



Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study

VANCOUVER REPORT



ENVIRONICS
• INSTITUTE •

Published by

Environics Institute

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

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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 Vancouver?

According to the 2006 Census, Vancouver has the third largest Aboriginal population of any city in Canada, after Winnipeg and Edmonton. Yet Aboriginal peoples account for only two percent of the total population of Vancouver, which is one of the smaller per capita concentrations among the *UAPS* cities.

The *UAPS Vancouver Report* is the sixth of a series of city reports, following the release of the main report of the *UAPS* on April 6, 2010. In Vancouver, the main survey consisted of in-person interviews with 261 First Nations peoples (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit (18 years and older), between April 7 and August 6, 2009.

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

- **Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are among the most likely of *UAPS* participants to express a strong sense of their Aboriginality in the city.** Connections to Aboriginal cultural activities and services are among the most widespread in Vancouver and Aboriginal Vancouverites are the most likely of any city to feel they belong to a mostly Aboriginal (rather than a non-Aboriginal) community. Likely as a result, strong confidence in their ability to retain their cultural identity in the city is higher here than in any other city except Winnipeg and Edmonton.
- **There is strong Indigenous pride among Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver.** Most are very proud of their specific First Nations/Métis/Inuk identity and of their collective Aboriginal identity. While Aboriginal peoples in most other cities are similarly proud of their Canadian identity, strong pride in being Canadian is noticeably lower in Vancouver than in any other city except Montreal.
- **There is a notable degree of satisfaction among Aboriginal residents about life in Vancouver.** They are among the most positive about their city, due in large part to the quality of life, particularly the availability of green spaces. Moreover, they are among the most confident about their ability to make a positive impact in the city.
- **It is interesting, therefore, that while a majority of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver consider the city to be their home, this feeling is less widespread than the national average.** This is likely related to the notably strong sense of connection to their communities of origin, particularly among First Nations peoples in Vancouver. Moreover, the minority of second generation residents (i.e., those born and raised in Vancouver whose family is from somewhere else) who plan to return there permanently is larger in Vancouver than in other *UAPS* cities.
- **Most *UAPS* participants feel discrimination of Aboriginal peoples is a pervasive problem, and one that majorities report having experienced personally.** This is similarly true for Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver, who believe substance abuse is the dominant stereotype about the Aboriginal population. At the same time, they express a greater degree of social acceptance than in many other *UAPS* cities, which is likely related to living in a large and diverse city like Vancouver. As well, a slim majority are optimistic that non-Aboriginal attitudes are changing for the better, a view that is more common in Vancouver than in most other cities.

- **The top life aspirations for Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver include raising a family and higher education.** These are largely consistent with the life aspirations of Aboriginal peoples living in other *UAPS* cities.
- **Family and a balanced lifestyle are considered the most important ingredients of a successful life.** Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver place greater importance than others on having a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage and living in a traditional way, while (particularly compared to *UAPS* participants in smaller cities) they place comparatively less value on financial independence and home ownership.

How do non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver perceive Aboriginal people?

As part of the *UAPS*, Environics surveyed a representative sample of non-Aboriginal Canadians to learn how they view Aboriginal peoples 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, Thunder Bay, 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 residents of Vancouver yielded 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 Vancouver, there is no single common top-of-mind impression of Aboriginal peoples.** Similar to other *UAPS* cities, impressions revolve primarily around their history as the first inhabitants of Canada and their First Nations/Métis/Inuit identities.
- **Opinions are divided about 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.** Nonetheless, belief in the unique rights of Aboriginal people is more common here than in most other *UAPS* cities except Montreal and Toronto.
- **Almost half of non-Aboriginal Vancouverites are *Cultural Romantics*: idealistic individuals with a strong belief in Aboriginal peoples’ artistic and cultural contributions.** A segmentation analysis of the *UAPS* data reveals that non-Aboriginal participants have four distinct broad viewpoints of Aboriginal peoples. All four are evident in Vancouver, at levels similar to the national average, with *Cultural Romantics* being the most prominent.

- **Virtually all Vancouver residents know Aboriginal people live in their city, and awareness of an Aboriginal community (either physical or social) in their midst is higher than in the other big cities of Toronto and Montreal.** Most non-Aboriginal Vancouverites have at least occasional contact with Aboriginal people, and minorities know Aboriginal people as close friends, neighbours and co-workers, but this is understandably less common than in cities with large relative Aboriginal populations (i.e., Regina, Winnipeg and Saskatoon).
- **Threats to culture and identity are perceived to be the top challenge facing the Aboriginal population in Canada overall as well as in cities.** The balance of opinion in Vancouver is that the problems faced by Aboriginal people in Canada have largely been caused by the attitudes of other Canadians and the policies of government than by Aboriginal peoples themselves. A majority of Vancouver residents have heard about Indian residential schools, and this group is among the most likely in any *UAPS* city to feel these schools have contributed to the challenges facing Aboriginal communities today.
- **Vancouver residents clearly recognize that Aboriginal people experience discrimination, and believe they endure at least as much as other groups in Canadian society.**
- **A slight majority of non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver believe the current state of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada is positive.** This perception is more widespread in Vancouver, Halifax and Toronto than elsewhere. Non-Aboriginal Vancouverites are similarly among the most optimistic that relations are changing for the better.

Next steps

All *UAPS* reports are freely available via the study's website, www.UAPS.ca. The *UAPS Vancouver 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

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). Vancouver itself is home to over 40,000 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 VANCOUVER. The *UAPS Vancouver Report* constitutes the sixth of a series of city reports, following the release of the main report of the *UAPS* on April 6, 2010. In Vancouver, the main survey consisted of in-person interviews with 261 First Nations peoples (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit (18 years and older) between April 7 and August 6, 2009.

Key to the study's legitimacy was that the sample be representative of the Aboriginal population in Vancouver: 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 Vancouver to design an "ideal sample," based on such characteristics as identity group, age, educational attainment and gender. The Vancouver research team, consisting of a Project Co-ordinator (Chris Atchison) and a team of interviewers, then searched out individuals that fit this sample profile. The research team worked with local Aboriginal agencies and other organizations 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 Vancouver (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 – Vancouver Report* is organized into nine chapters.

Chapter 1, the Urban Context, provides a demographic snapshot of the Aboriginal population in Vancouver, and information on where study participants are from, how long they have lived in Vancouver and the strength of their connection to Vancouver and to their home community.

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

Chapter 3, Experiences with Non-Aboriginal People, summarizes how Aboriginal peoples living in Vancouver 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 Vancouver.

Chapter 5 explores how Aboriginal peoples feel about living in Vancouver in **Urban Experiences**.

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

Chapters 7 and 8 are Special Themes in the Vancouver report: **Confidence in the Criminal Justice System** and **Gender Issues**.

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

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

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

UAPS participant profile in Vancouver

	# (Unweighted) (%)	% (Weighted)
IDENTITY		
First Nations	168	60
Status	152	55
Non-status	13	4
Métis	85	40
Inuit	8	*
GENDER		
Men	112	46
Women	149	54
AGE		
18-24	42	16
25-44	141	47
45+	78	37
EDUCATION		
No diploma	54	24
High school diploma	79	29
College degree	73	38
University degree	55	9
HOUSEHOLD INCOME		
<\$10,000	40	16
\$10,000 - \$30,000	65	25
\$30,000 - \$60,000	64	23
\$60,000+	63	27
Refused	29	10
LIVING SITUATION		
Renting an apartment or house	159	57
Homeowner	42	19
Living with friends or family	36	14
Renting a room in a rooming house/hostel	9	3
Living in a temporary shelter	6	4
ELDER		
Yes	27	13
No	234	87

* Less than 0.5%

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.

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.

As a starting point, the *UAPS* asked Vancouver participants a number of questions to establish where they were from, how long they had lived in Vancouver, and how they felt about Vancouver (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 Vancouver based on the 2006 Census.

Key findings

- ***UAPS* participants in Vancouver have long-standing ties to the city.** They are largely first generation residents (i.e., born and raised somewhere other than Vancouver), but are nonetheless long-term urban residents: a majority of this group have lived in Vancouver for 10 years or more. Although only a minority of *UAPS* participants were born and raised in Vancouver (i.e., second and third generations), this is in fact more common among First Nations peoples than Métis, which is the reverse of the pattern in other *UAPS* cities.
- **Aboriginal peoples move to Vancouver to pursue educational opportunities, as well as for family reasons, the city life available and employment opportunities.** These reasons are generally common to Aboriginal peoples in all 11 *UAPS* cities, although those in Vancouver are more likely than others to say they moved for the amenities the city offers, as well as the quality of life and the chance for a fresh start.
- **A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver consider the city to be their home, although this feeling is less widespread than the national average.** This is likely related to the notably strong sense of connection to their communities of origin, particularly among First Nations peoples. While only a minority plan to return to them permanently, second generation Aboriginal residents of Vancouver (who are more typically First Nations than Métis) are more likely than those in other *UAPS* cities to say they will do so.

1.1 The Aboriginal population in Vancouver

Vancouver has the third largest Aboriginal population of any city in Canada, after Winnipeg and Edmonton. According to the 2006 Census, a total of 40,310 people in the Vancouver census metropolitan area (CMA) identified themselves as Aboriginal, that is, First Nations, Métis or Inuit. Yet Aboriginal peoples account for only two percent of the total population of Vancouver, which is one of the smaller per capita concentrations among the *UAPS* cities. Moreover, the Aboriginal population is growing at a relatively slow pace (an increase of 9% between 2001 and 2006), compared to Winnipeg (up 22%) and Edmonton (up 27%), for example, as well as to Canada's other major metropolitan areas, Toronto (up 31%) and Montreal (up 61%). During the same time period, the total population of Vancouver grew by more than six percent.

As of 2006, First Nations peoples are the largest Aboriginal group in Vancouver, accounting for six in ten (58%) of the Aboriginal population. Métis account for 37 percent of the Aboriginal population, while less than one percent identified as Inuit, and four percent offered other or multiple responses. Most of the growth in the Aboriginal population in Vancouver is due to growth among Métis (an increase of 21%) rather than First Nations peoples (4%).

As well, according to 2006 Census data, Vancouver has a relatively young urban Aboriginal population.

- The Aboriginal population living in Vancouver is slightly younger than the non-Aboriginal population (with a median age of 31 years, compared to 39 years for the non-Aboriginal population).² A similar pattern is observed Canada-wide, but is not as pronounced in Vancouver as in the Prairie cities, particularly Regina and Saskatoon.
- Compared to non-Aboriginal residents, the Aboriginal population, in addition to being younger, has higher unemployment rates, lower education and income levels. Aboriginal youth in the city are also more likely than non-Aboriginal children to be living in a single-parent household.

² The median age is the point where exactly one-half of the population is older and the other half is younger.

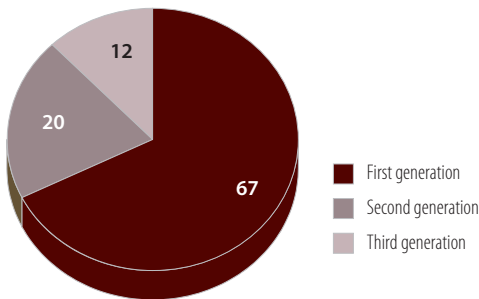
1.2 Residency in the city

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

In 2006, 50 percent 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 Vancouver 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 Vancouver) or are you from somewhere else?

First, second and third generation Vancouver residents



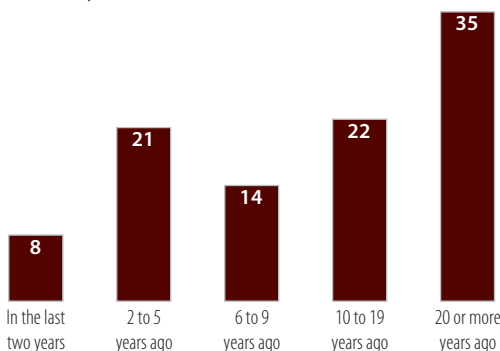
The data revealed two main groups of people: those who were born and raised somewhere other than Vancouver (“first generation”); and those who were born and raised in Vancouver but whose family is from another place (“second generation”). A third, smaller group is comprised of urban Aboriginal peoples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

In Vancouver, a majority (67%) of UAPS participants are “first generation” residents born and raised in a community, town, city or reserve other than Vancouver. “Second generation” residents born and raised in Vancouver whose parents and/or grandparents are from another place represent one-fifth (20%) of Vancouver’s urban Aboriginal population. A third group of urban Aboriginal peoples born and raised in Vancouver whose parents/grandparents are also from Vancouver (“third generation”) comprises 12 percent of the population.

Overall, this generational make-up of Vancouver’s urban Aboriginal population is consistent with the average profile of all 11 UAPS cities. Notably, Métis are more likely than First Nations peoples to be the first generation of their family living in Vancouver (82% and 56%, respectively), which is the reverse of the pattern in most other UAPS cities (where First Nations peoples are more likely to be first generation residents).

Among first generation residents, a majority are long-term residents of Vancouver. Just under six in ten (57%) first came to Vancouver at least 10 years ago, including just under four in ten (35%) who arrived 20 or more years ago. Just over four in ten (43%) have arrived in the last 10 years, including one in ten (8%) who first came in the last two years. The average year of arrival in Vancouver among first generation UAPS participants was 1994; this is on par with the average arrival time for first generation UAPS participants in other cities.

Time of arrival*
When did you first come to Vancouver?



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

1.3 Reason for moving

The decision to move to Vancouver was prompted primarily by a desire for educational opportunities, but also for family and for employment opportunities. City life is also a more important motivator for moving to Vancouver than average.

Why do Aboriginal peoples move to Vancouver?

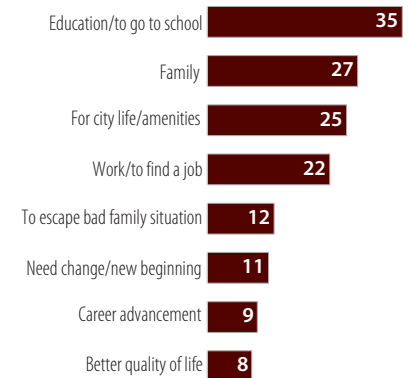
Among the wide variety of reasons cited by first generation UAPS participants in Vancouver for why they first moved here, education, family, city life and employment emerge at the top of the list. Education is a reason for moving that is shared with first generation residents of other UAPS cities; Aboriginal residents of Vancouver are relatively more likely than those in other cities to say they moved for the city amenities, and relatively less likely to say they moved to be closer to family or for a job.

When first generation Aboriginal residents of Vancouver are asked (unprompted, without response options offered) why they first moved to the city, the largest proportion (35%) say they did so in order to pursue an education. Slightly smaller but still significant proportions say they moved for family reasons (27%), for the city life (25%) and/or for employment opportunities (22%).

First generation residents of Vancouver are more likely than their counterparts in other cities to indicate that they moved to the city for a new beginning (11%) or for a better quality of life (8%). Other reasons cited for moving include the desire to escape a bad family situation (12%), the opportunity for career advancement (9%) and wanting to be near friends (7%). Five percent or fewer each mention a variety of other reasons for moving to Vancouver.

The reasons for moving to Vancouver are largely similar for First Nations peoples and Métis, although Métis are more likely than First Nations to mention quality of life and the climate in the city.

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



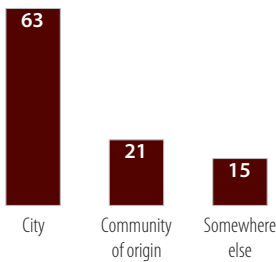
*Subsample: Among those who were not born or raised in Vancouver.

1.4 Connection to Vancouver

Vancouver is “home” for most Aboriginal peoples in the city, although the proportion who equate home with somewhere else – particularly among the First Nations population – is higher than the national average.

