



## **Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes of First Nations and Métis People in Saskatchewan FAQ's**

### **Q. Why is there going to be a Task Force?**

On May 17, 2011, the Government of Saskatchewan and the FSIN entered into a partnership for the Task Force with the objective of finding practical solutions so that all people can be fully engaged in the Province's prosperity.

In undertaking the Joint Task Force, the parties have agreed that the following are the desired outcomes:

1. Improved early childhood outcomes and the transition to school;
2. Improved high school completion;
3. Improved completion rates for post-secondary education;
4. Improved labour market participation and attachment;
5. Improved quality of life and enhanced self-sufficiency; and
6. Stronger education systems with improved return on investment in PreK-12 and post-secondary education and training.

### **Q. You talk of a common vision for First Nations and Métis people. What is it?**

The Government of Saskatchewan recognizes that current gaps in education and employment outcomes for First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan are unacceptable. The FSIN has a specific interest in improving the outcomes of First Nations people

Saskatchewan and the FSIN share a vision of a prosperous Province where all people have access to a high quality of life on- and off- reserve. To achieve this vision, education and employment outcomes must improve for First Nations and Métis people.

### **Q. What is the biggest challenge in solving this education/employment gap?**

These are complex issues. The purpose of the Task Force is to be inclusive and talk with First Nations and Métis people and other stakeholders – to engage with them on the practical solutions that will increase First Nation and Metis Peoples success in educational and employment pursuits.



**Q. Why a Task Force rather than investing directly in programs that will benefit First Nations and Métis people immediately?**

The Government of Saskatchewan commits significant funding to education and skills training programs for First Nations and Métis people. The Government of Saskatchewan 2011-12 budget provides more than \$167 Million in for all programming and initiatives for First Nations and Métis people, an increase of 8.5 per cent over the previous year.

The Task Force will directly engage First Nations and Métis people who are the intended clients for these programs and services. This will provide insight on practical, long-term solutions to the education and employment gaps.

**Q. What do you hope this Task Force will achieve?**

We are confident the Task Force will identify long-term practical solutions that will positively impact education and employment outcomes and have the potential for province-wide application. We also hope that this initiative will lead to a broader public understanding and appreciation of the challenges faced by a significant part of the Province's population.

**Q. What makes this initiative different from other studies and investigations?**

The Task Force is being undertaken jointly, reflecting the shared commitment to work together to eliminate the gap, and improve education and employment outcomes in the spirit of mutual respect.

The Task Force is intended to directly engage with First Nations and Métis people to find practical solutions to the challenges they face in education and employment success.

Details on the initiative may be found in the Joint Task Force Agreement at:  
<http://www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/fsin-jtfee.pdf>:

**Q. Will the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan be involved in the work of Task Force?**

Yes. The Government of Saskatchewan is in discussion with the MN-S to determine how best to ensure Métis participation.



**Q. Will the Joint Task Force duplicate the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (ANDCC) National Panel on Education?**

No. The national panel is tasked to develop options for First Nations education, with a mandate to make recommendations for new federal legislation respecting governance and accountability. The national panel will examine how to enhance the K-12 education system and outcomes for First Nations students living on-reserve and will be taking a national perspective.

**Q. Will the parties be obligated to implement the recommendations?**

The Task Force is a partnership; the parties have agreed that they will review the recommendations of the Task Force once they are received. It is hoped that all parties will be able to embrace the recommendations.

**The Task Force:**

**Q. What is the scope of the Task Force's work?**

Abundant data is available from the Province, First Nations, Tribal Councils, the FSIN, Métis institutions and the federal government to demonstrate the existence of education and employment gaps between First Nations and Métis people and non-Aboriginal people. The work of the Task Force will begin from the assumption that these gaps exist. While the emphasis of this project is on recommending solutions, it is understood that in order to effectively propose and analyse solutions, there is a need to understand barriers and challenges. To this end, the Task Force will be informed by research and consultation to identify issues, as well as solutions.

The Task Force will review approaches that have been effective for Indigenous and marginalized populations in Saskatchewan, Canada and other jurisdictions. As well, it will include input and advice from individuals, institutions and academics. When proposing approaches, the Task Force will be innovative while considering how best to implement solutions within Saskatchewan's Treaty, political, geographic, jurisdictional and historic



context. Federal funding that affects education and employment programs and services provided to First Nations and Métis people will be considered.

