

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:	2.4.2	Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program
Sponsor(s):	<i>Keyano College Foundation, Royal Bank Foundation</i>	

1. Objective

To strengthen the entrepreneurship skills and business management capacity of Aboriginal people in the Wood Buffalo region, without their having to leave their jobs or relocate their families.

2. Description

The main goals of the program are:

- To foster success in individuals through education and training focused on entrepreneurial knowledge and skills in an Aboriginal context
- To support the development of successful businesses with an Aboriginal context
- To contribute to the success of existing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses with the skills obtained in this program
- To meet the needs of current entrepreneurs, individuals who wish to become entrepreneurs, and those currently employed
- To deliver meaningful, practical learning in an Aboriginal context

Current employees of Aboriginal companies will benefit from this program and enhance their opportunities to advance within their current firms or prepare them to start new businesses. The program will improve their business knowledge and skills in an environment that is supportive and sensitive to the needs of Aboriginals in a business environment. The program is designed to meet the learning needs of individuals who are:

- Currently employed or have experience in the workplace
- Working in Aboriginal businesses that would benefit from additional skills in business and entrepreneurship in support of their organization
- Experienced in both business and knowledge of their communities
- Require a non-traditional delivery format due to work and family commitments

Course Descriptions

Ten courses are offered as described below:

The Spirit of New Enterprise ABEN 100 - Getting Started: An introduction to the Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program and the development of preliminary skills and knowledge including a self assessment, research skills, sectoral studies, mentoring and an overview of Aboriginal business issues and business planning.

ABEN 103 - Communications: Development of effective writing and reading skills with progression to oral and written communication including listening skills, presentations, giving and receiving feedback, business writing including letters, memos and reports.

ABEN 106 - Marketing for New Business Ventures: An introduction to marketing for new and developing businesses including market research, sectoral studies and the development of a marketing plan. Prerequisite: ABEN 100 or consent of the program chair.

ABEN 109 - Personal/Management Skills: Development of personal and interpersonal skills including goal setting, leadership and management skills, coaching and mentoring, and a personal development plan.

ABEN 112 - Finance for Aboriginal Business: Analysis of the funding challenges and opportunities for Aboriginal business. Introduction to numeracy skills applied to the topics of money management and budgeting. The ABEN Micro-Credit Committee will meet with the students in class and provide an overview of available start-up micro-loans upon completion of the program.

ABEN 115 - Small Business Accounting and Bookkeeping: Development of numeracy through an introduction to accounting and related standard software packages; set up of a small business accounting system; development of skills for organizing and maintaining information and data.

ABEN 118 - Business Law: Introduction to business law including legal forms of business, contracts and contractual obligations, liabilities, insurance and bonding, and the legal issues related to Aboriginal business activity.

ABEN 121 - Human Resource Issues: Recruiting, selecting and training staff, relationships with staff, team work, dealing with difficult people, dealing with family and band members.

ABEN 124 - E-commerce for Small Business: Introduction to e-commerce including websites, electronic tendering and internet research.

ABEN 127 - The Business Plan: Finalizing the business plan using standard software. The business plan will be a synthesis of business strategy, marketing, human resources and financial management. Students will prepare a presentation for the ABEN Micro-Credit Committee for assessment.

3. Implementation

Applicants must possess an Alberta high school diploma or equivalent or mature student status. Mature students 21 years of age or older are encouraged to apply. They may be admitted as special students if they have a recommendation from a current employer, have previous

experience in the workplace, or are currently entrepreneurs. All applicants must meet with the ABEN coordinator to be accepted into the program.

The coordinator assists the instructors and facilitators in seeking guest speakers, mentors, and sponsorship for students. The coordinator also helps with promoting the program, providing support for students and interviewing potential students, and works with program technical support staff regarding alternative delivery.

4. Timeframe for Results

Students are encouraged to complete the entrepreneurship program within two years. However, due to some employment or business situations, students may be allowed to continue for an additional period of study.

5. Measurable Criteria

Courses are graded on a pass or fail basis. The 10 program courses require students to complete a variety of assignments, homework, quizzes, final exams, projects and presentations (including Power Point and video conferences). The quality of the final program product (the business plan) will ultimately determine what amount of start-up funding the student will receive for the business concept.

6. Budget

Students registered for nine credits or more in a single academic year (July 1 to June 30) will be charged full-time tuition fees (2005/06: \$1,653 per semester) plus associated costs including books and supplies, registration fee, recreation and athletic fee, and student association fee.

Students taking fewer than nine credits in a single academic year will be assessed on a part-time, per-credit basis (2005/06: \$157 per credit) plus the associated costs.

7. Partners and Sponsors

The Keyano College Foundation has accepted the responsibility of working with community partners to raise the operational funding needed to deliver this program. The foundation is committed to partnering with corporations, organizations and individuals who value Aboriginal education and want to impact the lives of students throughout northeastern Alberta.

The Royal Bank Foundation is the major sponsor for the program. The following organizations have provided guest speakers and mentors: Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association (NAABA), Syncrude Canada, Mrs. Yanik (Elder), The Business Link, Chase Construction, Business Development Bank of Canada, Petro-Canada, Encana, Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc., Acree Fashion Designs, Pastew Place Detoxification Centre. Syncrude Canada, Suncor Energy and Northern Alberta Development Council have provided sponsorship towards some of the students' tuition and books.

8. Experience with the Program

The Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program is unique to Alberta post-secondary institutions and has generated strong interest from individual Aboriginal students, First Nations organizations, tribal councils, Métis associations and Inuit organizations.

The first intake of students was in February 2003. Fifteen students registered and there was a

wait list to enter the program. Of the 15 students, 11 have continued with the program. The other four students will continue at a later date, as they are all currently operating businesses. All the students have given positive feedback to the coordinator and report receiving value from the courses. In the 2004/2005 academic year, there were 18 students and two graduates.

9. General Applicability

This program may be of interest to companies wanting to strengthen the business and entrepreneurial skills of their employees or to mentor Aboriginal businesses that are suppliers to the company.

10. Additional Information or Support

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