# Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study

## MAIN REPORT

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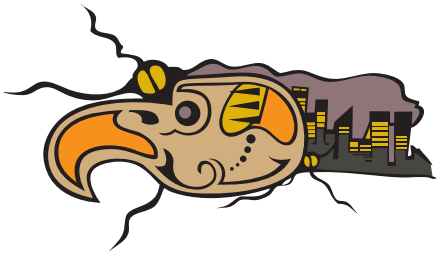

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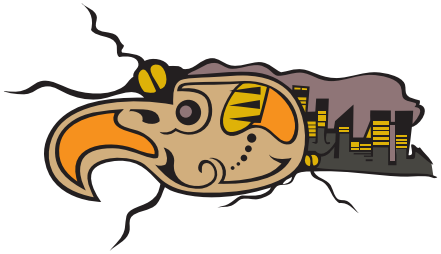

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# Executive Summary

## This report is about the future, not the past

In the 2006 Census, a total of 1,172,790 people in Canada identified themselves as Aboriginal persons, that is, First Nations, Métis or Inuit. As of 2006, half of the Aboriginal population in Canada lived in urban centres (including large cities or census metropolitan areas and smaller urban centres).

Urban Aboriginal peoples (i.e., citizens of larger collectives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples who live in urban centres) are an increasingly significant social, political and economic presence in Canadian cities today – and yet relatively little is known about these individuals' experiences and perspectives. The goal of the *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study (UAPS)* is to understand better this important and growing population. The *UAPS* is different than any other survey of the Aboriginal population. The *UAPS* does not seek to collect a series of economic and social 'facts' about Aboriginal people living in the city. Rather is it an enquiry about the values, experiences, identities and aspirations of urban Aboriginal peoples. How do they see themselves in relation to their communities – both geographically and culturally? Which factors are leading them toward greater success, autonomy and cultural confidence? What are their hopes for the future, their definitions of success? What tools and supports have helped them? What barriers have impeded them?

Another goal of the *UAPS* is to provide opportunities for dialogue among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. Thus, the study also investigated how non-Aboriginal people view Aboriginal people in Canada today. The *UAPS* also encompasses a pilot study measuring the experiences and success in the lives of National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation Scholars who have pursued, or are pursuing, post-secondary education.

## A respectful dialogue

To accomplish its aims, the *UAPS* included three separate research elements.

- First, 2,614 person-to-person interviews were conducted (the "Main" survey) with First Nations peoples (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit in 11 cities across Canada: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Montreal, Toronto, Halifax and Ottawa (Inuit only). These interviews took place between March and October 2009.
- Second, a telephone survey was conducted with 2,501 non-Aboriginal urban Canadians living in these same cities (excluding Ottawa). This occurred from April to May 2009.
- Finally, a pilot on-line survey of 182 current and past National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF) scholars was conducted from June to July 2009.

## The Main survey

The *UAPS* research team worked hard to design a study that demonstrated respect for First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit peoples' reflections on their values, experiences, identities and aspirations.

More than 100 interviewers, almost all of whom were themselves Aboriginal, talked, in-person, with 2,614 First Nations (status and non-status) peoples, Métis and Inuit living in the 11 Canadian cities.

*UAPS* participants came from all walks of life. They included men and women from all educational backgrounds, income levels and age groups. The interview process included some structured questions, but also afforded many opportunities for participants to speak freely about their perceptions and experiences; discussions often ran well beyond an hour in length. All responses were carefully and accurately recorded by the UAPS research teams in each city.

The *UAPS* touched on many topics. These included (but were not limited to): urban Aboriginal peoples' communities of origin; Aboriginal cultures; community belonging; education; work; health; political engagement and activity; justice; relationships with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people; life aspirations and definitions of success; and experiences with discrimination.

Previous studies have tended to view Aboriginal Canadians largely through a "problem lens" – that is, simply as targets for social services. The *UAPS* survey sought to fully capture urban Aboriginal peoples as complex individuals and communities. In doing so, we uncovered a broader range of narratives and scenarios than one typically encounters via the news and other media. Many of the survey findings suggest that Canadian cities are becoming sites of connection, engagement and cultural vitality for a large number of Aboriginal peoples.

Although many segments of First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations in Canada face substantial challenges, the picture in cities is more diverse – and in many cases more hopeful – than public perceptions and media coverage often acknowledge. Some of these more positive narratives are highlighted in the summary of main findings on the following page.

UAPS participants came from all walks of life.

# Main Findings

For many, the city is home. Urban Aboriginal peoples retain a strong sense of connection to their ancestral communities or places of origin. These links are integral to strong family and social ties, and to traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture. Notwithstanding these links, majorities of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit consider their current city of residence *home*, including those who are the first generation of their family to live in the city, and also those who most strongly identify as First Nations peoples, Métis or Inuit.

Within these cities, urban Aboriginal peoples are seeking to become a significant and visible part of the urban landscape. They like living in their cities and majorities feel they can make a positive difference in their urban homes. Notably, they are as likely as non-Aboriginal people to feel this way.

Most urban Aboriginal peoples are likely to feel connected to Aboriginal communities in their cities. More than six in ten of those surveyed said they belonged to a "mostly" Aboriginal or "equally" Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community. This sensibility is particularly strong among First Nations peoples and Inuit, but appears true for Métis in some cities as well.

The nature of urban Aboriginal community varies from city to city. Aboriginal communities in urban areas are not simply transplanted non-urban communities. The importance to urban Aboriginal peoples of particular community ties (i.e., family, neighbours, other Aboriginal peoples, Aboriginal services and organizations, etc.) differs somewhat across cities, suggesting their sense of identity and community is shaped by features of the particular city around them.

The city is a venue for the creative development of Aboriginal culture. One of the most optimistic findings from the *UAPS* is the strong sense of cultural vitality among urban Aboriginal peoples in Canadian cities. By a wide margin, First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit think Aboriginal culture in their communities has become stronger rather than weaker in the last five years. This is particularly true in Toronto and Vancouver, where residents are both more aware of Aboriginal cultural activities in their city and participate in them more frequently.

They like living in their cities a lot and majorities feel they can make a positive difference in their city.

Furthermore, there is an evident confidence in their ability to retain their cultural identity in the city. While they acknowledge the need for proactive steps to maintain their cultural traditions in the city, they seem fairly confident in their ability to maintain their cultural identity in an urban setting.

Urban Aboriginal peoples aspire to the "good life". They are most likely to feel that family and a balanced lifestyle are essential ingredients of a successful life; majorities also emphasize the importance of a good job, a successful career and financial independence.

Pursuing higher education is the leading life aspiration of urban Aboriginal peoples today. This is particularly the case for those who are younger and less affluent. Not only do urban Aboriginal peoples see higher education as a path to a good job or career for their own generation, many say that they hope higher levels of education will be key to how future generations of Aboriginal peoples will distinguish themselves from their ancestors. Those who plan to pursue post-secondary education say that career goals are their main reason for doing so. But interestingly, those who have already completed college or university say the greatest impact of higher education has been to help them feel more empowered – in part by expanding their knowledge of their Aboriginal heritage and identity. Higher education emerges as a passport towards learning more about one's Aboriginal identity – those urban Aboriginal peoples with a college or university education are more likely than others to claim a better understanding of their Aboriginal heritage and to believe this knowledge has contributed positively to their lives.

While urban Aboriginal peoples may have overcome many barriers to get to the post-secondary level, once they are pursuing their studies the most common obstacle is funding. Perhaps most tellingly, those who started but did not finish their post-secondary degree are as likely as those who did finish to say they received emotional and moral support while in school; however, they are less likely to say they received financial support.

Mentors and/or role models also play an important role. NAAF scholars demonstrate that, after family, the greatest encouragement they received to pursue post-secondary studies came from a role model. (NAAF – the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation – provides tools necessary for Aboriginal peoples in Canada, especially youth, to achieve their potential.) There is also widespread belief among those who currently have or who have had a mentor that this person made a significant contribution to their education. Male scholars are especially likely to say a mentor made a big difference in their lives. Finally, a large majority of NAAF scholars believe positive role models have a big impact on Aboriginal youth.

Urban Aboriginal peoples strongly believe in the importance of formal education, both for themselves and for Aboriginal people generally. Notwithstanding this conviction, most consider education to be more than what is offered in mainstream schools, and through existing degree and diploma programs. They believe that education also encompasses what is taught in Aboriginal schools and "life-long learning" from Elders.

Despite significant cultural and historical differences, First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit living in Canadian cities share many values and aspirations. One important difference among these groups, however, lies in their opinions about the importance of a strong connection to one's Aboriginal identity and background and of living in a traditional way. For example, Inuit and status First Nations peoples are much more likely than non-status First Nations peoples and Métis to associate a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage with a successful life.

...they hope higher levels of education will be a central way in which future generations of Aboriginal peoples distinguish themselves from past generations.

Nonetheless, urban First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit alike maintain great reverence for their heritage and express strong Indigenous pride. As one *UAPS* participant noted, "You have to know where you're coming from to know where you're going." This remark captures the sense of family heritage, survival, tradition and identity that participants express when asked to describe the importance of knowing their Aboriginal ancestry. Large majorities are also similarly proud to be *First Nations, Métis* or *Inuk* and *Aboriginal*.

Seven in ten urban Aboriginal peoples also say they are very proud to be Canadian, demonstrating that Indigenous pride and pride in Canada are, in most cases, complementary – not mutually exclusive. Nor is a sense of Canadian identity necessarily evidence of "'assimilation" into the non-Aboriginal world: those who feel they belong to a mostly *Aboriginal* community in their city are as likely as others to be very proud to be *Canadian*.

...Indigenous pride and pride in Canada are, in most cases, complementary – not mutually exclusive.

Perhaps the clearest example of the relationship between urban Aboriginal peoples' *Aboriginal* and *Canadian* identities is in the realm of politics. A stronger *Aboriginal* political identity coincides with a stronger *Canadian* political identity. In other words, urban Aboriginal peoples with greater Aboriginal political involvement are also more likely to vote in Canadian elections.

In short, urban Aboriginal peoples today maintain strong Aboriginal *and* Canadian identities, and are forming stable and vibrant Aboriginal communities in Canadian cities. However, they do this despite a widespread belief that they are consistently viewed in negative ways by non-Aboriginal people. If there is a single urban Aboriginal experience, it is the shared perception among First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit, across cities, that they are stereotyped negatively. Indeed, most report that they have personally experienced negative behaviour or unfair treatment because of who they are.

## Conclusion

The *UAPS* has found First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples living within our cities who are striving towards better education, healthier family life, and strengthening their cultures and traditions. The urban Aboriginal experience in Canada's cities is that there is no contradiction between success, power and knowledge in 'mainstream' society, and a strong First Nations, Métis or Inuit culture. On the contrary, urban Aboriginal peoples in Canada's cities are today proving that these are mutually reinforcing.

## Survey of non-Aboriginal Canadians

NA urban Canadians' first impressions of Aboriginal people are generally positive. Only a handful of NA urban Canadians express explicitly negative stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples – although significant minorities in Thunder Bay, Winnipeg and Regina say their own impressions of Aboriginal people have worsened in recent years. At the same time, however, there is an almost unanimous belief that Aboriginal people are the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today. This response, accurately mirrors the stated experiences of urban Aboriginal peoples themselves.

There is a basic tension in the minds of NA urban Canadians about where Aboriginal people fit into the Canadian mosaic. They clearly feel Aboriginal people possess unique cultural identities that other Canadians can learn and benefit from. But NA urban Canadians are divided over whether Aboriginal people should hold unique rights and privileges or whether they should be seen as no different than other cultural or ethnic groups in Canadian society.

There is a general awareness of Aboriginal peoples and their place in Canada's history among NA urban Canadians. However, they know less about the contemporary situation of Aboriginal peoples. Majorities of NA urban Canadians, particularly new Canadians (i.e., those born outside Canada), view Aboriginal history and culture as an important symbol of national identity, and recognize the contributions that Aboriginal peoples and culture have made in the areas of the environment, culture and the arts in Canada. But there is a lack of awareness and apparent uncertainty about the most important issues for Aboriginal people today, and in particular, about the problems faced by those living in cities. There is a significant gap between Aboriginal peoples' socio-economic reality and the perceptions of NA urban Canadians. They believe Aboriginal people have the same or better socio-economic and other opportunities as any other Canadians. Most notably, almost half of NA urban Canadians have never read or heard anything about Indian residential schools, a situation that appears to have changed little following the federal government's official apology in June 2008.

Despite their limited knowledge of Aboriginal people and issues, NA urban Canadians demonstrate a desire to learn more. Indeed, many NA urban Canadians give Canadians schools a failing grade when it comes to educating the population at large about Aboriginal history, culture and experience.

Finally, at some level, non-Aboriginal people are starting to recognize the demographic and cultural presence of urban Aboriginal communities, although this awareness varies substantially by city. Different city histories, the size of local Aboriginal populations, and the nature and location of urban Aboriginal organizations all shape NA urban Canadians' awareness of Aboriginal communities in their cities. Interestingly, those who are aware of an Aboriginal community in their city (i.e., a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community) are more likely than others to believe Aboriginal people wish both to maintain their culture and to participate in Canadian society.

How do non-Aboriginal urban Canadians ("NA urban Canadians") view Aboriginal peoples?

For more information on the *UAPS*, please visit www.UAPS.ca

# About the Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study

Under the auspices of the Environics Institute, the *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study* (*UAPS*) is an innovative research study aimed at advancing the national conversation with and among Aboriginal Canadians. The study seeks to better understand and document the values, experiences, aspirations and identities of Aboriginal people living in Canadian cities today.

This study is about the future, not the past. The *UAPS* seeks to advance – and reframe – the national conversation between and among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. It also seeks to build capacity so that this study can be replicated by Aboriginal organizations in other communities.

The *UAPS* sprang from discussions that began in 2008 that identified the need for a well-designed empirical research study that would work with diverse Aboriginal peoples to understand and reflect on evolving urban Aboriginal perspectives. The Institute embarked on this project not as a pollster, but as a partner and collaborator with a range of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal individuals who have been integral to the success of this project.

First, the design and interpretation of the *UAPS* has been guided by an Advisory Circle of recognized experts from academia and from Aboriginal communities (see below for a list of *UAPS* Advisory Circle members). The Advisory Circle's ongoing involvement in *UAPS* has been instrumental and, with their help, a study was designed that is intended to be inclusive of all urban Aboriginal peoples.

Second, the *UAPS* Steering Committee has devoted considerable time, energy and expertise to the successful management and execution of the study. Michael Mendelson (The Caledon Institute), David Eaves (Independent), May Wong (Environics Institute), Amy Langstaff (Environics Institute), Doug Norris

## The UAPS Advisory Circle

| | |
|---|---|
| Allan Benoit | Métis Nation |
| John Berry | Queen's University |
| Ellen Bielawski | University of Alberta |
| Lewis Cardinal | Cardinal Strategic Communications |
| Hayden King | McMaster University |
| Peter Dinsdale | National Association of Friendship Centres |
| Calvin Helin | Lawyer, author of Dances with Dependency |
| Corinne Jetté | President and CEO, Mount Pleasant Educational Services Inc. |
| Caroline Krause | Former principal Grandview Elementary School, Faculty of Educ., UBC |
| Peter Menzies | Centre for Addiction Mental Health |
| Katherine Minich | University of Toronto |
| David Newhouse | Trent University |
| Andrew Parkin | Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation |
| John G. Paul | Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs |
| Evelyn Peters | University of Saskatchewan |
| Mark Podlasly | N'laka'pmx First Nation / Harvard/Queens (fellow) |
| Jennifer Rattray | Peepeekisis First Nation / University of Winnipeg |
| John Richards | Simon Fraser University |
| Pamela Sparklingeyes | Aboriginal Learning Services, Edmonton Catholic School Board |
| Noella Steinhauer | National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation |

(Environics Analytics), Michael Adams (Environics Institute), Keith Neuman (Environics Research Group), Sonya Kunkel (Environics Research Group), Sarah Roberton (Environics Research Group), Jay Kaufman (KTA) and Karen Beitel (KTA) have all played an important role in bringing this study to fruition.

Third, the *UAPS* would not have been possible without the efforts and commitment of Ginger Gosnell-Myers (Project Manager) and Vina Wolf (Associate Project Manager). They, along with city supervisors Dr. Jino Distasio, Allan Vicaire, Chris Atchison, Christine Cybenko, Douglas Sinclair, Jaimee Marks, Dr. Maisie Cardinal, Nathan Elliot, Dr. Rachel Eni, Shelley Knott, Dr. Trudy Sable and Tungasuvvingat Inuit (Martin Lougheed and Barbara Sevigny), and all of the interviewers in each of the 11 participating cities, ensured that the research was conducted in a comprehensive and sensitive way, with meaningful Aboriginal involvement. Their passion and perseverance in collecting the stories of urban Aboriginal peoples across Canada, along with their belief in the *UAPS*, has been integral to the success of this study.

Fourth, the *UAPS* has relied on a high degree of involvement and co-operation among city officials, local colleges/universities, Aboriginal organizations and governing bodies, and community foundations. Their ongoing commitment to the *UAPS* research process has been important to bringing this study to fruition.

Finally, the *UAPS* would not have been possible without the unconditional support and sponsorship of its sponsors.

## UAPS Sponsors

Calgary Foundation
Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation
City of Edmonton
City of Toronto
Edmonton Community Foundation
Edmonton United Way
Elections Canada
Environics Institute
Government of Canada (Federal Interlocutor)
Halifax Regional Municipality
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
John Lefebrve
Mental Health Commission of Canada
Province of Alberta
Province of Manitoba/Manitoba Hydro
Province of Nova Scotia (Aboriginal Affairs)
Province of Ontario (Aboriginal Affairs)
Province of Saskatchewan
Tides Canada Foundation
Toronto Community Foundation
Trillium Foundation
Vancouver Foundation
Winnipeg Foundation

# Introduction

## Background of this report

*The Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study: Main Report* is the culmination of a research process started more than two years ago, in March 2008, by the Environics Institute. The original inspiration for the *UAPS* stemmed from observations heard repeatedly from Aboriginal persons and organizations about the need for research that aims to understand the experiences, identities, values and aspirations of urban Aboriginal peoples across Canada, and how valuable they felt it could be in revealing and documenting what is happening in Aboriginal communities in ways that could lead to positive outcomes.

According to the most recent Statistics Canada Census information (2006), nearly 1.2 million people living in Canada today report themselves to be Aboriginal (i.e., First Nations, Métis or Inuit). This represents 3.8 percent of the national population.

- Nearly two-thirds of Canada's entire Aboriginal population is First Nations peoples. In all regions except Nunavut, First Nations peoples – both status and non-status that live on and off reserves – make up the largest Aboriginal identity group.
- Just under one-third identify themselves as Métis. However, in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the heart of the Métis Nation Homeland, Métis comprise more than one-third of the Aboriginal population, a larger proportion than in other provinces.
- Nearly five percent of Canada's Aboriginal population is Inuit.

The number of people in Canada who self-identify as Aboriginal is growing everywhere – in rural areas, on reserves and in cities. This growth is especially obvious in urban areas: half of Aboriginal peoples in Canada now live in urban centres (including large cities or census metropolitan areas and smaller urban centres). In some western cities, including Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon and Edmonton, Aboriginal people make up a substantial portion of the population. And in cities where Aboriginal populations are smaller, such as in Toronto and Montreal, their numbers have increased by 30 percent and 60 percent, respectively, between 2001 and 2006.

Urban Aboriginal peoples are an increasingly significant social, political and economic presence in Canadian cities today – and yet relatively little is known about these individuals' experiences and perspectives. The goal of the *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study* (*UAPS*) is to understand better this important and growing population. The *UAPS* is different than any other survey of the Aboriginal population. The *UAPS* does not seek to collect a series of economic and social 'facts' about Aboriginal people living in the city. Rather is it an enquiry about the values, experiences, identities and aspirations of urban Aboriginal peoples. How do they see themselves in relation to their communities – both geographically and culturally? Which factors are leading them toward greater success, autonomy and cultural confidence? What are their hopes for the future, their definitions of success? What tools and supports have helped them? What barriers have impeded them?

Another goal of *UAPS* is to provide opportunities for dialogue among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. As asserted by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples,[1] the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada has long been troubled. These problems do not inhere in either community, but in the nature of the relationships (institutional, intergroup and interpersonal) between the communities. Thus, a way forward in renewing the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is through 'parallel' information on non-Aboriginal urban Canadians' attitudes and perceptions of Aboriginal people that provides insight into their mutual relations.

The *UAPS* also encompasses a pilot study measuring the experiences and success in the lives of National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation scholars who have pursued or are pursuing post-secondary education. This aspect of the study provides important insights into this accomplished group of individuals.

To accomplish its aims, the *UAPS* included three separate research elements:

- First, 2,614 person-to-person interviews were conducted (the "Main" survey) with First Nations peoples (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit in 11 cities across Canada: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Montreal, Toronto, Halifax and Ottawa (Inuit only), between March and October 2009.
- Second, a telephone survey was conducted with 2,501 non-Aboriginal urban Canadians living in these same cities (excluding Ottawa) from April to May 2009.
- Finally, a survey of 182 current and past National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF) scholars was conducted on-line from June to July 2009.

Once the *UAPS* was underway, it was recognized that there was a significant opportunity to expand upon the standard reporting for this type of project by creating a video archive of the lives of urban Aboriginal peoples, as told in their own words. The Department of Indian/Native Communication Arts at First Nations University was commissioned to conduct 50 one-hour long video interviews with survey participants in each city, with the objective of bringing the study "to life" with the faces and voices of diverse individuals involved in the *UAPS*. This video archive will be made available on the *UAPS* website www.uaps.ca.

## A note on terminology

The term "urban Aboriginal peoples" is used frequently in this report. The term refers to citizens of the Inuit, Métis and First Nations Peoples currently residing in urban areas.

It is also important to emphasize that the cities included in the *UAPS* are built on or around Aboriginal nations and communities. Aboriginal populations in these places are not "new" populations; their presence has long preceded these urban centres.

1 The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP) was a Canadian Royal Commission established in 1991 to address many issues of Aboriginal status that had come to light with recent events such as the Oka Crisis and the Meech Lake Accord. The commission culminated in a final report of 4,000 pages and 440 recommendations published in 1996 that contains a great wealth of information, analysis and recommendations on a range of issues including treaties, economic development, health, housing, Métis perspectives and the North. To date, the federal government has not implemented the RCAP recommendations.

## Organization of this report

*The Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study: Main Report* is organized into 12 chapters:

**Chapter 1, The Research – A Tale of Eleven Cities**, describes the *UAPS* research process, including the design, implementation and interpretation of the Main survey with First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit living in Canadian cities, along with descriptions of the non-Aboriginal survey and the NAAF pilot survey.

**Chapter 2** provides useful background information drawn from Statistics Canada and other relevant sources on the Aboriginal population in Canada. **The Urban Aboriginal Context** includes a description of the Aboriginal identity population (First Nations, Métis, Inuit), along with socio-demographic information on population growth rates, urbanization and socio-economic trends.

**Chapter 3** delivers main findings from the *UAPS* on **Urban Aboriginal Peoples' Sense of Place**. Key topics addressed include the proportion of first, second and third plus generation urban residents among *UAPS* participants, urban Aboriginal peoples' connection to their city of residence and the degree to which it, or another place, is home for them, their satisfaction with city life, and their belief that they can make their city a better place to live.

**Chapter 4** delves into the subject of **Urban Aboriginal Identity**. Key aspects of Aboriginal identity considered in this chapter include knowledge of family history, pride in Aboriginal and Canadian identities, community belonging, and the continuing role and intergenerational effects of colonial projects upon the identities of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian cities, namely Indian residential schools. How these aspects of urban Aboriginal identity vary socio-demographically is also explored.

**CHAPTER 5** explores the subject of **Urban Aboriginal Culture**. Notwithstanding the challenges and difficulties Aboriginal peoples face in maintaining their cultural values and beliefs in a mainly non-Aboriginal urban setting, *UAPS* data show Aboriginal peoples living in Canadian cities are findings ways to respect and practice their cultural traditions.

**CHAPTER 6** provides main findings on urban Aboriginal peoples' **Experiences With Non-Aboriginal People**. Specifically, how Aboriginal people are thought to be perceived by non-Aboriginal people, in what ways non-Aboriginal people are viewed as different from Aboriginal people, and in what ways experiences with non-Aboriginal people have shaped the lives of urban Aboriginal peoples and who they are today. This chapter also explores their experiences with non-Aboriginal services in their city.

**Chapter 7** explores urban Aboriginal peoples' **Political Identity and Engagement**, namely their levels of engagement in Aboriginal *and* Canadian politics and political organizations, and what factors characterize more or less involvement in these two spheres.

**Chapter 8, Justice**, delves into urban Aboriginal peoples' perceptions of and experience with the justice system, in terms of their confidence in the system, their support for an alternate Aboriginal justice system, and whether or not they believe alternate approaches to justice for Aboriginal people within the current system can make a difference.

**Chapter 9** encompasses all four themes of the *UAPS* (i.e., identity, experiences, aspirations and values) as it explores **Happiness, Life Aspirations and Definitions of "Success" among Urban Aboriginal Peoples**. Perceptions of their quality of employment and health are also captured in this chapter.

**Chapter 10** expands upon the statistics about Aboriginal educational achievement, by exploring the impact that education has, and what can be done to ensure that those who want a post-secondary education are successful. **Educational Values, Aspirations and Experiences** addresses questions such as: What has the educational experience of urban Aboriginal peoples been like? For those who pursued a post-secondary education, who and what motivated them, and what are the benefits they have realized from that experience? What supports did they rely on during their post-secondary studies, and what supports would they have liked to have had? And finally, how much value do urban Aboriginal peoples place on education, and on the different forms that learning can take?

**Chapter 11** summarizes findings from the **National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation Scholar Survey**. This pilot study aimed to identify and measure experiences and success in the lives of NAAF scholars who have pursued or are pursuing post-secondary education.

**Chapter 12**, the final chapter of the report, captures **Non-Aboriginal Perspectives of Aboriginal Peoples**. Topics explored include non-Aboriginal urban Canadians' perceptions of Aboriginal people in Canada, their awareness of Aboriginal peoples and communities in their cities, their contact and interaction with Aboriginal people, their perspectives on how well institutions respond to the needs of Aboriginal people, their knowledge of salient Aboriginal issues (i.e., Indian residential schools, acceptance of differential systems of justice), and the importance of Aboriginal history and culture in the minds of NA urban Canadians.

An overview at the beginning of each chapter summarizes the main *UAPS* findings and, where relevant, provides summaries of findings from the unique perspectives of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit.

Finally, unless otherwise noted, all of the numbers in the graphs are percentages.

# I. The Research – A Tale of Eleven Cities

*The Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study* is the culmination of a research process started more than two years ago, in March 2008, by the Environics Institute. The original inspiration for *UAPS* stemmed from observations heard repeatedly from Aboriginal persons and organizations about the need for research that aims to understand the experiences, identities, values and aspirations of urban Aboriginal peoples across Canada, and how valuable they felt it could be in revealing and documenting what is happening in Aboriginal communities in ways that could lead to positive outcomes. At the outset, it was recognized that the success of the research would be determined by Aboriginal involvement in all phases of the process, including design, implementation and interpretation.

To accomplish its aims, the *UAPS* included three separate research elements. First, 2,614 person-to-person interviews were conducted (the "Main" survey) with First Nations peoples (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit in 11 cities across Canada: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Montreal, Toronto, Halifax and Ottawa (Inuit only), between March and October 2009. Second, a telephone survey was conducted with 2,501 non-Aboriginal urban Canadians living in these same cities (excluding Ottawa) from April to May 2009. Finally, a pilot survey of 182 current and past National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF) scholars was conducted on-line from June to July 2009.

A description of each of these surveys (main, non-Aboriginal and NAAF) is provided in the following sections.

## Main survey

### Research design

The research design of the main survey was guided by an Advisory Circle of recognized experts from academia and Aboriginal communities across Canada (see page 12 of this report for a list of *UAPS* Advisory Circle members). The Advisory Circle first met in September 2008 at the Forks in Winnipeg to discuss and agree on the broad focus and direction of the research. The main survey of urban Aboriginal peoples was originally conceived as a standard telephone survey with follow-up in-person interviews with a subset of participants, but the Advisory Circle felt in-person interviews would more effectively capture the full spectrum of the urban Aboriginal population (e.g., overlooking the homeless or those in shelters, or those with cell phones but no land line). In-person interviews also allow for a longer questionnaire length and for the establishment of rapport between interviewer and participant, ensuring a greater depth of information on a wide range of topics and greater comfort discussing potentially sensitive topics. Finally, Aboriginal culture may be characterized as an oral tradition, making interview-based data collection the most culturally-appropriate choice. As a result, in-person interviews were chosen as the sole methodology for the main survey.

UAPS conceptual framework

| | |
|---|---|
| Who are you? **IDENTITIES** | What's your everyday life like? **EXPERIENCES** |
| What's important to you in your life? **VALUES** | What do you want for your future? **ASPIRATIONS** |

The Advisory Circle also developed the conceptual framework upon which the research is based. At its inaugural meeting, the Advisory Circle identified four themes – identities, experiences, values and aspirations – and a list of topics to be explored in the research.

Based on this framework, Environics Research Group developed an initial content outline that addressed these themes and topics, followed by several drafts of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to include both structured questions, to obtain quantifiable information, and open-ended questions, to capture greater depth and unprompted response to certain types of questions.

At each stage of questionnaire development, input was solicited from the Advisory Circle and study sponsors. Prior to the launch of the survey, the questionnaire was pilot tested by the Institute for Urban Studies

at the University of Winnipeg (which also served as the local project team in Winnipeg for interviews conducted among First Nations peoples and Inuit). The pilot test consisted of interviews with a small sample of Aboriginal participants, conducted in the same manner as for the full survey. A small number of relatively minor questionnaire changes were implemented following feedback from the pilot test.

## Implementation

The implementation of the main survey was co-ordinated by two Aboriginal Project Managers, who managed the local research teams in each city.The Project Managers were responsible for recruiting a Project Co-ordinator in each city, [2] who are affiliated with universities or other organizations, or are independent community members (i.e., have no such affiliations), and most of whom are Aboriginal. Each Project Co-ordinator recruited and trained approximately eight to 10 local Aboriginal students and other community members to conduct the interviews (in total, there were 116 Aboriginal interviewers involved in this study). Project Co-ordinators themselves also received training in research methodologies and interviewing through the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg.

The main study was conducted with 2,614 individuals aged 18 or older who self-identify as First Nations (status or non-status), Métis or Inuit, across the 11 cities included in the study. The 10 main cities include Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax. These 10 cities have a total population of 286,000 Aboriginal people, representing 46 percent of the urban Aboriginal population in Canada. Ottawa comprised the 11th city, and was added to include an important urban Inuit community. The geographic boundary for each city was defined as the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), and excluded urban reserves.

Perhaps the greatest methodological challenge in conducting this survey was defining and locating representative samples of Aboriginal peoples in each city. There is no sampling frame available for the urban Aboriginal population. The 2006 Census provides comprehensive and reasonably current population statistics, although Statistics Canada does acknowledge limitations related to its enumeration of Aboriginal Peoples due to "under-coverage" (individuals who are missed on Census Day, for example, because they are homeless or transient), and those living in institutions such as hospitals, jails or shelters.[3] To ensure as representative a sample of urban Aboriginal peoples as possible, the 2006 Census was used to construct a profile of Aboriginal people 18 years and older in each city, based on Aboriginal identity (First Nations, Métis, Inuit), age, gender and education. Given the importance of First Nations Elders to their communities, efforts were made to include a minimum number in each city. In Toronto, the sample was also designed to include representation from both the 416 and 905 area codes. Interviews were mostly conducted in English, with a small number of French interviews in Montreal, and Inuktitut interviews among Inuit in Ottawa.

Based on the population profiles developed, quotas were established for all age, gender, education and identity groups in each city. To "populate" these cells, the study relied primarily on "snowball" or "network-based" sampling to identify participants. These are sampling techniques whereby study participants suggest friends or acquaintances as possible new participants, and are typically used with populations that are difficult to reach.

For the *UAPS*, Project Co-ordinators in each city worked with local Aboriginal organizations, colleges and universities, and community foundations, who referred individuals who were interested in participating in the survey. These initial individuals then referred their peers, and so on. Project Co-ordinators and

2 There were two Project Co-ordinators in Winnipeg, one of whom was responsible for interviews with First Nations peoples and Inuit, and one of whom was responsible for interviews with Métis.

3 http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/12-592-x/12-592-x2007001-eng.htm (Accessed January 25, 2010).

interviewers were extremely resourceful and used a variety of other methods to recruit participants, including posters, recruiting at Aboriginal events, telephone numbers for individuals to call if they wanted to participate, or simply visiting areas of the city (e.g., parks or apartment complexes) where Aboriginal people live or gather. As potential participants were identified through these multiple sources, they "populated" the relevant cells of the city profile, so that the final sample in each city matched the population according to these characteristics (age, gender, education and identity). The characteristics were also verified with each participant prior to the start of their interview. Interviewing in each city took place over one to four months, with interviews conducted between March 4 and October 4, 2009.

This approach was ultimately successful in achieving a representative sample of Aboriginal peoples in most cities, and including hard-to-reach groups of Aboriginal peoples such as individuals who are renting a room in a rooming house or hostel (4% of the final sample), or living in a temporary shelter (3%), or who are homeless (less than 0.5%).

The research was conducted in accordance with established standards and procedures for social science research and the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Research Ethics (SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR), as well the standards set out by the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA). Potential participants were fully briefed about the research at the recruiting stage, to ensure they could make an informed decision about their participation. The briefing explained the purpose of the study, how the information was to be used, and the time required, and ensured they understood the voluntary nature of the research and the guaranteed anonymity of their responses. Each participant who completed the survey was paid $50.00 (either in cash or in the form of a gift card) as a thank you for their time. Each of the local research teams worked hard to create a safe space for participants to speak freely and without fears of being judged. The success of this approach is demonstrated by the fact that many interviews went well beyond an hour in length and produced a rich and detailed set of responses from participants.

A limitation in the sampling of the main survey is that it under-represents Métis in Saskatoon, Montreal and Halifax compared to the 2006 Census. The local research team in Saskatoon encountered difficulties in carrying out their mandate, and in the end too few interviews were conducted with Métis with a college or university education, suggesting there may have been particular difficulties in identifying more assimilated Métis for participation. In Montreal and Halifax, the lack of clarity within the communities-at-large in these cities around the definition of Métis identity may be a contributing factor.

The adjacent table presents the proportion of interviews in each city conducted with First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit, in comparison to the population proportions reported by the 2006 Census.

At the analysis stage, data were weighted to accurately reflect the distribution of the population according to the 2006 Census. The data for Inuit have been included as part of the main survey results, and accordingly have been weighted to their appropriate proportion within the Aboriginal population of these 11 cities. A separate report focusing on the Inuit results combined across cities will be produced at a later date. The table on the next page presents both the actual (unweighted) and the weighted participant profiles in the 11 cities included in the main survey.

Actual (unweighted) UAPS sample distribution by Aboriginal identity group compared to 2006 Census

| | First Nations | | Métis | | Inuit | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Sample % | Census | Sample % | Census | Sample % | Census |
| Vancouver | 64 | 60 | 33 | 40 | 3 | 1 |
| Calgary | 55 | 40 | 42 | 60 | 4 | 1 |
| Edmonton | 52 | 41 | 42 | 58 | 6 | 1 |
| Regina | 59 | 52 | 40 | 48 | 1 | * |
| Saskatoon | 76 | 51 | 24 | 49 | * | * |
| Winnipeg | 50 | 35 | 48 | 65 | 1 | 1 |
| Thunder Bay | 71 | 72 | 29 | 27 | - | * |
| Toronto | 69 | 67 | 27 | 32 | 4 | 1 |
| Montreal | 65 | 62 | 10 | 35 | 25 | 3 |
| Halifax | 73 | 59 | 24 | 38 | 3 | 3 |
| **TOTAL** | 60 | 49 | 30 | 50 | 10 | 1 |

* indicates less than 0.5%

The adjacent table presents the household income, living situation and Elder status for survey participants (characteristics for which there are no comparable Census information).

## Analysis and interpretation

Completed questionnaires were coded and data entered at Environics' data processing facilities in Toronto. The process of coding verbatim responses was conducted with Aboriginal involvement, to ensure cultural nuances were captured. In addition to having members of the Toronto interviewing team involved in coding some of the questionnaires, the final codes assigned to open-ended responses were reviewed by members of the Montreal interviewing team, under the auspices of the firm Acosys.

The interpretation of the study results was iterative in nature, and unfolded in stages. Initially, the data were analyzed and pulled together into a working draft report by the Environics research team. In November 2009, the Advisory Circle and some of the Project Co-ordinators met for a second time at the Forks in Winnipeg to discuss insights emerging from the research, and to agree upon the narrative and the conclusions of the study. The Environics team then revised the report, drawing further upon the expertise of members of the Advisory Circle as required. The Advisory Circle then reviewed and provided feedback on the revised report prior to it being finalized.

Once the *UAPS* was underway, it was recognized that there was a significant opportunity to expand upon the standard reporting for this type of project by creating a video archive of the lives of urban Aboriginal peoples, as told in their own words. The Department of Indian Communication Arts at First Nations University was commissioned to conduct 50 one-hour long video interviews with survey participants in each city, with the objective of bringing the study "to life" with the faces and voices of diverse individuals involved in the *UAPS*. This video archive will eventually be made available on the *UAPS* website www.uaps.ca. The hope is that 100 years from now the archives will remain an invaluable source of information about this time, and a yardstick against which to measure progress.

# Survey of non-Aboriginal Canadians

The survey of non-Aboriginal Canadians is an important component of this study because it reveals how this population currently views the experience of Aboriginal peoples, reflecting some of the barriers and opportunities facing the Aboriginal community. A telephone methodology was chosen for the non-Aboriginal survey as it is the most effective and proven mode for identifying and contacting the population-at-large for this type of survey.

The *UAPS* Advisory Circle discussed the focus for the non-Aboriginal questionnaire and identified some question areas at its inaugural meeting in September 2008. Based on this input, Environics developed an initial content outline, followed by a draft questionnaire, which were circulated to the Advisory Circle and study sponsors for feedback. The content of this questionnaire is distinct from the questionnaire for the main survey (with Aboriginal peoples), although it includes a few of the same questions where comparisons were appropriate. The questionnaire also incorporates questions from ongoing public opinion syndicated research conducted by Environics (*FOCUS CANADA*) that allow for comparisons to historical data. The final questionnaire includes primarily structured questions, to obtain quantifiable information, but also incorporates a few open-ended questions to capture greater depth and unprompted response to certain types of questions.

UAPS participant profile

| | (%) Weighted |
|---|---|
| **HOUSEHOLD INCOME** | |
| <$10,000 | **18** |
| $10,000 - $30,000 | **23** |
| $30,000 - $60,000 | **22** |
| $60,000+ | **10** |
| Refused | **9** |
| **LIVING SITUATION** | |
| Renting an apartment or house | **56** |
| Homeowner | **18** |
| Living with friends or family | **17** |
| Renting a room in rooming house/ hostel | **4** |
| Living in a temporary shelter | **3** |
| Homeless | * |
| **ELDER** | |
| Yes | **11** |
| No | **89** |

| | Actual (Unweighted) (%) | Weighted (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **IDENTITY** | | |
| First Nations | **60** | **50** |
| *Status* | ***56*** | ***46*** |
| *Yes, registered under Bill C-31* | ***15*** | ***14*** |
| *Non-status* | ***4*** | ***4*** |
| Métis | **30** | **49** |
| Inuit | **10** | **1** |
| **GENDER** | | |
| Men | **41** | **45** |
| Women | **58** | **55** |
| **AGE** | | |
| 18-24 | **20** | **19** |
| 25-44 | **50** | **47** |
| 45+ | **29** | **34** |
| **EDUCATION** | | |
| No diploma | **27** | **29** |
| High school diploma | **31** | **28** |
| College degree | **23** | **33** |
| University degree | **19** | **10** |
| **CITY** | | |
| Vancouver | **10** | **15** |
| Calgary | **10** | **9** |
| Edmonton | **10** | **17** |
| Saskatoon | **9** | **7** |
| Regina | **10** | **5** |
| Winnipeg | **10** | **24** |
| Thunder Bay | **10** | **4** |
| Toronto | **10** | **11** |
| Montreal | **10** | **7** |
| Halifax | **8** | **2** |
| Ottawa (Inuit only) | **6** | * |

* Less than 0.5%

Prior to finalizing the survey for field, Environics conducted a full pilot test with "live" participants. This consisted of telephone interviews in the same manner as for the full survey, but with a small sample of participants. Following the pilot test, a small number of revisions to the questionnaire were identified and implemented.

This survey consists of telephone interviews conducted with a representative sample of 2,501 non-Aboriginal people (aged 18 and older) living in 10 of the cities covered by the main study (excluding Ottawa) (250 per city). Interviewing took place between April 28 and May 15, 2009. The margin of error for a probability sample of 2,501 is plus or minus 2.0 percentage points, 19 times in 20.[4]

## National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF) pilot survey

The National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation is a nationally registered non-for-profit organization dedicated to raising funds to deliver programs that provide the tools necessary for Aboriginal peoples to achieve brighter futures. The purpose of the NAAF survey is to measure the experiences and successes of these scholars, and derive insights from their lives and careers that will aid future generations of aspiring Aboriginal students.

Originally conceived as a larger study, the NAAF survey was ultimately conducted as a smaller pilot since older records were not up-to-date and did not always contain current contact information. The results of the NAAF pilot survey are based on an on-line survey completed by 182 current and past NAAF scholarship recipients. An on-line methodology was chosen because the NAAF typically communicates with its scholars by e-mail and therefore had relatively current contact information. The NAAF has also had success with on-line surveys in the past, and an on-line survey is appropriate both for the type of information the *UAPS* is collecting and for the audience (those with post-secondary education who are likely comfortable with this survey format).

This questionnaire is based on the version used for the main survey. The *UAPS* Advisory Circle and the NAAF provided input into removing sections and/or questions of less relevance (e.g., questions on political engagement, the justice system) and expanding others (e.g., education section, what a NAAF award means for identity). The questions were also revised as necessary from an interviewer-led format to a self-completion format appropriate for an on-line methodology. The final questionnaire included primarily structured questions, to obtain quantifiable information, with a few open-ended questions to capture greater depth.

The NAAF compiled a list of 1,800 e-mails for current and past scholarship recipients. This list was heavily weighted towards recent recipients, since older records are not up-to-date and thus do not contain e-mail addresses or current contact information. NAAF sent an e-mail to each scholarship recipient to inform them of the research, and invited them to participate in the survey and requested a reply to confirm their interest. A total of 296 NAAF scholars indicated their interest in participating, of which 182 completed the on-line survey. Two-thirds of participants in the NAAF survey are currently in school (61% full-time and 7% part-time), while one-third (32%) have completed or are no longer in school. This survey took place between June 16 and July 6, 2009.

Further details on the methodology of all three *UAPS* surveys are provided in the Appendix to this report.

4 Because the sample for the main survey is based on individuals who initially "self-selected" for participation, no estimate of sampling error can be calculated for the main survey. It should be noted that all surveys, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error, including but not limited to sampling error, coverage error and measurement error.

# II. The Urban Aboriginal Context

This chapter provides background information drawn from Statistics Canada and other relevant sources on the Aboriginal population in Canada. It includes a description of the Aboriginal identity population (First Nations, Métis, Inuit), along with socio-demographic information on population growth rates, urbanization, and socio-economic trends. As well, this chapter briefly highlights the enduring colonial legacy experienced by Aboriginal peoples living in urban centres today.

## First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples

For the purposes of this study, the *UAPS* designed the research approach, and reports survey results, based on three Aboriginal "identity groups": First Nations, Métis and Inuit. *UAPS* participants identified themselves as belonging to one of these three groups. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that the peoples captured in these three groups may consider themselves to be quite different from others in the same group. The categories "First Nations," "Métis" and "Inuit" encompass a tremendous amount of Aboriginal diversity that, while beyond the scope of the *UAPS* to fully capture, does exist.

According to the 2006 Census, a total of 1,172,790 people in Canada identified themselves as an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations, Métis or Inuit. This population accounts for almost four percent of the total population of Canada.

First Nations people, Métis and Inuit are three distinct peoples with unique histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

**FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE.** As of 2006, there are 698,025 First Nations people in Canada. "First Nations people" refers to Status and Non-Status "Indian" peoples in Canada. First Nations peoples are identified in the Constitution as one of the founding nations of Canada, along with the English and French. Many communities also use the term "First Nation" in the name of their community. Currently, there are 615 First Nation communities, which represent more than 50 nations or cultural groups and 50 Aboriginal languages.

The First Nations population increased 29 percent between 1996 and 2006. The majority of First Nations people are Status Indians, meaning they are registered under the *Indian Act*.[5] The census enumerated 564,870 people who reported they were Registered Indians, 81 percent of the total First Nations population. An estimated 133,155 First Nations people identified as Non-Status, meaning they were not registered under the *Indian Act*.

*UAPS* participants who identified as "First Nations" are generally referred to as "First Nations peoples" and, where appropriate, as "status First Nations peoples" and "non-status First Nations peoples" for the purposes of this report.

**MÉTIS.** Of the 1,172,790 people who identified themselves as an Aboriginal person in the 2006 Census, 389,785 reported they were Métis. This population has almost doubled (increasing by 91%) since 1996. The term "Métis" used here refers to Aboriginal people of mixed First Nations and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis people, as distinct from First Nations people, Inuit or non-Aboriginal people.

The Métis National Council (www.metisnation.ca) defines Métis as "a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation." The Métis people constitute a distinct Aboriginal nation largely based in western Canada. The "historic Métis Nation's Homeland" is based on the traditional territory upon which the

*"Canada is about to become a whole lot different in the next couple of generations – the Aboriginal population is growing faster than any other group of people."*

*— Waubgeshig Rice*

*(The Globe and Mail on-line edition, July 20, 2009)*

5 The *Indian Act* sets out certain federal government obligations and regulates the management of Indian reserve lands, moneys and other resources. Only Status Indians are recognized as Indians under the Indian Act, and therefore entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law. Source: Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census.

Métis people have historically lived and relied upon within west central North America. This territory roughly includes the three Prairie provinces (Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan), parts of Ontario, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories.

**INUIT.** In 2006, 50,485 individuals identified as Inuit. Inuit are the Aboriginal people of Arctic Canada. About 45,000 Inuit live in 53 communities in: Nunatsiavut (Labrador); Nunavik (Quebec); Nunavut; and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region of the Northwest Territories. Between 1996 and 2006, the Inuit population rose by 26 percent.[6]

### The Aboriginal identity population, 2006

| Aboriginal identity | 2006 | Percentage change from 1996 to 2006*** |
|---|---|---|
| **Total population** | **31,241,030** | **9** |
| **Aboriginal identity population** | **1,172,790** | **45** |
| First Nations people* | **698,025** | **29** |
| Métis* | **389,785** | **91** |
| Inuit* | **50,485** | **26** |
| Multiple and other Aboriginal responses** | **34,500** | **34** |
| **Non-Aboriginal population** | **30,068,240** | **8** |

* Includes persons who reported a North American Indian, Métis or Inuit identity only

** Includes persons who reported more than one Aboriginal identity group (North American Indian, Métis or Inuit) and those who reported being a Registered Indian and/or Band member without reporting an Aboriginal identity.

*** Data have been adjusted to account for incompletely enumerated reserves in 1996 and 2006.

*Sources: Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census, Statistics Canada*

### Aboriginal population and proportion of CMAs, with population increase, 2001-2006

| | Aboriginal population (2006) (n) | Proportion of CMA (2006) | Change 2001 – 2006 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Halifax | **5,320** | **1.4%** | **+51%** |
| Ottawa-Gatineau | **20,590** | **1.8%** | **+52%** |
| Montreal | **17,865** | **0.5%** | **+60%** |
| Toronto | **26,575** | **0.5%** | **+31%** |
| Thunder Bay | **10,055** | **8.3%** | **+23%** |
| Winnipeg | **68,385** | **10.0%** | **+22%** |
| Regina | **17,105** | **8.9%** | **+9%** |
| Saskatoon | **21,535** | **9.3%** | **+6%** |
| Calgary | **26,575** | **2.5%** | **+26%** |
| Edmonton | **52,100** | **5.1%** | **+27%** |
| Vancouver | **40,310** | **1.9%** | **+9%** |

*Source: 2006 Census*

## A rapidly growing population

As noted, the Aboriginal population in Canada – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – grew between 1996 and 2006, experiencing an overall increase of 45 percent, a rate almost six times faster than the eight-percent increase in the non-Aboriginal population.

Much of this growth took place in urban centres, including in the 11 cities (i.e., Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Thunder Bay, Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Ottawa) that comprise the *UAPS*.

There are various factors that may explain the rapid growth of the Aboriginal population in Canada. These factors likely include natural population growth (i.e., births minus deaths), higher fertility rates and a reduction over time in the number of incompletely enumerated First Nations reserves. However, there is evidence that another key factor is ethnic mobility, which occurs when someone changes their ethnic affiliation over time. In short, more individuals are choosing to identify themselves as Aboriginal than in previous Census years.

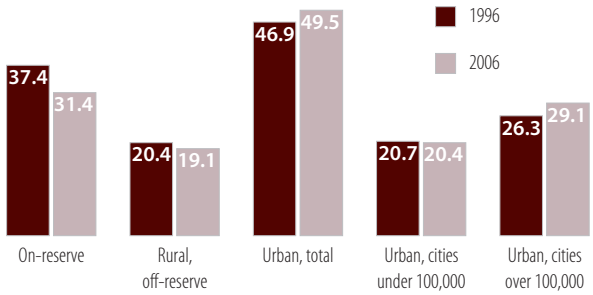
## Growing urbanization

In 2006, half of the Aboriginal population in Canada lived in urban centres (including large cities or census metropolitan areas and smaller urban centres), up from 47 percent in 1996. In turn, the proportion of the Aboriginal population that lives on-reserve or in rural (off-reserve) locations has declined.

6 http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ap/in/index-eng.asp

Aboriginal groups differ significantly in their degree of urbanization. The most urbanized Aboriginal peoples are non-status First Nations peoples (or non-status Indians) and Métis, with 74 percent and 66 percent, respectively, living in urban areas. Status First Nations peoples (or Registered Indians) are less urbanized (38% live in urban centres), with about half of their population (52%) residing on reserves (and about 10% located in rural areas off reserve). Inuit are the least urbanized, with less than 30 percent residing in an urban centre.

Distribution of Aboriginal identity population, by location
1996 – 2006




Source: Richards, J. & Scott, M. (2009). *Aboriginal Education: Strengthening the Foundations*. Prepared for Canadian Policy Research Networks. Census data has been revised to account for under-enumeration of reserves.

## A younger population

Half (48%) of Aboriginal people in Canada are children and young people under 24 years of age, much higher than the 31 percent of the non-Aboriginal population. This proportion is particularly high in Regina and Saskatoon, two cities included in the *UAPS*, which have more than half (56% and 55%, respectively) of their Aboriginal populations aged 24 or younger.

This has implications for the future job market, among others. By 2017, there is projected to be close to a million Aboriginal people of working age (15 and older), or about 3.4 percent of the working age population overall (Statistics Canada 2005). In the same time period, the number of young Aboriginal adults (aged 20 to 29) – those entering the labour market – is expected to grow by more than 40 percent, which is well beyond the projected growth of nine percent among 20- to 29-year-olds in the general Canadian population. The Aboriginal share of the young adult population is likely to be particularly high in the western provinces, potentially accounting for 30 percent of those in their 20s in Saskatchewan and 24 percent in Manitoba. A recent Statistics Canada publication concluded about the western provinces that "the degree to which these regions can integrate these young people in the labour force will become increasingly important."[7]

## Socio-economic gaps are narrowing, but slowly

Employment rates improved and unemployment rates dropped for Aboriginal peoples between 2001 and 2006, yet Aboriginal peoples remain less likely than non-Aboriginal people to be employed.[8] Almost two-thirds (65.8%) of Aboriginal people of working age (25 to 54 years) were employed in 2006, up from 61.2 percent in 2001. By comparison, the employment rate for non-Aboriginal people was 81.6 percent in 2006 (up from 80.3% in 2001).

Unemployment rates between 2001 and 2006 declined more quickly for Aboriginal peoples (down 4.2 percentage points) than for the non-Aboriginal population (down only 0.8 percentage points). Despite this improvement, in 2006, Aboriginal peoples (13.2%) were twice as likely to be unemployed as non-Aboriginal people (5.2%).

7 Jacqueline Luffman and Deborah Sussman, *The Aboriginal labour force in Western Canada, Perspectives*, Statistics Canada, January 2007, Vol. 8, no. 1.

8 Statistics Canada. 2008. *Canada's Changing Labour Force, Census 2006*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 97-559-X. Ottawa, Ontario. http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-559/pdf/97-559-XIE2006001.pdf (accessed February 15, 2010)

Similar patterns have been found in employment income and low-income rates among Aboriginal peoples in cities. Siggner and Costa (2005) found an overall decline in the gap in median employment income between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in most Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) between 1980 and 2000.[9] Nonetheless, the most recent Census in 2006 continues to show a disparity in the median earnings even among those who worked full-time for the full year between Aboriginal peoples ($34,940) and non-Aboriginal people ($41,401). Another study found that, although the low-income rate among Aboriginal peoples in cities dropped between 1995 and 2002, Aboriginal peoples remained much more likely to fall into the low-income category (41.6%) compared to the general population (17.7%).[10]

The phenomenon of ethnic mobility described earlier may explain some of the improvement in employment rate and the reduced gap in employment income. That is, some individuals (those who are employed and have higher incomes) who previously did not self-identify as an Aboriginal person may now be choosing to do so.

## A diverse population

The Aboriginal populations within each of the cities included in the *UAPS* are not uniform. Their composition varies by the relative proportions of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit. For example, Métis comprise only one-quarter of the Aboriginal population of Thunder Bay, but are a majority (60%) in Winnipeg. First Nations peoples form the largest share of the Aboriginal population in most of the *UAPS* cities, with the exceptions of Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton, where Métis are the most populous group. In all cities, Inuit are only a small proportion of the Aboriginal population (less than 5%).

There is also diversity within the First Nations populations in each city. Some cities are home to many nations (e.g., Cree, Ojibway, Mohawk), while the First Nations populations in other cities come primarily from one or two nations of origin.

9 Siggner, A. & Costa, R. 2005. *Aboriginal Conditions in Census Metropolitan Areas, 1981-2001*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-613-MIE No. 008. Ottawa, Ontario. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-613-m/89-613-m2005008-eng.pdf (accessed February 15, 2010).

10 Heisz, A. & McLeod, L. 2004. *Low-income in Census Metropolitan Areas, 1980-2000*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-613-MIE — No. 001. Ottawa, Ontario. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-613-m/2004001/4193746-eng.pdf (accessed February 15, 2010).

## The colonial legacy

This report cannot do justice in explaining the history and damaging effects of 'colonial projects' imposed upon Aboriginal peoples in Canada. These measures include residential schools, mission and day schools and other institutions, forced adoptions, forced relocation from one community to another, the delineation of status versus non-status Indians, denial of existence as in the case of the Métis Nation, and Bill C-31,[11] among others. As the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples has said, "Successive governments have tried – sometimes intentionally, sometimes in ignorance – to absorb Aboriginal people into Canadian society, thus eliminating them as distinct peoples. Policies pursued over the decades have undermined – and almost erased – Aboriginal cultures and identities."[12] These assimilation policies have done great damage, the effects of which are intergenerational and therefore continue to be felt by Aboriginal peoples, not least in the difficulty many have in learning about their own history, family and identity. These impacts are best conveyed in the words of *UAPS* participants themselves:

> *Non-Aboriginal people, most still have their language intact; they haven't had cultural genocide in their background. I can't think of too many others who had their whole existence wiped out. How do you compare Aboriginal people who have lived here forever to people who have come here from so many other cultures?*
>
> *— UAPS participant, Calgary*

11 *An Act to Amend the Indian Act* (S.C.-1985, C. 27), commonly referred to as Bill C-31, passed in April 15, 1985. Controversial and contested, the stated purposes of the Bill were to remove overt discrimination from the Indian Act; restore status and membership rights to those who lost them because of inequalities in the Act; and to increase control of Indian bands over their own affairs.

12 The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). 1996. *Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. Ottawa, Government of Canada. p.3. ainc-inac.gc.ca/ap/pubs/rpt/rpt-eng.asp.

# III. Urban Aboriginal Peoples' Sense of Place

## Overview

David Newhouse and Evelyn Peters, in their 2003 book *Not Strangers in These Parts*, note that "Aboriginal people are now part of the urban landscape and will remain so, most likely in increasing numbers, over the decades to come. Understanding this complex reality in sufficient detail and depth is a major research challenge."[13] In order to better understand this complex reality, this report begins with a chapter on a fundamental aspect of identity: urban Aboriginal peoples' sense of place.

The focus of the *UAPS*, in part, is to understand how Aboriginal peoples, in the midst of this process of urbanization, feel about living in their cities. Thus, a first step for the *UAPS* was to determine how long urban Aboriginal peoples have lived in their cities; specifically, if they were born and raised in their city of residence, or if they were born and raised elsewhere. Another important step was to explore urban Aboriginal peoples' connection to their city of residence and the degree to which it, or another place, is *home* for them. From there, what is it that urban Aboriginal peoples like most and least about living in their city, and do they believe they can make their city a better place to live?

An important note about the terminology used in this chapter. To determine if urban Aboriginal peoples born and raised in their city of residence have different views from those who were not born and raised in their city, comparisons are made between the two groups throughout the chapter. For ease of understanding, these two groups are referred to as "first generation" urban Aboriginal peoples (i.e., those not born and raised in their city of residence) and "second generation" urban Aboriginal peoples (i.e., those born and raised in their city of residence whose family is from another place). "Born and raised" is defined as one's home community, or the community that had the most influence on an individual as they were growing up.

The following points summarize the main findings around urban Aboriginal peoples' sense of place:

- ***UAPS* participants are largely first generation residents.** In other words, they were born and raised in another community, town, city or reserve other than their current city of residence. However, they are also typically long-term urban residents, as a significant number have lived in their city for 10 years or more.
- **Aboriginal peoples move to the city for family, education and work opportunities, and the amenities and services available.** These reasons are generally common to First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit. However, women move to the city for somewhat different reasons than men, with family and education more typically the reason women moved to their city, in addition to a small group who say they first moved to escape a bad family situation and find a better place to raise their children. Men are more likely to have moved to their city to find work.
- ***UAPS* participants stay connected to their communities of origin, though only a minority has ever returned.** Majorities of Aboriginal peoples (first and second generation) in Canadian cities today retain a sense of connection to their home communities and places of origin, either their own, or that of their parents and grandparents. This is particularly true for those who strongly identify as Aboriginal (i.e., those who feel they belong to a mostly Aboriginal community and know their family tree very well). Nonetheless, only two in ten have ever moved back to their community of origin or plan to return permanently.

13 David Newhouse and Evelyn Peter (eds.), *Not Strangers in These Parts*, Policy Research Initiative, 2003.

- **Today, Aboriginal peoples' sense of place is defined as much by the cities they live in as elsewhere.** The urban Aboriginal population is a permanent population. Their links to their communities of origin are integral to strong family and social ties, and to both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal cultures. Notwithstanding these links, many First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit consider their current city of residence as *home*, including majorities of first generation individuals and those who strongly identify as *Aboriginal*.
- ***UAPS* findings reveal that urban Aboriginal peoples – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – like living in their cities and believe they can make their city a better place to live.** Indeed, urban Aboriginal peoples feel they can make a positive difference in their cities, and have as strong a sense of their potential impact as non-Aboriginal people in these same cities. Notably, a connection to their past is clearly a feature of those who think they can change the future: those who know their family tree very well are among those *UAPS* participants most likely to think they can have a *big* impact on their city.

The following paragraphs elaborate on aspects of urban Aboriginal peoples' sense of place among First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit.

## First Nations

Three-quarters of First Nations *UAPS* participants are first generation residents of their cities. They are most likely among *UAPS* participants to say they first moved to their city of residence to pursue higher education.

As is the case with Inuit and Métis, a minority of first generation First Nations peoples have moved back to their home community at one time, and among this minority few have moved with any frequency. However, overall, among those who have moved back, they are more likely to be First Nations peoples (and Inuit).

Furthermore, although the city is home for a majority of First Nations peoples, a significant minority of *status* First Nations peoples (three in ten) do plan to return to their home communities permanently one day, especially those born and raised on First Nations reserves.

Status and non-status First Nations peoples also differ in how much they like living in their cities. Although non-status First Nations peoples are among the most urbanized of Aboriginal groups in Canada (i.e., as of the 2006 Census, a large majority of non-status First Nations peoples lived in urban centres), they are much less likely to like living in their cities compared to status First Nations peoples.

Finally, First Nations peoples (status and non-status) are as likely as other *UAPS* participants to think they can make their city a better place to live.

## Métis

Métis are among the most urbanized of Aboriginal groups in Canada.[14] Accordingly, fewer, albeit still majorities, are first generation residents of their cities. Métis are also most likely among *UAPS* participants to have lived in their cities for some time (close to half first arrived in their city at least 20 years ago), and to consider their city home, and least likely among urban Aboriginal peoples to have ever moved back to their community of origin.

Métis are as likely as other *UAPS* participants to think they can make their city a better place to live.

14 2006 Statistics Canada.

## Inuit

Almost nine in ten Inuit are first generation urban residents, reflecting the fact that Inuit are the least urbanized of Aboriginal groups in Canada. They are most likely among *UAPS* participants to feel a very close connection to their home community and have plans to return there permanently one day. Nonetheless, majorities feel their city of residence is home, although this feeling is less widespread compared to Métis and First Nations peoples.

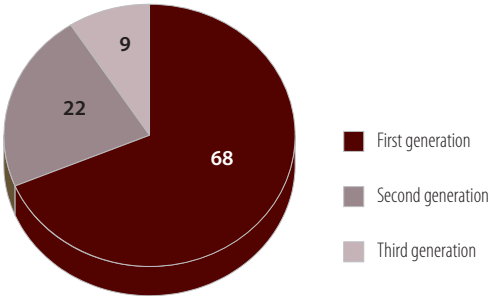
Finally, Inuit are as likely as other *UAPS* participants to think they can make their city a better place to live.