**Q. What are the objectives for the Task Force in its work?**

1. To recommend and prioritize evidence-based public policy, program and practical approaches in relation to the themes articulated in the project scope. These approaches will positively impact education and employment outcomes and have the potential for province-wide application.
2. To identify current issues, barriers and/or ineffective approaches and recommend changes or elimination.
3. To identify investments, potential costs and savings associated with the recommended approaches identified in objective one and the changes recommended in objective two.
4. To arrange for literature reviews, analysis and advice that will inform the development of the recommendations.
5. Engagement in the process will extend beyond the signator parties ,e.g. Métis Institutions, Tribal Councils and Independent First Nations, First Nation Band Councils (education portfolios), Office of the Treaty Commissioner, First Nation and Métis Education Provincial Advisory Committee (FNMEPAC).

**Q. What is the timeframe for the Task Force’s work?**

This work of the Task Force will be accomplished from September 2011 to August 2012.

Milestones include the following:

- May, 2011
  - Announcement of the Task Force
- August- September, 2011
  - Launching of the Expression of Interest (for task force members)
  - Launching the Request for Proposals (for secretariat to support the task force)
- November, 2011
  - RFP and Expression of Interest review and selection
- December, 2011
  - Public Appointment of Task Force
  - Contract established with Secretariat
  - Approve Engagement Process
  - Launch of the Engagement Process
- Fall, 2012



- Final Report

### **Q. Who will sit on the Task Force?**

Three members will be chosen, one of whom will be the Chair.

Members will be selected through an Expression of Interest process that will be broadly communicated.

### **Q. What are the qualifications required to be a Task Force member?**

The Task Force members will ideally bring a diversity of perspectives including: PreK-12 education, post-secondary education and training, labour market attachment in relation to First Nations, Métis and other institutions.

Selection criteria include the following:

1. Demonstrated leadership and experience in the private and/or public sector;
2. Knowledge of the issues associated with the gaps in education and employment for First Nations and Métis people;
3. Ability to be client-focused, objective, solutions-oriented and pragmatic;
4. Ability to elicit input through a broad and inclusive consultation process; and,
5. Ability to manage dynamic, contentious and sensitive issues and situations.

### **Q. If I am interested in being a Task Force member, how do I apply?**

If you are interested, fill in the Application Form and forward the completed Form together with your Curriculum Vitae or Résumé to the following email address:

[joint.task.force@gov.sk.ca](mailto:joint.task.force@gov.sk.ca)

### **Q. What are the required time commitments for Task Force members and what will their compensation be?**

It is estimated that Task Force members would be committing 100-120 days to the Task Force's work.

Compensation will be commensurate with expertise in the qualifications listed above.



## **The Secretariat:**

### **Q. Who will be supporting the Task Force?**

The Task Force will be supported by a Secretariat, which will be contracted through a Request for Proposals process. The Secretariat will be directed in its responsibilities by the Task Force and will perform the following responsibilities:

- undertake compiling research and analysis;
- develop and manage the engagement process;
- record and compile input received through the engagement process; and,
- develop report(s).

### **Q. What will the assessment criteria for the Secretariat be?**

Contractors will be selected through an assessment of proposals against the following criteria:

1. The proposed budget is reasonable to accomplish the work of the project within the established timeframe;
2. The proponent can demonstrate proven ability to complete the project within the timeframe, by providing evidence of related work, references and access to human resources to accomplish the work;
3. The proponent demonstrates successful experience in working with and engaging First Nations and Métis people and institutions;
4. The proponent demonstrates knowledge of Saskatchewan's K-12 on- and off- reserve context, geographic, jurisdictional and demographic challenges, as well as provincial and federal government, First Nations and Métis decision making processes.
5. The proponent demonstrates experience in project management and coordination.

### **Q. What will the selection process be?**

The Secretariat will be selected through a Request for Proposals process in keeping with Government of Saskatchewan procurement policies and guidelines.

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. The proposed budget is reasonable to accomplish the work of the project within the established timeframe.
2. The proponent can demonstrate proven ability to complete the project within the



timeframe, by providing evidence of related work, references and access to human resources to accomplish the work.

3. The proponent demonstrates successful experience in working with and engaging First Nations and Métis people and institutions.
4. The proponent demonstrates knowledge of Saskatchewan's K-12 on- and off- reserve education systems, post-secondary education and training systems, Treaty and historical context, geographic, jurisdictional and demographic challenges, as well as provincial and federal government, First Nation and Métis decision making processes.
5. The proponent demonstrates experience in project management and coordination.  
(Joint proposals will be considered.)

**Q. What will the deliverables for the Secretariat be?**

1. A project plan that sets out the work to be accomplished with associated timelines for approval by the Senior Officials Table.
2. A consultation plan that provides an overview of the consultation methodology, target audiences and timelines for approval by the Senior Officials Table.
3. Once the engagement process is complete, a preliminary report to the Senior Officials Table for review and comment
4. A report to the Leadership Forum summarizing the findings and recommendations of the Task Force.