



Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study

TORONTO REPORT



ENVIRONICS
• INSTITUTE •

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Environics Institute

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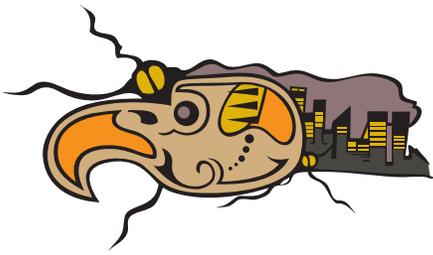


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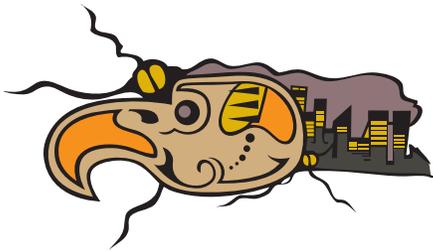


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Acknowledgments

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UAPS Steering Committee and staff

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

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- commissioning original survey research;
- funding academic studies related to polling and public opinion; and
- working with media partners to disseminate the results of its research.

Founded in 2006, the Institute has already conducted a number of groundbreaking studies, including a survey of Canadian Muslims, a survey of the people of Afghanistan, and a study (undertaken in partnership with Canada's World) of Canadians' personal engagement with people and issues around the world.

The Environics Institute sees public opinion research as a valuable lens through which Canadians can examine and better understand their own diverse and evolving society.

About the Environics Institute

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What is the *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study* and why now?

The *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study (UAPS)* is a snapshot of the hundreds of thousands of Aboriginal people who now live in urban centres. Conducted by the Environics Institute, and guided by an Advisory Circle of recognized experts from academia and from Aboriginal communities, the study is an enquiry into the values, experiences, identities and aspirations of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit living in Canada's major urban centres.

The urban Aboriginal population in Canada now numbers over 600,000 and is at an all time high. There are now more Aboriginal people living in urban centres across Canada than there are living in Aboriginal territories and communities on reserves, in Métis settlements and in Inuit communities. Aboriginal people now constitute a permanent presence in Canadian cities, and promise to be an important part of multicultural urban Canada.

The *UAPS* sprang from discussions with diverse stakeholders and opinion leaders across the country that recognized these trends, as well as the need for well-designed empirical research that would credibly express evolving urban Aboriginal perspectives.

How was the research done?

The *UAPS* investigated a range of issues including (but 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.

The study involved *in-person* interviews, one to two hours in length, with 2,614 Métis, Inuit and First Nations (status and non-status) individuals living in 11 Canadian cities from Halifax to Vancouver. With input from the *UAPS* Advisory Circle, individual questions were organized under four overarching themes:

- *identity*: who are you?
- *experiences*: what's your everyday life like?
- *values*: what's important in your life?
- *aspirations*: what do you want for your future?

In each city, the Environics Institute engaged a small team of local Aboriginal people to construct a 250-person sample and organize the interviews. Key to the study's legitimacy was that the sample be representative of the urban Aboriginal population: that it not select solely among those living in serious poverty or those who are succeeding. The Institute used the 2006 Canadian Census profile of Aboriginal people in each city (CMA) to design an "ideal sample," based on such characteristics as identity group, age, educational attainment and gender. Local research teams in each city then searched out individuals that fit this sample profile.

The study also investigated how non-Aboriginal people view Aboriginal people in Canada today, through a telephone survey with 2,501 non-Aboriginal urban Canadians living in these same cities (excluding Ottawa).

What did the study find?

Many of the *UAPS* 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.

In April 2010, the Institute released a national report of the study's findings (*Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study – Main Report*, www.UAPS.ca). Among the main findings described in the report:

- **For most, the city is home, but urban Aboriginal peoples stay connected to their communities of origin.** Six in ten feel a close connection to these communities – links that 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 (71%), including those who are the first generation of their family to live in their city.
- **Almost eight in ten participants say they are “very proud” of their specific Aboriginal identity (i.e., First Nations, Métis or Inuk).** Slightly fewer – 70 percent – say the same about being Canadian.
- **Urban Aboriginal peoples are seeking to become a significant and visible part of the urban landscape.** Six in ten feel they can make their city a better place to live, a proportion similar to non-Aboriginal urban dwellers.
- **Six in ten are not concerned about losing contact with their culture, while a minority totally (17%) or somewhat (21%) agree that they are concerned.** As well, by a wide margin (6:1), First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit think Aboriginal culture in their communities has become stronger rather than weaker in the last five years.
- **They display a higher tolerance for other cultures than their non-Aboriginal neighbours:** Seventy-seven percent of urban Aboriginal peoples believe there is room for a variety of languages and cultures in this country, in contrast to 54 percent of non-Aboriginal urbanites.
- **A majority believe they are viewed in negative ways by non-Aboriginal people.** Three in four participants perceive assumptions about addiction problems, while many feel there are negative stereotypes about laziness (30%), lack of intelligence (20%) and poverty (20%).
- **Education is their top priority, and an enduring aspiration for the next generation.** Twenty percent want the next generation to understand the importance of education, 18 percent hope younger individuals will stay connected to their cultural community and 17 percent hope the next generation will experience life without racism.



What does the *UAPS* tell us about Aboriginal peoples who live in Toronto?

One of the largest and most diverse Aboriginal communities in Canada exists in Toronto. Home to a population that, according to the 2006 Census, exceeds 26,000 individuals (and more according to other estimates), Toronto is a city of historical significance and contemporary opportunity for Aboriginal peoples.

The *UAPS Toronto Report* is the first of a series of city reports, following the release of the main report of the *UAPS* on April 6, 2010. In Toronto, the main survey consisted of in-person interviews with 251 First Nations peoples (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit (18 years and older), between May 29 and August 3, 2009.

An analysis of the *UAPS* Toronto data reveals the following about the identities, experiences, values and aspirations of Aboriginal residents of Toronto:

- **Aboriginal Torontonians are among those *UAPS* participants most likely to express a strong sense of their Aboriginality in the city.** In spite of, or perhaps a result of, the fact that Aboriginal Torontonians are more likely than those in most cities to feel they belong to a *non-Aboriginal* community, they retain strong Aboriginal cultural links. Half of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto say that Aboriginal cultural activities are widely available in the city, a perception that is stronger than in any other *UAPS* city except Vancouver.
- **There is also strong Indigenous pride among urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto.** They are among the *most* likely in all cities to be very proud of their First Nations/Métis/Inuk and Aboriginal identities, and among the *least* likely to express strong pride in being Canadian.
- **Most urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto consider the city to be their home, even first generation residents (although this feeling is less widespread).** But, this does not preclude a sense of connection to their community of origin, as a majority of *UAPS* participants in Toronto retain close links with these communities, though few plan to return to them permanently.
- **Most *UAPS* participants feel discrimination of Aboriginal people to be a pervasive problem that majorities have experienced personally.** This is particularly true for Aboriginal Torontonians, who feel non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of distorting stereotypes of Aboriginal people. The *UAPS* also confirms that these stereotypical attitudes are frequently expressed through negative behaviours, such as insults and unfair treatment, that majorities in Toronto said they had experienced. Despite these experiences, there is some sense among Aboriginal people living in Toronto that these negative attitudes may be changing for the better, a view that is more common in this city compared to others.
- **Nonetheless, a unique feature of the Aboriginal experience in Toronto is the degree to which Aboriginal people express a sense of social acceptance, a view almost exclusive to Toronto.** In part the product of the view that non-Aboriginal impressions of Aboriginal people are changing for the better, there is also a sense among *UAPS* participants that it is easier to “blend in” in a city as diverse as Toronto. As well, perhaps reflecting the heterogeneity of their traditions and cultures, Aboriginal residents of Toronto are among those most likely to display a high tolerance of other languages and cultures and, despite Toronto’s general diversity, to a much greater degree than non-Aboriginal Torontonians.

- **Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto feel language, and Aboriginal customs and traditions are the most important aspects of Aboriginal culture to be passed on to future generations, and also rank Aboriginal ceremonies and spirituality as more important compared to others.** There is a range of concern about the loss of their cultural identity among urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto, although they are among the most likely of all *UAPS* participants to express concern, and are more concerned about losing their cultural identity than are non-Aboriginal peoples.
- **The top life aspiration for Aboriginal peoples in Toronto is completing their education, followed by raising a family.** The life aspirations of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are largely consistent with those held by Aboriginal peoples living in the other *UAPS* cities.
- **Family and a balanced lifestyle are most important to Aboriginal Torontonians' definition of success.** Compared to those in other *UAPS* cities, they place greater importance on having a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity and background, and less value on a good job, financial independence and home ownership. Indeed, urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are most likely to hope for a future world that includes greater cultural connection, and express this desire more frequently than those in any other *UAPS* city.

In addition to the findings around Aboriginal Torontonians' identity, experiences, values and aspirations, the *UAPS Toronto Report* includes their attitudes towards traditional healing practices versus mainstream care, and their confidence in the criminal justice system. Analysis of these two special themes revealed:

- Access to traditional healing practices is more important for urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto than for those living in almost any other *UAPS* city.
- Aboriginal Torontonians are among the least confident of the criminal justice system in Canada and support for a separate Aboriginal justice system is stronger in Toronto than in any other city.

How do non-Aboriginal Torontonians perceive Aboriginal people?

As part of the *UAPS*, Environics surveyed a representative sample of non-Aboriginal 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.

A closer look at the responses of non-Aboriginal Torontonians yields the following insights into their attitudes towards Aboriginal people, their awareness of Aboriginal people and communities in their city, their perceptions of the top issues facing Aboriginal people today and, finally, their perceptions of future relations with Aboriginal people. Specifically:

- **Among non-Aboriginal people in Toronto, the most common top-of-mind impression of Aboriginal peoples revolves around their history as the original inhabitants of Canada.** This perception is more common in Toronto than in any other *UAPS* city except Montreal. Non-Aboriginal people in Toronto are also the most likely of all *UAPS* participants to associate Aboriginal people with mistreatment or abuse by Canadian citizens and governments.
- **Non-Aboriginal people in Toronto 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.** Still, belief in the unique rights of Aboriginal people is more common here than in most other *UAPS* cities except Montreal and Vancouver.
- **More than one in two non-Aboriginal Torontonians are *Cultural Romantics*, individuals with fairly high cultural and media exposure to Aboriginal people, but little personal contact.** A segmentation analysis of the *UAPS* data reveals that non-Aboriginal participants have four distinct broad viewpoints of Aboriginal people. All four are evident in Toronto, but *Cultural Romantics* are especially prominent, and more so compared to other cities.
- **A majority of Toronto residents know Aboriginal people live in their city, but they are among the least likely to be aware of an Aboriginal community in the city.** Indeed, very few non-Aboriginal Torontonians have regular contact with Aboriginal people (which is understandably more common in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations), and are among the least likely to know Aboriginal people as close friends, neighbours and co-workers.
- **Land claims, and threats to culture and identity are perceived to be the most important issues facing the Aboriginal population in Canada today, while isolation and integration issues are considered the top challenge for urban Aboriginal peoples.** The perception of this latter challenge is more widespread in Toronto than in most other *UAPS* cities except Thunder Bay. However, a significant minority of Torontonians are unaware of key challenges. Indeed, they are less aware of Indian residential schools, for example, than are those in most other *UAPS* cities except those in Montreal and Halifax.
- **Toronto residents clearly think Aboriginal people experience discrimination – and at least as much as other groups in Canadian society.** Nonetheless, the minorities who do not believe such discrimination exists are somewhat larger in Toronto than in most other *UAPS* cities except Montreal.
- **Toronto residents are three times 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.** This view is more common than in any other *UAPS* city.
- **Non-Aboriginal Torontonians are ultimately divided about the current state of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, but display greater optimism than those in western cities.**

Next steps

All *UAPS* reports are freely available via the study's website, www.UAPS.ca. The *UAPS Toronto Report* and subsequent city reports will all be posted on this site as they are available.

Environics Institute is also committed to making the study data accessible to the public. The results of all the *UAPS* survey questions can be freely accessed through data tables on the website, or by contacting the Institute directly (see the Acknowledgements section of this report for contact details).

In addition, the recent release of the *UAPS* main report offers a unique window into establishing new meaningful dialogue with Aboriginal Peoples in Canada's major cities. More than ever, a public forum in Canadian cities across the country is required that brings people from all sectors, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, together to take action on the needs of and opportunities for urban Aboriginal communities in this country

To that end, the *UAPS Public Engagement Strategy* has been designed using the study as a platform for community dialogue and discussion. The broad goal of this strategy is to promote collaborative engagement of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in determining the implications of *UAPS* research findings for urban Aboriginal communities. The Institute hopes to organize forums in each *UAPS* city that bring together Aboriginal organizations, policy-makers and *UAPS* participants to build a deeper collective understanding of the values and experiences of urban Aboriginal peoples, and identify the next steps for supporting the urban Aboriginal community in a given city.

For more information on *UAPS* public engagement, please contact Ginger Gosnell-Myers, *UAPS* Public Engagement Director, at ginger.gosnell-myers@environics.ca.

About the Research

Agencies

Anishnawbe Health
Toronto Council Fire
Native Canadian Centre
Native Child and Family
Services of Toronto
Na-Me-Res
Native Women's Resource
Center

Organizations

Canadian Council for
Aboriginal Business
Centennial College
Centre for Indigenous Theatre
City of Toronto
First Nations Elementary
School
Gabriel Dumont Non-Profit
Homes
George Brown College
Humber College
ImagiNative
Indian and Northern Affairs
Canada
Métis Nation of Ontario
Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs
Native Earth Performing Arts
Ontario Federation of Indian
Friendship Centres
Oshawa Métis Council
Peel Aboriginal Network
Ryerson University
Seneca College
Sheridan College
York University

Events

Peel Aboriginal Festival
(Mississauga)
Oshawa Métis Festival
Newmarket PowWow
Na-Me-Res PowWow

BACKGROUND. The urban Aboriginal population in Canada now numbers over 600,000 and is at an all time high. The largest Aboriginal community is no longer a reserve, but a diverse Aboriginal population in a major city that exceeds 60,000 people (Winnipeg). Toronto itself is home to over 26,000 Aboriginal peoples. Urban Aboriginal populations are permanent populations, and promise to be an important part of multicultural urban Canada.

The *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study* sprang from discussions with diverse stakeholders and opinion leaders across the country that recognized these trends, as well as the need for well-designed empirical research that would credibly express evolving urban Aboriginal perspectives. Throughout 2009, the Environics Institute, a not-for-profit foundation established by Environics Research co-founder Michael Adams that supports original research on important issues of public policy and social change, oversaw with its Advisory Circle community-based research in 11 Canadian cities: Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Thunder Bay, Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver.

The objectives of the *UAPS* are to better understand the perspectives of urban Aboriginal peoples as complex individuals and communities, and provide new insights that stimulate dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal urban communities across Canada. Designed to be an enquiry about the values, experiences, identities and aspirations of Aboriginal peoples living in cities, the study investigated a range of issues including (but 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.

UAPS IN TORONTO. The *UAPS Toronto Report* constitutes the first of a series of city reports, following the release of the main report of the *UAPS* on April 6, 2010. In Toronto, the main survey consisted of in-person interviews with 251 First Nations peoples (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit (18 years and older) between May 29 and August 3, 2009.

Key to the study's legitimacy was that the sample be representative of the urban Aboriginal population in Toronto: that it not select solely among those living in serious poverty or those who are succeeding. The Institute used the 2006 Canadian Census profile of Aboriginal people in Toronto to design an "ideal sample," based on such characteristics as identity group, age, educational attainment and gender; the Toronto sample was also designed to include representation from both the 416 and 905 area codes. The Toronto research team then searched out individuals that fit this sample profile.

The research team consisted of a Project Co-ordinator (Douglas Sinclair) and a team of interviewers. The research team worked with local Aboriginal agencies and other organizations, and attended a number of events (presented in the sidebar), to build community awareness and support for the study, and to identify survey participants.

The table on the next page presents a profile of the final sample of participants, by such characteristics as identity, gender, age and education. At the analysis stage, data were weighted so that the final sample accurately reflects the distribution of the population according to the 2006 Census. The table presents the actual number of participants (unweighted) within each subgroup, as well as the weighted proportion each subgroup represents within the total sample.

The results contained in this report are based on the total sample, and are reported separately in some cases for First Nations peoples and Métis, but the sample size is not sufficiently large to allow for analysis by characteristics such as age and education.

In addition to the main survey, a telephone survey was conducted with 250 non-Aboriginal residents of Toronto (18 years and older) between April 28 and May 15, 2009. This is an important component of the *UAPS* because it reveals how the non-Aboriginal population views the experiences of Aboriginal peoples, reflecting some of the barriers and opportunities facing the Aboriginal community. The margin of error for a probability sample of 250 is plus or minus 6.2 percentage points, 19 times in 20.¹

Further details on the methodology of both *UAPS* surveys can be found in the main report on the *UAPS*, available at www.UAPS.ca.

IN THIS REPORT. *The Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study – Toronto Report* is organized into nine chapters.

Chapter 1, the Urban Context, provides a demographic snapshot of the Aboriginal population in Toronto, and information on where study participants are from, how long they have lived in Toronto and how they felt about Toronto (i.e., did they consider it or another community to be home?).

Chapter 2 delivers main findings from the *UAPS* on Aboriginal Torontonians' expressions of Aboriginal **Identity and Culture** in the city.

Chapter 3, Experiences with Non-Aboriginal People, summarizes how Aboriginal peoples living in Toronto feel perceived by the non-Aboriginal population-at-large.

Chapter 4, Experiences with Aboriginal Services and Organizations, explores study participants' perceptions of and interactions with Aboriginal services and organizations in Toronto.

Chapter 5 captures how Aboriginal peoples feel about living in Toronto in **Urban Experiences**.

Chapter 6, Urban Aspirations, delves further into contemporary Aboriginal urban experience and explores Aboriginal Torontonians' life aspirations and definitions of success.

Chapters 7 and 8 are Special Themes in the Toronto report: **Traditional Healing Practices vs. Mainstream Care** and **Confidence in the Criminal Justice System**.

Chapter 9, Non-Aboriginal Perspectives, the final chapter of the report, captures non-Aboriginal Torontonians' perceptions of Aboriginal peoples, including their awareness of and level of contact with Aboriginal people, their knowledge of salient Aboriginal issues, and the importance of Aboriginal history and culture in the minds of non-Aboriginal Torontonians.

An overview at the beginning of each chapter summarizes the main *UAPS* findings.

Unless otherwise noted, all of the numbers of the graphs are percentages.

1 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.

UAPS participant profile in Toronto

	# (Unweighted) (%)	% (Weighted)
IDENTITY		
First Nations	174	69
Status	147	59
Non-status	27	10
Métis	68	31
Inuit	9	*
GENDER		
Men	91	40
Women	137	52
Two-spirited	23	8
AGE		
18-24	38	14
25-44	123	50
45+	90	36
EDUCATION		
No diploma	33	22
High school diploma	90	27
College degree	70	35
University degree	57	15
HOUSEHOLD INCOME		
<\$10,000	46	20
\$10,000 - \$30,000	73	30
\$30,000 - \$60,000	64	24
\$60,000+	61	24
Refused	7	2
LIVING SITUATION		
Renting an apartment or house	144	55
Homeowner	41	15
Living with friends or family	25	12
Renting a room in a rooming house/hostel	24	10
Living in a temporary shelter	13	6
ELDER		
Yes	20	6
No	231	94

* Less than 0.5%

I.0 The Urban Context

The urban Aboriginal population in Canada now numbers over 600,000 and is at an all-time high. There are now more Aboriginal people living in urban centres across Canada than there are living in Aboriginal territories and communities on reserves, in Métis settlements and in Inuit communities. Aboriginal people now constitute a permanent presence in Canadian cities, and promise to be an important part of multicultural urban Canada.

One of the largest and most diverse Aboriginal communities in Canada exists in Toronto. Home to a population that, according to the 2006 Census, exceeds 26,000 individuals (and more according to other estimates), Toronto is a city of historical significance and contemporary opportunity for Aboriginal peoples.