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

Many of those who have lived in Vancouver all their lives, not surprisingly, consider the city to be their home (72% of second generation residents). A majority (60%) of first generation residents (i.e., those not born or raised in the city) also consider Vancouver their home, although this feeling is not as widespread as those born and raised there.

Overall, when asked “Where is home for you?” just over six in ten (63%) *UAPS* participants say it is Vancouver.³ Significantly fewer equate “home” with their community of origin (21%) or another community (15%). Nonetheless, the view that the city is home is less evident in Vancouver than average for the *UAPS* cities. This is due to the fact that this sentiment is less pronounced among First Nations peoples, not only compared to Métis in Vancouver (54% and 74%, respectively) – reflecting, at least in part, the fact that First Nations peoples may come from a reserve and retain the option of living there – but even by comparison to First Nations peoples in other cities.

Although *UAPS* participants report an important connection to the city in which they are living, their sense that Vancouver is home does not preclude a relationship with their community of origin. The following section (1.5 Connection to community of origin) explores the relationship to a community of origin as reported by *UAPS* participants.

³ The question “Where is home for you?” was not asked of third generation *UAPS* participants (12% of *UAPS* participants in Vancouver).

1.5 Connection to community of origin

A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver retain links with their community of origin, whether it be their own or that of their parents/grandparents. This sense of connection is particularly strong among First Nations peoples.

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.⁴

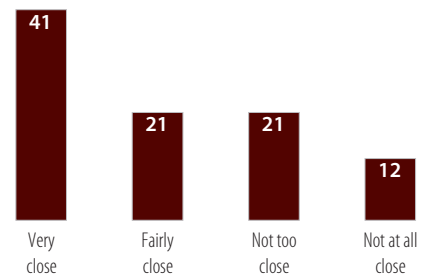
Such connections are clearly evident among *UAPS* participants in Vancouver, who are among the most likely to say they maintain a very close connection to their community of origin (together with residents of Halifax).

Overall, six in ten say they feel a very (41%) or fairly close (21%) connection to their community of origin. Two in ten (21%) say they feel not too close to these communities, while a small group feel not at all close (12%). Not only do First Nations people in Vancouver express a stronger connection to their community of origin than do Métis (49% and 30%, respectively, say they feel a very close connection to their home community), but also compared to First Nations peoples living in other *UAPS* cities.

As a result, second generation urban residents (who are more likely to be First Nations) report a stronger sense of connection to their home community than do first generation residents (50% and 37%, respectively, say they feel a very close connection).

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?

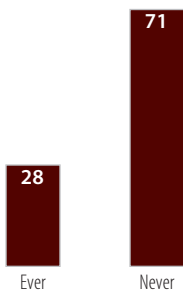


* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in Vancouver; those who have lived in Vancouver all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

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

Have you moved back to your home community?*

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

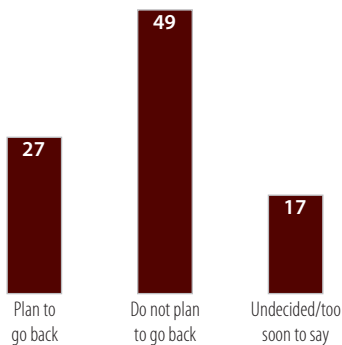


Note: Less than 1% said dk/na

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

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

It is clear from the data that the majority of *UAPS* participants in Vancouver maintain links to their communities of origin, even though they have long tenure within the city. Nonetheless, only three in ten (28%) first generation *UAPS* participants have moved back to their home community at least once since they first moved to Vancouver (representing 19% of *UAPS* participants in Vancouver overall). Most (71%) say they have never moved back to their home community since coming to Vancouver.

The proportion of first generation Vancouver 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 (37%) are more likely than Métis (20%) to report having moved back to their community of origin since first coming to Vancouver.

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.

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),⁵ about three in ten (27%) plan to return. Five in ten *UAPS* participants say they do *not* plan to return (49%), and almost two in ten (17%) say they are undecided or that it is too soon to say. These proportions are similar to those found in other *UAPS* cities.

Those planning to return to their home community are the minority among both first and second generation residents of Vancouver. However, the proportion of second generation residents (who are more typically First Nations than Métis) who say they plan to return permanently one day (36%) is more than twice the national average.

5 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 (12% of *UAPS* participants in Vancouver).

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.⁶

The Urban Aboriginal Task Force in Ontario,⁷ 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 of Aboriginal authenticity.

In the midst of these challenges, Aboriginal Vancouverites – and particularly First Nations peoples – are among those *UAPS* participants most likely to express a strong sense of their Aboriginality in the city. This is evident in their greater familiarity with their ancestry, higher participation in cultural activities, and stronger sense of belonging to a mostly Aboriginal community. Likely as a result, they are largely confident that they can protect against the loss of their unique cultural identity.

Key findings

- **There is strong Indigenous pride among Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver.** A large majority take great pride in both their First Nations/Métis/Inuk and their collective Aboriginal identities. At the same time, they are the *least* likely of those in any *UAPS* city to express strong pride in being Canadian.
- **Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are more familiar with their ancestry than those living in other *UAPS* cities.** Seven in ten say they know their family tree well, although this awareness is higher among First Nations peoples than Métis. Lack of opportunity, not lack of interest, is the main reason why Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver say they do not know their family tree very well.
- **Eight in ten Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member.** Such experience is more widespread in Vancouver than in any other *UAPS* city except Saskatoon. Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver with first- or second-hand Indian residential schools experience are among the most likely to say it has had a significant impact in shaping their life and who they are today.
- **Awareness of and reported participation in Aboriginal cultural activities is higher in Vancouver than in most other *UAPS* cities except Toronto.** Half of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver say that Aboriginal cultural activities are widely available in the city, and a large majority participate in these activities at least occasionally. Indeed, Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver display a very strong sense of cultural vitality, on par with Toronto and higher than in other cities.

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

7 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.

- **There is an evident confidence in their ability to retain their cultural identity in the city.** Six in ten Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are unconcerned about losing their cultural identity, and strong confidence is higher here than in any other city except Winnipeg and Edmonton. Both Métis and First Nations peoples in Vancouver express similar confidence on this front.
- **There is no consensus among Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver about the type of community to which they belong, although they feel a greater than average sense of belonging to a mostly Aboriginal community.** This view is particularly common among First Nations peoples, even by comparison to their counterparts in other UAPS cities. Nonetheless, many UAPS participants in Vancouver report strong social connections to their own identity group in the city, to members of other Aboriginal groups and to the non-Aboriginal population.

2.1 Pride in Aboriginal and Canadian identity

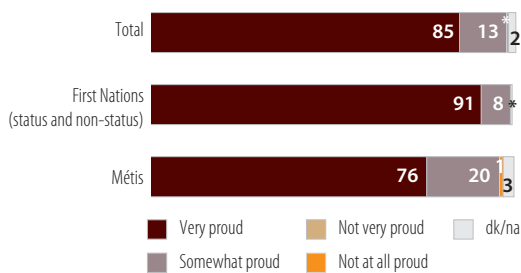
Most Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are very proud of their First Nations/Métis/Inuk and Aboriginal identities. They are noticeably less likely to express strong pride in being Canadian.

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 Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver take equal pride in their specific Aboriginal identity (that is, their First Nations, Métis or Inuk identity) and in being part of a larger Aboriginal identity. However, being Canadian has noticeably less resonance in Vancouver, both for First Nations peoples and Métis.

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?



* Less than one percent

Note: Total data include Inuit (n=8)

PRIDE IN BEING FIRST NATIONS/MÉTIS/INUK. Of the three aspects of identity explored in the survey, Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are most proud to be *First Nations, Métis or Inuk*. The large majority (85%) say they are very proud of their specific Aboriginal identity (i.e., *First Nations, Métis or Inuk*). Strongly expressed pride is more prevalent among First Nations peoples (91%) than Métis (76%). The pride felt by Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver is similar to that found among urban Aboriginal participants in general.

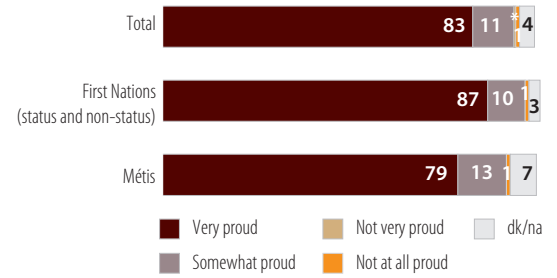
PRIDE IN BEING ABORIGINAL. Most Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver (83%) are also very proud of their Aboriginal identity, and this sense of pride is similar for both First Nations peoples and Métis. Their high level of pride in being *Aboriginal* is largely consistent with that of urban Aboriginal peoples in the other *UAPS* cities.

PRIDE IN BEING CANADIAN. Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are least proud to be *Canadian*, with just half (52%) who say they are very proud of this aspect of their identity; this degree of pride is similar for Métis and First Nations peoples in Vancouver. Notably, strong pride in being *Canadian* is lower in Vancouver than in most other *UAPS* cities, with the exception of Montreal (52%).

What shapes urban Aboriginal peoples' pride in their *First Nations/Métis/Inuk, Aboriginal* and *Canadian* identities? The sample size for Vancouver alone (261 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) indicate that pride in these aspects of identity varies 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.

Pride in being Aboriginal

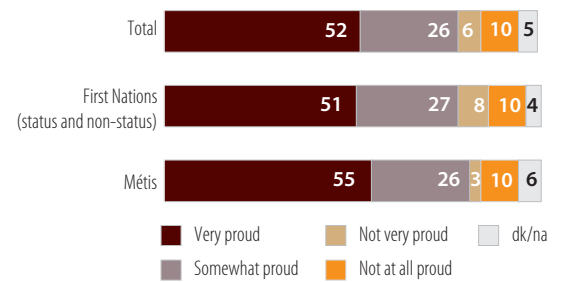
Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very, or not at all proud to be Aboriginal?



* Less than one percent
 Note: Total data include Inuit (n=8)

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=8)

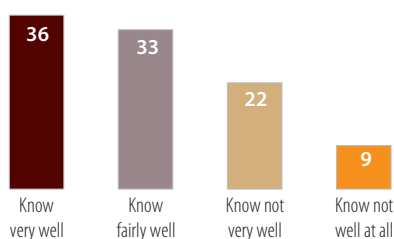
2.2 Knowledge of Aboriginal ancestry

Seven in ten Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver know their Aboriginal ancestry at least fairly well. This level of knowledge is higher than average, particularly among First Nations peoples.

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.

Extent of knowledge of family tree

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

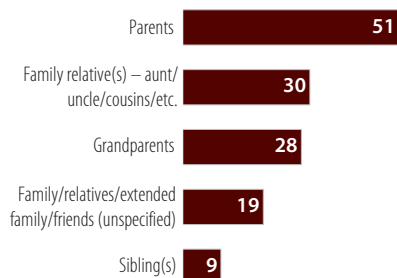


The *UAPS* results indicate that Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are generally familiar with their family tree (i.e., who their Aboriginal ancestors are), and are more likely to be very knowledgeable than those in any other *UAPS* city. Seven in ten know their family tree very (36%) or fairly (33%) well, while three in ten say they know their family tree not very (22%) or not at all (9%) well. First Nations peoples in Vancouver report a greater degree of familiarity with their family tree than do Métis, as well as by comparison to their counterparts in other *UAPS* cities.

By far, parents are key sources of this information. When asked from where or from whom they have learned what they know about their Aboriginal ancestry (asked unprompted, without offering response choices), half (51%) Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver identify their parents as their main source of learning. Fewer say they have learned what they know about their family tree from immediate family relatives such as aunts or uncles (30%), although this is more widespread in Vancouver than average, as well as grandparents (28%), extended family (19%) or siblings (9%). A range of non-family sources are also mentioned, such as Elders, home communities and community members, archives and historical records, and the Internet or social networking sites, but none by more than six percent. These sources of learning about one's family tree are similar for both First Nations peoples and Métis in Vancouver.

Sources of learning about family tree/ Aboriginal ancestry

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



Impact of family tree

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

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

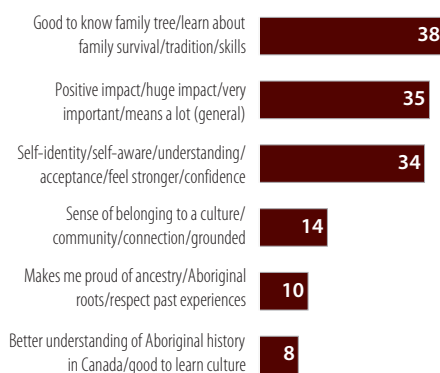
Both First Nations peoples and Métis in Vancouver believe that knowledge of their family tree has had a significant personal impact on their lives and how they see themselves. UAPS participants cite three main ways in which knowing their family tree has contributed to their lives:⁸

- **Understanding of family survival and cultural endurance.** Four in ten (38%) Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver 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.** One-third (35%) of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver emphasize the greater personal meaning they’ve gained from knowing their family tree, much more so than in any other city except Halifax (32%) and Toronto (30%).
- **Greater self-identity and self-awareness.** Another third (34%) mention that they have derived a greater sense of self-identity and self-awareness from knowing about their Aboriginal ancestry. Aboriginal residents of Vancouver are among the most likely of all UAPS cities to say they have gained a greater sense of self-awareness, together with residents of Toronto (38%) and Montreal (37%).

Smaller proportions of UAPS participants (14% or fewer each) mention other ways in which knowing their family tree has had a meaningful impact on their lives. These include a sense of belonging (14%), pride in their Aboriginal “roots” (10%) and a better understanding of Aboriginal history (8%), as well as generational continuity, awareness of family connections and strength to move on from the past.

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?



Six percent say knowing their family tree has had only a little (5%) or no (1%) impact on their life, which is lower than in most other UAPS cities. Only one percent feel knowing their family tree has had a negative impact on their lives.

The impact of knowing one’s family tree on the personal lives of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver:

Big difference. Important to know who you are. To be proud of the people you are from and their accomplishments.

More impacted by not knowing. It’s harder to form an identity when you don’t know where you come from.

Huge sense of belonging. Sense of confidence. I’m in awe at times when I think of the challenges of my ancestors and their resiliency. Ultimately, [they are] role models. Sense of being embraced. Shaped my world view.

Had a very positive grounding effect.

Craving to learn more. The best is yet to come – to have a sit-down with my mom and aunties.

A great impact to know who I am and where I come from, and that my ancestors did many, many great things in developing the country.

My late mother taught me to respect myself and my culture. I taught a language class.

I know my medical history, land rights, family place in my mother’s Aboriginal community.

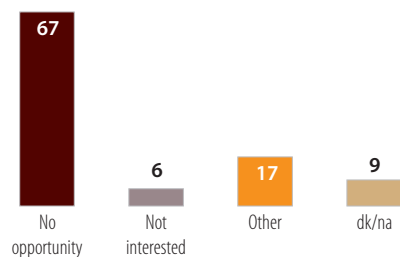
Being able to connect with relatives, learn my lineage, tribe, clan, names, territory, family and identity.

It has brought up the ancestral names (that have almost been forgotten). Now we are naming our family members with ancestral names. It has given me pride in who I am.

⁸ 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.

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."

Why do some Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver 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* 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. Consistent with those in other *UAPS* cities, lack of opportunity, not lack of interest, is the main reason why Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver say they do not know their family tree very well.

Two-thirds (67%) of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver who do not know their family tree very well say it is because they have had no opportunity to learn more, and this is true for similar proportions of First Nations peoples and Métis. In turn, one-quarter (23%) say they are either not interested (6%) or cite other reasons (17%) why they do not know their family tree very well (such as information that is lost when relatives or Elders pass away, family secrecy or a lack of connection to their Aboriginal culture). One in ten (9%) are unable or unwilling to say why they have not learned more about their family tree.

