

ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

Program Area:	2.0	Workforce Development
Sub Program:	2.4	Programs Sponsored by Government and Non-Profit Agencies
Template:	2.4.15	Taking Pulse Program
Sponsor(s):	<i>National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF)</i>	

1. Objective

To increase Aboriginal workforce participation while simultaneously addressing the 70-per-cent high school drop-out rate among Métis, First Nations and Inuit youth.

2. Description

In 2001, the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF) launched a bold new initiative called Taking Pulse. The program resulted from consultations with the lead corporate sponsor, TransCanada PipeLines Ltd., that grew into a broad-based consultation connecting educators, provincial and federal officials, private sector representatives and Aboriginal people. Two programs were identified to address the various social and economic issues facing Aboriginal youth across Canada.

Industry in the Classroom. This initial offering in the Taking Pulse Program is designed to challenge students to consider career options in industries that are expected to experience skilled labour shortages. Industry in the Classroom concentrates on careers in several sectors, including transportation, justice, finance, information technology, health, and energy, among others. The program is intended to help with recruitment within these growth industries and to help youths develop a strong sense of self worth while becoming valued contributors to Canadian society. The program includes a video plus a curriculum portion lasting approximately two and a half hours.

Rivers to Success: Youth at Risk. This initiative is a unique and collaborative multi-option program to motivate and facilitate the return to school or work of Aboriginal at-risk youth who have dropped out within three years prior to entering the program. The primary target group, therefore, is Aboriginal youth aged 15-19. The secondary target groups are students under 15 and youths aged 19-25. The program provides students who have dropped out with the tools and new coping mechanisms they will need to become school- and/or work-ready. Recruited youth will be streamed into one of three optional program areas deemed most appropriate to their immediate needs and their willingness and ability to participate.

3. Implementation

Some of the key elements for implementation and management of this program are:

- The scope of the program will initially be limited in order to retain effective growth

management and gain early success for future expansion.

- The needs of the community are diverse and beyond what any one program can provide; the key is to stay focused on a specific client group, meet their needs and avoid playing the numbers game and trying to solve all the ills faced by Aboriginal youth. NAAF and Taking Pulse will remain committed to service delivery within a targeted group aligned with NAAF's core competencies, expertise and strengths.

4. Timeframe for Results

The first module of the Industry in the Classroom program was delivered to 50 schools across the country. The response from both students and teachers was overwhelmingly positive. To date, three additional modules have been developed and it is anticipated they will be delivered to schools during the 2005-2006 academic year. The Rivers to Success program is still in the early stages of development and requires additional funding in order to be successfully implemented.

5. Measurable Criteria

These include:

- Number of graduates completing high school and coursework
- Decrease in unemployment rates among Aboriginal youth
- Increase in the number of students enrolling in education programs related to employment
- Number of students completing post-secondary
- Increased private sector/community partnership activities and improved community relations for companies engaged in the Taking Pulse programs

6. Budget

Program development is still under way. Part of this is determining how much each program will cost and these figures have not been finalized.

7. Partners and Sponsors

The five lead corporate sponsors are: TransCanada PipeLines, Canadian National Railway Company, CIBC, Suncor Energy Inc., and Hewlett-Packard. Phase II has 16 private sector sponsors, including Nexen Inc., Flint Energy Services Ltd., and Precision Drilling Corporation. There are six provincial and territorial sponsors, including Alberta, and six federal government departments, including Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Industry Canada and Natural Resources Canada.

8. Experience with the Program

NAAF has 20 years of experience in developing programs for Aboriginal youth making it the leader among its peers in Aboriginal programming in Canada.

This program's success will be made possible by partnerships with industry, where the majority of jobs reside for the growing pool of Aboriginal labour. Youth comprise the largest portion of the Aboriginal community, which is the fastest growing segment of Canadian society. All NAAF programs are designed to increase the connection between this growing pool of talent and the industry players that will require their skills.

9. General Applicability

Taking Pulse is transferable to other companies and industries and others interested in decreasing the Aboriginal drop-out rate and unemployment.

10. Additional Information or Support

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