

Best Practices for Building Relationships with Indigenous Peoples

The Legislative Assembly's [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) includes a commitment to provide educational opportunities and resources to Members and staff to enhance understanding of Indigenous history and contemporary issues.

As part of this commitment, this guide is meant as a starting point for Members and their constituency office staff to enhance their collective understanding and build relationships with the Indigenous Peoples they represent and serve.

This guide has been informed by external engagement and advice from the Speaker's Indigenous Reconciliation Advisory Committee during the 42nd Parliament:

- Taylor Baker, Executive Councillor for Tsawwassen First Nation;
- Howard Grant (qiyəplenəx^w), Councillor for Musqueam Indian Band;
- Chief David Jimmie (Lenéx wí :ót), Squiala First Nation; and
- Chief Willie Sellars, Williams Lake First Nation.

The Legislative Assembly sincerely thanks them for their advice, encouragement and contributions.

The Foundation:

The list of initial questions below offers a foundation for documenting and developing knowledge about the First Nations in a Member's constituency. Later in the document, an exercise is provided to assist Members and their constituency office staff with answering some of the questions below.

- What are the First Nations with traditional territory/territories within the constituency?
 - Do the traditional territories of the First Nations located within the constituency cross with any neighbouring constituencies?
- What languages are spoken by the First Nations in the constituency?
- Who are the Chiefs and Councils of the First Nations in the constituency? What are their election cycles?
- Where are the First Nations' offices located in the constituency?
- What governance structures do the First Nations utilize? How do decisions get made?
- Do any of the First Nations in the constituency have a hereditary structure?
- Are the First Nations in the constituency Treaty? Do they have their own unique self-governing agreement? Are the First Nations in the constituency negotiating Treaties, and if so, where are they in the process?
- Do the First Nations have an economic development corporation or department?
 - Who is their lead contact on economic development?
 - Is an Indigenous-owned business listing publicly available?
 - Is the economic development corporation actively pursuing any projects in the constituency?

- Are there friendship centres in the constituency? Where are they located? What services and supports do they offer to First Nations constituents?

Outreach with First Nations:

There are many touchpoints a Member and their constituency office staff may have with First Nations on a wide range of matters. First Nations themselves may not be familiar with how to communicate with their Member and their constituency office staff. Outreach to First Nations located within the constituency is a way to enhance relationship development.

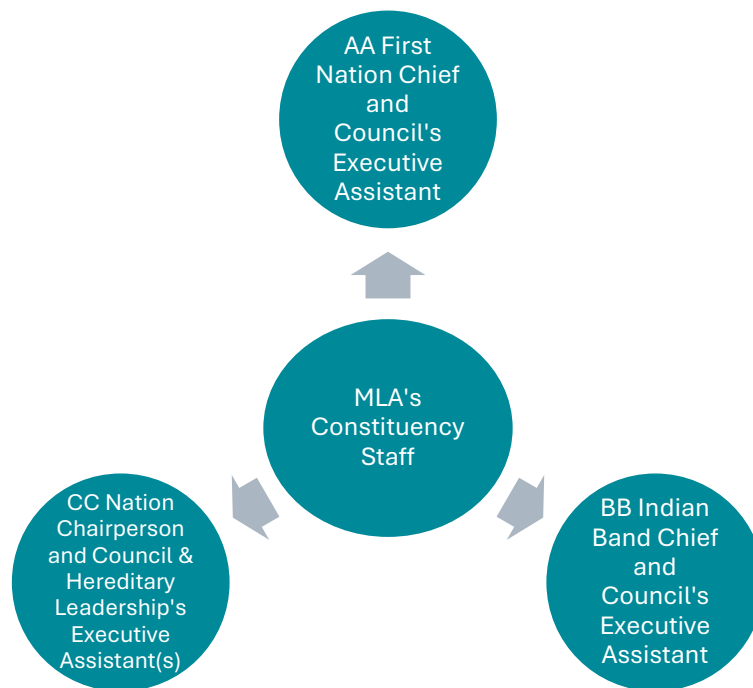
How to initiate outreach

- A Member or their constituency office staff may extend an invitation to meet informally with the Chief and members of Council.
 - Coffee/Lunch
 - Informal visit to their lands
- Additional opportunities to initiate outreach include:
 - Prioritizing introducing yourself to them at an event
 - Inviting them to your events
 - Working with other elected representatives within the constituency to facilitate invitations to key community events
- To maintain consistent dialogue and be aware of the issues of most concern for First Nations, suggest a meeting cadence with Chief and Council, or other decision-makers, throughout the year for information sharing and collective learning.
- Building personal relationships with First Nations can support a positive working relationship.