2.3 Indian residential schools

Eight in ten Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member; this is the case for almost all First Nations peoples in Vancouver, but also for the majority of 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.”⁹

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 1996.¹⁰

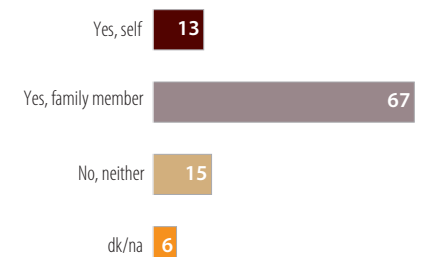
First Nations, Métis and Inuit children had varied residential school experiences, both in intensity and duration. Regardless, the residential school had a direct impact on Survivors and has spilled over to their descendants, creating challenges pertaining to identity, culture and parenting.¹¹

A majority of *UAPS* participants in Vancouver say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member. When asked, eight in ten (80%) say either they themselves (13%) or a family member (67%) were a student at a federal residential school or a provincial day school. Reported attendance at Indian residential schools is higher in Vancouver than in any other *UAPS* city except Saskatoon (where 84% have either first- or second-hand experience).

As is the case across most *UAPS* cities, experience with residential schools varies considerably between First Nations peoples and Métis. Almost all (94%) First Nations peoples in Vancouver report either first-hand (18%) or second-hand (76%) experience with residential schools; reported attendance is lower among Métis, but nonetheless is still the case for a majority (60%, with 6% reporting personal and 54% reporting family attendance).

Indian residential schools

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



9 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).

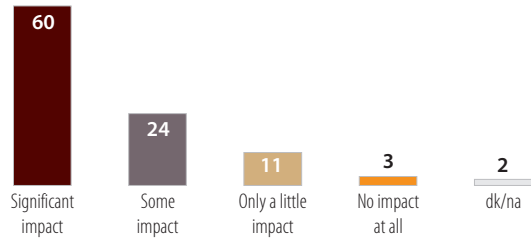
10 Environics Research Group, report prepared for the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *2008 National Benchmark Survey*, May 2008., p.9.

11 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

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.

Most Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver 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 Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver who say they or a family member were a student in one of these schools,¹² more than eight in ten say this experience, or the experience of their family member, has had either a significant impact (60%) or some impact (24%) in shaping their life and who they are today. This represents two-thirds (66%) of all UAPS participants in Vancouver.

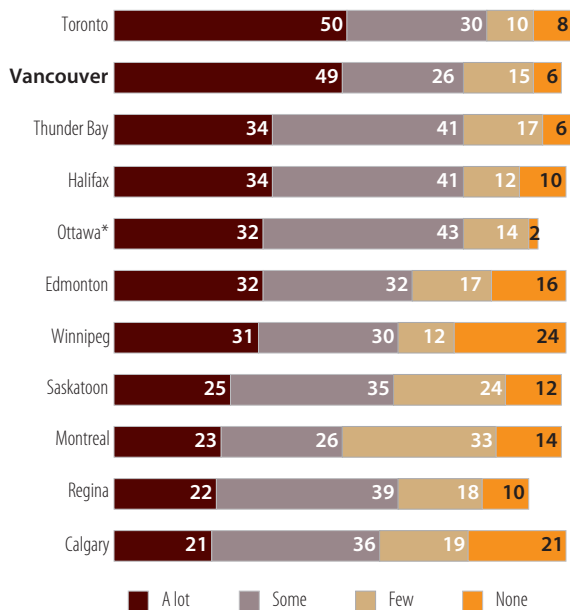
Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are among those most likely to feel the Indian residential schools experience has had a *significant* impact on their lives, together with those living in Montreal (60%), Toronto (58%) and Calgary (58%).

2.4 Aboriginal cultural activity in the city

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

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

Aboriginal cultural activities are perceived to be widely available in Vancouver, and more so than in most other UAPS cities. Three in four Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver say there are either a lot (49%) or some (26%) Aboriginal cultural activities available in the city; a minority say there are only a few (15%) or no (6%) such activities available to them (4% cannot say). First Nations peoples have a greater awareness of Aboriginal cultural activities (57% say there are a lot) in the city than do Métis (38%). Of all UAPS participants, Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (50%) and Vancouver (49%) are by far the most likely to believe there are a lot of Aboriginal cultural activities where they live.

12 The sample size of Métis in Vancouver (n=46) 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

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

Among those urban Aboriginal peoples who say Aboriginal cultural activities are available in Vancouver, majorities say they participate in them at least occasionally. Three in four say they often (38%) or occasionally (39%) participate in these activities, compared to one in four who rarely (19%) or never (4%) do. Although First Nations peoples believe Aboriginal cultural activities to be more widely available in Vancouver than do Métis, First Nations peoples and Métis who are aware of such activities participate in them with similar frequency.

Participation in Aboriginal cultural activities in Vancouver (often or occasionally) is higher than average, after Toronto and Halifax.

Strength of Aboriginal culture

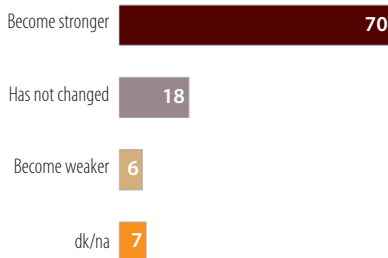
Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver display a very strong sense of cultural vitality, more so than in any UAPS city except Toronto.

There is a strong sense of optimism about the direction of Aboriginal culture in Vancouver in recent years.

Overall, seven in ten (70%) Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver think that Aboriginal culture in the city has become stronger in the last five years, while only six percent say it has become weaker. Another one in five (18%) say it has not changed, while seven percent offer no opinion on the direction of Aboriginal culture in Vancouver. The view that Aboriginal culture has strengthened is equally shared by First Nations peoples and Métis in Vancouver.

Strength of Aboriginal culture

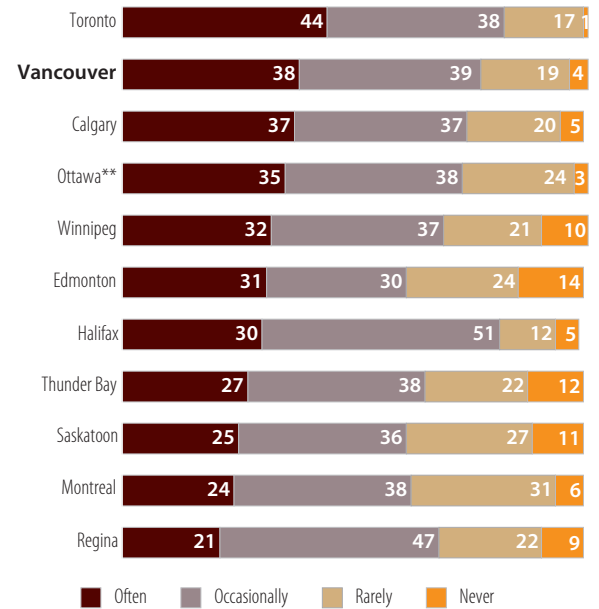
In the last five years, do you think that Aboriginal culture in your community has become stronger, become weaker or has not changed?



Optimism about the direction of Aboriginal culture is most evident in Vancouver (70%) and Toronto (70%) compared to other UAPS cities.

Frequency of participation in cultural activities,* by city

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



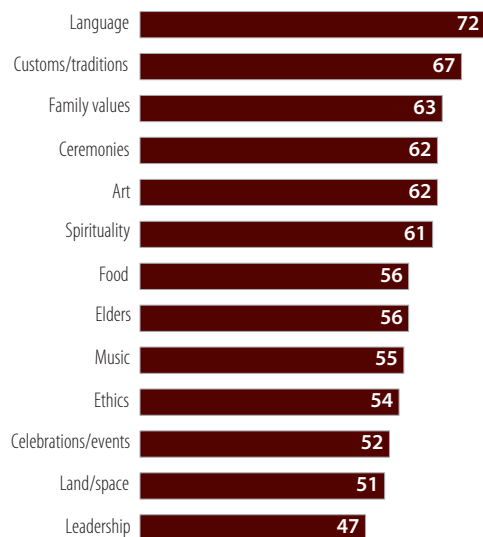
* Subsample: Those who have Aboriginal cultural activities available in their community.
 ** Inuit only

2.5 Maintaining Aboriginal cultural identity

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?

Top mentions



Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver feel language is the most important aspect of Aboriginal culture to be passed on to future generations, but they also place a high value on customs and traditions, family values, ceremonies, art and spirituality.

Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver believe there are numerous aspects of Aboriginal culture that should be passed on to future generations, but feel language is the most important.

When Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver 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), they are most likely to mention language (72%), followed by Aboriginal customs and traditions (67%), family values (63%), Aboriginal ceremonies (62%), art (62%) and spirituality (61%). Slightly fewer Aboriginal peoples, but still more than half, also mention Elders (56%), food (56%), music (55%), ethics (54%), celebrations and events (52%), and connection to the land (51%). This set of cultural priorities is similar to that found among urban Aboriginal peoples in general. First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to mention most of these.

Concern over losing cultural identity

A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are reasonably confident they can protect their cultural identity, and concern about this issue is only slightly higher than among non-Aboriginal people in the city.

As the previous results demonstrate, Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver perceive more cultural growth in their city and are more involved in these activities than Aboriginal residents of other UAPS cities. Perhaps as a result, they are more confident than not in their ability to protect against a loss of cultural identity.

When posed with the statement “I am concerned about losing my cultural identity,” Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are almost twice as likely to disagree as to agree. Six in ten (59%) disagree at least somewhat that this is a possibility, while four in ten (39%) agree at least somewhat (2% do not give an opinion). Moreover, strong confidence (44% totally disagree) is among the highest of the UAPS cities (together with Winnipeg and Edmonton) and outweighs strong concern about this issue (17% totally agree). A similar degree of confidence in their ability to protect their cultural identity is evident among both First Nations peoples and Métis in Vancouver.

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.

Aboriginal people in Vancouver are only slightly more concerned about losing their cultural identity than are non-Aboriginal people. One-third (32%) of non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver say they either totally or somewhat agree with the statement “I am concerned about losing my cultural identity,” compared to four in ten Aboriginal people in the city. Larger gaps, where concern about the loss of cultural identity is more evident among Aboriginal people than among non-Aboriginal people, are found in most other *UAPS* cities including Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon, Thunder Bay, Toronto and Halifax. Among non-Aboriginal Canadians, only Montrealers express a significant degree of concern about the loss of cultural identity.

2.6 Communities and connections

Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver define their community in a variety of ways, but as in other UAPS cities, family and friends are top-of-mind.

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.

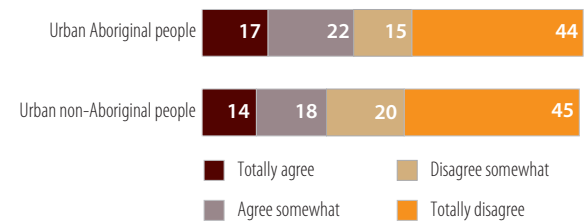
Who or what do Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver consider to be a part of their community? *UAPS* data show attachment to family and friends is top-of-mind for majorities of urban First Nations, Métis and Inuk residents in Vancouver, which is consistent with those living in other *UAPS* cities.

When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), Aboriginal people in Vancouver most frequently mention friends (62%) or family (61%) as part of their community. Others mention people in their neighbourhood (46%), people from their identity group (i.e., First Nations, Métis or Inuit; 43%), co-workers (41%) and Aboriginal peoples in the city (39%).

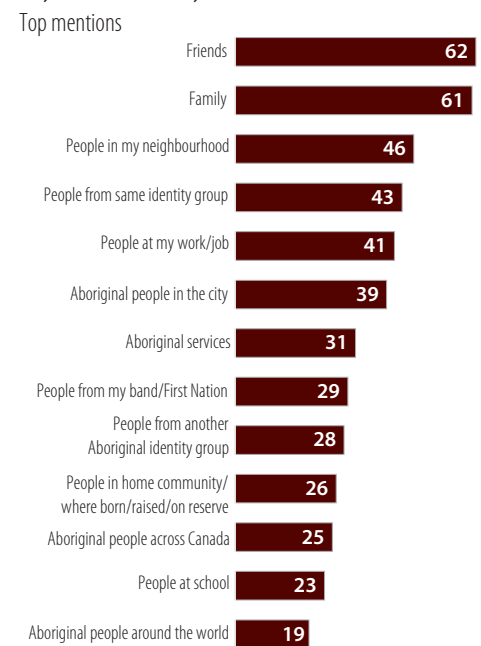
Three in ten (31%) Aboriginal residents of Vancouver say they consider Aboriginal services (friendship centres, healing centres, counselling centres, etc.) to be a part of their community. Slightly fewer consider people from their band/First Nation (29%), people from another identity group (28%), people from their home community (26%), Aboriginal peoples across Canada (25%), people at school (23%) and Aboriginal people around the world (19%) as part of their community.

Concern over losing cultural identity

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



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



2.7 Belonging to Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal communities

Belonging to Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal community

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



Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver – and particularly First Nations peoples – feel a greater than average sense of belonging to a mostly Aboriginal community.

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

In fact, there is no one type of community to which Aboriginal peoples feel they belong. Similar proportions of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver feel they belong to a community that is mostly Aboriginal (34%) or equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (31%), while slightly fewer say they belong to a mostly non-Aboriginal community (25%). Very few describe their community as exclusively Aboriginal (4%) or exclusively non-Aboriginal (4%).

The view that they belong to a mostly Aboriginal community is more widespread in Vancouver than in any other UAPS city. This is due to the relatively high proportion of First Nations peoples in Vancouver who hold this view (45%), even by comparison to their counterparts in other UAPS cities.

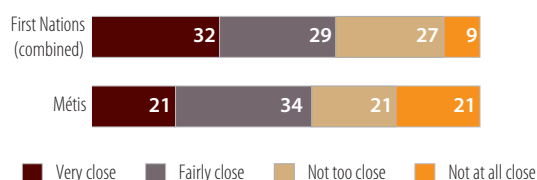
Connection to Aboriginal peoples in the city

Métis express a strong connection to other Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver, both members of their own Aboriginal group and others. Likely due to their larger relative population in Vancouver, First Nations peoples express a closer connection to other First Nations than to Métis and Inuit in the city.

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

Connection to Aboriginal group, by identity group

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



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

CONNECTION TO ABORIGINAL GROUP. How close a connection do Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver have to members of their own Aboriginal group? Overall, both First Nations peoples and Métis are more likely than not to feel a close connection to other members of their Aboriginal group. Six in ten (61%) First Nations peoples feel either a fairly or very close connection to other members of their First Nation in Vancouver. A similar proportion (55%) of Métis feel a close connection to other Métis in the city.

Interestingly, First Nations peoples are slightly more likely to feel a close connection to members of *other* First Nations in Vancouver (70% very or fairly close) than to members of their own First Nation (61%). This illustrates the great diversity of the First Nations population in Vancouver, and the challenges in finding and connecting with members of one's own specific First Nation. First Nations peoples in Vancouver, as well as those living in Toronto (71%) and Montreal (70%), are the most likely among all UAPS participants to feel a close connection to members of other First Nations.

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 Vancouver? Métis (58%) are more likely to feel connected to other Aboriginal peoples in the city (First Nations peoples and Inuit) than First Nations peoples (38%) are to feel toward Métis and Inuit.

Friendships in the city

Majorities of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver report close friendships with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, although the latter is more common among Métis than First Nations peoples.

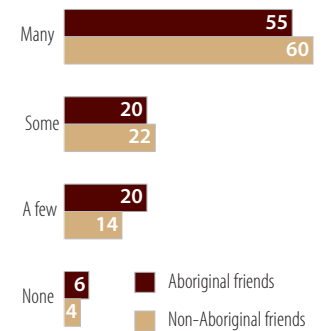
Beyond their sense of connection to members of their own or other Aboriginal groups, the *UAPS* asked Aboriginal residents of Vancouver about their friendships with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

FRIENDSHIPS WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLE. Overall, three-quarters of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver say they have many (55%) or some (20%) close friends in the city who are Aboriginal, similar to the findings among urban Aboriginal people in general. In Vancouver, having many or some close friends is noticeably more likely among First Nations peoples (80%) than Métis (64%).

