URBAN ABORIGINAL STRATEGY

LA STRATÉGIE POUR LES AUTOCHTONES VIVANT EN MILIEU URBAIN

# The Urban Aboriginal Strategy

## Community Consultations

Winnipeg, Manitoba 2007-08

Thank you to all of those persons and members of community organizations who took the time to share their wisdom with us...

this report belongs to them.

# About the Institute of Urban Studies

Founded in 1969 by the University of Winnipeg, the Institute of Urban Studies (IUS) was created at a time when the city's "urban university" recognized a need to address the problems and concerns of the inner city. From the outset, IUS has been both an educational and an applied research centre.

The Institute has remained committed to examining urban development issues in a broad, non-partisan context and has never lost sight of the demands of applied research aimed at practical, often novel, solutions to urban problems and issues.

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# Executive Summary

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) has three broad national priorities that touch on life skills; promoting jobs, training, and entrepreneurship; and providing support for women, children and families. This report explored these priorities within Winnipeg's Aboriginal community in order to obtain feedback and advice so as to allow the UAS in Winnipeg to direct initiatives that reflected a local response to these national priorities over a five year program window.

To obtain community input, a series of consultations were held through the fall of 2007 and early 2008. These sessions included hosting focus groups with clients of community organizations, drawing in service providers that best represented the priority areas and holding open community forums. Across these sessions some 400 persons took time to share their thoughts and stories. The findings in this report are therefore oriented around providing the UAS with advice on processes for program delivery, principles for consideration and the development of a guiding framework.

This report also reviewed the literature and determined that there was a strong relationship with what has been said in reports with what Winnipeg's Aboriginal community expressed during the consultative process. This included providing support for women, targeting youth, assisting seniors and also considering the needs of Aboriginal males. The role of mobility both within the city and between the city and rural and northern areas was also highlighted as remaining an area of critical concern. The literature also emphasized that the response by the Aboriginal community has been tremendous, with one report pegging the number of services currently targeting Aboriginal persons at just over 240, with half being delivered by Aboriginal run organizations.

The following points highlight some of the report's main findings.

## The Aboriginal Community in Winnipeg

- Winnipeg's Aboriginal community is growing and as of the 2006 Census, nearly 64,000 Aboriginal persons resided in the city;

- For the first time in history, Manitoba's Aboriginal community reached 50% urban and growing; and

- It is highly likely that the Winnipeg's Aboriginal population will reach 100,000 in the coming decades, making the need for programs and supports critical, especially housing.

## The Consultation Process

The Aboriginal community was clear in that they want to be heard and be an active part of the ongoing UAS in Winnipeg.

- The attempt at trying to prioritize needs was difficult as many expressed that ranking one issue over another was less important than taking a more holistic approach to program and support delivery;
- The delivery of services and supports right in the neighbourhood was seen as critical; and
- Funding initiatives were seen as needing to be long term as opposed to short term so as to allow programs to grow and respond to needs.

## Process Issues

Participants talked about the process in which the UAS could engage the Aboriginal community such as:

- Making all processes as open and transparent as possible;
- Including as many community voices as possible; and
- Hosting open community sessions to continue the dialogues started.

## Guiding Principles

There was much discussion around how the UAS should conduct itself with the following guiding principles offered:

- Cooperation, partnerships, and networking;
- Broad communication in plain language;
- Cultural grounding and sensitivity;
- Fair processes, flexibility, balanced and equal, no hidden agendas;
- Connect past programming to future programming;
- Holistic approach and programming;

- Evolutionary, ensure continuation and stability of the UAS;
- Needs based and people/individual focused;
- Community owned and driven; and
- Commitment to undertake community engagement processes.

## Guiding Framework

A guiding framework was developed that attempted to capture the intent of the sessions. The framework included key areas such as:

- Holistic and Cultural Programming;
- Mentorship and Partnerships; and
- Community and UAS Processes.

A conclusion of this report is that this is only the first step in a longer process that actively engages the community throughout the next five years.

"Create flexible guidelines for Aboriginal organizations that reflect organizational needs."

"The UAS should have two committees, one for funding and one for appeals."

"An inner-governance model will give accountability to the community."

# Introduction and Overview

Over a period extending from September 2007 to January 2008, a series of consultations were held with Winnipeg's Aboriginal community. The purpose of these consultations was to inform the Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians (OFI) on the development of a five year strategy document that would allow programming in Winnipeg to be delivered through the local Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) office. The sessions were also intended to identify ways in which the Winnipeg UAS office, through its own processes, could better engage with the community in delivering programming and support in order to build on the momentum that had been gained over previous years. Thus this document is only one piece of a broader process of engagement in Winnipeg and one that will continue to evolve.

"Rebuilding our communities and families have longer positive effects as opposed to short-term training."

To undertake these discussions and to develop this strategy document, it was determined that a series of "opportunities to participate" would be needed in order to accommodate as many participants as possible; this included hosting a combination of focus groups, stakeholder sessions, and community forums. This approach resulted in some 400 persons giving of their time so as to share both the successes and challenges facing Winnipeg's Aboriginal community while also helping to establish program direction that the UAS could consider as they too move forward. Perhaps a starting point that encapsulates this five year journey are the words of one participant who stated "rebuilding our communities and families have longer positive effects as opposed to short-term training."

Throughout this document readers will see, prominently, the comments, quotes and the direction given by the participants who ultimately crafted this strategy. Perhaps one of the most important outcomes of this process was that it was not based so much on setting or establishing priorities in the sense that one issue outweighed another, more so, the strategy evolved to form a set of principles and ideals. It is from this foundation that the Winnipeg UAS can draw from and adapt to move forward on setting a course of action for funding initiatives, building relationships and contributing to positive change in Winnipeg over the next five years.

Prior to the development of the Winnipeg UAS and before the consultations within the community commenced, it was deemed critical to establish guiding principles that would set the process within a positive framework, and one that would involve the input, support and the confidence of the Aboriginal community. This included building relationships and partnerships among the other levels of government while involving the business community, community based organizations and other key stakeholders. This process resulted in the establishment of the following values that guided researchers which included:

- Transparency to ensure effective community engagement and accountability;
- Ensuring grassroots representation and participation at all stages;
- Respecting the knowledge and leadership of Aboriginal persons;
- Ensuring a broad and deep engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders;
- Participation of participants in a respectful environment of mutual trust and shared power;
- Acknowledgement that information gathered is from an ever-changing environment that may impact understanding of issues;
- Capacity-building and engaging Aboriginal youth; and
- Clearly articulating a research strategy that provides a road map for the planning process which embraces indigenous research methods.

Each point above was carefully considered and respected throughout this process with an understanding that engaging the community on sensitive issues required an equally sensitive approach to allow participants the necessary level of comfort from which to share their thoughts and stories. While many of these stories highlighted the strengths of the community, it was those participants who dug deeper and shared, with the research team, the challenges they faced that required a special understanding. Therefore, too a special thanks goes out to those who shared and contributed to the development of this document and as one person added “we need to talk about ourselves from a position of strength.”

“We need to talk about ourselves from a position of strength.”

# The Research and Consultation Processes

This document, as noted, was not only framed around the guiding principles but also through the input and support of a committee comprised of members of the Aboriginal Partnership Committee (APC).* It was under the support of this APC subcommittee and UAS staff in Winnipeg that this project undertook the following tasks:

## Delivering Focus Groups

- Undertaking "hosted" focus groups at service provider locations (attracting 100 participants);
- Ensuring the participation of a range of persons including, seniors , youth, and community members and leaders;
- Providing where possible light supper;
- Ensuring confidentiality of participants and having a drop box available for additional comments;
- Providing participants with a UAS background information sheet; and
- Inviting focus groups participants to the broader community events.

## Undertaking Stakeholder Sessions

- Focusing on service provision;
- Focusing on training, jobs and entrepreneurship;
- Providing approximately 100 persons with an opportunity to contribute;
- Ensuring confidentiality of participants and having a drop box available for additional comments;
- Providing participants with a UAS background information sheet; and
- Confidential drop box was available.

* See also page 11 for further discussion relating to the APC and its members as of January 2008.

## Facilitating Community Forums

- Two forums were held at the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre with approximately 200 persons attending;
- Providing a broad introduction and smaller priority tables set up;
- Offering opportunity to 10 Youth Ambassadors to assist and support the process;
- Ensuring that Ojibway and Cree Interpreters were available;
- Opening prayers offered by Elders ;
- Including an Opening Drum Ceremony;
- Providing a Stew & Bannock meal;
- Offering child minders and children's activity areas;
- Providing participants with a UAS background information sheet; and
- Confidential drop box was available.

## The Opportunities to Participate

Developing the Winnipeg UAS document would not have been possible without the willing participation of the Aboriginal community. To ensure that a broad range of persons had the opportunity to contribute, a significant amount of time was spent on this phase to build a sense of trust, especially for the focus groups that were hosted by community based organizations. As in all sessions, members of the research team worked diligently to provide a comfortable setting, and one of mutual respect in which all participants felt welcomed and listened to and as one participant stated "community wants to be informed, heard and have a voice in the process."

"Community wants to be informed, heard and have a voice in the process."

Seeking input also involved significant effort (canvassing, posters and media) to ensure that as many people as possible were made aware of the broader consultation processes and the various ways in which to contribute. As noted, three distinct phases were used to seek input: focus groups, stakeholder sessions and larger community forums.

To gain the needed community-wide exposure, a strategic campaign was developed and consisted of:

- Creating posters and handbills for the events that were placed in various community offices and in locations throughout Winnipeg;
- An email campaign using AMIK and the IUS Community Link;
- Personal phone calls to various groups and organizations using an Aboriginal Directory;
- Radio spots announcing the larger community event were purchased from Native Communications Incorporated;
- Print advertisements were placed in two local papers (The Drum and the Grassroots News); and
- A final set of announcements were made through word of mouth and by other organizations that thoughtfully forwarded messages about getting involved in the process.

"Have more youth talking to government directly – we are most affected."

It is important to note that the focus group sessions were held at community based organizations. It was these organizations that played a central role in ensuring that participants were on hand to discuss issues and share thoughts. Moreover, it was also through the strong relationships established in this phase of the research that youth participants were invited to serve as support staff for the larger community events. This provided an excellent opportunity for 10 youth to be part of the planning and delivery of two community forums. Youth also welcomed the call to participate and were clear in wanting to "have more youth talking to government directly – we are most affected."

Remuneration was offered to the focus group participants to thank them for their time and effort and also to the Aboriginal youth who assisted in the community forums. As well, and as a sign of respect, Certificates of Appreciation were prepared and framed for each youth member.

As was noted, two stakeholder sessions were held with service providers and with organizations that more specifically focused on training, jobs and entrepreneurial efforts. The process for attracting participation at both stakeholder sessions was more

targeted and included personal calls and an e-mail campaign. Both sessions were held at a central location and they were structured around small facilitated group discussions.

The two Community forums also served as more than just opportunities to share stories and to seek input on the UAS document, they were also used as a means to celebrate Aboriginal culture and to bring people together. While the recruitment of participants was gained through the techniques noted above, the events themselves served as central parts of this document's development. First, they allowed Aboriginal youth to be part of the process. At both events, youth ambassadors provided an extra hand in helping to set up the room, assist with events, serve food and be active in the community. These events also allowed the community to celebrate as drummers, dancers and a Hoop Dancer provided entertainment. At both the December 5, 2007 and January 10, 2008 sessions, participants were greeted by UAS staff and Aboriginal Partnership Committee members. Elders were asked to offer an opening prayer which was followed by drum songs. Food was then served by students from a local restaurant that has an attached Aboriginal cooking school. It was these students that not only prepared the meals (traditional stew and bannock) but also attended the event, set up the food, and served participants.

