



EAGLE'S EYE VIEW

An environmental scan of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg



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Introduction

In December 2001, members of the United Way of Winnipeg Board of Trustees and members of the Aboriginal community joined together to form an Aboriginal Task Group to explore whether there might be interest and value in a community involvement initiative within the Aboriginal community similar to the Journey Forward process that United Way had previously used to engage all Winnipeggers.

Members of the Aboriginal Task Group shared common values and developed the following principles that have guided its work and decisions: honesty, respect, transparency, openness, patience, and all-inclusiveness. In all its work, the task group nurtured an environment of trust that emphasized partnership and sharing in a balanced and innovative manner.

Members of the Aboriginal Task Group

Judith Bartlett, chair
Irene Hamilton
Rick Joyal
Crystal Laborero
Rhonda McCorriston
Stanley McKay
Fred Shore
Murray Sinclair
Fausto Yadao

After reviewing and learning from the Journey Forward process and reflecting on their own knowledge and experience, the task group members decided their first step would be to facilitate development of a comprehensive environmental scan or “eagle’s eye view” of the Aboriginal community of Winnipeg. The scan would provide a holistic, comprehensive, and integrated body of information on the urban Aboriginal community. No such tool existed and the task group believed that the process of developing it, as well as the scan itself, could provide the following benefits:

- build knowledge, understanding, trust, connections and relationships within and between the Aboriginal community, United Way and the broader community, and
- inform and influence policy in the public, private, and voluntary sectors.





This scan is neither a study nor a commentary on the Aboriginal community. Instead, it includes information from a number of existing resources, from interviews and focus groups, and presents this information without analysis using a culturally grounded framework called the Aboriginal Life Promotion Framework[®] (see appendix for broader description).

Over the past two years, the following people have worked as a team to develop the scan and realize the task group's vision:

- Judith Bartlett – Métis; past chair, United Way Board of Trustees; chair, Aboriginal Task Group
- Crystal Laborero – band member, Sapotawayak Cree Nation; member, United Way Board of Trustees; member, Aboriginal Task Group
- Pat Harper – director, Strategic Management Services, United Way of Winnipeg
- Sharon Redsky – band member, Shoal Lake 40 First Nation; project manager, *Eagle's Eye View*, United Way of Winnipeg. Sharon came to United Way through Environment Canada's Interchange Program.
- Natasha Knautz – Métis, *Eagle's Eye View* summer research intern 2003, Masters of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba. United Way of Winnipeg and the Centre for Aboriginal Health Research, Department of Community Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, University of Manitoba jointly funded Natasha's position.
- Destiny Seymour – First Nation, summer research assistant 2002, University of Manitoba. United Way of Winnipeg and the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development jointly funded Destiny's position.

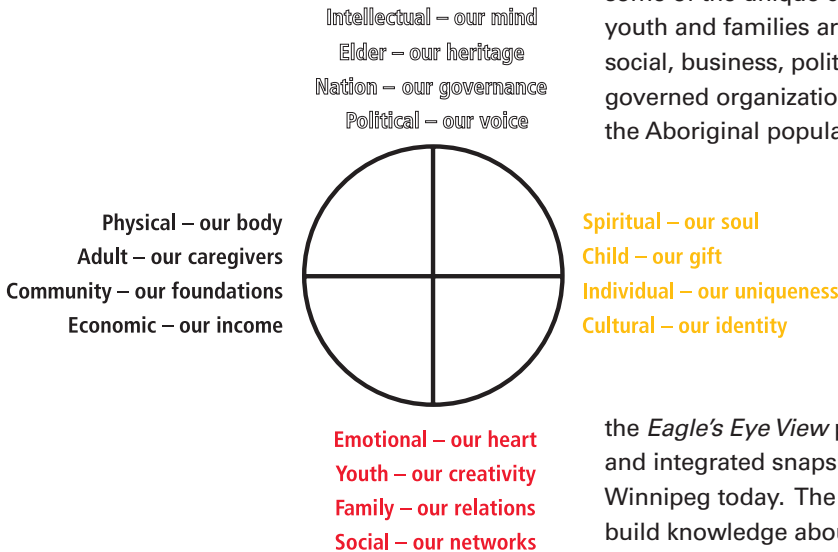
Executive Summary

Winnipeg is home to the largest urban Aboriginal population in Canada. The Aboriginal population includes First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

According to Census data, 55,755 Aboriginal people lived in Winnipeg in 2001, comprising 8% of the city's population. The Aboriginal population is the fastest growing segment of Winnipeg's population, projected to comprise 11% of the population in 2006 and 13% of the population over the next decade.

These and other population data provide a partial snapshot of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. But who are the Aboriginal peoples in Winnipeg today? What languages do Aboriginal peoples speak, what is

happening to these languages and to what effect? What are some of the unique challenges and opportunities Aboriginal youth and families are experiencing? What cultural, health, social, business, political, spiritual and other Aboriginal led and governed organizations are there and how are they impacting the Aboriginal population? What are the many changes, accomplishments and successes Aboriginal people in Winnipeg are experiencing?



These are just some of the many questions the *Eagle's Eye View* aims to answer. Developed by the Aboriginal Task Group at United Way of Winnipeg,

the *Eagle's Eye View* provides a first-of-its-kind, comprehensive, and integrated snapshot of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg today. The task group created the *Eagle's Eye View* to build knowledge about and understanding of the realities and significance of Aboriginal peoples in our city.

The information in the *Eagle's Eye View* is presented using the holistic, culturally-based Aboriginal Life Promotion Framework[®], which is a simple yet organized approach to thinking about the many complexities of life. The Framework is grounded in an Aboriginal understanding of connectedness or interdependence of all elements of living. The diagram opposite illustrates the Framework and the major content areas in the document.

Eagle's Eye View includes facts about the Aboriginal community today as well as some of the challenges it is experiencing, and some of its accomplishments and successes in addressing these challenges.

These facts, challenges, and accomplishments include the following:

- A 16.7% growth in the Aboriginal population between 1996 and 2001 accounted for Winnipeg's net population growth in that time period.
- The median age of the Aboriginal population in 2001 was 24.7 years compared to 37.3 years for the non-Aboriginal population.
- In 2001, more than 30% of Winnipeg's Aboriginal population were children between the ages of 0-14 years.
- The population of Aboriginal seniors 65 years and over grew 40% between 1996 and 2001 while the population of non-Aboriginal seniors grew 10%.

- By 2015 the percentage of Aboriginal people in the 65 years and over age group is expected to double to 7% of the Aboriginal population.
- Projected population increases indicate that at least one in five and perhaps one in three labour market entrants over the next fifteen to twenty years in Manitoba will be of Aboriginal descent.
- In 2001, 43.5 % of all Aboriginal households were single parent households, while 14.9% of households that were not Aboriginal were single parent households.
- The Aboriginal community has a higher incidence of low income, higher unemployment rates, lower labour force participation rates and lower educational levels than the non-Aboriginal population.
- Labour force participation rates, employment rates and education levels of Aboriginal people all increased between 1996 and 2001, and they increased at a rate higher than the rates for those who are not Aboriginal people.
- The incidence of low income amongst Aboriginal people decreased between 1996 and 2001, and decreased at a rate greater than the rate amongst people who are not Aboriginal.
- The number of self-employed Aboriginal people in Winnipeg increased 24.9% between 1996 and 2001 while the number of self-employed people who were not Aboriginal declined by 6.9%.
- Aboriginal people own or operate over 1,000 businesses in Manitoba. Of these, 108 businesses that participated in a recent survey indicated that their average number of years in business is 13.5 years.
- Aboriginal adults 25-44 years of age were twice as likely to be attending school full time in 2001 as adults who were not Aboriginal.
- Aboriginal people live in all parts of Winnipeg and participate in all walks of life including business, the judiciary, education, entertainment, government and the professions.
- An increasing number of Aboriginally owned and driven cultural, economic, political, spiritual and social organizations in Winnipeg offer a range of culturally sensitive and relevant services.

The information in this document has been gathered from a number of existing information sources, including written documents, Statistics Canada data, interviews and discussion groups with Aboriginal people. All information is referenced within and at the end of the document.

The information in the *Eagle's Eye View* is presented to you without analysis or interpretation. But you may want to ask yourself: What does the information mean to me? How is it relevant to me? How is it relevant to my family, my neighbourhood, my city? Does it raise other questions that I would like to see answered?

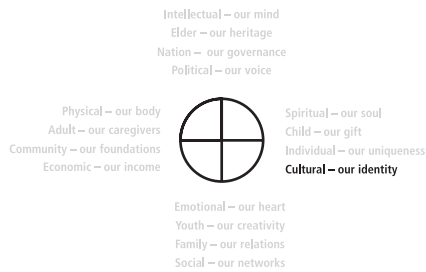
The Aboriginal Task Group hopes this holistic *Eagle's Eye View* of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg will stimulate and ground important discussion within the Aboriginal community as well as amongst other individuals and groups that work with Aboriginal Winnipeggers.

We welcome your impressions of the document and any questions or comments you might have. Please feel free to connect with us at 477-5360.

Note: Each element of living in this *Eagle's Eye View* scan is prefaced with a brief introduction that attempts to set a general context for the information contained in the section's. We developed only a generic meaning for the elements in order to help determine the best placement for information pieces. Because of the way source information has been documented, the fit may at times not be the best. Any mismatch between a section general context statement and the content should be attributed to this writer. As well, we hope we have not placed the name of any organization incorrectly under particular sections of the document. If we have missed any Aboriginal organizations, this was not by intention.

SECTION 1

Cultural, Social, Economic & Political



Cultural – our identity

Culture is intricately related to our identity as a people or peoples and to the way we define ourselves through language, culture, and cultural organizations. The Aboriginal community in Winnipeg includes many different cultures and cultural practices; for example, First Nation peoples includes Cree, Ojibway, Dakota, Salteaux, Sioux, Dene, and others, while Métis includes those with Indian, Francophone and Scottish origins.

This section of the scan looks at Aboriginal languages and highlights some of the many Aboriginal cultural organizations in Winnipeg.

I. ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples defined language as “the principal instrument by which culture is transmitted from one generation to another, by which members of a culture communicate meaning and make sense of their shared experience.”¹

The 2001 Census found that 6,370 Aboriginal people in Winnipeg had “knowledge of Aboriginal language(s).” This group represents 11.4% of the total Aboriginal identity population in 2001. Of this population, 8.9% first learned and still understood an Aboriginal language(s), and 6.4% were actively speaking an Aboriginal language in their home.²

Fifty-four per cent of the adults surveyed for Statistics Canada’s 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, said that keeping, learning or re-learning an Aboriginal language is very or somewhat important while 41% said it is not very important or not important.³

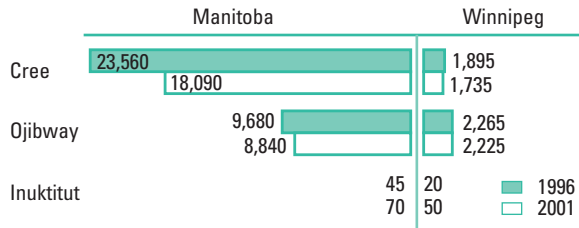
Based on 1996 Census data, Bruce Hallett author of the *Aboriginal People in Manitoba 2000* report wrote that “although spoken most by elders and least by the young, use of the Aboriginal languages continues to be prevalent. However, mother

tongue... and home language... vary among the Aboriginal groups and across the regions of Manitoba.”⁴ The report also stated that in 1996, 550 Winnipeggers spoke Cree in their homes making this the most commonly used Aboriginal language. Ojibway was the next most commonly used language and was spoken by 375 people.⁵

“Without the language, we are warm bodies without a spirit.”

Elder, Mary Lou Fox, of the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation in Sudbury, Ontario, quoted in the 1996 Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

ABORIGINAL IDENTITY, BY MOTHER TONGUE FOR MANITOBA AND WINNIPEG



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 1996 & 2001

Between 1996 and 2001, the number of Aboriginal Winnipeggers speaking Cree and Ojibway at home declined to 230 and 190 respectively.⁶

As shown in the chart below, both the 1996 and 2001 Censuses found English to be the mother tongue for more than 80% of Manitoba's Métis population and the home language for more than 90%. French was the second most reported mother tongue for Métis at 11% in both 1996 and 2001.

In 1996, 4% of Manitoba Métis reported Cree or Ojibway as their mother tongue; this dropped to 2.4% in 2001. In 1996, "very few Métis reported Michif as either mother tongue or home language. However, some language specialists maintain that Métis people who indicate use of French or Cree are actually speaking Michif variants or dialects."⁷

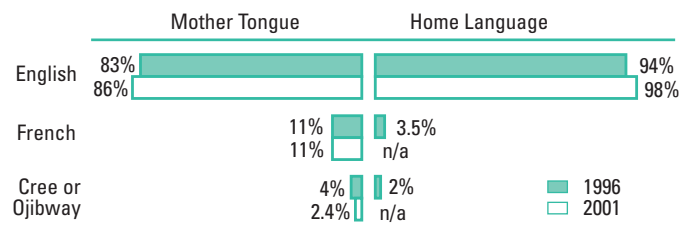
The authors of an article titled "Aboriginal Languages in Canada's Urban Area: Characteristics, Considerations and Implications" note that "Many of Canada's Aboriginal languages are endangered and have already suffered great losses due to the forces of modernization, discouragement in residential schools, the influence of dominant languages, and possibly the fact that many Aboriginal languages are predominantly oral."⁸ The authors also make the following observations:

(There is a) significant presence of indigenous languages within Canada's urban areas and a resilience that persists even in the face of almost overwhelming odds. Yet at the same time, the findings suggest that urban Aboriginal people continue to be confronted with considerable challenges in maintaining that presence. This is a concern that should not be ignored given the role in identity in adapting to an urban environment... In urban areas, language can play an important and tangible role for Aboriginal people in contributing to developing and maintaining a strong sense of identity^(page 110).

Although urban Aboriginal people may want to participate in the mainstream dominant society without undermining their own cultural identity, clearly there are obstacles. Isolation from family and home community, lack of culturally relevant resources and activities and the necessity to deal with non-Aboriginal institutions and agencies for programs and services create tensions and difficulties in maintaining Aboriginal identity in general, and even more so for Aboriginal language^(page 110).

The transmission of a language from one generation to the next, as well as population size, are both important considerations in the viability of a language. Only three Aboriginal languages (Cree, Inuktitut and Ojibway) have sufficiently large population bases for long-term language survival... A language no longer spoken at home cannot be handed down as a mother tongue to the next generation^(page 95).

MOTHER TONGUE AND HOME LANGUAGE FOR MANITOBA METIS – 1996 AND 2001



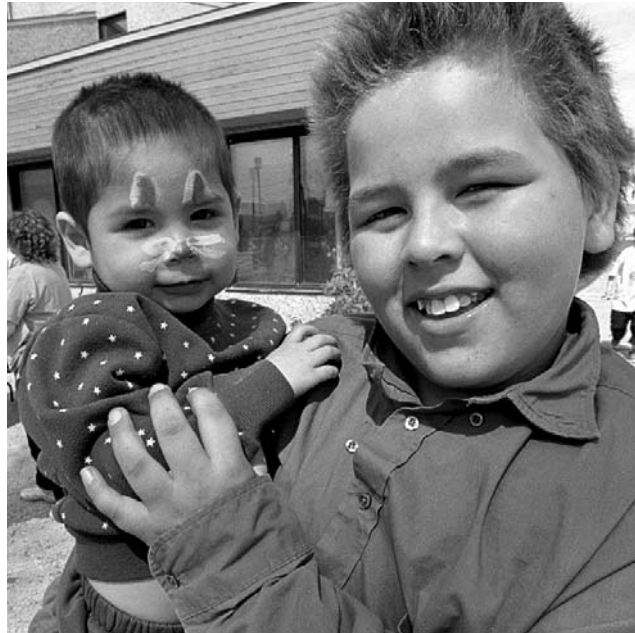
Sources: 1996 data: Bruce Hallett, *Aboriginal People in Manitoba 2000*. 2001 data: Community Data Network, *Aboriginal Target Group Profile*. Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2001

In general, the population with an Aboriginal mother tongue is older than the overall Aboriginal population – seniors are much more likely to have an Aboriginal mother tongue than younger generations...although younger generations may not be learning their indigenous language as a mother tongue, it appears they are at least learning it as a second language^(page 98).