FRIENDSHIPS WITH NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLE. Just as *UAPS* participants in Vancouver have close Aboriginal friends in the city, a similar proportion have some or many close non-Aboriginal friends where they live. Eight in ten say they have many (60%) or some (22%) close friends who are non-Aboriginal, although this is more common among Métis (90%) than among First Nations peoples (76%). Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are among the most likely of all *UAPS* participants to say they have close non-Aboriginal friends (together with residents of Winnipeg).

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal friends

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



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 (across all cities) feel discrimination of Aboriginal people is a pervasive problem, and that stereotypical attitudes are frequently expressed through negative behaviours, such as insults and unfair treatment, that the majority have personally experienced – and this is similarly true for Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver. What is unique to Vancouver is a sense of optimism 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 explores encounters and experiences with non-Aboriginal services in the city such as schools, banks, the health care system, and government programs such as social assistance programs, and employment and training programs.

Key findings

- **Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver – like their counterparts in other *UAPS* cities – widely believe that they are viewed negatively by non-Aboriginal people.** There is a very strong perception among Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver that non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of negative and distorting stereotypes about them, the most common being about substance abuse. However, there is a sense that non-Aboriginal people's impressions of Aboriginal peoples may be changing for the better, and this view is stronger here than in any other *UAPS* city.
- **Most Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver agree that others behave in an unfair or negative way toward Aboriginal people.** A majority say they have been teased or insulted because of their Aboriginal background, on par with the experiences of Aboriginal peoples in other *UAPS* cities. At the same time, Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are more likely than not to feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people, although this is more widespread among Métis.
- **Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver report a substantial amount of contact with non-Aboriginal banks and the health care system, but much less experience with other services.** In fact, experience with non-Aboriginal social assistance programs, and employment and training programs is lower in Vancouver than average. Positive assessments of these experiences largely outweigh negative ones, except in the case of the child welfare system, where experiences have been mixed. Negative experiences are generally related to being poorly treated by the people who deliver the services, rather than to concerns about the overall effectiveness of the services or about the process of accessing them.

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

Non-Aboriginal perceptions – positive or negative

Most Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver believe that they are seen in a negative light by non-Aboriginal people.

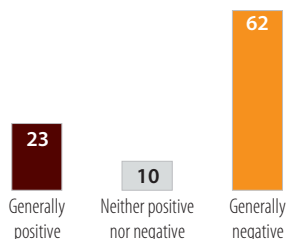
A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver believe that non-Aboriginal people view them negatively, consistent with perceptions held in other UAPS cities.

Six in ten (62%) UAPS participants in Vancouver believe non-Aboriginal people's impressions of Aboriginal people are generally negative. Almost one-quarter (23%) think non-Aboriginal people's impressions are generally positive, while one in ten (10%) think they are neither positive nor negative. These views are similar among First Nations peoples and Métis in Vancouver.

Although it is the minority view, Aboriginal residents of Vancouver are more likely than average to think that non-Aboriginal people take a *positive* view of Aboriginal peoples.

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

Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver believe that non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of negative and distorting stereotypes of Aboriginal people, with addiction problems dominating the list

Overwhelmingly, Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples in Vancouver 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). Perceptions among Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver about these stereotypes are largely similar to that expressed by urban Aboriginal peoples in general. Some of the stereotypes they believe non-Aboriginal people hold are presented in participants' own words in the sidebar on this page.

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

We are all the same: drunks, druggies, welfare cases and stupid.

Alcohols, drug addicts, unemployed, on and off welfare, have too many kids that we can't take care of.

Get everything free. Don't pay taxes. That we can't take care of ourselves.

We are not "real Indians" anymore. We were all the same before the Europeans showed up (for example, we all have feathers in our hair). We lacked complex social/legal/agricultural systems before the Europeans arrived.

Drunks, lazy, bums, drunken Indians, worthless, bingo addicts, welfare bums, kids are not cared for, uneducated, wear braids, don't have to pay taxes.

They should "get over it" and become Canadians.

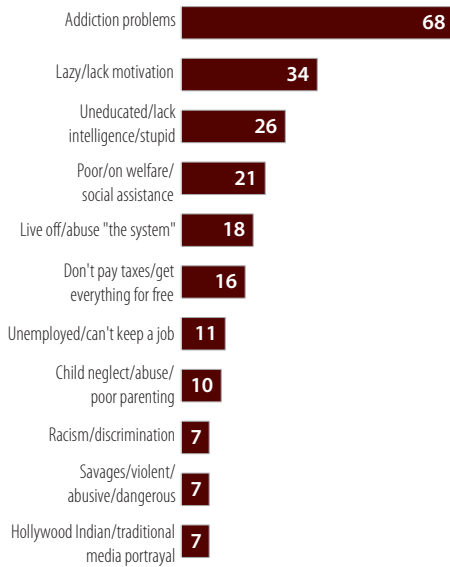
Things are handed to them on a silver platter, then they just waste it. That kids get taken away, put in foster homes and residential schools, because their home situations were bad, when actually, their home situations were made bad by being taken away. Don't see strength and positive things in native people. Don't understand family dynamics, how residential school and foster care affected it.

Drunks, druggies, no job, cars on lawn that don't run, long hair and missing teeth.

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



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 Vancouver. Seven in ten (68%) believe non-Aboriginal people associate them with drug and alcohol abuse. This view is equally held by First Nations peoples and Métis in Vancouver.
- **Lazy and lack motivation.** One in three (34%) Aboriginal people in Vancouver think this is a common stereotype non-Aboriginal people hold of Aboriginal people.
- **Lack intelligence and education.** One in four (26%) believe non-Aboriginal people see Aboriginal people as lacking intelligence and education. Of the *UAPS* cities, this view is strongest in Calgary (29%) and Toronto (27%), as well as Vancouver.
- **Poor and on welfare.** Two in ten (21%) Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver believe non-Aboriginal people think Aboriginal people are poor and always on welfare.
- **Abuse government assistance.** Two in ten (18%) believe Aboriginal peoples are seen as taking unfair advantage of government benefits. A similar proportion (16%) fear they are also seen as not paying their fair share of taxes and "getting a free ride."

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants in Vancouver (11% or fewer) believe non-Aboriginal people hold several other negative stereotypes of Aboriginal people. These include such notions as Aboriginal people being unemployed, neglectful/abusive of their children, violent or abusive, or homeless.

Do Aboriginal peoples believe non-Aboriginal impressions are changing?

There is some sense in Vancouver 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.

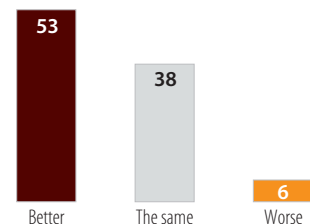
Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are cautiously optimistic that non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people has gotten better over the past few years, and only a small minority think it has gotten worse. In fact, Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are among the most optimistic that impressions 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, just over half (53%) of UAPS participants in Vancouver think impressions have improved. Four in ten (38%) think impressions have stayed the same. Only six 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

More than eight in ten Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver agree that others behave in an unfair or negative way toward Aboriginal people as whole. About three-quarters report that they personally have been teased or insulted because of their Aboriginal background.

Not only do Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver feel that they are viewed negatively by their non-Aboriginal neighbours, but they also report widespread experience (personally and as a group) with negative treatment or unfair treatment because of who they are.

NEGATIVE AND UNFAIR BEHAVIOUR TOWARD ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN GENERAL. Most Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver agree with the statement "I think others behave in an unfair or negative way towards Aboriginal people." More than eight in ten either strongly (36%) or somewhat (48%) agree with this statement, while just over one in ten (14%) disagree. This perception is shared by both First Nations peoples and Métis in Vancouver, and is equally strong in Vancouver as in most other UAPS cities.

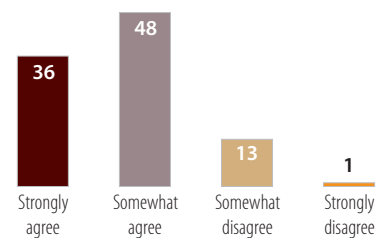
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH INSULTS AND TEASING BY NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLES.

A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver also say they have personally experienced insulting treatment because of who they are. When posed with the statement "I have been teased or insulted because of my Aboriginal background," about three-quarters strongly (39%) or somewhat (34%) agree, compared to about one-quarter who somewhat (12%) or strongly (15%) disagree.

The reported experiences of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver generally mirror those of Aboriginal peoples in the other UAPS cities. Moreover, Métis and First Nations peoples in Vancouver are equally likely to report having been insulted because of who they are.

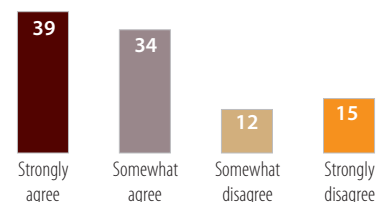
Negative behaviour

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



Unfair treatment

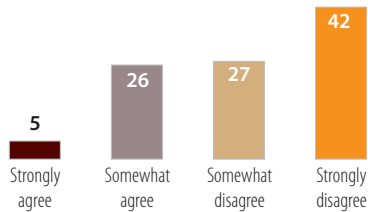
"I have been teased or insulted because of my Aboriginal background."



Sense of acceptance

A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people, a view that is more widespread than in any UAPS city except Winnipeg.

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



Despite widespread personal experience with prejudice, Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are more likely than not to feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people.

Seven in ten (69%) *UAPS* participants in Vancouver either strongly (42%) or somewhat (27%) *disagree* with the statement “I don’t feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people.” By comparison, a minority of three in ten who strongly (5%) or somewhat (26%) agree that they do not feel accepted. Métis are more likely to feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people than First Nations peoples. The sense of acceptance felt by Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver overall is higher than in most other *UAPS* cities except Winnipeg.

Impact of experiences with non-Aboriginal people

Most Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver 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.

For the most part, Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver 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 Vancouver are most likely to frame the impact in a positive light. 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 Vancouver (39%) 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 at school and elsewhere, made them more ambitious, made them want to disprove Aboriginal stereotypes, and gave them needed encouragement and support.
- **More tolerant and accepting.** One in four (24%) Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver also feel they developed more tolerance and acceptance of other people through their experiences with non-Aboriginal people. Specifically, they feel these experiences gave them a perspective on other cultures, made them less prejudiced and judgmental, and taught them to be adaptable in a non-Aboriginal society.
- **Mentoring and a sense of direction.** Two in ten (22%) Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver report how a non-Aboriginal teacher, professor or other individual gave them a positive experience and guidance about “how to stay out of trouble,” pursue a career, and mentored them at a critical point in their life.
- **Greater sense of Aboriginal self.** A slightly smaller group of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver (17%) feel they have gained a greater sense of themselves as an Aboriginal person through their experiences with non-Aboriginal people. These experiences both gave them a perspective on their own Aboriginal culture and reinforced their pride in being Aboriginal.

Two in ten (19%) Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver also cite ways in which their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have had a *negative* impact on their lives. These individuals cite such negative experiences as exposure to racism and discrimination, distrust and anger, loss of connection to their Aboriginal identity and language, shame, and lower self-confidence and self-esteem.

A total of one in ten Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver either say their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have had no impact at all on them (2%), or are unable or unwilling to answer the question (7%).

3.3 Experiences with non-Aboriginal services and organizations

Extent of contact with non-Aboriginal services

Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver report a substantial amount of contact with non-Aboriginal banks and with the health care system, but much less contact with other services offered. They are less likely than average to report recent use of social assistance programs, and employment and training programs.

As a final dimension to better understanding urban Aboriginal peoples' perceptions of and experiences with non-Aboriginal people, the *UAPS* 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 Vancouver 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 recently used by Aboriginal peoples living in Vancouver. More than nine in ten (94%) say they have made use of banks/credit unions in the past 12 months, and just under nine in ten (86%) 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. Minorities report using elementary and secondary schools as a parent (26%), non-Aboriginal social assistance programs (20%), and non-Aboriginal employment and training services (17%).

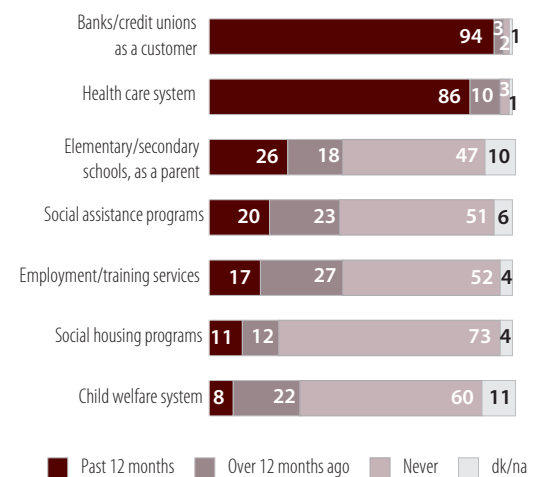
Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are least likely to report recent experience with the child welfare system and social housing programs. Very small proportions report using social housing programs (11%) or the child welfare system (8%) within the past year; in both cases, majorities have never used them (73% and 60%, respectively).

Reported contact with these non-Aboriginal services and organizations is largely similar for First Nations peoples and Métis in Vancouver. Contact is similar to the averages reported by urban Aboriginal peoples in general.

The *UAPS* found some variation in contact with these non-Aboriginal services across the 11 cities, perhaps due to the specific needs of the community and/or the varying availability of *Aboriginal* services in these areas. Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are less likely than average to have had recent contact with non-Aboriginal social assistance programs, and employment and training programs.

Contact with non-Aboriginal services and organizations

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



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

Assessing experiences with non-Aboriginal services

Those who have been in contact with non-Aboriginal services in Vancouver are generally positive about the experience. Opinion is more divided about the child welfare system. Although a minority, negative experiences with elementary and secondary schools are more common in Vancouver than in most other UAPS cities.

Positive experiences with non-Aboriginal services in Vancouver tend to outweigh negative ones, with the exception of experiences with the child welfare system, which have been mixed.

Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver who have ever used or made contact with these non-Aboriginal services¹³ were asked if the experience was generally positive or generally negative. They are most likely to report positive experiences with banks and credit unions (90%), employment and training services (86%), and the health care system (82%). In each of these cases, only a minority (ranging between 8% and 17%) say they had a negative experience.

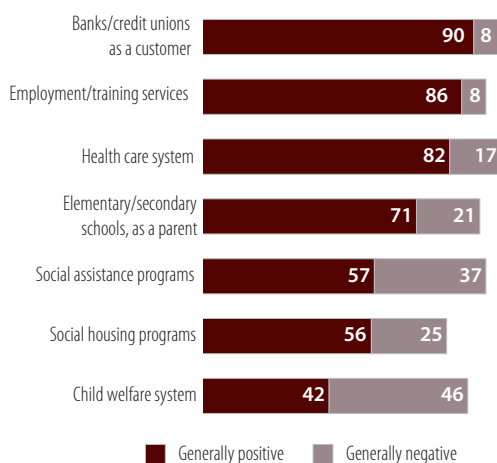
Positive experiences are the case for fewer, but still majorities, of those who have accessed elementary or secondary schools (as a parent) (71%), social assistance programs (57%) and/or social housing programs (56%). In each of these cases, between two and four in ten say their experience was negative.

Among Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver who have ever had contact with the child welfare system, negative perceptions of this experience (46%) are matched by those who report positive ones (42%).

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

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.

13 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. Almost half (46%) of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver 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.

About one-quarter (23%) had problems with process, such as long waiting lists or wait periods, expensive fees, missing documents or complicated paperwork. An equal proportion (23%) questioned the effectiveness of the service, saying it was not supportive, unhelpful and didn't actually achieve its goal. Ten percent have concerns that the services lack resources, such as qualified staff or funding, and therefore provide poor or disorganized service.