As a starting point, the *UAPS* survey asked Toronto participants a number of questions to establish where they were from, how long they had lived in Toronto, and how they felt about Toronto (i.e., did they consider it or another community to be home?). Answers to these questions are summarized in this chapter, following a demographic snapshot of the Aboriginal population in Toronto based on the 2006 Census.

Key findings

- ***UAPS* participants in Toronto are largely first generation residents. In other words, they were born and raised in a community, town, city or reserve other than Toronto.** However, they are also typically long-term urban residents as a significant number have lived in Toronto for 10 years or more.
- **Aboriginal peoples move to Toronto for work opportunities, education and family, and the amenities and services available. These reasons are generally common to Aboriginal peoples in all 11 *UAPS* cities.** However, *UAPS* participants in Toronto are among the most likely to say they moved to pursue employment opportunities (similar to Halifax, Winnipeg and Calgary).
- **Most urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto consider the city to be their home, even first generation residents (although this feeling is less widespread).** But, this does not preclude a sense of connection to their community of origin, as a majority of *UAPS* participants in Toronto retain close links with these communities, though few plan to return to them permanently.

1.1 The Aboriginal population in Toronto

Toronto, with a population of 2.48 million, is considered one of the most multicultural cities in the world. Its rich diversity is expressed by the more than 200 distinct ethnic origins residents identified in their response to the 2006 Census.

Within this mosaic, Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Toronto. The City is an area that holds great historical significance in that it is a sacred place for cultural practices and a place where diverse Aboriginal nations came together to exchange goods. Numbering 26,575 according to the 2006 Census, the Aboriginal population in the Toronto census metropolitan area (CMA) is the largest of any city in Ontario in terms of absolute numbers and is made up of richly diverse communities, including First Nations from across Canada, Métis and Inuit people.² This represents 2.3 percent of all Aboriginal persons in Canada and 11.0 percent of those in Ontario.

As of 2006, the majority of Toronto's Aboriginal population identified themselves as First Nations (65%); the remaining one-third identified themselves as Métis (29%) or Inuit (1%), or offered multiple/other responses (5%). Of those who identified as First Nations people, almost half (45%) reported being a Treaty Indian or a registered Indian as defined by the *Indian Act* of Canada.

As well, according to Census data, Toronto has a relatively young and growing urban Aboriginal population.

- From 2001-2006, the Aboriginal population in the Toronto CMA went from 20,300 to 26,575, an increase of 31 percent.
- The 2006 census found that the Aboriginal population living in Toronto was slightly younger than the non-Aboriginal population (with a median age of 32 years, compared to 37 years for the non-Aboriginal population).³
- The finding that Toronto's Aboriginal population was generally younger than the city's non-Aboriginal population mirrors a similar trend noted when comparing Canada's national Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. However, it was not as pronounced in Toronto as in the Western provinces, particularly in Regina and Saskatoon.

Studies on the socio-economic context of urban Aboriginal people in Toronto are currently limited. Nonetheless, the 2006 Census data showed that, compared to non-Aboriginal residents, the Aboriginal population, in addition to being younger, has higher unemployment rates, a lower annual income and a greater likelihood of a single-parent household.

² Census counts for Aboriginal identity include persons living in private households only. Individuals who lived in collective residences, institutions or were homeless at the time of the enumeration are not reflected. The results of the 2006 Census may be undercounting actual population numbers. The number of urban Aboriginal persons reported by the Census has historically been lower than estimates from agencies serving this community. In 2006, Aboriginal agencies estimated that there were approximately 70,000 Aboriginal people living in the City of Toronto.

³ The median age is the point where exactly one-half of the population is older and the other half is younger.

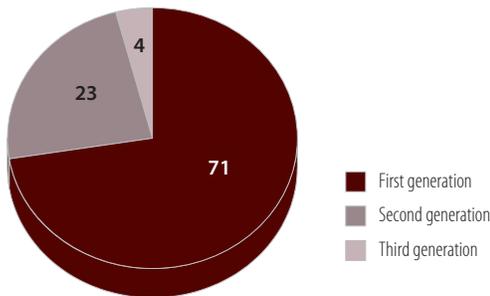
1.2 Residency in the city

The majority of UAPS participants in Toronto are first generation residents, and have typically lived in the city for 10 years or more.

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. The movement of Aboriginal people to Canadian urban areas has been occurring for several decades, with Aboriginal populations in some cities constituting the largest Aboriginal communities in Canada.

Exploring the movement of Aboriginal people over time to Toronto is beyond the scope of the *UAPS*. Nonetheless, the survey did provide the opportunity to document one distinction considered particularly relevant to the urban Aboriginal experience: Are you originally from the city (i.e., born and raised in Toronto) or are you from somewhere else?

First, second and third generation Toronto residents

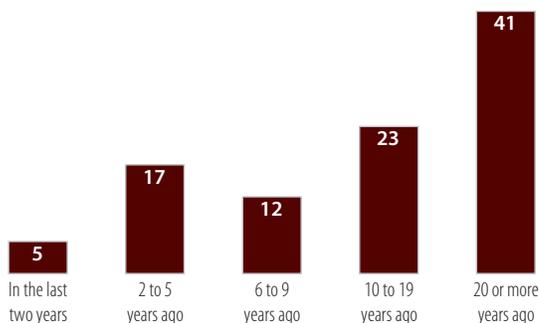


The data revealed two main groups of people: those who were born and raised somewhere other than Toronto (“first generation”); and those who were born and raised in Toronto but whose family is from another place (“second generation”). A third, smaller group is comprised of urban Aboriginal peoples born and raised in Toronto whose parents and/or grandparents are also from Toronto (“third generation”).

In Toronto, a majority (71%) of *UAPS* participants are “first generation” residents born and raised in a community, town, city or reserve other than Toronto. “Second generation” residents born and raised in Toronto whose parents and/or grandparents are from another place represent one-quarter (23%) of Toronto’s urban Aboriginal population. A third group of urban Aboriginal peoples born and raised in Toronto whose parents/grandparents are also from Toronto (“third generation”) comprises just four percent of the population. The generational make-up of Toronto’s urban Aboriginal population is consistent with the average profile of all 11 *UAPS* cities.

Time of arrival*

When did you first come to Toronto?



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

Among first generation residents, a majority are long-term residents of Toronto. Over six in ten (64%) first came to Toronto at least 10 years ago, including four in ten (41%) who arrived 20 or more years ago. Fewer (34%) have arrived in the last 10 years, including less than one in ten (5%) who first came in the last two years. To look at it another way, the average year of arrival in Toronto among first generation *UAPS* participants was 1991.

Length of time in Toronto is generally consistent with the average arrival time for first generation *UAPS* participants in other cities. The *UAPS* found that urban Aboriginal peoples’ length of time in their city does not vary substantially across the 11 cities included in the study, 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 as a result of its large Métis population, reflecting the fact that Métis are the most urbanized of Aboriginal groups in Canada.

1.3 Reason for moving

Three main reasons fuel the move to Toronto: employment opportunities, education and family.

Why do Aboriginal peoples move to Toronto?

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

When asked (unprompted, without response options offered) why they first moved to Toronto, the most common reason is for employment opportunities (42%), followed closely by the pursuit of education (38%) and the opportunity to be closer to family (37%). Smaller proportions say they moved to their city because it offered better amenities (20%), the chance to escape a bad family situation (10%) and the opportunity for career advancement (10%).

Smaller groups of *UAPS* participants (8% or fewer) mention other reasons for moving to the city, such as the need for a change, friends, better access to social services or health care, and for training to upgrade their skills.

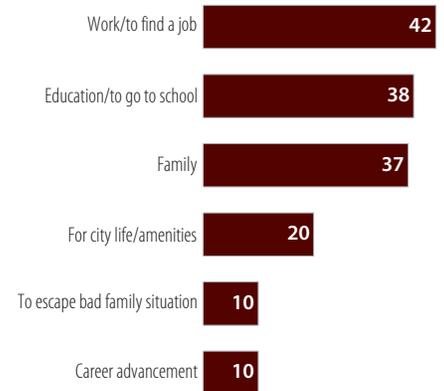
Overall, urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto share similar reasons for moving to their city as first generation residents of other cities. However, *UAPS* participants in Toronto are among the most likely to say they moved to pursue work and employment opportunities, making it their top reason, along with first generation residents of Halifax, Winnipeg and Calgary.

Majorities regard the city as home.

Most of those who have lived in Toronto all their lives, not surprisingly, consider the city to be their home (81% of second generation residents). A majority of first generation (58%) residents (i.e. those not born or raised in the city) also consider Toronto their home, although this feeling is not as widespread as those born and raised there. Overall, when asked “Where is home for you?” more than six in ten (64%) *UAPS* participants say it is Toronto.⁴ Significantly fewer (17%) say it is their community of origin, while the remainder (17%) indicate that a community other than Toronto or their community of origin is home to them. *UAPS* participants in Toronto are somewhat less likely than the national average to say that their city is home (64% vs. 71% overall), and somewhat more likely to say home is somewhere other than the city or their community of origin.

Majorities of both First Nations peoples and Métis consider Toronto home, but Métis are most likely to do so (74%, compared to 60% of First Nations peoples). Since Métis in Toronto are no more likely than First Nations peoples to be second generation residents, differences in the extent to which they consider Toronto home may reflect that some First Nations peoples come from a reserve and retain the option of living there. It could also reflect varying levels of integration with the city that arise from the challenges of maintaining a strong cultural identity in the city, obtaining affordable housing, and feeling part of the social and economic life of the city.

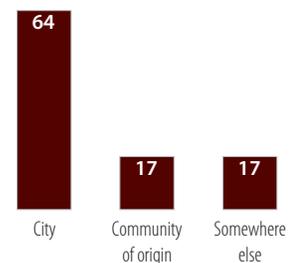
Top reasons for moving to Toronto*
What is the most important reason why you first moved to your city?



*Subsample: Among those who were not born or raised in Toronto

Where is home for you?*

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 Toronto; those who have lived in Toronto all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

⁴ The question “Where is home for you?” was not asked of third generation *UAPS* participants (4% of *UAPS* participants in Toronto).

Although *UAPS* participants reported an important connection to the city in which they are living, their sense that Toronto is home does not preclude a relationship with their community of origin. The following section (1.4 Connection to community of origin) explores the relationship to a community of origin as reported by *UAPS* participants.

1.4 Connection to community of origin

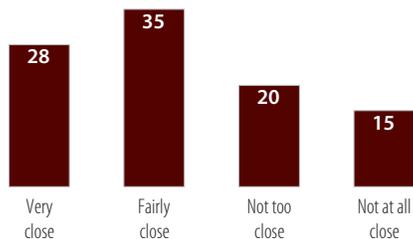
A majority of urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto retain links with their community of origin, whether it be their own or that of their parents/grandparents.

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.⁵

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

Connection to community of origin*

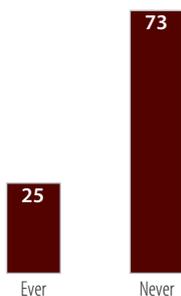
How close a connection do you feel to your home community?
How close a connection do you feel to the place where your parents and grandparents are from?



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

Have you moved back to your home community?*

Since you first moved to Toronto, have you ever moved back to your home community?



Note: 3% said dk/na

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

Overall, six in ten say they feel a very (28%) or fairly close (35%) connection to their community of origin. Fewer urban Aboriginal peoples say they feel not too close (20%) to these communities, while a small group feel not at all close (15%) to their community of origin. Notably, first and second generation urban Aboriginal peoples express a similarly strong connection to their community of origin (61% and 69%, respectively, say they have at least a fairly close connection, and similar proportions of both groups express a very close connection). Aboriginal residents of Toronto share a similar sense of connection to their home community as Aboriginal residents of other cities included in the *UAPS*.

It is clear from the data that the majority of *UAPS* participants in Toronto maintain links to their communities of origin, even though they have long tenure within the city. However, only a small proportion of first generation *UAPS* participants have moved back to their home community at least once since they first moved to Toronto. When asked if they have ever moved back to their home community from Toronto, one in four (25%) first generation residents say they have (representing 18% of *UAPS* participants in Toronto overall). Most (73%) say they have never moved back to their home community since coming to Toronto (3% are unwilling or unable to say if they have ever moved back).

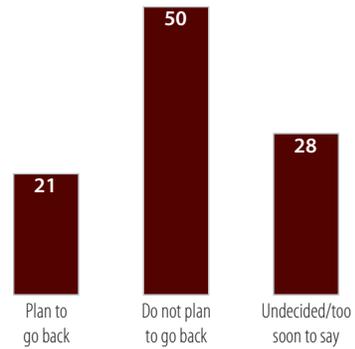
The proportion of first generation Toronto residents who have moved back to their home communities is similar to first generation *UAPS* participants in other cities. Also consistent with the pattern in other *UAPS* cities, First Nations peoples (31%) are more likely than Métis (10%) to have moved back to their community of origin since first coming to Toronto.

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

5 Urban Aboriginal Task Force, 2007, p.65.

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),⁶ two in ten (21%) plan to return. Half of *UAPS* participants say they do *not* plan to return (50%), while another group say they are undecided or that it is too soon to say (28%); one percent are unable or unwilling to offer information about their future plans. Those planning to return are the minority among both first and second generation residents. Moreover, the proportion of *UAPS* participants in Toronto who plan to return permanently to their communities of origin is similar to other *UAPS* cities.

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 Toronto; those who have lived in their city of residence all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

⁶ 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 (4% of *UAPS* participants in Toronto).

2.0 Identity and Culture

Cities have often been cast as places where Aboriginal identity and culture are lost. As more Aboriginal people moved into cities, researchers studying Aboriginal culture and identity in the 1970s drew particular attention to an urban Aboriginal culture of poverty, cultural conflict and loss of culture. This perpetuated a one-dimensional image of urban Aboriginal peoples' lives, with the view that cities and urban Aboriginal cultures are incompatible.⁷

The Urban Aboriginal Task Force in Ontario,⁸ in its 2007 research reports, also noted that, in addition to the legacy of residential schools and other acts of repression, distance from home communities and family networks, and other urban pressures of assimilation, an added challenge in terms of contemporary urban Aboriginal culture and expressions of identity is the notion among some that one cannot be economically successful without losing some degree Aboriginal authenticity.

In the midst of these challenges, Aboriginal Torontonians are among those *UAPS* participants *most* likely to express a strong sense of their Aboriginality in the city. Aboriginal cultural activities and traditions (knowledge of family tree, Aboriginal languages, customs, ceremonies and Aboriginal spirituality) mark “the boundaries of difference” between their Aboriginality and the non-Aboriginal community at large, and are very important to maintaining and enhancing Aboriginal culture and identity among Aboriginal peoples living in Toronto.

Key findings

- **There is strong Indigenous pride among urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto.** They are among the *most* likely in all cities to be very proud of their First Nations/Métis/Inuk and Aboriginal identities, and among the *least* likely to express strong pride in being Canadian.
- **Majorities say they know their family tree well, proportions consistent with those in other *UAPS* cities.** A stronger sense of self, a sense of family heritage, survival and tradition, and greater personal meaning, are the top ways knowledge of one's family tree has made a difference for urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto. Lack of opportunity, not lack of interest, is the main reason why urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto say they do not know their family tree very well.
- **Two-thirds of urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member.** In Toronto, second-hand experience through a family member is more common among First Nations peoples than Métis. Most urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto with first- or second-hand Indian residential schools experience say it has had at least some impact in shaping their life and who they are today.
- **Half of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto say that Aboriginal cultural activities are widely available in the city, a perception that is stronger than in any other *UAPS* city except Vancouver.** A large majority of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto participate in cultural activities in their city at least occasionally, more so than in any other *UAPS* city, with the exceptions of Halifax and Vancouver. Indeed, urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto display a very strong sense of cultural vitality, more so than in any *UAPS* city except Vancouver.

7 Urban Aboriginal Task Force, Sudbury Final Report, August 2007, p.45.

8 Throughout 2005 and 2006, the Urban Aboriginal Task Force, a partnership of Aboriginal organizations and government agencies, oversaw community-based research in five urban sites: Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Barrie/Midland/Orillia, and Kenora. The project investigated racism, homelessness, poverty, youth, women and health, also considering broader concerns of culture and identity, gaps in delivery of services, Elders and long-term care, women and children, access to resources, and assessment of Aboriginal services.

- Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto feel language, and Aboriginal customs and traditions are the most important aspects of Aboriginal culture to be passed on to future generations, and also rank Aboriginal ceremonies and spirituality as more important compared to others. There is a range of concern about the loss of their cultural identity among urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto, although they are among the most likely of all UAPS cities to express concern, and are more concerned about losing their cultural identity than are non-Aboriginal peoples.
- Notwithstanding the Aboriginal cultural vitality evident in Toronto, Aboriginal peoples living in the city feel a greater sense of belonging to a mostly non-Aboriginal community than to a mostly Aboriginal community, an orientation that is more common than in any other UAPS city except Montreal. Likely due to the small relative size of the Aboriginal population in the city, they still express a strong connection to other Aboriginal people in Toronto, both members of their own Aboriginal group and others.

2.1 Pride in Aboriginal and Canadian identity

There is strong Indigenous pride among urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto. They are among the most likely in all cities to be very proud of their First Nations/Métis/Inuk and Aboriginal identities, and among the least likely to express strong pride in being Canadian.

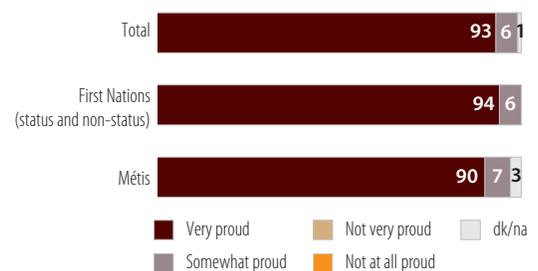
An important part of the UAPS was to understand how proud urban Aboriginal peoples are of their identity and, specifically, to what extent their pride is tied to three distinct aspects of identity: being *First Nations/Métis/Inuk*, *Aboriginal* and *Canadian*.

The results show that, while pride in each of these aspects of their identity is high among urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto, the degree of pride does vary somewhat among First Nations peoples and Métis.

PRIDE IN BEING FIRST NATIONS/MÉTIS/INUK. Of the three aspects of identity explored in the survey, urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are most proud to be *First Nations, Métis* or *Inuk*. Almost all (93%) say they are very proud of their specific Aboriginal identity (i.e., *First Nations, Métis* or *Inuk*). Strong pride is equally shared by First Nations peoples and Métis. Compared to other cities, urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are the most likely to be very proud of their specific Aboriginal identity, together with Inuit in Ottawa (94%).

Pride in being First Nations/Métis

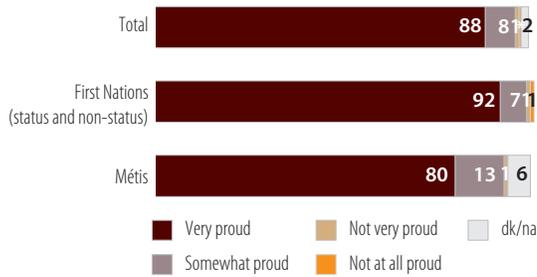
Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very, or not at all proud to be First Nations/Métis?



Note: Total data include Inuit (n=9)

Pride in being Aboriginal

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

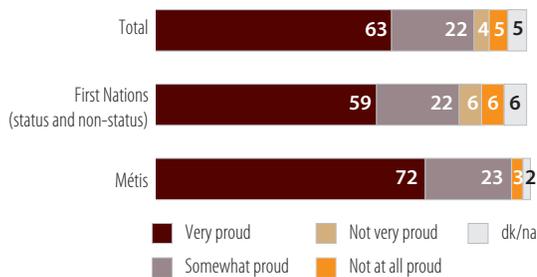


* Less than one percent

Note: Total data include Inuit (n=9)

Pride in being Canadian

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



Note: Total data include Inuit (n=9)

PRIDE IN BEING ABORIGINAL. Most urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are also very proud (88%) to be *Aboriginal*. Toronto residents, together with those living in Montreal (87%) and Halifax (87%), express the strongest pride in being Aboriginal of any of the *UAPS* cities. In Toronto, pride in this aspect of identity is most widespread among First Nations peoples (92%), followed by Métis (80%).

