programming in Fredericton though it would likely require the individual to travel for application/ enrollment and programs would generally not be direct social services. Skigin-Elnooq Housing Corporation does have rent-subsidized units available for Aboriginal people in Moncton. There is no transitional, supportive or Aboriginal-specific emergency shelter available. In addition to this, Aboriginal people living in Moncton lack access to culture and language programming in the city, Aboriginal-specific counseling or Aboriginal family services. According to the Indian Register System from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), as of December 31, 2014, there were approximately 15,249 First Nations people in New Brunswick, 9,366 on reserve and 5,883 off reserve. Adding those without official Indian Status but who have Aboriginal ancestry to this number would see this number increase considerably. Therefore, given the growing population of Aboriginal people living off-reserve in NB and the considerable size of the city of Moncton, the obvious lack of services available in the greater Moncton area is an issue that requires further investigation.

Lack of Aboriginal-Specific Employment and Training in NL and Labrador

Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island all have ARO's and Friendship Centers which offer Aboriginal-specific employment and training services through their respective offices. Organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador indicated that over the past fiscal year, funding for Aboriginal-specific in-house employment and training services has been terminated. Currently, Aboriginal people in Newfoundland and Labrador who seek employment and training services are required to access those services through Service Canada centers or through the office of the Department of Advanced Education and Skills. Organizational representatives in Newfoundland and Labrador have indicated that the termination of Aboriginal-specific employment and training has created a significant gap in this area as Aboriginal clients prefer to access services through an Aboriginal organization.

“Employment is also a huge gap; we used to offer employment services, but the government cancelled every public employment service office that was hosted by non-profits and made them all internal. Now you have to apply online or walk into a huge government service centre and try to speak to someone who will tell you that you have to go online...They shut down every Aboriginal employment services office off-reserve. So, we have employment issues.”
(Anonymous)

Lack of Aboriginal-Specific Economic Development Organizations

The city of Fredericton, New Brunswick houses the only organization in the Atlantic region that has a full-service Aboriginal organization devoted to supporting Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in urban areas in business, economic development and industry partnership: JEDI. Many ARO's and the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre in Halifax offer in-house employment and training services to Aboriginal people accessing services through these organizations; however, the services are generally limited to upgrading skills through post-secondary education and career counseling. NCNS offers some programming targeted to those interested in pursuing careers in oil and gas industries. The employment and training services of the ARO's and Friendship Center are characterized by an almost exclusive focus on increasing *individual* skills rather than supporting communities or individuals in business.

JEDI administers its own programming with an individual skills focus but also operates as a “connector organization” – connecting businesses, organizations and individuals to support both individual and community economic development. There are organizations that offer some comparable services in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island though these organizations

do not have a comparable commitment to serving the off-reserve and urban communities through a formal or informal relationship. Given the direction that funding agencies are taking in terms of requiring that funding recipients are working towards greater financial autonomy, increased governmental support of organizations that operate to support community *and* individual economic development may be an area of interest.

Trends

Working Towards Long-term Program Funding

The organizations involved in this study expressed a strong desire to offer consistent and continuous programming for individuals and groups accessing their services. Over the past number of years, funding agencies have been offering more funding options for short-term projects rather than multi-year program funding. Often, Aboriginal organizations in Atlantic Canada have supplemented the decrease in multi-year programming by securing shorter-term project funding. This funding may be available through government agencies or through partnerships with other non-profit organizations. Often, temporary staff is hired to administer the project for its duration.

Though this type of funding allows for a certain degree of creativity with project content and increases the availability of unique services, this type of project and the funding dispersal does not support continuity or consistency of the service. Further, it is the continuity and consistency in service delivery that fosters community engagement with the organization. Aboriginal organizations indicate that the benefit of responding to a need in the short-term does not always outweigh the organizational purpose to offer continuous services with the communities served.

“Actually, one of the top three [organizational priorities] should be sustainability - because every core program has to be able to be continued even if there is no money. That is a rule. What is the point of having a program that if you lose the funding, you can't continue it?” (Anonymous)

Part of the challenge with short-term projects lies in the nature of the project and suitability to a short time-frame for delivery. Projects that do not attempt to address a sensitive issue may work in the short-term, though other projects – with a goal to address a sensitive issue – are reported to not work well in a short delivery time-frame. Some short-term projects respond to an immediate need but require long-term attention and aftercare – the latter services not financially possible through this type of project funding.

