



Grow Your Aboriginal Business Through Procurement

Tool Kit for Aboriginal Entrepreneurs

Presented by **I DO BUSINESS.** Inc.
in collaboration with
Diversity Management Group

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I DO BUSINESS.

DIVERSITY
MANAGEMENT GROUP



About Us

About I DO BUSINESS. Inc.

I DO BUSINESS. supports emerging and established entrepreneurs to obtain the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to achieve their business dreams. We celebrate and stimulate the entrepreneurial spirit of individuals and communities across Canada through impactful events, entrepreneurial training programs, and consulting services.

About Diversity Management Group

Diversity Management Group (DMG) is a 100% Aboriginal owned Mi'kmaq consulting business based out of Nova Scotia. DMG develops strategies for capacity building opportunities for the sustainable growth of First Nations communities. This is done through a multitude of services provided to clients (both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal) with the goal of increasing Aboriginal business growth as well as economy-building and community development initiatives.

Grow Your Aboriginal Business Through Procurement: A Tool Kit for Aboriginal Entrepreneurs

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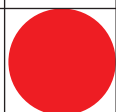
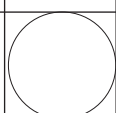
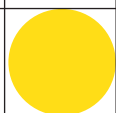


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We would also like to thank those who participated in our procurement surveys and **I DO BUSINESS. Summits**. You provided us with invaluable insights and resources that helped us to create the best document possible to support the growth of Aboriginal businesses through procurement!

This tool kit is the result of the diligent efforts of both **I DO BUSINESS. Inc.** and Diversity Management Inc. team members. Special thanks also to Mark Freedman (Consultant) for peer reviewing components of this document and providing excellent feedback.



Aboriginal Affairs and
Northern Development Canada

Affaires autochtones et
Développement du Nord Canada



Aboriginal peoples of the Americas can be proud of a strong entrepreneurial spirit that has existed since time immemorial, with a history of trade networks connecting “Indigenous communities from Patagonia to the far northern reaches of the Circumpolar region” ¹.

However, the history of colonialism, residential schools, ongoing issues of access to adequate housing and more, have created a number of challenges for Aboriginal peoples to fully participate in the Canadian economy as entrepreneurs. This is evidenced by the fact that Aboriginal people are half as likely to be self-employed as non-Aboriginal Canadians ², and that as of the 2006 Census, the “median income of Aboriginal people (\$18,962) was considerably less than that of non-Aboriginal people (\$27,097)” ³.

Despite these numerous challenges, the future of Aboriginal entrepreneurship is quite promising. Aboriginal businesses are popping up and expanding from coast to coast. The most recent census showed that:

...over 5 years, there was a 38% increase of Aboriginal Business owners – this exceeds that of self-employed Canadians overall. Aboriginal businesses have also created approximately 82,000 full time jobs as well as 18,000 part time jobs...⁴

In an effort to increase opportunities for Aboriginal businesses to start, grow, and succeed, the Government of Canada initiated the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business (PSAB) in 1996 to “assist and support Aboriginal businesses to pursue and win federal procurement opportunities” ⁵. Since PSAB began, more than “100,000 contracts with the Federal Government have been awarded to Aboriginal suppliers with a total value of \$3.3 billion” ⁶.

Better access to procurement dollars can provide significant business growth for Aboriginal entrepreneurs, helping to improve Aboriginal economies across Canada. **I DO BUSINESS. Inc.** and Diversity Management Group Inc. developed this tool kit to help more Aboriginal entrepreneurs have the knowledge, tools, and skills to bid on and win procurement contracts.

¹ Warren Weir (2007). First Nation Small Business and Entrepreneurship in Canada: Research Paper for the National Centre for First Nations Governance. Page 51-52. Retrieved October 14, 2015 from http://fngovernance.org/ncfng_research/warren_weir.pdf

² Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. Promise and Prosperity: The Aboriginal Business Survey. Retrieved April 18, 2015 from <https://www.ccab.com/uploads/File/Promise-and-Prosperity--The-Aboriginal-Business-Survey.pdf>

³ Cody Lang, John A. Price, Anne-Marie Pedersen, Frank Trovato. Aboriginal People: Economic Conditions. Retrieved May 30, 2015 from <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-people-economic-conditions/>

⁴ Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. PSAB – Bringing Meaning to Procurement. Retrieved April 18, 2015 from <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1428589345821/1428589429138>

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

As a component of developing this tool kit, we surveyed Aboriginal entrepreneurs to get a better idea of the level of knowledge and capacity regarding procurement. We advertised the survey through NationTalk and I DO BUSINESS, Inc.'s e-newsletter. We received responses from 45 individuals from almost all provinces and territories, with the exception of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

What we found confirmed the need for this kind of tool kit to assist Aboriginal entrepreneurs in accessing procurement opportunities:

- Only 7% of respondents said they had “very good knowledge” about procurement
- 85% of respondents said they would like assistance to develop a procurement strategy for their business
- 47% of respondents said that they had “poor” or “no knowledge” of procurement opportunities that exist in their region
- When asked, “What challenges have you faced with the procurement process?” 31% said they didn’t understand the procurement process, and 56% said that they were not aware of procurement opportunities for their business

Dissemination of this tool kit will help improve the general knowledge of procurement for Aboriginal entrepreneurs across the country. It will also help to increase the capacity of Aboriginal individuals to start new businesses that specifically target procurement opportunities, and assist existing businesses to increase their ability to win procurement contracts.

It is our hope that this tool kit will help celebrate and stimulate the entrepreneurial spirit of Aboriginal individuals by empowering them to capitalize on these procurement opportunities.

The Aboriginal Business Butterfly

You will see butterfly imagery throughout this document for a special reason. This butterfly is a powerful symbol for the flourishing of Aboriginal businesses across Canada that can be achieved through the creation of an environment that supports Aboriginal entrepreneurs to be prepared for, know about, and have access to procurement opportunities. This is the vision of Robert Bernard, President and CEO of Diversity Management Group Inc. The colours and shapes of the butterfly all have a special significance, explained fully in Appendix A: The Aboriginal Business Butterfly.

It is worth noting that the full vision of the butterfly, as described by Mr. Bernard, is still in development as a companion document to “Grow Your Aboriginal Business through Procurement”. This current tool kit focuses only on the left wing of the butterfly: building the capacity of Aboriginal entrepreneurs to grow their businesses through procurement.



Development of a Companion Document for Government, Industry, Aboriginal Communities and Organizations

Preparing Aboriginal entrepreneurs to bid on contracts is a good start to improving Aboriginal economies. However, we also need to educate more organizations across the country on how they can procure more effectively from Aboriginal businesses.

In addition to this tool kit for Aboriginal businesses, our team is developing a companion tool kit for government bodies, corporations, industry, Aboriginal communities and organizations. These organizations are the ones who need to purchase through procurement the very products and services that Aboriginal businesses are trying to sell.

The intent of this companion document is to help create a more hospitable environment for Aboriginal businesses to come out of their cocoons and succeed in the world of procurement. This is represented as the right wing of the Aboriginal business butterfly as described in Appendix A.

The working title of this document is *“How to Improve Your Organization’s Aboriginal Procurement Practices: A Tool Kit for Increasing Positive Procurement Relations with Aboriginal Businesses”*. This document will include:

- An overview of benefits and challenges regarding procuring products and services from Aboriginal businesses
- Identified best practices for all levels of government, industry, private business, non-profits, Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal organizations
- Case studies of Aboriginal procurement policies and practices for each type of organization, highlighting successes, challenges, and best practices

This tool kit will help organizations to do better business with Aboriginal entrepreneurs through increased opportunities to procure their products and services.

Expansion of Aboriginal businesses through procurement is good for everyone. The potential impact for the mainstream society will mean more jobs, less impact upon government dependency on social programs, more directed educational and business programs, and the growth of the Aboriginal economy.

Want to stay up to date on the developments of our procurement tool kits? Make sure to sign up for our [I DO BUSINESS. Inc. e-Newsletter!](#)



You Can Too!

Issue # 10

I DO BUSINESS. E-Newsletter - Issue 10

The intent of this document is to help you, the Aboriginal entrepreneur, learn how to participate in procurement opportunities that will grow your business. If you are confused right now about what “procurement” even is, or how it will help your business, that is okay. This tool kit has been created for you!

In 2012 alone, there were 108 million dollars worth of contracts set aside specifically for Aboriginal businesses¹. Only 1,371² of approximately 37,000 Aboriginal businesses³ in Canada actually bid on these opportunities.

- Haven't started a business yet, but want to
- Are in business and would like to expand through procurement
- Have tried to get some procurement contracts before, but were unsuccessful
- Have had some procurement success, but would like to improve your approach

¹ Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business: 2012 Annual Report - Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Branch. Retrieved February 12, 2014 from <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1428519695278/1428519777541>

³ Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. PSAB - Bringing Meaning to Procurement. Retrieved February 14, 2014 from <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1428589345821/1428589429138>



The Significance of the Butterfly

The metaphor of the butterfly has a very important role to play in the creation and publication of this tool kit. When this tool kit was first being developed, Robert Bernard, President and CEO of Diversity Management Group Inc. shared with the whole team his vision of Aboriginal businesses as butterflies, growing from an egg, to caterpillar, to the chrysalis stage, and then emerging as a beautiful butterfly. The metaphor of the butterfly will be continuously used throughout this document when it most strongly relates to the topic.

You will also see the image of the butterfly throughout this document. The colours and shapes all have a special significance, explained fully by Robert Bernard in Appendix A: The Aboriginal Business Butterfly.

Guide to Reading this Tool Kit

This is a living document. That means that we will update it from time to time to include additional resources that we have found, or update web links that may have changed since publication. If you find a web link that doesn't work anymore, don't give up. Chances are, with a quick online search you can find it. For example, if the "Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business" web link is broken, you could type in that title in a search engine and with a little digging, you would probably find the information we are referring to.

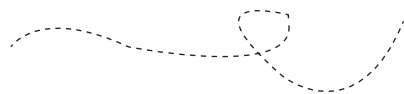
If you do see a broken web link, please let us know at info@idobusiness.ca and we will update the document.



Key Definitions, Acronyms & Concepts



Key Definitions, Acronyms & Concepts



Sometimes, contract opportunities that are posted by government or corporations are filled with these complicated terms and ideas, leaving businesses new to procurement confused. Get to know these terms and you will have a better chance at properly submitting a proposal that will win the contract!

If you see a word or term while you read this tool kit that you don't understand, chances are, you will find the definition here! If you don't see a definition for a word here, don't be afraid to look it up through an online search.

Aboriginal: For the purposes of this document we use the term “Aboriginal” to refer to First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples living in Canada.

Aboriginal Communities: For the purposes of this document, we use the term “Aboriginal communities” to refer to a group of Aboriginal individuals living together in the same place who share a common identity, often on land that is claimed specifically for that group. We elected to use the generalized term “Aboriginal Communities” to be as inclusive as possible of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples’ diverse land claim and political situations across Canada . For example, First Nations such as Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation in Alberta would fit within this definition. Inuit communities, such as Kuujuaq in northern Quebec, and Inuit regions, such as Inuvialuit, also fit this definition. Metis chartered communities such as Cochrane, Ontario, represented by the MNO Northern Lights Métis Council, fit into this broad definition.

Aboriginal Organizations: For the purposes of this document, we use the term “Aboriginal organizations” to refer to any organization that serves Aboriginal populations across Canada. This very broad definition includes Friendship Centres, the Assembly of First Nations, the Native Women’s Association of Canada, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, and much, much more.

Aboriginal Set-Asides: Federal government contracts that serve mostly Aboriginal people are set aside for Aboriginal businesses to compete against each other for the contracts. Aboriginal businesses can also compete for any federal contract, as long as you are able to prove that you can provide the product or service. For more information on eligibility, [click here](#).

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada: Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) supports Aboriginal people (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) and Northerners in their efforts to:

- Improve social well-being and economic prosperity;
- Develop healthier, more sustainable communities; and
- Participate more fully in Canada’s political, social and economic development — to the benefit of all Canadians.

AANDC: Acronym for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. See above definition.

Audit: An organized review of something. For example, in the accounting world, an audit refers to an organized review of an organization's or business' financial statements and records.

Bid: An offer to do work or to supply goods or services in return for a stated price.

Business Partnership: A connection of two or more people working in a business where the profits and losses are shared equally.

Bid Bonding: A debt, in the form of a cash deposit, confirmed by a bidder for the purpose of giving a promise to the project owner that the bidder will take on the job if selected. Some contract opportunities require bid bonding which means you may have to put up very high bid bonds just to have them consider your company to deliver the project.

Contract: A legal agreement between two or more groups.

Contract Proposal: Documents put together by a vendor or supplier in the hopes of securing the business of a particular customer.

Corporation: A business or organization that under the law has the rights and duties of an individual and follows a specific purpose.

Expression of Interest: A call to potential providers of goods and/or services to register interest in supplying them.

EOI: Acronym for expression of Interest. See above definition.

Joint Venture: A business relationship where two or more people/groups agree to pool their resources for the purpose of completing a specific task.

Impact Benefit Agreements: The main aim is to deal with the negative effects of business activities on local communities and their environments and to make sure First Nations receive benefits from business activities in their traditional territory.

