

Emphasizing collaboration and partnership: Calgary Urban Aboriginal Initiative

Given that Canada is one of the most urbanized countries in the world, it should come as no surprise that well over one-half of Canada's Aboriginal people live in urban settings. Two-thirds of the urban Aboriginal population lives in western Canadian cities alone.

Calvin Hanselman, Canada West Foundation, notes in his report *Urban Aboriginal People in Western Canada*, that "Urban Aboriginal people face challenges above and beyond those faced by the non-Aboriginal urban population including lower educational levels, lower labour force participation rates, higher unemployment rates, lower income levels and an over-representation in the criminal justice system, as both victims and offenders. "



While there are plenty of community and government initiatives designed to tackle the different issues experienced by Aboriginal people, the scope and depth of these challenges requires Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities to work comprehensively and collaboratively if we hope to make real progress.

The scores of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations involved in Calgary's Urban Aboriginal Initiative have recognized that they are shaping a unique made-in-Calgary approach that is catching the eye of people and organizations across Canada.

Initiatives of this multisectoral group include:

- An expansion in the volume of community building investments into Calgary's Aboriginal community by facilitating a collaborative granting process that brings together public, philanthropic and corporate funding groups to learn more about programs and service proposals that have been reviewed by CUI domain groups.
- Encouraging the Provincial government to temporarily pay the program costs of Aboriginal persons seeking treatment for substance abuse while several public departments explore longer-term alternatives to the government practice covering only services provided in rural communities or those on reserves.

Learn more about CUI!

- [CUI's History](#)
- [CUI's Committee Model](#)
- [Removing Barriers: A Listening Circle \(Consultation Report\)](#)
- [Urban Aboriginal People in Western Canada: Realities and Policies](#)



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