PRIDE IN BEING CANADIAN. Finally, urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are least proud to be *Canadian*, although six in ten (63%) say they are very proud of this aspect of their identity. Notably, strong pride in being *Canadian* is lower in Toronto than in most other *UAPS* cities, with the exception of Vancouver (52%) and Montreal (52%). In Toronto, pride in this aspect of identity is most widespread among Métis (72%), followed by First Nations peoples (59%).

What else shapes urban Aboriginal peoples' pride in their *First Nations/Métis/Inuk*, *Aboriginal* and *Canadian* identities? The sample size for Toronto alone (251 survey participants) is too small to allow for a detailed analysis by socio-demographic factors. However, the national *UAPS* survey data (across all 11 cities) indicates that pride in these aspects of identity vary by age, sense of community and knowledge of their family tree. For instance, majorities in all socio-demographic groups are very proud of their *First Nations/Métis/Inuk* identity, but strong pride is most evident among older urban Aboriginal peoples (45 years of age and over), those who feel they belong to a mostly or exclusively Aboriginal community, and those who know their family tree very well.

Indeed, Aboriginal Torontonians are among those *UAPS* participants most likely to say the stories and experiences of their ancestors have fed a greater sense of self-awareness, which likely contributes to the strong pride in their Aboriginal identity evident among them. The following section (2.2 Knowledge of Aboriginal ancestry) explores how well Aboriginal persons in Toronto know their family tree.

2.2 Knowledge of Aboriginal ancestry

Majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto have at least some knowledge of their Aboriginal ancestry.

The legacy of policies of assimilation in Canada and their outcomes have contributed to multiple, ongoing challenges experienced by Aboriginal people, not least of which is the disconnection from their heritage and culture that many have experienced, and the resulting struggle to reclaim and reconstruct their Aboriginal identity.

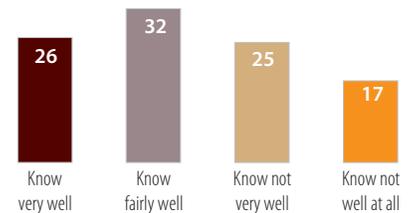
As the previous chapter demonstrated, many Aboriginal people are established in Toronto and now call the city home. But this does not mean they are abandoning their heritage. Knowledge of one's family tree is important to Aboriginal Torontonians, as majorities indicate they know their family tree (i.e., who their Aboriginal ancestors are) well. Six in ten know their family tree very well (26%) or fairly well (32%). Fewer say they know their family tree not very well (25%) or not well at all (17%). Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto share a similar level of knowledge of their family trees with urban Aboriginal peoples in the other UAPS cities.

By far, 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 (49%) are the main source of learning about one's Aboriginal ancestry. Smaller groups of Aboriginal Torontonians 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.) (26%), extended family and friends (17%), and siblings (10%). These sources of learning about one's family tree are generally similar to those reported by UAPS participants in other cities.

A range of non-family sources is also mentioned, such as Elders and home communities and community members, but none by more than six percent of those asked. Nonetheless, urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are among the most likely to have used certain non-family sources, including archives and historical records (6%), genealogy courses (6%), and the Internet or social networking sites (e.g., Facebook) (4%) to learn about their family tree.

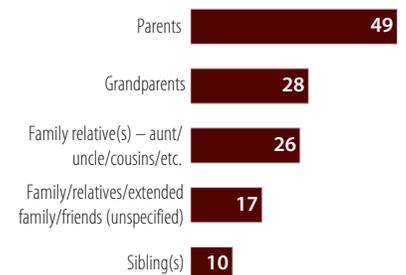
Extent of knowledge of family tree

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



Sources of learning about family tree/ Aboriginal ancestry

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



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

It means everything. If you cannot know your history, how can you know your future? Residential schools took that all away from us.

I didn't think it was going to make that much difference, but it gave me a sense of belonging and I wish to know more. It's important to me.

I feel enriched. It gives me excitement, a wholeness in knowing fully who I really am. As an adult, I realize now much more, why I grew up with as many problems that I did. I am able to be proud today, before I was depressed. I am enriched in that I am much stronger person now.

Having a sense of who you are and where you came from. Has a stabilizing affect (anchors you down). As an adoptee, I did not know who I was – now I have a compass to orient myself rather than being in the dark.

It's valuable. It's a crucial part of who I am striving to be and how I wish the world to know me.

Impact of family tree

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

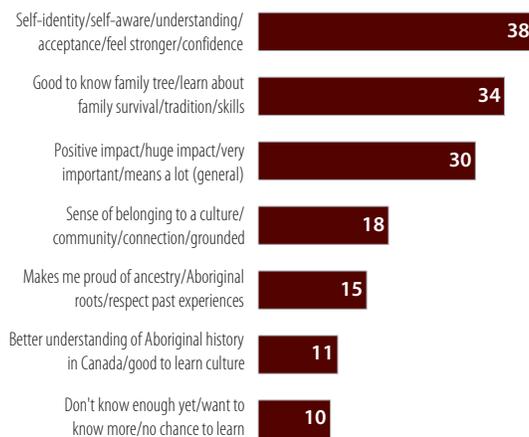
Beyond how well they know and learn about their family tree, what does this knowledge mean to urban Aboriginal peoples' sense of themselves?

Knowledge of one's family tree has a great impact on urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto, 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:⁹

- **Greater self-identity and self-awareness.** Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto most frequently mention that they have derived a greater sense of self-identity and self-awareness (38%) from knowing about their Aboriginal ancestry. Notably, Métis (51%) are much more likely than First Nations peoples (32%) to express this view. Overall, Aboriginal residents of Toronto are among the most likely participants in all *UAPS* cities to say they have gained a greater sense of self-awareness, together with residents of Montreal (37%) and Vancouver (34%).
- **Understanding of family survival and cultural endurance.** One-third (34%) of urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto also say that, through knowing their family tree, they have learned stories of family survival, endurance and long-held cultural traditions that have deeply affected them.
- **Greater personal meaning.** Three in ten (30%) of urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto emphasize the greater personal meaning they've gained from knowing their family tree, more so than in any other city except Vancouver (35%) and Halifax (32%).

Impact of family tree

What has it meant for you personally, or what impact has is made on your life, to learn what you do know about your family tree?



⁹ *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.

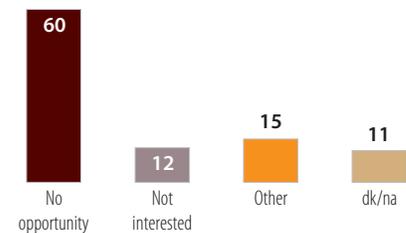
- **Builds a sense of belonging.** One in five (18%) *UAPS* participants in Toronto highlight their greater sense of belonging to a community. Aboriginal residents of Toronto are twice as likely as those in most other cities to cite a sense of community belonging derived from knowing their family tree.
- **Instills pride.** Some urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (15%) indicate that knowing their family tree makes them proud of their Aboriginal “roots” and instills a greater respect for their families’ past.

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (11% 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, generational continuity, awareness of family connections and strength to move on from the past that they gain from knowing their family tree. Finally, one in ten say knowing their family tree has either a little (6%) or no impact (4%) on their life, which is lower than in most other *UAPS* cities. Only two percent feel knowing their family tree has had a negative impact on their lives.

Why do some urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto 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. Lack of opportunity, not lack of interest, is the main reason why urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto say they do not know their family tree very well. Six in ten (60%) urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto say it is because they have had no opportunity to learn more about their family tree, and this is true for similar proportions of First Nations peoples and Métis. In turn, one-quarter (27%) of *UAPS* participants in Toronto say they are either not interested (12%) or cite other reasons (15%) why they do not know their family tree very well (such as information lost when relatives or Elders pass away, family secrecy and lack of connection to Aboriginal culture). One in ten (11%) Aboriginal Torontonians are unable or unwilling to say why they have not learned more about their family tree. These reasons for not knowing more about their family tree are consistent with those given in most other *UAPS* cities.

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."

2.3 Indian residential schools

Two-thirds of urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member. In Toronto, second-hand experience through a family member is more common among First Nations peoples than Métis.

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.”¹⁰

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 1996.¹¹

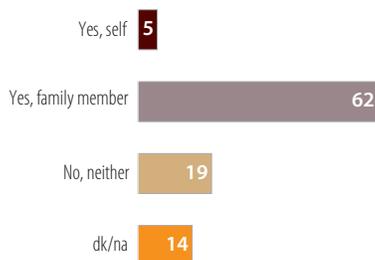
First Nations, Métis and Inuit children had varied residential school experiences, both in intensity and duration. Regardless, the residential school had a direct impact on Survivors and has spilled over to their descendants, creating challenges pertaining to identity, culture and parenting.¹²

A majority of *UAPS* participants in Toronto say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member. When asked, two-thirds (67%) say either they themselves (5%) or a family member (62%) were a student at a federal residential school or a provincial day school.

First Nations peoples and Métis in Toronto are equally likely to say they themselves were students at a federal residential school or a provincial day school, but First Nations peoples (69%) are more likely than Métis (45%) to say a family member was once a student at these schools. Across cities, Aboriginal peoples in Toronto, together with those living in Vancouver (67%), Saskatoon (62%) and Edmonton (58%), are among the most likely to have a family member who was a student at an Indian residential school.

Indian residential schools

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



10 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).

11 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.

12 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.

Impact of residential schools

Most urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto with first- or second-hand Indian residential schools experience say it has had at least some impact in shaping their life 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,¹³ seven in ten say this experience, or the experience of their family member, has had either a significant impact (58%) or some impact (13%) in shaping their life and who they are today. This represents close to half (47%) of all UAPS participants in Toronto.

Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are among those most likely to feel the Indian residential schools experience has had a *significant* impact on their lives, together with those living in Vancouver (60%), Montreal (60%) and Calgary (58%).

2.4 Aboriginal cultural activity in the city

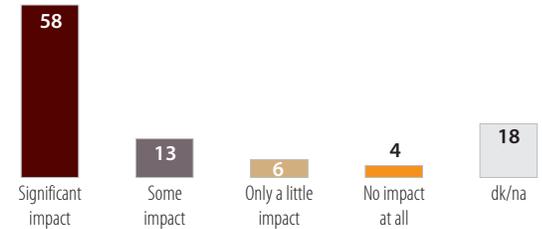
Half of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto say that Aboriginal cultural activities are widely available in the city, a perception that is stronger than in any other UAPS city except Vancouver.

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

There is a strong perception that Aboriginal cultural activities are widely available in Toronto, and more so than in most other UAPS cities. Eight in ten urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto say there are either a lot (50%) or some (30%) Aboriginal cultural activities available in the city. A minority say there are only a few (10%) or no (8%) such activities available to them, while three percent cannot say how many Aboriginal cultural activities are available in Toronto. First Nations peoples have somewhat greater awareness of Aboriginal cultural activities (54% a lot) in the city than do Métis (39%). Of all the UAPS participants, Aboriginal peoples in Toronto and Vancouver (49%) are by far the most likely to believe there are a lot of Aboriginal cultural activities where they live.

Impact of Indian residential schools*

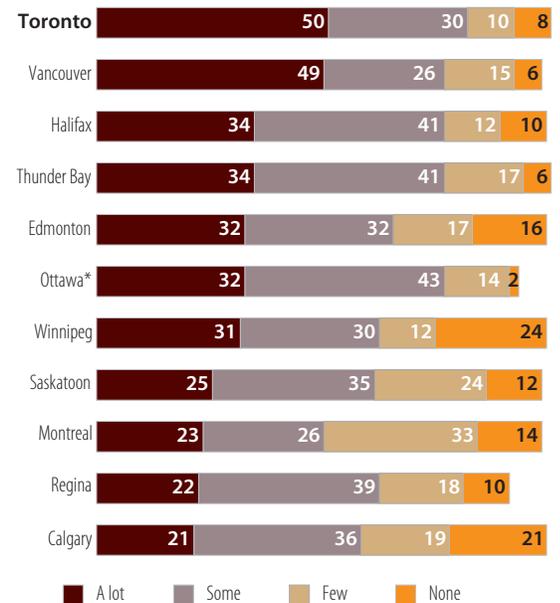
To what extent has [this experience/or the experience of your family member] shaped your life and who you are today?



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

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?



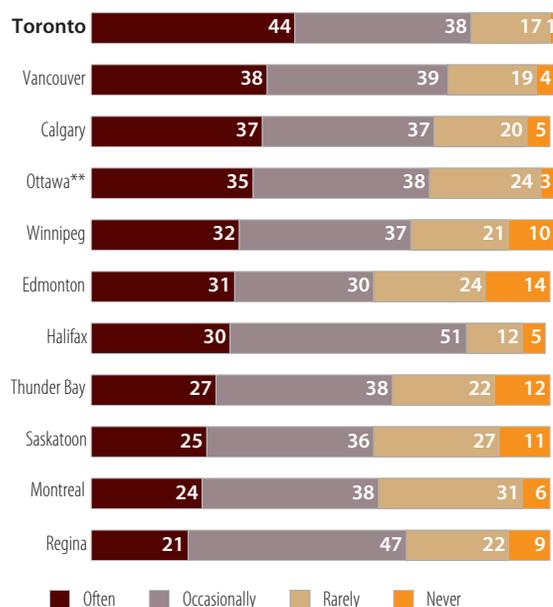
* Inuit only

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

13 The sample size of Métis in Toronto (n=33) who say they or a family member attended an Indian residential school is too small to look at the findings of this question separately for this group.

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

Frequency of participation in cultural activities

A large majority of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto participate in cultural activities in their city at least occasionally. The extent of participation is largest of any UAPS city except Halifax and Vancouver.

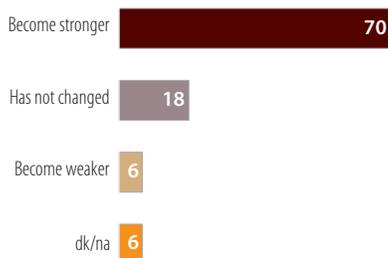
While *UAPS* data do not permit investigation of the specific types of Aboriginal cultural activities urban Aboriginal peoples participate in, the survey did ask participants *how often* they participate in these activities.

Among those urban Aboriginal peoples who say Aboriginal cultural activities are available in Toronto, majorities say they participate in them at least occasionally. Eight in ten say they often (44%) or occasionally (38%) participate in these activities. Only two in ten indicate they rarely (17%) or never (1%) participate in Aboriginal cultural activities in the city. Although First Nations peoples believe that Aboriginal cultural activities in Toronto are more widely available than do Métis, First Nations peoples and Métis who are aware of such activities participate in them with similar frequency.

Aboriginal peoples in Toronto who are aware of any Aboriginal cultural activities in the city are among the most likely of all *UAPS* participants to participate in them at least occasionally (82%), to a similar extent as those living in Halifax (81%) and Vancouver (77%).

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?



Strength of Aboriginal culture

Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto display a very strong sense of cultural vitality, more so than in any UAPS city except Vancouver.

By a ratio of more than ten to one, First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit think that Aboriginal culture in Toronto has become stronger than weaker in recent years.

Overall, seven in ten (70%) urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto think that Aboriginal culture in the city has become stronger in the last five years. The remainder say it either has not changed (18%) or has become weaker (6%), while six percent cannot offer an opinion on the direction of Aboriginal culture in Toronto. The view that Aboriginal culture has strengthened is equally shared by First Nations peoples and Métis in Toronto.

Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (70%) and Vancouver (70%) are considerably more likely than those in other *UAPS* 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 that Aboriginal cultural activities are widely available to them.

2.5 Maintaining Aboriginal cultural identity

Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto feel language, and Aboriginal customs and traditions are the most important aspects of Aboriginal culture to be passed on to future generations, and also rank Aboriginal ceremonies and spirituality as more important compared to others.

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

When Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are 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), Aboriginal customs and traditions are most frequently mentioned (82%). Considerable proportions of urban Aboriginal peoples also feel that ceremonies (77%), Aboriginal spirituality (74%) and language (71%) are important aspects of Aboriginal culture to be passed on to the next generation. Slightly fewer Aboriginal peoples, but still more than half, also mention Elders (65%), Aboriginal celebrations and events (62%), music (60%), family values (58%), art (58%) and food (52%). Smaller groups mention Aboriginal ethics (46%), connection to the land (45%) and leadership (41%) as important aspects of Aboriginal culture to be passed on to the next generation.

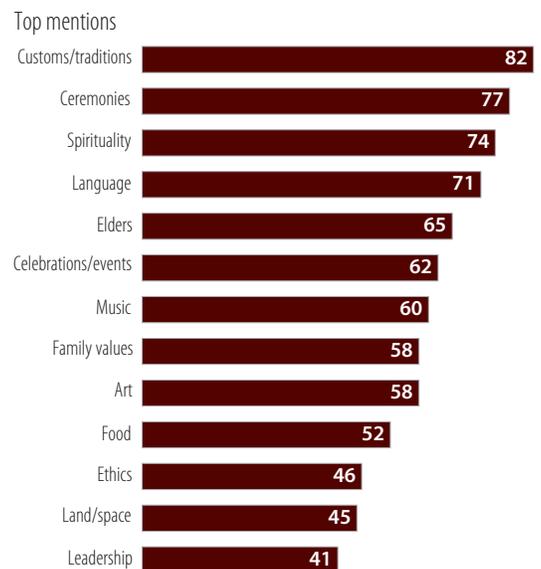
Small proportions of *UAPS* participants in Toronto (9% or fewer) mention other aspects that are important to be passed on, such as Aboriginal history, Aboriginal medicines and healing practices, and teachings, beliefs or values.

First Nations peoples and Métis in Toronto hold mostly similar views of what they feel are the most important aspects of Aboriginal culture to pass on to future generations, with a few exceptions. Most notably, First Nations peoples (76%) are much more likely than Métis (59%) to think Aboriginal languages are an important aspect to pass on, which likely reflects the fact that First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to speak an Aboriginal language.¹⁴ Métis, in turn, are more likely to emphasize the importance of Aboriginal history (18% vs. 5% of First Nations peoples) to future generations.

Compared to Aboriginal people living in other *UAPS* cities, those living in Toronto place greater emphasis on ceremonies and Aboriginal spirituality (ranking them higher on their list of important aspects), and less emphasis on language and family values (ranking them lower on their list of important aspects).

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?



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

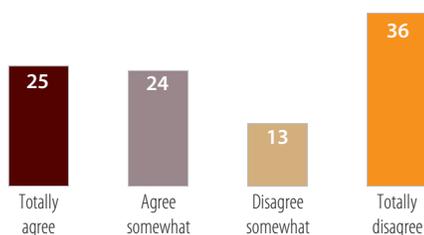
Concern over losing cultural identity

There is a range of concern about the loss of their cultural identity among urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto, although overall they express greater concern about this issue than do non-Aboriginal people in the city.

As the previous results demonstrate, urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto display a pro-active stance towards protecting their cultural traditions while at the same time showing a high tolerance for other languages and cultures. At the same time, there are mixed opinions about the potential loss of their cultural identity, and Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are less confident about this issue than are non-Aboriginal people in the city.

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."

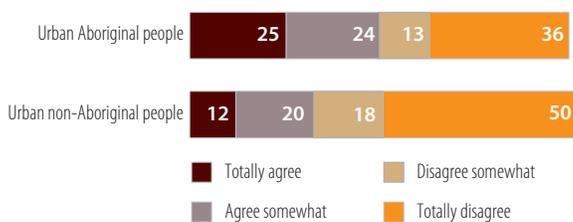


When posed with the statement "I am concerned about losing my cultural identity," urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are divided about whether they agree or disagree. Half (49%) agree at least somewhat that they are concerned about losing their cultural identity, while the other half (49%) disagree at least somewhat (3% do not give an opinion). However, strong concern about the loss of cultural identity (25% totally agree) is outweighed by those who are not at all concerned (36% totally disagree). Mixed opinions are evident among both First Nations peoples and Métis in Toronto.

Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are among the most likely of all UAPS participants to express concern about losing their cultural identity, together with those living in Calgary (51% totally or somewhat agree) and Saskatoon (49%). In other UAPS cities, the proportion who are *not* concerned about the loss of their cultural identity more strongly outweighs the proportion who are concerned.

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."



ABORIGINAL VERSUS NON-ABORIGINAL PERCEPTIONS. As part of the UAPS, a separate survey was conducted with non-Aboriginal residents of the same 10 cities (excluding Ottawa). Some questions were asked in both the main and the non-Aboriginal surveys, to allow for direct comparisons between the two groups.

Urban Aboriginal people in Toronto are more concerned about losing their cultural identity than are non-Aboriginal people. Only three in ten (32%) non-Aboriginal people in Toronto say they either totally agree or agree somewhat with the statement "I am concerned about losing my cultural identity," compared to half of Aboriginal people in the city. This pattern is consistent in most, but not all, UAPS cities. Similar to Toronto, concern about the loss of cultural identity is higher among Aboriginal people than among non-Aboriginal people in Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon, Thunder Bay and Halifax.

2.6 Belonging to Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal communities

Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto feel a greater sense of belonging to a mostly non-Aboriginal community than to a mostly Aboriginal community, an orientation that is more common than in any other UAPS city except Montreal.

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

When asked how Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal they feel the community they belong to is, the largest proportion of urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto feel they belong to a mostly non-Aboriginal community (40%), rather than a mostly Aboriginal (27%) or equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (29%) 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 (7%).

It is not surprising that the view that they belong to a mostly non-Aboriginal community is most widespread in Toronto and Montreal (41%) compared to other UAPS cities, since these two cities have the smallest relative Aboriginal populations. Within Toronto's Aboriginal population, this view is also more common among Métis (49%) than First Nations peoples (36%), who are more evenly represented across all three "belonging" groups.

Belonging to Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal community
Do you feel that the community you belong to is...?



Connection to Aboriginal peoples in the city

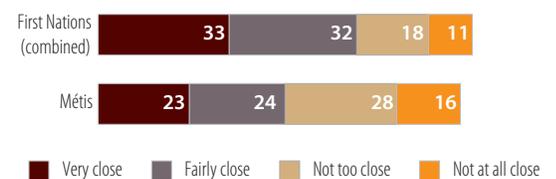
Urban Aboriginal peoples express a strong connection to other Aboriginal people in Toronto, both members of their own Aboriginal group and others. However, First Nations peoples are more likely to feel a sense of connection than are Métis.

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 Toronto.

CONNECTION TO ABORIGINAL GROUP. How close a connection do urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto have to members of their own Aboriginal group? Overall, First Nations peoples feel a closer connection to other members of their First Nation in Toronto, than do Métis to other Métis in the city. Two-thirds (65%) of First Nations peoples feel either a fairly or very close connection to other members of their First Nation in Toronto, and are among the *most* likely of all UAPS participants to feel such a connection. By comparison, half (47%) of Métis feel a close connection to other Métis in the city, and are among the *least* likely to feel such a connection.

Interestingly, First Nations peoples are slightly more likely to feel a close connection to members of *other* First Nations in Toronto (71% very or fairly close) than to members of their own First Nation (65%). This illustrates the great diversity of the First Nations population in Toronto, and the challenges in finding and connecting with members of one's own specific First Nation. First Nations peoples in Toronto, as well as those living in Vancouver (70%) and Montreal (70%), are the most likely among all UAPS participants to feel a close connection to members of other First Nations.

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 OTHER ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN THE CITY. How strong a connection do First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit feel to *other* Aboriginal peoples in Toronto? Métis (48%) and First Nations peoples (40%) are similarly likely to feel connected to other Aboriginal peoples in the city, which in both cases is consistent with those in other *UAPS* cities.

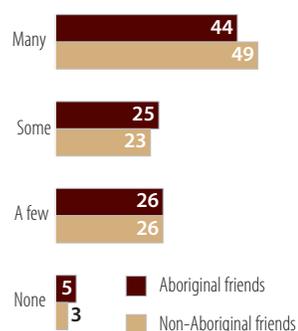
Friendships in the city

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 Toronto about how many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal friends they have.

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal friends

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



FRIENDSHIPS WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLE. Overall, seven in ten urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto say they have many (44%) or some (25%) close friends in the city who are Aboriginal. Similar proportions of First Nations peoples and Métis say they have some or many close Aboriginal friends, although First Nations peoples are more likely to say they have many close Aboriginal friends. Aboriginal people in Toronto and Montreal are least likely to have close friends who are Aboriginal, which likely reflects the smaller relative Aboriginal populations in these cities.

FRIENDSHIPS WITH NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLE. Just as *UAPS* participants in Toronto have close Aboriginal friends in the city, equal proportions have some or many close non-Aboriginal friends where they live. Seven in ten say they have many (49%) or some (23%) close friends who are non-Aboriginal.

Once again, similar proportions of First Nations peoples and Métis have at least some close non-Aboriginal friends in Toronto. The likelihood of having close non-Aboriginal friends in Toronto is similar to the national average of all 11 *UAPS* cities.

3.0 Experiences with Non-Aboriginal People

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996 report devoted a chapter, *Urban Perspectives*, to the experiences of Aboriginal peoples living in urban centres. The chapter begins with cultural identity and then proceeds to a section on racism. The segue is intentional, as the consequences of racism and discrimination on identity can be profound – generations of Aboriginal people have struggled to assert their identity amidst a pervasive sense that they are perceived negatively by the non-Aboriginal population-at-large.

Most *UAPS* participants felt discrimination of Aboriginal people to be a pervasive problem that majorities have experienced personally. This is particularly true for Aboriginal Torontonians, who felt non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of distorting stereotypes of Aboriginal people, many of which are described in this chapter. The *UAPS* also confirmed that these stereotypical attitudes are frequently expressed through negative behaviours, such as insults and unfair treatment, that majorities in Toronto said they had experienced. Despite these experiences, there is some sense among Aboriginal people living in Toronto that these negative attitudes may be changing for the better, a view that is more common in this city than in others.

This chapter also captures Aboriginal Torontonians' encounters and experiences with non-Aboriginal services in the city such as schools, banks and the health care system, in addition to social assistance programs, where they are the most likely of all *UAPS* participants to have recently used such programs (over one in four Aboriginal people in Toronto live below the low-income cut-off¹⁵).

Important to note is that other research has shown that internal racism and discrimination between Aboriginal people is also a considerable problem in some cities.¹⁶ The *UAPS* survey did not explore this aspect of the urban Aboriginal experience directly, but this was a topic that was touched on by several of the 50 *UAPS* participants who agreed to be interviewed on film for the purposes of the study. To view their observations, please visit www.uaps.ca.

Key findings

- **In Toronto, non-Aboriginal people are widely believed to have generally negative impressions of Aboriginal people, consistent with perceptions held in the other *UAPS* cities.** There is a very strong perception among urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto that non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of negative and distorting stereotypes of Aboriginal people. Stereotypes relating to substance abuse, lack of intelligence and homelessness are more commonly mentioned in Toronto than in other *UAPS* cities. However, there is some sense in Toronto that non-Aboriginal people's impressions of Aboriginal people may be changing for the better, and this view is stronger than in most other *UAPS* cities.
- **Almost all urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto agree that others behave in an unfair or negative way towards Aboriginal people.** A large majority say they have been teased or insulted because of their Aboriginal background, and this is more common in Toronto than in other *UAPS* cities. Nonetheless, a majority of urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto report they feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people, although a significant minority do not.

¹⁵ 2006 Aboriginal Population Profile for Toronto, Statistics Canada, April 2009.

¹⁶ Urban Aboriginal Task Force, Sudbury Final Report, August 2007.

* Aboriginal peoples in Toronto report a substantial amount of contact with non-Aboriginal services, particularly banks and the health care system, and are among the most likely of all *UAPS* participants to have recently used social assistance programs. Those who have been in contact with non-Aboriginal services in Toronto are generally positive about the experience, with the exception of the child welfare system, where negative experiences outweigh positive ones. Although a minority, negative experiences with elementary and secondary schools are more common in Toronto than in the other *UAPS* participants.

3.1 How Aboriginal peoples feel they are perceived by non-Aboriginal people

In Toronto, non-Aboriginal people are widely believed to have generally negative impressions of Aboriginal people, consistent with perceptions held in the other *UAPS* cities.

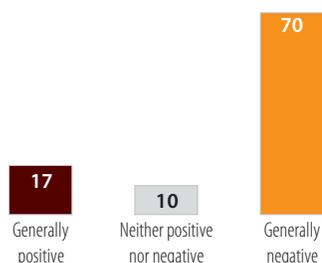
By a wide margin, most urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto think non-Aboriginal people view them in a negative light.

Seven in ten (70%) *UAPS* participants in Toronto believe non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people is generally negative. Only a small group think their impression is generally positive (17%), while another one in ten (10%) think non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people is neither positive nor negative. Majorities of both First Nations peoples and Métis in Toronto think non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people is generally negative. Of the remainder, First Nations peoples (21%) are twice as likely as Métis (9%) to think impressions are generally positive, although in both cases this is the minority opinion.

In Toronto, perceptions of non-Aboriginal people's impressions of Aboriginal peoples are consistent with the national average of all 11 *UAPS* cities.

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 in Toronto that non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of negative and distorting stereotypes of Aboriginal people. Stereotypes relating to substance abuse, lack of intelligence and homelessness are more commonly mentioned in Toronto than in other UAPS cities.

Overwhelmingly, Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples in Toronto 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). Some of the stereotypes they believe non-Aboriginal people hold are presented in participants' own words in the sidebar on this page.

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

- **Addiction problems.** This is, by far, the stereotype most frequently mentioned by *UAPS* participants in Toronto. More than eight in ten (86%) believe non-Aboriginal people associate them with drug and alcohol abuse. This view is equally held by First Nations peoples and Métis in Toronto. While the perception that non-Aboriginal people associate Aboriginal people with substance abuse is widespread among Aboriginal peoples in most cities, it is in fact most common among those in Toronto.
- **Lack intelligence and education.** Although less common than the stereotype of addiction problems, one in four (27%) urban Aboriginal peoples nonetheless believe non-Aboriginal people see Aboriginal people as lacking intelligence and education. Of the *UAPS* cities, this view is strongest in Toronto, together with Calgary (29%) and Vancouver (26%).
- **Lazy and lack motivation.** A similar proportion of Aboriginal people in Toronto (26%) think this is a common stereotype non-Aboriginal people hold of Aboriginal people.
- **Homeless/panhandlers.** Two in ten (21%) urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto believe non-Aboriginal people think Aboriginal people are homeless and panhandlers, or "bums." This view is more prominent in Toronto than in any other *UAPS* city.
- **Unemployed.** Two in ten (19%) Aboriginal peoples in Toronto also 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.

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants in Toronto (14% or fewer) believe non-Aboriginal people hold several other common stereotypes of Aboriginal people. These include such notions as Aboriginal people rely on welfare and social assistance, are violent or abusive, engage in criminal activity, get a "free ride" for everything and do not pay taxes.

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

Don't have to pay taxes, free education, hunt and fish where ever we want, money coming out of their pocket goes directly into ours, when you bring out status card [non-Aboriginal] people react.

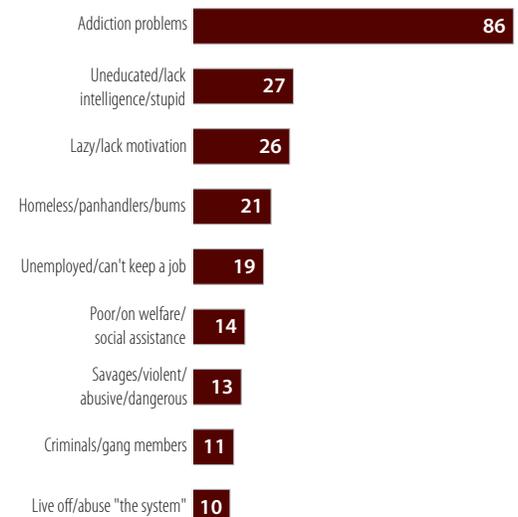
Drunks, bums, do nothing with their lives. Negative overall. Judge whole group on the look of few.

Alcoholics, drink a lot, live off welfare, uneducated, take advantage of the system to get things for free from the government, drug addicts, no positive outcomes.

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 in Toronto that non-Aboriginal people's impressions of Aboriginal people may be changing for the better, and this view is stronger than in most other UAPS cities.

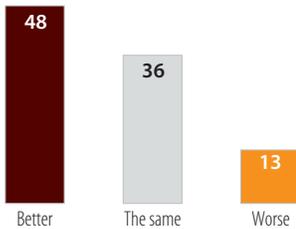
Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are divided as to whether or not non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people has gotten better or stayed the same in the past few years, while only a small minority think it has gotten worse. Nonetheless, Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are among the most optimistic that impressions are improving, compared to those in other UAPS cities.

When asked about the change in non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people over the past few years, half (48%) of UAPS participants in Toronto think impressions have improved. Less than four in ten (36%) think impressions have stayed the same. Only 13 percent believe non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people has gotten worse over the past few years.

Of all UAPS cities, perceptions that non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people is changing for the better are strongest in Vancouver (53%), followed closely by Toronto (48%).

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?

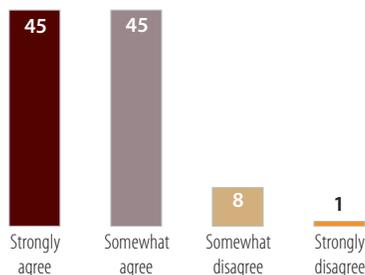


3.2 Experiences of discrimination

Almost all urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto agree that others behave in an unfair or negative way towards Aboriginal people. A large majority say they have been teased or insulted because of their Aboriginal background, and this is more common in Toronto than in other UAPS cities.

Negative behaviour

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



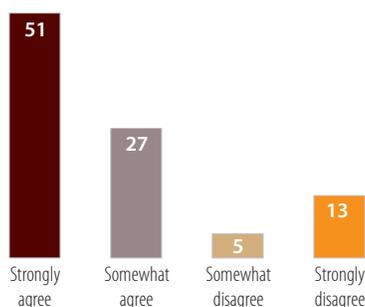
Beyond how they feel perceived by non-Aboriginal people, the UAPS survey explored whether or not participants have experienced negative behaviour or unfair treatment because of who they are. Many urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto agree that they have. Still, despite these experiences, they are more likely than not to feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people.

NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR. Most Aboriginal peoples in Toronto agree with the statement "I think others behave in an unfair/negative way towards Aboriginal people." Nine in ten either strongly (45%) or somewhat (45%) agree with this statement, while only one in ten (9%) disagree. This perception is shared by both First Nations peoples and Métis in Toronto, and is equally strong in Toronto as in most other UAPS cities.

UNFAIR TREATMENT. A large majority of urban Aboriginal peoples also say they have personally experienced unfair treatment because of who they are. When posed with the statement "I have been teased or insulted because of my Aboriginal background," eight in ten strongly (51%) or somewhat (27%) agree. Two in ten either somewhat (5%) or strongly (13%) disagree that they have experienced unfair treatment due to their Aboriginal background. Notably, First Nations peoples in Toronto (57% strongly agree) are much more likely than Métis (36%) to say they have experienced unfair treatment.

Unfair treatment

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



Overall, Aboriginal people in Toronto are more likely than those in other UAPS cities to say they have been insulted because of who they are (51% strongly agree vs. 37% average for 11 UAPS cities).

Sense of acceptance

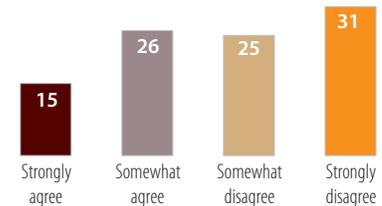
A majority of urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people, although a significant minority do not.

Despite the fact that most Aboriginal peoples in Toronto believe Aboriginal people are subject to unfair treatment, teasing and insults because of their Aboriginal identity, they are more likely than not to feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people.

More than half (56%) of UAPS participants in Toronto either strongly (31%) or somewhat (25%) disagree with the statement “I don’t feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people.” However, there is a substantial minority of four in ten who strongly (15%) or somewhat (26%) agree that they do not feel accepted. In Toronto, Métis have a stronger sense of being accepted (71% disagree with the statement) than do First Nations peoples (50%).

The degree of acceptance felt by Aboriginal people in Toronto is shared with those in most other UAPS cities.

Sense of acceptance by non-Aboriginal people
“I don’t feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people.”



Impact of experiences with non-Aboriginal people

Most Aboriginal peoples in Toronto say they have responded to their experiences with non-Aboriginal people by becoming stronger and more motivated to succeed, more accepting and tolerant, and more aware of their identity as an Aboriginal person.

Majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto indicate that their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have, ultimately, compelled them to become stronger, better individuals.

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), Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are most likely to frame the impact in a positive light: eight in ten (78%) Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples cite examples of how their character grew and strengthened in response to their experiences with non-Aboriginal people. 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 Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (42%) feel their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have had an impact. 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.
- **Greater sense of Aboriginal self.** A smaller group of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (22%) feel they have gained a greater sense of themselves as an Aboriginal person through their experiences with non-Aboriginal people. These experiences 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.
- **Mentoring and a sense of direction.** Some urban Aboriginal people in Toronto (19%) 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.** Finally, Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (18%) 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.
- **Negative impact.** One in four (27%) Aboriginal peoples in Toronto also cite ways in which their experiences with non-Aboriginal peoples have had a *negative* impact on their lives, and this proportion is among the highest of the *UAPS* cities (together with Regina). These 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, fewer than one in ten (6%) urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto say their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have had no impact at all on them (1% are uncertain as to how their experience with non-Aboriginal people has shaped their life and who they are today).

3.3 Experiences with non-Aboriginal services and organizations

Aboriginal peoples in Toronto report a substantial amount of contact with non-Aboriginal services, particularly banks and the health care system, and are among the most likely of all UAPS participants to have recently used social assistance programs.

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 Aboriginal peoples in Toronto 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 Aboriginal peoples living in Toronto. Nine in ten (92%) say they have made use of **banks/credit unions** in the past 12 months, and more than eight in ten (85%) 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 is non-Aboriginal **social assistance programs**, which four in ten (40%) Aboriginal peoples in Toronto say they have used in the past year. One-quarter each say they have been in recent contact with **elementary and secondary schools** as a parent (27%), or made use of non-Aboriginal **employment and training services** (26%). Slightly fewer (21%) say they made use of non-Aboriginal **social housing programs** in the past year.

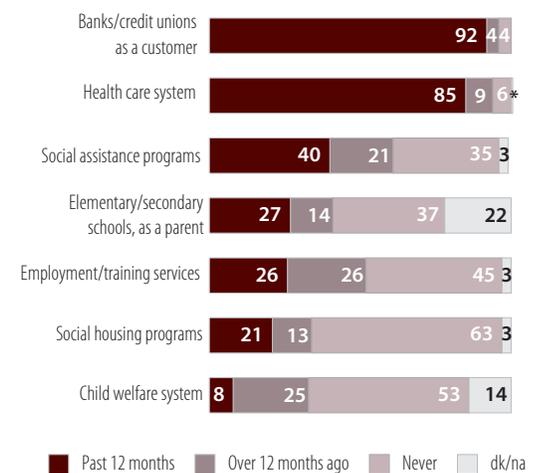
Aboriginal in Toronto are least likely to report experience with the child welfare system. Eight percent report having contact with the **child welfare system** in the past 12 months, and another 25 percent have had less recent contact, while a majority (53%) say they have never had contact.

