

A Guide to Strengthening 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 to support Members and their constituency office staff to build relationships with the Indigenous Peoples they represent and serve. This guide provides initial suggestions for consideration on how to start engaging with Indigenous leaders. This guide does not provide advice to Members on engagement regarding legislative business and respects that every Member and their staff holds individual experiences and relationships with the Indigenous Peoples in their constituency.

This guide has been informed, in part, by external engagement 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 Legislative Assembly Administration [welcomes feedback](#) from Members and their staff on ways to improve this guide.

THE FOUNDATION

Every constituency is unique, as are the Indigenous Peoples residing in it. For example, each First Nation has its own unique culture, governing structures, and goals and priorities for its membership.

As Members and their staff hold relationships and an understanding of the Indigenous Peoples in their constituencies, this high-level list of questions was developed to serve as a starting point for documenting information, discovering new information, and developing a deeper knowledge about the Indigenous Peoples in a Member's constituency.

Initial Action #3 from the Reconciliation Action Plan:

Include reconciliation resources in the orientation program for Members of the 43rd Parliament, including on the Legislative Assembly's commitment to reconciliation and additional resources for learning about, and strengthening relationships with, Indigenous Peoples.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES:

Later in the document, a sample checklist has been provided to assist Members and their staff with answering some of the questions posed below.

Who are the First Nations with lands and 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? What is their culture?

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 are in place? Is there an elected leadership and/or hereditary leadership 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 BC Treaty Commission process?

What is the vision statement and/or goals of First Nations in the constituency?

Are there annual events, open to the public, hosted by First Nations in the constituency?

Is an Indigenous-owned business registry publicly accessible for procuring services?

Do First Nations in the constituency have a cultural protocol contact to request traditional territory welcomes for constituency office events?

Are there organizations serving Métis and Urban Indigenous Peoples in the constituency? Where are they located? What services and supports do they offer to Indigenous constituents?

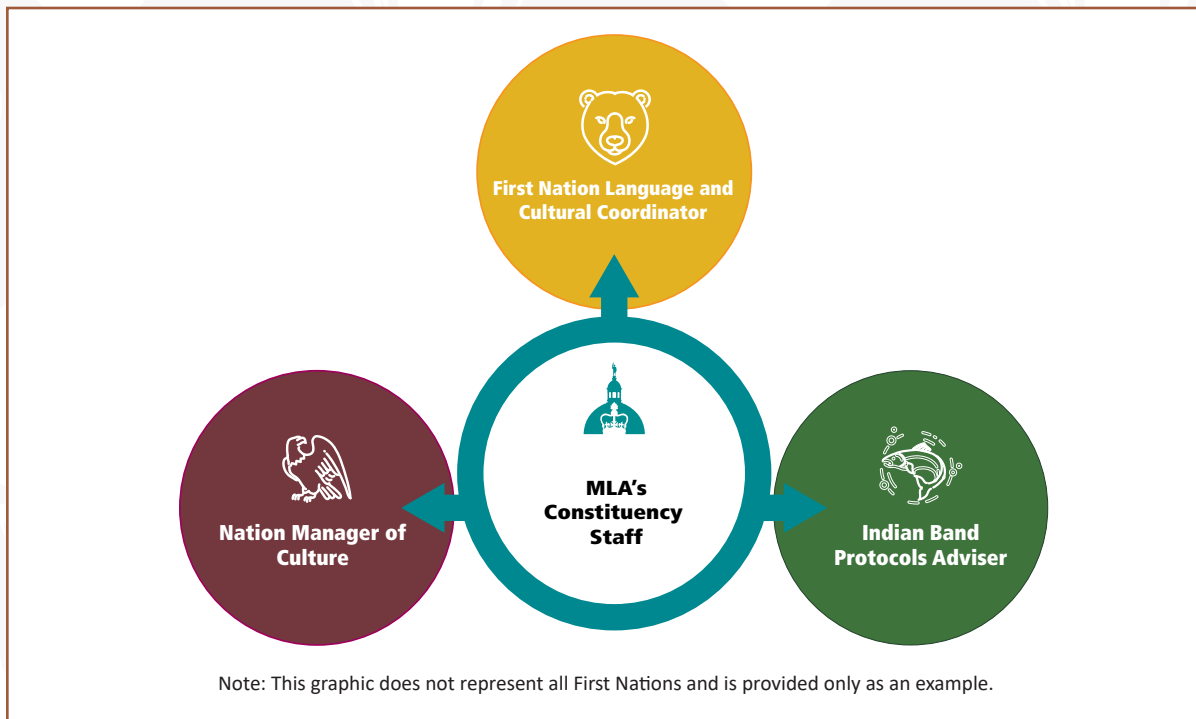
ENGAGEMENT WITH FIRST NATIONS

There may be many opportunities for Members and their staff to interact with First Nations in their constituency on a wide range of matters. It is important to keep in mind that some First Nations might not be aware of the best way to communicate with their Member and their staff or what matters fall under provincial jurisdiction.

