

## Aboriginal Special Projects Fund

Jurisdiction: British Columbia

Contact: Janice Nakamura

Level: Post-Secondary

Theme: Community Based Practice

### Description of Practice:

The BC Ministry of Advanced Education administers the **Aboriginal Special Projects Fund (ASPF)** to provide limited, short-term financial support that assists BC's public post-secondary institutions in developing and delivering culturally-sensitive and quality educational programming and support services for Aboriginal learners. Through ASPF, partnerships are encouraged between public-post-secondary institutions, Aboriginal organizations, Bands, Tribal Councils, Aboriginal Advisory Councils and Aboriginal-controlled institutions.

Since the Fund's inception in 2000/01, projects funded through the ASPF have included adult basic education, social work, health programs, Aboriginal language programs, justice and the law, community economic development, natural resource management, tourism, math and science, early childhood education, teacher education, trades, governance, film, fine arts and online learning.

### Background:

Two hundred and twenty-two projects under the ASPF have been funded involving more than 3,900 Aboriginal post-secondary students and totalling about \$11 million between fiscal 2000/01 and 2006/07.

### Development:

The primary purpose of the program is to increase participation, success and retention rates for Aboriginal learners in BC through the development and pilot of new programs/courses, on-campus cultural education support and transition programs, and student recruitment activities.

### Evidence:

The ASPF has been well subscribed. A recent review of the ASPF program involved the surveying of BC post-secondary institutions and its concluding data suggests that nearly every college applied for ASPF funding, while universities and colleges made the greatest number of applications over time.

The review also indicated that 13 institutions reported that initial ASPF funding also supports or supported significant recruitment and retention initiatives, with the majority confirming that some related programs or courses made a successful transition to ongoing funding support through institutional operating grants.

Generally, outcomes resulting from the use of ASPF funding can be measured by the following indicators:

- Number of Aboriginal learners who have benefited from the projects;
- New programs/courses that have been developed;
- Additional support services for Aboriginal learners;
- Continuation of project activity as part of institutions' base funding once ASPF funding ends; and,
- Relationship-building (and subsequent cultural understanding) that occurs when projects involve with post-secondary public/private institutions and Aboriginal communities

Adaptability:

The ASPF program could be easily modified for use in other jurisdictions. It should be noted that this process has been refined during the past six years as a result of experience and input from an ASPF External Review Committee.

Further information:

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