Reported contact with these non-Aboriginal services and organizations is largely similar for First Nations peoples and Métis in Toronto. The exception is social assistance programs, which First Nations people are more likely to report using in the past 12 months (45% vs. 28% among Métis).

The UAPS found that contact with these non-Aboriginal services varies across the 11 cities, perhaps due to the specific needs of the community and/or the varying availability of *Aboriginal* services in these areas. In Toronto, recent use of social assistance programs is higher than in any other UAPS city except Saskatoon (where 44% used it in past 12 months). Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are also among the most likely to have recently used non-Aboriginal social housing programs, together with those living in Halifax and Regina.

Contact with non-Aboriginal services and organizations

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



* Less than one percent

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

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

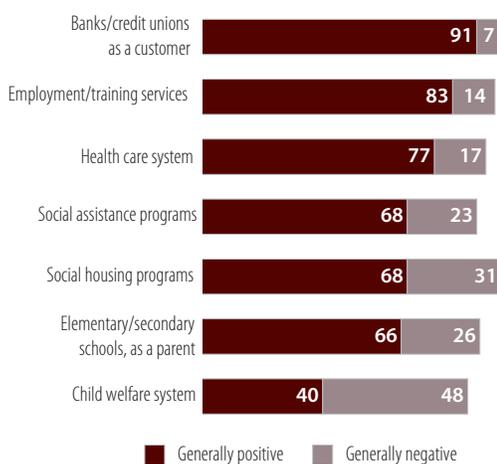
Those who have been in contact with non-Aboriginal services in Toronto are generally positive about the experience, with the exception of the child welfare system, where negative experiences outweigh positive ones. Although a minority, negative experiences with elementary and secondary schools are more common in Toronto than in the other UAPS cities.

Positive experiences with non-Aboriginal services in Toronto tend to outweigh negative ones, with the exception of experiences with the child welfare system.

Aboriginal peoples in Toronto who have ever used or made contact with these non-Aboriginal services¹⁷ were asked if the experience was generally positive or generally negative. They are most likely to report positive experiences with **banks and credit unions** (91%), **employment and training services** (83%), and the **health care system** (77%). In each of these cases, only a minority (ranging between 7% and 17%) say they had a negative experience.

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.

Positive experiences are the case for slightly fewer, but still majorities, of those who have accessed **social assistance programs** (68%), **social housing programs** (68%), and **elementary or secondary schools** (as a parent) (66%). In each of these three cases, between one-quarter and three in ten say their experience was negative.

Among Aboriginal peoples in Toronto who have ever had contact with the **child welfare system**, negative perceptions of this experience (48%) outweigh positive ones (40%).

Perceptions of these services among Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are largely shared with those living in other UAPS cities. However, negative experiences with elementary and secondary schools are most common in Toronto (26%), followed by Vancouver (21%) and Halifax (20%).

¹⁷ In most cases, the sample size of those who have used or accessed the service is too small to compare perceptions for First Nations peoples and Métis in Toronto.

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES. 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. Six in ten (59%) Aboriginal people in Toronto 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. This is a more common concern in Toronto, Edmonton (55%) and Regina (54%) than in other UAPS cities.

One-quarter (25%) had problems with process, such as long waiting lists or wait periods, complicated paperwork, missing documents or expensive fees. A similar proportion (24%) question the effectiveness of the service, saying it was not supportive, unhelpful and didn't actually achieve its goal. One in ten (9%) 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 (8%), being removed as a child from their home (4%), or being misinformed or misdiagnosed (2%).

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

I got pre-approved for a mortgage and the bank reneged because it was coming from an Aboriginal source specifically for a down payment program.

It was prejudicial system. Our needs were over looked or not being heard, very little respect of cultural or traditional beliefs and interests and educational preferences.

Worker was completely ignorant to Aboriginal facts and knowledge. She refused to find out. She made ignorant comments "Usually when we come into house where there is an alcoholic, it's usually the Native people."

4.0 Experiences with Aboriginal Services and Organizations

As noted in Chapter 2.0, Aboriginal Torontonians are among those *UAPS* participants *most* likely to express a strong sense of their Aboriginality in the city. This widespread sensibility is likely due in part to the fact that they are among those *UAPS* participants most likely to have used and relied at least occasionally on Aboriginal services and organizations in their city. Indeed, there is a wide network of Aboriginal services and organizations in Toronto that is important to Aboriginal residents, both for the maintenance of Aboriginal culture and identity, and the provision of specific social support services.

As part of understanding urban Aboriginal peoples' experiences in Canadian cities today, the *UAPS* survey explored study participants' perceptions of and interactions with Aboriginal services and organizations. Growing out of the friendship centre movement, a large network of institutions has emerged within urban Aboriginal communities that provide a range of services such as, but not limited to, education, training, employment, economic development, child care, health, housing, cultural support and corrections. Of note, over the last two decades in particular, urban Aboriginal organizations are assuming key roles in the delivery of health services. Many aspects of urban Aboriginal life are mediated through a vast array of Aboriginal cultural, artistic, heritage, educational, economic, community development and political institutions.

Toronto stands out as a city where *UAPS* participants are among the most convinced of the importance of Aboriginal services and organizations to their well-being, especially friendship centres and health centres. These services clearly provide important access to Aboriginal healing traditions and cultural practices, and sustain a sense of collective identity that may otherwise be difficult to achieve in a city as large and diverse as Toronto.

Key findings

- **Majorities of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto use and rely at least occasionally on Aboriginal services and organizations in the city, the largest proportion in all *UAPS* cities except Vancouver.** Compared to other *UAPS* participants, those living in Toronto are most likely to cite the connection to Aboriginal culture as a reason for using Aboriginal services and organizations.
- **Aboriginal Torontonians value a variety of Aboriginal services and organizations, particularly health services.** They are also more likely than those in other *UAPS* cities to find Aboriginal legal services, and child and family centres of great use. Indeed, there is a strong consensus among Aboriginal peoples in Toronto that it is important for Aboriginal services to exist in addition to non-Aboriginal ones, and they are among the most convinced of this need.
- **A significant proportion of Aboriginal Torontonians consider Aboriginal urban institutions to be a part of their community in the city.** More so than in any other *UAPS* city, the network of Aboriginal services and organizations available in Toronto clearly provide Aboriginal residents with a sense of shared community and values.

4.1 Use of urban Aboriginal services and organizations

Seven in ten urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto use and rely at least occasionally on Aboriginal services and organizations in the city, the largest proportion in all UAPS cities except Vancouver.

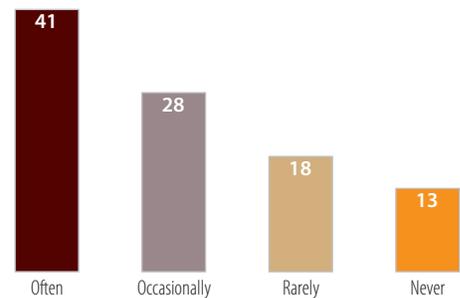
Many Aboriginal services and organizations promote culture and identity for urban Aboriginal peoples through their types of services, the events they sponsor, and simply through their existence as Aboriginal organizations in Toronto. The UAPS survey asked participants how often, and why, they use these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

Aboriginal peoples in Toronto use Aboriginal services and organizations in their city relatively frequently, and more so than those in the other UAPS cities except Vancouver.

Seven in ten Aboriginal Torontonians often (41%) or occasionally (28%) use or rely on Aboriginal services or organizations in Toronto. Three in ten do so either rarely (18%) or never (13%). First Nations people in Toronto (75%) are more likely than Métis (55%) to use Aboriginal services at least occasionally. Across cities, use (often or occasional) is most common among Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (69%) and Vancouver (68%), those cities already noted for their greater availability of Aboriginal cultural activities.

What else explains the use of Aboriginal services and organizations in cities? The sample size for Toronto alone (251 survey participants) is too small to allow for a detailed analysis by socio-demographic factors. However, the national UAPS survey data (across all 11 cities) indicates that use varies by age and income, but not by length of time in the city. Frequent use of Aboriginal services and organizations is more common among Aboriginal peoples 45 years and older, and the less affluent (use of these services and organizations steadily declines as household income increases). However, use of Aboriginal services is similar among 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).

Use of Aboriginal services or organizations
How often do you use or rely on Aboriginal services or organizations in Toronto?



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

They are there to support me.

Feel a sense of home. Familiar, I am a part of something.

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

I would rather use Aboriginal services, more comfortable. They know where I am coming from.

More one-on-one support available, feel more comfortable, they don't seem so professional. They're there to help – it's more of a community feel – more of a personal relationship with resources.

I feel at home. We all have something in common. Access to my culture and healing.

Reasons for use

As in other cities, Aboriginal services and organizations in Toronto 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).

Aboriginal peoples in Toronto who use Aboriginal services and organizations regularly emphasize the positive environment, along with the value of the health, employment and educational resources they offer. These are consistent with the main reasons for use mentioned in other *UAPS* cities.

WHY THEY USE. When asked why they use Aboriginal services and organizations in Toronto, those who use them regularly (i.e., often or occasionally – 69% of *UAPS* participants in Toronto overall) do so largely for the positive environment and specific resources they are seen to offer. Some of these reasons are illustrated in verbatim comments in the sidebar on this page. Specifically:

- **Positive environment.** About half (52%) of those who use Aboriginal services and organizations regularly cite their positive environment, whether it be the personal relationships, supportive community and/or the connection to Aboriginal culture, sharing circles and Elders that they offer. Compared to those in other *UAPS* cities, those living in Toronto are most likely to cite the connection to Aboriginal culture as a reason for using Aboriginal services and organizations.
- **Specific resources.** A similar proportion (50%) of those who regularly use Aboriginal services do so for their specific resources. Programs and social services, health supports, and education and employment services are most typically the types of resources they describe using. In particular, reliance on Aboriginal services for health care or healing is more widely mentioned in Toronto than in other *UAPS* cities.
- **Employee/volunteer.** A small group of *UAPS* participants in Toronto (8%) also use Aboriginal services and organizations because they are either employed by them, or volunteer their time and services.

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (8% or fewer each) 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 THEY DON'T USE. Those who rarely or never use Aboriginal services and organizations (representing 31% of UAPS participants in Toronto overall) typically indicate they have no need for them (53%). Smaller groups do not use them because they are personally unaware of the services and organizations available in their city (18%), because of transportation issues or problems getting to them (12%), or because they feel they are unhelpful (8%). Although mentioned by a small number of people, transportation barriers are more prominent in Toronto than in other UAPS cities. Some of the reasons why Aboriginal services are not used more often are illustrated in verbatim comments in the sidebar on this page.

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

Don't know what's offered, where they are located or how I could participate.

Distance to activities is too far – I don't like driving down to Toronto.

Do not feel the need at this moment in time, but in the future if I do need it, I would access it.

Geography – I work in Toronto during the day at an Aboriginal organization, but then I go back to the 905 region, where there are no services (Aboriginal) on nights and weekends.

I'm breaking away and becoming more independent; more self-sufficient now.

Most useful Aboriginal services and organizations

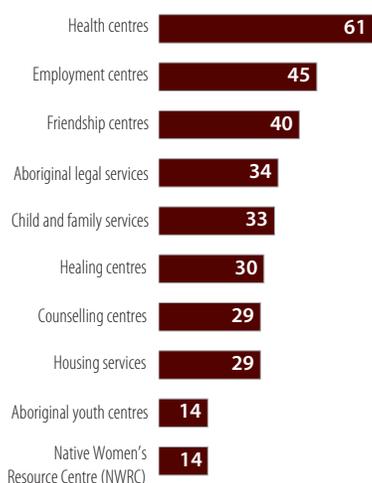
Aboriginal Torontonians value a variety of Aboriginal services and organizations, particularly health centres. They are also more likely than Aboriginal peoples in other UAPS cities to find Aboriginal legal services, child and family centres, and healing centres of great use.

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

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.

Aboriginal peoples in Toronto value a wide range of Aboriginal services and organizations, but first and foremost name health centres (61%). Other organizations that are widely valued include employment centres (45%) and friendship centres (40%). Close to three in ten each note the importance of Aboriginal legal services (34%), child and family services (33%), healing centres (30%), counselling centres (29%) and housing services (29%). Smaller proportions of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto also find Aboriginal youth centres (14%) and the Native Women's Resource Centre (14%) to be useful.

Several other services and organizations are mentioned as particularly useful by one in ten or fewer UAPS participants, including AHRDA (Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holder), specific Métis or First Nations associations, sports associations and education-related associations.

In Toronto, First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to value housing services and the Native Women's Resource Centre. In turn, Métis are more likely to have found specific Métis associations to be particularly useful.

Certain Aboriginal organizations and services are perceived as particularly useful by Aboriginal peoples in Toronto compared to those living in other UAPS cities. Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are more than twice as likely as average to find health centres and Aboriginal legal services useful, and about twice as likely to find child and family services, and healing centres of particular use. They are also among the most likely to value employment centres (together with those living in Vancouver, Calgary and Regina) and counselling centres (together with residents of Vancouver).

4.2 Importance of Aboriginal services

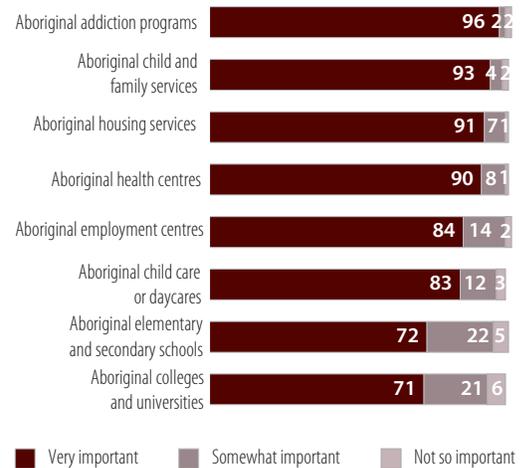
Large majorities of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto believe it is very important to also have Aboriginal services, and compared to those living in other UAPS cities, are among the most convinced of this need.

There is a strong consensus among Aboriginal peoples in Toronto 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 (96% very important), followed by child and family services (93%), housing services (91%) and health centres (90%). More than eight in ten each say that Aboriginal employment centres (84%), and Aboriginal child care or daycares (83%) are very important. Slightly fewer, but still majorities, of urban Aboriginal peoples say it is very important to have Aboriginal elementary and secondary schools (72%), and Aboriginal colleges and universities (71%). In all cases, most of the remaining participants say having Aboriginal services is somewhat important, and fewer than one in ten each say it is not so important.

Compared to Aboriginal peoples in other *UAPS* cities, those living in Toronto are among the most convinced of the importance of Aboriginal-specific services in all of these areas.

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.

4.3 Aboriginal services and urban community

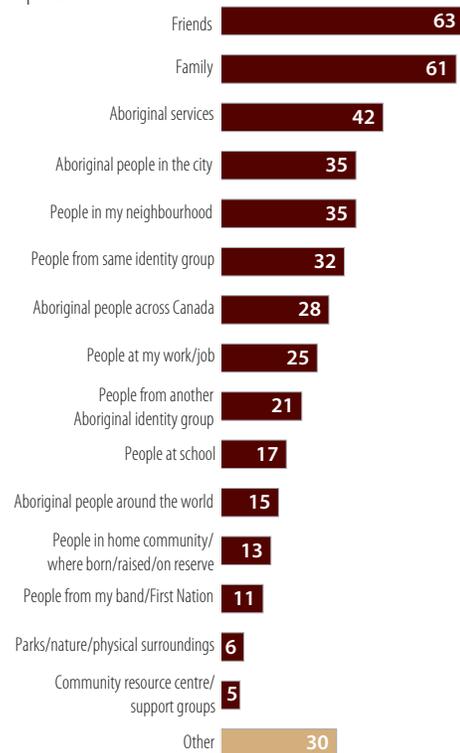
Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto define their community in a variety of ways, but family and friends are top-of-mind. Aboriginal services, such as friendship centres, are also considered part of their community – more so than in any other UAPS city.

Communities play a pivotal role in shaping individual identities. Parents, family, friends, neighbours, members of one’s own Aboriginal group, other Aboriginal persons and non-Aboriginal persons transmit social values and understandings that influence Aboriginal identity in cities.

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 you consider to be a part of your community?

Top mentions



Who or what do urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto 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 in Toronto.

When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), they most frequently consider friends (63%) or family (61%) to be a part of their community, a view that is shared with residents of other *UAPS* cities. Smaller proportions consider the people in their neighbourhoods (35%), Aboriginal peoples in the city (35%), and people from the same identity group (i.e., First Nations, Métis or Inuit) (32%) to be a part of their community.

Particularly notable, however, is that four in ten (42%) Aboriginal residents of Toronto say they consider Aboriginal services (friendship centres, healing centres, counselling centres, etc.) to be a part of their community, more so than those in any other *UAPS* city. Aboriginal Torontonians are also among the most likely of all *UAPS* participants to identify Aboriginal peoples across Canada (28%) and around the world (15%) as part of their community.

Smaller groups of urban Aboriginal peoples consider co-workers (25%), people from other Aboriginal identity groups (21%), people at school (17%), people in their home community (i.e., where they were born and raised) (13%) and people from their band/First Nation (11%) to be a part of their community.

Yet smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (5% or fewer each) mention other connections, including religious communities, community and support groups, music and arts communities, sports and recreation services, and social services.

In Toronto, definitions of community are similar for First Nations peoples and Métis.

In general, how do Aboriginal people feel about the city they live in? Beyond the themes discussed so far in this report, the *UAPS* survey also explored how much participants like living in Toronto, 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 Toronto a better place to live, along with their openness to other languages and cultures.

A unique feature of the Aboriginal experience in Toronto is the degree to which Aboriginal people express a sense of social acceptance, a view almost exclusive to Toronto. In part the product of the view that non-Aboriginal impressions of Aboriginal people are changing for the better, there is also a sense among *UAPS* participants that it is easier to “blend in” in a city as diverse as Toronto. As well, perhaps reflecting the heterogeneity of their traditions and cultures, Aboriginal residents of Toronto are among those most likely to display a high tolerance of other languages and cultures and, despite Toronto’s general diversity, to a much greater degree than non-Aboriginal Torontonians.

Key findings

- **Aboriginal Torontonians like living in their city, in part for the social acceptance they experience.** A large majority say they like living in Toronto, and to a similar extent as do *UAPS* participants in other cities. As well, they like living in their city for reasons similar to those of Aboriginal people in other cities. The one exception is that a sense of social acceptance ranks high on their list of “likes,” a perspective almost exclusive to Aboriginal Torontonians.
- **Affordable housing is the most common reason for Aboriginal Torontonians’ choice of neighbourhoods. Transportation, and access to Aboriginal cultural and spiritual services stand out as deciding factors in Toronto – more so than in most other *UAPS* cities.** They are also among those most likely to feel they have a lot of choice as to where they live in the city.
- **Seven in ten urban Aboriginal peoples think they can make Toronto a better place to live, and are among the most likely to feel this way across cities.** This belief mirrors the belief *non-Aboriginal* Torontonians have in their own ability to affect change.
- **Like Aboriginal people in other cities, Aboriginal Torontonians are strongly accepting of other languages and cultures, and much more so than *non-Aboriginal* peoples in Toronto.**

5.1 Satisfaction with city life

Aboriginal Torontonians like living in their city, due in part to the social acceptance they experience (a view almost exclusive to Toronto).

Urban living can be difficult for many Aboriginal people. They typically face urban violence, poverty and health challenges on a greater scale than the population-at-large. However, there is another side to these urban communities, a side not often featured in popular discourse and media. Thousands of First Nations people, Métis and Inuit are establishing themselves in urban centres, or continuing long histories of multi-generational residence in Canadian cities.

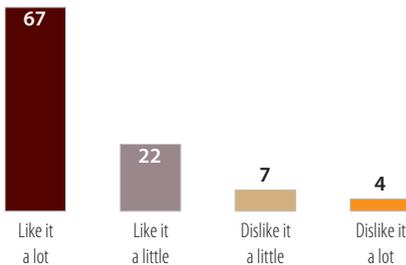
Nations people, Métis and Inuit are establishing themselves in urban centres, or continuing long histories of multi-generational residence in Canadian cities.