Frequent and consistent engagement with First Nations located within the constituency is a way to develop strong relationships. Recognizing each Member and their staff will have their own unique style and approach to engagement, there are several ways to further engagement. Below are just a few ideas to get started.

INITIATING OUTREACH

A Member or their staff may extend an invitation to meet informally with the Chief and members of Council (ex. coffee/lunch, informal visit to their lands).



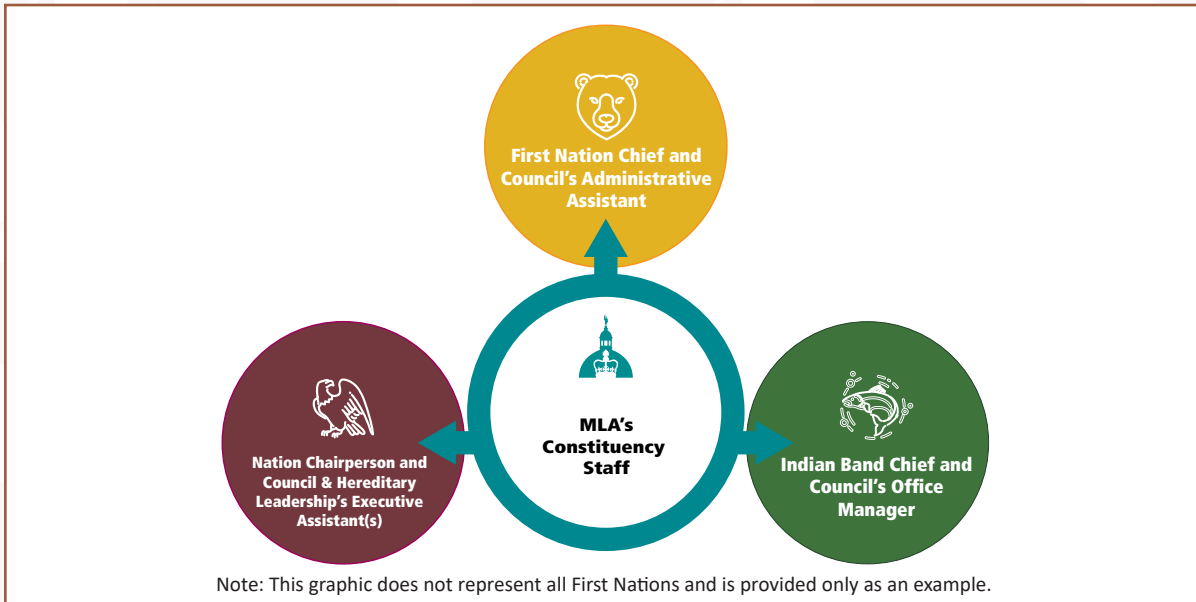
Additional opportunities to initiate outreach include:

- 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. Members may request a tour of their lands or participate in any cultural activities they are aware of.

MAINTAINING THE RELATIONSHIP AND BUILDING TRUST

Connect constituency office staff with the Executive Assistant to Chief and Council and encourage meeting formally and informally.



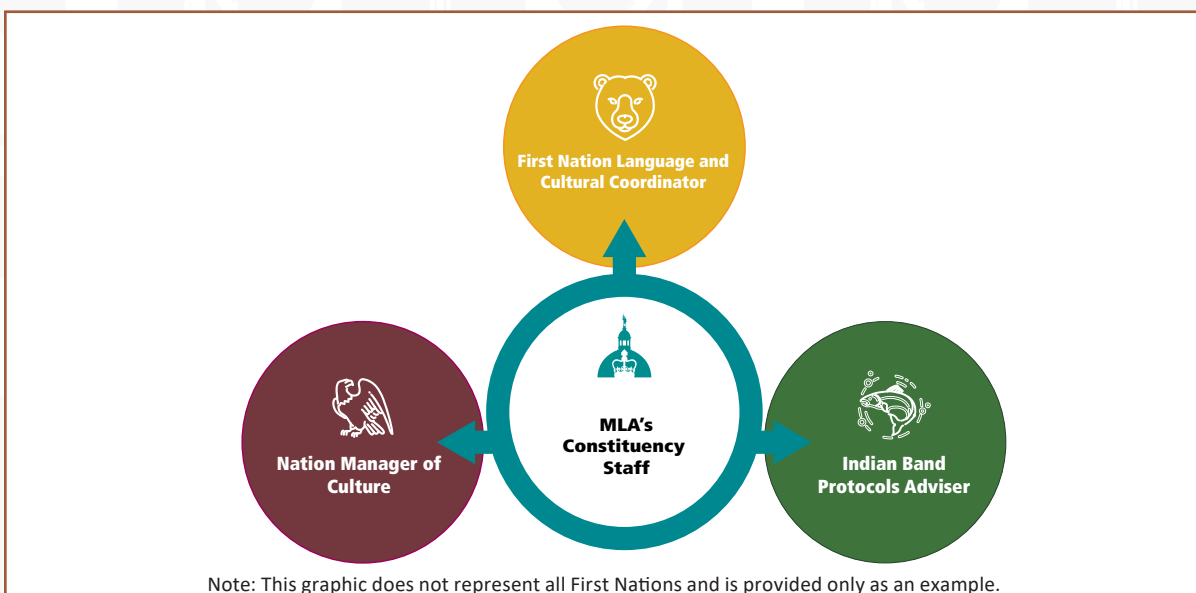
Additional opportunities for maintaining the relationship and building trust include:

- Extending congratulatory messages on dates of significance for First Nations, such as National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21).
- Considering if there is an opportunity to advertise a constituency event that is of interest to the First Nation in a First Nations community newsletter.
- Offering to amplify public First Nations-hosted events on your social media channels.