Other negative experiences relate to being misinformed or misdiagnosed (8%), being abused or mistreated by staff or caregivers (7%), or having an application rejected (5%).

What Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver say about their negative experiences with non-Aboriginal services:

System designed to make you feel "less-than."

There is a lot of racism toward Aboriginal people in the health care system: no matter what type of person you are or your job, they assume you are a drunk or drug addict.

They [bank] would not help me cash my work cheque at different branches. Very rude and unhelpful.

For my children (being First Nation), the expectations for them are very low. The teacher and staff thought they had a learning disability.

Lots of bureaucracy. Ask ambiguous questions in forms. Hard to fill out.

It's extremely difficult to access social assistance. You end up getting lost in the bureaucracy.

When my child was younger, when I was asking for assistance, they made me feel like I couldn't take care of my kid.

Racist, judgmental, unsupportive, demeaning, stressful, traumatizing as a parent.

4.0 Experiences with Aboriginal Services and Organizations

As part of understanding urban Aboriginal peoples' experiences in Canadian cities today, the *UAPS* 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.

There is considerable reliance on Aboriginal services and organizations in Vancouver, and *UAPS* participants in this city are clearly convinced of the importance of these services to the well-being of their community.

Key findings

- **Seven in ten Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver use and rely at least occasionally on Aboriginal services and organizations in the city, the largest proportion in all *UAPS* cities except Toronto and among Inuit in Ottawa.** They are used primarily for specific services, but also for a sense of community and belonging. Those who have used Aboriginal services and organizations in Vancouver have found friendship centres and employment centres of greatest value.
- **Regardless of how much interaction they have with Aboriginal services, there is a strong consensus among Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver that they are very important.** This is considered to be most important in the case of Aboriginal child and family programs, addiction programs and housing services. They are also more convinced than average in the need for Aboriginal-specific child care or daycares.

4.1 Use of urban Aboriginal services and organizations

Extent of use of services

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

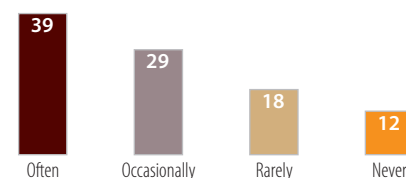
Many Aboriginal services and organizations promote culture and identity for urban Aboriginal peoples through the types of services they offer, the events they sponsor and simply through their existence as Aboriginal organizations in Vancouver. The *UAPS* asked participants how often, and why, they use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

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

Seven in ten (68%) use or rely on the city's Aboriginal services or organizations in Vancouver either often (39%) or occasionally (29%), compared to three in ten (30%) who say they rarely (18%) or never (12%) do. Reported use is similar for First Nations peoples and Métis in Vancouver. Across cities, use of these services is most common among Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (69%) and Vancouver, and among Inuit in Ottawa (67%).

What else explains the use of Aboriginal services and organizations in cities? The sample size for Vancouver alone (261 survey participants) is too small to allow for a detailed analysis by socio-demographic factors. However, the national *UAPS* data (across all 11 cities) indicate 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 aged 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 Vancouver?



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

I feel comfortable in that environment. The services are geared towards Aboriginals. I fit right in.

They understand the complexity of issues involved in living in the downtown east side of Vancouver.

They provide services that affect my daily life.

Because I trust them. I can count on them. Someone is always there.

For access to phone, computer, advice, help. To help get work.

Always friendly and make me feel like I'm at home and they go the extra mile to help you.

Protocol, respect – building community, partnerships.

Good sources of information. Compile information about community resources and events.

[They are a] gathering place for community and culture.

Use programs for my son [because we are] labelled by non-Aboriginal medical and educational services.

Reasons for use

As in other cities, Aboriginal services and organizations in Vancouver are used for specific services, but also for their sense of community and belonging.

Beyond asking Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver how often they use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations, the UAPS also explored why some use these services more regularly than others (unprompted, without response options offered).

WHY THEY USE. Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver who are regular users¹⁴ of the city's Aboriginal services and organizations say they are motivated by the specific services offered and/or by the positive environments they find. These are largely consistent with the main reasons for use mentioned in other UAPS cities. Some of these reasons are illustrated in verbatim comments in the sidebar on this page.

SPECIFIC RESOURCES. More than half (56%) of regular users of Aboriginal services and organizations are motivated by a desire/need for specific resources. Programs and social services, education and employment services, health supports, and services related to Aboriginal benefits or advocacy, are the most typical resources they describe using.

POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT. One in three (35%) users of Aboriginal services and organizations say they are drawn by the presence of positive environments, whether it be a greater degree of comfort, the connection to Aboriginal culture, the supportive community and/or the personal relationships that they offer.

EMPLOYEE/VOLUNTEER. One in ten (11%) are connected to Aboriginal services and organizations because they are either employed by them, or volunteer their time and services.

14 Those who report using services often or occasionally (68% of UAPS participants in Vancouver overall).

WHY THEY DON'T USE. Those who rarely or never use Aboriginal services and organizations (30% of UAPS participants in Vancouver overall) typically indicate they have no need for them (54%). Considerably fewer do not use them because they feel the services aren't helpful (10%), because they are unaware of what is available (8%), and/or because they can't access or don't qualify for these services (8%). Some of the reasons why Aboriginal services are not used more often are illustrated in verbatim comments in the sidebar on this page.

Most useful Aboriginal services and organizations

Users of Aboriginal services in Vancouver identify friendship centres and employment centres as most useful to them.

Aboriginal peoples who have used Aboriginal services and organizations in Vancouver have found a wide range of these to be useful, but first and foremost value friendship centres (52%) and employment centres (46%). Close to three in ten each have received useful services from Aboriginal health centres (30%), youth centres (29%) and counselling centres (26%). Smaller proportions have found Aboriginal healing centres (20%), housing services (18%), child and family services (18%), education-related services (18%) and legal services (15%) to be helpful.

In Vancouver, First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to identify most of these Aboriginal services as being particularly helpful, with the exception of education-related services and scholarships, which Métis are more likely to have found useful.

Most useful Aboriginal services and organizations*

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

Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are the most likely of any UAPS city to have found use in Aboriginal youth centres and education-related services; they are also more likely than average to mention friendship centres, employment centres and counselling centres as being valuable.

Top mentions



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

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

Never felt part of the community. I have more personal friendships.

There are other options out there. Self-sufficient. Emotionally-sufficient. Would rather another person who is just coming up getting that service.

Usually I fall outside the age range. It's either an adult program or a youth program. Poor advertising. Bad accessibility.

Because I don't feel I need them.

Haven't found them convenient. Haven't sought such services out because I am not actively part of Aboriginal community and due to ignorance (don't really know what services exist, are available).

Not too many around where I live. They are usually in Vancouver and on the reserves.

My Band provides services for all my needs.

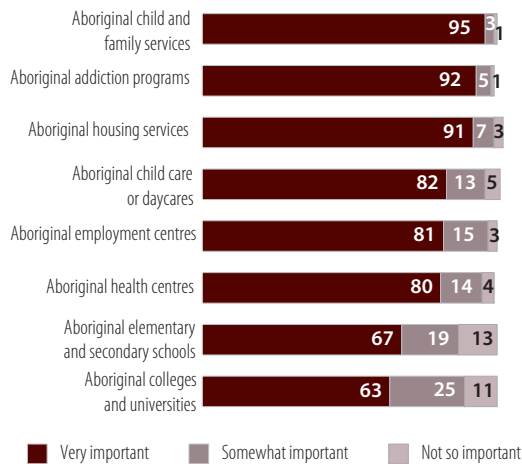
4.2 Importance of Aboriginal services in addition to non-Aboriginal services

Large majorities of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver believe it is very important to also have Aboriginal services. Compared to those living in other UAPS cities, they are among the most convinced of the need for Aboriginal child and family services, housing services, and child care or daycares.

There is a strong consensus among Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver that it is important for Aboriginal services to exist in addition to non-Aboriginal ones.

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.

Nine in ten or more each say it is *very* important to have Aboriginal child and family services (95%), addiction programs (92%) and housing services (91%). Eight in ten each say the same about Aboriginal child care or daycares (82%), employment centres (81%) and health centres (80%). Slightly smaller proportions say it is *very* important to have Aboriginal elementary and secondary schools (67%), and Aboriginal colleges and universities (63%). In all cases, most of the remaining participants say having Aboriginal services is *somewhat* important, and no more than 13 percent say it is *not so* important. These views are similar for both First Nations peoples and Métis in Vancouver.

Aboriginal residents of Vancouver are more convinced than urban Aboriginal peoples in general of the importance of Aboriginal-specific child and family services, housing services, and child care or daycares.

In general, how do Aboriginal peoples feel about the city they live in? Beyond the themes discussed so far in this report, the *UAPS* also explored how much participants like living in Vancouver, their reasons for choosing their neighbourhood (and the extent to which they feel they have a choice), how much they believe they can make Vancouver a better place to live, along with their openness to other languages and cultures.

Key findings

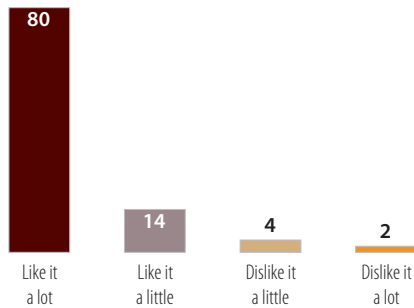
- **Most urban Aboriginal peoples (across all cities) like living in their cities, and this is especially true for Aboriginal peoples living in Vancouver.** They like Vancouver for the quality of life, urban amenities, and the presence of family and friends. A sense of social acceptance also ranks high on their list of “likes,” a perspective almost exclusive to those living in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Their primary concern about life in the city is about common urban pressures like traffic and the cost of living.
- **Affordability of housing, and proximity to family and friends, and to school or work are the most common reasons for choosing a neighbourhood.** Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are as likely as those in other cities to feel they have a lot of choice as to where they live in the city.
- **Aboriginal peoples believe they can make Vancouver a better place to live.** Seven in ten are confident that they can make a positive difference in their city, exceeding the sense of empowerment felt by Aboriginal peoples in most other cities, as well as by non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver.
- **Like their counterparts in other *UAPS* cities, Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are strongly accepting of other languages and cultures, and much more so than non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver.**

5.1 Satisfaction with city life

Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are among the most positive about life in their city, due in part to the quality of life, particularly the availability of green spaces.

Like living in Vancouver

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



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, or continuing long histories of multi-generational residence, in Canadian cities, including Vancouver.

Almost all Aboriginal peoples say they like living in Vancouver, and the degree of satisfaction expressed is higher than in any other *UAPS* city except Halifax. When asked, eight in ten (80%) like it a lot, while another 14 percent indicate they like it a little. Fewer than one in ten dislike living in their city a little (4%) or a lot (2%). Satisfaction with living in Vancouver is similar for Métis and First Nations peoples in the city.

What do *UAPS* participants like most and least about living in Vancouver? General quality of life and city life, social acceptance, and the presence of family and friends are among Vancouver's most appreciated features, while certain city conditions (i.e., traffic, cost of living) are what they like least about the city.

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

- **Quality of life.** The most common reason Aboriginal peoples like living in Vancouver is the quality of life it offers. A total of four in ten (42%) indicate this is what they most like about living in the city. They place greater emphasis on the availability of green spaces (25%) than do *UAPS* participants in any other city, but also cite the variety and convenience of amenities (12%), good neighbourhoods (5%), and the resources and services (4%).
- **City life.** Another major reason why Aboriginal peoples say they enjoy Vancouver is the city life available to them. One in four (25%) like the recreation and entertainment opportunities, the fast pace of city life, and the cultural and artistic events.
- **Social acceptance.** One in five (19%) Aboriginal peoples like the social acceptance they experience in Vancouver. This perspective is almost exclusive to those living in Montreal (34%) and Toronto (33%), and to a lesser extent, in Vancouver; only a handful of Aboriginal peoples in smaller cities (6% or fewer) say they like living in their city for this reason.
- **Presence of family and friends.** Another feature Aboriginal peoples like about living in Vancouver is the presence of family and friends (17%). However, this reason is less widely mentioned in Vancouver than by those living in the Prairie cities and Thunder Bay.

Smaller proportions of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver say they like the career and employment opportunities (12%), the climate (10%), the perception of greater freedom and opportunity (9%), the friendly people (8%), or that they were born or grew up in Vancouver and are very familiar with the city (8%). First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to say they like the employment opportunities in Vancouver; otherwise the two identity groups mention similar things they like about living in city.

LIKE LEAST. What do Aboriginal peoples like least about living in Vancouver? Although they mention a broad range of issues, their responses clearly reveal one main concern.

- **Urban pressures.** A universal complaint of all city-dwellers, close to half (45%) of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver dislike certain urban pressures, particularly the traffic and the higher cost of living, but also the pollution, a sense of overcrowding and that it is too big and urbanized. This is by far the primary issue in Toronto (55%), Calgary (48%), Vancouver and Montreal (45%), where it evokes much more concern than in other *UAPS* cities.

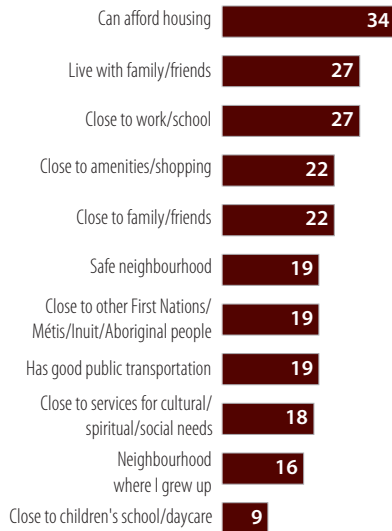
Very few in Vancouver (9%) mention issues related to crime and violence, well below the proportions in the Prairie cities and Halifax (ranging from 29% to 45%) who voice such concerns.

Other features that Aboriginal people in Vancouver say they dislike about the city (each mentioned by 8% percent or fewer) include the presence of drugs and alcohol, the climate, poverty and homelessness, and unfriendly people. Features they dislike about Vancouver are largely similar for First Nations peoples and Métis.

5.2 Reasons for choice of neighbourhood

Why do you live in your neighbourhood?

Why do you live in the neighbourhood you do?



The availability of affordable housing, and proximity to family and friends, and to school or work are the most common reasons for Aboriginal peoples' choice of neighbourhood in Vancouver. Three in four believe they have choice about where they live.

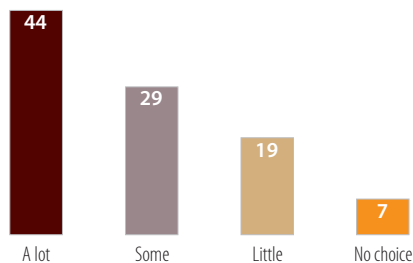
Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver choose their neighbourhood for a range of reasons, most typically because of the availability of affordable housing, as well as proximity to family and friends, and to school or work.

When asked why they live in their neighbourhood (unprompted, without response options offered), Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are most likely to say it is because they can afford the housing (34%). Other important considerations include the opportunity to live *with* (27%) or *close to* (22%) family and friends, and proximity to work and/or school (27%). Around two in ten each offer other reasons, including desire to be close to amenities (22%), good public transit (19%), other Aboriginal people (19%), because it offers a safe environment (19%), cultural or spiritual services (18%), or because it is the neighbourhood where they grew up (16%). A variety of other reasons are mentioned, but none by more than nine percent (each) of participants.

EXTENT OF CHOICE. To what extent do Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver feel they have a choice about the neighbourhood they live in? When asked directly, three in four feel they have either a lot (44%) or some (29%) choice about where they live in the city, compared to one in four who feel they have either a little (19%) or no choice at all (7%). These sentiments are similar to those expressed by urban Aboriginal peoples in general.

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...?



5.3 Personal impact on city

Seven in ten Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver think they can make the city a better place to live. This sense of empowerment is stronger than in any other UAPS city except Toronto, and is also stronger than among non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver.