Industry: A sector of an economy. Examples: the automobile industry, the retail industry, tourism industry, etc.

Invoice: A list of goods sent or services provided, with a statement of the amount due to pay for the goods/services provided. Invoices are also sometimes called a "bill" or "statement of charges".

Private Sector: The part of the economy that is not state (government) controlled, and is run by individuals and companies for profit.

Procure: To obtain something. For the purposes of this tool kit, to "procure" something refers to obtaining goods or services from another business.

Procurement: The complete process of getting something, usually a capital item (work or goods) or a high-value service. See "What is Procurement" section in this tool kit for more details.



Proponent: A person who argues for or supports something.

Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business (PSAB): PSAB is a federal government initiative that aims to increase federal contracting opportunities and help Aboriginal businesses gain access to the overall federal procurement process. All federal government departments and agencies participate in this initiative. For more information, [click here](#).

PSAB: Acronym for Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business. See above definition.

Purchase Order: A commercial document and first official offer issued by a buyer to a seller, with details of the types, quantities, and agreed prices for products or services.

Request for Proposals or Call for Proposals: Call to bid for a contract to provide services, or the bid document itself. Samples of RFPs can be easily found online for more details.

RFP: Acronym for “Request for Proposals”. They are commonly referred to as “RFP”s.

Request for Tenders: A formal, structured invitation to suppliers, to bid, to supply products or services. Sometimes referred to as an RFT.

RFT: See above definition for request for tenders.

Sole Proprietorship: A sole proprietorship is the simplest and most common structure chosen to start a business. It is an unincorporated business owned and run by one individual with no distinction between the business and you, the owner. You are entitled to all profits and are responsible for all your business’s debts, losses and liabilities.

Tender: A sealed bid or contract proposal in response to a request for tenders. The tender document will include detailed information on behalf of the business demonstrating how they can deliver the potential contract according to the terms specified in the Request for tenders or RFP.

Tendering for Contracts: An offer to do work or to supply goods or services in return for a stated price.

Tender Management: The process of designing and writing tender proposals (also known as contract proposals), and keeping track of bids.

Vendor: Also called a supplier, an individual or company that sells goods or services to someone else, i.e. another business, government agency, or organization.

Vendor List: A listing of various types of suppliers and providers that a company has agreed meet its standards in terms of quality and price, and is happy to do business with.



Procurement Tool Kit for Aboriginal Entrepreneurs



Procurement Tool Kit for Aboriginal Entrepreneurs

Who is this tool kit for?

This tool kit is for Aboriginal entrepreneurs who want to grow their businesses. Whether you are just getting started or you are an experienced entrepreneur, there are big opportunities to grow your business through something called “procurement”. This tool kit will show you how!

When we refer to “Aboriginal entrepreneurs” or “Aboriginal business” in this document, we are speaking inclusively of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis, individuals. We have made our best effort to provide valuable information that will help you in procurement, no matter your Aboriginal background or geographic location within Canada.

What is procurement, anyways?

Procurement is a set of steps to get a business contract to provide your businesses’ services or products. These steps include bidding on a contract, securing the contract, and delivering your products or services. You can apply to get these business contracts with lots of different groups. These include contracts with a:

- Company
- Non-Profit Organization
- First Nation
- Aboriginal Membership Organization
- Community
- City
- Municipality
- Province
- Federal Government
- And more



Can my business do procurement?

Everyone is eligible for procurement if they position themselves properly. Aboriginal companies have a lot of great opportunities to benefit from the procurement process.

There are many procurement opportunities that are available to any Canadian business. There are also special opportunities just for Aboriginal companies that you can take advantage of.

How will procurement help my business?

Whether you are just starting up or have an established business, you can benefit from procurement! The Federal Government of Canada buys approximately 14 billion dollars worth of goods and services every year, while the provinces buy about \$20 billion worth! The average contract with the Federal Government is actually \$100,000 or less, making it totally possible for a smaller business to get in on the action. There are also countless local and regional procurement opportunities for your business to bid on, if you know where to find them and how to do it.

By getting good at procurement you can get a slice of this big pie, in order to help grow your business and find success!

It is important to remember that procurement success does not typically happen overnight. You have to learn the “ropes” and understand how the system works in order to increase your company’s ability to deliver on a contract.

Knowing how the procurement and contracting system works will help your business greatly by finding out how to prepare your business to be ready to do business.

This tool kit is designed to help you! It will help you to know what you need to do to get your business opportunities flowing. Through this process you will educate others to implement some of our recommendations and help them to help you!

Who is purchasing products and services from Aboriginal business?

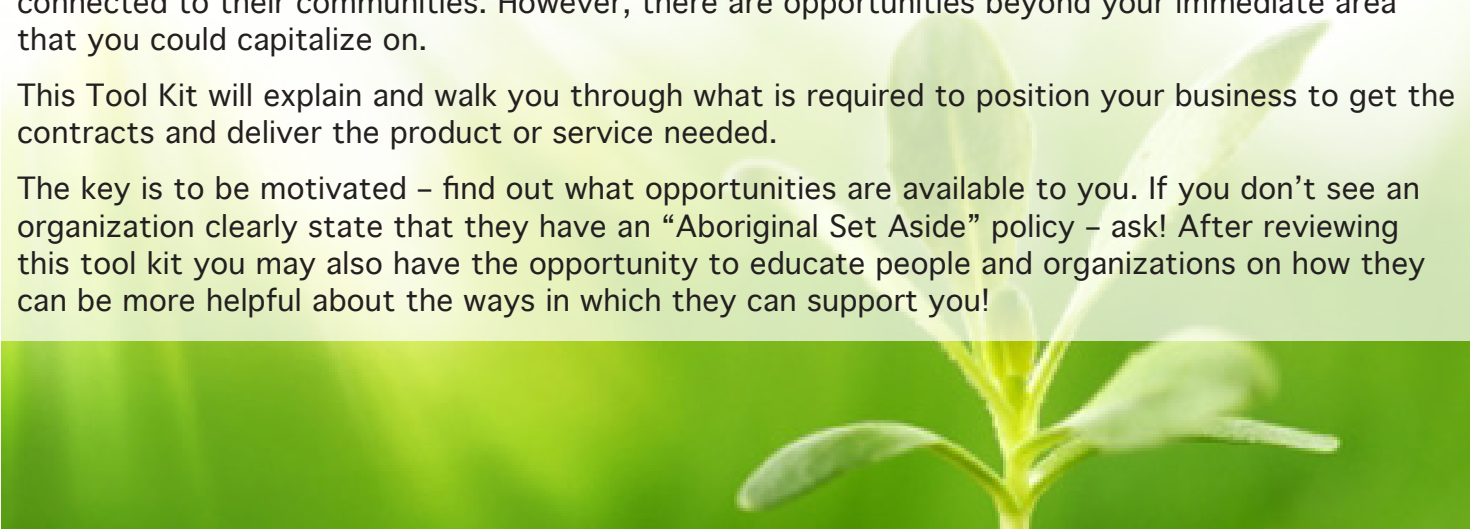
The procurement process happens daily! Businesses are securing contracts in many different sectors around the world all of the time. In the everyday mainstream private sector world, there are not many “First Peoples First” or “Aboriginal Inclusion” strategies that make it a priority to get their products and services from Aboriginal entrepreneurs.

However, there are still quite a few opportunities for Aboriginal entrepreneurs to participate in the procurement process. For government contracts, Aboriginal entrepreneurs can bid on contracts that are identified as “Minority or Aboriginal Only Contract Opportunities”. You will see these opportunities when the work being done is inside or nearby Aboriginal lands, or if the land is disputed land under a First Nation “Land Claim”.

A great majority of Aboriginal businesses focus on contract opportunities found within their own immediate communities or related Aboriginal community organizations that are politically connected to their communities. However, there are opportunities beyond your immediate area that you could capitalize on.

This Tool Kit will explain and walk you through what is required to position your business to get the contracts and deliver the product or service needed.

The key is to be motivated – find out what opportunities are available to you. If you don’t see an organization clearly state that they have an “Aboriginal Set Aside” policy – ask! After reviewing this tool kit you may also have the opportunity to educate people and organizations on how they can be more helpful about the ways in which they can support you!



List of groups that you could find procurement opportunities with:

Federal Aboriginal Set Asides

The Government of Canada's Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business (PSAB) requires that all federal government departments and agencies have "Aboriginal Set Asides". This means that contracts that serve mostly Aboriginal people are set aside for Aboriginal businesses to compete against each other for the contracts. Aboriginal businesses can also compete for any federal contract, as long as you are able to prove that you can provide the product or service. PSAB has an online booklet with more details that you can read about here.

Am I Eligible for Federal Aboriginal Set Asides?

Aboriginal businesses that meet one of the following requirements are eligible:

- A band as defined by the Indian Act
- A sole proprietorship
- A limited company
- A co-operative
- A partnership
- A not-for-profit organization that Aboriginal persons have at least 51 percent ownership and control over
- A partnership of two or more Aboriginal businesses or an Aboriginal business and a non-Aboriginal business(es). The Aboriginal business(es) must have at least 51 percent ownership and control of the joint venture.

Click here for more details on your eligibility for about "Aboriginal Set Asides".

Watch this short video about the benefits of PSAB here.



Federal Government of Canada

Darlene Chuka of the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises (OSME) gave a presentation on how to do business with the Federal Government of Canada at the **I DO BUSINESS. National Summit & Tradeshow 2015** in Winnipeg, Manitoba. OSME provides assistance and information on how to sell your goods and services to the Government of Canada, and will help you to navigate the procurement process.

View her presentation slides on how to do business with the Government of Canada.

Click here to listen to the audio of her presentation that goes along with the slides. Scroll down until you see her name and press "Play".

Provinces and Territories

Different provinces have different policies when it comes to Aboriginal set-asides for procurement. Some provinces, like [Manitoba](#) and [Ontario](#), have clear policies and Aboriginal Business Registries. Others do not. Regardless, all provinces and territories have products and services they need to procure from other businesses.

MERX: [MERX](#) is a searchable database of procurement opportunities for most Canadian provincial governments and the federal government.

Here are some useful links to provincial websites where you can find potential procurement opportunities, and sometimes even register your business to be on their vendor list!

[Alberta Government Purchasing](#)

[British Columbia – BC Bid](#)

[Manitoba Government Purchasing](#)

[New Brunswick Government Purchasing](#)

[Newfoundland and Labrador Government Purchasing](#)

[Northwest Territories Contract Opportunities](#)

[Nova Scotia Government Procurement Policies](#)

[Nova Scotia Government Tenders](#)

[Nunavut Contract Opportunities](#)

[Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti procurement](#)

[Ontario Government Procurement](#)

[PEI Government Procurement Policy](#)

[PEI Government Tender Opportunities](#)

[Quebec Government Purchasing \(French Only\)](#)

[Saskatchewan Government Purchasing](#)

[Yukon Government Purchasing](#)



Municipalities

Municipalities also have many goods and services they need to procure from businesses. Find your local municipality website online and set up a meeting with a representative to tell them about your Aboriginal business. You never know what opportunities could come up! Municipalities also often post the contracts they are looking to have filled on their websites.

In some cases, municipalities have established formal working relationships with nearby First Nations to mutually increase the economic wellbeing of their communities. For example, The Town of Cochrane, Ontario, has a Memorandum of Understanding with Taykwa Tagamou Nation (TTN). The “purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding... is to initiate a process for Cochrane and TTN to work together to create long term partnerships that will build healthy sustainable economies... based on mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation, while recognizing cultural, linguistic, and territorial differences” . Part of this agreement includes the commitment to encourage both “TTN and Cochrane entrepreneurs to network and develop business partnerships in order to create a vibrant and sustainable economy” (ibid).

While this is a great example of collaboration between a First Nation and a Municipality to create more opportunities for Aboriginal entrepreneurs, it might not apply to your situation. Be proactive, find out what your Municipality’s economic development policies are, if they have Aboriginal set-asides, and where to find contract opportunities. Remember, it never hurts to ask!

Local Aboriginal Procurement

At the very grassroots level, First Nation, Métis, and Inuit organizations and communities may have Aboriginal Inclusion Policies, where contracts are set-aside for Aboriginal firms. For example, if a First Nation has such a policy, then you are eligible if you have First Nation Status or are an Indian Status Card holder. You may also be eligible if you have Métis Status or are Inuit. You could even be Non-Status, but recognized as a member of the community and be eligible.

If you aren’t sure about whether they have an Aboriginal Inclusion Policy, make sure to ask. If they say no, ask them why not, or whether they have thought about this before. More Aboriginal communities and organizations need to be providing these kinds of opportunities to their community members.

If they do not have such a policy, it may inspire them to consider developing one! If they do, they can help you understand if you are eligible, and if there are opportunities for your business.

Industry

Cassandra Dorrington of the Canadian Aboriginal & Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC) gave a presentation at the **I DO BUSINESS. National Summit & Tradeshow 2015** about how to do business with industry. CAMSC has an initiative called “Supplier Diversity” designed to ensure that companies are being inclusive of diverse suppliers with equal opportunities to prequalify and bid on goods and services purchased by corporations.