"We know what the problems are, we just need the resources."

The first Community Forum was geared toward gaining knowledge, with approximately 100 persons attending and breaking into smaller groups following the opening prayer and drum song. The second Community Forum was focused on responding back to the community with an update on the research. It was also at this event that participants had the opportunity to ask further questions and to celebrate. In all, some 200 persons were given a chance to provide thoughts, hear about the findings of the report and share in a great expression of culture that took place at the December 5, 2007 and January 10, 2008 2008 events.

It was through these three steps and processes that the Aboriginal community was encouraged to lead this journey and help the following document emerge to assist the UAS in developing a Winnipeg response to the National UAS priorities. Along the way of this journey many recognized that this was merely the first step

* Please See Appendix A for a copy of the participant package materials.

and that the relationships and dialogues that had been started must continue to be nurtured through an open and accessible means and grounding this process in the Aboriginal community was central as it became clear in the words of one attendee who said “we know what the problems are, we just need the resources.”

# Document Outline

This document begins by providing background to the national priorities of the UAS followed by the UAS efforts taking place in Winnipeg. The remaining sections provide background on the national UAS priorities which were used to set the context and the limitations of the Winnipeg response. Following this, an overview of the history of the Winnipeg UAS is offered to shed light on the types of initiatives that have been funded. To provide some additional background material, a brief review of Winnipeg’s Aboriginal community is then explored with an emphasis on service and program delivery in the city.

The final sections of this document then shifts to exploring the results of the consultation process and end with offering thought on how to move forward with the UAS Winnipeg Strategy.

# The Urban Aboriginal Strategy

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy was developed to respond to the needs facing Aboriginal people living in Canadian cities. Winnipeg and Thompson are the two communities that are part of the UAS in Manitoba. It is through the UAS that the Government of Canada partners with other levels of governments, businesses, community organizations and Aboriginal community members to support strategies and projects that respond to local priorities. According to the UAS information website, over 300 pilot projects were funded between 2003 and 2006. A positive outcome of these projects is that, on average, most leveraged $1.10 in additional funding from partners for every $1 of UAS funding. However, in Winnipeg this was then doubled with $2.36 in additional funding leveraged from other partners for every $1.*

* See also http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/interloc/uas/index-eng.asp

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy began in the late 90's through discussions between the Government of Canada and stakeholders. Initially, the goal was to determine the issues for urban Aboriginal people and understand what activities were taking place to address these issues. In 2003, the Government of Canada introduced funding to support the development of community committees to steer activities in a number of cities in western Canada. This included funding to test solutions and create partnerships. The Pilot Phase ended in March 2007 and beginning in April 2007, the Government of Canada announced an investment of $68.5M over five years into UAS designated communities.

> "Partnerships take time to build and we get caught up in seeking funding."

# The UAS National Priorities

The aim of the UAS is to help people gain more choice and independence in their lives. To accomplish this, the UAS focuses investments in three priority areas:

## Improving Life Skills

By working with partners to encourage Aboriginal youth to remain in or return to school, to help Aboriginal learners relocating into cities from other communities, and to encourage a wide range of learning opportunities that meet the community's needs.

## Examples may include:

- Mentorship programs;
- Summer and other special camps;
- Transition services for students and families; and
- Leadership programs, etc.

## Promoting Jobs, Training and Entrepreneurship

By bringing partners together to fill gaps in programming and to remove barriers that prevent access to quality, lasting and well-paying employment.

* See also http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/interloc/uas/index-eng.asp

## Examples may include:

- Training programs including literacy and essential skills;
- Increasing opportunities for Aboriginal employees; and
- Supports to enable more Aboriginal participation in trades and other areas of the community's labour shortages, etc.

## Supporting Aboriginal Women, Children and Families

By working with partners to reduce the number of families living in poverty and providing transitional supports to families that have moved into the city; and to prevent women, children and families from being victims of crime or from entering a life of crime.

## Examples may include:

- Traditional and other counselling services to rebuild self-esteem;
- Encourage positive life choices through culture; and
- Education and skills training, etc.

"People should be the focus of all programming."

"Basic needs must be met especially for children 0-5 - housing, food, clothing, utilities, medical and pre-natal care."

# Goals of the UAS

The development of the three national priorities also included the development of a set of goals from which programs could strive to include. These goals included:

- Increased and strengthened partnerships to address urban Aboriginal issues;
- Enhanced leveraging of investments from partners;
- Increased intergovernmental collaboration in urban areas, specific socio-economic performance indicators and measurements developed in collaboration with provinces, municipalities and Aboriginal organizations to track progression strategic investments;
- Improved outcomes in the areas of education, employment and business development for urban Aboriginal people; a reduction of Aboriginal women, children and families living in poverty and targets of these circumstances;
- Strategic management of Aboriginal issues locally;
- Increased federal responsiveness to community needs; and
- More local research and interest on urban Aboriginal issues.

The above goals remain important to the development of the Winnipeg UAS document and helped to establish the framework used to engage the community.

# The UAS in Winnipeg

The UAS in Manitoba dates back more than a decade with programming initially coordinated by Western Economic Diversification (WED). In 2003, the UAS received an infusion of $25 million nationally to be spent over a three year period. Between 1998 and 2006, some 80 projects were funded in Manitoba.* In their 2006 evaluation report, Alderson-Gill & Associates concluded that in Winnipeg “the UAS is viewed across the board as an innovative and extremely important initiative” (p.19). What the evaluation did note is that the UAS and the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement (WPA)** seemed to be causing confusion in the community with overlapping jurisdiction and unclear plans and objectives. Despite what might be called growing pains, the report did conclude that the Winnipeg based projects were well received and that “project funding under the UAS/WPA has brought considerable tangible benefit to Winnipeg’s Aboriginal community, mainly through new and enhanced services” (p.20).

* See Urban Aboriginal Strategy in Manitoba: Final Evaluation Report (Alderson –Gill Associates Consulting Inc.).

# The Aboriginal Partnership Committee (APC)

As was noted in the previous section, the role of the APC was central to the development of this strategy document in providing key support and guidance. Through working with this committee and its resident Elder, various aspects of the research were enhanced and strengthened through their careful input. The APC is important in offering recommendations on the UAS and for policies and programs for addressing urban Aboriginal issues in the long term. The APC also continues to drive this strategy forward and remains active in many aspects of the UAS.

**Table1**
**Members of the APC (January 2008)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Annetta Armstrong** | Community | **Bruce Miller** | United Way |
| **Marileen Bartlett** | Community | **Marie Bouchard** | Winnipeg Foundation |
| **Angie Bruce** | Community | **Darren Ramsay** | Province of Manitoba |
| **Katherine Morrisseau Sinclair** | Community | **Rhonda Forgues** | City of Winnipeg |
| **Diane Roussin** | Community | **Cynthia Foreman** | Government of Canada |
| **Colynda Beardy** | Youth | **Jules Lavalle** | Elder |
| **Vacant** | Youth | **2 Business Seats** | vacant |
| **Ron Chartrand** | Winnipeg Métis Association | **Rita Lynn Emerson** | Mothers of Red Nations |
| **Keely Tenfingers** | Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs | **Wayne Helgason** | Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg |

* For more information on the WPA see http://www.winnipegpartnership.mb.ca/

# Winnipeg's Aboriginal Community: Strengths and Challenges

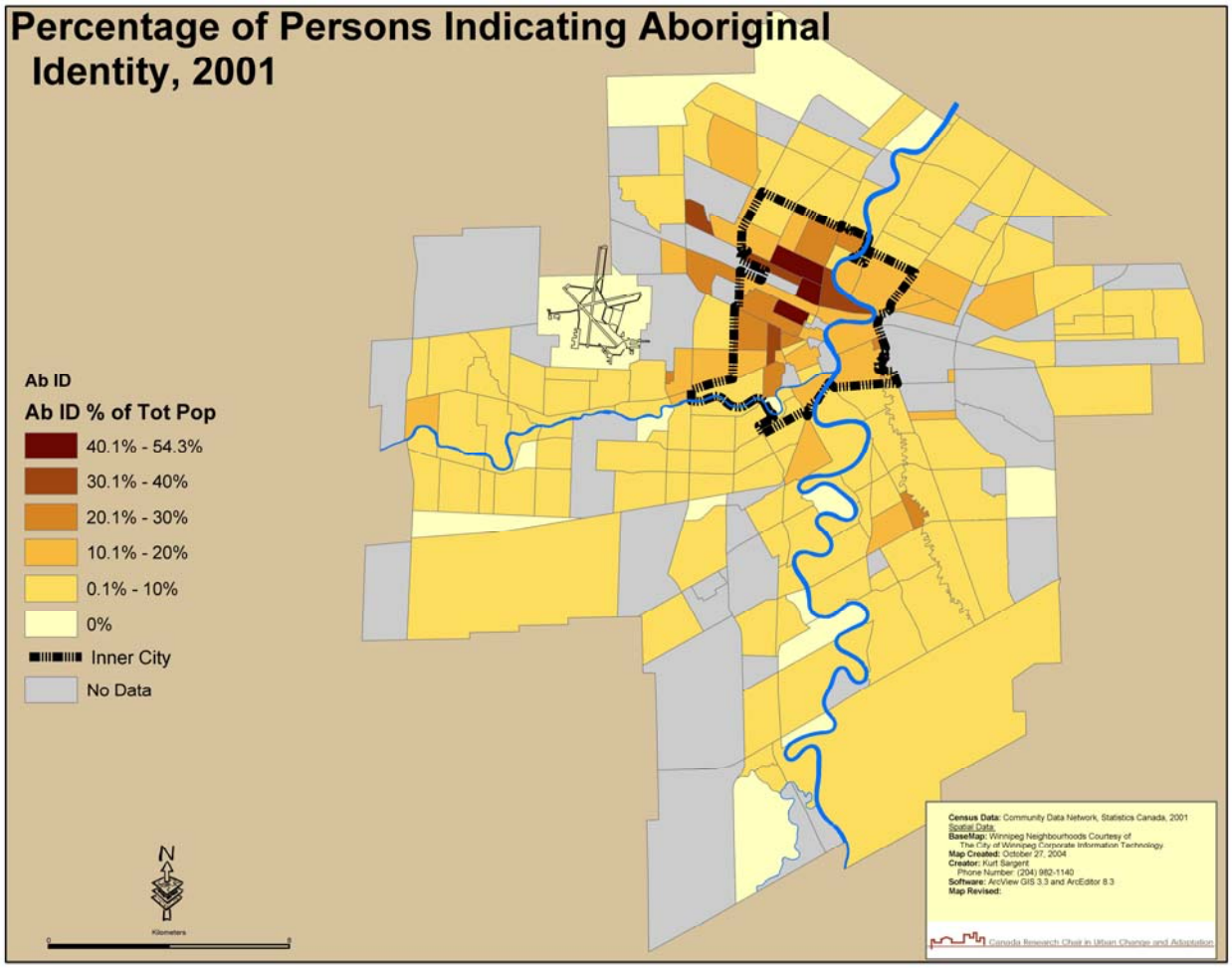
The following section examines Winnipeg's Aboriginal community through the lens of population characteristics, migration patterns and service use and needs. The materials drawn together in this section comprise a cross-section of the work that has been done in the community. The intent is to compare the included materials with the priorities of the UAS and the findings of the community consultations at the conclusion of the report.