Case in point: urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto. The large majority of urban Aboriginal peoples like living in Toronto. When asked, two-thirds say they like living in their city a lot (67%), while a much smaller group indicate they like it a little (22%). Only one in ten dislike living in their city a little (7%) or a lot (4%). Urban Aboriginal people in Toronto like living in their city to a similar extent as do *UAPS* participants in other cities.

What do *UAPS* participants like most and least about living in Toronto? General quality of life and city life, along with social acceptance, are among those features most prominently mentioned, while certain city conditions (i.e., pollution, overcrowding, etc.) are what they like least about their city.

Like living in Toronto

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



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

- **Quality of life.** The most common reason urban Aboriginal peoples like living in Toronto is the quality of life it offers. Close to half (46%) of urban Aboriginal peoples indicate this is what they most like about living in Toronto, more so than in any of the other *UAPS* cities. They cite the variety and convenience of amenities available (29%), and also place greater emphasis than do those in other cities on the availability of resources, support and services (17%).
- **City life.** Another major reason urban Aboriginal peoples enjoy Toronto is the city life available to them. Four in ten (39%) 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 Toronto are among the most likely of all *UAPS* participants to enjoy these aspects of their city, together with residents of Montreal (40%).
- **Social acceptance.** The third most common feature urban Aboriginal peoples most like about living in Toronto is the social acceptance (33%) they experience in the city. Importantly, this perspective is almost exclusive to those who live in Toronto, Montreal (34%), 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 urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto say they like the career and employment opportunities available to them (16%), and the perception of greater freedom and opportunity (12%).

Features of Toronto enjoyed by 10 percent or fewer urban Aboriginal residents include a sense of community in the city, access to education and training, proximity to other Aboriginal peoples and transportation; these latter two features are more widely mentioned in Toronto than in other cities. Notably, Aboriginal residents of Toronto are among the least likely of all *UAPS* participants to cite family and friends (8%), together with those in Halifax (8%) and Montreal (12%).

What explains the greater sense of social acceptance expressed by Aboriginal Torontonians? After all, Chapter 3 (Experiences with Non-Aboriginal People) revealed that there is a very strong perception among Aboriginal Torontonians that non-Aboriginal people generally hold a wide range of negative stereotypes of Aboriginal people. However, there is also a strong view in Toronto that non-Aboriginal attitudes may be changing for the better (a more widespread view in Toronto compared to other cities) that likely corresponds with the sense of social acceptance they experience in the city. *UAPS* participants in Toronto also noted it is easier to “be who you want to be” amidst the multicultural diversity of the city.

LIKE LEAST. What do urban Aboriginal peoples like least about living in Toronto? Although they mention a broad range of concerns or issues, their responses clearly reveal one primary reason:

- **Urban pressures.** A universal complaint of all city-dwellers, more than half (55%) of urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto dislike certain urban pressures, particularly the pollution, a sense of overcrowding and a stressful pace of life, but also bad traffic, the higher cost of living and the lack of green space. Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are most likely of all participants to dislike this aspect of city living, followed by Aboriginal residents of Calgary (48%).

Crime is the second most commonly disliked aspect of urban life in Toronto (mentioned by 17%), although Aboriginal residents in this city are only about half as likely as those in the Prairie cities (Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton and Calgary) and Halifax to voice such concerns.

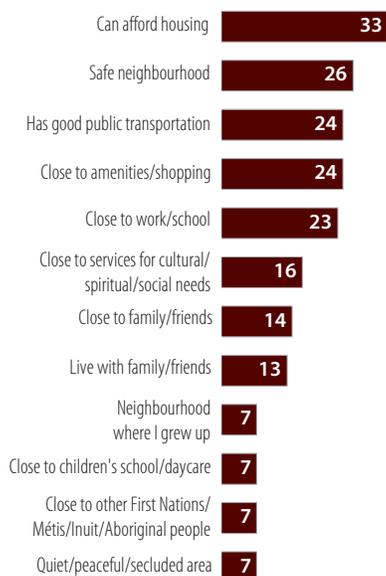
Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (10% or fewer) mention other features they like least about living in Toronto. These include experiences with racism and discrimination, poor housing conditions, how large and spread out the city is, and a lack of connection to Aboriginal culture. As well, Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (10%) are more than twice as likely as those in most other cities to say unfriendly people are what they like least about living in their city. Finally, even smaller groups (5% each) have concerns about safety and security, and dislike the lack of community and support for Aboriginal peoples.

First Nations peoples and Métis both say urban pressures are what they dislike most about living in Toronto, although this aspect is more widely mentioned by Métis (68%) than by First Nations peoples (49%). In turn, First Nations people are more likely than Métis to express concerns about crime (21% vs. 10% of Métis), and their personal safety and security (7% vs. 1% of Métis).

5.2 Reasons for choice of neighbourhood

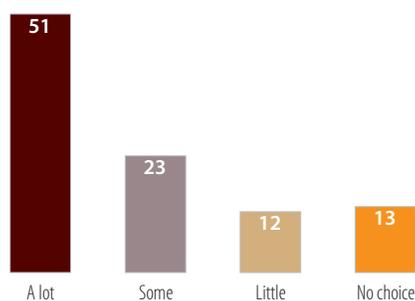
Why do you live in your neighbourhood?

Why do you live in the neighbourhood you do?



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...?



Affordable housing is the most common reason for Aboriginal Torontonians' choice of neighbourhoods. Transportation, and access to Aboriginal cultural and spiritual services stand out as deciding factors in Toronto more so than in most other UAPS cities.

UAPS participants choose their neighbourhoods for a range of reasons, most typically because they offer affordable housing, as well as a safe environment, and proximity to amenities, transportation, work and school.

When asked why they live in their neighbourhood (unprompted, without response options offered), one in three (33%) urban Aboriginal peoples say it is because they can afford the housing. One in four also say their neighbourhood offers either a safe environment for themselves and their families (26%), proximity to city amenities and shopping (24%), good public transportation (24%), and proximity to work and/or school (23%). Smaller proportions also live in their neighbourhoods because they are close to cultural and spiritual services (16%), and offer the chance to be close to (14%) or live with (13%) family and friends. Although they share the same top reasons for living in their neighbourhoods with residents of other UAPS cities, Aboriginal residents of Toronto are among the most likely to mention proximity to transportation, and to Aboriginal organizations that provide cultural and spiritual services.

Smaller groups (7% or fewer) choose to live in their neighbourhoods because they are the places where they 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.

EXTENT OF CHOICE. To what extent do urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto feel they have a choice about the neighbourhood they live in? When asked directly, three in four feel they have either a lot (51%) or some (23%) choice about where they live in their city, but a significant minority feel they have either a little (12%) or no choice at all (13%). Aboriginal residents of Toronto, together with those living in Montreal (53%) and Halifax (52%), are the most likely of all UAPS participants to feel they have *a lot* of choice about where they live.

5.3 Impact on city

Seven in ten urban Aboriginal peoples think they can make Toronto a better place to live, and are among the most likely to feel this way across cities.

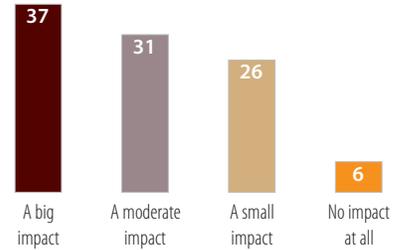
Beyond the fact that many urban Aboriginal peoples like living in Toronto is a widely held belief that they can make the city a better place to live, a sentiment that is comparable to the perspective of non-Aboriginal people in Toronto.

Seven in ten *UAPS* participants think people like themselves can have either a big (37%) or moderate (31%) impact in making Toronto a better place to live. By comparison, three in ten believe they can have only a small impact (26%) or no impact at all (6%) on their city. Individuals in Toronto and Vancouver have the strongest sense of empowerment, indicated by the largest proportions of all *UAPS* participants who believe they can have a big impact in making their city a better place to live.

UAPS participants' widespread belief in their ability to be positive agents of change in Toronto mirrors the belief *non-Aboriginal* people have in their own ability to affect change, including similar proportions who think they can have a *big* impact on Toronto (37% and 30%, respectively).

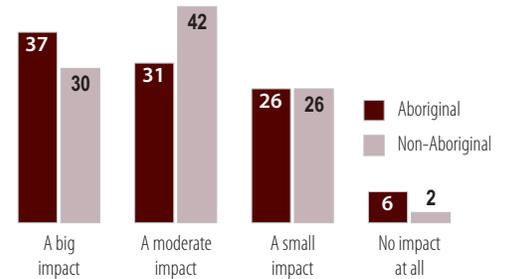
Making Toronto a better place to live

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



Making Toronto a better place to live

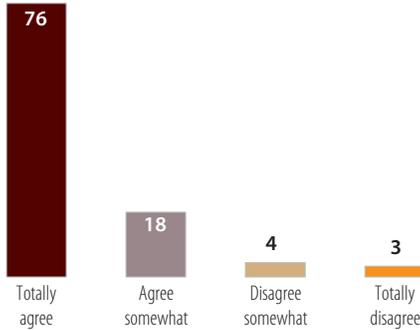
Overall, how much impact do you think people like you can have in making your city a better place to live?



5.4 Attitudes towards multiculturalism

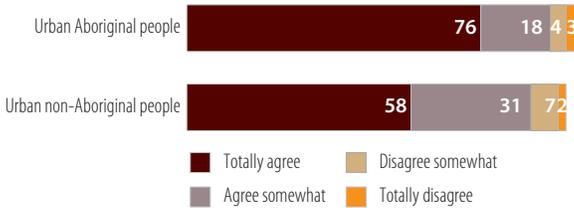
There is room for a variety of languages and cultures in this country

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."



Like Aboriginal people in other cities, Aboriginal Torontonians are strongly accepting of other languages and cultures, and much more so than non-Aboriginal peoples in Toronto.

Over nine in ten Aboriginal Torontonians totally (76%) or somewhat (18%) agree that Canada is a country where there is room for a variety of languages and cultures. This view is largely shared with urban Aboriginal peoples in the other *UAPS* cities.

ABORIGINAL VERSUS NON-ABORIGINAL PERCEPTIONS. Notably, urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto express a greater degree of tolerance for other languages and cultures in comparison with non-Aboriginal people. Using data from the *UAPS* survey of non-Aboriginal people, urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (76%) are much more likely than non-Aboriginal people in the city (58%)¹⁸ to *totally* agree there is room for a variety of languages and cultures in Canada, and this pattern is consistent across cities.

¹⁸ Generally, both individuals born in Canada and those born outside Canada were much less likely to agree there is room for a variety of languages and cultures.

6.0 Urban Aspirations

An important goal from the outset of the *UAPS* was to learn about urban Aboriginal peoples' aspirations. The *UAPS* Advisory Circle and research team sought to include questions in the *UAPS* survey that would consider urban Aboriginal peoples, so often described in terms of "need" or "lack," from a more positive vantage point, in order to learn what they most wanted for their life and those of future generations, and how they defined success.

Pursuing higher education proved to be the leading life aspiration of urban Aboriginal peoples. Not only did they see higher education as a path to a good job or career for their own generation, many said that they hope higher levels of education will be key to how future generations of Aboriginal people distinguish themselves from their ancestors. This was true for Aboriginal Torontonians, whose top life aspirations are largely consistent with those held by Aboriginal peoples living in other cities. However, a unique feature of Aboriginal Torontonians' aspirations and definitions of success is the importance to them of a strong Aboriginal cultural connection. More so than in those other *UAPS* cities, they emphasize that maintaining a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity and background is important to their current and future well-being and success.

Key findings

- **The top life aspiration for Aboriginal peoples in Toronto is completing their education, followed by raising a family.** The life aspirations of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are largely consistent with those held by Aboriginal peoples living in the other *UAPS* cities.
- **Family and a balanced lifestyle are most important to Aboriginal Torontonians' definition of success.** Compared to those in other *UAPS* cities, they place greater importance on having a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity and background, and less value on a good job, financial independence and home ownership.
- **Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are most likely to hope for a future world that includes greater cultural connection, and express this desire more frequently than those in any other *UAPS* city.**

6.1 Life aspirations

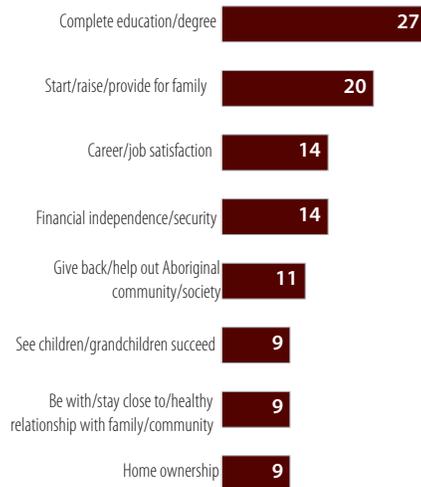
The top life aspiration for Aboriginal peoples in Toronto is completing their education, followed by raising a family.

What do Aboriginal peoples in Toronto 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 Aboriginal peoples in Toronto is completing their education (27%), followed by starting, raising or providing for a family (20%). Slightly fewer mention having a good or enjoyable job (14%), becoming financially independent or wealthy (14%), or giving back to their Aboriginal community (11%).

Aboriginal peoples in Toronto mention a wide variety of other life aspirations, although none by more than nine percent of survey participants, including owning a home, seeing children/grandchildren go to school and succeed in life, staying close to their family and community, having good health, being a positive role model, and passing on their knowledge or keeping their culture alive.

Completing their education is more likely to be identified as a top aspiration by First Nations peoples (33%) in Toronto than Métis (13%). In turn, Métis are most likely to say they aspire to financial independence (22%).

The life aspirations of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are largely consistent with those held by Aboriginal peoples living in the other *UAPS* cities.

6.2 Definitions of “success”

Family and a balanced lifestyle are most important to Aboriginal peoples in Toronto. Compared to those in other UAPS cities, they place greater importance on having a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity and background, and less value on a good job, financial independence and home ownership.

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.

Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are most likely to consider family and a balanced lifestyle central to a successful life. Nine in ten each say **raising healthy, well-adjusted children who contribute to their community** (91%) is very important to their idea of a successful life, and similar proportions say the same about **living a balanced life** (90%), and **being close to family and friends** (86%). Three in four place the same degree of importance on **having a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity or background** (76%). Majorities also define success as a **good job or a successful career** (68%), and **financial independence** (57%). For each of these elements, most of the remainder say they are somewhat important in defining a successful life, while no more than six percent say they are not so important.

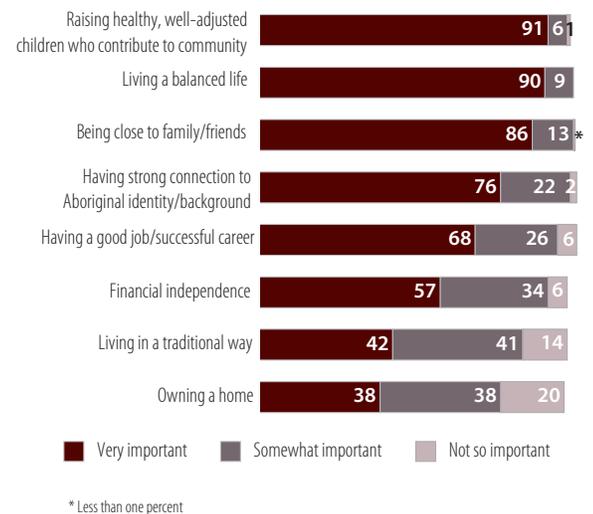
By comparison, Aboriginal peoples in Toronto have mixed opinions about the importance of **living in a traditional way** and **owning a home**. Four in ten (42%) say living in a traditional way is very important to a successful life, while a similar proportion (41%) say it is somewhat important and 14 percent believe it is not so important. Similarly, opinions are divided as to whether it is very (38%), somewhat (38%) or not so (20%) important to own a home.

First Nations peoples and Métis in Toronto possess similar ‘universal’ notions of a successful life (i.e., family and a balanced lifestyle), but diverge significantly on the importance of living in a traditional way. First Nations peoples (49%) are much more likely than Métis (26%) to believe this is very important to a successful life.

Across the UAPS cities, a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage is most important to the concept of a successful life for urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (76%), as well as in Halifax (77%), Vancouver (74%) and among Inuit in Ottawa (78%). Notably, the importance of a good job, financial independence and home ownership are lowest in Toronto compared to the other UAPS cities.

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.



Aboriginal Torontonians' hopes for the future:

Hope they would be able to learn traditional practices, freely identify as Aboriginal without fear, don't have to fight for basic rights and freedoms.

I hope that they have (or feel like they have) less struggles. I hope that they can be closer together – because distance separates, it is hard to keep emotional connections. I hope I do have grandchildren.

Won't have to fight so hard to achieve a normal education or face so many obstacles on a day-to-day basis to be happy. Hope that society will be more open – curriculum more open and diverse.

Want them to be raised in a happy home, to always be safe, proud of who they are, free from racism/ discrimination/ hatred, education is important.

6.3 Hopes for the future

Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are most likely to hope for a future world that includes greater cultural connection, and express this desire more frequently than those in any other UAPS city.

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), the hopes of Aboriginal people in Toronto centre on greater cultural connection.

Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are most likely to hope that future generations are more aware of, involved in and connected to their Aboriginal cultural community (31%). Moreover, they are more likely to express this hope than Aboriginal peoples in any of the other UAPS cities.

A wide range of other hopes for future generations were expressed, each by about one in ten Aboriginal peoples in Toronto. These include living in a society without racism and discrimination (13%); making better decisions than they themselves did (13%); learning the importance of education and finishing school (12%); enjoying a safe environment without crime, violence, or physical or emotional abuse (12%); a stable/strong supportive family life (12%); pride in their Aboriginal identity (12%); achieving greater financial security and/or wealth (11%); access to better resources or opportunities (11%); and leading happier, healthier and more balanced lives (10%). Some of these hopes are presented in participants' own words in the sidebar on this page.

In Toronto, First Nations peoples and Métis express generally similar hopes for the lives of future generations. However, learning the importance of education is a more commonly expressed desire among First Nations peoples (14%) than Métis (5%).

Access to traditional healing practices is more important for urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto than for those living in almost any other *UAPS* city.

This is the key finding from data on Aboriginal Torontonians' perceptions of traditional healing practices and mainstream health care. The *UAPS* survey included a limited number of questions about urban Aboriginal peoples' perceptions of their health and well-being. Given that one-half of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto live with one or more chronic conditions,¹⁹ and the importance to Aboriginal Torontonians of maintaining strong links with their cultural practices and traditions, this report includes a special section on the importance to them of traditional healing practices and mainstream health care.

Access to traditional healing practices is more important for urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto than for those living in almost any other *UAPS* city, except Inuit in Ottawa. Most urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto say traditional healing practices are at least equally, if not more, important to them than mainstream health care. Half (50%) say access to traditional healing practices is equally important to them as access to non-Aboriginal or mainstream health care services, while four in ten (43%) say traditional practices are more important. Only six percent 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 First Nations peoples (49%) than among Métis (28%). Métis, in turn, are more inclined to say the two are equally important; very few (less than one in ten) in each group say access to traditional healing is less important.

Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (43%), as well as Inuit in Ottawa (47%), are the most likely of those living in any *UAPS* city to say accessing traditional healing practices is more important to them than accessing mainstream health care services.

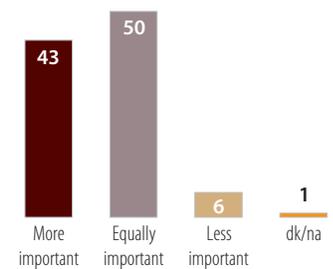
Actual access to traditional healing practices appears easy for a majority of urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto. Three in four say it is very (52%) or somewhat (22%) easy to access traditional healing practices such as natural medicines, healing circles and other ceremonies, and the counsel of elders. One in four say it is somewhat (12%) or very (11%) difficult for them to access these practices. Reported ease of access is similar for First Nations peoples and Métis in Toronto.