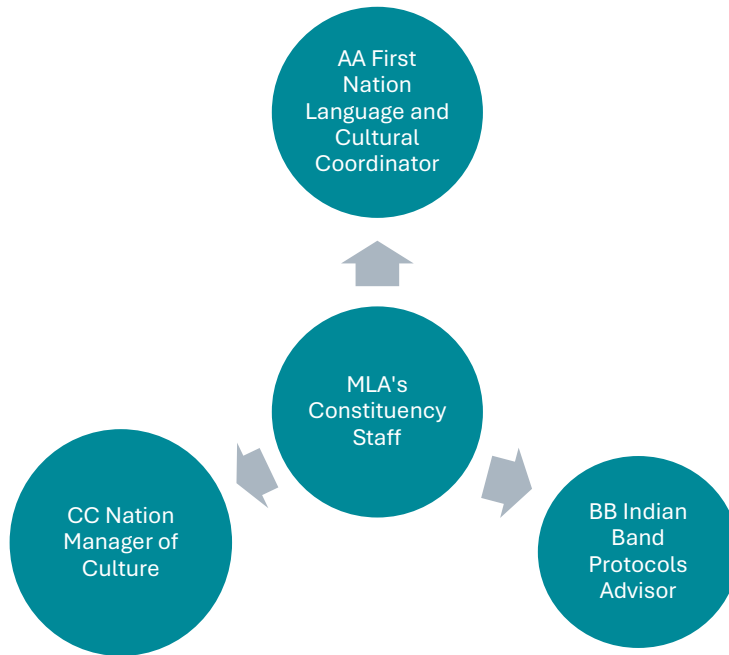
How to maintain the relationship and build trust

- Connect constituency office staff with the Executive Assistant to Chief and Council and encourage meeting formally and informally.
- Extend congratulatory messages on dates of significance for First Nations, such as National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21).
- Consider if there is an opportunity to advertise a constituency event in a First Nations community newsletter.
- Offer to amplify public First Nations-hosted events on your network.



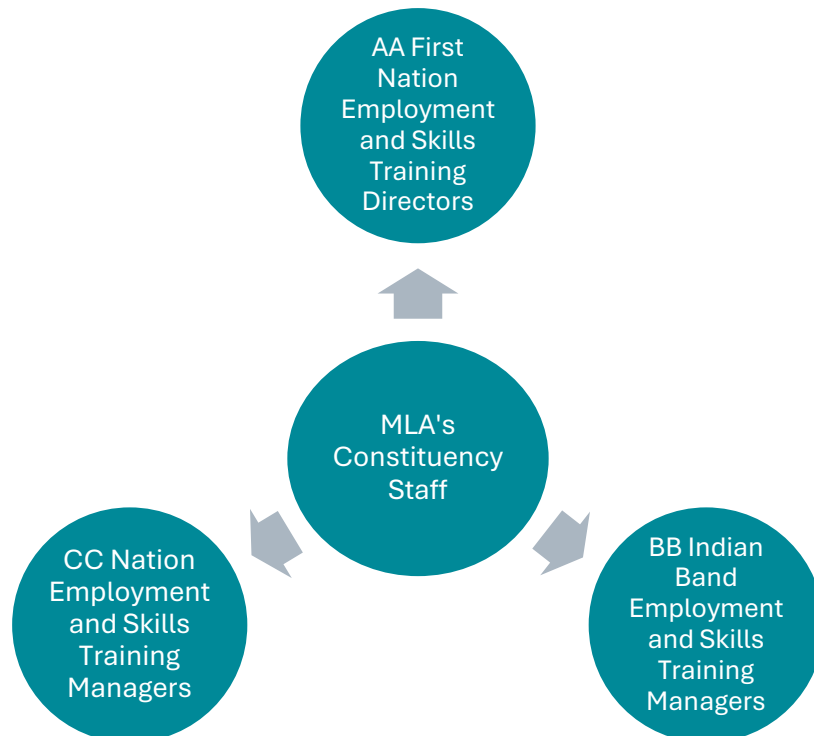
How to coordinate protocols

- Confirm what land acknowledgement or protocols First Nations would like to see from your office when hosting an event. Connect with the First Nations' cultural services lead to initiate dialogue.
- Contact First Nation about how you may go about sourcing an Indigenous art piece for your office.