## Demographic Change

Winnipeg remains home to Canada's largest urban Aboriginal population with 63,380 persons identifying as Aboriginal as of the 2006 Census. Along with a growing Winnipeg population, the latest data also indicate that Manitoba, with an Aboriginal population of 175,395, makes up 15% of the total population of the province which is the highest in Canada. The data also reveal a much younger Aboriginal population with Manitoba's median age being 24 compared to nearly 40 for the non-Aboriginal population.*

The population numbers in Manitoba show another trend on the rise and that is more Aboriginal persons are living in cities. This changing dynamic has meant that for the first time in history 50% of Manitoba's Aboriginal population are urban, up from 47% in 2001. With the movement into cities accelerating, the ensuing growth and changing demographics have contributed to acute policy challenges, especially with respect to housing. As of 2006, 16% of the Aboriginal population lived in crowded dwellings compared to just 2% for non-Aboriginal households. Even more telling is the condition of housing in the province that has resulted in 11% of non-Aboriginal households residing in dwellings requiring major repairs while for Aboriginal households this number skyrockets to 25%. An important characteristic of the Aboriginal population is that of geographic location of where persons are living in Winnipeg. As the following map displays, persons of Aboriginal Identity are in all parts of the city (see Map One). While this map is based on 2001 data, the pattern of settlement shows a wide distribution throughout Winnipeg although there is a marked concentration in the inner city.

* See Census Media Release "2006 Census: Canada's Aboriginal population surpasses one million; more than one in 10 Manitobans Identifies as Aboriginal Persons." (Accessed January 20, 2008, www.census2006.ca




Clearly, the preliminary results of the 2006 Census for both Manitoba and Winnipeg indicate: a younger Aboriginal population; a growing urban concentration; and one that continues to struggle to find adequate shelter. In looking forward to the coming decades, the housing challenges of Aboriginal persons in Winnipeg will become even more pronounced as an increasing population is likely to place more stress on programs and services if things go unchecked. To this point, the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics predicts that the Winnipeg Aboriginal population will reach 92,000 by 2026. The expected rate of growth is 2.1% which is much higher than Manitoba's overall rate of just 0.8%.*

* See http://www.gov.mb.ca/aboutmb/statistics for more details.

The implications of potentially adding another 28,620 Aboriginal persons in Winnipeg by 2026 should be looked at as being a tremendous asset for the city as labour shortages will undoubtedly result in many opportunities for this growing population. To this point Mendelson (2004) and Brunnen (2003) both concur on the importance of seeking active ways to engage the Aboriginal community in the labour market with Mendelson stating "Aboriginal employment should be of concern not only to Aboriginal Canadians and those interested in social equity…Aboriginal success in Canada's labour market is, or should be, of great interest to all Canadians" (p. 1). To achieve success in matching the growing needs of the Aboriginal community to the labour market by putting in place the programs and supports to ensure ready access to the necessary training and education. Mendelson stresses that the investment in Aboriginal children is critical as the dollars spent now are bound to pay off in the future (p.38). Furthermore, with the 2006 data confirming that housing and basic needs remain problematic, the coming decades will continue to look to the UAS and other mechanisms to provide a supportive framework to ensure growth and opportunity.

While the 2006 Census is not fully available at the time of this report, the following table presents 2001 data that compare Winnipeg's Aboriginal community to the city. As can be seen from the data, the Aboriginal population is younger (0-14 years of age), have overall lower education attainment for both high school and university completion, have higher levels of unemployment (13% compared to 6%) and lower incomes. Despite these challenges, the comparison of labour force occupation characteristics display a strong and varied skill set. In a complimentary report published by the United Way (2004), an environmental scan of Winnipeg's Aboriginal community was completed and pointed out not only the same set of challenges but also highlighted the many exciting changes that were underway. The following points illustrate some of the positive findings described in the Eagle's Eye View:

- Labour force participation rates, unemployment rates and education levels of Aboriginal persons all improved over 1996;
- The rates of self-employed Aboriginal persons increased;
- Aboriginal persons own and operation more that 1000 businesses in Manitoba; and
- Aboriginal adults 25-44 years of age were twice as likely to attend school full time in 2001 as adults who were not Aboriginal.

## Table 2
## Socio-Economic and Employment Characteristics
## 2001 Census Profile

| Socio-Economic Characteristics | Aboriginal Population N = 58,785 % | Total Population N = 610,450 % |
|---|---|---|
| *Gender* | | |
| Male | 46.9 | 48.5 |
| Female | 53.1 | 51.5 |
| *Age* | | |
| 0-14 years | 33.9 | 19.1 |
| 15-24 years | 17.1 | 13.8 |
| 25-34 years | 16.5 | 14.0 |
| 35-44 years | 14.9 | 16.4 |
| 45-54 years | 10.5 | 14.5 |
| 55+ | 7.1 | 22.1 |
| *Level of Education* | | |
| Less than Grade 9 | 9.2 | 7.8 |
| Grade 9-13 no certificate | 35.2 | 20.4 |
| Grade 9-13 certificate | 10.3 | 11.7 |
| Trades certificate/diploma | 2.5 | 11.1 |
| Other non-university | 24.1 | 21.2 |
| University | 18.6 | 27.8 |
| % Moved 1 Year Prior to Census | 28.3 | 15.1 |
| % Moved 5 Years Prior to Census | 64.4 | 42.3 |
| *% With Post-Secondary Qualifications* | 31.7 | 47.2 |
| *Labour Force Activity (15 and over)* | | |
| Participation Rate | 67.0 | 68.0 |
| Unemployment Rate | 58.0 | 64.0 |
| Unemployment Rate | 13.0 | 6.0 |
| *Labour Force by Occupation (15 and over)* | | |
| Management | 6.4 | 9.5 |
| Business, Finance and Administration | 19.9 | 20.5 |
| Natural and applied sciences | 3.5 | 5.7 |
| Health | 4.6 | 6.7 |
| Social Science, Education, Government | 8.4 | 8.5 |
| Art, Culture, Recreation, Sport | 2.5 | 2.7 |
| Sales and Services | 28.5 | 25.3 |
| Trades, Transport, Equipment Operators | 17.0 | 13.1 |
| Primary Industry | 1.5 | 0.9 |
| Processing, Manufacturing | 7.6 | 7.2 |
| *Total Income (15 and over)* | | |
| Without Income | 6.4 | 3.5 |
| Less than $10,000 | 30.8 | 20.7 |
| $10,000 – $19,999 | 24.6 | 22.8 |
| $20,000 - $29,999 | 15.7 | 17.7 |
| $30,000 - $39,999 | 10.9 | 13.6 |
| $40,000 and over | 11.6 | 21.7 |

## Aboriginal Women

Aboriginal women do face multiple burdens, including poor health status, poverty, violence, substance abuse, and lack of child care. Employment Income Assistance is the primary source of income for single mother families in Canada (National Council of Welfare, 2001), it is particularly difficult for women with pre-school children to participate in the labour force or attend formal schooling as daycare is expensive and often unattainable.

**Female participants in the UAS focus groups remarked that daycares in Winnipeg are hard to find and those facilities that they were aware of have very long wait lists.**

| Table 3<br>Aboriginal Identity Female Lone Parent Households 2001 | Winnipeg (CMA)* |
|---|---|
| Total Population | 322,135 |
| Total Aboriginal Identity Population | 55,760 |
| Total Female Aboriginal Identity Population | 29,715 |
| Total Aboriginal Identity Lone Parent Family Households | 5,865 |
| Total Female Aboriginal Identity Lone Parent Family Household | 5,105 |
| % Total Aboriginal Identity Lone Parent Households: Headed by Females | 87% |

Source: Aboriginal Population Profile, Statistics Canada: 2001
* CMA's refers to geographical areas where the urban population exceeds 100,000 persons.

Aboriginal females have relatively high rates of low income. The 2003 statistics show that 38% had incomes which fell below the after-tax LICO* compared to 7% of under 65 years of age of two-parent families (Statistics Canada, 2006).

In addition, systemic barriers exist for some women who want to pursue educational attainment. One participant said that an Employment Income Assistance (EIA) worker told her that "If you are eligible for school you are eligible for work." Without safe, affordable housing, subsidized day care, and adequate social assistance, education is clearly out of reach for impoverished single mother-led families.

"If you are eligible for school you are eligible for work."

There are distinct issues for some First Nations women who migrate to large urban areas. Many of these women relocate to urban centres where they are confronted with hardships, especially if they have no support of extended family or friends (Distasio *et al., 2006).* Aboriginal women who experience marriage breakdown while residing on a reserve have further burdens.** For example, women and children may be forced to leave their matrimonial homes, and the reserve, because they have no legal claim to occupy the family residence.

For some women, remaining in a home where violence is occurring is often the only choice because of the lack of alternatives (Mann, 2005). In large urban areas, Aboriginal women between 25-44 years of age are five times more likely to die of violence than non-Aboriginal women. In the document, ***Canada: Stolen Sisters* *** it was revealed that more than five hundred Aboriginal women have gone missing or have been murdered in the past thirty years in Canada. In addition, Aboriginal women often do not report incidences of violence to the police because of high degrees of suspicion of the legal system.

* LICO refers to low-income cut-off lines. For more information see http://www.ccsd.ca/pr/lico00aj.htm

** Unlike other women in Canada, First Nations women have no right to certain assets when their marriage breaks down. Provincial and territorial matrimonial laws do not apply to real property on reserves resulting from The Indian Act*, which gives the federal government exclusive law making authority over "Indians, and Lands reserved for Indians." Real property refers to land or things attached to it, such as a house.

The Domestic Violence Support Service and the Domestic Violence Intervention Unit are two major provincial initiatives to curb or support victims of domestic violence. The Domestic Violence Support Service helps victims of domestic violence when criminal charges have been laid or may be laid against their partners. They also help to develop protection plans to increase the personal safety of the victims. In 2006-07, they serviced 4,780 victims in Manitoba (Manitoba Justice Annual Report, 2006-07). The Domestic Violence Intervention Unit was established in 2006 and offers supports to families who receive police services for domestic violence incidences that occur in Winnipeg, but that did not result in charges or arrest. In 2006-2007 this department responded to 9,578 matters (Manitoba Justice Annual Report, 2006-07).

## Aboriginal Youth

In Winnipeg, there is a strong association between homelessness and youth in care in the child welfare system as youth are not adequately prepared for or supported when they move out of care. In 2006, the Child's Advocate released a document highlighting the transitioning of youth from the Manitoba Child and Family Services System and reports that almost 1,600 will be aging out of the child and family services system in Manitoba in the next three years. Most of the youth are of Aboriginal descent and a significant number have a diagnosed disability, (70% are Aboriginal and 28% have a disability). In general, youth leaving care have limited education, lack of employment skills and they have a challenge with finding a sense of belonging (Serge, *et al,* 2004).

The Office of the Children's Advocate looked at the child and family services death review between 2003 and 2006 and found that 24 children died of suicide in care, all but one was Aboriginal. They were all between the ages 16 and 17 years living in foster care homes at the time, 60% of the youth were male and a considerable number were thought to have FASD (The Office of the Children's Advocate, 2006).

