



Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study

THUNDER BAY REPORT



ENVIRONICS
• INSTITUTE •

Published by

Environics Institute

900 - 33 Bloor Street East, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4W 3H1

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ISBN 978-0-9866104-0-0

Printed in Canada by

The Interprovincial Group

1315 Morningside Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada M1B 3C5

Cover logo generously designed and donated by a **UAPS** research team member who wishes to remain anonymous.

Design by **Gravity Inc.** (www.gravityinc.ca), with layout by Sandra Sarner and editorial by Cathy McKim

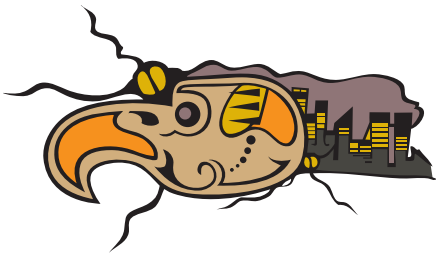


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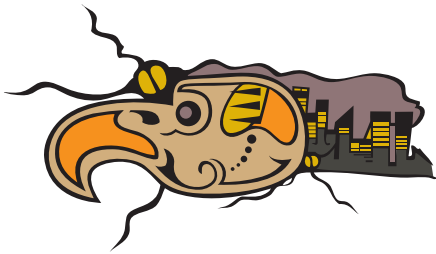


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The Environics Institute would like to thank all the individuals and organizations who contributed their input and expertise to the *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study (UAPS)*. Special thanks to all of the interviewers and study participants for their time and involvement in the research.

Acknowledgments

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UAPS Steering Committee and staff

The *UAPS* Steering Committee has devoted considerable time, energy and expertise to the successful management and execution of the study. Michael Mendelson (The Caledon Institute), David Eaves (Independent), May Wong (Environics Institute), Amy Langstaff (Environics Institute), Doug Norris (Environics Analytics), Michael Adams (Environics Institute), Keith Neuman (Environics Research Group), Sonya Kunkel (Environics Research Group), Sarah Robertson (Environics Research Group), Jay Kaufman (KTA) and Karen Beitel (KTA) have all played an important role in bringing this study to fruition.

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Edmonton Community Foundation

Edmonton United Way

Elections Canada

EnviroNics Institute

Government of Canada (Federal Interlocutor)

Halifax Regional Municipality

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

John Lefebvre

Mental Health Commission of Canada

Ontario Trillium Foundation

Province of Alberta

Province of Manitoba/Manitoba Hydro

Province of Nova Scotia (Aboriginal Affairs)

Province of Ontario (Aboriginal Affairs)

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- funding academic studies related to polling and public opinion; and
- working with media partners to disseminate the results of its research.

Founded in 2006, the Institute has already conducted a number of groundbreaking studies, including a survey of Canadian Muslims, a survey of the people of Afghanistan, and a study (undertaken in partnership with Canada's World) of Canadians' personal engagement with people and issues around the world.

The Environics Institute sees public opinion research as a valuable lens through which Canadians can examine and better understand their own diverse and evolving society.

About the Environics Institute

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What is the *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study* and why now?

The *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study (UAPS)* is a snapshot of the hundreds of thousands of Aboriginal people who now live in urban centres. Conducted by the Environics Institute, and guided by an Advisory Circle of recognized experts from academia and from Aboriginal communities, the study is an enquiry into the values, experiences, identities and aspirations of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit living in Canada's major urban centres.

The urban Aboriginal population in Canada now numbers over 600,000 and is at an all time high. There are now more Aboriginal people living in urban centres across Canada than there are living in Aboriginal territories and communities on reserves, in Métis settlements and in Inuit communities. Aboriginal people now constitute a permanent presence in Canadian cities, and promise to be an important part of multicultural urban Canada.

The *UAPS* sprang from discussions with diverse stakeholders and opinion leaders across the country who recognized these trends, as well as the need for well-designed empirical research that would credibly express evolving urban Aboriginal perspectives.

How was the research done?

The *UAPS* investigated a range of issues including (but not limited to) urban Aboriginal peoples' communities of origin, Aboriginal cultures, community belonging, education, work, health, political engagement and activity, justice, relationships with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, life aspirations and definitions of success, and experiences with discrimination.

The study involved *in-person* interviews, one to two hours in length, with 2,614 Métis, Inuit and First Nations (status and non-status) individuals living in 11 Canadian cities from Halifax to Vancouver. With input from the *UAPS* Advisory Circle, individual questions were organized under four overarching themes:

- *identity*: who are you?
- *experiences*: what's your everyday life like?
- *values*: what's important in your life?
- *aspirations*: what do you want for your future?

In each city, the Environics Institute engaged a small team of local Aboriginal people to construct a 250-person sample and organize the interviews. Key to the study's legitimacy was that the sample be representative of the urban Aboriginal population: that it not select solely among those living in serious poverty or those who are succeeding. The Institute used the 2006 Canadian Census profile of Aboriginal people in each city (defined as the Census Metropolitan Area, or CMA)) to design an "ideal sample," based on such characteristics as identity group, age, educational attainment and gender. Local research teams in each city then searched out individuals that fit this sample profile.

The study also investigated how non-Aboriginal people view Aboriginal people in Canada today, through a telephone survey with 2,501 non-Aboriginal urban Canadians living in these same cities (excluding Ottawa).

What did the study find?

Many of the UAPS findings suggest that Canadian cities are becoming sites of connection, engagement and cultural vitality for a large number of Aboriginal peoples. Although many segments of First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations in Canada face substantial challenges, the picture in cities is more diverse – and in many cases more hopeful – than public perceptions and media coverage often acknowledge.

In April 2010, the Institute released a national report of the study's findings (*Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study – Main Report*, www.UAPS.ca). Among the main findings described in the report:

- **For most, the city is home, but urban Aboriginal peoples stay connected to their communities of origin.** Six in ten feel a close connection to these communities – links that are integral to strong family and social ties, and to traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture. Notwithstanding these links, majorities of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit consider their current city of residence home (71%), including those who are the first generation of their family to live in their city.
- **Almost eight in ten participants say they are “very proud” of their specific Aboriginal identity (i.e., First Nations, Métis or Inuk).** Slightly fewer – 70 percent – say the same about being Canadian.
- **Urban Aboriginal peoples are seeking to become a significant and visible part of the urban landscape.** Six in ten feel they can make their city a better place to live, a similar proportion to non-Aboriginal urban dwellers.
- **Six in ten are not concerned about losing contact with their culture, while a minority totally (17%) or somewhat (21%) agree that they are concerned.** As well, by a wide margin (6:1), First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit think Aboriginal culture in their communities has become stronger rather than weaker in the last five years.
- **They display a higher tolerance for other cultures than their non-Aboriginal neighbours:** Seventy-seven percent of urban Aboriginal peoples believe there is room for a variety of languages and cultures in this country, in contrast to 54 percent of non-Aboriginal urbanites.
- **A majority believe they are viewed in negative ways by non-Aboriginal people.** Three in four participants perceive assumptions about addiction problems, while many feel there are negative stereotypes about laziness (30%), lack of intelligence (20%) and poverty (20%).
- **Education is their top priority, and an enduring aspiration for the next generation.** Twenty percent want the next generation to understand the importance of education, 18 percent hope younger individuals will stay connected to their cultural community and 17 percent hope the next generation will experience life without racism.



What does the *UAPS* tell us about Aboriginal peoples who live in Thunder Bay?

According to the 2006 Census, Thunder Bay has the second smallest Aboriginal population of the *UAPS* cities (only Halifax has fewer Aboriginal residents). Yet Aboriginal peoples account for eight percent of the total population of Thunder Bay, a proportion that is exceeded only by the per capita populations in Winnipeg (10%), Saskatoon (9%) and Regina (9%).

The *UAPS* Thunder Bay Report is the fifth of a series of city reports, following the release of the main report of the *UAPS* on April 6, 2010. In Thunder Bay, the main survey consisted of in-person interviews with 250 First Nations peoples (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit (18 years and older), between April 21 and June 1, 2009.

An analysis of the *UAPS* Thunder Bay data reveals the following about the identities, experiences, values and aspirations of Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay:

- **Most Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay – even first generation residents – consider the city to be their home.** They also retain close links with their communities of origin, although only a minority are currently planning to return there one day.
- **Like other *UAPS* participants, Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay like living in their city and tend to believe they can make a positive difference.** They are more likely than average to express concern about lack of employment and a general lack of resources and opportunities, and less likely to express concern about crime.
- **There is strong indigenous pride among Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay.** Most are very proud of their specific First Nations/Métis/Inuk identity and of their collective Aboriginal identity; they also take a similar degree of pride in being Canadian. Moreover, they express a modest sense of confidence in their ability to retain their cultural identity in the city.
- **Most *UAPS* participants feel discrimination of Aboriginal peoples is a pervasive problem that majorities have experienced personally.** This is similarly true for Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay, who believe substance abuse is the dominant stereotype about the Aboriginal population. The view that there has been little change in non-Aboriginal attitudes over the past few years is more widespread than average for the *UAPS* cities, with only a minority who are optimistic that perceptions of Aboriginal peoples are improving. Moreover, as in other *UAPS* cities, a substantial minority of almost four in ten say they do not feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people.
- **Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are neither oriented towards an exclusively Aboriginal nor an exclusively non-Aboriginal community, but feel they belong somewhere in between.** Many report strong social connections to other Aboriginal people in the city, both members of their own identity group and others. Majorities are aware of and report participation in Aboriginal cultural activities in the city, and there is a modest sense of cultural vitality on par with other *UAPS* cities.
- **There are widespread connections to Aboriginal services in Thunder Bay.** Nearly six in ten say they rely at least occasionally on Aboriginal services and organizations in Thunder Bay, consistent with most other *UAPS* cities. Regardless of how much interaction they have with Aboriginal services, there is broad agreement they are needed in addition to mainstream services, particularly when it comes to Aboriginal addiction programs and health centres.

- **The top life aspirations for Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay include raising a family, higher education and a good job.** These are largely consistent with the life aspirations of Aboriginal peoples living in other *UAPS* cities. Family and friends are most central to their idea of a successful life; in contrast, there are mixed opinions about the importance of living in a traditional way.

How do non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay perceive Aboriginal people?

As part of the *UAPS*, Environics surveyed a representative sample of non-Aboriginal Canadians to learn how they view Aboriginal peoples and what informs these views. The results of the non-Aboriginal survey are based on telephone interviews conducted from April 28 to May 15, 2009 with 250 non-Aboriginal people in each of the same 10 urban centres in which the main survey was conducted: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Thunder Bay, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax (excluding Ottawa). In all, 2,501 non-Aboriginal urban Canadians (“NA urban Canadians”) participated, providing a rich picture of how NA urban Canadians see Aboriginal people in cities today.

Topics explored in the survey include non-Aboriginal urban Canadians’ perceptions of Aboriginal people in Canada, their awareness of Aboriginal peoples and communities in their cities, their contact and interaction with Aboriginal people, their perspectives on how well institutions respond to the needs of Aboriginal people, their knowledge of salient Aboriginal issues (i.e., Indian residential schools, acceptance of differential systems of justice), and the importance of Aboriginal history and culture in the minds of NA urban Canadians.

A closer look at the responses of non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay yielded the following insights into their attitudes towards Aboriginal people, their awareness of Aboriginal people and communities in their city, their perceptions of the top issues facing Aboriginal people today and, finally, their perceptions of future relations with Aboriginal people. Specifically:

- **Among non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay, there is no single common top-of-mind impression of Aboriginal peoples.** Similar to other *UAPS* cities, impressions revolve primarily around their First Nations/Métis/Inuit identities and the history of Aboriginal peoples as the first inhabitants of Canada. Only a minority of non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay say their impressions have recently worsened, but this is more common here than in any other *UAPS* city.
- **Opinions are divided about whether Aboriginal people have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada, or are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canadian society.** Nonetheless, the view that Aboriginal peoples are no different from other cultural or ethnic groups is more common here than in most other *UAPS* cities except Edmonton, Regina and Winnipeg.
- **A segmentation analysis of Thunder Bay residents reveals that the largest proportion is *Cultural Romantics*: idealistic individuals with a strong belief in Aboriginal peoples’ artistic and cultural contributions.** However, Thunder Bay also has a larger than average proportion of *Dismissive Naysayers*, who tend to view Aboriginal peoples and communities negatively.

- **Virtually all Thunder Bay residents know Aboriginal people live in their city, and awareness of an Aboriginal community (either physical or social) in their midst is higher than in any other UAPS city.** Thunder Bay residents are among the most likely to have regular contact with Aboriginal people, or to know Aboriginal people as close friends, neighbours and co-workers, similar to those living in other cities with large relative Aboriginal populations (i.e., Regina, Winnipeg and Saskatoon).
- **Isolation and integration issues are perceived to be the top challenge facing the Aboriginal population in Canadian cities today, a perception that is more widespread in Thunder Bay than in other UAPS cities.** Thunder Bay residents are also among the most aware of Indian residential schools (similar to those living in the Prairie cities). They are almost twice as likely to say the problems faced by Aboriginal people in Canada have largely been caused by the attitudes of other Canadians and the policies of government as by Aboriginal peoples themselves.
- **Thunder Bay residents are among the most likely of any UAPS city to recognize that Aboriginal people experience discrimination, and clearly believe they endure at least as much discrimination as other groups in Canadian society.**
- **Non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay are ultimately divided about the current state of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, but are among the most pessimistic, together with residents of western cities.** There are also mixed views about whether relations are changing or not, but the minority who believe relations are deteriorating is higher than in any other UAPS city.

Next steps

All *UAPS* reports are freely available via the study's website, www.uaps.ca. The *UAPS Thunder Bay Report* and other city reports will all be posted on this site as they are available.

The Environics Institute is also committed to making the study data accessible to the public. The results of all the *UAPS* survey questions can be freely accessed through data tables on the website, or by contacting the Institute directly (see the Acknowledgements section of this report for contact details).

In addition, the recent release of the *UAPS* main report offers a unique window into establishing new and meaningful dialogue with Aboriginal Peoples in Canada's major cities. More than ever, a public forum in Canadian cities across the country is required that brings people from all sectors, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, together to take action on the needs of and opportunities for urban Aboriginal communities in this country

To that end, the *UAPS Public Engagement Strategy* has been designed using the study as a platform for community dialogue and discussion. The broad goal of this strategy is to promote collaborative engagement of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in determining the implications of *UAPS* research findings for urban Aboriginal communities. The Institute hopes to organize forums in each *UAPS* city that bring together Aboriginal organizations, policy-makers and *UAPS* participants to build a deeper collective understanding of the values and experiences of urban Aboriginal peoples, and identify the next steps for supporting the urban Aboriginal community in a given city.

For more information on *UAPS* public engagement, please contact Ginger Gosnell-Myers, *UAPS* Public Engagement Director, at ginger.gosnell-myers@environics.ca.

About the Research

BACKGROUND. The urban Aboriginal population in Canada now numbers over 600,000 and is at an all time high. The largest Aboriginal community is no longer a reserve but Winnipeg itself, with a diverse Aboriginal population that exceeds 60,000 people. Urban Aboriginal populations are permanent populations, and promise to be an important part of multicultural urban Canada.

The *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study* sprang from discussions with diverse stakeholders and opinion leaders across the country that recognized these trends, as well as the need for well-designed empirical research that would credibly express evolving urban Aboriginal perspectives. Throughout 2009, the Environics Institute, a not-for-profit foundation established by Environics Research co-founder Michael Adams that supports original research on important issues of public policy and social change, oversaw with its Advisory Circle community-based research in 11 Canadian cities: Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Thunder Bay, Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver.

The objectives of the *UAPS* are to better understand the perspectives of urban Aboriginal peoples as complex individuals and communities, and provide new insights that stimulate dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal urban communities across Canada. Designed to be an enquiry about the values, experiences, identities and aspirations of Aboriginal peoples living in cities, the study investigated a range of issues including (but not limited to) urban Aboriginal peoples' communities of origin, Aboriginal cultures, community belonging, education, work, health political engagement and activity, justice, relationships with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, life aspirations and definitions of success, and experiences with discrimination.

UAPS IN THUNDER BAY. The *UAPS Thunder Bay Report* constitutes the fifth of a series of city reports, following the release of the main report of the *UAPS* on April 6, 2010. In Thunder Bay, the main survey consisted of in-person interviews with 250 Métis, First Nations peoples (status and non-status) and Inuit (18 years and older) between April 21 and June 1, 2009.

Key to the study's legitimacy was that the sample be representative of the Aboriginal population in Thunder Bay: that it not select solely among those living in serious poverty or those who are succeeding. The Institute used the 2006 Canadian Census profile of Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay to design an "ideal sample," based on such characteristics as identity group, age, educational attainment and gender. The Thunder Bay research team, consisting of a Project Co-ordinator (Shelly Knott) and a team of interviewers, then searched out individuals that fit this sample profile. The research team worked with local Aboriginal agencies and other organizations to build community awareness and support for the study, and to identify survey participants.

The table on the next page presents a profile of the final sample of participants, by such characteristics as identity, gender, age and education. At the analysis stage, data were weighted so that the final sample accurately reflects the distribution of the population according to the 2006 Census. The table presents the actual number of participants (unweighted) within each subgroup, as well as the weighted proportion each subgroup represents within the total sample.

The results contained in this report are based on the total sample, and are reported separately in some cases for First Nations peoples and Métis, but the sample size is not sufficiently large to allow for analysis by characteristics such as age and education.

In addition to the main survey, a telephone survey was conducted with 250 non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay (18 years and older) between April 28 and May 15, 2009. This is an important component

of the *UAPS* because it reveals how the non-Aboriginal population views the experiences of Aboriginal peoples, reflecting some of the barriers and opportunities facing the Aboriginal community. The margin of error for a probability sample of 250 is plus or minus 6.2 percentage points, 19 times in 20.¹

Further details on the methodology of both *UAPS* surveys can be found in the main report on the *UAPS*, available at www.uaps.ca.

IN THIS REPORT. The *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study – Thunder Bay Report* is organized into eight chapters.

Chapter 1, the Urban Context, provides a demographic snapshot of the Aboriginal population in Thunder Bay, and information on where study participants are from, how long they have lived in Thunder Bay and how they felt about Thunder Bay (i.e., do they consider it or another community to be home?).

Chapter 2 delivers main findings from the *UAPS* on Aboriginal peoples’ expressions of **Aboriginal Identity and Culture** in the city.

Chapter 3, Experiences with Non-Aboriginal People, summarizes how Aboriginal peoples living in Thunder Bay feel perceived by the non-Aboriginal population-at-large.

Chapter 4, Experiences with Aboriginal Services and Organizations, explores study participants’ perceptions of and interactions with Aboriginal services and organizations in Thunder Bay.

Chapter 5 captures how Aboriginal peoples feel about living in Thunder Bay in **Urban Experiences**.

Chapter 6, Urban Aspirations, delves further into contemporary Aboriginal urban experience and explores Aboriginal peoples’ life aspirations and definitions of success.

Chapter 7 is a Special Theme in the Thunder Bay report: **Confidence in the Criminal Justice System**.

