

Kootenay Boundary Aboriginal Services Collaborative

Terms of Reference 2025

Preamble:

- First Nations people have lived in, traveled through, and utilized the land known as Kootenay Boundary¹ since time immemorial;
- Aboriginal people (First Nation, Métis, and Inuit) from many nations are living in and raising children on this land;
- These terms of reference remain neutral to territorial divisions within the Kootenay Boundary;
- Our Collaborative is rooted in sacred responsibility to all Aboriginal people who live here;
- Whereas, historically Aboriginal peoples have faced many health inequities;
- Whereas, Aboriginal peoples have the right to evolve, and assist in shaping culturally safe services within the Kootenay Boundary; and
- Whereas, traditionally Aboriginal communities have utilized collaborative approaches for generations to ensure a high quality of life for all Aboriginal peoples.

Background:

- The Syilx and Ktunaxa sit at decision making tables within Kootenay Boundary as partners with government bodies (i.e. Ministry of Children and Family Development) and authorities (i.e. Interior Health) resulting in both nations having a unique and distinct responsibility;
- The Métis Nation British Columbia has relationship protocols with the government bodies and authorities along with First Nations pertaining to the delivery of services to Métis people;
- The need for a bridge between Kootenay Boundary decision making tables and the Aboriginal people of Kootenay Boundary is critical to ensure any Aboriginal person within Kootenay Boundary receives the support and services they require.

Vision:

KBASC is working towards systems transformation by offering Aboriginal solutions-based processes and opportunities for open discussion to shift perspectives.

¹ Kootenay Boundary is comprised of the 7 local health areas (Arrow Lakes, Castlegar, Grand Forks, Kettle Valley, Kootenay Lake, Nelson, and Trail)

Purpose:

- Provide mechanisms for the collaboration of Aboriginal organizations with those who provide supports and service to Aboriginal people;
- Advocate for Aboriginal self-determination through ensuring voices of Aboriginal people are represented in the design, delivery, assessment and strategic direction of supports and services;
- Ensure culturally relevant, culturally safe, and holistic supports and services that advance the health and well-being of Aboriginal people;

Values that will inform the actions of the Collaborative:



Priority Focus Areas:

For each priority focus area, an accountability statement is included. It is written in the 'present tense' to describe the desired outcomes for the work in each focus area that will be realized by 2029.

Strengthening the Collaborative

The diversity of the Nations is honoured and celebrated. Because of our work that is grounded in the wisdom and culture of this Land, there is increased awareness and availability of services and supports for Aboriginal people and expanded willingness by our partners to reflect on taken for granted knowledge and invest in Aboriginal holistic ways of knowing and being.

Advocacy and Accountability

The KBASC is recognized, sought out and trusted to inform cultural safety and humility by cultivating conditions to be responsive to different ways of knowing and being.

Communication and Engagement

Illustrating a pathway to empower the voices of Aboriginal people to share aspirations about their wellbeing and translating that information through dialogue with partners to bring reflection, to integrate and create practice changing moments that impact and benefit future generations.

Objectives:

- Develop and enhance partnerships to direct external partners (i.e. Provincial Government Ministries, Federal Government Departments, Health Authority) in planning, delivery, and assessment to ensure supports and services remain relevant to Aboriginal people;
- Coordinate information sharing regarding existing services;
- Plan and advocate for required services to best support Aboriginal people;
- Foster and strengthen the working relationship between Aboriginal organizations that will positively impact the future opportunities of partnering and collaborating on projects, programs, and services;
- Plan for and collaborate on the transformation of primary health care support and services to Aboriginal people in Kootenay Boundary;
- Identify priority health and well-being focus areas (i.e. health, social, education) for the Aboriginal Collaborative;
- Promote cultural humility, sensitivity, and agility in the delivery of supports and services;
- Identify recommendations for political advocacy by Aboriginal leadership;
- Receive requests for engagement pertaining to the design, delivery, assessment and strategic direction of supports and services for Aboriginal people.

Membership:

Core membership consists of representation from (listed alphabetically):

- Circle of Indigenous Nations Society
- Ktunaxa
- Métis
- Secwepemc
- Sinixt and
- Syilx

In addition to this core membership additional representatives from member organizations may attend this collaborative as guests or partners to provide support for members of the Collaborative. It is the members' responsibility to ensure any additional representatives have been oriented to the Terms of Reference.

Guests:

Individuals who possess expertise that will support the objectives of the Collaborative may be invited by the Members to participate in the business of the Collaborative. Advisors may include doctors, nurse practitioners, allied health providers, child welfare leadership, and other service providers.

