



# Aboriginal Business Development Centre Aboriginal Community Development Centre

“Action is The Key”

Provincial Aboriginal Business of the Year – 1999  
National Economic Developer of the Year Award - 2002

## National Network for Urban Aboriginal Economic Development

You are invited...

To a two day gathering to kick off our SSHRC project “National Network for Urban Aboriginal Economic Development”.

### **The need**

Many of us – academics, practitioners, community members and government employees – are engaged in the work of studying, developing and building sustainable economies in urban Aboriginal communities. In doing so we have discovered that this area of work is a unique field of practice, with specific questions, challenges and innovations. Until now we have all been working in isolation or in small groups, but not in a specific national network, where we can share information, explore innovative thinking and create projects together. Furthermore, there is a compelling need to move beyond the work we have been doing to date and to find the next level of projects, study, thinking and practice that will create the conditions for new solutions to emerge.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), in a funding partnership with the Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Metis and Non-Status Indians, has provided the resources to finally do so. A small steering committee has been working diligently to create the conditions for us to all come together across disciplines and areas of practice to talk about and initiate a community of practice on these issues. It is our intention that we meet to discuss areas of common ground and experience and to initiate a three year learning process that will advance the field of urban Aboriginal economic development to a new level.

## **Our purpose and principles**

You are invited to be with us in Ottawa on October 28 and 29, 2008 as we explore the following purpose together:

- To set up learning circles across the country;
- To build relationships between participants from government, academia and community practice;
- To set the foundations for a network that will grow over the next three years;
- To identify areas of common ground in practice, policy and academic inquiry;
- To invite your participation and commitment to the project.

In designing this gathering, we have chosen to operate from the following principles:

- There are no spectators – this gathering is participatory and we invite you to come and stay *for the full two days*.
- Share information openly. Everything we are working on, everything we need is to be shared openly with each other.
- We are inclusive and value everyone's knowledge equally. We don't know where we will find the pieces that will help move us forward, and therefore participation from all voices is important.
- Our learning is based in an Aboriginal multi-generational and cultural context, meaning that we invite the energy and vision of youth, the wisdom of Elders and the capacity of everyone else to help find our way forward.
- Keep it simple. We are operating in a multi-stakeholder environment and jargon and lingo has a way of getting in the way of communicating. Please come as you are and seek to connect with others on the most simple human level.
- Get ready to stretch. We are creating something new and this doesn't happen without stretching into unfamiliar territory. We invite a principle of staying with the challenges – and the not knowing and uncertainty – that comes with the work of pursuing clarity and innovation.

## **Our work on October 28-29**

Our work together on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of October will result in the following:

- Active regional and multi stakeholder learning circles up and running by the end of 2008.
- An advisory committee in place, drawn from those who have an especially strong calling to help guide this work.
- A website usable as a tool for information sharing and social network support.
- A mechanism and set of proposals so the academic work can be funded.
- Beginning to build documents and build the national network.

In all of this work we recognize that the collective intelligence is most important to tap. We will combine a series of information sessions with participatory process that will lead us into strong working relationships and tangible results. As we move closer to the meeting, we will send more information about the approaches we are developing and the participants who are joining us.

### **Logistics**

This workshop will take place at the Delta Ottawa Hotel and Suites. As there is limited funding available to support this gathering, we are asking you to book in advance to get the best airfares possible. Please book your flights with Uniglobe Travel at 1-800-753-0553. When you speak with the travel agent please identify yourself with ABDC. Please note that if you choose to book the flight on your own you may not get reimbursed. Hotel rooms are reserved at the Delta under ABDC. You can reserve your room by calling 1-800-268-1133. Both the airfare and the hotel will be billed directly to ABDC.

As this workshop is an important kickoff event for our network, it is important that everyone who agrees to participate also agrees with the principle that you will participate for the entire two days. As such we ask that you book your flight times so that you are able to arrive and depart with plenty of time to attend the session for both days.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Network Coordinator, Laura Blumhagen via phone or email ([SSHRC@bcgroup.net](mailto:SSHRC@bcgroup.net)). Laura will be in contact with you over the next couple of weeks to confirm your attendance.

Sincerely

Ray Gerow  
President/CEO  
**Aboriginal Business Development Centre**  
**Aboriginal Community Development Centre**

Greg Halseth  
Director  
**Community Development Institute**  
**University of Northern BC**