Chapter 8, Non-Aboriginal Perspectives, the final chapter of the report, captures non-Aboriginal Thunder Bay residents’ perceptions of Aboriginal peoples, including their awareness of and level of contact with Aboriginal people, their knowledge of salient Aboriginal issues, and the importance of Aboriginal history and culture in the minds of non-Aboriginal Thunder Bay residents.

An overview at the beginning of each chapter summarizes the main *UAPS* findings.

Unless otherwise noted, all of the numbers in the graphs are percentages.

UAPS participant profile in Thunder Bay

	# (Unweighted)	% (Weighted)
IDENTITY		
First Nations	177	73
Status	172	71
Non-status	5	2
Métis	73	27
Inuit	–	–
GENDER		
Men	103	43
Women	147	57
AGE		
18-24	53	19
25-44	121	43
45+	76	38
EDUCATION		
No diploma	81	34
High school diploma	66	23
College degree	70	31
University degree	31	10
HOUSEHOLD INCOME		
<\$10,000	50	19
\$10,000 – \$30,000	73	28
\$30,000 – \$60,000	54	20
\$60,000+	50	23
Refused	23	10
LIVING SITUATION		
Renting an apartment or house	143	55
Homeowner	64	27
Living with friends or family	31	12
Renting a room in a rooming house/hostel	5	3
Living in a temporary shelter	5	2
ELDER		
Yes	27	15
No	223	85

¹ Because the sample for the main survey is based on individuals who initially “self-selected” for participation, no estimate of sampling error can be calculated for the main survey. It should be noted that all surveys, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error, including but not limited to sampling error, coverage error and measurement error.

1.0 The Urban Context

The urban Aboriginal population in Canada now numbers over 600,000 and is at an all time high. There are now more Aboriginal people living in urban centres across Canada than there are living in Aboriginal territories and communities on reserves, in Métis settlements and in Inuit communities. Aboriginal people now constitute a permanent presence in Canadian cities, and promise to be an important part of multicultural urban Canada.

This chapter begins with a demographic snapshot of the Aboriginal population in Thunder Bay based on the 2006 Census. It then presents Aboriginal peoples' responses to a series of questions included in the *UAPS* designed to establish where members of the Aboriginal population in Thunder Bay come from, how long they have lived in Thunder Bay, and how they feel about the city (i.e., do they consider Thunder Bay or another community to be home?).

Key findings

- ***UAPS* participants in Thunder Bay have long-standing ties to the city.** They are largely first generation residents (i.e., born and raised somewhere other than Thunder Bay), but are nonetheless long-term urban residents: a majority of this group have lived in Thunder Bay for 10 years or longer. Furthermore, the group born and raised in Thunder Bay (i.e., second and third generations) is larger here than the average for the *UAPS* cities.
- **Aboriginal peoples move to Thunder Bay primarily for education, family reasons and work opportunities, reasons that are largely shared by Aboriginal peoples in all 11 *UAPS* cities.** However, education emerges as a greater consideration for Aboriginal peoples to set up residence in Thunder Bay (similar to Halifax and Regina).
- **Most Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay – even first generation residents – consider the city to be their home.** However, this does not preclude a sense of connection to their community of origin, as a majority of *UAPS* participants in Thunder Bay retain close links with these communities. While only a minority plan to return to them permanently, second generation Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay are among the most likely of all *UAPS* participants to say they will do so.

1.1 The Aboriginal population in Thunder Bay

In terms of absolute numbers, Thunder Bay has the second smallest Aboriginal population of the *UAPS* cities (only Halifax has fewer Aboriginal residents). According to the 2006 Census, a total of 10,055 people in the Thunder Bay census metropolitan area (CMA) identified themselves as Aboriginal, that is, First Nations, Métis or Inuit. Yet Aboriginal peoples account for eight percent (8.3%) of the total population of Thunder Bay, a proportion that is exceeded only by the per capita populations in Winnipeg (10.0%) and Saskatoon (9.3%) and Regina (8.9%). In contrast, Aboriginal peoples comprise 0.5 percent (each) of the total populations of Montreal and Toronto, even though both those cities have larger absolute numbers of Aboriginal residents than Thunder Bay.

As of 2006, First Nations peoples are the majority Aboriginal identity group in Thunder Bay (74%), with Métis accounting for 24 percent of the Aboriginal population. Fewer than one percent identify themselves as Inuit; two percent offer other or multiple responses.

As is the case in other urban centres, Thunder Bay has a relatively young and growing urban Aboriginal population:

- From 2001 to 2006, the Aboriginal population in Thunder Bay grew by 23 percent (a noticeably slower rate than that reported for Montreal, Ottawa and Halifax, but much faster than that found for Saskatoon, Regina and Vancouver). The rate of growth was somewhat greater for Métis (32%) than for the First Nations population (22%).
- The Aboriginal population living in Thunder Bay is much younger than the non-Aboriginal population (with a median age of 26 years, compared to 43 years for the non-Aboriginal population), which is consistent with the pattern observed Canada-wide.²
- Compared to non-Aboriginal residents, the Aboriginal population, in addition to being younger, is less likely to have completed a post-secondary education, has lower incomes and higher unemployment rates. Aboriginal youth in the city are also more likely than non-Aboriginal children to be living in a single-parent household.

² The median age is the point where exactly one-half of the population is older and the other half is younger.

1.2 Residency in the city

A majority of UAPS participants in Thunder Bay are first generation residents, although the proportion born and raised in the city is larger than average.

In 2006, half of the Aboriginal population in Canada lived in urban centres (including large cities or census metropolitan areas and smaller urban centres), up from 47 percent in 1996. In turn, the proportion of the Aboriginal population that lives on-reserve or in rural (off-reserve) locations has declined. The movement of Aboriginal people to Canadian urban areas has been occurring for several decades, with Aboriginal populations in some cities constituting the largest Aboriginal communities in Canada.

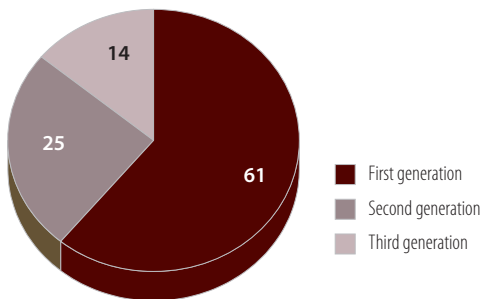
Exploring the movement of Aboriginal people over time to Thunder Bay is beyond the scope of the UAPS. Nonetheless, the survey did provide the opportunity to document one distinction considered particularly relevant to the urban Aboriginal experience: Are you originally from the city (i.e., born and raised in Thunder Bay) or are you from somewhere else?

The data revealed two main groups of people: those who were born and raised somewhere other than Thunder Bay (“first generation”); and those who were born and raised in Thunder Bay but whose family is from another place (“second generation”). A third, smaller group is comprised of Aboriginal peoples born and raised in Thunder Bay whose parents and/or grandparents are also from Thunder Bay (“third generation”).

In Thunder Bay, six in ten (61%) UAPS participants are “first generation” residents born and raised in a community, town, city or reserve other than Thunder Bay; this is more typical of First Nations peoples than Métis. “Second generation” residents born and raised in Thunder Bay whose parents and/or grandparents are from another place represent one-quarter (25%) of Thunder Bay’s Aboriginal population. Fourteen percent are “third generation” residents of the city (i.e., Aboriginal peoples born and raised in Thunder Bay whose parents/grandparents are also from Thunder Bay). Thunder Bay has a larger proportion of Aboriginal residents born and raised in the city (i.e., second and third generations) compared to the average of all 11 UAPS cities.

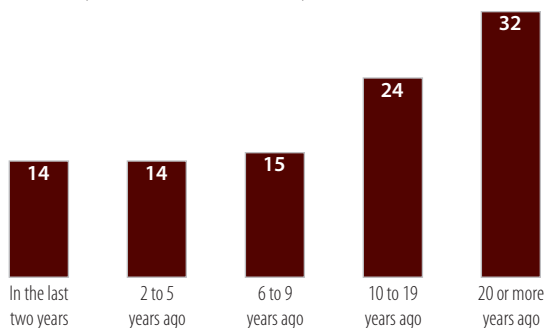
Among first generation residents, a majority are long-term residents of Thunder Bay. Over half (56%) first came to Thunder Bay at least 10 years ago, including three in ten (32%) who arrived 20 or more years ago. Just over four in ten (43%) have arrived in the past 10 years, including over one in ten (14%) who first came in the past two years. The average year of arrival in Thunder Bay among first generation UAPS participants was 1993; this is similar to the average arrival time for first generation UAPS participants in other cities.

First, second and third generation Thunder Bay residents



Time of arrival*

When did you first come to Thunder Bay?



* Subsample: Among those who were not born or raised in Thunder Bay.

1.3 Reason for moving

The decision to move to Thunder Bay was prompted primarily by a desire for educational opportunities, and more so than in most other UAPS cities. Family and employment opportunities are also important motivators.

Why do Aboriginal peoples move to Thunder Bay?

Among the wide variety of reasons cited by first generation UAPS participants in Thunder Bay for why they first moved, education, family and employment emerge at the top of the list. These three main reasons are shared with first generation residents of other UAPS cities, although Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay are among the most likely to say they moved to go to school (together with residents of Halifax and Regina).

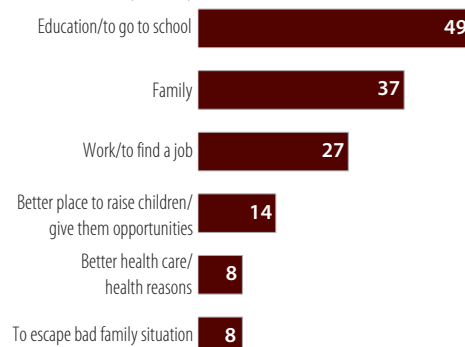
When first generation Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay are asked (unprompted, without response options offered) why they first moved to the city, the largest proportion, by far, say they did so in order to pursue an education (49%). Smaller but still significant proportions say they moved for family reasons (37%) and/or for employment opportunities (27%).

First generation residents of Thunder Bay are more likely than their counterparts in other cities to indicate that they moved to the city because of the belief that it would be a better place in which to raise their children (14%). Other reasons include the desire to escape a bad family situation (8%), better access to health care services (8%), wanting to be near friends (6%) and the perception that the city offered better amenities (6%). Four percent or fewer each mention a variety of other reasons for moving to Thunder Bay.

The reasons for moving to Thunder Bay are largely similar for First Nations peoples and Métis, although Métis are more likely than First Nations to mention employment opportunities.

Top reasons for moving to Thunder Bay*

What is the most important reason why you first moved to your city?



*Subsample: Among those who were not born or raised in Thunder Bay.

1.4 Connection to Thunder Bay

Thunder Bay is “home” for most Aboriginal peoples in the city.

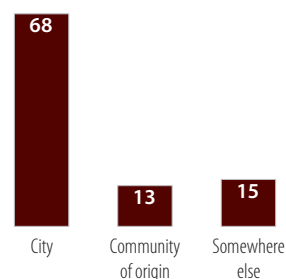
Overall, when asked “Where is home for you?” a majority (68%) of Aboriginal peoples in the city say it is Thunder Bay.³ Relatively few equate “home” with their community of origin (13%) or another community (15%). These views are consistent with the national average across all 11 UAPS cities.

The sentiment that Thunder Bay is their home is, not surprisingly, most widespread among those who have lived in Thunder Bay all their lives (89% of second generation residents). However, even six in ten (60%) first generation residents (i.e., those not born or raised in the city) also consider Thunder Bay their home. Among these first generation residents, this view is similar among First Nations peoples and Métis.

Although UAPS participants report an important connection to the city in which they are living, their sense that Thunder Bay is home does not preclude a relationship with their community of origin. The following section (1.5 Connection to Community of Origin) explores this relationship.

Where is home for you?*

Where is *home* for you? Is it your city of residence, your home community, or somewhere else?



* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in Thunder Bay; those who have lived in Thunder Bay all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

³ The question “Where is home for you?” was not asked of third generation UAPS participants (14% of UAPS participants in Thunder Bay).

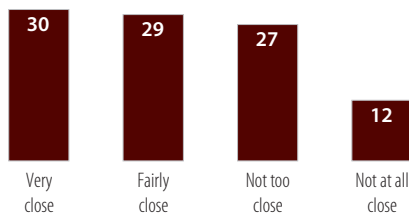
1.5 Connection to community of origin

Among Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay, six in ten feel close to their community of origin, whether it be their own or that of their parents/grandparents, but only a minority are currently planning to return to live there.

Previous research has found that many urban Aboriginal peoples have maintained links with their community of origin (i.e., one's home community or the home community of parents/grandparents) because of the proximity of First Nations and Métis communities to cities, the history of mobility of Aboriginal peoples, the fact that the land is such a fundamental source of traditional and contemporary culture, and the continuance of strong family and social ties to the communities.⁴

Connection to community of origin*

How close a connection do you feel to your home community?/
How close a connection do you feel to the place where your parents and grandparents are from?



* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in Thunder Bay; those who have lived in Thunder Bay all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

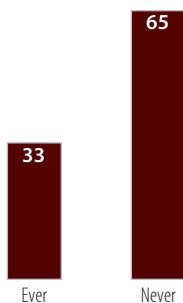
Such connections are evident among *UAPS* participants in Thunder Bay, although more so among first generation than among second generation residents.⁵ Overall, six in ten say they feel a very (30%) or fairly (29%) close connection to their community of origin. Fewer than three in ten say they feel not too close (27%) to these communities, while a small group feel not at all close (12%) to their community of origin.

Interestingly, second generation Aboriginal residents express a similarly strong connection to their community of origin as do first generation residents (61% and 56%, respectively, say they have at least a fairly strong connection). Among both groups, the sense of connection is similar to the national average for all the *UAPS* cities.

It is clear from the data that the majority of first generation residents of Thunder Bay maintain strong links to their communities of origin, even though they have long tenure within the city. Moreover, one in three (33%) have moved back to their home community at least once since they first moved to Thunder Bay (representing 7% of *UAPS* participants in Thunder Bay overall). A majority of two in three (65%) say they have never moved back to their home community since coming to Thunder Bay. This pattern is similar to that of first generation *UAPS* participants in other cities.

Have you moved back to your home community?*

Since you first moved to Thunder Bay, have you ever moved back to your home community?



Note: 2% said dk/na

* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in Thunder Bay.

Most Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay do not intend to return to their communities of origin to live permanently in the future, although some (first and second generation) either plan to return or remain undecided.

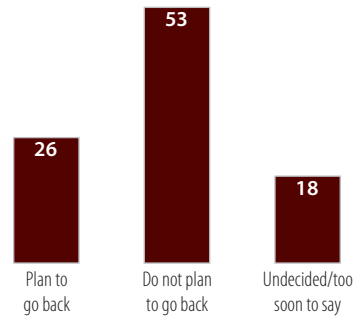
4 *Urban Aboriginal Task Force Final Report, 2007, p.65.*

5 This question was not asked of third generation *UAPS* participants (14% of *UAPS* participants in Thunder Bay).

When asked if they plan to go back and live in their communities of origin permanently one day (whether it be another community, town, city or reserve),⁶ one in four (26%) say they plan to return. Half (53%) say they do not plan to return, and one in five (18%) say they are undecided or that it is too soon to say.

Those planning to return are a minority among both first (26%) and second generation (28%) residents, although second generation residents in Thunder Bay are among the most likely of all *UAPS* participants to say they plan to return permanently to their communities of origin.

Plans to go back to live in community of origin*
Do you plan to go back to live in your home community/place where your parents/grandparents are from permanently one day, or not?



* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in Thunder Bay; those who have lived in their city of residence all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

6 The question “Do you plan to go back to live in your home community (either your own or that of your parents/grandparents) permanently one day?” was not asked of third generation *UAPS* participants (14% of *UAPS* participants in Thunder Bay).

2.0 Identity and Culture

One of the reasons cited in existing research for the increased tendency of people to identify as Aboriginal (a major factor in the substantial increases in urban Aboriginal populations between 1981 and 2006⁷) is that contemporary urban Aboriginal peoples, in particular, are more positive about their Aboriginal identity than at any time in the past.⁸

Key aspects of Aboriginal identity considered in this chapter include knowledge of family history, pride in Aboriginal and Canadian identities, community belonging, and the continuing intergenerational effects of “colonial projects” upon the identities of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian cities, namely Indian residential schools, mission and day schools, and other policies of assimilation. This chapter also examines other critical aspects of identity, such as participation in urban Aboriginal cultures.

In the midst of these challenges, Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay express a strong sense of pride in their unique identity, and are more confident than not in their ability to retain it.

Key findings

- **There is strong Indigenous pride among Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay; pride in one’s Aboriginal roots does not preclude pride in being a Canadian.** Majorities are very proud of both their specific *First Nations/Métis/Inuk* identity and of their collective *Aboriginal* identity, although this is more widespread among First Nations peoples than Métis. Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are also equally proud of being *Canadian*.
- **Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay are less familiar with their ancestry than are urban Aboriginal peoples in general.** Half say they know their family tree well, and this knowledge has given them a greater sense of family heritage, survival and tradition, a more positive view of themselves and a stronger sense of self. Those who are less knowledgeable about their ancestry attribute this primarily to a lack of opportunity, rather than a lack of interest.
- **The legacy and effects of Indian residential schools persist widely, particularly for First Nations peoples.** Three in four First Nations peoples in Thunder Bay, and one in three Métis, have had either personal or family experience with Indian residential schools. A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay (both Métis and First Nations) with such experience say it has had at least some impact in shaping their life and who they are today.
- **There is widespread awareness of Aboriginal cultural activities in Thunder Bay, but lower reported participation compared to most other UAPS cities.** On par with urban Aboriginal peoples in general, there is a modest sense of cultural vitality in Thunder Bay, with six in ten believing that local Aboriginal culture has become stronger in the past five years.
- **There is a modest sense of confidence in their ability to retain their cultural identity in the city.** Just under six in ten Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are unconcerned about losing their cultural identity, although this falls short of the level of confidence expressed in Winnipeg and Edmonton. Métis in Thunder Bay are more confident on this front than are First Nations peoples.

7 Statistics Canada.

8 Craig Proulx, “Aboriginal Identification in North America Cities,” the *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 2006:26:2, p.405.

- There is no consensus among Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay about the type of community to which they belong. A plurality of four in ten describe their community as equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and the remainder are divided as to whether their community is mostly Aboriginal or mostly non-Aboriginal. Moreover, many UAPS participants in Thunder Bay report strong social connections to other Aboriginal people in the city, both members of their own identity group and others. Likely due to their smaller relative population in Thunder Bay, Métis express a stronger connection to Aboriginal groups other than their own than do First Nations peoples.

2.1 Pride in Aboriginal and Canadian identity

Most Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are very proud of both their specific Indigenous identity and their collective Aboriginal identity, although this is more prevalent among First Nations peoples than among Métis. They are also equally proud of being “Canadian.”

An important part of the UAPS was to understand how proud urban Aboriginal peoples are of their identity and, specifically, to what extent their pride is tied to three distinct aspects of identity: being *First Nations/Métis/Inuk*, *Aboriginal* and *Canadian*.

