



Income Assistance Program Reform Project 2018-2019

Hi! Welcome to the IAP Reform Web Blogs. We have gathered all the blogs we posted on our community engagement sessions and conveniently put them into this document for you to read through.

January 22, 2019 – Key First Nation

1st IAP Engagement Session Complete

The IAP project team headed out to Key First Nation on January 22, 2019 to conduct focus groups and interviews. The goal of the project is to better understand the needs of the beneficiaries, identify strengths of the programs, and ways to improve the program to better address the basic needs of clients and their dependants living on reserve.

There were a total of 10 IA client participants. Discussions revolved around the types of programming and resources available in their community, effectiveness of resources and supports, and resources that would be beneficial to finding employment.

Interviews were cancelled due to weather and rescheduled for a date later in March 2019. Thanks to Pearlene--- for helping to organize the focus group and providing excellent hospitality. It's great to have people come out and voice their opinions, wants and needs for our First Nations communities.

Now that the 1st focus group is complete its great to see how we are "using your voice to find solutions".

February 19, 2019 – IAP team meets the North!

Sturgeon Lake First Nation

The Project team had made their way to Sturgeon Lake First Nation on February 19, 2019. The staff felt very welcomed and we able to complete a Client Focus Group as well as two (2) Client Interviews.

The focus group consisted of 8 IA Clients and 2 Elders. Discussion revolved around strengths of community supports and resources as well as improvements they felt should be considered in programming.

Client interviews were completed in the afternoon. Both client interviews were enriched discussions on community programs, supports and resources available to help assist clients finding employment. Other topics discussed were identifying personal barriers relating to Income Assistance and goal setting.

The team would like to thank the Income Assistance Worker – Audrey Kingfisher, for the hospitality. It was a pleasure visiting your community!

February 21, 2019

Engagement Sessions in full swing!

Buffalo River Dene Nation

On February 21, 2019 the project visited Buffalo River Dene Nation. A Youth Focus group was completed and surveys were collected.

Thanks to Income Assistance Worker May Billette and, Tracey Benjamin the pre-employment caseworker for accommodating the project team, which led to the successful completion on the Client Focus Group.

There were a total of 9 IA youth clients that provided feedback on the Income Assistance Program. The group felt strongly that programming was starting to head in a positive direction. They were very well aware of what was needed from Income Assistance to become “successful”. Many ideas, opinions, and laughter were shared while the focus group was conducted.

The team also met the Mayor of Dillion, Mr. Robert Woods. Robert is also the Justice Worker for Buffalo River. He shared future hopes for Buffalo River and Dillion. It was a wonderful time learning about the history and meaning of “community” in Buffalo River.

The team truly enjoyed the scenery and hospitality! A big thank you to May Billette, Tracey Benjamin and Robert Woods for such hospitality! Hopefully we will see you later down the road! We won't forget to bring our fishing rods!

February 26, 2019

Lac La Ronge

On February 26, 2019 Lac La Ronge welcomed the project team to the community. 1 focus group was completed as well as 1 Elder interview and 1 client interview!

The IA client focus group discussed remoteness, and community supports and resources. This is another community that is well aware of what is and isn't working for them and their surrounding communities. Opinions varied and were respected by all. It is a wonderful experience when you have a group of enthusiastic people who are eager to input new ideas. Thank you Cynthia Cook and team for great hospitality and giving your clients a chance to have their voice heard! Wonderful work!

February 27, 2019

Muskoday First Nation

On February 27, 2019 the project was received a warm welcome from Ron Bear and Muskoday First Nation. The project team were honored to host an Elder Focus Group! There was much laughter and sharing with a well-rounded Elder group. The Muskoday Elders had such passionate and family orientated ideas about Income Assistance in their community. You could feel the pride in their community as well as hopes for a bright future for their community and its members!

A 2nd focus group was completed in the afternoon. This focus group was a mixed group of IA Clients. Discussion included the strengths and weaknesses about resources and supports in the community. Great ideas about future supports flowed through the room. It was interesting to hear about the Income Assistance Program from Clients with different histories utilizing Income Assistance!

Thank you so much Ron Bear and Muskoday for having us in your community! It was truly a pleasure and honor. The experience alone will always be one to remember! Keep up the great work 😊

Unforeseen Events

March 5-8, 2019

Community engagement sessions were planned for Gordons First Nation, Red Earth Cree Nation, Shoal Lake First Nation and Cumberland House Cree Nation. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances the team was unable to meet the communities. The team will continue to ensure participants from each of these communities are given the opportunity to have their voice heard. Arrangements for electronic interviews are in the works!

