

# MEETING IN THE MIDDLE: PROTOCOLS AND PRACTICES FOR MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH INDIGENOUS PARTNERS AND COMMUNITIES

Shelter, Support and Housing Administration

## BACKGROUND

Due to the distinct experience of trauma, historical and ongoing relationship with Canada, it is imperative that Indigenous peoples – First Nations, Inuit and Métis people – are engaged in a way that promotes Indigenous sovereignty and well-being. Nation-to-nation engagement is engrained into significant teachings and treaties such as the Two-Row Wampum<sup>1</sup> and The Dish with One Spoon<sup>2</sup>, which highlight the significant nature of relationships and meaningful engagement amongst Indigenous nations. Canada is a product of nation-to-nation engagement through the treaties which makes it critical that these agreements are upheld in all levels of government work.

The City of Toronto has made commitments that Indigenous communities will be engaged in a holistic manner that ensures Indigenous peoples are included in the decision-making process and Indigenous capacity is being built (Commitments to Indigenous Peoples<sup>3</sup>). Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) co-created the [Meeting in the Middle Engagement Strategy and Action Plan](#) (*Meeting in the Middle*) with the Toronto Aboriginal Support Service Council (TASSC) and the Indigenous Community Advisory Board (CAB) to identify actions to more meaningfully address Indigenous homelessness in Toronto. *Meeting in the Middle* is based on the importance of building strong, trusting, and reciprocal relationships as a foundation for the action plan. One of the key commitments in the strategy is to ensure that Indigenous peoples are being engaged in a way that is inclusive, holistic and promotes Indigenous sovereignty and well-being. Advancing the actions in the strategy are key priorities for SSHA and staff have a key role to play in engagement with Indigenous communities.

## PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to outline protocols and safe practices that SSHA staff are expected to follow when engaging with Indigenous partners and communities. It is not intended to be an all-encompassing and definitive resource but a starting point for staff in engaging and working with Indigenous partners and communities. This guidance should always be obtained through consultation with the Indigenous CAB,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://honorthetworow.org/learn-more/history/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.indiantime.net/story/2010/08/05/cultural-corner/the-dish-with-one-spoon/7510.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/indigenous-affairs-office/commitments-to-indigenous-peoples/>

the *Meeting in the Middle* policy lead, and/or the Indigenous Affairs Office. In addition to following the protocols in this document, staff seeking to engage with Indigenous partners and communities should review broader commitments and actions in *Meeting in the Middle* that all SSHA staff are expected to uphold.

## ESTABLISHING A FOUNDATION FOR ENGAGEMENT

SSHA is committed to respecting self-determination and self-governance and seeks to build strong, respectful and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities. It is hoped that better relationships and engagement will result in services that are more responsive and appropriate and more effectively address Indigenous homelessness in Toronto.

*Meeting in the Middle* articulates the significance of engaging in a holistic, inclusive, and meaningful way. This is the overarching framework that should guide your work. As an employee of the City of Toronto and SSHA you are representing a relationship between Indigenous peoples, the organization, and the Division. Not following appropriate engagement protocols can impact the work you and others are doing within SSHA and the City and can damage relationships with Indigenous partners and communities that have taken significant time and care to build.

### Understanding and Respecting Diverse Cultures and Nationhood

- As identified by the Government of Canada, there are three populations collectively identified as being Indigenous in North America: First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. Within these three categories there are a diversity of nations with distinct languages, cultures, teachings, and traditions. When engaging, it is important to acknowledge and honour these differences.
- It is also important to acknowledge that Indigenous identity and history is complicated and there are many different opinions/perspectives.
  - Even within one nation there can be a diversity of teachings and stories that may differ from one another. It is not Indigenous thinking to assert a certain perspective as the "right" one but rather to work towards understanding these different perspectives.
- Indigenous peoples are diverse and developing a strong relationship with the communities will allow for deeper understandings of this diversity and how best to engage with them.
  - Depending on the community, engagement may be done differently to accommodate and acknowledge the specific gifts of diverse groups and the specific roles they play in these communities. For example, people with disabilities or people who identify as Two-Spirited are examples of the diversity in roles that certain populations achieve among certain communities.
- While this document is a general outline for engagement, always keep in mind that the different nations have distinct protocols and procedures. Further, it is

important to understand that this concept of Indigeneity is not exclusive to people or groups specifically from this region or from Canada but to all Indigenous people who trace their ancestry to Turtle Island (North America).