Challenges with this type of project can be illustrated with the example of a six month project aimed at decreasing intimate partner violence within the off-reserve Aboriginal community. Participants attended weekly sessions in a central location with a social worker and support staff to participate in healing cultural practices, receive education and awareness sessions, and to learn healthy coping behaviors and self-care. While the project promoted healing within the community, the project evaluation highlighted the need for continued services and pointed to difficulties for participants who, in some cases, had relived traumatic experiences without continued care. Clearly not all of the short-term projects address issues of such a traumatic nature; however, organizations feel a responsibility to provide a continuum of care. This type of project cycle does not generally foster trust in the services of an organization.

An additional challenge with this type of project frame work is that the programs are ultimately too short to demonstrate successful outcomes. The needs of Aboriginal people living in urban areas and off-reserve are complex and short-term approaches are bound to fail. Sustained and adequate funding is necessary to assist Aboriginal organizations within urban settings and off-reserve to develop coordinated and holistic responses. Funding cycles of limited duration restrict the ability of Aboriginal organizations to develop the long-term strategies required to address the needs of the communities they serve.

Further to this point, organizational survival on annual grants places a significant administrative burden on Aboriginal organizations. This requires that much time is devoted completing sometimes complicated proposals and evaluations for program funding or meeting reporting requirements to account for the funding. Moreover, organizations often face bureaucratic delays in accessing approved funding. If an organization does not have the financial capacity to administer the program until the funding is available, the project is often shortened to accommodate the project time-lines thus rendering the project less effective.

The shift towards longer-term programming is happening at varying paces within the service delivery landscape. Some organizations have greater economic capacity, which enables them to be more selective in the type of funding they seek. Executives may have already made decisions to not apply for short-term project funding. Other organizations may still be applying for short-term project funding with the knowledge that their organization is positioned to continue the project without outside funding. Other organizations may have a general plan to work towards longer-term funding but for a variety of reasons, continue to seek short-term funding to offer services that cannot be offered through other channels. Finally, smaller organizations that offer more targeted services may not qualify for funding other than short-term project funding. For these organizations, partnerships are crucial in the ability to survive as a service organization.

Social Economy

Many of the organizations considered in this project expressed a desire to develop a social economy or social enterprise within their organizations. In some cases the organizations used the terms social enterprise and social economy interchangeably. The social economy (or social enterprise) refers to using the tools and some of the methods of business, on a not-for-profit basis, to fund social, cultural, economic and health services to communities that need them.

The social economy may be characterized by cooperative enterprises that respond to new needs in social and health services, typically at the community level. Organizations suggested there were two primary reasons for the development of social economy. First, illustrating an effort to develop social economy and economic development within Aboriginal organizations has become a requirement of funding agencies in a number of program funding criteria. Development of a more robust social economy translates into less dependency on government funding. Aboriginal organizations are often dependant on funding agencies to perform many basic operational functions and to carry out service provisions. Therefore, many organizations alluded that they are operating at the mercy of funding agencies in terms of the timelines, deliverables and outcomes set by the agencies. In a perfect service delivery landscape, Aboriginal organizations would have greater autonomy in the development of programming activities and timelines, and would be positioned to deliver programming that fits the needs of the communities.

Almost all of the organizations expressed a desire for a degree of financial autonomy independent from funding agencies. The organizations had varying degrees of social economic development based on their size, location and local capacity for organizational development. Additionally, funding available for economic development programs or economic development officers is sometimes limited to Aboriginal Representative Organizations (ARO's) and excludes multi-service providers like Friendship Centers. A number of multi-serve providers, including Friendship Centers and ARO's offering social services programming, reported that social enterprise, or at least the goal of creating financial autonomy through business enterprises to fund essential programs were being implemented or existed in a strategic plan.

Within Atlantic Canada, organizations located within larger urban centers or more populated areas showed the most progress in social economic development. In Halifax, the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre is in the process of developing condo-housing units to finance a new building to house the Friendship Centre. In St. John's, the Friendship Center has raised capital by offering medical navigation services to Aboriginal, Inuit and Innu people travelling to St. John's for medical treatments. The Friendship Center in St. John's has also created a

transportation service that allows them to bid on delivery and transportation contracts within the city. In Truro, NCNS offers printing and graphic design services to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. The Labrador Native Friendship Center creates some of its own source funding by operating a hostel, cafeteria and an assisted living facility.