Dorrington's presentation discusses how to do business with Corporate Canada, the challenges you may face in doing business, and how to increase your chances of winning the contract! [Click on this link to view her full presentation.](#)

Corporations

More and more corporations in Canada are working to build positive relationships with Aboriginal people by hiring Aboriginal people or contracting Aboriginal businesses to provide needed products or services. Private sector companies have their own procurement/contract officers/managers and purchasing departments/managers – usually reporting to their CEO's/Senior Managers.

Here are a Few Examples:

[HydroOne](#)

[Enbridge](#)

[Suncor](#)

[Syncrude Canada](#)

[Cenovus Energy](#)

[Dominion Diamond Corporation](#)

[SaskTel](#)



Mike Petrina

Other Small Businesses

Procurement also works best when there is a system in place to help ensure that full and fair opportunities are given to all participants bidding on contracts through the utilization of a procurement guideline for bidding.

Procurement can also happen within your own business model where you may be searching for a company to deliver on some services that you require, for example an expansion on your office or fixing your paved parking lot or if you need 5 or 6 computers. Through a procurement template or model you can start your own procurement process by putting together ways in which you will provide the opportunity and then provide a way for other companies to bid on the work that you need done. Then you will hopefully decide through a set of guidelines that are fair and inclusive who will best deliver on your business needs. This way you also have the opportunity to build on local procurement capacity if you find a qualified company.



Natalie Clifford



What kinds of services and products can I provide through procurement?

If you have a product or service to provide, chances are there is a procurement opportunity out there for you! The Canadian Government purchases billions annually on a wide range of products and services.

Here are just a few examples:

- Construction services
- Food and grocery
- Catering
- Financial services
- Fuel
- Training and education
- Construction materials
- Power
- Consultant services
- Office supplies
- Oil
- Work uniforms
- Website development



Maurice - Latash & Dehlia Nahanee

Examples of Successful Procurement

Procurement with another small business

Procurement doesn't have to mean big, out of reach contracts. You can get your feet wet with smaller ones by providing goods and services to other businesses.

For example, **I DO BUSINESS.** runs events for Aboriginal entrepreneurs across Canada.

I DO BUSINESS. often needs caterers, table and chair rentals, office supplies, local speakers, and event coordinators. **I DO BUSINESS.** could put out a call for proposals, and contract with your business to provide one of these needs. **I DO BUSINESS.** contracts with Aboriginal businesses for the products and services they need whenever possible.

Procurement with a corporation

According to the PSAB website, SaskTel created a \$15 million set-aside procurement program for Aboriginal businesses with \$5.5 million awarded to five Aboriginal businesses. Three of these companies had not previously done work for SaskTel. This Set-Aside created 48 new jobs. Two new businesses were created as a result of the SaskTel set-aside program. [Click here for more information.](#)

Aboriginal Business Success Story - Forest Communications

One success story highlighted by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's PSAB is Louis Laforest, owner of Forest Communications. Mr. Laforest

...first learned of the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business (PSAB) while working for a large advertising agency on various national Government of Canada campaigns. Forest Communications was established in 2000 and has spent the last 13 years providing a full range of communications services to its clients. Forest's most significant expertise is in graphic design and web development; however, it has recently expanded services to include video production and a range of application development services, from mobile apps to database analytics. Mr. Laforest is very proud to be an Aboriginal entrepreneur and registering with PSAB was another way of communicating his pride and marketing his services.

Mr. Laforest shared these thoughts on PSAB: "Through these 'set-aside' projects, I have been able to grow Forest's portfolio of Aboriginal-focused work, which has allowed me to compete for and win work with private Aboriginal organizations across the country as well. We have won several government contracts under PSAB. Since 2008, we have won hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of set-aside contracts with various departments and that number continues to grow to this day."⁵

For more examples of "The Power of Procurement", [click here!](#)

⁵ Aboriginal and Northern Development Affairs Canada. The Updater – The Power of Procurement. Retrieved March 22, 2015 from http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ-ECD/STAGING/texte-text/pop-11-01-2013-pdf_1383330228229_eng.pdf



Am I prepared for procurement opportunities?

Let's be real, getting your business ready for procurement can be a lot of hard work, but some of it will be surprisingly easy. Here is a handy-dandy procurement preparedness checklist. You might have already done some of these steps. But wherever you are in this checklist, there is likely something for you to do!

Ready – Set – Go!



Step One – Find Opportunities

- ☐ Do your research on procurement opportunities in your area
- A. Make a list of Aboriginal communities and organizations that you are a member of, or could potentially sell to. Contact them to find out how you can be kept up to date on procurement opportunities. Make sure to ask if they have an Aboriginal procurement policy. They may even share with you what kind of business opportunities there are in your area that you could set up!
- B. If you are a member of a First Nation, visit their office and speak with your Economic Development Officer.
- C. Find out if your local county or municipality posts procurement opportunities. Visit their website, and make calls to the municipality's Economic Development Officer if they have one.
- D. Learn how your province/territory does procurement.
- E. Inquire about what local and/or target market businesses or corporations there are that release contract opportunities.
- F. Identify what major industry is going on in your area. Do they have specific needs for certain products or services you could provide?

Step Two – See Where You Fit

- ☐ Identify what current products or services you have that you can deliver to these groups.
- ☐ Identify any potential new products or services that you could develop to deliver to these groups (use your research to help you find out what these might be!).

Step Three – Put Yourself Out There

- ☐ Register your business in registries such as the [Aboriginal Business Directory](#)
- ☐ Arrange meetings with potential local businesses, corporations, Aboriginal Membership Organizations, First Nation communities, and local government to let them know what you offer and you are an Aboriginal business or joint venture.
- ☐ If you can, find a local mentor, a business support officer, or an organization that can help to assess your business capacity (your ability to deliver on products and services) as this will help you set realistic goals for your business.

- ☐ If you want to do business in the USA, you can obtain a nine-digit identifier called a DUNS number that's essential for government contract procurement.
- ☐ Work to figure out what category your goods or services fit into within the North American Industry Classification System coding framework.

Step Four – Make Sure You Can Deliver

As a business owner, you must decide if you are ready to bid on any contract.

Bidding takes up time, business resources, and financial resources (as there are many costs associated with bidding on contracts). You also have to consider how it will affect you and your company if you win or do not win your bid. Sometimes, you might bid on a great contract and put together an excellent proposal but don't end up winning the contract. This is an unfortunate part of business, so make sure to learn from these failed bids by contacting the vendor and asking what you could do to improve, or finding out why you were not selected.

Other times, companies bid on major contracts and write a great proposal but cannot deliver on the actual contract because they were not honest in their ability to deliver the services required. This can negatively affect not only your company's future work, but also your future reputation. You may be able to secure a major contract and have quality discussions with internal staff to ensure that you will work to fill in the gaps in order to deliver. You may also be able to partner with a great joint venture partner to boost your company to future exciting opportunities through good business planning strategies.

If you are just starting out, take on something small and make sure you do a good job so that you can build a strong track record. Increase your ability to deliver better each time and build your business. As you grow, learn new things, and get better at doing business, you can then increase your business opportunities in number and size. When you are ready you can bid on larger projects to deliver products or the services that you provide.

When considering whether or not to bid for a contract, keep the following in mind:

- ☐ Have I contacted staff from the organization to learn more about the opportunity and make sure I understand their specific contract needs and requirements?

Note: Some RFPs will clearly state that they do not want to be contacted.

Follow their guidelines. You can always research the organization's website to learn more if you cannot talk with them directly.

- ☐ Do I meet all of the requirements described in the Request for Proposals?
- ☐ Do I have the track record to prove that I am capable of delivering on the contract?
- ☐ Do I have the financial resources to put together this proposal and deliver it without



☐ immediate payment?

Do I have the human resources to deliver the product or service on time and keep

☐ the quality high?

Do I need to consider joint venturing or working with a partner to make my proposal stronger? Joint ventures are when you join up with one or more businesses or individuals to deliver on a contract. Joint Ventures can be a great advantage when submitting a proposal for a contract. They allow you to share strengths, lower your risks, and increase your ability to compete

☐ against the other bidders.

☐ Would the work fit in with your strategy and positioning of your business?

Estimate the costs of fulfilling the contract and whether or not you'd make enough money to
☐ justify it.

Assess how the contract would affect your other work, staffing, and ability to take on other new business.

Step Five – Decide if You Should Prepare a Proposal

As a business owner you make the decision to bid on a contract. Knowing what you can deliver and understanding the client is very important. There is usually very stiff competition for these contracts.

Even if you know you can deliver the contract, you may still decide it is not worth your time and money to submit a proposal. To decide whether or not to prepare a proposal, try first to understand why a contract is being put out to tender.

The customer may just be going through the motions because it is their policy to always publicize the potential contract. They may already have a supplier or company in mind. They may be trying to get a current supplier or business to lower their bid, or they could be looking for free ideas.

If through your research you believe that the contract really is open to all bidders, you should think about how much competition there is for the contract, and how the bids for the contract will be evaluated and compared. For example, are they okay with a more expensive solution if it provides them with more value, or do they just want the lowest price possible?

If you can, get in touch with the client as early in the process as you can. You will build a relationship with the potential client and give them advice that could steer them in the direction of your company. You can demonstrate your strengths and abilities through this dialogue.



What are the procurement steps?

Understanding how procurement works from the client organization's point of view will increase your company's ability to identify and get contracts.

Here are the basic steps that organizations go through when they need to get products or services from an outside business:

Step 1: Identify Product or Service Need

The organization internally identifies that it needs a product or service from an external source. The product or service can be one that they have gotten before and need more of, or may be a completely new need.

Step 2: Describe Details of Product or Service Needed

Getting the right product or service to meet the organization's needs is very important. Sometimes there will already be clear standards set out by an industry. Other times, the organization will have to determine their specific needs. This could include:

- Part numbers of the products needed
- Color and weight of product
- Specific contract services needed

Step 3: Contract Criteria & Bidding

The organization develops criteria to evaluate who will be the best supplier of the needed product or service. The process of procurement can be an important strategy for the organization to get the best price on a product. If the price of the contract is more than the potential profits, the business will not survive, or a government organization will not have met its goals. However, cost is not always the determining factor in winning a procurement contract. There can be a number of other factors involved.

Step 4: Source Options

The organization needs to decide how to find the right business to get the product or service from. Sometimes companies or government agencies will already have an approved vendor list. They will send out a request for proposals to this vendor list with a deadline to respond by and a set of criteria the business must fulfill to get the contract. Be proactive! It's your job as a business to find out which companies or government agencies might have a vendor list, and to identify the steps you need to take to get on the list.

Other ways they may try to find vendors include:

- Posting it in an online searchable database such as [MERX](#) or [Biddingo](#)
- Posting an RFP on their own website



- Searching their own purchase orders from previous contracts to see who they have purchased from before
- Searching magazines, the internet, or finding sales representatives

The company will qualify potential suppliers to determine the best product/service provider for the business.

Step 5: Getting the Contract

The organization will then review all RFPs and choose the business to supply the product or service based on the criteria they developed and described in the RFP. This will include an analysis of the value the potential businesses bring, in comparison to the price they quote, and how closely the businesses' proposals match what was requested in the RFP.

The organization will then choose one of the businesses that submitted a proposal. The final price will be negotiated between the organization and the business provider. Then a contract will be written and signed to clearly demonstrate what the business is responsible for supplying to the organization, in what timeframe, and for what cost.

Step 6: Provide your products or services

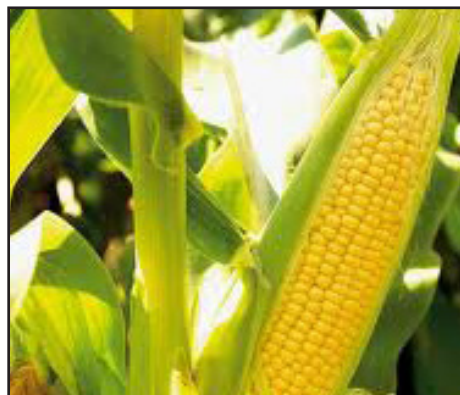
Products

If you are delivering a product, the purchase order must be delivered. This can happen by fax, mail, personally, email or other electronic means. Sometimes the delivery method is specified in the purchasing contract. The organization then acknowledges that they have received the product order. Both parties keep a copy on file.

“Expediting” the purchase order, is a term you will come across in this process. Expediting refers to the timeline for providing your products or services, and tying your payment dates to this completion timeline.

Services

Depending on the service, there will be timeframes associated with specific tasks or “deliverables” (such as a completed report) that you will need to complete and show evidence of completing in exchange for payment.



Cathy Martin



Step 7: Receipt and Inspection of Purchases

Once the organization receives the product or service, they accept or reject the items. Acceptance of the items means that they must now pay for them according to the schedule agreed upon in the contract. A service provider example of this is if a consultant were to submit a report as part of a contract. The receiving organization may want changes made to the report prior to payment if it does not meet their requirements.

Step 8: Invoice Approval and Payment

This refers to any documents that state the product or service has been provided and fee must match in order to receive payment. This could include the contract, an invoice, or a purchase order. Any differences must be fixed before the organization pays your business. Usually, payment is made in the form of cash, cheque, bank transfers, credit letters or other types of electronic transfers.

Step 9: Record Maintenance

In the case of audits, both your business and the client organization must keep good records. These include purchase records needed to do your taxes and purchase orders to confirm any guarantees or warranties.