## Consider Why You Are Engaging with Indigenous Communities

- Indigenous sovereignty and decision-making is a constitutionally protected right and, as such, engagement with Indigenous peoples should not be viewed as stakeholder work.<sup>4</sup>
- Consider the nature of the work that you are doing and thoroughly assess your social location.
  - Social location is a concept that is imperative in understanding how age, social class, gender, race/ethnicity, settler status, culture, sexual orientation, ability etc. influences who you are, self-perception, your interactions/relationships with others, opportunities and outcomes.<sup>5</sup>
  - Staff must understand that this work can only be done when you critically reflect on your power and privilege and how this impacts your relationships with Indigenous peoples.
- Canvas the Indigenous communities and other City staff to ensure no one else is undertaking this work. Staff should be sensitive to the research and consultation demands placed on Indigenous organizations and communities who may not be able to take on new work, especially if they cannot demonstrate how it will directly benefit the lives of Indigenous people and communities.
- Engagement must come from a good place and not be task or outcome-driven. The intent of good engagement is a meaningful process that ensures all voices are being uplifted, heard and incorporated into the findings and final product.
- The outcomes of engagement should remain focussed on collective community knowledge, adding value to the lives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, building capacity and reflecting cultural ways of knowing.

## Building Good Relationships with Indigenous Communities

- Relationships are the foundation for good engagement. Extra care needs to be invested in establishing and sustaining good relationships with Indigenous partners. This ground work takes time but it will strengthen outcomes in the long-term.
- Remember that you are developing a relationship with both individual people and communities at large.
- To begin a relationship you must be committed to upholding your end of the process; to maintain a reciprocal relationship, all partners should be contributing. Indigenous partners should not be engaged to delegate work to.
- Be authentic about who you are. Creating personal connections with others or communities is a good way to build relationships. However, it must be done in a

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ictinc.ca/why-aboriginal-engagement-isnt-stakeholder-engagement>

<sup>5</sup> <http://sociologyinfocus.com/2015/11/so-youve-been-told-you-need-to-check-your-privilege-now-what/>

way that shows you are working towards creating a strong relationship and not looking to speed up the process.

- Attempting to connect with Indigenous communities by referring to your Indigenous friends or acquaintances can appear one dimensional and insincere.
- It is not advised to attempt to make connections based on blood quantum or pass as an active Indigenous community member if you are aware of potential Indigenous ancestry in your family history but are not aware of what Nation, community or teachings are associated with this ancestry.<sup>6,7</sup> Indigenous ancestry is a more complex concept than blood quantum or family "stories" and goes into deeper themes of lived experience, family history, teachings and community connectivity.
- Relationships can be built in non-intrusive and respectful ways by attending community gatherings like feasts, pow-wows and other Indigenous-led community events. Also consider attending more formal events like annual meetings hosted by Indigenous partner organizations.

## KEY CONTACTS/PARTNERS TO CONSULT IN EARLY STAGES

There are some key partners who SSHA staff seeking to engage Indigenous communities should consult and involve early on in their projects.

### Indigenous Community Advisory Board

- SSHA has established a respectful, trusting, and reciprocal relationship with the Indigenous CAB and TASSC through the process of co-creating *Meeting in the Middle*. The CAB is the body that SSHA has been asked to engage with around strategic policy, planning and program development.
- The Indigenous CAB was formed in 2008 for the express purpose of assisting the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle (the Toronto Community Entity administering federal Indigenous Homelessness Partnering Strategy/Reaching Home funding) in decision-making to ensure the needs of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness in Toronto are met.
- The CAB gathers every two months for purposes of networking and communication in order to address issues of mutual interest and/or concern, striving to adhere to each individual organizations' protocol and/or mandate. The Indigenous CAB is made up of Indigenous organizations providing housing and homelessness supports services (see Appendix A for membership). It also includes representatives from SSHA and Service Canada.
- Engagement with the CAB should be considered in your project's timelines. Multiple meetings with the CAB may be needed in order to obtain advice.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2015/10/chokeberry-blood-why-do-so-many-americans-believe-they-have-chokeberry-ancestry.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/the180/least-important-election-the-case-to-stop-changing-the-clocks-and-the-problem-of-dna-as-proof-of-culture-1.3834912/sorry-that-dna-test-doesn-t-make-you-indigenous-1.3835210>