The NCNS, NBAPC and NCPEI operate commercial and communal fishing enterprises. Each organization has their own unique operational relationship with this arm of their respective organization though in each case, the capital generated by the fishing enterprises does contribute in varying degrees to the administration of services within the organization. While the fishing enterprises have their own set of mandates separate from the organizations they are connected to, the fishing enterprises are successful examples of social economic development at work for the communities they serve. Not only do they provide a certain amount of capital to the Aboriginal organization, they also provide employment within communities and support other commercial fishing operations. It is important to note however, this is made possible to some extent due to the fact that these organizations are considered ARO's, and, as such, are able to provide this type of service to their communities where multi-services providers are excluded from doing so.

Although social economic development is growing in Atlantic Canada, Aboriginal organizations face a number of challenges in social economy development. One of the major challenges in developing social economy is convincing private sector partners of the value or potential of partnering with a non-profit in these ventures. Often times, Aboriginal organizations are seen solely as social service providers removed from the economic development nexus. In addition to this, many non-profit Aboriginal organizations do not have access to cash for economic development ventures and may have to convince potential partners or funders of the value of their in-kind contribution. They may also face challenges in convincing outside partners of the value in the social services they wish to augment. Organizations may also see challenges in deciding what type of venture to pursue. The development of cultural experiences for commercial benefit has been an option for some organizations. While this type of venture works in some locations for some groups, there have been issues around the process and cost of community consultations. Many of these organizations are working on behalf of a number of different Aboriginal groups so questions around which culture(s) to promote, and ethical questions regarding commercialization of culture have been identified.

One of the greatest challenges identified by the organizations has been the lack of manpower devoted to social economy development. Many of the organizations suggest that with limited funding, most of their employees must focus their efforts on social service program administration. And although some of the larger multi-service providers do devote staff position (s) to employment and training, this is generally geared to *individual* participation in

the economy within the context of job training, education and job placement as opposed to development of for profit business ventures of the organization.

Economic Development and Participation in the Economy

The Aboriginal population in Canada is the fastest-growing segment of the Canadian population. In recent decades, the number of Aboriginal people living in Canada's urban centers has grown substantially. In some of the larger urban centers the number of Aboriginal people living in urban centers has doubled. Statistics indicate that school attendance, post-secondary completion and employment are improving for Canada's urban Aboriginal population. Part of this can be attributed to a growing number of Aboriginal people completing post-secondary education. (Source: AANDC Urban Aboriginal Peoples Fact Sheet). Over the past decade, Aboriginal organizations have been increasing efforts to provide a variety of education and training programs. Further to this point, funding agencies are increasingly creating programs designed to increase urban and off-reserve participation in the economy.

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) is a federal government funding program developed to facilitate activities that lead to increasing urban Aboriginal participation in the economy. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada has two contribution programs to support the objectives of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. The two programs are Urban Partnerships and Community Capacity Support. The Urban Partnerships program works to increase urban Aboriginal participation in the economy by providing funding to projects that leverage partnerships and additional investments from other stakeholders. Through the Community Capacity Support program the Urban Aboriginal Strategy provides core-like funding to Friendship Centers and other urban Aboriginal organizations so they can have a stable base from which to deliver programs and services that increase urban Aboriginal participation in the economy. This stable base is also to be used to attract additional investments by being a platform from which other government programs, from all orders of government, can be delivered to the urban Aboriginal community. (Source: AANDC, Contributions to Support the Urban Aboriginal Strategy). Under the UAS, AANDC outlines a number of criteria that must be met for eligibility which generally excludes organizations that are not already running at least two social programs.

Most of the multi-service organizations in Atlantic Canada offer various programs to increase participation in the economy. As previously mentioned, most of the ARO's are ASETS agreement holders and offer post-secondary funding through this stream. These same organizations – along with a select few Friendship Centers – also offer additional economic development programs in the form of education and training for specific industries, career

development services and Aboriginal business supports. Some organizations have created their own Equity Funding streams to assist Aboriginal business development. For example, the NBAPC has an Equity Fund devoted to Aboriginal business development. NBAPC also encourages other individuals and business in a number of Maritime Provinces by offering mobile workshops outlining eligibility requirements for funding through this stream.

Basic Needs Approach to Economic Participation

Within the context of programs that enhance and support economic participation, many of the organizations indicated that programs that had the most effect on economic participation were not necessarily focused on traditional post-secondary education, skills development or attaining a high school diploma. Organizations across the region suggested that Aboriginal participation in the economy can only be attained if the basic needs of Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in urban centers are being met.