# 1. Communities of origin

## First and second generation residents

***The majority of* UAPS *participants are first generation residents.***

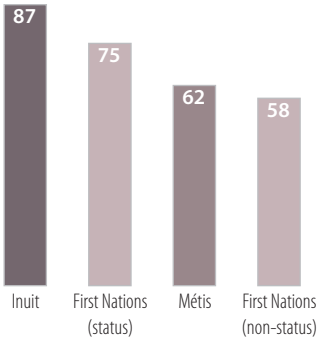
First, second and third generation city residents




Exploring urban Aboriginal peoples' sense of place is complicated by the variety of communities to which people have connections. For example, a person could have parents and grandparents who are each from a different community; could have personally moved several times in their life, due to education, family reasons or marriage; or could have multiple families due to foster/adoption situations. While it was outside of the scope of the survey to document all of these links, one distinction was considered particularly relevant: Are you originally from the city (i.e., born and raised here) or are you from somewhere else?

The data reveal two main groups of people: those who were born and raised somewhere other than their current city of residence ("first generation"); and those who were born and raised in their city of residence but whose family is from another place ("second generation"). A third, smaller group is comprised of urban Aboriginal peoples born and raised in their city whose parents and/or grandparents are also from the same city ("third generation").

First generation residents, by identity group



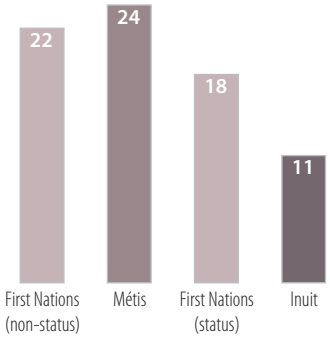

**"FIRST GENERATION."** The first group is comprised of urban Aboriginal peoples born and raised in another *community, town, city or reserve* other than their current city of residence and represents 68 percent of *UAPS* participants. A majority within each Aboriginal identity group are from somewhere other than their city, although this is most common among Inuit (87%), followed by status First Nations peoples (75%),[15] Métis (62%) and non-status First Nations (58%). Montreal (86%) and Halifax (80%), followed by Edmonton (77%) and Calgary (76%), have the largest proportion of "first generation" urban Aboriginal peoples. Older people (77% of those aged 45 and older) are more likely than younger people (60% of those aged 18 to 24 and 64% of those aged 25 to 44) to be "first generation" urban Aboriginal peoples.

15 Specifically among "first generation" First Nations peoples, 44 percent of those with status and seven percent of those without status come from a reserve, while 54 percent and 93 percent, respectively, come from another community, town or city (not a reserve).

**"SECOND GENERATION."** The second group consists of urban Aboriginal peoples born and raised in their city of residence whose parents and/or grandparents are from another place. This group represents 22 percent of the urban Aboriginal population. Being "second generation" is most common among non-status First Nations (22%) and Métis (24%), followed by status First Nations (18%), and is least common among Inuit (11%). Regina (29%) and Winnipeg (26%) (i.e., cities with larger Métis populations) and Thunder Bay (25%) have the largest proportion of "second generation" urban Aboriginal peoples. Younger people (27% of those aged 18 to 24, and 24% of those aged 25 to 44) are more likely than older people (16% of those aged 45 and older) to be "second generation" urban Aboriginal peoples.

**"THIRD GENERATION."** A third group of urban Aboriginal peoples born and raised in their city whose parents/grandparents are also from the same city represents nine percent of the urban Aboriginal population. This group is a small minority within each Aboriginal identity group, but is more common among non-status First Nations (15%) and Métis (12%) than among status First Nations (6%). (Not surprisingly, only one percent of Inuit in the study indicated that they had been born and raised in their city whose parents/grandparents are also from the city.)

Second generation residents, by identity group




## Arrival in the city

***UAPS participants are typically long-term urban residents, with a significant number having lived in their city for 10 years or more.***

As a first step to determine their connection to their city of residence, the *UAPS* survey asked first generation *UAPS* participants when they first came to their city.

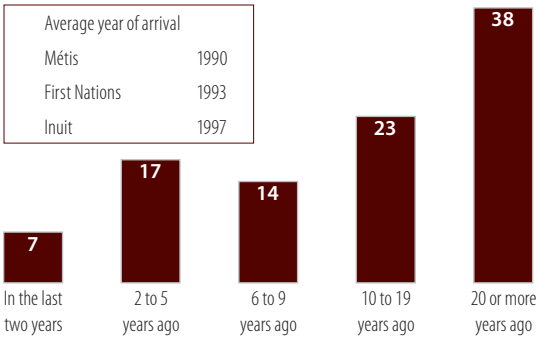
Six in ten first came to their city at least 10 years ago, rising to seven in ten Métis.

When asked when they first came to their city, a majority of *UAPS* participants say they arrived either 20 or more years ago (38%) or 10 to 19 years ago (23%). Fewer have arrived in the last 10 years (14% six to nine years ago and 17% two to five years ago). Less than one in ten (7%) have arrived in the last two years.

Typically, Métis have lived in their city the longest, reflecting the fact that they are the most urbanized of Aboriginal groups in Canada (as of the 2006 Census, 69% of Métis lived in urban centres, followed by 45% of First Nations peoples and 37% of Inuit[16]). While similar proportions of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit are recent arrivals (i.e., within the last five years), over the longer term Métis are most likely among UAPS participants to have arrived in their city 20 or more years ago (42%, compared to 36% of First Nations peoples and 19% of Inuit). To look at it another way, among first generation *UAPS* participants, the average year of arrival in their city for Métis is 1990, compared to 1993 for a First Nations person and 1997 for an Inuk.

Urban Aboriginal peoples' length of time in their city does not vary substantially across cities, but where such differences exist it reflects the characteristics of the city's Aboriginal population. For example, Winnipeg, by far, has the longest term residents (55% say they first came to Winnipeg 20 or more years ago) as a result of its large Métis population.

Time of arrival*
When did you first come to [your city]?




* Subsample: Among those who were not born or raised in their city.

16 *Urban centres* include CMAs (census metropolitan areas) and urban non-CMAs.

## Reason for moving

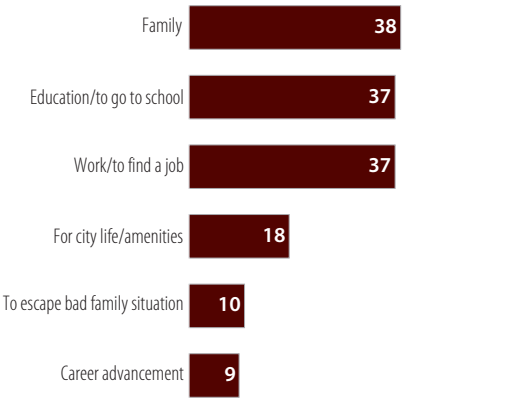
***Three main reasons fuel the move to the city: family, education and training, and employment opportunities. But women are more likely than men to say they first moved to their city for family, education and to escape a bad family situation.***

Why do Aboriginal peoples move to the city?

While first generation *UAPS* participants cite a wide variety of reasons for why they first moved, family, education and employment are, by far, their most common reasons.

Top reasons for moving to the city

What is the most important reason why you first moved to your city?




When asked (unprompted, without response options offered) why they first moved to their city, equal proportions cite the opportunity to be closer to family (38%), and the pursuit of education (37%) and employment opportunities (37%). Smaller proportions say they moved to their city because it offered better amenities (18%), the chance to escape a bad family situation (10%) and the opportunity for career advancement (9%).

Smaller groups of *UAPS* participants (7% or fewer) mention other reasons for moving to the city such as friends, the need to find a better place to raise children and give them opportunities, the need for a change and new beginning, and the chance to access better health care and housing.

Overall, First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit share similar reasons for moving to their city. However, education is the top reason First Nations peoples (43%) moved to their city, whereas the pursuit of work and employment opportunities is the top reason among Métis (41%).

Men and women move to their city of residence for somewhat different reasons. Specifically, women are more likely than men to say they first moved to their city for family, education, to escape a bad family situation and/or find a better place to raise their children, whereas men are more likely to say they first moved in order to find work. Otherwise, there are few further socio-demographic differences worthy of note among the reasons why *UAPS* participants first moved to their city.

# 2. Connection to community of origin

***A majority of urban Aboriginal peoples retain links with their community of origin, whether it be their own, or that of their parents/grandparents.***

Previous research has found that many urban Aboriginal peoples have maintained links with their community of origin (i.e., one's home community or the home community of parents/grandparents) because of the proximity of First Nations and Métis communities to cities, the history of mobility of Aboriginal people, the fact that the land is such a fundamental source of traditional and contemporary culture, and the continuance of strong family and social ties to the communities.[17]

Such connections are clearly evident among *UAPS* participants. A majority of both first *and* second generation individuals say they maintain a close connection to their community of origin.

Overall, six in ten say they feel a very (30%) or fairly close (31%) connection to their community of origin. Fewer urban Aboriginal peoples say they feel not too close (22%) to these communities, while a small group feel not at all close (14%) to their community of origin.

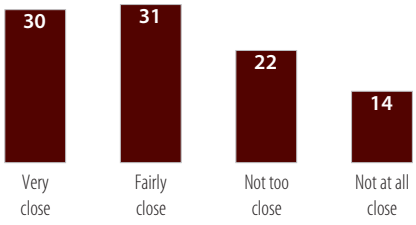
17 Urban Aboriginal Task Force, Final Report 2007, p.65.

Who is most likely to describe themselves as having a *very* close connection to their community of origin? Inuit (43%) are more likely than First Nations peoples (32%) or Métis (28%) to feel a very close connection, as are residents of Halifax (46%) and Vancouver (41%). Notably, those who feel they belong to a mostly Aboriginal community (39%) and, particularly, those who know their family tree very well (48%), are among those most likely to feel very closely connected to their community of origin.

Greater economic means enables some to stay connected with their home communities more easily than others. While some three in ten in most income groups say they have a very close connection to their community of origin, this rises to four in ten among those with household incomes of $80,000 or more (representing 10% of *UAPS* participants overall), corroborating other research that has found that those who visit their communities of origin most often are those with the highest economic ability to do so.[18]

## Connection to community of origin*

How close a connection do you feel to your home community?/ How close a connection do you feel to the place where your parents and grandparents are from?




* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in their city; those who have lived in their city of residence all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

Notably, first and second generation urban Aboriginal peoples express a similarly strong connection to their community of origin (64% and 55%, respectively, say they have at least a fairly close connection, and similar proportions of both groups express a *very* close connection). Nonetheless, each of these groups has some notable characteristics:

**FIRST GENERATION.** First generation individuals with a very close connection are most likely to be Inuit (almost one-half of Inuit feel they have a very close connection, compared to three in ten First Nations and Métis) and strongly identify as Aboriginal (i.e., they know their family tree very well and are more likely to feel they belong to a mostly Aboriginal community).[19]

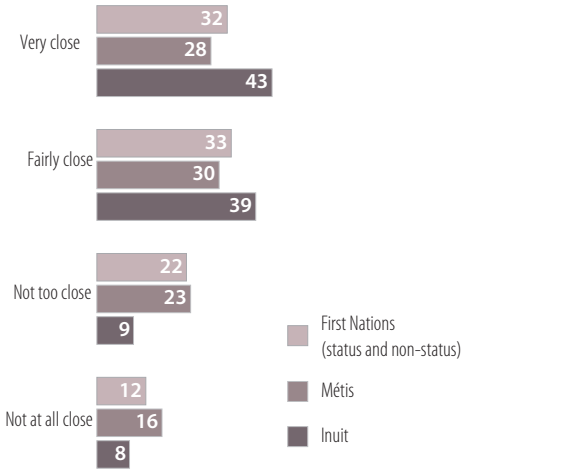
Across cities, similar proportions of first generation individuals maintain very close links with their home communities. The one exception is Halifax, where a much higher proportion of residents (47%) say they have a very close connection with their home community.

**SECOND GENERATION.** Similar proportions of second generation First Nations peoples and Métis feel they have a very close connection to their home community,[20] but this sense of connection is much stronger among those aged 45 and older (50% versus 19% of those under 45 years of age).

A strong knowledge of one's family history also sustains a strong connection to the home communities of parents and grandparents. Second generation individuals who know their family tree very well are twice as likely as those who are less knowledgeable to feel a very close connection to where their parents/ grandparents are from. Note, however, that second generation urban Aboriginal peoples are almost as likely to feel the community they belong to is *non-Aboriginal* as *Aboriginal*.

## Connection to community of origin, by identity group*

How close a connection do you feel to your home community?/How close a connection do you feel to the place where your parents and grandparents are from?




* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in their city; those who have lived in their city of residence all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

Finally, second generation Aboriginal Vancouverites are much more likely to feel they have a very close connection with their home community compared to those in other cities.

18 Urban Aboriginal Task Force, Final Report, 2007, p.67

19 Important to note is that causality in this instance is difficult to determine: a very close connection with one's home community may promote one's knowledge of their family history and/or sense of belonging to a mostly Aboriginal community, or a stronger sense of these aspects of Aboriginal identity may encourage a closer connection with one's home community.

20 The subsample of second generation Inuit is too small to permit comparison with First Nations peoples and Métis.

# 3. Mobility

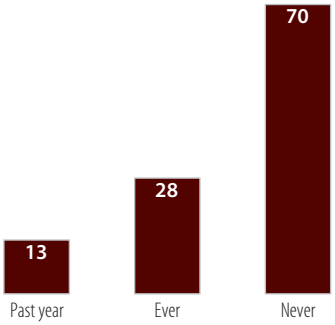
## Moving back to home communities

***Three in ten first generation urban Aboriginal peoples have moved back to their home community since they first came to their city. Some* UAPS *participants move back and forth between their city and home community frequently, but the vast majority do not.***

Six in ten *UAPS* participants feel a close connection to their home communities, but do they ever move back to these communities, and how often?

Have you moved back to your home community?*

Since [you first moved to your city], have you ever moved back to your home community?




* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in their city.

These were important questions in the *UAPS* survey, as urban Aboriginal peoples are typically described as a highly mobile group of people. Census data show that all Aboriginal groups experience significantly higher mobility compared to the non-Aboriginal population, although mobility patterns and levels do differ across Aboriginal groups, reflecting group differences in regional distribution, urbanization and registered status.[21]

In order to understand their level of mobility, the *UAPS* survey asked first generation participants how often they have moved back to their home communities since they first moved to their city of residence. (It did *not* ask how often they have moved within communities in their city of residence, which is another important aspect of mobility among Aboriginal peoples that was beyond the scope of *UAPS*).

Only a minority of first generation *UAPS* participants have moved back to their home community at least once since they first moved to their current city of residence. Within this group, First Nations peoples and Inuit, and those who have lived in their city for 10 years or more are most likely to have moved back at one time.

When asked if they have ever moved back to their home community, three in ten (28%) first generation urban Aboriginal peoples say they have moved (representing 19% of *UAPS* participants overall). Most (70%) say they have never moved back to their home community since they first moved to their city.

First Nations peoples (33%) and Inuit (33%) are more likely than Métis (22%) to have moved back to their community of origin recently. The proportion that have moved back also rises the longer they have lived in their city (from 19% of those who have lived in their city for less than 10 years to 34% of those who have lived in their city for 10 years or more).

Similar proportions of *UAPS* participants across cities, in all age and income groups, and equal proportions of men and women have moved back to their home communities at one time.

**RECENT MOVES.** The *UAPS* survey also explored how many participants have moved back and forth between their city of residence and home community recently (i.e., in the past year).

Among those who have ever moved back, almost half (46%) say they have moved back in the past year. In other words, just over one in ten (13%) first generation individuals (representing 9% of *UAPS* participants overall) have moved and back and forth in the past year.

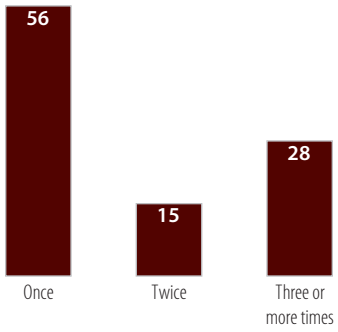
21 Katherine A.H. Graham and Evelyn Peters, *Aboriginal Communities and Urban Sustainability*, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Discussion Paper F27, December 2002.

Among those who have moved in the past year, few have moved back and forth between their city of residence and home community frequently (i.e., two or more times) in the past year. More than half (56%) of those who have moved in the past year did so only once. The remainder moved back and forth either *twice* (15%) or *three or more times* (28%).[22] Those who have moved frequently (i.e., two or more times in the past year) represent only a handful of *UAPS* participants overall (less than 5%). To look at it another way, individuals who moved back and forth between their city of residence and their home community in the past year did so an average total of 2.7 times.

Who moves back and forth between their cities and home communities most frequently? As could be expected, individuals currently attending university move with greater frequency than others, as do individuals with higher household incomes (i.e., $60,000-$80,000). However, caution is required with these results as these groups are very small.

Frequency of moves back to home community in the past year*

How many times have you moved back and forth between your city of residence and your community in the past year?




* Subsample: Those who have moved back to their home community in the past year.

Finally, although other research has found that women tend to go back to their community of origin somewhat more frequently than men, among *UAPS* participants men, on average, moved back and forth in the past year more frequently than women (averaging 3.7 moves, compared to 2.0 moves among women).

## Plans to return permanently

***Most urban Aboriginal peoples do* not *intend to return to their communities of origin to live permanently in the future, but some (first and second generation) either plan to return or remain undecided.***

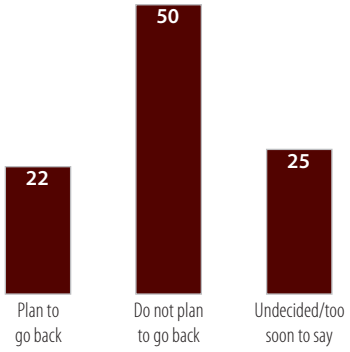
Only a small group of *UAPS* participants move back and forth between their city of residence and their community of origin with any frequency. However, given the widespread connection to these communities that they retain, do any plan to return to these communities permanently one day?

When asked if they plan to go back and live in their communities of origin permanently one day (whether it be another community, town, city or reserve),[23] two in ten (22%) say they plan to return. Half of *UAPS* participants say they do not plan to return (50%), while the remainder say they are undecided or that it is too soon to say (25%); three percent are unable or unwilling to offer information about their future plans.

While only two in ten plan to return to their communities of origin, this rises to three in ten among Inuit (32%) and status First Nations peoples (28%), compared to Métis (12%) and non-status First Nations peoples (15%). Plans to return are also more common among those who strongly identify as *Aboriginal* (i.e., they are more likely to feel they belong to an *Aboriginal* community and know their family tree very well). As well, those who plan to go back to live in their community of origin are among those who move back and forth between their city of residence and this ancestral place (62% of those who plan to go back have moved back and forth at least once in the past year, compared to 43% of those who do not plan to go back).

Plans to go back to live in community of origin*

Do you plan to go back to live in your home community/place where your parents/grandparents are from permanently one day, or not?




* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in their city; those who have lived in their city of residence all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

22 A note to the reader to be cautious with this finding – one year provides characteristics for a given year, but the limitation is that it could be an unusual or volatile time period and may not be typical of the longer trends.

23 The question "Do you plan to go back to live in your home community (either your own or that of your parents/grandparents) permanently one day?" was not asked of third generation *UAPS* participants (9% of *UAPS* participants overall).

In general, similar proportions of *UAPS* participants in all age, income and education groups plan to return to their home communities. This is also the case for first *and* second generation *UAPS* participants (22% of first generation and 16% of second generation plan to return permanently to their communities of origin).

What characterizes those *UAPS* participants who are undecided about returning to their community of origin? Those in this small group vary little socio-demographically from others, but they are more typically first generation individuals and those dissatisfied with their jobs.

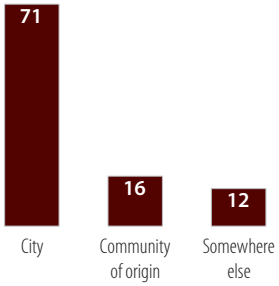
## 4. Defining home

***Urban Aboriginal peoples may stay connected to their communities of origin, but for most the city is home.***

Notwithstanding the sense of connection majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples have to their communities of origin, the large majority of urban Aboriginal peoples feel their current city of residence is home.

### Where is home?*

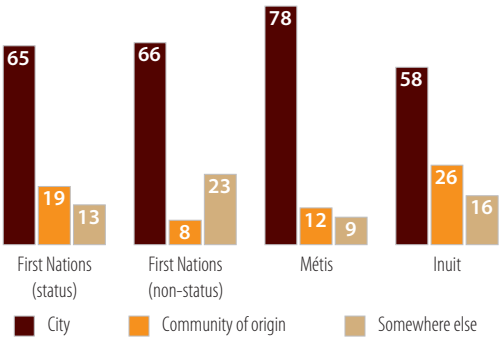
Where is *home* for you? Is it your city of residence, your home community, or somewhere else?




* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in their city; those who have lived in their city of residence all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

### Where is home? by identity group*

Where is *home* for you? Is it your city of residence, your home community, or somewhere else?




* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in their city; those who have lived in their city of residence all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

When asked "Where is home for you?" seven in ten (71%) *UAPS* participants say it is their current city of residence.[24] Significantly fewer (16%) say it is their community of origin, while the remainder (12%) indicate that another community other than their city of residence or home community is home to them.

Majorities of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit consider their city of residence home. But Métis are most likely to consider their city home (78%, compared to 64% of First Nations peoples and 58% of Inuit), reflecting the fact that Métis are more likely than others to be second generation. In addition, although similar proportions of non-status and status First Nations peoples consider their city of residence home, status First Nations peoples are more likely to regard their community of origin as home, whereas non-status First Nations peoples are more likely to feel somewhere other than their city of residence or community of origin is home.

Notably, those who strongly identify as *Aboriginal* (i.e., those who feel they belong to an *Aboriginal* community and those who know their family tree very well) are as likely as others to consider their city of residence to be home.

Who are those *UAPS* participants who consider their communities of origin to be home? They are typically first generation residents who have lived in their city for less time (i.e., less than five years). They are among those who move back and forth most frequently between their city and home community. As could be expected, they are also among those most likely to plan to return to their home communities to live permanently one day. Finally, a majority (58%) of those in this group come from a First Nations reserve and likely retain the option of living there.

24 The question "Where is home for you?" was not asked of third generation UAPS participants (9% of UAPS participants overall).

# 5. Satisfaction with city life

## How much urban Aboriginal peoples like living in their city

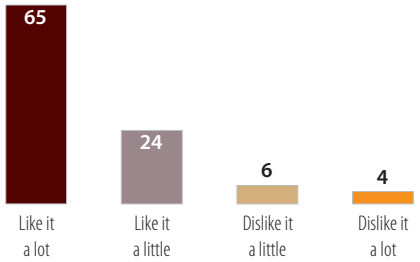
***A positive story emerges of an urban population – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – that likes living in their cities, generally feels they have a choice in where they live and believes they can make their city a better place to live.***

As a final dimension of understanding urban Aboriginal peoples' sense of place, the *UAPS* survey also explored how much they like living in the city, their reasons for choosing their neighbourhood (and the extent to which they feel they have a choice) and how much they believe they can make their city a better place to live.

The large majority of urban Aboriginal peoples like living in their city. When asked, two-thirds say they like living in their city a lot (65%), while a much smaller group indicates they like it a little (24%). Only one in ten dislike living in their cities a little (6%) or a lot (4%).

### Like living in the city

How much do you like living in your city? Would you say you like it or dislike it?




Status First Nations peoples, Inuit and Métis differ little in how much they like living in their cities. The one exception is non-status First Nations peoples (a small proportion of *UAPS* participants overall) who are less likely than others to say they like living in their cities a lot (52%, compared to 65% of urban Aboriginal peoples overall) and are twice as likely as others to *dislike* living in their cities (21%, compared to 10% of urban Aboriginal peoples overall).

A strong sense of their Aboriginal heritage also characterizes those who like living in their cities. The proportion of urban Aboriginal peoples who like living in their cities *a lot* steadily rises with knowledge of their family tree (from 56% of those who do not know their family tree at all to 72% of those who know their family tree very well). This finding may offer some explanation for the smaller proportion of non-status First Nations peoples who like living in their city, as they are also among the least likely to have some knowledge of their family history.

Finally, the degree to which urban Aboriginal peoples like living in their cities varies little by socio-demographic characteristics, with two important exceptions. Residents of Halifax (81%) and Vancouver (80%) are considerably more likely than those in other cities to like living in their city a lot, which may reflect characteristics of these particular coastal cities.

What do *UAPS* participants like most and least about living in their cities? General quality of life and city life, along with proximity to family and friends, are among those features most prominently mentioned, while certain city conditions (i.e., traffic, cost of living, etc.) and crime are what they like least about their cities. Specifically:

**LIKE MOST.** When asked what they like most about living in their cities (unprompted, without response options offered), urban Aboriginal peoples are most likely to cite five main features:

- **Quality of life.** The most common reason urban Aboriginal peoples like living in their city is the quality of life it offers. Four in ten (39%) urban Aboriginal peoples indicate this is what they most like about living in their cities, particularly the variety and convenience of amenities available. As well, urban Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver (25%) strongly associate their quality of life in their city with the green spaces and landscapes at their doorstep.

- **City life.** Another major reason urban Aboriginal peoples enjoy their city is the city life available to them. One-quarter (26%) most enjoy the recreation and entertainment offered in their city, the cultural and artistic events, and the fast pace of city life. Aboriginal residents of Montreal (40%) and Toronto (39%) are most likely to enjoy these aspects of their city, as are university graduates (36%).
- **Family and friends.** The third most common feature urban Aboriginal peoples most like about living in their cities is their proximity to family and friends (23%). Individuals in Regina (39%) are most likely to cite this as what they most like about living in their city.
- **Career/employment.** The fourth most common feature urban Aboriginal peoples like most about living in their cities is the career and employment opportunities (16%) available to them. This is a more appealing aspect of the city to individuals aged 25 and older.
- **Social acceptance.** A fifth feature enjoyed by smaller proportions of urban Aboriginal peoples is the social acceptance (11%) they experience in their city. Importantly, this perspective is almost exclusive to those who live in Montreal (34%), Toronto (33%) and, albeit to a lesser degree, Vancouver (19%); only a handful of Aboriginal peoples in other cities (6% or fewer) say they like living in their city for this reason.

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (9% or fewer) mention other features they like most about living in their city. These include a sense of community in the city, and the perception of greater freedom and opportunity, a feeling of comfort and familiarity that comes with growing up in their city, and proximity to other Aboriginal peoples.

**LIKE LEAST.** What do urban Aboriginal peoples like least about living in their city? Their responses reveal two main reasons:

- **Urban pressures.** A universal complaint of all city-dwellers, urban Aboriginal peoples similarly dislike certain urban pressures (34%), such as bad traffic, the higher cost of living, pollution, and a too busy and stressful pace of life. Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (55%) and Calgary (48%) are most likely to dislike this feature of city living.
- **Crime.** The second most commonly disliked aspect of urban life, crime (28%) (i.e., violence, vandalism and gang activity), is especially top-of-mind among those living in Winnipeg (45%), Saskatoon (41%), Regina (36%), Halifax (33%), Edmonton (30%) and Calgary (29%). In particular, concerns about violence and murders are prominent in Winnipeg, while gang activity is largely a concern of those living in Saskatoon and Regina.

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (9% or fewer) mention other features they like least about living in their city. These include the weather and climate, experiences with racism and discrimination, the presence of drugs and alcohol, a lack of security and safety in the city, and distance from family and friends. However, Aboriginal peoples in Regina (20%) are more than twice as likely as those in most other cities to say racism and discrimination is what they like least about living in their city. Finally, even smaller groups (less than 5%) dislike poverty and homelessness, poor housing conditions, high rental fees, and the lack of community and support for Aboriginal peoples.

## Reasons for choice of neighbourhood

***Affordable housing is the most common reason for urban Aboriginal peoples' choice of neighbourhoods, but their reasons do vary across cities and reflect unique urban realities.***

*UAPS* participants choose their neighbourhoods for a range of reasons, most typically because they offer affordable housing, as well as a safe environment, the chance to either live with or be close to family and friends, and proximity to work and school.

When asked why they live in their neighbourhood (unprompted, without response options offered), three in ten (29%) urban Aboriginal peoples say it is because they can afford the housing. Two in ten also say their neighbourhood offers either a safe environment for themselves and their families (21%), the chance to live with family and friends (21%), or the ability to be close to work and/or school (21%). Smaller proportions also live in their neighbourhoods because they are close to city amenities and shopping (17%), close to family and friends (15%), good public transportation (13%), and cultural and spiritual services (10%) in their city.

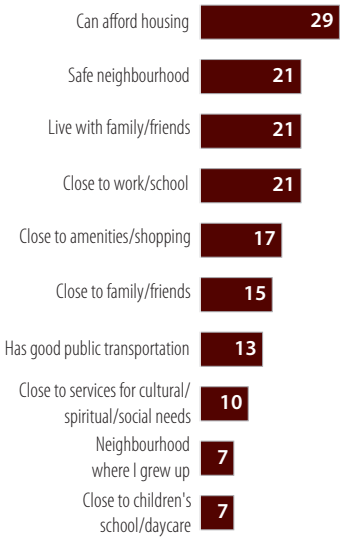
Smaller groups (7% or fewer) choose to live in their neighbourhoods because they are the places where *UAPS* participants grew up, are close to their children's schools, daycare, or other First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit, or because they feel their neighbourhoods are peaceful and quiet.

First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit choose to live in their neighbourhoods for similar reasons. As well, Aboriginal peoples across cities share the same top reasons. However, some reasons are more prominent among residents of particular cities and clearly reflect unique urban realities. Specifically:

- Aboriginal residents in Calgary are more likely than those in other cities to live in their neighbourhood because they can afford the housing.
- Choosing their neighbourhood because it is seen as a safe environment is most common among *UAPS* participants in Regina.
- Aboriginal peoples in Halifax and Calgary are more likely than others to live in their neighbourhood because it is close to work and/or school.
- In Winnipeg and Vancouver, individuals are more likely than those in other cities to live in their neighbourhood because it is close to family and friends.
- Finally, residents of Vancouver and Toronto are much more likely than others to say they live in their neighbourhood because it is close to Aboriginal organizations that provide cultural and spiritual services.

Why do you live in your neighbourhood?

Why do you live in the neighbourhood you do?

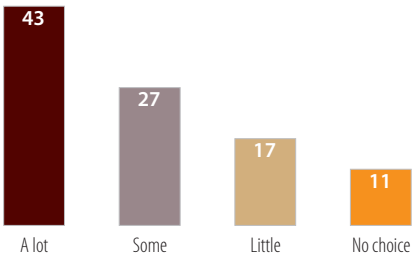


**EXTENT OF CHOICE.** To what extent do urban Aboriginal peoples feel they have a choice about the neighbourhood they live in? When asked directly, seven in ten feel they have either a lot (43%) or some (27%) choice about where they live in their city, but a significant minority feel they have either a little (17%) or no choice at all (11%).

Who is most likely to feel they have *a lot* of choice about where they live in the city? *UAPS* participants in this group are more likely to be Métis (45%) and First Nations peoples (41%) than Inuit (31%), and live in cities such as Toronto, Montreal and Halifax, where one in two residents (each) feel they have *a lot* of choice about the neighbourhood they live in. They are typically older (28% of those aged 18 to 24 feel they have a lot of choice, rising to 44% of those aged 25 to 44 and 49% of those aged 45 and older) and, as could be expected, more educated and more affluent (the proportion of *UAPS* participants who feel they have a lot of choice steadily rises with level of education and household income).

How much choice do you feel you have in where you live?

To what extent do you feel you have a choice about the neighbourhood you live in? Do you feel you have . . . ?




In addition, those who feel they have a lot of choice about the neighbourhood they live in also possess greater knowledge of their Aboriginal heritage. Regardless of education and affluence, *UAPS* participants who know their family history well are considerably more likely than others to feel they have a lot of choice in where they live in the city (56% of those who know their family tree very well feel they have a lot of choice, compared to 31% of those who do not know their family tree at all). This is independent of the kind of community *UAPS* participants feel they belong to, as those who feel they belong to a more *non-Aboriginal* than *Aboriginal* community are more likely than others to feel they have a lot of choice about where they live.

Finally, it is in Saskatoon (46%) and Regina (40%) where residents are most likely to say they have *little* to *no* choice in what neighbourhood they live in.

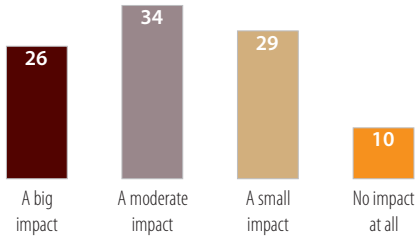
## Impact on city

***More than half of urban Aboriginal peoples think they can make their city a better place to live, and have as strong a sense of empowerment as non-Aboriginal people.***

Beyond the fact that many urban Aboriginal peoples like living in their cities is a widely-held belief that they can make their city a better place to live, a sentiment that is comparable to the perspective of non-Aboriginal people in their city.

Making the city a better place to live

Overall, how much impact do you think people like you can have in making your city a better place to live?




Six in ten *UAPS* participants think people like themselves can have either a big (26%) or moderate (34%) impact on making their city a better place to live, and majorities of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit share this view. By comparison, four in ten believe they can have only a small impact (29%) or no impact at all (10%) on their city (2% are unable to offer an opinion).

A strong sense of empowerment is particularly evident among certain groups of urban Aboriginal peoples. Across cities, individuals in Toronto (37%) and Vancouver (35%) are most likely to believe they can have a big impact in making their city a better place to live. This belief also strengthens with age (only 19% of those aged 18 to 24 believe they can have a big impact, compared to 30% of those aged 45 years and older) and education (just 53% of those with no formal education believe they can have at least a moderate impact, compared to 70% of those with a university degree).

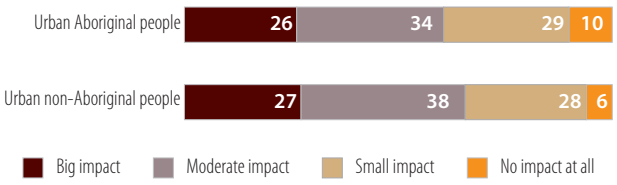
*UAPS* participants' widespread belief in their ability to be positive agents of change in their city mirrors the belief *non-Aboriginal* people have in their own ability to affect change, including equal proportions who think they can have a *big* impact on their city (26% and 27%, respectively).

In addition, a connection to their past is clearly a distinctive feature of those urban Aboriginal peoples most likely to think they can change the future. Those who know their family tree very well are much more likely than others to feel they can have a *big* impact: the proportion of *UAPS* participants who believe they can have a big impact rises from 19 percent of those who know their family tree not at all to 35 percent of those who know it very well.

Not surprisingly, urban Aboriginal peoples who believe they can have no impact at all in making their city a better place tend to be among urban society's most disadvantaged. Those in this small group (10% of *UAPS* participants overall) are more likely to have no formal education, be unemployed or receiving social assistance, and feel their health is only fair to poor. It is worthwhile to note, however, that similar proportions in all income groups (with the exception of those whose household incomes are $80,000 or more) believe they can have no impact at all on their city.

### Making the city a better place to live

Overall, how much impact do you think people like you can have in making your city a better place to live?



# IV. Urban Aboriginal Identity

## Overview

One of the reasons cited in existing research for the increased tendency of people to identify as Aboriginal (a major factor in the substantial increases in urban Aboriginal populations between 1981 and 2006[25]) is that contemporary urban Aboriginal peoples, in particular, are more positive about their Aboriginal identity than at any time in the past.[26]

Key aspects of Aboriginal identity considered in this chapter include knowledge of family history, pride in Aboriginal and Canadian identities, community belonging, and the continuing intergenerational effects of "colonial projects" upon the identities of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian cities, namely Indian residential schools. How these aspects of urban Aboriginal identity vary socio-demographically is also explored. Other critical aspects of identity, such as participation in urban Aboriginal cultures, and urban Aboriginal peoples' perceptions of and experiences with non-Aboriginal people, are addressed in subsequent chapters.

The following points summarize the main findings around urban Aboriginal identity:

- **First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit in urban centres maintain great reverence for their heritage and express strong Indigenous pride.** As one survey respondent noted, "You have to know where you're coming from to know where you're going," capturing the perspective of majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples when asked to describe the importance of knowing their Aboriginal ancestry. Few say they ever downplay or hide their Aboriginal identity, particularly their identity as a First Nations person, Métis or Inuk.
- **Education is a critical channel for learning about one's Aboriginal identity.** Urban Aboriginal peoples with a college or university level education are more likely than others to say they have a greater knowledge of their Aboriginal heritage, and believe this knowledge has contributed positively to their lives. Individuals without any formal education are among those most likely to say they have had *no* opportunity to learn about their family tree.
- **Furthermore, knowledge of one's family tree is strongly linked to other aspects of Aboriginal identity.** Those who know their family tree well are more likely than others to feel a strong sense of connection to other Aboriginal peoples in their city, and to be very proud of their *First Nations/Métis/Inuk* and *Aboriginal* identities.
- **A majority of youth are very proud of their Aboriginal identity.** Although they are less likely to have some knowledge of their family tree and feel a connection to other Aboriginal peoples in their city, three-quarters of Aboriginal youth (18-24) express a strong sense of pride in their *First Nations/Métis/Inuk* identity.
- **Urban Aboriginal peoples are as likely to feel they belong to an *Aboriginal* as a *non-Aboriginal* community in their cities.** More than six in ten say they belong to a mostly Aboriginal or equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community. This sensibility is particularly strong among First Nations peoples and Inuit, but appears true for Métis in some cities as well.
- **Urban Aboriginal "community" is also a product of unique city environments.** Aboriginal communities in urban areas are not simply transplanted non-urban communities. The importance to urban Aboriginal peoples of particular community ties differ somewhat across cities, suggesting their sense of identity and community also develop in tandem with unique features of the city around them.

25 Statistics Canada.

26 Craig Proulx, *"Aboriginal Identification in North America Cities," The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 2006:26:2, p.405.

- **Having many Aboriginal friends coincides with having many non-Aboriginal friends.** *UAPS* participants with many Aboriginal friends are just as likely as those with *no* close Aboriginal friends to have many non-Aboriginal friends. Among those who do not have many non-Aboriginal friends, almost six in ten say they would like more.
- **Finally, the legacy and effects of Indian residential schools persist among urban Aboriginal peoples.** *UAPS* data show majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples across cities have been affected by Indian residential schools; the belief that this experience has had at least some impact in shaping their life and who they are today is widespread.

The following paragraphs elaborate upon aspects of urban Aboriginal identity among First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit.

## First Nations

Majorities of First Nations peoples know their family tree well, but *status* First Nations peoples are much more likely to know their family history than non-status First Nations peoples. Nonetheless, status and non-status First Nations are similarly proud of their identity as a First Nations person. Indeed, First Nations peoples are more likely to be very proud to be *First Nations* and *Aboriginal* than *Canadian*, although nearly two-thirds are very proud to be Canadian.

Maintaining a connection to members of their own First Nation and other First Nations in their city is important to majorities of First Nations residents in cities.

First Nations peoples define their community primarily as family and friends. They are more likely to feel they belong to an *Aboriginal* than *non-Aboriginal* community, although this is not true for non-status First Nations peoples, who are more likely to feel they belong to a *non-Aboriginal* community.

## Métis

Majorities of Métis know their family tree at least fairly well, but their knowledge varies considerably across cities, with a particularly strong sense of family heritage evident among Métis in Edmonton. Métis in Toronto stand out from those in other cities for the sense of self-awareness and confidence they say they gain from knowing their family tree well.

Métis are equally very proud to be *Métis* and *Canadian*, and less likely to be very proud to be *Aboriginal,* although seven in ten are very proud of this latter identity. Nonetheless, Métis are clearly more ambivalent of their pride in being *Aboriginal* than *Métis* and *Canadian,* as a small but significant proportion of Métis are either unable or unwilling to say how proud they are to be *Aboriginal*. This is most evident in Winnipeg, within the centre of the Métis Nation Homeland, where two in ten Métis participants are unable or unwilling to say how proud they are to be *Aboriginal*.

In general, Métis living in Canadian cities are more likely to feel they belong to an equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, or mostly non-Aboriginal, community.

## Inuit

Inuit are more likely than First Nations or Métis to know their Aboriginal ancestry/background well, and derive a great sense of pride from this knowledge. Inuit are more likely to be very proud to be *Inuk* than *Aboriginal* and *Canadian,* although more than two-thirds are very proud of both these latter identities. Nonetheless, one-quarter of *UAPS* participants in Ottawa (where the *UAPS* surveyed Inuit only) are either unable or unwilling to say how proud they are to be *Aboriginal,* and two in ten are unable or unwilling to say how proud they are to be *Canadian.*

However, their strong connection to their Inuk heritage does not preclude a sense of connection to other Aboriginal peoples. Indeed, Inuit are most likely among urban Aboriginal peoples to have a sense of connection with other Inuit *and* other Aboriginal groups in their city.

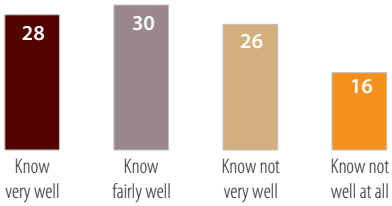
# 1. Knowledge of Aboriginal ancestry

## Knowledge of family tree

***Majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples have at least some knowledge of their Aboriginal ancestry, particularly those who are older and university-educated.***

### Extent of knowledge of family tree

How well do you know your family tree, that is, who your Aboriginal ancestors are?



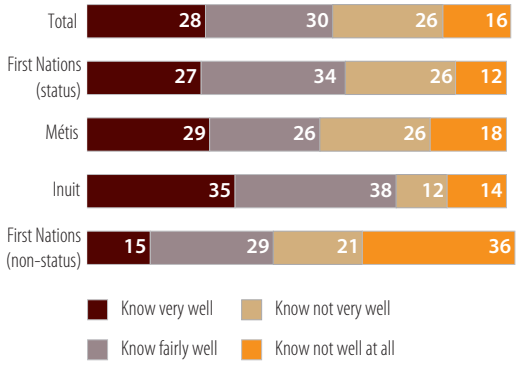

In order to better understand Aboriginal identity in Canadian cities, the *UAPS* survey included several questions that asked participants how well they know their family tree (i.e., who their Aboriginal ancestors are) and what this knowledge means to them in their daily lives.

How well do urban Aboriginal peoples know their family tree? Majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples say they know their family tree (i.e., who their Aboriginal ancestors are) well. Six in ten urban Aboriginal peoples know their family tree very well (28%) or fairly well (30%). Fewer say they know their family tree not very well (26%) or not well at all (16%).

Inuit are more likely than First Nations peoples and Métis to say they know their family tree at least fairly well. In addition, among First Nations peoples, status First Nations (61%) are more likely than non-status First Nations (44%) to say they know their family tree at least fairly well.

### Extent of knowledge of family tree, by identity group

How well do you know your family tree, that is, who your Aboriginal ancestors are?




Knowledge of one's family tree varies little by city. The two exceptions are Halifax (72%) and Vancouver (69%), where residents are more likely than those in other cities to say they know their family tree well. In both of these cities, First Nations peoples are notably more likely than Métis to say they know their family tree at least fairly well.

As well, those aged 45 or older are more likely than younger urban Aboriginal peoples to have at least some knowledge of their Aboriginal ancestry (67% versus 56% of those aged 25-44 and 44% of those aged 18-24). Knowing one's family tree very well is also higher among individuals with a college (34%) or university (37%) education, compared to those with high school (24%) or no degree (22%). Those who have attained a certain level of affluence also know their family tree well. One in two urban Aboriginal peoples with household incomes of less than $30,000 know their family tree, but this jumps to two-thirds of all those with incomes of $30,000 or more.

Interestingly, birthplace does not substantially affect urban Aboriginal peoples' knowledge of their family tree: first generation urban Aboriginal peoples (i.e., those not born and raised in their city of residence) (60%) are only slightly more likely than those who are second generation (i.e., those born and raised in their city of residence whose family is from another place) (53%) to know their family tree at least fairly well.

Finally, individuals who feel they belong to a mostly or exclusively *Aboriginal,* as opposed to *non-Aboriginal,* community are among those most likely to say they know their family tree well.

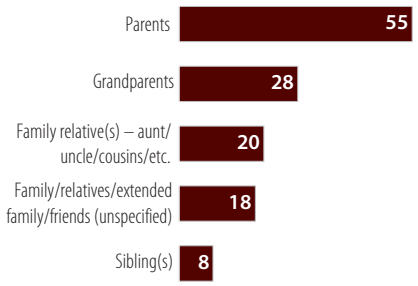
## Sources of learning about one's family tree

***Aboriginal peoples in cities learn about their family tree from a variety of sources, but parents and grandparents are key sources of information, especially for youth.***

*UAPS* participants were also asked from where or from whom they have learned what they know about their family tree (asked unprompted, without offering response choices). By far, parents (55%) are the main source of learning about one's Aboriginal ancestry. Smaller groups of urban Aboriginal peoples also say they have learned what they know about their family tree from other family members, such as grandparents (28%), immediate family relatives (i.e., aunts, uncles, etc.) (20%), extended family and friends (18%), and siblings (8%). A range of non-family sources is mentioned, such as personal research, archives and historical records, genealogy courses, Elders, and home communities and community members, but none by more than five percent of those asked.

Sources of learning about family tree/ Aboriginal ancestry

From where or from whom have you learned what you do know about your family tree?




These sources of learning about one's family tree are common to First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit, across cities. The one exception is that Métis, albeit still small minorities, are more likely than First Nations and Inuit to have relied on their own research, books, archives and other historical records to learn what they know about their family tree.

However, sources of learning do vary by city. Aboriginal peoples in Regina are more likely than those in other cities to have learned about their family tree from their parents (67%) and grandparents (40%). In Vancouver, participants are more likely than those in other cities to say they learned about their ancestry from immediate family relatives (30%). Finally, Aboriginal residents of Halifax (37%) are much more likely than others to say they have learned what they know about their family tree from extended family and friends.

Immediate family is the most common source of learning about one's family tree among younger urban Aboriginal peoples. Individuals aged 18 to 24 are much more likely to have learned about their family tree from either their parents (67% versus 57% of those aged 25-44, and 46% of those aged 45 or older) or grandparents (38% versus 28% of those aged 25-44, and 22% of those aged 45 or older). Use of non-family sources, such as archives, historical records and personal research, is more common among older Aboriginal peoples (especially those aged 45 or older), but even among this group is still secondary to extended family and siblings.

Interestingly, study participants with a university level education are just as likely as those with a college or high school education to have learned about their family tree from parents and grandparents; but they are also somewhat more likely than others to have also learned about their heritage from immediate family relatives, and extended family and friends. This is especially true of those who are currently in school. This may suggest that higher education prompts thinking and questions for some about one's heritage and place in the world that extend beyond the knowledge gained from their closest family members.

**The importance to urban Aboriginal peoples of knowing one's family tree:**

*It was always important for me to know where I came from because my ancestors suffered greatly… I need to be able to tell their stories and share that history.*

*[It has made a] big difference to me. [It is] Important to know who you are. To be proud of the people you are from and their accomplishments.*

*It's a priority. Very important. Self-knowledge. Necessary.*

*Roots. Know where I come from. To be able to push forward and be the best I can be, knowing where I came from.*

*It's important to know who you are. There are many heroes in my family.*

*Even though I am not connected to my First Nation band, I get a renewed connection talking to Elders and hearing about my family history through them.*

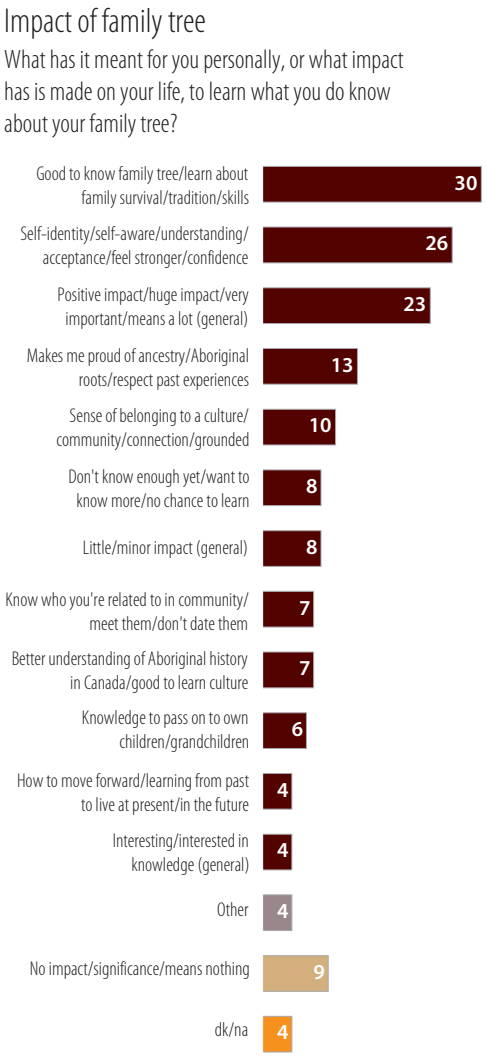
## Impact of knowing one's family tree

***A sense of family heritage, survival, and tradition and a stronger sense of self, are the top ways knowledge of one's family tree has made a difference in urban Aboriginal peoples' lives.***

Beyond how well they know and learn about their family tree, what does this knowledge mean to urban Aboriginal peoples' sense of themselves?

Knowledge of one's family tree has a great impact on urban Aboriginal peoples, including a greater sense of self-awareness, pride and cultural continuity in the city. *UAPS* participants cite five main ways in which knowing their family tree has contributed to their lives:[27]

- **Understanding of family survival and cultural endurance.** Urban Aboriginal peoples most frequently mention that through knowing their family tree they have learned stories of family survival, endurance and long-held cultural traditions. Three in ten (30%) say these stories of survival and endurance have affected them deeply. Greater understanding is most common among residents of Regina (45%), Calgary (41%), Montreal (40%) and Vancouver (38%), and among those with a college or university education.




27 *UAPS* participants were asked what is has meant to them personally, or what impact it has made on their lives, to learn what they know about their family tree.

- **Greater self-identity and self-awareness.** One-quarter (26%) of urban Aboriginal peoples also say they have derived a greater sense of self-identity and self-awareness from knowing about their Aboriginal ancestry. Those in Toronto (38%), Montreal (37%) and Vancouver (34%) are more likely than others to say this is what they have gained, especially Métis in Toronto (51%). Individuals aged 25 and older are also more likely to feel they have gained a greater sense of self-awareness from knowing their Aboriginal ancestry. Finally, *UAPS* participants with a university education (43%) stand out for the greater self-awareness and sense of identity they say they have gained from knowing their family tree.
- **Greater personal meaning.** One-quarter (23%) of urban Aboriginal peoples emphasize the greater personal meaning they've gained from knowing their family tree. Individuals in Vancouver (35%), Halifax (32%) and Toronto (30%) are more likely than those in other cities to describe the impact of knowing their family tree in this way.
- **Instills pride.** Some urban Aboriginal peoples (13%) indicate that knowing their family tree makes them proud of their Aboriginal "roots" and instills a greater respect for their families' past. Inuit (30%) are most likely to feel this way, followed by Métis (14%) and First Nations peoples (12%).
- **Builds a sense of belonging.** One in ten (10%) *UAPS* participants highlight their greater sense of belonging to a community. Similar proportions of Métis (11%) and First Nations peoples (9%) express this view, followed by Inuit (5%). Interestingly, both First Nations peoples and Métis in Toronto are twice as likely as those in most other cities to cite a sense of community belonging derived from knowing their family tree.

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (8% or fewer) mention other ways in which knowing their family tree has had a meaningful impact on their lives. These include a better understanding of Aboriginal history, awareness of family connections, generational continuity and strength to move on from the past that they gain from knowing their family tree. Finally, nearly two in ten say knowing their family tree has either a little (8%) or no impact (9%) on their lives. Only one percent feel knowing their family tree has had a negative impact on their lives.

**The importance to urban Aboriginal peoples of knowing one's family tree (continued):**

*Allows me to know who I am and where I come from. What I can inherit. To be comfortable with myself as an Aboriginal person.*

*A strong base of knowing who I am. Staying grounded. I made it to university. [Knowing my family tree] gave me strength to finish my degree. Gave me strength to not change who I was. I did my best, never changed who I was.*

*I always felt there was a part of me that was missing and I realized it was not knowing my Native side.*

*Resiliency, motivation to succeed. Overall better person.*

*Certain sense of growing – that you belong to something, somewhere [there is] a foundation.*

*It has shaped who I am. You have to know where you're coming from to know where you're going.*

*[Knowing my family tree] makes me feel strong to be Métis and from my family. If you endure and persevere, you can overcome obstacles in your life, just like my family tree.*

## Reason for lack of knowledge

***Lack of opportunity, not interest, is the main reason why urban Aboriginal peoples say they do not know their family tree very well.***

Why do some urban Aboriginal peoples know their family tree and others do not?

There are many reasons why urban Aboriginal peoples may or may not know their family tree that are not possible to capture in this study. The *UAPS* survey simply asked those who do not feel they know their family tree very well to identify if this was due to lack of interest or opportunity. Six in ten (58%) urban Aboriginal peoples say it is because they have had no opportunity to learn more about their family tree. This is true for similar proportions of Inuit, First Nations peoples and Métis.

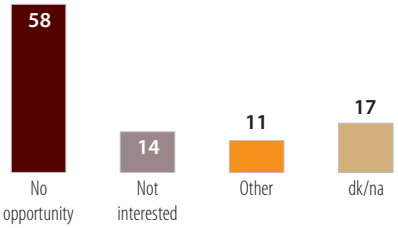
Notably, residents of Saskatoon (73%) are much more likely than Aboriginal peoples in other cities to say they have had no opportunity to learn more about their family tree, as are those without any formal education.

In turn, one-quarter (25%) of urban Aboriginal peoples say they are either not interested (14%) or cite other reasons (11%) why they do not know their family tree very well (such as discomfort with knowing more about their ancestry, lost information, oral traditions where written records are not kept and lack of connection to Aboriginal culture). Urban Aboriginal youth (18-24) are almost three times as likely (20%) as urban Aboriginal peoples aged 45 or over (7%) to say they are not interested in learning more about their family tree.

Almost one in six (17%) urban Aboriginal peoples are unable or unwilling to say why they have not learned more about their family tree.

### Reason for lack of knowledge of family tree*

Is the main reason you have not learned more about your family tree because you have not had the opportunity, or because you are not particularly interested?




* Subsample: Those who do not feel they know their family tree "very well."

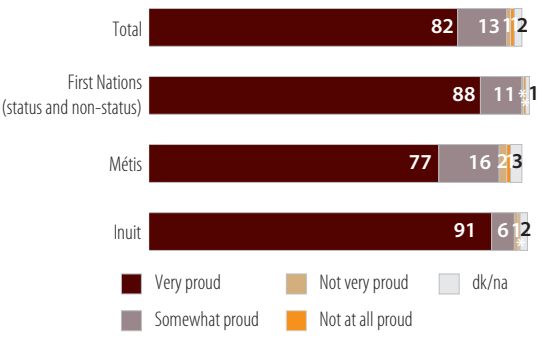
# 2. Pride in Aboriginal and Canadian identity

***There is strong Indigenous pride among urban Aboriginal peoples. Few say they ever downplay or hide their Aboriginal identity.***

An important part of *UAPS* was to understand how proud urban Aboriginal peoples are of their identity and, specifically, to what extent their pride is tied to three distinct aspects of identity: being *First Nations/Métis/Inuk, Aboriginal* and *Canadian.*

### Pride in being First Nations/Métis/Inuk

Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very, or not at all proud to be First Nations/Métis/Inuk?




* Less than one percent

The results show that, while pride in each of these aspects of their identity is high among urban Aboriginal peoples, there are notable differences among First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit.

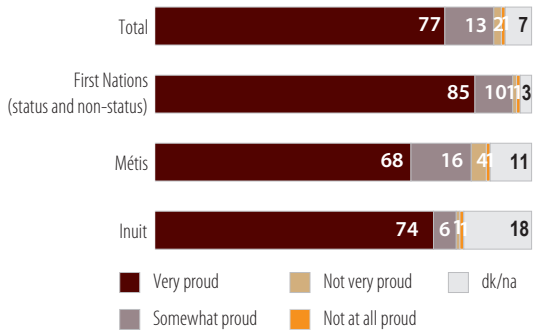
**PRIDE IN BEING FIRST NATIONS/MÉTIS/INUK .** Urban Aboriginal peoples are most proud to be *First Nations, Métis or Inuk.* Overall, eight in ten (82%) say they are very proud of their specific Aboriginal identity (i.e., First Nations, Métis or Inuk). This is particularly true for Inuit (91% very proud) and First Nations (88%), followed by Métis (77%). However, there is some variation in this pattern across cities, as Métis in Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto and Halifax are as proud as others of their specific Aboriginal identity.

Importantly, status and non-status First Nations peoples are similarly very proud to be *First Nations.*

**PRIDE IN BEING ABORIGINAL.** Most urban Aboriginal peoples are also very proud (77%) to be *Aboriginal,* although there is some ambivalence evident among some Métis and Inuit. Pride in this aspect of identity is most widespread among First Nations peoples (85%), followed by Inuit (74%) and Métis (68%). Small but significant proportions of Métis (11%) and Inuit (18%) are unable or unwilling to say they are proud to be *Aboriginal*. Notably, in Winnipeg, within the centre of the Métis Nation Homeland, fewer Métis (50%) say they are very proud to be Aboriginal, and two in ten (21%) are unable or unwilling to say they are proud to be *Aboriginal*. Similarly, in Ottawa (where the *UAPS* surveyed Inuit only) one-quarter of participants (26%) are unable or unwilling to respond.

### Pride in being Aboriginal

Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very, or not at all proud to be Aboriginal?



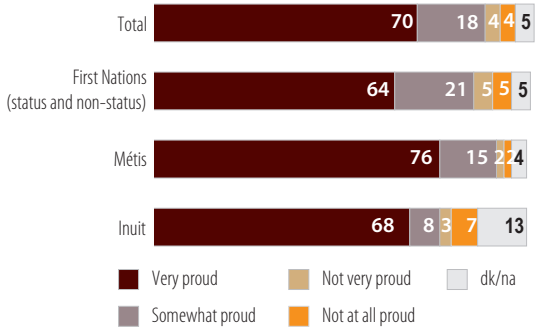

**PRIDE IN BEING CANADIAN.** Finally, urban Aboriginal peoples are least likely to be very proud to be *Canadian*, although seven in ten (70%) say they are very proud of this aspect of their identity. Three-quarters (76%) of Métis say they are very proud to be *Canadian,* followed by Inuit (68%) and First Nations peoples (64%). However, a significant minority of Inuit in Ottawa (20%) are unable or unwilling to say they are proud to be *Canadian*. In addition, both First Nations peoples and Métis in Vancouver are less likely to say they are *very* proud (51% and 55%, respectively) and more likely to say they are *somewhat* proud to be *Canadian* (27% and 26%, respectively) compared to those in other cities.

What else shapes urban Aboriginal peoples' pride in their *First Nations/Métis/Inuk, Aboriginal* and *Canadian* identities? Survey data show their pride in these aspects of identity also vary by age, their sense of community, where they were born and raised, and knowledge of their family tree.

For instance, older (45 years or older) urban Aboriginal peoples (87%) are more likely than those younger than them to be very proud of their *First Nations/Métis/Inuk* identity. Still, it is important to note that three-quarters (75%) of urban Aboriginal youth (18-24) say they are very proud of their specific Aboriginal identity. Youth (75%) are also more likely than those immediately older (25-44 years of age) (67%) to be very proud to be *Canadian*, although this gap largely disappears among urban Aboriginal peoples 45 years of age and older (72%).

### Pride in being Canadian

Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very, or not at all proud to be Canadian?



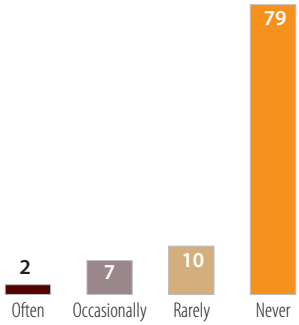

How much pride urban Aboriginal peoples have in their Aboriginal and Canadian identities is also clearly tied to the kind of community they feel they belong to in their city. The proportion of urban Aboriginal peoples very proud to be *First Nations/Métis/Inuk* and *Aboriginal* increases the more they feel they belong to an *Aboriginal* community. For example, pride in being *Aboriginal* rises from 69 percent of those who feel they belong to a mostly or exclusively *non-Aboriginal* community to 86 percent of those who feel they belong to a mostly or exclusively *Aboriginal* community. As could be expected, urban Aboriginal peoples who feel they belong to more of a *non-Aboriginal* community are more likely than those belonging to more of an *Aboriginal* community to be proud to be Canadian, although this gap is less pronounced.

Regardless of one's birthplace, Aboriginal peoples are equally proud of their *First Nations/Métis/Inuk* identities. However, *UAPS* participants *not* born and raised in their city of residence (80%) are more likely than those who are (69%) to be very proud to be *Aboriginal*.

Finally, urban Aboriginal peoples' pride in their Aboriginal identities is linked to their knowledge of their family tree. Those who know their family tree very well are among those most likely to be very proud to be *First Nations/Métis/Inuk* (92%) and *Aboriginal* (88%). By comparison, how well urban Aboriginal peoples know their family tree does not affect how proud they are to be *Canadian*.

Downplaying Aboriginal identity

How often do you downplay or even hide your Aboriginal identity?




## Do urban Aboriginal peoples ever downplay their identity?

A strong sense of pride is further reflected in the fact that few urban Aboriginal peoples say they ever downplay their Aboriginal identity.

Regardless of where they live, where they are from, or any other socio-demographic characteristic, nine in ten urban Aboriginal peoples say they never (79%) or rarely (10%) downplay or hide their Aboriginal identity. Less than one in ten say they occasionally (7%) downplay their identity and only two percent say they often do.