In addition to enjoying living in their city, many Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are confident that they can make the city a better place to live.

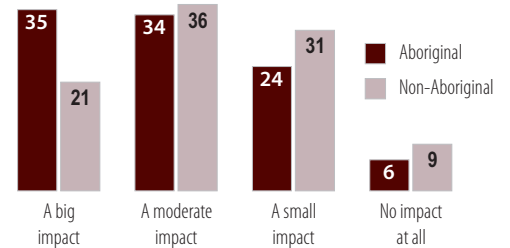
Seven in ten Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver think people like themselves can have either a big (35%) or moderate (34%) impact in making the city a better place to live. By comparison, three in ten believe they can have only a small impact (24%) or no impact at all (6%) on their city. These perceptions are similar for First Nations peoples and Métis.

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' belief in their ability to be positive agents of change in Vancouver exceeds the belief non-Aboriginal people have in their own ability to affect change: Aboriginal people are more likely to believe they can make at least a moderate impact on Vancouver (69% vs. 57% of non-Aboriginal people).

Making Vancouver 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?



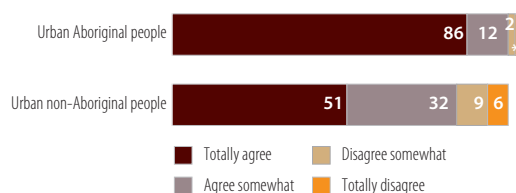
5.4 Attitudes toward multiculturalism

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

Virtually all Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver totally (86%) or somewhat (12%) agree that Canada is a country where there is room for a variety of languages and cultures. This view is largely shared with Aboriginal peoples living in other *UAPS* cities, although the proportion in total agreement is highest in Vancouver and Montreal. In Vancouver, Métis are more likely than First Nations peoples to totally agree with this statement (93% and 81%, respectively).

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."



* Less than one percent

ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVES. Notably, Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver express a greater tolerance for other languages and cultures than do non-Aboriginal people. Using data from the *UAPS* survey of non-Aboriginal people, Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver (86%) are considerably more likely than non-Aboriginal people in the city (51%) to totally agree that there is room for a variety of languages and cultures in Canada. This pattern is consistent across most *UAPS* cities, with the exception of Calgary.

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* 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 is similarly true for Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver, whose top life aspirations are largely consistent with those held by Aboriginal peoples living in other cities. However, more so than those living in smaller urban centres, Aboriginal peoples living in Vancouver also emphasize the importance of a strong Aboriginal cultural connection to their current and future well-being and success.

Key findings

- **The top life aspirations for Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver include raising a family and completing their education.** Their life aspirations are largely consistent with those of Aboriginal peoples in other *UAPS* cities, although they express more interest in travel.
- **Family and a balanced lifestyle are considered the most important ingredients of a successful life.** Compared to those in other *UAPS* cities, Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver place greater importance on having a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage and living in a traditional way, and less value on financial independence and home ownership.
- **Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are most likely to hope for a future world that includes greater cultural connection, and express this desire more frequently than average.**

6.1 Life aspirations

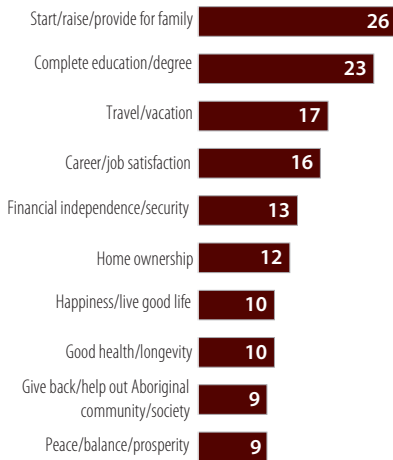
The top life aspirations for Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are raising a family and completing their education.

What do Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver 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 widely mentioned life aspirations among Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are raising or providing for a family (26%), and completing their education (23%). Other important goals include travel (17%), having a good job or career (16%), financial security or independence (13%), or home ownership (12%).

A wide range of other aspirations are mentioned by 10 percent or fewer, including health, happiness, giving back to the Aboriginal community, peace and balance, becoming a successful artist and owning a business.

The life aspirations of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are largely consistent with those held by Aboriginal peoples living in the other *UAPS* cities. However, they are among the most interested in travel (together with those living in Edmonton and Montreal).

In Vancouver, First Nations peoples and Métis identify similar life aspirations, although First Nations peoples are more likely to mention a desire to see their children and grandchildren go to school and become successful (10% vs. 1% of Métis).

6.2 Definitions of “success”

Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver most associate success with family and friends, and a balanced lifestyle. Compared to UAPS participants in other cities, they place greater importance on a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage and living in traditional ways, and less on financial independence and home ownership.

The UAPS 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 Vancouver are most likely to consider family and a balanced lifestyle central to a successful life. Nine in ten each say it is very important to be close to family and friends (94%), to live a balanced life (92%), and to raise healthy, well-adjusted children who contribute to their community (91%).

More than seven in ten each place the same degree of importance on having a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity or background (74%), and having a good job or a successful career (73%), while slightly fewer highly value financial independence (63%). A majority also believe it is very important to own a home (52%).

By comparison, Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver have mixed opinions about the importance of living in a traditional way: four in ten (41%) say it is very important to a successful life, while a similar proportion (37%) say it is only somewhat important and one in five (18%) believe it is not so important.

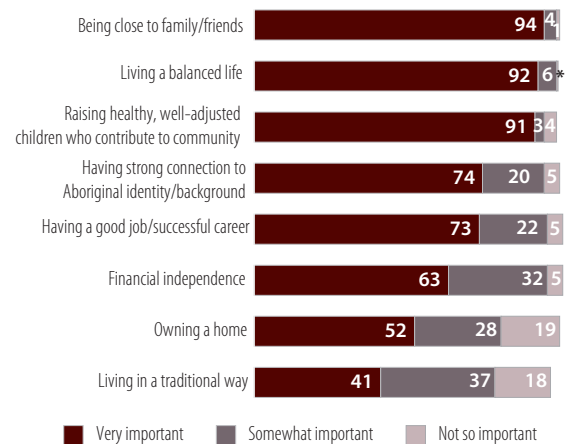
First Nations peoples and Métis in Edmonton possess similar ‘universal’ notions of a successful life (i.e., family and a balanced lifestyle), but diverge significantly on the importance of having a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity and of living in a traditional way. First Nations peoples are much more likely than Métis to believe both of these are critical features of 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 Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver (74%), as well as in Halifax (77%), Toronto (76%) and among Inuit in Ottawa (78%). Aboriginal peoples in the larger urban centres (Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal) place less relative importance on financial independence and owning a home than do those living in smaller 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.



* Less than one percent

The hopes of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver for future generations:

That Aboriginal languages, history and cultures are respected and taught in their schools. Also, that all Aboriginal history will be taught in all Canadian schools from grade two on to university.

He gets to stay a kid as long as possible. Be naive. Play as long as possible. I don't want him to have to be a parent to his parents like I was to my mom. Have fun.

They don't have to suffer as much, they can just be people, and not have to worry about the colour of their skin or backgrounds.

I hope they will always be proud to be Métis, to know what it means, share it. Also to know that they're connected to Cree people.

I hope coming generations can be balanced in life. Live in the Aboriginal community without relying too much on it. Surviving outside the Aboriginal community without being ashamed of it.

More prominent impact on Canadian society. More influence.

Good education – better grades, degrees. Financial freedom – good job.

That they can think more critically about what's happening around them. Question more. Embrace uniqueness.

Less alcohol abuse and violence. More healthy ways of communicating. Stronger sense of belonging.

6.3 Hopes for the future

Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver hope that future generations will have a stronger connection to their Aboriginal culture, and are more likely than average to express this desire.

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 most prominent hope is for greater cultural connection.

Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are most likely to hope that future generations will be more aware of, involved in and connected to their Aboriginal cultural community (25%). Moreover, they are more likely to express this hope than Aboriginal peoples in any other UAPS city except Toronto.

They are also hopeful that their children and grandchildren will learn the importance of education and finishing school (18%); will live in a society free of racism and discrimination (17%); enjoy a safe environment without crime, violence, or physical or emotional abuse (14%); and avoid addiction to drugs and alcohol (13%).

A wide range of other hopes for future generations were also expressed, including that they live happier, healthier and more stable lives (10%), be more financially secure (9%), have access to better resources (9%), and have strong and stable family relationships (9%). Some of these hopes are presented in participants' own words in the sidebar on this page.

In Vancouver, the hope that future generations will complete their education is more commonly expressed by First Nations peoples, while hopes for a stable and strong family life and for a healthy environment are more widely expressed by Métis.

7.0 Special Theme: Justice

Aboriginal peoples are over-represented as offenders in the criminal justice system. According to Statistics Canada, in 2007/2008, Aboriginal people represented just four percent of British Columbia's total population, but made up 21 percent of individuals sentenced to custody in the B.C. correctional system.¹⁵ That is, the representation of Aboriginal adults in provincial sentenced custody in B.C. is five times their representation in the general population, a gap that exists (in varying degrees) in all provinces and territories.

In this context, it is not surprising that Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver express limited confidence in Canada's criminal justice system, and are more likely than not to support the idea of a separate Aboriginal justice system.

Key findings

- **Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are among the least confident of all UAPS participants in the criminal justice system in Canada.** Moreover, they are three times as likely to endorse as to oppose the creation of a separate Aboriginal justice system, in part from the belief that a more culturally relevant system is needed.
- **Majorities of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver support the idea of a criminal justice system that incorporates alternate approaches to justice.** Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver believe alternate approaches (such as incorporating Aboriginal concepts of justice, or having Aboriginal police, judges and courts) would help reduce Aboriginal crime rates, improve community safety and increase their confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada.

7.1 Confidence in the criminal justice system

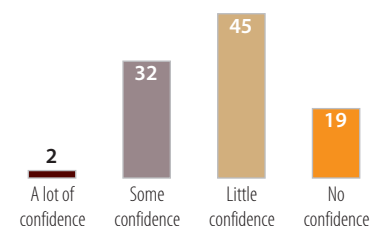
More than six in ten Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver have little or no confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada, a level that is among the highest of all UAPS cities.

Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver tend to lack confidence in Canada's criminal justice system. More than six in ten say they have little (45%) or no (19%) confidence in the criminal justice system. Three in ten (32%) have some confidence in this system, but very few (2%) have a lot of confidence. Majorities of both First Nations peoples (65%) and Métis (64%) in Vancouver express a lack of confidence.

No more than one in ten in any UAPS city express a great deal of confidence in the criminal justice system. Lack of confidence is most evident among Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver (64%), Saskatoon (63%), Winnipeg (60%), Toronto (59%) and Edmonton (55%); elsewhere, majorities say they have at least some confidence in the criminal justice system (with the exception of Montreal, where opinion is equally divided).

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?



¹⁵ Statistics Canada. 2009. Incarceration of Aboriginal people in adult correctional services. *The Daily*. July 21. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-001-XIE.

What influences urban Aboriginal peoples' confidence in the criminal justice system? The sample size for Vancouver alone (261 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) suggests that confidence is 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). The proportion of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver who report serious involvement of this sort (49%) is on par with the average for all 11 *UAPS* cities.

7.2 Support for an Aboriginal justice system

Good idea or bad idea

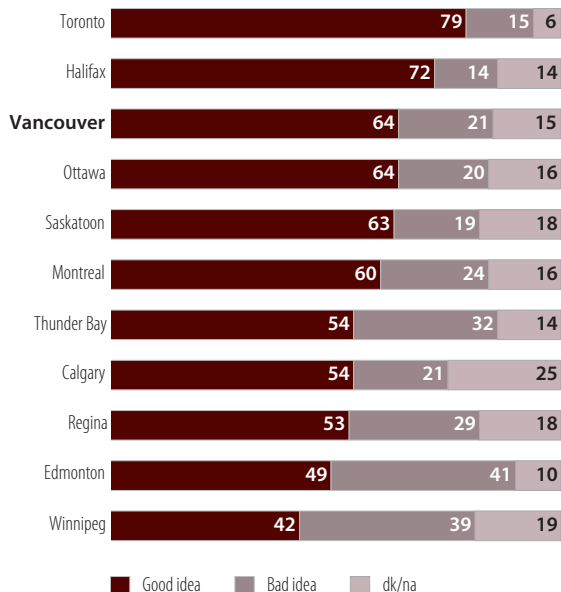
Support for a separate Aboriginal justice system outweighs opposition among Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver, a finding that is consistent with views in most UAPS cities.

Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are much more likely to support than to oppose the creation of an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system.

More than six in ten (64%) Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a good idea, clearly outweighing the two in ten (21%) who believe it is a bad idea. More than one in ten (15%) offer no opinion. Views are largely similar between First Nations peoples and Métis in Vancouver.

Aboriginal justice system

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



Support for the idea of a separate Aboriginal justice system is highest in Toronto (79%) and Halifax (72%). Opposition to the concept is a minority view in all cities, but is highest among Aboriginal peoples in Edmonton (41%) and Winnipeg (39%). In Winnipeg, this greater skepticism is driven by the majority Métis population, while in Edmonton there is an evident desire for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to be treated equally to avoid (further) discrimination.

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 Vancouver are most likely to say that 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 (26%).

Others base their support on the belief that it would provide greater rehabilitation, healing and reduce recidivism (21%), would offer a setting that is culturally more comfortable for Aboriginal people (18%), would offset a current justice system that they perceive to be biased and that treats Aboriginal people unjustly (17%), or because it is a promising alternative for an existing system that is not working for Aboriginal peoples (13%).

WHY A BAD IDEA? Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver who think creating a separate system is a *bad* idea were also asked the reason for their opinion (unprompted, without response options offered). Those opposed to this idea are most likely to say it is because they feel Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people should be treated equally to avoid discrimination (43%), and/or that it would unnecessarily segregate and isolate Aboriginal people (29%).

Reasons why Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is

...a good idea:

Traditional cultures have effective and positive justice systems. The problems that Aboriginal people face can't be addressed by the Canadian criminal justice system, because it does not address cultural differences.

Because what they're doing now is not working. The other ways might work and make a difference.

If it's [a] separate [system], mitigating circumstances can be addressed. Whoever is being addressed can be responsible to their community for their action.

I believe that the justice system is too willing to put First Nations in jail. Many Aboriginal people are in the system their whole lives. It is an endless cycle. That cycle needs to be broken. It starts with healing.

...or a bad idea:

The whole system should be fair for everyone, not just separating the Natives from non-Natives.

Why separate us? Put us in yet another category?

Crime is equal. If you've committed a crime, everyone should receive equal punishment for like crimes committed.

Separation between non-Aboriginal justice and Aboriginal justice does not seem like a positive or current way to approach issues.

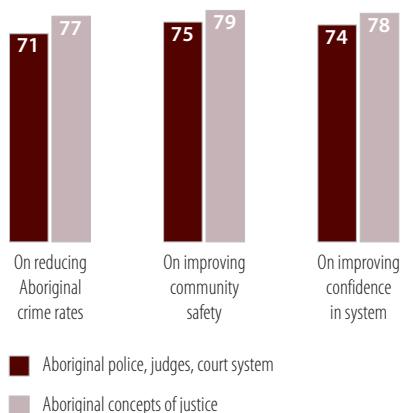
Perceived impact of alternate approaches

Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver believe that alternate approaches to justice would help reduce Aboriginal crime rates, improve their confidence in the justice system and improve community safety.

Aside from their opinions about the value of an Aboriginal justice system, what do Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver think would make a difference in reducing Aboriginal crime rates, improving community safety, and improving their own confidence in the criminal justice system? Urban Aboriginal peoples were asked to evaluate the potential impact of two alternate approaches to justice:

- A system that incorporates Aboriginal police, Aboriginal judges and an Aboriginal court system to work with Aboriginal people who come in contact with the criminal justice system; and
- A system that incorporates Aboriginal concepts of justice, such as sentencing circles and healing circles, Aboriginal laws, and alternatives to punishment such as reconciliation and restoration.