“When someone comes in to our Friendship Center, we believe that you treat them as a whole. Even though they are coming in for employment services, they may need housing, childcare, addiction services, upgrading, so there are many pieces...Employment and economic participation are key, but you can’t keep people there if you have not addressed all of their needs.” (Pam Glode-DesRochers, MNFC Halifax)

Individuals who have sufficient physical and/or mental wellness, adequate housing, adequate child care and transportation will generally make a greater and meaningful contribution to the economic system.

Organizations also indicated that indirect supports to employment such as after-school programs and early learning programs supported Aboriginal economic participation.

“We know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that if we can keep kids in school, there is a good chance we’ll keep them off the street and they will finish school and become gainfully employed. If they are not finishing school, they are not going to enter the labor force because no one wants them because they don’t have the education. What is happening is we wait – and I think – until it’s too late, and we’re putting Band-Aids on the other end. I think we should be investing in this end, starting with early childhood education. We have children that are coming from extreme circumstances. Our families are dealing with substance abuse, domestic violence, abject poverty, and what goes along with that – all kinds of things. I think that Head Start is one of the best programs

across the country. We embrace the entire family. We are perfectly positioned to break the cycle. We get the kids ready for school. We have children that have multiple issues. It might be FASD, learning disabilities, and getting them ready for school gets them ready to succeed.” (Patsy McKinney, Under One Sky)

In each province, organizations indicated that programming and services designed to address barriers to economic participation in the form of housing, mental health services, child care services and transportation were at least as important as employment and training programs. Until basic social services offered are adequate, the employment and training programs will be underused and less effective.

Industry Partnership and Economic Participation

Governments, non-profit Aboriginal organizations and various industries in Atlantic Canada are recognizing the value in creating strong partnerships to collectively benefit Aboriginal communities. Fostering and formalizing strong partnerships supports Aboriginal participation in the economy and provides skilled workers to move industry forward. More and more, Aboriginal organizations are working with large industry leaders to facilitate a more thriving industry and workforce. The trend over the past five years is that a number of Aboriginal organizations are strengthening industry partnerships. Each Atlantic province has varying degrees of progress in this area.

Certain provinces have an easier time connecting with industry partners because of their proximity of workers to the particular industry – this point is illustrated by considering partners in the mining industry in Labrador and the potential of partners through the Irving shipbuilding project in NB. In provinces and areas where major industries are located farther from Aboriginal communities and where organizations have less option for direct partnership for employment in that industry, some organizations have developed partnerships with industry professionals in other parts of Canada to ensure that workers are properly trained in those sectors. For example, the NCNS provides opportunities for training through the Encana Native Council Opportunities Fund which provides relevant and useful oil and gas training, education and insight into service opportunities with the offshore oil and gas industries. Tutoring, mentoring and workshops take place in NS, individuals accessing the program may travel to relevant university/college with funding support through the program.

Organizations suggest that Aboriginal people are not entirely satisfied with the opportunities identified through analyses of labour market demand in their home provinces. In some cases,

organizational representatives suggested that while the careers identified as “in demand” did not offer a competitive enough salary within their home provinces.

Within the context of the progression of Aboriginal/Industry partnership, New Brunswick has seen a great deal of success. Organizations suggested that this success was due to a variety of factors. One major factor lies in the fact that the province has an Aboriginal non-profit organization devoted solely to economic development and partnership development. The Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI) works with Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, public and private stakeholders to foster Aboriginal economic development in New Brunswick. And while JEDI’s mandate is to serve Aboriginal people living off and on-reserve in New Brunswick, the organization is unique in that it holds a formal relationship with the NBAPC to ensure that the unique needs of the off-reserve Aboriginal communities are met. Therefore, the economic development initiatives of the NBAPC are enhanced and improved, rather than duplicated by the services of JEDI. To this point, NBAPC is able to benefit from the strong focus on industry partnership that JEDI has developed. In terms of partnerships with industry, JEDI has worked with the shipbuilding industry in New Brunswick to complete The New Brunswick Aboriginal Shipbuilding Engagement Strategy which saw Aboriginal people from around New Brunswick provide their input on how they would like to benefit from the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy.