In another article, Verna Kirkness says that “At the current rate of decline, only four of our original 60 Aboriginal languages in Canada have a reasonable chance of surviving the next century. Cree, Ojibway, Inuktitut, and Dakota are the languages predicted to survive.”⁹

In its final report, The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples concluded that, “For Aboriginal people, the threat that their languages could disappear is more than the prospect that they will have to acquire new instruments for communicating their daily needs and building a sense of community. It is a threat that their distinctive world view, the wisdom of their ancestors and their ways of being human could be lost as well. And, as they point out, if the languages of this continent are lost, there is nowhere else they can be heard again.”¹⁰

In response to these threats to Aboriginal language and culture, in December 2002, Minister of Canadian Heritage Sheila Copps announced \$172.5 million in federal funding to establish and operate a new Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Centre as part of the Government of Canada’s 2002 Throne Speech commitment to “work with Aboriginal people to preserve and enhance Aboriginal languages and cultures.”¹¹



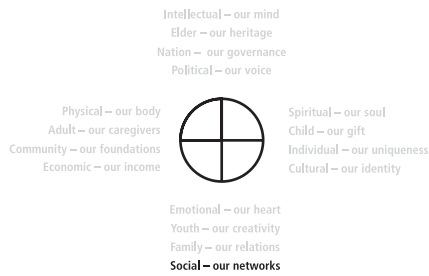
“For Aboriginal people, the threat that their languages could disappear is more than the prospect that they will have to acquire new instruments for communicating their daily needs and building a sense of community. It is a threat that their distinctive world view, the wisdom of their ancestors and their ways of being human could be lost as well.”

Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Perspectives and Realities, Volume 3, Chapter 6, Section 2.1

II. CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

The following is a brief overview of some Aboriginal cultural organizations in Winnipeg.

- **Aboriginal Languages of Manitoba Inc.** was formerly known as the Manitoba Association for Native Languages Inc., which was established in 1985 to promote the retention of Manitoba's Aboriginal Languages.
- **First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres** is a national, federally incorporated, not-for-profit organization that represents seventy-six First Nations cultural education centres and cultural programs. These centres and programs serve over three hundred First Nations communities across Canada by helping to maintain, recover, and strengthen Aboriginal identity.
- **Manitoba Indian Cultural Education Centre, Inc.** is a not-for-profit, charitable organization whose goal is to promote awareness and understanding of First Nations culture to individuals and groups within Manitoba.
- **Métis Resource Centre** was incorporated in the fall of 1996 as a non-profit, charitable organization working for the preservation and restoration of Métis history, culture, and genealogy.
- **The Circle of Life Thunderbird House** is a place for spiritual recognition and fulfillment based on Aboriginal culture and values. Thunderbird House is home to North America's first urban ma-doo-doo-sung or sweat lodge and hosts a range of activities and programs including ceremonies, teachings, workshops, seminars, weddings, and other community events. All levels of government participated in this initiative through the Winnipeg Development Agreement (WDA). Construction of the Circle of Life Thunderbird House began in the summer of 1999 and was completed in February 2000; the official launch occurred in March 2002.



Social – our networks

Social networks exist within the formal organizations and informal associations in which we come together to express our beliefs and orientations and to meet our common needs. This section presents information about the accomplishments, effective practices and challenges of Aboriginal-led organizations and highlights social organizations and activities.

I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CHALLENGES AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICES OF ABORIGINAL-LED ORGANIZATIONS

The urban Aboriginal community has representation in all walks of life including business, the judiciary, entertainment, education, government, social services, and the professions. For many Aboriginal people, the progression through education to employment is no different than it is for non-Aboriginal people. For many others though, this progression is more difficult.

As highlighted in a later section on economics, the Aboriginal community has higher levels of poverty than the rest of society. “There are many reasons for this, including lower labour force participation rates and higher unemployment rates, in turn the result of lower educational levels, greater incidence of single parent families, poor health and living conditions, social instability, and the barriers of institutionalized racism.”¹²

The urban Aboriginal community has representation in all walks of life including business, the judiciary, entertainment, education, government, social services, and the professions.

Despite these challenges, in 1998 the Manitoba Round Table on Environment & Economy noted that “Aboriginal people in Winnipeg represent a vibrant, growing community with much to offer.”¹³ In its report titled *Towards a Strategy for Aboriginal People Living in Winnipeg*, the Round Table made the following comments about the Aboriginal community’s aspirations and potential.

Aboriginal people in Winnipeg want the same recognition, respect, trust and understanding as other cultural groups in the city. Aboriginal people also wish to maintain the entitlement of being Aboriginal that comes from the constitutional responsibilities of all governments and the historical, financial, treaty and fiduciary responsibilities of the Federal Government.

The Winnipeg Aboriginal community is capable of delivering programs for themselves through partnering with governments and working with the private sector, other community groups and organizations. There is a strong desire by the grassroots community to achieve the full human potential of the diverse Aboriginal population. The community is motivated to evolve their vision and find ways to empower individuals and families to increase the control and influence over issues, programs and decisions that affect their lives and their ability to determine their own destinies.¹⁴

II. SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

Many Winnipeg organizations offer support in the areas of human and social development, as well as treatment services for Aboriginal people. The following is a brief overview of some of these social organizations.

- **Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre (AHWC)** is located at the Aboriginal Centre in Winnipeg and provides a range of primary health services that empower Aboriginal people to enhance their lifestyles through health and wellness programs that blend traditional and contemporary practices.
- **Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development (CAHRD)** is a non-profit, registered charity that provides education, training and employment services to the Aboriginal people of Winnipeg.
- **Indian and Métis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg** works to meet the needs of the Aboriginal community by encouraging cultural activities, providing recreational services, and conducting advocacy on behalf of individuals and groups that need support.
- **Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Inc.** was established in 1984 and operates as a community resource centre that provides culturally relevant preventive and supportive programs and services for Aboriginal families.
- **Mother Of Red Nations, Women's Council of Manitoba, Inc.** has a mission to promote, protect and support the spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental well-being of all Aboriginal women and children in Manitoba. The organization also provides voice, representation and advocacy for Aboriginal women through spiritual, cultural, social, economic, political, educational, and recreational development.
- **Owiisookaage(g) Inc.** was incorporated in 2000 as a non-profit, independent youth organization. The name Owiisookaage(g) translates from Ojibway as "those who work closely together to help others." The organization won the 2002 Mayor's Volunteer Service Award and has several programs including Path to Aboriginal Youth Empowerment, which "provides life skills training, networking, and training to enable Aboriginal youth to work in the community and counter the numerous challenges faced by Aboriginal youth, such as poverty, unemployment and negative peer pressure."¹⁵



III. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Whereas the organizations listed above provide social services, the following events, activities, and venues are some of the many that provide opportunities for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Winnipeggers to interact socially.

- **Annual Traditional Graduation Pow-Wow** is an annual event held at the University of Manitoba to honour Aboriginal graduates from both the University of Manitoba and University of Winnipeg. In addition to being a culturally relevant celebration of graduates, the Pow-Wow also provides an opportunity for members of the university and broader communities to learn about Aboriginal culture.
- **Keeping the Fires Burning** is an annual dinner and awards ceremony that began in 2003. The event recognizes and honours Aboriginal women as role models, contributes to restoring the equal status of Aboriginal women in a contemporary society, and acknowledges the critical role that Aboriginal women continue to play in preserving, protecting, and transmitting First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures.
- **North American Indigenous Games** were held in Winnipeg in 2002 providing an opportunity for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to celebrate amateur sport along with the culture of North American Indigenous People. The Games were the largest gathering of its kind in Canadian history with over 7,000 First Nation, Métis and Inuit participants.
- **Oodena Celebration Circle** is located at The Forks where the Red and Assiniboine Rivers join and Aboriginal people have been meeting for 6,000 years. In the summer months, the White Buffalo Spiritual Society presents an Indigenous Tribal Village at the Oodena Celebration Circle, which Tourism Winnipeg describes as a “shallow grass-lined bowl” that has “limestone monoliths, geometrically aligned to the true North (Polaris) and the sunrise and sunset of each equinox and solstice”¹⁶.



Economic – our income

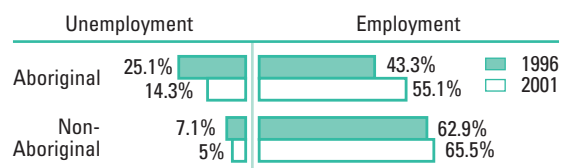
Economic aspects of our existence include those things that we, and others, do to support ourselves financially and to ensure we can meet our basic needs and personal aspirations. This section looks at employment rates, income levels, economic development, funding and sources of capital, and urban development.

I. EMPLOYMENT RATES

Although Statistics Canada’s monthly Labour Force Survey is the most commonly cited source for key labour market indicators in Canada, the Survey excludes on-reserve Status Indians and does not distinguish between Aboriginal people and other people in off-reserve settings. For this reason, the national census, which occurs every five years, provides the best snapshot of labour market characteristics for Aboriginal people.¹⁷

The 2001 Census indicates an upturn in labour participation rates among the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg. Between 1996 and 2001, the employment rate for Aboriginal people ages fifteen and older in Winnipeg rose from 43.3% to 55.1%.¹⁸

COMPARISON OF THE UNEMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT RATES OF ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL POPULATION, WINNIPEG 1996 AND 2001 AGE 15 YEARS AND OVER



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 1996 and 2001.

As shown in the chart above, during this five-year period, the unemployment and employment rates for Aboriginal people improved in absolute terms and also in comparison to the non-Aboriginal population. In an article titled “Aboriginal Economic Development in Winnipeg,” economist John Loxley noted that “A balanced view of the Aboriginal community must recognize, therefore, not just the prevalence of poverty, but also a desire to secure paid employment, both part-time and full-time.”¹⁹

II. INCOME LEVELS

The 2001 Census found that the median income for the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg fifteen years and over was \$14,594, which is 62% of the \$23,248 median income for Winnipeg’s non-Aboriginal population in this age group.

The median income for Aboriginal female Winnipeggers ages 25-44 was \$16,628. This is 70% of the \$23,500 median income for non-Aboriginal female Winnipeggers in the same age group.²⁰

The wage gap for Aboriginal men aged 25-44 years was higher than for women. The median income for Aboriginal men was \$20,894 or 64% of the \$32,533 median income for non-Aboriginal men in this age group. Wage differences are smaller for younger people (15-24) but increase as the population ages.²¹

Between 1996 and 2001, the low-income rate among Aboriginal households in the inner city fell from 80.3% to 71.3%. Similarly, the low-income rate for all Aboriginal households in Winnipeg fell from 64.7% to 51.8%. Aboriginal households accounted for 15.4% of all low-income households in Winnipeg in 2001.^{22 23}

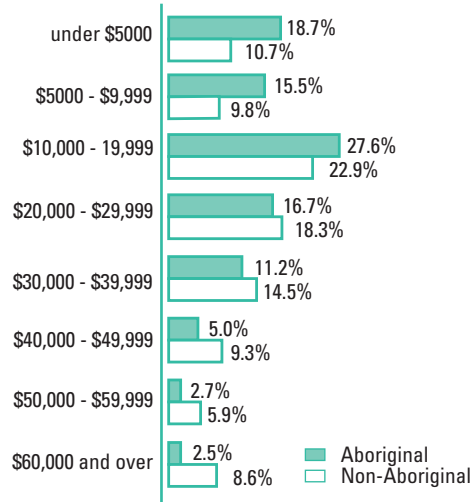
The chart below shows the change in low-income that occurred among the Métis, Status Indian and Non-Aboriginal populations in Winnipeg between 1996 and 2001. The chart above compares incomes for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal adults.

III. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A 1998 Industry Canada report states that “Within Canada, a vibrant business sector of privately owned Aboriginal businesses is emerging.”²⁴ The report provides many facts and figures to support this statement including the following:

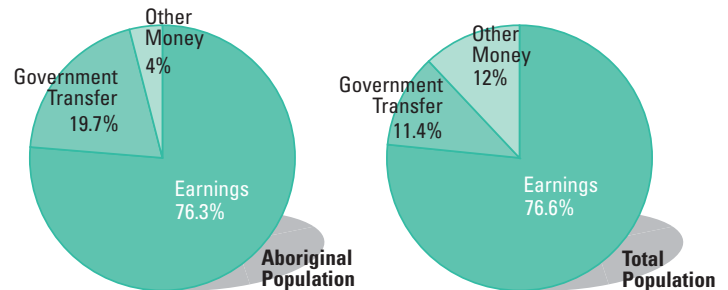
- between 1981 and 1996, the number of self-employed Aboriginal people grew by 170%, which is more than 2-1/2 times faster than the national increase in self-employment, and
- the 1996 Census found that more than 20,000 North American Indians, Métis and Inuit in Canada were self-employed.²⁵

INCOME COMPARISONS, ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL ADULTS 15 YEARS AND OVER 2001



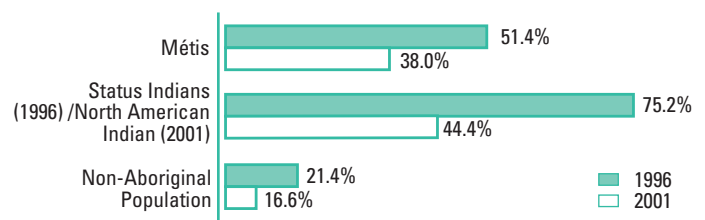
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2001, Table #97F0011XCB01047

SOURCES OF INCOME: COMPARISONS BETWEEN ABORIGINAL POPULATION AND TOTAL POPULATION 15 YEARS AND OVER, WINNIPEG, 2001



Source: Statistics Canada 2001 Census

PERCENT OF POPULATION (ALL PERSONS) LIVING BELOW THE LOW-INCOME CUT-OFF, WINNIPEG 1996 AND 2001



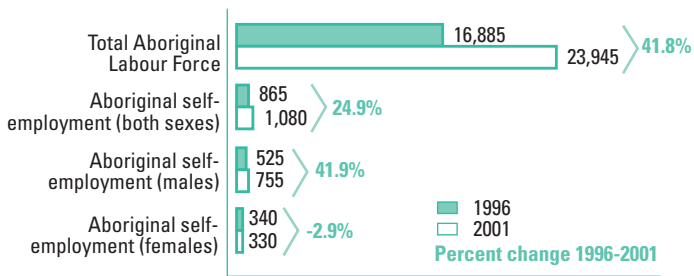
Source: 1996 data from Bruce Hallett, *Aboriginal People in Manitoba 2000*, Manitoba Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, 2002, p. 82. 2001 data from Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2001 Table # 97F0011XCB01047

Industry Canada also noted that

Aboriginal entrepreneurs are active in businesses that span the spectrum – from primary activities to manufacturing and services. They are still most prevalent in “traditional pursuits, such as fishing and trapping, farming, and the contracting trades...However, Aboriginal entrepreneurs are also venturing into “new economy” areas that are highly knowledge-based.”²⁶

In the five years following the 1996 Census, the number of self-employed Aboriginal persons in Canada increased 35% to 27,000. ²⁷

ABORIGINAL ADULTS 15 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER SELF-EMPLOYMENT BY GENDER, WINNIPEG 1996 - 2001



Source: Community Data Network (CDN), *Aboriginal Target Group Profile*, Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 1996 and 2001

producing, wholesale, agencies and distributing. Some Aboriginal businesses were established in the 1960s and many have been in operation for five or more years.²⁹

A 2003 survey conducted by Aboriginal Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs (ABLE) found that Manitoba has more than 1,000 businesses either owned or operated by First Nation, Métis or Inuit people.

Of the 112 companies that completed ABLE’s survey, thirty-seven are in the service industry and the remainder spread across fourteen different sectors as shown in the chart.³⁰

One hundred and eight companies answered ABLE’s survey question about number of years in business. Of these, the average was 13.5 years in business. One hundred and three companies answered the question about number of employees; the average was thirteen employees. Forty-two companies answered the question about annual revenues; of these, twenty-nine reported annual revenues of \$500,000 or less, ten reported revenues between \$1 million and \$5 million, and three reported revenues exceeding \$5 million.³¹

In Winnipeg, the number of self-employed Aboriginal persons increased 87.1% between 1991 and 1996. By comparison, the rate of increase among the non-Aboriginal population was 35.1% over the same period. According to 2001 data, the number of self-employed Aboriginal persons in Winnipeg increased 24.9% between 1996 and 2001. Over the same time period, the number of non-Aboriginal persons who were self-employed declined by 6.9%.²⁸

In Winnipeg, Aboriginal-owned businesses participate in a variety of sectors including the service industry, manufacturing, processing and

ABORIGINAL COMPANIES PARTICIPATING IN 2003 ABORIGINAL BUSINESS SURVEY BY SECTOR, MANITOBA, 2003

Sector	# of Businesses
Service Industry	37
Agriculture, food and beverage	15
Cultural goods and services	14
Information and communications	7
Consulting	7
Building products	5
Automotive	5
Training and education	4
Health industries	4
Environmental industries	3
Oil and gas equipment and services	3
Management	2
Electrical power equipment and services	2
Financial	2
Road construction	1
Not specified	1
Total	112

Source: Aboriginal Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs (ABLE), *Building for the Future: Aboriginal Entrepreneurs at Work*, page 4.

