



CREATING FIRST NATIONS CAPACITY



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Our Vision

Social, economic, and cultural prosperity for all Aboriginal people and communities in BC

Our Mission

AFOA BC strengthens First Nations communities by building leadership and management capacity, through professional development and education





AFOA BC: Enabling Economic Development

First Nations across BC are acquiring wealth through economic development (ED). The Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of BC (AFOA BC) held our first ED conference in March 2018. Our goal was to facilitate relationship building between First Nation Councils and their economic development leaders.

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Build a business governance model that is consistent and complementary to the nation's traditional governance. Then the business model will not be seen as foreign, but rather local and community driven. Provide in-depth training for board members, senior management and Council. And ensure continuous capacity building, from the bottom to top of your organization.

Michael McDonald, Partner, Clark Wilson LLP

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Economic Development Corporations (EDC) need, among other things, business experience, people skills, focus, time and energy. The EDC should concentrate on producing value for the nation, and ensure operations are sound from financial, legal and environmental perspectives.

Roslyn Kunin, Principal, Roslyn Kunin and Associates, Inc.

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Indigenomics is a new word that brings an Indigenous perspective to economic and social development. This is the right time for Indigenous peoples to claim our place at the economic table of this country.

Carol Anne Hilton, CEO and Founder, Indigenomics Institute

MESSAGE

from our PRESIDENT and our GENERAL MANAGER

Our overarching strategic direction at the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of BC is enabling First Nation communities to take advantage of a New Fiscal Relationship (NFR) with the Government of Canada. We are experiencing a fundamental shift in the First Nations world, with a new approach to federal funding that recognizes First Nations are in the best position to define and manage our own community priorities.



Dillon Johnson
AFOA BC President

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What makes me feel good about this work is hearing the positive feedback from our members, and seeing how much they enjoy engaging with their peers at our conferences and learning from what other communities are doing.

Launching the New Fiscal Relationship

The new relationship will change how First Nations are funded and build government-to-government relationships with Indigenous communities, with fiscal powers to match. The goal is to provide sufficient, predictable, sustainable funding for First Nations.

In the past year, AFOA BC has had the privilege of supporting our communities and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) at dialogue sessions, focus groups and information events we coordinated to ensure the New Fiscal Relationship gets off to a strong start. A key outcome was the announcement of 10-year grant funding for First Nations that begins April 1, 2019. We have always advocated for long term funding with reduced reporting requirements, because our communities stand to benefit from this change in approach.

First Nations will have greater flexibility in how they can spend funding and more autonomy over program delivery. Reporting will focus on progress toward our Comprehensive Community Plans, rather than ISC indicators.

AFOA BC has an important role to play in supporting First Nations to prepare for these new responsibilities and opportunities. We are working with the First Nations Financial Management Board (FNFM) on training to help First Nations who do not yet qualify for the 10-year grant, so they can develop the robust financial management systems and capacity to qualify, manage successfully and prosper. One criterion is to have a Financial Administration Law or Bylaw in place. We will work with FNFM to help communities that don't have one to get there. Our goal is for all First Nations to qualify for a grant.

We need to move quickly to ensure the New Fiscal Relationship is implemented while the current government is in office, so we do not lose momentum when the next election cycle begins.

Providing Professional Development

Not all First Nations can travel to Vancouver to attend our training events. So last year we started a regional conference program to hold events in smaller cities and towns. We organized a successful regional conference in Terrace in September 2017, and will be in Prince George this year.

Another highlight was our first ever First Nations Economic Development Conference in Richmond, in March 2018. We wanted to bring councils and ED corporations together to gain a greater understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities in economic development. Based on the success of this event, we hope to host an annual ED conference.

We also began to move beyond our two-day community-based workshops to provide longer term support for First Nations. With an initial pilot project, our facilitator reviewed financial controls, human resources (HR), computer systems and governance structures, in addition to leading a workshop; then produced a written assessment with recommendations for improvement.

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We're able to bring people together to explore the opportunities and challenges of the New Fiscal Relationship that will lead to self-determination and a better relationship with government.



Mike Mearns
AFOA BC General Manager



Seeking Sustainable Support

Studies have shown the importance of Indigenous institutions to the success of First Nation communities. And AFOA BC has garnered recognition as an Indigenous institution for capacity building. However, as a non-profit organization, we face a funding challenge to continue supporting First Nations with financial, administrative and governance training.

AFOA BC has been supported all along by Indigenous Services Canada, which hasn't been the case with other chapters across the country. But we have been operating with deficit budgets for several years, relying on a cushion we had put in place. Those funds are now gone. Without more sustainable funding, AFOA BC's future is uncertain. Now is the time for action.

