



Calgary Urban Aboriginal Initiative (CUAI)

Background Information

Vision

Coming together to effect positive change for Calgary's Aboriginal population

Mission

To provide a home for ongoing discussion, coordinated and informed action in support of Calgary Urban Aboriginal issues and initiatives.

History

The Calgary Urban Aboriginal Initiative is a continuation of the "*Listening Circle*" investigative process, which commenced in 1999 with focus groups designed to encourage open communication, free and easy acceptance of suggestions, observations, complaints and anecdotal sharing of information. The *Listening Circle* forum was designed to meet six goals:

- 1) Identify needs, issues and potential solutions around barriers to service and systems access for people of Aboriginal descent.
- 2) Identify challenges, successes and potential solutions for service providers working with urban Aboriginal and Métis communities.
- 3) Engage significant input and involvement from urban Aboriginal and Métis community members.
- 4) Develop a forum that would honour, respect and celebrate Aboriginal traditions.
- 5) Provide an opportunity for members of the Aboriginal and Métis communities to engage in a solution-focused dialogue with service providers.
- 6) Create an opportunity for the development of joint solutions and action plans from issues and barriers identified.

An Overview

CUAI aims to ensure that urban Aboriginal issues are addressed in an efficient manner, in a way that is reflective and supportive of the unique context and culture of Calgary's Aboriginal citizens. Eight domains, or areas of interest, have become the central focus of work being undertaken by CUIAI, these domains are:

- 1) Education
- 2) Employment
- 3) Funding
- 4) Health
- 5) Housing
- 6) Human Rights
- 7) Justice
- 8) Social Services

Each of these "domain groups" are in various stages of development and activity, dependent upon the issues that each domain faces, the stakeholders and community members involved in each domain, and the unique challenges inherent to each domain group.



Calgary Urban Aboriginal Initiative (CUAI)

Background Information

Domain Groups

- φ This model's foundation lies in the concept of strong and representative domain groups. These would include those domains identified through the Listening Circle: health, employment, human rights, services, education, justice, housing, and funding.
- φ The eight domain areas are equally represented and integrated issue sectors.
- φ The domain groups consist of representatives working towards developing projects, programs and initiatives that address issues they identified as well those identified through the Listening Circle process.
- φ This group would also work towards building upon and refining connections, facilitating links to resources, and linking to policy as required.

CUAI Committee

The CUIA Committee exists to build upon and refine connections, facilitate links to resources, and link to policy as required. The duties of this group include:

- φ Initiating stakeholder and community consultations as required.
- φ Establishing the administrative arrangements that will support the development, organization and management of the Calgary Urban Aboriginal Initiative
- φ Providing support, recommendations and facilitation to projects, programs, and initiatives brought forward by the Domain Groups
- φ Link to regional / provincial committee and Deputy Ministers as required

Project Team

- φ The Project Team provides the practical assistance necessary to foster project development within and between all groups mentioned above, and ensures effective communication within and between these groups and the greater community.
- φ The Project Team is comprised of an Implementation Director, and two Community Liaisons.

A Sample Initiatives

- φ CUIA is helping to expand 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 CUIA domain groups.
- φ CUIA members encouraged 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.
- φ CUIA Committee and Domain Groups have expressed their support for the re-establishment of a Calgary Friendship Centre and are maintaining a close connection with the new staff of the Calgary Friendship Centre -- Transitional Office.

Calgary Urban Aboriginal Initiative

Location # 8116 · P.O. Box 2100 · Calgary · Alberta · T2P 2M5

Tel: 403-268-5111

2



Click here to visit the Tamarack website for more engaging content! www.tamarackcommunity.ca