Impact of alternate approaches to justice
Big or moderate impact



Overall, majorities feel both approaches would have a beneficial impact. Between seven and eight in ten Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver 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. Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver are among the most optimistic about the potential impact of both approaches, similar to those living in Halifax, Toronto and Saskatoon.

8.0 Special Theme: Gender Issues

The *UAPS* is a rich, in-depth source of information about the experiences, identities, values and aspirations of urban Aboriginal peoples across Canada. The main report and the individual city reports have begun to develop a picture of the urban Aboriginal population. The goal is to make the data publicly accessible for others to expand upon these insights.

Gender issues are a topic of interest in the Aboriginal community in Vancouver that has not yet been explored in great depth in the *UAPS* findings. The purpose of this section is to uncover the extent to which there are differences in the perspectives of Aboriginal men and women in Vancouver.

Gender is not a major differentiator in the overall *UAPS* results (across all cities). Key differences exist between Aboriginal identity groups, age groups and socio-economic groups (i.e., education and income levels), but variation by gender is limited. Differences between men and women are most evident in relation to personal and financial security, reflecting the fact that women tend to be more vulnerable in these areas.

A similar pattern of gender differences exists in Vancouver. That is, the broad findings are applicable to both genders, although issues of security (both personal and financial) stand out more for women than for men.¹⁶

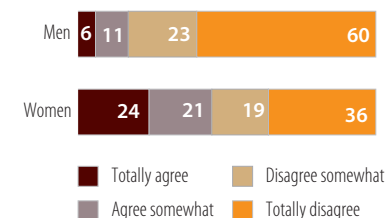
PERSONAL SECURITY. Aboriginal women have mixed views about their personal safety in their neighbourhoods, but express more concern than do men. Close to half (45%) of Aboriginal women *agree* with the statement “I’m afraid to walk alone at night in my neighbourhood,” while just over half (55%) disagree. By comparison, only a small minority of Aboriginal men are as concerned about their personal safety (17% agree with the statement).

It is important to note that this is not simply an issue of concern for Aboriginal women, but for women generally. A 2009 survey of the total Canadian population found a similar gap in concern about personal safety between women and men (44% and 15%, respectively, agreed that they were afraid to walk alone at night in their neighbourhood).¹⁷

Concern about personal safety is also evident in Aboriginal women’s reasons for moving to Vancouver and for their choice of neighbourhood. Men and women give the same main reasons for their decision to move to Vancouver (education, family, city life and work opportunities), but women are also more likely to say they moved to escape a bad family situation or because they needed a new beginning. Similarly, men and women list the same top reasons for their choice of neighbourhood (affordability, living with or close to family or friends, close to work/school and amenities), but women are more likely to cite safety considerations in their decision. Moreover, women are slightly less likely to feel they have a lot of choice about the neighbourhood in which they live.

Afraid to walk alone in my neighbourhood at night

Please tell me if you totally agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or totally disagree ... I’m afraid to walk alone at night in my neighbourhood.



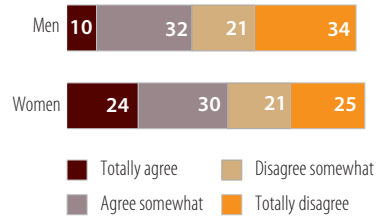
¹⁶ In part, the limited gender differences are due to the relatively small sample sizes of men (n=112) and women (n=149) in Vancouver, meaning that any differences must be fairly large in order to be statistically significant.

¹⁷ 2009 Environics’ Social Values Monitor.

FINANCIAL SECURITY. Financial security is also of greater concern for Aboriginal women than for Aboriginal men. A slight majority (54%) of women agree with the statement “I am very concerned that I will not have enough money to live comfortably in the future,” compared to four in ten (42%) men; moreover, the proportion expressing the greatest concern (i.e., totally agree with the statement) is more than twice as high for women (24%) as for men (10%).

Concern about future financial security

Please tell me if you totally agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or totally disagree ... I am very concerned that I will not have enough money to live comfortably in the future.



Once again, it is important to note that similar gender differences exist in the total Canadian population. In 2009, strong concern about future financial security was significantly higher among Canadian women (31% totally agreed that they were concerned about money for the future) than Canadian men (21%).¹⁸

Perhaps as a result, Aboriginal women place greater importance on financial independence, with seven in ten (69%) who consider it very important to their idea of a successful life, compared to just over half (56%) of Aboriginal men.

18 2009 Environics' Social Values Monitor.

9.0 Non-Aboriginal Perspectives

For several years, Environics Research Group has been tracking the attitudes of non-Aboriginal Canadians toward 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 between 1999 and 2007. Over time, one evident trend in Canadians' attitudes is the growing awareness of an Aboriginal urban presence and a prioritizing of issues related to Aboriginal people in cities over others, such as the settling of native land claims.

As part of the *UAPS*, Environics surveyed a representative sample of Canadians to learn how they view Aboriginal people and what informs these views. The results of the non-Aboriginal survey are based on telephone interviews conducted from April 28 to May 15, 2009 with approximately 250 non-Aboriginal people in each of the 10 of the urban centres in which the main survey was conducted: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax (excluding Ottawa). In all, 2,501 non-Aboriginal 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 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 non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver.

9.1 Perceptions of Aboriginal peoples

Top-of-mind impression

There is no single common impression of Aboriginal peoples among non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver, but that most widely expressed relates to their history as the first inhabitants of Canada.

What are the top-of-mind impressions of Aboriginal peoples among non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver 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 inhabitation of the country – is the most common impression of Aboriginal peoples among non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver (16%).
- **First Nations/Métis/Inuit.** For more than one in ten (14%) non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver, 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.)
- **Culture and art.** The most top-of-mind impression for just over one in ten (13%) non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver is of cultural and artistic traditions among Aboriginal peoples.
- **Reserves.** For an additional one in ten (9%) non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver, reserves are what first come to mind when thinking of Aboriginal peoples.

- **Mistreatment.** One in ten (8%) also associate Aboriginal people with abuse or mistreatment by Canadian citizens and government.

Smaller proportions of non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver associate Aboriginal peoples with alcoholism and substance abuse (7%); tax breaks, and additional rights and privileges (5%); poverty and poor living conditions (5%); a refusal to adapt to, or segregation from, Canadian society (5%); perceptions that they are lazy and make minimal contributions to society (4%); welfare and other social assistance (4%); and treaty claims, disputes and protests (4%). Four percent believe that Aboriginal peoples are no different from other Canadian citizens.

A wide variety of other impressions are cited, but none by more than three percent of non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver. One in ten (8%) cannot say what first comes to mind when they think of Aboriginal peoples.

Are non-Aboriginal impressions changing in Vancouver?

The majority of non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver say their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have not changed in the past few years.

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

Two-thirds (67%) of non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver 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 people in Vancouver are four times as likely to say these impressions have improved (22%) as worsened (5%). Seven percent offer no opinion. Vancouver residents are among the least likely to report their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have recently worsened, consistent with perceptions in Toronto (8%), Montreal (10%) and Halifax (10%).

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

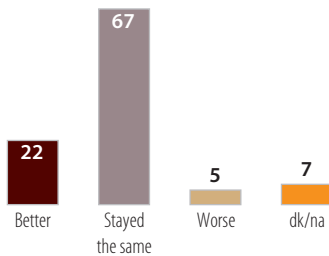
- **Perception of progress.** Three in ten (31%) attribute their improved impressions to improvements in the economic, social or educational circumstances of Aboriginal peoples.
- **Personal relationships.** A personal relationship with an Aboriginal person has contributed to better impressions for a quarter (24%) of this group.

Fewer associate their more positive impressions with growth in their own personal maturity or open-mindedness (9%); a better general understanding of Aboriginal culture or issues (8%); a more visible presence in the community or media (8%); their perception that Aboriginal peoples are more respected among citizens and the government (7%); or learning more about Aboriginal cultures through educational courses (4%).

REASONS FOR WORSENING IMPRESSIONS. Alcoholism and substance abuse, crime, asking for hand-outs, and not taking advantage of opportunities for betterment were given as reasons why impressions of Aboriginal peoples have gotten worse. However, the sample size of non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver who report their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have worsened (n=17) 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 Vancouver are divided on whether Aboriginal peoples are just like other ethnic or cultural groups in Canada, or have unique rights and privileges as the country's first inhabitants. Belief in the unique rights and privileges of Aboriginal peoples is more common here than in most UAPS cities except Montreal and Toronto.

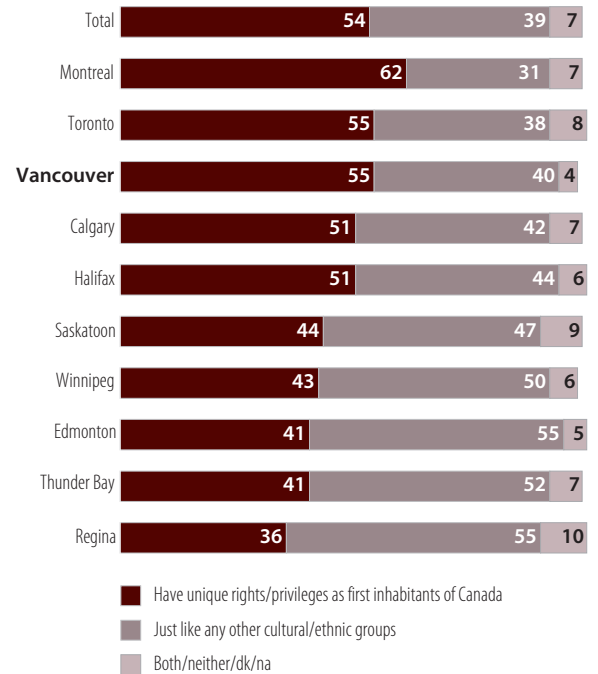
Non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver are divided in their perceptions of whether Aboriginal people hold a distinct status, or whether they are just the same as other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada.

A slight majority (55%) of non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver believe Aboriginal peoples have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada, whereas four in ten (40%) feel Aboriginal peoples are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada's multicultural society (2% say they are both equally or neither, while 2% do not have an opinion).

Compared to non-Aboriginal people in other UAPS cities, those in Vancouver are among the most likely to believe Aboriginal peoples have unique rights and privileges, similar to residents of Toronto (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.

Unique rights and privileges, or just like other groups?

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



9.3 The big picture: explaining views of Aboriginal peoples among non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver

Nearly half of non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver are “Cultural Romantics;” individuals with fairly high cultural and media exposure to Aboriginal peoples, but little personal contact.

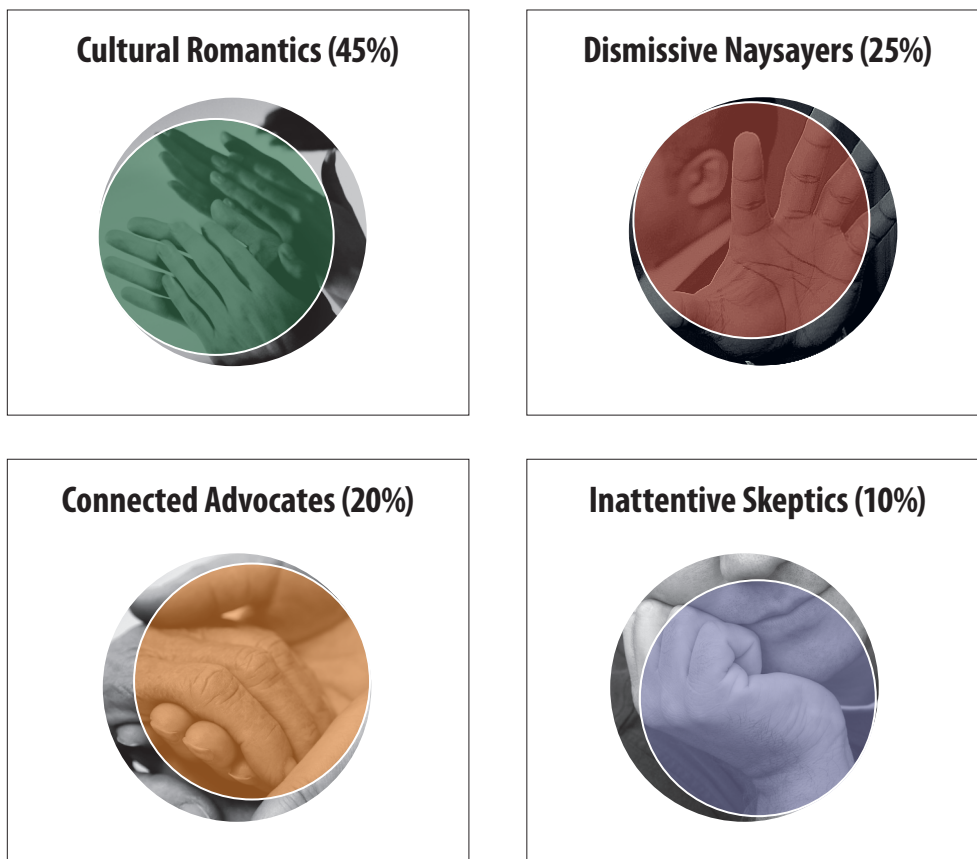
The overall picture of what is going on among Vancouver residents in terms of their attitudes toward Aboriginal peoples can be somewhat elusive when there are so many individual questions and answers to consider. In order to achieve this overall picture, our examination of the survey results included 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* reveals four distinct *world views* of Aboriginal people among non-Aboriginal urban Canadians:

- **Dismissive Naysayers.** They tend to view Aboriginal peoples and communities negatively (i.e., unfairly entitled and isolated from Canadian society).
- **Inattentive Skeptics.** Uninformed and unaware, they typically believe Aboriginal peoples are just the same as 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 with Aboriginal peoples, and a strong belief that Aboriginal peoples often experience discrimination.

The world views of Vancouver residents are consistent with the average for non-Aboriginal Canadians overall. Vancouverites are most likely to be Cultural Romantics (45%), although this falls short of the proportions in Halifax (57%) and Toronto (55%). The next two largest groups in Vancouver are Dismissive Naysayers (25%) and Connected Advocates (20%). Inattentive Skeptics represent only a small proportion (10%) of non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver.



9.4 Awareness and perceptions of an Aboriginal community in Vancouver

Awareness of an Aboriginal community in Vancouver

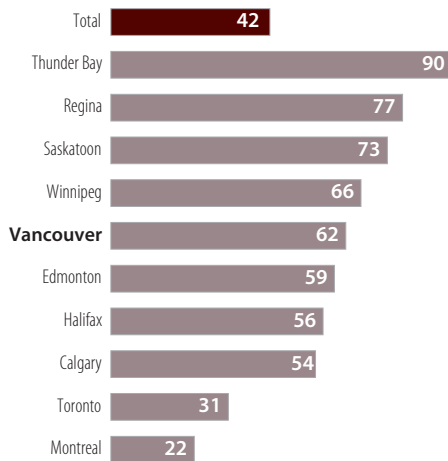
Almost all non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver know there are Aboriginal peoples living in the city, and many are also aware of the existence of an Aboriginal community, although to a lesser extent than in cities with a large relative Aboriginal population.

The UAPS non-Aboriginal survey asked non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver how aware they are of Aboriginal people and communities. Awareness of Aboriginal people in the city is almost universal, and many are also aware of an Aboriginal community (i.e., a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community) in their midst. Nine in ten (90%) Vancouver residents know there are Aboriginal peoples living in their city, a level of awareness consistent with most other UAPS cities; by comparison, such awareness is lower in Montreal (54%) and Toronto (73%).

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.



A majority (62%) of Vancouver residents are also aware of an Aboriginal community in their city. This is noticeably higher than the levels of awareness among residents of Toronto (31%) and Montreal (22%), but falls short of the awareness of an Aboriginal community in Thunder Bay (90%), Regina (77%) and Saskatoon (73%).