According to Professor John Loxley, from the University of Manitoba's Department of Economics, Aboriginal people in Winnipeg have defined two different approaches to economic development: the incubator approach and the Neechi approach. The incubator approach

consists of providing a variety of economic functions from a central location, under one roof. The idea is that each venture would benefit from being in proximity to the next, sharing space, reducing overhead costs, having access to services and to clientele. While the building would be under the ownership and control of an Aboriginal organization, the businesses housed there would tend to be privately owned.³²

In contrast, the Neechi approach,

focuses on community economic development. It was put forward by members of the Neechi Foods Co-op Ltd. (a worker owned co-operative community store) in their *Its Up To All Of Us* guide, 1993. They laid down ten community development criteria (subsequently expanded to eleven) by which to assess proposed or actual community initiatives... It argues for 'a community economic development planning process geared towards developing a convergent, self-reliant local economy based upon community economic development principles: maximising income retention, strengthening and promoting economic linkages, and maximising community employment.'³³

IV. FUNDING FOR POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

“The Aboriginal population currently represents an untapped component of the labour supply market in Canada, one whose potential contribution to the cultural diversity and economic prosperity of this country is undervalued.”

Ben Brunnen, *Achieving Potential: Towards Improved Labour Market Outcomes for Aboriginal People*, Canada West Foundation, 2003, page 22.

The following is a partial list of funders/financiers for Aboriginal organizations and initiatives.

- Aboriginal Healing Foundation
- City of Winnipeg
- Government of Canada
- Manitoba Métis Federation
- Median Credit Union
- Province of Manitoba
- The Winnipeg Foundation
- United Way of Winnipeg

V. SOURCES OF CAPITAL AND OTHER SUPPORTS FOR ABORIGINAL BUSINESS

- **Industry Canada's Aboriginal Business Canada** program provides "financial assistance, information, resource materials and referrals to other possible sources of financial or business support"³⁴ to clients who are Canadian Indian, Métis, or Inuit and to majority-owned Aboriginal organizations and development corporations.
- **Aboriginal Business Leaders & Entrepreneurs (ABLE)** is a non-profit network of Aboriginal business owners and entrepreneurs in Manitoba who are dedicated to the development of Aboriginal commerce.
- **The Department of Indian and Northern Development (DIAND)** has developed a number of initiatives to encourage and promote economic development in First Nation communities. These initiatives include the Community Economic Development Program (CEDP), which provides funding to over five hundred Community Economic Development Organizations (CEDOs). First Nations, Inuit, and Innu can use cedos to pursue a variety of economic development opportunities including loans to community members for training, business or resource development projects and holding equity in private or community enterprises.
- **Louis Riel Capital Corporation** is a Manitoba Métis-owned lending institution created to finance start-up, acquisition, and/or expansion of viable small businesses that are based in Manitoba and owned by individuals of Métis or Non-Status Indian ancestry. The Corporation's services are also available to corporations and other entities controlled or owned by Métis or Non-Status Indians.
- **Native Investment and Trade Association (NITA)** is a non-profit, non-political organization "dedicated to encouraging Aboriginal self-reliance by promoting participation in mainstream enterprise."³⁵ To achieve its goal of "creating a healthier climate between Aboriginal Canada and the business community"³⁶, NITA promotes communication, partnership and joint ventures and produces trade shows, conferences and business forums.
- **Tribal Wi-Chi-Way-Win Capital Corporation** provides financial resources to qualified member Aboriginal entrepreneurs and businesses in Manitoba. The Corporation has three objectives: 1) To provide assistance for the establishment, expansion, or diversification of self-sustaining Aboriginal businesses in Manitoba, 2) To improve the access to capital for Aboriginal businesses that have traditionally had difficulty in obtaining conventional commercial financing, and 3) To promote the orderly growth and development of the network of commercial loan corporations owned and controlled by Aboriginal people.³⁷

VI. URBAN DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES MAKE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY A PRIORITY

On January 26, 2003, the federal, provincial and civic governments signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to “negotiate a renewed Urban Development Agreement”³⁸ for the City of Winnipeg.

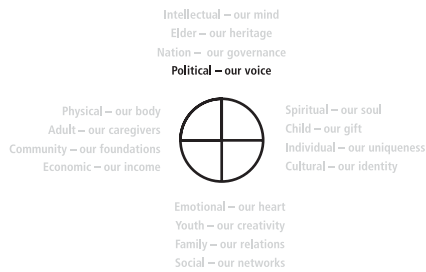
The framework underlying the MOU states that all three levels of government

agree urban renewal requires a common, long-term commitment to address Winnipeg’s economic and social issues and to make the most of the opportunities a knowledge-based economy presents. The governments also agree that, to be effective, these initiatives need to reflect a community development approach, one that welcomes input from and builds partnerships with community stakeholders.³⁹

Accordingly, the framework states that in addition to strengthening Winnipeg’s economy and improving the quality of life for all residents, the agreement will “respond to the barriers faced by Winnipeg’s Aboriginal community.”⁴⁰ One of the agreement’s four components is called Aboriginal participation and focuses on “enhancing social and economic development opportunities for Aboriginal people.”⁴¹ The other three components – building sustainable neighbourhoods, downtown renewal, and supporting innovation and technology – will also affect the Aboriginal community.

In addition to the tripartite agreement, the City of Winnipeg has its own strategy to “open the door to a new era of co-operation between the City and Winnipeg’s Aboriginal community.”⁴² The City’s urban Aboriginal strategy, titled *First Steps: Municipal Aboriginal Pathways*, was released in September 2003 and includes the following five priorities or pathways:

- Employment –The City will undertake initiatives to enhance the participation of Aboriginal people in both the civic and community workforce.
- Safety –The City will build on current public safety programs and services to promote the personal safety and security of Winnipeg’s Aboriginal community.
- Economic development –The City will develop partnerships that promote economic development projects.
- Quality of life –The City will enhance programming and services to support Aboriginal recreation and wellness activities.
- Outreach and education –The City will develop outreach and education initiatives that promote cross-cultural understanding and improve access to information about civic services.⁴³



Political – our voice

Political aspects of existence include the ways in which citizens have a voice in the overall functioning of their community. This section looks at the growth in the number of Aboriginal leaders and professionals and provides a summary of themes that emerged during a sharing circle on leadership. The section also looks at Aboriginal media organizations as another mechanism for voice in Winnipeg.

I. ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

In an article titled “Prospects for a New Middle Class Among Urban Aboriginal People,” Terry Wotherspoon, a professor of sociology at the University of Saskatchewan, makes the following observations:

There has been a gradual growth, within the Aboriginal population generally, and more specifically among those who live in urban areas, in various jobs and categories associated with leadership positions and identities. There are at least three major components of this expansion – the promotion of entrepreneurship..., professional and managerial employment, which is strongly linked in turn to the continuing importance of public sector employment for Aboriginal people.⁴⁴

In many respects, an increasing segment of urban Aboriginal populations appears to be moving, or becoming positioned for entry, into positions associated with the new middle classes. Labour market changes, educational advancement, and emerging business and employment opportunities have increased the numbers and proportions of individuals who are engaged or aspiring to careers in professional and managerial work. Entrepreneurial work is also producing new options for self-sufficiency and managerial and professional expertise. These changes are further fuelled by the expansion of populations, markets, and service needs that contribute to employment options for the growing numbers of urban Aboriginal people who have advanced qualifications, training, and skills. Aboriginal people are gradually becoming more integrated into key professional and administrative roles in diverse sectors. The concentration of highly qualified and experienced Aboriginal people in urban centres has opened doors to develop new networks, contacts, and spheres of influence that are likely to maintain themselves and foster opportunities for further growth and development in these regards. The climate is gradually changing to acknowledge the positive contributions these emergent capacities can offer to promote the interests of Aboriginal people and enhance their ties with organizations that previously have had limited engagement with the Aboriginal population.⁴⁵

II. ABORIGINAL LEADERS AND PROFESSIONALS TALK ABOUT SUCCESSES AND BARRIERS

On December 18, 2003, fourteen Aboriginal leaders and professionals participated in a three-hour sharing circle at United Way of Winnipeg. The participants work in business, health, government, community organizations, human resources, and technology. The purpose of the sharing circle was to identify successes and barriers Aboriginal leaders and professionals face in their lives. Five major themes emerged from the sharing circle.

Leadership

Strong leadership currently exists in the Aboriginal community. Many Aboriginal people are highly skilled, educated and thereby capable of solving issues independently. It is imperative to create more opportunities to build and expand on leadership by creating more mentorship opportunities within the Aboriginal community.

The most important thing to me is having the opportunity to be mentored. The second and third most important things are being in a supportive environment and working in an Aboriginal organization. There are lots of things that don't need to be said, you just fit and you belong. There is an understanding and that leads to more self-confidence to being able to do more things. A barrier is not having a lot of Aboriginal organizations that can really concentrate on building the capacity to be leaders. Funding for things like this is hard to find. – *Participant*

Partnership and Linkages

Participants focused on the need for, and importance of, supporting each other and working together. They feel that collaboration with various community sectors and linkages within the Aboriginal community are important factors for success, as are education and eliminating barriers.

I knew that I had to break a cycle and that was the biggest challenge for me. I wanted to go back to school and the government told me I couldn't because I was on welfare. The government would support me on a six-month program and I challenged them. I took them to court and set a precedent for other women. Here I am ten years later, (working) in a non-Aboriginal environment. I try to educate that system and I've seen a change in the seven years that I've been there...If you are truly proud to be Aboriginal, then be truly proud to make cutting-edge policy and truly proud to walk the talk. People are rising to the challenge and I'm really excited. – *Participant*

I agree with working together. I've been involved with the business community and with people looking for opportunities within the Aboriginal community...if the community was able to get together it would be the most powerful group. It would be amazing. – *Participant*



Identity and Strength

Participants felt that perseverance and determination are the key elements for success. Identity and the celebration of gifts as Aboriginal people are also important. Many participants spoke about the importance of Aboriginal culture and values in helping them gain strength and perseverance. Many believe that it is important for youth to understand their Aboriginal identity at a young age.

In terms of successes, it's all the gifts that the creator has given me, the situations that I've been put in, the experiences that I've had, and the determination I've had. – *Participant*

One key factor for me has been finding what is positive about being Aboriginal and teaching this to children. When I worked for the government, I felt that I was in a token position and I wanted to quit. But an elder told me, "You can't quit because our grandchildren are coming." It's been important for me to stay and break through the veil and create understanding. – *Participant*

Funding and Resources

Aboriginal leaders and professionals expressed their concern about the lack of financial resources directed to support Aboriginal-led organizations. They recognize the need for United Way and other funders to flow dollars and resources to support the Aboriginal community. During the sharing circle, the leaders and professionals also expressed the strong need to include the Aboriginal community in making decisions and building stronger partnerships.

They really need to start trusting Aboriginal people and Aboriginal organizations and start looking at us as partners. – *Participant*

The more we begin to transfer ownership to ourselves and to our own organizations, the faster we are going to solve our problems. The problem is not in us. The problem is in those institutions. There is a beginning recognition in government and hopefully among other funders about the need to flow dollars into Aboriginal hands. – *Participant*

Access to Funding

The final theme that emerged during the sharing circle is the availability of funding to address community needs. The majority of participants shared frustrating experiences about gaps in the system, which make it difficult for them to access funding.

When I moved down to Winnipeg the barriers I had to overcome included being marked as an Aboriginal person. Right away there was that stigma – because if you are Aboriginal you are not considered to be accountable for your own actions in business. There is no way that they will give you a loan...It's taken me ten years and it's better now than it was because of the clout we've built and being able to be accountable. I think that if I can do it, then we can certainly mentor others. – *Participant*

III. ABORIGINAL MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS

The following is a brief overview of some Aboriginal-owned and operated media outlets in Winnipeg that enhance the voice of Aboriginal people.

- **Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN)** “is the first national Aboriginal television network in the world with programming by, for, and about Aboriginal Peoples...(APTN) provides First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people...the opportunity to share their stories with all of Canada.”⁴⁶ APTN was launched in 1999 and operates from headquarters in Winnipeg.
- **Native Communications Inc. (nci)** operates from Winnipeg as a registered charity. NCI began radio broadcasting in Northern Manitoba in September 1971 and now provides radio programming across Manitoba that is “designed for and by Aboriginal people.”⁴⁷ In 1985 NCI began producing television shows, which have aired on CBC Manitoba, North of Winnipeg, and the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network.
- **Grassroots Newspaper** was established in 1995 and “has become Manitoba’s most frequently published and most widely distributed Aboriginal/Métis newspaper.”⁴⁸ The paper’s distribution area includes sixty-four First Nations, most Métis communities, towns, and major cities across Manitoba.

SECTION 2

Individual, Family, Community & Nation



Individual – our uniqueness

Individuals have unique characteristics that are most often documented only at a population level. This section highlights the population demographics and life expectancy of Aboriginal Manitobans and Winnipeggers.

I. THE URBAN ABORIGINAL POPULATION IN WINNIPEG

The 2001 Census found there were 55,755 Aboriginal people living in the City of Winnipeg.

Between 1996 and 2001, Winnipeg’s population grew by 4,070 people, which is a 0.6% increase over the five-year period.⁴⁹ Looking at this growth in terms of its Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal components reveals that the Aboriginal population grew by 21.9%, or 10,005⁵⁰ people while the non-Aboriginal population declined by .95%, or 5,935 people.

In its 1998 report, the Manitoba Round Table on Environment & Economy noted that “The large movement of Aboriginal people off reserve and other Aboriginal communities within the past two decades signifies a process of transition to the urban environment, which is significantly greater than previously encountered.”⁵¹

In addition to growing more quickly than the non-Aboriginal population, the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg is also younger. The 2001 Census found a median age of 24.7 years for Aboriginal Winnipeggers and a median age of 37.3 years for Winnipeg’s non-Aboriginal population.

In 1996, 52% of Manitoba’s Métis population lived in Winnipeg⁵². By 2001, this had increased to just over 55%.⁵³ In both years, Winnipeg had the largest Métis community in Canada.

ABORIGINAL IDENTITY

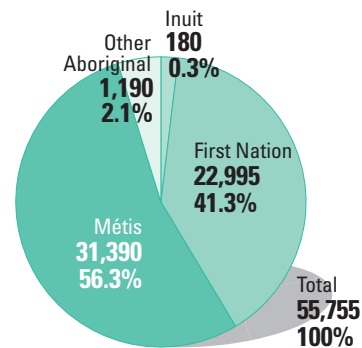
“Refers to those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group i.e. North American Indian, Métis or Inuit (Eskimo) and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian as defined by the *Indian Act of Canada.*”

ABORIGINAL ORIGIN

“Refers to those who reported at least one Aboriginal origin to the ethnic origin question. Ethnic origin refers to the ethnic or cultural group(s) to which the respondent’s ancestors belong.”