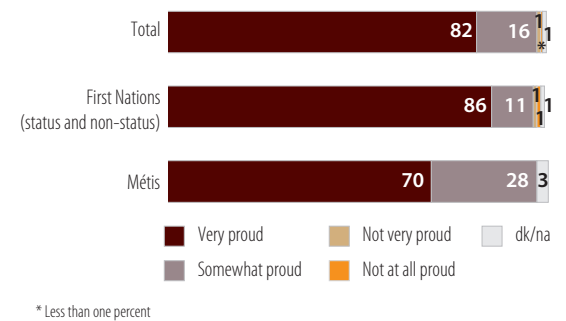
The results show that Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay take equal pride in their specific Aboriginal identity (that is, their *First Nations, Métis* or *Inuk* identity), in being part of a larger *Aboriginal* identity, and in being *Canadian*. However, pride in one’s specific Aboriginal identity and in being *Aboriginal* is greater among First Nations peoples than among Métis, who are most likely to say they are very proud of being *Canadian*.

PRIDE IN BEING FIRST NATIONS/MÉTIS. Most (82%) Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay say they are very proud of their specific Aboriginal identity (i.e., *First Nations, Métis* or *Inuk*). However, this degree of pride is greater among First Nations peoples (86%) than among Métis (70%). Residents of Thunder Bay are similar to urban Aboriginal peoples in general in the degree of pride they take in their specific Aboriginal identity.

PRIDE IN BEING ABORIGINAL. Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are equally proud of their Aboriginal identity (81% say they are very proud). Again, this sense of pride is greater among First Nations peoples (87%) than among Métis (67%). This high level of pride in being Aboriginal is largely consistent with that of urban Aboriginal peoples in the other UAPS cities (with the exception of Winnipeg, where it is noticeably lower).

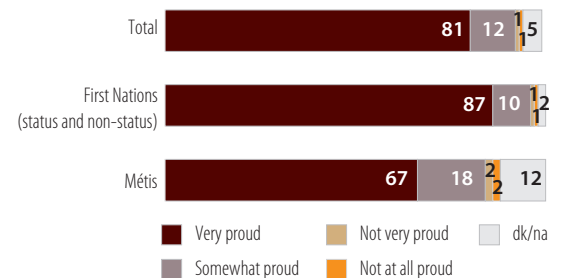
Pride in being *First Nations/Métis/Inuk*

Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very, or not at all proud to be *First Nations/Métis/Inuk*?



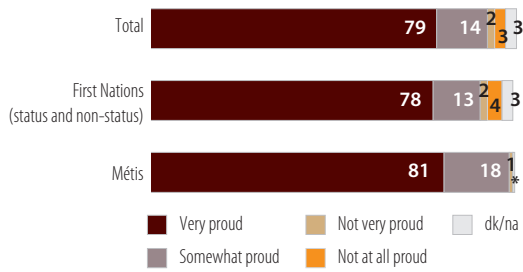
Pride in being *Aboriginal*

Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very, or not at all proud to be *Aboriginal*?



Pride in being *Canadian*

Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very, or not at all proud to be *Canadian*?



* Less than one percent

PRIDE IN BEING CANADIAN. The majority (79%) of Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay also take great pride in being Canadian, a sentiment that is more common in the Prairie cities and Thunder Bay than in the larger urban centres (Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal). In Thunder Bay, the degree of pride is similar among Métis and First Nations peoples.

What else shapes urban Aboriginal peoples' pride in their *First Nations/Métis/Inuk*, *Aboriginal* and *Canadian* identities? The sample size for Thunder Bay alone (250 survey participants) is too small to allow for a detailed analysis by socio-demographic factors. However, the national *UAPS* survey data (across all 11 cities) indicate that pride in these aspects of identity vary by age, sense of community and knowledge of their family tree. For instance, majorities in all socio-demographic groups are very proud of their *First Nations/Métis/Inuk* identity, but strong pride is most evident among older urban Aboriginal peoples (aged 45 years or older), those who feel they belong to a mostly or exclusively Aboriginal community, and those who know their family tree very well.

2.2 Influence of Aboriginal ancestry

Knowledge of family tree

Five in ten Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay know their Aboriginal ancestry at least fairly well, but are less familiar than are urban Aboriginal peoples overall.

The legacy of policies of assimilation in Canada and their outcomes have contributed to multiple, ongoing challenges experienced by Aboriginal peoples, not least of which is the disconnection from their heritage and culture that many have experienced, and the resulting struggle to reclaim and reconstruct their Aboriginal identity.

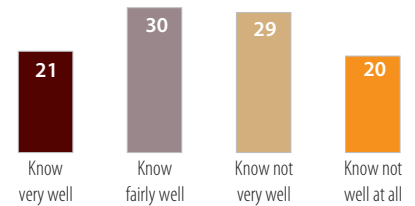
The UAPS results indicate there are varying degrees of familiarity with their family tree (i.e., who their Aboriginal ancestors are) among Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay. Half know their family tree very (21%) or fairly (30%) well, while the other half say they know their family tree not very (29%) or not at all (20%) well. On average, they report less familiarity with their family tree compared to other UAPS cities. In Thunder Bay, degree of familiarity with their family tree is similar for Métis and First Nations peoples.

By far, parents are key sources of this information. When asked from where or from whom they have learned what they know about their Aboriginal ancestry (asked unprompted, without offering response choices), about six in ten (57%) Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay identify their parents as their main source of learning. Smaller proportions name their grandparents (25%), extended family (20%), and/or immediate family relatives such as aunts, uncles (19%), Elders (6%) or siblings (5%). Three percent or fewer each mention a range of non-family sources (e.g., archives and historical records, genealogy courses, the Internet and social media) and seven percent simply say they taught themselves.

These sources of learning about one's family tree are generally similar for both First Nations peoples and Métis, although First Nations peoples are more likely to have learned this information from their grandparents.

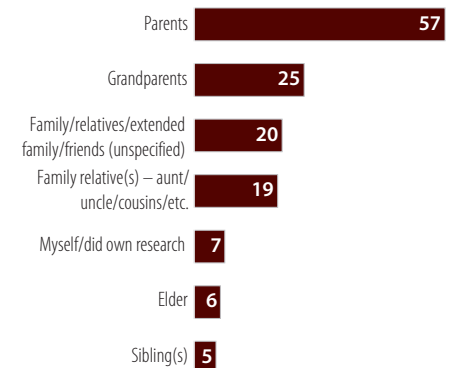
Extent of knowledge of family tree

How well do you know your family tree, that is, who your Aboriginal ancestors are?



Sources of learning about family tree/ Aboriginal ancestry

From where or from whom have you learned what you do know about your family tree?



The impact of knowing one’s family tree on the personal lives of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay:

It installed a sense of pride. A lot of my family members were warriors, who fought on military efforts. My family were mavericks when it came to the Indian Agent. My grandpa was in the council to get rid of the final Indian Agent. My family has a lot of respect. Gives me motivation to carry on and inspire those I come in contact with.

Knowing what my family went through makes me stronger.

It encouraged me to not be afraid of who I am and it pushed me to get the education to prove that I could. I never knew my grandfather, who was very traditional.

Big impact because it’s good to know where I came from, met family I hadn’t met before.

Helped me to understand the way I feel sometimes, helped me understand the stages I went through in life.

Makes me feel strong to be Métis and from my family. If you endure and persevere, you can overcome obstacles in your life, just like [people on] my family tree.

It’s good to know where you come from. It creates a comfort level in that you know you have a home.

Really important to know that I come from a line of strong women.

Gave me better understanding of who I am and my place in the world as a spiritual being.

Impact of knowing one’s family tree

A sense of family and cultural survival is the primary way knowledge of their family tree has made a difference for Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay. Those without such knowledge attribute it overwhelmingly to a lack of opportunity rather than a lack of interest.

Beyond how well they know about their family tree, what does this knowledge mean to urban Aboriginal peoples’ sense of themselves?

Both First Nations peoples and Métis in Thunder Bay believe that knowledge of their family tree has had a significant personal impact on their lives and how they see themselves, particularly a greater understanding of family and cultural survival. UAPS participants cite three main ways in which knowing their family tree has contributed to their lives:

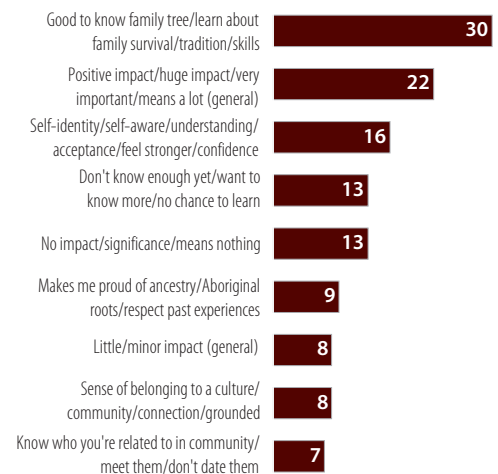
- **Understanding of family survival and cultural endurance.** Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay most frequently say that, through knowing their family tree, they have learned stories of family survival, endurance and long-held cultural traditions that have deeply affected them (30%). This view is similar to that expressed by urban Aboriginal peoples in general.
- **A positive impact.** Two in ten (22%) Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay emphasize the positive impact that knowledge of their Aboriginal ancestry has had on their lives. This view is similar to that expressed by urban Aboriginal peoples in general.
- **Greater self-identity and self-awareness.** Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are less likely than urban Aboriginal peoples in general to mention the greater sense of self-identity and self-awareness they have derived from knowing about their Aboriginal ancestry (16%).

Smaller proportions of UAPS participants (9% or fewer each) mention other ways in which knowing their family tree has had a meaningful impact on their lives, including making them proud of their Aboriginal “roots” and instilling a greater respect for their families’ past, a sense of community, knowing their relatives better, and a better understanding of Aboriginal history. Thirteen percent say they don’t know enough and would like to learn more about their family trees.

At the same time, Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are also less likely than average to articulate the positive ways that this knowledge has impacted their lives. There is no sense of a negative impact, but a total of one in four (26%) say that knowing their family tree has had little or no significant personal impact on their lives, or are unsure, higher than in most other UAPS cities.

Impact of family tree

What has it meant for you personally, or what impact has is made on your life, to learn what you do know about your family tree?

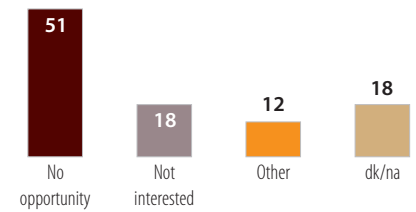


Why do some Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay know their family tree and others do not? The full range of potential reasons is not possible to capture in this study. The *UAPS* simply asked those who do not feel they know their family tree very well to identify if this was due to lack of interest or opportunity. Consistent with those in other *UAPS* cities, lack of opportunity, not lack of interest, is the main reason why Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay say they do not know their family tree very well.

Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay who do not know their family tree very well are much more likely to say this is because they have had no opportunity to learn more (51%) than to say it is because they are either not interested (18%). One in ten (12%) cite other reasons why they do not know their family tree very well (such as a lack of time, or that they are simply still learning). Two in ten (18%) are unable or unwilling to say why they have not learned more about their family tree. These reasons are similar for both Métis and First Nations peoples in Thunder Bay.

Reason for lack of knowledge of family tree*

Is the main reason you have not learned more about your family tree because you have not had the opportunity, or because you are not particularly interested?



* Subsample: Those who do not feel they know their family tree "very well."

2.3 Indian residential schools

Personal involvement with residential schools

Two-thirds of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member. Both personal and second-hand experience is much more common among First Nations peoples.

On June 11, 2008 the Government of Canada issued a formal apology to the former Aboriginal students of residential schools, affirming the disruptive impact of historical policies and legislation. The apology formally recognized that “this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in [this] country.”⁹

The Indian residential school system predates Confederation and grew out of the missionary experience in Canada’s early history. Indian residential schools existed, at one time or another, in all Canadian provinces and territories except Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

The residential school system left in its wake a tragic legacy. It is estimated that as many as 150,000 Aboriginal children attended these institutions. Many former students have reported undergoing hardship, forcible confinement and physical and sexual abuse while attending the schools. In addition, these students were not allowed to speak their language or practice their culture. While most residential schools were closed by the mid-1970s, the last school did not close until 1996.¹⁰

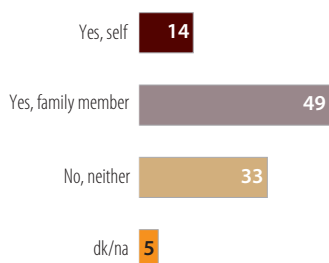
First Nations, Métis and Inuit children had varied residential school experiences, both in intensity and duration. Regardless, the residential school had a direct impact on Survivors and has spilled over to their descendants, creating challenges pertaining to identity, culture and parenting.¹¹

A clear majority of *UAPS* participants in Thunder Bay say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member. Nearly two in three (63%) say either they themselves (14%) or a family member (49%) were a student at a federal residential school or a provincial day school. This is on par with the degree of involvement reported by urban Aboriginal peoples in general.

As is the case across most *UAPS* cities, First Nations peoples in Thunder Bay report more widespread experience with residential schools than do Métis, both in terms of personal attendance (18%, compared to 4% of Métis) and family attendance (58%, compared to 24% of Métis).

Indian residential schools

Were you, or any member of your family, ever a student at a federal residential school or a provincial day school?



9 Canada, Office of the Prime Minister, “Prime Minister Harper offers full apology on behalf of Canadians for the Indian Residential Schools system,” *Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada* [website], www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=2149 (accessed December 2009).

10 Environics Research Group, report prepared for the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *2008 National Benchmark Survey*, May 2008., p.9.

11 Although status Indians formed the majority of attendees at any given time, many Métis children were accepted, often to boost school enrolment figures. Meanwhile, the number of Inuit children grew quickly in the 1950s when a network of schools was built across the North. Roughly 10% of the Aboriginal population in Canada self-identify as Survivors of the residential school system. *Aboriginal People, Resilience and the Residential School Legacy*, Aboriginal Healing Foundation Series, 2003.

Impact of residential schools on lives today

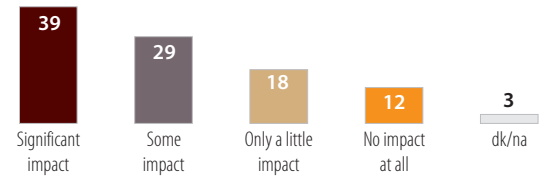
A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay with first- or second-hand experience of Indian residential schools say this has had at least some impact in shaping their lives and who they are today.

The Indian residential school experience continues to shape the lives of urban Aboriginal peoples today. Among those Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay who say they or a family member were a student in one of these schools, seven in ten say this experience, or the experience of their family member, has had either a significant impact (39%) or some impact (29%) in shaping their life and who they are today. This represents 15 percent of all UAPS participants in Thunder Bay.

Yet despite being as likely as Aboriginal peoples in other cities to have had experience with residential schools, Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are among those least likely to feel this has had a significant impact on their lives, similar to those living in Winnipeg (39%) and Halifax (39%). Within Thunder Bay, First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to report a significant impact on their lives, likely because a larger proportion experienced the system first-hand.

Impact of Indian residential schools*

To what extent has [this experience/or the experience of your family member] shaped your life and who you are today?



* Subsample: Those who were, or whose family member was, a student at a federal residential school or a provincial day school.

2.4 Aboriginal cultural activity in the city

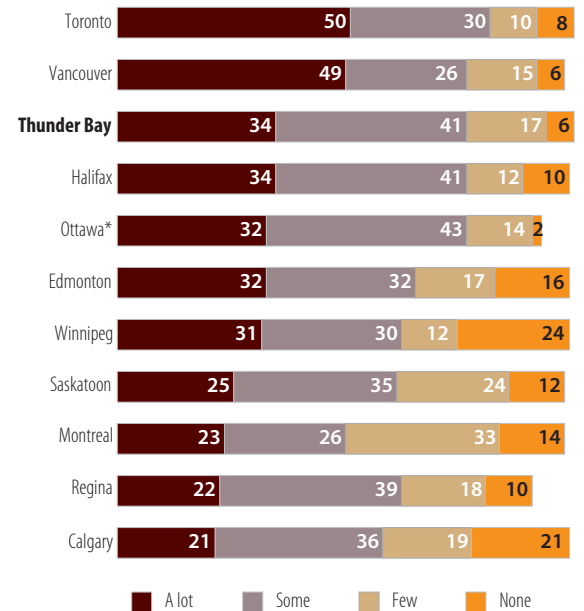
Perceived availability of Aboriginal activities

Three out of four Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay say there are Aboriginal cultural activities available in the city.

Aboriginal cultural activities are perceived to be widely available in Thunder Bay. Three in four Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay say there are either a lot (34%) or some (41%) Aboriginal cultural activities available in the city; 17 percent say there are only a few such activities and just six percent believe there are no such activities available to them. Of all UAPS participants, Aboriginal peoples living in Toronto (50%) and Vancouver (49%) are by far the most likely to believe there are a lot of Aboriginal cultural activities where they live.

Aboriginal cultural activities available in your community, by city

Are there any, a lot, some, a few or no Aboriginal cultural activities available in your community?

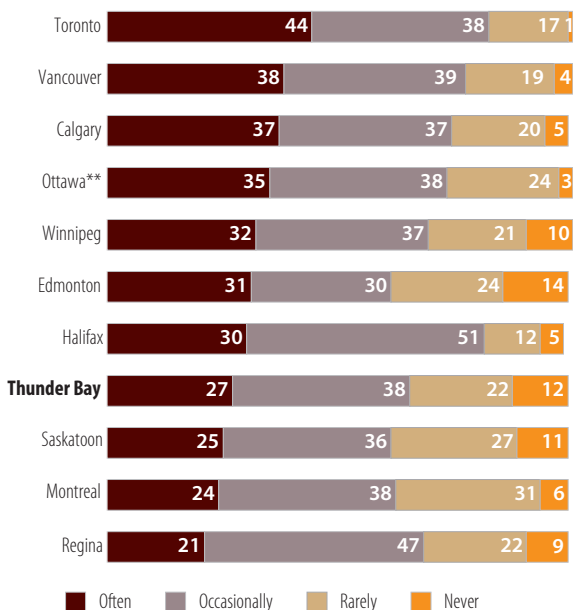


* Inuit only

Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer the question

Frequency of participation in cultural activities,* by city

How often do you personally participate in these Aboriginal cultural activities?



* Subsample: Those who have Aboriginal cultural activities available in their community.

** Inuit only

Frequency of participation in cultural activities

Two in three Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay aware of cultural activities in their city participate at least occasionally, but the rate of frequent participation is lower than average.

Among those Aboriginal peoples who say Aboriginal cultural activities are available in Thunder Bay, two in three say they often (27%) or occasionally (38%) participate in these activities; one in three indicate they rarely (22%) or never (12%) do. The reported rate of participation is higher among First Nations peoples than among Métis.

Frequent participation in Aboriginal cultural activities in Thunder Bay is lower than average (but similar to that reported by Aboriginal residents of Saskatoon, Montreal and Regina).

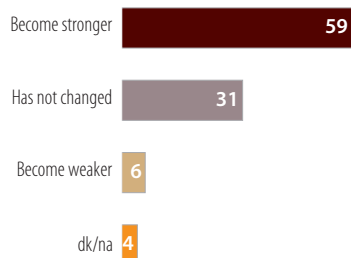
Strength of Aboriginal culture

Six in ten Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay believe the Aboriginal cultural in their city is getting stronger, on par with views in other UAPS cities.

