



# Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study

HALIFAX REPORT



ENVIRONICS  
• INSTITUTE •

Published by

**Environics Institute**

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### The *UAPS* Advisory Circle

Allan Benoit	Métis Nation
John Berry	Queen's University
Ellen Bielawski	University of Alberta
Lewis Cardinal	Cardinal Strategic Communications
Hayden King	McMaster University
Peter Dinsdale	National Association of Friendship Centres
Calvin Helin	Lawyer, author of <i>Dances with Dependency</i>
Corinne Jetté	President and CEO, Mount Pleasant Educational Services Inc.
Caroline Krause	Former principal, Grandview Elementary School, Faculty of Educ., UBC
Peter Menzies	Centre for Addiction Mental Health
Katherine Minich	University of Toronto
David Newhouse	Trent University
Andrew Parkin	Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation
John G. Paul	Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs
Evelyn Peters	University of Saskatchewan
Mark Podlasly	N'laka'pmx First Nation / Harvard/Queens (fellow)
Jennifer Rattray	Peepeekisis First Nation / University of Winnipeg
John Richards	Simon Fraser University
Pamela Sparklingeyes	Aboriginal Learning Services, Edmonton Catholic School Board
Noella Steinhauer	National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation

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## UAPS Project Managers and City Co-ordinators

Ginger Gosnell-Myers (Project Manager)

Vina Wolf (Associate Project Manager)

Dr. Jino Distasio (Winnipeg First Nations Co-ordinator)

Allan Vicaire (Montreal Co-ordinator)

Chris Atchison (Vancouver Co-ordinator)

Christine Cybenko (Saskatoon Co-ordinator)

Douglas Sinclair (Toronto Co-ordinator)

Jaimee Marks (Regina Co-ordinator)

Dr. Maisie Cardinal (Edmonton Co-ordinator)

Nathan Elliot (Calgary Co-ordinator)

Dr. Rachel Eni (Winnipeg Métis Co-ordinator)

Shelly Knott (Thunder Bay Co-ordinator)

Dr. Trudy Sable (Halifax Co-ordinator)

Tungasuvvingat Inuit: Martin Lougheed and Barbara Sevigny (Ottawa Co-ordinators)

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- commissioning original survey research;
- 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

### Contact Details

Environics Institute  
33 Bloor Street East, Suite 900  
Toronto, ON M4W 3H1  
(416) 920 – 9010  
[www.environicsinstitute.org](http://www.environicsinstitute.org)

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**City of Vancouver, Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy, and Province of Quebec.**

## 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](http://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 Halifax?

Halifax has one of the smallest Aboriginal populations of the *UAPS* cities, in terms of both absolute number and per capita concentration. According to the 2006 Census, Halifax is home to just over 5,000 people, who account for only one percent of the total population of the city.

The *UAPS Halifax Report* is one of a series of city reports, following the release of the main report of the *UAPS* on April 6, 2010. In Halifax, the main survey consisted of in-person interviews with 202 First Nations peoples (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit (18 years and older), between March 5 and June 4, 2009.

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

- **A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax consider the city to be their home.** At the same time, strong links to their communities of origin are more evident here than in many other *UAPS* cities, in part because Halifax has a larger than average proportion of first generation residents (i.e., Aboriginal peoples born and raised in a community other than Halifax).
- **There is a notable degree of satisfaction among Aboriginal residents about Halifax.** They are among the most positive about life in their city (together with Vancouver residents), due in large part to the quality of life, particularly the availability and convenience of amenities. At the same time, one in three Aboriginal Haligonians express concern about crime in the city, which is notably similar to the level of concern in the Prairie cities. Moreover, they are among the least likely of any *UAPS* participants to believe they can make their city a better place to live.
- **There is strong Indigenous pride among Aboriginal peoples in Halifax.** Most are very proud of their specific *First Nations/Métis/Inuk* identity and of their collective *Aboriginal* identity. They are also more familiar with their ancestry than those living in most other *UAPS* cities.
- **Aboriginal Haligonians express a modest sense of confidence in their ability to retain their cultural identity in the city.** In part, this may reflect higher than average participation in Aboriginal cultural activities in Halifax, as well as a strong sense of cultural vitality (second only to Vancouver and Toronto).
- **Most *UAPS* participants (across all cities) feel discrimination of Aboriginal peoples is a pervasive problem, but this view is somewhat less pronounced in Halifax.** The predominant stereotype of Aboriginal peoples is believed to be about substance abuse, while negative stereotypes related to laziness and “getting a free ride” are more widely believed to exist here than average. Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are also among the least likely to report personally having to deal with racism in the form of teasing or insults about their Aboriginal identity.
- **Aboriginal peoples in Halifax value Aboriginal services in the city.** Half say they rely at least occasionally on Aboriginal services and organizations in Halifax, and more so than in any other city, friendship centres are identified as particularly important. In fact, Aboriginal Haligonians are among the most convinced of the need for Aboriginal-specific services in addition to mainstream services.

