

Indigenous Engagement Plan

OVERVIEW

With more than 200,000 Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia, we are committed to creating a nurturing and collaborative environment that enhances our relationships with those who have traditional rights over the land on which we work.

To support our move toward true and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, Acres has made a commitment to redress the historical and continued barriers that Indigenous Peoples face, acknowledge past wrongs, educate the people who are working for and with us, connect with communities, and invest in and develop a workforce capacity in Indigenous communities.

This plan will support Acres in creating pathways forward to grow our relationships with Indigenous Peoples for our shared future.

> “Education is the foundation upon which we build our future.”
>
> -CHRISTINE GREGOIRE

COMMITMENT AND VALUES:

BUILD a representative and sustainable Indigenous workforce based on trust, integrity and respect.

ENGAGE local communities in work to mutually benefit parties.

RESPECT and value the cultures of Indigenous Peoples by taking measures to protect the territories we work in.

EDUCATE our employees on the unique cultures and traditions of Indigenous Peoples by delivering diversity and cultural awareness training.

BUILDING A REPRESENTATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

Acres has worked with various communities, particularly Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, to provide opportunities for students to gain meaningful work experience through our company.

When an employment opportunity presents itself, a position description is provided to a contact from the local community. The Acres Human Resources (HR) team will work with the Nation's Employment Coordinator (if available) or designate to make every effort to maximize the employment of local Indigenous Peoples.

Recently, Acres has worked with Employment Coordinators from the following Indigenous communities:

- **Canim Lake Indian Band**
  - 50 percent of our project workforce was community members.
- **Lheidi T'ennneh**
  - Acres HR Team has been working with the Capacity Development and Training Officer to explore employment opportunities for local community members.
- **Neskonlith Band**
- **Stk'emlupsemc Te Secwépemc Nation**
- **Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc**
  - Acres has provided work experience and hired Indigenous Peoples from the above 3 communities.

As a part of our commitment to developing a representative workforce, Acres has and will continue to partner with the Tk'emlúpsemc, 'the people of the confluence,' now known as the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, to provide work placements and practical work experience for community members in the Thompson Rivers University Trade Programs.

ENGAGING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

At Acres, we understand the importance of engaging local communities and feel that involving Indigenous Peoples to the maximum amount possible is the best way to ensure a successful project.

Acres provides preferences to Indigenous-owned businesses for subcontracting and material supply opportunities.

We will continue to work with communities' economic business development departments to ensure that the work we are completing has a positive economic impact on the region.

We make it a priority to build relationships by attending Indigenous celebrations and events, creating relationships with community leaders, and educating our company on the peoples and histories of the local territories.
Leadership at Acres have partaken in the following events:

- Assembly of First Nations (AFN) in Ottawa.
- BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) in Vancouver.
- National Aboriginal Business Opportunities Conference (NABOC) in Osoyoos and Prince Rupert.

RESPECT AND VALUE INDIGENOUS CULTURES

At Acres, respect is a core value, a fundamental value, exercised everyday by every member of the company.

We recognize the diversity of and differences in cultures and traditions. Acres encourages and promotes opportunities for members of the company to participate in professional development opportunities to learn more about Indigenous traditions.

When planning projects, Acres will always be transparent with Indigenous communities. We will seek advice from communities on how to avoid impacts on the community and the land and, of course, operate safely at all times.

Our Strategic Development Team has worked firsthand in Indigenous communities by assisting Elders, helping to coordinate youth events and providing employment skills to communities. Our teams' insight, education and experience have helped to create and shape our Indigenous engagement initiatives.

EDUCATE

To further understand Indigenous worldviews, members from the Acres team attended a Warriorship: Leading Brave-Hearted workshop. This workshop was facilitated by The Raven Institute which hosts a gathering space to connect hearts, minds and hands.

Recently, Acres Human Resources team met with the Supervisor of Cplul'kw'ten, the Indigenous centre at Thompson Rivers University, to learn more about the Indigenous support offered to students. The intent of this meeting was to brainstorm ideas to implement to better support our Indigenous workforce.

Acres is planning to offer team diversity and cultural awareness training, which incorporates Indigenous histories and cultures, in 2022. We feel this education will contribute to developing intercultural understanding, respect and competency.