# 3. Connection and belonging

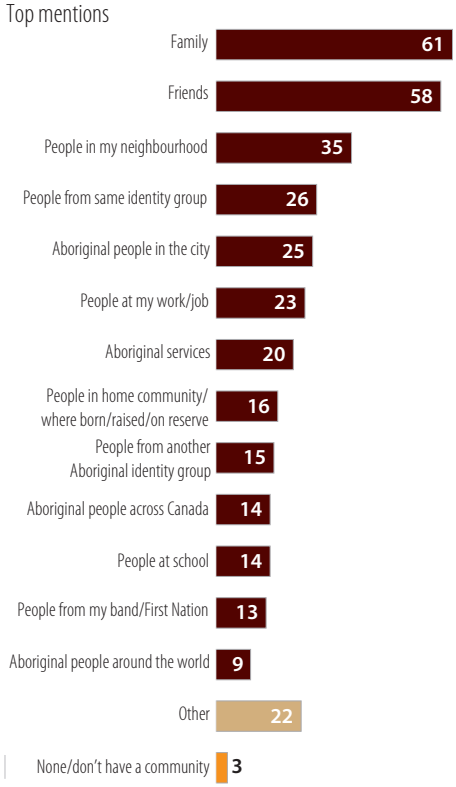
## Definitions of community

***Urban Aboriginal peoples define their community in a variety of ways, but family and friends are top-of-mind, followed by people in their neighbourhood, members of their own cultural group and Aboriginal people in the city.***

Communities play a pivotal role in shaping individual identities. Already noted in this chapter is the way in which urban Aboriginal peoples' pride in their Aboriginal identity grows the more they feel they belong to an *Aboriginal* community. Parents, family, friends, neighbours, members of one's own Aboriginal group, other Aboriginal persons and non-Aboriginal persons transmit social values and understanding that influence Aboriginal identity in cities.

Who or what do you consider to be a part of your community?

Top mentions




In order to better understand what community ties are important, and determine what community means in the lives and identities of Aboriginal peoples living in Canadian cities, the *UAPS* survey explored how participants define their community, along with their sense of belonging and connection to various groups and entities.

Who or what do urban Aboriginal peoples consider to be a part of their community? *UAPS* data show attachment to family and friends is top-of-mind for majorities of urban First Nations, Métis and Inuk residents. When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), they most frequently consider family (61%) or friends (58%) to be a part of their community. Smaller proportions of urban Aboriginal peoples consider the people in their neighbourhoods (35%), people from the same identity group (i.e., First Nations, Métis or Inuit) (26%), Aboriginal peoples in the city (25%) and co-workers (23%) to be a part of their community.

Yet, smaller groups of urban Aboriginal peoples consider Aboriginal services (friendship centres, healing centres, counselling centres, etc.) (20%), people in their home community (i.e., where they were born and raised) (16%), people from other Aboriginal identity groups (15%), people at school (14%), Aboriginal people across Canada (14%), people from their band/First Nation (13%) to be a part of their community and, finally, Aboriginal people around the world (9%).

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (3% or fewer) mention other connections, including religious communities, community and support groups, music and arts communities, sports and recreation services, and social services.

But definitions of community differ somewhat for First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit. For example, two-thirds of Inuit (68%) and First Nations peoples (64%) consider family as part of their community, followed by Métis (58%). Inuit and First Nations peoples are also somewhat more likely to regard friends as part of their community than are Métis, who are much more likely to see the people in their neighbourhood as part of their community (41% of Métis feel this way, compared to 30% of First Nations peoples and 15% of Inuit).

Almost one in two Inuit (45%) also feel other Inuit are part of their community, whereas only one-quarter of First Nations peoples (27%) and Métis (24%) regard other members of their identity group to be part of their community. But, First Nations peoples (30%) are more likely than others to feel Aboriginal people in the city are part of their community.

Finally, small but significant minorities of First Nations peoples and Inuit feel Aboriginal services and organizations, and people from their home communities to be part of their community.

Some differences among Aboriginal peoples across cities also suggest that where one lives influences their sense of community. While it is generally difficult in this instance to distinguish genuine city differences from differences between First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit, certain "city stories" stand out. Specifically, urban Aboriginal peoples in Regina (75%) are much more likely than those in other cities to consider family to be a part of their community. A higher proportion of Aboriginal residents in Vancouver consider people in their neighborhood and work colleagues to be a part of their community compared to Aboriginal peoples in other cities. And, in Toronto, residents are twice as likely as average to count Aboriginal services such as friendship centres and healing centres as part of their community. Distinctive urban neighbourhoods and environments, the different city histories and trajectories of Aboriginal services and organizations in Canadian cities, the proximity of home communities, settlements and reserves – all these factors likely contribute to the diversity of urban Aboriginal communities across the country.

Finally, individuals with a university degree define "community" somewhat differently from others. While they are as likely as others to consider people in their neighbourhood, people from their own Aboriginal group and other Aboriginal people in the city to be a part of their community, they are also most likely to also consider family, friends and the people they work with to be a part of their community.

## Belonging to Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal communities

***Similar proportions of urban Aboriginal peoples feel they belong to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, but distinct differences among First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit are evident.***

To what extent do urban Aboriginal peoples feel they belong to an Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal community in the city?

When asked how Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal they feel the community they belong to is, similar proportions of *UAPS* participants feel they belong to either a mostly Aboriginal (28%), equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (36%), or mostly non-Aboriginal (32%) community. Among those who belong to a mostly Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal community, few feel this community is exclusively Aboriginal (4%) or exclusively non-Aboriginal (4%).

Belonging to an Aboriginal community is strongest among status First Nations peoples and Inuit, while a sense of belonging to a non-Aboriginal community is stronger among Métis and non-status First Nations peoples:

Belonging to Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal community

Do you feel that the community you belong to is . . . ?

**MOSTLY ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY.** Those who feel they belong to a mostly Aboriginal community are more typically Inuit (40%) and status First Nations peoples (37%) than non-status First Nations peoples (20%) or Métis (19%). However, Métis in Calgary, Edmonton, Regina and Saskatoon are just as likely as First Nations peoples in these cities to feel they belong to a mostly Aboriginal community. In addition, First Nations peoples in Vancouver are much more likely to feel they belong to a mostly Aboriginal community (49% versus 38% overall). Sense of belonging to a primarily Aboriginal community is also higher among those who know their family tree well and those with household incomes of less than $10,000.

### Belonging to Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal community, by identity group

Do you feel that the community you belong to is . . . ?


Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer this question.

**EQUALLY ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY.** Equal proportions of First Nations (34%), Métis (38%) and Inuit (35%) feel they belong to an equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community. This group varies little sociodemographically, with one exception. Urban Aboriginal peoples with no formal education are somewhat more likely than others to feel they belong to an equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community.

**MOSTLY NON-ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY.** Finally, urban Aboriginal peoples who feel they belong to a mostly non-Aboriginal community are more typically non-status First Nations peoples (41%) and Métis (36%) than status First Nations peoples (27%) and Inuit (16%). They are most likely to reside in Montreal (41%) and Toronto (40%) (those cities with the smallest relative Aboriginal populations). As well, those with household incomes of $80,000 or more (a very small proportion of *UAPS* participants overall) are considerably more likely than others to feel they belong to a non-Aboriginal community.

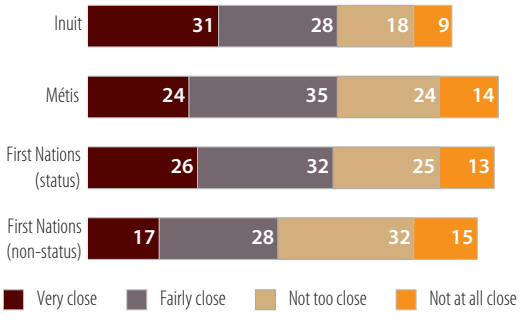
## Connection to Aboriginal peoples in the city

***Beyond the boundaries of their community, Aboriginal peoples typically express a strong connection to other Aboriginal people in their city, both members of their own Aboriginal group and others.***

A majority of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit feel a close connection to members of their own group in their city and to other Aboriginal people in their city, especially Inuit.

### Connection to Aboriginal group, by identity group

How close a connection do you feel [to members of your own Aboriginal group]?




Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer this question.

**CONNECTION TO ABORIGINAL GROUP.** How close a connection do urban Aboriginal peoples have to members of their own Aboriginal group? Overall, equal proportions of Métis (59%), Inuit (59%) and First Nations peoples (57%) feel either a fairly or very close connection to other Métis, other Inuit and other members of their First Nation in their city, respectively.

First Nations peoples are also as likely to feel a close connection to members of other First Nations in their city. Notably, while non-status First Nations peoples (45%) are less likely than status First Nations peoples (58%) to feel a close connection to members of their own First Nation, they are as likely as status First Nations peoples to feel a close connection to members of other First Nations in their city.

First Nations peoples and Métis aged 45 and older are more likely to feel at least a fairly close connection other First Nations/Métis in their city compared to those who are younger. Older Inuit are also more likely to have at least a fairly close

connection to other Inuit in their city, however Inuk youth (41%) are as likely as those aged 45 and older (41%) to have a very close connection to other Inuit in their city.

In addition, urban Aboriginal peoples who know their family tree very well are much more likely than others to feel a strong sense of connection to other Métis, Inuit and members of their First Nation and other First Nations in their city.

**CONNECTION TO OTHER ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN THE CITY.** How strong a connection do First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit feel to *other* Aboriginal peoples in their city? Inuit (60%) are most likely to feel connected to other Aboriginal peoples, followed by Métis (51%) and First Nations peoples (41%). As well, Métis and First Nations peoples aged 45 and older are more likely to feel connected to other Aboriginal peoples in their city compared to those who are younger, especially youth (this pattern is less apparent among Inuit).

## Friendships in the city

***Urban Aboriginal peoples are as likely to have many close non-Aboriginal as Aboriginal friends. Aboriginal friends are more common among older urban Aboriginal peoples, whereas youth are more likely to have many non-Aboriginal friends.***

Beyond their sense of connection to members of their own or other Aboriginal groups, the *UAPS* survey asked First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit living in urban centres about how many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal friends they have.

**FRIENDSHIPS WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLE.** Overall, three-quarters of urban Aboriginal peoples say they have many (51%) or some (24%) close friends in their city who are Aboriginal. Similar proportions of Inuit (79%), First Nations peoples (78%) and Métis (72%) say they have some or many close Aboriginal friends.

*UAPS* participants in Saskatoon (64%), Regina (57%) and Winnipeg (57%) are most likely to say they have many close Aboriginal friends. This is true for both First Nations and Métis residents, and likely reflects the larger relative Aboriginal populations in these cities. In contrast, Aboriginal peoples in Montreal and Toronto, cities with the smallest relative Aboriginal populations, are least likely to have close friends who are Aboriginal.

Urban Aboriginal peoples aged 25 and older (52%) are more likely than those aged 18 to 24 (43%) to have many close friends in their city who are Aboriginal. As well, Aboriginal peoples who know their family tree very well (61%) are much more likely than those who do not know it at all (39%) to have many close Aboriginal friends.

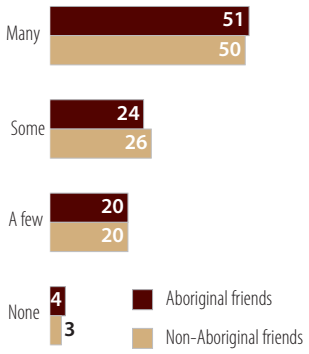
**FRIENDSHIPS WITH NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLE.** Just as *UAPS* participants have close Aboriginal friends in their city, equal proportions have some or many close non-Aboriginal friends where they live. Three-quarters say they have many (50%) or some (26%) close friends who are non-Aboriginal.

Once again, fairly similar proportions of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit have at least some close non-Aboriginal friends in their city. However, Métis (56%) are somewhat more likely than First Nations peoples (43%) to have *many* close non-Aboriginal friends (50% of Inuit have many close non-Aboriginal friends).

Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver (60%) and Winnipeg (57%) are most likely to say they have many close non-Aboriginal friends. In both these cities, Métis are considerably more likely than First Nations peoples to say this is so.

### Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal friends

Do you have many, some, a few, or no close friends in [your city] who are Aboriginal/ non-Aboriginal?



Furthermore, whereas older Aboriginal peoples are more likely to have many close *Aboriginal* friends, Aboriginal youth (18-24 years) are more likely to have many close *non-Aboriginal* friends (57% versus 50% of those aged 25-44, and 45% of those 45 years and older). Nonetheless, this gap between Aboriginal youth and older Aboriginal peoples largely disappears when those with some close non-Aboriginal friends is taken into account.

Urban Aboriginal peoples with a university education (58%) are also somewhat more likely than those with a college (51%) or high school (51%) education to have many close non-Aboriginal friends. Their level of affluence also makes a difference: those with household incomes of $80,000 or more are most likely among *UAPS* participants to have many close non-Aboriginal friends.

Having many Aboriginal friends coincides with having many non-Aboriginal friends. Those with many Aboriginal friends are just as likely as those with no close Aboriginal friends to have many non-Aboriginal friends.

Do *UAPS* participants have any interest in having more non-Aboriginal friends? Among those who do not have many non-Aboriginal friends, nearly six in ten (57%) say they would like more. Similar proportions of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit feel this way, but status First Nations (61%) are more likely than non-status First Nations peoples (40%) to have an interest in having more non-Aboriginal friends.

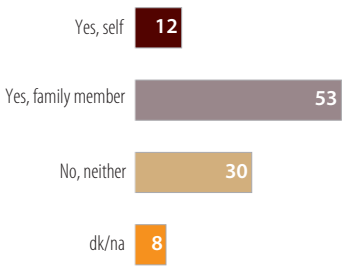
Interest in having more non-Aboriginal friends is also more common among those aged 18 to 24 (64%) and 25 to 44 (59%), compared to those aged 45 and older (51%).

Finally, just over four in ten urban Aboriginal peoples are not interested (23%) in having more non-Aboriginal friends or are unable to offer an opinion (20%).

## 4. Indian residential schools

Indian residential schools

Were you, or any member of your family, ever a student at a federal residential school or a provincial day school?




***Two-thirds of urban Aboriginal peoples across cities say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member. Most in this group feel this experience has had at least some impact in shaping their life and who they are today.***

On June 11, 2008 the Government of Canada issued a formal apology to the former Aboriginal students of residential schools, affirming the disruptive impact of historical policies and legislation. The apology formally recognized that "this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in [this] country."[28]

The Indian residential school system predates Confederation and grew out of the missionary experience in Canada's early history. Indian residential schools existed, at one time or another, in all Canadian provinces and territories except Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

The residential school system left in its wake a tragic legacy. It is estimated that as many as 150,000 Aboriginal children attended these institutions. Many former students have reported undergoing hardship, forcible confinement, and physical and sexual abuse while attending the schools. In addition, these students were also not allowed to speak their language or practice their culture. While most residential schools were closed by the mid-1970s, the last school did not close until 1996.[29]

28 Canada, Office of the Prime Minister, "Prime Minister Harper offers full apology on behalf of Canadians for the Indian residential schools system," *Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada* [website], www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=2149 (accessed December 2009).

29 Environics Research Group, report prepared for the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *2008 National Benchmark Survey*, May 2008., p. 9.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit children had varied residential school experiences, both in intensity and duration. Regardless, the residential school had a direct impact on Survivors and has spilled over to their descendants, creating challenges pertaining to identity, culture and parenting.[30]

Majorities of *UAPS* participants across cities say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member. When asked, two-thirds (65%) say either they themselves (12%) or a family member (53%) were a student at a federal residential school or a provincial day school.

Status First Nations peoples (20%) and Inuit (19%) are more likely than Métis (6%) and non-status First Nations peoples (3%) to say they were students at a federal residential school or a provincial day school. Across cities, Aboriginal peoples in Saskatoon (22%) and Regina (20%) are most likely to say they were once a student at these schools.

Status First Nations peoples (67%) are also more likely to say a family member was once a student at these schools than are Inuit (42%), Métis (41%) and non-status First Nations peoples (39%). Across cities, Aboriginal peoples, particularly First Nations peoples, in Vancouver (67%), Toronto (62%), Saskatoon (62%) and Edmonton (58%) are most likely to have a family member who was a student at a federal residential school or a provincial day school. In Saskatoon, equal proportions of First Nations peoples (63%) and Métis (61%) say they have a family member who was a student at these schools.

Three in ten (30%) urban Aboriginal peoples say neither themselves nor a family member were ever a student at these schools. This proportion is highest among non-status First Nations peoples (48%) and Métis (44%).

## Impact of residential schools

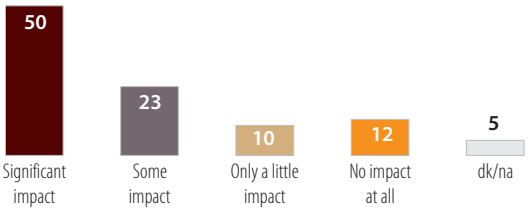
***Most urban Aboriginal peoples feel the Indian residential schools experience has had at least some impact in shaping their lives and who they are today.***

The Indian residential schools experience continues to shape the lives of urban Aboriginal peoples today. Among those urban Aboriginal peoples who say they or a family member were a student in one of these schools, three-quarters say this experience, or the experience of their family member, has had either a significant impact (50%) or some impact (23%) in shaping their lives and who they are today. This represents close to one-half (45%) of all *UAPS* participants.

Belief that residential schools had at least some impact on their life is equally true for First Nations, Métis and Inuit. Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver (84%) and Montreal (80%) are more likely than those in other cities to feel the Indian residential schools experience has had at least some impact in shaping their life and who they are today.

### Impact of Indian residential schools*

To what extent has [this experience/or the experience of your family member] shaped your life and who you are today?




* Subsample: Those who were, or whose family member was, a student at a federal residential school or a provincial day school.

30 Although status Indians formed the majority of attendees at any given time, many Métis children were accepted, often to boost school enrolment figures. Meanwhile, the number of Inuit children grew quickly in the 1950s when a network of schools was built across the North. Roughly [10%] of the Aboriginal population in Canada self-identify as Survivors of the residential school system. *Aboriginal People, Resilience and the Residential School Legacy*, Aboriginal Healing Foundation Series, 2003.

Only two in ten urban Aboriginal peoples who say they or a family member were a student in one of these schools say the experience has had only a little impact (10%) or no impact at all (12%) in shaping their lives and who they are today. Individuals in this group are typically younger (i.e., 18-24), and are more likely to have little to no formal education, as well as feel they belong to a non-Aboriginal community.

Finally, five percent of urban Aboriginal peoples who say they or a family member were a student in one of these schools are unable or unwilling to say to what extent the Indian residential schools experience has impacted their lives. This proportion is highest in Toronto (18%), where, notably, half of Métis (52%) in this city are unable or unwilling to say to what extent this experience has impacted their lives, and among those with a university degree (11%).

# V. Urban Aboriginal Culture

## Overview

There is a view among some observers that cities are places where First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures and communities are lost.[31] As other researchers have observed, assumptions about the incompatibility of urban culture and First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures, and the focus in research and policy primarily on Aboriginal peoples' socioeconomic characteristics, make it important to examine the role of culture for urban Aboriginal peoples.[32]

Notwithstanding the challenges and difficulties Aboriginal peoples face in maintaining their cultural values and beliefs in a mainly non-Aboriginal urban setting, the *UAPS* data show Aboriginal peoples living in Canadian cities are finding ways to respect and practice their cultural traditions.

Indeed, the *UAPS* suggests the cultural revitalization among urban Aboriginal people observed by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report (1996) continues, particularly in certain Canadian cities. But the findings also demonstrate that some groups, notably urban Aboriginal youth, are less likely than others to participate in Aboriginal traditions and cultural activities in their city. The following points summarize the main findings around urban Aboriginal culture (i.e., the ways of life that are passed from generation to generation):

- **There is a sense of cultural vitality among urban Aboriginal peoples in Canadian cities.** By a wide margin, First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit are more likely to think Aboriginal culture in their community has become stronger than weaker in the last five years.
- **This sense of cultural vitality is strongest in Vancouver and Toronto.** Aboriginal peoples in these cities are both more aware of Aboriginal cultural activities in their community and participate in them more frequently. Not surprisingly, residents in these cities are also most likely among urban Aboriginal peoples to think that Aboriginal culture in their community has grown stronger in the last five years.
- **The idea or theory that Aboriginal people cannot be economically successful without losing some degree of cultural authenticity is not well-supported by *UAPS*.** More educated and affluent urban Aboriginal peoples typically have greater awareness of Aboriginal cultural activities in their community, and are more likely than others to say they often participate in them. These findings suggest that the less affluent may be more challenged by the task of maintaining a strong cultural identity in the city.
- **There is an evident confidence in their ability to retain their cultural identity in the city.** While urban Aboriginal peoples acknowledge the need to take pro-active steps to protect their cultural traditions in the city, they are fairly confident in their ability to maintain their cultural identity in the urban setting.
- **Maintaining Aboriginal languages, and customs and traditions is top-of-mind for many urban Aboriginal peoples,** demonstrating these aspects of Aboriginal culture are key links which connect Aboriginal people with their past and "…ground their social, emotional and spiritual vitality."[33] Though studies have found that there is less Aboriginal language use and transmission in urban than in non-urban areas,[34] Aboriginal languages still have significant importance in the lives of urban Aboriginal peoples.

31 Proulx, Ibid., 2006.

32 Evelyn Peters, *Three Myths About Aboriginals in Cities*, *Breakfast on the Hill Seminar Series*, Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Services, March 25 2004.

33 The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). 1996. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 5 vols. Ottawa, Government of Canada, p.531.

34 M.J Norris and L. Jantzen, "Aboriginal Languages in Canada's Urban Areas: Characteristics, Considerations and Implications," Not Strangers in These Parts, 2003; Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census, Statistics Canada.

- **Urban Aboriginal youth are the least attuned to Aboriginal culture in their communities.** They are less likely than older generations to be aware of Aboriginal cultural activities available in their community, and least likely among urban Aboriginal peoples to participate in them.
- **Urban Aboriginal peoples embrace pluralism, and even more so than non-Aboriginal people.** Their tolerance for languages and cultures other than their own substantially exceeds that of non-Aboriginal urban Canadians.
- **Finally, Aboriginal services and organizations clearly help Aboriginal peoples make significant choices about their cultural, economic and social affairs – and, for some, sustain a sense of collective identity in their city.** Friendship centres, employment centres and health centres are of value to First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit alike, albeit to varying degrees. As well, experiences with particular Aboriginal services and organizations vary substantially by city, and may reflect the different services and organizations available in specific cities.

The following paragraphs elaborate upon aspects of urban Aboriginal culture among First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit. Similar proportions of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit are aware of Aboriginal cultural activities in their community and participate in these activities with similar frequency. They differ most around what they think is important to maintaining their collective identity in the city.

## First Nations

Majorities of First Nations peoples are aware of Aboriginal cultural activities in their city and, like Métis and Inuit, participate in them regularly. Aboriginal spirituality is clearly a very important dimension of majorities of First Nations peoples' lives, particularly for those in Vancouver and Toronto (those cities where urban Aboriginal peoples are more likely to say cultural activities are available). Like Métis and Inuit, they feel Aboriginal peoples need to take steps to protect their cultural traditions from outside influences; they are also more likely than others to feel choosing partners with the same cultural background is important.

According to the 2001 Statistics Canada Aboriginal Peoples Survey, two out of three First Nations peoples felt that keeping, learning or relearning their Aboriginal language was very or somewhat important.[35] *UAPS* data corroborates this finding: most status First Nations peoples feel Aboriginal languages are the most important aspect of Aboriginal culture to be passed on to future generations. Aboriginal customs, traditions and Elders are similarly important to majorities of First Nations peoples.

## Métis

Majorities of Métis are aware of Aboriginal cultural activities in their city and, like First Nations peoples and Inuit, participate in them regularly. They are also as likely as First Nations peoples and Inuit to think Aboriginal culture has become stronger in their community in the last five years, although this varies for Métis across cities. Overall, Métis feel less strongly than others about what aspects of Aboriginal culture should be passed on, but in certain cities, such as Toronto and Vancouver, they appear as likely as others to note the importance of Aboriginal languages, customs and traditions, spirituality, ceremonies, Elders, and celebrations and events to future generations. They are also as likely as others to feel Aboriginal peoples need to take steps to protect their cultural traditions from outside influences. Finally, Métis are least likely among urban Aboriginal peoples to use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations.

35 Statistics Canada, 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, http://www.statcan.gc.ca/bsolc/olc-cel/olc-cel?catno=89-589-X&CHROPG=1&lang=eng,

## Inuit

Majorities of Inuit are aware of Aboriginal cultural activities in their city and, like First Nations peoples and Métis, participate in them regularly. They are as likely as others to think Aboriginal culture has become stronger in their community in the last five years and, like First Nations peoples, are more likely than others to feel Aboriginal spirituality is very important in their lives.

Inuit are most likely among urban Aboriginal peoples to use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations. Language is also of great cultural importance – most Inuit think Aboriginal languages are the most important aspect of Aboriginal culture to be passed on to their children and grandchildren.

# 1. Aboriginal cultural activity in the city

## Availability of Aboriginal cultural activities

***Majorities say Aboriginal cultural activities are regularly available in their communities, although this view is stronger in Toronto, Vancouver, Halifax and Thunder Bay, as well as among those who are older and those who strongly identify as Aboriginal.***

To what degree are Aboriginal cultural activities seen to be available to Aboriginal peoples living in Canadian cities?

Urban Aboriginal peoples are more likely than not to say there are some, if not a lot, of Aboriginal cultural activities in their community, but there are notable variations in this perception by city, socio-economic status, age and how strongly they identify as *Aboriginal*.

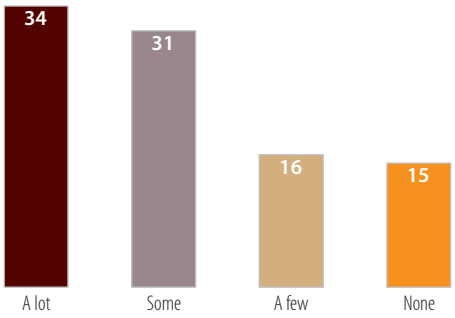
When asked, more than six in ten urban Aboriginal peoples say there are either a lot (34%) or some (31%) Aboriginal cultural activities available in their community. Fewer *UAPS* participants say there are only a few (16%) or no (15%) activities available to them, while four percent cannot say how many Aboriginal cultural activities are available in their community.

Overall, First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit differ little in the number of Aboriginal cultural activities they think are available in their community. First Nations peoples (38%) and Inuit (35%) are somewhat more likely than Métis (29%) to say there are *a lot* of Aboriginal cultural activities available, but similar proportions say there are *some* activities available in their community.

More significant differences in the perception of the availability of Aboriginal cultural activities are evident among urban Aboriginal peoples across cities. By a sizeable margin, Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (80%), Thunder Bay (75%), Vancouver (75%) and Halifax (75%) are most likely to think there are at least some Aboriginal cultural activities available in their community. In contrast, Aboriginal peoples in cities such as Calgary (57%), Winnipeg (61%), Regina (61%) and Saskatoon (60%) are much less likely to share this view. Aboriginal people in Montreal (49%) are least likely to say there are at least some Aboriginal cultural activities available in their community.

### Aboriginal cultural activities available in your community

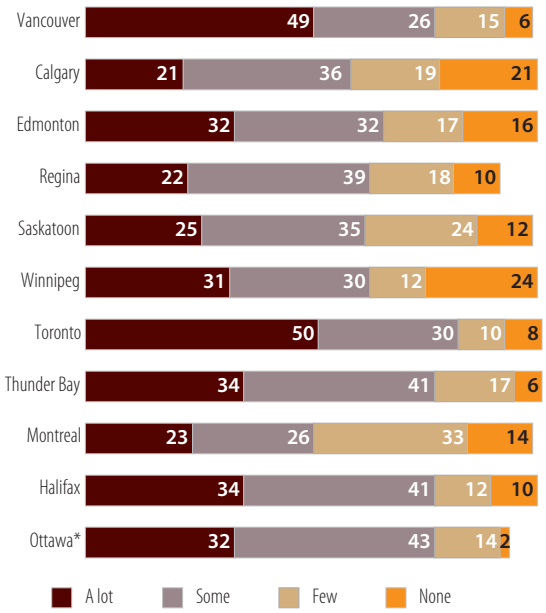
Are there any, a lot, some, a few or no Aboriginal cultural activities available in your community?



More educated and affluent urban Aboriginal peoples display greater awareness of Aboriginal cultural activities in their cities. Specifically, individuals with a university degree and those with incomes between $30,000 and $80,000 are more likely than others to say there are at least some Aboriginal cultural activities in their community.

### Aboriginal cultural activities available in your community, by city

Are there any, a lot, some, a few or no Aboriginal cultural activities available in your community?




* Inuit only

Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer the question

Furthermore, just as a sense of Aboriginal identity is less evident among urban Aboriginal youth (see previous chapter on Urban Aboriginal Identity), so, too, do youth appear to be less aware of the cultural activities that may contribute to a sense of collective identity among urban Aboriginal peoples. Older urban Aboriginal peoples are more likely than youth to say there are Aboriginal cultural activities in their community (70% of those aged 45 and older say there are at least some activities available in their community, compared to 65% of those aged 25-44 and 56% of those aged 18-24).

Finally, awareness of Aboriginal cultural activities is clearly higher among individuals who strongly identify as *Aboriginal*. Those who know their family tree very well and those who feel the community they belong to is *Aboriginal* (or equally *Aboriginal* and *non-Aboriginal*) are more likely than average to say there are *a lot* of Aboriginal cultural activities in their community.

## Frequency of participation in cultural activities

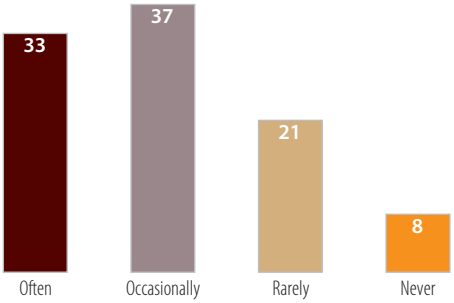
***Majorities of Aboriginal peoples participate in cultural activities in their city, with the exception of youth.***

While *UAPS* data do not permit investigation of the specific types of Aboriginal cultural activities urban Aboriginal peoples participate in, the survey did ask participants *how often* they participate in these activities. First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit all regularly participate in Aboriginal cultural activities in their community, although participation varies according to the availability of the opportunities within a given city. Nonetheless, even in those cities where opportunities are more limited, majorities indicate they participate in Aboriginal cultural activities at least occasionally.

Among those urban Aboriginal peoples who say they have Aboriginal cultural activities available in their community, a majority say they participate in them at least occasionally. Seven in ten say they often (33%) or occasionally (37%) participate in these activities. Only three in ten indicate they rarely (21%) or never (8%) participate in Aboriginal cultural activities in their communities.

### Frequency of participation in cultural activities*

How often do you personally participate in these Aboriginal cultural activities?




*Subsample: Those who have Aboriginal cultural activities available in their community.

Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples participate in Aboriginal cultural activities with similar frequency. However, urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (82%), Halifax (81%) and Vancouver (77%), those cities where residents are most likely to say there are Aboriginal cultural activities available in their community, are more likely than others to participate at least occasionally in these activities. That said, at least six in ten Aboriginal peoples in all other cities say they participate at least occasionally in Aboriginal cultural activities.

Frequency of participation in Aboriginal cultural activities also varies somewhat by annual household income and how strongly urban Aboriginal peoples identify as Aboriginal. The more affluent (i.e., $30,000- $80,000) are more likely than others

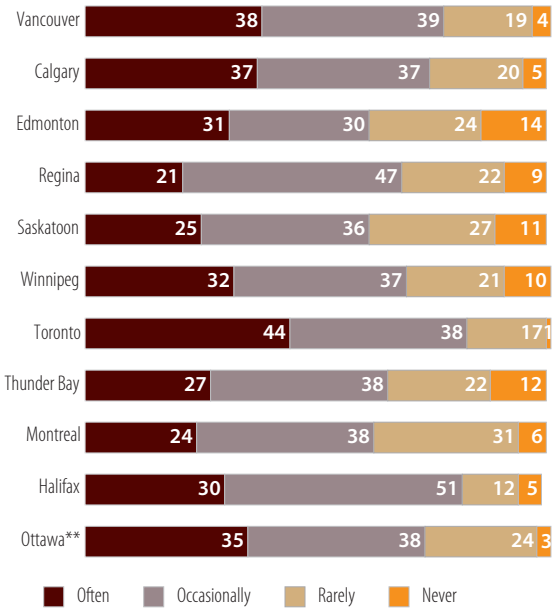
to say they *often* participate in Aboriginal cultural activities, although this is less apparent among those with the highest household incomes (i.e., $80,000+). Participation in Aboriginal cultural activities also rises with knowledge of one's family tree, from six in ten of those who do not know their family tree to eight in ten of those who know their family tree very well.

Notwithstanding these differences, majorities still indicate they participate in Aboriginal cultural activities. Even among those urban Aboriginal peoples who feel they belong to a largely *non-Aboriginal* community, six in ten (62%) say they at least occasionally participate in Aboriginal cultural activities.

Urban Aboriginal peoples' participation in Aboriginal cultural activities varies most dramatically by age. Once again, youth are least likely to say they participate in these activities. One in two (52%) of those aged 18 to 24 say they participate at least occasionally, compared to two-thirds (67%) of those aged 25 to 44 and more than eight in ten (84%) of those 45 years and older. A small, but significant, minority (15%) of youth say they *never* participate in Aboriginal cultural activities.

### Frequency of participation in cultural activities,* by city

How often do you personally participate in these Aboriginal cultural activities?




* Subsample: Those who have Aboriginal cultural activities available in their community.
** Inuit only

## Strength of Aboriginal culture

***Urban Aboriginal peoples display a strong sense of cultural vitality, especially in Vancouver and Toronto.***

By a ratio of six to one, First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit are more likely to think that Aboriginal culture in their city has become stronger than weaker in the last five years.

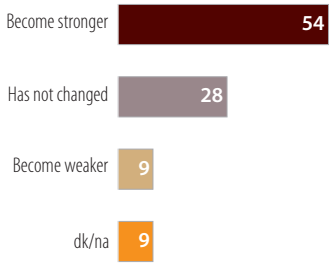
Overall, more than one in two (54%) urban Aboriginal peoples think that Aboriginal culture in their community has become stronger in the last five years. The remainder say it either has not changed (28%) or has become weaker (9%), while another one in ten (9%) cannot offer an opinion on Aboriginal culture in their city in the last five years.

Equal proportions of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit think that Aboriginal culture in their community has become stronger. But, Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (70%) and Vancouver (70%) are considerably more likely than those in other cities to think that Aboriginal culture in their community has become stronger in the last five years, which likely explains the higher proportion of residents in these cities who say there are Aboriginal cultural activities available in their community. In most other cities, somewhat higher proportions think that Aboriginal culture has not changed; few think it has become weaker.

Likely by virtue of their greater awareness of Aboriginal cultural activities in their community and their higher rates of participation, older urban Aboriginal peoples are more likely than others to think that Aboriginal culture in their community has become stronger in the last five years. Youth (18-24) are most likely among all urban Aboriginal peoples to think the status quo prevails.

### Strength of Aboriginal culture

In the last five years, do you think that Aboriginal culture in your community has become stronger, become weaker or has not changed?



# 2. Maintaining Aboriginal cultural identity

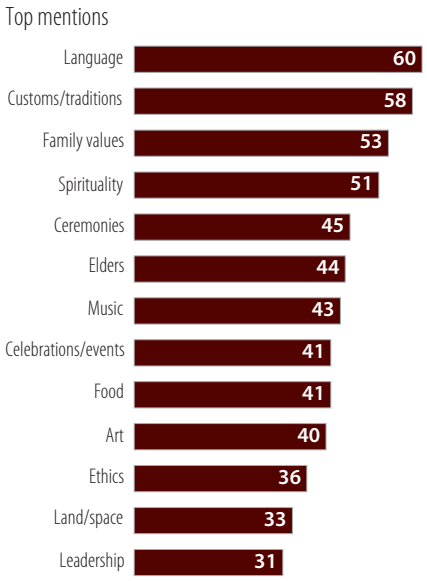
## Most important aspects of Aboriginal culture to be passed on

***Urban Aboriginal peoples, particularly First Nations peoples and Inuit, feel language, and Aboriginal customs and traditions are the most important aspects of Aboriginal culture to be passed on to future generations.***

Urban Aboriginal peoples believe there are numerous aspects of Aboriginal culture that should be passed on to future generations – but feel Aboriginal languages, and Aboriginal customs and traditions are the most important.

### Most important aspects of Aboriginal culture to pass to next generation

In your opinion, what aspects of Aboriginal culture are most important to be passed on to your children or grandchildren, or to the next generation?




When asked what aspects of Aboriginal culture are most important to be passed on to their children or grandchildren, or to the next generation (unprompted, without response options offered), six in ten urban Aboriginal peoples say language (60%), and Aboriginal customs and traditions (58%). Considerable proportions of urban Aboriginal peoples also feel family values (53%), Aboriginal spirituality (51%), ceremonies (45%), Elders (44%), music (43%), Aboriginal celebrations and events (41%), food (41%) and art (40%) are important aspects of Aboriginal culture to be passed on to their children or grandchildren, or to the next generation. Smaller groups of urban Aboriginal peoples also mention Aboriginal ethics (36%), connection to the land (33%) and leadership (31%), as important aspects of Aboriginal culture to be passed on to the next generation.

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (6% or fewer) also mention Aboriginal history, respect for others, Aboriginal medicines and healing practices, respect for nature and wildlife, and treaty rights, among others, as important aspects of Aboriginal culture to be passed on.

First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit differ in some meaningful ways in terms of what they feel to be the most important aspects of Aboriginal culture to be passed on to future generations. Most notably, Inuit (82%) and status First Nations peoples (73%) are much more likely than Métis (48%) and non-status First Nations peoples (47%) to think Aboriginal languages are the most important aspect of Aboriginal culture to be passed on. This difference likely reflects the fact that status First Nations peoples and Inuit are more likely than non-status First Nations peoples and Métis to speak an Aboriginal language.[36] In addition, Inuit and First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to think Aboriginal customs and traditions, and Elders are the most important aspects of Aboriginal culture to be passed on. First Nations peoples are also more likely than Inuit and Métis to emphasize the importance of Aboriginal spirituality and ceremonies to future generations.

Where one lives also influences urban Aboriginal peoples' opinions of what aspects of Aboriginal culture should be passed on. Perhaps driven by the greater availability of Aboriginal cultural activities in Vancouver and Toronto, individuals in these cities (including First Nations peoples *and* Métis in Toronto) are most likely among urban Aboriginal peoples to feel Aboriginal languages, customs and traditions, spirituality, ceremonies, Elders, celebrations and events, in addition to several other aspects of Aboriginal culture cited by *UAPS* participants, should be passed on to future generations.

36 Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census, Statistics Canada.

Language is also a priority in Halifax. A large majority of eight in ten in this city think language is the aspect of Aboriginal culture most important to be passed on to their children and grandchildren. This finding may in part be the result of Aboriginal Languages Initiatives underway in Nova Scotia to preserve the predominant Aboriginal language spoken in the province, Mi'kmaq.

## Aboriginal spirituality

***Aboriginal spirituality is important to majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples, but has greater significance among First Nations and Inuit.***

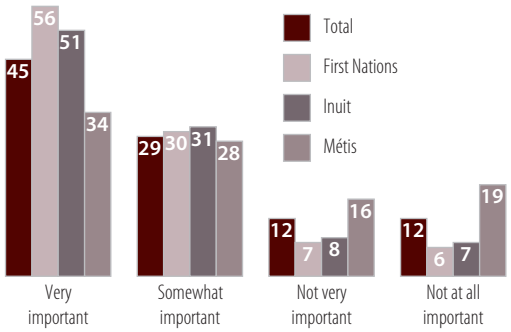
There are very little data that identify the extent to which First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit practice and maintain their spirituality, particularly traditional and Aboriginal forms of spiritual practice.[37] In order to better understand this aspect of urban Aboriginal peoples' lives, the survey asked *UAPS* participants how important *Aboriginal* spirituality is in their lives. *UAPS* data show Aboriginal spiritual practices and traditions clearly have an important place in their lives, especially among First Nations peoples and Inuit.

When asked, majorities of First Nations, Métis and Inuit say Aboriginal spirituality is important in their lives. Three-quarters say it is very important (45%) or somewhat important (29%) in their lives. Only one-quarter say Aboriginal spirituality is either not very (12%) or not at all (12%) important to them. However, First Nations peoples (56%) and Inuit (51%) are much more likely than Métis (34%) to feel Aboriginal spirituality is *very* important (similar proportions think it is somewhat important in their lives).

Similar proportions of Aboriginal peoples across cities feel Aboriginal spirituality is important in their lives, but this feeling is significantly stronger among First Nations peoples and Métis living in Toronto and Vancouver. Aboriginal spirituality is also of greater significance to older urban Aboriginal peoples. Individuals aged 45 or older are much more likely to feel it is very important in their lives (58% versus 43% of those aged 25-44 and 28% of those aged 18-24). One-third of Aboriginal youth in cities feel Aboriginal spirituality is not very or not at all important in their lives.

Importance of Aboriginal spirituality, by identity

How important is Aboriginal spirituality in your life?




Interestingly, the importance of Aboriginal spirituality in the lives of urban Aboriginal peoples varies little by level of education or household income, but does appear to be somewhat influenced by place of birth: those not born and raised in their city of residence (48%) are more likely than those who are (38%) to feel Aboriginal spirituality is very important. This may be due to the fact that "first generation" urban Aboriginal peoples tend to be older and, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, older individuals are more likely to feel Aboriginal spirituality is important in their lives. But, it may also suggest that Aboriginal spiritual practices and traditions help some Aboriginal peoples maintain connections to their home communities and communities of origin.

Finally, Aboriginal spirituality is of greater importance to those who know their family tree very well (59% very important versus 29% of those who know their family tree not at all).

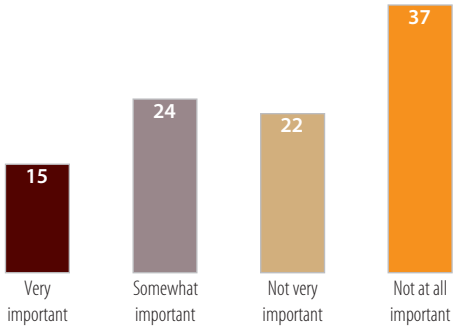
37 The Canadian Council on Learning, T*he State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada: A Holistic Approach to Measuring Success*, 2009, p.29.

# Importance of choosing partners with the same cultural background

***Métis and non-status First Nations peoples largely reject the notion that Aboriginal people should choose partners with the same cultural background as their own, but status First Nations peoples and Inuit are more divided.***

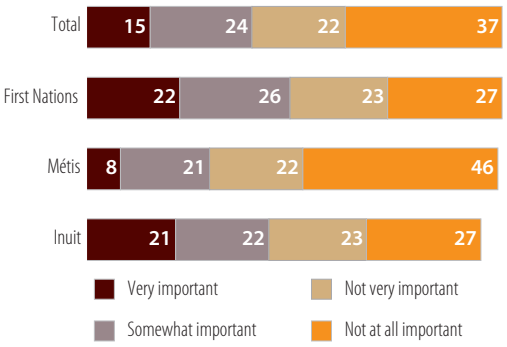
## Importance of choosing partners from same cultural background

And in your view, how important is it that Aboriginal people choose partners with the same cultural background as their own?




## Importance of choosing partners from same cultural background, by identity group

And in your view, how important is it that Aboriginal people choose partners with the same cultural background as their own?




Overall, a majority of urban Aboriginal peoples think choosing spousal partners with the same cultural background is *not* important. However, status First Nations peoples and Inuit are more divided than others on its importance, as are older urban Aboriginal peoples.

When asked how important it is that Aboriginal people choose partners with the same cultural background as their own, four in ten feel it is either very (15%) or somewhat (24%) important to them. A larger proportion of urban Aboriginal peoples feel choosing partners from the same cultural background is either not very (22%) or not at all (37%) important to them.

However, status First Nations peoples and Inuit are more likely than Métis and non-status First Nations peoples to think choosing partners with the same cultural background as their own are important. Half (48%) of status First Nations peoples, followed by Inuit (43%), think choosing partners with the same cultural background is at least somewhat important, compared to three in ten Métis (29%) and non-status First Nations peoples (33%). Almost half of the latter two groups think choosing partners with the same cultural background is *not at all* important.

Age and sense of belonging to an *Aboriginal* versus *non-Aboriginal* community also influence urban Aboriginal peoples' views on this topic. The importance of choosing partners with the same cultural background steadily rises with age (from 29% of those 18-24 years of age to 46% of those aged 45 and older). As well, urban Aboriginal peoples who belong to a mostly *Aboriginal* community are much more likely than others to think choosing partners with the same cultural background as one's own is important, as do those who know their family tree well, albeit not to the same extent.

Finally, urban Aboriginal peoples' views on the importance of choosing partners with the same cultural background also differ somewhat by household income (but not by level of education). Roughly four in ten urban Aboriginal peoples with household incomes of less than $60,000 think choosing partners with the same cultural background is important, but this drops to three in ten or fewer of those with household incomes of $60,000 or more.

## Attitudes towards protecting cultural traditions

***Urban Aboriginal peoples feel strongly that they have to take steps to protect their cultural traditions from outside influences, but this view is less evident among youth.***

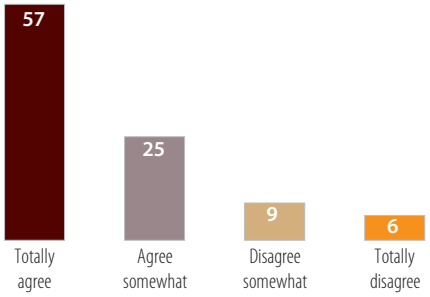
Many *UAPS* participants agree that Aboriginal peoples have to take steps to protect their cultural traditions from outside influences. Using data from the non-Aboriginal survey of *UAPS*, a comparison also shows urban Aboriginal peoples are much more likely to feel these steps are necessary compared to non-Aboriginal urban residents, who are less likely to feel they need to take steps to protect their own cultural traditions.

Eight in ten urban Aboriginal peoples totally (57%) or somewhat (25%) agree that Aboriginal peoples have to take steps to protect their cultural traditions from outside influences. Only a handful disagree somewhat (9%) or totally disagree (6%) with this idea.

First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit feel similarly that Aboriginal peoples need to take steps to protect their cultural traditions from outside influences. This view is also generally consistent across socio-demographic groups, as it is among individuals who strongly identify as Aboriginal and those who do not – although it is more predominant among those who live in a mostly Aboriginal community.

Have to take steps to protect cultural traditions from outside influences

"We have to take steps to protect our cultural traditions from outside influences."




However, Aboriginal peoples in Halifax (71%) and Toronto (69%) are somewhat more likely than those in other cities to *totally* agree that they need to take steps to protect their cultural traditions from outside influences.

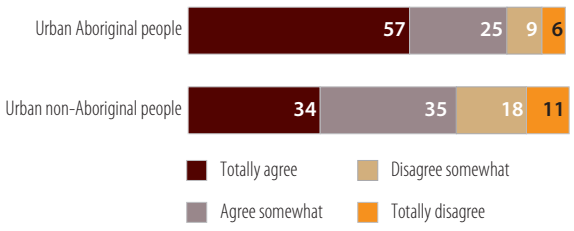
Urban Aboriginal peoples' belief that they need to take steps to protect their cultural traditions varies most by age. While youth agree Aboriginal peoples need to take steps to protect cultural traditions, they are less likely to *totally* agree that this is necessary. Among those aged 18 to 24, just over four in ten (44%) *totally* agree Aboriginal peoples need to take steps to protect their cultural traditions from outside influences, compared to seven in ten (69%) of those aged 45 and older.

**ABORIGINAL VERSUS NON-ABORIGINAL PERCEPTIONS.** Overall, non-Aboriginal urban peoples' attitude towards their own cultural traditions is quite different from that of urban Aboriginal peoples. Data available from the non-Aboriginal survey of *UAPS* shows only a third (34%) of participants feel strongly that they have to take steps to protect their own cultural traditions from outside influences – considerably fewer compared to urban Aboriginal peoples.

While not as pronounced as it is among urban Aboriginal peoples, some groups of non-Aboriginal people express a stronger need than others to protect their cultural traditions from outside influence. Across cities, this sentiment is strongest among those in Montreal (45%) and Thunder Bay (41%). Individuals born in Canada are also more likely than others to feel steps are necessary (36% *totally* agree they have to take steps to protect their own cultural traditions from outside influences, compared to 26% of those individuals born outside Canada), as are those with less formal education (individuals with only a high school diploma are twice as likely as those with a university degree to *totally* agree they have to take steps).

Have to take steps to protect cultural traditions from outside influences

Do you totally agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or totally disagree with the following statement: "We have to take steps to protect our cultural traditions from outside influences."



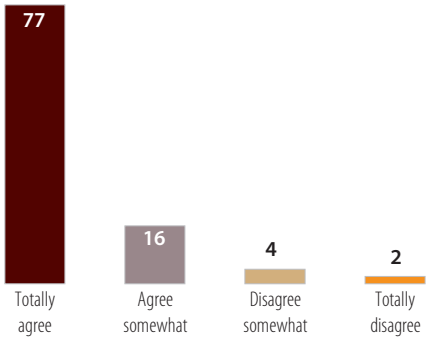
## Attitudes towards other languages and cultures

***Urban Aboriginal peoples are strongly accepting of other languages and cultures, and much more so than non-Aboriginal urban peoples.***

Although there is broad agreement that steps must be taken to protect their cultural traditions from outside influence, nine in ten First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit either totally (77%) or somewhat (16%) agree that Canada is a country where there is room for a variety of languages and cultures.

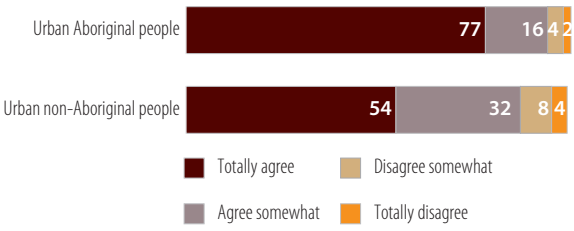
### There is room for a variety of languages and cultures in this country

Do you totally agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or totally disagree with the following statement: "There is room for a variety of languages and cultures in this country."




### There is room for a variety of languages and cultures in this country

Do you totally agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or totally disagree with the following statement: "There is room for a variety of languages and cultures in this country."




Similar proportions of Aboriginal peoples across cities hold this view. The one exception is Calgary, where residents appear more ambivalent in their attitudes towards other languages and cultures compared to those in other cities (just over one-half totally agree there is room for a variety of languages and cultures, compared to three-quarters or more of those in other cities).

Urban Aboriginal peoples' attitudes towards other languages and cultures do not vary substantially by other socio-demographic factors.

**ABORIGINAL VERSUS NON-ABORIGINAL PERCEPTIONS.** Notably, urban Aboriginal peoples express a much greater degree of tolerance for other languages and cultures in comparison with non-Aboriginal people. Using data available from the non-Aboriginal survey of *UAPS*, urban Aboriginal peoples (77%) are much more likely than non-Aboriginal people (54%) to *totally* agree there is room for a variety of languages and cultures in Canada.

Still, some groups of non-Aboriginal people display greater acceptance, chiefly younger individuals (67% of those aged 18-29 totally agree there is room for a variety of languages and cultures, compared to 44% of those aged 60 and older) and those with a university degree. Interestingly, birthplace does not appear to influence non-Aboriginal peoples' perceptions: similar proportions of those born in Canada (53%) and those born outside Canada (59%) totally agree there is room for a variety of languages and cultures in the country.

# 3. Concern over losing cultural identity

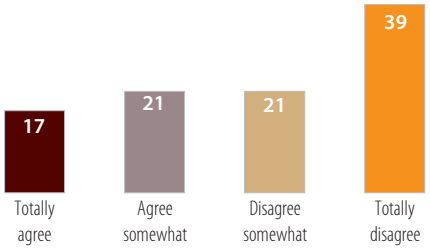
***A majority of urban Aboriginal peoples do not express much concern about losing their cultural identity, but First Nations peoples and Inuit are more divided.***

As the previous results demonstrate, urban Aboriginal peoples display a pro-active stance towards protecting their cultural traditions, while at the same time showing a high tolerance for other languages and cultures. Perhaps by virtue of this perspective, only a minority of urban Aboriginal peoples express concern about losing their cultural identity, with the division of opinion being remarkably parallel to that of non-Aboriginal people.

When posed with the statement "I am concerned about losing my cultural identity," a majority of urban Aboriginal peoples disagree. Six in ten totally disagree (39%) or disagree somewhat (21%) that they are concerned about losing their cultural identity. Smaller proportions agree somewhat (21%) or totally agree (17%) with this statement.

Concern over losing cultural identity

Do you totally agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or totally disagree with the following statement: "I am concerned about losing my cultural identity."

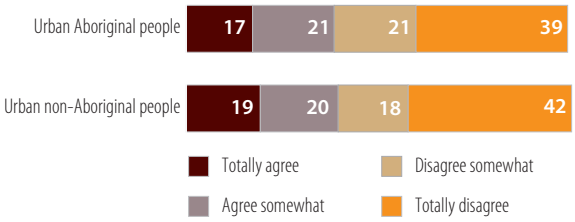



Who is concerned about losing their cultural identity? Status First Nations peoples and Inuit, albeit still minorities, are more likely than others to express concern about losing their cultural identity – they are twice as likely as Métis and non-status First Nations peoples to feel a strong sense of concern about this. However, this concern is somewhat offset by knowledge of family history, as urban Aboriginal peoples who know their family tree very well express less concern than others about losing their cultural identity (48% totally disagree, compared to one-third of those who know their family tree not well or not at all). Those who often participate in Aboriginal cultural activities are also less likely than others to express concern about losing their cultural identity.

**ABORIGINAL VERSUS NON-ABORIGINAL PERCEPTIONS.** Notably, urban Aboriginal peoples are no more concerned about losing their cultural identity than are non-Aboriginal peoples. Equal proportions of non-Aboriginal urban Canadians and urban Aboriginal peoples say they either totally disagree or disagree somewhat with the statement "I am concerned about losing my cultural identity."

Concern over losing cultural identity

Do you totally agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or totally disagree with the following statement: "I am concerned about losing my cultural identity."




Non-Aboriginal Canadians differ little in the degree to which they are concerned about losing their cultural identity. The two exceptions are Montrealers (43%), who are much more likely than other non-Aboriginal participants to express strong concern about losing their cultural identity. Also, remarkably, individuals born in Canada (22%) are twice as likely as those born outside Canada (12%) to *totally* agree they are concerned about losing their cultural identity.

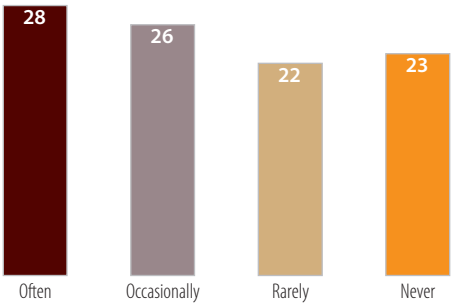
# 4. Experiences with Aboriginal services and organizations

## Frequency of use of urban Aboriginal services and organizations

***Half of urban Aboriginal peoples use and rely at least occasionally on Aboriginal services and organizations in their city, rising to seven in ten Inuit.***

Use of Aboriginal services or organizations

How often do you use or rely on Aboriginal services or organizations in [your city]?




Many Aboriginal services and organizations promote culture and identity for urban Aboriginal peoples through their types of services, the events they sponsor, and simply through their existence as Aboriginal organizations in the city. The *UAPS* survey asked participants how often, and why, they use these services and organizations, and to identify which ones they find most useful.

Urban Aboriginal peoples divide among those who use and do not use Aboriginal services and organizations in their city, with use most common among First Nations peoples and Inuit, and among those who live in Vancouver and Toronto.

Just over one-half of urban Aboriginal peoples often (28%) or occasionally (26%) use or rely on Aboriginal services or organizations in their city. Just under one-half of urban Aboriginal peoples either rarely (22%) or never (23%) use or rely on such services or organizations.

Who among urban Aboriginal peoples make the greatest use of Aboriginal services and organizations in their city? Inuit (71%) are most likely to occasionally or often use and rely on these services and organizations, followed by First Nations peoples (59%) and Métis (48%). Use is also more common among Aboriginal peoples in Toronto and Vancouver, those cities already noted for their greater availability of Aboriginal cultural activities. Across cities, residents of Regina (40%) are least likely to use or rely on Aboriginal services and organizations in their city.

Frequent use of Aboriginal services and organizations is also more common among Aboriginal peoples aged 45 years and older, and those less affluent (use of these services and organizations steadily declines as household income increases).

Finally, Aboriginal services and organizations are equally important to similar proportions of those new to their city (i.e., those who arrived in their city within the last two years) and long-time residents (i.e., those who arrived in their city 20 or more years ago).

## Reasons for use

***Aboriginal services and organizations clearly help some individuals make significant choices about their cultural, economic and social life – and, for some, sustain a sense of collective identity in their city.***

Beyond how often they use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations, the *UAPS* survey explored why some use them more regularly than others (unprompted, without response options offered).

Among those who use Aboriginal services and organizations regularly, *UAPS* participants emphasize the value of the health, employment and educational resources they offer, along with their positive environments.

**WHY THEY USE ABORIGINAL SERVICES.** When asked why they use Aboriginal services and organizations, those who use them regularly (i.e., often or occasionally – 54% of *UAPS* participants overall) do so largely for the specific resources and positive environment they are seen to offer. Some of these reasons are illustrated in verbatim comments in the sidebar on this page. Specifically:

- **Specific resources.** This is the most common reason why urban Aboriginal peoples (45%) use or rely on Aboriginal services and organizations. Programs and social services, health supports, and education and employment services are most typically the types of resources they describe using. Notably, those aged 18 to 24 (55%), followed by those aged 25 to 44 (48%), are more likely than those aged 45 and older (37%) to use Aboriginal services and organizations for this reason.
- **Positive environment.** Similar proportions of those who use Aboriginal services and organizations regularly also cite their positive environment (38%), whether it be the personal relationships, supportive community and/or the connection to Aboriginal culture, sharing circles and Elders that they offer. These features are particularly important for those who *often* use Aboriginal services and organizations.
- **Employee/volunteer.** A small group of *UAPS* participants (14%) also use Aboriginal services and organizations because they are either employed by them, or volunteer their time and services.

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (12% or fewer), mention other reasons for using Aboriginal services and organizations. These typically reflect a lack of need or efforts among those who use them only occasionally to not rely on them too often.

### Why urban Aboriginal peoples use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations:

*I am still new here. I want to get to know the Aboriginal community better so I have involved myself with an Aboriginal Women's Professional Association to be part of a larger circuit. I may be more involved when I develop more contacts.*

*Because they help me to achieve projects that I'm working on. And it's also for community development, striving for a better community and staying connected. I've found strengths in them as an Aboriginal person seeking truths, development and balance.*

*Without their services and support, it would be hard to adjust in the city. They provide a sense of community.*

*Why do I use them? Sometimes I need a blanket, a clean pair of socks, something to eat or for coffee, or for taking a shower. The friendship centre knows the kind of needs I have.*

*I just feel more comfortable with Aboriginal services. I don't feel as judged. I feel that I don't have to be ashamed about being Aboriginal. I feel that it is easier for me to talk about my problems because they know about my background and my culture.*

**Why urban Aboriginal peoples do not use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations:**

*Just because I'm independent. I feel that there are too many handouts. I just feel like everyone can help. I just don't feel that it has to be Aboriginal-based.*

*I don't really rely on the Aboriginal services, but I am really happy that they are there for me when it comes to using them for school.*

*Because I've never been on unemployment, had troubles with rent or had family difficulties. There's not been a need.*

*Because I'm independent. My goal is to not be dependent on any system. To me, that is a form of government control.*

*I don't know what is out there and at the same [time] think that I do not need them that much. I think I can fairly rely on myself in that respect. Also, when it comes to certain services, I am reluctant to use them on the basis [that] I am Aboriginal. If I am to use a service, I prefer to be entitled to it on my own merit than exclusively based on my background.*

*Some organizations I don't know about. I moved from Ottawa. Many of them catered towards people in the Downtown Eastside. I'm not in that situation.*

*There is no information about where to go to get services.*

**WHY THEY DON'T USE ABORIGINAL SERVICES.** Those who rarely or never use Aboriginal services and organizations (representing 45% of *UAPS* participants overall) typically indicate they have no need for them (49%). Smaller groups do not use them either because they are personally unaware of the services and organizations available in their city (14%), or feel they are unhelpful (10%). Some of these reasons are illustrated in verbatim comments in the sidebar on this page.

## Most useful Aboriginal services and organizations

***Urban Aboriginal peoples value a variety of Aboriginal services and organizations, particularly friendship centres.***

Among those who have used or relied on Aboriginal services or organizations in their city at one time, which ones have they found particularly useful?

Urban Aboriginal peoples value a wide range of Aboriginal services and organizations, but first and foremost name friendship centres (42%), followed by employment centres (37%).

Others note the importance of Aboriginal services and organizations, such as health centres (25%), counselling centres (19%), housing services (18%) and healing centres (16%). Some urban Aboriginal peoples also find child and family services (15%), Aboriginal youth centres (14%), Aboriginal legal services (12%), and Aboriginal educational and scholarship programs (10%) to be useful.

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (less than 10%) mention several other services and organizations, including AHRDA (Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holder), specific Métis or First Nations associations, women's centres, spiritual services, and arts and music services as particularly useful.

Inuit (55%) and non-status First Nations peoples (56%) are somewhat more likely than status First Nations peoples (43%) and Métis (39%) to value friendship centres in their cities, but similar proportions find employment centres and counselling centres particularly useful. First Nations peoples and Inuit are twice as likely as Métis to value health centres, housing services, and child and family services. Notably, non-status First Nations peoples (30%) are much more likely than others to have found healing centres to be particularly useful.

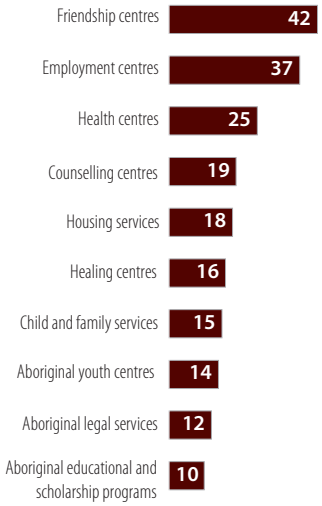
Urban Aboriginal peoples' attitudes towards the usefulness of particular Aboriginal services and organizations are shaped in part by the availability of these services and organizations in their city. While examining the correlation between availability and perceptions of value is beyond the scope of this study, *UAPS* data show the following variations in urban Aboriginal peoples' perceptions of specific types of Aboriginal organizations and services across cities:

- Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are much more likely than those in other cities to find friendship centres particularly useful, followed by those in Montreal and Vancouver.
- Employment centres are of somewhat greater value to Aboriginal peoples in Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Regina.
- Six in ten Aboriginal peoples in Toronto find health centres particularly useful.
- Aboriginal peoples in Regina are twice as likely as average to find housing services particularly useful.
- Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are most likely to have found Aboriginal youth centres particularly useful.
- Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are much more likely than those in other cities to value child and family services, and Aboriginal legal services.