RESPECTING CULTURAL PROTOCOLS

Confirm what land acknowledgement First Nations would like to see from your office when hosting an event or writing correspondence. Connect with the First Nations' cultural services lead staff member to initiate dialogue on cultural protocols.

You may also wish to contact First Nations about how you may go about sourcing Indigenous art for your office to support Indigenous representation from the First Nations in your constituency.



ENGAGEMENT WITH MÉTIS AND URBAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES:

In addition to interacting with First Nations located in the constituency, Members and their staff may also seek engagement opportunities with Métis and Urban Indigenous Peoples. Frequent and consistent engagement with the organizations that represent and serve Métis and Urban Indigenous Peoples located within the constituency is a way to develop strong relationships. Recognizing each Member and their staff will have their own unique style and approach to engagement, there are several ways to further engagement. Below are just a few ideas to get started.

- Engaging with Métis and Urban Indigenous organizations in the constituency (e.g., Métis Nation of B.C. [chartered communities](#) or [Friendship Centres](#)¹) to understand their priorities.
- 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 THE CONSTITUENCY?

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













¹Friendship 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](#))
















QUESTIONNAIRE TO SUPPORT INFORMATION GATHERING

This questionnaire is a starting point intended to assist Members and their staff seeking to build on their collective knowledge of the Indigenous Peoples they represent and serve.

Please note the examples provided are not intended to represent all Indigenous groups.

QUESTION	YOUR CONSTITUENCY'S ANSWER
<p>Who are the First Nations with lands and 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>*Insert your answers here*</p> <p>EXAMPLE: This constituency has three First Nations within its constituency boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  First Nation  Nation  Indian Band <p>First Nation's offices are located in [name] City</p> <p>Nation is located in [name] Town Centre</p> <p>Indian Band's offices are located in [name] Village.</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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Métis Association  Friendship Society

QUESTION	YOUR CONSTITUENCY'S ANSWER
<p>What publicly accessible information do Indigenous groups have on their websites?</p>	<p>*Insert your answers here*</p> <p>EXAMPLE:</p> <p> First Nation's website includes history of the First Nation, a vision statement, goals of the First Nation, biographies of their Chief and Council, an events listing, and information about cultural tours they conduct.</p> <p> Nation's website includes the same information as Bear First Nation's website plus an Indigenous member-owned business listing.</p> <p> Indian Band's website includes the same information as Bear First Nation and Eagle Nation's websites in addition to published copies of their Community Plan for the next 5 years.</p> <p> Métis Association's website includes information about Métis history in Canada, information about their recognition of Louis Riel Day, and biographies for their elected leadership and staff.</p> <p> Friendship Society's website includes information about their services, upcoming events, biographies of their staff, and educational resources on the Indigenous Groups in their region.</p>

QUESTION	YOUR CONSTITUENCY'S ANSWER																								
<p>Who are the Indigenous leaders in your constituency?</p>	<p>*Insert your answers here*</p> <p>EXAMPLES:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>First Nation:</td> <td></td> <td>Nation:</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Chief Executive Councillor Executive Councillor</td> <td></td> <td>Elected Chairperson and Council Chairperson Councillor Councillor Councillor</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Indian Band:</td> <td>Hereditary Chiefs</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Chief Councillor Councillor</td> <td>Chief Chief Chief</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Métis Association:</td> <td></td> <td>Friendship Society:</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>President</td> <td></td> <td>Executive Director</td> </tr> </table>		First Nation:		Nation:		Chief Executive Councillor Executive Councillor		Elected Chairperson and Council Chairperson Councillor Councillor Councillor		Indian Band:	Hereditary Chiefs			Chief Councillor Councillor	Chief Chief Chief			Métis Association:		Friendship Society:		President		Executive Director
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QUESTION	YOUR CONSTITUENCY'S ANSWER
<p>Are the First Nations in your constituency Treaty? Are any First Nations negotiating Treaties? Do they have their own unique self-governing agreement? Are there any historic treaties?</p>	<p>*Insert your answers here*</p> <p>EXAMPLES:</p> <p> First Nation is a Treaty Nation, with a modern treaty negotiated and implemented under the BC Treaty Commission process.</p> <p> Nation is currently at stage 4 of the Treaty negotiation process – Negotiation of an Agreement in Principle (AIP). They will be holding a vote with their members to approve the AIP in the coming weeks.</p> <p> Indian Band is negotiating their own self-governance agreement with the provincial and federal governments outside the Treaty process.</p>