FNFMBC certifies First Nation communities in financial management. Some in government suggest FNFMBC could also handle the training needed to support certification, rather than AFOA BC. However, as others have noted, FNFMBC should not develop the rules and regulations *and* provide the training to ensure First Nations have the right systems in place. Much like an auditor, independence is important. An auditor reviewing the books for First Nation communities shouldn't also be the one creating the books. Two different entities are required. We make the case that AFOA BC's training support complements FNFMBC's certification process.

We will work with the regional ISC office in the coming year to reach an improved funding model, and with partner First Nation institutions on program delivery that supports the capacity building needed in our communities.

Looking ahead

We've been listening to what our members say. Across the board, First Nations are seeking support for capacity development, from administration to governance, financial management to community programs.

A key theme we heard in our dialogue sessions and focus groups: no one wants any community left behind. We still have much work to do to support some smaller communities in overcoming barriers to success.

Our Board of Directors is also looking at how we can strengthen our own governance at AFOA BC, and will evaluate how we are doing at the board level. We always recommend this best practice—regular reviews of governance—to the First Nations we work with and want to lead by example.

In addition, the federal government is working with the Assembly of First Nations to devolve responsibilities to First Nations and Indigenous institutions. We need to be ready and responsive to our members' needs in this quickly changing environment, with the understanding AFOA BC may be one of the institutions taking on more responsibility to help communities. And we must ensure devolution comes with the requisite resources and fiscal powers to be successful.

Expressing Gratitude

We would like to thank past Director Eric Alex and past Advisory Council Chair Jim Adams for their service, and welcome Barbara Joe as a new Board member. Clay Harmon took over from Jim as Advisory Chair in 2018.

We want to acknowledge our Board members who bring a complementary composition to AFOA BC's leadership, representing financial officers, administrators, community leaders, consultants and, yes, accountants.

And we want to thank our members for your continuing support and participation.



AFOA BC has a proven record over the years as responsive to changing fiscal times for First Nations. We host training conferences that are relevant to current fiscal conditions, deliver support at the community level to improve governance, financial and administrative systems, and help organize events for dialogue and information sharing.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

AFOA BC Conferences

We held four training conferences this year to give our members the opportunity to acquire skills and network with colleagues from across the province.

Spring 2017

Supporting First Nations Band Administrators

Each year, we coordinate a conference focusing on professional development for band administrators:

- ▶ Engaging with and leading change—a constant reality in our dynamic global environment—so our people learn strategies to motivate colleagues and drive success
- ▶ Integrated, multi-year financial planning to guide First Nations in setting and linking priorities to current operations and future investments
- ▶ Establishing a Financial Administration Bylaw or Law to ensure First Nation communities have financial management best practices in place
- ▶ Developing a land code so First Nation communities can opt out of the Indian Act's land management sections and establish local control over their lands and resources
- ▶ Learning about best practices in human resources, community engagement and governance from the Okanagan Nation Alliance
- ▶ Exploring ways to enhance negotiation skills and integrate cultural practices to drive results
- ▶ Discussing best practices for band and program managers related to Comprehensive Community Planning, capital planning, HR practices and more

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Developing a land code is crucial for First Nations who want to take steps to self-government.

Robert Louie, Chair, First Nations Lands Advisory Board; Officer of the Order of Canada

“
Understanding
emotional intelligence
helps create a
pathway to overcome
lateral violence and
promote a kinder
workplace.”

Dr. Christina Dobson, Senior
Advisor, Health & Wellness Program,
Carrier Sekani Family Services

Fall 2017

Strengthening First Nations Finance & Administration

Our fall conference delivered training designed to advance First Nations financial management and administrative capacity:

- ▶ Exploring effective First Nation communications and best practices for engagement among council, staff and members
- ▶ Managing wealth from economic development opportunities
- ▶ Improving Budget IQ, by keeping outcomes and strategic goals front of mind
- ▶ Moving from lateral violence toward a kinder workplace, by understanding emotional intelligence to enhance everyday interactions
- ▶ Learning about HR best practices and labour laws
- ▶ Managing risk with a Financial Administrative Bylaw or Law to address common financial management issues



Winter 2017

Growing First Nations Financial Management & Human Resources Capacity

To help our communities increase financial and HR capacity, we delivered training in:

- ▶ Planning for cyber security to protect data, systems, and people's privacy
- ▶ Establishing a finance committee to advise council on oversight for budgeting, financial planning, statements, policies, investments, and more
- ▶ Navigating the top five HR issues facing Indigenous organizations
- ▶ Learning from First Nations youth about engaging youth interest in governance and leadership to become tomorrow's leaders
- ▶ Reviewing changes to group benefit and pension plans for First Nations
- ▶ Creating an emergency response plan for wildfires and flooding affecting First Nation communities, and how to access recovery funds when the worst has happened
- ▶ Getting legal advice on employee behaviour and federal and provincial labour laws from an employment lawyer

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Cyber risk, from
network security to
privacy liability, is a
universal concern
for businesses.”