Access to traditional healing is judged considerably easier by urban Aboriginal peoples living in Toronto than average (30% very easy for all 11 *UAPS* cities).

7.0 Special Theme: Traditional Healing Practices vs. Mainstream Care

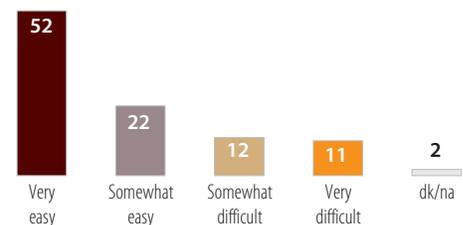
Importance of traditional healing practices

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?



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?

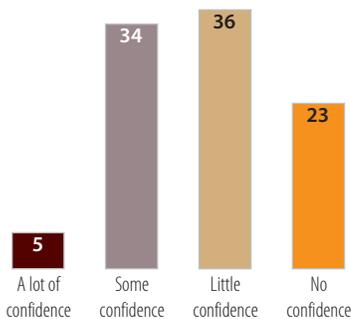


¹⁹ According to the 2006 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, over half of First Nations (58%) and Métis (55%) adults living in Toronto reported that they had been diagnosed with at least one chronic condition.

8.0 Special Theme: Confidence in the Criminal Justice System

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?



Aboriginal Torontonians are among the least confident in the criminal justice system in Canada and support for a separate Aboriginal justice system is stronger in Toronto than in any other city.

This is the key finding from *UAPS* data on Aboriginal Torontonians' perceptions of the criminal justice system in Canada. The *UAPS* survey included a limited number of questions about this topic, given that 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.²⁰ 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.²¹ The disparity is smaller in Ontario, although it still exists: Aboriginal people accounted for nine percent of admissions to sentenced custody in Ontario, but only two percent of the population. 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).

Six in ten Aboriginal peoples in Toronto have little (36%) or no (23%) confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada, which is among the lowest levels of confidence in the *UAPS* cities. One in three (34%) have some confidence in this system, but only a very few (5%) have a lot of confidence. Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are among the most likely of all *UAPS* participants to express a lack of confidence in the criminal justice system, together with those living in Vancouver (64%), Saskatoon (63%), Winnipeg (60%) and Edmonton (55%). In Toronto, levels of confidence are similar for First Nations peoples and Métis.

What influences urban Aboriginal peoples' confidence in the criminal justice system? The sample size for Toronto alone (251 survey participants) is too small to allow for a detailed analysis by socio-demographic factors. However, the national *UAPS* survey data (across all 11 cities) found that confidence was lower among 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). In fact, Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are more likely than those in other *UAPS* cities to report serious involvement of this sort (67% vs. 52% average), which goes some way towards explaining their lower confidence in the justice system.

20 Statistics Canada. 2009. Incarceration of Aboriginal people in adult correctional services. *The Daily*. July 21. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-001-XIE.

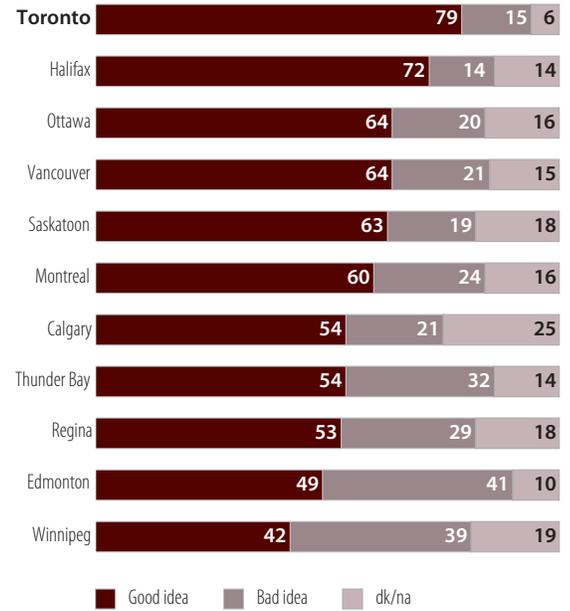
21 Brzozowski, Jodi-Anne, Andrea Taylor-Butts and Sara Johnson. 2006. "Victimization and offending among the Aboriginal population in Canada." *Juristat*. Vol. 26, no.3. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-XIE.

In light of the low confidence in the criminal justice system, it is not surprising that most Aboriginal peoples in Toronto think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a good idea. Support for this idea is stronger in Toronto than in any other *UAPS* city.

Eight in ten (79%) Aboriginal residents of Toronto think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a good idea. Fifteen percent believe it is a bad idea, while a small proportion (6%) are unable to offer an opinion. First Nations peoples and Métis in Toronto are equally likely to support the idea of a separate system of justice.

Aboriginal justice system

Do you think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a good idea or bad idea?



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.

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 in Toronto are most likely to 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 (37%). Some also think a separate system would provide greater rehabilitation and healing, and reduce recidivism (27%), a view that is more common in Toronto and Edmonton than in most other UAPS cities. Smaller groups suggest a separate Aboriginal justice system would offset a current justice system that they perceive to be biased and that treats Aboriginal people unjustly (17%), offer a setting that is more comfortable culturally for Aboriginal people (16%) and, finally, provide a more effective alternative to the existing system that does not appear to be working for Aboriginal people (12%).

WHY A BAD IDEA? Aboriginal peoples in Toronto who think creating a separate system is a *bad* idea were also asked the reason for their opinion (unprompted, without response options offered). The number of survey participants in this subgroup is too small (n=36) to be conclusive. However, the results suggest the most common reasons for opposing a separate system include the view that healing circles are not an effective punishment or deterrent, that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people should be treated equally to avoid discrimination, and that a separate system would cause resentment or create conflict with the broader Canadian population.

Perceived impact of alternate approaches

Of all UAPS participants, Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are among the most 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, UAPS participants were asked what would make a difference in reducing Aboriginal crime rates, improving community safety and improving their own confidence in the criminal justice system. They 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 alternative to punishment, such as reconciliation and restoration.

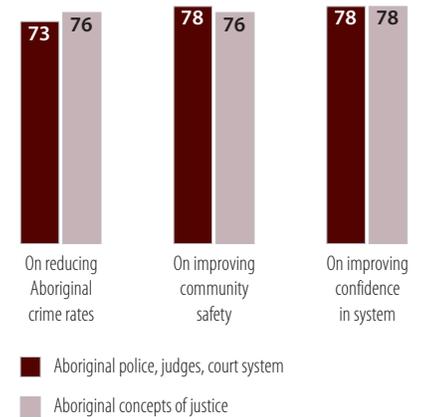
Overall, a large majority of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto feel both approaches would have a beneficial impact. More than seven in ten say that each of these two approaches would have at least a moderate impact on reducing Aboriginal crime rates, improving community safety and improving their confidence in the justice system. Across all the UAPS cities, Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are the most optimistic about the potential impact of both approaches, although those living in Saskatoon and Halifax are similarly optimistic about the impact Aboriginal police, judges and courts could have.

When it comes to improving confidence in the system, both approaches are considered equally likely to be beneficial. However, Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are more optimistic that a system that incorporates Aboriginal concepts of justice would have a greater impact on reducing crime rates (60% say it would have a big impact) than would a system that incorporates Aboriginal police, judges and court system (47%). There is also greater optimism about the impact that incorporating Aboriginal concepts of justice could have on community safety (60% vs. 51% for a system incorporating Aboriginal police, judges and court system).

Métis in Toronto are more optimistic than First Nations peoples about the impact of incorporating Aboriginal concepts of justice on crime rates and community safety (but not about the impact it would have on their confidence in the justice system). Views about the potential impact of Aboriginal police, judges and courts are similar for First Nations peoples and Métis in Toronto.

Impact of alternate approaches to justice

Big or moderate impact



9.0 Non-Aboriginal Perspectives

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 non-Aboriginal 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 sections of the main survey findings.

A closer look at the responses of non-Aboriginal Torontonians yields the following insights into their attitudes towards Aboriginal people, their awareness of Aboriginal people and communities in their city, their perceptions of the top issues facing Aboriginal people today and, finally, their perceptions of future relations with Aboriginal people. Specifically:

- **Among non-Aboriginal people in Toronto, the most common top-of-mind impression of Aboriginal peoples revolves around their history as the original inhabitants of Canada.** This perception is more common in Toronto than in any other *UAPS* city except Montreal. Non-Aboriginal people in Toronto are also the most likely of all *UAPS* participants to associate Aboriginal people with mistreatment or abuse by Canadian citizens and governments.
- **Non-Aboriginal people in Toronto 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.** Still, belief in the unique rights of Aboriginal people is more common here than in most other *UAPS* cities except Montreal and Vancouver.
- **More than one in two non-Aboriginal Torontonians are Cultural Romantics, individuals with fairly high cultural and media exposure to Aboriginal people, but little personal contact.** A segmentation analysis of the *UAPS* data reveals non-Aboriginal participants have four distinct broad viewpoints of Aboriginal people. All four are evident in Toronto, but Cultural Romantics are especially prominent, and more so compared to other cities.

- **A majority of Toronto residents know Aboriginal people live in their city, but they are among the least likely to be aware of an Aboriginal community in the city.** Indeed, very few non-Aboriginal Torontonians have regular contact with Aboriginal people (which is understandably more common in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations) and are among the least likely to know Aboriginal people as close friends, neighbours and co-workers.
- **Land claims, and threats to culture and identity are perceived to be the most important issues facing the Aboriginal population in Canada today, while isolation and integration issues are considered the top challenge for urban Aboriginal peoples.** The perception of this latter challenge is more widespread in Toronto than in most other *UAPS* cities except Thunder Bay. However, a significant minority of Torontonians are unaware of key challenges. Indeed, they are less aware of Indian residential schools, for example, than are those in most other *UAPS* cities except for those Montreal and Halifax.
- **Toronto residents clearly think Aboriginal people experience discrimination – and at least as much as other groups in Canadian society.** Nonetheless, the minorities who do not believe such discrimination exists are somewhat larger in Toronto than in most other *UAPS* cities except Montreal.
- **Toronto residents are three times 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.** This view is more common in Toronto than in any other *UAPS* city.
- **Non-Aboriginal Torontonians are ultimately divided about the current state of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, but display greater optimism than those in western cities.**

9.1 Perceptions of Aboriginal peoples

Top-of-mind impression

Among non-Aboriginal people in Toronto, the most common top-of-mind impression of Aboriginal peoples revolves around their history as the original inhabitants of Canada. This perception is more common in Toronto than in any other UAPS city except Montreal.

What are the top-of-mind impressions of Aboriginal peoples among non-Aboriginal people in Toronto? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), non-Aboriginal people in Toronto 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 peoples among non-Aboriginal people in Toronto (21%).
- **First Nations/Métis/Inuit.** For one in seven (15%) non-Aboriginal people in Toronto, what comes to mind is simply First Nations, Métis or Inuit, or other terms that are sometimes used to describe Aboriginal peoples, such as Indians or natives. (There is no indication whether these are positive, neutral or negative impressions.)
- **Mistreatment.** The most top-of-mind impression for another one in ten (12%) non-Aboriginal Toronto residents is of perceptions of abuse and mistreatment experienced by Aboriginal peoples at the hands of Canadian citizens and governments.
- **Culture and art.** Non-Aboriginal residents of Toronto are slightly less likely to associate Aboriginal peoples with cultural and artistic traditions (9%) as they are with mistreatment.
- **Reserves.** One in ten (8%) first associate Aboriginal peoples with living on reserves.

Small proportions of non-Aboriginal people in Toronto associate Aboriginal peoples with loss of culture/assimilation/oppression (6%); poverty and poor living conditions, largely as these conditions relate to Aboriginal people living on reserves (5%); tax breaks, rights and special privileges (4%), such as government funding of First Nations peoples’ post-secondary education; and that they are a proud people with a proud history and culture (4%). A wide variety of other impressions are cited, but none by more than three percent (each) of non-Aboriginal residents of Toronto. Fewer than one in ten (6%) cannot say what first comes to mind when they think of Aboriginal peoples.

The impression of Aboriginal peoples as the “first inhabitants” is top-of-mind in most UAPS cities, but is particularly common in Toronto, as well as in Montreal. Non-Aboriginal people in Toronto are also the most likely of all UAPS participants to associate Aboriginal people with mistreatment or abuse by Canadian citizens and governments.

Are NA urban Canadians' impressions changing?

Most non-Aboriginal residents of Toronto say their impressions of Aboriginal people have not changed in the past few years. Among those whose impressions have changed, they are more than twice as likely to say their impressions have improved.

Non-Aboriginal Toronto residents are much more likely to say their impressions of Aboriginal peoples are unchanged in recent years than to report they have changed for better or worse.

Two-thirds (67%) of non-Aboriginal people in Toronto say their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have stayed the same over the past few years. Of the minority who report shifting impressions of Aboriginal peoples, non-Aboriginal Torontonians are more likely to say these impressions have improved (21%) than worsened (8%). Toronto residents are among the least likely to report their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have recently worsened, consistent with perceptions in Vancouver (5%), Montreal (10%) and Halifax (10%).

REASONS FOR IMPROVING IMPRESSIONS. Non-Aboriginal Torontonians who say their impressions of Aboriginal people have improved over time cite three main reasons for this:

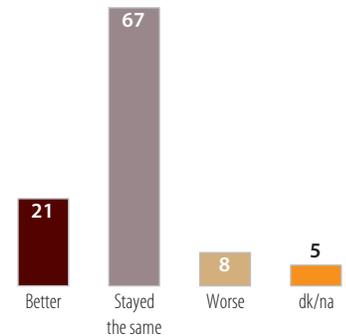
- **Visibility.** Three in ten (31%) cite a more visible and positive presence in the local community and media as the main reason their impression of Aboriginal peoples has improved. Torontonians are more likely than non-Aboriginal people in any other *UAPS* city to mention this visibility as a reason for their improving impressions.
- **Personal relationships.** A personal relationship with an Aboriginal person has also contributed to better impressions for two in ten (21%) of this group.
- **Educational or awareness courses.** One in six (17%) attribute their improved impressions to specific knowledge they have gained through taking educational or awareness courses.

Other less common reasons for improved impressions include perceived educational, social and economic gains among Aboriginal peoples in the past few years (14%), or a better general understanding of Aboriginal culture or issues (12%). Fewer individuals associate their more positive impressions with their perception that more government or social assistance opportunities are now available to Aboriginal people (7%), with the perception that Aboriginal peoples' political leadership has improved (7%), with growth in their own personal maturity or open-mindedness (3%), or with the greater recognition or respect that they believe Aboriginal people are getting from governments and ordinary Canadians (2%).

REASONS FOR WORSENING IMPRESSIONS. Non-Aboriginal Torontonians who report their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have worsened attribute this change primarily to the perception that they are constantly making demands or protesting issues such as land claims. However, the sample size for this group (n=22) is too small to provide a meaningful basis for further analysis or conclusions.

Stable impressions

Over the past few years, has your impression of Aboriginal people gotten better or worse, or stayed the same?

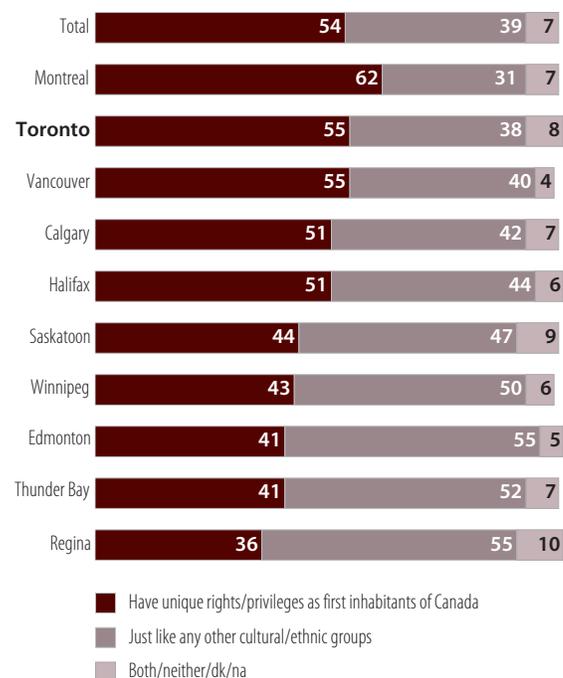


9.2 Unique rights and privileges?

Non-Aboriginal people in Toronto 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. Belief in the unique rights of Aboriginal people is more common here than in most other UAPS cities except Montreal and Vancouver.

Unique rights and privileges, or just like other groups?

Which of the following two statements best represents how you think about Aboriginal people?



In addition to exploring their impressions of Aboriginal people, the UAPS survey probed non-Aboriginal participants' perceptions of Aboriginal status. Non-Aboriginal residents of Toronto are divided 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 slight majority (55%) of non-Aboriginal people in Toronto believe Aboriginal people have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada, whereas four in ten (38%) 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 4% do not have an opinion).

Compared to non-Aboriginal people in other UAPS cities, Torontonians are among the most likely to believe Aboriginal peoples have unique rights and privileges, similar to residents of Vancouver (55%), although to a slightly lesser extent than those living in Montreal (62%). Typically, it is residents of cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations who are more likely to consider Aboriginal people the same as other cultural or ethnic groups.

9.3 The big picture: explaining non-Aboriginal Torontonians' views of Aboriginal people

More than one in two non-Aboriginal Torontonians are “Cultural Romantics;” individuals with fairly high cultural and media exposure to Aboriginal people, but little personal contact.

The overall picture of what is going on among Torontonians 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, 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 non-Aboriginal people living in the *UAPS* cities.

Specifically, this in-depth look involved determining if there are patterns of views among non-Aboriginal 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 non-Aboriginal urban Canadians based on their overall attitudes toward Aboriginal culture, responsibility and contribution to Canadian society in order to encapsulate non-Aboriginal urban Canadians' broader viewpoints of Aboriginal people.

An analysis of a large number of questions posed in the *UAPS* survey revealed four distinct viewpoints of Aboriginal people among non-Aboriginal urban Canadians:

- **Dismissive Naysayers.** They tend to view Aboriginal people and communities negatively (i.e., unfairly entitled and isolated from Canadian society).
- **Inattentive Skeptics.** Uninformed and unaware, they typically think Aboriginal peoples are not 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.

Non-Aboriginal Torontonians are predominantly Cultural Romantics (55%), a segment that is larger in Toronto and Halifax than in any other city. A distant second, Inattentive Skeptics (17%) are the next largest group, but more prominent in Toronto than in any other city except for Montreal. Connected Advocates (15%) represent the third largest group of non-Aboriginal people, a proportion similar to other cities. Finally, Dismissive Naysayers (the polar opposite of Connected Advocates) represent the smallest group (13%) of non-Aboriginal Torontonians. Toronto also has the smallest proportion of Dismissive Naysayers of all the UAPS cities.

Dismissive Naysayers (13%)

Tend to view Aboriginal peoples and communities negatively, i.e., entitled and isolated from Canadian society.



Cultural Romantics (55%)

Idealistic and optimistic, they have a strong belief in Aboriginal peoples' artistic and cultural contributions.



Inattentive Skeptics (17%)

Uninformed and unaware, they typically think Aboriginal peoples are no different from other Canadians.



Connected Advocates (15%)

High level of contact and strong belief that Aboriginal peoples often experience discrimination.



9.4 Awareness and perceptions of an Aboriginal community in the city

A majority of Toronto residents know Aboriginal people live in their city, but they are among the least likely to be aware of an Aboriginal community in the city.