How to extend employment / professional development opportunities

- Inquire about interest from First Nations youth for filling any potential positions in your office to allow for First Nations students to gain community service or office administration experience.



How to develop relationships with Métis and urban Indigenous Peoples:

Outside First Nations located in the constituency, Members and constituency office staff may also build relationships with Métis and urban Indigenous Peoples by:

- Connecting with Métis and urban Indigenous organizations in the constituency (e.g., Métis Nation of B.C. [chartered communities](#) or [Friendship Centres](#)¹).
- Sharing resources and materials provided by these organizations.
- Promoting public activities and events organized by these organizations.
- Participating in public events hosted by these organizations.

What can you offer constituents who approach your office to learn more about Indigenous Peoples in their constituency:

Constituents often approach Members or constituency offices to obtain information or learning material on topics related to their community. In anticipation of requests for informational resources or materials on the Indigenous Peoples in the constituency, Members and constituency office staff may consider:

- Initiating dialogue with First Nations and other Indigenous organizations in the constituency to ask whether they have developed materials that could be shared by the constituency office.
- Creating a resource library.

¹ Friendship Centres are not-for-profit, Indigenous-led, social service organizations that work to promote, develop, and deliver accessible programs and services that support Indigenous Peoples living in urban areas and away from home. They provide a wide range of wraparound programs and services to communities—youth, child and family wellness, employment and training, education, health, economic development, language, culture and arts, preventing violence, sport and recreation, and community outreach. (Accessed: bcaafc.com)

Example to Support Information Gathering:

Below is a fill in the blanks exercise that Members and their constituency office staff may use to begin building their collective understanding of the Indigenous Peoples they will be representing and serving.

Question	Your Constituency's Answer	EXAMPLE CONSTITUENCY
<p>Who are the First Nations with traditional territories within your constituency boundaries? Where are they located? What language(s) do they speak? Are there any other organizations providing services to Indigenous Peoples?</p>		<p>Constituency has three First Nations within its constituency boundaries – AA First Nation, BB Indian Band, and CC Nation.</p> <p>AA First Nation's offices are located in Constituency. BB Indian Band's offices are located in [name] Village, and CC Nation is located in [name] Town Centre.</p> <p>All First Nations in the constituency speak dialects of the [name] language grouping.</p> <p>The constituency is also home to the Indigenous community organizations DD Métis Association and EE Friendship Society.</p>
<p>Who are the Indigenous leaders in your constituency?</p>		<p>AA First Nation: Chief Councillor Councillor Councillor</p> <p>BB Indian Band: Chief Councillor Councillor Councillor Councillor</p> <p>CC Nation: <u>Elected Chairperson and Council</u> Chairperson Councillor Councillor</p>

		<p>Councillor Councillor</p> <p><u>Hereditary Chiefs</u> Chief Chief Chief Chief</p> <p>DD Métis Association: President</p> <p>EE Friendship Society: Executive Director</p>
<p>Are the First Nations in your constituency Treaty? Are they bound by the <i>Indian Act</i>? Do they have their own unique self-governing agreement? Are any First Nations negotiating Treaties?</p>		<p>AA First Nation is a Treaty Nation signing their Modern-Day Treaty in 2018.</p> <p>BB Indian Band is negotiating their own self-governance agreement with the provincial and federal governments outside the Treaty process. They will remove ‘Indian Band’ from their name and replace it with ‘Nation’ once the self-governing agreement is realized, no longer being bound by the <i>Indian Act</i>.</p> <p>CC Nation is in Treaty negotiations working to identify how best they can incorporate their hereditary leadership into the Treaty process. Currently, CC Nation is at stage 4 of the Treaty negotiation process – Negotiation of an Agreement in Principle.</p>
<p>Are there Indigenous Economic Development Corporations in your constituency? Who leads them? What projects are they involved in?</p>		<p>There are three economic development corporations in the Constituency, as each First Nation has their own economic development officer that is appointed by their Chief and Council.</p>

		<p>All three economic development corporations are involved in the [name] Energy Project and have negotiated project-agreements with the authority that provide economic benefits, such as employment and subcontracts, to Indigenous members and member-owned businesses.</p>
<p>Is an Indigenous-owned business listing publicly available?</p>		<p>AA First Nation has their business list publicly available on their website.</p> <p>BB Indian Band's business list is available by request through their economic development corporation officer.</p> <p>CC Nation requires a signed agreement in order to share a business list with individuals, businesses, and organizations seeking to build relationships with the Nation.</p>