### Most useful Aboriginal services and organizations*

What kinds of Aboriginal services or organizations have you found to be particularly useful?

Top mentions




*Subsample: Those who have used Aboriginal services in their city.

# VI. Experiences with Non-Aboriginal People

## Overview

Maintaining strong Aboriginal identities, and forming stable and vibrant Aboriginal communities in the city does not occur in isolation, but amidst a non-Aboriginal population-at-large. There is a long history of systemic racism towards Aboriginal people in Canadian society, no less so in cities where urban populations may have little exposure to, or understanding of, Aboriginal peoples. Thus, part of better understanding contemporary urban Aboriginal identities is to better comprehend how they feel perceived in a largely non-Aboriginal urban world.

In this context, the *UAPS* survey explored perceptions of and experiences with non-Aboriginal people, in terms of how Aboriginal people are thought to be perceived by non-Aboriginal people, in what ways non-Aboriginal people are viewed as different from Aboriginal people, and in what ways experiences with non-Aboriginal people have shaped the lives of urban Aboriginal peoples and who they are today. The survey also explored urban Aboriginal peoples' experiences with non-Aboriginal services in their city.

The following points summarize the main findings around urban Aboriginal peoples' perceptions of and experiences with non-Aboriginal people:

- **Non-Aboriginal peoples' impression of Aboriginal people is widely believed to be generally negative.** Nonetheless, there is some sense among urban Aboriginal peoples that impressions may be changing for the better, especially among those most familiar with their own Aboriginal background.
- **If there is a 'single urban Aboriginal experience,' it is the shared perception among Métis, Inuit and First Nations peoples, across cities, that they are stereotyped negatively.** There is a very strong perception among urban Aboriginal peoples that non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of negative stereotypes of Aboriginal people, most commonly of alcoholism and drug abuse. Notable regional variations also demonstrate that *UAPS* participants' perceptions are shaped by where they live.
- **Many urban Aboriginal peoples say they have experienced negative behaviour or unfair treatment because of who they are.** These views are particularly strong among older *UAPS* participants, women and residents of Saskatoon. Nonetheless, despite these views, urban Aboriginal peoples tend to feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people and many feel their experiences with non-Aboriginal people (good and bad) have shaped their lives positively.
- **Non-Aboriginal people are viewed as different from Aboriginal people in multiple ways, especially in terms of their value systems and cultural heritage.** Most urban Aboriginal peoples identify at least one difference between the two groups, and the general tone of many is that there are keen differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.
- **There is a general consensus among First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit in terms of their perceptions and experiences with non-Aboriginal people.** Few substantive differences exist. The one main exception is that Inuit are less likely than others to think non-Aboriginal people perceive Aboriginal people negatively.
- **Urban Aboriginal peoples report a substantial amount of contact with non-Aboriginal services, particularly banks and the health care system.** They are generally positive about their experiences, with the exception of the child welfare system, where negative experiences outweigh positive ones.

- **Regardless of how much interaction they have with non-Aboriginal services, there is broad agreement among urban Aboriginal peoples that it is very important to also have *Aboriginal* services.** This is considered to be most important in the case of addiction programs, child and family services, and housing services.

# 1. How Aboriginal peoples feel they are perceived by non-Aboriginal people

## Perceptions of non-Aboriginal impressions of Aboriginal people

***Non-Aboriginal people are widely believed to have generally negative impressions of Aboriginal people.***

By a wide margin, and across all socio-demographic groups, most urban Aboriginal peoples think non-Aboriginal people view them in a negative light.

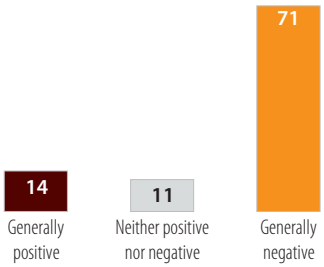
Seven in ten (71%) *UAPS* participants believe non-Aboriginal peoples' impression of Aboriginal people is generally negative. Only a small group think their impression is generally positive (14%), while another one in ten (11%) think non-Aboriginal peoples' impression of Aboriginal people is neither positive nor negative.

The perception that non-Aboriginal people view Aboriginal people negatively is strongest among Métis (73%) and First Nations peoples (68%), followed by Inuit (53%), who tend to be more likely than others to think impressions are generally positive or ambivalent (i.e., neither positive nor negative). Majorities in all cities think non-Aboriginal peoples' impression is generally negative, but this view is strongest among those in Edmonton (80%) and weakest in Halifax (52%), where residents are twice as likely as average to think non-Aboriginal peoples' impression of Aboriginal people is neither positive nor negative.

As mentioned, urban Aboriginal peoples in all socio-demographic groups share the perception that non-Aboriginal people view Aboriginal people negatively. However, it is important to note that this view is especially strong among women (75%, compared to 66% of men), who are among those most likely to think non-Aboriginal peoples' impression of Aboriginal people is generally negative.

Perceptions of non-Aboriginal people's impressions of Aboriginal people

Do you think non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people is generally positive or negative?



## Perceptions of non-Aboriginal stereotypes of Aboriginal people

***There is a very strong perception among urban Aboriginal peoples that non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of negative and distorting stereotypes of Aboriginal people, most commonly of alcoholism and drug abuse.***

Overwhelmingly, Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples believe non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of stereotypes of Aboriginal people, and that these most commonly relate to addiction problems (alcohol and drug abuse).

Only one percent of urban Aboriginal peoples believe non-Aboriginal people hold *no* stereotypes of Aboriginal people. Some of the stereotypes they believe non-Aboriginal people hold are presented in participants' own words in the sidebar on this page.

Importantly, while similar stereotypes are mentioned by *UAPS* participants across cities and in all socio-demographic groups, notable regional variations demonstrate that urban Aboriginal peoples' perceptions of how they are viewed by non-Aboriginal people are complex, and are in part locally constructed and shaped by where they live.

Specifically, when asked (unprompted, without response options offered) what they believe are the most common stereotypes that non-Aboriginal people hold about Aboriginal people five main stereotypes emerged:

- **Addiction problems.** This is, by far, the stereotype most frequently mentioned by *UAPS* participants. Three-quarters (74%) believe non-Aboriginal people associate them with drug and alcohol abuse. This view is strongest among First Nations peoples (74%) and Métis (74%), followed by Inuit (59%). This view is also widespread among Aboriginal peoples in most cities, but is most common among those in Toronto (86%), where most think non-Aboriginal people associate Aboriginal people with substance abuse and alcoholism. As well, those under 45 years of age are somewhat more likely than older individuals to believe addiction problems to be the most common stereotype non-Aboriginal people hold about Aboriginal people (77% versus 67%).
- **Lazy and lack motivation.** Although less common than the stereotype of addiction problems, three in ten (30%) urban Aboriginal peoples nonetheless believe non-Aboriginal people see Aboriginal people as lazy and lacking in motivation. This view is most common among Métis (34%), followed by First Nations peoples (27%) and Inuit (19%). Varying proportions of Aboriginal peoples across cities believe this is a common stereotype non-Aboriginal people hold, but this view is strongest in Halifax (41%), and in Edmonton (36%) and Winnipeg (36%), reflecting the Métis population in these cities. This view is also more typical among those with household incomes of $80,000 or more (47%).
- **Lack intelligence and education.** Two in ten (20%) think this is a common stereotype non-Aboriginal people hold of Aboriginal people, and is a view that is strongest among residents of Calgary (29%), Toronto (27%) and Vancouver (26%).
- **Rely on welfare and social assistance.** Two in ten (20%) urban Aboriginal peoples also believe non-Aboriginal people think Aboriginal people rely on "handouts" and social assistance. This is a view held largely by First Nations peoples (20%) and Métis (20%), compared to Inuit (8%). As well, this is a more prominent perception among residents of such western cities as Regina (27%) and Winnipeg (25%).

**Common stereotypes of Aboriginal people, in the words of urban Aboriginal peoples:**

*That [Aboriginal people] are alcoholics and bums who don't want to better themselves. Druggies. Poor parents. Prostitutes. That [Aboriginal people] choose to live how they do. Uneducated. That Aboriginal people have it easy. They get so many breaks. No taxes. Free school. [Non-Aboriginal people] don't have any knowledge of our history or past so they make assumptions. Why don't Aboriginal people "Just get over it?"*

*Lazy, alcoholics, druggies, don't have to pay for schooling, get everything for free and pay no taxes what so ever. "Free ride," get into problems and [do] not necessarily have to deal with the punishments.*

*Well, I think they think a lot of us are on social assistance. There's generally a feeling of incapability, like "they can't do the job." The comment I usually get is "a lot of Aboriginal companies have failed to deliver." The other aspect is, believe it or not, everyone lives in the woods. There's that impression of noble savage, there's like the exotic romantic view, and generally we're viewed as problematic. You know, blocking bridges, protesting and always looking for a free lunch.*

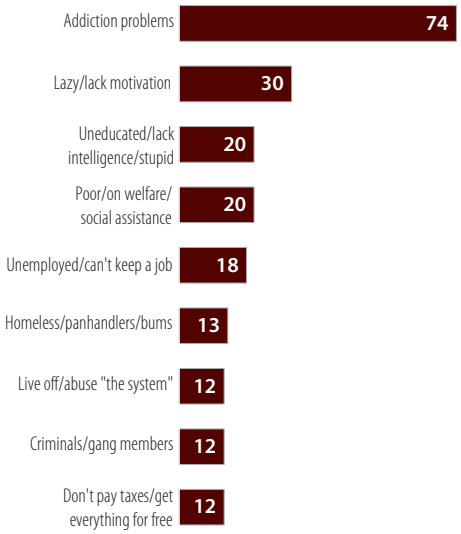
- **Unemployed.** A similar proportion of urban Aboriginal peoples (18%) believe a common stereotype of Aboriginal people is that they are perennially unemployed and unable to keep a job, and as a result do not contribute to society. Notably, this view is particularly strong among residents of Regina (33%), especially Métis, and, albeit to a lesser degree, Aboriginal peoples in Edmonton (24%).

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (13% or fewer) believe non-Aboriginal people hold several other common stereotypes of Aboriginal people. These include such notions as Aboriginal people are homeless and panhandlers, abuse "the system," engage in criminal activity, do not pay taxes, get a "free ride" for everything and neglect their children.

### Common stereotypes of Aboriginal people

What do you believe are the most common stereotypes that non-Aboriginal people hold about Aboriginal people, if any?

Top mentions




## Do Aboriginal peoples believe non-Aboriginal impressions are changing?

***There is some sense that non-Aboriginal peoples' impressions of Aboriginal people may be changing for the better.***

Urban Aboriginal peoples are divided as to whether or not non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people has gotten better or stayed the same in the past few years, while only a small minority think it has gotten worse.

When asked about the change in non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people over the past few years, four in ten (40%) *UAPS* participants think impressions have improved. Another four in ten (41%) think impressions have stayed the same. Only 16 percent believe non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people has gotten worse over the past few years.

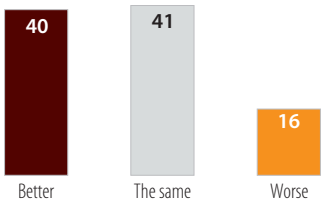
Perceptions that non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people is changing for the better is linked to where urban Aboriginal peoples live and their age. While equal proportions of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit think impressions have gotten better, those in Vancouver (53%) and Toronto (48%) are most likely to think they have improved in recent years, while those in Calgary (29%) are least likely. Individuals 25 years of age and older are also more likely than youth (18-24) to think non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people has gotten better (43% versus 31%). Youth are more likely than others to think impressions have stayed the same.

Notably, greater optimism about non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people is also associated with a strong connection to one's past. Individuals who know their family tree very well (50%) are *most* likely among urban Aboriginal peoples to think impressions have improved over the past few years.

Finally, perceptions of non-Aboriginal people's current impression of Aboriginal people influence urban Aboriginal peoples' views of how these impressions are changing. Most *UAPS* participants who say non-Aboriginal people's current impression is generally negative either don't see this as changing (43%), or feel it is becoming even worse (20%). Still, there is a sizeable minority (35%) in this group who, promisingly, feel impressions have gotten better. Optimism is higher among those who say the current impression is generally positive (60% think non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people has gotten better).

### Change in impressions

Over the past few years, do you think that non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people has gotten better, or worse or stayed the same?



# 2. Perceptions of non-Aboriginal people

## How they are different

***Most urban Aboriginal peoples think non-Aboriginal people are very different from Aboriginal people, especially in terms of their values, culture and socio-economic opportunities.***

In addition to questions that explore how urban Aboriginal peoples believe they are perceived by non-Aboriginal people, *UAPS* also delved into how they think non-Aboriginal people are different from Aboriginal people.

*UAPS* participants were asked (unprompted, without being offered response options) in what ways, if any, they think non-Aboriginal people are different from Aboriginal people. Most (77%) urban Aboriginal peoples identify at least one difference between the two groups. It is also important to note that *UAPS* participants typically mentioned multiple differences, and that these are deep differences and not just ones of degree. Some of these perceptions are presented in participants' own words in the sidebars on this and the next page.

The following are the top ways they believe non-Aboriginal people differ from Aboriginal people:

- **Value systems.** Three in ten (29%) urban Aboriginal peoples think differences stem from different beliefs and values. Those in this group express the sense that non-Aboriginal people are more self-oriented and pre-occupied with material gain. They also feel Aboriginal people possess a sense of close-knit community, family orientation (especially a commitment to raising grandchildren) and respect for Elders that is less evident among non-Aboriginal people. The view that non-Aboriginal people possess a value system different from Aboriginal people is shared by First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit alike.
- **Cultural heritage.** Two in ten (22%) urban Aboriginal peoples also believe Aboriginal people have a very different set of cultural traditions and practices that set them apart from the non-Aboriginal population-at-large. Those in this group emphasize a distinct historical experience and Aboriginal languages as aspects of Aboriginal peoples' cultural heritage that distinguish Aboriginal from non-Aboriginal people. Inuit (29%) and First Nations peoples (26%) are most likely to view non-Aboriginal people as different from Aboriginal people in this way, followed by Métis (19%). As well, residents of Halifax (46%) are much more likely than those in other cities to believe a unique cultural heritage is a source of difference.

**Urban Aboriginal peoples' perceptions of how non-Aboriginal people are different:**

*Their way of thinking… For example, how they do not value their Elders. Aboriginal people value Elders very strongly. We are closely connected and [have] a large cultural base. We have a strong connection to families. They do not understand our values and teachings.*

*Their culture and spiritual belief systems are very different.*

*Aboriginal culture, history is distinct from other people's because we're from here and have a close connection to the land. We have a spiritual relationship with the land that cannot be fully experienced or understood by non-Aboriginals because it's inherent.*

*They don't see things from a holistic perspective. "That everything is interconnected." Their culture promotes "independence" and every man for [himself]. They feel they are dominant – rather than "everyone is equal."*

*Cultural differences, ways in being raised, Métis are very close with family and know what's going on while non-Aboriginals do not.*

- **Greater socio-economic opportunity.** A smaller proportion of *UAPS* participants (12%) also feel non-Aboriginal people are different from Aboriginal people because they experience greater socio-economic opportunities, namely access to education. Important to note is that the general tone of this group is that non-Aboriginal people have less trouble understanding how to navigate institutions like the education system, thereby enabling non-Aboriginal people to enjoy greater socio-economic success than Aboriginal people.
- **Mindset.** Another way in which urban Aboriginal peoples perceive non-Aboriginal people as different is in terms of their attitudes and mindset (12%). Interrelated with value systems, non-Aboriginal people are seen as more arrogant, critical and judgmental than Aboriginal people, and generally close-minded towards Aboriginal people.
- **Historical ignorance.** The final main way in which urban Aboriginal peoples think non-Aboriginal people are different from Aboriginal people is in their general ignorance of Aboriginal history and experience (9%). Common themes among these *UAPS* participants are that non-Aboriginal people know little about Aboriginal issues (i.e., treaties, Indian residential schools, foster care), and are uneducated in the cultural traditions and practices of Aboriginal people in Canada. This ignorance is seen by this group to produce among non-Aboriginal people two kinds of attitudes towards Aboriginal people: either a sense of "Why can't you just get over it?" or a tendency to equate the Aboriginal experience with that of other immigrant groups in Canada. There is also some sense among this group that there is an unwillingness on the part of non-Aboriginal people to learn more about Aboriginal peoples.

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (8% or fewer) mention other ways in which non-Aboriginal people are different from Aboriginal people. These include perceptions that in terms of spirituality, humour, lifestyle and physical appearance, non-Aboriginal people are different, and that non-Aboriginal people believe stereotypes of Aboriginal people.

Finally, less than two in ten (17%) urban Aboriginal peoples maintain there are no differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people (another 6% are uncertain). Urban Aboriginal peoples in Winnipeg (31%) and Thunder Bay (24%) are notably more likely than those in other cities to think non-Aboriginal people are the same as Aboriginal people, as are individuals with no formal education.

**Urban Aboriginal peoples' perceptions of how non-Aboriginal people are different (continued):**

*Most non-Aboriginal people still have their language intact; they haven't had cultural genocide in their background. I can't think of too many others who had their whole existence wiped out – Language – we've lost so much of that. …how do you compare Aboriginal people who have lived here forever, to people who have come here from so many other cultures?*

*I would say priorities. Willingness to be involved in the general community. Aboriginal communities are more willing to contribute to the larger urban community ... [we have a] broader definition of community. We differ on social issues, for example: addictions are less talked about by non-Aboriginal people, less of a priority for non-Aboriginal people. Non-Aboriginal friends are more focused on self and not contributions to their community.*

*I think there is a real lack of awareness that non-Aboriginal people have about Aboriginal culture. Sometimes they act as if it doesn't exist.*

# 3. Experiences of discrimination

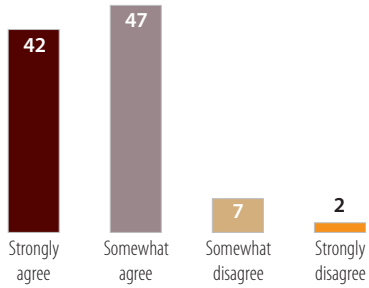
## Negative behaviour and unfair treatment

***Almost all urban Aboriginal peoples agree that others behave in an unfair or negative way towards Aboriginal people. Majorities say they have been teased or insulted because of their Aboriginal background.***

Beyond how they feel perceived by non-Aboriginal people, the *UAPS* survey explored whether or not participants have experienced negative behaviour or unfair treatment because of who they are. Many urban Aboriginal peoples agree they do. Still, despite these experiences, they tend to feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people, and feel their experiences with them have shaped their lives positively.

### Negative behaviour

"I think others behave in an unfair/negative way toward Aboriginal people."



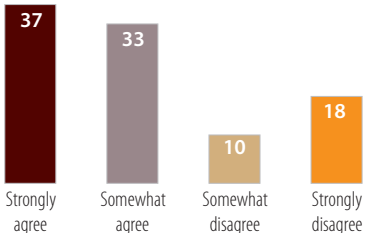

**NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR.** Most urban Aboriginal peoples agree with the statement "I think others behave in an unfair/negative way towards Aboriginal people." Nine in ten either strongly (42%) or somewhat (47%) agree with this statement, while only one in ten (9%) disagree.

Overall, most urban Aboriginal peoples in all socio-demographic groups think Aboriginal people experience negative behaviour from others. But this perception is especially strong among those in Saskatoon (51% strongly agree), and those aged 45 years and older (48% strongly agree). Women are also more likely than men to *strongly* agree that others behave in an unfair/negative way toward Aboriginal people (47% versus 37%), as are Elders (57%). As well, this view is more common among those who feel they belong to a mostly Aboriginal community.

**UNFAIR TREATMENT.** A large majority of urban Aboriginal peoples also say they have experienced unfair treatment because of who they are. When posed with the statement "I have been teased or insulted because of my Aboriginal background," seven in ten strongly (37%) or somewhat (33%) agree. Another one in ten (10%) somewhat disagree, while a small group strongly disagree (18%) that they have experienced unfair treatment due to their Aboriginal background.

### Unfair treatment

"I have been teased or insulted because of my Aboriginal background."




While similar proportions agree they have experienced unfair treatment because of their Aboriginal background, this view is strongest among First Nations peoples (41% strongly agree, compared to 33% of Métis and Inuit). This view is also strongest among Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (51%), who are more likely than those in other cities to strongly agree.

Who among urban Aboriginal peoples is *least* likely to feel they have been teased or insulted because of their Aboriginal background? Perceptions are influenced alternately by age, employment and, in one instance, city. Those aged 18 to 24, albeit still the majority, are less likely than older individuals to agree they have been teased or insulted (58%, compared to 71% of those aged 25-44, and 75% of those 45 years and older), as are those who are employed full-time (67%) or part-time (63%). In addition, while only small proportions of Aboriginal peoples across most cities say they have *not* experienced unfair treatment, this rises to one-third (strongly agree) of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax.

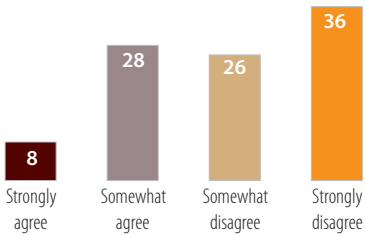
## Sense of acceptance

***Despite widespread perceptions of negative behaviour and unfair treatment, urban Aboriginal peoples tend to feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people.***

Despite the fact that most urban Aboriginal peoples believe Aboriginal people are subject to unfair treatment, teasing and insults because of their Aboriginal identity, only a relatively small group feel non-Aboriginal people do not accept them.

Only one-third of *UAPS* participants strongly (8%) or somewhat (28%) agree with the statement "I don't feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people." Urban Aboriginal peoples are more likely to either somewhat (26%) or strongly (36%) disagree when presented with this statement.

Sense of acceptance by non-Aboriginal people
"I don't feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people."




Urban Aboriginal peoples across socio-economic groups generally display a similarly strong sense of acceptance by non-Aboriginal people. However, Métis do have a somewhat stronger sense of acceptance compared to others (42% strongly disagree, compared to 30% of First Nations peoples and 25% of Inuit). Residents of Vancouver (69%) and Winnipeg (68%), particularly Métis in these cities, are also more likely than others to disagree with the statement "I don't feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people." In comparison, Aboriginal peoples in Saskatoon (44%) and Regina (49%) are the least likely to disagree that they don't feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people. In other words, Aboriginal peoples in these two Saskatchewan cities are the least likely to feel accepted by their non-Aboriginal neighbours.

## Impact of experiences with non-Aboriginal people

***Seven in ten urban Aboriginal peoples feel their experiences with non-Aboriginal peoples have shaped their lives positively, making them stronger and more motivated to succeed, more accepting and tolerant, and reinforcing their identity as an Aboriginal person.***

Majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples also indicate that their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have, ultimately, shaped their life positively.

When asked in what ways, if any, their experience with non-Aboriginal people has shaped their life and who they are today (unprompted, without response options offered), urban Aboriginal peoples are most likely to answer positively: seven in ten (70%) Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples cite positive examples of how their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have contributed to who they are today. Summarized, their responses fall into the following four main categories:

- **Greater motivation.** A greater sense of motivation and desire to achieve is the top way in which urban Aboriginal peoples (36%) feel their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have shaped their life positively. They express this greater sense of motivation in multiple ways, including the belief that their experiences with non-Aboriginal people drove them to work harder, made them more ambitious, gave them needed encouragement and support, gave them a greater sense of responsibility, and made them want to disprove Aboriginal stereotypes.
- **Mentoring and a sense of direction.** A smaller group of urban Aboriginal peoples (18%) feel a non-Aboriginal teacher, professor or other individual gave them guidance about "how to stay out of trouble," pursue a career, and mentored them at a critical point in their life.

- **More tolerant and accepting.** Urban Aboriginal peoples (17%) also feel they developed more tolerance and acceptance of other people through their experiences with non-Aboriginal people. Specifically, they feel these experiences made them less prejudiced and judgmental, gave them a perspective on other cultures, and taught them more adaptability in a non-Aboriginal society.
- **Greater sense of Aboriginal self.** Finally, the fourth main way urban Aboriginal peoples (12%) feel their experiences with non-Aboriginal people has shaped their lives positively is through the greater sense they gained through these experiences of themselves as an Aboriginal person. Non-Aboriginal people either gave them a perspective on their own Aboriginal culture, reinforced their pride in being Aboriginal, or made them appreciate and want to learn more about Aboriginal peoples generally.
- **Negative impact.** Urban Aboriginal peoples are much less likely to feel their experiences with non-Aboriginal peoples have shaped their lives *negatively***.** Among this small group (18%), individuals cite such negative experiences as exposure to racism and discrimination, shame, lower self-confidence and self-esteem, and hiding their identity as an Aboriginal person.

Finally, one in ten (11%) urban Aboriginal peoples say their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have had no impact at all on them, while seven percent are uncertain as to how their experience with non-Aboriginal people has shaped their life and who they are today.

# 4. Experiences with non-Aboriginal services and organizations

## Contact with non-Aboriginal services and organizations

***Urban Aboriginal peoples report a substantial amount of contact with non-Aboriginal services, particularly banks and the health care system, but also in other types of areas.***

As a final dimension to better understanding urban Aboriginal peoples' perceptions of and experiences with non-Aboriginal people, the *UAPS* survey asked participants about their experiences with non-Aboriginal services and organizations. Specifically, the survey explored how much contact they have with these services and organizations, and the nature of their experience.

To what extent do urban Aboriginal peoples have contact with non-Aboriginal services or organizations? Of the seven non-Aboriginal service types included in the survey, banks or credit unions, and the health care system are by far the most likely to have been used recently by urban Aboriginal peoples. Nine in ten (89%) say they have made use of **banks/credit unions** in the past 12 months, and more than eight in ten (84%) say the same about the **health care system.**

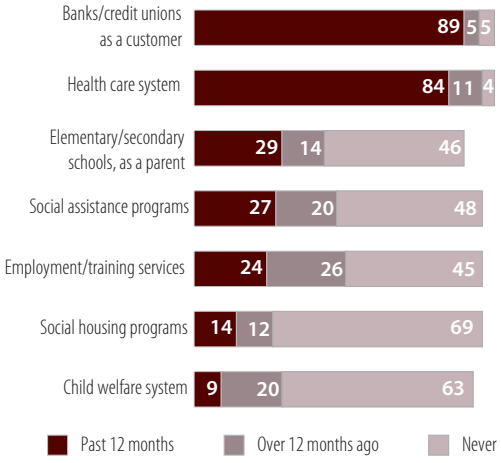
There is a substantial gap between these two non-Aboriginal services and others in degree of contact reported. The next most commonly used non-Aboriginal establishment is **elementary and secondary schools**, with three in ten (29%) urban Aboriginal peoples who say they have been in contact with schools as a parent in the past year. Similarly, one-quarter each say they have made use of non-Aboriginal **social assistance programs** (27%), and non-Aboriginal **employment and training services** (24%). In each of these three cases, close to half of urban Aboriginal peoples say they have never used these services (the remainder say they have, but that it was over a year ago).

Urban Aboriginal peoples are least likely to report experience with non-Aboriginal social housing programs and the child welfare system. Fourteen percent say they made use of **social housing programs** in the past year, and a similar proportion (12%) say they did so over a year ago. Nine percent report having contact with the **child welfare system** in the past 12 months, and another 20 percent have had less recent contact. Majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples say they have never had contact with either of these types of organizations.

There are consistent and important variations in contact with these non-Aboriginal services and organizations, particularly when it comes to socio-economic status and gender. Urban Aboriginal peoples with the least education and lowest incomes are consistently less likely to have made recent use of banks, the health care system, or elementary and secondary schools (as a parent), and are more likely to have had recent experience with social assistance programs, employment and training services, social housing programs and the child welfare system. Women are more likely than men to have ever been in contact with these non-Aboriginal services, with the exception of banks and employment services (for which level of contact is similar).

### Contact with non-Aboriginal services and organizations

Have you made use of or been in contact with the following non-Aboriginal services in your city in the past 12 months, over 12 months ago or never?




Note: Percentages don't add up to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer this question.

There are also differences in experience with non-Aboriginal services by Aboriginal identity. First Nations peoples and Inuit are more likely than Métis to have made use of social assistance programs and social housing programs in the past 12 months. First Nations peoples are also more likely than others to have recently had experience with the child welfare system, and used employment and training services.

There are no consistent variations in contact with these non-Aboriginal services across cities, which could be due to the specific needs of the community and/or the varying availability of Aboriginal services in these areas. For example, urban Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are less likely than others to report recent contact with the health care system, elementary and secondary schools, and employment and training services (this last together with Vancouver residents). Also, urban Aboriginal peoples living in Toronto are more likely to report using social assistance and social housing programs (this last together with Regina and Halifax residents).

## Have experiences with non-Aboriginal services been positive or negative?

***Those who have been in contact with non-Aboriginal services are generally positive about the experience, with the exception of the child welfare system, where negative experiences outweigh positive ones.***

Positive experiences with non-Aboriginal services tend to outweigh negative ones, with the exception of experiences with the child welfare system. However, perceptions vary across the types of services, and negative experiences are more common for those services more often accessed by urban Aboriginal peoples with less education and lower incomes.

Urban Aboriginal peoples who have ever used or made contact with these non-Aboriginal services were asked if the experience was generally positive or generally negative. They are most likely to report positive experiences with **banks and credit unions** (90%), **employment and training services** (84%), **the health care system** (82%), and **elementary and secondary schools (as a parent)** (80%). In each of these cases, only a minority (ranging between 8% and 15%) say they had a negative experience.

This pattern changes for those services that are more commonly used by urban Aboriginal peoples with less education and lower incomes. While over six in ten (64%) of those who have accessed **social housing programs** say their experience was generally positive, nearly three in ten (27%) say it was negative. Similarly, six in ten (58%) report positive experiences with **social assistance programs,** while three in ten (32%) say their experiences were negative.

Among urban Aboriginal peoples who have ever had contact with the **child welfare system**, negative perceptions of this experience (45%) outweigh positive ones (39%).

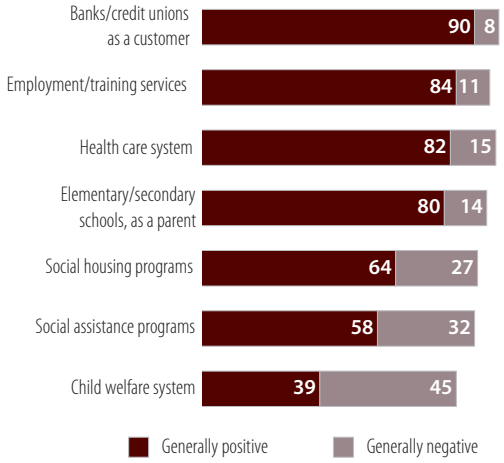
In most cases, urban Aboriginal peoples who have used these services more recently (past 12 months) are more likely to hold a positive impression of their experience than those who were in contact more than a year ago. The two exceptions are the health care system and employment services, which receive similarly positive perceptions no matter how recent the contact. This may reflect efforts that many cities have made in recent years to improve relations with their urban Aboriginal populations, or it could be that memories of negative experiences last longer than positive ones.

Perceptions of these services are remarkably consistent among those who have used them, with a few exceptions: the main variations are by city. For example, positive perceptions of one's experience with social assistance programs ranges from 81 percent in Thunder Bay to only 45 percent in Winnipeg. Positive experiences with the health care system are more common in Halifax (91%) than elsewhere, while negative experiences with elementary and secondary schools are most common in Canada's big cities, Toronto (26%) and Vancouver (21%). Finally, while negative experiences with the child welfare system outweigh positive ones across most of the 10 cities (residents of Toronto and Vancouver are divided), the opposite is actually the case in Thunder Bay (69% positive vs. 29% negative) and Regina (53% positive vs. 27% negative), and to a lesser extent in Montreal (51% positive vs. 36% negative).

Positive perceptions of social housing, and employment and training programs vary by number of years in the city, and are both more common among those have lived in their city for less than 10 years (69% and 89%, respectively). Younger people (87% of those aged 18 to 44) are also more likely than those aged 45 or older (78%) to have positive perceptions of their contact with employment services. Métis (83%) are more likely than First Nations peoples (76%) to report a positive experience with the elementary and secondary school system as a parent. Positive perceptions of banks are most common among those in the highest income bracket (96%), and yet are also at or approaching the 90-percent level for those at lower incomes levels.

## Experience with non-Aboriginal services*

Was your experience with this service generally positive or generally negative?




*Subsample: Those who have used the services

Note: Percentages don't add up to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer this question.

## Negative experiences with non-Aboriginal services

Urban Aboriginal peoples who have had negative experiences with non-Aboriginal services were asked to describe the experience (unprompted, in their own words). Some of these experiences are presented in the sidebar on this page.

The most common concern is being treated poorly. Just over four in ten (43%) say their experience was negative because of racism or discrimination; they were treated unfairly or disrespectfully; or they encountered staff that were judgmental, mean or rude, or lacked empathy, didn't understand their needs or culture, or simply didn't believe them.

Three in ten (29%) had problems with process, such as long waiting lists or wait periods, complicated paperwork, missing documents, or expensive fees. Two in ten (20%) question the effectiveness of the service, saying it was not supportive, unhelpful and didn't actually achieve its goal. Nine percent have concerns that the services lack resources, such as qualified staff or funding, and therefore provide poor or disorganized service.

Other negative experiences relate to having an application rejected (5%), being misinformed or misdiagnosed (4%), or being removed as a child from their home (4%) or having their children removed from them (2%).

First Nations peoples (50%) and Inuit (48%) are more likely to say their negative experience with a non-Aboriginal service relates to being poorly treated (and particularly experiencing racism and discrimination) than are Métis (36%). Poor treatment is also a more common concern in Toronto (59%), Edmonton (55%) and Regina (54%) than in other cities.

Interestingly, urban Aboriginal peoples with a university degree (50%) are slightly more likely than those with less education (40% of those with high school or less) to say their experience with a non-Aboriginal service was negative because they were poorly treated. In turn, those with no formal education (27%) are more apt than those with a post-secondary education (14%) to say their experience was negative because the service was not helpful or didn't accomplish anything.

The types of concerns that urban Aboriginal peoples express vary somewhat by type of service. Poor treatment is the most common concern with most of the non-Aboriginal services discussed, but particularly for elementary and secondary schools (83%). The exceptions are non-Aboriginal social housing programs, for which the number one reason for a negative experience is waiting lists or wait times (48%), and the health care system, where wait lists or wait times (39%) is as common a concern as poor treatment. Those who had a negative experience with social assistance programs and employment services are more likely than others to say it is because the service was not helpful or effective (34% and 40%, respectively).

**Ways in which experience with non-Aboriginal services was negative:**

*A doctor immediately separated me from other Aboriginal people by saying, "You must have been one of the few" who made it, because I seem educated and speak well. I tried to educate the doctor about prejudice. I found this unfair to others, a generalization.*

*Because I just find that they just don't understand the situation I'm in, like my financial needs. Because I'm a student, I don't have money all the time, I can't afford the bank fees and when I try to talk to them, I just run into more trouble with them.*

*They weren't very helpful, they looked down on me and wouldn't listen to me at all or anything. I hate to say it but my life and anything that happened [to me] was never considered. So I just remained silent. I wish the workers were Aboriginal or I wish they had an understanding of what I was going through.*

*Just the way they treated me. I found they talked down to me like I was a child or I couldn't understand them. They cut you off when you try to speak to them, they don't take their time with you, they rush and I forget what I wanted to say.*

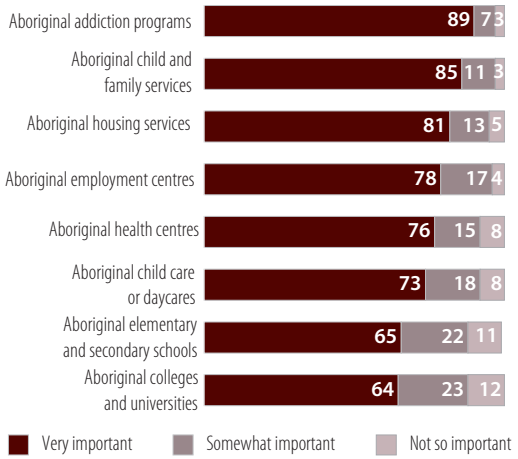
*We (my sister and I) were put in foster care at a young age. Hard and sad to be with people you didn't know. Not knowing or understanding what was going on.*

## Importance of Aboriginal services

***Regardless whether they are users or non-users of non-Aboriginal services, or whether these experiences have been positive or negative, large majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples believe it is very important to also have* Aboriginal *services.***

### Importance of Aboriginal services

How important do you think it is that the following Aboriginal services exist in addition to non-Aboriginal ones?




Note: Percentages don't add up to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer this question.

There is a consensus among urban Aboriginal peoples that it is important for *Aboriginal* services to exist in addition to non-Aboriginal ones. This is considered to be most important in the case of addiction programs (89% very important), followed by child and family services (85%), and housing services (81%). More than seven in ten each say that Aboriginal employment centres (78%), Aboriginal health centres (76%), and Aboriginal child care or daycares (73%) are very important. Slightly fewer but still majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples say it is very important to have Aboriginal elementary and secondary schools (65%), and Aboriginal colleges and universities (64%). In all cases, most of the remaining participants say having Aboriginal services is somewhat important, and very few say it is not so important (ranging from a low of 3% to a high of 12%).

One might expect the perceived importance of these Aboriginal services to be higher among users of the corresponding non-Aboriginal service, or at least among those who had a negative experience with the non-Aboriginal service, but that is not always the case. The importance of Aboriginal housing services is highest among urban Aboriginal peoples who have recently used a non-Aboriginal housing service (93%), and yet is also considered very important by 79 percent of those who have never had occasion to use non-Aboriginal housing services. As well, those who had a negative experience with non-Aboriginal elementary and secondary schools (76%) are more likely than those who had a positive experience (66%) to say having an Aboriginal housing service is very important. Otherwise, the perceived importance of these Aboriginal services is similar for both users and non-users of the corresponding non-Aboriginal service, and regardless of whether that experience was negative or positive.

There are some consistent differences in the perceived importance of Aboriginal services by city, Aboriginal identity, age, education and household income. For most (but not all) types of services, having an Aboriginal service is considered more important in Vancouver, Toronto and Halifax; among First Nations peoples and Inuit than among Métis; among older urban Aboriginal peoples (aged 45 and older); among those with no degree; and those with household incomes under $60,000. The perceived importance of Aboriginal services is also typically higher among those who feel they belong to a community that is mostly or exclusively Aboriginal.

# VII. Political Identity and Engagement

## Overview

This chapter explores urban Aboriginal peoples' levels of engagement in Aboriginal *and* Canadian politics and political organizations, and what factors characterize more or less involvement in these two spheres.

The following points summarize the main findings around urban Aboriginal peoples' political identity and engagement:

- **There is a wide range in the degree to which urban Aboriginal peoples engage in the Aboriginal and mainstream political systems.** More than half pay attention to Aboriginal and Canadian politics, although only minorities belong to Aboriginal political organizations,[38] or Canadian political parties or attend their meetings. Four in ten urban Aboriginal peoples say they regularly vote in Canadian elections at the federal, provincial or municipal level; two in ten say they regularly vote in elections held by Aboriginal political organizations (which are oftentimes limited to certain groups such as Band members).
- **Activity in Aboriginal politics is higher among urban Aboriginal peoples who strongly identify as Aboriginal.** Those who know their family tree very well, and those who describe their community as mostly or exclusively Aboriginal are more likely than others to be active in Aboriginal political organizations and to vote in elections held by Aboriginal political organizations. Important to note is that causality in this instance is difficult to determine: political involvement may increase one's sense of Aboriginal identity, or a stronger sense of Aboriginal identity may encourage greater political involvement.
- **A stronger *Aboriginal* political identity coincides with a stronger *Canadian* political identity among urban Aboriginal peoples.** This counters theories suggesting that urban Aboriginal peoples participate in Aboriginal political organizations as an alternative to Canadian politics. Rather, *UAPS* data reveal that urban Aboriginal peoples with higher Aboriginal political involvement are also more likely to vote in Canadian elections. Furthermore, urban Aboriginal peoples' political participation increases with their involvement in Aboriginal-based services or organizations (e.g., friendship centres). Rather than a "rival system of representation,"[39] a healthy and vibrant Aboriginal civil society appears to facilitate voice both within Aboriginal and Canadian elections.
- **Regardless of the politics in question, certain socio-demographic patterns of political engagement prevail among urban Aboriginal peoples.** Consistent with previous research on Aboriginal peoples' political behaviour,[40] *UAPS* data indicate that education, household income and, in particular, age, affect urban Aboriginal peoples' involvement in *both* Aboriginal and Canadian politics. Specifically, urban Aboriginal peoples with a post-secondary education, those with higher household incomes, and those aged 45 or older are more likely than others to be engaged, and vote in both Aboriginal and Canadian political organizations and elections.

38 There are five major, national Aboriginal political organizations that hold elections: the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis National Council, the Inuit Tapirit Kanatami, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and the Native Women's Association of Canada. The first three and their affiliates have asserted and/or been recognized as Aboriginal governments. In addition, there are numerous bands, treaty organizations, provincial organizations and Métis locals that hold elections.

39 Allison Harell, Dimitrios Panagos and J. Scott Matthews, *Explaining Aboriginal Turnout in Federal Elections: Evidence from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba*, Elections Canada, 2009.

40 Paul Howe and David Bedford, *Electoral Participation of Aboriginals in Canada*, Elections Canada, 2009.

- **There is a substantial minority of urban Aboriginal people who do not feel that any Aboriginal or mainstream political organization speaks for them, or cannot say who does so.** This is most evident among non-status First Nations peoples, but is also the case for more than three in ten Inuit, and at least four in ten Métis and status First Nations peoples. Moreover, fewer than half of urban Aboriginal peoples feel that Aboriginal political organizations do a good job representing their interests.

There are few substantial differences in reported political activity among First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit, or among urban Aboriginal peoples across cities.[41] This contrasts with past research indicating that there are significant regional and cultural variations among Aboriginal peoples that influence Aboriginal peoples' political activity and willingness to vote in Canadian elections.[42] This pattern is not as clear among the urban Aboriginal participants in this study, which may be partly explained by the fact that most previous research into the voting behaviour of Aboriginal peoples has been based on samples of Status Indians on reserves.[43]

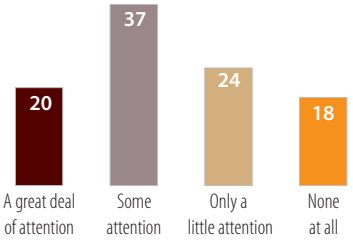
# 1. Engagement in Aboriginal politics

## Attention to Aboriginal politics

***A modest majority of urban Aboriginal peoples pay attention to what is happening in Aboriginal politics. Attention is more common among older, university educated and more affluent individuals, and those who are most familiar with their Aboriginal background.***

Attention to Aboriginal politics

How much attention do you generally pay to what is happening in Aboriginal politics?




Urban Aboriginal peoples are more likely than not to pay attention to Aboriginal politics, although their level of attention varies considerably by socio-demographic factors.

More than one-half (57%) of urban Aboriginal peoples say they pay a great deal (20%) or some (37%) attention to what is happening in Aboriginal politics. First Nations peoples, Inuit and Métis are equally likely to pay attention to Aboriginal politics. Across cities, reported attention to Aboriginal politics is highest in Toronto (67% pay at least some attention) and Winnipeg (65%), and lowest in Regina (46%) and Edmonton (47%).

Age has a substantial impact on urban Aboriginal peoples' attention to Aboriginal politics. Older urban Aboriginal peoples (71% of those aged 45 or older) are considerably more likely than younger urban Aboriginal peoples, especially urban Aboriginal youth (34% of those 18-24 years of age), to pay at least some attention to Aboriginal politics.

Educational attainment is also a factor. Almost three-quarters (73%) of university graduates pay at least some attention to Aboriginal politics, compared to only half (51%) of those with a high school diploma or less education.

In a similar fashion, attention to Aboriginal politics also rises with level of household income (from 45% of those with household incomes under $10,000 to 71% of those with household incomes of $60,000 to $80,000), although this pattern plateaus among urban Aboriginal peoples with incomes of $80,000 or more (65%).

41 This statement is not meant to minimize the potential unique experiences and aspirations within Aboriginal subgroups (note Harell et al.'s interesting findings with respect to voting patterns between the Blackfoot and Cree speaking First Nations).

42 Harell et al., p.14.

43 Harell et al., p.11.

Notably, connection to one's Aboriginal heritage also appears to be a factor in one's level of political engagement. Urban Aboriginal peoples who know their family tree very well (74%) are twice as likely as those who do not know their family tree at all (37%) to pay at least some attention to Aboriginal politics. Attention to Aboriginal politics is also higher among those who feel the community they belong to is exclusively Aboriginal (62%) or equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (59%), than among those who describe their community as almost exclusively non-Aboriginal (53%).

## Reported involvement in Aboriginal political organizations

***There is a small group of urban Aboriginal peoples who are active in Aboriginal politics through membership in an Aboriginal political organization or by attending its meetings. These tend to be older, better educated individuals with higher household incomes.***

A minority of urban Aboriginal peoples are actively involved with an Aboriginal political organization through membership or by attending meetings. Two in ten (22%) say they belong to an Aboriginal political organization. As well, two in ten report that they often (8%) or occasionally (13%) attend meetings of an Aboriginal political organization, while most say they rarely (20%) or never (56%) do so.

Overall, three in ten (30%) among the urban Aboriginal population are either a member of an Aboriginal political organization *or* attend their meetings at least occasionally, and almost half of this group (representing 13% of all urban Aboriginal people) do both.

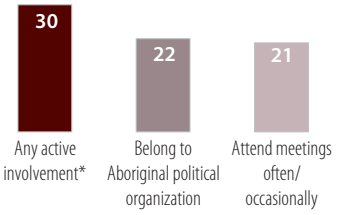
There are some consistent socio-demographic differences in reported membership in Aboriginal political organizations and in meeting attendance, which is not surprising given the extent of overlap between the two groups. Both reported membership in an Aboriginal political organization and meeting attendance (often or occasionally) is higher in Vancouver than in other cities, among urban Aboriginal peoples aged 45 or older, those who have a college or university degree, those with household incomes of $30,000 or more, and those who have lived in their city longer (10 years or more).

Knowledge of one's family tree is also a factor influencing both membership in and attendance at meetings of Aboriginal political organizations. Urban Aboriginal peoples who know their family tree very well are much more likely to belong to an Aboriginal political organization (35% vs. 5% who know almost nothing about their family tree) and to attend meetings at least occasionally (37% vs. 5% who know almost nothing). Meeting attendance is also more common among those who describe their community as almost exclusively Aboriginal (28%).

While still a minority, more Métis (27%) than First Nations peoples (17%) and Inuit (21%) report belonging to an Aboriginal political organization. Reported meeting attendance does not vary by Aboriginal identity group.

Membership in Aboriginal political organizations

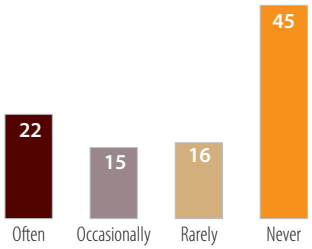
Do you belong to any Aboriginal political organizations?




* Belong to and/or attend meetings

Reported voter turnout in Aboriginal elections

How often do you vote in elections held by Aboriginal political organizations?




## Reported voter turnout in Aboriginal elections

***Close to four in ten urban Aboriginal peoples often or occasionally vote in elections held by Aboriginal political organizations. Status First Nations peoples report voting more frequently than do other urban Aboriginal peoples.***

There is a small group of urban Aboriginal peoples who are frequent voters in elections held by Aboriginal political organizations, and most vote rarely or not at all. Almost four in ten say they vote often (22%) or occasionally (15%) in elections held by Aboriginal political organizations, while six in ten rarely (16%) or never (45%) vote. Reported voting (at least occasionally) is more common among status First

Nations peoples (45%) than Métis (33%) and Inuit (37%), and particularly compared to non-status First Nations peoples (9%), which may be due to the opportunities status First Nations peoples have to vote in Band elections.

Repeating the pattern of socio-demographic differences observed previously in this chapter, those more likely to vote in Aboriginal elections include those aged 45 or older (48%), those with a college or university degree (43%), those with household incomes between $60,000 and $80,000 (54%), those who have lived in their city for 10 years or longer (42%), those who feel they belong to a mostly Aboriginal community (45%) and, especially, those who know their family tree very well (59%). Notably, urban Aboriginal peoples in Montreal (61%) are more likely than those in other cities (ranging from 37% to 48%) to say they *never* vote in Aboriginal elections.

## Reasons for lack of involvement

***Disinterest, and a belief that Aboriginal politics are too complicated, drives lack of involvement in Aboriginal politics.***

A slim majority (53%) of urban Aboriginal peoples report they are not involved in Aboriginal politics in any way (rarely or never vote in Aboriginal elections, do not belong to an Aboriginal political organization and rarely or never attend their meetings). The *UAPS* asked these participants about the reasons for this lack of involvement (unprompted, without response options offered). Some of these reasons are presented in the sidebar on this page.

Simple lack of interest is the most common reason for their lack of involvement. Three in ten (32%) of this group indicate they are not interested or don't care about Aboriginal politics. Lack of interest is higher among Métis (39% versus 30% of Inuit and 23% of First Nations peoples) and those who have no educational degree (39%).

Next to lack of interest, two in ten (20%) of this group say they find Aboriginal politics either too complicated or do not know how to get involved. Urban Aboriginal peoples in Edmonton (31%), Toronto (28%) and Vancouver (26%) are most likely to express this viewpoint about Aboriginal politics.

Other main reasons for urban Aboriginal peoples' lack of involvement in Aboriginal politics include a personal lack of time due to other life commitments (15%), and the perception that Aboriginal politics does not concern off-reserve and non-status Aboriginal peoples (8%). Urban Aboriginal peoples in Regina (20%) and Thunder Bay (17%) are twice as likely as those in other cities to think Aboriginal politics overlooks off-reserve and non-status Aboriginal peoples.

# 2. Engagement in Canadian politics

## Attention to Canadian politics

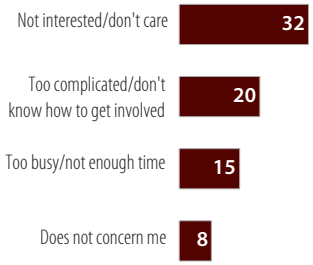
***A modest majority of urban Aboriginal peoples pay attention to Canadian politics. Interest is much higher among those who are also interested in Aboriginal politics.***

How much attention do urban Aboriginal peoples pay to Canadian politics? Six in ten (58%) say they pay a great deal (20%) or some (38%) attention to what is happening in Canadian politics at either the federal, provincial or municipal level. Métis (62%) are slightly more likely than First Nations peoples (55%) and Inuit (54%) to report paying at least some attention to Canadian politics.

### Reasons for lack of involvement in Aboriginal politics*

What are the main reasons why you are not more involved in Aboriginal politics?

Top mentions




*Subsample: Those who are not involved in Aboriginal politics (by voting in Aboriginal elections, or by membership in or attending meetings of Aboriginal political organizations).

**Reasons why urban Aboriginal peoples are not more involved in Aboriginal politics:**

*Not enough information on Aboriginal politics and no access.*

*Because all it is, is money. The Chiefs take all the money and [don't] share with [their] peoples.*

*I feel my voice would have little impact on what seems to be a chaotic field to get involved in.*

*It feels too unsafe at my community. There's too much violence connected to politics here.*

*Don't hear or see anybody offering any answers.*

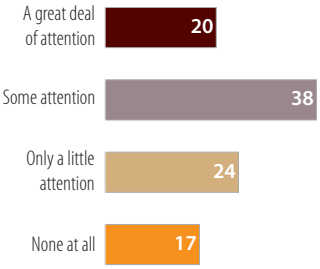
*Living in the city has not brought me too much contact with them.*

*I have no trust in the leadership.*

*I never knew there were any Aboriginal political organizations.*

### Attention to Canadian politics

How much attention to you generally pay to what is happening in Canadian politics, at either the federal, provincial or municipal level?




Four in ten (41%) pay only a little attention (24%), or none at all (17%), to what is happening in Canadian politics. Urban Aboriginal peoples in Regina (50%), Saskatoon (50%) and Halifax (50%) are most likely to report paying little or no attention.

Interest in Aboriginal politics is associated with considerably greater interest in Canadians politics. More than half (54%) of urban Aboriginal peoples who pay a great deal of attention to Aboriginal politics pay the same degree of attention to Canadian politics, compared to only one in ten (12%) who pay some, little or no attention to Aboriginal politics.

Given the overlap between those who are interested in Aboriginal politics and Canadian politics, it is not surprising that similar socio-demographic differences are evident. As with attention to Aboriginal politics, attention to Canadian politics increases with age, education and household income, and is higher among those who have lived longer in their city and who have strong knowledge of their family tree.

## Reported membership in Canadian political parties

***Few urban Aboriginal peoples belong to a Canadian political party or attend party meetings.***

### Membership in Canadian political organizations

Do you belong to any Canadian political party?


* Belong to and/or attend meetings

Few urban Aboriginal peoples are associated with any Canadian political parties through membership or by attending meetings. Just one in ten (11%) say they belong to a Canadian political party, while seven percent report that they often (2%) or occasionally (5%) attend party meetings.

Overall, 14 percent among the urban Aboriginal population are either a member of a Canadian political party *or* attend party meetings at least occasionally, and about one-quarter of this group (representing 4% of all urban Aboriginal people) do both.

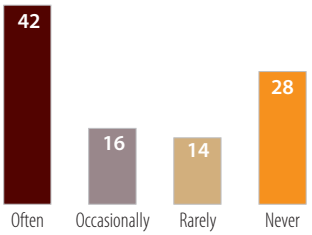
There is a fair amount of overlap in reported membership between Canadian political parties and Aboriginal political organizations. Close to half (47%) of members of a Canadian political party also report belonging to an Aboriginal political organization. As well, as one would expect, members of a Canadian political party are more likely than non-members to attend party meetings. As a result, many of the same socio-demographic differences that influence membership in an Aboriginal political organization are evident in urban Aboriginal peoples' affiliation with Canadian political parties. That is, membership in a Canadian political party and meeting attendance increases with age, education and household income, and is higher among Métis, those who have lived in their city for 10 or more years, and those with greater knowledge of their family tree. No cities stand out as having greater involvement than others in Canadian political parties.

## Reported voter turnout in Canadian elections

***A minority of urban Aboriginal peoples report voting in Canadian elections always or often. Reported voter turnout is more frequent among those with greater Aboriginal political involvement.***

### Reported voter turnout in Canadian elections

How often do you vote in Canadian elections at either the federal, provincial or municipal level?




Less than half (42%) of urban Aboriginal peoples say they always or often vote in Canadian elections at the federal, provincial or municipal level. This is higher than the two in ten (22%) who say they often vote in Aboriginal elections, although in many cases Aboriginal elections are limited to certain portions of the population (e.g., Band members). Another 16 percent of urban Aboriginal peoples say they vote occasionally in Canadian elections, while four in ten do so only rarely (14%) or never (28%).

Métis (49%) are more likely than First Nations peoples (36%) and Inuit (36%) to say they always or often vote in Canadian elections. Frequent voting is also more common among urban Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver (54%) than in other cities.

As it does for reported voting in Aboriginal elections, frequent voting in Canadian elections increases with age, education and income. Reported voter turnout in Canadian elections at the municipal, provincial and federal level is highest among urban Aboriginal peoples who know their family tree very well (58% vote always or often).

*UAPS* data reveal that urban Aboriginal peoples who have a high level of Aboriginal political involvement (i.e., belong to or attend meetings of Aboriginal political organizations, or vote in Aboriginal elections) are also more likely to vote in Canadian elections. Two-thirds (65%) always or often vote in Canadian elections, compared to four in ten (44%) with moderate involvement and three in ten (31%) with low involvement.

## Reported versus actual voter turnout

In the *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study,* Aboriginal participants were asked how often they voted in elections held by Aboriginal political organizations and Canadian elections at either the federal, provincial or municipal level.

Survey (i.e., self-reported) estimates of voter turnout are normally higher than actual turnout levels. In a study commissioned by Elections Canada, researchers Paul Howe and David Bedford at the University of New Brunswick noted that collecting data using surveys in which people are asked if they have voted produces rates that are consistently higher than actual turnout rates, by roughly 15 percentage points (based on the 2000 Canadian federal election).

Notwithstanding this over-reporting, survey data are an important addition to general knowledge about Aboriginal voting activity. Research on voter participation among Aboriginal persons typically looks at on-reserve voter turnout, studying only those polls which are entirely contained within reserve communities. This leaves out important sections of the Aboriginal population: those who live off-reserve.

In the *UAPS*, reported rates of voting in Canadian elections at either the federal, provincial or municipal level among urban Aboriginal peoples correspond to previously reported voter turnout among urban Aboriginal peoples in other studies. In the *UAPS*, 58 percent of urban Aboriginal peoples say they vote at least occasionally in Canadian elections at either the federal, provincial or municipal level. This figure approximates self-reported voting patterns in the *General Social Survey 17,* 2003, where reported urban Aboriginal voter turnout in the 2000 federal election and most recent provincial and local elections was 58 percent, 54 percent, and 44 percent, respectively.

## Reasons for lack of engagement

***Urban Aboriginal peoples do not get involved in Canadian politics for a number of reasons, but chiefly because of a lack of interest.***

A substantial minority (42%) of urban Aboriginal peoples are not involved in Canadian politics in any way (rarely or never vote in Canadian elections, do not belong to a mainstream political party, and rarely or never attend their meetings). The *UAPS* asked these participants about the reasons for this lack of involvement (unprompted, without response options offered). Some of these reasons are illustrated in verbatim comments in the sidebar on this page.

Consistent with the reasons for lack of involvement in Aboriginal politics, lack of interest (42%) is, by far, the most common reason why urban Aboriginal peoples are not more involved in Canadian politics, particularly among Aboriginal youth (54% say they are not more involved because of lack of interest, compared to 40% of those aged 25-44, and 31% of those aged 45 or older).

**Reasons why urban Aboriginal peoples are not more involved in Canadian politics:**

*I feel that I lack the education and experience. Perhaps one day when I get a little more formal education, I will involve myself more.*

*I have spoken with representatives of government agencies at conferences about the preservation of Treaty rights (like hunting/fishing licence, health care). I speak at conferences on behalf of Aboriginal people.*

*Through my work, I write letters of protest to funding cuts to all levels of governments.*

*Strong views against whole "system" of politics. Indigenous peoples are not recognized and until that time...*

*I did the Census, through my involvement in school, through getting information on the Internet.*

*No, besides being affected every day by the rules and laws that are put in place by politics.*

However, it is important to note that lack of interest is not synonymous with a complete lack of political activity. Although these participants may not vote in Canadian elections, nor belong to or attend meetings of mainstream political parties, some feel they are exercising their political voice in other ways (examples provided in the sidebar include speaking out through their work or by speaking on behalf of Aboriginal people at conferences).

Much smaller proportions say they are either not informed or find Canadian politics too complicated (10%), are too busy to afford the time to pay attention to Canadian politics (8%), or believe politicians are not trustworthy (7%). Some urban Aboriginal peoples also feel the Canadian political system does not reflect Aboriginal issues and culture (6%), or feel like their vote will not matter (5%).

## Involvement in Aboriginal-based organizations appears to foster participation in Aboriginal *and* Canadian elections.

Involvement in urban Aboriginal services and organizations has important, positive effects on urban Aboriginal peoples' voter turnout, in both Aboriginal and Canadian elections. Past research shows that those who report involvement in an organization connected with their Aboriginal identity have 1.7 times the odds of voting in a Canadian election than those who are not involved in such organizations.*

The UAPS data show urban Aboriginal peoples who often use or rely on Aboriginal services or organizations in their city are twice as likely as those who never use these organizations and services to vote in elections held by Aboriginal political organizations.

When it comes to Canadian elections, urban Aboriginal peoples who often use or rely on Aboriginal services and organizations in their city are also more likely to say they often vote in Canadian elections.

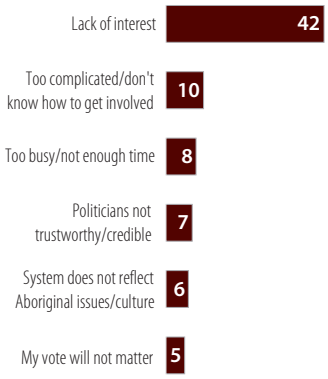
There is no evidence that involvement in Aboriginal-based organizations competes with traditional forms of political participation. On the contrary, such organizational involvement seems to foster engagement in both Aboriginal and Canadian elections.

* *Source: Harell et al., Explaining Aboriginal Turnout in Federal Elections: Evidence from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.*

### Reasons for lack of involvement in Canadian politics*

What are the main reasons you are not more involved in Canadian politics?

Top mentions




*Subsample: Those who are not involved in Canadian politics (by voting in Canadian elections, or by membership in or attending meetings of Canadian political parties).

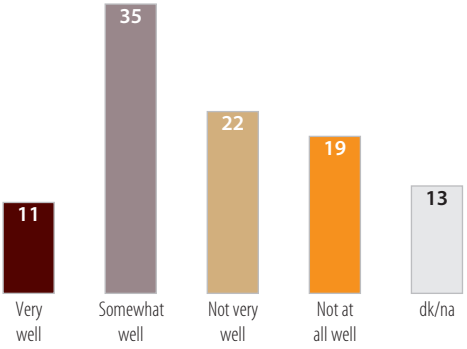
# 3. Who represents urban Aboriginal peoples?

## Perceptions of Aboriginal political organizations

***Less than half of urban Aboriginal peoples feel well-represented by existing Aboriginal political organizations. Individuals active in the Aboriginal political system are more likely to feel such organizations speak for them.***

### How well do Aboriginal political organizations represent you?

In general, how well do you think Aboriginal political organizations represent you and your interests?