For more information on this process, visit BusinessDictionary.com

Where can I find procurement opportunities?

There are a number of ways you can find out about procurement opportunities. There are business registries you can sign up with, specifically for Aboriginal businesses. You can also sign up with different online databases (some are free and some have a fee) that you can search or receive notifications from to learn about opportunities.

Lastly, we highly recommend you practice the old-fashioned method of contacting your Aboriginal community administration office (ask for your local business, economic or benefits staff), municipality, province, local company or corporation to tell them about your business and see if there are opportunities for your business to provide them with a product or service. Building these relationships can only help your business, and give you an edge on the competition, since you will already be a known business to these groups when an RFP comes out.

Build Business Relationships for Contracts

Research and then identify contract opportunities that you have a great chance at getting. If needed, you can increase your capacity by partnering with another business or hiring staff to help deliver a contract.

Building relationships with customers can be the best way of finding out about contract opportunities that are coming soon. As part of this, you may need to go through a pre-qualification process, demonstrating to a potential customer that you meet their general supplier requirements.

This gives you a head start when the organization decides to ask suppliers to compete for a contract. Purchasers often tell preferred suppliers about their requirements by sending a request for proposal (RFP) or invitation to tender (ITT).



Directories and Registries for Aboriginal Business

Register Your Business in the Aboriginal Business Directory

The Aboriginal Business Directory is a part of the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business (PSAB), supported by the Federal Government. Registering your business with this directory is a great start on your journey to getting involved in procurement. It will increase your visibility, and allow government, other businesses, or corporations, to search for businesses like yours when they are in need of a product or service and prioritize working with an Aboriginal business. This website has all of the eligibility information for you, as well as a searchable directory to see what kinds of other Aboriginal businesses are registered. *Click on the web link in the title above to learn more.*

Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB)

The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) is a member based organization driving business opportunities and advancing corporate social responsibility for the Aboriginal community. CCAB offers unique programs and services that help facilitate sustainable relations between First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people and the Canadian business sector.

Visit www.ccab.com to learn more.

BC Aboriginal Business Association (BCABA)

The BC Aboriginal Business Association (BCABA) is an Industry Council for Aboriginal Business (ICAB) sponsored organization. Their vision is to increase opportunities for aboriginal businesses by improving access to project contracts, employment, and training in a wide range of BC business sectors. *Click on the weblink in the title above to learn more.*

Canadian Aboriginal Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC)

CAMSC operates as a private sector-led, non-profit membership organization governed by a Board of Directors that is comprised of major multinational corporations operating in Canada. The organization aims to boost economic development efforts and employment. It delivers programs and processes to promote and facilitate procurement opportunities between major corporations in Canada and suppliers of all sizes owned and operated by Canadian Aboriginal people and Minorities. Visit www.camsc.ca to learn more.

Province of Manitoba – Aboriginal Procurement Initiative

The objective of the Aboriginal Procurement Initiative is to increase the participation of Aboriginal peoples and suppliers in providing goods and services to the Manitoba Government. To that end, Manitoba Procurement Services Branch has introduced an Aboriginal Procurement Initiative (API) to increase the participation of Aboriginal businesses in providing goods and services to government. *Click on the weblink in the title above to learn more.*

Province of Ontario – Aboriginal Business Directory

Similar to the Federal Aboriginal Business Directory, this is a directory of Aboriginal businesses in Ontario, and the products and services they provide. You can register your business and search other registered businesses on this site as well. *Click on the weblink in the title above to learn more.*

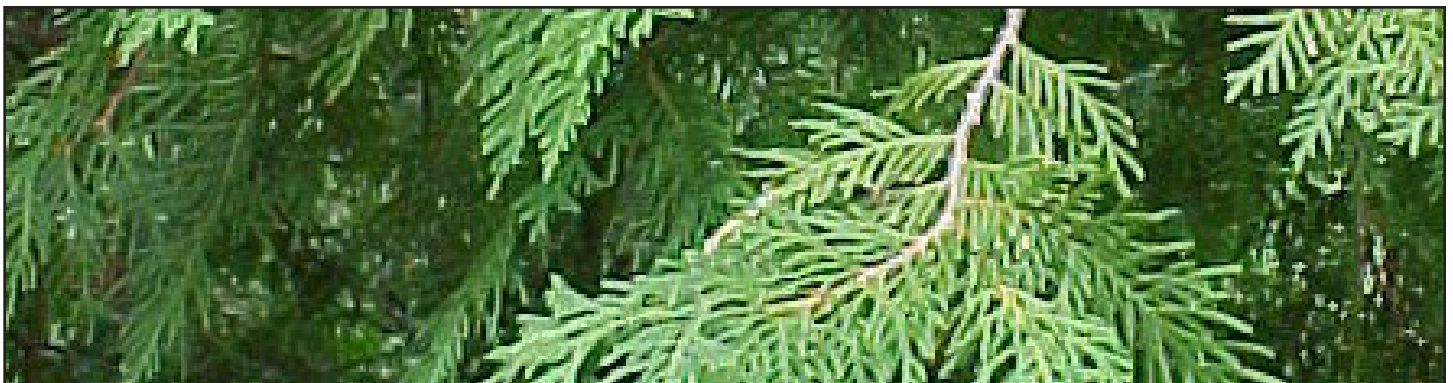
Union Gas

Union Gas is committed to building long-term productive relationships with members of the First Nation and Métis communities based on mutual respect and economic opportunity. As the largest Ontario-based subsidiary of Spectra Energy, Union Gas is responsible for the company's First Nation and Métis relations in the province. *Click on the weblink in the title above to learn more.*

Kativik Regional Government

The Kativik Regional Government (KRG) was created in 1978 pursuant to the **James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement** to deliver public services to Nunavimmiut. Many of the KRG's responsibilities are stipulated in the **Act respecting Northern Villages and the Kativik Regional Government** (Kativik Act). Other mandates have been delegated to the KRG by the region's municipalities and the Québec government.

Learn more about their Business Directory on their website.



Online Searchable Databases

NationTalk

NationTalk is a website and daily e-newsletter that is “the best way to reach out to the Aboriginal communities with more than 15,000 daily newsletter subscribers and over 2 million page impressions a year through its website.” NationTalk lists tenders that are of interest to Aboriginal businesses. *Click on the weblink in the title above to learn more.*

Biddingo

Biddingo.com is an online portal that connects suppliers providing various goods and services to buyers from the Provincial, Municipal, Education, Crown Corporation, Housing, Construction and Healthcare sectors and Private companies from across Canada. *Click on the weblink in the title above to learn more.*

MERX

MERX is Canada’s leading electronic tendering service. It is a database that contains contract opportunities from the Canadian public sector, or from Canadian Agencies, Crown & Private corporations, or from the U.S. federal, state and local marketplaces. MERX has leveled the playing field so that businesses of any size can have easy and affordable access to billions of dollars in contracting opportunities. *Click on the weblink in the title above to learn more.*

Buy and Sell – Public Works and Government Services Canada

If you are interested in selling your goods or services to the federal government, the five-step approach outlined on this website will help you understand the basics of procurement, register, and bid on opportunities. *Click on the weblink in the title above to learn more.*

Canada Business Network

Learn about procurement opportunities in your province by *clicking on the weblink in the title above.*

Bid Match

Bid Match is a U.S. data mining service that links clients to potential opportunities based on a profile that specifies what products or services the business can provide. Relevant opportunities are delivered directly to the client’s email. *Click on the weblink in the title above to learn more.*

Charity Village

Charity Village is a searchable contract and job-posting site for people interested in working with or for non-profits. While the site looks like it is focused on just jobs, you can find Requests for Proposals by clicking on “Advanced Search” right below the main page “Search” button. You can then select “part time and full time contracts” and any other qualifiers for the kind of contracts you are looking for. *Click on the weblink in the title above to learn more.*



First Nation Opportunities

Procurement happens differently when it comes to First Nation opportunities. Many communities have not developed any specific type of procurement process or policy. Some are very good at identifying what they need and put it out to tender and have RFP's, similar to what a typical mainstream contract would have. Other communities/organizations pre-identify companies that they have in their own communities or regular contracted companies that they have working in their communities for years and offer the contracts to them outright. If you are a member of a First Nation, find out what their policy is, and advocate for your business to be a potential provider of products and services for them.

How do I submit a contract proposal?

Chances are that if you are getting ready to submit a contract proposal, you have found or been sent a “Request for Proposal (RFP)” or an “Invitation to Tender (ITT)”. These terms are often used interchangeably.

According to TechTarget, “Both RFPs and ITTs are documents that an organization posts or shares with potential businesses to get bids for a product or service. For example, a new business or a business moving from a paper-based system to a computer-based system might request proposals for all the hardware, software, and user training required to establish and integrate the new system into the organization. Another business might draft an RFP for a custom-written computer application they wanted to outsource”.⁶

In your bid, you need to describe how your business will solve the problem by providing a product or service. You will also need to quote a competitive price for your work.

⁶ TechTarget. Request for Proposal. Retrieved March 20, 2015 from <http://searchitchannel.techtarget.com/definition/request-for-proposal>



Guidelines for submitting a great bid:

- **Whenever possible, contact the potential client** to introduce yourself and let them know you will be submitting. Ask them one or two questions to make sure you fully understand what they need. Do not contact the client if they clearly ask you not to.
- **Read and follow the guidelines set out in the RFP or ITT for submitting a proposal.** When you are finished writing your first draft, check what you have done against their requirements to make sure you are doing exactly what is asked of you. This demonstrates attention to detail and your ability to follow direction.
- **Focus on the client - how you can fulfill their needs?** Talk only about yourself and your business in relation to how it can provide the products or services the client needs.
- **Come up with and describe great new ideas** that could help the client meet their needs. Show your creativity and interest in helping them solve the problem. Get the product or service in a new and more efficient or sustainable way.
- **Show the client that you meet all of the qualifications** they are looking for with regards to prior experience and education. Provide them with concrete evidence that you are right for the job! Show them you have the resources needed to do the work cost-effectively; that you will hit deadlines and can be flexible when it counts.
- **Explain how you will manage the contract** and provide a list of key products or services you will deliver, and when you will deliver them.
- **Show that you are giving them value for money.** Use your creativity and think of ways you can bring the client something that your competitors cannot. Show them that giving you the contract will benefit them in many different ways, including increased efficiency, risk reduction and management, cost-effectiveness, expertise, etc.
- **Think about all of the costs to you if you get the contract.** Consider wages for staff and for yourself, cost of insurance, supplies, travel, time for meetings with the client, cost of your product, etc.
- **Provide a bid on the contract** that is competitive, but includes a reasonable profit margin for you to pay all of the costs you know you will have.
- **Let your team shine!** Your resumes should focus on your strengths and directly relate to the proposal requirements to demonstrate you can do the job. Highlight similar projects you have successfully completed, and include references of happy past clients.
- **Use direct and plain language.** Make sure your grammar and punctuation are correct. The proposal should be easy to read, clearly formatted, and simple for anyone to understand. Take note of the writing style and language used in the RFP or ITT and match your style and tone to that document.
- **Use visual impact.** Make sure your document is organized and formatted in a way that is very clear and includes relevant graphic elements to give a positive and professional visual impact. Your proposal is a marketing document. It should be attractive, approachable, and professional.
- **Include your contact information details.** Make sure you put this at the beginning or end of your document. Many companies also include their contact information in the footer of the document.

Closing the Deal

You may be contacted to provide the client with references, to explain part of your proposal, or to provide a presentation to the client. Use each of these opportunities to make sure your company shines.

You may also be offered the contract, but at a lesser price than what you quoted. Make sure that you have a bottom line for how low you can deliver the contract, still pay all of your costs, and make some profit.

Write up a Contract

When you work with the client to come up with a contract for you to provide the product or service, consider taking some steps to protect yourself. You may want a non-disclosure agreement as part of the contract that clearly states what information should be kept confidential and not released to anyone outside of the contract.

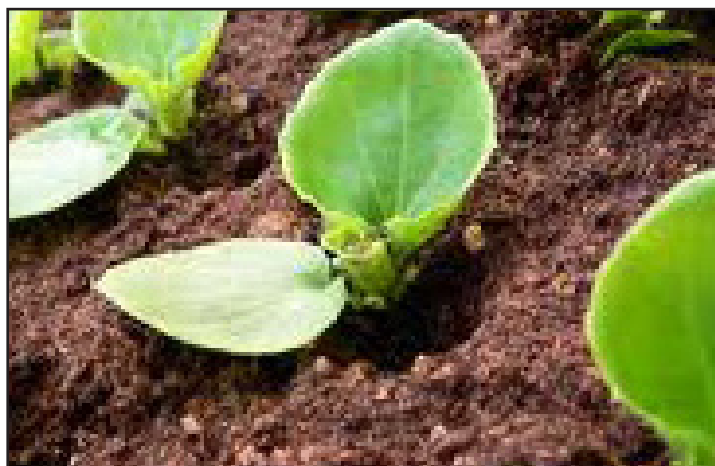
Make sure the contract clearly outlines

- ☐ Roles and responsibilities for your business to fulfill
- ☐ Roles and responsibilities for the client to fulfill
- ☐ Timelines for delivery of the product or service
- ☐ Timelines for payment for your product or service
- ☐ Protections against any unacceptable risks for your business

Contracts can also be colour-coded to clearly highlight the rights and responsibilities of each of the contracting parties. Colour coding can significantly reduce contract related disputes and bring about improvements in the contracting practices for both parties. We recommend including a key in the document explaining what each colour identifies, i.e. to clearly highlight the rights and responsibilities of each of the contracting parties, a colour-coded version of the contract is included – Blue for Supplier, Green for Customer, Orange for Both.