In 2000, the Department of Justice held a series of Talking Circles with youth to determine the incarceration rates and found an over-representation of Aboriginal youth in custody. They found that 39% of those who participated were involved with child protection agencies at the time of their admission. Just under half (47%) of Aboriginal youth lived in a family that received social assistance as a primary source of income (Department of Justice, 2004). They also discovered that most Aboriginal youth are convicted of their first offence between the ages of 12 and 14 years of age.

The average daily youth custody population of Manitoba increased to 219 in 2006-2007 from 198 the previous year (Department of Justice Annual Report, 2006-07). The Province of Manitoba is responding to youth that need additional resources and programming. Table 7 highlights some of these recent key initiatives.

| Table 4<br>Programs Targeted towards Youth: Province of Manitoba | |
|---|---|
| **Youth Justice Committees** | Approximately sixty Youth Justice Committees operated across the province with five-hundred volunteer committee members administering community justice measures that provide crime prevention and community education services within the community (Department of Justice, 2006-07). |
| **The Lighthouse Program** | The Lighthouse Program helps young Manitobans and makes use of schools' recreational centers and other community facilities outside school hours for sports, art, music and such. There are 31 funded lighthouse sites in Winnipeg and 14 sites in rural Manitoba. An expansion of two prevention programs for youth "Light Houses" and "Turn About" for those under age 12 who have come into conflict with the law (Manitoba Justice Annual Report, 2006-07). |
| **Independent Living Program** | The Independent Living Program has two components, the Individual Preparation and a Life Skills Group. Youth that go to these programs are referred to by social workers, once the youth approach the age of majority, (which means that the youth must be between the ages of 16 to 18 years of age). Between May 2005 and September 2006, close to 90 youth were referred to the Independent Living Program. Supports include finding a place to live, purchasing furniture and locating household supplies. They also support the youth in continuing with an education program or preparing for employment, how to manage in the community and teaching basic life skills. They monitor the youth's progress and provide assistance after the youth reaches the age of majority (Manitoba Family Services and Housing, 2006-07). |
| **Gang Suppression and Prevention Initiative: Spot Light** | In 2006, a new Gang Suppression and Prevention Initiative called Spot Light was implemented. This program is designed to combine close supervision and swift consequences with collaborative community services to help youth deal with substance abuse, stay in school and find a job. It is also part of a three-pronged approach to reduce youth gang activity in the province. This strategy involves prevention, intervention, and suppression initiatives (Manitoba Justice Annual Report, 2006-07). |
| **Circle of Care Initiative** | This initiative aims to increase the number of available foster care spaces by 300 in 2006-2007 and in October 2006 the province announced a 6.1 million dollar strategy that will see rates for foster parents increase more than 23% over 14 months, which started in January 2007 (Manitoba Family Services and Housing, 2006-07). |
| **Youth Drug Stabilization** | In 2006, the Youth Drug Stabilization Support for Parent's Act was incorporated. The Act helps parents deal with a child who has a serious drug problem. The parents can apply to have the young person taken to a safe and secure facility for up to seven days. At this time the child will have their condition assessed and will be stabilized and a plan for treating the drug use will be developed (Manitoba Health and Healthy Living, 2006-07). |

## Aboriginal Seniors

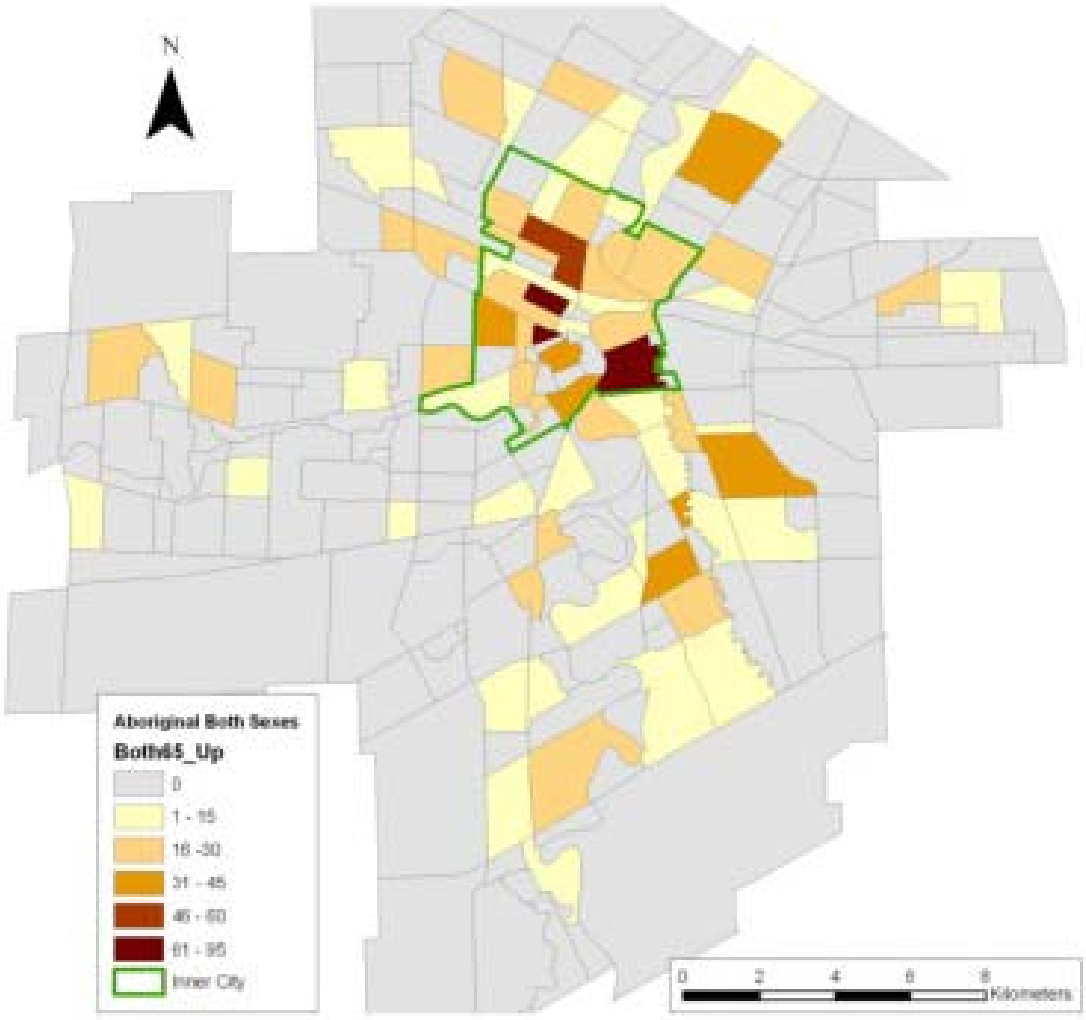
Aboriginal seniors are respected for their knowledge and experiences as Aboriginal people have traditionally turned to their Elders as vital sources of knowledge, wisdom, and cultural continuity. In Winnipeg, there are 4,240 Aboriginal seniors aged 55 plus, the majority of which are living on limited incomes and are paying more than 30% of their income for shelter. Their incomes are often low because of the amount paid towards Canadian Pension Plan contributions prior from retiring from employment activities. This is especially true of elderly Aboriginal women because the majority have spent their pre-retirement years working as homemakers, which did not allow for CPP contributions.

"Old Age Pension should go up and don't penalize us due to marital status."

In 2007, the Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat of Manitoba commissioned the Institute of Urban Studies to explore the issues and challenges facing Aboriginal seniors in their effort to find and maintain safe and adequate housing and to explore their financial capabilities in relationship to their housing needs. During the sessions many seniors called for an advocate for senior's housing to interpret laws, rules and regulations; give updates; check into shelter allowance; and provide a list of existing resources for Aboriginal housing. The overall sense of the Aboriginal seniors in attendance was that currently their voice is not being heard and that equally no one is listening.

"We need support and funding for home improvements for homeowners."

"We need continued funding for places such as the Aboriginal Senior Resources Centre."




**Aboriginal Persons Aged 55 and Older: Winnipeg, Manitoba**

# Challenges and Opportunities

There has been no shortage of research and scholarly work examining the urban Aboriginal situation in Canadian cities and by no means could this report include a full review. More so, the following sections simply provide a basic selection of pertinent materials in hopes that it can draw attention to the areas of need and strength that the community has identified. For example, In a study conducted by Ekos Research Associates (2005), the authors examined the situation facing urban Aboriginal populations in large Canadian cities and comment:

> "Reflecting the significance of socioeconomic status, Aboriginal people living in large cities face many of the same basic challenges as non-Aboriginal people (e.g., employment, affordable housing, education/skills acquisition and childcare are lacking). There is also a desire among many to pursue self-employment/start a business. Racism often makes dealing with these challenges more difficult" (p.26).

The work of Ekos Research Associates shed light on the challenges facing Aboriginal populations but note that these issues are heightened by concerns of racism. Their work also confirms that migration into cities presents a fundamental policy challenge. The work of Silver et al (2006) examined Winnipeg's Aboriginal community in their report aptly titled "In a Voice of their Own: Urban Aboriginal Community Development." This report focused on community development and issues facing the inner city. It clearly acknowledged that the Aboriginal community has "developed the intellectual foundations of a workable model of inner city community development by and for Aboriginal people" (p.2). In interviews with some 26 community practitioners, the findings suggest that a holistic approach is needed to community development that must begin with the individual.

## Mobility and Migration

The data from both the 2001 and 2006 Censuses pointed to an increasing urban Aboriginal population in Winnipeg. The outcome of this growth presents a number of distinct policy challenges. First, for persons arriving in Winnipeg, the need for programs and supports are critical, and second, to fully understand the present situation it is also essential to trace the historical factors that have influenced migration to cities as well as the subsequent pattern within cities once persons arrive.

Since the 1950s, the settlement patterns of Aboriginal peoples in Canada have changed dramatically. While in 1951 only seven per cent of the Indigenous population lived in cities, by 2001, the proportion of urban Aboriginals had increased to 49 per cent (Newhouse & Peters, 2003). According to Norris and Clatworthy (2003), the main issue of Aboriginal mobility is not the redistribution of the population, but rather, the residential change that occurs frequently both between reserves and cities and within cities.

According to Newbold (2004), Indigenous mobility and its conceptualization are ultimately different from that of the general population. The Indigenous populations of first world countries (including Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada) share a common history of oppression, racism and discrimination that has created the context for the unique movements of Aboriginal peoples between their traditional homelands and modern metropolitan centres. Amongst these Indigenous groups, post-war migration to urban centres has been countered by a sustained presence in rural settlements and Indigenous lands. These distinct geographies have created high levels of mobility amongst Aboriginal peoples with population churn between cities and reserve and rural settlements. Specifically, a system of circular mobility involving both urban and rural contexts has been identified as a unique characteristic of Aboriginal demography (Taylor & Bell, 2004).

It is high levels of mobility that characterize Aboriginal people in Canada. Using census data, several authors have focused on the rates of absolute net migration and demonstrated, in general, First peoples are more mobile than the non-Aboriginal population. For example, in the twelve months prior to the 2001 Census, one in five Aboriginal people moved compared to one in seven for the general Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2003). In particular, it is movement to and from reserves, and within the rural-urban hierarchy that is of importance to the geographical dimensions of Aboriginal migration.

