

ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

Program Area:	3.0	Business Development
Sub Program:	3.3	Programs Sponsored by Government and Non-Profit Agencies
Template:	3.3.3	Aboriginal Business Services Network (ABSN)
Sponsor(s):	<i>Western Economic Diversification, Industry Canada, Alberta Economic Development</i>	

1. Objective

To provide the Aboriginal business community with a wide range of information on government services, programs and regulations that is accurate, relevant, and up-to-date.

The ABSN was established to provide a range of business products and services, using information and Internet technologies where possible. This service is supported through the Canada Business Services Centres which provide free-of-charge access to this information.

2. Description

The ABSN was created by the Aboriginal Business Development Initiative launched by the federal government in April 1999 to improve business development opportunities for Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

The ABSN project consists of the development of products and the delivery of training in support of three strategies aimed at increasing the number of Aboriginal businesses participating in the Alberta economy. These strategies are:

- Develop and maintain a database of business service providers to the Aboriginal community
- Increase awareness of business opportunities for Aboriginal entrepreneurs and develop new and enhanced products to support business development and management
- Provide training and resources to business service providers in an effort to improve their effectiveness when dealing with Aboriginal entrepreneurs and businesses

Specific products available through the ABSN website include Aboriginal programs and services; federal, provincial and territorial programs and services; business information guides; Alberta Aboriginal business service providers database; Aboriginal Albertans in Business series; and other information.

3. Implementation

ABSN builds on the structure of existing Canada Business Service Centres located across the country which provide free-of-charge access to information on business programs, services and

regulations. Resources are accessible by phone, fax, email, the Web and walk-in sites. The ABSN in Alberta is committed to serving clients throughout Alberta. To provide wider access to Aboriginal-specific resources, six mini ABSN sites have been established in Alberta.

Each mini ABSN site has a display stand that profiles the products and services of Alberta ABSN and specific information for Aboriginal clients. The mini ABSN sites are also equipped with a collection of Aboriginal-specific books and a trained ABSN representative.

The locations for mini ABSN sites were selected based on their geographic coverage, proximity to Aboriginal communities, and their expressed commitment to serve their Aboriginal clients' business needs:

- Calgary Business Information Centre
- Fort McMurray Regional Business Development Centre
- Lac La Biche Regional Community Development Corporation
- Lakeland Community Development Corporation, Bonnyville
- Lesser Slave Lake Community Development Corporation, Slave Lake
- Mackenzie Economic Development Corporation, High Level

4. Timeframe for Results

Ongoing.

5. Measurable Criteria

- Number of clients
- Number of referrals
- Client feedback

6. Budget

Currently under review.

7. Partners and Sponsors

The ABSN is built upon the Canada Business Service Centres and is managed through federal-provincial cooperative agreements that provide a single, seamless gateway to information for business. In Western Canada, these centres are part of Western Economic Diversification's service delivery network.

Other partners include Alberta Economic Development, Industry Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

8. Experience with the Program

Successful in providing information.

9. General Applicability

ABSN provides access to information on business programs, services and regulations that may be

useful to Aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs, and to industry in mentoring, partnering or working with Aboriginal businesses.

10. Additional Information or Support

Access through the Western Economic Diversification website: www.wd.gc.ca under "Business Tools and Guides", then "Points of Service"

Or access through the Canada Business Service Centres website: www.cbsc.org/alberta under "Aboriginal Business Service Network"

Or access through the Alberta Mini ABSN Sites:

Calgary Business Information Centre, Genevieve Casault, 205 Standard Life Building, 639 - Avenue SW, Calgary, AB T2P 0M9

Fort McMurray Regional Business Development Centre, Mr. Rick Fiedosiewich, Manager, #102, 9816 Hardin Street, Fort McMurray, AB T9H 4K3

Lac La Biche Regional Community Development Corp., Mr. Kal Polturak, Manager, P.O. Box 2188, Lac La Biche, AB T0A 2C0

Lakeland Community Development Corp., Ms. Phyllis Maki, Manager, P.O. Box 8114, 5006 - 50 Avenue, Bonnyville, AB T9N 2J4

Lesser Slave Lake Community Development Corporation, Ms. Edie Spagrud, Executive Director, P.O. Box 2100, 105 - 6 Avenue NW, Slave Lake, AB T0G 2A0

Mackenzie Economic Development Corporation, Liz Goodrich, Community Development Coordinator, 10005 - 100th Avenue, High Level, AB T0H 1Z0

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