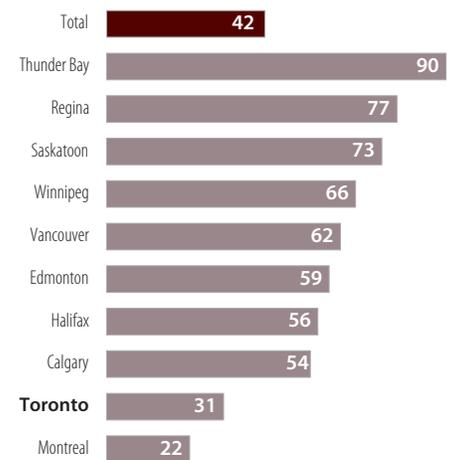
The *UAPS* non-Aboriginal survey asked non-Aboriginal residents of Toronto how aware they are of Aboriginal people and communities in the city. Majorities know Aboriginal people live in their city, but they are less aware of an Aboriginal *community* (i.e., a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community) in their midst.

Three-quarters (73%) of Toronto residents say they know there are Aboriginal people living in their city, although this is the second lowest level of awareness of any *UAPS* city after Montreal (54%).

As could be expected, Toronto residents (31%) are also among the least likely to be aware of an Aboriginal *community* in their city, together with Montreal residents (22%). By comparison, awareness of an Aboriginal community is considerably higher among non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay (90%), Regina (77%) and Saskatoon (73%). However, it is noteworthy that awareness of an Aboriginal community does vary considerably among non-Aboriginal people in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations, ranging from over one-half (54%) in Calgary to nine in ten in Thunder Bay.

What explains the variation among non-Aboriginal 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.²² 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.

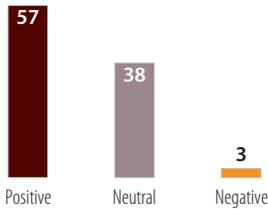
Aware of Aboriginal community in my city
Are you aware of an Aboriginal community in your city?
By community, I mean either a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community.



²² Katherine A.H. Graham and Evelyn Peters, *Aboriginal Communities and Urban Sustainability*, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Discussion Paper F27, December 2002.

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 Toronto.

Positive or negative presence

Non-Aboriginal people in Toronto are largely positive about the presence of urban Aboriginal peoples and communities in their city, and more so than in any other UAPS city.

How do Torontonians perceive Aboriginal peoples and communities in their city? When asked, Toronto residents aware of Aboriginal people and communities in their city have mixed views about whether their presence is positive or neutral, but very few describe it as negative for Toronto.

More than half (57%) think the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is positive for their city, and this opinion is stronger than in any other UAPS city. By comparison, four in ten (38%) say they are neutral about the presence of Aboriginal peoples and communities in their city. Only three percent view Aboriginal peoples and communities as a negative presence.

Contributions and challenges

Toronto residents 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.

REASONS FOR POSITIVE VIEWS. Among Toronto residents who think the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is positive for their city, in what ways do they think Aboriginal people contribute? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), they are most likely to think Aboriginal peoples and communities contribute to Toronto in the following main ways:

- **Enrich urban art and culture.** Four in ten (42%) believe Aboriginal people and communities make great contributions to Toronto's artistic and cultural life.
- **Add cultural diversity.** Three in ten (30%) believe Aboriginal people and communities add to the general cultural mosaic of Toronto.
- **Make equal contributions.** The third main way Torontonians 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 (16%).
- **Stimulate city economies.** One in ten (12%) note the economic contributions Aboriginal people and communities make to Toronto as employees and employers of local businesses. However, Torontonians are much less likely to mention this type of contribution than are residents of Saskatoon (33%), Regina (29%), Calgary (27%) and Winnipeg (26%).

Fewer individuals mention the contributions Aboriginal people and communities make by participating in or running Aboriginal outreach or community programs (6%), by being good friends and neighbours (5%), by stimulating the economy and paying taxes (4%), or through their environmental knowledge or activism (4%).

REASONS FOR NEGATIVE VIEWS. The sample size of Torontonians who think the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is negative for their city (n=9) is too small to for a meaningful analysis of the results.

Contact with Aboriginal people

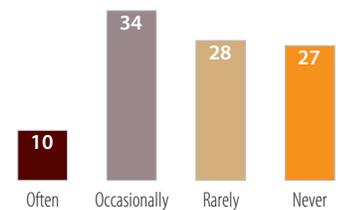
Very few non-Aboriginal residents of Toronto have regular contact with Aboriginal people, which is understandably more common in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations.

Few non-Aboriginal people in Toronto are in regular contact with Aboriginal people in their daily lives. One in ten (10%) Toronto residents say they encounter Aboriginal people often, while another third (34%) do so occasionally. Over half of Toronto residents are rarely (28%) or never (27%) in contact with Aboriginal people.

Not surprisingly, NA urban Canadians in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations are more likely to encounter Aboriginal people. In turn, frequent contact with Aboriginal people is lowest in Toronto (10%) and Montreal (10%), and non-Aboriginal people in these two cities are the most likely to say they rarely or never encounter Aboriginal people (55% and 65%, respectively).

Contact with Aboriginal people

Do you personally have contact with Aboriginal people often, occasionally, rarely or never?



Aboriginal friends, neighbours and co-workers

Toronto residents are among the least likely to know Aboriginal people as close friends, neighbours and co-workers, although they display among the greatest interest in knowing more of them.

Aside from casual contact, how many Toronto residents know Aboriginal people, either as close friends, neighbours or co-workers? Among Torontonians who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in the city, most know few or no Aboriginal people as close friends (92%), co-workers (84% among those who are currently employed) or even neighbours (70%).

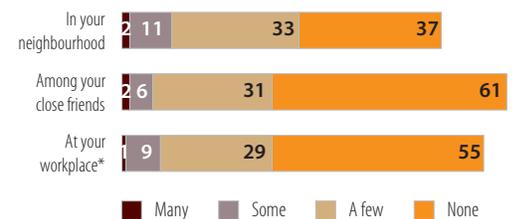
As could be expected, the proportions of NA urban Canadians who have at least some Aboriginal people as neighbours, close friends and co-workers are higher in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations.

Thus, in comparison to non-Aboriginal residents of the western cities and Thunder Bay, Torontonians are much less likely to say they have at least some neighbours, co-workers or close friends who are Aboriginal.

When asked if they have any interest in having more Aboriginal friends, two-thirds (67%) of Toronto residents who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in the city say they do. Very few (6%) say they are not interested, and most of the remainder (28%) say “it depends” or uncertain. Across the UAPS cities, an interest in more Aboriginal friends is most common in Montreal (69%) and Toronto (67%), followed by Halifax (62%) – the same cities where non-Aboriginal people are least likely to currently have Aboriginal people as close friends.

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

9.5 Perceived barriers facing Aboriginal people

Land claims, and threats to culture and identity are perceived to be the most important issues facing the Aboriginal population in Canada today, while isolation and integration issues are considered the top challenge for urban Aboriginal peoples.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE. Non-Aboriginal people in Toronto 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 non-Aboriginal Torontonians in their views of the key challenges facing Aboriginal people. The most frequently mentioned problems are land claims and territory rights (16%), and threats to culture and identity (14%). One in ten or fewer (each) identify discrimination (8%), lack of education (8%), poverty and homelessness (6%), and issues of acknowledgement or recognition (6%) as the most pressing problems facing Aboriginal people in Canada today. A wide range of other potential problems are mentioned, but none by more than four percent (each) of Toronto residents. Sixteen percent are unable to identify any issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada today.

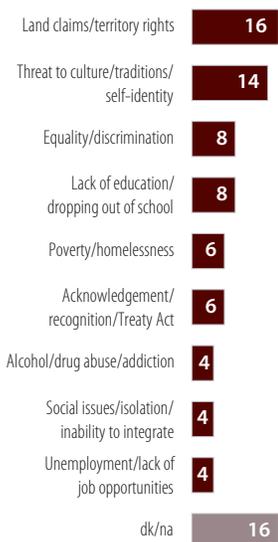
Mentions of land claims as the primary issue facing Aboriginal people in Canada are higher in Montreal (19%) and Toronto (16%) than in other UAPS cities.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN CITIES. Non-Aboriginal people in Toronto 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 (30%) who are unable to identify what they believe to be the key challenge for urban Aboriginal people. Issues related to isolation and difficulties integrating into broader society are identified as the leading concern for the urban Aboriginal population by just over one in ten (13%) Toronto residents. Torontonians also perceive urban Aboriginal people to be dealing with discrimination (10%), unemployment and a lack of job opportunities (10%), threats to their culture and identity (9%), poverty and homelessness (9%), and a lack of education (5%). A number of other issues are mentioned, but none by more than two percent (each) of non-Aboriginal residents of Toronto.

Isolation and integration issues are more frequently identified in Thunder Bay (16%) and Toronto (13%) than in other UAPS cities. Torontonians are the least likely to mention substance abuse as a key issue facing urban Aboriginal peoples.

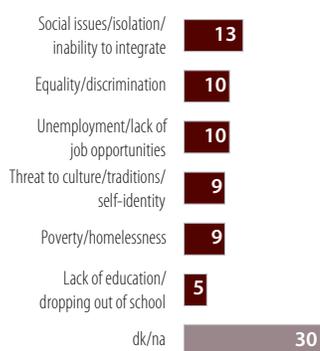
Most important issue in Canada (top mentions)

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?



Indian residential schools

Toronto residents are less aware of Indian residential schools than those in most other UAPS cities except Montreal and Halifax. However, a majority believe the challenges faced by Aboriginal communities are, at least to some extent, the result of this experience.

The survey examined awareness of Indian residential schools among non-Aboriginal people in Toronto, and their views about the consequences the Indian residential schools experience has had for Aboriginal people.

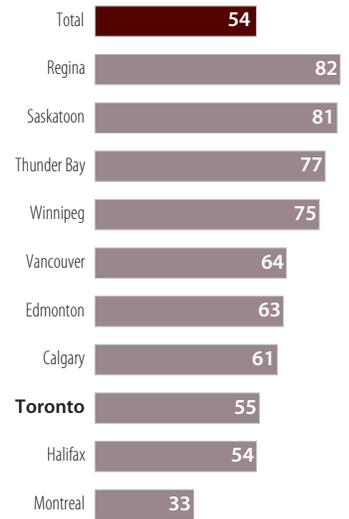
AWARENESS. Despite being a high-profile issue, the subject of Indian residential schools is not top-of-mind for most non-Aboriginal Toronto residents. Fewer than one percent identify residential schools as the most important issue facing Aboriginal people generally, and none mention it as an issue for Aboriginal people living in cities. Once prompted, over half of Torontonians (55%) report they have read or heard something about Indian residential schools.

Awareness of Indian residential schools is lowest in Montreal (33% have heard or read anything on the subject). Nonetheless, non-Aboriginal people in Toronto, similar to Halifax residents (54%), are less informed than those living in UAPS cities with the largest relative Aboriginal populations (e.g., Regina, Saskatoon, Thunder Bay and Winnipeg).

IMPACT. Among Toronto residents aware of residential schools, most feel that Aboriginal peoples' experiences with them have had consequences for their communities. Three in ten (31%) believe that the current challenges faced by Aboriginal communities are, to a great extent, the result of Aboriginal peoples' experiences in residential schools. Another four in ten (41%) feel that, to some extent, the challenges currently facing Aboriginal communities are the result of this experience. One in four see little (21%) or no (4%) relationship between the two.

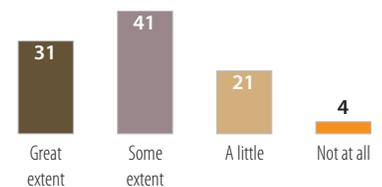
Among those aware of residential schools, Toronto residents are among the most likely of all UAPS participants to believe they have contributed to a great extent to the challenges facing Aboriginal communities (31%), similar to non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver (33%), Thunder Bay (30%) and Calgary (29%).

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 people communities today are a result of Aboriginal peoples' experiences in residential schools?



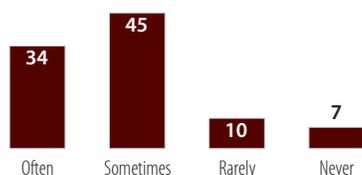
* Subsample: Among those aware of Indian residential schools

9.6 Perceptions of discrimination

Toronto residents clearly think Aboriginal people experience discrimination – and at least as much as other groups in Canadian society. Nonetheless, the minorities who do not believe such discrimination exists are somewhat larger in Toronto than in most other UAPS cities except Montreal.

Discrimination

Do you think that Aboriginal people are often, sometimes, rarely or never the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today?



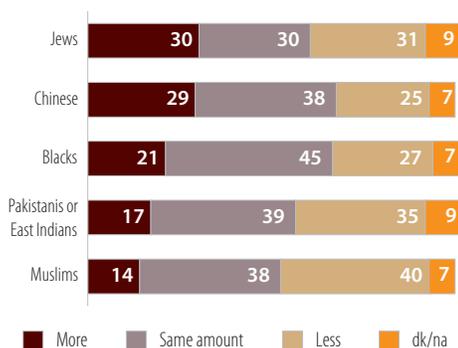
There is a widespread belief among non-Aboriginal Toronto residents that Aboriginal people are sometimes, if not often, the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today.

One in three (34%) Toronto residents believe Aboriginal people are discriminated against often, and an additional 45 percent believe they sometimes experience discrimination. Only 17 percent believe that Aboriginal people rarely or never experience discrimination.

Although the large majority of Toronto residents believe that Aboriginal people are the subject of discrimination at least occasionally, Torontonians are nonetheless among the most likely of all UAPS participants to say Aboriginal people rarely or never face discrimination (17%), similar to perceptions among Montrealers (15%).

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?



Furthermore, majorities of non-Aboriginal people in Toronto think Aboriginal people are subject to the same, if not more, discrimination relative to other groups in Canadian society, such as Jews, Chinese, Blacks, Pakistanis or East Indians, and Muslims. Three in ten Toronto residents think Aboriginal people endure *more* discrimination than groups such as Jews (30%) and Chinese (29%), and two in ten think they endure more discrimination than Blacks (21%). Slightly fewer think Aboriginal people endure more discrimination than groups such as Pakistanis or East Indians (17%), and Muslims (14%).

Notably, perceptions that Aboriginal people face *less* discrimination relative to most of these minority groups is more common among non-Aboriginal people in Toronto and Montreal than among those living in other UAPS cities.

9.7 Attitudes of Canadians and their governments

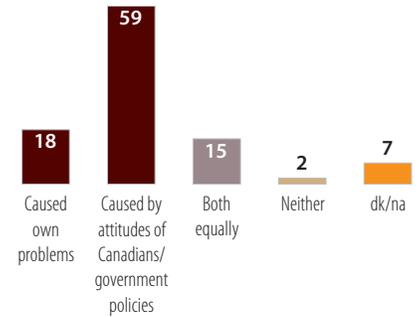
Toronto residents are three times as likely to say the problems faced by Aboriginal people in Canada have largely been caused by the attitudes of other Canadians and the policies of government as by Aboriginal people themselves, and this view is more common than in any other UAPS city.

Non-Aboriginal people in Toronto tend to believe that many of the problems facing Aboriginal people are largely due to external factors over which they have no control. A majority (59%) attribute the problems facing Aboriginal peoples to the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of governments, compared to one in five (18%) who say these are problems Aboriginal people have brought upon themselves, and 15 percent who say both are equally responsible.

Torontonians (59%) are most likely to attribute problems faced by Aboriginal peoples to Canadian attitudes and government policies, followed by non-Aboriginal people living in Montreal (54%), Halifax (52%) and Vancouver (50%).

Responsibility for problems

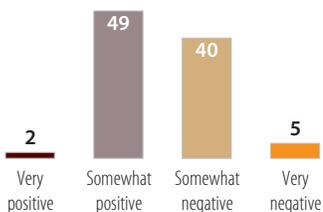
In your opinion, have Aboriginal people in Canada largely caused their own problems or have the problems been caused primarily by the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of governments?



9.8 Relations with Aboriginal people and the future

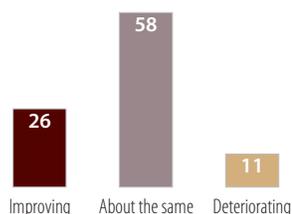
Current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people

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?



Changing relations

Do you think relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada are improving, deteriorating or staying about the same?



Non-Aboriginal Torontonians are ultimately divided about the current state of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, but display greater optimism than those in western cities.

Toronto residents are divided over the state of current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people today. Few 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 (49%) or somewhat negative (40%).

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.

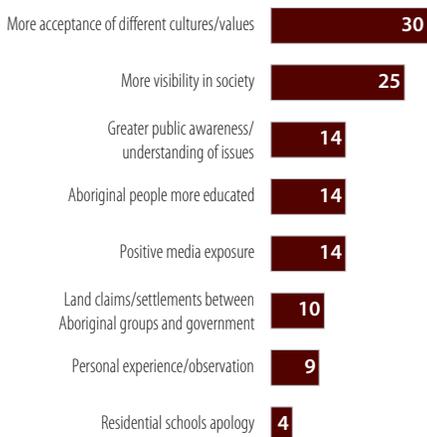
How do non-Aboriginal people in Toronto view the evolution of their relationship with Aboriginal peoples? Currently, a majority (58%) of Toronto residents think the relationship is staying the same, while one in four (26%) think relations are improving and 11 percent think they are deteriorating. These perceptions are within the average of the 10 *UAPS* cities.

REASONS FOR IMPROVING RELATIONS. Among Toronto residents 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: acceptance by non-Aboriginal Canadians of different cultures and values (30%), and growing contact and dialogue between the two groups (25%). 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 (14%), and through personal experience or observation (9%), but also due to positive media exposure (14%). Others give credit for better relations to Aboriginal people, because they are seen to be better educated than in the past (14%). Relatively few identify land claim settlements (10%) or the federal government’s apology for residential schools (4%) as catalysts 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. Toronto residents who believe that the relationship between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people is *deteriorating* are most likely to blame this on Aboriginal protests, and demands for rights or land. However, the sample size for this group (n=29) is too small to provide a meaningful basis for further analysis or conclusions.

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.

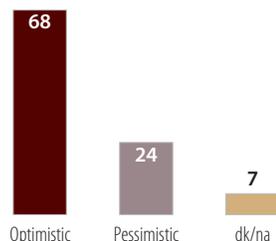
People have become educated and informed about Aboriginal people in the news, and that now there is more social interaction and communication between the non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people. Better communication.

I think that more people are having more exposure to native people and realizing the similarities.

Future quality of life

Views of future quality of life

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?



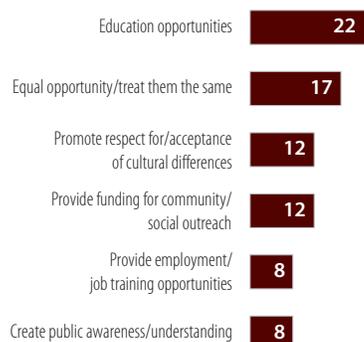
A majority of Toronto residents are optimistic that Aboriginal peoples' quality of life will approach the rest of the population's in the next generation, which is similar to the view in other cities.

Looking to the future, what do Toronto residents foresee for the quality of life of Aboriginal people in their city? Torontonians 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. Seven in ten (68%) non-Aboriginal people in Toronto are optimistic about such progress, compared to only one-quarter (24%) who are pessimistic. Notably, the degree of optimism about Aboriginal peoples' future quality of life is remarkably similar in all UAPS cities, including Toronto.

How do Torontonians think their city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), non-Aboriginal people in Toronto suggest a range of approaches, but most think greater educational opportunities (22%) or treating Aboriginal people the same as non-Aboriginal people (17%) are the most important ways Toronto can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people. Toronto residents also think promoting respect for and acceptance of Aboriginal cultural differences (12%), providing funding for community and social outreach (12%), providing employment and job training opportunities (8%), and creating greater public awareness and understanding of their situation or culture (8%) would contribute to a better quality of life for Aboriginal people in the future.

How to ensure a better quality of life (top 6 mentions)

What do you think is the most important way Toronto can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people?



A number of other ways in which Toronto can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people are mentioned, but none by more than five percent (each) of the non-Aboriginal population. One-quarter (24%) of Torontonians cannot say what they think is the most important way their city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people.