- **The top life aspirations for Aboriginal peoples in Halifax include personal goals as well as more financially-based goals, none of which stand out as more prominent than others.** These are largely consistent with the life aspirations of Aboriginal peoples living in other *UAPS* cities, although they express more interest than average in general happiness and success, financial independence and finding a life partner.
- **Family and friends are considered the most important ingredients of a successful life.** Aboriginal peoples in Halifax place greater than average importance on financial independence and home ownership (particularly compared to *UAPS* participants in larger cities), as well as on having a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage and living in traditional ways.

## How do non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax 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 Halifax 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 Halifax, 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.
- **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.** Belief in the unique rights of Aboriginal people is most common in the largest cities of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.
- **Almost six in ten non-Aboriginal Haligonians are *Cultural Romantics*: idealistic individuals with a strong belief in Aboriginal peoples’ artistic and cultural contributions.** A segmentation analysis of the *UAPS* data reveals that non-Aboriginal participants have four distinct broad viewpoints of Aboriginal peoples. All four are evident in Halifax, but Cultural Romantics are especially prominent, and more so compared to any other city except Toronto.

- **Halifax residents know Aboriginal people live in their city, but they are not as aware of an Aboriginal *community* (either physical or social) as are residents of cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations.** A majority of non-Aboriginal Halifaxians have at least occasional contact with Aboriginal people, but few know Aboriginal people as close friends, neighbours and co-workers, which is understandably more common in the Prairie cities and Thunder Bay.
- **Halifax residents identify a range of challenges facing the Aboriginal population today, both generally and in cities, the most common being threats to culture and identity.** They are less aware of Indian residential schools than those in any other *UAPS* city except Toronto and Montreal. Nonetheless, they are more than 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.
- **Non-Aboriginal Halifaxians clearly recognize that Aboriginal people experience discrimination, and believe they endure at least as much as other groups in Canadian society.**
- **A slim majority of non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax believe the current state of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada is positive.** This optimism is more widespread in Halifax, Vancouver and Toronto than in other *UAPS* cities.

## Next steps

All *UAPS* reports are freely available via the study's website, [www.uaps.ca](http://www.uaps.ca). The *UAPS Halifax 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](mailto: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 HALIFAX.** The *UAPS Halifax Report* constitutes the eighth of a series of city reports, following the release of the main report of the *UAPS* on April 6, 2010. In Halifax, the main survey consisted of in-person interviews with 202 First Nations peoples (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit (18 years and older) between March 5 and June 4, 2009.

Key to the study's legitimacy was that the sample be representative of the Aboriginal population in Halifax: 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 Halifax to design an "ideal sample," based on such characteristics as identity group, age, educational attainment and gender. The Halifax research team, consisting of a Project Co-ordinator (Dr. Trudy Sable) 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. While the sampling approach was generally successful in most cities, insufficient numbers of Métis were identified in Halifax, and as a result, Halifax did not fulfill its overall quota of 250 interviews. 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 Halifax (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.<sup>1</sup>

Further details on the methodology of both *UAPS* surveys can be found in the main report on the *UAPS*, available at [www.uaps.ca](http://www.uaps.ca).

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

**Chapter 1, the Urban Context**, provides a demographic snapshot of the Aboriginal population in Halifax, and information on where study participants are from, how long they have lived in Halifax and the strength of their connection to Halifax and to their home community.