Despite the promise of industry partnership, a number of challenges exist for organizations in Atlantic Canada in the development of industry partnerships. Some of these challenges include the proximity of the industries to the workforce. Other challenges involve “buy in” from the industry itself. Some organizations have suggested – similar to social enterprise ventures – that there is some difficulty convincing industry leaders to partner with social service organizations whose mandates are more geared to providing social service programming. In addition to this, industry leaders may not see the value in partnering with Aboriginal organizations simply due to lack of awareness of the untapped resource that exists in a young and growing workforce of Aboriginal people living off-reserve. In more populated parts of the country, the successful inclusion of Aboriginal people working in the energy, mining, potash and oil and gas sectors has been an ongoing priority. This is a result from larger numbers of Aboriginal people in those areas, commitment from Industry and an ongoing effort of Aboriginal organizations to ensure that industry recognizes the value in incorporating the Aboriginal workforce. This is also happening in Atlantic Canada, though organizations indicate that the progress is happening at a slower rate.

While New Brunswick has the benefit of an organization devoted entirely to economic development and industry partnerships with a meaningful commitment to the off-reserve

community, the same type of organization does not exist in the other Atlantic Provinces. As previously noted, the Mi'kmaq Economic Benefits Office (MEBO) in Nova Scotia has developed strong and beneficial relationships with industry partners to promote economic development initiatives and to promote Aboriginal inclusion in the workforce. However, MEBO's mandate is to represent the First Nations communities in Nova Scotia and does not include Board members representing the off-reserve community. With the understanding that issues exist regarding First Nations responsibility and commitment to Aboriginal people living off-reserve and in urban areas, involvement of this segment of the population in industry workforce development is an issue deserving further investigation.

Strengths

Innovative Partnerships

Service delivery organizations in Atlantic Canada are adept in building and nurturing relationships with partners. Partners may be non-Aboriginal or Aboriginal organizations, other community-based organizations, government (Provincial and Federal), private sector businesses, foundations, labour unions and/or semi-public organizations (police, corrections). Often, service delivery organizations work with a collection of partners from each of these categories. Some organizations have formal partnerships expressed in the form of funding agreements or through Memorandum of Understanding Agreements (MOU's). All of the organizations have informal partnerships whereby they may exchange in-kind services including resources, office space, sponsorship and/or event sharing.

One of the greatest collective assets of Aboriginal organizations in Atlantic Canada is that they continually work as a unit in the spirit of partnership. Though there are organizations that expressed a desire to be more closely connected with other Aboriginal service organizations to provide more seamless service, the vast majority indicated that many of the organizations are working together through formal and informal partnerships to create a better life for Aboriginal people living off-reserve and in urban centers.

“On the practical and everyday working level, there is a great deal of cooperation and we're all one unit. We're treating the individual as a whole, rather than just putting a roof over their head, closing the door, and leaving them. They have other needs, and the Aboriginal community is united in that way, in providing [for] those needs.” (Anonymous)

Developing and maintaining partnerships is not new to Aboriginal organizations, though over the past decade, organizations report a greater emphasis on partnerships. This can be attributed to a number of factors. Most obviously, partnerships allow Aboriginal organizations to provide a service that they need to do more quickly, more efficiently, or that they may not be able to do on their own. A partnership may allow an organization to access new or additional resources or funds, develop expertise to address more complex issues including justice or environmental issues or to develop greater credibility in their respective communities. The most significant push for partnership creation comes from funding agencies. In efforts to make their funding dollars go farther, agencies generally require funding recipients to formally identify partners by submitting of letters of support and their commitment to cash and in-kind contribution.

Aboriginal organizations form a vast array of partnerships with varying characteristics. The function of the partnership may include community based research, joint program delivery or cultural awareness workshops. The level of intensity ranges from simple cooperative partnerships to very complex collaboration. Leadership in the partnership may be shared equally or with one partner assuming most of the leadership. The partnership could be between two organizations or up to a dozen. Finally the length of the partnership may be as short as a few months or could be a partnership of many years.

“We partner with the Maliseet Conservation Council to deliver a youth project that was addressing barriers to youth in participating in the economy. We pulled together 5 partners on that one and put together a huge project in two months and reached 200 or 300 youth.” (Wendy Wetteland, NBAPC)

Aboriginal organizations have become expert in developing partnerships to maximize their ability to provide services and to increase cultural awareness and education. Of particular importance, is the ability of Aboriginal organizations to develop meaningful partnerships in areas where they identify gaps in services or programs either from lack of funding for that service area opportunity and/or a weakness in a provincial social service. In Halifax, the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Center addresses the gap in culturally relevant justice options through innovative partnerships.