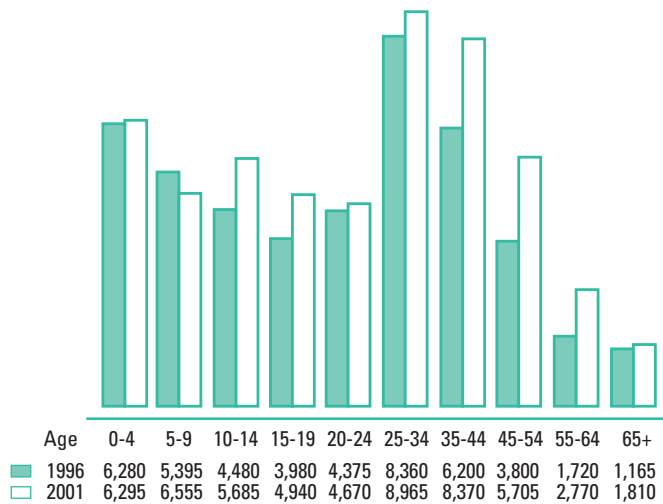
Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

COMPOSITION OF URBAN ABORIGINAL IDENTITY POPULATION IN WINNIPEG



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2001

THE URBAN ABORIGINAL POPULATION IN WINNIPEG BY AGE GROUP



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 1996 and 2001

II. LIFE EXPECTANCY AND CAUSES OF DEATH

Life expectancy for Aboriginal people lags behind the population at large by 8 years for males and 6.7 years for females. This gap in life expectancy varies widely among Aboriginal groups and communities and is highest for those living on reserve (more than ten years) and lowest for those living in urban areas (less than two years).⁵⁴

A First Nations male born in 2000 can expect to live until age 68.9 while females born in 2000 can expect to live 76.6 years. When compared to the average life expectancy for all Canadians born in 2000, First Nations males will live 7.4 years less and females 5.2 years less.⁵⁵

Between 1989 and 1993, the leading causes of mortality among Status Indians in Manitoba were

motor vehicle accidents at 31%, followed by suicide at 27%, homicide at 18%, and drowning at 14%.⁵⁶

During this period, the First Nations rate of death by homicide “was twice the national rate and much higher than in any other region, with Saskatchewan a distant second.”⁵⁷

In his report titled *Aboriginal People in Manitoba 2000*, Bruce Hallett refers to a 1998 study by the Winnipeg Free Press, which found that Aboriginal people were the victims in 60% of the 158 homicides that occurred in Manitoba between 1992 and 1996. Based on this, the Free Press calculated that Aboriginal Manitobans had a thirty times higher risk of being murdered than the population as a whole.⁵⁸ In reflecting on this, Mr. Hallett concludes that “the First Nations homicide rate in Manitoba is very striking and not easily explained.”⁵⁹

In 1996, the leading cause of death among First Nations people in Canada was injury and poisoning, which includes suicide and homicide. The second, third, and fourth leading causes of death were circulatory

diseases, cancer, and respiratory diseases; these rankings were unchanged since the late 1970’s.⁶⁰

Although Aboriginal death rates for circulatory and respiratory diseases have declined moderately since the late 1970s, they remain higher than Canadian rates.⁶¹

“Mortality by age-related causes has been kept down by the relatively young Aboriginal population. However, with the age 65+ group expected to double to 7% of the Aboriginal population by 2015, the prevalence of these diseases will also rise, as will the associated health care costs.”

Bruce Hallett, *Aboriginal People in Manitoba 2000*, Manitoba Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, 2002, p. 39.



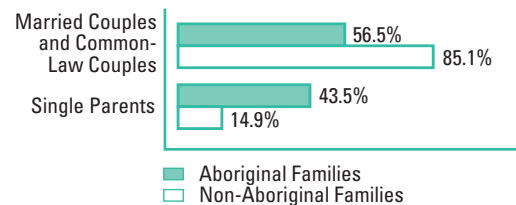
Family – our relations

Family relations involve members of the immediate family (parents, children, siblings, spouses, and partners) and extended family (grandparents, in-laws and cousins). Because there is little documentation on extended family relationships in the Aboriginal community this section looks at how families are structured.

I. FAMILY STRUCTURE

In 2001, family households accounted for 66.8% of all Aboriginal households in Winnipeg. Non-family households, that is, people living alone or with others to whom they are not related, accounted for the remaining 33.2% of Aboriginal households. Within the family category, households comprised of husband-wife and common-law couples accounted for 56.5% of all Aboriginal family households while single parents accounted for 43.5%. Among non-Aboriginal family households in 2001, couples accounted for 85.1% while single parents made up 14.9%.⁶²

COMPOSITION OF FAMILY CATEGORY HOUSEHOLDS, WINNIPEG, 2001



Source: Community Data Network, Custom Table #12-14, Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2001

According to 1996 Census data, 51% of Aboriginal children in Winnipeg between the ages of 0-14 lived with a single parent. Thirty-one per cent lived with married couples and 19% with common-law couples.⁶³ Data from the 2001 Census indicate that 53.8% of Aboriginal children under 17 years of age in Winnipeg lived in a single parent family.⁶⁴

In 1996, 61% of First Nation families in Winnipeg and 41% of Métis families were led by a single parent while 17.6% of non-Aboriginal families were led by a single parent.⁶⁵ In 2001, 56.8% of all First Nation households in Winnipeg and 34.4% of all Métis households were led by a single parent.⁶⁶



Community – our foundations

Communities, whether based on geography or a common interest or cause, create opportunities for people and groups to work together in a variety of ways. This section looks at the neighbourhoods where Aboriginal Winnipeggers live, the size of their dwellings and whether they rent or own their homes, at community housing infrastructure, and at the ways that Aboriginal people give and share.

I. WHERE PEOPLE LIVE

Aboriginal people live in every neighbourhood in Winnipeg. The distribution of the Aboriginal population ranged from a high of 23.3% in Mynarski to a low of 2.4% in River Heights-Fort Garry.⁶⁷

In 2001, just over 41% of Aboriginal persons lived in the inner city, down from 43% in 1996.⁶⁸

II. RENTING VERSUS HOME OWNERSHIP

According to the 1996 Census, there were approximately 14,855 Aboriginal households in Winnipeg of which 11,075 rented their dwellings and roughly 3,780 owned their own homes. By 2001, the number of Aboriginal households had increased by 27% to 18,920 of which 13,215 rented their dwellings and 5,705 owned their own homes.⁶⁹

Between 1996 and 2001, the percentage of Aboriginal households owning their dwellings decreased from 74.6% to 69.8% while the percentage renting their dwellings increased from 25.4% to 30.2%

In 1996, 88.3% of Aboriginal single parents in Winnipeg rented their home while 59.8% of Aboriginal couples with children and 51.9% of couples without children rented their dwelling.⁷⁰

According to data from the 2001 Census, 84.0% of Aboriginal single parent households in Winnipeg rented their dwellings compared with 40.0% of non-Aboriginal single parent households. Among couple households (husband-wife and common-law), 47.1% rented their dwelling in 2001 compared with 15.4% of non-Aboriginal households.⁷¹

The 2001 Census found that just under 70% of Aboriginal households, 60.6% of Métis households, and 83.0% of North American Indian households rented rather than owned their homes.⁷²

**TOTAL POPULATION AND ABORIGINAL POPULATION
(BASED ON IDENTITY) BY CITY OF WINNIPEG
ELECTORAL WARD, 2001**

Electoral Ward	Total Population	Aboriginal Population	Aboriginal Population as % of total Population
Mynarski	39,570	9,235	23.3%
Point Douglas	42,025	7,275	17.3%
Daniel McIntyre	43,420	6,525	15.0%
Elmwood - East Kildonan	42,030	4,785	11.4%
Fort Rouge - East Fort Garry	45,020	4,175	9.3%
St. Boniface	45,600	3,250	7.1%
St. Vital	48,280	3,205	6.6%
Old Kildonan	41,370	2,380	5.8%
St. Norbert	46,310	2,115	4.6%
North Kildonan	36,840	1,540	4.2%
Charleswood - Tuxedo	41,435	1,210	2.9%
St. James - Brooklands	29,700	1,965	6.6%
Transcona	32,360	1,945	6.0%
St. Charles	31,715	1,725	5.4%
River Heights-Fort Garry	44,775	1,095	2.4%
Winnipeg (City): total of above	610,450	52,415	8.6%
Winnipeg CMA	661,725	55,755	8.4%

Source: Community Data Network (CDN) *Basic Profile*.
Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2001.

In 2003, the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg released preliminary results of a First Nation, Métis and Inuit Mobility Study that surveyed 525 Aboriginal people who had lived in the city for less than twelve months. The survey revealed that 51.4% of these newcomers lived in apartments, 17.9% in single detached houses, and the remaining 30.7% in row or townhouses, duplexes, condominiums, or some other type of housing.

The researchers found that 17.3% of survey respondents lived in three-person households with two bedrooms or less and over half of these three-person households had one or no bedrooms.⁷³ Based on these and other findings related to household size and number of bedrooms, the researchers noted “the potential for crowding to become an issue.”⁷⁴

To gather information for its Urban Aboriginal Strategy, the Manitoba Round Table on Environment & Economy conducted a series of grassroots workshops that attracted over 1,000 participants. In one workshop participants were asked to discuss “issues related to settlement and living in our community.”⁷⁵ This discussion resulted in the identification of “two main objectives with respect to housing and home ownership... to increase Aboriginal home ownership, and to address the poor quality of housing and general neighbourhood decay.”⁷⁶



III. COMMUNAL HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE

Several Aboriginal organizations in Winnipeg plan for, develop, and/or manage communal housing infrastructure. By addressing the need for secure, affordable, adequate and suitable housing, these organizations often directly or indirectly address other social needs and help build stronger communities. The following are examples of the Aboriginal communal housing organizations in Winnipeg:

- **Dial-A-Life Housing Inc.** provides suitable and affordable housing for medically displaced persons of Aboriginal ancestry and their families.
- **Kanata Housing** provides housing for Aboriginal families.
- **Kekinan Centre** provides affordable apartments for First Nations elders over age fifty-five and for members of the First Nations community who have disabilities or are infirm but able to live independently. The Centre also raises community awareness about health, social needs, and delivery of resources to the aged.

- **Kinew Housing Corporation** provides subsidized housing to the Aboriginal community and owns, manages, and rents over 380 Winnipeg houses to Aboriginal people.
- **Payuk Inter-Tribal Housing Co-op** is the only co-operative of its kind in Winnipeg and provides a safe and supportive environment for Aboriginal women and children. The co-op has Aboriginal people as residents and managers of its forty-two unit apartment block and five duplex units.

IV. GIVING AND SHARING: CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMUNITY

Contributions to community are often described using terms like philanthropy, donations, and voluntarism. For Aboriginal communities, contributions to community are more often described as ‘giving and sharing’.

There is little documentation about the way that Aboriginal individuals and groups contribute to their communities; however, in a 1999 report titled *Native-American Philanthropy; Expanding Social Participation and Self-Determination*, Mindy L. Berry states that

In Native American cultures, philanthropy broadly means the honor of giving and receiving. In practice, many terms are used in place of philanthropy, such as sharing, obligation, exchange, reciprocity, helping, being noble, mutual respect, community, sponsoring, partnering and collaborating. Many traditions of giving and sharing exist and some are cast as rituals such as potlatches, giveaways and feasts. Passed on from generation to generation, Native communities express their generosity regardless of their economic or social conditions.

The National Aboriginal Voluntary Organization (NAVO) celebrates volunteer activities in the Aboriginal community throughout Canada. A video titled *It's Our Way*, which was produced under the auspices of NAVO as part of the Voluntary Sector Initiative, chronicles a range of activities that touch on the importance of giving back, caring, and sharing. The video provides a traditional perspective and looks at today's contemporary world. The people who share their stories in the video say that Aboriginal languages do not have words for volunteering; instead, Aboriginal languages articulate the concept of volunteering using phrases like the following:

- a way of life,
- our way,
- at the heart of who we are,
- the essence of life,
- a privilege to offer a gift in return for what Mother Earth gives us, and
- giving of ourselves is the most important gift we have to offer.



Nation – our governance

Nation is generally used to think about governance and its influences. This section describes who Aboriginal people are, their population profile in Canada as Nations, and the Aboriginal political structures that are located in Winnipeg.

I. WHO ARE THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN CANADA?

Aboriginal people descend from the original inhabitants of North America. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people: Indians, Métis, and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

The following definitions for the words commonly used to describe Aboriginal people and groups are either extracted from or adapted from definitions recommended by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.⁷⁷

- **First Nation(s)** is a term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word “Indian,” which some people found offensive. Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term “First Nations peoples” refers to the Indian people in Canada, both Status and Non-Status. Some Indian people have also adopted the term “First Nation” to replace the word “band” in the name of their community.

Indian is a term that describes all the Indigenous people in Canada who are not Inuit or Métis. Indian peoples are one of three groups of people recognized as Aboriginal in the *Constitution Act, 1982*. The Act specifies that Aboriginal people in Canada consist of three different groups: Indians, Inuit, and Métis. As explained below, there are three legal definitions that apply to Indians in Canada: Status Indians, Non-Status Indians and Treaty Indians.

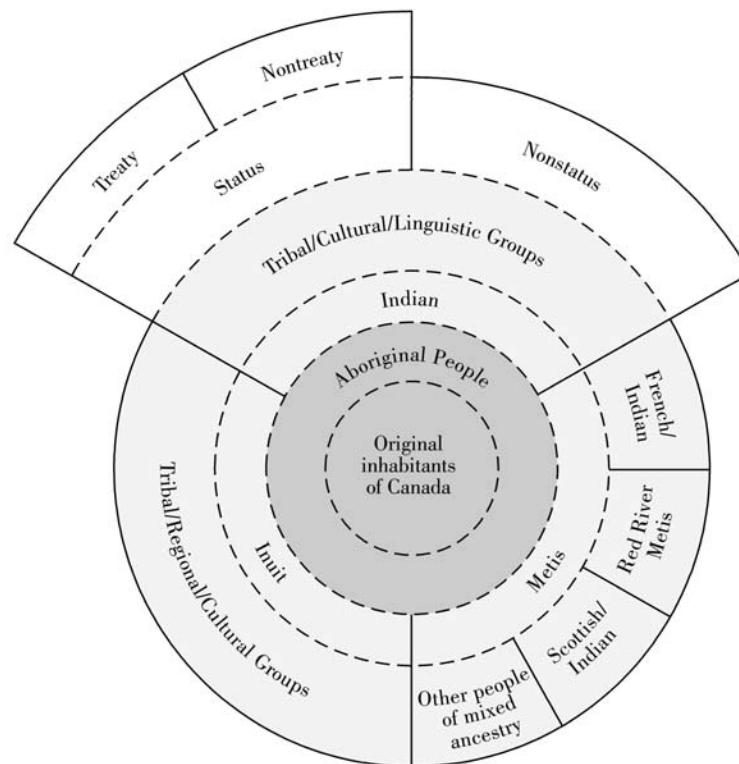
Status Indians are people who are entitled to have their names included on the Indian Register, an official list that is maintained by the federal government. Certain criteria determine who can be registered as a Status Indian and registration entitles individuals to certain rights and benefits under the law. Only Status Indians are recognized as Indians under the *Indian Act*, which defines an Indian as “a person who, pursuant to this Act, is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian.” Status Indians are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law.

Non-Status Indians are people who consider themselves to be Indians or members of a First Nation but whom the Government of Canada does not recognize as Indians under the *Indian Act*, either because they are unable to prove their status or have lost their status rights. Many Indian people in Canada, especially women, lost their Indian status through discriminatory practices in the past. Non-Status Indians are not entitled to the same rights and benefits that are available to Status Indians.

Treaty Indians are Status Indians who belong to a First Nation that signed a treaty with the Crown.

- **Métis** are people of mixed and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis people, as distinct from First Nations people, Inuit or non-Aboriginal people. The Métis have a unique culture that draws on their diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, French, Ojibway and Cree.
- **Inuit** are the Aboriginal people in northern Canada, who live above the tree line in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, Northern Quebec and Labrador. The word means “people” in the Inuit language Inuktitut. The singular of Inuit is Inuk.

The following diagram from the Manitoba Round Table on Environment & Economy’s 1998 report titled *Towards a Strategy for Aboriginal People in Winnipeg*, shows the Aboriginal peoples in Canada.