There is a sense of optimism about the direction of Aboriginal culture in Thunder Bay in recent years. Overall, six in ten (59%) Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay think that Aboriginal culture in the city has become stronger in the past five years, while fewer than one in ten (6%) say it has become weaker; three in ten (31%) say it has not changed. These views are similar for Métis and First Nations peoples in Thunder Bay, and are consistent with the average of all 11 UAPS cities.

Strength of Aboriginal culture

In the last five years, do you think that Aboriginal culture in your community has become stronger, become weaker or has not changed?



2.5 Maintaining Aboriginal cultural identity

Most valued aspects of Aboriginal culture

Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay believe language, and Aboriginal customs and traditions, are the most important aspects of Aboriginal culture to be passed on to future generations.

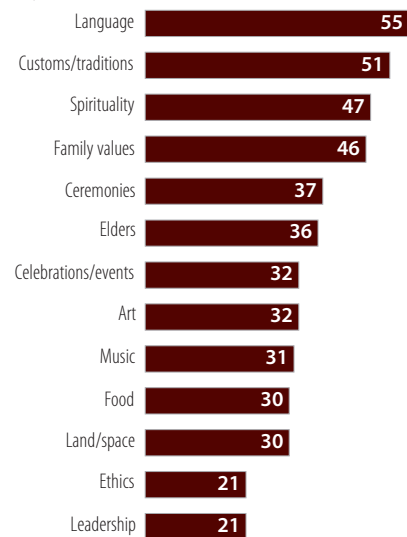
When Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay were asked what aspects of Aboriginal culture are most important to be passed on to their children or grandchildren, or to the next generation (unprompted, without response options offered), they are most likely to identify language (55%), and Aboriginal customs and traditions (51%). Also important are Aboriginal spirituality (47%) and family values (46%).

One in three each say it is important that the next generations know about Aboriginal ceremonies (37%), Elders (36%), celebrations and events (32%), art (32%), music (31%), land (30%) and food (30%). Two in ten each want the next generation to know about Aboriginal ethics (21%) and leadership (21%). Six percent or fewer each mention a range of other aspects of Aboriginal culture. This set of cultural priorities is similar to that found among urban Aboriginal peoples in general. Within Thunder Bay, Métis are more likely than First Nations peoples to emphasize the importance of Aboriginal storytelling.

Most important aspects of Aboriginal culture to pass to next generation

In your opinion, what aspects of Aboriginal culture are most important to be passed on to your children or grandchildren, or to the next generation?

Top mentions



Concern over losing cultural identity

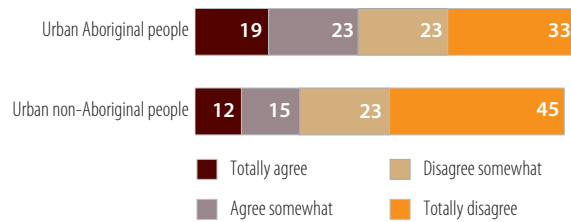
A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are reasonably confident they can protect their cultural identity, although they express greater concern about this issue than do non-Aboriginal people in the city.

As the previous results demonstrate, most Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are aware of and involved in Aboriginal cultural activities and have a sense of cultural growth. Moreover, as is the case for urban Aboriginal peoples generally, they are more confident than not in their ability to protect against a loss of cultural identity.

When presented with the statement “I am concerned about losing my cultural identity,” Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are modestly more likely to disagree than to agree. Just under six in ten (56%) disagree at least somewhat that this is a possibility, while four in ten (42%) agree at least somewhat. Moreover, strong confidence (33% totally disagree) outweighs strong concern about this issue (19% totally agree). Strongly expressed confidence in the ability to protect one’s cultural identity is more widespread among Métis than among First Nations peoples in Thunder Bay.

Concern over losing cultural identity

Do you totally agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or totally disagree with the following statement: “I am concerned about losing my cultural identity.”



ABORIGINAL VERSUS NON-ABORIGINAL PERCEPTIONS. As part of the *UAPS*, a separate survey was conducted with non-Aboriginal residents of the same 10 cities (excluding Ottawa). Some questions were asked in both the main and the non-Aboriginal surveys, to allow for direct comparisons between the two groups.

Although majorities of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are generally unconcerned about losing their cultural identity, strongly expressed confidence is higher among non-Aboriginal residents (45% totally disagree with the statement “I am concerned about losing my cultural identity,” compared to 33% of Aboriginal residents). Among non-Aboriginal Canadians, only Montrealers express a significant degree of concern about the loss of cultural identity.

2.6 Community and connections

Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay define their community in a variety of ways, but family and friends are top-of-mind.

Communities play a pivotal role in shaping individual identities. Parents, family, friends, neighbours, members of one's own Aboriginal group, other Aboriginal persons and non-Aboriginal persons transmit social values and understandings that influence Aboriginal identity in cities.

In order to better understand what community ties are important, and determine what community means in the lives and identities of Aboriginal peoples living in Canadian cities, the *UAPS* explored how participants define their community, along with their sense of belonging and connection to various groups and entities.

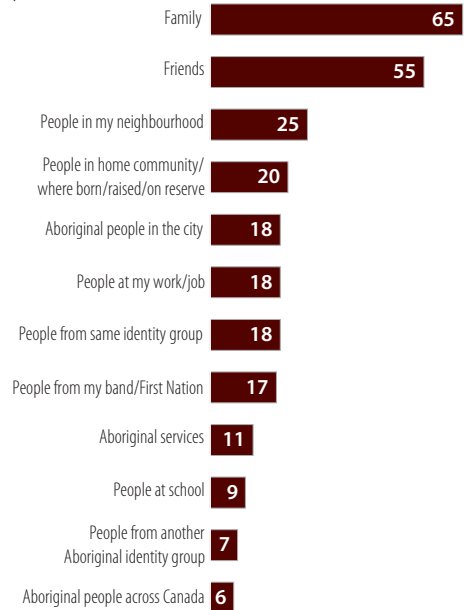
Who or what do urban Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay consider to be a part of their community? *UAPS* data show that attachment to family and friends is top-of-mind for First Nations, Métis and Inuk residents in Thunder Bay, which is consistent with those living in other *UAPS* cities.

When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay most frequently identify family (65%) and/or friends (55%) as part of their community. Also included in their definition of community are people in their neighbourhoods (25%), people from their home community (20%), people from one's own identity/cultural group (18%), Aboriginal people in general in the city (18%), people they work with (18%), people from their band/First Nation (17%) and Aboriginal services (11%). Nine percent or fewer each mention a variety of other types of individuals.

Métis are more likely than First Nations peoples to mention friends as part of their community; First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to consider people in the community where they were born and/or people from their band as part of their present community.

Who or what do you consider to be a part of your community?

Top mentions



Belonging to Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal communities

Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay generally feel that they belong to communities that are not exclusively “Aboriginal” or “non-Aboriginal,” but are somewhere in between.

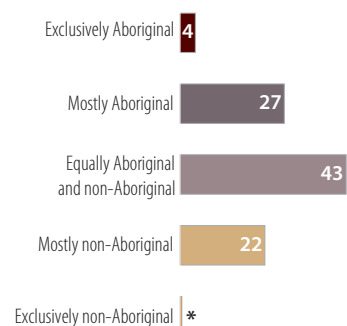
To what extent do Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay feel they belong to an Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal community?

The survey finds no consensus regarding the type of community to which Aboriginal peoples feel they belong. The largest proportion (43%) of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay feel they belong to a community that is equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Smaller proportions say they belong to a mostly Aboriginal (27%) or a mostly non-Aboriginal (22%) community. Very few describe their community as exclusively Aboriginal (4%) or exclusively non-Aboriginal (less than 1%).

The views of Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay are similar to those of urban Aboriginal participants in general. Within Thunder Bay, First Nations peoples and Métis hold similar views on the extent to which their community is Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal.

Belonging to Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal community

Do you feel that the community you belong to is...?



* Less than one percent

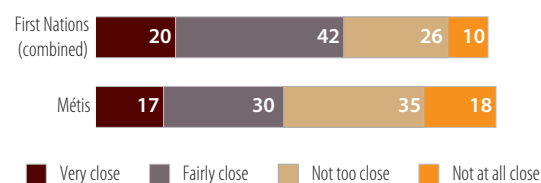
Connection to Aboriginal peoples in the city

First Nations peoples express a stronger sense of connection to their own identity group in Thunder Bay than do Métis. In turn, Métis feel a closer connection than do First Nations peoples to Aboriginal groups other than their own.

CONNECTION TO OWN ABORIGINAL GROUP. How close a connection do Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay have to members of their own Aboriginal group? Overall, First Nations peoples feel a closer connection to their own First Nation in Thunder Bay than do Métis to other Métis in the city. Six in ten (62%) First Nations peoples feel either a very or fairly close connection to other members of their First Nation in Thunder Bay. In comparison, about five in ten (47%) Métis feel a close connection to other Métis in Thunder Bay.

Connection to Aboriginal group, by identity group

How close a connection do you feel [to members of your own Aboriginal group]?



Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer this question.

As might be expected, First Nations peoples are less likely to feel a close connection to members of other First Nations in Thunder Bay (58% very or fairly close). This finding is similar to that found among urban Aboriginal participants in general. First Nations peoples living in the largest urban centres (Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal) are the most likely among all UAPS participants to report a close connection to members of other First Nations.

CONNECTION TO OTHER ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN THE CITY. How strong a connection do First Nations peoples and Métis feel to members of other Aboriginal groups in Thunder Bay? Métis (45%) tend to feel more connected to other Aboriginal peoples in the city (i.e., to First Nations and Inuit) than do First Nations peoples (33%), likely as a result of being the minority Aboriginal group in the city. First Nations peoples in Thunder Bay are less likely than those in other UAPS cities to feel a sense of connection to other Aboriginal peoples in the city (i.e., to Métis and Inuit).

Friendships in the city

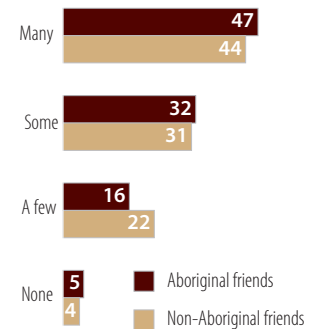
Majorities of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay report close friendships with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike. However, First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to have Aboriginal friends and Métis are more likely than First Nations peoples to have non-Aboriginal friends.

Beyond their sense of connection to members of their own or other Aboriginal groups, the *UAPS* survey asked First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit living in Thunder Bay about the extent of their Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal friendships.

FRIENDSHIPS WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLE. Overall, eight in ten (79%) Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay say they have many or some close friends in the city who are Aboriginal. However, First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to say they have many Aboriginal friends (52% and 33%, respectively).

FRIENDSHIPS WITH NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLE. Three in four (75%) *UAPS* participants in Thunder Bay say they have at least some close friends who are non-Aboriginal, although Métis are more likely than First Nations peoples to say they have many non-Aboriginal friends (55%, compared to 39% of First Nations peoples).

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal friends
Do you have many, some, a few, or no close friends in Regina who are Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal?



3.0 Experiences with Non- Aboriginal People

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996 report devoted a chapter, *Urban Perspectives*, to the experiences of Aboriginal peoples living in urban centres. The chapter begins with cultural identity and then proceeds to a section on racism. The segue is intentional, as the consequences of racism and discrimination on identity can be profound – generations of Aboriginal people have struggled to assert their identity amidst a pervasive sense that they are perceived negatively by the non-Aboriginal population at large.

Most *UAPS* participants (across all cities) feel discrimination of Aboriginal people is a pervasive problem, and that stereotypical attitudes are frequently expressed through negative behaviours, such as insults and unfair treatment, that the majority have personally experienced – and this is similarly true for Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay.

This chapter also explores encounters and experiences with non-Aboriginal services in the city such as schools, banks, the health care system, and government programs such as social assistance programs, and employment and training programs.

Key findings

- **Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay – like their counterparts in other *UAPS* cities – widely believe that they are viewed negatively by non-Aboriginal people.** There is a very strong perception among Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay that non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of negative and distorting stereotypes about them, the most prominent being about alcohol and drug abuse. Although a minority believe that these attitudes may be changing for the better, the balance of opinion is that they remain unchanged.
- **Most Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay agree that others behave in an unfair or negative way towards Aboriginal people.** A majority say they have personally been teased or insulted because of their Aboriginal background, on par with the experiences of Aboriginal peoples in other *UAPS* cities. At the same time, Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are more likely than not to feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people.
- **Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay report a substantial amount of contact with non-Aboriginal services, particularly banks and the health care system.** Experience with elementary and secondary schools (as a parent) is higher in Thunder Bay than in most other *UAPS* cities. Positive assessments of these experiences largely outweigh negative ones, including in the case of the child welfare system (where, in most other cities, negative experiences outweigh positive ones). Negative experiences are generally related to being treated poorly by the people who deliver the services, rather than to concerns about the overall effectiveness of the services or about the process of accessing the services.

3.1 How Aboriginal peoples feel they are perceived by non-Aboriginal people

Non-Aboriginal perceptions – positive or negative

Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay generally believe that they are seen in a negative light by non-Aboriginal people.

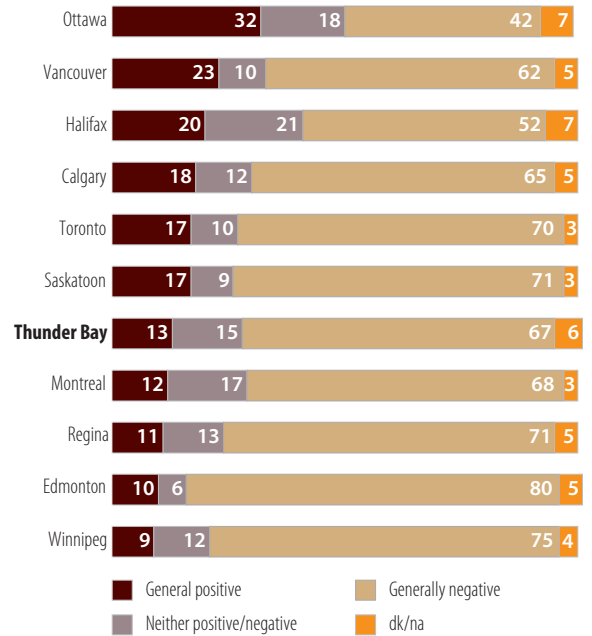
A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay believe that non-Aboriginal people view them negatively, a perception that is consistent with that expressed in other UAPS cities.

Two-thirds (67%) of UAPS participants in Thunder Bay believe non-Aboriginal people’s impression of Aboriginal people is generally negative. Just one in ten (13%) think non-Aboriginal people’s impressions are generally positive, and 15 percent think they are neither positive nor negative.

Although it is the minority view, First Nations peoples (15%) are more likely than Métis (6%) to believe non-Aboriginal residents of the city take a positive view of Aboriginal peoples.

Perceptions of non-Aboriginal people’s impressions of Aboriginal people

Do you think non-Aboriginal people’s impression of Aboriginal people is generally positive or negative?



Common stereotypes of Aboriginal people, in the words of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay:

That Aboriginals are all drunks.

I think that they feel we're lazy, prefer to be welfare cases, rather than give to the community.

Alcoholics, unreliable and we have it easy.

That Aboriginal people have it easy, but they don't know how hard it really is.

Drugs, lazy, poor parenting, poverty, jobless, homelessness, less fortunate.

Lazy, dirty, addictive and ignorant.

Alcoholics, don't want to work, lives off the government. Uneducated. They get something for nothing.

We all drink Listerine. We all live on welfare. We get lot of money from the bands to live in the city.

In washrooms, you see racial comments. In public places and restaurants, they talk about Aboriginal people even though you are sitting right there. They say that probably it's residential school money we're drinking, that we should have bought better clothes.

Perceptions of non-Aboriginal stereotypes of Aboriginal people

Addiction problems dominate the list of negative and distorting stereotypes that non-Aboriginal people are believed to hold about Aboriginal peoples.

Métis, First Nations peoples and Inuit in Thunder Bay believe non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of stereotypes of Aboriginal people. However, these focus overwhelmingly on addiction problems (alcohol and drug abuse). Some of the stereotypes they believe non-Aboriginal people hold are presented in participants' own words in the sidebar on this page.

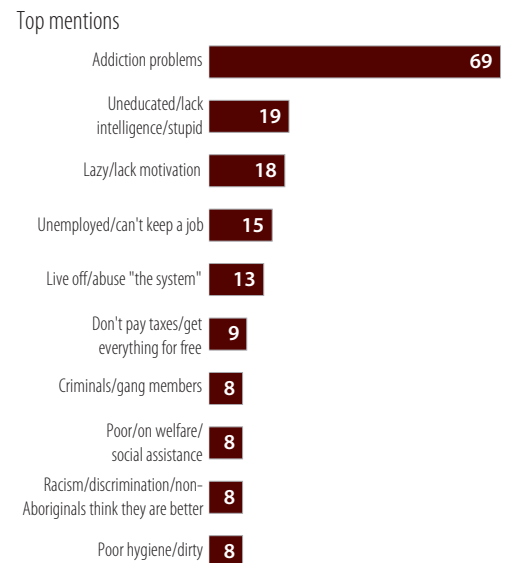
Specifically, when UAPS participants in Thunder Bay are asked (unprompted, without response options offered), what they believe are the most common stereotypes that non-Aboriginal people hold about Aboriginal people, one stereotype dominates: seven in ten (69%) believe that non-Aboriginal people associate them with drug and alcohol abuse.

Two in ten each believe non-Aboriginal people think Aboriginal people lack intelligence or education (19%), and/or are lazy and unwilling to work hard to get what they want and need (18%). Smaller proportions mention stereotypes such as Aboriginal people being perennially unemployed and unable to keep a job (15%), and/or taking advantage of government assistance (13%). Nine percent or fewer each mention a range of other negative stereotypes, such as the perception that Aboriginal people don't pay their taxes, are often in criminal gangs, are poor and on welfare, have poor hygiene and/or are generally inferior.

First Nations peoples and Métis in Thunder Bay have similar views of the negative stereotypes associated with Aboriginal peoples.

Common stereotypes of Aboriginal people

What do you believe are the most common stereotypes that non-Aboriginal people hold about Aboriginal people, if any?



Do Aboriginal peoples believe non-Aboriginal impressions are changing?

The balance of opinion is that there has been little change in non-Aboriginal people's impressions of Aboriginal people over the past few years, although one-third are optimistic that attitudes are improving.

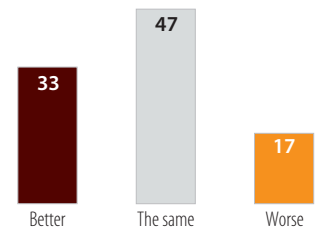
In Thunder Bay, the view that perceptions of Aboriginal people have not changed in recent years outweighs the belief that they are improving, while only a small minority think perceptions have deteriorated.

When asked about the change in non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people over the past few years, about half (47%) of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay think impressions have stayed the same. One-third (33%) think impressions have become better. Only 17 percent believe non-Aboriginal people's impressions of Aboriginal people has gotten worse over the past few years.

Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are more likely than average to perceive no change in non-Aboriginal people's impressions; by comparison, optimism that attitudes are improving is strongest in Vancouver (53%) and Toronto (48%). In Thunder Bay, Métis and First Nations peoples hold similar perceptions about this issue.

Change in impressions

Over the past few years, do you think that non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people has gotten better, or worse or stayed the same?



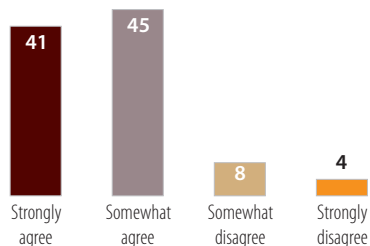
3.2 Experiences of discrimination

Group and personal experiences

Close to nine in ten Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay agree that others behave in an unfair or negative way toward Aboriginal people as whole. Seven in ten report that they personally have been teased or insulted because of their Aboriginal background.

Negative behaviour

"I think others behave in an unfair/negative way toward Aboriginal people."

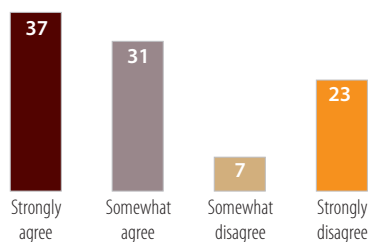


Not only do Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay feel that they are viewed negatively by their non-Aboriginal neighbours, but they also report widespread experience (personally and as a group) with negative or unfair treatment because of who they are.

NEGATIVE AND UNFAIR BEHAVIOUR TOWARD ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN GENERAL. The large majority of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay agree with the statement "I think others behave in an unfair/negative way toward Aboriginal people." Close to nine in ten either strongly (41%) or somewhat (45%) agree with this statement; only 12 percent disagree. This perception is equally strong in Thunder Bay as in most other *UAPS* cities. Within Thunder Bay, Métis are more likely than First Nations peoples to strongly agree that Aboriginal peoples are largely treated in negative ways.

Unfair treatment

"I have been teased or insulted because of my Aboriginal background."



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH INSULTS AND TEASING BY NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLES. Most Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay also say they have personally experienced insulting treatment because of who they are. When posed with the statement "I have been teased or insulted because of my Aboriginal background," seven in ten strongly (37%) or somewhat (31%) agree; relatively few somewhat (7%) or strongly (23%) disagree.

The reported experiences of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay generally mirror those of Aboriginal peoples in the other *UAPS* cities. Métis and First Nations peoples in the city are equally likely to report having been insulted because of who they are.

Sense of acceptance

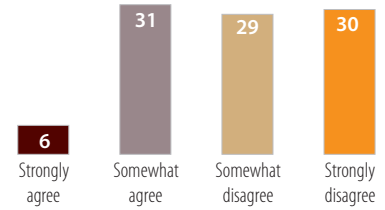
A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people, although a significant minority do not.

Despite the fact that a majority in Thunder Bay believe Aboriginal people are subject to unfair treatment, teasing and insults because of their Aboriginal identity, they are more likely than not to feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people.

Six in ten (59%) UAPS participants in Thunder Bay strongly (30%) or somewhat (29%) disagree with the statement "I don't feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people." However, a substantial minority of almost four in ten strongly (6%) or somewhat (31%) agree that they do not feel accepted. These sentiments are similar among Métis and First Nations peoples in Thunder Bay.

The degree of acceptance felt by Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay is similar to that expressed by urban Aboriginal peoples in general.

Sense of acceptance by non-Aboriginal people
"I don't feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people."



Impact of experiences with non-Aboriginal people

For the most part, Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay feel their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have shaped their lives and identities in positive ways.

For the most part, Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay indicate that their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have, ultimately, compelled them to become stronger, better individuals.

When asked in what ways, if any, their experience with non-Aboriginal people has shaped their life and who they are today (unprompted, without response options offered), Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are most likely to frame the impact in a positive light. Summarized, their responses fall into the following four main categories:

- **Greater motivation.** A greater sense of motivation and desire to achieve (36% of mentions) is the top way in which Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay feel their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have had an impact. They express this greater sense of motivation in multiple ways, including the belief that their experiences with non-Aboriginal people drove them to work harder, made them put more emphasis on their education, made them want to improve themselves, made them more ambitious and stronger, and made them want to disprove Aboriginal stereotypes.
- **Mentoring and a sense of direction.** Over one in ten (14%) Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay report that a non-Aboriginal teacher, professor or other individual gave them opportunities, helped them change perspectives, gave them guidance about “how to stay out of trouble,” and mentored them at a critical point in their life.
- **More tolerant and accepting.** One in ten (10%) Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay believe they developed more tolerance and acceptance of other people through their experiences with non-Aboriginal people. Specifically, they feel these experiences made them less prejudiced and judgmental, gave them a perspective on other cultures and taught them about different values, and made them more tolerant and understanding.
- **Greater sense of Aboriginal self.** One in ten (9%) Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay say they have gained a greater sense of themselves as an Aboriginal person through their experiences with non-Aboriginal people. These experiences reinforced their pride in being Aboriginal, made them more confident and vocal, or gave them a perspective on their own Aboriginal culture. Métis are more likely than First Nations peoples to specifically mention that their interactions with non-Aboriginals has given them a greater sense of self.

One in ten (10%) Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay also cite ways in which their experiences with non-Aboriginal peoples have had a *negative* impact on their lives. These individuals cite such negative experiences as exposure to racism and discrimination, distrust and anger, lower self-confidence, shame, and loss of their connection to their Aboriginal identity and language.

A total of one-quarter of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay either say their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have had no impact at all on them (18%), or are unable or unwilling to answer the question (9%).

3.3 Experiences with non-Aboriginal services and organizations

Extent of contact with specific services

Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay report a substantial amount of contact with non-Aboriginal services, particularly banking services and the health care system. They are among the most likely of UAPS participants to report recent use of the elementary or secondary school system (as a parent).

As a final dimension to better understanding urban Aboriginal peoples' perceptions of and experiences with non-Aboriginal people, the UAPS asked participants about their experiences with non-Aboriginal services and organizations. Specifically, the survey explored how much contact they have with these services and organizations, and the nature of their experience.

To what extent do Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay have contact with non-Aboriginal services or organizations? Of the seven non-Aboriginal service types included in the survey, **banks or credit unions** (90%), and the **health care system** (86%) have been the most widely used within the past year.

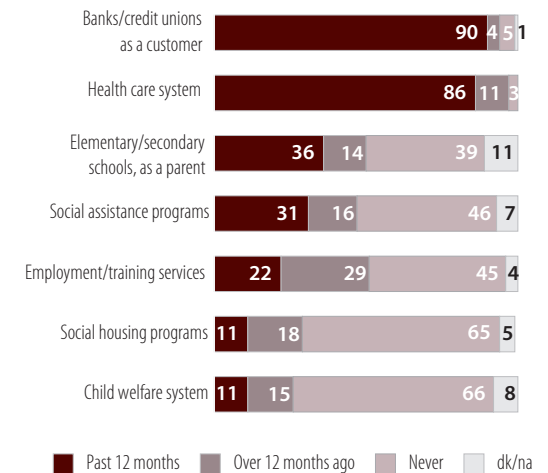
There is a substantial gap between these two non-Aboriginal services and others in degree of contact reported. One-third or fewer report using **elementary and secondary schools as a parent** (36%), **social assistance programs** (31%), and non-Aboriginal **employment and training services** (22%).

Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are least likely to report recent experience with the child welfare system and social housing programs. Very small proportions report using **social housing programs** (11%) or **the child welfare system** (11%) within the past year; in both cases, majorities have never used them (65% and 66%, respectively).

Reported contact with these non-Aboriginal services and organizations is largely similar for First Nations peoples and Métis in Thunder Bay, with the exception of the banking system, for which recent use is more widely reported by Métis (96% vs. 87% of First Nations peoples).

Contact with non-Aboriginal services and organizations

Have you made use of or been in contact with the following non-Aboriginal services in Regina in the past 12 months, over 12 months ago or never?



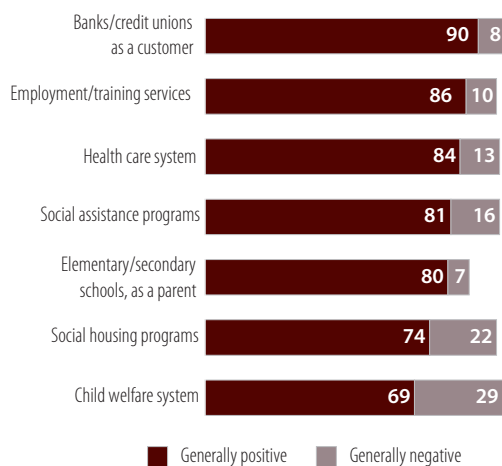
Note: Percentages don't add up to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer this question.

Assessing experiences with non-Aboriginal services

Positive experiences far outweigh negative ones among those who have been in contact with non-Aboriginal services in Thunder Bay.

Experience with non-Aboriginal services*

Was your experience with this service generally positive or generally negative?



*Subsample: Those who have used the services

Note: Percentages don't add up to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer this question.

Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay who have ever used or made contact with these non-Aboriginal services¹² were asked if the experience was generally positive or generally negative. They are most likely to report positive experiences with banks and credit unions (90%), employment and training services (86%), the health care system (84%), social assistance programs (81%), and elementary or secondary schools, as a parent (80%). In each of these cases, relatively few (ranging between 7% and 16%) say they have had a negative experience.

Positive experiences are also the norm for slightly fewer, but still a majority, of those who have accessed social housing programs (74%).

Among Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay who have had experience with the child welfare system, positive experiences (69%) outweigh negative ones (29%), which is the opposite pattern to the western cities and Toronto (where negative experiences outweigh positive ones).

12 In most cases, the sample size of those who have used or accessed the service is too small to compare perceptions for First Nations peoples and Métis in Thunder Bay.

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES. Aboriginal peoples who have had negative experiences with non-Aboriginal services were asked to describe the experience (unprompted, in their own words). Some of these experiences are presented in the sidebar on this page.

The most common concern is being treated poorly. Just over four in ten (43%) Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay say their experience was negative, primarily because of racism or discrimination (19%). They also complain of being treated unfairly or disrespectfully; or encountering staff who were mean or rude, or lacked empathy; or didn't understand their needs or culture.

Three in ten (30%) had problems with process, particularly long waiting lists or wait periods (21%). Two in ten (21%) report negative consequences as a result of interaction with the service, including having applications rejected and problems associated with child welfare service. One in six (16%) question the effectiveness of the service, saying it was not supportive, unhelpful and didn't actually achieve its goal.

What Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay say about their negative experiences with non-Aboriginal services:

When I received my residential school settlement, I couldn't open a bank account because I didn't have a Social Insurance Number card. All the banks I went to refused me. So I had to go to a Money Mart.

Had to use walk-in clinic, where you must sit for three hours in order to see the doctor even though you were almost the first one there.

I had two kids and I was looking after my boyfriend's three kids to get them out of foster care and they helped me financially until I got fired and then they told me to pay everything back. I found ...they didn't see me as a good member of society.

The receptionist[s] attitude towards me makes me feel as if I'm wasting her time. I've been asking for refills but they say they lost my x-rays. I think health sucks for Native people in Thunder Bay. You get better service out of town.

My grandson lives with me and he is going to a white school and has difficulty with the teachers. I believe because he is Aboriginal, for example, he is singled out in class all the time.

Just the way they treated me. I found they talked down to me like I was a child or I couldn't understand them. They cut you off when you try to speak to them, they don't take their time with you, they rush and I forget what I wanted to say.

4.0 Experiences with Aboriginal Services and Organizations

As part of understanding urban Aboriginal peoples' experiences in Canadian cities today, the *UAPS* explored study participants' perceptions of and interactions with Aboriginal services and organizations. Growing out of the friendship centre movement, a large network of institutions has emerged within urban Aboriginal communities that provide a range of services such as, but not limited to, education, training, employment, economic development, child care, health, housing, cultural support and corrections. Of note, over the last two decades in particular, urban Aboriginal organizations are assuming key roles in the delivery of health services. Many aspects of urban Aboriginal life are mediated through a vast array of Aboriginal cultural, artistic, heritage, educational, economic, community development and political institutions.

There is considerable reliance on Aboriginal services and organizations in Thunder Bay, and *UAPS* participants in this city are clearly convinced of the importance of these services to the well-being of their community.

Key findings

- **Almost six in ten Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay use and rely at least occasionally on Aboriginal services and organizations in the city.** Friendship centres and health centres are considered the most useful. Lack of use results primarily from the perception that these services are not needed (as opposed to not being accessible or helpful).
- **Regardless of how much interaction they have with Aboriginal services, there is broad agreement among Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay that they are very important.** This is considered to be most important in the case of addiction programs and health centres. Moreover, they are more convinced than average in the need for Aboriginal-specific health centres.

4.1 Use of urban Aboriginal services and organizations

Extent of use of services

Almost six in ten Aboriginal peoples use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations in Thunder Bay at least occasionally, which is on par with reported use in most other UAPS cities.

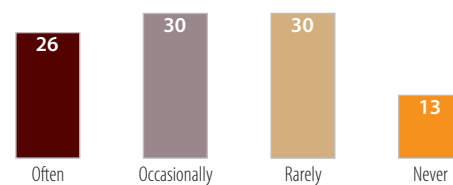
Many Aboriginal services and organizations promote culture and identity for urban Aboriginal peoples through the types of services they offer, the events they sponsor and simply through their existence as Aboriginal organizations in Thunder Bay. The *UAPS* asked participants how often, and why, they use these services and organizations, and which they find most useful.

Among Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay, almost six in ten (56%) use or rely on the city's Aboriginal services or organizations either occasionally (26%) or often (30%); just over four in ten (43%) say they rarely (30%) or never (13%) do. Reported use is similar to that found in most other *UAPS* cities, but is not as widespread as in Toronto (69%) and Vancouver (68%), and among Inuit in Ottawa (67%). Within Thunder Bay, reported use is greater among First Nations peoples than among Métis.

What else explains the use of Aboriginal services and organizations in cities? The sample size for Thunder Bay alone (250 survey participants) is too small to allow for a detailed analysis by socio-demographic factors. However, the national *UAPS* data (across all 11 cities) indicates that use varies by age and income, but not by length of time in the city. Frequent use of Aboriginal services and organizations is more common among Aboriginal peoples aged 45 years and older, and the less affluent (use of these services and organizations steadily declines as household income increases). However, use of Aboriginal services is similar among those new to their city (i.e., those who arrived in their city within the last two years) and long-time residents (i.e., those who arrived in their city 20 or more years ago).

Use of Aboriginal services or organizations

How often do you use or rely on Aboriginal services or organizations in Thunder Bay?



Why urban Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations

Because they help me to achieve projects that I'm working on. And it's also for community development, striving for a better community and staying connected. I've found strengths in them as an Aboriginal person seeking truths, development and balance.

Just feel more comfortable there.

I work with Aboriginals on a daily basis, so I try to access these services because they are more holistic.

For the youth programming and kids programming. They can learn from more than just the TV.

Because of professional work relationships.

Food. Shelter. Social services.

I rely on them for support programming and networking, and employment.

I feel a little more "on the level" dealing with Aboriginal organizations, more accepted and less ashamed.

For community interaction. Find out what's going on with the community events and how I can help out.

The services are geared toward our needs specifically.

Because they're easy to access.

Reasons for use

As in other cities, Aboriginal services and organizations in Thunder Bay are used both for specific services, and for their sense of community and belonging.

Beyond asking Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay how often they use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations, the UAPS also explored why some use these services more regularly than others (unprompted, without response options offered).

WHY THEY USE. Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay who are regular users¹³ of the city's Aboriginal services and organizations say that these serve a dual purpose – the provision of specific services and a welcoming, supportive atmosphere. These are largely consistent with the main reasons for use mentioned in other UAPS cities. Some of these reasons are illustrated in verbatim comments in the sidebar on this page.

SPECIFIC RESOURCES. Half (48%) of regular users of Aboriginal services and organizations are motivated by a desire/need for specific resources. Programs and social services, education and employment services, health supports, and services related to Aboriginal benefits or advocacy, are the most typical resources they describe using.

POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT. Three in ten (29%) users of Aboriginal services and organizations say they are drawn by the presence of positive environments, whether it be the supportive community personal relationships, and/or the connection to Aboriginal culture, sharing circles and Elders that they offer.

EMPLOYEE/VOLUNTEER. Over one in ten (15%) UAPS participants in Thunder Bay are connected to Aboriginal services and organizations because they are either employed by them, or volunteer their time and services. This is more the case for Métis than for First Nations peoples.

¹³ Those who report using services often or occasionally (56% of UAPS participants in Thunder Bay overall).

WHY THEY DON'T USE. Those who rarely or never use Aboriginal services and organizations (43% of UAPS participants in Thunder Bay overall) typically indicate they have no need for them (55%). Considerably fewer do not use them because they are unaware of what services and organizations are available in their city (14%), because the services aren't helpful (7%), and/or because they can't access or don't qualify for these services (6%). Some of the reasons why Aboriginal services are not used more often are illustrated in verbatim comments in the sidebar on this page.

Most useful Aboriginal services and organizations

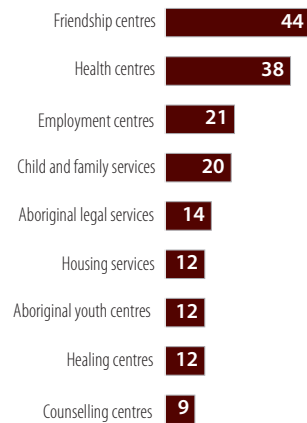
Users of Aboriginal services in Thunder Bay identify friendship and health centres as most useful to them.

Aboriginal peoples who have used Aboriginal services and organizations in Thunder Bay have found a wide range of these to be useful, but first and foremost value friendship centres (44%), health centres (38%) and, to a lesser extent, employment centres (21%), and child and family services (20%). About one in ten, each, have found legal services, (14%), Aboriginal youth centres (12%), healing centres (12%), housing services (12%) and counselling centres (9%) to be useful.

Most useful Aboriginal services and organizations*

What kinds of Aboriginal services or organizations have you found to be particularly useful?

Top mentions



*Subsample: Those who have used Aboriginal services in their city.

In Thunder Bay, First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to report have found Aboriginal health centres useful; Métis are more likely than First Nations peoples to say they found Aboriginal legal services useful.

Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are more likely than average to mention health centres, and child and family services as being particularly valuable; in turn, they are less likely than average to mention employment centres, counselling centres and housing services.

Why urban Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay do not use or rely on Aboriginal services and organizations

I'm just not at the stage in my life where I require a lot for assistance from them.

I have no interest or need, and I'm too busy with work.

Don't currently use, but I have used them before. I feel Aboriginal organizations are available for people new to the city (resource centre) [who are] looking for opportunity.

Rely on other sources (non-Aboriginal).

No need – quite capable of doing things myself.

Nothing offered to me, all the services are geared toward poor Indians.

There are not always (Aboriginal) services that meet my needs. If there is a service, then I will use it.

Use whatever services are available, whether they are Aboriginal or not.

I never really feel the need to. When there is a big problem I seek out help, depend on family for help (partner, etc.).