IA Worker Focus Group at IA Admin Quarter Meeting

March 13, 2019

IA Worker Focus Group a success!

On March 13, 2019, the SFNFCI IAP Project team was welcomed to the IA Admin Regional Quarter meeting held in Saskatoon to conduct IA Worker Focus Groups.

The IA Admins from across the province broke out into four groups. Each group was designated a theme. Topics discussions revolved around success, challenges and improvements needed in the IA Program.

The IAP Project team presented a project update to the IA Regional Group and ISC Representatives. At this time, the team also announced the data collection period for the Surveys is now over. The team will still be out in the communities picking up completed surveys along with conducting the engagement sessions planned. It is still expected some of the completed surveys will be mailed back to the institute.

The team had an opportunity to meet ISC Representatives from Ottawa to demonstrate the project implementation. This was a wonderful time for the team.

We would like to thank Christine Pechawis and Jason Yew for the hospitality, as well as, all the participants that made this Focus group successful. It truly was a great experience.

It was interesting to hear such great ideas on how improvements could be made, and what is needed to make the program thrive!

March 20, 2019

Cotes welcomes the IAP Team

On March 20, 2019 the IAP was welcomed by Tara Cadette. The team was successful in interviewing 2 IA clients as well as picked up surveys for that community. Due to scheduling the team was unable to conduct a Focus Group. We would like to thank Tara for the professionalism and hospitality.

March 21, 2019

Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation

An insightful engagement session!

The team head out to Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation on March 21, 2019. They were very welcomed by the IA worker – Lorraine Cameron

The team successfully completed 2 Focus Groups one with community Elders and one with IA Clients. The team also picked up completed surveys.

Both groups presented rich discussions on “ways of life”, IA policy improvements and Budgeting. Participants provided such great insight to the meaning of community and working together. Wonderful! Wonderful ideas! Thank you so much for all the great hospitality.

It was an honor to sit and listen to you all.

March 22, 2019

Ahtahkakoop First Nation

On March 22, 2019 the team headed out to Ahtahkakoop First Nation to conduct engagement sessions. The team was received by IA worker – Sheila Knife.

The team hit the ground running and started the session off with a Client Interview. We heard great insights on what is needed to help support clients transition from IA to gaining employment.

The team also had the privilege of sitting with a community Elder. Stories were shared and much insight was gained. It truly was an honor to sit and listen to the history and hopes for the community.

At the time the team also picked up completed surveys.

The sun was shining and it certainly was a beautiful day. Thank you, Sheila, for having us in the community. Until we meet again.

April 1-3, 2019

IAP Reform Team Meets Kahkewistahaw First Nation

On April 1, 2019 the engagement team had the honor of meeting with Kahkewistahaw First Nation Leadership. The reform project was introduced, and the team was very well received and welcomed into the community. Leadership answered questions to their great ability and the team was pleased with the outcome.

On the Second day of community engagement, the Income Assistance Worker – Vera Wasacase, welcomed the team and 2 client focus groups were conducted for the day. There were a total of 18 participants for the day including an elder to open the community engagement.

On the third day, the team conducted 2 more focus with one with Clients and another with community elders. The turnout was great with the first group having 8 participants and the elder group having 8 participants as well. Very rich discussions on community, barriers and hopes. It was a wonderful day.

The team also had the privilege of conducting a Focus Group at the community high school. Discussion was great. They also, in return, had a few questions of their own.

Thank you Kahkewistahaw for all the support, and accommodations! Many, many opportunities in the community fore coming, you should be very proud.

April 11, 2019

IAP Reform wraps up in Piapot First Nation

On April 11, 2019 the engagement team were honored to be in Piapot First Nation. The team was very well received by Donna Mantee, the Income Assistance Worker.

The team was successful in conducting a mixed Focus Group of Clients as well as a Leadership Interview. The group ranged from new and younger clients to clients that have more experience on assistance. The group was also honored to have a few elders sit in on the group and add input and share stories with all the participants. There were a total of 15 participants and discussions were quickly enriched.

Topics revolved around motivation and steps to success, addressing barriers and hopes for brighter futures. You could feel the support of the community as the discussions progressed. It was a very wonderful experience.

After the awesome lunch that was provided the group parted ways and the team prepared for the leadership interview. Great insight and provide and exchanged regarding Income Assistance. Overall, the community visit was deemed a success. T

Thank you Donna Mantee for arranging our visit and welcoming us into the community, it was a great way to wrap up our engagement sessions! Until our paths meet again! 😊