“We’re [Friendship Centers] always looking for opportunities to partner and share resources. For example [with] Legal Aid. We are providing space for them and they are providing lawyers...Those types of non-traditional partners go a long way. Our community members are comfortable coming here, and if the service is here, they are more likely to use it.” (Pam Glode-DesRocher)

Innovative partnerships have been created to address health concerns within the Aboriginal community off-reserve and in urban areas. The Native Council of Prince Edward Island and the New Brunswick Aboriginal People's Council partnered with the Victorian Order of Nurses in New Brunswick to offer free mobile diabetes screening, awareness and foot care clinics throughout both PEI and NB over the course of approximately eight months. The project was funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada and engaged record numbers of community members. The significant number of people served is a testament to the power of partnerships to address a gap in the mainstream system. The substantial community engagement is also an indication of the benefit to the community when a service is administered by an Aboriginal organization.

Other Aboriginal organizations are finding value in developing multi-sectoral partnerships with large corporations and community organizations. The Friendship Centre in St. John's has secured a multi-year partnership with a large corporate sponsor and a healthy eating foundation to deliver a full-service after-school program that includes transportation from surrounding schools to the Friendship Center. This type of service is invaluable for Aboriginal youth, their families and the community in general and is significantly enhanced by strong and meaningful partnerships.

A number of organizations have also developed meaningful partnerships with provincial Departments of Culture and Heritage, municipalities, non-profit organizations and Aboriginal organizations to provide more well-rounded cultural experiences. This is especially evident in partnerships created to support Powwows and National Aboriginal Day celebrations. Aboriginal organizations report that there is significant competition between organizations for funding dollars to support these types of cultural events. The intense competition for this particular type of funding may be attributed to the fact that most Aboriginal organizations wish to promote cultural activities (many organizing their own celebrations). Competition is also intensified because almost every Aboriginal organization may be considered a candidate for this type of funding based solely on the population served. Further, funding agencies providing support for cultural celebrations often allow non-Aboriginal groups to apply within the same funding stream.

A number of organizations suggested the development of a funding resource specifically for off-reserve Aboriginal organizations in Atlantic Canada. A funding resource and supporting documents may include a comprehensive list of funding agencies, funding criteria and a list of organizations applying through a particular funding stream. This could potentially lessen competition between Aboriginal organizations, increase partnerships, and ensure that programming was being enhanced by other organizations rather than duplicated.

“I think we need to come up with an off-reserve Aboriginal community alliance, for funding purposes, so that we can apply for Aboriginal dollars and just Aboriginal organizations would get it. Now non-Aboriginals are allowed to apply for the dollars...We should know what everyone else is doing.” (Julie Thomas, Healing Our Nations)

The ability of Aboriginal organizations to develop meaningful partnerships is crucial to sustaining organizational success. Despite this, Aboriginal organizations suggest there are drawbacks and risks in undertaking these partnerships. In some cases, urban and off-reserve Aboriginal organizations worry that government agencies partner with off-reserve and urban Aboriginal organizations only because they have been required to do so. Within partnerships that are created between on and off-reserve organizations, and various levels of governments, urban and off-reserve organizations have indicated that issues and concerns of the on-reserve organizations are often considered the autonomous voice of all of Aboriginal groups around the table. In some cases, urban and off-reserve Aboriginal organizations do not see the value in partnerships. This is especially pertinent in areas where there are few Aboriginal organizations in operation. In these cases, that particular organization becomes the “go to” for partners seeking Aboriginal involvement.

Aboriginal organizations must devote considerable time to develop and maintain partner relationships. For larger organizations, scheduling time to devote to partnerships may be less challenging if they employ a greater number of employees. Some smaller organizations with fewer employees reported having greater challenges in developing partnerships due to the demands of the day-to-day administration of their organizations. More to this point, some organizations reported that there is some difficulty maintaining partnerships when the rate of employee turn-over is high. For example, in cases where an employee has been hired to administer a short-term project, that employee will often develop their own partnerships based on existing professional relationships. Subsequently, when the project funding ends and the employee contract expires, the partnerships may end as well. This is a frequent occurrence among organizations that rely on shorter-term funding cycles and creates a challenging pattern for these organizations in the context of fostering on-going partner relationships.