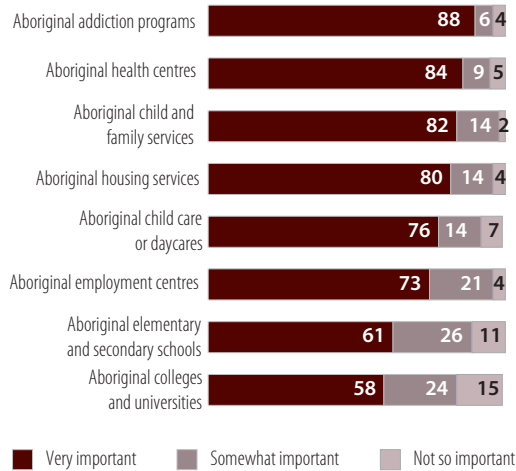
I don't choose a label: I consider myself to be a citizen of the world.

4.2 Importance of Aboriginal services in addition to non-Aboriginal services

Large majorities of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay believe it is very important to also have Aboriginal services. Compared to those living in other UAPS cities, they are among the most convinced of the need for Aboriginal health centres.

Importance of Aboriginal services

How important do you think it is that the following Aboriginal services exist in addition to non-Aboriginal ones?



Note: Percentages don't add up to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer this question.

The results of the UAPS in Thunder Bay confirm that Aboriginal peoples in the city feel there is a definite need for *Aboriginal* services to complement or supplement non-Aboriginal ones.

Between eight and nine in ten say it is *very important* to have Aboriginal addiction programs (88%) and Aboriginal health centres (84%). Between seven and eight in ten say the same about Aboriginal child and family services (82%), Aboriginal housing services (80%), Aboriginal child care or daycares (76%), and Aboriginal employment centres (73%). Six in ten each say it is *very important* to have Aboriginal elementary and secondary schools (61%), and Aboriginal colleges and universities (58%). In all cases, most of the remaining participants say having Aboriginal services is somewhat important, and no more than 15 percent say any of these services are unimportant.

Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay are more convinced than urban Aboriginal peoples in general of the importance of Aboriginal-specific health centres. Within the city, First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to place importance on having Aboriginal colleges and universities, as well as Aboriginal health centres.

In general, how do Aboriginal peoples feel about the city they live in? Beyond the themes discussed so far in this report, the *UAPS* also explored how much participants like living in Thunder Bay, their reasons for choosing their neighbourhood (and the extent to which they feel they have a choice), how much they believe they can make Thunder Bay a better place to live, along with their openness to other languages and cultures.

Key findings

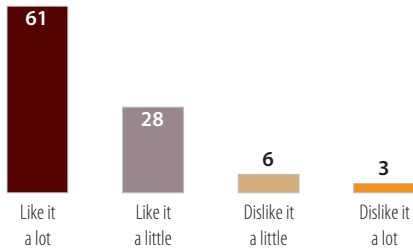
- **Most urban Aboriginal peoples (across all cities) like living in their cities, and this is also true for Aboriginal peoples living in Thunder Bay.** Residents like Thunder Bay for the quality of life, the presence of family and friends, and urban amenities. Concerns about life in the city are each mentioned by relatively small proportions, although they are more likely than average to complain about a lack of employment, and a general lack of resources and opportunities.
- **Affordability of housing and safety considerations are the most common reasons for choosing a neighbourhood.** Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are as likely as those in other cities to feel they have a lot of choice as to where they live in the city.
- **Aboriginal peoples believe they can make Thunder Bay a better place to live.** Over half are confident that they can make a positive difference in their city, on par with Aboriginal peoples in other cities, as well as with non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay.

5.1 Satisfaction with city life

Most Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay like living in their city because of the general quality of life, the presence of family and friends, and urban amenities.

Like living in Thunder Bay

How much do you like living in your city? Would you say you like it or dislike it?



Urban living can be difficult for many Aboriginal people. They typically face urban violence, poverty and health challenges on a greater scale than the population-at-large. However, there is another side to these urban communities, a side not often featured in popular discourse and media. Thousands of First Nations people, Métis and Inuit are establishing themselves, or continuing long histories of multi-generational residence, in Canadian cities, including Thunder Bay.

Almost all Aboriginal peoples say they like living in Thunder Bay. When asked, six in ten (61%) like it a lot, while another three in ten (28%) indicate they like it a little. One in ten dislike living in their city a little (6%) or a lot (3%). These sentiments are similar to those expressed by *UAPS* participants in general. Satisfaction with living in Thunder Bay is also similar for Métis and First Nations peoples in the city.

What do *UAPS* participants like most and least about living in Thunder Bay? General quality of life, the presence of family and friends, and access to amenities are among Thunder Bay's most appreciated features, while dislike of the city is driven by a number of issues, including such urban stresses as overcrowding and cost of living, and difficulties finding employment.

LIKE MOST. When asked what they like most about living in Thunder Bay (unprompted, without response options offered), Aboriginal peoples are most likely to cite three main features:

- **Quality of life.** The most common reason Aboriginal peoples like living in Thunder Bay is the quality of life it offers. A total of one in three (34%) indicate this is what they most like about living in the city. This is primarily related to the variety and convenience of amenities (15%) and availability of green spaces (13%), but also the resources and services (8%). *UAPS* participants in Thunder Bay, and particularly Métis, are more likely than average to say they appreciate the access they have to green spaces.
- **Presence of family and friends.** Another major reason why Aboriginal peoples like living in Thunder Bay is the presence of family and friends (28%). This perspective is more common among those living in the Prairie cities and Thunder Bay than in other cities.
- **City life.** Two in ten (22%) Aboriginal peoples say they enjoy the city life available to them in Thunder Bay, particularly the recreation and entertainment opportunities (16%).

Smaller proportions of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay say they like the small-city feeling (13%), the career and employment opportunities (10%), and the education and training available to them (10%).

Only one percent of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay say they like living in Thunder Bay for the social acceptance found there, similar to other smaller urban centres – and in sharp contrast to the large urban centres of Montreal (34%), Toronto (33%) and Vancouver (19%).

LIKE LEAST. When Aboriginal peoples are asked what they like least about living in Thunder Bay, a range of concerns are identified, but no one issue predominates. They are less likely than urban Aboriginal participants in general to express concern about crime and are more likely to say there is nothing that they dislike about the city.

- **Urban pressures.** Nearly one in five (15%) dislike certain urban pressures, such as overcrowding and the higher cost of living. However, this is less of a concern for Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay than those living in most other cities, particularly Toronto (55%), Calgary (48%), Vancouver (45%) and Montreal (45%), where it is by far the primary issue. Within Thunder Bay, First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to cite this concern.
- **Lack of employment.** More than one in ten (14%) say they dislike the lack of employment and weak economy in Thunder Bay. This issue is more widely mentioned in Thunder Bay than in any other *UAPS* city.
- **Lack of opportunities and resources.** One in ten (11%) *UAPS* participants in Thunder Bay express concerns about a lack of opportunities, activities, resources or services, more than in other *UAPS* cities.
- **Racism/discrimination.** The presence of racism and discrimination is another commonly disliked aspect of urban life in Thunder Bay (mentioned by 10%), and is more widely identified as an issue by First Nations peoples than by Métis.

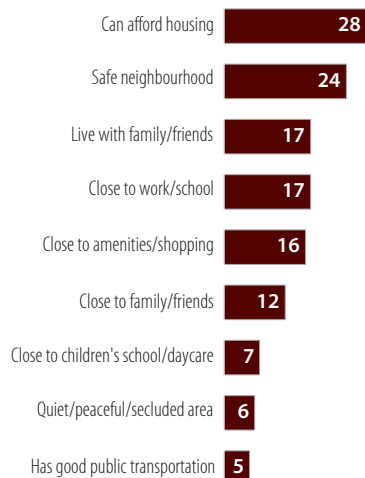
Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (fewer than 10% each) mention other features they dislike about living in Thunder Bay, including crime, drugs and alcohol, and lack of physical access to amenities and services. Nine percent say there is nothing that they dislike about the city.

5.2 Reasons for choice of neighbourhood

The availability of affordable housing and a safe environment are the most common reasons for Aboriginal peoples' choice of neighbourhood in Thunder Bay. Three in four believe they have a choice about where to live.

Why do you live in your neighbourhood?

Why do you live in the neighbourhood you do?



Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay choose their neighbourhood for a range of reasons, most typically because of the availability of affordable housing and for the opportunity to live in a safe neighbourhood, but also to be close to family and friends.

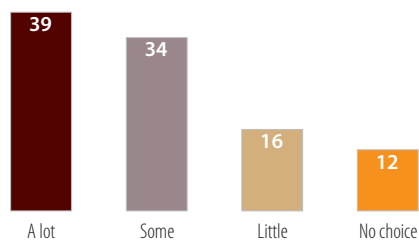
When asked why they live in their neighbourhood (unprompted, without response options offered), Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are most likely to say it is because they can afford the housing (28%), or because it is a safe environment for themselves and their families (24%).

Other important considerations include the opportunity to live *with* (17%) or *close to* (12%) family and friends, and proximity to work and/or school (17%) and to amenities (16%). Seven percent or fewer each offer other reasons, including the desire to be close to a child's school or daycare, to cultural and spiritual services, to good public transit, and/or to live in a peaceful neighbourhood. First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to indicate their neighbourhood was chosen (at least in part) to be close to work/school.

EXTENT OF CHOICE. To what extent do Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay feel they have a choice about the neighbourhood they live in? When asked directly, three in four feel they have either a lot (39%) or some (34%) choice about where they live in their city, compared to three in ten who feel they have either a little (16%) or no choice at all (12%). These sentiments are similar to those expressed by urban Aboriginal peoples in general.

How much choice do you feel you have in where you live?

To what extent do you feel you have a choice about the neighbourhood you live in? Do you feel you have...?



5.3 Personal impact on city

Over half of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay think they can make the city a better place to live.

In addition to enjoying living in their city, many Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are confident that they can make the city a better place to live.

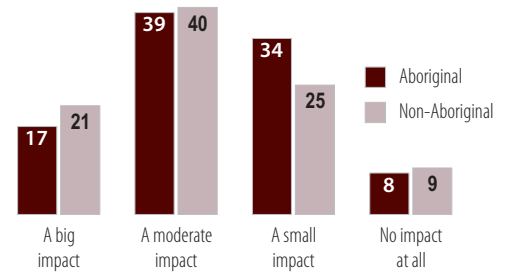
Over half of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay think people like themselves can have either a big (17%) or moderate (39%) impact in making the city a better place to live and four in ten believe that they can have only a small impact (34%) or no impact at all (8%) on their city. These perceptions are similar for First Nations peoples and Métis.

This sense of being able to make a difference is similar to that of urban Aboriginal participants in general, although it trails the sense of empowerment found in Vancouver and Toronto (35% and 37%, respectively, say they can have a big impact).

UAPS participants' belief in their ability to be positive agents of change in Thunder Bay is similar to the belief *non-Aboriginal* people have in their own ability to affect change: Almost as many Aboriginal people feel they can make at least a moderate impact on Thunder Bay (56% vs. 61% of non-Aboriginal people).

Making Thunder Bay a better place to live

Overall, how much impact do you think people like you can have in making your city a better place to live?



5.4 Attitudes toward multiculturalism

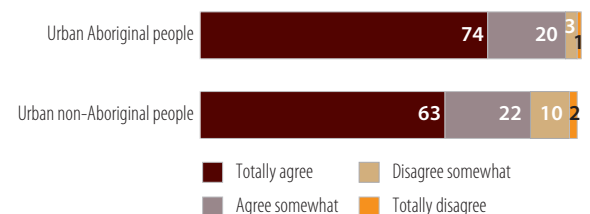
Like Aboriginal peoples in other cities, Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are strongly accepting of other languages and cultures.

Virtually all Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay totally (74%) or somewhat (20%) agree that Canada is a country where there is room for a variety of languages and cultures. This view is largely shared with Aboriginal peoples living in other UAPS cities, and by both First Nations peoples and Métis in Thunder Bay.

ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVES. Notably, Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay express a greater tolerance for other languages and cultures than do non-Aboriginal people. Using data from the UAPS survey of non-Aboriginal people, Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay (74%) are somewhat more likely than non-Aboriginal people in the city (63%) to totally agree that there is room for a variety of languages and cultures in Canada. This pattern is consistent across cities, although it is less pronounced in Thunder Bay than elsewhere.

There is room for a variety of languages and cultures in this country

Do you totally agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or totally disagree with the following statement: "There is room for a variety of languages and cultures in this country."



6.0 Urban Aspirations

An important goal from the outset of the *UAPS* was to learn about urban Aboriginal peoples' aspirations. The *UAPS* Advisory Circle and research team sought to include questions in the *UAPS* that would consider urban Aboriginal peoples, so often described in terms of "need" or "lack," from a more positive vantage point, in order to learn what they most wanted for their life and those of future generations, and how they defined success.

Pursuing higher education proved to be the leading life aspiration of urban Aboriginal peoples. Not only did they see higher education as a path to a good job or career for their own generation, many said that they hope higher levels of education will be key to how future generations of Aboriginal people distinguish themselves from their ancestors. This is similarly true for Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay, whose top life aspirations are largely consistent with those held by Aboriginal peoples living in other cities. However, Aboriginal peoples living in smaller urban centres (rather than Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal) also emphasize the importance of a good job to their current and future well-being and success.

Key findings

- **Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay consider family and a balanced lifestyle the most important ingredients of a successful life.** Majorities also emphasize the importance of a good job, financial independence, home ownership and a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage.
- **The leading life aspirations for Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay include raising a family, higher education and a good job.** Learning the importance of education and completing school are also among their most prominent hopes for future generation, together with greater acceptance in society, a stronger cultural connection and the wisdom to avoid the mistakes they themselves made.

6.1 Life aspirations

The top life aspirations for Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are raising a family, completing one's education, and having a good job or career.

What do Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay consider to be a good life? To explore what urban Aboriginal peoples aspire to for their futures, *UAPS* participants were asked (unprompted, without response options offered) what three things they most want to achieve in their lifetime.

The most widely mentioned life aspirations among Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are raising or providing for a family (32%), completing one's education (30%), and having a good job or career (25%). Fewer mention living a long and healthy life (14%), seeing one's children/grandchildren going to school and succeeding in life (14%), being happy (11%), becoming financially independent or wealthy (11%), home ownership (10%) and giving back to the Aboriginal community (8%).

A wide range of other aspirations are mentioned by fewer than one in ten each, including owning a business, staying close to their family and community, and being a positive role model.

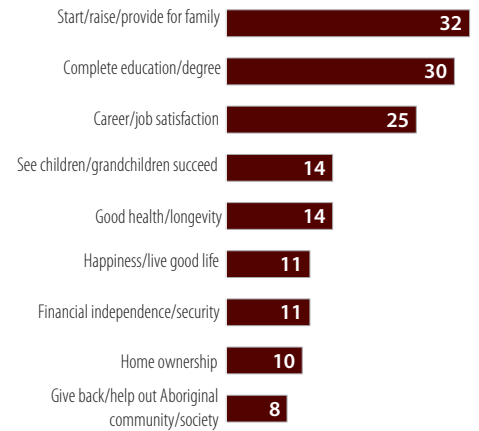
The life aspirations of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are largely consistent with those held by Aboriginal peoples living in the other *UAPS* cities. However, they are among the most likely to mention raising their family, and are also more likely than average to say they aspire to a long and healthy life.

In Thunder Bay, completing one's education is more likely to be identified as a top aspiration by First Nations peoples (35%) than by Métis (18%), who tend to have a higher level of education.

Life aspirations

What are three things that you most want to achieve in your lifetime?

Top mentions



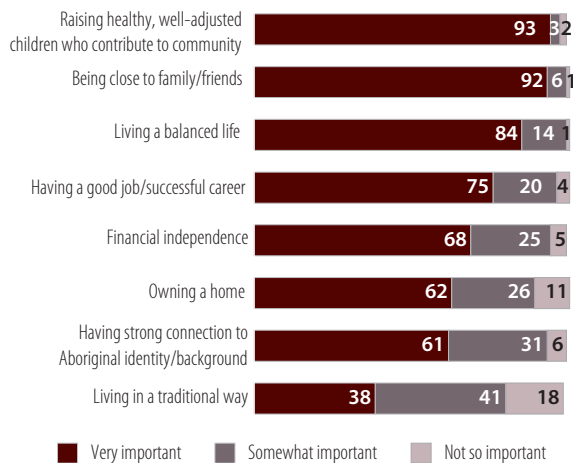
6.2 Definitions of “success”

Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay most associate success with family life, and being close to family and friends.

When the UAPS asked Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay to rate the importance of eight factors to their idea of a successful life, the results confirm that they consider family central to a successful life. Nine in ten, each, say it is very important to raise healthy, well-adjusted children who contribute to their community (93%), and to be close to family and friends (92%). More than eight in ten place the same degree of importance on having a balanced life (84%). Strong majorities also value a good job or successful career (75%), financial independence (68%), owning a home (62%), and having a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity or background (61%). For each of these elements, most of the remainder say they are somewhat important in defining a successful life, while no more than 11 percent say they are not so important. These definitions of success are shared by urban Aboriginal participants in general.

Definition of a successful life

People define a successful life in a many different ways. Please tell me if the following are very important, somewhat important or not so important to your idea of a successful life.



By comparison, Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay have mixed opinions about the importance of living in a traditional way: four in ten (38%) say it is very important to a successful life, but an equal proportion (41%) say it is only somewhat important and two in ten (18%) believe it is not so important.

For the most part, First Nations peoples and Métis in Thunder Bay possess similar ‘universal’ notions of a successful life (i.e., family and a balanced lifestyle); however, First Nations peoples place greater importance on raising healthy, well-adjusted children than do Métis.

6.3 Hopes for the future

Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay hope that future generations will be better educated, live in a world free from discrimination, connected to their roots and able to make better life decisions.

When Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are asked to think about the future and in what ways they hope their children's and grandchildren's lives (or the lives of the next generation) will be different from their own (unprompted, without providing response options), their most prominent hopes are for education, acceptance, connection and wisdom.

Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are most likely to hope that future generations learn the importance of education and finishing school (20%), that they live in a society without racism and discrimination (17%), that they become more aware of, involved in and connected to their Aboriginal cultural community (16%), and that they make better decisions than they themselves have done (15%). A wide range of other hopes for future generations were expressed, including avoidance of addiction to drugs and alcohol (9%), financial security (8%), and better access to resources or opportunities (8%). Some of these hopes are presented in participants' own words in the sidebar on this page.

These aspirations for future generations are largely similar to those expressed by urban Aboriginal peoples in general. In Thunder Bay, Métis and First Nations peoples express similar hopes for future generations, although Métis are more likely than First Nations peoples to mention living in a society free of racism.

The hopes of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay for future generations:

I want them never to touch a drink, get a good education. The rest will come by itself.

I hope they don't have to struggle to get where they want or need to go. No experience with racism. Never have to live in poverty.

Not faced with racism/discrimination. Access to financial resources for education.

Better off financially, know about their culture.

I hope they understand and appreciate more of the culture than I did because I didn't get the opportunity.

Less racism for children of mixed culture. More information given to children about different cultures.

I would like to see a little more balance in self-governance, a better idea of where they want to go. Living a balanced life between traditional and mainstream, and still stay true to themselves.

I want my daughter to be involved in the native community more than I was. Education. Easier life (not better income but easier time making it). Connectivity.