If You Don't Get the Contract

Whether you get the contract or not, it is important for the growth of your business to follow up and ask why your bid succeeded or failed. This will only help you to improve future proposals.



Do I need approval from anyone to enter into a procurement process?

This section of the Tool Kit focuses specifically on issues of approval for First Nation members. If you are a member of a First Nation, you generally do not need approval from Chief and Council to go after contracts with government and other businesses and corporations. You are free to act independently as your own business.

When working in a First Nation setting where you would like to provide a product or service to a First Nation office, there are a number of “business activities” that may be considered difficult to navigate. In many scenarios where policy and guidelines do not exist, a typical tendering process can become very tough to find success. Building strong relationships at the community level and promoting your company internally through leadership and senior staff may be a strong way for you to gain trust and provide them with the opportunity to learn about your ability to deliver on contracts.

Some First Nation communities and organizations only allow trusted contractors to deliver on their goods and services. Others just need to know that your company exists, that you fall within their expenditure guidelines, and can deliver a quality product or service. Never assume that you will secure a contract just because you belong to a certain community or because you know certain people. Personal or political ties will not secure your contracting requirements the majority of the time, especially away from your own community and networks.

In terms of approvals, if you have responded to a RFP specifying a commitment to purchase from an Aboriginal business, most times your company has to prove that it has the eligibility via ownership as a majority owned “First Nation” company. This means that your status card must be recognized by the organization that issues the RFP, whether they are the community, the organization, or the government that is tendering the contract opportunity.

Are there tools available to help me get ready for procurement?

There are all sorts of tools available to help prepare your company. However, procurement is not something that you can learn overnight. Understanding the system takes time. It also takes a lot of energy and resources to prepare your company to achieve a level of business knowledge and skill to deliver a quality product.

The biggest challenge is the learning curve that every project and contract has, and your ability as a company owner to understand these learning curves. If you can understand these then you will become more successful at securing contracts in the short and long-term future.

Resources and tools that are currently available can be found:

- Online
- At your local economic development office
- At community, regional and provincial Aboriginal business support organizations,
- At mainstream business consulting firms,
- At mainstream business support agencies,



- Through federal and provincial departments that promote Aboriginal business development
- With local business owners that are willing to help mentor your business.

There are also business development workshops, conferences, events and training sessions that you can typically find in most regions, some of which may be at no cost and some that are provided through sponsors locally.

Examples of resources to help you prepare for procurement include:

Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business

Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business

Preparing to Sell to the Government



I DO BUSINESS. Summits

I DO BUSINESS. hosts Aboriginal entrepreneurship Summits across Canada that focus on providing information and opportunities to develop and enhance business, Implementing strategies for business growth, Bridging First Nation and government business, building contract and procurement opportunities, and understanding the procurement process. Request a Summit in your community today!

I DO BUSINESS. Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Training

I DO BUSINESS. provides community partners with a one of a kind entrepreneurship training program for aspiring and current Aboriginal entrepreneurs to reach dreams and achieve success in business. Request to participate in our training program today!

Get Help Developing Your Procurement Strategy

Are you ready to go after procurement opportunities, but need help developing a strong strategy that will increase your number of successful bids? **I DO BUSINESS.** has the expertise to help you develop your own procurement strategy. Contact us to learn more about how we can help!

I DO BUSINESS. Newsletter

Sign up for the **I DO BUSINESS.** You will receive regular updates on opportunities to grow your business and develop your procurement capacity.

Significance of Traditional Cultural Knowledge



Significance of Traditional Cultural Knowledge

Most people can relate to belonging to a specific community or culture, but we do not always think about how our culture and cultural knowledge can help us in business, or on the flip side, cause challenges when we work with someone from a different culture. Your culture shapes you as a person, and may have even impacted your business goals.

This section of the tool kit is intended to help you think personally through how your culture relates to your business practices, how to communicate the role of your culture in your business to others, and understanding how all of this relates to procurement opportunities.

If you were raised in an Aboriginal community, there are some challenges that you may face in reaching your business goals, especially if you are looking to do business with mainstream society. However, there are also many gifts that your culture has given you that can help you to do business in a way that feels right to you, respects your roots, and even helps your business to grow!

If you are re-entering your culture because you have been displaced, raised outside of your traditional community, or you were adopted, but you want to re-learn your culture while running your business, you will experience a different set of challenges and opportunities.

The good news is that there are many Aboriginal entrepreneurs that embrace their traditional cultural values and find success working with mainstream culture business partners and clients.



Finding Your Business & Culture Balance

How much do you want to incorporate your traditional cultural knowledge into the ways you do business? For some of you, this could be a lot, and for others, very little. It is up to you how much you want to consciously include your cultural values and practices into your business goals and activities. Below are some questions to help you consider this. We recommend you take a moment to jot down your answers to these questions on a piece of paper.

- What are your most sacred (to you) cultural values and teachings?
- How can these values and practices help you in your business?
- How might these values and practices create some added challenges for you to consider when doing business with people from other cultures?
- How will you honour these values and practices in your every-day business life?
- Can you include your cultural values and practices as a part of your business plan?
- How can you include culturally relevant practices and values into your work (i.e. smudging, elder involvement, teachings, traditional opening prayers, songs)?
- What influence does your community have in how you run your business, and who your clients and partners might be?
- Do you know or want to learn your traditional language, and will you use this language in some way in your business?
- Are you in the business of sharing your culture through art, dance, song, drumming, or in other ways, such as cross-cultural education workshops?

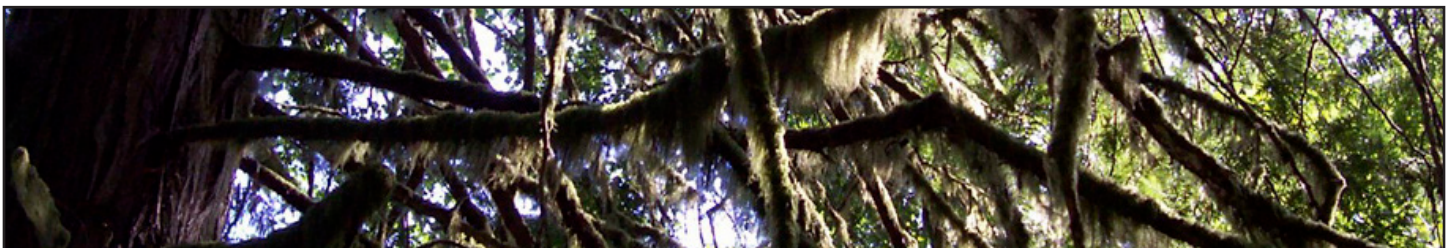
If your client or business partner has different cultural expectations than you do on how to deliver a product or service, are you willing to compromise so you can meet in the middle? If so, what are you willing to compromise on, and what will you absolutely not compromise on?

Communicating Your Culture



The ability to communicate about your culture will come in handy as a business person, as it will help you to build business relationships with more people who come from different cultural backgrounds. Consider the following questions for your business:

- How comfortable are you with doing business with people from other cultures?
- How will your current comfort level impact your ability to reach your target market for your business?
- Are you able and willing to educate your clients and partners about what is important to you and how these cultural values come to life in the way you do business?
- How do you communicate the importance of your cultural values to your mainstream business partners and clients in a way that will increase the likelihood of them being respectful towards your culture?
- How will you respond professionally if a business partner or client is disrespectful towards your culture, accidentally or intentionally?



The Culture of Procurement

Every time you decide to bid for a contract with the government, a corporation, or another private business, you need to make sure you understand the culture of the organization you are going to work with, and what they expect to see in your proposal. This is an example of cross-cultural business, because every government agency, corporation, or private business will do things a little differently. You cannot put in the same type or style of contract proposal for every potential contract, because it may be missing some things that this organization has specifically asked for.

You also want to consider carefully before you decide to bid on a contract if you think there is a cultural “fit” between who you are, what you do, and what they are asking for. Some questions to consider are:

- How might your cultural values and practices be an added benefit to the work they need done?
- Is there an opportunity in their proposal and bidding process that allows you to share how your cultural values and business practices will help get the job done at a higher quality or more efficiently than your competitors?

Note: There will not always be an obvious place to do this, be creative!

- Are there any parts of the potential contract that make you feel uncomfortable, or do not mesh with your values? Are you willing to compromise some of these values for the contract, or will you simply choose not to submit a proposal?



Culture & Business Tips

Understand that everyday, the world is changing around you, and you will have to adapt continuously to survive and thrive along with these changes. However, having strong business values shows that you have integrity between what you say, and what you do. Your business values can be inspired from your traditional cultural knowledge. Define your values and decide how your business will bring them to life in daily activities. Examples of good business values include respecting each other's opinions, or keeping your word on delivering a contract.

Continuously communicate with your clients and partners to ensure that your messages are clear, and that they understand where you are coming from. Do not assume they understand or know already.



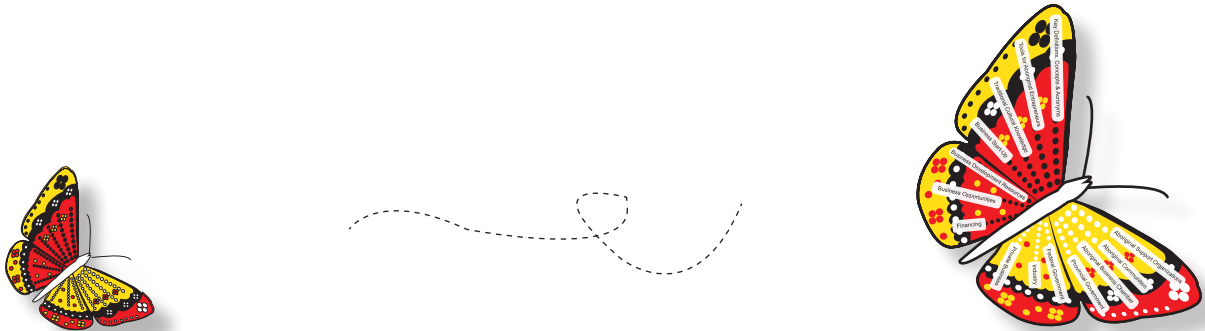
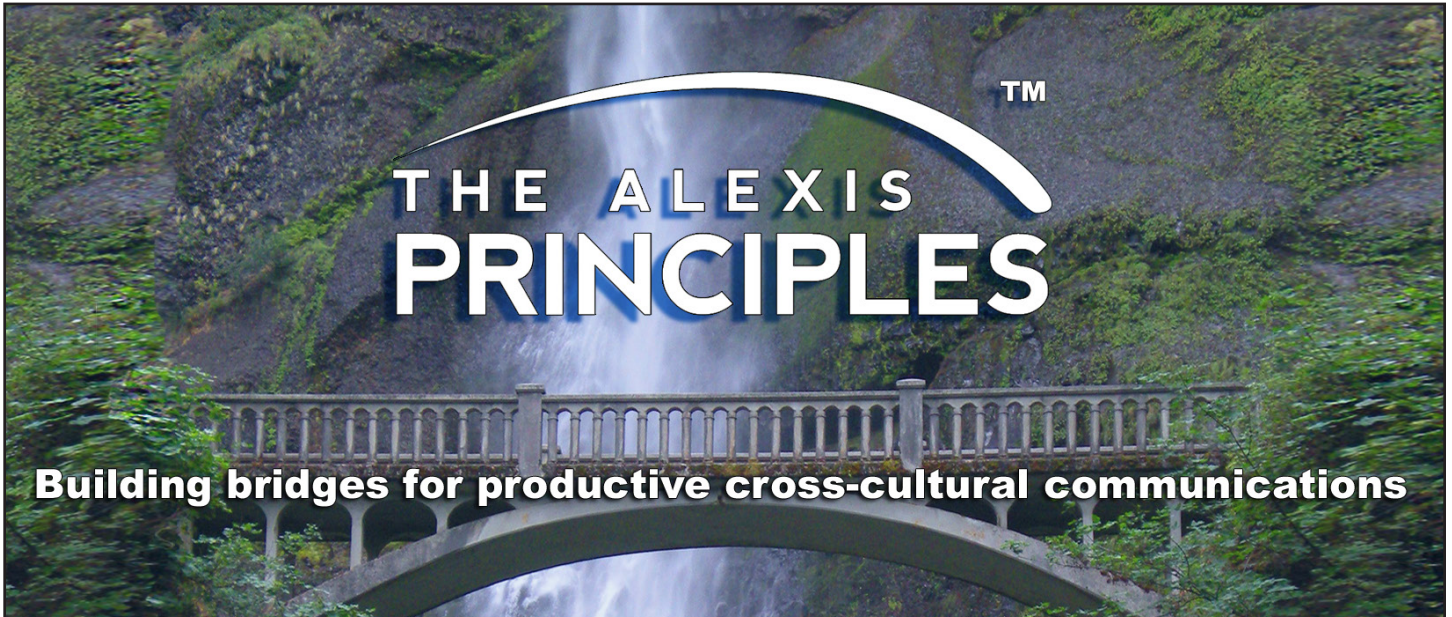
Building Cross Cultural Bridges for Business Success

In today's world, we are being called to communicate and work with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, often different from our own. Taking the time to learn key principles for how to work with someone culturally different than you will greatly help your success rate in building business relationships and bidding on contracts.