Cultural sensitivity training packages

Aboriginal organizations and their partners recognize how cultural backgrounds affect individual perceptions and actions; and how cultural awareness can improve relationships between people from differing cultural backgrounds. Aboriginal organizations serving people living off-reserve or in urban areas stressed the importance of making sure that accurate

information about off-reserve and urban communities is being reflected in cultural sensitivity training. Not surprisingly, many Aboriginal organizations off-reserve or in urban centers have developed cultural sensitivity and awareness packages and workshops for delivery with the non-Aboriginal sector.

Aboriginal organizations throughout the region offer a wide-range of cultural awareness training and education workshop. Women's organizations such as the Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network offer workshops and training focused on intimate partner violence and women in leadership. Gignoo transition house offers workshops and training on intimate partner violence, teen dating and self-esteem. Healing our Nations offers workshops and training closely related to sexual health and safety. Some ARO's and service providers may offer cultural sensitivity and awareness packages that focus on the unique challenges for people living off-reserve and/or unique cultural practices of Aboriginal groups in a province or region. Other organizations are considering this type of training as a social enterprise.

Aboriginal organizations in Atlantic Canada play an important role in education and awareness of Aboriginal issues and Aboriginal organizations expressed the importance in delivering cultural sensitivity and awareness to non-Aboriginal service providers. In general, Aboriginal people living off-reserve and in urban areas access non-Aboriginal or mainstream services. Alternatively, many living on reserve have access to health, justice and educational services on-reserve. Ensuring that the delivery of cultural awareness and training is delivered from an *off-reserve or urban* perspective is crucial to make certain that service providers understand the unique challenges, strengths and cultures of the off-reserve and urban communities they serve. Every effort should be made by mainstream providers and stakeholders to have training delivered by these organizations.

Cultural Activities and Language

Many of the organizations involved in this study alluded to the importance of cultural activities available through their organizations to foster a sense of identity, connection to their communities and in some cases, to ensure that a particular language is learned by younger generations. All of the organizations involved in this study incorporate elements of culture and language into all of their programming. Almost every ARO and Friendship Center offers culture and language programs and projects despite the fact that funding streams for this type of programming and projects are limited and expected to be delivered in a short-time frame. Of all of the services and programs offered, culture and language are often the most consistent and sometimes most attended. Many have often been administered by volunteers in communities. Aboriginal organizations understand intrinsically that this type of programming – while often underfunded – is one of the most important services and organization can provide. A strong

sense of cultural identity and connection to culture creates strong individuals and collectives. Culture and language programming often bring together Elders and youth to provide opportunities to pass on important cultural practices or language training. ARO's, Friendship Centers and other organizations act as a cultural conduit in many off-reserve communities and urban areas. Some of these organizations act as drop-in centers and are paramount in fostering Aboriginal identity, and connection to culture and community. Every effort should be made to ensure that cities and towns in Atlantic Canada have an organization devoted to this aim.

Recommendations

Aboriginal organizations are providing invaluable services to a growing population of Aboriginal people within Atlantic Canada. Barriers to basic services such as housing, Aboriginal-specific employment and training, mental health and addictions treatments and physical health must be addressed using holistic and long-term approaches. Without a meaningful and adequate commitment to addressing these barriers, programs designed to increase participation in the economy and economic development will be underused and less effective. It is the hope of Aboriginal organizations that funding agencies will act on the following recommendations:

- Economic development initiatives designed for Aboriginal people in urban areas are only effective if/when the basic needs of the target group are being met. Funding agencies must ensure that basic needs are being addressed to increase the effectiveness of skills training, economic development and employment programs in urban areas and off-reserve.
- Funding agencies must engage meaningfully and consistently consult with urban/off-reserve Aboriginal organizations in the development of program/project requirements and criteria to increase the effectiveness of the programs/projects.
- Funding agencies must focus on youth programming geared towards building the cultural competency, self-esteem, self-worth, and supports for Aboriginal youth living in urban areas and off-reserve. Increased youth programming will help influence healthier life choices in family, education, health, and employment.
- Funding agencies must move from short-term funding to multi-year funding to enable urban and off-reserve Aboriginal organizations to develop more effective long-term relationships with partners and community members.
- Agencies should recognize the value of offering intensive and consistent mental health and addiction services through urban/off-reserve Aboriginal organizations. Aboriginal-specific mental health and addiction services should be readily available and accessible within urban areas.
- Aboriginal child welfare and early intervention supports should be extended to children living in urban areas and off-reserve. Disparities between child welfare supports offered to families on reserve vs those offered in urban areas and off-reserve must be addressed.
- A social service needs assessment should be conducted within the city of Moncton and surrounding areas.
- Policy makers have a duty to implement recommended changes to ensure gaps in services are being addressed. Further, policy makers must engage in regular review of implemented changes to adjust for successful service delivery outcomes.