- The CAB requests that all presenters complete an online presentation request form to assist in understanding the request and evaluating whether they are the appropriate group to consult with (See Appendix B).
- The CAB has articulated the importance of engagement with SSHA senior management (i.e., 'executive to executive engagement'). If you are attending a CAB meeting, it is respectful for your Director to also be present.
- It is important to remember that while the CAB can provide strategic advice and guidance, meeting with this group should not replace consultation with Indigenous communities, service providers and clients.
- Finally, if a project is already underway and there has been no/limited/poor engagement with the CAB or Indigenous communities, this should not preclude engagement altogether. Acknowledge the lack of engagement and commit to moving forward in a more inclusive and meaningful way.

## City of Toronto Indigenous Affairs Office

- In 2017, City Council endorsed the establishment of an [Indigenous Affairs Office](#) (IAO) within the City Manager's Office. The creation of this office was also requested by the Aboriginal Affairs Committee and the Indigenous community in Toronto.
- The IAO is focused on supporting City divisions in their work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and all urban Indigenous communities. The IAO strives to strengthen the City's relationships with Indigenous communities and support City staff in advancing reconciliation.
- The IAO provides focused and coordinated leadership and guidance on Indigenous affairs to ensure that City programs and policies are responsive to the needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit partners across the city, our Treaty partner and local First Nations.
- While SSHA has been asked to engage with the Indigenous CAB, there are cases where it may be appropriate to engage with the IAO, particularly if the project or issue is interdivisional in nature. It is also important to ensure our work aligns and supports the strategic directions of the IAO.

## SSHA Meeting in the Middle Policy Lead

- The SSHA policy lead for *Meeting in the Middle* is the first person you should reach out to if you are considering engaging with the CAB, the IAO, or Indigenous agencies and communities.
- The policy lead already has a well-established relationship with both the Indigenous CAB and the City's IAO. The Indigenous CAB has asked that communication and engagement with the CAB is coordinated through this lead.
- The policy lead can provide advice to ensure your project aligns with commitments in the *Meeting in the Middle* and, if appropriate, can facilitate a connection to the CAB and/or IAO as appropriate.

## RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

The following section outlines principles and safe practices for engaging with Indigenous communities. It is important to note that these are guidelines and not definitive practices that will be appropriate in every situation. This is why it is important to build a relationship with the Indigenous communities and seek their advice on appropriate engagement.

### Principles and Safe Practices

1. **Understand the historical and current colonial context** and how this impacts Indigenous communities and your own power and privilege as it relates to Indigenous people. Take cultural competency/safety training and spend some time reading about the history of Tkaronto<sup>8</sup>, Residential Schools<sup>9</sup>, The Indian Act<sup>10</sup>, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission<sup>11</sup> and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples<sup>12</sup>. It is also helpful to review TASSC's Research Terms of Reference (available upon request) and understand the principles of OCAP<sup>13</sup>, USAI research framework<sup>14</sup> and the Tri-Council Policy Statement<sup>15</sup> before engaging in research or community work.
2. **Engagement with Indigenous peoples should be on a nation-to-nation basis** and not viewed as stakeholder work. Indigenous sovereignty and decision-making is a constitutionally protected right.<sup>16</sup> Indigenous communities have an inherent right to self-determination. This means holding distinct engagement sessions with Indigenous partners, organizations and communities (in addition to inviting these groups to mainstream consultations).
3. **Engagement must be mutually beneficial.** Benefits must not only consider SSHA's mission, values and priorities but also that of Indigenous communities and agencies impacted. Ensuring the needs of the community should be the foundation of good engagement, not the needs of the project. It is important to be transparent about the benefits this process will have for Indigenous communities, agencies, researchers, SSHA and the City of Toronto.
4. **The process of engagement should not do any harm and should benefit Indigenous communities.** Indigenous people have historically been over-researched and consulted. As a result, many communities and organizations

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/a-defining-moment-for-tkaronto/article18432992/>

<sup>9</sup> [https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the\\_residential\\_school\\_system/](https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the_residential_school_system/)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/indian-act>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.trc.ca/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://ocap.ca/about/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://ofifc.org/publication/usai-research-framework-utility-self-voicing-access-inter-relationality>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/default/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.ictinc.ca/why-aboriginal-engagement-isnt-stakeholder-engagement>

may not be receptive to research or consultation unless there is direct benefit for Indigenous organizations and communities.