How good a job do urban Aboriginal peoples think Aboriginal political organizations do at representing them and their interests? Fewer than half of urban Aboriginal peoples say that Aboriginal political organizations represent them very (11%) or somewhat (35%) well, a view that is most common among Inuit (61%) and least common among non-status First Nations peoples (35%) (49% of status First Nations peoples and 44% of Métis think Aboriginal political organizations represent their interests at least somewhat well). A substantial minority say they are not very well (22%) or not at all well (19%) represented by the existing organizations. The perception that Aboriginal political organizations do not truly represent them is highest among residents of Regina (51%) and Saskatoon (49%). More than one in ten (13%) cannot offer an opinion about how well Aboriginal political organizations represent them.

Belief in being well-represented (very or somewhat) by Aboriginal political organizations is higher among older urban Aboriginal peoples, those who know their family tree at least fairly well (51% vs. 31% who do not know their family tree at all), and those who feel the community they belong to is either primarily Aboriginal or equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (51% vs. 39% who feel their community is primarily non-Aboriginal).

There is a connection between urban Aboriginal peoples' perceptions on this issue and their attention to Aboriginal politics and level of Aboriginal political involvement. The more likely they are to pay attention to Aboriginal politics, to vote in Aboriginal elections, and to belong to and to attend meetings of such organizations, the more likely they are to believe Aboriginal political organizations speak for them.

## Who best represents you?

***Urban Aboriginal peoples identify with a diverse array of Aboriginal political organizations and Canadian political parties, but significant minorities feel there is no one entity that truly represents them or cannot say.***

The *UAPS* asked urban Aboriginal peoples to consider both Aboriginal political organizations and Canadian political parties and to identify (unprompted, without being offered response options) which one they feel best represents them. They cite a mix of organizations and parties, both Aboriginal and mainstream, with no clear preference.

In terms of a political organization that best represents them, one in four (27%) urban Aboriginal peoples identify a national Aboriginal organization, while an almost identical proportion (26%) name a mainstream (Canadian) political party. A small group (5%) says that another Aboriginal organization (such as their Band or a provincial or regional organization) speaks for them. A total of four in ten (41%) urban Aboriginal people cannot identify any political organization or party, Aboriginal or mainstream, which best represents them (14%), or say none do so (27%).

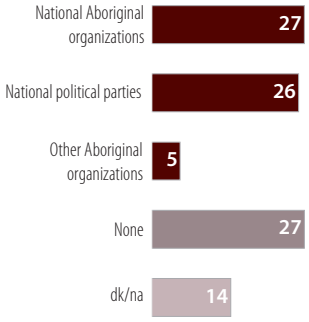
The national Aboriginal organizations that top urban Aboriginal peoples' list of political entities that truly speak for them include the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) (13%) and the Métis National Council (10%). Relatively few cite the Native Women's Association of Canada (2%) or the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (1%).

Identification with a political organization aligns with Aboriginal identity, in a predictable way. Status First Nations peoples are most likely to believe the AFN best represents them (25%), while Métis are most likely to mention the Métis National Council (20%) and Inuit are most likely to name Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (31%). Non-status First Nations peoples are more likely than others to identify with the Native Women's Association of Canada (10% vs. 3% among other urban Aboriginal peoples).[44] Nonetheless, substantial minorities in all identity groups feel there is no one organization that represents them or cannot say, ranging from one-third (33%) of Inuit, to four in ten Métis (42%) and status First Nations peoples (40%), to half (50%) of non-status First Nations peoples.

As one might expect, urban Aboriginal peoples who feel well-represented (very or somewhat) by Aboriginal political organizations are more likely than others to name a national Aboriginal organization as the entity that best represents them. Those who feel they are not well-represented by Aboriginal political organizations are much more likely to say that there is no organization or party that speaks for them, or cannot say which does (48% vs. 31% of those who feel well-represented) or to identify with a mainstream political party (29% vs. 22%).

### What political organization or party best represents you?

Thinking about both Aboriginal political organizations and Canadian political parties, is there one that you feel best represents you?




### What political organization or party best represents you?


* Less than 0.5%

44 Women comprise a greater proportion of non-status First Nations peoples (69%) than status First Nations peoples (55%).

# VIII. Justice

## Overview

Aboriginal peoples are over-represented in the criminal justice system, both as victims and offenders. According to Statistics Canada, in 2007/2008, Aboriginal people represented only three percent of the Canadian population, but made up 22 percent of individuals sentenced to custody in the provincial or federal correctional system.[45] This disparity is largest in the Prairie provinces: Aboriginal people accounted for 81 percent of admissions to sentenced custody in Saskatchewan and 69 percent in Manitoba, but represented only 11 percent and 12 percent of the provincial populations, respectively. In 2004 (the latest year for which data is available), Aboriginal people were also three times more likely than non-Aboriginal people to be the victim of sexual assault, robbery or physical assault (319 versus 101 incidents per 1,000 populations).[46]

In this context, the *UAPS* explored urban Aboriginal peoples' perceptions of and experience with the justice system, in terms of their confidence in the system, their support for an alternate Aboriginal justice system, and whether or not they believe alternate approaches to justice for Aboriginal people within the current system can make a difference. Also in this chapter, research conducted by Public Safety Canada and the Department of Justice Canada is used to draw comparisons between urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples' confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada.

The following points summarize the main findings:

- **Half of urban Aboriginal peoples in the study have been in contact with the criminal justice system either as a witness to or as a victim of a crime, or by being arrested or charged with a crime.** Among those who have had serious involvement in the criminal justice system, almost six in ten feel they were treated fairly. Those who feel they were treated unfairly tend to believe it is because they are an Aboriginal person.
- **Urban Aboriginal peoples do not have great confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada, and consequently endorse the concept of creating a separate Aboriginal system.**
- **Majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples support the idea of a criminal justice system that incorporates alternate approaches to justice.** This is equally true of those that support a separate Aboriginal justice system and those who do not. Urban Aboriginal peoples believe alternate approaches (such as incorporating Aboriginal concepts of justice) would help reduce Aboriginal crime rates, improve community safety and increase their confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada.

The following paragraphs elaborate upon the perceptions of the Canadian criminal justice system among First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit.

## First Nations

First Nations peoples are most likely among urban Aboriginal peoples to report some type of serious involvement in the criminal justice system (i.e., they have been a witness to or a victim of a crime, have been arrested or have been charged with a crime). More than half lack confidence in the system, yet this proportion is no higher than among Métis (who are less likely to have had serious involvement).

45 Statistics Canada. 2009. Incarceration of Aboriginal people in adult correctional services. *The Daily*. July 21. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. *11*-001-XIE.

46 Brzozowski, Jodi-Anne, Andrea Taylor-Butts and Sara Johnson. 2006. "Victimization and offending among the Aboriginal population in Canada." *Juristat*. Vol. 26, no.3. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-XIE.

Most First Nations people express support for a separate Aboriginal justice system, and believe that alternate approaches to justice would help reduce Aboriginal crime rates, improve community safety and improve their confidence in the justice system.

### Métis

Métis are less likely than other urban Aboriginal peoples to report serious involvement in the criminal justice system due to being arrested, charged with a crime or as a victim of a crime (excluding Inuit), but as likely as others to report being a witness to a crime. Among those who have had serious involvement where they feel they were treated unfairly, fewer Métis than Inuit and First Nations peoples attribute this to their Aboriginal identity. Despite this, more than half of Métis lack confidence in the justice system (similar to the proportion among First Nations peoples). Yet Métis are moderately more skeptical than First Nations peoples and Inuit of the prospect of a separate Aboriginal justice system and, albeit less so, of the impact of alternate approaches to justice on Aboriginal crime rates, community safety and their own confidence in the justice system.

### Inuit

Fewer Inuit than Métis and First Nations peoples report serious involvement in the criminal justice system as a witness to or a victim of a crime, although proportions similar to that of other urban Aboriginal peoples report they have been arrested or charged with a crime. At the same time, Inuit are most likely among urban Aboriginal peoples to express at least some confidence in the justice system, by a majority of almost six in ten. Nonetheless, most Inuit say a separate Aboriginal justice system is a good idea, and are optimistic about the improvements that could be made to the current system by incorporating alternate approaches to justice.

## 1. Contact with the criminal justice system

### Personal contact

***Half of urban Aboriginal peoples have been in contact with the criminal justice system either as a witness to or as a victim of a crime, or by being arrested or charged with a crime.***

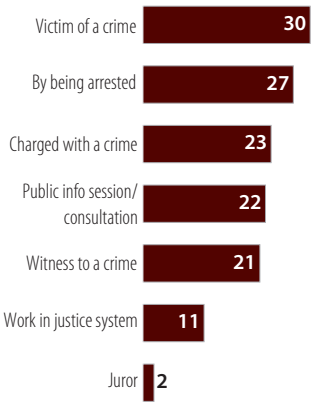
In the past decade, a majority (62%) of urban Aboriginal peoples have had some type of contact with the Canadian criminal justice system. Three in ten (30%) have been the victim of a crime in the past 10 years, and one-quarter (27%) say they have been arrested. About two in ten each have been charged with a crime (23%), involved in a public information session or public consultations (22%), or been a witness to a crime (21%). Small proportions say they have worked in the justice system themselves (11%) or served as a juror (2%).

Overall, one in two (52%) urban Aboriginal people have had serious involvement with the justice system – that is, they have been a witness to or a victim of a crime, have been arrested or have been charged with a crime. Moreover, most (62%) of this group with serious involvement have experienced the justice system from more than one of these four viewpoints (e.g., as both a victim *and* a witness), while four in ten (38%) have only had one type of experience.[47]

47 This does not refer to the number of separate occasions in which there was contact between an individual and the justice system (which was not asked).

Contact with the criminal justice system

In the last 10 years, have you personally been involved in the Canadian criminal justice system in any of the following ways. . . ?



First Nations peoples (55%) are more likely than Métis (48%) and Inuit (43%) to report some type of serious involvement in the criminal justice system (i.e., witness, victim, arrested or charged). Inuit are less likely than others to report being a witness to or a victim of a crime, while Métis are less likely to report being arrested or charged.

Serious involvement in the criminal justice system is more common in Toronto (67%) and Saskatoon (65%) than in other cities. It is also more often the case among men and those aged 25 to 44. Serious involvement, and particularly that involving an arrest or a criminal charge, is also strongly associated with socio-economic status. Seven in ten (68%) of those with household incomes under $10,000 have had some type of serious involvement with the justice system (versus 39% with household incomes of $60,000 or more), as do six in ten (58%) of those without a high school diploma (versus 37% with a university degree). Specific experience with an arrest or a criminal charge is almost four times higher among those in the lowest income bracket (51%), compared to those with household incomes of $60,000 or more (13%), and among those without a high school diploma (43%), compared to those with a university degree (11%).

## Fairness of treatment

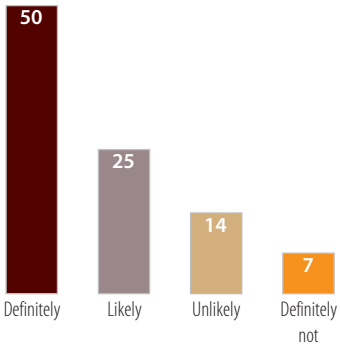
***Among those who have had serious involvement in the criminal justice system, more than one-half feel they were treated fairly. Those who feel they were treated unfairly tend to think it is because they are an Aboriginal person.***

The *UAPS* survey also asked those who say they have been seriously involved in the criminal justice system in the past 10 years (as a witness or victim to a crime, or by being arrested and/or charged) whether they think they were treated fairly by the justice system. Although opinions are divided, urban Aboriginal peoples in this group are more likely than not to feel they received fair treatment. Almost six in ten (57%) believe they were treated fairly by the justice system in Canada, compared to four in ten (39%) who feel they were treated unfairly (4% are unable to offer an opinion). It is not possible to determine how perceptions of treatment vary by the type of involvement (e.g., upon being arrested compared to when a victim of a crime) since many people have had more than one such experience, but were only asked about their overall treatment.

Among those urban Aboriginal peoples who feel they were treated unfairly by the justice system, half (50%) think it is definitely because they are an Aboriginal person, and another one in four (25%) think this is likely the reason. Inuit (67%) and First Nations peoples (58%) are more likely than Métis (41%) to definitely think they were treated unfairly because they are an Aboriginal person.

### Was unfair treatment due to Aboriginal identity?*

To what extent do you think you were treated unfairly because you are an Aboriginal person?




*Subsample: Those who have been involved with the justice system as a witness/victim to a crime, or by being charged/arrested and felt they were treated unfairly.
Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer the question.

## 2. Confidence in the criminal justice system

***More than half of urban Aboriginal peoples have little or no confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada. Comparisons with other research suggest they are more than twice as likely as Canadians generally to have low confidence.***

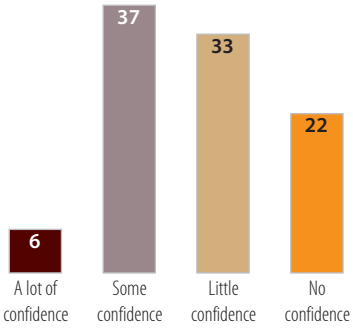
Urban Aboriginal peoples tend to lack confidence in Canada's criminal justice system. More than one in two urban Aboriginal peoples have little (33%) to no (22%) confidence in the criminal justice system. Almost four in ten (37%) have some confidence in this system, but only a very few (6%) have a lot of confidence.

First Nations peoples (57% little or no confidence) and Métis (55%) express less confidence in the justice system than do Inuit (39%). Lack of confidence is also more evident among urban Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver (64%), Saskatoon (63%), Winnipeg (60%), Toronto (59%) and Edmonton (55%).

Notably, those aged 25 and older express less confidence than younger urban Aboriginal peoples in Canada's criminal justice system (58% little or no confidence, versus 46% for those aged 18 to 24), as do those urban Aboriginal peoples who have had some type of serious involvement with the justice system in Canada (i.e., they have been a victim of a crime, a witness to a crime, or arrested or charged with a crime). Confidence is lowest among those with some type of serious involvement who believe they were unfairly treated (77% say they have little or no confidence).

Confidence in Canada's system of justice

In general, would you say you have a lot of confidence, some confidence, little confidence or no confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada?




### How does urban Aboriginal peoples' confidence in the Canadian criminal justice system compare to Canadians overall?

Urban Aboriginal peoples appear to have less confidence in Canada's criminal justice compared to Canadians overall.

While the *UAPS* does not allow for a direct comparison of urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples' confidence in Canada's criminal justice system, findings from other studies provide some insight. In a 2004 Public Safety Canada review of public opinion research conducted in Canada between 1980 and 2004, 46 percent of Canadians expressed confidence in their criminal justice system and 32 percent did not. In another study, the 2007 National Justice Survey, the Department of Justice Canada found 25 percent of Canadians expressed low confidence in their criminal justice system, while 75 percent had either moderate or high confidence in the criminal justice system.

The 2004 Public Safety Canada and 2007 Department of Justice findings suggest Canadians overall have more confidence in their criminal justice system compared to urban Aboriginal peoples. As *UAPS* data show, less than half of urban Aboriginal peoples express confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada. Compared to the 2007 Department of Justice findings, urban Aboriginal peoples appear more than twice as likely as Canadians generally to have low confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada.

According to the 2007 National Justice survey, individuals who had more confidence in Canada's public institutions reported a greater sense of belonging to Canada.

*Sources:* *The 2007 National Justice Survey: Tackling Crime and Public Confidence, Department of Justice Canada; "Public confidence in the criminal justice system," Public Safety Canada, Research summary, Vol. 9, No. 6, November 2004.*

# 3. Support for an Aboriginal justice system

## Good idea or bad idea

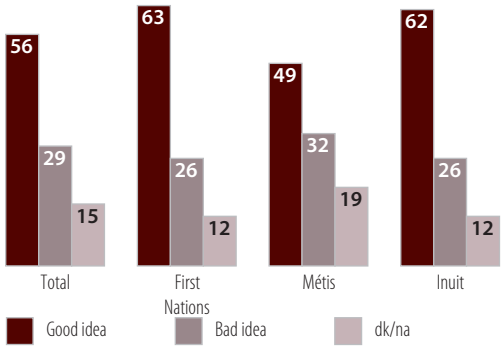
***There is strong support for an Aboriginal justice system among urban Aboriginal peoples, especially among those with little or confidence in the justice system in Canada.***

In light of the low confidence in the criminal justice system, it is not surprising that most urban Aboriginal peoples think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a good idea. However, Métis are slightly more skeptical about the value of this idea than are Inuit or First Nations peoples.

More than one in two (56%) urban Aboriginal peoples think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a good idea. Three in ten (29%) believe it is a bad idea, while 15 percent are unable to offer an opinion.

Aboriginal justice system: good or bad idea?

Do you think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a good idea or a bad idea?




Support for a separate system is highest among First Nations peoples (63%) and Inuit (62%), although Métis are also more likely to support (49%) than oppose (32%) this idea (19% are undecided).

Across cities, urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (79%) and Halifax (72%) are most likely to support the idea of a separate Aboriginal justice system. Opposition to this idea is highest among urban Aboriginal peoples in Edmonton (41%) and Winnipeg (39%) – which is due to higher than average opposition among both First Nations peoples and Métis in these cities.

Not surprisingly, support for a separate system is greatest among those less confident in the justice system (such as those aged 45 or older). However, even one in two (51%) who have a lot of confidence in the justice system favour the idea of a separate system.

Finally, engagement in the Aboriginal community influences these opinions. Urban Aboriginal peoples who belong to a community that is mostly or exclusively Aboriginal (63%), or who pay a great deal of attention to Aboriginal politics (69%) are more likely than others to support the creation of an Aboriginal justice system.

**WHY A GOOD IDEA.** When asked why they think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a *good* idea (unprompted, without response options offered), supporters say it is because they believe Aboriginal people would be better served by a system that allows them to be judged within their own value system and by their own peers, and that respects Aboriginal history and culture (25%). Some urban Aboriginal peoples also think a separate system would offset a current justice system that they perceive to be biased and that treats Aboriginal people unjustly (21%). Smaller groups suggest an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system would provide greater rehabilitation, healing and reduce recidivism (18%), offer a setting that is more comfortable culturally for Aboriginal people (17%) and, finally, provide a worthy alternative to an existing system perceived to be ineffective for Aboriginal people (10%).

**WHY A BAD IDEA?** Urban Aboriginal peoples who think creating a separate system is a *bad* idea were also asked the reason for their opinion (unprompted, without response options offered). Those opposed to this idea are most likely to say it is because they feel Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people should be treated equally to avoid discrimination (48%). Some urban Aboriginal peoples believe that a separate system would unnecessarily segregate and isolate Aboriginal people (18%). Other reasons for opposing a separate system include the view that healing circles are not an effective punishment or deterrent (9%), and that a separate system would cause resentment or create conflict with the broader Canadian population (8%).

Reasons why urban Aboriginal peoples think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a good idea:

*The concept of justice is different in an Aboriginal perspective. I think there would be less re-offending because their sentence would be culturally appropriate.*

*Because our values and belief systems alone would significantly prevent a lot of our youth from being in the present criminal justice system.*

*For punishment to be effective it has to be meaningful to the individual, which means it would have to be close to their cultural beliefs.*

…or a bad idea:

*There are no [good] reasons to create one. Some may use it as an excuse to get away with crime.*

*Everyone is equal. Why should one race have special treatment and special laws?*

*Even though Aboriginal people have had experiences such as residential schools, I feel at the end of the day people are all at risk for experiencing negative situations (like abuse). I don't feel segregating [the] Aboriginal population from all other people and cultures is necessarily the answer... I feel implementing programming and healing into correctional facilities for all would be more beneficial.*

## Perceived impact of alternate approaches

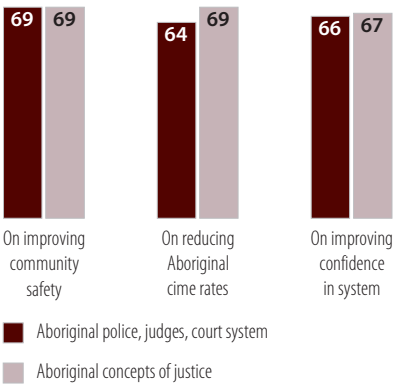
***Urban Aboriginal peoples are convinced that alternate approaches to justice would help reduce Aboriginal crime rates, improve their confidence in the justice system and improve community safety.***

Aside from their opinions about the value of an Aboriginal justice system, what do urban Aboriginal peoples think would make a difference in reducing Aboriginal crime rates, improving community safety, and improving their own confidence in the criminal justice system? Urban Aboriginal peoples were asked to evaluate the potential impact of two alternate approaches to justice:

- A system that incorporates Aboriginal police, Aboriginal judges and an Aboriginal court system to work with Aboriginal people who come in contact with the criminal justice system; and
- A system that incorporates Aboriginal concepts of justice, such as sentencing circles and healing circles, Aboriginal laws, and alternatives to punishment such as reconciliation and restoration.

Overall, majorities feel both approaches would have a beneficial impact. More than six in ten urban Aboriginal peoples say that each of these two approaches would have at least a moderate impact on reducing Aboriginal crime rates, improving community safety and improving their confidence in the justice system.

Impact of alternate approaches to justice
Big or moderate impact




When it comes to community safety and improving confidence in the system, both approaches are considered equally likely to be beneficial. However, urban Aboriginal peoples are slightly more optimistic that a system that incorporates Aboriginal concepts of justice would help reduce crime rates (42% say it would have a big impact) than would a system that incorporates Aboriginal police, judges and court system (36%).

First Nations and Inuit are most optimistic about the impact of incorporating both Aboriginal concepts of justice and Aboriginal police, judges and courts into the justice system. Métis are slightly more skeptical, although majorities are nonetheless optimistic that there would be a positive impact on Aboriginal crime rates, community safety and their confidence in the justice system.

Across cities, urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto, Saskatoon and Halifax are most optimistic about the potential impact of Aboriginal police, judges and courts. Inuit in Ottawa are similarly optimistic about the effect this approach would have on community safety. Urban Aboriginal peoples living in Toronto are also the most convinced of the impact that incorporating Aboriginal concepts of justice into the system would have on all three areas.

Optimism about both approaches is also consistently stronger among urban Aboriginal people aged 45 and older, and those who support a separate Aboriginal justice system. Interestingly, urban Aboriginal peoples are similarly convinced of the benefits of these alternate approaches no matter their level of confidence in the criminal justice system.

# IX. Happiness, Life Aspirations and Definitions of "Success" Among Urban Aboriginal Peoples

## Overview

This chapter encompasses all four themes of the *UAPS* (i.e., identity, experiences, aspirations and values) as it explores urban Aboriginal peoples' happiness with their life, their life aspirations, their definitions of a good life, and perceptions of their quality of employment and health.

The following points summarize the main findings around urban Aboriginal peoples' happiness, life aspirations and definitions of "success":

- **Majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples are happy with their lives.** Health, connection to their Aboriginal heritage and socio-economic status are all factors that affect their level of happiness, but homeowners and those who are very satisfied with their jobs are most likely to say they are very happy.
- **Completing or achieving higher education is the leading life aspiration of urban Aboriginal peoples today.** This is particularly the case for younger and less affluent urban Aboriginal peoples. Learning the importance of education and completing school is also a main way in which urban Aboriginal peoples hope the lives of future generations of Aboriginal peoples differ from their own.
- **Urban Aboriginal peoples' definition of a successful life mirrors universal notions of success in Canadian society at large.** They are most likely to feel family and a balanced lifestyle are very important ingredients of a successful life, and majorities also emphasize the importance of a good job or successful career, and financial independence.
- **In contrast, opinions about the importance of a strong connection to one's Aboriginal identity and background, and of living in a traditional way are more mixed.** These two elements are considered more central to a successful life by urban Aboriginal peoples who strongly identify as Aboriginal (i.e., those urban Aboriginal peoples who feel they belong to a mostly Aboriginal community and know their family tree very well).
- **Work is a positive experience for many urban Aboriginal peoples, which they chiefly attribute to passion for their job and a good working environment.** Nonetheless, job satisfaction is much lower among young urban Aboriginal peoples, part-time workers, and those with less education and lower household incomes – factors which are intertwined – leading to a greater inclination among these groups to move on to something else in the future.
- **Mental outlook and reducing stress are considered to be the most important factors determining a person's overall health.** Most urban Aboriginal peoples, and particularly those with a stronger Aboriginal identity (i.e., know their family tree very well, or feel they belong to a primarily Aboriginal community or one that is equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), also believe that spirituality and being part of a healthy, vibrant community are important to good health.
- **Most urban Aboriginal peoples say that access to traditional healing practices is as, if not more, important to them than access to mainstream health care.** Moreover, six in ten say it is at least somewhat easy for them to access these types of practices. The relative importance of traditional healing practices is higher among status First Nations peoples and Inuit, although Inuit are most likely among urban Aboriginal peoples to find it difficult to access such practices.

Much of the variation in the findings on happiness, life aspirations, and quality of employment and health is related to life stage (age) or socio-economic factors (education and income). Similar proportions of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit are positive about their lives, their jobs and their personal health. The differences appear in subtle variations around their aspirations, how they define success, and what they believe contributes to good health. The following paragraphs elaborate upon the points-of-view of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit.

## First Nations

Education is the top life aspiration for First Nations peoples, followed by a good job or career, and raising a family. Like Métis and Inuit, they define a successful life primarily in terms of family and a balanced lifestyle. Yet, status First Nations peoples are among those most likely to identify a strong connection to one's Aboriginal heritage as another important element of a good life. Similarly, First Nations peoples are among the most likely to express the hope that future generations have stronger cultural connections, and to believe that being part of a healthy community has an influence on personal health.

## Métis

Having a family is the leading life aspiration for Métis, just slightly edging out aspirations related to higher education. Like Inuit and First Nations peoples, Métis consider family and a balanced lifestyle the most important elements of a successful life. However, they place comparatively less importance on a strong connection to one's Aboriginal heritage and on living in a traditional way in defining a good life. Métis are more likely than other urban Aboriginal peoples to express the hope that future generations will enjoy financial stability, although this is secondary to their hopes for education, and a more tolerant society for their children and grandchildren.

## Inuit

Education is the main life aspiration for Inuit, followed by a good job or career, and owning/having a home. Like First Nations peoples and Métis, Inuit define a successful life primarily in terms of family and a balanced lifestyle. In addition, they are most likely among urban Aboriginal peoples to believe that having a strong connection to one's Aboriginal heritage and living in a traditional way are important elements of a good life. When it comes to overall health, Inuit are the most likely to consider being part of a healthy community an important determinant, and are less likely than others to believe in the importance of physical exercise.

# 1. Happiness

***Urban Aboriginal peoples are generally happy with their lives, including six in ten who say they are very happy. Happiness is highest among homeowners and those who are very satisfied with their job.***

Almost all urban Aboriginal peoples describe themselves as happy, and a majority say they are very much so. More than nine in ten say they are very (58%) or somewhat (36%) happy with their life, while fewer than one in ten say they are not very (4%) or not at all happy (1%). Similar proportions of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit say they are very happy with their lives.

Urban Aboriginal peoples' degree of happiness is strongly influenced by socio-economic status. The proportion of urban Aboriginal peoples who say they are very happy jumps markedly from four in ten (41%) of those in the lowest income bracket to three-quarters (77%) of those with household incomes of $60,000 or more. Stated happiness is also higher among those who own their own home (81% very happy) and those with a post-secondary degree (66%).

Job status and job satisfaction are also associated with urban Aboriginal peoples' sense of happiness. Those employed full-time (72%) are more likely than those who are self-employed (61%) or employed part-time (50%) to be very happy with their life. As well, happiness rises with job satisfaction: half of urban Aboriginal peoples somewhat satisfied with their jobs are very happy compared to eight in ten (80%) of those who are very satisfied with their jobs.

Not surprisingly, urban Aboriginal peoples' perception of their own health affects their level of happiness. Those who feel they are in good or excellent health (69%) are more likely to be very happy with their life compared to those who feel their health is either fair or poor (44%).

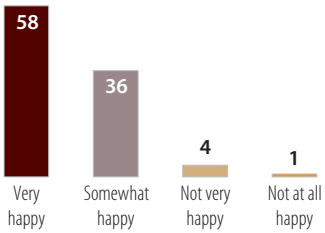
As well, the proportions of urban Aboriginal peoples who are very happy steadily rises with knowledge of their family tree, from some four in ten (43%) of those who their family tree not at all, to seven in ten (70%) of those who know their family tree very well.

Across cities, urban Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver (64%) and Winnipeg (63%) are most likely to say they are very happy, while Torontonians (48%) are least likely to feel this way.

Despite these variations in the proportions of urban Aboriginal peoples who describe themselves as *very* happy, fewer than two in ten in any segment of the population say they are unhappy. Urban Aboriginal peoples who are unemployed or relying on social assistance (13%), and those in fair to poor health (14%) are among the most likely to say they are not happy.

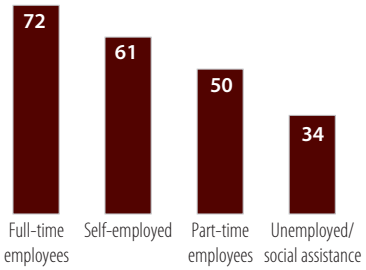
### Level of happiness

Overall, are you very, somewhat, not very or not at all happy with your life?



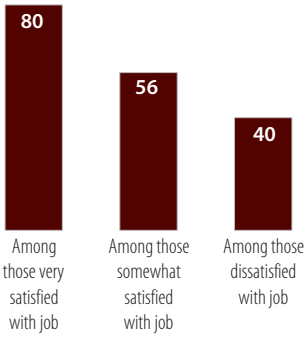

### Level of happiness

Very happy, by employment status




### Level of happiness

Very happy, by job satisfaction



# 2. Life aspirations and definitions of "success"

## Life aspirations

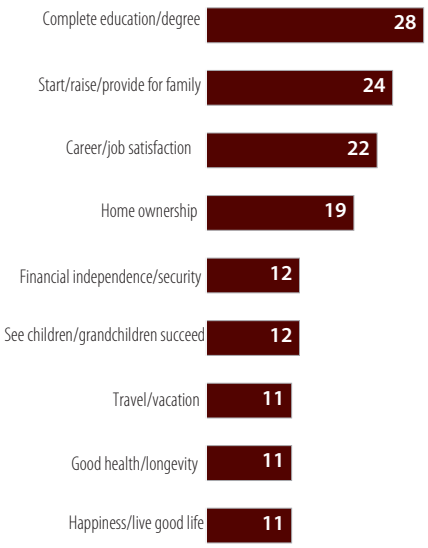
***Urban Aboriginal peoples' top life aspiration is completing their education, followed by raising a family, having a good job and home ownership. Education, and a job or career are particularly common goals for younger and less affluent urban Aboriginal peoples.***

What do urban Aboriginal peoples consider to be a good life? To explore what urban Aboriginal peoples aspire to for their futures, *UAPS* participants were asked (unprompted, without response options offered) what three things they most want to achieve in their lifetime.

Life aspirations

What are three things that you most want to achieve in your lifetime?

Top mentions




The most commonly mentioned life aspiration among urban Aboriginal peoples is completing their education (28%), followed by starting, raising or providing for a family (24%), having a good or enjoyable job (22%), and owning a home (19%). Slightly fewer urban Aboriginal peoples mention becoming financially independent or wealthy (12%), seeing their children/grandchildren go to school and succeed in life (12%), getting to travel (11%), having good health (11%), or being happy or living a good life (11%) among their life goals.

Urban Aboriginal peoples mention a wide variety of other life aspirations, although none by more than 10 percent of survey participants, including owning a business, staying close to their family and community, giving back to their Aboriginal community, being successful, passing on their knowledge or keeping their culture alive, achieving peace, balance and prosperity, and finding a partner or getting married.

Higher education is the leading life aspiration, or among the top aspirations, in all cities and for most groups within the urban Aboriginal population, although some variation is evident. Completing their education is more likely to be identified as a top aspiration by Inuit (36%) and First Nations peoples (33%) than by Métis (23%). Métis (26%) are most likely among urban Aboriginal peoples to indicate that raising and providing for a family is among their top life aspirations, just surpassing higher education.

Education is also a more frequently mentioned life aspiration for young urban Aboriginal peoples (51% of those aged 18 to 24) and women (35%), as well as those without a post-secondary degree (33%) and those with household incomes under $30,000 (35%).

In addition to education, a good career (45%), and starting or raising a family (35%) are also more common life aspirations among young urban Aboriginal peoples aged 18 to 24. While education and starting/raising a family are similarly the top life aspirations for those aged 25 to 44 (just less frequently mentioned compared to younger people), this age group is more likely than younger urban Aboriginal peoples to cite other family-related goals such as getting married, being a good partner or parent, seeing their children succeed in life and staying close to family. Older individuals (aged 45 and older) are more likely than others to focus on personal growth (e.g., good health/healthy lifestyle, peace and balance, spirituality) and a desire to pass on their knowledge to others.

In addition to education, a career and home ownership are more frequently mentioned life goals for urban Aboriginal peoples without a college or university degree, and those with lower household incomes. While still secondary to education, family and career goals, a desire to travel is a more common aspiration for those with more education and higher incomes. Urban Aboriginal peoples with a university degree are the most likely to cite giving back to the community (14%) or being a positive role model (9%) as life aspirations. Finally, those with higher incomes are more likely than others to want financial security or a comfortable retirement.

There are also differences in life aspirations across cities. Desire to complete one's education is most frequently mentioned in Saskatoon (45%), starting or raising a family is a more common life aspiration among urban Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay (32%) and Calgary (30%), while a good career is more frequently mentioned in Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg (32% each).

## Definitions of "success"

***Family and a balanced lifestyle are most important to First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit ideas of a successful life, but they diverge on the importance of having a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity and background, and living in a traditional way.***

The *UAPS* survey asked urban Aboriginal peoples to rate the importance of eight factors to their idea of a successful life: financial independence; having a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity or background; owning a home; having a good job or a successful career; being close to family and friends; living a balanced life; living in a traditional way; and raising healthy, well-adjusted children who contribute to their community.

Urban Aboriginal peoples are most likely to consider family and a balanced lifestyle central to a successful life. Nine in ten (90%) say **raising healthy, well-adjusted children who contribute to their community** is very important to their idea of a successful life, and similar proportions say the same about **being close to family and friends** (88%), and **living a balanced life** (88%). Eight in ten (78%) urban Aboriginal peoples place the same degree of importance on a **good job or a successful career.** Majorities also define success as **financial independence** (71%), **having a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity or background** (63%), and **owning a home** (61%). For each of these elements, most of the remainder say they are somewhat important in defining a successful life, while no more than one in ten say they are not so important.

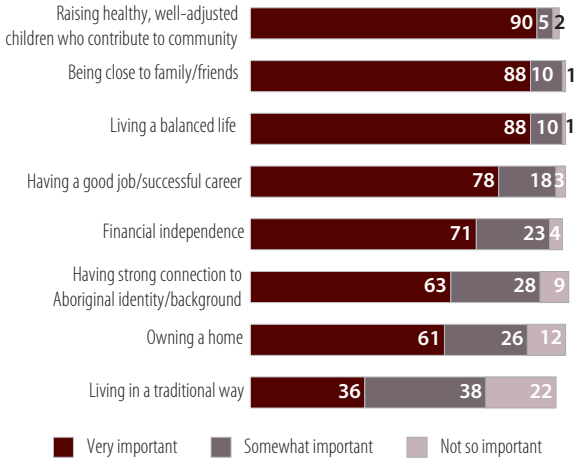
By comparison, urban Aboriginal peoples have mixed opinions about the importance of **living in a traditional way**. Fewer than four in ten (36%) rate this to be very important to a successful life, while a similar proportion (38%) say it is somewhat important and two in ten (22%) believe it is not so important.

First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit possess similar 'universal' notions of a successful life (i.e., family and a balanced lifestyle). However they diverge significantly on the importance of a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity and background, and living in a traditional way. In the first instance, Inuit (83%) and status First Nations peoples (75%) are much more likely than non-status First Nations peoples (56%) and Métis (52%) to associate a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage with a successful life. With regards to living in a traditional way, fewer urban Aboriginal peoples overall think this is very important to a successful life, but, again, Inuit (62%) and First Nations peoples (status and non-status) (45%) are more likely than Métis (27%) to consider it central to a successful life.

Across cities, a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage is most important to the concept of a successful life for urban Aboriginal peoples in Halifax (77%), Toronto (76%) and Vancouver (74%), as well as among Inuit in Ottawa (78%). Living in a traditional way is also considered particularly important in Halifax (54%) and among Inuit in Ottawa (57%). In contrast, urban Aboriginal peoples in Winnipeg are least inclined to consider a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage (45%) and living in a traditional way (27%) as very important factors in their idea of success, a finding which is in part due to the large Métis population in this city. Nonetheless, the proportion of Métis who consider a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage to be key to a successful life is much lower in Winnipeg (35%) than in other cities (60%).

## Definition of a successful life

People define a successful life in a many different ways. Please tell me if the following are very important, somewhat important or not so important to your idea of a successful life.




The extent to which a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage is considered important for success is also influenced by urban Aboriginal peoples' age, birthplace and how strongly they identify as Aboriginal. Older urban Aboriginal peoples (72% of those aged 45 or older), and those born or raised somewhere other than their current city (68%) are more likely than others to value a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity or background. Furthermore, those who strongly identify as Aboriginal (i.e., those who know their family tree very well, and who feel the community they belong to is mostly or exclusively Aboriginal) are among those most likely to value both a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage and living in a traditional way.

Finally, the importance of living in a traditional way to urban Aboriginal peoples' idea of a successful life declines the higher their household income.

## 3. Work experiences

*UAPS* findings reveal a strong association between happiness and job status and satisfaction. The *UAPS* briefly addressed the topic of work, expanding upon existing labour statistics of the Aboriginal population by focusing on quality of employment and the types of successes that urban Aboriginal peoples have experienced in their working lives.

### Employment profile

***A majority of UAPS participants are working, either full-time, part-time or for themselves. The rate of employment is highest among those with a post-secondary degree.***

First, it is useful to understand the employment profile of *UAPS* participants. Six in ten (58%) *UAPS* participants are working. Most are full-time employees (40%), while some are self-employed (7%) or are working part-time (11%). The remainder includes full-time students (10%), individuals who stay at home full-time (4%) or are retired (4%), those on social assistance (4%) or on a disability pension (3%), and those who are currently unemployed (14%).

Métis (48%) are more likely than First Nations peoples (33%) and Inuit (29%) to say they are working full-time, although rates of self-employment and part-time employment are similar. In turn, unemployment is more commonly reported by Inuit (21%) and First Nations peoples (17%) than by Métis (11%).

Employment rates (including full-time, part-time or self-employment) are highest among *UAPS* participants with a university (79%) or college (72%) degree, confirming the link between educational attainment and labour market success (Statistics Canada has demonstrated that the likelihood of employment increases and the likelihood of unemployment decreases significantly with more education). Age is also a factor, with younger urban Aboriginal people more likely than others to have part-time employment (16% vs. 9% of those aged 25 and older).

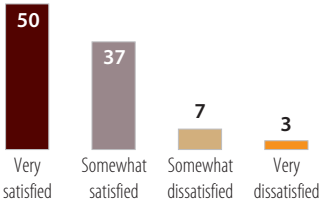
Rates of employment are highest in Vancouver (71% working full-time, part-time or self-employed), followed by Winnipeg (64%), and lowest in Saskatoon (38%), where one-quarter (26%) of *UAPS* participants describe themselves as unemployed. Self-employment is most common in the big cities of Vancouver (14%), Montreal (12%) and Toronto (11%).

Urban Aboriginal peoples presently working either full-time or part-time work in a range of occupations and professions, although two sectors predominate: services and sales (white collar) (20%), and skilled and semi-skilled trades (15%). Smaller proportions say their principal occupation is in social work and counselling (9%), unskilled work (9%), the professions (i.e., doctor, lawyer, dentist) (7%), as an administrator or owner of a small business (5%) or big business (4%), consulting and management services (3%), technician and service professional (3%), and food services (3%). Some occupations are more common among part-time workers, including unskilled work (15%) and food services (7%).

## Job satisfaction

### Job satisfaction*

Would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with your job?




* Subsample: Those who are working full- or part-time, or are self-employed.

***Job satisfaction is high among working urban Aboriginal peoples, and the low level of job dissatisfaction is on par with the Canadian population-at-large. Passion for their work and a good work environment are the top reasons for individuals who are very satisfied with their jobs.***

What quality of employment do urban Aboriginal peoples experience? One way to explore this is through their level of satisfaction with their jobs. Most urban Aboriginal peoples express satisfaction with the work they do. Among urban Aboriginal peoples who are presently employed full-time or part-time or who are self-employed, half (50%) say they are very satisfied with their job and over a third (37%) are somewhat satisfied. Only one in ten feel somewhat (7%) or very (3%) dissatisfied with their job. Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples who are presently employed do not differ substantially in their degree of job satisfaction.

Levels of job dissatisfaction, as defined by Statistics Canada, appear similar to that of the Canadian population-at-large. The 2002 Canadian Community Health Survey found that eight percent of Canadian workers were either "not too satisfied" or "not at all satisfied" with their jobs, a figure slightly lower than the one in ten urban Aboriginal peoples who report they are either "somewhat dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with their jobs.

Job satisfaction is higher among those who are self-employed (55% very satisfied) or working full-time (51%) than among those who are employed part-time (40%). In part, money makes a difference. Strong job satisfaction grows from four in ten (39%) urban Aboriginal peoples with household incomes under $30,000 to six in ten (62%) of those with household incomes of $60,000 or more[48] – and urban Aboriginal peoples with full-time work are more than twice as likely as part-time employees to fall into this latter category.

Job satisfaction also increases with age, ranging from three in ten (28%) urban Aboriginal peoples aged 18 to 24 to two-thirds of those aged 45 and older (65%). This is not entirely due to a better work status among older urban Aboriginal peoples, since they are consistently more satisfied with their jobs than younger individuals regardless of whether they are employed full-time or part-time, or self-employed. Happiness with one's job is also more evident among urban Aboriginal peoples with college (57%) or university (54%) degrees.

Urban Aboriginal peoples in Montreal (62%), Toronto (59%) and Vancouver (55%) are most likely to be very satisfied with their jobs, which is due in part to the higher proportion in these cities who are self-employed. Dissatisfaction (very or somewhat) is slightly more common in Calgary (16%) and Edmonton (14%) than elsewhere.

**REASONS FOR JOB SATISFACTION OR DISSATISFACTION.** Passion for their work and a positive work environment stand out as urban Aboriginal peoples' top reasons why they are satisfied with their jobs.

When urban Aboriginal peoples who are very satisfied with their jobs are asked the reasons why (unprompted, without response options offered), more than one-third (36%) say it is because they "love their job." A good boss, colleagues and work environment (24%) also make a difference, as does the sense among some that their work allows them to give back to (21%) or have a positive influence on

48 This is consistent with other research demonstrating that, as people move into "middle income" brackets, they are more likely to report higher levels of job satisfaction. Statistics Canada, Health Reports: Job satisfaction, stress and depression, *The Daily*, 2006.

(13%) their community. Less common reasons for strong job satisfaction include a sense of fulfillment in their work (14%), the pay and/or the benefits (13%), and the opportunity for advancement available to them in their current role (10%).

The relatively small group of urban Aboriginal peoples who are dissatisfied with their current job are most likely to cite a lack of challenge (18%), poor pay (17%), and bad management or politics in the workplace (17%). Other reasons for their dissatisfaction include no link between their job and their interests or educational degree (15%), and a stressful or difficult job (11%).

The group of urban Aboriginal peoples who say they are somewhat satisfied with their job cite a mix of both positive and negative reasons for this, none of which stand out as unique reasons compared to those who are either very satisfied or dissatisfied with their employment. It is interesting that those who are somewhat satisfied are as likely as those who are dissatisfied to treat their job as temporary, and indicate that they are planning a career change (9%) or that their current job is just to pay the bills (5%).

## Contentment with work versus plans to move on

***Urban Aboriginal peoples are fairly divided between those who are content with their work and those who hope to move on to something else, views that are clearly affected by job satisfaction. Those who plan to move on ultimately hope to pursue educational aspirations and work in other fields.***

Beyond their level of job satisfaction, how content are urban Aboriginal peoples with their type of work? Urban Aboriginal peoples who work full-time, part-time or who are self-employed are fairly divided between those who are comfortable in their job and those who favour a change. Just over one-half (53%) of this group say they are generally content with the type of work they do, while four in ten (43%) say they hope to move on to something else (4% are unable to offer an opinion). As was the case with job satisfaction, contentment with their jobs is similar for First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit.

Job satisfaction is a key influence on urban Aboriginal peoples' contentment with their work. Only one-quarter (23%) of those very satisfied with their jobs hope to move on to something else, compared to 57 percent of those who are somewhat satisfied and nine in ten (88%) who are dissatisfied with their jobs.

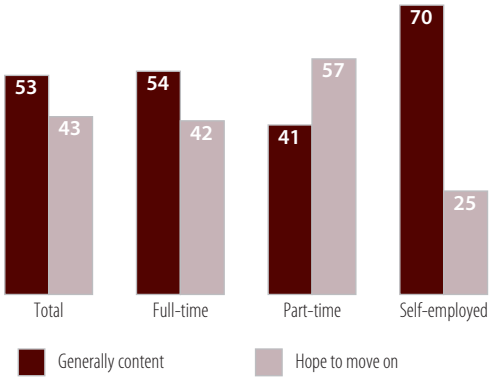
As could be expected, the desire to move on is highest among young urban Aboriginal people (76%) and declines with age (to only 24% of those aged 45 and older). More time in the workforce, and the fact that older urban Aboriginal peoples are more likely to be employed full-time and satisfied with their jobs, likely contribute to their greater contentment in their jobs.

The inclination to do something other than their current job is highest among those in the lowest income brackets (55% of those with household incomes under $30,000). It is also more evident among those with part-time jobs (57%) compared to those with full-time jobs (42%). In contrast, urban Aboriginal peoples who are self-employed are most likely to be content with their type of work (70% vs. 25% who hope to move on).

Among urban Aboriginal peoples in the labour force, the desire to move on is highest in Calgary and Edmonton (where job dissatisfaction is most common), followed by Regina and Saskatoon. In the other cities, the balance of opinion is towards contentment with their current jobs.

### Job contentment, by employment status*

Would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with your job?




*Subsample: Those who are working full- or part-time, or are self-employed.

Among urban Aboriginal peoples who intend to move on from their present job, what do they want to do? One in ten each plan to continue their education (10%), own their own business (10%)[49] or hope to be promoted within their organization (8%), a desire particularly common among those who are very satisfied with their jobs, and an indication that not all plans entail a departure from their current workplace. Others cite a wide range of different professions or fields in which they hope to be, the most common of which include social work (7%), working on behalf of the Aboriginal community (6%), teaching (5%), law (5%), nursing (4%) and art/design (4%).

## Workplace successes

***Urban Aboriginal peoples describe a range of successes in the workplace, including specific job successes and advancement, personal growth opportunities, job and financial stability, and the opportunity to give back to others.***

What do urban Aboriginal peoples consider their biggest successes in their working life?

When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), urban Aboriginal peoples in the labour market described five main types of success:

- **On-the-job successes and advancement.** Urban Aboriginal peoples are most likely to mention on-the-job successes and advancement as their biggest success in their working life so far. Four in ten (39%) describe specific job successes, such as promotions, advancement in their company, greater responsibility, and prestige, awards and recognition gained through accomplishing particular goals, as examples of on-the-job success and advancement. Proportions of urban Aboriginal peoples who cite on-the-job successes and advancement as their biggest success rises to five in ten of those in Edmonton (54%), Vancouver (52%), and Montreal (49%).
- **Growth opportunities.** The second most common form of workplace success, three in ten (31%) feel the new skills they have acquired, stretch assignments received, personal growth achieved on the job, and educational opportunities for skills upgrading and certification constitute the biggest success in their working life so far. Urban Aboriginal peoples in Calgary (40%) are most likely to say growth opportunities have been their biggest success in their working life.
- **Employment and job stability.** More than two in ten (23%) urban Aboriginal peoples feel their biggest success so far has been achieving job stability and/or security in their industry or field. This is most evident in Thunder Bay (33%) and Calgary (31%).
- **Financial stability.** Two in ten (18%) urban Aboriginal peoples also feel their ability to afford what they want, support their family or themselves, and be able to afford their own home and car are the biggest successes they have had in their working life so far, rising to three in ten or more in Thunder Bay (34%), Halifax (32%) and Calgary (30%).
- **Giving back.** Similarly, two in ten (18%) emphasize the sense of success they feel by doing a job that requires them to help youth, work with other Aboriginal peoples and give back to their community. This type of "success" is cited most frequently in Toronto (25%) and Vancouver (23%).

49 Beyond the general desirability of owning their own business, there is a strong trend in small business ownership among Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Statistics Canada data show Aboriginal peoples start businesses at nine times the rate of the average Canadian.

# 4. Hopes for the future

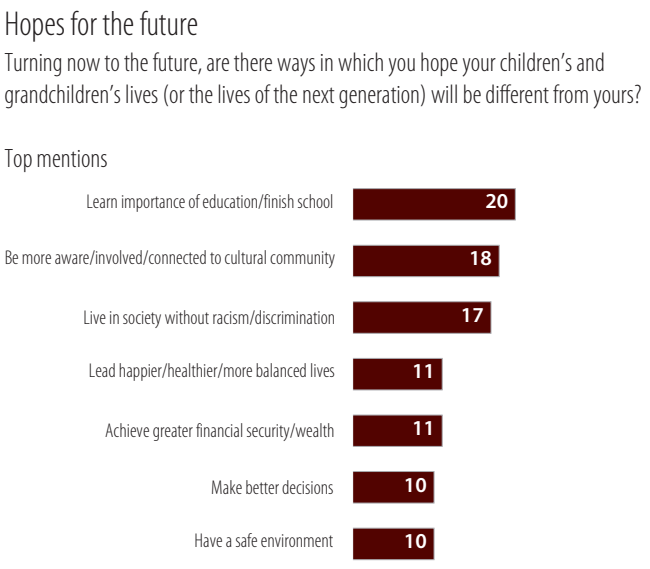
***Urban Aboriginal peoples are most likely to hope for a future world of greater cultural connection, education and tolerance.***

When asked to think about the future and in what ways they hope their children's and grandchildren's lives (or the lives of the next generation) will be different from their own (unprompted, without providing response options), urban Aboriginal peoples' hopes centre on a world of greater educational aspiration, cultural connection and tolerance. Some of these hopes are presented in participants' own words in the sidebar on this page.

Urban Aboriginal peoples are most likely to hope that future generations learn the importance of education and finishing school (20%). The next most common hopes for future generations are that they be more aware of, involved in and connected to their Aboriginal cultural community (18%), and that they will live in a society without racism and discrimination (17%).

Smaller proportions of urban Aboriginal peoples hope their children and grandchildren will lead happier, healthier and more balanced lives (11%), achieve greater financial security and/or wealth (11%), make better decisions than themselves (10%), and enjoy a safe environment without crime, violence or physical or emotional abuse (10%). A wide variety of other hopes for the future are mentioned, although none by more than nine percent of survey participants, including avoidance of addictions to drug and alcohol, access to better resources or opportunities, a stable/strong supportive family life, pride in their Aboriginal identity, and more access to or support in education.

Hopes for the lives of future generations are generally similar across most demographic segments of the urban Aboriginal population, with a few exceptions. Education is a more common hope for future generations among older urban Aboriginal peoples (24% of those aged 45 and older) and those with no high school diploma (24%). In turn, those with at least a high school education are more likely than others to express a hope for a more tolerant society (19%). As well, First Nations peoples are most likely to express a desire for future generations to have stronger cultural connections (24%). Financial stability is a more common hope for Métis (13%) than for others.




## Urban Aboriginal peoples' hopes for the future:

*A positive experience in education. That they will not face systemic or racial discrimination. They don't experience bullying.*

*I wish the future generations, including my grandchildren, will have strong cultural connections and ties to the land and the spirits of their ancestors, to reclaim and restore our people to their roots and to the land, and most of all to their ancient values and beliefs.*

*My child and my grandchildren will be raised within our family, free of alcohol and drugs. They will be educated on the negative effects that addictions can have on their lives. They will take responsibility for the choices they make, and live life with integrity.*

*Hopefully, in their time they will be treated equally and there will be an end to racism.*

*That they have meaningful opportunities to participate in mainstream society; have knowledge of family history, lineage and culture; they don't feel the inter-generational abuses caused by colonization; access to healthy, spiritual, cultural teachers and elders.*

*I hope they are happy and see less crime and drugs on the street. There are too many young kids dying of drug overdose and gang violence in the streets.*

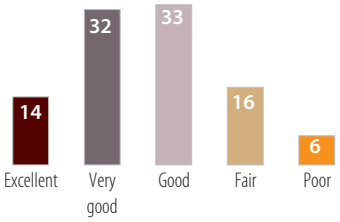
# 5. Health perceptions

Since quality of health clearly affects urban Aboriginal peoples' sense of happiness with their life, a short exploration of urban Aboriginal peoples' perceptions of their health and well-being is appropriate at this point in the report. The *UAPS* asked urban Aboriginal peoples to rate their own health and about the factors they feel are important in determining a person's overall health, as well as about the importance of and their ease of access to traditional healing practices.

## Assessment of personal health

Health status

In general, would you say your health is . . . ?




***Most urban Aboriginal peoples are positive about their personal health.***

Urban Aboriginal peoples are generally positive about their personal health. When asked to assess their health, eight in ten urban Aboriginal peoples rate their health as excellent (14%), very good (32%) or good (33%). Two in ten say their health is fair (16%) or poor (6%). First Nations, Métis and Inuit are similarly positive about their personal health. These self-reported results are best interpreted as an indicator of how people perceive their health rather than as an objective measure of population health status.

Urban Aboriginal peoples' assessment of their health does not vary significantly by identity group. However, urban Aboriginal peoples in Halifax (86%), Vancouver (86%), Calgary (82%) and Montreal (82%) are more likely than average to report they are in excellent-to-good health.

Not surprisingly, perceptions of health are more positive among younger individuals and those with higher socio-economic status. Younger urban Aboriginal peoples (i.e., those under 45 years of age) (82%), those with a university education (89%), and those with higher household incomes (86% – $60,000 or more) are all more likely than others to say they are in excellent-to-good health.

## Perceived determinants of personal health

***Positive outlook on life and reducing stress are perceived to be the most important factors determining a person's overall health.***

There are various factors that determine personal health, apart from absence of disease. These include lifestyle choices, and societal and environmental factors. A growing body of literature also indicates that Aboriginal peoples' concept of overall health and well-being includes other considerations, such as spirituality, relation to the land and strength of Aboriginal identity.[50] To explore the ways in which urban Aboriginal peoples define good health, the *UAPS* asked survey participants to rate the importance of six factors in determining a person's overall health: physical exercise, diet, outlook on life, spirituality, being part of a healthy and vibrant community, and reducing stress and anxiety.

Majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples think all six factors are very important in determining a person's overall health. However, they are most likely to think a **positive outlook on life** (88%), and **reducing stress and anxiety** (87%) are very important in determining overall health, closely followed by **physical exercise** (84%). Fewer, albeit still majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples, think **diet** (76%), **spirituality** (69%), and **being part of a healthy, vibrant community** (67%) are very important in determining a person's overall health. Most of the remainder consider each of these factors to be somewhat important; very few (less than one in ten) say they are not so important.

Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples prioritize the importance of these six health factors somewhat differently. Métis (85%) and First Nations peoples (84%) are more likely than Inuit (71%) to rate physical exercise as a very important determinant of overall health. Inuit (79%) and, to a lesser degree, First Nations peoples (73%) are more inclined than Métis (61%) to see being part of a healthy, vibrant community as a very important health determinant.

In addition, spirituality, and being part of a healthy, vibrant community are considered more important factors by urban Aboriginal peoples who know their family tree very well, and who feel they belong to a community that is primarily Aboriginal, or equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

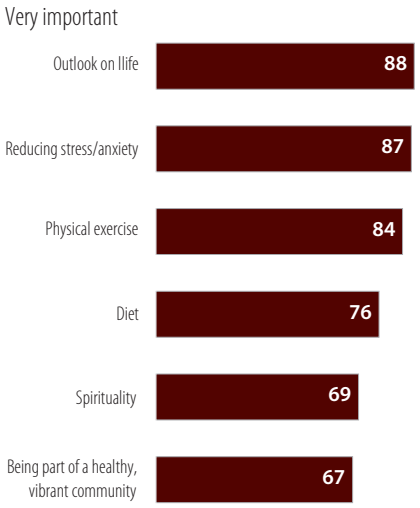
Urban Aboriginal peoples' views on the determinants of health also vary by gender and age. Women are more likely than men to perceive nearly all of these six factors as very important determinants of health. The one exception is physical exercise, which is similarly perceived as important by both men and women. The perceived importance of all six factors is higher among older urban Aboriginal peoples, and those aged 45 and older are most likely to believe in the value of a good diet, community and spirituality. However, these views do not vary substantially by personal health status.

Notably, while urban Aboriginal peoples without a high school diploma are least likely to place value on exercise, diet and life outlook, they are as likely as those with more education to believe community, spirituality and stress reduction are very important to overall health.

Across cities, urban Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are more likely than average to consider exercise (92%), diet (87%) and reducing stress (93%; this latter together with Toronto at 91%) as very important to overall health. In comparison, those living in Winnipeg are less inclined than average to rate spirituality (56%) and being part of a healthy, vibrant community (56%) as very important.

### Importance to overall health

Your health can make a big difference to your quality of life. Please tell me if you believe each of the following is very important, somewhat important or not so important in determining a person's overall health.



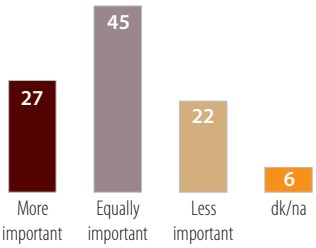

50 Nettleton, C., Napolitano, D., Stephens, C. (2007). An overview of current knowledge of the social determinants of Indigenous Health Working Paper. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Commissioned by the World Health Organization.

## Traditional healing practices vs. mainstream care

***Access to traditional healing practices is as, if not more, important than access to mainstream health care for majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples, especially Inuit and status First Nations peoples, and those who strongly identify as Aboriginal.***

### Importance of traditional health practices

Is having access to traditional healing practices more important, less important or equally important to you as access to non-Aboriginal or mainstream health care services?




How important is it for urban Aboriginal peoples to have access to traditional and culturally-appropriate health care? Most urban Aboriginal peoples say traditional healing practices are at least equally, if not more, important to them than mainstream health care. Almost half (45%) of urban Aboriginal peoples say access to traditional healing practices are equally important to them as access to non-Aboriginal or mainstream health care services, while one-quarter (27%) say traditional practices are more important. Only two in ten (22%) consider traditional healing to be less important than access to mainstream health care.

The view that access to traditional healing practices is more important than access to mainstream health care services is more evident among Inuit (37%) and status First Nations peoples (36%) than among non-status First Nations peoples (25%) and Métis (20%). Métis, in turn, are more inclined than others to say access to traditional healing is less important (30% vs. 15% of others), while non-status First Nations peoples are more likely to say the two are equally important (58% vs. 44% of others).

Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (43%) and Inuit in Ottawa (47%) are more likely than those living in other cities to say accessing traditional healing practices is more important than accessing mainstream health care services. In contrast, those living in Winnipeg (18%), most likely driven by the higher proportion of Métis living in this city, Regina (19%) and Edmonton (20%) are least likely to share this view.

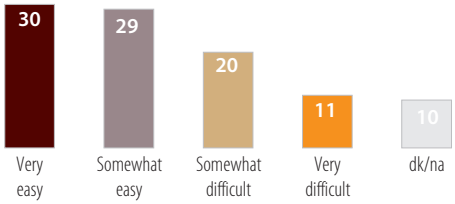
The relative importance of traditional healing practices among urban Aboriginal peoples also increases with age and strength of Aboriginal identity. Those aged 45 and older, and those who strongly identify as Aboriginal (i.e., those who know their family tree very well, and feel the community they belong to is mostly or exclusively Aboriginal) are more likely than others to think access to traditional healing practices is more important than access to mainstream health care. However, these views do not vary noticeably by personal health status.

## Access to traditional healing practices

***Six in ten urban Aboriginal peoples say it is easy to access traditional healing practices, especially urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto.***

### Access to traditional healing practices

How easy or difficult is it for you to access traditional healing practices, such as natural medicines, healing circles and other ceremonies, and the counsel of elders?




Actual access to traditional healing practices appears easy for majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples. Six in ten say it is very (30%) or somewhat (29%) easy to access traditional healing practices such as natural medicines, healing circles and other ceremonies, and the counsel of elders. Three in ten say it is somewhat (20%) or very (11%) difficult to access these practices. (Ten percent do not give an opinion).

Status First Nations peoples (37%) are more likely than Métis (24%), non-status First Nations peoples (18%) and Inuit (13%) to say it is *very* easy for them to access traditional healing practices. Inuit (50%) are far more likely than Métis (34%) and First Nations peoples (29%) to say it is *difficult* for them to access traditional healing practices. Access to traditional healing is also judged considerably easier by urban Aboriginal peoples living in Toronto (52% very easy). However, the ease or difficulty of access does not vary significantly by personal health status.

# X. Educational Values, Aspirations and Experiences

## Overview

A significant amount of the research literature on Aboriginal people in Canada has focused on the topic of education, at least in part because experts consistently agree that higher education is key to improving the prospects of Aboriginal people. Formal education is recognized as the path to well-paid occupations for Aboriginal people, and subsequently to lower Aboriginal poverty rates.[51]

According to the 2006 Census, urban Aboriginal peoples have had greater success achieving a post-secondary education than their on-reserve counterparts: almost half (47%) of Aboriginal people living in the cities included in this survey (excluding Ottawa) have a college or university degree, compared to only three in ten (30%) on-reserve. Yet the university graduation rate of urban Aboriginal peoples (15%) continues to trail that of other Canadians (25%), despite having similar high school and college completion rates.