The Alexis Principles™ are a set of cross-cultural strategies that build bridges for successful business development and communications between individuals, businesses, corporations, and government agencies in any cultural context.

The intent of *The Alexis Principles™* is to help prepare you to build those business relationships with government, industry, and other small businesses based on respect, mutual trust, and understanding of each other's cultural values.

Sign up for *The Alexis Principles*[™] updates to find out when a training opportunity will be available in your area.



Business Start-Up Information



Business Start-Up Information

If you are interested in starting a business up that can grow through procurement dollars, this section of the tool kit is for you! This section will provide you with some resources and tools to get you started, including:

- Start-up business stories to get you inspired
- Procurement specific start-up considerations
- Entrepreneurial training and support opportunities
- Links to Aboriginal-specific start-up resources
- Links to start-up resources from each province and territory

Start-Up Inspiration

Everyone going into business can benefit from hearing the stories of other entrepreneurs who have found success and overcome obstacles along the way.

I DO BUSINESS. has some inspiring Aboriginal business start-up stories recorded from our **I DO BUSINESS. National Summit & Tradeshow 2015**. Listen to the stories of amazing Aboriginal entrepreneurs while doing your chores to motivate you to get started on your business dream!

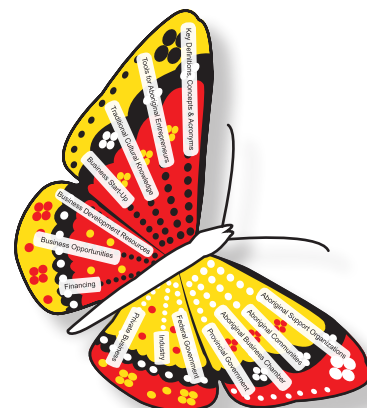


Sandi Boucher, Traditionally Speaking.ca

Sandi Boucher is a favourite keynote speaker at **I DO BUSINESS.** events and a savvy business woman. Listen to her tell her story about how she came from many life challenges to building a very successful business as a motivational speaker and best-selling author here. Her speech is called “Why Entrepreneurship is the Best Career Option EVER!”.

You can also find her power point presentation that goes along with her speech here. It includes a great “Are you an Entrepreneur?” quiz!

To learn more about Sandi’s business, visit her website: www.traditionallyspeaking.ca





Brenda LaRose, Higgins Executive Search

Brenda LaRose is a Managing Partner for Higgins Executive Search, a national retainer executive search practice with partner networks both nationally and internationally. Brenda LaRose gave a moving keynote speech to open the **I DO BUSINESS. National Summit & Tradeshow 2015** about her life story and entry into entrepreneurship.

[Listen to her keynote speech here](#), “Being an Entrepreneur - What You Need to Know”. She will be sure to inspire you with a story that shows that no matter your past or obstacles, you can succeed!

To learn more about Higgins Executive Search, visit their website: www.higginsinc.com/about

Highlighting Success Stories – Aboriginal Business Panel

Our **I DO BUSINESS. National Summit & Tradeshow 2015** held a discussion panel of four exceptional Aboriginal entrepreneurs, sharing their successes and challenges as business owners. The panel included: Andrew Lawson of [Lawson Consulting & Surveying LTD.](#), Orene Askew, aka [DJ O Show](#), Brenda La Rose, [Higgins Inc.](#), and Leslie Lounsbury, [SAY Magazine](#).

[To listen to their stories](#), visit the **I DO BUSINESS**. Audio Gallery and scroll to the bottom of the page to “Highlighting Success Stories – Panel”, select the top left option underneath the heading of “Panel Presentations”: www.idobusiness.ca/audio

Enjoy!



Procurement Business Start-Up Considerations

As a start-up, this tool kit will be most helpful to you once you have answered the following questions for your business and completed some research to prepare you for entering the procurement world.

What products and/or services will your business provide?

If you aren't yet sure what kind of business you want to have, we recommend that you do the following research to find a strong business opportunity that matches with your skills and procurement needs:

1. Go to the tool kit section, "Who is purchasing products and services from Aboriginal Businesses?"
2. Utilize the resources in this section to explore what the federal, provincial or territorial, municipalities, local Aboriginal communities, and corporations are looking to purchase from companies, with a focus on your region.
3. Browse through these procurement opportunities online and see which of them might fit with a skill set you have or product you know you could sell.
4. Call your local municipality, and/or Aboriginal community or organization and ask them specifically what opportunities they see coming up in your area for business start-ups related to procurement.
5. Once you have narrowed down your options, follow the steps below for "If you already know what you'll sell".

If you already know what you'll sell, you still need to do the research to see what kind of demand there may be for the products or services you want to sell, and who your potential clients could be. Your next steps are to:

1. Go to the tool kit section, "Who is purchasing products and services from Aboriginal Businesses?"
2. Utilize the resources in this section to do some searches to find out who your strongest target market might be. For example, are there a lot of calls for your product or service from governments or corporations?
3. Notice where these opportunities are geographically located. Are they close by to you?
4. Make a list of the requirements you see buyers are looking for you to fulfill to be eligible as a vendor. Turn these common requirements into a checklist for you to start working on as you develop your business.
5. Call your local municipality, and/or Aboriginal community or organization and tell them about your business start up and what you plan to offer. Ask them what opportunities they see coming up in your area that could relate to your business offerings.
6. Begin developing your business plan by utilizing the resources contained in this tool kit.



Entrepreneurial Training and Supports

Starting up a business requires a lot of different knowledge and skills, such as marketing, budgeting, research, business management, and more. There are a number of entrepreneurial training programs and start-up resources available across Canada that can help make sure you have all of the tools and skills you need for success. Some of these programs even include access to small start-up grants or low interest loans.

Below is a brief list of examples of entrepreneurship training programs and informational resources to get you started. Make sure to contact your local municipality and/or Aboriginal community/organization to see what other support and training may be available to you!

Do some online research for your particular province or territory. Try online search phrases such as “Aboriginal entrepreneurship training Alberta”, for example, and you will find a number of government and non-profit training programs available. Some of these programs are even FREE!

The following are just a few resources and suggestions of programs you could utilize:

Business Start Up Check List from Canada Business Network

This is an excellent place to start when considering getting your business up and running. It includes resources for business planning, organizing your finances, registering your business, hiring and managing your employees, and much more!

I DO BUSINESS. Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Training Program

I DO BUSINESS. provides Aboriginal communities and organizations with a one of a kind entrepreneurship training program for aspiring and current Aboriginal entrepreneurs to achieve success in business. Our training program provides you with the skills, knowledge, resources and start-up support to successfully build your own business. [Request to bring our training program to your community today!](#)

I DO BUSINESS. Summits for Aboriginal Success

I DO BUSINESS. hosts Aboriginal entrepreneurship summits across Canada that focus on providing information and opportunities to develop and enhance business, implement strategies for business growth, bridge Aboriginal and government business, build contract and procurement opportunities, and understand the procurement process. [Request a Summit in your community today!](#)

I DO BUSINESS. Newsletter

Sign up for the I DO BUSINESS. electronic newsletter. You will receive regular updates on opportunities to grow your business and develop your procurement capacity.



Futurpreneur – Business Planning & Mentorship Supports

Futurpreneur Canada is a national, non-profit organization that provides financing, mentoring and support tools to aspiring business owners aged 18-39. If you are under 18 or over 39, don't worry! There are still a ton of excellent resources you can access through their website, especially their "crash course in business planning" and online business plan writer.

Aboriginal-Specific Resources

There are a number of amazing resources out there that are designed specifically for you! Remember, you are your own best ally. The following is not an exhaustive list of resources. Check with your local community, region, and Aboriginal organizations to see what else might be available to you!

Starting a Business - For Aboriginal Peoples

This government of Canada website will link you to Aboriginal-specific start up programs and services including: start-up financing opportunities, Aboriginal banking services, business development programs, and training and employment programs.

Aboriginal Business and Entrepreneurship Development (AEBD)

The AEBD works with Aboriginal entrepreneurs and its partners to provide a range of services and support that promote the growth of a strong Aboriginal business sector in Canada.

[Learn more here.](#)

Aboriginal Business Service Network

The BC ABSN is a collective of Aboriginal Business Service Providers in British Columbia who enhance access to business information and resources.

Aboriginal Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC's)

There are 269 non-profit Community Futures Development Corporation offices across Canada that provide services to entrepreneurs living in rural communities, such as small business loans, tools, training and events for people wanting to start, expand, franchise, or sell a business.

There are a number of Aboriginal-specific CFDCs, such as the Community Futures Development Corporation of Sto:lo (SCF) that supports First Nation Communities within the traditional Sto:lo Territory in small business start-ups and expansions. Another example would be Community Futures Treaty Seven, which provides small business services to all Treaty 7 First Nations in Alberta.

[Click here](#) to find a CFDC in your province or territory.



Métis Start-Up Resource

If you are Métis, there are a number of Métis-specific business start-up programs and resources out there for you to access. Check with your area's Métis Nation or organization to see what is available for you. For example, in Alberta, they have the [Métis Entrepreneurial Program](#), which is designed to provide self-employment training for those starting a new business or expanding an existing business. Another great example of a Métis-specific resource is the Métis Nation of Ontario's small [business start-up tool kit](#), which you can access [here](#).

Remember, if you can't find the support and resources you need through your Nation or organization, be an advocate for yourself and ask them to consider offering programs to help Métis entrepreneurs get started.

Inuit Start-Up Resources

If you are Inuit, there are a number of Inuit -specific business start-up programs and resources out there for you, too! Do your research to find out what is available for you in your area. For example, the Kakivak Association has a [Business Development Department](#) which offers services that help Inuit in the Qikiqtani Region to plan, start, and expand their services. The [Inuit Women in Business Network](#) provides an online resource page for business development that includes how to get started, business directories, the Inuit Firm Registry, and more!

Government Start-Up Resources and Information

Canada Wide

[Canada Business Network](#) has an excellent set of resources for any person or group to help them get started with their business. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Items to consider and do research on [before you start your business](#)
- [Checklists and guides for starting a business](#), includes specifics for types of businesses such as cleaning business, food truck, landscaping and snow removal, mobile pet care, restaurants, and more!
- [Business planning resources](#), such as how to write a business plan, business plan templates, sample business plans, market research information and statistics.

Provinces and Territories

[British Columbia Business Registry](#) has excellent business resources to register your business, a [start up checklist](#), financing opportunities, and steps to start your business.

[Alberta](#) has a website that includes information on registering your business name, occupational health and safety resources for a small business, checklists for going into business, help creating a business plan, points to consider when starting your own business, and more!

[Saskatchewan](#) has website with a variety of useful links such as permits and licenses, guides for starting up your business and how to manage it and how to establish a business in Saskatchewan. Check out [Saskatchewan's Business Resource Centre](#), which offers a variety of services to help the province's entrepreneurs successfully establish their business.

Manitoba has a Starting Smart website that features a variety of business resources including business starts, licenses and permits, financial programs, business planning, general business counseling, financial assistance programs, online tools and resources, as well as workshops and seminars!

Ontario provides small business advice, support, services and information on business permits and regulations. Make sure to take advantage of their Small Business Enterprise Centres (SBECs). SBECs can help you start your business through consultations, reviews of your business plans, workshops, and online tool kits. In addition, Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs boasts an excellent variety of business start-up tool kits and videos to get you going, and ONE Centres provides you with free reviews of your business plan.

Quebec has resources for business start-up, including self-employment programs. You can also learn how to register your business and about licensing, permits and regulations here.

New Brunswick provides links to various resources for starting up including incentives, business permits and licenses, tax credits and more.

Nova Scotia provides information on how to register your business, obtain licenses and permits, or start paying taxes so that they can help to get your business up and running smoothly.

Prince Edward Island Opportunities PEI has a variety of links and resources related to starting a business, including a start up checklist, links to programs and services, how to register your business, taxes, licenses, and more!

Newfoundland & Labrador offers small business counseling, steps to starting a small business guide, financial supports, and more.

Northwest Territories offers a how-to guide for starting your business, including how to get started, how to build a business plan, financing, regulations and licensing. Additional business resources that are industry specific can be found here.

Yukon provides financial incentive programs, ideas for types of start-up businesses, how to select a name, all of the necessary forms you have to fill out to start a business, and more. Additional business resources for the Yukon can be found here.

Nunavut has an excellent document that guides you through seven steps to start your business. In addition, you can find information about Nunavut's different business incentive programs and support programs, as well as additional resources for start up here.

Closing Thoughts

Starting up a new business is always challenging. Follow these golden rules to find success:

- Learn from other successful entrepreneurs.
- Focus in on YOUR strengths and what you feel you can deliver as part of YOUR products and services.
- Grow your business slowly, set reachable goals for yourself both financially and otherwise.
- Always keep in mind that personal and holistic approaches will help keep you grounded.
- Don't be afraid of failure. Instead, turn failures into learning opportunities.
- Build a strong business plan and keep refining it as your business changes and grows.