5. **"Nothing about us without us."** Indigenous partners have emphasized the importance of policy, planning and program development being Indigenous-led or co-created in recognition of Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination and autonomy. This approach will ensure that the work is grounded in an Indigenous perspective, follows appropriate protocols, and better addresses the needs and priorities of Indigenous communities.
6. **Good engagement is a process that focusses on relationship-building.** Engagement is an ongoing, reciprocal and cyclical process that involves continually holding up the principles and protocols in this document as well as those identified by your partners. Consider how you will know whether you have done good consultation work and how will you obtain this feedback. How will it be determined that effective engagement has occurred and the opinions of Indigenous communities have been heard and understood?
7. **Engagement should begin early in your project** and continue throughout all stages of the project (from project initiating, planning, implementation, reporting back to communities, and evaluation). Do not engage Indigenous partners and communities after you have already developed your project/proposal expecting a stamp of approval. This shows that you are not interested in relationship-building or consultation. In some cases, you must be prepared to have multiple meetings to ensure the community has been thoroughly informed as to the findings of the consultation.
8. **Engagement is not outcome-based** and will not necessarily result in Indigenous peoples agreeing with your intentions or goals or supporting your work. Using appropriate engagement is a relational practice and not a sway opinions of communities.
9. **Community engagement is a must.** There is no individual who represents the collective opinions of Indigenous peoples. It is not appropriate to invite a single Indigenous person to your engagement session and expect them to speak on behalf of Indigenous communities – this is why holding distinct engagement sessions with Indigenous communities is so critical.
  - Just because a certain approach or form of engagement worked with one group/community does not mean it will work another. While it is helpful to draw on previous engagements, remember that there is no 'one size fits all' approach.
  - Take time to learn and understand the concerns of the community. Often the community will raise concerns that will strengthen your work and the well-being of the community.

10. **Be clear and transparent about time and/or resource constraints.** Staff may be involved in projects that have time, resource or other constraints (e.g., legislative constraints, work being led by another City Division/level of government, City Council direction) or have taken on a project that is already underway. Be clear about your timelines and constraints and if, as a result, there are limits to the extent of engagement, so that Indigenous partners can make an informed decision about their involvement in the project. Having an existing positive relationship with Indigenous partners can help overcome constraints.

## Learning Circles/Engagement Sessions

- Many Indigenous communities use a learning circle format when engaging in teachings or consultations. Circles are holistic and can help alleviate power dynamics or imbalances ensuring space for every participant to speak.
- The learning circle will follow certain protocols that will vary depending on the teachings of the Indigenous community. Working in partnership with Indigenous partners will ensure that these protocols are followed.
- Key elements include:
  - Having an Indigenous consultant, facilitator and/or organization plan and deliver (alone or in partnership with SSHA) the learning circle/engagement session to ensure it is grounded in an Indigenous perspective. Consult with the Indigenous CAB around who might be appropriate to do this work.
  - Inviting an Elder/knowledge keeper/traditional teacher to provide an opening and closing to ensure the engagement session begins and ends in a good way. Elders have different teachings, therefore it is best to get a recommendation from Indigenous partners for an Elder.
  - Holding the session at an Indigenous space or a space comfortable and convenient for Indigenous partners and communities.
  - Consulting potential participants for dates/times that work best for most, including coming to part of an existing meeting.
  - Ensuring that food is provided to promote relationship-building.
- As much as learning circles promote inclusive dialogue to lift up the voices of Indigenous people, SSHA staff supporting these sessions should still be fully engaged in the process, including:
  - Coming to the learning circles prepared to engage, answer questions, and discuss. It is appropriate to have some potential ideas/options for discussion however, make sure there is room for consideration of input, changes, or new options.
  - If you are engaging with Indigenous communities and are not willing to shift control and/or co-create then consider your intentions for engagement.
- Often learning circles will begin with smudging or burning of sacred medicines. If you are not in a space where smudging regularly takes place, engage with Facilities staff ahead of time to ensure provisions are in place.
- In some cases it may be more appropriate to hold individual interviews rather than a larger gathering, which can be helpful in starting the relationship-building



process. Concepts and protocols of the learning circle are still applicable even in an interview format.