**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 Halifax 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 Halifax.

**Chapter 5** explores how Aboriginal peoples feel about living in Halifax in **Urban Experiences**.

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

**Chapters 7** is a Special Theme in the Halifax report: **Confidence in the Criminal Justice System**.

**Chapter 8, Non-Aboriginal Perspectives**, the final chapter of the report, captures non-Aboriginal Halifax residents' perceptions of Aboriginal peoples, including their awareness of and level of contact with Aboriginal people, their knowledge of salient Aboriginal issues, and the perceived importance of Aboriginal history and culture.

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 Halifax

	# (Unweighted)	% (Weighted)
<b>IDENTITY</b>		
First Nations	147	63
Status	134	59
Non-status	13	4
Métis	48	30
Inuit	5	2
<b>GENDER</b>		
Men	90	41
Women	112	59
<b>AGE</b>		
18-24	49	16
25-44	98	52
45+	55	33
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
No diploma	48	16
High school diploma	71	28
College degree	42	34
University degree	38	16
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>		
<\$10,000	48	17
\$10,000 - \$30,000	79	43
\$30,000 - \$60,000	44	23
\$60,000+	23	13
Refused	8	4
<b>LIVING SITUATION</b>		
Renting an apartment or house	132	68
Homeowner	27	13
Living with friends or family	26	11
Renting a room in a rooming house/hostel	8	2
Living in a temporary shelter	1	*
<b>ELDER</b>		
Yes	24	12
No	178	88

\* Less than 0.5%

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## I.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.

As a starting point, the *UAPS* asked Halifax participants a number of questions to establish where they were from, how long they had lived in Halifax, and how they felt about Halifax (i.e., did they consider it or another community to be home?). Answers to these questions are summarized in this chapter, following a demographic snapshot of the Aboriginal population in Halifax based on the 2006 Census.

### Key findings

- ***UAPS* participants in Halifax have long-standing ties to the city.** They are largely first generation residents (i.e., born and raised somewhere other than Halifax), and more so than average for the *UAPS* cities. They are nonetheless long-term urban residents: half of this group has lived in Halifax for 10 years or more.
- **Aboriginal peoples move to Halifax primarily for employment and educational opportunities.** Both reasons are generally common to Aboriginal peoples in all 11 *UAPS* cities, although they are more widely mentioned in Halifax than average.
- **The majority of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax consider the city to be their home, even first generation residents.** At the same time, most Aboriginal peoples in Halifax retain links with their community of origin, whether it be their own or that of their parents/grandparents, and this sense of connection is stronger than in most other *UAPS* cities. Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are less likely than average to have made up their minds as to whether or not they plan to go back and live permanently in their communities of origin one day; those who have decided are equally divided between those who do plan to return and those who do not.



## 1.1 The Aboriginal population in Halifax

In terms of absolute numbers, Halifax has the smallest Aboriginal population of the *UAPS* cities. According to the 2006 Census, a total of 5,320 people in the Halifax census metropolitan area (CMA) identified themselves as Aboriginal, that is, as First Nations, Métis or Inuit. Aboriginal peoples account for just over one percent of the total population of Halifax, which is also one of the smallest per capita concentrations among the *UAPS* cities.

As of 2006, First Nations peoples are the majority Aboriginal identity group in Halifax (56%), with Métis accounting for one-third (33%) of the Aboriginal population. Three percent identify themselves as Inuit; eight percent offered other or multiple responses.

As well, according to 2006 Census data, Halifax has a relatively young and growing urban Aboriginal population.

- From 2001 to 2006, the Aboriginal population in Halifax grew by 51 percent, which represents one of the fastest growth rates for the *UAPS* cities. The rate of growth is much greater among Métis (an increase of 120%) than among the First Nations population (28%). During the same time period, the total population of Halifax grew by just four percent.
- The Aboriginal population living in Halifax is slightly younger than the non-Aboriginal population (with a median age of 30 years, compared to 39 years for the non-Aboriginal population).<sup>2</sup> A similar pattern is observed Canada-wide, but is not as pronounced in Halifax as in the Prairie cities, particularly Regina and Saskatoon.
- Compared to non-Aboriginal residents, the Aboriginal population, in addition to being younger, has higher unemployment rates, and lower education and income levels. Aboriginal youth in the city are also more likely than non-Aboriginal children to be living in a single-parent household.