The high mobility of First Nations people in the rural-urban hierarchy suggests that, as a point of both origin and destination, reserves represent a unique set of push and pull factors that encourage the “churn” phenomenon (Norris, Cooke & Clatworthy, 2003). Migration from the reserve is generally the result of push factors related to high population growth and poor quality housing and overcrowding on reserves, and the inability of the economic base to support the existing Aboriginal population (Frideres, 1998). It is commonly believed that the primary reason for migration from reserves to

cities is to search for employment. However, the 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey demonstrated that the major reasons for migration were family and housing, regardless of destination, followed by education in the case of leaving reserves. It is particularly significant that, in contrast to rural-urban migration, employment was much more likely to be a reason for moving between urban communities (Norris & Clatworthy, 2003).

High mobility rates may also have serious consequences for the stability and well-being of Aboriginal individuals and communities. The fact that Aboriginal Canadians relocate more frequently than other Canadians is indicative that programming and services are not addressing the needs of the First Nations population. As Taylor and Bell (1999) have suggested, the frequent movement of many Indigenous persons hinders their ability to participate and perform in education, training and subsequent engagement in the labour market. Therefore, it is important to evaluate further the migration of Aboriginal persons and the context of mobility in relation to labour force participation. However, it is difficult to fully examine the circumstances of the Aboriginal population as a result of the limitations of existing data sources.

## Local Examinations of Migration and Mobility

A detailed examination of the migration into Winnipeg was completed by the Institute of Urban Studies (2004) and raised a similar set of challenges by noting that while many Aboriginal persons moved into the city for personal reasons or to pursue upgrading and education, the biggest obstacle they faced on day one was finding adequate shelter. To this point the ***First Nations, Métis and Inuit Mobility Study*** report was based on 1350 interviews with Aboriginal persons who had recently moved to Winnipeg and it tracked persons over a three year period. During the course of this study it was determined that approximately half of the participants were unable to find a place of their own, despite repeated efforts.

This situation, which was referred to as hidden homelessness, reflected a housing industry in Winnipeg that was incapable of dealing with the shelter needs of not only recently arriving Aboriginal persons but also those who had remained in the city for nearly three years.*

* Hidden homelessness generally refers to the lack of access to a permanent and secure form of housing. This includes person living in temporary conditions (with friends or family) or relying on the use of shelters or other temporary options.

What is also important about this study is that it examined the ways in which Aboriginal persons used and found key services. A finding was that there appeared to be an adequate number of services and that those most effective services were located within close proximately to the neighbourhood. Also, unique was that the manner in which people found services was not primarily by traditional means but more by word of mouth, walking by or referral as opposed to media or pamphlets. The Mobility Study offered some important recommendations that called for:

- Increased information delivery mechanisms, especially for persons arriving into the city but lacking knowledge of existing supports and services;
- Creating supports to help people remain in Winnipeg (employment and training opportunities) and better housing;
- Expanding services to include more transitional support (from reserve to urban setting);
- Providing more Aboriginal services and workers;
- Providing more cultural awareness training; and
- Consideration for the relocation of some services outside of the inner city to meet growing needs in other neighbourhoods.

In a 2005 follow-up study completed by IUS that focused specifically on hidden homelessness in prairie cities (Regina, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg) a similar set of findings was observed. * The purpose of this study was to understand the shelter circumstances of Aboriginal persons in prairie cities in order to better conceptualize hidden homelessness. This study discussed that the problems associated with a rapidly rising urban population who are finding the adjustment to the urban environment is fraught with problems and obstacles. The outcome was a tremendous amount of movement within each city itself and also between urban centres and rural or reserve locations.

* See Report: *Home is where the heart is at, and right now that is nowhere: An Examination of Hidden Homelessness among Aboriginal Persons in Prairie Cities.* (download at www.ius.uwinnipeg.ca)

The recommendations of the Hidden Homeless report were oriented around the following:

- Furthering the understanding of the complex movement between urban and rural settings and adjusting services and supports accordingly;
- Providing more shelter supports for transitional housing as well as long term options;
- Supporting the informal networks that exist within the Aboriginal community that provide shelter and care to family and friends; and
- Curbing the waitlists for housing through the establishment of a continuum of care model that helps persons through their shelter journey.

The Mobility Study and the Hidden Homeless report attempted to highlight both the needs of Aboriginal persons as well as the tremendous outreach of organizations trying to curb the housing crisis that continues to be experienced by many Aboriginal persons in urban settings.

In response to the unique needs of Aboriginal persons migrating to Winnipeg, The Eagle Urban Transition Centre began operation in the downtown in 2005 with the mandate to "address mobility and transitional issues arising from the movement of First Nation and Aboriginal persons moving into or within the City of Winnipeg" (p.1). In this report prepared by the Eagle Transition Centre and titled "You're Not Alone" the results of a service provider forum were summarized. What the report concluded was that despite "80 different urban Aboriginal programs delivered by various government departments…jurisdictional issues between the three levels of government may be contributing to the ineffectiveness and lack of far-reaching scope of programs and services that Aboriginal people residing in and moving to the City of Winnipeg need" (p.40). The Eagle Transition Centre Report included a number of important recommendations such as:

- Increasing partnerships and networking among service providers;
- Increasing the number of service provider forums;
- Providing a one stop shop for information; and
- Providing a central phone number for new residents to call.

The studies noted in this section raised issues that have and continue to be faced by Aboriginal persons residing in or moving to urban settings. However, what is also important to discuss is the response by community based organizations and others to provide the supports and services needed to not only facilitate the transition to urban centres but also to ensure that all persons have access to adequate supports.

# Trends in Winnipeg: A Snapshot of Government Programming and Community Resiliency

The previous sections attempted to shed light on the needs of Winnipeg's urban Aboriginal community through a broad overview of key literature and data. This section shifts the focus to the role of both government and community based organizations in responding to the overwhelming need for shelter and related support services. By no means does this section present an inventory of programs or policies, moreover, it merely highlights activities in key sectors. In order to ground the discussion, programs and services relating primarily to housing and transitional support are examined.

The response by all three levels of government has been extensive with respect to dealing with urban issues in Canadian cities, with much work over the last 10 years focusing primarily on housing and homelessness. In looking across the various programs, it is difficult to gain a full appreciation of the breath and range of such initiatives. However, perhaps a good start is the Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative (SCPI) that was developed in 1999 in response to mounting concerns raised by Canadians to deal with the homeless situation that peaked in the 1990s. SCPI was a Federal government initiative launched with a budget of $753 million and a three year window that was subsequently extended. SCPI was envisioned as the cornerstone of the Government of Canada's strategy to deal with absolute homelessness and Winnipeg became one of the ten cities included in the first wave of funding. SCPI funding also required a local delivery mechanism which resulted in the establishment of the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI).

The WHHI was to evolve into a “single window” access point for housing programs and supports being delivered by the three levels of government. This tripartite delivery mechanism was seen as the means by which to ease the inter-governmental bureaucracy by concentrating services in one location. The WHHI’s mandate has been to address housing and homelessness in Winnipeg by focusing on the deteriorated housing stock in target inner city neighbourhoods.* At the governmental level, WHHI has significant partnerships that make the delivery model work effectively and include:

- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC);
- City of Winnipeg Planning and Property Development;
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC);
- Manitoba Family Services and Housing, and Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation;
- National Homelessness Initiative; and
- Service Canada.

From its inception in 2000, the WHHI has delivered housing programs with the mandate of addressing housing and homelessness in Winnipeg by focusing on the deteriorated housing stock in target inner city neighbourhoods. The result of this has been the commitment of some $83 million dollars and the building or rehabilitation of some 3500 units.

Since 1999, the SCIPI model evolved to now form the Homelessness Partnership Strategy (HPS) with Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson each producing Community Plan Updates (CPU). In the three CPU’s, the challenges, needs and tools to address homelessness in each community were developed through a comprehensive consultation process. The outcome was the development of a CPU to determine how to allocate federal funding designated to each community.

“Stop funding mainstream programs, Aboriginal community programs are not resourced.”

* http://www.whhi.ca/home.htm

It is also important to note that the HPS process also designated specific money for Winnipeg's Aboriginal community. The Manitoba CPUs contained several common issues including:

- More affordable housing;
- An increase in income assistance rates;
- Increased information sharing;
- Operational and long-term funding;
- Expanded emergency shelter beds;
- Development and expansion of transitional housing programs;
- Expansion of supported housing for those who require ongoing support due to physical or mental disabilities and specialized services to provide for the special needs of those with co-occurring disorders; and
- The continuation of funding to existing programs.

Recognizing the importance of housing, the UAS partnered with Service Canada and supplied the Manitoba Urban Native Housing Association with funding so they could develop a housing plan. Their membership consists of 14 housing corporations (7 in Winnipeg) and they have reported that there is a wait list for 4,000 Aboriginal families. Home ownership is also a topic that has recently received attention, for example, a housing partnership between the Manitoba Real Estate Association (MREA) and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs has been implemented in early 2008. The Manitoba Tipi Mitawa Program is for First Nations people who live in urban centres in Manitoba and is designed to provide an opportunity for homeownership.

While the Province of Manitoba contributes to the WHHI model above, it also created several initiatives with significant investments geared toward improving access to affordable housing and eliminating homelessness. In the following tables program details from Provincial initiatives are displayed. What is evident in these tables is that there is a comprehensive set of policies and programs that cover many key areas.

| Table 5<br>Provincial Programs Related to Homelessness and Community Development in Manitoba | |
|---|---|
| **Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI)** | Provincial, territorial and municipal governments and supports programs related to emergency shelters, transitional supportive housing and prevention. |
| **Regional Homelessness Fund** | Supports small and rural communities experiencing homelessness in their local areas. Provides funding and support to proposals primarily from communities not funded by SCPI. |
| **Urban Aboriginal Homelessness Initiative (UAH)** | Provides flexibility to meet the needs through culturally sensitive services to assist those Aboriginal persons experiencing homelessness. |
| **The Northern Housing Strategy** | Partnership between MHRC and northern/Aboriginal organizations, to develop a strategic approach to address housing needs in the North. |
| **Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative** | Transforms surplus federal property into facilities that serve homeless people or those at risk at homelessness. |
| **The Homeless Individuals and Families Information Support System (HIFIS)** | The establishment of a community driven national information system for shelter service providers. |
| **The National Research Program** | To help create an understanding of the causes of homelessness in Canada. |
| **The Winnipeg Partnership Agreement** | To promote long-term sustainable community and economic development in the City of Winnipeg. |
| **Urban Strategic Initiatives** | Policies and programs in support of urban revitalization, downtown renewal and community economic development in the City of Winnipeg. |
| **Urban Community Economic Development** | Provides an urban redevelopment policy framework for the provincial investment in strategic downtown revitalization projects and economic community development initiatives in the City of Winnipeg. |

Source: Manitoba Family Services and Housing, 2008.

"We should be working on healing our families and preparing people...this is a priority."

| Table 6<br>Four Pillar Program<br>Manitoba Low Income Housing Strategy | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Pillar One: Homeworks!** | • Inner city revitalization<br>• Older Manitobans<br>• Urban Aboriginals<br>• Northern Manitoba<br>• Homeless Manitobans | $104.5 million |
| **Pillar Two: Foundations** | • Unit renovations<br>• Supportive housing new playgrounds<br>• Enhanced security<br>• Co-op and rent to own<br>• Community empowerment | $76.2 million |
| **Pillar Three: A Roof Over Each Head** | • Emergency and transitional<br>• Shelter for homeless | $3.9 million |
| **Pillar Four: Home Renovation Programs** | • F/P renovation<br>• Residential<br>• Rehabilitation Assistance Program<br>• Home Adaptations for senior's initiative<br>• Emergency repair<br>• Shelter enhancement program | $4.0 million |
| **Total** | | **$188.6 million** |

Source: Manitoba Family Services and Housing, 2008.