- Some community members may not be comfortable or physically able to attend a gathering; however, these members should not be excluded from the consultation process.
- Indigenous peoples are aware of what their communities need to thrive. Engagement sessions should be approached from a place of mutual collaboration of how to actualize these understandings.
  - Findings of these engagement sessions should be reported back to the CAB and communities, even in situations where priorities/projects change.
  - Data/results from engagement sessions and research should remain with the Indigenous community as stewards of the data.
  - Cultural knowledge that is incorporated into the research process should not be commodified but respected at every stage of the process and be controlled by the community.
  - The community or host agency reviews and approves the final report.

## Engaging Elders and Knowledge Keepers

- Tobacco is one of the sacred medicines used by many (but not all) Indigenous nations. Tobacco is a way of giving thanks and communicating with the Creator. For this reason it is imperative that tobacco is offered in exchange for knowledge.
  - Tobacco is critical to many Indigenous nations and is symbolic of entering into a relationship.
  - If you have offered tobacco to an Elder/Knowledge keeper/community then you must be truly committed to the relationship.
  - Offering tobacco does not replace financial reimbursements for consultation or time. Honoraria should be provided to acknowledge time and sharing of knowledge.
- Tobacco is offered at the beginning of sessions as it is a symbolic gesture and spiritually appropriate in starting in a good way.
- Although certain Elders and Knowledge Keepers will accept different types of tobacco, the safest practice is to offer traditional ceremonial tobacco and not industrialized tobacco which will have other chemicals in it.<sup>17</sup>

## Youth Engagement

- Youth are highly valued in many Indigenous cultures. Among Anishinaabe people, children and youth hold up a specific quadrant of the Medicine Wheel Teachings<sup>18</sup>. Because of this, there is space created so that youth can contribute to decisions. In addition, Anishinaabe teachings speak of the importance of considering the impact of decisions on the next seven generations.
- Youth must be engaged in a different way and still included in major decisions.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://carleton.ca/indigenous/resources/tobacco-offering-protocol/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://saymag.com/the-seven-lessons-of-the-medicine-wheel/>

- Youth should feel confident that their input will be valued and make difference in the outcomes.
- Youth engagement should be done separately to ensure their voices are being heard. Often youth representation is diminished to one or two spots on a larger committee.
- Ensure youth are being financially compensated for their work.
  - Youth engagement sessions should be held in a comfortable space and it is advised to provide food as well
  - This may also include a tobacco offering as some youth may be identified as a Knowledge Keeper among their communities.

## SUMMARY

This document is designed to assist staff in understanding SSHA's commitment to meaningful engagement with Indigenous partners and communities and provide guidance on principles and practices when working with Indigenous peoples in Toronto. By no means are all of the barriers and safe practices included in this document. Many of the barriers/concerns can only be identified through developing a relationship with Indigenous partners. Further, although the focus of this document is on strategic engagement, many of the concepts and principles are applicable in front-line situations when developing a relationship with service-users. This document is designed to give you an entry point in creating these relationships and engaging in a good way.

## Resources:

### **Meeting in the Middle Strategy and Action Plan:**

Engagement strategy and action plan co-created by SSHA and Indigenous organizations to identify commitments and actions to more meaningfully address Indigenous homelessness in Toronto.

[Meeting in the Middle Engagement Strategy and Action Plan](#)

### **City of Toronto Commitment to Indigenous People:**

The City of Toronto's commitments to reconciliation, engagement and capacity building with Indigenous communities in Toronto.

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/indigenous-affairs-office/commitments-to-indigenous-peoples/>

### **Indigenous Affairs Office:**

City of Toronto established the IAO in 2017 out of a need to ensure Indigenous knowledge and approaches were being used, honoured and incorporated into the work that City staff are completed. The IAO has multiple mandates/missions as detailed on their webpage.

<http://insideto.toronto.ca/indigenous-affairs-office/about.htm>

### **Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council:**

TASSC is an Indigenous research, policy and advocacy organization that is mandated for Indigenous organizations and communities in Toronto.