The focus of the *UAPS* was to expand upon the statistics about Aboriginal educational achievement, by exploring the impact that education has, and what can be done to ensure that those who want a post-secondary education are successful. The survey addressed the following questions: What has the educational experience of urban Aboriginal peoples been like? For those who pursued a post-secondary education, who and what motivated them, and what are the benefits they have realized from that experience? What supports did they rely on during their post-secondary studies, and what supports would they have liked to have had? And finally, how much value do urban Aboriginal peoples place on education, and on the different forms that learning can take? The following points summarize the main findings around their educational values, aspirations and experiences:

2006 Census: Highest education level attained*

| | Total Canadian population (%) | Urban Aboriginal population (%) | Aboriginal populaton on-reserve (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| No degree | **20** | **27** | **54** |
| High school diploma | **25** | **27** | **16** |
| College | **30** | **32** | **23** |
| University | **25** | **15** | **7** |

** All results based on those aged 20 and older.*

*Source: 2006 Census*

- John Richards has noted that "education from kindergarten to grade 12 is [in part] about transmission of culture."[52] **Yet, *UAPS* results suggest that most urban Aboriginal peoples do not learn about Aboriginal people, history and culture in elementary and high school, and it is not until the post-secondary level that they recall learning about their culture in any measure.** Nor have urban Aboriginal peoples had much exposure to Aboriginal teachers, despite the fact that many were attending schools with more than a few Aboriginal students.
- **For urban Aboriginal peoples who decide to pursue a post-secondary education, the main reason is to secure a good job or launch a career.** However, when reflecting on the ways in which post-secondary education has improved their life, they are more likely to value their increased sense of empowerment over job prospects or financial stability.
- **Family is central to the success of urban Aboriginal peoples at the post-secondary level,** both because they have the most impact on the decision to pursue studies at the post-secondary level, and because they are a primary source of support during college or university.

51 John Richards and Megan Scott, *Aboriginal Education: Strengthening the Foundations*, CPRN research report, December 2009.

52 John Richards, *"Culture Matters, but... Explaining Trends among Urban Aboriginal people,"* in *Belonging, Diversity, Recognition and Shared Citizenship in Canada*, p.14.

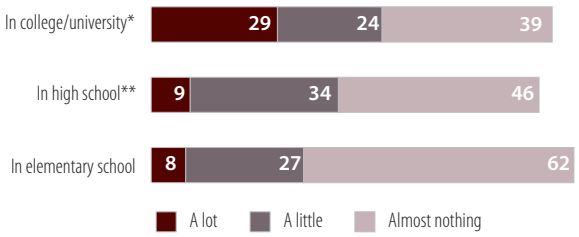
- **While urban Aboriginal peoples may have overcome many barriers to get to the post-secondary level, once they are pursuing their studies the most common obstacle is funding.** Perhaps most tellingly, those who started but did not finish their post-secondary degree are as likely as those who did finish to say they received emotional and moral support while in school, but are less likely to say they received financial support.
- **Urban Aboriginal peoples strongly believe in the importance of formal education, both for themselves and for Aboriginal people generally.** Notwithstanding this conviction, most consider education to be more than what is offered in mainstream schools, and through degree and diploma programs – and that it can also encompass Aboriginal schools and different forms of education like life-long learning or learning from Elders.
- **Urban Aboriginal peoples rely primarily on Band or Aboriginal funding for their post-secondary education, and have less access to job income, family support and personal savings than do non-Aboriginal Canadians.** They are also less comfortable with government student loans, and less likely to be saving towards their children's post-secondary education.

## 1. The educational experience

***Urban Aboriginal peoples report learning more about their culture at the post-secondary level than they do in elementary or high school. Students have very limited exposure to Aboriginal teachers and classes in Aboriginal languages at all levels, although many report attending schools with a substantial Aboriginal student population.***

Exposure to Aboriginal culture in school[t]

Would you say you have learned a lot, a little or almost nothing about Aboriginal people, history and culture in. . .?




*Subsample: Excludes those who have never pursued education at the college or university level.
**Subsample: Excludes those whose highest level of education was elementary school
[t] Toronto results excluded due to inconsistent scale used in error.
Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer the question

To what extent do urban Aboriginal peoples learn about their culture in formal school settings? Relatively few say they learned about Aboriginal people, history and culture in their elementary and high schools, although this appears to change for students who reach the post-secondary level. Only one-third (35%) of urban Aboriginal peoples say they learned a lot or a little about their culture in elementary school; most (62%) say they learned almost nothing. This improves slightly in high school, with just over four in ten (43%) who say they learned at least a little about Aboriginal culture. Among those who pursue a college or university education however, the proportion who say they learned something about Aboriginal culture increases to one in two (53%); this is due to the dramatic increase in those who say they learned *a lot* (29%) during their post-secondary experience.[53]

53 That those who pursue a college or university education learn more about Aboriginal culture during their post-secondary studies is not due to being exposed to more (or less) in previous educational environments; this group is no more likely than others to say they learned about Aboriginal culture in elementary or high school.

In addition to general lack of exposure to Aboriginal content in school curricula, few *UAPS* participants report receiving any instruction in an Aboriginal language while in school. More than eight in ten each say that none of their classes were in an Aboriginal language in elementary school (84%) or in high school (84%) (this was not asked about post-secondary education).

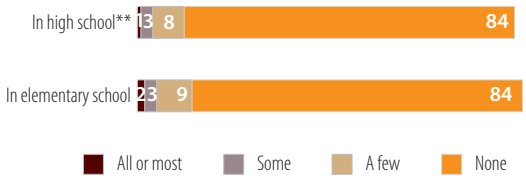
The limited exposure to Aboriginal content in school curricula is likely related, in part, to a lack of exposure to Aboriginal teachers while in school. Seven in ten (69%) urban Aboriginal peoples say that none of their teachers in elementary school were Aboriginal, and a similar proportion (67%) say the same of their high school teachers; at each level, fewer than one in ten say that all/most or some of their teachers were Aboriginal (9% in elementary school and 7% in high school). This changes slightly with post-secondary education: only half (51%) of those who attended college or university who say that none of their professors were Aboriginal, and the proportion who say that all/most or some of their professors were Aboriginal increases to 15 percent.

In contrast to their lack of exposure to Aboriginal cultural content and languages, and Aboriginal teachers, *UAPS* participants have had a substantial proportion of Aboriginal classmates at every level of their education. Half report that all/most (25%) or some (25%) of their fellow students in elementary school were Aboriginal, another three in ten (32%) say that only a few were, and only a small proportion (14%) say there were no other Aboriginal students where they went to elementary school. The proportion of Aboriginal classmates reported drops slightly in high school: only 14 percent say all/most of their classmates were Aboriginal, although another one in three (34%) say some were. By college or university, urban Aboriginal peoples are least likely to have Aboriginal classmates: 11 percent report that all/most of their classmates were Aboriginal, and only a further three in ten (28%) say some were.

In elementary and high school, the likelihood of learning about Aboriginal culture and languages, and having Aboriginal teachers and classmates, is highest among Inuit, followed by First Nations peoples, and is lowest among Métis. Accordingly, these in-school experiences are also more common during the elementary and high school years among those who were born and raised somewhere other than their current city of residence. These experiences are also more common among younger Aboriginal peoples aged 18 to 24 (those who were most recently in elementary and secondary school). The main city difference is that the proportion of Aboriginal classmates reported in elementary and high school is lower among those currently living in Toronto, Montreal, Halifax and Calgary (although it cannot be assumed that all of them attended elementary and secondary school in these cities).

### Instruction in an Aboriginal language

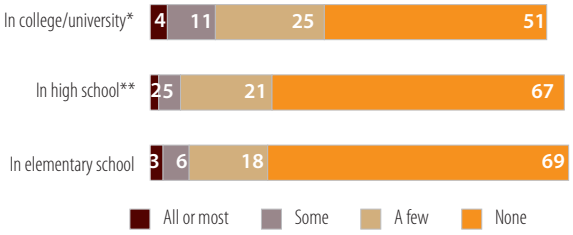
How many or your classes in [school level] were in an Aboriginal language? All or most, some, a few or none?




**Subsample: Excludes those whose highest level of education was elementary school

### Aboriginal teachers

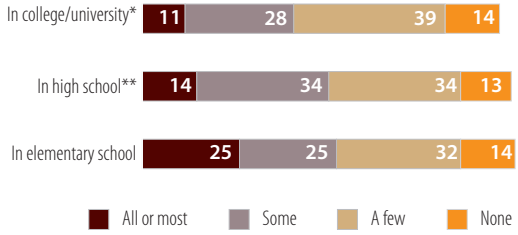
How many or your teachers in [school level] were Aboriginal? All or most, some, a few or none?




*Subsample: Excludes those who have never pursued education at the college or university level.
**Subsample: Excludes those whose highest level of education was elementary school

### Aboriginal classmates

How many students in [school level] were Aboriginal? All or most, some, a few or none?




*Subsample: Excludes those who have never pursued education at the college or university level.
**Subsample: Excludes those whose highest level of education was elementary school
Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer the question

There is little consistent variation by demographic segment in post-secondary experiences with Aboriginal culture, teachers or classmates among those who pursued this level of education. However, the likelihood to have learned a lot about Aboriginal history, to have had at least some Aboriginal teachers, and to have gone to school with at least some Aboriginal classmates is highest among those who completed a university degree.

## Educational experiences: *UAPS* comparison groups

***The survey was designed to focus on post-secondary education through the eyes of three different groups: those who have past experience with post-secondary education but are no longer in school; those who are currently studying towards a post-secondary degree; and elementary or high school students who are planning to attend college or university.***

The first group is comprised of **urban Aboriginal peoples who have gone to college or university but are no longer in school**, and represents 47 percent of the urban Aboriginal population aged 18 and older. Over half (54%) of this group have completed a college degree, and 16 percent have completed a university degree, while three in ten (30%) started but did not complete their degree. This group is comprised of similar proportions of First Nations (47%) and Métis (53%). As one might expect, this group is older, with half (51%) aged 25 to 44, and four in ten (40%) aged 45 and older, with only nine percent in the youngest age bracket (18-24). Women (55%) are more likely than men (44%) to have pursued a post-secondary degree in the past.

The second group consists of **students who are currently enrolled in college or university,** and represents 15 percent of the urban Aboriginal population 18 years and older. Nearly half (46%) of this group are working towards a college degree and an equal proportion are enrolled in an undergraduate degree (46%). A small group (8%) is working towards a post-graduate degree (e.g., medicine, Masters or Doctorate). This group is comprised of a somewhat higher proportion of First Nations (54%) than Métis (45%), and consists of more women (58%) than men (41%). Half (51%) are between the ages of 25 and 44, and most of the remainder (35%) are between 18 and 24, although there is a small group (14%) aged 45 and older.

The third group of **elementary or high school students who plan to go on to post-secondary education** is very small. Only three percent of urban Aboriginal peoples 18 years and older indicate they are currently studying at the elementary or high school level, and most of these (82%) say they plan to go to college or university. Thus, the sample size on which these questions are based is small (n=76) and limits the conclusions that can be drawn.

# 2. The decision to pursue post-secondary education

## Reason for choosing a post-secondary education

***Urban Aboriginal peoples say that choosing a post-secondary education is primarily about getting a good job or career, but also about financial and quality of life benefits, and for their own personal development. Yet, when reflecting on the outcome of their education, they say the experience made the most difference by helping to empower them.***

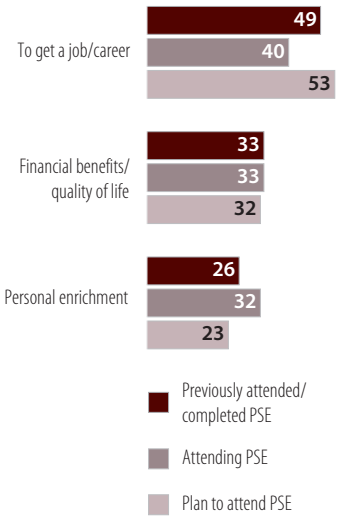
Why do urban Aboriginal peoples choose to pursue a post-secondary education? What motivates them to strive for this goal? To explore this issue, participants who are currently or were previously in college or university, or who plan to pursue a college or university degree, were asked an unprompted question about their main reasons for deciding to get a post-secondary education. No matter the stage at which a person is in their education, the responses reveal three main reasons:

- **To get a career/job.** The most common reason is that post-secondary education opens up opportunities for getting, or advancing in, a job or career. Some also mention that it can help in achieving a career or position that they *enjoy*. Career or job-related reasons were given by half (49%) of those who previously studied at the post-secondary level and a similar proportion of those who plan to do so in the future (53%), and by four in ten (40%) who are currently in college or university.
- **For the financial benefits that ensure quality of life.** Another major reason for choosing a post-secondary education is to achieve financial security, so that students can provide a good quality of life for themselves and their family. Although not as commonly mentioned as job-related reasons, financial reasons are given by one-third (33%) of those who previously attended college or university, one-third (33%) of those who are currently doing so, and one-third (32%) of those who plan to do so in the future. Notably, women are more likely than men to cite financial reasons for their decision to pursue a post-secondary education.
- **For personal enrichment.** A third reason given for pursuing a post-secondary education is personal development, whether through the enjoyment of learning, by completing their education or upgrading their skills, because education is important to them, or by proving that they can to do it (to themselves, their family and others). It is notable that, among current post-secondary students, personal enrichment (32%) is as common a reason for deciding to get their education as financial ones (33%); their current experiences in school may be influencing this perspective, and they have yet to realize the financial and life quality benefits. In contrast, those who are no longer in college or university and those who plan to go in the future are less likely to mention personal enrichment (26% and 23%, respectively), compared to financial reasons (33% and 32%, respectively).

A fourth reason for choosing a post-secondary education was expressed by a smaller number of people, which is to give back to their community and make a difference (12% of those currently in college or university, 8% of previous students and 14% of those who are planning post-secondary studies).

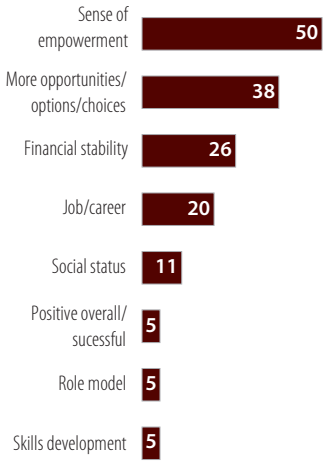
### Reasons for choosing post-secondary education

What are the main reasons why you decided to get a post-secondary education?



Impact of post-secondary education*

What kind of difference did education make in your life?




*Subsample: Those who pursued post-secondary education, and who agreed that education has significantly or somewhat improved their life

**BENEFITS OF A POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION.** It is noteworthy that when urban Aboriginal peoples who have been to college and university but are no longer in school are asked to reflect on the difference that post-secondary education made to their life, the primary benefit that comes to mind is not job/career or financial considerations. Instead, half (50%) of this group say their post-secondary education improved their life in various ways that, taken together, represent an increased sense of empowerment. This includes: making them more self-confident, open-minded, mature and responsible; giving them a sense of accomplishment; and expanding their knowledge generally or about themselves as an Aboriginal person. Many also recognize that their education opened up opportunities and gave them more options (38%). Other benefits that this group attributes to their post-secondary education include financial stability (26%), the ability to get a job or develop a career (20%), social status (11%), becoming a role model for others (5%), skills development (5%) and a generally positive outcome/ success (5%).

College and university graduates are more likely than those who started but did not complete a degree to mention the financial benefits that stem from their education. College graduates are also more apt than the other two groups to say that their education helped them get a job in the field they wanted; university graduates are more likely than others to say their education helped them become a role model.

> *"It gave me the ability to accept myself for who I am, brought a great deal of self-confidence and that ordinary people can rise above what people say about them."*
>
> *"I have a job that I love, and where I can be of service and live my Aboriginal culture every day."*
>
> *"What did it not do? It got rid of my inferiority complex, better economic position, improved social status position...I stopped tolerating abuse, and people saw my resiliency and determination. My kids and my nephews and nieces are now pursuing a better standard of living for themselves and trying to stop the cycle as well."*

## Key influences on the decision to pursue post-secondary education

***Parents/guardians and other family members were generally most supportive of the decision to pursue post-secondary studies, while role models are also a significant source of encouragement for those currently in or planning to attend college or university.***

In addition to the reasons for choosing post-secondary education noted in the previous section, who or what influences the educational choices of urban Aboriginal peoples? Those who went to, are currently in, or intend to go to college or university were asked to assess the degree to which certain individuals or groups encouraged their decision to pursue post-secondary education or training.

Regardless of one's stage of education – previously attended, currently attending, or planning to attend college or university – family is the main influence on the decision to pursue studies at the post-secondary level. More than half of both past (53%) and current students (60%) say that their **parents or guardians** significantly encouraged that decision, and about four in ten (41% and 43%, respectively) say **other family members** did the same. Among those who are planning to attend college or university, the reported influence of parents (70%) and other family members (62%) is even stronger.

After family, the greatest encouragement to attend college or university comes from a **role model.** This is particularly the case among those currently in school and those who are planning a post-secondary education, both of whom indicate that role models were as, if not more, likely to significantly encourage their decision (50% and 62%, respectively) as other family members (43% and 62%, respectively). Among past post-secondary students, four in ten (39%) report that a role model offered significant encouragement.

**Teachers** have also provided significant encouragement to urban Aboriginal students in their decision to pursue a post-secondary degree, but particularly for those who are still planning to go to college or university. Two-thirds (65%) of this group say their teachers significantly encouraged them, which is almost double the proportion of past (33%) and current (35%) students who say the same. Similar to teachers, **friends** and **guidance counsellors** are also more likely to be key influences for those planning post-secondary studies (52% and 50%, respectively) than among those who have already gone to or are currently attending university. **Representatives from a university, college or apprenticeship program** are generally considered to have provided the least encouragement among all three groups (21% of past students, 25% of current students and 33% of future students).

Key influences on decision to pursue post-secondary education

| | Previously attended or completed PSE | Attending PSE | Plan to attend PSE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Parents/guardians | **53** | **60** | **70** |
| Other family members | **41** | **43** | **62** |
| Role model that you admired | **39** | **50** | **62** |
| Teachers | **33** | **35** | **65** |
| Friends | **30** | **34** | **52** |
| Guidance counsellors at school | **24** | **25** | **50** |
| University/college representative | **21** | **25** | **33** |

Urban Aboriginal peoples who previously pursued, are currently pursuing or plan to pursue a post-secondary education generally do not feel that any of these groups actively discouraged their decision. In each case, four percent or fewer report that any one group either somewhat or significantly discouraged them from pursuing post-secondary studies. However, older urban Aboriginal peoples appear to have encountered greater challenges. A fair proportion of those aged 45 and older who are currently in school cannot say how their parents influenced them (20%) or say their parents discouraged their decision (8%) to get a post-secondary education. As well, college graduates and those who started but did not complete a post-secondary degree report greater encouragement from guidance counsellors, while those with a university degree are more likely than others to recall discouragement from this source (8%).

## Supporting factors to post-secondary education

***Family is the main source of support for urban Aboriginal peoples throughout their post-secondary education. Emotional, motivational and financial support are all identified as important in helping these students get their education.***

The *UAPS* was interested in identifying the types of supports that make the most difference to educational achievement, and how these supports help. Urban Aboriginal peoples who are currently in college or university, or who have pursued post-secondary studies in the past were asked to identify (unprompted) up to three people or things that really made a difference in helping them get their education, and the ways in which that person/thing helped them.

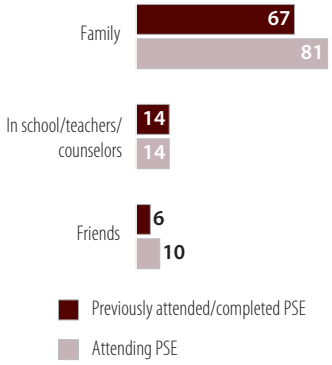
**WHO OR WHAT MADE A DIFFERENCE.** Not only does family play an important role in encouraging the decision to pursue education beyond high school, but it is also vital support for urban Aboriginal peoples while they are pursuing their post-secondary studies. Support from family is most frequently mentioned as having made a difference helping urban Aboriginal peoples get their education, by many of those currently in college or university (81%), as well as those who attended in the past (67%). This support has come from a variety of family members, including mothers/fathers/parents, spouses or partners, children and grandchildren, grandparents, siblings and other family members.

The next most common source of support, albeit to a much lesser degree, has been that received in school, which includes primarily teachers or professors, but also school counselors, Aboriginal student services or centres, and classmates. Equal proportions of those currently studying towards a post-secondary degree (14%) and those who have done so in the past (14%) say the support they received from school-related sources really made a difference.

Friends are identified by small groups as another major source of support for students (10% of those in school and 6% of those previously in school). A wide variety of other supporting factors are mentioned, although none by more than 10 percent of survey participants, including employers and work colleagues, funding sources (i.e., loans, scholarships, bursaries), their community, their Band, the Métis Nation, their own personal determination, and mentors or role models.

### Main sources of support

Was there anything or anyone that really made a difference in helping you get your education?




### Is there a relationship between supports received and the level of education achieved?

Urban Aboriginal people with a university degree are more likely than those with a college degree or those who started but did not complete a post-secondary degree to say their parents and their professors really made a difference in helping them get an education.

Past students are equally likely to say they received emotional and motivational support no matter the level of education they ultimately achieved. However, financial assistance is more likely to be mentioned by those who completed a college or university degree than by those who began but did not complete a degree, which is consistent with the existing body of research that identifies lack of funding as a substantial barrier to post-secondary education for Aboriginal people.

The results suggest there is a relationship between receiving support and level of education achieved. Those who have completed a university degree are more likely than those with a college degree or those who started but never completed their post-secondary degree to mention the support they received both from family (particularly their parents) and from school-based sources (e.g. professors); the latter group is least likely to identify anything or anyone who made a difference in this respect.

**HOW THIS MADE A DIFFERENCE.** From these sources, urban Aboriginal peoples pursuing post-secondary education have received three main types of support: emotional, motivational and financial.

Two-thirds of those currently in school (65%), and those who previously attended college or university (64%) acknowledge the emotional and moral support they received while pursuing their studies. This includes love, having someone always there for advice or to talk to, someone who believed in them or gave them confidence, and social support from friends and peers.

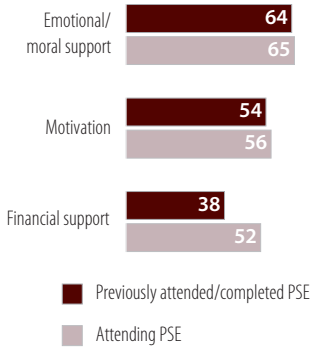
Motivational support is almost as widely mentioned as a way urban Aboriginal peoples received help in getting their education (56% of those in school and 54% of those previously in school). This refers to those who encourage them to succeed and achieve their dreams, and those who inspire them to do so, including role models and mentors.

Half (52%) of urban Aboriginal peoples currently in college or university also acknowledge the financial support they have received, although this proportion is not as high among those who are no longer in school (38%). For this latter group, memory may contribute to the emphasis on emotional and motivational support over financial assistance; the greater role that funding played for college (40%) and university (35%) graduates, compared to those who started but did not complete a degree (23%), underlines the importance of financial support in achieving a post-secondary education.

Other types of support include tangible assistance (e.g., child care, housing, time off from work, transportation), general guidance and counseling, and academic support (e.g., help with homework, exams), although none of these other supports are mentioned by more than two in ten survey participants.

Main types of support

How did that person/it help you?



## 3. Obstacles to achieving educational goals and supports desired

***Cost is the main obstacle that urban Aboriginal peoples say they have to overcome in order to complete a post-secondary degree. Consequently, financial support is what they believe would most help them to achieve their educational goals.***

Aside from any support they may have received, the survey was also designed to identify the obstacles that urban Aboriginal peoples face while pursuing a post-secondary education, and the types of supports they would like to have.

**OBSTACLES.** Financial issues are by far the most common obstacle that urban Aboriginal peoples say they have to overcome in order to complete their post-secondary degree. Almost half (45%) of those currently in college or university, and four in ten (39%) of those who attended in the past, identify the cost of their education, poverty or the cost of living as barriers to post-secondary education. Financial issues are also the barrier most often mentioned by those who are planning to attend college or university (36%), although not quite to the same extent as current or past students. This may be because they already have funding for their post-secondary education or believe that they can get it, or because they have not yet thought about what funding will be necessary.

A wide range of other barriers are identified. These include: managing the balance between work, school and family life (particularly being a parent and raising a family); personal issues such as health or mental health, issues with family or one's partner, or overcoming addictions; academic-related concerns such as time management, study habits, keeping grades up, stress, language barriers and learning disabilities; lack of support or isolation; transportation or housing issues; racism or discrimination; and maintaining their commitment or motivation. In general, the identified barriers are similar for those currently in school and for those who are thinking back or ahead to their experience. The exception is academic-related concerns, which are more frequently mentioned by those currently in the midst of their post-secondary degree (31%, compared to 13% of those who have previously attended or completed post-secondary education, and 12% of those who plan to in the future).

Only a minority say they have or had no barriers to overcome, or could not think of any, ranging from fewer than two in ten (16%) current post-secondary students to one-quarter (26%) of those who have previously attended college or university.

**SUPPORTS DESIRED.** Given the extent to which urban Aboriginal peoples say that cost is an obstacle in their pursuit of a post-secondary education, it is not surprising that they also consider this the main area in which they would like more support. Almost half (44%) of urban Aboriginal peoples who are currently attending college or university say they would like to have more financial support in the form of bursaries, scholarships, loans, grants or lower tuition; one-third (33%) of those who previously studied towards a post-secondary degree and three in ten (31%) of those who plan to do so say the same.

Past, current and future post-secondary students identify a wide variety of other types of supports they would consider helpful, although none are mentioned as often as financial assistance. Useful types of support include Aboriginal resources (teachers, counsellors, courses, programs, cultural centres, student housing and more Aboriginal presence generally); daycare, housing or transportation; as well as more of the support provided by family and friends, counselors, role models, tutors, and one's Band or home community.

The results of these two questions among those who started but never completed a post-secondary degree provides little additional insight into obstacles they faced and supports they needed (they are less likely than others to be able to identify any obstacles or desired supports). However, when asked separately, if there was a particular reason why they did not complete these studies, the most common reasons are those related to the cost of a post-secondary education. Many in this group say they did not finish their degree due to a lack of funds (19%) or because they had a job (14%). A wide variety of personal reasons are also given by one-quarter (26%) of those not finishing their post-secondary degree, including pregnancy and needing to care for children, personal illness or illness/death of friends and family, and addiction or substance abuse problems.

Main obstacles to overcome while pursuing post-secondary degree – top mentions

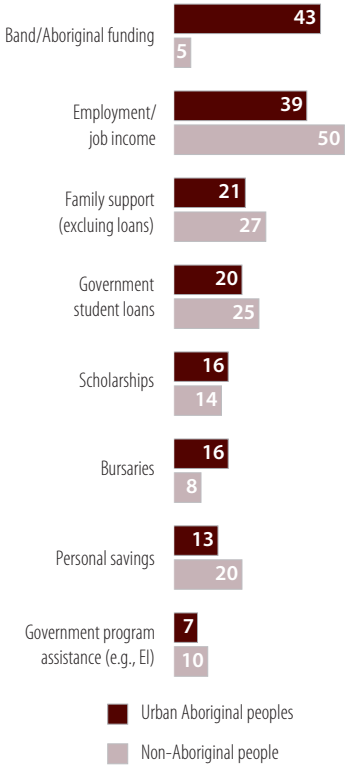
| | Previously attended or completed PSE | Attending PSE | Plan to attend PSE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cost of education/poverty/cost of living | 39 | 45 | 36 |
| Balancing work/school/family/being a parent | 20 | 16 | 14 |
| Personal issues (e.g., health, mental, family) | 13 | 12 | 16 |
| Academic requirements (e.g., time management, stress) | 13 | 31 | 12 |
| Lack of support/isolation/leaving home | 7 | 4 | 2 |
| Transportation/housing | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| Racism/discrimination | 6 | 4 | – |
| Commitment/dedication/motivation | 3 | 10 | 8 |

Support that would have liked, to make it easier to achieve educational goals – top mentions

| | Previously attended or completed PSE | Attending PSE | Plan to attend PSE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Financial support/bursaries/scholarships/loans | 33 | 44 | 31 |
| Aboriginal resources | 11 | 13 | 6 |
| Daycare/housing/transportation | 8 | 11 | 13 |
| Advisor/support/encouragement (general) | 6 | 3 | 2 |
| Family/friends/home visits | 7 | 5 | 3 |
| Guidance/counselling | 6 | 2 | 9 |
| Role models/mentors | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Better service/resources/information | 5 | 4 | 6 |
| Band/community/social support | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| A tutor | 3 | 6 | 10 |
| None/nothing | 20 | 18 | 34 |
| dk/na | 14 | 8 | 7 |

Total funding sources for post-secondary education (top mentions)*

What is the primary source of funding for your current post-secondary education or training? Do you have any other sources of funding?




*Subsample: Those currently enrolled in college or university.

# 4. Paying for post-secondary education

***Urban Aboriginal students rely primarily on Band or Aboriginal funding for their post-secondary education, and have less access to job income, family support and personal savings than non-Aboriginal Canadians. They are also less comfortable with government student loans, and less likely to be saving for their children's post-secondary education.***

The *UAPS* identifies some of the potential obstacles that urban Aboriginal peoples face in funding their post-secondary education. First, urban Aboriginal peoples rely on a different mix of funding sources than do non-Aboriginal Canadians. Band or Aboriginal funding (43%) is the primary source of funding for urban Aboriginal students who are currently enrolled in college or university, followed by employment income (39%). Yet they are much less likely than their non-Aboriginal counterparts to have access to employment income (50%), as well as family support and personal savings.[54] This disparity is also evident among those who have previously attended or completed their post-secondary education. For example, one-third (33%) of non-Aboriginal Canadians in this group had access to personal savings to fund their post-secondary education, compared to only one in ten (9%) urban Aboriginal peoples.

Current First Nations students are by far the most likely to be funding their post-secondary education with Band or Aboriginal funding (69% vs. 12% for Métis); the sources that Métis students report using to pay for their education are very similar to those used by non-Aboriginal students.

A second potential obstacle is that urban Aboriginal peoples are less comfortable using government student loans to finance post-secondary education than are non-Aboriginal Canadians. When considering an individual (themselves or someone they know) who wanted to go to college or university but didn't have sufficient money to pay for it, a majority (57%) of urban Aboriginal peoples say it would be a good idea to borrow the money through a government student loan program. By comparison, one-quarter (28%) say it would be a bad idea and 14 percent say it depends. This degree of comfort with government student loans is much lower than among non-Aboriginal Canadians (87% say such loans would be a good idea).

Third, urban Aboriginal peoples are less than half as likely as non-Aboriginal Canadians to be saving for their children's post-secondary education. Only one-third (34%) of urban Aboriginal peoples with children under 18 say they are currently saving money to pay for their children's education after high school, compared to three-quarters (75%) of non-Aboriginal Canadians with children in the same age group. Although the proportion who are saving for this purpose grows to six in ten (60%) urban Aboriginal peoples with household incomes of $80,000 or more, this is still well below the level reported by non-Aboriginal Canadians in the same income bracket (86%).

54 It is likely that the amount of funding available through sources such as job income, family support and personal savings is also lower for urban Aboriginal peoples than for non-Aboriginal Canadians, although this question was not asked in the survey.

## The importance of education and alternative forms of learning

***Urban Aboriginal peoples place tremendous value on the role of education in their own lives and in the lives of Aboriginal people generally.***

Among urban Aboriginal peoples who have taken some or completed a college or university education, the large majority say it significantly (62%) or somewhat (19%) improved their life, compared to only eight percent who said it made no difference. This sense of conviction increases with level of education: while less than half (43%) of those who did not complete their college or university degree say this experience nonetheless significantly improved their life, this grows to two-thirds (67%) of college graduates and just over eight in ten (83%) university graduates. Women (67%) are also more likely than men (56%) to say that post-secondary education made a significant contribution to their life.

Moreover, almost nine in ten (86%) urban Aboriginal peoples say that formal education is very important to improving the lives of Aboriginal people, compared to 12 percent who say it is somewhat important and only one percent who say it is not so important. The belief that education is very important is strongest among First Nations peoples (88%) and Métis (85%), compared to Inuit (76%), among those aged 45 and older (91% very important), and among those with a high school (89%) or college (90%) degree.

***Urban Aboriginal peoples value different forms of learning, and most think of education as being more than what is offered in mainstream schools and through diploma/degree programs.***

Urban Aboriginal peoples have mixed views about whether it is better to attend mainstream or Aboriginal schools, but most believe that it should not be a choice between the two. One-quarter (27%) say it is preferable to attend mainstream schools to learn the skills and knowledge required by contemporary society, while slightly fewer (21%) believe it is preferable to attend Aboriginal schools that reflect Aboriginal culture, language and traditions. However, half (49%) say that both are equally important or that it depends on various things.

There are similarly mixed opinions about the relative benefits of a degree-based education versus different forms of learning. One in five (18%) say it is most important to complete a degree or diploma through an educational institution, while one-quarter (27%) say learning opportunities such as life experiences, continuing education, and learning from elders or mentors, are as important as mainstream schooling. Yet again, a slight majority (53%) decline to choose between the two, saying that both are equally important or that it depends on various things.

Preference for mainstream schools and a degree-based education are both higher among those aged 18 to 24. Preference for attending a mainstream school tends to be higher among those with household incomes of $80,000 or more, and those who identify their community as mostly or exclusively non-Aboriginal. In turn, preference for Aboriginal schools and forms of learning other than degree/diploma programs are higher among those aged 45 and older, and those who are more oriented towards an Aboriginal community. Preference for other forms of learning is also stronger among Inuit (38%) than First Nations (28%) and Métis (26%).

# XI. National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation Scholar Survey

## Overview

The *UAPS* also includes a pilot survey of National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF) scholars.

The NAAF study aims to identify and measure experiences and success in the lives of NAAF scholars who have pursued, or are pursuing, post-secondary education.

The results of the NAAF pilot survey are based on an on-line survey with a sample of 182 current and past NAAF scholarship recipients (see Chapter I for a description of the survey methodology).

Where appropriate and when subsample sizes permit, key differences between First Nations and Métis NAAF scholars are highlighted, as are differences between demographic subgroups.

The following points summarize the main findings around NAAF scholars' educational experiences:

- **The NAAF scholarship played a key role in scholars' decision to pursue post-secondary education.** Half of scholars say it had a substantial influence, second only to the level of influence parents are reported to have had in the decision.
- **Funding is the major obstacle that NAAF scholars say they must overcome to complete their post-secondary education.** And less than half of NAAF scholars currently in school believe they have enough financial support to get them all the way through their education.

## About the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation

The National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF) is a nationally registered, non-profit organization dedicated to raising funds to deliver programs that provide the tools necessary for Aboriginal peoples, especially youth, to achieve brighter futures.

The NAAF is the largest non-governmental funding body for First Nations, Inuit and Métis post-secondary students across Canada. Bursary and scholarship awards are provided to First Nations, Inuit and Métis students across a diverse range of disciplines.

Since 1985, the Foundation through its Education Program has awarded more than $37 million in scholarships and bursaries to more than 9,800 First Nations, Inuit and Métis students nationwide.

The NAAF's key initiatives include: The National Aboriginal Achievement Awards (NAAA), a national annual broadcast celebrating 14 achievers in a multitude of career areas, including a special youth award and an award for lifetime achievement; Taking Pulse joins the NAAF with industry to present career options in specific growth sectors through a series of short documentaries and supporting curriculum materials with the aim of recruiting First Nations, Inuit & Métis youth; and Blueprint for the Future (BFF) a series of one-day career fairs that motivate and inspire First Nations, Inuit and Métis high school students with valuable resources and information on career opportunities. Over 30,000 students have attended these exciting youth-oriented events to date nationwide.

*Source: NAAF; National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, Annual Report, 2007-2008.*

- **The large majority of scholars say they would have found a way to pursue their post-secondary education even without the NAAF scholarship.** This speaks to the tenacity of these students rather than any lack of value of the scholarship, given the emphasis these scholars place on funding. In fact, the NAAF scholarship is only one of a mix of sources NAAF scholars have used/are using to fund their education, including employment income, government student loans, and (in the case of First Nations scholars) Band or other Aboriginal funding.
- **Mentors and/or role models have played an important role in the success of NAAF scholars.** After family, the greatest encouragement NAAF scholars received to pursue post-secondary studies came from a role model. There is also widespread belief among those who have or had a mentor, particularly for men, that this person made a significant contribution to their education. Finally, scholars recognize the value of role models for the next generation, with a large majority believing they have a big impact on Aboriginal youth due to their post-secondary education experience.
- **Almost half of scholars believe the NAAF scholarship had a noticeable effect on their identity as an Aboriginal person.** This effect is attributed to having greater pride in being Aboriginal, being recognized as an Aboriginal student, demonstrating the success of Aboriginal students, or a resulting desire to be more involved in the Aboriginal community.

## 1. NAAF scholars' educational attainment

Among the NAAF scholars who are currently completing their post-secondary education (68% of the scholars surveyed), some six in ten are completing Bachelor/undergraduate degrees or teacher's college (51%) or are completing degrees in Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine or Optometry (8%). Three in ten are completing post-graduate degrees (Masters – 20%; Doctorate – 8%). The remainder are in community college, CEGEP or nursing school (10%); or trades/technical college, vocational school or business school (2%).

The profile of educational attainment among NAAF scholars who have completed their education (32% of the scholars surveyed) is fairly similar to that of NAAF scholars currently in school. Most completed undergraduate or medical degrees (39%), or post-graduate degrees (34%), while two in ten completed their technical, vocational or CEGEP diploma.

Highest level of education

| | In school | Completed school |
|---|---|---|
| Trade/tech/vocational/business college | **2** | **10** |
| Community college/CEGEP/nursing school | **10** | **8** |
| Bachelor's degree/teachers college | **51** | **31** |
| Degree in medicine/dentistry/ veterinary science/optometry | **8** | **8** |
| Master's degree | **20** | **29** |
| Doctorate | **8** | **5** |
| Other | **2** | **8** |

# 2. The educational experience

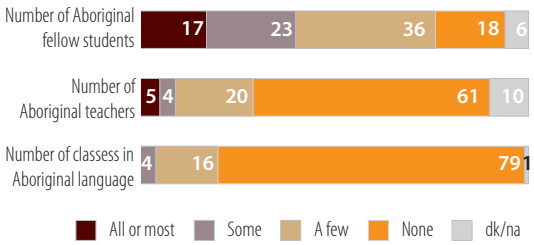
What is the Aboriginal educational experience of NAAF scholars? As they progressed through the education system, from elementary to high school and thence to college or university, how did their educational experience reflect their Aboriginal heritage? To provide some answers to these questions, the NAAF scholar survey assessed the extent to which the scholars' teachers and fellow students were Aboriginal, as well as the number of classes held in Aboriginal languages, and the amount learned about Aboriginal people, history and culture.

## The elementary school experience

***At the elementary level, NAAF scholars had many Aboriginal classmates, but few Aboriginal instructors. Very few classes were held in Aboriginal languages, and little was learned about Aboriginal people, history and culture.***

### Aboriginal educational experience – elementary school

Please indicate how many of your fellow students/teachers were Aboriginal in elementary school/how many of your classes were in an Aboriginal language.

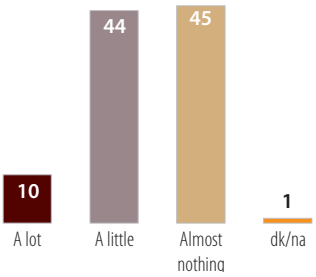



In elementary school, NAAF scholars were surrounded with a mix of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal classmates. Four in ten report that some (23%) or all/most (17%) of their fellow students were Aboriginal, while just over half report that only a few (36%) or none (18%) of their fellow students were Aboriginal. First Nations scholars are much more likely to report that all/most of their fellow students in elementary school were Aboriginal (24%) than are Métis scholars (4%).

Although most NAAF scholars had at least some Aboriginal classmates in elementary school, Aboriginal *teachers* are another story. Six in ten NAAF scholars (61%) report that *none* of their elementary school teachers were Aboriginal, while only one in ten report that some (4%) or all/most (5%) were Aboriginal. There is little difference between First Nations and Métis scholars in terms of number of Aboriginal teachers.

### Amount learned about Aboriginal heritage – elementary school

Please indicate if you have learned a lot, a little, or almost nothing about Aboriginal people, history and culture at each stage of your education.




With the small number of Aboriginal elementary school teachers, it is no surprise to learn that NAAF scholars had very few classes taught in Aboriginal languages in elementary school. Eight in ten (79%) report that *no* elementary school classes were taught in an Aboriginal language, while only one in twenty (4%) report that some were, and none report that all or most were. Métis NAAF scholars are particularly likely to report that no classes were taught in Aboriginal languages at this level (94%).

Regardless of the number of Aboriginal teachers and students, and the degree to which classes were conducted in Aboriginal languages, it is still possible for Aboriginal students to learn about the history and culture of the Aboriginal peoples. However, the elementary school system as recalled by NAAF scholars did not appear to do a very good job of teaching Aboriginal students about their heritage. While a majority learned at least *something* about Aboriginal people, history and culture, only one in ten (10%) learned a lot. This is true of both First Nations and Métis students.

## The high school experience

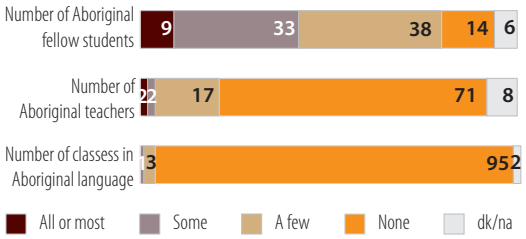
***NAAF scholars were even less likely to have Aboriginal instructors or classes held in Aboriginal languages in high school than in elementary school, and even less was learned about Aboriginal people, history and culture.***

NAAF scholars are slightly less likely to report that some (33%) or all/most (9%) of their classmates were Aboriginal in high school, compared to elementary school. As was the case for elementary school, First Nations scholars are more likely to report that they had Aboriginal classmates: half of First Nations scholars (49%) report at least some Aboriginal fellow students, compared to one-third (34%) among Métis scholars, and 12 percent of First Nations scholars report that all/most of their fellow high school students were Aboriginal, compared to four percent of Métis scholars.

Aboriginal teachers were in even shorter supply when NAAF scholars were in high school than when they were elementary students. Seven in ten (71%) report that *none* of their high school teachers were Aboriginal, while only one in twenty report that that some (2%) or all/most (2%) were Aboriginal. As was the case in elementary school, there is no difference between First Nations and Métis scholars in terms of the number of Aboriginal teachers.

### Aboriginal educational experience – high school

Please indicate how many of your fellow students/teachers were Aboriginal in high school/how many of your classes were in an Aboriginal language.



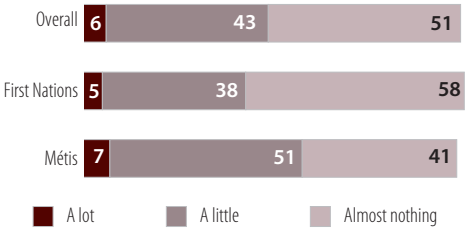

By the time NAAF scholars reached high school, classes taught in Aboriginal languages were almost non-existent. Virtually all scholars (95%) report than *no* high school classes were taught in an Aboriginal language.

The high school system (as recalled by NAAF scholars) did an even poorer job of teaching Aboriginal students about Aboriginal history and culture than did the elementary school system. Only about half of NAAF scholars learned *anything* about Aboriginal people, history and culture and only one in twenty (6%) learned a lot. Among First Nations scholars, things were even worse, with six in ten (58%) learning almost nothing about Aboriginal people, history and culture in high school.

### Amount learned about Aboriginal heritage – high school

Please indicate if you have learned a lot, a little, or almost nothing about Aboriginal people, history and culture at each stage of your education.

By identity

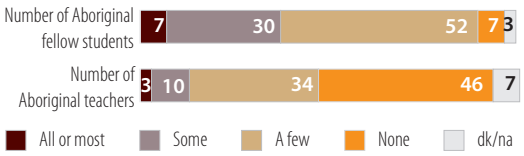


## The post-secondary experience

***NAAF scholars are most likely to report Aboriginal classmates and teachers at the post-secondary level, and are most likely to report learning about Aboriginal people, history and culture at that level.***

### Aboriginal educational experience – college/university

Please indicate how many of your fellow students/teachers were Aboriginal in college/university.



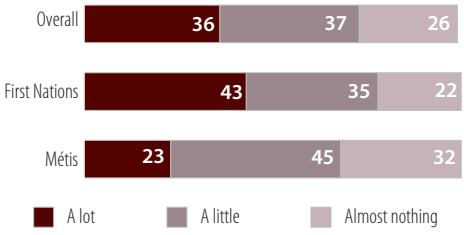

NAAF scholars are more likely to report having Aboriginal fellow students at college or university than at any other level. Although fewer than four in ten report that some (30%) or all/most (7%) of their fellow students were Aboriginal, only about one in five (7%) report that *none* were. As was the case for both the elementary and secondary levels, First Nations scholars are more likely to report that they had Aboriginal classmates in college or university; in fact, one in ten First Nations scholars (12%) report all or most of their fellow students were Aboriginal, compared with only one percent of Métis scholars.

Aboriginal instructors are also slightly more common at the post-secondary level than at the elementary or secondary levels. Just under 15 percent of NAAF scholars report that some (10%) or all/most (3%) of their instructors in college or university were Aboriginal, while less than half (46%) report having no Aboriginal instructors at all. First Nations NAAF scholars are particularly likely to report having Aboriginal instructors, with one in five reporting that some (15%) or all/most (4%) were Aboriginal, compared to only one in twenty Métis scholars (3% – some; 3% – all/most).

### Amount learned about Aboriginal heritage – college/university

Please indicate if you have learned a lot, a little, or almost nothing about Aboriginal people, history and culture at each stage of your education.

By identity




In contrast to the relatively small increases in the number of Aboriginal classmates and instructors at the post-secondary level, relative to lower levels, there is a dramatic improvement in instruction on Aboriginal history and culture. More than one-third (36%) of scholars report learning *a lot* about Aboriginal history and culture in university or college. First Nations scholars are particularly likely to report learning a lot about Aboriginal people, history and culture at this level (43%). This is in contrast to high school, where First Nations scholars were *less* likely than Métis to report having learned about their culture and heritage.

# 3. The decision to pursue post-secondary education

## Reasons for pursuing post-secondary education

***NAAF scholars cite a variety of reasons for pursuing post-secondary education, chief among them being the desire for a successful career (both materially and in terms of personal fulfillment) and the desire to give back to their community.***

Why did NAAF scholars decide to pursue a post-secondary education? The survey posed this question in an unprompted manner (without response options offered). For those still completing their education, the benefits of an education in terms of job/career opportunities are uppermost in their minds. Three in ten (28%) mention job opportunities/advancement/career change. The benefits of a job or career in terms of material success and life satisfaction are both mentioned: one-quarter (24%) are pursuing their post-secondary education in order to pursue a career path or work for something they enjoy, while 16 percent cite reasons related to having a better future or being able to buy things, travel or meet people. An equal proportion (16%) specifically mention being able to support or provide for their families. Similar proportions want to give back to their community or help make a difference (15%), or simply enjoy learning or want to learn something new (15%).

Those who have completed their post-secondary education cite reasons similar to those still in school, with job opportunities most commonly mentioned (25%). However, the sheer enjoyment of learning (24%) is mentioned relatively more often among this group, ahead of pursuing an enjoyable career (22%) and giving back to the community (19%).

## Key influences on the decision to pursue post-secondary education

Parents/guardians and other family members had a major impact on NAAF scholars' decision to pursue post-secondary education.

In addition to the factors noted in the previous section, which individuals or groups most influenced NAAF scholars' decision to pursue post-secondary education? The NAAF scholar survey assessed the contribution of six individuals or groups (as well as the NAAF scholarship itself) to the scholar's decision to pursue post-secondary education or training.

Family is clearly a key influence in the NAAF scholar's decision to pursue studies beyond the high school level, particularly **parents/guardians.** More than eight in ten NAAF scholars (84%) report that their parents/guardians significantly (73%) or somewhat (11%) encouraged that decision, while some three-quarters say that **other members of their family** significantly (49%) or somewhat (27%) encouraged them. (The influence of family can also be seen in the fact that most NAAF scholars were preceded into post-secondary studies by other members of their family, with only one-third – 36% – reporting that they are the first in their family to pursue a post-secondary education.)

It is interesting to note that older NAAF scholars (35 and older) are much *less* likely to report that parents/guardians provided significant encouragement to them (47%) and are correspondingly *more* likely to indicate that they are the first in their family to pursue post-secondary studies (53%).

Next to family, the greatest encouragement for NAAF scholars to extend their education beyond high school was provided by **a role model that they admired** – about two-thirds of NAAF scholars report a role model significantly (46%) or somewhat (21%) encouraged them. It is not surprising to note that those who have a mentor are much more likely to report that a role model significantly encouraged their decision (70%) than are those who do not have a mentor (20%). **Teachers** also provided a great deal of encouragement in this decision, with seven in ten scholars reporting that teachers significantly (41%) or somewhat (29%) encouraged them. Younger NAAF scholars (60% among those under 25 years of age), and those whose most recent NAAF scholarship was in 2008 or 2009 (58%) are particularly likely to report that their teachers significantly encouraged them.

**Friends** also provided encouragement to NAAF scholars in their quest to advance their education; about one-third (36%) of NAAF scholars report that friends significantly encouraged them, while an equal proportion (37%) indicate that their friends somewhat encouraged them.

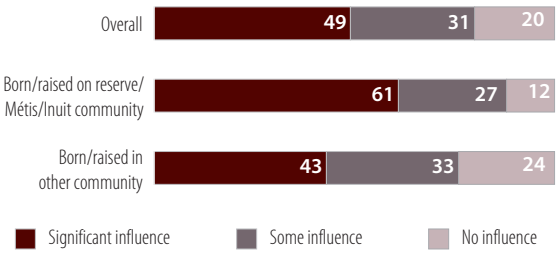
The other two groups assessed provided a generally lower level of encouragement. Half of NAAF scholars report that **guidance counsellors at school** significantly (26%) or somewhat (25%) encouraged them in their decision to pursue post-secondary education, while over four in ten report that **a representative from a university, college or apprenticeship program** significantly (21%) or somewhat (24%) encouraged them.

It is also noteworthy that NAAF scholars generally did not feel that any of these groups actively *discouraged* them from pursuing post-secondary studies. In no case did even five percent report that any group discouraged them from pursuing post-secondary studies.

***The NAAF scholarship itself was a key influence on scholars' decision to pursue post-secondary education.***

Influence of NAAF scholarship on decision to pursue post-secondary education

To what extent did receiving a NAAF scholarship influence your decision to pursue post-secondary education?




In addition to assessing the impact these individuals and groups had on NAAF scholars' decision to continue their education beyond high school, the survey also assessed the impact of having received the NAAF scholarship itself. Eight in ten NAAF scholars credit the scholarship with some level of influence on their decision, with half (49%) feeling it had a significant influence. This level of influence is second only to that of parents/guardians among the groups assessed on the survey. Those who were born and raised on a First Nations reserve, or in a Métis or Inuit community (of whom the large majority are First Nations peoples) are particularly likely to feel that the NAAF scholarship had a significant influence on their decision (61%).

However, despite the high level of importance scholars attribute to the NAAF scholarship as an influence in the post-secondary decision, the large majority do *not* feel that pursuing a post-secondary education would have been impossible without it. Some nine in ten scholars (88%) believe they would have found a way to pursue their post-secondary education even without the NAAF scholarship. It is important to note that the NAAF encourages students to apply to other sources for funding as there are a limited amount of funds available compared to the amount that students request.

## The role of the mentor

***Half of NAAF scholars have a mentor and most (particularly men) feel that their mentor has made a significant contribution to their ability to achieve their educational goals.***

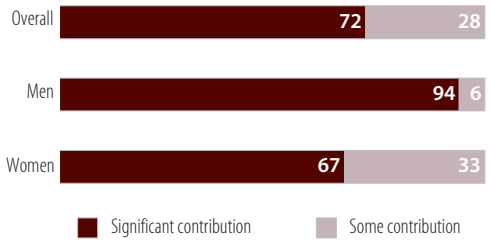
The survey asked NAAF scholars whether or not they have a mentor (which was defined as someone "who acts as a trusted guide or advisor about your education and other important matters in your life"). Overall, half of the NAAF scholars surveyed indicate they have a mentor (or had one when they were in school, for those who have completed their education). Those currently in school are more likely to have a mentor (55%) than are those who have completed their education (41%). Also, those completing (or who have completed) post-graduate studies are more likely to have a mentor (59%) than are those at lower education levels (45%).

What is the value of a mentor? Does having one have any real impact? Those NAAF scholars who have (or had) a mentor were asked to what extent the mentor contributed to their ability to achieve their educational goals. All who have (or had) a mentor feel that mentor made at least some contribution to their ability to achieve their goals (educationally speaking), with seven in ten (72%) feeling the mentor's contribution was *significant*. Mentors appear to be particularly valuable to men, as virtually all male NAAF scholars who have (or had) a mentor (94%) believe that individual made a significant contribution to their ability to achieve their educational goals.

The value of a mentor, so clear among those NAAF scholars who have one, is not nearly as apparent to those who do not. Those NAAF scholars who do not (or did not) have a mentor were asked to what extent they believe a mentor *would contribute* (or *would have contributed*) to their ability to achieve their educational goals. Although all see some value in a mentor, only one-third (33%) believe a mentor would make (or would have made) a *significant* contribution.

### Contribution of mentor to achievement of educational goals*

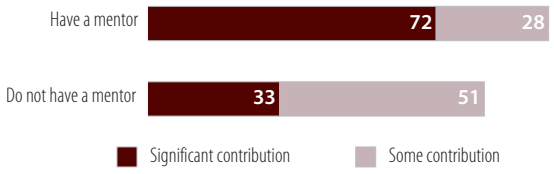
To what extent do you think your mentor/guide/advisor has contributed to your ability to achieve your educational goals?




*Subsample: Those who have/did have a mentor

### Perceived contribution of mentor to achievement of educational goals*

To what extent do you think a mentor/guide/advisor would contribute to your ability to achieve your educational goals?




*Subsample: Those who do not/did not have a mentor

## Obstacles to completing post-secondary education

***NAAF scholars overwhelmingly cite financial obstacles as the main obstacle that must be overcome to complete their post-secondary education. Other obstacles include balancing work, life and school, and having to leave home.***

What do NAAF scholars see as the main obstacles that must be overcome in order to realize the dream of completing a post-secondary education? The NAAF scholar survey posed this question to scholars in an unprompted manner (without response options offered). For those still completing their education, the primary obstacle is financial: six in ten (62%) mention obstacles related to finances, poverty and the cost of living. A number of other obstacles are mentioned, but only four are mentioned by one in ten or more NAAF scholars who are still in school: balancing work, family life and school (16%), the level of commitment/dedication required (13%), having to leave home and move to the city (11%), and having to re-orient study habits and improving work ethic (8%).

Those NAAF scholars who have completed their education cite similar obstacles, with financial obstacles by far the most commonly mentioned (69%). However, these scholars mention some obstacles more frequently than those still in school. These include being a parent/finding daycare (14%), family/partner issues (14%) and racism (10%).

# 4. Financing post-secondary education

## Sources of funding for post-secondary education

***Funding for NAAF scholars' post-secondary education comes from a variety of sources, key among them are employment income, government student loans, and (in the case of First Nations scholars) Band or Aboriginal funding. The NAAF scholarship is not generally seen as a primary source of funding.***

Once the decision to continue education beyond high school has been made, one of the first and most important challenges students must meet is funding their post-secondary education. How did NAAF scholars meet the funding challenge? The NAAF scholar survey asked scholars to name (unprompted, without providing response options) all their sources of funding for their post-secondary education, as well as the *primary* source.

### Sources of post-secondary funding

| | Total | First Nations | Métis |
|---|---|---|---|
| NAAF scholarship | **77** | **79** | **75** |
| Employment/job income | **51** | **40** | **65** |
| Band or Aboriginal funding | **48** | **72** | **13** |
| Bursaries | **47** | **41** | **58** |
| Scholarships (other than NAAF) | **43** | **38** | **48** |
| Government student loans | **41** | **32** | **52** |
| Personal savings | **35** | **33** | **36** |
| Family support | **26** | **18** | **35** |
| Bank/credit union loan | **25** | **18** | **35** |
| Personal loans | **9** | **6** | **14** |
| Government program assistance | **2** | **2** | **3** |
| RESP/other educational savings plan | **2** | **1** | **1** |
| Social/income assistance | **2** | **3** | **–** |
| Other | **4** | **4** | **4** |

NAAF scholars make use of a variety of sources of funding to finance their post-secondary education. Not surprisingly, the NAAF scholarship itself is mentioned most frequently (77% mention it). Of course, this means that some one-quarter of NAAF scholars do *not* think of the NAAF scholarship they received as a source of post-secondary education funding (or may have assumed this was obvious and did not need to be re-stated). Indeed, only one in ten (9%) name the NAAF scholarship as their *primary* funding source. This is not surprising since NAAF encourages students to explore all other possible sources of funding to complement any award from NAAF as few applicants receive the full amount of their requests (due to the limited amount of funds available).

Other key sources of funding include employment income (mentioned by 51%, but 65% of Métis scholars), Band or Aboriginal funding (mentioned by 48%, but 72% among First Nations scholars), bursaries (47%), scholarships other than NAAF (43%) and government student loans (41%). In addition, about one-third of NAAF scholars (35%) made use of personal savings, while some one-quarter relied in part on support from families (26%), or loans from a bank or credit union (25%).

It is interesting to note that Métis NAAF scholars are more likely than are First Nations scholars to mention most of the sources named (exceptions are the NAAF scholarship itself, Band or Aboriginal funding, and personal savings). Also of note is the fact that younger scholars are much more likely to mention employment income (74% among those under 25) than are older scholars (33% among those 35 and older).

Three main funding sources are cited as the *primary* source of post-secondary education funding: Band or Aboriginal funding (31%, but 54% among First Nations scholars), government student loans (22%, but 30% among Métis scholars) and employment income (12%, but 22% among Métis scholars).

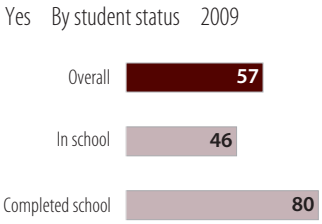
## Adequacy of funding for post-secondary education

***Only a minority of NAAF scholars currently in school believe they have adequate financial support to complete their post-secondary education. Those who have completed their education are much more likely to report having had enough financial support.***

As noted earlier, NAAF scholars report a variety of sources of funding for their post-secondary education. Are these sources adequate to the task? The survey asked NAAF scholars whether or not they believe they have (or had, among those who have completed their education) enough financial support to complete their post-secondary education or training. Findings reveal that a significant proportion of NAAF scholars who are still in school are concerned about having enough financial support to achieve their educational goals. In fact, only a minority (46%) report having secured sufficient financial support to complete their education. On the other hand, the large majority of those NAAF scholars who are no longer in school (80%) report that they did, indeed, have sufficient financial resources to complete their post-secondary education.

Adequacy of funding for post-secondary education

Do you think you have enough financial support to complete your current post-secondary education or training?/ Did you have enough financial support to complete your post-secondary education or training?




# 5. NAAF scholars' opinions on education

## Importance of education to Aboriginal people

***Virtually all NAAF scholars see formal education as important to the lives of Aboriginal people, with nine in ten believing education is very important.***

It is perhaps to be expected that NAAF scholars see education as important; however, the degree to which they are in agreement is striking. Nine in ten scholars (91%) believe that formal education is very important to improving the lives of Aboriginal people. Only one percent believe it is not important.

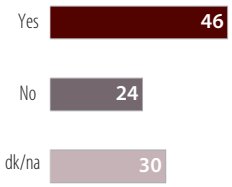
***The large majority of NAAF scholars believe that, as role models for Aboriginal youth, they (and other Aboriginal people pursuing a post-secondary education) have a big impact.***

The NAAF scholar survey asked scholars what kind of impact those Aboriginal people who are pursuing post-secondary education have as role models for Aboriginal youth. Virtually all believe they have at least some impact, with three-quarters (77%) believing they have a big impact as role models. This is true across all subgroups of NAAF scholars.

# 6. Effect of NAAF scholarship on Aboriginal identity

Effect of NAAF scholarship on Aboriginal identity

Did receiving a NAAF scholarship have a noticeable effect on your identity as an Aboriginal person?




***Almost half of NAAF scholars believe the NAAF scholarship had a noticeable effect on their identity as an Aboriginal person. Most characterize this effect as an increase in their level of pride in being Aboriginal and showcasing the success of Aboriginal students.***

In addition to helping Aboriginal students achieve their educational goals, does receiving the NAAF scholarship have any impact on the scholar's Aboriginal identity? The survey asked NAAF scholars whether receiving the NAAF scholarship had a *noticeable* effect on their identity as an Aboriginal person. Almost half (46%) of NAAF scholars indicate that receiving the scholarship did indeed have a noticeable impact on their Aboriginal identity. About one-quarter of scholars indicate that the NAAF scholarship did not have any noticeable effect on their Aboriginal identity, while a large proportion (30%) cannot answer the question. Thus, among those who give an opinion on this question, two-thirds (66%) believe the scholarship did have a noticeable effect on their identity as an Aboriginal person.

Those who believe the NAAF scholarship had a noticeable effect on their Aboriginal identity characterize this effect in a number of ways. The most commonly mentioned effect is that the NAAF scholarship made them proud to be Aboriginal (36%). One-quarter each mention recognition as an Aboriginal student as an effect of the NAAF scholarship (25%) and believe that the NAAF scholarship demonstrates the success of Aboriginal students (25%). Two in ten (22%) note that the scholarship makes them want to be more involved in the Aboriginal community.

# XII. Non-Aboriginal Perspectives

## Overview

For several years, Environics Research Group has been tracking the attitudes of non-Aboriginal Canadians towards the concerns of Aboriginal peoples through two ongoing syndicated Environics studies: *FOCUS Canada*, a survey of 2,000 adult Canadians conducted continuously each quarter since 1976, and *North of 60° and Remote Community Monitor,* a survey of residents in the three territories, Nunavik and Labrador, conducted annually since 1999. Over time, one evident trend in Canadians' attitudes is the growing awareness of an Aboriginal urban presence and a prioritizing of issues related to Aboriginal people in cities over others, such as the settling of native land claims.