APPENDIX A

Key Informant Questions

1. Tell us a bit about yourself.

- a. What is your organizational position?
- b. How long have you held this position?
- c. Why did you become involved in this organization?

2. Tell us about your organization.

- a. What is the name of your organization?
- b. Where is it located?
- c. What is its purpose and mandate?
- d. What are the goals you are trying to achieve?
- e. Do you receive funding from governments? For what purpose?

3. Programs and Services.

- a. What kind of programs and services do you offer?
- b. Who are the target service population?
- c. Who else offers programs and services to urban Aboriginal people in your community?
- d. Are there gaps in services or target groups?
- e. Which of these services enhance economic participation of urban Aboriginal people?
How?
- f. What are three priority areas for service delivery? How were these priorities determined? How are these priorities met?
- g. What are the best practices/lessons learned on how services are designed and delivered that have emerged over the last decade?
- h. What do these organizations perceive as being facilitating factors, and threats, to their sustainability?

- i. How does your organization work/engage with various stakeholders (other organizations both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, various governments, First Nations/Métis/Inuit communities, industry, etc) to improve service delivery?
- j. What are the challenges that these engagements face? How are they addressed?
- k. What service delivery partnerships have emerged over the last decade? How do they work? What is needed to sustain them?
- l. What is the value of these partnerships? How are the results of these partnerships evaluated?
- m. Are there service areas where partnerships might be helpful or useful?

APPENDIX B

Organizations Offering Limited Services to Aboriginal People living Off-reserve or in Urban Areas (working list and not meant to be definitive)

NL and Labrador

Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership

Makomi Status of Women

Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Association

New Brunswick

New Brunswick Aboriginal Women's Association

Prince Edward Island

Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island

Nova Scotia

Atlantic Canada First Nations Help Desk

Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq

Mi'kmaq Economic Benefits Office

APPENDIX C

List of Acronyms

AANDC	Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
ADI	Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative
AHS	Aboriginal Head Start
APTEC	Aboriginal Peoples Training and Employment Commission
ARO	Aboriginal Representative Organization
ASETS	Aboriginal Skills for Employment and Training Strategy
AWA	Aboriginal Women's Association of PEI
CCAY	Cultural Connection for Aboriginal Youth
CCS	Community Capacity Support
HON	Healing Our Nations
IRS	Indian Registry System
JEDI	Joint Economic Development Initiative
LNFC	Labrador Native Friendship Center
MEBO	Mi'kmaq Economic Benefits Office
MFRC	Mi'kmaq Family Resource Center
MLSN	Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network
MNFC	Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Center
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAWN	Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network
NBAPC	New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council
NIHB	Non-Insured Health Benefits
NCNS	Native Council of Nova Scotia
NCPEI	Native Council of Prince Edward Island
NNADAP	National Native Alcohol and Drug Addiction Program
NWAC	Native Women's Association of Canada
PHAC	Public Health Agency of Canada
SJNFC	St. John's Native Friendship Center
UAP	Urban Aboriginal Partnership
UAS	Urban Aboriginal Strategy

APPENDIX D

Opportunities for Future Research and Work

- A Funding Resource Guide for Off-Reserve and Urban Aboriginal Organizations *
- Aboriginal-specific health care options/programs in Atlantic Canada
- Caring for Our Elders and Ageing Aboriginal Population: What's In Place?
- An Assessment of the Effectiveness of "Housing First" in Halifax
- Education: Urban Aboriginal History
- Aboriginal Needs Assessment in Moncton, NB

*Currently, ARO's secure core and project based funding through AANDC through the Basic Organizational Capacity Funding stream (BOC) for salaries, rent and utilities. Friendship Centers also receive funding through AANDC but through a different stream. Friendship Centers and Aboriginal community organizations receive Community Capacity Support through the Urban Aboriginal Strategy program that provides operational funding to urban Aboriginal community organizations. Aboriginal Community Organizations may also qualify for funding through the Urban Partnerships funding stream for projects. For all of the organizations, other project and program funding comes from various government partnerships, private sector partnerships and other non-profit organizations. A list of AANDC funding streams and other funding opportunities would be helpful resource.