Left to Right: Marcia Ritchie and Charlene John working on their business plans as part of the **I DO BUSINESS. Entrepreneurship Program** in Saugeen First Nation



John Cummine, **I DO BUSINESS. Entrepreneurship Training Program** participant, receives his grant of \$3000 from Business Development Facilitator, Jesse Terry



Business Development Resources



Business Development Resources

Even if you are already running a business, there is always room for development and growth. This section is intended for Aboriginal business owners who have a business, but want to increase their success rate in getting procurement contracts. Business development is an ongoing process that requires time to reflect on where your business currently is, and what you need to do to take things to the next level.

It is important to remember that procurement success does not happen overnight. You have to learn the “ropes”, understand how the system works, increase your company’s ability to deliver on a contract, find other companies that you may be able to partner with, and have the financial capacity to deliver on projects.

This section contains some suggestions that may help you to be prepared to succeed when the right procurement opportunity comes up, including information on:

- Business Partnerships
- Registering Your Business for Procurement Opportunities
- Tips for Writing a Procurement Proposal
- Bid Bonding
- Additional Business Development Supports and Recommendations

Business Partnerships

According to the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, the majority of Aboriginal businesses are very small, with no employees¹. If this is the case for your business, that means when you bid on a contract, you are 100% responsible for delivering. That is a lot of work for just one person! Even if you have a couple of employees, you may still need additional expertise to get the contract. Instead of letting these procurement opportunities pass you by, consider entering into a business partnership with another business or individual that has the expertise that compliments your own. Partnerships allow you to share strengths, lower your risks, and increase your ability to compete against the other bidders.

There are two main forms of partnership that will be discussed here: joint venture partnerships and an unincorporated business partnership.

¹ Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. Promise and Prosperity: The Aboriginal Business Survey. Retrieved March 9, 2015 from <https://www.ccab.com/uploads/File/Promise-and-Prosperity--The-Aboriginal-Business-Survey.pdf>



Joint Venture Partnerships (JVPs)

A joint venture partnership is a business relationship where two or more people/businesses agree to temporarily pool their resources for the purpose of completing a specific task. JVPs can allow you to bid and deliver on mainstream contracts that you may not have been able to access on your own.

This tool kit is an example of a joint venture partnership between two businesses that each bring different strengths, knowledge, and experience to the project:

I DO BUSINESS. Inc. and **Diversity Management Group Inc.**

For more information on Joint Venture Partnerships, listen to this plenary presentation from the **I DO BUSINESS. National Summit & Tradeshow 2015**, “Joint Venture Strategies: Creating Successful Partnerships and Capitalizing on Procurement Opportunities”. Once [you click on this link](#), scroll down to the bottom of the page where you will find the presentation at the bottom left hand corner, below “Panel Presentations”.

Check out this excellent article, [How to Lay Out a Joint Venture Partnership That Works](#), for more information on how to find and create a joint venture partnership.

Unincorporated Business Partnerships

According to the Canada Business Network,

A partnership is a good business structure if you want to carry on a business with a partner and you do not wish to incorporate your business. With a partnership, financial resources are combined and put into the business. You can establish the terms of your business with your partner and protect yourself in case of a disagreement or dissolution by drawing up a specific business agreement. As partners, you would share in the profits of your business according to the terms of your agreement.²

This is a good long-term business partnership option. For more information on how to build a business partnership, visit the [Canada Business Network](#) website.

¹ Canada Business Network. Corporation, partnership, or sole proprietorship? Retrieved March 8, 2015 from http://www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/page/2853/#toc-_partnerships





Tips For Better Business Partnerships

According to Kelly Lendsay of the Aboriginal Human Resource Council, there are six key conditions for effective business partnerships that he outlined during his presentation at the **I DO BUSINESS. National Summit & Tradeshow 2015**:

- **Value:** There must be clear agreement on the value each business brings to the partnership, and how this will build value for their client(s).
- **Relationships:** The partners should have the ability to work together in a compatible way.
- **Trust + Conflict:** Have a business partnership driven by values that is balanced fairly between both of you.
- **Commitment:** You should aim to work together to achieve mutually set goals and targets.
- **Accountability:** You should establish clear roles and responsibilities for each partner, with shared accountability for successes and challenges.
- **Results & Risk:** You should fairly share profits and risks between partners.

You can listen to Kelly Lendsay's full presentation at our [I DO BUSINESS. audio gallery](#). Scroll down until you see Mr. Lendsay's presentation. You can also [view his presentation slides here](#).

For more tips on business partnership development, check out this article, [5 Lessons for Strong Business Partnerships](#) from Forbes.com.

Register Your Business for Opportunities

Registering your business is an essential business development step that will lead you to countless procurement opportunities.

Federal Registries

Aboriginal Business Directory

As an Aboriginal business, it is essential for you to register with the Aboriginal Business Directory. This will increase the visibility of your company for potential procurement opportunities!

Make sure to go back and review the list of directories and registries for Aboriginal Business in the “Where can I find procurement opportunities?” section of the tool kit.

Supplier Registration Information Database

To sell to the federal government, register here for free to get a procurement business number and make your business’ products and services widely available to federal government buyers.

Centralized Professional Services ePortal

If you are a professional or a specialist, you can register your company in this database to conduct business with the Government of Canada.

SELECT

If you have a construction, architectural or engineering services business, you can register in this database to become an approved supplier for the federal government.

Provincial Registries

Below is a list of provincial and territorial procurement websites, some of which have registries. Make sure to do your research for your region to make sure you register your business everywhere you can. This will increase your chances of finding out about procurement opportunities that relate to your business.

Alberta Government Purchasing

British Columbia – BC Bid

Manitoba Government Purchasing

New Brunswick Government Purchasing

Newfoundland and Labrador Government Purchasing

Northwest Territories Contract Opportunities

Nova Scotia Government Procurement Policies

Nova Scotia Government Tenders

Nunavut Contract Opportunities

Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti Procurement

Ontario Government Procurement

PEI Government Procurement Policy

PEI Government Tender Opportunities



Chris Desjardins and
representatives from OPG

Quebec Government Purchasing (French Only)

Saskatchewan Government Purchasing

Yukon Government Purchasing

Tips for Writing a Procurement Proposal

In the main body of the tool kit, there is a section entitled “Am I prepared for procurement opportunities?” This section discusses briefly that most procurement opportunities are put out through Requests for Proposals (RFPs). Here are some tips and resources that can help prepare you to write a stand out proposal to get that contract!

Resources

How to Prepare a Bid for the Federal Government (buyandsell.gc.ca)

Buyandsell.gc.ca provides an excellent guide on how to prepare a bid for any of their procurement opportunities. You can also find out more on how a bid is evaluated, how a bid is selected, as well as a “best practices for bidding checklist”.

Government Guide to Writing a Proposal (Northwest Territories Example)

This Guide was published by the Northwest Territories Public Works and Services in 2005. It contains a number of excellent suggestions for preparing a great proposal. Please note that this is only an example. Every government body, corporation, or other organization will have their own specifications. Make sure to do your research and find out what you need to do for the specific organization that is requesting proposals.



Tips

7 Steps to a Winning Business Proposal

Read this excellent article that provides a strong overview of the seven major steps to writing a proposal and winning a contract.



Learning from Bids Service

Do you want to improve your bidding strategy to get government contracts? You may be eligible for a free analysis that could help you increase your chances at being awarded a contract. This program uses an unsuccessful bid as an example for discussion about your approach.

Know the Government of Canada's Fiscal Planning Cycle

Knowing the government's fiscal planning cycle will help you know when to start really paying attention for potential contract opportunities, and make sure you have some time set aside in your schedule to write an excellent proposal.

According to this Globe and Mail article, "the fiscal year runs from April to March. The first quarter (April to June) is for setting budgets. The second quarter (July to September) is for establishing programs and work plans. The third quarter (October to December) is for purchasing. And the fourth quarter (January to March), the busiest time of the year, is for wrapping everything up"³.

Bid Bonding

Some procurement opportunities require bid bonding. Bid bonding refers to a debt, in the form of a cash deposit, confirmed by a bidder (your business) for the purpose of giving a promise to the project owner that the bidder will take on the job if selected. Some contract opportunities require bid bonding which means you may have to put up very high bid bonds just to have them consider your company to deliver the project.

Bid bonding is most often required for construction jobs or similar projects where a guarantee is needed that the bidder has the ability to complete the job they are bidding on without running into cash flow problems as they go. Without a bid bond in place, the project owner or client has no evidence that your business has the financial capacity to complete the job.

When you submit a bid bond, if you win a project, but you back out of delivering it, or do not meet all of the contract specifications, a claim can be made against your bid bond demanding full payment.

This may sound intimidating at first, but it is worth your time doing some research to find out if bid bonding may be a requirement for procurement opportunities in your business. Otherwise, you could lose out on major contracts that you have the full capacity to deliver on that could help grow your business. To learn more about bid bonding, visit this Frequently Asked Questions Bid Bonding website ⁴.

³ Marion Soubliere (February 13, 2012). How to land a federal contract, even as a solpreneur. The Globe and Mail. Retrieved March 2, 2015 from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/small-business/sb-tools/how-to-land-a-federal-contract-even-as-a-solpreneur/article544842/>

⁴ Note: this is a private business website for an insurance company. **I DO BUSINESS.** has no affiliation with this company, and is not promoting their services. We are linking to their website due to the useful information on bid bonding.

This final part of this section is a compilation of resources and recommendations that can help you grow your business:

Having a business mentor can really help you take your company to the next level. A mentor is someone who has been down a similar path, and may be a little bit further ahead of you. This way, your mentor can share their experiences and provide you with advice and guidance on how to solve a problem or capitalize on an opportunity.

You could have an informal mentorship relationship with someone you know in your community, or find a mentor through non-profit or government mentorship program.

1. The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business has the Aboriginal Business Mentorship Program (ABMP). The ABMP pairs you with an experienced mentor to help you take your business to the next level. Visit: https://www.ccab.com/aboriginal_business_mentorship_program for more information.
2. The province of Ontario has a Wisdom Exchange program where you can connect and learn from mentors and business peers to develop strategies that will grow your business.
3. British Columbia has the program MentorshipBC that will link you with small business programming in your area of the province.

[illegible]

Market Your Business

According to the Canada Business Network, if you want to sell your goods and services to the federal government, “it is important to proactively promote your business as a supplier. You’ll want to identify the qualities that differentiate you from your competitors, and target your efforts at the people responsible for choosing suppliers” ⁵.

Here are some tips on how to promote yourself to the federal government.

Learn about Goods and Services Identification Numbers (GSIN) and why you need to know about them and use them.

Take Advantage of Available Resources & Programs

Aboriginal Business Development Program (ABDP)

The Aboriginal Business Development Program provides support to Aboriginal entrepreneurs for business planning, start-up, expansion and/or marketing. Through this Program, eligible Aboriginal businesses have access to financial assistance, business information and resources, and advice for other potential sources of financing or business support.

Aboriginal Business Development Toolkit

This toolkit developed by the province of Ontario provides business development supports, tools and information to help you grow your business.

Idea Connector

Idea Connector is an Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Online Community that offers “rich and varied resources to help you improve your success, find opportunities, and grow your business”. Idea Connector profiles Aboriginal entrepreneurs on film who share their secrets to success, and provides many other excellent programs online for the Aboriginal business-person.

Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce

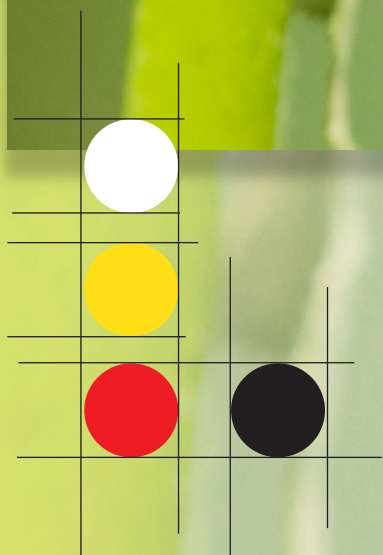
A Chamber of Commerce is a voluntary organization of the business community that lends itself to improving business and building a better community. The Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce is based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. [Read more about their services here.](#)

You can also consider joining your local community’s chamber of commerce. Chambers of Commerce can help connect you to other business people, business development workshops, and potential business-to-business contracts!

⁵ Canada Business Network. Market Yourself. Retrieved March 6, 2015 from http://www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/page/2780/#toc-_market_yourself



Business Opportunities



Business Opportunities

There are procurement opportunities in almost every industry. If you're wondering what corporations, governments, private businesses and others are buying through the procurement process, this section of the tool kit is for you!

If you have a business already, review this list to see where your products and services could fit into procurement. This list contains goods and services that have been procured by government, industry, etc.

If you are looking to start a business, this list could help you narrow down what products and services you'd like to offer that would be a good match for procurement opportunities.

Please note that this is not a comprehensive list, it is just enough to help you see the possibilities! It's up to you to do your research and see what is out there in your region, or for your type of business. The opportunities detailed below are listed in random order. The possibilities are endless!