The City of Winnipeg also remains an active partner in the WHHI model and has also moved forward on issues by releasing a report which was adopted by Council titled First Steps: Municipal Aboriginal Pathways.* According to the City, the report "is an action-oriented policy framework that represents the City of Winnipeg's explicit commitment to establish a progressive new partnership with Winnipeg's Aboriginal community to address key cultural, demographic, and socio-economic challenges." The report confirms that "Council has committed the City to develop 15 specific strategic initiatives within five policy pathways to address employment, safety, economic development, quality of life and outreach and education."

All three levels of government have responded in Manitoba and Winnipeg to deal with a range of housing and social issues. What this section detailed is that much work is underway and much more needs to be done. At the Federal level, the UAS, which was detailed in a previous section, has reconfirmed its commitment while the new HPS saw detailed community plan updates undertaken in Manitoba centres including Winnipeg.

The province of Manitoba has also earmarked significant funding to urban Aboriginal persons through a range of programs and supports. Lastly, the City of Winnipeg continues to develop politicises and support tools while also contributing to the WHHI delivery model as well as other strategic initiatives.

# Community Resiliency

Winnipeg's Aboriginal community continues to expand in the number of agencies and support services offered in the city. The result has been a growing offering of programs and supports that include such areas as housing, education and training, and culture to name but a few. In a report authored by Leskiw and Associates (2007), a comprehensive examination of Aboriginal services provided in Winnipeg was undertaken. What the report attempted to accomplish was to "map" these services using a variety of unique techniques. For example, much of the information in the report is oriented around the sustainable livelihood framework. According to the report, this framework identifies and "graphically illustrates where individual services fit along a continuum of human service needs and expectations….these needs and expectations range from basic needs to the building of assets" (p.7).

The report by Leskiw and Associates also identified the services in Winnipeg servicing the Aboriginal community and calculated that there were an estimated 243 such organizations with a "slight majority of the services that are available for the Aboriginal population (52%), are provided through Aboriginal service providers" (p.11). The report also examined the 243 services inventoried by a number of factors with the following being some key highlights:

- Personal development, health and well-being and family oriented services along with shelter and culture and heritage where the most frequent type of service; and
- Of the target groups, seniors and adult men had the least number of specific services.

Overall the report concludes that there is solid range of services available for Aboriginal person in Winnipeg but those focusing on adult men and seniors could use expansion. A key conclusion is that project based funding is having an impact on service providers in that they have to continually rely on this type of funding for survival and this is "taxing the resources and administration of service

organizations" (p.23). The report also noted that there was a geographic concentration of service located in Winnipeg's inner city and in particular, clustered around Higgins and Main and along Selkirk, while also acknowledging the need to consider locations outside of the inner city and downtown for future locations.

While Leskiw and Associate's report examined the distribution of Aboriginal based services in Winnipeg, the Mobility Study, tracked the use of services and supports in the community over a three year period (1,350 surveys). This report is useful in that respondents provided detailed accounts of the types of services that were needed and their overall satisfaction with those services. A key issue that was flagged in the Mobility Study was that services and supports were needed at two critical junctures: when respondents initially arrived in Winnipeg, and subsequently, while they remained. But what cannot be emphasized enough is the importance of housing. In the Mobility Study and in other studies, the availability of shelter forms the most important need for many Aboriginal persons, especially those arriving in the city for the first time.

The following points and table were drawn directly from sections of the Mobility Study that focuses on services:

- Of the services currently being accessed, it is estimated that nearly 20% were delivered by Aboriginal agencies;

- An informal referral network among service providers was central in connecting people to the support they needed;

- This "grassroots" network is based on the extensive knowledge of staff and their keen awareness of the services and supports existing within the community but not necessarily related to their organization;

- The majority of respondents rely on word of mouth or referrals, and to a less extent walk-bys, to find the services they are currently accessing; and

- Nearly 70% of respondents relied on friends and family to provide informal support in some capacity with 60% indicating that housing was being provided.

The following table presents the most frequently accessed services by type. As can be seen the most frequently accessed services for respondents were social services, employment, medical and education. The table also shows that the average respondent in the survey was using in excess of one service at the time of each survey.

**Table7**
**Proportion of Respondents Accessing Service Types, Survey 1, 2 and 3**
**Percentages**

| Services Types | Survey 1 | Survey 2 | Survey3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Social Services** | 32.5 | 32.6 | 31.9 |
| **Employment Services** | 21 | 20.9 | 25 |
| **Medical Services** | 13.7 | 13.9 | 14.4 |
| **Education Services** | 11.9 | 11.9 | 8.2 |
| **Housing Services** | 5.5 | 5.3 | 3.8 |
| **Support Services** | 4.8 | 4.8 | 5.3 |
| **Aboriginal Services** | 3.4 | 3.2 | 3.8 |
| **Transportation Services** | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.6 |
| **Legal Services** | 2.1 | 2.1 | 1.6 |
| **Services for children** | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.3 |
| **Recreation Services** | 0.7 | 0.7 | 1.5 |
| **Church Services** | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.7 |
| **Total Percent** | **100** | **100** | **100** |
| **Total Services Used** | **563** | **561** | **549** |
| **Services Per Person** | **1.58** | **1.57** | **1.54** |

As one of the National UAS pillars is seeking to promote entrepreneurialship, training and employment, it is worthwhile to review literacy in Manitoba and the relationship to Aboriginal world views. The Manitoba's Adult Literacy Act will come into effect on Jan. 1, 2009. This act is the first of its kind in Canada and will steer efforts to improve adult literacy levels across the province. Public consultations to develop a new adult literacy strategy taking place throughout Manitoba will conclude in the summer of 2008 (Province of Manitoba News release, April 14, 2008). The goal of the act is to formalize in law the governance of the current adult literacy program and refines the criteria for funding, program standards and student outcomes.

Executive Director of (NILA),* Doug Bartlett, expressed concerns with the literacy movement in relation to persons of Aboriginal descent in Winnipeg by stating the following passage:

> "Of concern with the literacy movement here in Winnipeg is the attempt by various levels of government to ingrain accreditation and such measurements into literacy. In the Aboriginal community, acceptances by the community of literacy programs are based on the accomplishments of the learners. If Aboriginal learners are comfortable with what they have received from any given Aboriginal literacy program then it is seen to be successful. The Provincial Act, again, attempts to measure Aboriginal people and programs from inside the box when history has taught us that this is not always the most appropriate method of measurement. I believe the Provincial Literacy Act should not require programs to be in existence to be able to access any available resources."

Mendelson (2004:38) asserts that literacy and numeracy are essential for employment and will remain so in the future. He questions whether good literacy and numeracy programs are available in correctional facilities, especially for young offenders. The following table highlights current initiatives by the Province of Manitoba geared towards literacy and pre-employment training.

**Table 8:**
**Programs for Participants who are in Receipt of Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) Benefits in Manitoba**

| Literacy and Upgrading and ESL | Building Independence: Pre-Employment Training |
|---|---|
| ARGYLE Alternative High School | AIM For Work, Selkirk |
| Aboriginal Community Campus, CAHRD | Artbeat Studio Inc. Bridges to Employment Pre-employment/Literacy |
| Academic English Program for University & College Entrance | Canadian Paraplegic Association, CPA |
| Adolescent Parent Centre (APC) | Career Connections |
| Adult Basic Education, Thompson | Churchill Resource Centre, Churchill |
| Adult Basic Education, Urban Training Circle Inc. | Clubhouse of Wpg Inc. |
| Adult ESL Centre (Day Program) | College Preparation Phase II, War Lake (Ilford) |

Source: The Building Independence Resource Directory

* The Winnipeg office of the National Indigenous Literacy Association (NILA) promotes the need for recognition and further development of distinct Aboriginal approaches to literacy education, reflecting environmental concerns and the need to preserve traditional Indigenous wisdom and knowledge practices.

The purpose of this section was to explore both government based program as well as providing an overview of service offered and accessed in Winnipeg. On the government program side much work is and has been done. As for services being currently offered to the Aboriginal community, the work of Leskiw and Associates highlighted that there has been an increasing number offered with more than half being run by Aboriginal based organizations. This finding is important and confirms that more Aboriginal based agencies are providing services. This report also confirmed that project based funding is problematic. In a similar manner, the mobility study which tracked service use among recently arriving Aboriginal persons also determined that there is a good range of services.

"Have more youth talking directly to government…"

"They should ask us what we need!"

"More assistance for the disabled."

# Community Consultation

The materials comprising this section are drawn from a series of consultations held in Winnipeg. All told, there were fifteen “opportunities to participate” that extended between the fall of 2007 and early 2008. The first session was with the Federal Interdepartmental Working Group at the Sky Lodge in the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada building. An additional eight focus groups were held as were two targeted sessions with services providers that represented the UAS national priority areas. In addition, a community forum was held at the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre, drawing in more than 100 participants. Participants at this event were welcomed by UAS staff with an overview of the project and then small group discussions took place around each priority area. Facilitators, recorders and Aboriginal youth were on hand to help ensure that the event was a success.

Also in December, a strategic strategy session was held with the APC to discuss the findings to date and set a course of action for finalizing the report. The outcome of this full-day session was a refinement of the priority areas (as presented in this section) as well as determining an agenda for the final community engagement event which was held in early January of 2008. It was at this final event that the APC and UAS presented to over 100 community members the findings to date and the objectives for moving forward with the UAS Winnipeg Strategy.

## The Community Sessions

The two service provider sessions were held with approximately fifty organization members attending to discuss the three national priorities. Both sessions were widely advertised and were open to all providers. The first session focused on service delivery and included a wide range of organizations, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. The second service provider session focused on promoting jobs, training and entrepreneurship and sought ways to build people’s skills to access quality employment options and find ways to create greater opportunities such as; bringing partners together to fill gaps, removing barriers to access employment, creating opportunities and responding with supports.

# Organizations that Participated in Consultation Process

(for those who signed in at reception area)

- A.L.M.
- Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce
- Aboriginal Council of Manitoba
- Aboriginal Focus Programs: University of Manitoba
- Aboriginal Seniors Resources Centre
- Aboriginal Women's Canadian Labour Force
- Academy of Learning
- ACM
- ACWE Justice
- ACWI Social Work Student
- ALW
- AMC
- ANA
- Artic Co-ops
- C.L.O.U.T.
- CAHRD
- Catholic Health Corporation of Manitoba
- CDPI
- CEDA
- City of Winnipeg
- Community Spirit Training Centre
- Congress of Aboriginal Persons
- COW
- Eagle Spirit Singers
- Eagle Transition Centre
- Elizabeth Fry Society
- Hand of Hope
- Home Based Crisis Intervention
- Indian Friendship and Métis Centre
- Inner City Aboriginal Neighbours
- John Howard's Society
- Kani Ki Kanichihk
- Knox Central Park
- LRCC
- M.A.P.A.
- M.I.C.E.C.
- Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre
- Manitoba Child Care Program
- Manitoba Justice/Community Justice
- Manitoba Métis Federation
- Manitoba Urban Native Housing Association
- Mothers of Red Nations
- Mount Carmel Clinic
- NACC
- Native Women's Transition Centre
- NDC
- Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc.
- NECRC
- NECRC/LSP Resource Centre
- NECW
- New Directions
- North End Women's Training Centre
- NWTC
- Oyate Tipi
- Patal Vocational School
- Province of Manitoba
- Red River Community College
- SEED Winnipeg
- Siloam Mission
- Social Planning Council of Winnipeg
- Success Skills Centre
- The FACT Coalition
- TWF
- United Way of Winnipeg
- University of Winnipeg Global College
- Wahbung
- Wechetowin
- White Buffalo Spiritual Society
- Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative
- Winnipeg Partnership Agreement
- Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
- Women's Directorate, Manitoba Government

"community wants to be informed, heard, and have a voice in the process."