7.0 Special Theme: Justice

Aboriginal peoples are over-represented as offenders in the criminal justice system. According to Statistics Canada, in 2007/2008, Aboriginal people represented just two percent of Ontario's total population, but made up nine percent of individuals sentenced to custody in the Ontario correctional system.¹⁴ That is, the representation of Aboriginal adults in provincial sentenced custody in Ontario is more than four times their representation in the general population, a gap that exists (in varying degrees) in all provinces and territories.

In this context, it is not surprising that Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay express limited confidence in Canada's criminal justice system, and are more likely than not to support the idea of a separate Aboriginal justice system.

Key findings

- **Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay do not have great confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada; this finding is consistent with that in other UAPS cities.** Moreover, a slight majority endorse the concept of creating a separate Aboriginal system, primarily out of the belief that the current system is biased against Aboriginal peoples.
- **Majorities of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay support the idea of a criminal justice system that incorporates alternate approaches to justice.** Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay believe alternate approaches (such as incorporating Aboriginal concepts of justice, or having Aboriginal police, judges and courts) would help reduce Aboriginal crime rates, improve community safety and increase their confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada.

¹⁴ Statistics Canada. 2009. Incarceration of Aboriginal people in adult correctional services. *The Daily*. July 21. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-001-XIE.

7.1 Confidence in the criminal justice system

Opinions about the criminal justice system in Canada are divided, and few Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay express great confidence in the system, similar to other UAPS cities.

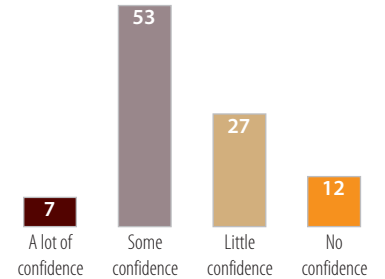
Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay hold mixed opinions about Canada’s criminal justice system. Six in ten (60%) have at least some confidence in this system, but this includes only a very few (7%) who have a lot of confidence. Four in ten say they have little (27%) or no (12%) confidence in the criminal justice system. These views are similar for First Nations peoples and Métis in Thunder Bay.

No more than one in ten in any UAPS city express a great deal of confidence in the criminal justice system. Lack of confidence is most evident among Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver (64%), Saskatoon (63%), Winnipeg (60%), Toronto (59%) and Edmonton (55%).

What influences urban Aboriginal peoples’ confidence in the criminal justice system? The sample size for Thunder Bay alone (250 survey participants) is too small to allow for a detailed analysis by socio-demographic factors. However, the national UAPS survey data (across all 11 cities) suggest that confidence is lower among urban Aboriginal peoples who have had some type of serious involvement with the justice system in Canada (i.e., they have been a victim of a crime, a witness to a crime, or arrested or charged with a crime). The proportion of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay who report serious involvement of this sort (44%) is lower than the average for all 11 UAPS cities (52% average).

Confidence in Canada’s system of justice

In general, would you say you have a lot of confidence, some confidence, little confidence or no confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada?



7.2 Support for an Aboriginal justice system

Good idea or bad idea

Support for a separate Aboriginal justice system outweighs opposition among Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay, a finding that is consistent with views in most UAPS cities.

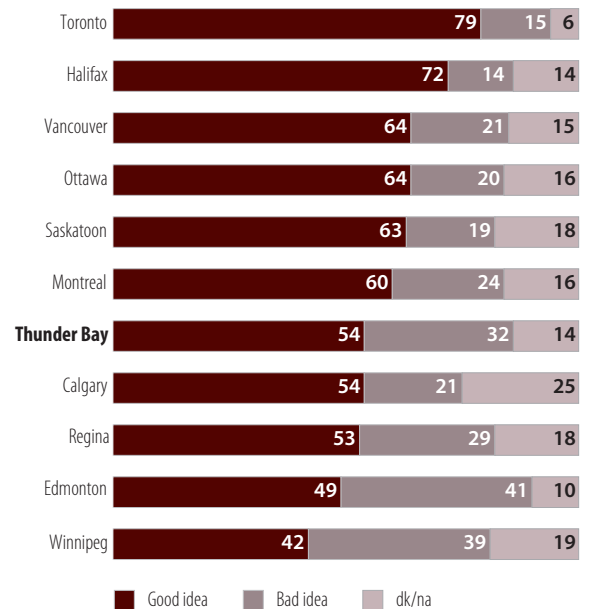
Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay are more likely to support than to oppose the creation of an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system.

Over half (54%) of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a good idea, clearly outweighing the three in ten (32%) who believe it is a bad idea. Over one in ten (14%) offer no opinion. Views are largely similar between First Nations peoples and Métis in Thunder Bay.

Opposition to the idea of a separate Aboriginal justice system, while a minority view in all cities, is highest among Aboriginal peoples in Edmonton (41%) and Winnipeg (39%). By comparison, Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (79%) and Halifax (72%) are most likely to support the idea.

Aboriginal justice system

Do you think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a good idea or bad idea?



Reasons why Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is

...a good idea:

Aboriginals get treated unfairly due to the crimes they commit. We have our own ways of dealing with things. They can do their time and get treatment with other Aboriginals.

I think if an Aboriginal was dealing with Aboriginal criminals, they might have a better understanding of where the problems stem from. A non-Aboriginal may not be as lenient with an Aboriginal as with a non-Aboriginal.

There are just so many different needs within the Aboriginal community that are more culturally-based. Usually have generational trauma. You have to have an understanding of people's living situations. There's a bigger picture.

I think that they would have better results with their young people, if the Elders dictated punishments, as opposed to the White Man's way.

...or a bad idea:

I think everyone is equal, so should be treated equal.

Because there's one system in place that works. I don't feel Aboriginal people should have any difference. The precedence is set, and both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal should abide by it.

It will create more stereotypes. It might provide support for those stereotypes. I think there are problems in having a separate system.

WHY A GOOD IDEA. When asked why they think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a *good* idea (unprompted, without response options offered), supporters in Thunder Bay are most likely to say they believe it would offset a current justice system that they perceive to be biased and that treats Aboriginal people unjustly (25%). Others base their support on the belief that Aboriginal people would be better served by a system that allows them to be judged within their own value system and by their own peers, and that respects Aboriginal history and culture (15%), or that it would offer a setting that is culturally more comfortable for Aboriginal people (14%).

Other reasons for supporting a separate system include the belief that it would provide greater rehabilitation, healing and reduce recidivism (10%), and that Aboriginal beliefs and values regarding justice are different (10%).

WHY A BAD IDEA? Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay who think creating a separate system is a *bad* idea were also asked the reason for their opinion (unprompted, without response options offered). Those opposed to this idea are most likely to say it is because they feel Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people should be treated equally to avoid discrimination (39%), and/or that it would unnecessarily segregate and isolate Aboriginal people (29%). Also mentioned is the view that alternate approaches like healing circles are not effective punishments or deterrents (10%).

Perceived impact of alternate approaches

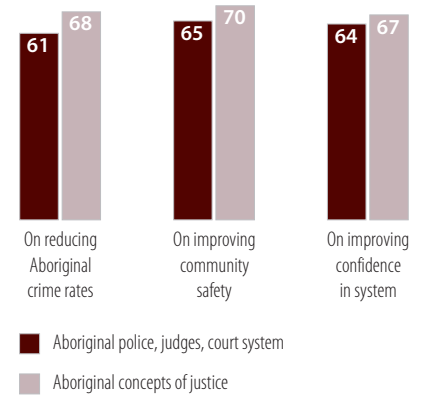
Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay believe that alternate approaches to justice would help reduce Aboriginal crime rates, improve their confidence in the justice system and improve community safety.

Aside from their opinions about the value of an Aboriginal justice system, what do Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay think would make a difference in reducing Aboriginal crime rates, improving community safety, and improving their own confidence in the criminal justice system? Urban Aboriginal peoples were asked to evaluate the potential impact of two alternate approaches to justice:

- A system that incorporates Aboriginal police, Aboriginal judges and an Aboriginal court system to work with Aboriginal people who come in contact with the criminal justice system; and
- A system that incorporates Aboriginal concepts of justice, such as sentencing circles and healing circles, Aboriginal laws, and alternatives to punishment such as reconciliation and restoration.

Overall, majorities feel both approaches would have a beneficial impact. Between six and seven in ten Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay say that each of these two approaches would have at least a moderate impact on reducing Aboriginal crime rates, improving community safety and improving their confidence in the justice system. These views are consistent with those of urban Aboriginal peoples in general.

Impact of alternate approaches to justice
Big or moderate impact



8.0 Non-Aboriginal Perspectives

For several years, Environics Research Group has been tracking the attitudes of non-Aboriginal Canadians toward the concerns of Aboriginal peoples through two ongoing syndicated Environics studies: *FOCUS Canada*, a survey of 2,000 adult Canadians conducted continuously each quarter since 1976, and *North of 60° and Remote Community Monitor*, a survey of residents in the three territories, Nunavik and Labrador, conducted annually between 1999 and 2007. Over time, one evident trend in Canadians' attitudes is the growing awareness of an Aboriginal urban presence and a prioritizing of issues related to Aboriginal people in cities over others, such as the settling of native land claims.

As part of the *UAPS*, Environics surveyed a representative sample of Canadians to learn how they view Aboriginal people and what informs these views. The results of the non-Aboriginal survey are based on telephone interviews conducted from April 28 to May 15, 2009 with approximately 250 non-Aboriginal people in each of the 10 of the urban centres in which the main survey was conducted: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax (excluding Ottawa). In all, 2,501 non-Aboriginal urban Canadians participated, providing a rich picture of how NA urban Canadians see Aboriginal people in cities today.

Topics explored in the survey include non-Aboriginal perceptions of Aboriginal people in Canada, their awareness of Aboriginal peoples and communities in their cities, their contact and interaction with Aboriginal people, their perspectives on how well institutions respond to the needs of Aboriginal people, their knowledge of salient Aboriginal issues (i.e., Indian residential schools, acceptance of differential systems of justice), and the importance of Aboriginal history and culture in the minds of non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay.

8.1 Perceptions of Aboriginal peoples

Top-of-mind impression

There is no single common impression of Aboriginal peoples among non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay, but those most widely expressed relate to their First Nations/Métis/Inuit identities or their history as the first inhabitants of Canada.

What are the top-of-mind impressions of Aboriginal peoples among non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay express a variety of impressions of Aboriginal peoples, but are most likely to cite the following impressions:

- **First Nations/Métis/Inuit.** Just over one in ten (13%) non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay associate Aboriginal peoples with First Nations, Métis or Inuit, or other terms that are sometimes used to describe Aboriginal peoples such as Indians or natives. (There is no indication whether these are positive, neutral or negative impressions.)
- **First inhabitants.** "The first people" – individuals native to Canada who possess special status by virtue of their original inhabitancy of the country – is one of the more common impressions of Aboriginal peoples among non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay (10%).

Smaller proportions of non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay associate Aboriginal peoples with reserves (6%), tax breaks/privileges (6%), welfare (6%), the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and languages (6%), alcoholism and substance abuse (6%), abuse or mistreatment at the hands of Canadian citizens and governments (5%), crime rates (5%), and with both history and culture (4%), and loss of culture (4%).

One in ten (8%) say Aboriginal peoples are no different from other Canadians. A wide variety of other impressions are cited, but none by more than three percent (each) of non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay. One in ten (11%) do not offer any impressions of what first comes to mind when they think of Aboriginal peoples.

Are non-Aboriginal impressions changing in Thunder Bay?

Although a plurality of non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay say their impressions of Aboriginal people have not changed in the past few years, the proportion who say their impression has worsened is the highest among the cities included in the survey. Worsening impressions are largely driven by concerns about crime in the Aboriginal community.

Non-Aboriginal Thunder Bay residents are divided on the question of whether their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have improved, deteriorated or stayed the same in recent years.

Just under half (45%) of non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay say their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have stayed the same over the past few years; one-quarter say their impressions have worsened (25%) and a similar proportion say they have improved (21%). Although they represent a minority, Thunder Bay residents are the most likely of any city to report their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have recently worsened; this view is also more common in the Prairie cities than in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

REASONS FOR IMPROVING IMPRESSIONS. Non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay who say their impressions of Aboriginal people have improved over time cite three main reasons for this:

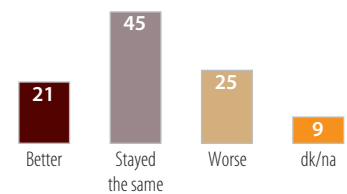
- **Perception of progress.** Four in ten (38%) attribute their improved impressions to improvements in the economic, social or educational circumstances of Aboriginal peoples.
- **Personal relationships.** A personal relationship with an Aboriginal person has contributed to better impressions for one in three (33%) of this group.
- **Greater awareness of Aboriginal achievements.** Two in ten (22%) cite a more visible and positive presence in the local community and media as the main reason their impression of Aboriginal peoples has improved.

Fewer associate their more positive impressions with a better general understanding of Aboriginal culture or issues (8%), or with specific knowledge gained through educational or awareness courses (5%).

REASONS FOR WORSENING IMPRESSIONS. The minority of non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay who report their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have worsened attribute this change primarily to the perception that Aboriginal peoples are involved in crime (54%, representing 14% of all non-Aboriginal Thunder Bay residents); also mentioned is the perception that Aboriginal peoples rely on “handouts” and make minimal societal contributions (31%).

Stable impressions

Over the past few years, has your impression of Aboriginal people gotten better or worse, or stayed the same?

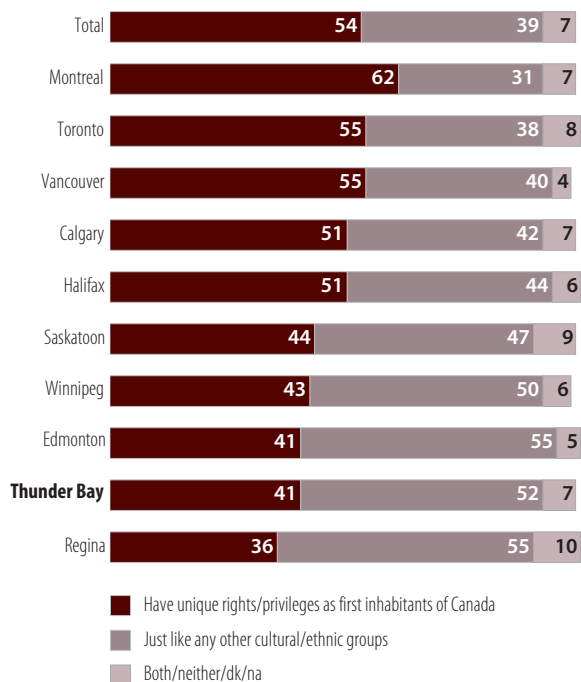


8.2 Unique rights and privileges

There is no consensus among Thunder Bay residents whether Aboriginal peoples have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada or are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canadian society, but the latter view is more widespread in Thunder Bay than average.

Unique rights and privileges, or just like other groups?

Which of the following two statements best represents how you think about Aboriginal people?



The balance of opinion in Thunder Bay is towards the view that Aboriginal people are just the same as other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada, rather than possessing a distinct status.

Five in ten (52%) non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay believe Aboriginal people are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada's multicultural society, whereas four in ten (41%) say Aboriginal people have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada. Seven percent offer no opinion.

Compared to non-Aboriginal people in other UAPS cities, Thunder Bay residents are among the most likely to say Aboriginal peoples are no different from other cultural or ethnic groups, consistent with the views held in Edmonton, Regina and Winnipeg.

8.3 The big picture: explaining views of Aboriginal peoples among non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay

A segmentation analysis of Thunder Bay residents reveals that the largest proportion are Cultural Romantics (individuals who take a positive view of the contribution that Aboriginal peoples make to the nation's cultural makeup), but the city also has a larger than average proportion of Dismissive Naysayers (people who take a decidedly more negative view of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit).

The overall picture of attitudes toward Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay can best be viewed by moving to another level of analysis that involved an in-depth look at the survey items to uncover broad viewpoints or segments among non-Aboriginal people living in the UAPS cities.

Specifically, this in-depth look involved determining if there are patterns of views among non-Aboriginal urban Canadians that run deeper than their answers to specific questions. To determine this, a segmentation of the data was performed. The goal of the segmentation was to find natural clusters among non-Aboriginal urban Canadians based on their overall attitudes toward Aboriginal culture, responsibility and contribution to Canadian society in order to encapsulate non-Aboriginal urban Canadians' broader viewpoints of Aboriginal people.

An analysis of a large number of questions posed in the UAPS reveals four distinct *world views* of Aboriginal people among non-Aboriginal urban Canadians:

- **Dismissive Naysayers.** They tend to view Aboriginal peoples and communities negatively (i.e., unfairly entitled and isolated from Canadian society).
- **Inattentive Skeptics.** Uninformed and unaware, they typically believe Aboriginal peoples are just the same as other Canadians.
- **Cultural Romantics.** Idealistic and optimistic, they have a strong belief in Aboriginal peoples' artistic and cultural contributions.
- **Connected Advocates.** They have a high level of contact with Aboriginal peoples, and a strong belief that Aboriginal peoples often experience discrimination.

Thunder Bay residents are most likely to be Cultural Romantics (40%). However, the survey also found a larger than average proportion of Dismissive Naysayers (31%, compared to 24% among all non-Aboriginal urban Canadians). Noticeably fewer Thunder Bay residents are Connected Advocates (17%) or Inattentive Skeptics (12%).

Cultural Romantics (40%)



Dismissive Naysayers (31%)



Connected Advocates (17%)



Inattentive Skeptics (12%)



8.4 Awareness and perceptions of an Aboriginal community in Thunder Bay

Awareness of an Aboriginal community in Thunder Bay

Virtually all non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay are aware that there are Aboriginal peoples living in the city, and awareness of an Aboriginal community in the city is higher than in any other UAPS city.

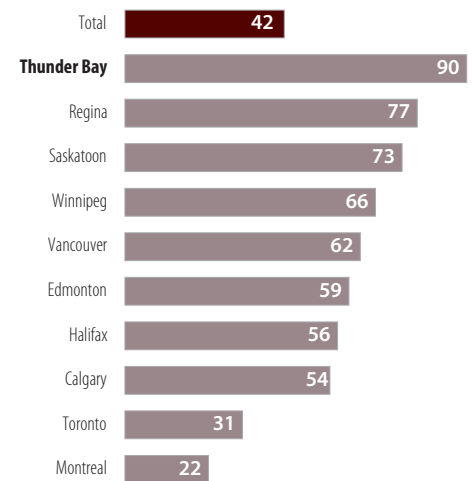
The UAPS non-Aboriginal survey asked non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay how aware they are of Aboriginal people and communities in the city. Awareness of Aboriginal peoples in the city is universal, and almost all are similarly aware of an Aboriginal *community* (i.e., a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community) in their midst.

Virtually all (99%) Thunder Bay residents say they know there are Aboriginal peoples living in their city, a level of awareness consistent with western cities and, to a lesser extent, Halifax; awareness is lower in Toronto and Montreal.

Similarly, most (90%) of Thunder Bay residents are also aware of an Aboriginal *community* in their city. This level of awareness is the highest among any of the UAPS cities.

