

Wise Practices for Engaging Contractors

Rationale

Setting clear expectations and considering fit when hiring contractors can help to maximize the benefit of this support. Beginning with consideration of candidates from within the community who have a vested interest in health and wellness of their family and extended family can support a strong, community-driven approach.

Description

This list of wise practices provides ideas for defining a relationship with contractors.

Tip list:

Consider in-house candidates first. This can include:

- **Considering the strengths and abilities of community members.** Different projects may require a variety of skillsets (e.g., planning and evaluation can involve research, writing, community engagement and communications among others). Do any community members or staff have talents and wisdom to contribute to some or all of the project? Who else is supporting health and wellness-related work in your community or at the Nation level? Can a suitable community member be hired and offered on-the-job training? Have you explored FNHA training and partnership supports?
- **Considering mentorship opportunities for staff or community members.** Are there strong candidates within the community who just require a bit more guidance to get started? If so, a mentorship relationship with another community may be helpful. If you would like assistance making a connection with a mentor, you can reach out to the FNHDA at fnhda@fnha.ca.
- **Accessing relevant tools and resources for hiring community members:**
 - [Planning Champion Tool](#) (p. 100 of [Health and Wellness Planning: A Toolkit for BC First Nations](#))
 - [FNHDA Job Description and Hiring Toolkit](#)
 - Talk to the FNHA for training supports and resources available to support onboarding and professional development. If you are unsure who to ask, the Community Development team (community.development@fnha.ca) can help direct your request.

If you determine that external support is needed, some suggestions include:

- **Being clear about what you want the contractor to do.** Based on your assessment of existing staff, community, or partner skillsets and input on project scoping from community engagement, you may determine that support is needed with some but not all elements of the project. Different contractors can offer different kinds of support, so it can help to consider whether you are looking for a collaborator or someone who can oversee the work. Advantages and disadvantages of having a contractor play various roles can be informally explored with staff

and community, or through conversation with the contractor before a contract is signed. For larger contracts with multiple applicants, scoring and weighting can also be used to review Requests for Proposals. For a sample list of criteria to consider when hiring a contractor, see *Sample Screening Criteria for Hiring a Contractor*

- **Creating terms of reference.** Taking the time to set out a purpose, roles and responsibilities, timelines, process, goals, outcomes and deliverables (e.g. plan, video, brochures etc.) can clarify expectations for all involved. The terms of reference can be designed with input from the community (e.g. staff, leadership, relevant advisory committees) to help ensure the project meets community's needs.
- **Building in two-way learning/mentoring into the process.** Are there opportunities for collaboration or job shadowing for youth or other interested community members to work with the contractor? Such arrangements can maximize opportunities for community members to enhance and learn new skills that can be carried forward after the project is complete. Integrating community expertise can also ensure the approach is culturally relevant, holistic and best suited to the specific needs of the community.
- **Checking references.** Contractors must be able to provide references as well as examples of past work on request. Considerations when reviewing candidates can include: whether the contractor has relevant experience; if they are recommended by other communities; what their strengths and weaknesses may be; and whether their skillset aligns with the community's needs.
- **Considering fit.** Trust, respect and communication are critical when working with a contractor, as the work will likely require some close collaboration with staff and community members. In addition, it can be helpful if contractors have a baseline knowledge of the culture, history, territory and governance of the community, an understanding of the social determinants of health, as well as the impacts of colonialism on First Nations in BC.
- **Ensuring contractors have liability insurance.** If the contractor does not have liability insurance, by default the organization hiring the contractor is liable for any accidents that may occur on the job.
- **Managing the relationship and project outcomes through early and ongoing communication.** Providing contractors with regular feedback and guidance can help to keep the project on track and can ensure deliverables are achieved. If project deliverables aren't being adequately met, community/organization staff and leadership can redirect the course. It may also help to consider which staff or community representatives need to be up to speed with the contractor's work (e.g. if the project has financial implications, engaging finance staff in addition to Health Director)

When and how FNHA can be involved with in the process:

FNHA staff can:

- ✓ Attend collaborative meetings with community staff, leadership, and contractors with support that is early and ongoing. Generally, FNHA staff will meet with contractors only when a community representative is also present in order to ensure transparency and community accountability.
- ✓ Share tools, wise practices and examples of community-driven approaches with the community representatives and contractor.
- ✓ Provide input on the Requests for Proposals review process (e.g. feedback on project deliverables and scoring/weighting in support of community deliverables). However, providing input on the selection process is out of scope for FNHA staff as this responsibility rests with the community or organization.

Additional Tools and Resources

I want to...	Relevant Tool or Resource
Get more information on Planning Mentorship opportunities	Planning Mentorship tool, p. 98 of <i>Health and Wellness Planning: A Toolkit for BC First Nations</i>
Help partners, contractors, and other supports understand wise practices in planning with First Nations communities and organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 7 Cs: A First Nations Guide to Planning and Reporting Standards—A Summary for Partners • Circle of Engagement Model
Hire a contractor to support my community in planning, reporting and/or evaluation	<i>The Health and Wellness Planning: A Toolkit for BC First Nations</i> provides resources and support as it relates to community health and wellness planning. The toolkit also includes a set of Planning, Reporting and Evaluation Standards built from and aligned with the 7 Directives.
Provide information to a contractor on the unique BC First Nations Governance structure.	First Nations in BC developed the 7 Directives to describe the fundamental standards and instructions for the new health governance relationship. Governance and Roles and Responsibilities placemats help summarize and provide visual illustrations of health governance and perspectives developed by BC First Nations.
Access a sample Request for Proposal	Talk to FNHA Community Development to request a sample FNHA Request for Proposal.  Sample FNHA RFP.pdf