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 those 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. 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 (in Vancouver, 38% are aware of any Aboriginal organization in their city).

Positive or negative presence

Non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver largely believe the presence of Aboriginal peoples has a positive or neutral impact on the city.

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

Half (49%) of non-Aboriginal residents aware of Aboriginal people or communities in Vancouver believe this is a neutral presence in their city, while two in five (41%) think it is positive. Only eight percent view the presence of Aboriginal peoples or communities as negative for the city; this point of view is higher in the Prairie cities and Thunder Bay than elsewhere in Canada.

Contributions and challenges

Vancouver residents who view Aboriginal people and communities in their city positively typically believe they contribute to Vancouver's artistic and cultural diversity.

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

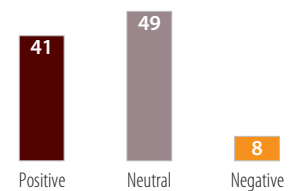
- **Enrich urban art and culture.** One of three (35%) believe Aboriginal people and communities make great contributions to Vancouver's artistic and cultural life.
- **Add cultural diversity.** One in four (24%) believe Aboriginal people and communities contribute different perspectives and add to the general cultural mosaic of Vancouver.
- **Impact of Aboriginal organizations.** One in ten (12%) identified the work of Aboriginal community outreach programs and the ability of their leaders to act as role models for others as a contribution to the city.
- **Stimulate city economies.** Vancouver residents also note the economic contributions Aboriginal people and communities make to the city as employees and employers of local businesses (11%), and by paying taxes (6%), although not to the same extent as do residents of Saskatoon, Regina, Calgary and Winnipeg.

As well, one in ten (8%) say that Aboriginal peoples make positive contributions to the city through environmental activism, which is a more common viewpoint in Vancouver and Calgary than in other UAPS cities. An additional eight percent say Aboriginal peoples are citizens that contribute to society the same as everyone else and eight percent say they are friendly, good neighbours.

REASONS FOR NEGATIVE VIEWS. The subsample of Vancouver residents who believe the presence of Aboriginal peoples is negative for the city (n=18) is too small for meaningful conclusions. However, the findings suggest there is no single reason for negative views, with these assessments associated with a range of perceptions such as substance abuse, strain placed on social programs, crime and increased poverty.

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 Vancouver.

Contact with Aboriginal people

The majority of non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver have at least occasional contact with Aboriginal people.

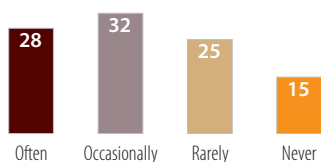
A majority of non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver are in contact with Aboriginal peoples in their daily lives, although not to the same extent as those in the Prairie cities and Thunder Bay.

Three in ten (28%) Vancouver residents say they often encounter Aboriginal people and another three in ten (32%) do so occasionally. Four in ten rarely (25%) or never (15%) have contact with Aboriginal peoples.

Not surprisingly, NA urban Canadians in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations (i.e., Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon and Thunder Bay) are the most likely to regularly encounter Aboriginal people, while this is least common in Toronto and Montreal.

Contact with Aboriginal people

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



Aboriginal friends, neighbours and co-workers

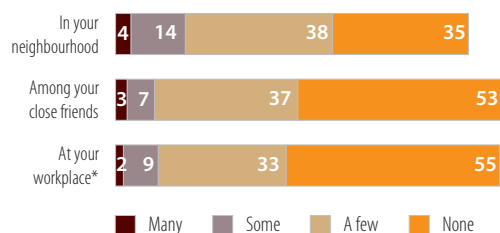
Few Vancouver residents have Aboriginal peoples as neighbours, co-workers or close friends, which is understandably more common in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations.

Aside from casual contact, how many Vancouver residents know Aboriginal people, either as close friends, neighbours or co-workers? Among Vancouver residents who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in the city, minorities know many or some Aboriginal people as neighbours (18%), as co-workers (11% of those who are currently employed) or close friends (10%). In each case, the remainder say they know only a few or no Aboriginal people in those ways.

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, such as Regina, Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Thunder Bay.

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

When asked if they have any interest in having more Aboriginal friends, the majority (57%) of Vancouver residents who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in the city say they are. Relatively few (5%) say they are not interested, the lowest of UAPS cities, while one in three say “it depends” (34%). The level of interest in having more Aboriginal friends in Vancouver is higher than in the Prairie cities and Thunder Bay, but falls short of interest expressed in Toronto and Montreal.

9.5 Perceived barriers facing Aboriginal people

Most important issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada and in cities

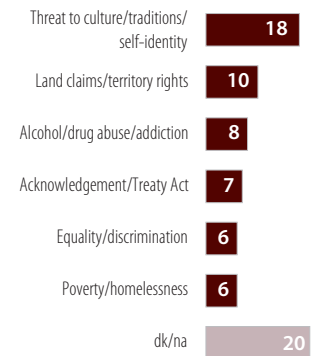
Vancouver residents identify a range of challenges facing the Aboriginal population today, both generally and in cities, the most common being threats to culture and self-identity.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE. When non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver are 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 in their views. The problem most frequently mentioned as facing Aboriginal peoples is threats to culture and self-identity (18%), and more so than in other UAPS cities. Other problems frequently identified as facing Aboriginal peoples include land claims (10%), substance abuse and addiction (8%), issues of acknowledgement and recognition (7%), poverty and homelessness (6%), and discrimination (6%). A wide range of other potential problems are mentioned, but none by more than four percent (each) of Vancouver residents. One in five (20%) are unable to identify any issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada today.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN CITIES. When asked about the issues facing Aboriginal people living in Canadian cities specifically, non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver do not have any better sense of the most important (asked unprompted, without offering response choices). They are again most likely to identify threats to culture and self-identity (14%), followed by substance abuse and addiction (10%), and poverty and homelessness (10%), as the leading concerns for the urban Aboriginal population. Vancouver residents also perceive urban Aboriginal people to be dealing with unemployment (8%), discrimination (8%), social isolation (5%) and lack of education (3%). A number of other issues are mentioned, but none by more than two percent each, while one in three (33%) cannot identify any issues facing Aboriginal people in Canadian cities today.

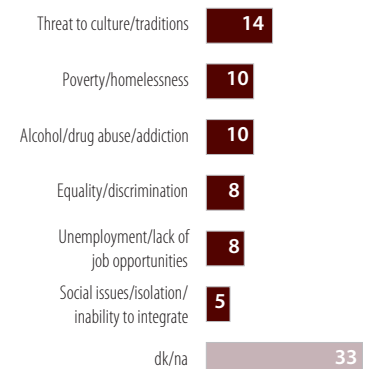
Most important issue in Canada (top mentions)

In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Aboriginal people in Canada today?



Most important issue in cities (top mentions)

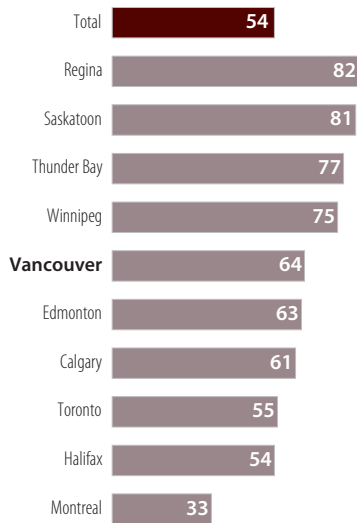
And in your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Aboriginal people living in cities across Canada today?



Indian residential schools

The majority of Vancouver residents are aware of Indian residential schools. They are among the most likely to think that the challenges faced by Aboriginal communities today are, at least to some extent, the result of this experience.

Aware of Indian residential schools
Have you read or heard anything about Indian residential schools?



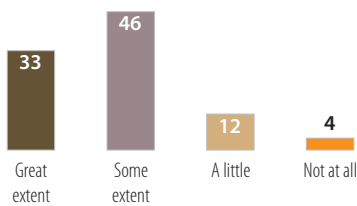
The survey examined awareness of Indian residential schools among non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver, and their views about the consequences this experience has had for Aboriginal people.

AWARENESS. About two-thirds (64%) of non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver report they have read or heard something about Indian residential schools. This level of awareness is higher than in Toronto and Montreal, but much lower than areas with a greater proportion of Aboriginal peoples, such as Regina, Saskatoon and Thunder Bay. Interestingly, despite the relatively high level of awareness, no one in Vancouver identifies residential schools as the most important issue facing Aboriginal people generally, or facing Aboriginal people living in cities.

IMPACT. Residents of Vancouver who are aware of residential schools also recognize that these institutions have had a significant impact on Aboriginal peoples. Of those who are aware of residential schools, eight in ten think that the challenges faced by Aboriginal communities today are, to a great extent (33%) or to some extent (46%), the result of Aboriginal peoples' experiences in residential schools. Only a minority see little (12%) or no (4%) relationship between the two. Non-Aboriginal Vancouverites are among the most likely of the UAPS participants to say that current challenges facing Aboriginal peoples are, at least to some extent the result of residential schools (together with Montrealers).

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

Perceptions of discrimination

The large majority of non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver think Aboriginal people experience discrimination at least some of the time and at least as much as other groups in Canadian society.

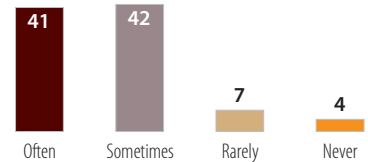
There is widespread recognition among non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver that Aboriginal peoples are the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today. Just over eight in ten Vancouver residents believe Aboriginal peoples often (41%) or sometimes (42%) face discrimination, while only 11 percent believe they rarely (7%) or never (4%) do. These views are consistent with the average for non-Aboriginal UAPS participants in general.

Majorities of non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver 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. In fact, four in ten (39%) Vancouver residents think Aboriginal people endure *more* discrimination than do Jews, while three in ten each think they are subject to more discrimination than Chinese (33%) and Blacks (31%). Two in ten each think Aboriginal people endure more discrimination than groups such as Pakistanis or East Indians (21%), and Muslims (18%).

Perceptions that Aboriginal people face more discrimination relative to Blacks are more common among non-Aboriginal people in western cities (including Vancouver) than in eastern ones. Otherwise, perceptions of the discrimination Aboriginal peoples are faced with relative to the other cultural groups are similar in Vancouver to the average of UAPS cities.

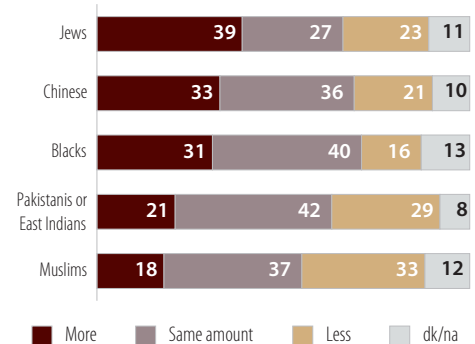
Discrimination

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



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?

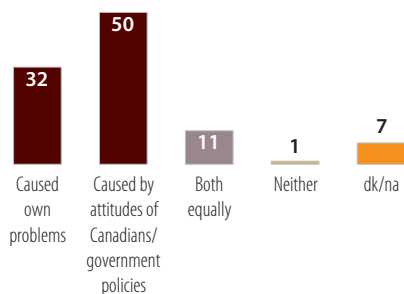


Main source of problems facing Aboriginal peoples

The balance of opinion in Vancouver is that the problems faced by Aboriginal peoples have largely been caused by the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of government rather than by Aboriginal peoples themselves.

Responsibility for problems

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



Non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver tend to believe that many of the problems facing Aboriginal people are largely due to external factors over which they have no control. Half (50%) of non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver attribute the problems faced by Aboriginal peoples to the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of governments, compared to three in ten (32%) who say these are problems that Aboriginal people have brought upon themselves. One in ten (11%) say both parties are responsible, while seven percent offer no opinion.

These views are closer to those expressed in Thunder Bay, Calgary and the cities east of Winnipeg than to those in the Prairie cities of Edmonton, Saskatoon and Winnipeg (where opinion is divided between the two viewpoints).

9.6 Relations with Aboriginal people and the future

Perceptions of current relations

Non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver are among the most optimistic about the current state of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

When Vancouver residents are asked about the state of current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, they are more likely to be optimistic than pessimistic. A slight majority (56%) believe current relations are somewhat positive, while one in three (33%) describe them as somewhat negative; few have extreme perceptions of current relations (1% say they are very positive, and 5% say very negative.)

The view that current relations are positive is most pronounced in Vancouver (57%) and Halifax (56%), followed by Toronto (51%). In contrast, non-Aboriginal residents of Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Regina and Thunder Bay are more pessimistic than optimistic about their relationship with Aboriginal people. Montrealers and residents of Saskatoon are more evenly divided between the two viewpoints.

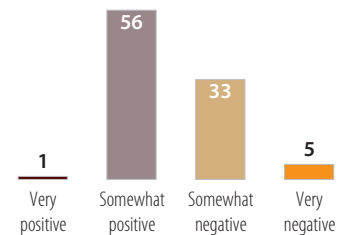
Perceptions of change

Vancouver's non-Aboriginal residents are divided about whether relations with Aboriginal peoples are improving or staying the same. The view that relations are getting better is more prominent here than in most other cities except Regina and Saskatoon.

Residents of Vancouver have mixed views about how the Aboriginal-non-Aboriginal relationship is changing over time, but are more likely to see relations getting better than worse. Half (48%) say relations between the two groups are staying the same, while four in ten (41%) say they are improving, only a small minority (7%) believe they are deteriorating. Vancouver residents are among the most optimistic about how relations are evolving, together with those living in Regina and Saskatoon.

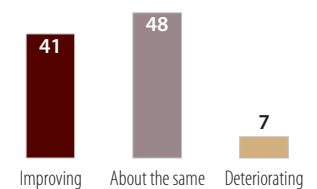
Current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people

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?

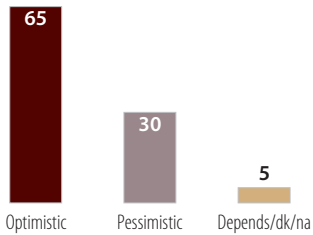


Future quality of life for Aboriginal peoples

The majority of non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver are optimistic that Aboriginal peoples' quality of life will approach that of the rest of the population's in the next generation, similar to views in other cities.

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?

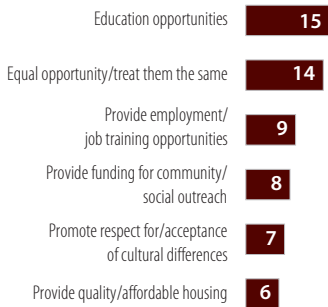


Looking to the future, what do Vancouver residents foresee for the quality of life of Aboriginal peoples in their city? Residents of Vancouver are largely optimistic that Aboriginal peoples' quality of life in the city will improve to the same level as that of non-Aboriginal people in the next generation. Two-thirds (65%) of non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver are optimistic about such progress, compared to three in ten (30%) who are pessimistic. Notably, the degree of optimism about Aboriginal peoples' future quality of life is remarkably similar in all UAPS cities, including Vancouver.

How do Vancouver residents think their city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal peoples? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), non-Aboriginal people in Vancouver suggest a range of approaches, but most commonly cite the creation of greater educational opportunities (15%), and fair and/or equal treatment or opportunity for Aboriginal peoples (14%). Residents also suggest providing employment and job training opportunities (9%), providing funding for community and social outreach (8%), promoting acceptance and respect of cultural differences (7%), providing quality affordable housing (6%), providing substance abuse programs (5%), and creating public awareness of the current situation for Aboriginal communities and culture (5%).

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

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



A wide range of other approaches are mentioned, but none by more than four percent each of the population. Three in ten (29%) of Vancouver's non-Aboriginal residents have no suggestions for ways in which their city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal peoples, while four percent say they feel the city is doing everything it possibly can.