Source: Manitoba Round Table on Environment & Economy, *Priorities for Action: Towards a Strategy for Aboriginal People Living in Winnipeg*, 1998, page 15

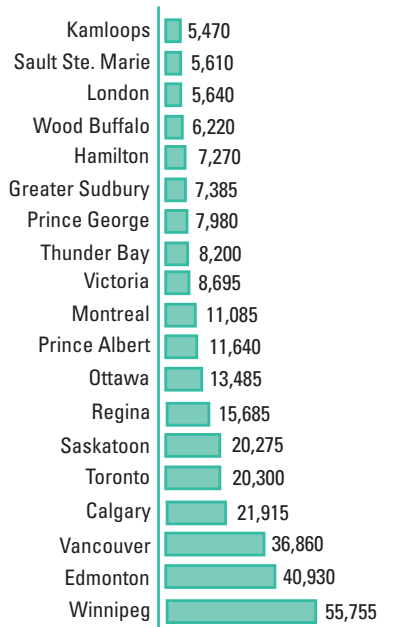
II. ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN CANADA: POPULATION NUMBERS AND GROWTH

The Aboriginal population in Canada is growing as a percentage of the total population. In 2001, 976,305 persons, 3.3% of the country's population, identified themselves as being a member of an Aboriginal group. This is 22.2% higher than the 799,010 people who identified themselves as being Aboriginal during the 1996 Census. In contrast to the Aboriginal population's growth of 22.2%, between 1996 and 2001 Canada's non-Aboriginal population grew by 3.4%.⁷⁸

Of all Aboriginal groups, the Métis experienced the largest population gain between 1996 and 2001: 43%.⁷⁹ "This five-year growth was almost three times as fast as the 15% increase in the North American Indian population, and almost four times the 12% increase among the Inuit."⁸⁰

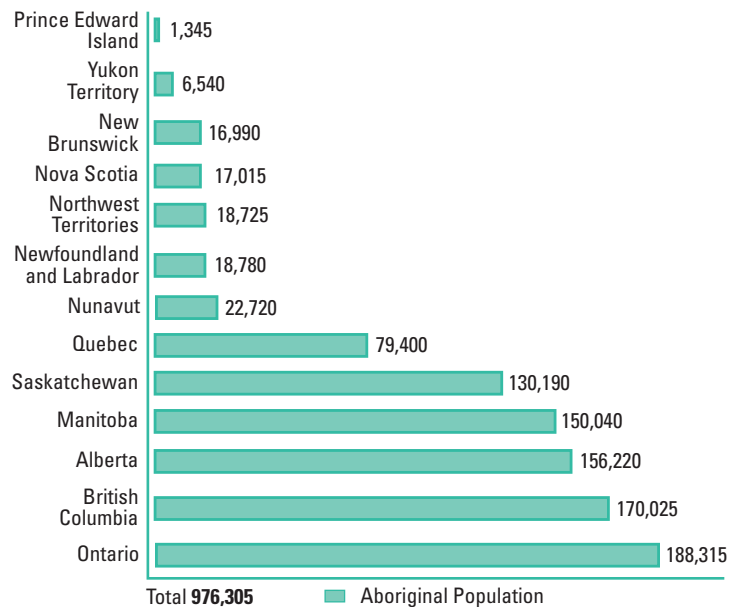
The 2001 Census also shows that the Aboriginal population is quite young. Its median age, the age at which half the population is older and half younger, was 24.7 years, compared with 37.7 years in the non-Aboriginal population.⁸¹ In 2001, children aged fourteen and under represented one-third of the Aboriginal population compared to 19% of the

POPULATION REPORTING ABORIGINAL IDENTITY IN SELECTED CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREAS WITH AN ABORIGINAL POPULATION OVER 5,000 FOR 2001



Source: Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal people of Canada: A demographic profile*, Catalogue #96F0030X1E2001007, 2003, p.23

POPULATION REPORTING ABORIGINAL IDENTITY FOR CANADA, 2001



Source: Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal people of Canada: A demographic profile*, Catalogue #96F0030X1E2001007, 2003, p. 23.

non-Aboriginal population. Aboriginal children represented 5.6% of all children in Canada while the Aboriginal population of all age groups represented 3.3% of Canada's population.⁸²

Seniors make up a relatively small portion of the Aboriginal population although their numbers are growing quickly. Between 1996 and 2001, the number of Aboriginal seniors increased 40% while the number of non-Aboriginal seniors in Canada increased by 10%.⁸³ In 2001, seniors represented 4% of the Aboriginal population and 13% of the non-Aboriginal population.⁸⁴



III. ABORIGINAL POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS IN WINNIPEG

Winnipeg is home to several Aboriginal political organizations including the five highlighted below:

- **Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg (ACW)** was established in 1990 when the Urban Indian Association and the Winnipeg Council of Treaty and Status Indians joined to form this new Council. The Council is mandated to represent the interests of the Aboriginal community of Winnipeg; it acknowledges the unique diversity in the Aboriginal community and recognizes the need to protect this diversity.
- **Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC)** was established in 1988 to “provide a forum for discussion, coordination and consensus building. It is intended to be comprehensive in terms of scope of issues and the integration of political and technical institutions of First Nations.”⁸⁵ The Assembly succeeds the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, which was established in the late 1960s and disbanded in the early 1980s. The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs’ Secretariat provides “technical support to the Manitoba Chiefs on common political, legal, and social issues relating to the First Nations communities.”⁸⁶
- **Manitoba Keewatinook Ininew Okimowin (MKO)** was established in 1981 by First Nations in Northern Manitoba. The organization’s main goal is to “lay the foundations of a self-governing legislative body to better serve the interests of MKO member First Nation’s and it’s citizens.”⁸⁷

- **Manitoba Métis Federation Inc. (MMF)** was created in 1968. The organization's four objectives are to promote the history and culture of the Métis people and promote their cultural pride; to promote the education of its membership respecting their legal, political, social and other rights; to promote the participation of its members in community and other organizations; and to promote the political, social, and economic interests of its members.⁸⁸
- **Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc. (sco)** was established in 1998 as "an independent political forum to protect, preserve, promote, and enhance First Nations people's inherent rights, languages, customs, and traditions through the application and implementation of the spirit and intent of the Treaty-making process."⁸⁹

The following Aboriginal political organizations are also located in Winnipeg and employ a significant number of Aboriginal Winnipeggers:

- Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council
- Interlake Reserves Tribal Council Inc.
- Island Lake Tribal Council
- Keewatin Tribal Council
- Southeast Resource Development Council
- Swampy Cree Tribal Council
- West Region Tribal Council

SECTION 3

Children, Youth, Adults & Elders



Child – our gift

Children include girls and boys from birth to fourteen years. This group, for the most part, is wholly dependent on others. This section looks at the number of Aboriginal children living in Winnipeg, their rates of school stability, their challenges and successes, and at culturally relevant services for children.

I. POPULATION NUMBERS

According to Statistics Canada’s 2001 Census, there are approximately 18,535 Aboriginal children between the ages of 0 and 14 living in the City of Winnipeg. This is 33% of Winnipeg’s total Aboriginal population.⁹⁰

Data from the 2001 Census show that 42.6% of all Aboriginal children 0-14 years live in the inner city.⁹¹ Among Aboriginal children under 18 years of age in the inner city, 66.6% lived in a single parent family in 2001.⁹²

ABORIGINAL CHILDREN BY GENDER, 0-14 YEARS, WINNIPEG CMA, 2001

Age	Male	Female	Total
0-4 years	3,375	2,920	6,295
5-9 years	3,390	3,165	6,555
10-14 years	2,745	2,940	5,685
Total	9,510	9,025	18,535

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, *Aboriginal Population by Age and Sex by Aboriginal Group*, Winnipeg CMA, 2001

II. RATES OF STABILITY AMONG ABORIGINAL STUDENTS IN WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION NO. 1

In the education system, the term stability refers to the percentage of students who stay in the school system from October to May of a given year. Stability is important for children because frequent moving disrupts their education and social relationships. One recent study on inner city high school students reported that “some children have been in 13 schools by 11 years of age...In a nine month period in 1992/93, there were 3,058 single parent family moves out of a possible 3,553”⁹³

In Winnipeg School Division No. 1, which serves 60% of Winnipeg’s Aboriginal population,⁹⁴ schools with the highest populations of Aboriginal youth have the lowest stability rates. This is illustrated by the following comparison of two schools in Winnipeg School Division No. 1.

“Stability is the ratio of the number of stable students over the average month-end enrolment, multiplied by one hundred. Stable students are those who were enrolled by October 1 and had not transferred out before May 31... A stability rate of 85% means that 85% of the students have stayed in school from October to May.”

The Winnipeg School Division, *School Demographics – 2000/2001*, p. B1

The 1996 Census found that 62.6% of children ages 0-14 in the area served by one elementary school were Aboriginal; between 1998 and 2000, this school had a stability rate of 80.8%. In contrast, the 1996 Census found there were no Aboriginal children ages 0-14 in the area served by another elementary school and its 1998-2000 stability rate was 99.5%⁹⁵.

In order to understand the high mobility rate of Aboriginal children, in 1990 the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg looked at 116 renter families with school age children in the inner city and reported that “the study results confirm the belief of inner city educators that poor housing conditions impel families to move frequently, which in turn affects their children’s school performance.”⁹⁶

In addition to families moving frequently, the environments and programs offered by schools may also contribute to low stability rates among Aboriginal children in inner city schools. To address this, Winnipeg School Division No. 1 has established “alternative educational settings”⁹⁷ for Aboriginal students at the following schools:

- Wi Wabigooni (Victoria-Albert)
- Children of the Earth
- Rising Sun (R.B. Russell)
- Eagle’s Circle (Hugh John Macdonald)
- Songide’ewin (Niji Mahkwa)

Between the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years, the stability rate in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 “continued a general upward trend seen over the last decade and was a record high.”⁹⁸

III. CULTURALLY RELEVANT ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

Culturally relevant services for Aboriginal children in Winnipeg include the following:

- **Abinotci Mino-Ayawin** is part of the Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre and offers family and one-to-one supports that encourage healthy living in a balanced environment. Abinotci Mino-Ayawin provides sharing circles, parenting programs, access to elders and Traditional healing, advocacy, child wellness assessment, and referrals to other community services.
- **Aboriginal Head Start Program** promotes early childhood education for Aboriginal children living in urban and rural settings. Many of the children participating in the Winnipeg program are between the ages of three and five and reside in the core area.
- **Andrews Street Family Centre** “builds on the community’s strengths and encourages our Families, Individuals, Elders, Children and Youth to reach their full potential through support, friendship and positive experience.”⁹⁹
- **Indian & Métis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg** provides “recreational services, encourages cultural activities and ensures effective communication of the Centre’s developments and needs to both the Aboriginal Community and to Winnipeg as a whole.”¹⁰⁰
- **Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc.** was established in 1984 and operates as a community resource centre that provides a variety of culturally relevant preventive and supportive programs and services for Aboriginal families.

- **Rossbrook House**, a neighbourhood centre, was founded in 1976 to provide children, youth, and adults with an alternative to “the destructive environment of the streets.” Rossbrook House is guided by the principles of self-help and self-referral, employs staff from among those who regularly attend the centre, and develops programs to respond to the “hopes, dreams and ideas” of youth.¹⁰¹
- **Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs** is “a community-based, youth serving agency.” The organization operates six drop-in centres and offers development programs “that enable youth to have fun, learn and grow.” Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs describes several of its drop-in centres as being “cross-cultural.”¹⁰²



IV. CHALLENGES FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN IN WINNIPEG

Children at high risk on a social index

When the research was conducted for the 2001 report titled *Results of the Community Mapping Study for the Children in Winnipeg (School Division No. 1)*, Aboriginal children represented 27% of the total population of children aged six and younger living in the area served by Winnipeg School Division No.1.¹⁰³

On the basis that a community’s socio-economic well-being affects the well-being of its children, the study’s researchers developed a social index that includes nine variables chosen “for their usefulness in describing the socio-economic context of communities.”¹⁰⁴

- employment rate – the proportion of males aged fifteen and over who were employed full-time for a full year,
- prevalence of low-income status – the proportion of the total population living in private households that fall below Statistics Canada’s low income cut-off,
- education levels – the proportion of individuals aged fifteen years and over without a high school diploma,
- family status – the proportion of families with children headed by a single parent,
- mobility – the proportion of the population that has moved in the past year,
- language – the proportion of the population speaking neither official language,
- home ownership – the proportion of private, residential dwellings that are privately owned,
- immigrant status – the proportion of the total population that are recent immigrants,
- composition of income – the proportion of the total income in the enumeration area coming from government transfers (e.g. Canada Pension Plan, Canada Child Tax Benefit, Provincial Social Assistance).¹⁰⁵

The researchers used this social index to analyze the communities served by Winnipeg School Division No. 1 and concluded that “Nearly 8,775 children aged six and younger (45%) lived in areas considered to be high risk”¹⁰⁶ because they have seven or more community challenges as measured by the social index.

Children in care

In its 2001 report titled *Promise of Hope: Commitment to Change*, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry-Child Welfare Initiative wrote that

It is widely recognized that Aboriginal peoples in Manitoba have not been well served by the mainstream child and family services system... While significant reforms have been introduced in recent years, high numbers of Aboriginal children and families continue to be involved in the child and family services system. Currently, Aboriginal children make up about 21% of Manitoba’s population under the age of 15 (The 1996 Census of Canada), but they account for 78% of children currently in care of the overall child and family services system (Data for the year 2000 from Manitoba Family Services and Housing).¹⁰⁷

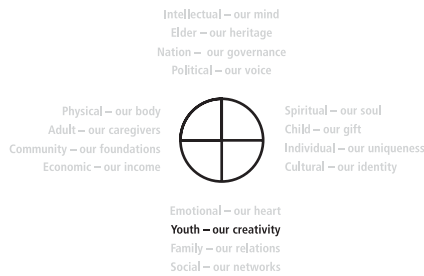
To address this challenge, in August 2000, the Manitoba Métis Federation, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (now known as Manitoba Keewatinook Ininew Okimowin), and the Province of Manitoba began working on a plan to restructure the child and family service system.¹⁰⁸ In working together, the four organizations acknowledged the following:

- The First Nations and Métis peoples have a right to control the delivery of child and family services province-wide for their respective community members;
- Child and family services for First Nations and Métis peoples within Manitoba must occur in a manner which respects their unique status, as well as their culture and linguistic heritage;
- The family is sacred and the first resource for the well-being of children; and
- Solutions developed locally with respect to both the delivery of child and family services, as well as adoption services, are the most effective and practical approach towards ensuring self-determination and healthy communities.¹⁰⁹

The plan to restructure the child and family service system called for the creation of four new authorities:

- Métis Child and Family Services Authority,
- First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority,
- First Nations of Southern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority, and
- General Child and Family Services Authority.

In November 2003, the Province of Manitoba enacted legislation to implement the new child and family services authorities¹¹⁰ and the process of transferring caseloads and resources has begun.



Youth – our creativity

The term youth generally applies to young men and women between the ages of fifteen and nineteen years of age although some statistics and researchers extend the upper age limit into the twenties, sometimes going as high as twenty-eight. This section looks at population numbers, education and mobility, culturally relevant services available to youth, and youth employment rates. The section closes with a look at challenges facing Aboriginal youth, highlights of their successes and contributions to community, and a plan for an alternative tomorrow that was developed by a group of eleven youth.

I. POPULATION NUMBERS

Statistics Canada’s Census of Population found that in 2001 there were 14,400 Aboriginal youths aged 15-19 in Manitoba of which 4,940 resided in the City of Winnipeg. This is a 24.1% increase over 1996 when 3,980 Aboriginal youths aged 15-19 resided in Winnipeg. The 2001 Census also found 4,670 Aboriginal persons in the next oldest age group, 20-24, living in Winnipeg.

It is estimated that there will be a large proportion of Aboriginal youth in Winnipeg within the next ten years such that at least “one in five and perhaps as high as one in three labour market entrants over the next 15-20 years in Manitoba will be Aboriginal.”¹¹¹

In 2001, 52.2% of Aboriginal children in Winnipeg aged 13-17 lived in a single-parent family; this is almost three times the rate (18.9%) for non-Aboriginal children in this age group.¹¹² According to 2001 Census data, 49% of single parents 15-19 years of age in Winnipeg were Aboriginal.¹¹³

II. EDUCATION AND MOBILITY

As noted by the Manitoba Round Table on Environment & Economy, education will be important for Aboriginal youth because it “has proven to lead to improvement in the outlook for Aboriginal youth and to provide greater opportunities to take responsibility for their own future.”¹¹⁴

Recent data for Winnipeg shows that 51% of Aboriginal youth 15-24 years of age were attending school either full-time or part-time in 2001 compared to 59.5% of non-Aboriginal youth.¹¹⁵

A December 2002 report published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives provides a profile of Aboriginal high school students based on interviews with forty-seven Aboriginal youths. These interviews revealed the following:

- over one-half of high school interviewees live with a single parent,
- just over one-third grew up both in Winnipeg and rural Manitoba or Ontario,
- just over one-half attended four or more schools,
- almost one-quarter attended six or more schools, and
- between one-quarter and one-third have parents who were in residential schools.¹¹⁶

Based on these findings, the researchers concluded that this “creates a profile of living arrangements and family background quite different from the average non-Aboriginal high school student, and quite different from the majority of teachers and staff.”¹¹⁷

Although there is limited data on the school attendance patterns for the Aboriginal population, a 2000-2001 report by Winnipeg School Division No. 1 may indicate a correlation between schools with high Aboriginal populations, and schools with high rates of mobility (the percentage of students who transferred in or out of school during October to May), and low rates of stability (the percentage of students who did not transfer in or out from October to May).¹¹⁸

A comparison of two secondary schools in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 illustrates this. During the 2000-2001 school year, one school, which has a substantial proportion of Aboriginal students, had a grade 7-8 population with a mobility rate of 147.8%, and a stability rate of 61.1%. In contrast, another school with few Aboriginal children had a mobility rate of 5.5% and a stability rate of 98.1%.¹¹⁹

III. CULTURALLY RELEVANT SERVICES FOR ABORIGINAL YOUTH

Many organizations offer a culturally relevant environment and services for Aboriginal youth in Winnipeg including those listed below:

- Anishnaabe Oway-Ishi
- Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs – Keewatin Winnipeg Youth Initiative
- Andrews Street Family Centre
- Aboriginal Learning and Literacy Centre
- Indian & Métis Friendship Centre
- Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc.
- Manitoba Métis Federation – Youth Department
- Manitoba Sport and Recreation Council Inc. – Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre Program
- Owiisookaage(g) Inc.
- Positive Adolescent Sexuality Support (PASS)
- Rossbrook House
- Winnipeg Boys and Girls Club

IV. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT RATES

In 1996, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal youth in Winnipeg was 28.8% while the overall unemployment rate for Winnipeg’s Aboriginal population was lower at 25.2%.¹²⁰ Recent data from the 2001 Census shows the unemployment rate for Aboriginal youth (15-24 years of age) in Winnipeg had fallen to 20.9% while non-Aboriginal youth had an unemployment rate of 9.7%.¹²¹ In 2001, Aboriginal youth were twice as likely as non-Aboriginal youth to be unemployed.