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

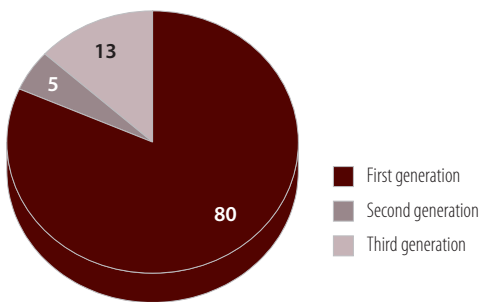
## 1.2 Residency in the city

***Eight in ten UAPS participants in Halifax are the first generation of their family living in the city, a proportion that is higher than average for urban Aboriginal peoples.***

In 2006, 50 percent 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 Halifax 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 Halifax) or are you from somewhere else?

First, second and third generation Halifax residents



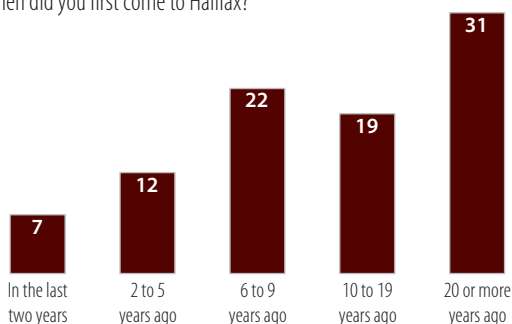
The data revealed two main groups of people: those who were born and raised somewhere other than Halifax (“first generation”); and those who were born and raised in Halifax but whose family is from another place (“second generation”). A third, smaller group is comprised of urban Aboriginal peoples born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

In Halifax, most (80%) *UAPS* participants are “first generation” residents born and raised in a community, town, city or reserve other than Halifax; this proportion is larger than the average for the *UAPS* cities. In turn, the group of “second generation” residents born and raised in Halifax whose parents and/or grandparents are from another place (5%) is smaller than average. A third group of urban Aboriginal peoples born and raised in Halifax whose parents/grandparents are also from Halifax (“third generation”) comprises 13 percent of the population.

First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to be the first generation of their family living in Halifax (86% and 64%, respectively), a pattern that is consistent with that found in most other *UAPS* cities.

Time of arrival\*

When did you first come to Halifax?



Among first generation residents, half are long-term residents of Halifax. Five in ten (50%) first came to Halifax at least 10 years ago, including three in ten (31%) who arrived 20 or more years ago. Four in ten (41%) have arrived in the past 10 years, including about one in ten (7%) who first came in the last two years (10% cannot not say when they first arrived). The average year of arrival in Halifax among first generation *UAPS* participants was 1993; this is on par with the average arrival time for first generation *UAPS* participants in other cities.

\* Subsample: Among those who were not born or raised in Halifax.

### 1.3 Reason for moving

**The decision to move to Halifax was prompted primarily by a desire for employment and educational opportunities, both of which are greater motivators in Halifax than for the UAPS cities in general.**

Why do Aboriginal peoples move to Halifax?

Among the wide variety of reasons cited by first generation UAPS participants in Halifax for why they first moved here, employment and education opportunities emerge at the top of the list. While these are among the top reasons for moving in all UAPS cities, both are more widely mentioned in Halifax than average.

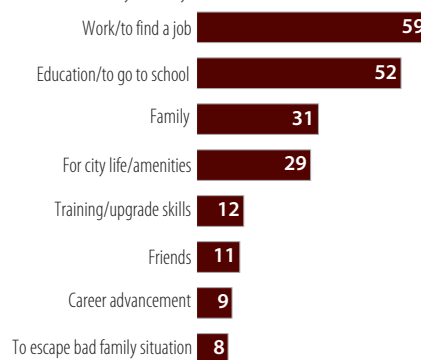
When first generation Aboriginal residents of Halifax are asked (unprompted, without response options offered) why they first moved to the city, the most common reason is for employment opportunities (59%) or career advancement (9%), followed by the desire to pursue an education (52%). Slightly smaller but still significant proportions say they moved for family reasons (31%) and/or for the city life in Halifax (29%), the latter of which is also a more common consideration in Halifax than average.

First generation residents of Halifax are more likely than their counterparts in other cities to indicate that they moved to the city for training or skills updating (12%). Other reasons cited for moving include wanting to be near friends (11%), to escape a bad family situation (8%), for housing (7%) and access to better health care (6%). Three percent or fewer each mention a variety of other reasons for moving to Halifax.

The reasons for moving to Halifax are largely similar for First Nations peoples and Métis, with a few exceptions. Métis are more likely than First Nations to say they moved for family reasons, while First Nations peoples are more likely to mention training opportunities.

#### Top reasons for moving to Halifax\*

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



\*Subsample: Among those who were not born or raised in Halifax.

### 1.4 Connection to Halifax

**For the majority of Aboriginal peoples in the city, Halifax is “home.”**

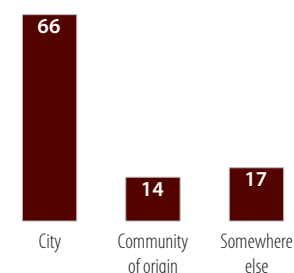
Most of those who have lived in Halifax all their lives, not surprisingly, consider the city to be their home (81% of second generation residents). A majority (65%) of first generation residents (i.e., those not born or raised in the city) also consider Halifax their home, although this feeling is not as widespread as those born and raised there.

Overall, when asked “Where is home for you?” two-thirds (66%) of UAPS participants say it is Halifax.<sup>3</sup> Significantly fewer equate “home” with their community of origin (14%) or another community (17%). These views are consistent with the national average of all 11 UAPS cities.

Although majorities of both First Nations peoples and Métis in the city consider Halifax to be “home,” this sentiment is less pronounced among First Nations peoples (62% compared to 86% of Métis). This reflects, at least in part, the fact that First Nations peoples are more likely to be first generation residents of Halifax; they may come from a reserve and retain the option of living there.

#### 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 Halifax; those who have lived in Halifax all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

<sup>3</sup> The question “Where is home for you?” was not asked of third generation UAPS participants (13% of UAPS participants in Halifax).

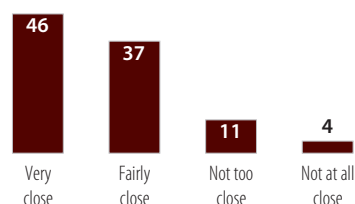
Although *UAPS* participants report an important connection to the city in which they are living, their sense that Halifax is home does not preclude a relationship with their community of origin. The following section (1.5 Connection to community of origin) explores the relationship to a community of origin as reported by *UAPS* participants.

## 1.5 Connection to community of origin

***A large majority of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax retain links with their community of origin, whether it be their own or that of their parents/grandparents, and this sense of connection is stronger than in most other UAPS cities.***

### 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 Halifax; those who have lived in Halifax all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

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 people, 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.<sup>4</sup>

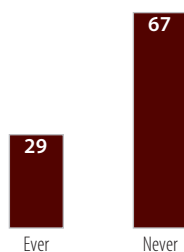
Such connections are clearly evident among *UAPS* participants in Halifax, who are among the most likely to say they maintain a very close connection to their community of origin (together with residents of Vancouver).<sup>5</sup> This is due at least in part to the larger than average proportion of Aboriginal peoples who are the first generation in their family living in Halifax.

Overall, just over eight in ten say they feel a very (46%) or fairly (37%) close connection to their community of origin. One in ten (11%) say they feel not too close, and a very small group (4%) say they feel not at all close. First Nations peoples and Métis in Halifax are equally likely to say they feel a very close connection to their home community.

It is clear from the data that the majority of *UAPS* participants in Halifax maintain links to their communities of origin, even though many have long tenure within the city. A minority of three in ten (29%) first generation *UAPS* participants have moved back to their home community at least once since they first moved to Halifax (representing 23% of *UAPS* participants in Halifax overall). Most (67%) say they have never moved back to their home community since coming to Halifax. 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 Halifax,  
have you ever moved back  
to your home community?