Partners:

Organizations including Government and Health Authorities, who provide support and services to Aboriginal people, upon invitation may be requested to attend the Collaborative as Partners.

Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Advisors:

Members may invite and bring Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Advisors. If a member invites and brings an Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Advisor, this will be the responsibility of the member organization.

Working Groups:

Four working groups have been established (each with their own Terms of Reference) to implement the workplan of the strategic plan. Any decision making or sign offs will have to come back to the full Collaborative.

Members will represent the Collaborative on that working group, not participating as an individual. Working groups will be in effect for the duration of the strategic plan. Each working group must have a minimum of one member of the Collaborative on it.

Working Groups:

Resourcing the Collaborative

Advocacy and Accountability

Communication and Engagement

Annual Gathering

Meetings:

Four Member meetings each year: End of September, November, February, and beginning of June

Two Members and Partners meetings each year: October and April

Requests for Engagement:

The Collaborative recognizes that requests will be made to support other organizations providing programs and services to Aboriginal people. When requests are made to the Collaborative, the Collaborative will consider such requests based on:

- The request aligning with the values of the Collaborative,
- The goals and objectives of the Collaborative.

All requests will be brought to the Collaborative for review, using the engagement form found on the website www.kbasc.org.

Decision Making by Membership:

The Collaborative is a recommendation making body. Every effort is to make recommendations through consensus. No recommendation or decision made by the Collaborative is binding on another member of the Collaborative.

Consensus decision-making is a group decision-making process in which group members develop and agree to support a decision in the best interest of the whole. Consensus may be defined as an acceptable resolution, one that can be supported, even if not the "favorite" of each individual. Consensus is achieved when everyone accepts and supports a decision and understands how it was reached. In meetings where significant decisions are to occur, all members will be notified and encouraged to attend.

When consensus cannot be achieved the Collaborative will utilize circle and ceremony to ensure the interests of all members are voiced and considered in developing recommendations and making decisions.

Valued Participation:

For a decision to be made, at least four of the member organizations must be represented.

Budget:

The Collaborative will seek funding to support member participation, facilitation and to advance projects and initiatives. In the absence of funding, each member organization is responsible for any cost related to participation in the Collaborative. The Collaborative will endeavor to fund honorarium and travel to members who are not participating in a paid role.

Each organization receives annual funding to participate in the Collaborative from the annual budget.

If a partner (i.e. government, authorities) requests to convene the Collaborative to provide guidance and advice to the partner, the partner is responsible for the expenses (space, food, travel, honoraria) to convene the Collaborative.

Communication:

Correspondence to the Collaborative will be distributed to all members and placed on the agenda of the next collaborative. If urgent, the member receiving the correspondence can request a collaborative call/meeting.

Representation:

The member organizations of the Collaborative represent the interests of their organizations at tables with government, authorities, and other partners. The Collaborative may identify representatives to attend and participate in the development, design, delivery, assessment and strategic direction of programs and services with partners. This does not replace the member organizations interests in such discussions.

Facilitation and Meeting Record:

The Collaborative will appoint a facilitator who will be responsible for preparing for, chairing and creating a record of Collaborative meetings. The meeting record will be distributed to all members.

Transparency:

The Collaborative recognizes the members' lived experiences will influence participation and positions on matters discussed at the Collaborative. The Collaborative recognizes that members have many roles (wear many hats) including family member, community member, helper, leader, and at times politician. Members will be transparent in identifying when they have personal, overlapping, and potentially conflicting responsibilities in order for the Collaborative

to determine how to proceed in these circumstances. Collaborative members recognize their ethical and moral responsibilities to be open and transparent regarding their roles.

Approval of Terms of Reference:

The Terms of Reference are approved at the September Member meeting each year.

Review of TOR:

The Terms of Reference are a living dynamic document that will be reviewed and if necessary revised on an annual basis. This includes approval by the Collaborative on an annual basis.

APPENDIX A

The work of the Collaborative is further grounded in the key documents of both Provincial and National Governments such as:

Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Human Rights – Province of British Columbia

<https://declaration.gov.bc.ca/>

Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People Action Plan - Province of British Columbia

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/ministries/indigenous-relations-reconciliation/declaration_act_action_plan.pdf

Indigenous Human Rights – Government of Canada

<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/index.html>

On June 21st, 2021, [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) received Royal Assent and came into force. This Act provides a roadmap for the Government of Canada and Indigenous peoples to work together to implement the Declaration based on lasting reconciliation, healing, and cooperative relations.

UNDRIP

Article 18

Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

Article 19

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

Article 20

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.
2. Indigenous peoples deprived of their means of subsistence and development are entitled to just and fair redress.

Article 23

Indigenous people have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.