V. CHALLENGES FACING ABORIGINAL YOUTH IN WINNIPEG

In 1996, a group of twelve Aboriginal youth – ten from Winnipeg and two from Victoria – received Health Canada support to identify the characteristics of the resilient Aboriginal child and the Aboriginal child at risk. In its final report, the research team explained that it decided to do the study in Victoria and Winnipeg because “Poverty in the inner city is just one of the many concerns that Aboriginal youth deal with... Violence, gangs, and falling into problems such as solvent abuse, drug addiction and/or alcohol abuse, cause a strong concern for Aboriginal youth.”¹²²

The research team held focus groups, conducted case studies, and used questionnaires to survey 170 high school students in Winnipeg and fifty in Victoria. In its final report, the research team noted its “lack of experience as researchers,” mentioned the difficulty it encountered getting high schools and students to participate in the study, and included the following information about the Winnipeg students who participated in the study:

- 33% say their families have no rules,
- 31% have suffered from violence or abuse in the family,
- 40% have or had a criminally-involved peer group of friends, and
- 45% believe that cultural teachings and Aboriginal language programs are very important in the lives of Aboriginal youth.¹²³

Aboriginal youth incarceration rates

Various Canadian studies indicate that Aboriginal youth are overrepresented at every stage of the criminal justice process. In many jurisdictions, the proportion of Aboriginal youth in custody exceeds their representation in the overall population. As a result, “critics charge that the criminal justice system fails to meet the needs of these youth.”¹²⁴

ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL YOUTH 15 TO 24 YEARS OF AGE EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION, WINNIPEG CMA 2001

Occupation	Aboriginal Identity Population	Non-Aboriginal Population
Management	145	1,670
Business, finance and administration	850	9,795
Natural and applied sciences	130	2,555
Health	140	1,710
Social science, education, government and religion	215	2,425
Art, culture, recreation and sport	185	1,825
Sales and service	2,320	28,725
Trades and transport	575	5,420
Primary industry	190	1,270
Processing and manufacturing	320	3,080
All occupations	5,065	58,470

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2001
- Catalogue #97F0011XCB01045

In a March 2002 report, The Department of Justice Canada acknowledged this challenge as follows: “The overrepresentation of Aboriginal youth within the criminal justice system poses important challenges for the Youth Justice Renewal Strategy. The Youth Justice Policy Team (YJPT) at the Department of Justice Canada recognizes that strategically targeted, community-based programs are needed to reduce Aboriginal youths’ involvement in the system.”¹²⁵

When the Department of Justice Canada conducted a one-day snapshot of Aboriginal youth in custody across Canada during 2000, almost three quarters (73%) of the Aboriginal youth in custody in Manitoba were First Nations/North American Aboriginal, while 27% were Métis. Of the youth who reported First Nations/North American Aboriginal origin, 93% were Status Indians.¹²⁶

Young parents: teen pregnancy rates and challenges faced by young fathers

Information provided by Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc. states that Manitoba has the third highest teen pregnancy rate in Canada: 64.4 pregnancies per 1,000 Manitoba girls aged 15-19. Every day in Manitoba, seven adolescents become pregnant and four become parents. Many teen parents are also school dropouts before they become pregnant, and 50% of teen mothers become pregnant again within two years although this number is lower for teens who return to school. In Manitoba, 52% of unmarried adolescent mothers are Aboriginal.¹²⁷

“The thing that helps me when I am feeling down and wanting to give up, is to stay with my son while he is sleeping. It gives me the encouragement to keep going and to do the best that I can.”

Young Aboriginal father talking about his experiences

Due to the difficulty obtaining information on young fathers, members of the United Way Aboriginal Task Group held a focus group/sharing circle with eight Aboriginal fathers; most were in their early twenties and two were in their thirties.

The majority of the fathers had attended a ten-week, young father’s program at the Ma Mawi Wi

Chi Itata Centre during the previous year. They stressed that participating in the young father’s program had contributed to their success as fathers and made a difference in their lives and the lives of their children. The key themes that emerged during the focus group are presented below:

- When asked if they knew anyone who is a good father, the majority of the focus group participants identified an extended family member such as an uncle, brother-in-law, or friend as being a good father while none identified their own fathers as being good. Participants said that good fathers show respect, listen to their children and treat them equally, they provide for their children and tune into them, and they acknowledge and support their children.
- On asking young fathers what makes fatherhood difficult, the majority of participants said that the lack of caregiving support, particularly the difficulty they have accessing daycare and babysitters, makes it difficult to be a father. They also said that a lack of support from family and other systems when children are sick makes fathering difficult. One single father talked about his frustration: “I have been looking for daycare for my son for the last year. I have been on waiting list after waiting list and I am still waiting for a daycare to get back to me. The hardest part is that there are no supports out there for me to go to as a single Aboriginal father.” Overwhelmingly, participants emphasized the need for programs and resources that would help Aboriginal fathers develop their parenting skills and provide them with emotional supports.

- In discussing the things that make it easy to be a father, the young fathers mentioned understanding the developmental needs of their children and the importance of connecting and bonding with them and having positive, loving interactions. The fathers also stressed the importance of learning about Aboriginal culture and sharing values with their children. One single father shared his experience with the group: “The thing that helps me when I am feeling down and wanting to give up, is to stay with my son while he is sleeping. It gives me the encouragement to keep going and to do the best that I can.”
- When asked how, over the years, they saw the father’s role changing, there was a general acceptance that among participants that that men are taking and will continue taking responsibility for caregiving roles. The young fathers talked about the way that violence had impacted their lives and how they as fathers would protect their children from recurring violence. The major theme emerging from the discussion on fathers’ roles was the stress associated with the lack of daycare and lack of programs for fathers.
- To the question about why they felt some fathers were not involved with their children, the most common response focused on the lack of role models that the men experienced in their own lives and how this affected their ability to care for their own children. Several young fathers said they did not know what was required for appropriate caregiving; for example, they did not understand children’s developmental needs. Others responded by identifying issues ranging from the impact of residential schools to the loss of freedom and the influence of drugs and alcohol.

VI. SUCCESSES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

A number of initiatives, including those highlighted below, engage youth in community activities and acknowledge their successes and contributions:

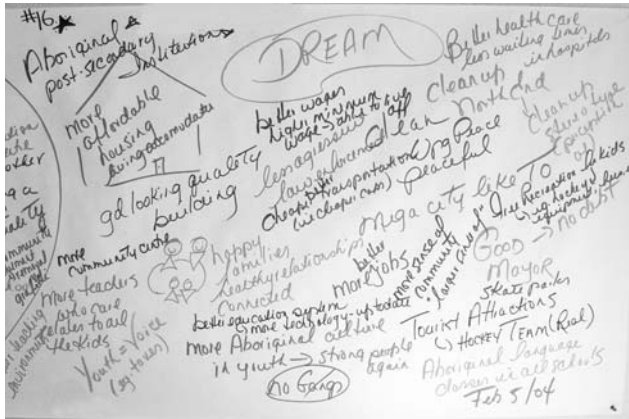
- **Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards** is an annual event that began in 1994 “to recognize the outstanding achievement of Manitoba’s Aboriginal Youth who exhibit high standards of excellence, dedication, leadership and accomplishments in the following areas: Academic, Athletic, Artistic, Cultural, Community/Volunteer, Business/Entrepreneurial, Personal Achievement, and Employment in a Traditional Field.”¹²⁸
- **Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Career Awareness Committee (MAYCAC)** was formed in 1987 to provide Aboriginal youth with positive Aboriginal role models. The Committee has four objectives: “promoting positive Aboriginal role models; providing employment, mentorship and work experience opportunities; encouraging early career planning; and providing career information.”¹²⁹
- **Winnipeg Aboriginal Youth Advisory Committee (AYAC)** “is a non-partisan, representative group of urban Aboriginal youth, aged 15 to 29 in Winnipeg. Its role includes proposal review and selection, as well as making funding recommendations to the Minister of Canadian Heritage.”¹³⁰

VII. PLANNING AN ALTERNATIVE TOMORROW WITH HOPE

On February 5, 2004, eleven Aboriginal youth participated in a Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) process at United Way. The PATH process provided the youth with an opportunity to share their dreams

for the future of Winnipeg, to describe how Winnipeg looks today, to identify challenges, to define ways to make Winnipeg stronger, and to outline first steps towards their dream for Winnipeg's future.

Aboriginal youth envision a future that offers equitable opportunities for them to live successfully, that builds on the diversity of the Aboriginal community, and that recognizes their cultural values. They would like to see families having access to affordable recreation, transportation and housing; an education system that respects and



promotes Aboriginal culture and includes Aboriginal languages, history, customs, traditions, and heritage in the curriculum; an Aboriginal institute for post secondary education; happy families and healthy relationships; and a safe, clean community without gangs.

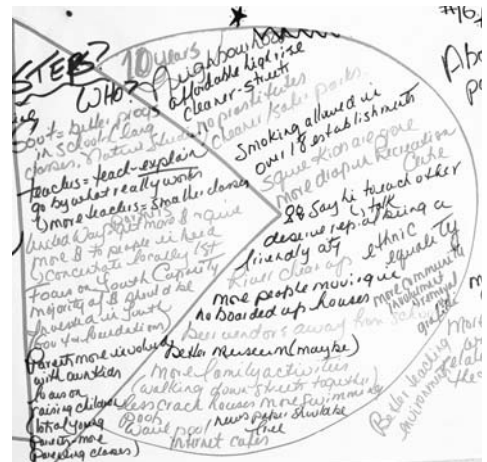
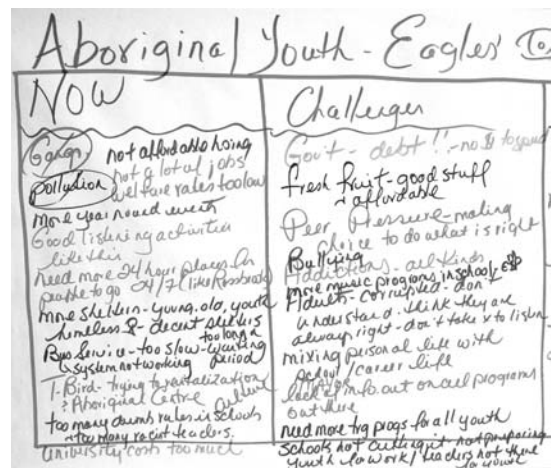
Aboriginal youth described Winnipeg today as having gangs, pollution, a shortage of affordable housing, a lack of employment opportunities, racism in school, and few recreational activities.

The youth identified the following challenges to achieve their dream: government, peer pressure, the education system, addictions, and communication.

For Winnipeg to become stronger, the Aboriginal youth see the need for real opportunities that provide them with the necessary skills, abilities and information to take advantage of the full range of education, training and employment possibilities. In addition, they would like a voice in

debates about their future and potential solutions.

Aboriginal youth believe that the first steps toward their dream for Winnipeg's future would be to provide more prevention and intervention programs, change the education system to include Aboriginal culture and language, increase parental involvement, and provide more government and other funding for programs that strengthen and encourage capacity building among Aboriginal youth.





Adults – our caregivers

Adults include women and men aged twenty to fifty-four years. This section looks at population statistics, educational attainment, culturally relevant services, and employment. It also identifies challenges facing Aboriginal adults.

I. POPULATION NUMBERS

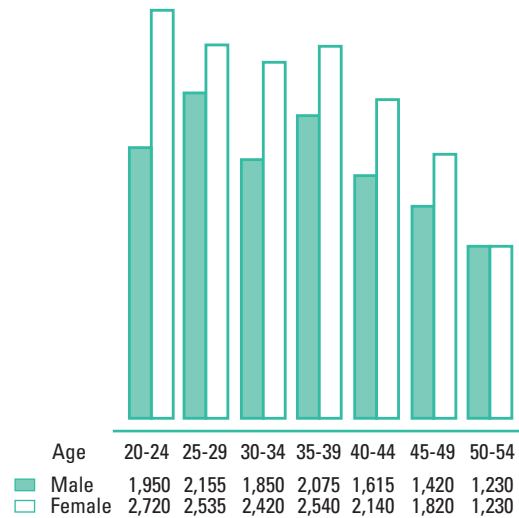
The 2001 Census found that there were 27,710 Aboriginal people living in Winnipeg aged 20-54.

In 1996, 13% of non-Aboriginal single parents living in Winnipeg were aged 15-29 compared to 33% of Métis single parents and 37% of Status Indian single parents.¹³¹

In 1996, over 60% of non-Aboriginal single parents in Winnipeg were over age forty, compared to 33% of Métis and 24% of Status Indians.¹³²

Data from the 2001 Census shows that 63.6% of non-Aboriginal single parents were forty years of age or older compared with 32.1% of Aboriginal single parents. Almost 20% of Aboriginal single parents were under the age of twenty-five in 2001, representing 39.3% of all single parents in Winnipeg under twenty-five years of age.¹³³

2001 URBAN ABORIGINAL ADULT POPULATION (20-54 YEARS OLD) IN WINNIPEG



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, *Aboriginal Population by Age & Sex by Aboriginal Group*, Winnipeg CMA, 2001

II. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Recent data from the 2001 Census shows that 10.4% of Aboriginal adults 25-44 years of age were attending school full time compared with 5.4% of the non-Aboriginal population 25-44 years of age.¹³⁴ Among Aboriginal groups, 7.2% of Métis 25-44 years of age and 14.9% of North American Indian adults 25-44 years of age were attending school full time in 2001.¹³⁵

In 2001, 39.2% of Aboriginal adults in Winnipeg aged 25-44 years held a post-secondary degree, diploma or certificate.

Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2001, Table # 97F0011XCB01043

In 2001, 39.2% of Aboriginal adults 25-44 years of age held a post-secondary degree, diploma or certificate compared with 29.7% of all Aboriginal adults in Winnipeg. Among Aboriginal groups, 42.9% of Métis adults 25-44 years of age had obtained a post-secondary degree, diploma or certificate in 2001 compared with 34.5% of North American Indian adults in this age group.¹³⁶

The most common field of study for Aboriginal adults obtaining post-secondary education in 2001 was applied science technologies and trades with 25.2% of Aboriginal students. Commerce, management and business administration was the next most common field of study with 23.3% of students followed by social sciences and related fields with 14.2%. Among Aboriginal groups, 27.2% of Métis post-secondary students were studying applied science technologies and trades compared with 22.0% of North American Indian students. Commerce, management and business administration accounted for 23.0% of Métis students and 23.4% of North American Indian students in 2001.¹³⁷

Early in 2003, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives conducted a study of Aboriginal learners attending five adult learning centres (ALC) in Manitoba. The researchers interviewed seventy-four Aboriginal adult learners and twenty staff and discovered that

The main factors contributing to their (adult learners') success include the holistic and learner-centred approach to instruction adopted by the ALCs...; the strong social, emotional and practical supports provided to learners; the warm, highly personalized and non-hierarchical atmosphere that prevails in the alcs; the dedication, even passion, of teaching and other staff; and the friendly, non-judgmental and respectful manner in which adult Aboriginal learners are treated...Many adult Aboriginal learners told us they feel much more comfortable in the ALC...than they did in their previous school experiences.¹³⁸

The study also found that Aboriginal learners appreciate Aboriginal cultural practices being part of "the educational strategy at an ALC and where such practices are not present, they are desired by many Aboriginal learners."¹³⁹ The research report includes several recommendations including a call for additional funding for adult learning centres, creating more opportunities for staff and students to learn Aboriginal culture and history, and hiring Aboriginal staff where possible.¹⁴⁰

III. CULTURALLY RELEVANT SERVICES

Several Winnipeg organizations provide culturally relevant services for Aboriginal adults including the following:

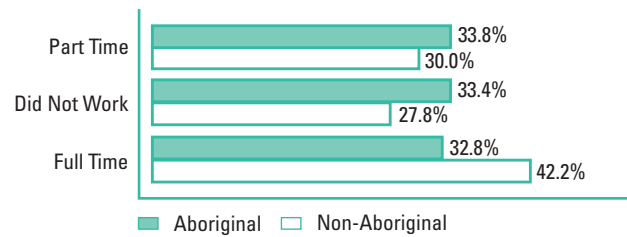
- **Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc.** is a shelter for abused Aboriginal women and their children.
- **Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Inc.** was established in 1984 and operates as a community resource centre that provides a variety of culturally relevant preventive and supportive programs and services for Aboriginal families. For example, Ma Mawi's young fathers program deals with self-awareness and self-esteem, anger management, child development, cultural teachings, and other topics.
- **Native Addictions Council of Manitoba** provides traditional healing services to members of the First People who are actively seeking assistance for their addictions.
- **Native Women's Transition Centre** is a safe house for Aboriginal women and their children who need long-term supports and services.

IV. EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

The 2001 Census found that 32.8% of Aboriginal adults in Winnipeg worked full-time, 33.8% worked part-time, and 33.4% did not work. As shown in the chart opposite, Aboriginal adults are more likely to work part-time than are non-Aboriginal adults.

Of the 22,945 Aboriginal adults over age fifteen employed in 2001, the largest portion (27.8%) worked in sales and service; 19.8% worked in business, finance, and administration; and 18.0% worked in trade and transport. As shown in the table below, seven other industries each accounted for less than 10% of employed Aboriginal adults.¹⁴¹

WORK ACTIVITY FOR ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL ADULTS 15 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, WINNIPEG 2001



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2001, Table #97F0011XCB01047

V. CHALLENGES FACING ABORIGINAL ADULTS

In his report titled *Aboriginal People In Manitoba 2000*, Bruce Hallett notes that the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry “found that Aboriginal people in 1990 comprised over half of all inmates in Manitoba’s provincial and federal correctional institutions, and conservatively estimated that Aboriginal adults in Manitoba were six times as likely to be incarcerated as non-Aboriginal adults.”¹⁴² Between 1950 and 2000, the Aboriginal proportion of Manitoba’s prison population increased from 10% to 70% in 2000.¹⁴³

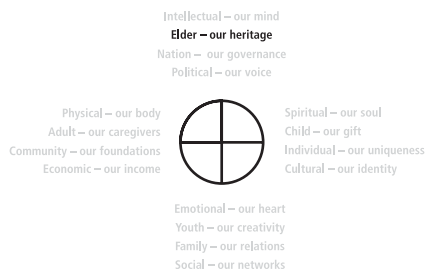
In its final report, the Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission included the results of a one-day snapshot of Manitoba’s prison population taken on September 6, 2000, which found that 63.4% of incarcerated adult males were Aboriginal (731 of 1,153 inmates) and 73.2% of incarcerated adult females were Aboriginal (41 of 56 inmates).¹⁴⁴ The Commission’s final report includes four recommendations to reduce the number of Aboriginal people involved with the justice system:

- Greater participation by Aboriginal people and Aboriginal communities is required at all stages in the justice system.
- Justice system personnel need to understand better the impact of normal system practices on Aboriginal people.
- Steps must be taken to improve the economic and social conditions of Aboriginal people.
- Children, youth, and the family should be a particular focus of services and programs.¹⁴⁵

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY ABORIGINAL ADULTS 15 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, WINNIPEG 2001

Industry	Number employed	% employed
Processing / manufacturing	1,920	8.4
Primary industry	425	1.9
Trade & transport	4,135	18.0
Sales / service	6,390	27.8
Art / culture / recreation / sport	550	2.4
Social science / education / govt. service & religion	1,920	8.4
Health	1,010	4.4
Natural & applied sciences	690	3.0
Business / finance / administration	4,550	19.8
Management	1,355	5.9
Total	22,945	100%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2001, Table #97F0011XCB01045.



Elders – our heritage

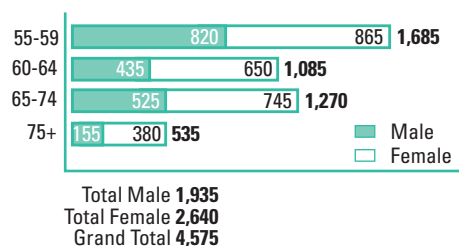
Elders include men and women aged fifty-five and older. At this age, Aboriginal men and women are concerned about passing on knowledge to younger generations. Some elders are wise teachers who have unusual insights; while others have general knowledge based on their lifetimes of experience. This section considers both groups under the headings population numbers, income levels, and elders with special gifts.

I. POPULATION NUMBERS

At the time of the 2001 Census, there were 4,575 Aboriginal people age 55 and older living in the Winnipeg Census Metropolitan Area. This is 3% of the total population of 151,530 people in this age group.

The population of Aboriginal seniors is growing: between 1996 and 2001 it increased 40% while the population of non-Aboriginal seniors in Canada increased by 10%.¹⁴⁶

ABORIGINAL ELDER POPULATION AGE 55+, WINNIPEG CMA, 2001



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001, *Aboriginal Population by Age & Sex by Aboriginal Group, Winnipeg CMA*

II. INCOME LEVELS

In 2001, the median income for Aboriginal females 65 years of age and over in Winnipeg was \$13,211, which was 83% of the median income of \$15,888 for the total female population over age 65.¹⁴⁷

In 2001, the median income for Aboriginal males 65 years of age was \$15,955, which was 64% of the median income of \$24,914 for the total male population in this age group.¹⁴⁸

In 2001, the low-income rate for Aboriginal seniors 65 years of age and over was 58.3%; this is almost double the 29.9% rate of low-income among non-Aboriginal seniors in Winnipeg.¹⁴⁹



III. ELDERS WITH SPECIAL GIFTS

The 1996 *Report of The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* described elders as follows:

Elders are respected and cherished individuals who have amassed a great deal of knowledge, wisdom and experience over many, many years. They are individuals who have also set examples, and have contributed something to the good of others. In the process, they usually sacrifice something of themselves, be it time, money or effort.

Elders have special gifts. They are considered exceptionally wise in the ways of their cultures and the teachings of the Great Spirit. They are recognized for their wisdom, their stability, and their ability to know what is appropriate in a particular situation. The community looks to them for guidance and sound judgement. They are caring and are known to share the fruits of their labours and experience with others in the community.¹⁵⁰

The *Report of The Royal Commission* goes on to say that “age itself does not make one an Elder. Most Aboriginal people have a special word or name for Elders that distinguishes them from what we would call senior citizens.”¹⁵¹

Aboriginal languages have special words for Elder. For example, the Ojibwa word is Kichenishnabe, meaning ‘Great People’.¹⁵² The Inuit use the word inutuqak to refer to elderly people and angijukquaqtigiit meaning ‘union of leaders’¹⁵³ to refer to Elders. The Métis Nation uses the title ‘Senator’ to recognize knowledge and insight much as First Nations use the word Elder.¹⁵⁴

4

SECTION

Spiritual, Emotional, Physical & Intellectual



Spiritual – our soul

Spirituality can have a number of meanings and may be defined and symbolized uniquely depending on Aboriginal group or culture. This section looks at the institutions and orientations that Aboriginal Winnipeggers use to attain and maintain spirituality in their lives. Although there is little research on spirituality from an Aboriginal perspective, one recent study looked at Métis women’s spirituality and this section includes a summary of its key findings.

I. SPIRITUAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORIENTATIONS

Members of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg belong to a variety of spiritual institutions ranging from Traditional to Christian. Traditional institutions and services incorporate practices like Pow Wows, singing, drumming, smudges, sweats, and sharing circles.

The Circle of Life Thunderbird House and Native United Church both use a holistic approach and Native United Church offers services in Oji-Cree every Sunday morning. Other organizations such as All Native Circle Conference offer a Christian outreach that incorporates Aboriginal practices.

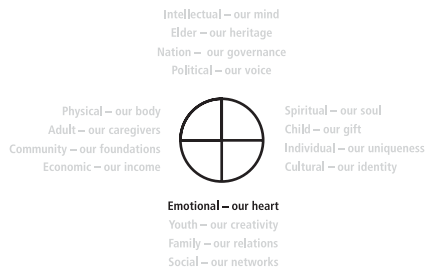
The following organizations are among the many that support the Aboriginal community’s spirituality:

- All Native Circle Conference
- Anishinaabe Fellowship Centre
- Diocesan Urban Aboriginal Outreach Ministry
- First Nations Community Church
- Native United Church
- The Circle of Life Thunderbird House

II. MÉTIS WOMEN’S PERCEPTIONS OF SPIRITUALITY

Research conducted by Judith Bartlett revealed that Métis women use prayer as their primary method for practicing spirituality. Some adult women said they were alienated from spirituality because of negative religious experiences that occurred early in their lives and because they were uncertain whether, as Métis, they could use indigenous historical ceremonies. Ultimately, most of the women stated that they came to understand that the method they use to practice their spirituality was not as important as becoming spiritually well – that no single approach to spirituality is superior to another.

Elder Métis women had not experienced the confusion that the younger women felt. Instead the Elders saw traditional spiritual practice as a powerful way to connect with one’s inner peacefulness. They described spiritually well individuals as having strength and resistance to adversity in difficult circumstances; being supportive, accepting, and non-judgmental; and caring for the spiritual needs of children.¹⁵⁵



Emotional – our heart

Emotions, or our feelings, are an important part of our inner life. A long history of colonization has negatively affected the emotions of many Aboriginal people. This section presents the types of organizations and activities that Aboriginal Winnipeggers access to support and enhance their emotional well-being and highlights recent research about Métis women’s perceptions of emotion.

I. SUPPORTIVE ORGANIZATIONS

The following is a brief overview of some organizations that provide emotional support:

- **Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre (AHWC)** is located in the Aboriginal Centre in Winnipeg. AHWC provides a range of primary health services that empower Aboriginal people to enhance their lifestyles through health and wellness programs that blend traditional and contemporary practices.
- **Eyaa-keen Centre Inc.** is a registered charity whose mission is “to provide traditional therapeutic training and holistic counselling and training to individuals, couples, and groups who, due to unresolved personal traumas, have been unable to progress from surviving in a chronic crisis mode to thriving and leading a healthy, productive lifestyle. To promote and facilitate personal and community development, healing and change.”¹⁵⁶ Eyaa-keen Centre Inc. is associated with BeingYou Inc., which was established in 1989 and supports “individuals from all walks of life.”¹⁵⁷ The organization’s services include group sessions on change, healing, and development and training programs for caregivers.
- **Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc.** is a “crisis shelter that provides safe accommodation, supportive counselling and advocacy to abused Aboriginal women and their children.”¹⁵⁸
- **Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Inc.** was established in 1984 and operates as a community resource centre that provides culturally relevant preventive and supportive programs and services for Aboriginal families.
- **Native Women’s Transition Centre** is a safe house for Aboriginal women and their children who need long-term support and services. The organization operates Memengwaa Place, a second stage independent living facility.
- **Native Addictions Council of Manitoba** provides traditional healing services to members of the First People who seek assistance with their addictions.
- **The Circle of Life Thunderbird House** has a resident Elder who provides spiritual healing and counselling to individuals and families.



- **Wahbung Abinoonjiiag** provides family violence programs for women who have recently left an abusive relationship and have children aged 0-6 years and programs for youth aged 7-17 years who have witnessed family violence.

II. MÉTIS WOMEN'S PERCEPTION OF EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

The Métis women who participated in a recent study by Judith Bartlett believe that no one has perfect emotional balance and that it is essential for people to quickly release their negative emotions. The women also believe that emotionally well individuals can identify feelings and understand their sources, accept emotions as part of the self, express feelings and keep others' feelings confidential, manage and control emotions in daily life, and understand that emotional well-being can only truly arise within one's self. Some Métis women also believe that emotionally well individuals are also spiritually well, free of drugs and alcohol, practice traditional activities, and act as positive emotional role models.¹⁵⁹



Physical – our body

Physical aspects of living include not only the body but also the natural and built environments. This section looks at health care use, health status, and health organizations. It also presents recent findings about Métis women’s perceptions of physical fitness and well-being.

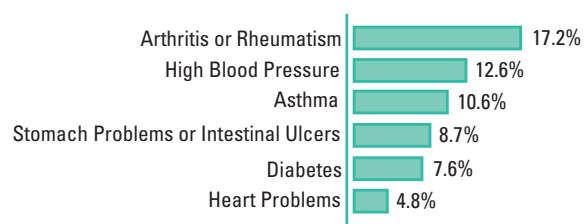
I. HEALTH CARE USE

A report by the University of Manitoba’s Aboriginal Planning Program notes that “Aboriginal people face many of the same medical issues as the general population. However, they experience greater rates (higher incidence) for a number of health problems including AIDS/HIV, diabetes, osteoporosis, fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), substance abuse, alcohol addictions, and suicide.”¹⁶⁰ The report also states that “Various factors affect the health and well-being of the Aboriginal community both on and off reserve. These factors include socio-economic disadvantages such as poverty; lack of employment opportunities; barriers to education; and overcrowded, substandard housing.”¹⁶¹

Statistics Canada’s 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey found that 16% of Aboriginal adults over age 15 in Manitoba say their health is fair or poor, 29% say it is good, and 55% say it is excellent.¹⁶² The survey also found that 8% of the Aboriginal adult population in Winnipeg had consulted with a traditional healer within a twelve-month period. Traditional healing is defined in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Perspectives and Realities*, as involving

practices designed to promote mental, physical and spiritual well-being that are based on beliefs which go back to the time before the spread of western, ‘scientific’ bio-medicine. When Aboriginal people in Canada talk about traditional healing, they include a wide range of activities, from physical cures using herbal medicines and other remedies, to the promotion of psychological and spiritual well-being using ceremony, counselling and the accumulated wisdom of the elders.¹⁶³

COMMONLY REPORTED CHRONIC CONDITIONS FOR THE ABORIGINAL IDENTITY NON-RESERVE POPULATION 15 YEARS AND OVER IN MANITOBA



Source: Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2001*, Table 2.5

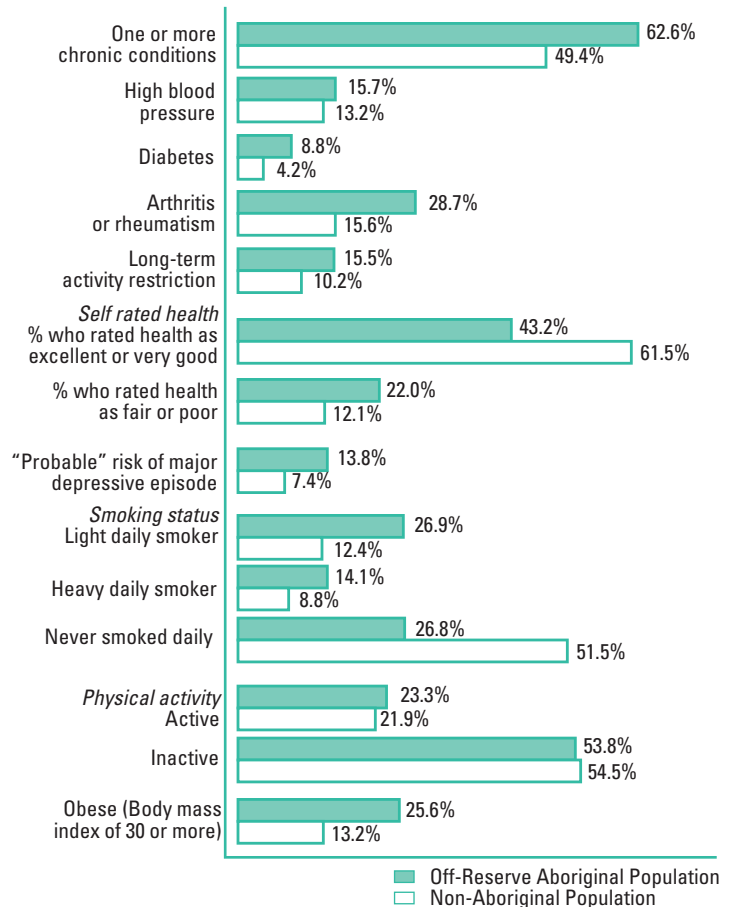
The final report of the Royal Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada, which was led by Roy Romanow, states that “The future of Canada’s health care system must reflect the values, needs and expectations of all Canadians, including Canada’s Aboriginal peoples. The poor health status of Canada’s Aboriginal peoples is a well-known fact and a serious concern not only to Aboriginal peoples but also to all Canadians.”¹⁶⁴

The Commission also noted that there is a “disconnect’ between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of Canadian society, particularly when it comes to sharing many of the benefits of Canada’s health care system” and points to five underlying reasons for this disconnect:

- competing constitutional assumptions,
- fragmented funding for health services,
- inadequate access to health care services,
- poorer health outcomes, and
- different cultural and political influences.¹⁶⁵

The urban Aboriginal population in Winnipeg is the largest in Canada and is expected to grow to 75,000 or 11% of the city’s total population by 2006.¹⁶⁶ As suggested in a report by the University of Manitoba’s Aboriginal Planning Program, “This rapid growth rate heightens the need for health-care related services as well as programs/initiatives that recognize the root of the problem and endeavour to find solutions.”¹⁶⁷

HEALTH INDICATORS AND DETERMINANTS FOR THOSE 15 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER IN CANADIAN PROVINCES FOR OFF-RESERVE SELF-IDENTIFIED ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL POPULATION



Source: Statistics Canada, 2000-2001 Canadian Community Health Survey

II. HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS FOR ABORIGINAL WINNIPEGGERS

Aboriginal Winnipeggers access medical services through the general health system, that does not always have the ability to meet cultural needs.