<http://www.tassc.ca/>

### **Toronto For All: Indigenous Peoples of Tkaronto Campaign:**

Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC) and the City of Toronto launched a public awareness campaign to raise awareness about Toronto's Indigenous heritage and the resilience of Indigenous Peoples in Toronto. The campaign was created in consultation with TASSC's Community Advisory Committee, which is comprised of members from various Indigenous communities. The website invites people to participate in the sacred act of acknowledging the Indigenous land on which Toronto or Tkaronto, derived from Iroquois language for the place where trees stand in water, was built.

<http://www.torontoforall.ca/indigenous-peoples-of-tkaronto/>

### **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada:**

Created to ensure the stories of those affected by Indian Residential Schools would not be lost but continued to be acknowledged. TRC findings have been a pinnacle turning point in engagement with Indigenous peoples in Canada.

<http://www.trc.ca/>

**United Nations the Declaration of on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:**

A critical turning point in the global recognition and rights of Indigenous peoples. This document is especially important in a Canadian context as Canada initially voted against the declaration out of concern over "free, prior and informed consent." It was eventually endorsed in 2010.

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>

## Appendix A: List of Indigenous Community Advisory Board (CAB) Member Agencies

- Anduhyaun Inc. <http://anduhyaun.org/>
- Gabriel Dumont Non-Profit Homes
- Infinity Property Services <http://www.infinitypropertyservices.ca/>
- Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training <http://miziwebiik.com/>
- Native Canadian Centre of Toronto <https://ncct.on.ca/>
- Native Child and Family Services of Toronto <https://www.nativechild.org/>
- Native Men's Residence (Na-Me-Res) <https://www.nameres.org/>
- Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto <http://nwrct.ca/>
- Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council <http://www.tassc.ca/>
- Toronto and York Region Metis Council <http://www.torontoyorkmetis.com/>
- Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre <https://www.councilfire.ca/>
- Wigwamen Inc. <http://www.wigwamen.com/>

# Appendix B: Indigenous CAB Presentation Request Form

The CAB Presentation Request Form will assist the Indigenous CAB in understanding your request and whether the Indigenous CAB is an appropriate group to consult with. The form will also assist you in understanding the key values and deliverables supported by the Indigenous CAB.

## Introduction to the Indigenous CAB of Toronto

The Community Advisory Board (CAB) was formed in 2008 for the expressed purpose of becoming the vehicle for the Aboriginal community in Toronto in the decision-making of the Homeless Partnership Initiative (HPI) Fund, through Service Canada. The CAB gathers every other month for the purposes of networking and communication in order to address issues of mutual interest and/or concern; thereby striving to adhere to each individual organizations' protocol and or mandate. The Indigenous CAB is made up of Indigenous organizations providing housing, shelter, and housing support. It also includes representatives from Services Canada and the City of Toronto.

## Meeting in the Middle Engagement Strategy

The Meeting in the Middle Engagement Strategy and Action Plan sets out expectations for relationship-building and partnerships between Toronto's Indigenous organizations and the City of Toronto's Shelter Support and Housing Administration. The Indigenous CAB requests that all presenters review this report prior to completing the Request to Present Form.

## Presenting to the Indigenous CAB

The CAB is most interested in hearing from presenters under the following circumstances:

- A) When the presentation aligns and/or supports the mandate of the CAB.
- B) When the information provided/requested has a direct effect on the lives of Indigenous people who face homelessness, risk of homelessness, or in need of adequate housing. The priority groups are individuals and families living or moving to Toronto.
- C) When the information provided/requested has a direct effect on Indigenous shelters, housing providers, or housing support programs in Toronto.

If your presentation meets any of the above categories, please continue to answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

1. What is the main request being asked of the CAB?

2. What new information can the CAB expect to gain from your presentation?
3. Does your presentation consider direct and indirect benefits/challenges to Indigenous people facing homelessness or lack of housing in Toronto?
4. Does your presentation consider direct and indirect benefits/challenges to Toronto's Indigenous shelters, housing providers, or housing programs?
5. Is there any information you would like the CAB to gather prior to the presentation?
6. What, if any, commitments would be requested of the CAB members to consider?
7. Is your presentation time sensitive?
8. Do you plan on consulting other Indigenous groups? If so, which ones?
9. Are you willing to report back to the Indigenous CAB on any follow up items coming out of your discussion with the CAB?
10. Members of the Indigenous CAB will review the form to decide if your presentation is a good fit with the priority areas. What is the best way to follow up with you?