Government Procurement Opportunities

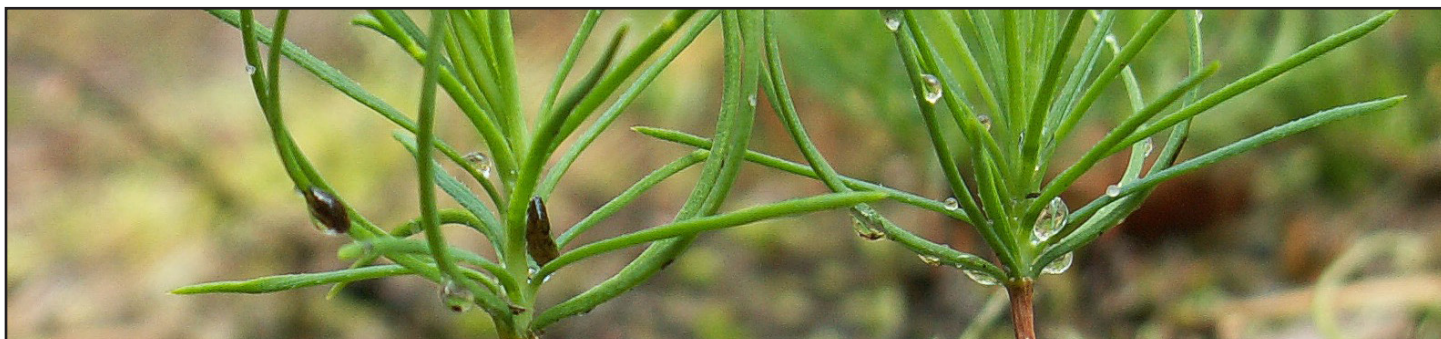
According to buyandsell.gc.ca, the Government of Canada "buys just about every kind of good and service, from aircraft to paper clips, from training services to scientific research" ¹. The following is a sample list of goods and services procured for the Government of Canada to give you an idea of the variety of opportunities available to you.

Goods	Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audiovisual equipment (video cameras etc.)• Computers• Printers• Scanners• Printing of brochures and other materials• Office furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cleaning services (i.e. carpets and windows)• Janitorial services• Grounds maintenance• Strategic planning facilitation• Engineering• Vehicle repair and maintenance

¹ Buyandsell.gc.ca. What the Government Buys. Retrieved September 4, 2014 from <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/for-businesses/selling-to-the-government-of-canada/the-procurement-process/what-the-government-buys>



Goods	Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuel • Uniforms • Widgets of all kinds • Paper hand flags • Purifying respirators • Engine spare parts • Vehicles • Chemicals • Inmate ankle boots • 3D Printers • Granite monument • Paper • Medical supplies • Construction materials and equipment • Fresh fruits and vegetables • Weapons cabinets • Bear proof bins • Exercise equipment • Electrical equipment • Portable fans • Athletic equipment • Musical instruments • Paints, varnishes, and related products • Clocks • Cleaning supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychiatric services • Campground maintenance • Technical support • Software architect • Laundry and dry cleaning services • Human resources training • Program evaluation • Garbage removal • Fire alarm servicing and maintenance • Snow removal • Mold removal • Develop e-learning content • Bus shuttle services • Waste oil collection and disposal • Grass cutting • Physiotherapy services • Moving services • Construction • Architecture • Website service and maintenance • Real estate • Language training • Government cellular services • Audit services • Humanities training • Courier services



Private Industry Opportunities

Many of the opportunities for procurement with corporations, and other private entities will be similar to the list above. [MERX](#) posts tenders online from private corporations, public sector organizations, non-profits, and more. [MERX](#) divides the types of procurement opportunities into the below categories. Take a look and see what category your business might fit into! Once you know what category or categories your business might fit within, visit [MERX](#) to browse or search for specific opportunities.

Goods	Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aerospace• Air conditioning and refrigeration equipment• Armament• Chemicals and chemical specialties• Communications, Detection and Fibre Optics• Construction Products• Cosmetics and Toiletries• EDP Hardware and Software• EDP and Office Equipment Maintenance• Electrical and Electronics• Energy• Engines, Turbines, Components and Accessories• Fabricated Materials• Fire Fighting, Security and Safety Equipment• Food• Food Preparation and Serving Equipment• Furniture• Industrial Equipment• Machinery and Tools• Marine• Medical Equipment, Supplies and Pharmaceuticals• Miscellaneous Goods• Office Equipment• Office Stationery and Supplies• Prefabricated Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Architect and Engineering Services• Communications, Photographic, Mapping, Printing and Publication Services• Construction Services• Custodial Operations and Related Services• Educational and Training Services• Environmental Services• Financial and Related Services• Health and Social Services• Information Processing and Related Telecommunications Services• Lease and Rental of Equipment• Leasing or Rental of Facilities• Maintenance, Repair, Modification, Rebuilding and Installation of Goods/Equipment• Natural Resources Services• Operation of Government-Owned Facilities• Professional, Administrative and Management Support Services• Quality Control, Testing, Inspection and Technical Representative Services• Research and Development (R&D)• Special Studies and Analysis - (Not R&D)• Transportation, Travel and Relocation Services



Financing



Debt

“A debt is a loan that must be repaid to a lender, with interest, within a set period of time. Debt does not affect the ownership of the business. If you put half the money into your business and borrowed the rest, you own 100 per cent of the shares. If the debt is not repaid, however, the lender may take ownership of your business assets, such as any equipment that was purchased using the debt” ².

This type of financing is outlined in detail in the [Aboriginal Business Development Toolkit](#). Examples of debts include: credit cards, loans, lines of credit, and personal debts to family and friends.

For more information on debts and equity, visit this [Canada Business Network](#) page on [private sector financing](#).

Grants & Crowdfunding

Grants are non-repayable funds or products disbursed by grant makers such as government bodies, foundations, or non-profits, to a business or an individual to support their work. Grants are not the most common way to receive financing for your business; however, opportunities may emerge specifically for Aboriginal entrepreneurs. The best way to find out if these opportunities are available to you is to ask. Ask your Aboriginal community or organization if they are aware of any grants that you could be eligible for. Research your province or territory, and the federal government with simple searches like “small business grants in Newfoundland” to see what is out there.

Crowdfunding is a new way to raise money for your business by getting a large number of people to give small amounts of money to meet a specific financial goal. This is usually done over the Internet.

There are many different types of crowdfunding, but they all have these three ingredients: an individual who proposes a project or idea to be funded, individuals or groups who support the idea and want to donate funds to help you get going, and a website platform that brings these two groups together.

Visit www.kickstarter.com for one example of a crowdfunding platform. You can also see what sorts of projects are being crowdfunded to give you ideas of what’s possible.

The Canada Business Network provides a great overview of how to use crowdfunding for your business [here](#).

² Ibid



Financing Opportunities and Resources

Here we list examples of grants, debt, and equity financing opportunities that could help your business grow. There are many more opportunities than we could list here. Be proactive and do your own research on what's out there in your home community, region, and federally.

Government Financing

Government Grants and Financing

This webpage provides an overview of government-based grants and financing available to you. It also features a search engine that can help you find specific opportunities for your business.

Canada Small Business Financing Program

The Canada Small Business Financing Program helps you with your financing needs. Under the program, the Government of Canada makes it easier for small businesses to get loans from financial institutions by sharing the risk with lenders. For more opportunities, visit this [Canada Business Network](#) webpage.

Financing for Aboriginal Businesses

Whether you are Inuit, Métis, or a member of a First Nation, there are financing opportunities out there for you. Like much of business, it requires you to do the legwork to find out what is offered in your region. For example, if you are Métis and live in Saskatchewan, a quick web search of “Métis business financing Saskatchewan” would provide resources like the [Saskmetis Economic Development Corporation](#).

We recommend that you spend some time researching what specific financing opportunities are available to you based on your status and location. Consider your time researching these opportunities as an important investment in the future growth of your business!

The following are a few examples of Aboriginal-specific financing opportunities:

Growth Capital for Aboriginal Business

BDC's Growth Capital for Aboriginal Business increases access to capital for Aboriginal entrepreneurs on or off a reserve, wanting to expand an existing business or start a new one. Under the GCAB program, you can obtain financing to a maximum amount of \$25,000 for start-ups and up to \$100,000 for existing businesses.

Aboriginal Financial Institutions

If you're thinking about starting a small business or don't yet have business experience that would allow you to borrow from a Chartered Bank, you may be able to obtain a loan from an Aboriginal Capital Corporation (ACC). ACCs concentrate on providing developmental loans (i.e., loans to businesses not yet ready to secure business loans from banks). Some ACCs also provide business services and have diversified their operations to be able to deliver services for Aboriginal Business Canada. There are 32 active ACCs across Canada.

Find an [Aboriginal Financial Institution](#) near you.

Aboriginal Banking

Mainstream banks and financial institutions also provide a variety of financing programs specifically designed for Aboriginal businesses. Examples of these institutions include:

[BDC \(Business Development Bank of Canada\)](#)

[BMO Bank of Montreal](#)

[Royal Bank of Canada \(RBC\)](#)

[Scotiabank of Canada](#)

Financing Challenges

Financing can be a challenge for many businesses. Here we list a few examples of challenges you may face in trying to get business loans.

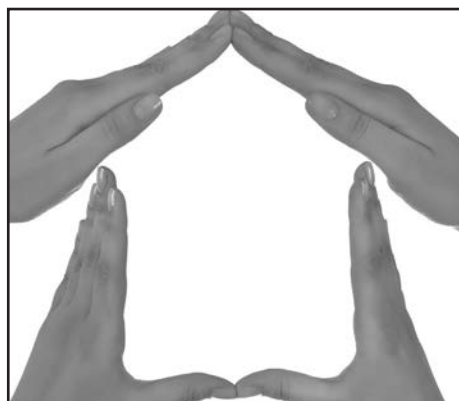
Collateral

Collateral is sometimes needed in order to get a business loan from a bank. Collateral refers to something you own that has value (like property or other assets that hold value) that you will have to give up if you do not pay your loan back as agreed upon by the bank. Some loans require some form of collateral. If you do not have ownership of these types of assets then you may not be able to get certain kinds of credit or loans.

On-Reserve Collateral

If your business is on a reserve and you own property there, it may be very difficult for you to use this as collateral, as your home would be considered by the bank to be the communal property of the reserve. This means that that property could not be given to the bank if you default on a loan because it is part of communal Aboriginal land title ³.

For more information on legislation for on-reserve lending, [click here](#).



Credit History

Your credit history, reflected in your current credit score, can have a significant impact on your eligibility for financing.

According to TD Canada Trust, your credit history is “a record of your payment habits over time. In Canada, this information is compiled by the two major credit reporting agencies — Equifax Canada and TransUnion Canada” ⁴. This record would include things like whether you pay your bills on time, if you have ever gone into bankruptcy or defaulted on a loan, whether you have any loans or credit cards out, and how much of a balance you carry on those debts.

Your credit score is “a ranking that indicates your financial health at a specific point in time. It compares the risk you pose for lenders to that of other Canadians” ⁵ (ibid). For more information about credit, [click here](#).

If you have “bad credit” or no credit history at all, your chances of getting a small business loan are very low. The good news is that you can always improve your credit score. Head over to this [Canada Business Network](#) website to read some great advice on how to improve your score!

³ Northern Development Ministers Forum (2010). Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Success Factors and Challenges. Retrieved January 22, 2015 from <http://www.chnook.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Aboriginal-Youth-Entrepreneurship-2010.pdf>

⁴ TD Canada Trust. What your credit report is and why it matters. Retrieved February 9, 2015 from <https://www.tdcanadatrust.com/planning/everyday-finance-made-easy/everyday-finance-made-easy/credit-report-matters.jsp>

⁵ Ibid



Preparing for Financing

Just like every procurement opportunity will have different requirements, financing opportunities will also require different things from you to qualify for a loan, line of credit, or grant. Below is a quick checklist for you to review that will help you consider what things you need to do to be prepared to jump on financing opportunities that come your way!

Make sure that you have the following:

- ☐ **A complete and current business plan?** If the answer is no, [learn about business planning here](#) and see [samples of completed business plans here](#).
- ☐ **A financial statement and projections?** If the answer is no, and you are a start-up, check out this [cash flow template](#) to get started. If you are already in business, learn the [three essentials of business statements](#) to get started.
- ☐ **A strong credit score?** If you don't know your score, find out [here](#). Once you know, here are some tips on how to [build your credit score](#).

Your paperwork ready to apply for a loan? [Review this business loan checklist](#) ⁶ of items you will need and what to expect when you go into a bank to apply for a loan.

⁶ Note: This is a U.S. resource, however the vast majority of it still applies to Canadian loans.



Conclusion

Congratulations for working your way through to the end of this tool kit! We hope that amongst the tips, tricks, and resources, you found what you were looking for to guide your way as you enter the world of procurement.

The sky is the limit when it comes to business procurement opportunities for Aboriginal businesses. We hope that your business will be like the butterflies throughout this document, flying to new heights!

Now it's time to take what you have learned and run with it. We wish you every success on your business procurement adventure!

Connect with Us!

Do you have a question, comment, or story to tell about your business' experience with procurement? Send us an email: info@idobusiness.ca