The following organizations provide health services and supports which are more culturally grounded, for members of the Aboriginal community:

- **Aboriginal Health Services, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA)** provides a variety of services including advocacy for Aboriginal patients, referrals to Traditional Elders or other spiritual care, and translation services in Ojibway, Cree, and Oji Cree.
- **Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre (AHWC)** is located at the Aboriginal Centre in Winnipeg and provides a range of primary health services that empower Aboriginal people to enhance their lifestyles through health and wellness programs that blend traditional and contemporary practices.

- **Centre for Aboriginal Health Research (CAHR)** is a joint initiative of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Manitoba, and the Foundations for Health. CAHR initiates, coordinates, and supports research activities to assist First Nations and Aboriginal communities and organizations to promote healing, wellness and improved health services in their communities.
- **First Nations Disability Office** provides peer support, advocacy and referral services to First Nations persons in Manitoba who live with visible and invisible disabilities.
- **Manitoba Métis Federation's Health Committee** oversees Aboriginal Community Continuing Care and the Breast Cancer Support Project and has participated in several initiatives including Diabetes: A Manitoba Strategy, consultations on the Manitoba Aboriginal AIDS Strategy, the Minister's Advisory Committee on Diabetes, the Manitoba Aboriginal AIDS Task Force and the Métis Survivor Wellness Project.¹⁶⁸

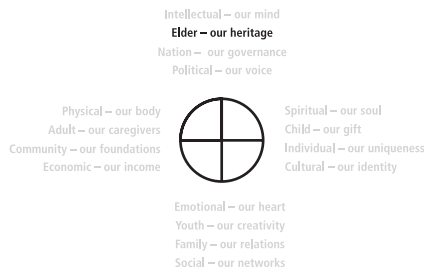
In addition to operating these health organizations, the Aboriginal community also consults and provides guidance to provincially run initiatives such as: Manitoba Health's Aboriginal Health Unit, the National Aboriginal Diabetes Association, Nine Circles Community Health Service, and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

III. MÉTIS WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

A research study conducted by Judith Bartlett in 2003, asked Métis women to describe *physical*. The Métis women believe that physical well-being relates to eating well and being physically active, feeling good in your own body, having energy to undertake basic daily activities, having optimum functioning of the body, and having access to a clean and safe environment.

The women's answers suggest that this is a source of great stress and anxiety. Most of the adult women did not consider themselves physically fit. Instead they felt discouraged and had a general dissatisfaction with their body image due to obesity and loss of their youthful vitality.

Elder women felt that the loss of independence that could result from physical problems motivated them to increase their physical activity. The elder women believe that physically-well individuals eat a proper diet, ensure that their children have adequate diets and nutrients, are physically active and fit, and work hard.¹⁶⁹



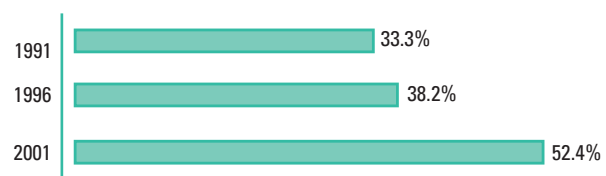
Intellectual – our mind

Intellectual (often referred to as mental) refers to the thinking part of existence. This section looks at educational attainment, the educational resources for Aboriginal Winnipeggers, and highlights from a study on Métis women’s perceptions of intellectual well-being.

I. EDUCATION LEVELS

Education levels among the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg are rising. The 1991 Census found that 33.3% of Aboriginal adults aged 15 and over had completed grade twelve or higher. By the 1996 Census, the number of Aboriginal adults who had completed grade twelve or higher rose to 38.2% (compared to 61.2% of the general population)¹⁷⁰ and by 2001 it had increased again to 52.4% of Aboriginal adults (compared to 69.4% of non-Aboriginal adults.)¹⁷¹

PERCENT OF ABORIGINAL ADULTS AGE 15 AND OVER WITH A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION OR HIGHER, WINNIPEG



Source: Census data

In 2001, more than half (55.4%) of Métis 15 years of age and over in Winnipeg had at least a high school education and 48.3% of North American Indians in Winnipeg had a high school degree or better in 2001.¹⁷²

In Winnipeg, 35.9% of Aboriginal youth 15-24 years of age had a high school degree or higher in 2001 compared with 58.2% for non-Aboriginal youth.¹⁷³

Data from the 2001 Census shows that 65.5% of Aboriginal adults 25-44 years of age in Winnipeg had a high school education or more compared with 83.0% of non-Aboriginal adults 25-44 years of age. Among Aboriginal adults 45-64 years of age, 51.7% had a high school education or higher compared with 72.9% of non-Aboriginal adults in this age group. Among Aboriginal groups, 55.4% of Métis adults 15 years of age and over had a high school education or higher in 2001. This rate drops to 40.8% for Métis adults 15-24 years of age but increases to 69.7% for Métis 25-44 years of age. Just under half (48.3%) of North American Indians 15 years of age and over in Winnipeg had a high school education or more in 2001. Among North American Indian youth 15-24 years of age the rate of high school or higher drops to 28.9% while among those 25-44 years of age the rate increases to 60.2%.¹⁷⁴

2001 data show that 9.1% of Aboriginal adults 15 years of age and over complete high school but obtain no further education. Among Aboriginal adults who do pursue post-secondary education, 22.4% have a trade or college degree or certificate while 6.0% obtain a university degree. Among Aboriginal groups, 12.4% of Métis adults held a trade degree or certificate in 2001 compared with 9.4% of North American Indians. Just over 1% of Métis and 1.6% of North American Indians had a college degree or certificate while the proportion of Métis and North American Indians who had a university degree was 6.0% in 2001.¹⁷⁵

II. EDUCATION RESOURCES FOR ABORIGINAL WINNIPEGGERS

Education resources for Aboriginal Winnipeggers include the following:

- **Aboriginal Community Campus** operates in partnership with Winnipeg Technical College, the University of Manitoba, and Red River Community College to provide education opportunities to Aboriginal youth.
- **Aboriginal Education Directorate** operates within Manitoba Education and Youth and Manitoba Advanced Education and Training and provides leadership and coordination for departmental initiatives in Aboriginal education and training.
- **Aboriginal Literacy Foundation Inc.** is a learning and literacy program for Aboriginal adults.
- **Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development (CAHRD)** operates in partnership with Morris Macdonald School Division, the University of Winnipeg, and Red River Community College. Through this partnership, CAHRD has provided an opportunity for education and training for over twenty years.
- **Manitoba Indian Education Association** provides academic, financial, and social counselling services for First Nations high school and secondary students.
- **Red River Community College** has an Aboriginal Student Services department, which includes an Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer who helps current and prospective Aboriginal students with program planning, registration and other academic, personal and career concerns. The College also has an Aboriginal Education program that offers one and two-year programs such as the Aboriginal Language Specialist program and the Aboriginal Self-Government Administration program.¹⁷⁶
- **Urban Circle Training Centre, Inc.** provides a holistic approach to training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.

ABORIGINAL ADULTS 15 YEARS AND OVER, EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, WINNIPEG CMA 1996 & 2001

Education level	1996	2001	Change 1996-2001	% Change 1996 - 2001
Pop. 15 years & over by highest level of education	29,125	37,220	8,095	27.8%
Less than grade 9	4,190	4,150	-40	-1.0%
Grade 9 - 12 without graduation certificate	11,610	13,565	1,955	16.8%
Grade 9 - 12 with graduation certificate	2,730	3,370	640	23.4%
Trades certificate or diploma	645	1,005	360	55.8%
Other non-university education only	5,910	8,860	2,950	49.9%
University without degree	2,830	4,040	1,210	42.8%
University with bachelor's degree or higher	1,200	2,240	1,040	86.7%

Source: Special tabulation of Census of Canada 1996 & Community Data Network, *Target Group Profile*, Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2001.

- **University of Manitoba** offers courses in Native Studies, has an Aboriginal Focus Program of courses within its Faculty of Continuing Education, and has an access program to make the university more accessible to Aboriginal students. The University also has an Aboriginal Student Centre that is “dedicated to the creation of an educational environment that includes the affirmation of Aboriginal cultures, values, languages, history, and way of life.”¹⁷⁷
- **University of Winnipeg’s** Aboriginal Student Services Centre “was created not only to address the issues and needs of the Aboriginal students on campus but also to develop a stronger link with the Aboriginal community.” The Centre’s services include academic, financial, and personal advising, orientation, and liaison with Aboriginal organizations.¹⁷⁸

Aboriginal studies programs in Canadian universities have attracted Status Indian and Inuit students to university and college studies. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has provided funding for research and development of post-secondary level programs for Aboriginal peoples through its Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP).¹⁷⁹

III. MÉTIS WOMEN’S PERCEPTIONS OF INTELLECTUAL WELL-BEING

When Métis women described *intellectual/mental* during a research study conducted by Judith Bartlett, they said it involved the mind, learning, and remaining curious about life. There was no perceived connection between age and intellectual well-being as the women believe that remaining intellectually active is a lifelong activity and that increased age is not an excuse for allowing interest in life to lapse or to become intellectually inactive.

The women who participated in the study believe that intellectually well individuals learn from reading and reflecting each day, are open to new ideas or out-of-the-box thinking, respect others’ views, are advanced and at ease in both their thinking and abilities, are rapidly adaptable to circumstances, respond with creative ideas, and attain higher education despite difficult life experiences. Some stated that elders who can teach and learn both old and new information are intellectually well.¹⁸⁰

Closing Comments

In this document, the Aboriginal Task Group has presented an *Eagle's Eye View* of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. This community is young; vibrant; growing; aware of, and successfully addressing, many of the challenges and opportunities it faces. The Aboriginal community has had, is having, and will continue to have a significant and increasing impact on the demographic, economic, cultural, political, and social fabric of Winnipeg.

The task group encourages readers to consider what the information in this document means to them and to share and discuss it with others. We hope that *Eagle's Eye View* will stimulate important conversations in our city.

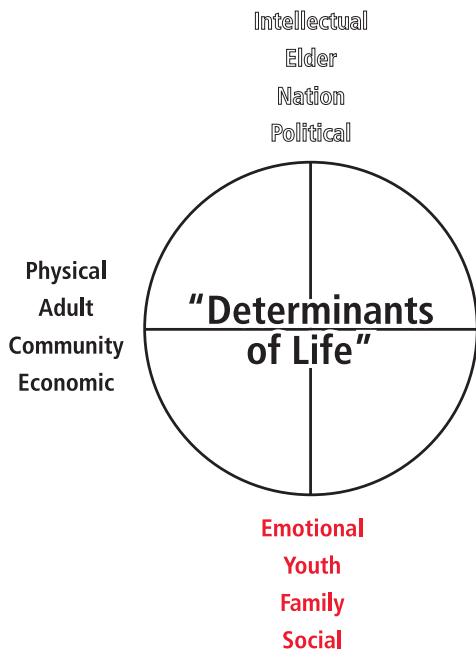
Appendix 1

Aboriginal Life Promotion Framework[©]

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After examining two possible frameworks for organizing the information in the *Eagle Eye View*, the Aboriginal Task Group selected the holistic, culturally- based Aboriginal Life Promotion Framework[©] (ALPF)^(c). I first developed this framework in 1994 as a response to the Winnipeg Aboriginal community’s request for a *culturally relevant holistic* health centre. To articulate the term holistic, I constructed the framework to combine what in

contemporary language is referred to as medicine wheels. Historically, these wheels were stone structures constructed on the plains of North America and consisting of a large, central cairn from which spoke-like lines radiated^(g). Although the historical purpose of these wheels is uncertain, this has not prevented Aboriginal development of creative new medicine wheel applications.



spiritual	emotional	physical	intellectual
child	youth	adult	elder
individual	family	community	nation
cultural	social	economic	political

The ALPF is presented here in two forms – a circle and a matrix. The colours of the four directions are a symbolic representation for inclusion of all peoples of the world.

Contemporary medicine wheels are circles containing variable components for organizing ideas and information. Embedded within is the *circle of life* concept; a belief commonly held by Aboriginal peoples that all things are intricately connected and of equal importance to the well-being of the whole. The underlying philosophy is that of *seven sacred teachings*, which are principles of living that include sharing, caring, kindness, honesty, respect, trust and humility. After searching to determine how medicine wheels were being used by Aboriginal communities today^(a,e,f,h), I brought together four such wheels. The resultant sixteen elements of human existence are equally important to the quality of one’s life and can be thought of as ‘Determinants of Life’.

Widely used is the first circle containing the spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual elements of life; less commonly seen is the fourth circle containing the cultural, social, economic and political elements. All four circles that form the ALPF have been used as Aboriginal components of holistic health and well-being for some years^(a,f,h). The idea of attaining, restoring and maintaining a sense of balance, as part of wholeness and a way of life, is an important Aboriginal concept⁽ⁱ⁾ that underlies this framework. “Well-being encompasses balancing the spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual aspects of life, by a child, youth, adult, or elder, who live as individuals, members of families, communities, and nations, within the context of cultural, social, economic, and political environments”^(s). In viewing the elements of the ALPF, the best way to ensure a holistic approach is to move each element in turn to the centre of the circle. This clearly presents a visual cue and conscious awareness that each element exists relative to and is influenced and affected by the other fifteen elements. Consciously viewing such integration will help to ensure attention is directed to understanding that whatever action is taken will affect the whole.

The ALPF can be used for individual, group or community profiling, assessment or planning, as well as for program development and research. It can support understanding of both individual and societal levels of existence within a single simple yet comprehensive picture. The framework also helps us to become aware of the essential need for an integration or connectedness between the society and the individual^(b). Program and policy development, and even personal development, must consider the relationship between and impact on all elements, and must be approached concurrently from both individual and societal perspectives.

For this scan the Aboriginal Life Promotion Framework’s[©] use is restricted to organizing existing information. At the same time, an important benefit of the Framework is that it can *facilitate exploration and understanding* of such information, and recognition of the essential balance that each elements has in relation to every other one. This document has been constructed to stimulate creative discussion on such relationships and connections, and to provide a reasonably complete picture that balances challenges with strengths of the Aboriginal community as a vibrant sector of Winnipeg.

In summary, the Aboriginal Life Promotion Framework[©] provides an organized approach to thinking about important elements of living. It supports individuals and groups to examine strengths and challenges from a holistic perspective that is grounded in Aboriginal cultural understandings. During one of the very early meetings of the Aboriginal Task Group, Reverend Stanley McKay stated, “*Interdependence is a higher form of human existence than independence*”. This is a most important principle that I hope is understood as inherent to the Aboriginal Life Promotion Framework[©].

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Eagle's Eye View

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