Sandy Treleaven, Vice President,
Financial Institutions Practice, Aon Risk
Solutions

Spring 2018

Empowering First Nations Economic Development

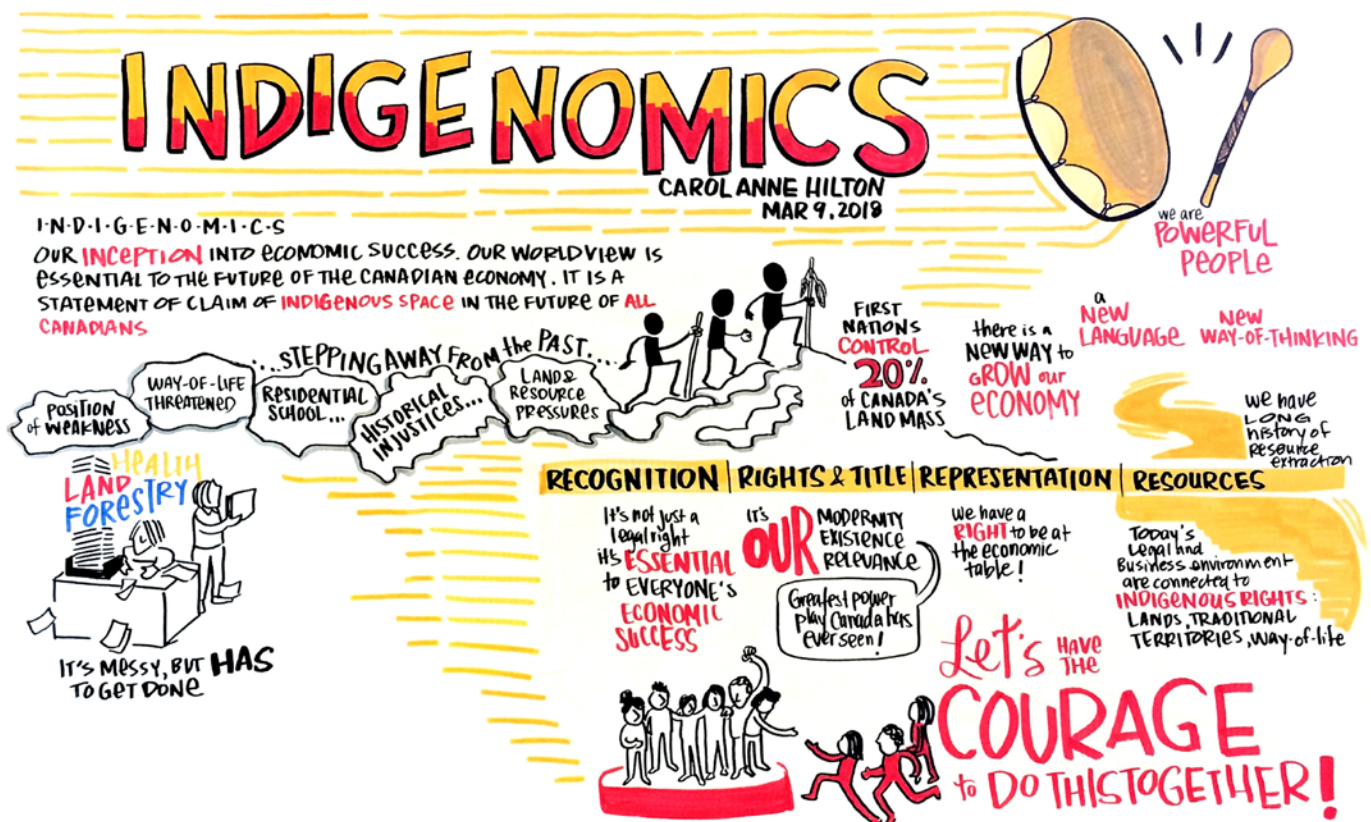
To strengthen economic development in First Nation communities, our first ED conference covered:

- ▶ Explaining the role of economic development corporations, selecting EDC board members, and maintaining productive relationships between the EDC and Chief and Council
- ▶ Exploring best practices for economic development corporations to support small business in First Nation communities
- ▶ Problem solving economic development issues through community engagement
- ▶ Assessing the taxation and legal considerations of corporate and non-corporate structures for new business opportunities
- ▶ Using trust funds and revenue sharing models to support First Nation community programs, services, entrepreneurs and members
- ▶ Discovering Indigenomics, a new approach that examines the expanding influence of First Nations people in the rapidly growing Indigenous economy
- ▶ Discussing best practices in governance and employment for economic development corporations
- ▶ Preparing First Nation Economic Development Corporations for the audit process

“

We can use Indigenomics as an economic reconciliation platform to form new beliefs, actions and approaches.

Carol Anne Hilton, CEO, Transformation International; CEO and Founder, Indigenomics Institute



Training Our Communities

We also delivered 26 professional development workshops for people in First Nation communities and organizations in the last fiscal year:

- ▶ **Essentials of Financial Management** – Nee Tahi Buhn, Bonaparte Indian Band, Saik'uz First Nation, Gitanyow/Hagwilget/Gitsegukla
- ▶ **Communications Skill Development** – Taku River First Nation
- ▶ **ISC Engagement Sessions** – Held in Terrace, Fort St. John, Prince George, Kamloops, Nanaimo, Chilliwack and Vancouver
- ▶ **Financial Governance Planning for Chief and Council** – Bonaparte Indian Band
- ▶ **Accounting Fundamentals** – We held one workshop for people from 15 First Nation communities in the Prince George area, plus workshops for the Heiltsuk Nation and Nicola Tribal Alliance
- ▶ **First Nations Audit Preparation Workshops** – Held in Fort St. John, Williams Lake, Prince George, Kamloops, Nanaimo and Vancouver
- ▶ **Train the Trainer for Financial Fitness** – Held in Vancouver to grow our group of facilitators
- ▶ **Financial Fitness Workshop** – Okanagan Indian Band, plus Carlton Trail College asked us to deliver the workshop for the George Gordon First Nation, as the Saskatchewan chapter of AFOA does not offer this training



2018 AFOA BC Salary Survey

Our 2018 Salary Survey* identifies pay ranges for leadership and employment positions in First Nation, Tribal Council, Indigenous health, and family service organizations. We had 76 nations participate in the survey, twice as many as ever before, so were able to obtain the best data yet to help First Nations with compensation and benefit planning.

The survey gave us data on over 50 benchmark positions in:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ▶ Governance and leadership | ▶ Health |
| ▶ Management and administration | ▶ Education |
| ▶ Finance and accounting | ▶ Housing and infrastructure |
| ▶ Human resources | ▶ Natural resource management |
| ▶ Social development | ▶ Economic development |

* Conducted by the Jouta Performance Group

JOIN US

AFOA BC membership is open to people working in Indigenous finance, administration and leadership, and to businesses working with Indigenous communities and people.

Member Benefits

- ▶ Professional development
- ▶ Networking
- ▶ Tools and resources
- ▶ Communications and support
- ▶ Cost savings
- ▶ Provincial and national representation
- ▶ AFOA Canada memberships
- ▶ AFOA BC Scholarships for small bands

AFOA BC Awards

Every year, we give out AFOA BC Best Practice Awards for excellence in band administration and financial management. Congratulations to our winners, who receive a recognition plaque and a \$1,500 certificate to use towards AFOA products, conferences or community workshops.

2018 Band Administrator Award

This year, **Edward “Ted” Adnitt**, Chief Executive Officer of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, is the winner of AFOA BC’s 2018 Band Administrator Award for his ability to strategically manage change while minimizing impacts on service.

Ted arrived at Tla-o-qui-aht in 2015, a time when the Nation was in the process of a crucial reorganization. “Ted came to Tla-o-qui-aht when significant change needed to occur quickly to stabilize administrative functions,” says Chief Elmer Frank. “What is most impressive through his administrative leadership, not only did he and his team address the issues, he led the turnaround in a very short period.”

He brought a “thoughtful approach and willingness to learn more,” says Melanie Touchie, Chief Financial Officer. “Ted takes the time to listen ... and then returns with a thoughtful, inclusive decision. His honesty, friendly nature, and willingness to engage on topics are qualities that make him a natural leader the organization and staff can depend on ... He appreciates a collaborative team, who work toward the common goal and how it applies to the current strategic plan, deliverables and measurable outcomes for the Nation.”

Ted’s leadership has led to positive change for the community:

- ▶ Introducing a performance management cycle that has increased building administration capacity
- ▶ Reorganizing the HR structure and adding 25 positions
- ▶ Improving financial management and transparency
- ▶ Creating two major capital facilities for the community and renovating another
- ▶ Adding 10 new housing units and developing a 21-unit container housing project
- ▶ Updating strategic planning and organizational policies
- ▶ Wrapping up all outstanding legal cases
- ▶ Reducing operating deficits to almost nil
- ▶ Reorganizing Tla-o-qui-aht’s ED structure and setting up a new economic development board and operations



Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation CEO, Ted Adnitt, (middle) is recognized with his award by Dillon Johnson, CEO of AFOA BC, (left) and Gabriel Branco, RBC

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2017 Best Practice Awards

Our Best Practice Awards recognize excellence in financial management in three First Nation communities each year. This year's winners are:

SUMAS FIRST NATION

Sumas First Nation (SFN) has come a long way over the last few years. This small community of 320 members, with 150 living on reserve, is part of the Sto:Lo Nation. The community has created an economic development corporation, established a Financial Administration Law, and is preparing a Comprehensive Community Plan.

Some other recent SFN accomplishments include:

- ▶ Establishing a strategic plan to guide future growth and integrating these priorities into annual departmental work plans
- ▶ Striking a Property Tax Appeal Board to address over \$1 million in arrears (and proceeding with three appeal board hearings, one of which set a precedent now used by the BC Assessment Authority)
- ▶ Collecting more than \$700,000 in back taxes, and using a new proactive practice to collect all property taxes on time
- ▶ Developing a more positive relationship with City of Abbotsford elected officials and staff
- ▶ Implementing a Specific Claims Settlement Trust to ensure future generations benefit from a recent agreement with the federal government

TZEACHTEN FIRST NATION

Tzeachten First Nation (TFN) is a vibrant, progressive community in the Fraser Valley, with a population of 600. Tzeachten sees itself as “a small community that could,” in pursuing best practices in all aspects of governance and administration.

In 2008, Tzeachten became one of the earliest First Nations to sign a Land Management and Control Agreement with Canada. TFN then established a land code, land use plan and Land Management Advisory Committee. As a result, Chief and Council are able to regulate and control all land matters for the community.

Some additional TFN achievements include:

- ▶ Achieving FNFMB Certification and establishing a Finance Administration Law, Finance and Audit Committee, and financial policies
- ▶ Developing a long term strategic plan, with input from the Tzeachten Family Advisory Committee, Elders Advisory Committee and senior management

K'OMOKS FIRST NATION

K'omoks First Nation (KFN) has fewer than 400 members. The community is in the final stages of Treaty negotiations and anticipates signing within two years. Some of KFN's best practices include:

- ▶ Setting up 15 business ventures to generate own source revenues in forestry, aquaculture, retail, manufacturing and tourism
- ▶ Implementing fraud prevention controls
- ▶ Making strides toward FNFMB certification, with a new Finance and Audit Committee, financial policy and procedures manual, human resources manual, and Financial Administrative Law
- ▶ Creating departmental budgets and training staff how to read budgets
- ▶ Developing a tax rates law and expenditures law

Sponsored by



Meet our Team

We would like to recognize our directors and staff for their commitment to supporting First Nation communities in BC.

AFOA BC Board of Directors



Dillon Johnson (MBA, CAFM), AFOA BC
President; Executive Councillor, Tla'amin Nation;
Associate, Temixw Planning



Carol Reimer (CPA, CAFM), AFOA BC Vice
President; Chief Financial Officer, Carrier Sekani
Family Services



Trevor Morrison (CAPA), AFOA BC Vice
President; President & CEO, Indigenous
Business Innovations



Sukhi Chouhan (CPA, CA, CAFM), AFOA BC
Treasurer; President, Chouhan Accounting
Ltd.; Financial Controller – Consultant,
Skeetchestn Indian Band; Chief Financial Officer
– Consultant, Knucwentwecw Development
Corporation



Heather Fader (CAPA), Certified Human
Resources Professional) AFOA BC Secretary;
Executive Director, Shackan Indian Band



Barbara Joe (CAFM), AFOA BC Director;
Principal Consultant, Barbara Joe Inc.



Norm Grdina (CFE, CAFM, CPA, FCGA),
AFOA BC Director; Director, RHN Chartered
Professional Accountants

AFOA BC Staff



Mike Mearns (CAFM)
General Manager

Lisa Wolfe
Manager of Training



Margaret Alexander
Office Coordinator

Krysta Elliott
Communications
Coordinator



Jade Schleppe
Project Coordinator



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