The focus groups were facilitated by the IUS research team and two members from the Aboriginal community. Where possible, the focus groups where hosted in the community by various agencies that also assisted the project team in securing participants. These sessions proved essential in capturing the voices of seniors, youth, women and men and are listed below. Each session was attended by 10 – 12 persons or just over 100 in total and included the following:

- Paa Pii Wak
- Urban Training Circle Inc.
- South East Tribal Council
- Inner City Aboriginal Neighbours
- North End Women's Transition Centre
- Aboriginal Seniors Resources Centre
- C.L.O.U.T.
- Federal Interdepartmental Working Group
- Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre (Youth)
- Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc. (Youth)

All of the information gathered from the consultation was again reviewed by the project team and the APC in early December and then brought back to the community on January 10th, at the Indian Friendship Métis Centre where all of the consultation processes and information was reviewed. The Aboriginal Partnership Committee was on hand to respond to concerns, criticisms and questions. It should be noted that at all events, a confidential drop box was available for those who wished to share their words in private. Also, the IUS team encouraged submissions from any-one or group who wished to share their viewpoints and perspectives, which would have been included in the final document.

"There is opportunity with the Aboriginal Employees Unit, the mentorship and all that is so important."

As has been noted throughout, approximately 400 participants contributed to the process of developing the UAS Winnipeg Strategy document. Over the course of this work, many consultations were held and included a combination of community members, government officials, business leaders and local organizations who shared not only their knowledge but also helped inform this report in a reciprocal manner…that is…we learned from each other. In the end, much was uncovered not only about the needs of the community but also the processes needed to achieve and affect change. The community was also adamant in that while many issues rang out loudly among participants, there was a reluctance to rank one priority or need higher than another. What was clear is that "community wants to be informed, heard, and have a voice in the process."

"Look at services that work within the community."

"Short-term funding is not enough…"

To this point, it was felt that while a range of issues were flagged; they could not be prioritized as they were all considered to be interconnected and valued equally by participants. Perhaps this approach was grounded more in the belief of a holistic model of community engagement and that all the work being done deserved equal attention to which one person said "rebuilding community is the answer."

More important than prioritizing issues and processes was the repeated request for services to be delivered in the neighbourhoods themselves. It was strongly felt that locating in the community was the best place to reach those in need of support but as one stated "look at services that work within the community." Related to this was a second overriding comment and that was that existing programs and services being provided in the community must be recognized for their long term contribution and that while national priorities may have changed, the UAS must remain committed to those successes that have already been achieved and that "short-term funding is not enough…longer term…three to five year plans."

"Rebuilding community is the answer."

# The Community's Response

The following section draws out the consistent messages and themes that emerged along the way. An attempt has been made to group the findings into what might be called areas of consideration. While there is no ranking of the issues captured, what does emerge is a set of approaches that are embodied within a framework that can help move the strategy forward.

In the first section, thought was offered on the processes needed for the UAS Winnipeg Strategy. As the points highlight, participants welcomed more accessibility to programs and hoped for transparency in the process. The points also cover issues that participants felt important including not only getting more people engaged but also planning for long term succession. A process for the UAS to consider was framed by one person who stated "government needs to be a part of the Aboriginal process and understand the relationships."

"Government needs to be a part of the Aboriginal process and understand the relationships."

## Processes for the UAS

- Examine program criteria to ensure that it is not limiting;
- Make improvements in communication and transparency;
- Accessibility of community members to become part of the process;
- Lobby for increases in funding;
- Establish an external appeal committee;
- Examine committee processes/governance structures and look for promising practices elsewhere;
- Create succession planning for Aboriginal based agencies and board members;
- Consideration of more holistic approaches to programs and operations; and
- Long term programming.

"Mentorship programming is not working, no consistency."

A second area of consideration was that many called for consistency in the manner in which work and projects were to be conducted. This related to developing a set of guiding principles, and as the list below shows, it was about building on the positive relationships and processes. It was also about making a strong statement that work being done was community-driven, holistic and fair. Again, it is in these guiding principles that community members hoped funding decisions and direction would evolve with respect to approving projects and in the management of the UAS Winnipeg Strategy. With respect to this, one person offered the following comment "the UAS has to be fair and do what is good for the community."

"The UAS has to be fair and do what is good for the community."

## Guiding Principles for the UAS

- Cooperation, partnerships, and networking;
- Broad communication in plain language;
- Cultural grounding and sensitivity;
- Fair processes, flexibility, balanced and equal, no hidden agendas;
- Connect past programming to future programming;
- Holistic approach and programming;
- Evolutionary, ensure continuation and stability of the UAS;
- Needs based and people/individual focused;
- Community owned and driven; and
- Commitment to undertake community engagement processes.

"Training needs to be looked at in a holistic way."

"Aboriginal people need to take ownership of programs."

# Themes Emerging from the Community Consultations

In addition to setting the UAS Winnipeg Strategy within the processes and guiding principles noted above, a further set of themes were drawn from the consultative processes. The following eight areas speak to the key issues and approaches that were most often talked about in the sessions and range from holistic programming to how the UAS should consult with the community (See Table 10, page 46). The points also speak more to the need to consider the ways in which the community draws support than what actually to support in the way of specific program areas. In fact, one comment that stands out is that the UAS should work to ensure "….more community ownership, more heart."

"….more community ownership, more heart."

In respect to the first two areas, Holistic Programming and Cultural Grounding, many stated that these were foundational components and that supporting culture in many aspects (events, training and awareness) was important. Furthermore, taking a more holistic approach to funding and delivering programs was also essential and this had to consider traditional principles as well as the sharing of supports and resources. In short, the Aboriginal community expressed a strong desire to take ownership of issues and determine the best course of action to achieve positive outcomes. Many offered meaningful comments to this point such as "training needs to be looked at in a holistic way" and "Aboriginal people need to take ownership of programs."

"Create less paperwork for applications… criteria should be easier."

In looking at Mentorship and Partnerships, it was recognized that for the UAS to be most effective, employment, education and training had to be part of the process. But to do this many pointed to the tools needed such as on the job training or more roles for youth. What was also considered important was the need to follow up with persons after training was completed. The feeling was that programs should include post program components to provide ongoing support. Participants also recognized the importance of partnerships between government, community and the private sector. Within these partnerships there was also a strong recognition that to affect change, grassroots and youth must be front and centre, with one person offering "we need partnerships that work and understand our community better" while another cautioned that "partnerships take time to build, but get caught up in seeking funding."

"We need partnerships that work and understand our community better."

The next two categories focused on programming considerations. It was within these two points that many raised the issues of ensuring accessibility and dealing with complex processes in a more open and effective manner such as "rebuilding communities and families have longer positive effects."

"Programs geared toward youth that include learning about traditions, learning about identity etc."

Participants also confirmed that the National Priorities established by the UAS fit well within the local context as education, training, families and life skills were also areas needing focus and included "training needs to be holistic" or that "more education opportunities will help people succeed." Many talked about the need to support youths as well as seniors but that the biggest challenge remained ongoing funding but also doing so in a balanced manner including having "programs geared toward youth that include learning about traditions, learning about identity etc."

"We should have increased funding for school sponsorship."

"UAS decision making has to be fair and transparent."

The final two points emphasize the process for the UAS to engage community and highlight the need for transparency, accessibility to participant and more opportunities for youth and others to be an active and meaningful partner. In relation to this, it was said that "UAS decision making has to be fair and transparent." Perhaps most important is many recognized the need to ensure that the lines of communication remain open and that people continue to not to only have a voice in the process but one that is heard and listened to in an open and respectful manner. With this in mind one person mentioned "What can we do collectively and work together not just in regard to funding but to the needs of the community."

"Recognize traditional principles."

"Value the outcomes of the work of the organizations."

"Be respectful of the organization's time."

"What can we do collectively and work together not just in regard to funding but to the needs of the community."

| Table 9: Themes from the Community Consultations | |
|---|---|
| **Holistic programming** | • Whole family involvement<br>• Provide a broader range of programming options within programs<br>• Recognize traditional principles<br>• Resource dissemination and sharing |
| **Cultural grounding** | • Cultural events<br>• Cross cultural training<br>• Cultural awareness in schools<br>• Combat racism<br>• Language training<br>• Aboriginal control over resources and programs with adequate funding |
| **Mentorship** | • On the job training<br>• Youth driven programming<br>• Role of employers and educational institutions<br>• Resource guides and accessibility<br>• Post employment follow-ups |
| **Partnerships** | • Build and strengthen partnerships between community, government, and service providers<br>• Lessen competitiveness<br>• Creation of roundtables<br>• Youth advisory groups<br>• Grassroots participation |
| **Programming** | • Increase accessibility<br>• Lessen and relax program and funding criteria<br>• Examine structure of programs to avoid “setting up for failures”<br>• Financial aid for training programs (participants & service providers)<br>• Keep it localized and small to ensure connectivity to community<br>• Recognize current successful programming, support and link to future programming<br>• Transitional programs and supports |
| **Additional UAS Priority Programming Areas** | • Education<br>• Training and employment<br>• Families and communities<br>• Life skills<br>• Seniors – health and safety<br>• Youth – recreation, prevention, and supportive programs |
| **UAS Community Processes** | • More Transparency<br>• Increased accessibility to participate in community planning and decision making<br>• Youth need more realistic opportunities to become engaged e.g., a Youth Council<br>• Seniors need a greater voice |
| **UAS Consultation Processes** | • Provide a respectful environment for all to feel comfortable participating in.<br>• Provide more opportunities to participate such as focus groups, public forums or other events |

# Bringing the Information and Consultation Together

The aim of the report was to provide a basic background on the UAS in Winnipeg, document trends in the literature that examine urban Aboriginal issues and report on the findings of the consultative processes undertaken for this research. Therefore, the overall goal was to produce a report that moved the UAS Winnipeg Strategy forward in a positive manner through the synthesis of multiple sources of information. This section brings these materials and processes together within the framework of the National Urban Aboriginal Strategy priorities.

As was noted, the UAS has three national strategies that include:

- Seeking to improve life skills;
- Promoting jobs, training and entrepreneurship; and
- Supporting Aboriginal women, children and families.

While these three priories are broad in nature, they speak to the needs facing the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg and mirror in many ways what has already been said in previous work. Again, one of the goals of this research was to assess these priorities against the views of the Winnipeg community to provide a local response and policy context for the consideration of the UAS and the APC.

## Improving Life Skills

In looking more closely at the first National priority “improving life skills” the intent was to help Aboriginal persons both in Winnipeg or moving to the city in acquiring the skills and supports they need to make the transition more positive. In the consultations conducted in this report, our findings are consistent with this theme in that many expressed a need for a more holistic approach while also building the cultural awareness of all residents. Our findings also suggest that mentorship and the role of youth in this process must be made core parts of any programming. These themes are also consistent with what the literature told us.