What explains the variation among non-Aboriginal urban Canadians in their awareness of Aboriginal people and communities in their city? The most obvious explanation is that the relative size of Aboriginal populations is higher in western cities and Thunder Bay than in Toronto and Montreal, making a distinct Aboriginal group and/or community more apparent to non-Aboriginal urban Canadians in the first group of cities. However, this does not entirely explain the variation in levels of awareness among cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations. Other factors include how Aboriginal people are dispersed across city neighbourhoods, the existence of urban reserves in some cities, and the nature and physical location of Aboriginal organizations in these cities.¹⁵ For instance, among those aware of an Aboriginal community or Aboriginal people living in their city, awareness of any Aboriginal organizations that are run by and provide services for Aboriginal people ranges from a high of 75 percent in Thunder Bay to a low of only 11 percent in Montreal.

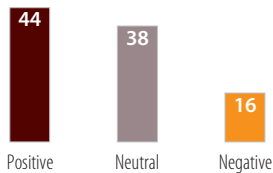
Aware of Aboriginal community in my city
Are you aware of an Aboriginal community in your city?
By community, I mean either a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community.



¹⁵ Katherine A.H. Graham and Evelyn Peters, *Aboriginal Communities and Urban Sustainability*, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Discussion Paper F27, December 2002.

Presence of Aboriginal people and communities*

Do you think that this Aboriginal community/ presence of Aboriginal people is positive, neutral or negative for your city?



* Subsample: Those who are aware of either an Aboriginal community or Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay.

Positive or negative presence

Most non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay believe the presence of Aboriginal peoples has a positive or neutral impact on the city.

How do Thunder Bay residents perceive Aboriginal peoples and communities in their city? When asked, Thunder Bay residents who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in the city are much more likely to offer positive or neutral views than negative assessments.

Among non-Aboriginal residents who are aware of Aboriginal people or communities in Thunder Bay, over four in ten (44%) believe these constitute a positive presence in their city, while four in ten (38%) characterize this presence as neutral. Fewer than two in ten (16%) describe the impact as negative; this point of view is higher in the Prairie cities than elsewhere.

Contributions and challenges

Thunder Bay residents who regard Aboriginal people and communities in their city positively typically point to Aboriginal peoples' contributions to Thunder Bay's economy, its artistic and cultural diversity, and to the work done by Aboriginal organizations.

REASONS FOR POSITIVE VIEWS. Among Thunder Bay residents who think the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is positive for their city, in what ways do they think Aboriginal people contribute? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), they are most likely to think Aboriginal peoples and communities contribute to Thunder Bay in the following main ways:

- **Enrich urban art and culture.** One in four (23%) believe Aboriginal people and communities make great contributions to Thunder Bay's artistic and cultural life, although this view is less widespread than average.
- **Impact of Aboriginal organizations.** One in four (23%) believe Aboriginal people contribute to the city through the work they do and by creating positive role models for the Aboriginal community. This association is much more pronounced in Thunder Bay than in the other *UAPS* cities, a finding mirrored in the much higher awareness of Aboriginal organizations in the city.
- **Add cultural diversity.** One in five (20%) believe Aboriginal people and communities add to the general cultural mosaic of Thunder Bay.
- **Stimulate city economy.** Thunder Bay residents note the economic contributions Aboriginal people and communities make to Thunder Bay as employees and employers of local businesses (14%) and by paying taxes (14%).
- **Make equal contributions.** Thunder Bay residents think Aboriginal people and communities contribute to the city in that they, like anyone else regardless of ethnic or cultural group, are citizens who make an equal contribution to life in their city (16%).

As well, one in ten (10%) say that Aboriginal peoples make positive contributions to the city by obtaining their education, which is a more common viewpoint in Thunder Bay than in other *UAPS* cities.

REASONS FOR NEGATIVE VIEWS. The minority of Thunder Bay residents who think the presence of Aboriginal people and communities has a negative impact on their city appear to base that view primarily on perceptions of increased crime and gang violence (which is broadly consistent with views in other *UAPS* cities). Negative views are also associated with perceptions of alcohol and substance abuse, welfare abuse, land issues, strain on the welfare system, and poverty and homelessness.

Contact with Aboriginal people

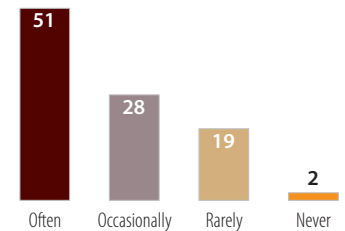
Most non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay have at least occasional contact with Aboriginal people. This degree of contact is among the highest of the UAPS cities, together with Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Regina.

Most non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay are in contact with Aboriginal people in their daily lives. Five in ten (51%) Thunder Bay residents say they often encounter Aboriginal people and another three in ten (28%) do so occasionally. Two in ten are rarely (19%) or never (2%) in contact with Aboriginal people.

Not surprisingly, non-Aboriginal urban Canadians in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations (i.e., Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon and Thunder Bay) are the most likely to regularly encounter Aboriginal people; contact is least common in Toronto and Montreal.

Contact with Aboriginal people

Do you personally have contact with Aboriginal people often, occasionally, rarely or never?



Aboriginal friends, neighbours and co-workers

Thunder Bay residents are among the most likely to know Aboriginal people as close friends, neighbours and co-workers, similar to residents of Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Regina.

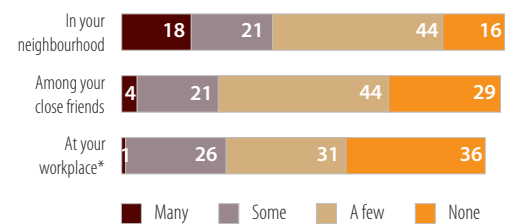
Aside from casual contact, how many Thunder Bay residents know Aboriginal people, either as close friends, neighbours or co-workers? Among Thunder Bay residents who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in the city, four in ten (39%) know some or many Aboriginal people as neighbours, but fewer know them as close friends (25%) or co-workers (27% of those who are currently employed). In each case, the remainder say they know only a few or no Aboriginal people in those ways.

As could be expected, the proportions of non-Aboriginal urban Canadians who have at least some Aboriginal people as neighbours, close friends and co-workers are higher in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations, which include Thunder Bay, as well as Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Regina.

When asked if they have any interest in having more Aboriginal friends, five in ten (49%) Thunder Bay residents who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in the city say they are. Relatively few (8%) say they are not interested, but just over four in ten say “it depends” (29%) or are uncertain (14%). The level of interest in having more Aboriginal friends in Thunder Bay is similar to that in the Prairie cities, but lower than in Vancouver and in the cities east of Thunder Bay.

Numbers of Aboriginal people

How many of your neighbours/co-workers/friends are Aboriginal? Many/some/a few, or none?



* Excludes those who do not work

8.5 Perceived barriers facing Aboriginal people

Most important issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada and in cities

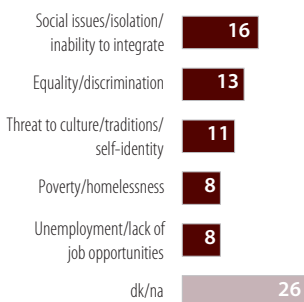
Most important issue in Canada (top mentions)

In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Aboriginal people in Canada today?



Most important issue in cities (top mentions)

And in your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Aboriginal people living in cities across Canada today?



Thunder Bay residents perceive the major challenges facing the Aboriginal population today, both generally and in cities, to be discrimination and threats to their culture. They are also more likely than others to believe that urban Aboriginal peoples suffer from social isolation.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE. When non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay are asked to identify the one issue they consider to be the most important issue facing Aboriginal people in Canada today (asked unprompted, without offering response choices), no one issue dominates. The problems most frequently identified as facing Aboriginal peoples include discrimination (12%), threats to culture and identity (9%), lack of education (9%), land rights (6%), substance abuse and addiction (5%), social issues/isolation (5%), housing problems (5%) and unemployment (4%). A wide range of other potential problems are mentioned, but none by more than three percent (each) of Thunder Bay residents. Just under two in ten (17%) are unable to identify any issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada today.

Residents of Thunder Bay are among the most likely of non-Aboriginal residents in the *UAPS* cities to mention discrimination as a leading issue for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. They are less likely to mention land claims as an issue (particularly by comparison to residents of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver).

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN CITIES. The survey finds a similar lack of consensus when non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay are asked to specify the important issues facing Aboriginal people living in Canadian cities (asked unprompted, without offering response choices). They are most likely to identify social issues, isolation or lack of integration (16%) as the leading concern for the urban Aboriginal population, and more so than in any other *UAPS* city. Thunder Bay residents also perceive urban Aboriginal people to be dealing with discrimination (13%), threats to culture and identity (11%), poverty and homelessness (8%), unemployment (8%) and substance abuse (4%). A number of other issues are mentioned, but none by more than two percent each. One-quarter (26%) do not identify any issues facing Aboriginal people in Canadian cities today.

Indian residential schools

Thunder Bay residents are more aware of Indian residential schools than is the case for the average non-Aboriginal urban Canadian. As in other cities, a majority believe the challenges faced by Aboriginal communities are, at least to some extent, a result of this experience.

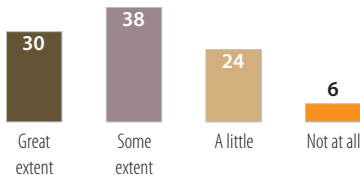
The survey examined awareness of Indian residential schools among non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay, and their views about the consequences of this experience for Aboriginal people.

AWARENESS. Three in four (77%) non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay report they have read or heard something about Indian residential schools. This level of awareness is among the highest of the UAPS cities, similar to Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg.

IMPACT. Not only are Thunder Bay residents widely aware of residential schools, but they also recognize that these institutions have had a significant impact on Aboriginal peoples. Among Thunder Bay residents who report being aware of residential schools, seven in ten (68%) feel that the current challenges faced by Aboriginal communities are, to a great extent (30%) or to some extent (38%), the result of Aboriginal peoples' experiences in residential schools. Three in ten see little (24%) or no (6%) relationship between the two. These findings are similar to the average of those reported for non-Aboriginal UAPS participants in general.

Impact of Indian residential schools*

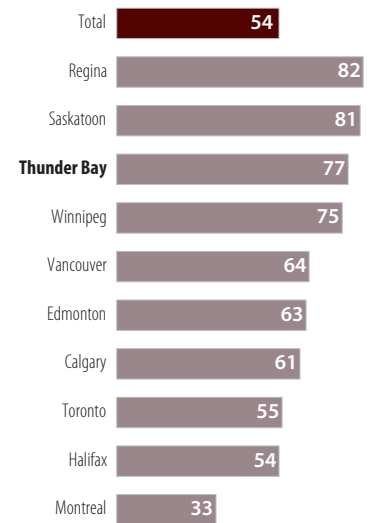
To what extent do you think that the challenges facing Aboriginal people communities today are a result of Aboriginal peoples' experiences in residential schools?



* Subsample: Among those aware of Indian residential schools

Aware of Indian residential schools

Have you read or heard anything about Indian residential schools?

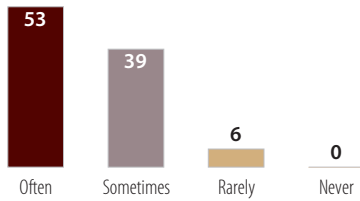


Perceptions of discrimination

Thunder Bay residents are among the most likely to recognize that Aboriginal people experience discrimination, and majorities believe they endure at least as much discrimination as other groups in Canadian society.

Discrimination

Do you think that Aboriginal people are often, sometimes, rarely or never the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today?

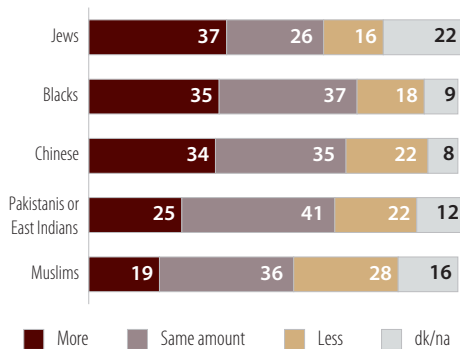


There is widespread recognition among non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay that Aboriginal peoples are the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today. Nine in ten Thunder Bay residents believe Aboriginal peoples often (53%) or sometimes (39%) face discrimination. Only six percent believe they rarely or never do. Notably, the view that Aboriginal peoples are often the victims of discrimination is among the most widespread in Thunder Bay, as well as in Regina and Calgary.

Furthermore, majorities of non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay think Aboriginal people are subject to the same, if not more, discrimination relative to other groups in Canadian society, such as Jews, Chinese, Blacks, Pakistanis or East Indians, and Muslims. In fact, close to a third of Thunder Bay residents (each) think Aboriginal people endure *more* discrimination than do Jews (37%), Blacks (35%) and Chinese (34%), and one-quarter think they endure *more* discrimination than Pakistanis or East Indians (25%). Slightly fewer think Aboriginal people endure more discrimination than Muslims (19%).

Discrimination against Aboriginals relative to other minorities

In Canada, do you think Aboriginal people are subject to more, less or about the same amount of discrimination as each of the following groups?



Perceptions that Aboriginal peoples face more discrimination relative to Blacks are more common in western cities and in Thunder Bay than in Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

Main source of problems facing Aboriginal peoples

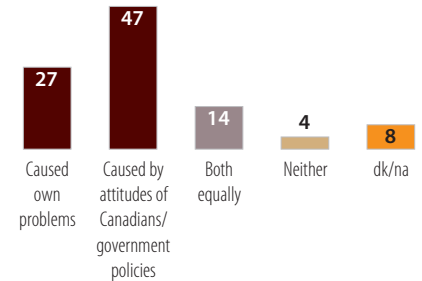
By a margin of almost two to one, Thunder Bay residents believe the problems faced by Aboriginal peoples have largely been caused by the attitudes of other Canadians and the policies of governments than by Aboriginal peoples themselves.

Non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay tend to believe that many of the problems facing Aboriginal peoples are largely due to external factors over which they have no control. Nearly one in two (47%) attribute the problems facing Aboriginal peoples to the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of government, compared to one in four (27%) who say these are problems that Aboriginal peoples have brought upon themselves. Fourteen percent say both parties are equally responsible, while one in ten (8%) offer no opinion.

These views are closer to those expressed in Vancouver, Calgary and the cities east of Winnipeg than to those in the Prairie cities of Edmonton, Saskatoon and Winnipeg (where opinion is divided between the two viewpoints).

Responsibility for problems

In your opinion, have Aboriginal people in Canada largely caused their own problems or have the problems been caused primarily by the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of governments?

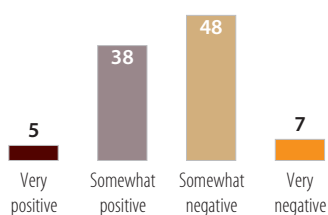


8.6 Relations with Aboriginal people and the future

Perceptions of current relations

Current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people

Would you describe the current relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada today as very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative or very negative?



Non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay are ultimately divided about the current state of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, but are among the most pessimistic, together with residents of western cities.

There is no consensus among Thunder Bay residents about the state of current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, but they are more likely to be pessimistic than optimistic. A slight majority (55%) believe current relations are negative, while just over four in ten (43%) describe them as positive; few have extreme perceptions of current relations (i.e., say they are very positive or negative).

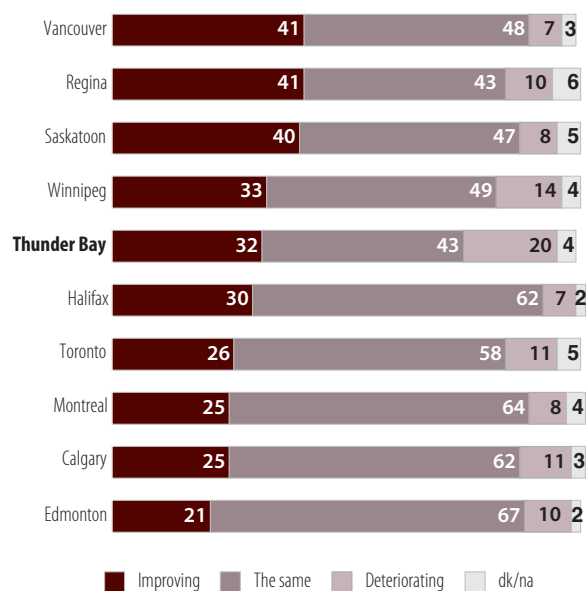
The view that current relations are negative is most pronounced in Edmonton (62%), but is also held by majorities in Calgary (55%), Winnipeg (55%) and Regina (54%), as well as Thunder Bay (55%). In contrast, non-Aboriginal residents of Vancouver, Halifax and Toronto are more optimistic than pessimistic about their relationship with Aboriginal people. Montrealers and residents of Saskatoon are most evenly divided between the two viewpoints.

Perceptions of change

Thunder Bay's non-Aboriginal residents are divided about whether relations with Aboriginal peoples are improving or staying the same. At the same time, the minority view that relations are deteriorating is more widespread here than in any other UAPS city.

Changing relations

Do you think relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada are improving, deteriorating or staying about the same?



Residents of Thunder Bay also have mixed views about how the Aboriginal-non-Aboriginal relationship is changing over time. The largest proportion (43%) say relations between the two groups are staying the same, while three in ten (32%) say they are improving. Only a minority (20%) say relations are deteriorating, but this is higher than in any other UAPS city.

Future quality of life for Aboriginal peoples

Six in ten non-Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay are optimistic that Aboriginal peoples' quality of life will approach that of the rest of the population's in the next generation, a view that is similar to that expressed in other cities.

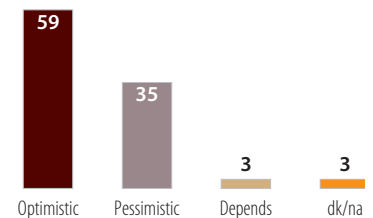
Looking to the future, what do Thunder Bay residents foresee for the quality of life of Aboriginal peoples in their city? Residents of Thunder Bay are largely optimistic that Aboriginal peoples' quality of life in the city will improve to the same level as that of non-Aboriginal people in the next generation. Six in ten (59%) Thunder Bay residents are optimistic about such progress, compared to one-third (35%) who are pessimistic. The degree of optimism about Aboriginal peoples' future quality of life is remarkably similar in all UAPS cities, including Thunder Bay.

How do Thunder Bay residents think their city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal peoples? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay suggest a range of approaches, but most commonly cite fair and/or equal treatment or opportunity for Aboriginal peoples (19%) and the creation of greater educational opportunities (15%). Thunder Bay residents also suggest providing employment and job training opportunities (11%), promoting respect and acceptance of cultural differences (7%), and alcohol or substance abuse programs (5%).

A wide range of other approaches are mentioned, but none by more than four percent (each) of the population. Five percent believe the city is already doing everything possible. Three in ten (28%) of Thunder Bay's non-Aboriginal residents have no suggestions for ways in which their city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal peoples.

Views of future quality of life

Looking to the future, are you optimistic or pessimistic that the quality of life for Aboriginal people in your city will improve to the same level as non-Aboriginal people in the next generation?



How to ensure a better quality of life (top 6 mentions)

What do you think is the most important way Thunder Bay can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people?