As part of the *UAPS*, Environics surveyed a representative sample of Canadians to learn how they view Aboriginal people and what informs these views. The results of the non-Aboriginal survey are based on telephone interviews conducted from April 28 to May 15, 2009 with 250 non-Aboriginal people in each of the same 10 urban centres in which the main survey was conducted: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax (excluding Ottawa). In all, 2,501 non-Aboriginal urban Canadians ("NA urban Canadians") participated, providing a rich picture of how NA urban Canadians see Aboriginal people in cities today.

Topics explored in the survey include non-Aboriginal urban Canadians' perceptions of Aboriginal people in Canada, their awareness of Aboriginal peoples and communities in their cities, their contact and interaction with Aboriginal people, their perspectives on how well institutions respond to the needs of Aboriginal people, their knowledge of salient Aboriginal issues (i.e., Indian residential schools, acceptance of differential systems of justice), and the importance of Aboriginal history and culture in the minds of NA urban Canadians.

As well, some questions asked of urban Aboriginal peoples were also included in the survey of NA urban Canadians to allow for comparisons between the two groups. These comparisons are *not* referred to in this chapter and are cited in the relevant section of the main survey findings.

The following points summarize the main findings around non-Aboriginal people's attitudes towards Aboriginal peoples:

- **NA urban Canadians' first impressions of Aboriginal people are generally positive.** Only a handful of NA urban Canadians express explicitly negative stereotypes of Aboriginal people. Nonetheless, significant minorities in Thunder Bay, Winnipeg and Regina report their impressions of Aboriginal people have worsened in the past few years.
- **NA urban Canadians are almost unanimous in their belief that Aboriginal people are the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today.** This is consistent across cities and socio-demographic groups. However, contact with Aboriginal people influences the extent to which such discrimination is perceived to exist. NA urban Canadians who have frequent contact with Aboriginal people are most likely to think Aboriginal people often experience discrimination. NA urban Canadians living in Thunder Bay, Regina and Calgary are most likely to believe Aboriginal people frequently face discrimination, in contrast with those living in Toronto and Montreal.
- **There is a basic tension in the hearts and minds of NA urban Canadians of where Aboriginal people fit in the Canadian mosaic.** They clearly feel Aboriginal people possess unique cultural identities that other Canadians can learn and benefit from, but NA urban Canadians are divided over whether Aboriginal people hold unique *rights and privileges,* or whether they are just the same as other cultural or ethnic groups in Canadian society.

- **There is a general awareness of Aboriginal peoples and their place in Canada's history, but NA urban Canadians know less about the contemporary situation of Aboriginal peoples.** Majorities of NA urban Canadians view Aboriginal history and culture as an important symbol of national identity, and recognize the contributions that Aboriginal peoples and culture have made in the areas of the environment, and culture and the arts in Canada. But there is a lack of awareness and apparent uncertainty about what the most important issues are facing Aboriginal people today, particularly those faced in Canadian cities. There is a significant gap between Aboriginal peoples' socio-economic reality and the perceptions of NA urban Canadians; Aboriginal people are seen by majorities to be as well off, or better off, compared to other Canadians. Most notably, almost half of NA urban Canadians have never read or heard anything about Indian residential schools, a situation that appears to have changed little following the federal government's official apology in June 2008.
- **Despite their limited knowledge of Aboriginal people and issues, NA urban Canadians demonstrate a desire to learn more.** Indeed, there's an apparent predisposition to be open, and interest in learning more about Aboriginal history, culture and experience. Many NA urban Canadians give Canadians schools a failing grade in terms of fulfilling this objective.
- **At some level, non-Aboriginal people are starting to recognize the urban Aboriginal community and their cultural presence, although this awareness varies substantially by city.** Different city histories and socio-demographic composition, size of the Aboriginal population, and the nature and location of urban Aboriginal organizations all shape NA urban Canadians' awareness of an Aboriginal community. Interestingly, those who are aware of an Aboriginal community in their city are more likely than others to believe Aboriginal people wish to both maintain their culture *and* participate in Canadian society.

NA urban Canadians' views of Aboriginal people vary somewhat by their own place of birth and age:

- **New Canadians** (i.e., those born outside Canada) typically have limited cultural exposure and day-to-day contact with Aboriginal people. They are least able to identify an important issue facing Aboriginal people in cities. Nonetheless, they are more likely than NA urban Canadians born in Canada to think Aboriginal people and culture have made a major contribution to Canada's national identity, and think positively about the presence of Aboriginal people and communities in their city.
- **Younger NA urban Canadians** are more likely than their older counterparts to associate Aboriginal people with arts and culture, and most likely among NA urban Canadians to feel Aboriginal peoples and cultures have made a major contribution to Canada's national identity. They are also more likely to think schools do a good job of teaching Aboriginal history and culture, suggesting a greater Aboriginal focus may be emerging in some school curricula. Most importantly, NA urban youth are more likely than older cohorts to perceive discrimination as the key issue facing Aboriginal people in cities today.

Finally, a segmentation analysis of a large number of questions in the *UAPS* survey reveals there are four distinct "views" of Aboriginal people among non-Aboriginal Canadians, some more negative than others:

- **Dismissive Naysayers.** They tend to view Aboriginal peoples and communities negatively (i.e., unfairly entitled and isolated from Canadian society).
- **Inattentive Skeptics.** Uninformed and unaware, they typically think Aboriginal peoples are no different from other Canadians.
- **Cultural Romantics.** Idealistic and optimistic, they have a strong belief in Aboriginal peoples' artistic and cultural contributions.
- **Connected Advocates.** They have a high level of contact and strong belief that Aboriginal peoples often experience discrimination.

# 1. Perceptions of Aboriginal people

## Top-of-mind impression

***NA urban Canadians' most common top-of-mind impression of Aboriginal people revolves around their history as the original inhabitants of Canada.***

What are NA urban Canadians' top-of-mind impressions of Aboriginal peoples? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), NA urban Canadians express a variety of impressions of Aboriginal peoples, but are most likely to cite the following impressions:

- **First inhabitants.** "The first people" – individuals native to Canada who possess special status by virtue of their original inhabitancy of the country – is the most common impression of Aboriginal people among NA urban Canadians (18%).
- **First Nations/Métis/Inuit.** For one in ten (12%) NA urban Canadians, what comes to mind is simply First Nations, Métis or Inuit, or other terms that are sometimes used to describe Aboriginal people, such as Indians or natives. (There is no indication whether these are positive, neutral or negative impressions.)
- **Mistreatment.** One in ten (9%) of NA urban Canadians' most top-of-mind impression is of perceptions of abuse and mistreatment experienced by Aboriginal people at the hands of Canadian citizens and governments. Misappropriation of land and the historical marginalization of Aboriginal people in Canadian society are common themes among this group of NA urban Canadians.
- **Culture and art.** NA urban Canadians are as likely to associate Aboriginal people with cultural and artistic traditions (9%) as they are with mistreatment. NA urban Canadians in this group feel Aboriginal people possess a rich and diverse series of cultural practices and traditions that enrich Canadian society.
- **Reserves.** One in ten (8%) first associate Aboriginal people with living on reserves.

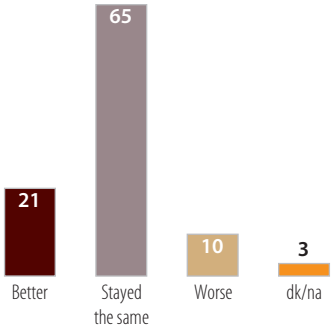
Small proportions of NA urban Canadians associate Aboriginal peoples with tax breaks, rights and special privileges (5%), such as government funding of First Nations peoples' post-secondary education, and poverty and poor living conditions (5%), largely as these conditions relate to Aboriginal people living on reserves. Four percent say Aboriginal peoples are no different than other Canadians and three percent point to loss of culture/assimilation/oppression. More negative stereotypes of Aboriginal people, such as reliance on handouts and social assistance (4%), alcoholism and substance abuse (4%), and laziness and lack of contribution to society (3%) are top-of-mind impressions among only a handful of NA urban Canadians. A wide variety of other impressions are cited, but none by more than two percent of NA urban Canadians. One in ten (8%) cannot say what first comes to mind when they think of Aboriginal people.

The impression of Aboriginal peoples as the "first inhabitants" is top-of-mind in most cities and among most socio-demographic segments of the population, but is particularly common in Toronto and Montreal, and among new Canadians (24%), especially those who have been in Canada for less than 10 years (35%). Impressions related to Aboriginal culture and art are more commonly cited by younger NA urban Canadians (12% under 45 years of age) and by those with at least some university education (14%), while reserves are more commonly mentioned by individuals born in Canada (10%) versus immigrants.

## Are NA urban Canadians' impressions changing?

Stable impressions

Over the past few years, has your impression of Aboriginal people gotten better or worse, or stayed the same?




***Most NA urban Canadians say their impressions of Aboriginal people have not changed in the past few years, but this varies by city. Among those whose impressions have changed, they are twice as likely to say their impressions have improved.***

NA urban Canadians are much more likely to say their impressions of Aboriginal people are unchanged in recent years than to report they have changed for better or worse.

Two-thirds (65%) of NA urban Canadians say their impressions of Aboriginal people have stayed the same over the past few years. The status quo prevails most among residents of Halifax (72%) and least among residents of Thunder Bay (45%).

Of the minority who report shifting impressions of Aboriginal people, NA urban Canadians are more likely to say these impressions have improved (21%) than worsened (10%). Similar proportions in each city say their impressions have gotten better. While still a minority, NA urban Canadians in Thunder Bay (25%), along with those in Regina (20%) and Winnipeg (18%) are, on average, more than twice as likely as residents of Toronto (8%), Montreal (10%), Halifax (10%) and Vancouver (5%) to report their impressions of Aboriginal people have worsened in the past few years.

Changing impressions of Aboriginal people are associated with age and with the amount of attention paid to Aboriginal issues. Older NA urban Canadians (27% of those aged 60 or older), and those who pay greater attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people (24%) are more likely than others to say their impressions have recently improved.

**REASONS FOR IMPROVING IMPRESSIONS.** NA urban Canadians who say their impressions of Aboriginal people have improved over time cite three main reasons for this:

- **Personal relationships.** Two in ten (22%) cite a personal relationship with an Aboriginal person as the main reason their impression of Aboriginal people has improved, especially those in Thunder Bay, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina and Winnipeg.

- **Visibility**. A more visible and positive presence in the local community and media has also contributed to better impressions for two in ten (20%) in this group. Torontonians are more likely than others to mention this visibility as a reason for their improving impressions.
- **Educational, social and economic gains.** Another two in ten (19%) attribute their improved impressions to perceived educational, social and economic gains among Aboriginal people in the past few years. Perceptions of this progress are most common among those in Regina, Saskatoon and Thunder Bay.

Other less common reasons for improved impressions include a better general understanding of Aboriginal culture or issues (13%), or specific knowledge learned through educational or awareness courses (11%). Relatively few individuals associate their more positive impressions with a greater personal maturity or open-mindedness (5%), with the greater recognition or respect that they believe Aboriginal people are getting from governments and ordinary Canadians (5%), with their perception that more government or social assistance opportunities are now available to Aboriginal people (4%), or with the perception that Aboriginal peoples' political leadership has improved (3%).

Younger people under 45 years of age are more likely to associate their improved impressions with either a personal relationship with an Aboriginal person (29%) or education about Aboriginal culture (20%), while older people are more likely to cite perceptions of educational, social and economic progress among Aboriginal people (26%). Reporting better impressions due to a personal relationship with an Aboriginal person is also more common among those in the middle-income brackets (31%) than those with lower or higher incomes. NA urban Canadians with higher household incomes ($80,000 or more) are more likely to cite greater visibility of (33%), and greater perceived recognition and respect given to (14%) Aboriginal people as reasons why their impression has improved.

**REASONS FOR WORSENING IMPRESSIONS.** Among the one in ten NA urban Canadians who report their impressions of Aboriginal people have worsened, to what do they attribute this change? The most common reason is a perception that Aboriginal people rely on "handouts" and make minimal societal contributions (19%, representing 2% of all NA urban Canadians). Other reasons include the perception that Aboriginal people are constantly making demands or protesting issues such as land claims (15%), especially in Toronto and among those with household incomes of $100,000 or more; the perception of an increase in Aboriginal crime (15%), which is particularly common among those in Thunder Bay and Regina; and the perception that Aboriginal people abuse privileges or take advantage of laws (13%). Others in this group blame alcoholism, substance abuse and addictions (11%) for their worsening impressions, a view expressed mainly by those in Calgary and Vancouver, and by those under 30 years of age.

Other less common reasons given for deteriorating impressions include negative portrayals of Aboriginal people in the media (9%); a perception that Aboriginal people are not taking advantage of opportunities available to them (9%); a perception that they are refusing to integrate into broader society (7%); or a negative personal experience with an Aboriginal person (7%).

## Perceptions of difference

***NA urban Canadians typically think Aboriginal people are different from non-Aboriginal people, primarily because they possess a unique cultural identity.***

NA urban Canadians were asked (unprompted, without being offered response options) in what ways, if any, they think Aboriginal people are different from non-Aboriginal people. Most (62%) NA urban Canadians identify at least one difference between the two groups. The following are the top ways in which NA urban Canadians believe Aboriginal people differ from non-Aboriginal people:

- **Unique cultural identity.** Three in ten (31%) NA urban Canadians believe Aboriginal people possess a unique cultural identity that sets them apart from the Canadian population at large. NA urban Canadians in this group think Aboriginal peoples' cultural traditions and heritage constitute a unique identity that Canadians can learn and benefit from. Underlying this unique identity, they perceive a distinct set of *Aboriginal* values, such as sharing, a tighter family connection and greater kinship with one another, and a strong connection with the land. This perception of a unique cultural identity is more of a bi-coastal phenomenon – residents of Vancouver (41%) and Halifax (41%) are most likely to think a unique cultural identity sets Aboriginal people apart, whereas residents of Thunder Bay (18%) are least likely to share this view. Stronger perceptions in Vancouver and Halifax may in part be due to their residents' propensity to think Aboriginal peoples and cultures have enriched Canadian culture and the arts, and Canadians' connection with the natural environment (see page 151). Some of these perceptions of a unique cultural identity are presented in the sidebar.
- **Entitlement.** One in ten (12%) NA urban Canadians think Aboriginal people are different from non-Aboriginal people because they are entitled. For some, this is simply a recognition that Aboriginal people possess special constitutional rights and privileges. However, others feel Aboriginal rights and privileges (i.e., tax free status, free education, government funding) are a "free ride" that discourages responsible behaviour and equates to an unfair advantage over other Canadians. NA urban Canadians in the western cities (excluding Regina) are more likely than others to believe that Aboriginal people are entitled. Some of these perceptions of entitlement are presented in the sidebar on this page.

**NA urban Canadians' perceptions of Aboriginal peoples' unique cultural identity:**

*[Aboriginal people] have been here longer than most of the people. They have a different culture, with an oral rather than written history. Natural environment plays a bigger role in their culture.*

*[Aboriginal people] are more grounded with nature and land, and [show] more respect towards them.*

*First Nations' traditions and cultures are fuller, with greater spirituality and more [connection] with nature. They are passionate about retaining their culture.*

**NA urban Canadians' perceptions of entitlement:**

*The only way (Aboriginal people) are different are the treaty rights.*

*They have no responsibilities. They have lots of rights but no responsibilities. Everyone else has to look after them because they are permanent victims. They aren't the only ones with problems.*

*They're not treated equal as everyone else. Aboriginal people don't pay taxes, they get their education paid for, they don't earn it. They can go to university as many times as they want and don't worry about who is flipping the bill.*

- **Socio-economic disadvantage**. Another way in which NA urban Canadians perceive Aboriginal people as different from themselves is in terms of socio-economic disadvantage (11%). A common theme among these NA urban Canadians is that Aboriginal people have less educational opportunities, greater health needs, and experience more poverty than the average Canadian, and they also believe Aboriginal people have bigger hurdles to overcome because they have been subject to negative stereotypes, discrimination and racism in Canadian society. NA urban Canadians in Toronto (16%) and Winnipeg (15%) are most likely to think Aboriginal people are different from non-Aboriginal people because they experience more socio-economic disadvantage, as are university graduates. Some of these perceptions of socio-economic disadvantage are presented in the sidebar on this page.
- **Separation/isolation.** Finally, a smaller group of NA urban Canadians (9%) think Aboriginal people are different from non-Aboriginal people because they live separately, either on reserves or in their own communities. The Indian reserve is viewed by many in this group as a place where Aboriginal people can "hang on to their identity" and live in the past, which is holding them back from finding a place in broader society. As well, a common perception within this group is that Aboriginal people over-emphasize their cultural identity and "should not try to be so different." These perceptions do not stand out among any one city or demographic group. Some of these perceptions of separation are presented in the sidebar on this page.

Three in ten NA urban Canadians (31%) maintain there are no differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people (another 7% are uncertain). NA urban Canadians in Montreal (41%) are notably more likely than those in other cities to believe Aboriginal people are the same as non-Aboriginal people. Younger NA urban Canadians are also more likely to perceive no difference, as are those who are unaware of an Aboriginal community (i.e., a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community) in their city.

**NA urban Canadians' perceptions of socio-economic disadvantage:**

*This was their country originally, and generally they are treated as second-class citizens.*

*They have been treated in the past unfairly, and are unequally represented in poverty.*

*They have societal disadvantage, they lack cultural capital, they have lots of unresolved issues that affect them generationally, they have different health needs than the average Canadian.*

*They don't have the same chances as we have. The effect of the residential school has affected their family structure. It has put them at a great disadvantage.*

**NA urban Canadians' perceptions of separation/ isolation:**

*They are stuck in a culture that needs to change so that they can become equal partners as Canadians.*

*They use their culture to keep [themselves] from integrating with the rest of Canada.*

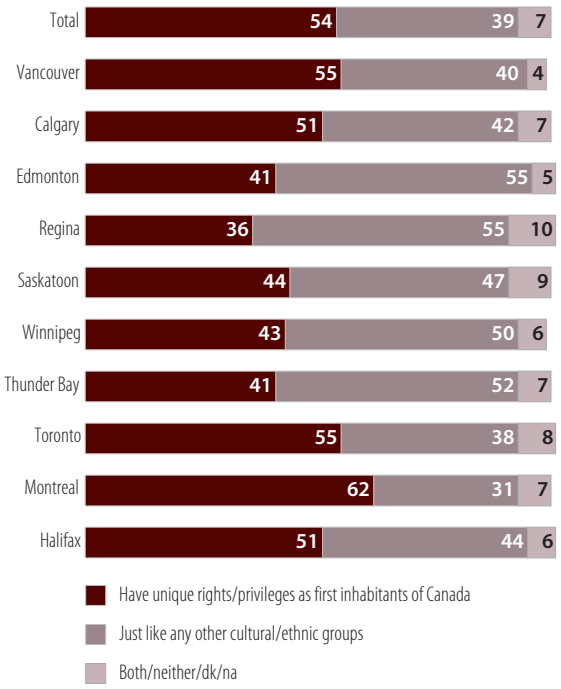
*(Aboriginal people are) different because of the way they are always looking for blame for their past. They don't seem to want to push ahead and get past the trauma or hardships suffered by [their] ancestors.*

## Unique rights and privileges?

***NA urban Canadians are divided on whether Aboriginal people have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada, or are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canadian society. Residents of cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations are more likely than other NA urban Canadians to consider Aboriginal people the same as other cultural or ethnic groups.***

### Unique rights and privileges, or just like other groups?

Which of the following two statements best represents how you think about Aboriginal people?




One of the sharpest divisions among NA urban Canadians exists in their perceptions of whether Aboriginal people hold a distinct status, or whether they are just the same as other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada.

A slim majority (54%) of NA urban Canadians believe Aboriginal people have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada, whereas four in ten (39%) feel Aboriginal people are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada's multicultural society (4% say they are both equally or neither, while 3% do not have an opinion).

Opinions vary somewhat by city, with the perception that Aboriginal people are just like other cultural and ethnic groups more common in places with a larger relative Aboriginal population. In fact, this is the majority opinion in Edmonton (55%), Regina (55%) and Thunder Bay (52%), and marginally outweighs the belief in a distinct status for Aboriginal people in Winnipeg (50%), while those in Saskatoon (47% just like others, 44% unique) are divided. In contrast, the perception that Aboriginal people have unique rights and privileges is most common in Montreal (62%), followed by Toronto (55%), Vancouver (55%), Calgary (51%) and Halifax (51%) – and accordingly, among those reporting the least personal contact with Aboriginal people.

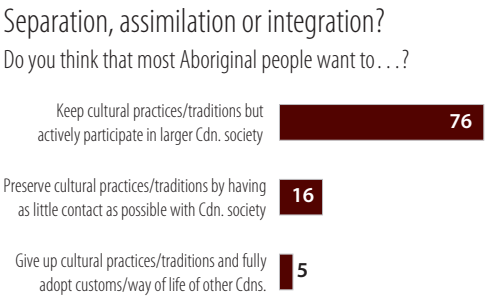
Beyond these city differences, NA urban Canadians' views of Aboriginal people's distinct status, or lack thereof, remain fairly consistent across socio-demographic groups. Roughly half in all age, education and income groups think Aboriginal people have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada. The two exceptions are university graduates and those aged 30 to 44, who are more likely than others to believe that Aboriginal peoples have unique rights and privileges.

## Separation, assimilation or integration

***Most NA urban Canadians believe Aboriginal people want to keep their cultural practices and traditions but actively participate in the larger Canadian society.***

Research suggests that there are several ways in which cultural and ethnic minorities may seek to live in the larger Canadian society.[55] *Assimilation* refers to the preference for abandoning one's culture in favour of the customs and ways of life of the broader society. *Separation* refers to the opposite end of the spectrum, where an individual seeks to protect their culture by avoiding interaction with the larger society. *Integration* refers to the desire to maintain one's culture at the same time as participating in the larger society. (A fourth dimension, called *marginalization*, relates to an individual who does not feel they have a place in either their own culture or in the broader society.)

How do NA urban Canadians believe Aboriginal people seek to live in Canada? The large majority believe that Aboriginal people aspire to integration, rather than separation or assimilation. Three in four (76%) think that Aboriginal people want to keep their cultural practices and traditions but actively participate in the larger Canadian society (integration). Just 16 percent believe Aboriginal people want to preserve their cultural practices and traditions by having as little contact as possible with Canadian society (separation), while five percent believe Aboriginal people want to give up their cultural practices and traditions, and fully adopt the customs and ways of life of other Canadians (assimilation).




These views are generally consistent across cities and socio-demographic groups. The likelihood to believe Aboriginal people aspire to integration is highest in Toronto (85%) and Edmonton (83%), and among those with a university education (83%). Residents of Montreal are most likely to believe that Aboriginal people wish to remain separate (28%); this perception is also stronger among those without a university education (18%).

Frequency of contact with Aboriginal people has little bearing on NA urban Canadians' impressions of how Aboriginal people seek to live in Canadian society. However, those who are aware of an Aboriginal community in their city (i.e., either a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community) (82%) or at the minimum are aware of Aboriginal people living in their city (77%) are more likely than those who are not aware of an Aboriginal presence in their city (67%) to believe Aboriginal people wish to both maintain their culture and participate in Canadian society (integration).

55 Berry, John W. (2005). *Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures. International Journal of Intercultural Relations.*

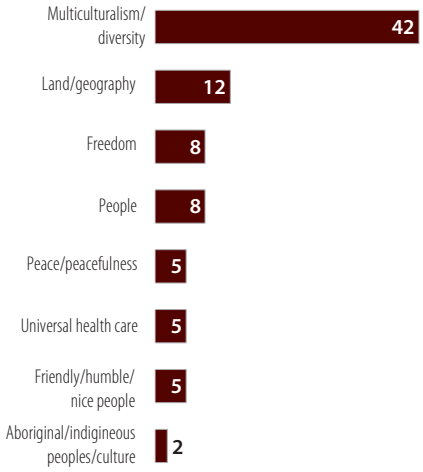
# 2. Aboriginal history and culture

## Importance of Aboriginal history and culture in defining Canada

### What makes Canada unique?

What do you think makes Canada unique?

Top mentions




***A majority of NA urban Canadians think Aboriginal history and culture is an important symbol of Canadian national identity, a view that is strongest in Halifax, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver.***

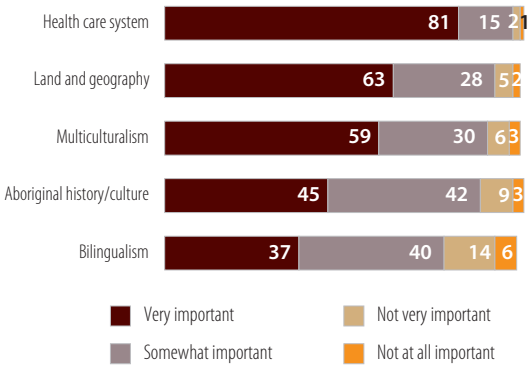
NA urban Canadians do not first think of Aboriginal peoples and culture when they first think of "Canada," but most consider Aboriginal peoples' history and culture to be an important symbol of Canadian national identity, a view that is widely shared across most socio-demographic groups.

When asked what they think makes Canada unique (unprompted, without offering response choices), NA urban Canadians are, by a wide margin, most likely to say multiculturalism or diversity (42%). Smaller proportions think land and geography (12%), the people (8%) and freedom (8%) make Canada unique. A wide range of other traits are mentioned (i.e., universal health care, tolerance, natural resources, the weather), but none by more than five percent of NA urban Canadians. Very few specifically mention Aboriginal peoples or their culture (2%).

Yet, when asked how important Aboriginal history and culture is to their definition of Canada, almost nine in ten NA urban Canadians (87%) say Aboriginal history and culture is very (45%) or somewhat (42%) important in defining Canada for them. Similar proportions of NA urban Canadians think multiculturalism, land and geography, and the health care system are important, but they are much more likely to think these three features of Canadian identity are *very* important compared to Aboriginal history and culture.

### Importance in defining Canada

Do you think each of the following is very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important in defining Canada?




NA urban Canadians living in Halifax (51%), Toronto (49%), Calgary (47%) and Vancouver (46%) are most likely to say Aboriginal history and culture is very important in their notion of "Canada." Aboriginal history and culture also plays a greater role in defining Canada for individuals with household incomes under $80,000 (48%) and people born outside of Canada (52%). NA urban Canadians aged 60 or older are most likely to say Aboriginal history and culture is not important in their definition of Canada.

## Contributions of Aboriginal people and culture

***Seven in ten or more NA urban Canadians believe that Aboriginal people and culture have contributed to Canadians' sense of nature, culture and the arts, and Canada's national identity.***

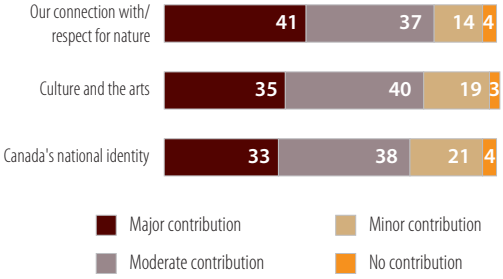
Regardless of how central Aboriginal history and culture is to NA urban Canadians' idea of Canada, majorities of NA urban Canadians recognize the contributions that Aboriginal people and culture have made in the areas of the environment, culture and arts, and national identity. At least seven in ten NA urban Canadians think Aboriginal people and their culture have made either moderate or major contributions to Canadians' connection with and respect for nature (78%), culture and the arts (75%), and Canada's national identity (70%).

NA urban Canadians' perceptions of how much of a contribution Aboriginal people and culture have made vary in the following ways:

- Younger NA urban Canadians (18-29) are most likely to think Aboriginal people and culture have made a *major* contribution to Canada's national identity.
- Residents of Vancouver are considerably more likely than those in other cities to believe that Aboriginal people and culture have made a *major* contribution to culture and arts in Canada, as are those who either often or occasionally have contact with Aboriginal people.
- Residents of Halifax, Montrealers and Torontonians are notably more likely than residents of other cities to feel Aboriginal people and culture have helped strengthen Canadians' connection with and respect for nature.
- NA urban Canadians with at least a high school diploma, those who pay a great deal of attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people, and those who believe Aboriginal people have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada are more likely to think Aboriginal people and culture make a *major* contribution in all three areas.

### Contributions of Aboriginal people and culture

How much of a contribution do you think Aboriginal people and culture have made in each of the following areas? Have they made a major contribution, a moderate contribution, a minor contribution, or no contribution to . . . ?




## Understanding Aboriginal history and culture

***Consistent with the value NA urban Canadians place on Aboriginal history and culture, this subject is one they feel is important for them to understand. However, only one in four believe schools do a good or excellent job of teaching students about it.***

Most NA urban Canadians think it is important they understand Aboriginal people's history and culture, but believe Canadian schools do only a poor to fair job of teaching the subject. When asked how important it is for non-Aboriginal Canadians to understand Aboriginal people's history and culture in Canada, more than nine in ten (93%) NA urban Canadians say it is either very (53%) or somewhat (40%) important they understand it. Only six percent say it is not important, although this proportion is substantially higher in Saskatoon (19%).

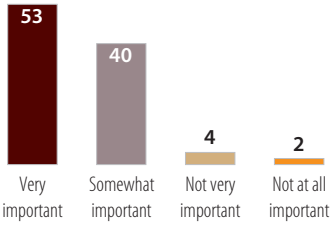
NA urban Canadians who pay a great deal of attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people are substantially more likely to feel that understanding Aboriginal people's history and culture in Canada is *very* important. This viewpoint also increases with level of education, from 44 percent of those without a high school diploma to 60 percent of those with a university degree.

Yet, despite the value placed on learning about Aboriginal people and their history, more than six in ten (63%) NA urban Canadians think Canadian schools do an only fair (34%) or poor (29%) job of teaching students about this subject. This view is particularly prominent among residents of Toronto (70%), Montreal (68%), Halifax (64%) and Calgary (62%) than in the other cities included in this survey. Those who believe it is very important for non-Aboriginal Canadians to understand Aboriginal history and culture (67%) are more likely than those who consider it is less important (59%) to say that schools are doing a fair-to-poor job of teaching students about this topic.

Only one-quarter of NA urban Canadians think Canadian schools do an excellent (4%) or good (20%) job of teaching students about Aboriginal people and their history. However, this perception is much more common among those aged 18 to 29 (36%) than among older NA urban Canadians (15% of those aged 60 or older), who are in turn more likely to say they do not know how good a job schools are doing in this regard. The perception that schools are doing a good-to-excellent job of teaching about Aboriginal people and their history is also slightly stronger among new Canadians.

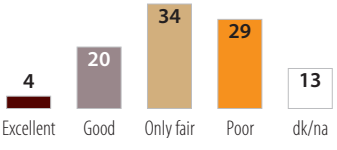
### Importance of understanding history/culture of Aboriginal people in Canada

In your opinion, how important is it for non-Aboriginal Canadians to underst and the history and culture of Aboriginal people in Canada?




### Rating of how well schools teach about Aboriginal people and history

Do you think that schools in Canada do an excellent, good, only fair or poor job of teaching students about Aboriginal people and their history?



# 3. Perceived barriers facing Aboriginal people

## Most important issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada and in cities

***Land claims, and threats to culture and identity are perceived to be the most important issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada today, while discrimination is also considered a significant challenge for Aboriginal peoples living in Canadian cities.***

**MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE.** NA urban Canadians were asked to identify the one issue they consider to be the most important facing Aboriginal people in Canada today (asked unprompted, without offering response choices). There is no consensus among NA urban Canadians in their views of the key challenges facing Aboriginal people. Land claims and territory rights (13%), and threats to culture and identity (12%) are each identified as the most pressing problem by just over one in ten NA urban Canadians. Fewer than one in ten (each) identify substance abuse (7%), discrimination (7%), lack of education (6%), or poverty and homelessness (6%) as the most important issue facing Aboriginal people in Canada today. A wide range of other potential problems are mentioned, but none by more than five percent of NA urban Canadians. One in five (18%) are unable to identify any issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada today.

Mentions of land claims as the primary issue facing Aboriginal people in Canada are higher in Montreal (19%) and Toronto (16%) than in other cities, while mentions of threats to culture and identity are higher in Vancouver (18%) than elsewhere. Substance abuse is mentioned most frequently in Calgary (15%) and Edmonton (12%), while poverty and homelessness is the key issue mentioned in Saskatoon (15%).

There are no meaningful differences between socio-demographic groups in the perceived issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada. However, perceptions do vary by the degree of attention paid to Aboriginal news and issues, and by frequency of contact with Aboriginal people. Those who pay a great deal of attention to Aboriginal news and issues are more likely to say that the most important issue facing Aboriginal people is acknowledgement and recognition, while land claims are more frequently mentioned by those who pay less attention to Aboriginal news and issues. As well, discrimination is more likely to be identified as a challenge for Aboriginal people by those in frequent contact with Aboriginal people.

**MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN CITIES.** NA urban Canadians are even less certain about the important issues facing Aboriginal people living in Canadian cities (asked unprompted, without offering response choices), with three in ten (31%) who are unable to identify what they believe to be the key challenge for urban Aboriginal people. Discrimination is identified as the leading issue for the urban Aboriginal population by one in ten (12%) NA urban Canadians. NA urban Canadians also perceive urban Aboriginal people to be dealing with threats to their culture and identity (10%), issues related to isolation and difficulties integrating into broader society (9%), poverty and homelessness (8%), unemployment and a lack of job opportunities (8%), and substance abuse (6%). A number of other issues are mentioned, but none by more than four percent of NA urban Canadians.

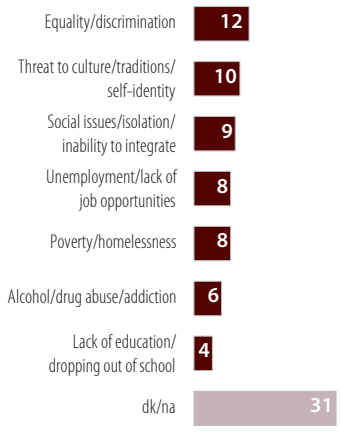
Across cities, discrimination is mentioned more frequently as a challenge facing urban Aboriginal people in Calgary (17%) and Montreal (15%). Mentions of threats to culture and identity are more common in Halifax (17%) and Vancouver (14%), while isolation and integration issues are more frequently identified in Thunder Bay (16%) and Toronto (13%). Substance abuse is also a key issue mentioned in Calgary (14%), Edmonton (13%) and Vancouver (10%). Residents of Saskatoon are more likely to identify

### Most important issue in Canada (top mentions)

In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Aboriginal people in Canada today?


### Most important issue in cities (top mentions)

And in your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Aboriginal people living in cities across Canada today?



unemployment (15%) as an important issue facing Aboriginal people in cities, while residents of Regina are more likely to mention housing issues and poor living conditions (11%).

Perceptions of the most important issue facing urban Aboriginal people in cities vary by age. Younger NA urban Canadians are more likely to perceive discrimination as the key issue facing Aboriginal people in cities today (18% of those aged 18 to 29). As well, NA urban Canadians aged 60 and older are least likely to identify threats to culture and identity as a pressing problem for urban Aboriginal people. New Canadians, those who pay little or no attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people, and those with the least contact with the Aboriginal population are least able to identify any important issue facing Aboriginal people living in cities.

## Indian residential schools

***Just over half of NA urban Canadians have heard or read anything about Indian residential schools. Majorities think the challenges faced by Aboriginal communities are, at least to some extent, the result of this experience.***

The survey examined NA urban Canadians' awareness of Indian residential schools, and their views of what consequences the Indian residential schools experience has had for Aboriginal people.

**AWARENESS.** Despite being a high-profile issue, the subject of Indian residential schools is not top-of-mind for most NA urban Canadians. Fewer than one percent identify residential schools as the most important issue facing Aboriginal people, either generally or specifically for those living in cities. Once prompted, just over half of NA urban Canadians (54%) report they have read or heard something about Indian residential schools. Awareness appears to have changed little following the federal government's official apology to former students of Indian residential schools in June 2008. A survey conducted for Indian residential schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC) by Environics Research Group in April 2008 found that, prior to the apology, half (51%) of the Canadian population living in urban centres were aware of Indian residential schools.

Majorities of NA urban Canadians in almost every city are aware of Indian residential schools, but this proportion is particularly high in those cities with the largest relative Aboriginal populations: Regina (82% awareness), Saskatoon (81%), Thunder Bay (77%) and Winnipeg (75%). The notable exception is Montreal, where only one-third (33%) of NA urban Canadians have heard or read anything about the subject.

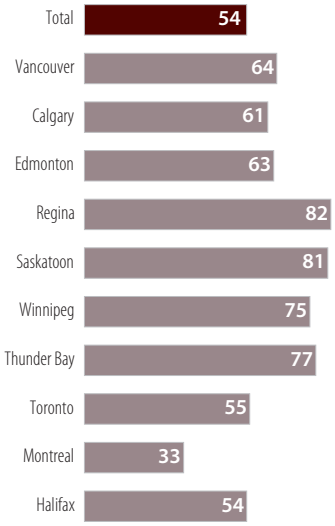
**IMPACT.** Among NA urban Canadians aware of residential schools, most feel that Aboriginal peoples' experiences with them have had consequences for their communities. Three in ten (28%) believe that the current challenges faced by Aboriginal communities are, to a great extent, the result of Aboriginal peoples' experiences in residential schools. Another 45 percent feel that, to some extent, the challenges currently facing Aboriginal communities are the result of this experience. One in four see little (18%) or no (5%) relationship between the two.

The IRSRC survey found that, prior to the federal government's apology for Indian residential schools in June 2008, two in ten (21%) Canadians living in urban centres who were aware of these schools believed that they contributed to a great extent to the challenges facing Aboriginal communities. The current *UAPS* data suggests that this sentiment has grown since then.

In each city, a large majority of those aware of residential schools believe they have contributed at least to some extent to the challenges facing Aboriginal communities, although this proportion is highest in Montreal (80%), despite low overall awareness, and Vancouver (78%). Notably, although awareness of

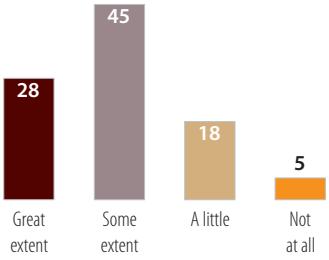
### Aware of Indian residential schools

Have you read or heard anything about Indian residential schools?




### Impact of Indian residential schools*

To what extent do you think that the challenges facing Aboriginal communities today are a result of Aboriginal peoples' experiences in residential schools?




* Subsample: Among those aware of Indian residential schools

Indian residential schools is higher in Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg, residents of these cities are in fact among the least likely to believe these schools had a significant impact. Thunder Bay stands out as having both higher awareness of residential schools and among the strongest belief that these schools have played a role in the challenges facing Aboriginal communities (30% to a great extent).

Among those aware of residential schools, the perception that the challenges facing Aboriginal communities result, to at least some extent, from experiences in these schools is higher among women, younger (18-29) and older (60 and over) NA urban Canadians, and those without a high school diploma (81%), compared to those with a high school diploma or more education (73%).

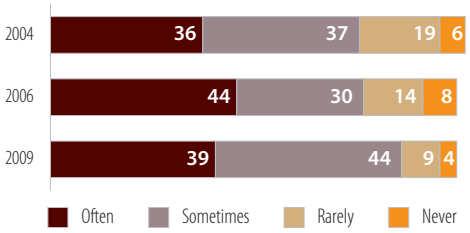
## Perceptions of discrimination

***NA urban Canadians clearly think Aboriginal people experience discrimination – and at least as much as other groups in Canadian society. Those who have greater contact with Aboriginal people are more convinced than others about the amount of discrimination this group faces.***

NA urban Canadians are almost unanimous in their belief that Aboriginal people are sometimes, if not often, the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today.

### Discrimination

Do you think Aboriginal people are often, sometimes, rarely or never the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today?




2006 data from Environics' FOCUS CANADA survey; 2004 data courtesy of Department of Canadian Heritage (omnibus quesitons placed on FOCUS CANADA); both based on communities of 100,000 or more

Four in ten (39%) NA urban Canadians believe Aboriginal people are discriminated against often, and an additional 44 percent believe that Aboriginal people experience discrimination sometimes. Only 13 percent believe that Aboriginal people rarely or never experience discrimination.

Historical context for these findings comes from surveys conducted by Environics Research Group in 2004 and 2006, focusing on the data among Canadians living in urban centres with populations of 100,000 or more.[56] The results suggest that NA urban Canadians are now less likely than in the past several years to say Aboriginal people rarely or never face discrimination, and more likely to perceive at least occasional discrimination against this population, which could reflect a better understanding of the experiences of Aboriginal people as a result of the media coverage surrounding the Canadian government's apology for Indian residential schools in 2008.

Large majorities in all cities and socio-demographic groups believe that Aboriginal people are the subject of discrimination at least occasionally. However, contact with Aboriginal people influences the extent to which such discrimination is perceived to exist. NA urban Canadians who often have contact with Aboriginal people (51%) are more likely than those with occasional or even less contact (36%) to think Aboriginal people often experience discrimination.

NA urban Canadians living in Thunder Bay (53%), Regina (52%) and Calgary (50%) are most likely to believe that Aboriginal people frequently face discrimination; those living in Toronto and Montreal are the most likely to say Aboriginal people rarely or never experience discrimination. Perceptions of frequent discrimination towards Aboriginal people are also more common among the most highly educated (47%) and among individuals born in Canada (42%), compared to those born in another country (32%).

Furthermore, majorities of NA urban Canadians think Aboriginal people are subject to the same, if not more, discrimination relative to other groups in Canadian society, such as Jews, Chinese, Blacks,

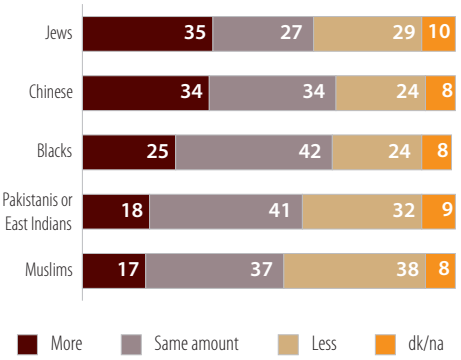
56 According to the 2006 Census, there are 33 Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) that currently have populations of 100,000 or more, which include all 10 cities in the *UAPS* survey of NA urban Canadians.

Pakistanis or East Indians, and Muslims. One in three NA urban Canadians think Aboriginal people endure more discrimination than groups such as Jews (35%) and Chinese (34%), and one in four think they endure more discrimination than Blacks (25%). Some one in five think they endure more discrimination than groups such as Pakistanis or East Indians (18%), and Muslims (17%).

Generally speaking (but not in every case), the perception that Aboriginal people face more discrimination relative to these other groups is higher among men and NA urban Canadians with a university education. Those who pay a great deal of attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people, those in frequent contact with Aboriginal people and those who are aware of an Aboriginal community in their city (i.e., either a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community) are also more likely than others to say Aboriginal people experience greater discrimination than these other groups. By comparison, NA urban Canadians living in Toronto, Montreal and Halifax stand out as more likely than others to believe that Aboriginal people face less discrimination than most of these groups.

### Discrimination against Aboriginals relative to other minorities

In Canada, do you think Aboriginal people are subject to more, less or about the same amount of discrimination as each of the following groups?




## Attitudes of Canadians and their governments

***NA urban Canadians are twice as likely to say the problems faced by Aboriginal people in Canada have largely been caused by the attitudes of other Canadians and the policies of government as by Aboriginal people themselves. These views have remained remarkably stable over the past 20 years.***

NA urban Canadians tend to believe that many of the problems facing Aboriginal people are largely due to external factors over which they have no control. A slim majority (52%) attribute the problems facing Aboriginal peoples to the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of governments, compared to one-quarter (24%) who say these are problems Aboriginal people have brought upon themselves, and 17 percent who say both are equally responsible.

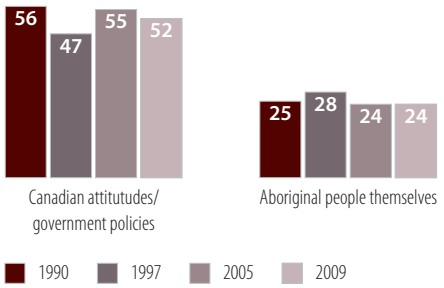
Public opinion on this issue has changed very little since Environics first asked this question of Canadians living in major urban centres almost 20 years ago.[57] Since 1990, the proportion who attribute the cause of Aboriginal peoples' problems to the attitudes of Canadians and policies of governments has consistently outweighed the proportion who attribute it to Aboriginal people themselves. This was the case even in 1997, following the release of the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), when urban Canadians were slightly *less* likely to place responsibility on public attitudes and government policies.

NA urban Canadians in Toronto (59%), Montreal (54%), Halifax (52%) and Vancouver (50%) are most likely to attribute problems faced by Aboriginal peoples to Canadian attitudes and government policies. Residents of Regina, Winnipeg and Saskatoon are divided (between citing Canadian attitudes and government policies, and Aboriginal people themselves).

NA urban Canadians without a post-secondary education are more likely than others to say Aboriginal people have mostly themselves to blame, while those with more education are more likely to divide responsibility equally between public attitudes and government policies, and Aboriginal people themselves.

### Responsibility for problems

In your opinion, have Aboriginal people in Canada largely caused their own problems or have the problems been caused primarily by the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of governments?




Data prior to 2009 from Environics' FOCUS CANADA survey (based on communities of 100,000 or more)

57 Historical data is based on Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) with populations of 100,000 or more. According to the 2006 census, there are 33 such communities in Canada, which include all 10 cities in the *UAPS* survey of NA urban Canadians.

As might be expected, NA urban Canadians who pay greater attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people are more likely to attribute the cause of their problems to Canadian attitudes and government policies (56%) than are those who pay little or no attention (43%). This perspective is also more common among NA urban Canadians who believe Aboriginal people are often the subject of discrimination (62%).

# 4. Awareness and perceptions of an Aboriginal community in the city

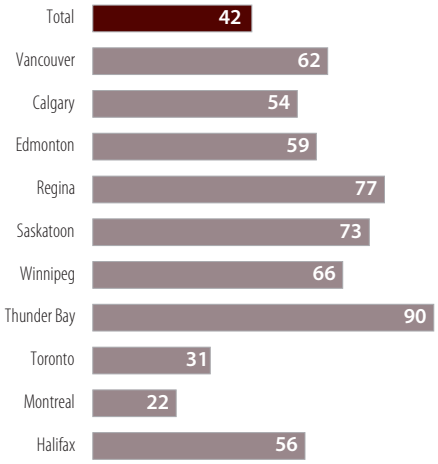
## Awareness of an Aboriginal community in the city

***Majorities of NA urban Canadians know Aboriginal people live in their city, but their awareness of an Aboriginal community varies widely by city.***

The *UAPS* non-Aboriginal survey asked NA urban Canadians how aware they are of Aboriginal people and communities in their city. Majorities know Aboriginal people live in their city, but they are less aware of an Aboriginal *community* (i.e., a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community) in their midst.

### Aware of Aboriginal community in my city

Are you aware of an Aboriginal community in your city? By community, I mean either a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community.




Three-quarters (77%) of NA urban Canadians say they know there are Aboriginal people living in their city. Excluding Toronto (73%) and Montreal (54%), the proportion of NA urban Canadians who say they know Aboriginal people live in their city rises to nine in ten or more.

As could be expected, NA urban Canadians in Toronto (31%) and Montreal (22%) are also least likely to be aware of an Aboriginal *community* in their city. In comparison, awareness of an Aboriginal community is highest among NA urban Canadians in Thunder Bay (90%), Regina (77%), and Saskatoon (73%). However, it is noteworthy that awareness of an Aboriginal community does vary considerably among NA urban Canadians in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations, ranging from over one-half (54%) of NA Canadians in Calgary to nine in ten in Thunder Bay.

What explains the variation among NA urban Canadians in their awareness of Aboriginal people and communities in their city? The most obvious explanation is that the relative size of Aboriginal populations is higher in western cities and Thunder Bay than in Toronto and Montreal, making a distinct Aboriginal group and/or community more apparent to NA urban Canadians in the first group of cities. However, this does not entirely explain the variation in levels of awareness among cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations. Other factors that may explain this variation include how Aboriginal people are dispersed across city neighbourhoods, the existence of urban reserves in some cities, and the nature and physical location of Aboriginal organizations in these cities.[58] For instance, among those aware of an Aboriginal community or Aboriginal people living in their city, awareness of any Aboriginal organizations which are run by and provide services for Aboriginal people ranges from a high of 75 percent in Thunder Bay to a low of only 11 percent in Montreal.

Awareness of an Aboriginal community is also higher among NA urban Canadians with a university education, those with household incomes of $60,000 or more, and those who were born in Canada.

58 Katherine A.H. Graham and Evelyn Peters, *Aboriginal Communities and Urban Sustainability*, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Discussion Paper F27, December 2002.

## Positive or negative presence

***NA urban Canadians are largely positive or ambivalent about the presence of urban Aboriginal peoples and communities in their city.***

How do NA urban Canadians perceive Aboriginal peoples and communities in their cities? When asked, NA urban Canadians aware of Aboriginal people and communities in their city have mixed views about whether their presence is positive or neutral, but few describe it as negative for their city.

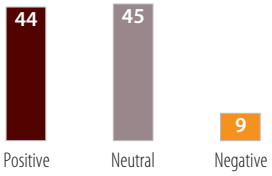
More than four in ten (44%) think the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is positive for their city, and this opinion is particularly strong in Toronto (57%). An equal proportion (45%) say they are neutral about the presence of Aboriginal peoples and communities in their city. Only one in ten (9%) view Aboriginal peoples and communities as a negative presence. However, a negative viewpoint is notably more evident in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations, especially Regina (34%), but also Winnipeg (24%), Saskatoon (19%), Thunder Bay (16%) and Edmonton (15%).

These perceptions are influenced by amount of contact with Aboriginal people and awareness of an Aboriginal community: positive and negative assessments are higher among those in frequent contact with Aboriginal people and those who know of an Aboriginal community in their city (suggesting they are more aware of both the benefits and the challenges for their community). Those who only occasionally, rarely or never have contact with Aboriginal people, and those who know Aboriginal people live in their city (but are unaware of a specific community) are more likely to consider the impact on their city to be neutral.

The perception that the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is neutral for their city is higher among men and younger NA urban Canadians (18-29). Positive impressions are stronger among women, those aged 30 or older, and Canadians who were born outside of Canada.

### Presence of Aboriginal people and communities*

Do you think that this Aboriginal community/ presence of Aboriginal people is positive, neutral or negative for your city?




* Subsample: Those who are aware of either an Aboriginal community or Aboriginal people in their city.

## Contributions and challenges

***NA urban Canadians who regard Aboriginal people and communities in their city positively typically see them as a positive and vibrant influence on urban artistic and cultural communities. The challenge of crime and gang violence is the most common reason NA urban Canadians view Aboriginal people and communities negatively.***

**REASONS FOR POSITIVE VIEWS.** Among those NA urban Canadians who think the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is positive for their city, in what ways do they think Aboriginal people contribute to their city? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), they are most likely to think Aboriginal peoples and communities contribute in the following main ways:

- **Enrich urban art and culture.** More than one-third (36%) believe Aboriginal people and communities make great contributions to the artistic and cultural life of their city. University graduates are most likely to think Aboriginal people and communities contribute in this way.
- **Add cultural diversity.** Three in ten (30%) believe Aboriginal people and communities add to the general cultural mosaic of their city. This perception increases with education and household income, and is more common among those under 60 years of age.
- **Stimulate city economies.** More than one in ten (13%) note the economic contributions Aboriginal people and communities make to their cities as employees and employers of local businesses. Residents of Saskatoon (33%), Regina (29%), Calgary (27%) and Winnipeg (26%) are twice as likely as average to think Aboriginal people and communities contribute to their city in this way.

- **Make equal contributions.** The fourth main way NA urban Canadians (13%) think Aboriginal people and communities contribute to the city is that they, like anyone else regardless of ethnic or cultural group, are citizens who make an equal contribution to life in their city.

Residents of Thunder Bay are also more likely than others to believe that Aboriginal people and communities contribute by participating in or running Aboriginal outreach or community programs, or by acting as role models (23%); residents are as likely to mention this as they are to note the contributions made to urban art and culture (23%).

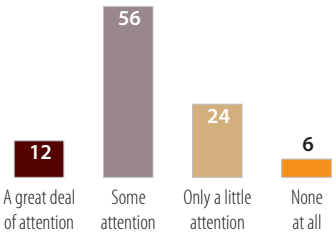
**REASONS FOR NEGATIVE VIEWS.** The small proportion of NA urban Canadians who think the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is negative for their city are most likely to associate Aboriginal people and communities with the challenge of increasing crime and gang violence in their cities (29%). Other challenges for their city that individuals relate to the presence of Aboriginal people or communities are poverty and homelessness (17%), and substance abuse (16%). A wide range of other challenges are identified, but none by more than six percent of those asked, and one in five (20%) cannot elaborate on why they feel the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is negative (sample sizes are too small to permit meaningful analysis of differences between groups of NA urban Canadians).

# 5. What informs NA urban Canadians' views of Aboriginal people?

## Attention to news and issues

Attention to news and issues

How much attention do you generally pay to news and issues about Aboriginal people? Would you say you pay . . . ?




***Majorities of NA urban Canadians report paying some attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people, although few take a lot of notice of information related to this topic.***

To what extent do NA urban Canadians pay attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people? Majorities say they pay at least some attention to this topic, although very few pay a great deal of attention. Seven in ten NA urban Canadians say they pay a great deal (12%) or some (56%) attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people. One-quarter (24%) pay only a little attention, while six percent say they take no notice at all.

The proportions of NA urban Canadians who pay at least some attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people are fairly consistent across cities, with the exception of Thunder Bay, where residents are most likely to notice news and issues about this topic (82%), and Edmonton, where residents are least likely to do so (58%).

Importantly, attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people is generally linked to greater awareness of Aboriginal people and communities, and more positive impressions of Aboriginal people generally, and of Aboriginal people and communities in their city. However, no conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between news exposure and views of Aboriginal people from these findings, since it may be that those who are most positive about Aboriginal people are more likely to seek out or at least make note of information about this population.

## Sources of learning

***NA urban Canadians are most likely to have learned what they know about Aboriginal people and their culture through media, television and newspapers, at school or through knowing an Aboriginal person.***

Media, television and newspapers are NA urban Canadians' main source of information about Aboriginal people and their culture, although personal contact with Aboriginal people is a close second.

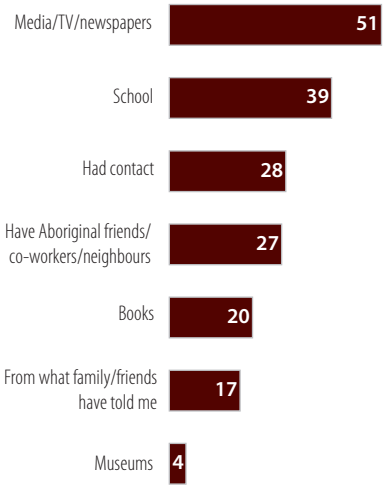
When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), five in ten (51%) NA urban Canadians say they have learned what they know about Aboriginal people and their culture from media, television and newspapers. A similar proportion (48%) indicate they have learned about Aboriginal people and culture through personal contact, whether it be casual contact with Aboriginal people (28%), or through Aboriginal friends, neighbours or co-workers (27%). Another common source is school (39%), while smaller proportions have learned what they know from books (20%), or family and friends (17%).

Torontonians (61%) are most likely to say they have learned about Aboriginal peoples and their culture through media sources. In contrast, contact and relationships with Aboriginal people are more common sources of learning among NA urban Canadians in Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg and Thunder Bay. For example, in Thunder Bay, NA urban Canadians are almost twice as likely (50%) as NA urban Canadians in Halifax (29%), Montreal (23%) and Toronto (20%) to learn about Aboriginal peoples and their culture through Aboriginal friends, neighbours and co-workers.

Media, television and newspapers are more popular sources of information for NA urban Canadians aged 30 and older. Younger NA urban Canadians, as well as those with more education and higher household incomes, are more likely than others to say they learned what they know about Aboriginal people and their culture in school. Personal contact and schools are also more common sources of this type of learning for individuals born in Canada, while new Canadians are more apt to say they learned what they know about Aboriginal people and culture from books.

### Sources of learning (top mentions)

From where or from whom have you learned what you know about Aboriginal people and their culture?




## Contact with Aboriginal people

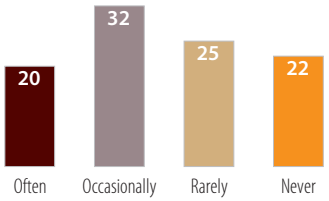
***Relatively few NA urban Canadians have regular contact with Aboriginal people, although this is understandably more common in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations.***

Few NA urban Canadians are in regular contact with Aboriginal people in their daily lives. One in five (20%) NA urban Canadians say they encounter Aboriginal people often, while another third (32%) do so occasionally. Almost half of NA urban Canadians are rarely (25%) or never (22%) in contact with Aboriginal people.

It is not surprising that NA urban Canadians are more likely to encounter Aboriginal people in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations. Frequent contact with Aboriginal people is notably higher among NA urban Canadians living in Thunder Bay (51%), Regina (48%), Saskatoon (48%), Winnipeg (45%) and Edmonton (39%). Residents of Montreal (65%) and Toronto (55%) are most likely to say they rarely or never encounter Aboriginal people; this lack of contact is also higher in Halifax (41%), Vancouver (40%) and Calgary (33%) than in the other western cities and Thunder Bay.

### Contact with Aboriginal people

Do you personally have contact with Aboriginal people often, occasionally, rarely or never?



Frequent contact with Aboriginal people is more common among NA urban Canadians under 60 years of age and those who are born in Canada. NA urban Canadians aged 60 and older, and those born outside Canada are more likely to say they never have such contact, as are those without a post-secondary education and those in the lowest income bracket.

How does contact influence NA urban Canadians' opinions and perceptions of Aboriginal peoples? The most notable differences are as follows:

- Positive *and* negative assessments of urban Aboriginal peoples and communities are higher among those in frequent contact with Aboriginal people, suggesting they are more aware of both the benefits and the challenges of the urban Aboriginal presence for their community. Further evidence of this greater awareness is that individuals with the least contact are also the least able to identify any important issues facing Aboriginal people living in cities.
- Although it remains a minority view, NA urban Canadians in frequent contact with Aboriginal peoples are more likely to believe that Aboriginal peoples have unique rights and privileges, and less likely to consider Aboriginal peoples as just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada.
- NA urban Canadians who are often in contact with Aboriginal peoples perceive more frequent discrimination against them, both overall and in comparison to other groups in Canadian society, such as Jews, Chinese, Blacks, Pakistanis or East Indians, and Muslims.

## Aboriginal friends, neighbours and co-workers

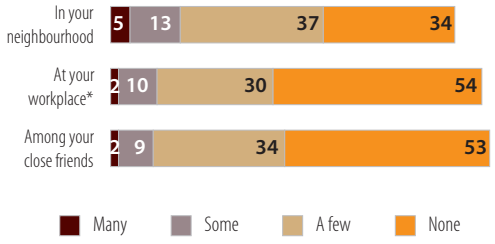
***Few NA urban Canadians know Aboriginal people as close friends, neighbours and co-workers, although they display considerable interest in knowing more of them.***

Aside from casual contact, how many NA urban Canadians know Aboriginal people, either as close friends, neighbours or co-workers? Among NA urban Canadians who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in their city, most NA urban Canadians know few or no Aboriginal people as close friends (87%), co-workers (84% among those who are currently employed) or even neighbours (71%).

As could be expected, the proportions of NA urban Canadians who have at least some Aboriginal people as neighbours, close friends and co-workers is higher in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations. Thus, NA urban Canadians in Thunder Bay, Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg are, on average, more than twice as likely as other NA urban Canadians to say they have at least some neighbours (38%) who are Aboriginal. Having Aboriginal co-workers is also more common in these four cities, as well as Edmonton, while having close Aboriginal friends is a more common occurrence in Regina, Saskatoon and Thunder Bay than elsewhere.

### Numbers of Aboriginal people

How many of your neighbours/co-workers/friends are Aboriginal? Many/some/a few, or none?




* Excludes those who do not work

NA urban Canadians with more education and higher household incomes are less likely than others to have at least some Aboriginal neighbours or friends. Interestingly, individuals born in Canada are twice as likely as new Canadians to have many or some Aboriginal neighbours.

In most cases, NA urban Canadians who have many Aboriginal friends, neighbours or co-workers do not express differing perspectives about Aboriginal peoples. However, there are two exceptions. This group is more likely than others to have heard of Indian residential schools and to believe that these schools have contributed to a great extent to the current challenges faced by Aboriginal communities. They are also more likely than others to be optimistic about the direction in which relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are heading.

When asked if they have any interest in having more Aboriginal friends, six in ten (60%) NA urban Canadians who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in their city say they do, especially those in Montreal (69%), Toronto (67%) and Halifax (62%) – the same cities where NA urban Canadians are most likely to currently have no Aboriginal people as close friends.

Significant minorities of NA urban Canadians are more ambivalent about whether or not they want more Aboriginal friends. Three in ten (32%) say "it depends" or are uncertain, rising to four in ten or more NA urban Canadians in Regina (44%), Thunder Bay (43%) and Calgary (40%). Only one in ten (9%) have no interest in more Aboriginal friends.

## Exposure to Aboriginal culture

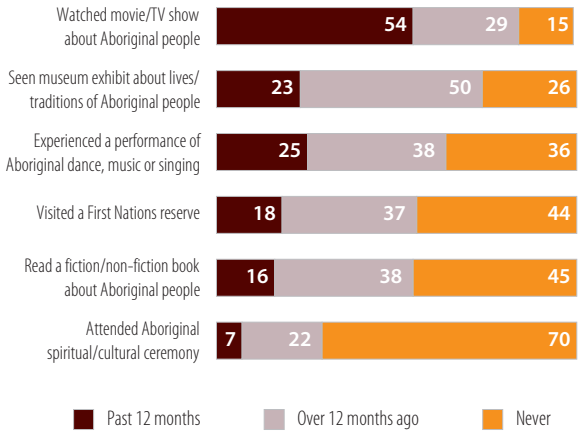
***Most NA urban Canadians have had some exposure to Aboriginal people and culture at one time, most likely through movies or TV shows about Aboriginal people.***

The survey explored the exposure that NA urban Canadians have had to Aboriginal culture. NA urban Canadians were asked how recently, if ever, they had participated in six different activities that can provide insight into Aboriginal people and their culture. Overall, seven in ten (71%) have been exposed to Aboriginal culture in at least one of these ways in the past 12 months, and more than nine in ten (94%) have *ever* had such exposure.