## Promoting Jobs, Training and Entrepreneurship

This priority focuses on filling the gaps and barriers that are preventing access to employment by creating educational opportunities that support Aboriginal participation. This report provided clear support for this priority. Respondents stated that they wanted access to training and employment and this desire was balanced with those wishing to enhance traditional knowledge and learning. Regardless, education and training were seen as being an integral part of moving the UAS Winnipeg strategy forward. Jobs and opportunities where also singled out as areas that youth must become more engaged. This view was echoed in the community forums, focus groups and in the targeted sessions that were held with service providers representing each of the three areas of this priority. This also confirmed the comments drawn from the literature that pointed to the potential advantages in Winnipeg in the coming decade with respect to having the Aboriginal community become a leader in providing access to meet the pending labour shortages.

## Supporting Aboriginal Women, Children and Families

Lifting all Aboriginal persons out of poverty and supporting the movement into cities with all the necessary services and supports must remain a key UAS priority. This priority, above all others, was echoed most in not only the sessions but in the literature and reports cited. As well, what was seen as framing this strategic area was building supports that help foster positive community change so as to ensure Aboriginal women, children and families have the capacity to flourish. This report also overwhelmingly confirmed that this must remain one of the cornerstones as it will undoubtedly help create a better community. Within this priority area, the importance of supporting Aboriginal seniors was also viewed as critical as was further engaging males and youth generally.

"Have grants so we can start small businesses."

# Moving Forward with a Winnipeg Urban Aboriginal Strategy

Overall, many of the 400 persons who shared along the way of writing this report contributed significantly to building a better understanding of the current level of need in Winnipeg. In the words and thoughts they offered, a road map emerged as to how to accomplish this daunting task. What people told us was not only did they want to have their voices heard but they wanted to be listened to and respected. To accomplish this they asked for many things to take place with respect to a process for future engagement. Such a process should strive to include the following issues that were raised in the consultations and comments provided:

- The UAS Winnipeg Strategy should be open and transparent, people want to be able to access the information and people who can help them in their seeking of support…therefore, access to information is central;

- More open and positive public venues for discussion and dialogue with the general community are needed, persons need to be valued for their input and get a sense that their comments and suggestions are taken seriously. This must seek to be as comprehensive as possible and include the voices of not only Aboriginal leaders but also grassroots persons and organizations;

- Key members of the Aboriginal community must also make this process all encompassing, in particular, the voices of youth and seniors and those groups less represented must be more actively sought out for input; and

The manner in which decisions are made must also be as open and transparent as possible. The following comments from service provider organizations stressed the following key points:

- There should be no jurisdictional wrangling with the new UAS;

- The UAS should review other decision-making bodies and adapt themselves to their practices to ensure that decision-making is fair and transparent;

- Administrative and financial reporting to the UAS is cumbersome;

- There should be an appeal process to be implemented within the UAS, one that is external with objective individuals on the appeal committee;
- Core services should be funded under the new UAS;
- Engage in a closer look at services that currently work within the community;
- The UAS should be enhancing current, successful programs and concerns raised over “funding mega projects” within the community;
- Five year investments should be made versus year-to-year funding of projects; and
- The UAS money is not enough.

The process of moving the UAS Winnipeg Strategy forward must also continue to emphasize people and their role in the process and thus more sessions need to draw out the grassroots voices that so often are missed. But in calling on more grass roots participation means ensuring that such dialogues be conducted in an environment that is respectful and that all feel comfortable in contributing to. In relation to this, many simply said they appreciated the opportunities to discuss issues and would welcome more sessions and sessions that sought ways to bring people and organizations together in new partnerships. This was an important assertion by the community and one that supports a finding outlined in a report by Alderson-Gill and Associates (2006) that called for ongoing communication with the community and stated “more, and more effective community consultation is needed both to better inform the broader Aboriginal community and to seek feedback and guidance from the community” (p.20).

Perhaps also useful is to revisit the three national priority areas that were established by the UAS. Under each priority area, a series of indicators appear as do measures. It is perhaps opportune that the UAS along with the APC now set targets for meeting the priorities, while heeding the advice of the community and not ranking issues. For example, under priority two, promoting jobs, training, skills and entrepreneurship, an indicator of "skills development" is listed with the measure being number of Aboriginal individuals receiving job/skills development training. By setting a "measure of success" under this indicator, the community would be able to see that the goal is to have 100 persons supported. Without this level of attention, focus will be lacking and results will be hard to summarize.

While there is no single approach to best address how to move the UAS Winnipeg Strategy forward, what was clear from our peripheral view is that Winnipeg's Aboriginal community must be the leaders in setting the course for the next steps, they must decide on the process and they must devise what is needed to accomplish this task and how success will be measured. What this report did was highlight that the UAS is on the right track with the process of engaging the community, and starting to form the right relationships. Furthermore, the National Priorities presented a set of core issues that require further collaborative effort to alleviate the challenges by seeking to create the opportunities. In the closing pages of the Eagle's Eye View, the authors wrote:

> "This community is young; vibrant; growing; aware of, and successfully addressing, many of the challenges and opportunities it faces. The Aboriginal community has had, is having, and will continue to have a significant and increasing impact on the demographic, economic, cultural, political and social fabric of Winnipeg." (p.66)

If the UAS and its Winnipeg strategy can bring to bear the words echoed in this report, Winnipeg will continue to see great opportunities and dreams realized. Evidence of this is in the 240 plus organizations "mapped" by Leskiw and Associates that highlighted two realities; that while the Aboriginal community still needs many supports and

programs, the Aboriginal community has responded by now providing the majority of those services while also continuing to build on the relationships and partnerships with others in the community. It is building on this strength that will set the stage for a dynamic period that will see 100,000 Aboriginal persons in Winnipeg over the coming years.

# Conclusion and Next Steps

The steps and processes outlined in this report were set within a framework guided and nurtured by Winnipeg's Aboriginal community. It was from the community that we also sought support and insight into developing a Winnipeg response to the National Priorities of the UAS. In answering the call to participate, some 400 people shared their thoughts on the future of the UAS in Winnipeg and the steps needed to make positive changes possible. In the end, what emerged was not a set of priorities but more so this work shed light on a set of guiding principles and considerations for future efforts to consider and embrace and perhaps "…build capacity in our urban Aboriginal community."

"Community based organizations have more value and are more meaningful."

Critical to this process was the community was also clear in saying that one issue did not necessarily outweigh another. What was also evident is that setting as many services and supports within the local neighbourhood and community was key as "community based organizations have more value and are more meaningful" as one participant contended. What also garnered attention was to look back at previous successes and see merit in continuing to fund those initiatives that have already and continue to affect change in the community and "The UAS needs to understand how these other approaches work…and respect approaches that worked."

"The UAS needs to understand how these other approaches work…and respect approaches that worked."

In closing, what is so essential to acknowledge is that as much as this journey was about gathering information and informing the development of a Winnipeg Urban Aboriginal Strategy, it was also about establishing a process that sought to obtain the full and ongoing participation of the Aboriginal community of Winnipeg. To seek participation, this report also engaged people in as many settings as possible. While many voices were heard along the way, many more were missed, and it is to them that this process is most effective as this report does not constitute the last word…more so… it simply took the first step forward in a five year walk. It is therefore fitting to end with the words of one participant who said quite eloquently:

"We Know what the problems are, we just need the resources."

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# Appendice A

URBAN ABORIGINAL STRATEGY
LA STRATÉGIE POUR LES AUTOCHTONES VIVANT EN MILIEU URBAIN

Come out and take part in the five year plan
for the Urban Aboriginal Strategy for Winnipeg

Every-one Welcome!
Complimentary Stew & Bannock!
Child minding and children's activities on-site!

Community Forum and Open House

December 6th, 2007
5 pm to 8 pm

Where? The Indian & Métis Friendship Centre
45 Robinson Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
For more information telephone: 982-1150

URBAN ABORIGINAL STRATEGY
LA STRATÉGIE POUR LES AUTOCHTONES VIVANT EN MILIEU URBAIN

Please join us for...

## Service Provider Forum

Areas for Discussion Include:
* Improving Life Skills
* Promoting Jobs, Training & Entrepreneurship
* Supporting Aboriginal Women, Children & Families

November 16 th, 2007
11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
11:30-12:00 hot buffet lunch provided
Ramada Marlborough Hotel Winnipeg
Marlborough Hall, 8th Floor
331 Smith Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Space is Limited: Reserved Seating Only
Please RSVP by Monday, November 12th, 2007
For more information contact:
Jillian Golby Borsa @ 204-982-1140

Coordinated by The Institute of Urban Studies *in partnership with*
The Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis & Non-Status Indians (OFI) & The Aboriginal Partnership Committee

URBAN ABORIGINAL STRATEGY
LA STRATÉGIE POUR LES AUTOCHTONES VIVANT EN MILIEU URBAIN

## Community Forum & Open House

### Urban Aboriginal Strategy

Come out and take part in the five year plan
for the Urban Aboriginal Strategy for Winnipeg

**December 6th, 2007**
**5 pm to 8 pm**

*Where?* The Indian & Métis Friendship Centre
45 Robinson Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Every-one Welcome!
Complimentary Stew & Bannock!
Child minding and children's activities on-site!

For more information telephone: 982-1150

URBAN ABORIGINAL STRATEGY
LA STRATÉGIE POUR LES AUTOCHTONES VIVANT EN MILIEU URBAIN

Please join us for...

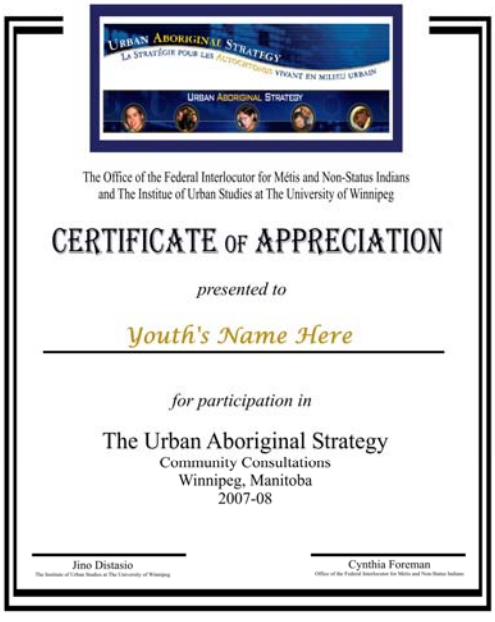
## Urban Aboriginal Strategy Forum

Discussions on:
Promoting Jobs, Training
& Entrepreneurship

Friday, November 23rd, 2007
8:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
8:00-8:30 a.m. hot buffet breakfast provided
Ramada Marlborough Hotel Winnipeg
Devonshire Room, 9th Floor
331 Smith Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Space is Limited: Reserved Seating Only
Please RSVP by Monday, November 20th, 2007
For more information contact:
Jillian Golby Borsa @ 204-982-1140

Coordinated by The Institute of Urban Studies *in partnership with*
The Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis & Non-Status Indians (OFI) & The Aboriginal Partnership Committee




The Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians
and The Institue of Urban Studies at The University of Winnipeg

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

*presented to*

*Youth's Name Here*

*for participation in*

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy
Community Consultations
Winnipeg, Manitoba
2007-08

Jino Distasio
The Institute of Urban Studies at The University of Winnipeg

Cynthia Foreman
Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians