

INFORMATION SHEET

ABORIGINAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NOVA SCOTIA

There are a variety of organizations and structures within the Aboriginal community. While not intended to describe the full scope of the roles and responsibilities of each of these bodies, the following will provide you with an overview of each organization and how they may be relevant to the work that you do:

Bands/First Nations

A band is a group of First Nation people for whom lands have been set apart under the Indian Act. Each band has its own governing band council, consisting of a Chief and several Councillors who are elected. The members of a band generally share common values, traditions and practices rooted in their ancestral heritage. Today, some bands prefer to be known as First Nations. Chief and Council have wide ranging authority within their communities including governance of municipal-like services such as water and sewage and provincial-like services such as education and social services. In addition, as specified in the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Framework Agreement and the Terms of Reference for a Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Consultation Process, the thirteen Mi'kmaq Chiefs are in negotiations and consultations on constitutional rights issues with the federal and provincial governments on behalf of their band members and other persons of Mi'kmaq heritage who are beneficiaries of Mi'kmaq rights and title in Nova Scotia.

In Nova Scotia, there are thirteen (13) bands. Each of the bands has one or more parcels of land called reserves. There are thirty-nine (39) reserve locations in Nova Scotia scattered across the province.

Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs

All 13 Chiefs in Nova Scotia come together on a regular basis as the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs. The Assembly plays a significant role in the collective decision making for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, particularly on issues pertaining to Mi'kmaq rights and governance. The Assembly directs the Mi'kmaq negotiations with the provincial and federal governments on treaty rights, Aboriginal rights, including Aboriginal title, and Mi'kmaq governance (Made-in-Nova Scotia Process). The Assembly also oversees the consultation process (Terms of Reference) that was established with Nova Scotia and Canada in 2007. The Terms of Reference process guides consultation on decisions and activities concerning Crown lands, waters or natural resources in order to attempt to address Mi'kmaq issues and concerns including impacts on claimed rights.

Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn also known as the Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative supports the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs in the Made-in-Nova Scotia Process and the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Consultation process. The negotiation and consultation process were mandated through the Umbrella Agreement (2002).

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TRIBAL COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONS

Tribal councils are not-for-profit organizations that represent the collective interests of the bands/First Nations. These organizations provide a unified political voice and often deliver common programs and services to their member bands. In Nova Scotia there are two tribal council organizations, the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq and the Union of Nova Scotia Indians.

Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM)

Located in Millbrook First Nation, CMM (incorporated in 1986) represents six First Nations in Nova Scotia including Millbrook, Glooscap, Bear River, Annapolis Valley, Pictou Landing and Paqtn'kek. Governed by a Board of Directors made up of the Chiefs of each of the member bands, CMM provides a wide range of programs and services for First Nation communities in Nova Scotia.

Union of Nova Scotia Indians (UNSI)

Formed in 1969, the Union of Nova Scotia Indians represents seven First Nations in Nova Scotia including the five Una'maki (Cape Breton) communities of Eskasoni, Waycobah, Wagmatcook, Chapel Island and Membertou. In addition, UNSI represents two mainland bands, Acadia and Indian Brook First Nations. UNSI is governed by a Board of Directors that includes the seven Chiefs of the member First Nations. The Union of Nova Scotia Indians provides some common services for the member communities as well as providing a unified political voice. The head office of UNSI is located in Membertou.

OTHER FIRST NATION POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nation Chiefs (APCFNC)

APCFNC is a policy research and advocacy secretariat for 33 Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy communities in Atlantic Canada. The APC Secretariat advocates on behalf of these communities and, through research, community engagement and analysis, develops policy alternatives for matters affecting First Nations communities in Atlantic Canada. The APCFNC head office is located in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

Assembly of First Nations (AFN)

The Assembly of First Nations is the national representative organization of the 630 First Nation communities in Canada. The AFN Secretariat, is designed to present the views of the various First Nations through their leaders in areas such as: Aboriginal and Treaty Rights, Economic Development, Education, Languages and Literacy, Health, Housing, Social Development, Justice, Taxation, Land Claims, Environment, and a whole array of issues that are of common concern which arise from time to time.

The Chiefs meet annually to set national policy and direction through resolution. The National Chief is elected every three years by the Chiefs-in-Assembly. The Chiefs meet between the annual assemblies every 3 to 4 months in a forum called the "Confederacy

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of Nations" to set on going direction. The membership of the Confederacy consists of Chiefs and other Regional Leaders chosen according to a formula based on the population of each region.

There is a Regional Vice-Chief for Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

OTHER ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

There are a number of organizations that advocate for various elements of the Aboriginal community in Nova Scotia. Prominent among these are the Native Council of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association.

Native Council of Nova Scotia (NCNS)

The NCNS advocates for Aboriginal people primarily residing off-reserve and provides a range of programs and services to Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia. The Native Council has a regional structure consisting of 13 zones. Along with the President, the Board of Directors consists of representatives from each zone. Programs and services delivered by the NCNS range from education and labour market programming to housing and resource management services.

The Native Council is affiliated with the Congress of Aboriginal People, a national Aboriginal organization.

Native Women's Association of Nova Scotia (NSNWA)

The NSNWA provides a voice for Aboriginal women in Nova Scotia. Located in Millbrook, the Native Women's Association has a small staff and a strong network of volunteers across the province dedicated to dealing with issues that affect Aboriginal women.

The NSNWA is affiliated with the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), a national Aboriginal organization.

OTHER POLICY, PROGRAM AND SERVICE DELIVERY ORGANIZATIONS

While not meant to be exhaustive, the following lists some of the major Aboriginal policy, program and service delivery organizations in Nova Scotia.

Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum

The Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum was formed in 1997 as a partnership between the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq, the Province of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada, to strengthen relationships and to resolve issues of mutual concern affecting Mi'kmaw communities.

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Micmac Native Friendship Centre

Located in Halifax Regional Municipality, the Friendship Centre provides a locus for urban Aboriginal programs and services including among others, early childhood education, health services, and labour market training. It also acts as a meeting place for Aboriginal people living in the urban core.

Mi'kmaq Family and Children's Services

Operating since 1985, the Mi'kmaq Family and Children Services provides child welfare and family services to Mi'kmaq people in Nova Scotia. This organization works closely with the Department of Community Services and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada through a tri-party committee.

Mi'kmaw Kina'matneway (MK)

This organization, created as part of the self-governing education arrangement in Nova Scotia, provides a collective voice on education matters for ten of the thirteen First Nations (Millbrook, Glooscap and Paqtn'kek do not participate in MK) in Nova Scotia. MK also provides financial, programming and policy support to the delivery of education to Mi'kmaw learners in Nova Scotia.

Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network (MLSN)

The Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network is the umbrella operation from which culturally appropriate, justice related projects and programs are developed and implemented. The administration of MLSN is operated through The CMM with staff in Millbrook, Halifax and Eskasoni. MLSN services are available to all Aboriginal people residing in Nova Scotia. Two programs currently offered by the MLSN are the Mi'kmaw Court Worker Program and the Mi'kmaw Customary Law Program (MCLP).

Unamaki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR)

UINR represents the five Mi'kmaq communities of Unama'ki (Eskasoni, Waycobah, Wagmatcook, Chapel Island, Membertou) and was formed to address First Nation's concerns regarding natural resources and their sustainability.

Ulnooweg Development Group Inc

Established as an Aboriginal Capital Corporation, Ulnooweg provides loans and business services to aboriginal entrepreneurs in Atlantic Canada.