Movies or TV shows about Aboriginal people are by far the most common ways in which NA urban Canadians have been exposed to Aboriginal culture, while only a minority have had the opportunity to experience a ceremony that encompasses the spiritual or cultural traditions of this population. More than eight in ten (83%) say they have **watched a movie or TV show about Aboriginal people** in the past 12 months (54%) or over 12 months ago (29%), while only 15 percent say they have never done so. Most NA urban Canadians have also seen a **museum exhibit about the lives and traditions of Aboriginal people** at some point (73% ever), although they are much less likely to have done so in the past year (23%). Slightly fewer NA urban Canadians say they have **experienced a performance of Aboriginal dance, music or singing** (63% ever; 25% in past 12 months), **visited a First Nations reserve** (55% ever; 18% in past 12 months), or **read a fiction or non-fiction book about Aboriginal people** (54% ever; 16% in past 12 months). NA urban Canadians are least likely to have **attended an Aboriginal spiritual or cultural ceremony** (29% ever; 7% in past 12 months).

### Participation in cultural activities

Please tell me if you have done each of the [following activities] in the past 12 months, over 12 months ago or never.




Eight in ten or more NA urban Canadians in each of the 10 cities say they have ever watched a movie or TV show about Aboriginal people. In contrast, participation in the other five types of activities varies considerably by city, and is generally lower in cities with smaller relative Aboriginal populations, particularly Montreal. For example, NA urban Canadians living in Montreal are much less likely than others to have seen a museum exhibit about Aboriginal lives and traditions (63% ever), to have read a book about Aboriginal people (41%), or to have experienced a dance, music or singing performance (40%). Torontonians are least likely to have visited a First Nations reserve (46%), and are also among the least likely to have attended an Aboriginal spiritual or cultural ceremony (26%), together with residents of Halifax (20%) and Montreal (13%).

Thunder Bay residents are most likely of all NA urban Canadians to have recently visited (in the past 12 months) a First Nations reserve (46%), and to have recently attended an Aboriginal spiritual or cultural

ceremony (21%), which is likely due at least in part to the existence of a First Nations reserve close to the city of Thunder Bay. Residents of Regina are more likely than others to say they have seen a museum exhibit about the lives and traditions of Aboriginal people in the past year (45%).

Participation in all six of these activities (ever) is least common among those without a high school diploma and those in the lowest income bracket, and increases with education and income. Across all six activities, participation is consistently lower among those who have been in Canada for less than 10 years, although participation among those who have been in Canada for 10 or more years either approaches or is equal to that for people born in Canada.

Exposure to these activities also varies with age, although not in a consistent manner. NA urban Canadians aged 60 or older are less likely than others to have watched a movie or TV show (72%) or to have read a book (45%) about Aboriginal people. The youngest group of NA urban Canadians (18-29) is less likely than others to have visited a First Nations reserve (42%), or experienced a performance of Aboriginal dance, music or singing (56%). Both the youngest and oldest NA urban Canadians are less likely than those aged 30 to 59 to have seen a museum exhibit about Aboriginal lives and traditions.

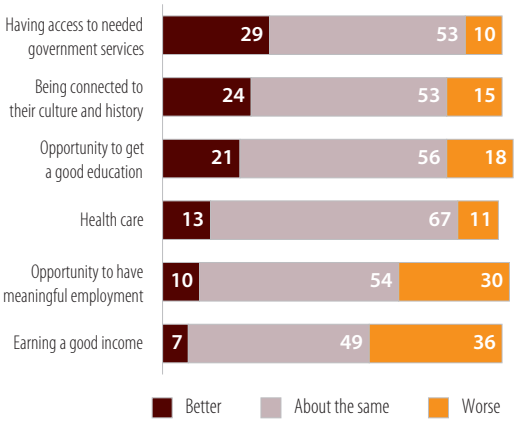
# 6. Perceptions of urban opportunity and services

## Perceptions of opportunities

***There is a significant gap between Aboriginal peoples' socio-economic reality and the perceptions of NA urban Canadians. Majorities of NA urban Canadians feel Aboriginal people have at least the same, if not better, socio-economic and other opportunities as non-Aboriginal people in their city.***

### Situation of Aboriginal people in cities

Do you think the situation of Aboriginal people in your city is better, worse, or about the same as that of non-Aboriginal people in each of the following ways?




Notwithstanding the socio-economic improvements achieved by Aboriginal people in the past two decades, the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people's quality of life is narrowing slowly. Aboriginal people continue to experience higher unemployment rates, lower incomes and lower educational attainment compared to non-Aboriginal people. Yet, there is a significant gap between this reality and the perceptions of NA urban Canadians.

The *UAPS* non-Aboriginal survey asked NA urban Canadians to assess whether or not the situation of Aboriginal people living in their city is better, worse or about the same as non-Aboriginal people on six dimensions: access to government services, commitment to their culture and history, opportunity to get a good education, health care, opportunity to have meaningful employment, and earning a good income.

Majorities of NA urban Canadians think the situation of Aboriginal people in their city is the same as or even better than that of non-Aboriginal people, across all six areas. NA urban Canadians are most likely to think that Aboriginal people have the same (53%) or better (29%) **access to needed government services**. Slightly fewer NA urban Canadians, albeit still large majorities, think that the **connection to their culture and history** (24% better and 53% same) and the **opportunity to get a good education** (21% better and 56% same) is at least as good among Aboriginal people as non-Aboriginal people. NA urban Canadians are somewhat less likely to think Aboriginal people have better **health care** (13%), and more likely to think their experience with health care services is similar to that of non-Aboriginal people (67%).

NA urban Canadians are least likely to think Aboriginal people in their city have the same or better employment and income opportunities as non-Aboriginal people. Nonetheless, more than six in ten think Aboriginal people have at least as good an **opportunity to have meaningful employment** as non-Aboriginal people (10% better and 54% the same), and more than one in two say the same about the **opportunity to earn a good income** (7% better and 49% the same). Three in ten or more NA urban Canadians think the situation of Aboriginal people is in fact worse when it comes to employment (30%) or income (36%) opportunities.

Perceptions of the situation of Aboriginal people in relation to non-Aboriginal people vary across the population of NA urban Canadians as follows:

- The proportion of NA urban Canadians who say that Aboriginal people have better access to government services, and better educational and employment opportunities is generally higher in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations, including Thunder Bay, Winnipeg, Regina and Saskatoon.
- Although a minority opinion, the perception that Aboriginal people have a worse connection to their culture and history is higher in Montreal (22%) and Toronto (19%), while the perception that they experience worse health care is higher in Calgary (17%) and Vancouver (16%). The view that the situation of Aboriginal people is worse when it comes to earning a good income is highest in Toronto (41%), Calgary (41%), Vancouver (40%) and Winnipeg (39%).
- NA urban Canadians with a university degree are more likely than others to think that Aboriginal people have poorer educational, employment and income opportunities, and poorer health care, than non-Aboriginal people.
- The proportions of NA urban Canadians who say that Aboriginal people have better access to government services, a better connection to their culture and history, better educational opportunities, and better health care are all higher among those who report more frequent contact with Aboriginal people.
- Those who pay greater attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people are more likely than others to think that the situation of Aboriginal people is worse than that of non-Aboriginal people in most areas, with the exception of having a connection to their culture and history (where opinions are similar regardless of level of attention to this topic).
- Views that health care, access to government services, and employment and income opportunities are worse for Aboriginal people are also more common among those aware of an Aboriginal community in their city (i.e., either a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community). However, this group is also more likely than others to think that Aboriginal people have a better connection to their culture and history than do non-Aboriginal people.

## Impressions of services provided to urban Aboriginal peoples

***NA urban Canadians tend to give services responding to the needs Aboriginal people in their city a good grade, but are more divided and unsure about the services provided to urban Aboriginal peoples by social housing programs and the child welfare system.***

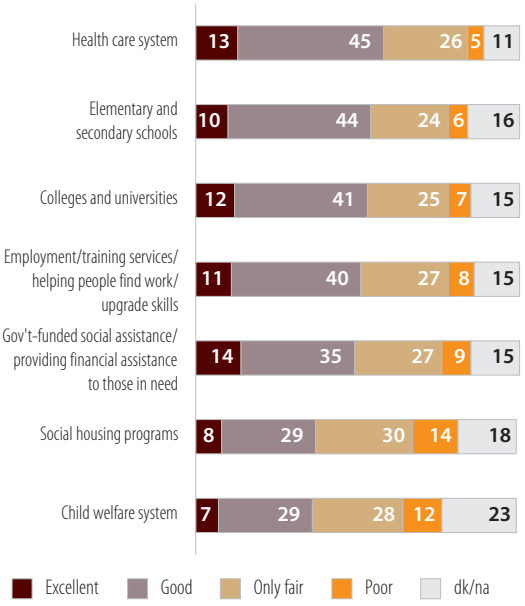
NA urban Canadians were asked to rate how well various services are responding to the needs of Aboriginal people living in their city: the health care system, elementary and secondary schools, colleges

and universities, employment and training services (to help people find work or upgrade their skills), social assistance programs (funded by government, that provide financial assistance to people in need), social housing programs (to help people find housing) and, finally, the child welfare system (which could involve contact with social workers, group or foster care, and adoption services).

In most cases, NA urban Canadians are more likely to rate these services as doing a good or excellent job than only a fair or poor one. The two exceptions are social housing programs and the child welfare system: those who say these services do a fair-to-poor job of responding to Aboriginal people's needs slightly outweigh the proportion who say they do a good-to-excellent job.

## Impressions of services

Are each of the following services doing an excellent, good, only fair or poor job at responding to the needs of Aboriginal people living in your city?




Of the seven services, NA urban Canadians are most likely to think the **health care system** (58%) does a good to excellent job of responding to the needs of Aboriginal people in their city. Close to or just over half each say the same about **elementary and secondary schools** (54%), **colleges and universities** (53%), **employment and training services** (51%), and **social assistance programs** (49%). In each of these cases, between three and four in ten NA urban Canadians say these services are doing an only fair to poor job.

Views are more divided when it comes to social housing programs and the child welfare system. More than one-third (37%) of NA urban Canadians think **social housing programs** do at least a good job of responding to the needs of Aboriginal people in their city, while a slightly greater proportion (44%) think they do only a fair or poor job. Similarly, 36 percent of NA urban Canadians think the **child welfare system** does a good or excellent job, compared to four in ten (40%) who say they do a fair-to-poor job. Also of note is that just over two in ten (23%) NA urban Canadians are unable to offer an opinion on the performance of the child welfare system in relation to Aboriginal people, higher than any of the other six services.

NA urban Canadians' perceptions of how well these services respond to the needs of Aboriginal people vary by city. Generally speaking, those living in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations are more likely than others to have confidence in the job their city is doing. Views that the health care system, and elementary and secondary schools do a good or excellent job responding to Aboriginal people's needs are more common in Thunder Bay, Saskatoon, Regina and Winnipeg (and in the case of health care, also in Edmonton). NA urban Canadians in Regina, Saskatoon and Thunder Bay are more likely than others to think that colleges and universities do a good or excellent job, while those in Regina and Saskatoon are also more likely to say the same of employment and training centres. Thunder Bay stands out as having a much higher proportion who believe that social housing programs (60%) and the child welfare system (57%) in their city are doing a good-to-excellent job responding to the needs of Aboriginal people. Finally, residents of Vancouver are most likely to give poor ratings to several areas, including the health care system, employment and training services, social assistance programs and social housing programs.

There are relatively few differences by socio-demographic factors in views of the service quality provided to Aboriginal people. The perception that social assistance programs do an excellent or good job responding to Aboriginal people's needs is more common among NA urban Canadians aged 30 to 59, while the view that they do only a fair to poor job in this regard is higher among those aged 18 to 29 (those aged 60 or older are more apt than others to say they do not know).

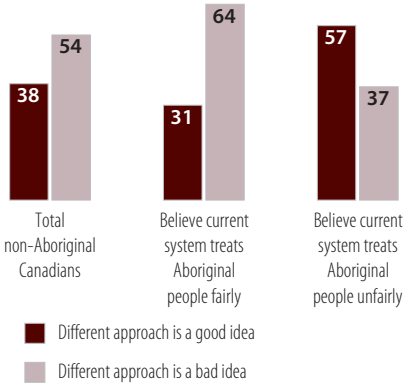
## Aboriginal people and the justice system

***Six in ten NA urban Canadians believe Canada's justice system treats Aboriginal people fairly. Accordingly, only minorities think the criminal justice system should incorporate a different approach for Aboriginal people.***

**PERCEPTIONS OF FAIRNESS.** Some six in ten NA urban Canadians (58%) believe that Aboriginal people who come in contact with Canada's justice system are fairly treated. This view is most widespread in Regina and Saskatoon, as well as among men and younger Canadians (under 45 years of age), and newer Canadians (i.e., those in Canada for less than 10 years). As well, this view is much more common among NA urban Canadians who believe Aboriginal people are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada's multicultural society (69%).

**SUPPORT FOR AN ALTERNATE APPROACH.** In light of these views, it is not surprising that a minority (38%) of NA urban Canadians agree with the idea that the criminal justice system should incorporate a different approach for Aboriginal people – one that respects Aboriginal concepts of justice, Aboriginal laws and alternatives to punishment such as reconciliation and restoration. Indeed, more than one in two (54%) think an alternate approach to justice for Aboriginal people is a bad idea (8% do not voice an opinion).

Support for different approach to justice for Aboriginal people, by perceptions of fairness




Opinions about the value of an alternate approach are linked to perceptions about the fairness of treatment that Aboriginal people receive in the current mainstream justice system. The proportion of NA urban Canadians who say a different approach to justice is a good idea is highest among those who think Aboriginal people are unfairly treated (57%) – although even three in ten of those who believe Aboriginal people are *fairly* treated support this idea (64% say it is a bad idea). Support grows even further to almost two-thirds (65%) of those who think Aboriginal people are unfairly treated *and* that they have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada.

Notably, opposition to this idea increases with frequency of contact with Aboriginal people (from 48% of those who are rarely or never in contact to 63% who are often in contact). This is at least partly explained by the fact that NA urban Canadians in frequent contact with Aboriginal people are more likely to reject the notion of special treatment or privilege for Aboriginal people, and to consider them just like other cultural or ethnic groups in this country.

Opposition to a different approach to justice for Aboriginal people outweighs support in almost all cities, and is particularly strong in Edmonton (66% think it is a bad idea). The exception is Montreal, where opinion on this issue is almost equally divided (45% oppose and 47% support). University graduates, and those who pay the most attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people are more likely than others to support this idea.

NA urban Canadians who *support* the idea of a different approach to justice for Aboriginal people do so because they believe:

- Aboriginal people have a unique culture and history that requires that they be judged within their own value system and by their peers (43%); and
- The current justice system is not working for Aboriginal people, and an approach is needed that focuses on rehabilitation and healing rather than punishment (22%).

In contrast, eight in ten (80%) NA urban Canadians *oppose* a different approach to justice for Aboriginal people because they do not believe that any one group should receive preferential treatment, and that treating everyone equally avoids discrimination.

In the Prairie cities, particularly Edmonton and Calgary, there is also a sense that previous attempts to pursue alternate approaches have not been effective. Unique to Toronto, some (12%) express concerns that other cultural groups will demand special considerations when it comes to the justice system.

# 7. Relations with Aboriginal people and the future

## Perceptions of current relations

***NA urban Canadians clearly divide into two 'camps' of NA urban Canadian world views, one more negative and the other more positive on the current state of relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people.***

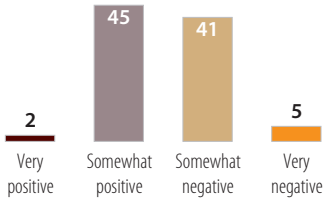
Communities and individuals have made much effort in the past two decades to build bridges between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Still, NA urban Canadians are divided over the state of current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people today. Few NA urban Canadians have extreme perceptions of current relations (i.e., say they are very positive or very negative), but similar proportions think current relations are either somewhat positive (45%) or somewhat negative (41%).

Perceptions of current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people vary across cities, likely influenced by the relative size of the Aboriginal population in each city. The view that current relations are negative is the majority opinion in Edmonton (62%), Calgary (55%), Winnipeg (55%), Thunder Bay (55%) and Regina (54%). In contrast, NA urban Canadians in Vancouver, Halifax and Toronto are more likely to be optimistic than pessimistic about their relationship with Aboriginal people. Montrealers and residents of Saskatoon are divided between the two viewpoints.

The view that current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is negative is more common among NA urban Canadians in the highest income bracket and those who were born in Canada. These perceptions are not influenced by amount of contact with Aboriginal people, but they are related to the amount of discrimination NA urban Canadians believe Aboriginal people experience. Those who believe Aboriginal people are often subject to discrimination are more likely to believe current relations are negative (61% vs. 42% of those who believe Aboriginal people experience discrimination less often).

### Current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people

Would you describe the current relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada today as very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative or very negative?



## Perceptions of change

***NA urban Canadians are more optimistic about the direction of their relationship with Aboriginal peoples than in 2005, but only three in ten think relations are improving.***

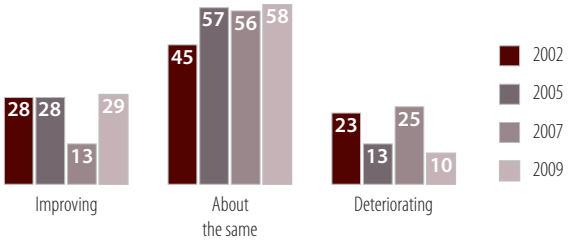
How do NA urban Canadians view the evolution of their relationship with Aboriginal peoples? Currently, a majority (58%) of NA urban Canadians think the relationship is staying the same, while three in ten (29%) think relations are improving and 10 percent think they are deteriorating. NA urban Canadians are more optimistic about relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people than they were two years ago, in the wake of high-profile protest actions (e.g., a blockade of the CN rail line near Deseronto, the occupation of disputed lands in Caledonia) and around the time that the Assembly of First Nations called for a National Day of Action (June 29, 2007). Perceptions of how relations are developing have rebounded from that low point and are now close to what they were in 2005.[59]

Perceptions about current relations influence NA urban Canadians' views of how these relations are changing (or not). Most NA urban Canadians who say the current relationship is negative don't see this changing (66%), with the remainder split between whether it is improving (16%) or becoming even worse (17%). Optimism is higher among those who say the current relationship is positive (42% say relations are improving even further).

Despite the fact that they are generally more negative than positive about the state of current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, NA urban Canadians living in Regina (41%) and Saskatoon (40%) are among the most optimistic that these relations are improving, together with residents of Vancouver (41%). Optimism is also more common among NA urban Canadians in the lowest income bracket, and those who pay at least some attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people. The perception that relations are deteriorating is higher in Thunder Bay (20%) than elsewhere.

### Changing relations

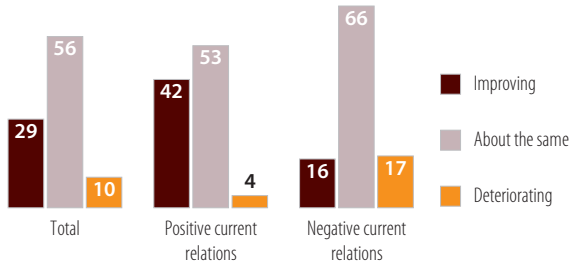
Do you think relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada are improving, deteriorating or staying about the same?




Data prior to 2009 from Environics' FOCUS CANADA survey (based on communities of 100,000 or more).

### Changing relations

Do you think relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada are improving, deteriorating or staying about the same?




59 Historical data is based on Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) with populations of 100,000 or more. According to the 2006 census, there are 33 such communities in Canada, which include all 10 cities in the *UAPS* survey of NA urban Canadians.

### Reasons why NA urban Canadians think current relations are improving:

*I see it in terms of participation in the workforce; more interactions between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. There used to be two solitudes.*

*Because I see more and more a mix of people together, and you see them at more places than you did before, which didn't happen years ago.*

*They are really working hard at getting over what's been done to them. Lots of them are great people and they have been through tough times, and they are coming out of it.*

*They are getting better at communicating their position to the larger society. I also think the present government has taken steps to improving the relationship.*

*People have become educated and informed about Aboriginal people in the news, and that now there is more social interaction and communication between the non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people. Better communication.*

*I think that more people are having more exposure to native people and realizing the similarities.*

**REASONS FOR IMPROVING RELATIONS.** Among NA urban Canadians who believe that the relationship between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people is *improving*, what do they think has brought about this change? Most believe it is due to one of two reasons: growing contact and dialogue between the two groups (25%), or greater acceptance by NA urban Canadians of different cultures and values (22%). Beyond these two reasons, some in this group believe that non-Aboriginal people now have a better understanding of Aboriginal people, in terms of the issues they face (10%), but also due to positive media exposure (9%). Others give credit for better relations to Aboriginal people, because they are seen to be better educated than in the past (10%), have more employment opportunities (4%) or are more self-sufficient (4%). Relatively few identify land claim settlements (7%) or the federal government's apology for residential schools (6%) as reasons for improved relations.

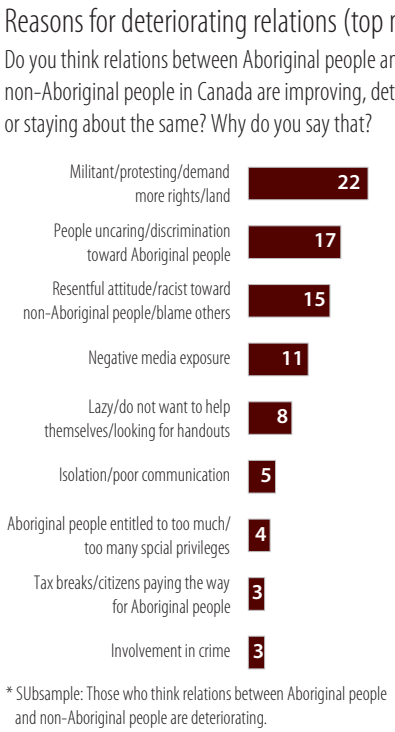
Some of NA urban Canadians' reasons why current relations are improving are presented in the sidebar on this page.

Reasons for improving relations (top mentions)*

Do you think relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada are improving, deteriorating or staying about the same? Why do you say that?


* SUbsample: Those who think relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people are improving.

**REASONS FOR DETERIORATING RELATIONS.** Among urban Canadians who believe that the relationship between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people is *deteriorating*, what do they think are the reasons for this? Most believe that Aboriginal protests and demands for rights or land (22%, representing 2% of all NA urban Canadians) are harming relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. Some in this group blame uncaring or discriminatory attitudes of non-Aboriginal Canadians (17%), or negative media exposure (11%). Others hold Aboriginal people responsible due to what they see as dismissive attitudes towards non-Aboriginal people (15%), laziness or lack of initiative (8%), or involvement in crime (3%). Relatively few say that existing privileges (4%) or tax breaks (3%) to which Aboriginal people are entitled have led to poorer relations.




### Reasons why NA urban Canadians think current relations are deteriorating:

*Because of the way they are going about things, like the blockade in Caledonia and taking people's cottages in the beaches up north.*

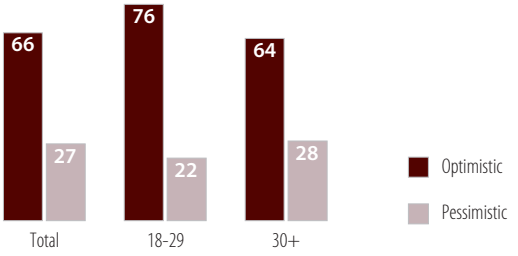
*Aboriginal people are being discriminated against in the job market, in good housing areas.*

*Instead of defending Aboriginal people, they get perceived as uneducated and violent.*

*It seems like the issues, such as residential schools, they seem to bring it forward as an excuse, blaming someone else for their problems.*

### Views on future quality of life, by age

Looking to the future, are you optimistic or pessimistic that the quality of life for Aboriginal people in your city will improve to the same level as non-Aboriginal people in the next generation?



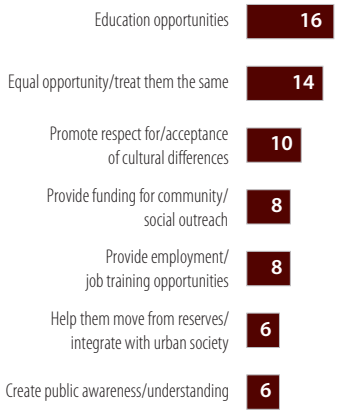

## Future quality of life

***Majorities of NA urban Canadians, across cities, are optimistic that Aboriginal peoples' quality of life will approach the rest of the population's in the next generation.***

Looking to the future, what do NA urban Canadians foresee for the quality of life of Aboriginal people in their city? NA urban Canadians, especially younger ones, are optimistic that Aboriginal peoples' quality of life in the city will improve to the same level as non-Aboriginal people in the next generation. Two-thirds (66%) of NA urban Canadians are optimistic about such progress, and this sentiment rises to three-quarters (76%) of those aged 18 to 29. Only one-quarter (27%) are pessimistic about the future quality of life for Aboriginal people in their city. Notably, the degree of optimism about Aboriginal peoples' future quality of life is remarkably similar in all cities.

### How to ensure a better quality of life (top 7 mentions)

What do you think is the most important way your city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people?




How do NA urban Canadians think their cities can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), NA urban Canadians express a range of approaches, but most think greater educational opportunities (16%) or treating Aboriginal people the same as non-Aboriginal people (14%) to be the most important ways their city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people. NA urban Canadians also think promoting respect for and acceptance of Aboriginal cultural differences (10%), providing funding for community and social outreach (8%), and providing employment and job training opportunities (8%) would contribute to a better quality of life for Aboriginal people in the future.

Finally, smaller proportions think the most important way their city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people is to help them move away from reserves and further integrate into urban society (6%), and for cities to create greater public awareness and understanding of their situation (6%). One-quarter (25%) of NA urban Canadians cannot say what they think is the most important way their city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people.

# 8. The big picture: NA urban Canadians' views of Aboriginal people

In this section of the chapter, results of individual survey questions are reported for NA urban Canadians overall and, where relevant, socio-demographic differences are described. However, when there is a great deal of information available, there is always the danger of missing "the forest for the trees." In other words, the overall picture of what is going on among NA urban Canadians in terms of their attitudes towards Aboriginal people can be somewhat elusive when there are so many individual questions and answers to consider. In order to achieve this overall picture, the examination of the survey results included another level of analysis that involved an in-depth look at the survey items to uncover broad viewpoints – or segments – among NA urban Canadians.

Specifically, this in-depth look involved determining if there are patterns of views among NA urban Canadians that run deeper than their answers to specific questions. To determine this, a segmentation of the data was performed. The goal of the segmentation was to find natural clusters among NA urban Canadians based on their overall attitudes toward Aboriginal culture, responsibility and contribution to Canadian society in order to encapsulate NA urban Canadians' "world views" of Aboriginal people.

An analysis of a large number of questions posed in the *UAPS* survey reveals four distinct "world views" of Aboriginal people among non-Aboriginal urban Canadians:

**Dismissive Naysayers (24%)**
*Tend to view Aboriginal peoples and communities negatively, i.e., entitled and isolated from Canadian society.*

**Cultural Romantics (45%)**
*Idealistic and optimistic, they have a strong belief in Aboriginal peoples' artistic and cultural contributions.*

**Inattentive Skeptics (14%)**
*Uninformed and unaware, they typically think Aboriginal peoples are no different from other Canadians.*

**Connected Advocates (17%)**
*High level of contact and strong belief that Aboriginal peoples often experience discrimination.*

- **Dismissive Naysayers** are the polar opposite of Connected Advocates. They are most likely among NA urban Canadians to possess a negative outlook towards Aboriginal peoples, namely that Aboriginal people are entitled, isolated from broader Canadian society by their own volition, and largely the cause of their own problems. Nonetheless, Dismissive Naysayers hold some views that are similar to those of Connected Advocates, such as viewing current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people negatively. However, they arrive at these conclusions from very different perspectives. Dismissive Naysayers are a larger proportion of the NA urban Canadian population in western cities (Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon and Winnipeg), Thunder Bay and Montreal. Overall, they are the second largest group (24%) of NA urban Canadians.
- **Inattentive Skeptics** are least able to identify an Aboriginal community in their city, have the least amount of personal contact with Aboriginal people and are generally out-of-touch with Aboriginal issues. In general, they know little about Aboriginal people, and are inclined to think Aboriginal people have the same issues and opportunities as anyone else. They span all ages and education levels, but a disproportionate number are French-speaking and live in Montreal. Inattentive Skeptics represent the smallest group (14%) of NA urban Canadians.
- **Cultural Romantics** are the most middle-of-the-road and optimistic of the four segments. They are largely distinguished from other segments in that they possess the strongest belief in the artistic and cultural contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society. They have fairly high cultural and media exposure to Aboriginal people, but little personal contact. Although present in all cities, they include a disproportionate number of Torontonians. Cultural Romantics represent the largest number of NA urban Canadians (45%).
- **Connected Advocates** represent one of two opposing views of Aboriginal people among NA urban Canadians. They are unique from other segments in their relatively high level of contact with urban Aboriginal peoples, and their belief that Aboriginal people have been marginalized and often subject to discrimination in Canadian society. Although present in all cities, they include higher than average proportions of NA urban Canadians in Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg. They are also the most educated of the four segments (more than six in ten possess a college/university or post-graduate degree). Connected Advocates represent the third largest group (17%) of NA urban Canadians.

More detailed descriptions of each segment and their geographic distribution is provided in Appendix B.

# Appendix A: Methodology

Provided below are additional details about the *UAPS* methodology beyond what is described in the Background section at the beginning of this report.

## Main survey

A total of 2,614 in-depth, in-person interviews were conducted with people who self-identify as being First Nations (status or non-status), Métis or Inuit in the 11 cities included in this survey. The adjacent table presents the number of completed interviews by identity group in each city, compared to the expected (quota) number.

The sampling approach, which relied primarily on "snowball" or "network-based" sampling to identify participants, was generally successful except that insufficient numbers of Métis were identified in Saskatoon, Montreal and Halifax (in comparison to population data from the 2006 Census). As a result, Halifax did not fulfill its overall quota of 250 interviews. In Saskatoon, the outstanding interviews were completed with First Nations participants, while in Montreal, they were divided between First Nations and Inuit participants.

### Aboriginal identity (unweighted) by city

| | TOTAL | | First Nations | | Métis | | Inuit | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Actual | Expected | Actual | Expected | Actual | Expected | Actual | Expected |
| Vancouver | 261 | 250 | 168 | 144 | 85 | 96 | 8 | 10 |
| Calgary | 249 | 250 | 136 | 120 | 104 | 120 | 9 | 10 |
| Edmonton | 250 | 250 | 130 | 120 | 106 | 120 | 14 | 10 |
| Regina | 251 | 250 | 148 | 125 | 100 | 115 | 3 | 10 |
| Saskatoon | 248 | 250 | 188 | 122 | 59 | 118 | 1 | 10 |
| Winnipeg | 252 | 250 | 127 | 120 | 122 | 120 | 3 | 10 |
| Thunder Bay | 250 | 250 | 177 | 160 | 73 | 80 | – | 10 |
| Toronto | 251 | 250 | 174 | 160 | 68 | 80 | 9 | 10 |
| Montreal | 250 | 250 | 163 | 154 | 24 | 86 | 63 | 10 |
| Halifax | 202 | 250 | 147 | 145 | 48 | 95 | 5 | 10 |
| Ottawa | 150 | 150 | – | – | – | – | 150 | 150 |
| **TOTAL*** | **2,614** | **2,650** | **1,558** | **1,370** | **789** | **1,030** | **265** | **250** |

** Total for all three identity groups is 2,612. There are an additional two cases in Halifax that have incomplete information about Aboriginal identity.*

The final sample distribution for the 11 cities is as follows:

## Final sample distribution by city

| | Aboriginal identity population | Percentage of population (%) | n (unweighted) | n (weighted) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vancouver | 40,310 | 14.1% | 261 | 383 |
| Calgary | 26,575 | 9.3% | 249 | 244 |
| Edmonton | 52,100 | 18.2% | 250 | 452 |
| Regina | 17,105 | 6.0% | 251 | 134 |
| Saskatoon | 21,535 | 7.5% | 248 | 171 |
| Winnipeg | 68,385 | 23.9% | 252 | 609 |
| Thunder Bay | 10,055 | 3.5% | 250 | 91 |
| Toronto | 26,575 | 9.3% | 251 | 278 |
| Montreal | 17,865 | 6.2% | 250 | 169 |
| Halifax | 5,320 | 1.9% | 202 | 50 |
| Ottawa (Inuit only) | 730** | * | 150 | 7 |
| **TOTAL** | **286,555** | **100%** | **2,614** | **2,589** |

* *Less than 0.5%*

** *Inuit population data only*

Interviewing was conducted on a staggered basis, as follows:

## Interviewing dates by city

| | Start date | End date |
|---|---|---|
| Calgary | March 2 | July 26 |
| Halifax | March 5 | June 4 |
| Winnipeg | March 24 | July 15 |
| Edmonton | April 3 | June 25 |
| Vancouver | April 7 | August 6 |
| Regina | April 10 | July 21 |
| Thunder Bay | April 21 | June 1 |
| Montreal | May 1 | July 7 |
| Ottawa | May 8 | August 18 |
| Toronto | May 29 | August 3 |
| Saskatoon | June 18 | October 4 |

At the analysis stage, the data were weighted by age, gender and education within Aboriginal identity, and by city overall to accurately reflect the distribution of the population according to the 2006 Census.

## Survey of non-Aboriginal Canadians

The sampling method was designed to complete 250 telephone interviews with non-Aboriginal people aged 18 and older living in households randomly selected in each of the urban centres in which the main survey was conducted: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax (excluding Ottawa), for a total of 2,500 interviews. The final sample was distributed as follows:

### Final sample distribution by CMA

| | Percentage of population | n (unweighted) | n (weighted) | Margin of error* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Halifax | 2.6% | 250 | 69 | ± 6.2 |
| Montreal | 25.2% | 250 | 613 | ± 6.2 |
| Toronto | 34.7% | 250 | 847 | ± 6.2 |
| Thunder Bay | 0.9% | 250 | 32 | ± 6.2 |
| Winnipeg | 4.8% | 250 | 123 | ± 6.2 |
| Saskatoon | 1.6% | 250 | 42 | ± 6.2 |
| Regina | 1.3% | 250 | 45 | ± 6.2 |
| Edmonton | 7.0% | 251 | 178 | ± 6.2 |
| Calgary | 7.2% | 250 | 184 | ± 6.2 |
| Vancouver | 14.8% | 250 | 367 | ± 6.2 |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **2,501** | **2,501** | **± 2.0** |

* *Described in percentage points, at the 95% confidence level. A margin of error can be calculated for this study because it is based on a probability sample (that is, when every member of the target population has a known probability of being selected).*

Environics uses a sampling method in which sample is generated using the RDD (random digit dialling) technique. Samples are generated using a database of active phone ranges. These ranges are made up of a series of contiguous blocks of 100 contiguous phone numbers and are revised three to four times per year after a thorough analysis of the most recent edition of an electronic phonebook. Each number generated is put through an appropriate series of validation procedures before it is retained as part of a sample. Each number generated is looked up in a recent electronic phonebook database to retrieve geographic location, business indicator and "do not call" status.

The postal code for listed numbers is verified for accuracy and compared against a list of valid codes for the sample stratum. Non-listed numbers are assigned a "most probable" postal code based on the data available for all listed numbers in the phone exchange. This technique ensures both unlisted numbers and numbers listed after the directory is published are included in the sample.

From within each multi-person household contacted, participants 18 years of age and older were screened for random selection using the "most recent birthday" method. The use of this technique produces results that are as valid and effective as enumerating all persons within a household and selecting one randomly. Participants were also screened to ensure they *do not* self-identify as an Aboriginal person. Incentives are not typically used for surveys of the general population, and were not used for this survey.

At the data analysis stage, the final sample was weighted by age, gender and education within CMA, and by CMA overall, to ensure the results are fully proportionate to the actual distribution of the adult Canadian population according to the 2006 Census.

Telephone interviewing was conducted at Environics' central facilities in Toronto and Montreal. Field supervisors were present at all times to ensure accurate interviewing and recording of responses. During fieldwork, 10 percent of each interviewer's work was unobtrusively monitored for quality control. All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the professional standards established by the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA), as well as applicable federal legislation (PIPEDA). The introduction of the survey included reference to the fact that it is registered with the National Survey Registration System. The average length of time to complete a survey interview was 27.5 minutes.

The effective response rate for this survey is seven percent.[60] This is calculated as the number of responding participants (completed interviews, disqualifications and over-quota participants – 2,880), divided by unresolved numbers (busy, no answer – 14,461) plus non-responding households or individuals (refusals, language barrier, missed callbacks – 22,180) plus responding participants (2,880) [R/(U+IS+R)].

The disposition of all dialled sample is presented in the table below.

## Completion results

| | |
|---|---|
| Total sample dialled | 52,654 |
| **UNRESOLVED NUMBERS (U)** | **14,461** |
| Busy | 204 |
| No answer | 4,923 |
| Voicemail/Answering machine | 9,334 |
| **RESOLVED NUMBERS** (Total minus Unresolved) | **38,193** |
| OUT OF SCOPE (Invalid/non-eligible) | 13,133 |
| Non-residential | 1,322 |
| Not-in-service | 10,271 |
| Fax/modem | 1,540 |
| **IN SCOPE NON-RESPONDING (IS)** | **22,180** |
| Refusals – household | 15,018 |
| Refusals – participant | 2,523 |
| Language barrier | 1,083 |
| Callback missed/participant not available | 3,422 |
| Break-offs (interview not completed) | 134 |
| **IN SCOPE RESPONDING (R)** | **2,880** |
| Disqualified | 167 |
| Quota filled | 212 |
| Completed | 2,501 |
| **RESPONSE RATE** [R / (U + IS + R)] | **7%** |

60 This response rate calculation is based on a formula developed by MRIA in consultation with the Government of Canada (Public Works and Government Services).

## NAAF pilot survey

The results of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation pilot survey are based on an on-line survey with a sample of 182 current and past NAAF scholarship recipients.

The survey was conducted by Environics using a secure, fully featured web-based survey environment according to the following steps:

- Environics programmed the questionnaire into survey software and hosted the survey on a secure server. A "beta test" link was used to review the survey on-line for final approval.
- Invitation e-mails were sent to the 296 NAAF scholars who opted-in to the survey. The e-mails included the URL link to the survey and a unique password.
- Technical support was provided to survey participants as required. Steps were taken to assure (and also guarantee) complete confidentiality and anonymity of survey responses.
- Environics electronically captured all survey responses as they were submitted, and created an electronic data file that was coded and analyzed (including open-ended responses).

Assigning a unique identifier (password) to each participant ensured that only one version of the survey was accepted per participant. The unique identifier permitted participants to return to the survey if interrupted during completion. Each time the participant entered the survey, it opened at the point where they left off. The on-line form did not permit moving backwards through the survey, so that earlier responses were not altered after reading later questions. The average length of time to complete a survey was 25.7 minutes. Each participant who completed the survey was paid a cash incentive as a thank you for their time.

The survey was launched on June 16, 2009. Reminder e-mails were sent on June 23 and 30 to those who had not yet completed the survey, and the survey was closed on July 6. Each stage of the survey process generated the following response:

- 126 surveys completed following initial e-mail
- 43 surveys completed following 1st reminder e-mail
- 13 surveys completed following 2nd reminder e-mail

The overall participation rate for this study is **65 percent** (calculated as the number of completed surveys expressed as a proportion of all emails not returned as undeliverable ["bounced"]). The breakdown is as follows:

| | # | % |
|---|---|---|
| **E-mails sent:** | **296** | **100** |
| "Bounced" (presumed address incorrect) | 14 | 5 |
| **E-mails received:** | **282** | **100** |
| Incompletes | 8 | 3 |
| Completed surveys | 182 | 65 |
| **Participation rate (Completes/emails received)** | | **65%** |

Coding of the NAAF on-line survey was conducted using the codeframes developed for the main survey, for questions that are identical between the two studies. Codeframes were also developed for the few open-ended questions that were unique to the NAAF survey. The data were not weighted for analysis purposes, in the absence of comprehensive population statistics on which to base the weighting.

The table below provides a profile of NAAF scholars who participated in the survey.

| | TOTAL (%) |
|---|---|
| **IDENTITY** | |
| First Nations | 57 |
| Métis | 38 |
| Inuit | 3 |
| Non-status | 2 |
| **GENDER** | |
| Men | 21 |
| Women | 78 |
| **AGE** | |
| 18-24 | 23 |
| 25-29 | 25 |
| 30-34 | 25 |
| 35-39 | 14 |
| 40+ | 12 |
| **INCOME** | |
| <$10,000 | 19 |
| $10,000 - $30,000 | 26 |
| $30,000 - $60,000 | 20 |
| $60,000 - $80,000 | 14 |
| $80,000+ | 12 |
| Refused | 9 |
| **CURRENT PROVINCE/TERRITORY OF RESIDENCE** | |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 2 |
| Prince Edward Island | – |
| Nova Scotia | 2 |
| New Brunswick | 1 |
| Quebec | 5 |
| Ontario | 37 |
| Manitoba | 13 |
| Saskatchewan | 5 |
| Alberta | 16 |
| British Columbia | 15 |
| Yukon | 1 |
| Northwest Territories | 1 |
| Nunavut | – |
| **YEAR OF MOST RECENT NAAF SCHOLARSHIP** | |
| 2009 | 18 |
| 2008 | 49 |
| 2005-2007 | 26 |
| Prior to 2005 | 7 |

## Segmentation analysis

The segmentation for the Non-Aboriginal portion of the *UAPS* study was developed by examining multiple solutions built up using two different clustering methods. To begin, a series of questions were chosen to act as the basis of the segmentation. The goal of the segmentation was to find natural clusters based on attitudes toward Aboriginal culture, responsibility and contribution to Canadian society. A few questions regarding the more general topic of multiculturalism were also included. In total, 21 questions were prepped and cleaned to this end – involving imputation for missing data, creating binaries of nominal questions, reordering values when necessary, etc.

The first method utilized latent class modeling (Latent Gold software). Solutions of three to six clusters were examined for robustness, face validity, and distinction as cross-tabulated with a variety of other values questions, behaviour and demographics.

The process was repeated using k-means clustering within SPSS – also generating three to six solutions and examining as above, comparing and contrasting with solutions within this method as well as the solutions generated using latent class analysis. All the solutions were combined into one SPSS data and, using cross-tabulation, we were able to understand the evolution and differences as sets of participants were jostled in and out of the segments – giving us a sense of robustness and stability of the various models and segments within each.

The four segment latent class solution proved to have the most explanatory force, stability and utility.

The following questions from the *UAPS* non-Aboriginal survey were used in the segmentation analysis:

**Q2.** What do you think makes Canada unique?

**Q3f.** Do you think [multiculturalism] is very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important in *defining Canada?*

**Q4a.** Please tell me whether you totally agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or totally disagree with the following statement: "There is room for a variety of languages and cultures in this country."

**Q5.** Overall, how much impact do you people like you can have in making your city a better place to live?

**Q7.** Over the past few years, has your impression of Aboriginal people gotten better or worse, or stayed the same?

**Q9.** In what ways, if any, do you think Aboriginal people are different from non-Aboriginal people?

**Q10.** Which of the following two statements best represents how you think about Aboriginal people?

Aboriginal people are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada's multicultural society

Aboriginal people have unique right and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada

**Q11.** Do you think most Aboriginal people want to…?

Give up their cultural practices and traditions and fully adopt the customs and way of life of other Canadians

Keep their cultural practices and traditions but actively participate in the larger Canadian society

Preserve their cultural practices and traditions by having as little contact as possible with Canadian society

**Q13.** How much of a contribution do you think Aboriginal people and their culture have made in each of the following areas? Have they made a major contribution, a moderate contribution, a minor contribution, or no contribution to?

Canada's national identity

Culture and the arts

Our connection with and respect for nature

**Q18.** In your opinion, have Aboriginal people in Canada largely caused their own problems *or* have the problems been caused primarily by the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of governments?

Aboriginal people in Canada have largely caused their own problems

The problems have been caused primarily by the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of governments

**Q24.** Do you think Aboriginal people are often, sometimes, rarely or never the subject of *discrimination* in Canadian society today?

**Q25.** In Canada, do you think Aboriginal people are subject to more, less or about the same amount of discrimination as each of the following groups?

a. Jews

c. Blacks

d. Chinese

e. Pakistanis or East Indians

f. Muslims

**Q26.** Would you say that Canada's justice system generally treats Aboriginal people fairly or unfairly?

# Appendix B: Non-Aboriginal Urban Canada's Four Views of Aboriginal People

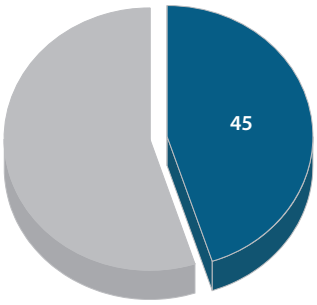
In this section, a detailed description of each of the four segments (Cultural Romantics, Dismissive Naysayers, Connected Advocates and Inattentive Skeptics) is provided that includes their key characteristics, and specific demographic and regional profiles.

## Cultural Romantics

***Cultural Romantics are 45 percent of NA urban Canadians.***

**Cultural Romantics** represent the largest number (45%) of NA urban Canadians overall. The most idealistic and optimistic of the four segments, Cultural Romantics are unique from other segments in that they possess the strongest belief in the artistic and cultural contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society. They are most likely of the four segments to think Aboriginal peoples and their culture have made a *major* contribution to Canada's national identity, and its culture and arts, and to believe Aboriginal history and culture is an important symbol of Canadian national identity.

| KEY CHARACTERISTICS | |
|---|---|
| STRONGER ON | WEAKER ON |
| Artistic and cultural contributions of Aboriginal peoples | Contact with Aboriginal peoples |
| Interest in having more Aboriginal friends | Belief that Aboriginal peoples are subject to discrimination |
| Belief that current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples are positive | |
| Optimism about Aboriginal people's future quality of life | |




Arts and culture is also their major source of exposure to Aboriginal peoples. Cultural Romantics, like Dismissive Naysayers and Inattentive Skeptics, have less personal contact with Aboriginal people than Connected Advocates. However, they are most likely of the four segments to be exposed to Aboriginal peoples through cultural activities (such as reading a book, attending an exhibit or watching a film about Aboriginal peoples). They are also more likely than average to say they have an interest in having more Aboriginal friends.

Much less likely than Connected Advocates to think Aboriginal peoples are subject to discrimination, Cultural Romantics express somewhat contradictory views of Aboriginal people vis-à-vis other groups in Canadian society. Along with Inattentive Skeptics, they are most likely of the four segments to think Aboriginal people are just the same as non-Aboriginal people. However, also like Inattentive Skeptics, when asked if Aboriginal people are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canadian society, or have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada, Cultural Romantics are more likely than not to believe Aboriginal peoples have unique rights and privileges.

They are more likely than Connected Advocates and Dismissive Naysayers, but not as likely as Inattentive Skeptics, to describe current relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada today as positive.

Finally, Cultural Romantics are the most likely of the four segments to be optimistic that Aboriginal people's quality of life in Canadian cities will improve to the same level as non-Aboriginal people in the next generation.

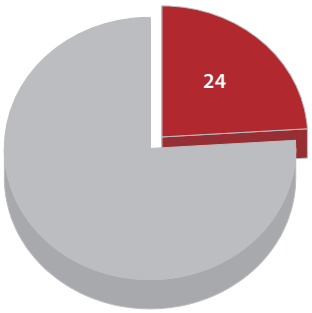
## Regional and demographic characteristics

Cultural Romantics include a higher than average proportion of Torontonians (41% versus 34% overall) and lower than average numbers of Montrealers (20% versus 25% overall). The segment contains slightly more women than men (55% and 45%, respectively). Cultural Romantics typically possess a college or university education, although they are not as highly educated as Connected Advocates. They are also more likely to be middle income ($30,000 to $60,000 and $60,000 to $80,000).

# Dismissive Naysayers

***Dismissive Naysayers are 24 percent of NA urban Canadians.***

Representing the second largest group of NA urban Canadians (24%), **Dismissive Naysayers** are largely the opposite of Connected Advocates. They are most likely to possess a negative outlook towards Aboriginal peoples, namely that Aboriginal peoples are entitled, isolated from broader Canadian society by their own volition, and largely the cause of their own problems.




| KEY CHARACTERISTICS | |
|---|---|
| STRONGER ON | WEAKER ON |
| Perception that Aboriginal peoples are entitled and the cause of their own problems | Artistic and cultural contributions of Aboriginal peoples |
| Contact with Aboriginal peoples | Interest in having more Aboriginal friends |
| Aboriginal peoples are just like other cultural and ethnic groups | Aboriginal peoples have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada |
| Belief that most Aboriginal peoples want to preserve their cultural practices and traditions by having as little contact as possible with Canadian society | |
| Aboriginal peoples are a neutral or negative presence in the city | |
| Impressions of Aboriginal peoples have worsened | |

Dismissive Naysayers are the opposite of Cultural Romantics in that they are the most likely of the four groups, by far, to think Aboriginal peoples and their culture have made minor or no contribution to Canada's national identity. They have an average level of contact with Aboriginal people but almost as little exposure to Aboriginal cultural activities as Inattentive Skeptics.

Dismissive Naysayers are the most likely of the four segments to believe Aboriginal people are different from non-Aboriginal people because they have different constitutional rights and privileges, and receive assistance from the government. They are also most likely to think of welfare/use of social assistance/handouts when they are asked what first comes to mind when they think of Aboriginal people in Canada.

They are the most likely of the four segments to think Aboriginal people are just like other cultural or ethnic groups (more than one in two Dismissive Naysayers think this is true, compared to just over one in three Cultural Romantics and Inattentive Skeptics, and one in four Connected Advocates).

Over four in ten Dismissive Naysayers think Aboriginal people want to preserve their cultural practices and traditions by having as little contact as possible with Canadian society, compared to one-quarter of Inattentive Skeptics, three percent of Connected Advocates and one percent of Cultural Romantics.

They are the most likely of the four segments to perceive Aboriginal people and communities as a neutral or negative presence in their city, despite living in cities with them; few view their presence positively.

Most likely of the four groups to think Aboriginal people are the cause of their own problems; discriminated, yes, but it is their own fault.

They are most likely of the four segments, by a wide margin, to say their impressions of Aboriginal people have worsened in the past few years.

Among the few who say their impressions have improved, they are most likely among the four segments to feel this way because they believe Aboriginal peoples have made economic and educational progress.

Finally, Dismissive Naysayers are most likely to say they have no interest in having more Aboriginal friends.

### Regional and demographic characteristics

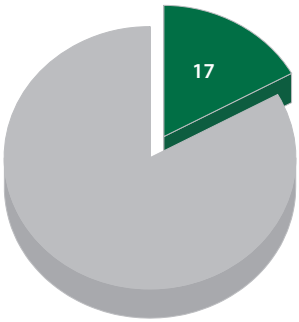
Dismissive Naysayers are a larger proportion of the NA urban Canadian population in western cities (Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg), Thunder Bay and Montreal.

They are the least educated of the four segments (45% have a high school or less compared to an average of 36%) and tend to be older (i.e., over 35 years of age).

## Connected Advocates

***Connected Advocates are 17 percent of NA urban Canadians.***

The third largest segment of NA urban Canadians (17%), **Connected Advocates** are unique from the other segments in their relatively high level of contact with urban Aboriginal peoples and the belief among many that Aboriginal peoples are often subject to discrimination in Canadian society.




Connected Advocates, like Dismissive Naysayers, are more likely to think Aboriginal peoples are different from non-Aboriginal peoples, but for completely different reasons. Connected Advocates, like Cultural Romantics, think Aboriginal are different from non-Aboriginal people because they possess a unique cultural identity. But they are also the most likely to see Aboriginal peoples as different because of their perceived socio-economic disadvantage and exposure to discrimination.

| KEY CHARACTERISTICS | |
|---|---|
| STRONGER ON | WEAKER ON |
| Contact with Aboriginal peoples | Perception that Aboriginal peoples are entitled and the cause of their own problems |
| Belief that Aboriginal peoples are often subject to discrimination | Belief that current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples are positive |
| Aboriginal peoples have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada | Optimism about Aboriginal peoples' future quality of life |
| Aboriginal peoples have been subject to unfair treatment and socio-economic disadvantage | |
| Impressions of Aboriginal peoples have improved | |

As mentioned, what truly distinguishes Connected Advocates from the other three segments is that they are most likely to see Aboriginal peoples as subject to discrimination, and feel it is the most important issue facing Aboriginal people living in cities across Canada today. Three-quarters (74%) of Connected Advocates think Aboriginal people are often the subject of discrimination in Canadian society compared to some four in ten Cultural Romantics (38%), three in ten Dismissive Naysayers (29%) and less than two in ten Inattentive Skeptics (17%). Furthermore, consistently, and unlike any other segment, majorities feel Aboriginal people are subject to more discrimination than other groups in Canadian society such as Jews, Blacks, Pakistanis or East Indians, Muslims and Chinese.

Unlike Cultural Romantics, Connected Advocates combine a belief in Aboriginal peoples' artistic and cultural contributions with a belief that Aboriginal peoples have been subject to unfair treatment and socio-economic disadvantage:

- They are most likely of the four segments, by far, to have heard or read about Indian residential schools.
- Most likely of the four segments to think Aboriginal peoples have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada.
- Most likely of the four segments to think Aboriginal peoples have fewer socio-economic opportunities compared to non-Aboriginal people in the city.
- Most likely of the four groups to think Canada's justice system treats Aboriginal people unfairly.
- With Cultural Romantics, share the perceptions that Aboriginal peoples' problems have been caused primarily by the attitudes of Canadians and policies of governments.
- Most likely of the four groups to have mistreatment/abused/misunderstood by citizens and government first come to mind when they think of Aboriginal people in Canada.

They are as likely as Dismissive Naysayers, to think current relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada today are *negative* (but clearly for different reasons).

Connected Advocates are most likely to say their impressions of Aboriginal people have gotten better in the past few years, and are most likely across the four groups to attribute this to the fact that they have a relationship or friendship with an Aboriginal person/s and the more visible presence of Aboriginal people in their community and media.

However, Connected Advocates are more likely than any other segment to be pessimistic that Aboriginal people's quality of life in Canadian cities will improve to the same level as non-Aboriginal people in the next generation.

## Regional and demographic characteristics

Connected Advocates include a higher than average proportion of NA urban Canadians in Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg. Also comprise a higher proportion of men than women. Most likely of the four segments to be English-speaking, they are also the most educated of the four segments (six in ten possess a college/university or post-graduate degree).

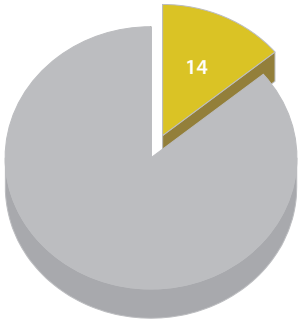
# Inattentive Skeptics

***Inattentive Skeptics are 14 percent of NA urban Canadians.***

**Inattentive Skeptics** represent the smallest group (14%) of NA urban Canadians.

They are distinguished by the fact that they are the least likely of the four groups to think Aboriginal people experience discrimination.

| KEY CHARACTERISTICS | |
|---|---|
| STRONGER ON | WEAKER ON |
| Aboriginal peoples have the same socio-economic opportunity as non-Aboriginal people | Artistic and cultural contributions of Aboriginal peoples |
| Belief that current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples are positive | Belief that Aboriginal peoples are subject to discrimination |
| | Awareness of an Aboriginal community and issues facing this community |




They have the least amount of contact with Aboriginal peoples.

Most likely to think Aboriginal people are treated fairly by the justice system.

On par with Dismissive Naysayers in their very limited cultural exposure to Aboriginal people.

They are also most likely to be unaware of an Aboriginal community in their city, and almost all are unaware of Aboriginal organizations in their city.

Significant minorities (although considerably fewer than Dismissive Naysayers) think Aboriginal people have made a minor or no contribution at all to Canada's national identity, or its culture and arts.

Inattentive Skeptics, with Dismissive Naysayers close behind, are most likely to be unable to offer an opinion on what is the most important issue facing Aboriginal people in Canada today. Furthermore, half of Inattentive Skeptics, more than any other group, are unable to offer an opinion on what is the most important issue facing Aboriginal people living in Canadian cities today.

They are less likely than Connected Advocates and Cultural Romantics to think problems have been caused primarily by the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of governments, but not as much as Dismissive Naysayers.

They are most likely of the four segments to have not read or heard anything about Indian residential schools.

They are most likely of the four segments to describe the current relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada today as at least somewhat positive (they don't know any better).

In general, Inattentive Skeptics have the least amount of exposure to Aboriginal cultural activities of the four segments.

In general, Inattentive Skeptics are most likely to think Aboriginal people have the same socio-economic opportunity as non-Aboriginal people in the city.

## Regional and demographic characteristics

There are a disproportionate number of Inattentive Skeptics who are French-speaking and live in Montreal.

Attitudes span all ages and education levels in this group; composed fairly evenly of those who are well educated and not well educated.

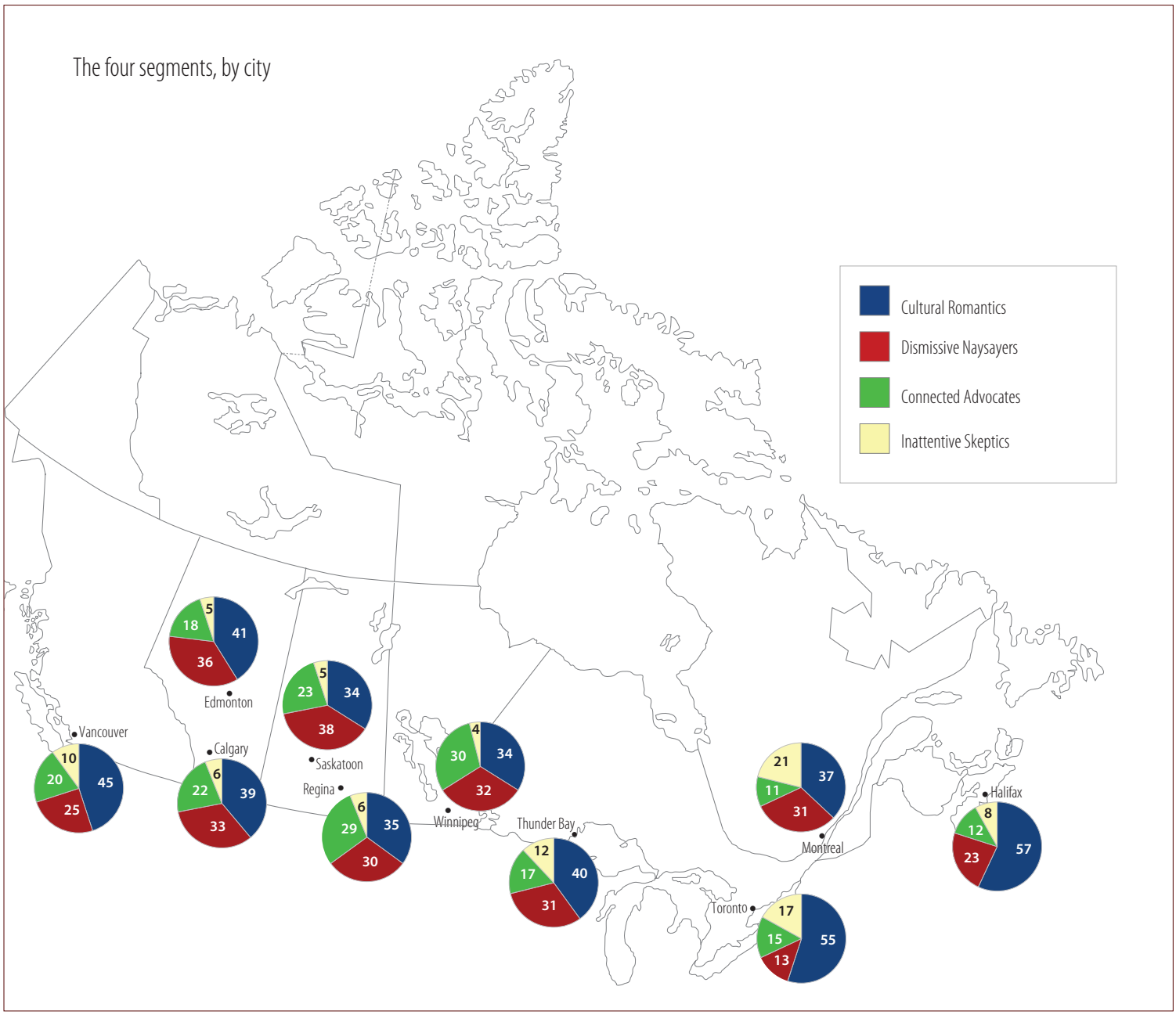
## Cultural Romantics, Dismissive Naysayers, Connected Advocates and Inattentive Skeptics across urban Canada

Each of the four groups of NA urban Canadians live in the 10 cities in the study, but to varying degrees.

Cultural Romantics, the largest of the four segments, comprise more than one-half of NA urban Canadians in Halifax and Toronto, but this number drops to one-third in cities such as Regina and Winnipeg, rising back up to 45 percent of NA urban Canadians in Vancouver.

Cities with the largest Aboriginal populations are also among those cities with the largest proportions of Dismissive Naysayers, such as Edmonton, Calgary and Saskatoon. However, these cities also have some of the largest proportions of Connected Advocates among NA urban Canadians.

Clearly, one thing NA urban Canadians in western cities are not is Inattentive Skeptics. The smallest of the four segments, Inattentive Skeptics are most likely to live in Montreal and, to a lesser degree, Toronto and Thunder Bay.


The four segments, by city
Cultural Romantics
Dismissive Naysayers
Connected Advocates
Inattentive Skeptics
Vancouver
10
20
25
45
Edmonton
5
18
36
41
Calgary
6
22
33
39
Saskatoon
5
23
38
34
Regina
6
29
30
35
Winnipeg
4
30
32
34
Thunder Bay
12
17
31
40
Toronto
17
15
13
55
Montreal
21
11
31
37
Halifax
8
12
23
57

























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