Experience Working with Indigenous Peoples or Indigenous Organizations

It is our responsibility to make every reasonable effort to engage those with Traditional Rights over the land on which we work. We aim to establish mutually beneficial economic and social relationships. For our community partners, this means revenue for the communities, jobs and training for their members, and a stronger voice when speaking to industry. For Acres, it means the ability to engage the skills of a local workforce. For our clients, it creates a solid relationship that combines Acres' unique construction expertise with the knowledge, voice, and expertise of local rights holders.

As demonstrated in the Acres Engagement Commitment Plan, we make every effort to hire and engage local community members for every project. To support this effort, Acres attends local career fairs and works closely with community members and employment coordinators, as well as with Indigenous educational programs to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are aware of employment opportunities with Acres and have the necessary skills, abilities, and qualifications. We are honoured to have developed long-lasting relationships with the following communities:

CANIM LAKE BAND

Acres has built a strong and meaningful relationship with the Canim Lake community and had the privilege of working on their territory in 2018. While completing a project in Canim Lake, BC, 50% of the personnel working on the project were local Indigenous Peoples.

ASHCROFT INDIAN BAND

Acres has been successfully and responsibly engaged in a business relationship with the Ashcroft Indian Band for many years. We have worked together with respectful and meaningful intent that has produced successful project outcomes for both partners.

TK'EMLUPS TE SECWEPÉMC

Acres has been working diligently with the Tk'emlups te Secwepémc (TteS) on building a trusted and lasting relationship. We have been engaged with the TteS Educational Department for the last two years developing and implementing work placements and employment opportunities for the band and community members. We have been working together to provide construction training opportunities, building skill sets for band members in a variety of work environments.

We are currently in discussion with TteS along with Chastity Davis Consulting to develop cultural awareness training for all Acres personnel. We feel it is not only important, but also our responsibility to ensure our team understands the cultural importance of Traditional Lands and applies the learning to their daily interactions.

K'TUNAXA NATION

Acres has a Letter of Intent with the K'tunaxa Nation. Following the provincial declaration of adherence to the principles of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Acres is working together with the K'tunaxa community to build a respectful and trusted relationship that yields success for both partners.

Acres has and continues to work closely with the Building Collaboration Through Construction Trades (BCCT) program to provide employment readiness training, meaningful work experience and apprenticeship opportunities to community members. Through these efforts, we have built a relationship with the Indigenous Lead at Thompson Rivers University Trades and Technology Program and have provided opportunities for students to learn firsthand about the construction industry from our field management team.

In respect to subcontracting and material supply opportunities on projects, Acres provides preference to local businesses identified as Indigenously owned. Recently, in the Kamloops region, we have worked with Alliance Traffic Control and Sk'elep Tree Experts to successfully complete projects.

At Acres, we are deeply committed to working with Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous organizations as part of the core values that drive every one of us to success.

TKEMLÚPS TE SECWÉPEMC

(Kamloops Indian Band)

Acres Enterprises Ltd.
971 Camosun Crescent
Kamloops, BC
V2C 6G1

January 17, 2020

Regarding: Partnership between Tk'emlups te Secwepemc and Acres Enterprise

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Tke'mlups te Secwepemc (TteS) Education Department, I have been fortunate to work with Acres Enterprise regarding work placements and employment opportunities for our band and community members in the last two years.

Acres Enterprises have provided comprehensive construction training opportunities to our members that have made them very employable, with a good construction skill set, in a variety of work environments.

We look forward to continuing to collaborate with Acres Enterprises in the future and expand on our partnership opportunities.

Sincerely,

Terri Mindel
Trades and Training Coordinator
250-819-0428
Terri.mindel@kib.ca

200-330 Chief Alex Thomas Way
Kamloops, BC V2H 1H1 250-314-1560
Terri Mindel – Trades Coordinator

ASHCROFT INDIAN BAND

July 12, 2019

To whom it may concern,

RE: Letter of Support for Acres Enterprises

Please accept this letter of support for Acres Enterprises.

Ashcroft First Nation, a member of the Nlaka'pamux Nation has a business relationship with Acres where they have completed work for us on both our church and an earthworks project. We are pleased with the group and with their performance.

We support Acres and any contracting opportunities they may attain.

Yours truly,

Ashcroft Indian Band
Per:

Jodene Blain, Band Manager

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