Note: 4% said dk/na

\* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in Halifax.

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

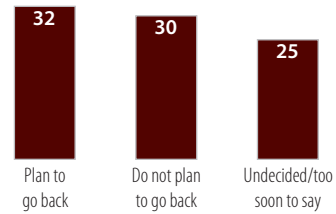
5 This question was not asked of third generation *UAPS* participants (13% of *UAPS* participants in Halifax).

First and second generation Aboriginal residents of Halifax are among the most divided of the *UAPS* cities about whether or not they intend to return to their communities of origin to live permanently in the future.

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),<sup>6</sup> three in ten (32%) say they plan to return, while an equal proportion (30%) do *not*. A total of four in ten (38%) either say they are undecided or that it is too soon to say (25%), or offer no opinion on the question (13%). These views are similar for First Nations peoples and Métis.

### 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 Halifax; 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 (13% of *UAPS* participants in Regina).

## 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 2006<sup>7</sup>) is that contemporary urban Aboriginal peoples, in particular, are more positive about their Aboriginal identity than at any time in the recent past.<sup>8</sup>

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.

Aboriginal peoples in Halifax 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 Halifax.** Most take great pride in both their *First Nations/Métis/Inuk* and their collective *Aboriginal* identities. Fewer, but still a majority, express the same degree of pride about being *Canadian*.
- **Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are more familiar with their ancestry than those living in most other UAPS cities.** Seven in ten say they know their family tree well. Lack of opportunity, not lack of interest, is the main reason why Aboriginal peoples in Halifax say they do not know their family tree very well.
- **Half of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member.** Such experience is less widespread in Halifax than in any other UAPS city except Montreal and Winnipeg. Aboriginal peoples in Halifax with first- or second-hand Indian residential schools experience are less likely than average to say it has had a significant impact in shaping their life and who they are today.
- **There is widespread awareness of Aboriginal cultural activities in Halifax, and reported participation is higher than average for the UAPS cities.** Indeed, Aboriginal peoples in Halifax display a strong sense of cultural vitality (although it falls short of Toronto and Vancouver).
- **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 Halifax are unconcerned about losing their cultural identity, although this falls short of the level of confidence expressed in Winnipeg and Edmonton.
- **There is no consensus among Aboriginal peoples in Halifax about the type of community – mostly Aboriginal, mostly non-Aboriginal, or equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – to which they belong.** Many UAPS participants in Halifax report strong social connections to their own identity group in the city and to members of other Aboriginal groups, although the latter is more widespread among Métis (who are the minority Aboriginal group in Halifax) than among First Nations peoples.

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7 Statistics Canada.

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

## 2.1 Pride in Aboriginal and Canadian identity

**Most Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are very proud of their First Nations/Métis/Inuk and Aboriginal identities. They are less likely to express strong pride in being Canadian.**

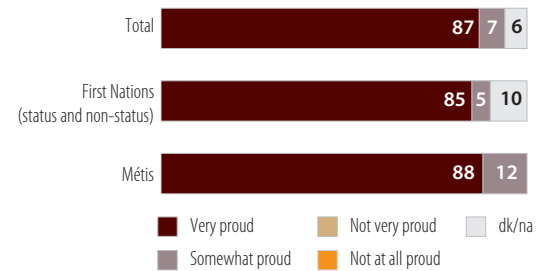
An important part of the UAPS was to understand how proud urban Aboriginal peoples are of their identity and, specifically, to what extent their pride is tied to three distinct aspects of identity: being *First Nations/Métis/Inuk*, *Aboriginal* and *Canadian*.

The results show that Aboriginal peoples in Halifax take equal pride in their specific Aboriginal identity (that is, their First Nations, Métis or Inuk identity) and in being part of a larger *Aboriginal* identity. However, being Canadian has less resonance in Halifax, both for First Nations peoples and Métis.

**PRIDE IN BEING FIRST NATIONS/MÉTIS/INUK.** The large majority (87%) of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax say they are very proud of their specific Aboriginal identity (i.e., *First Nations, Métis or Inuk*).

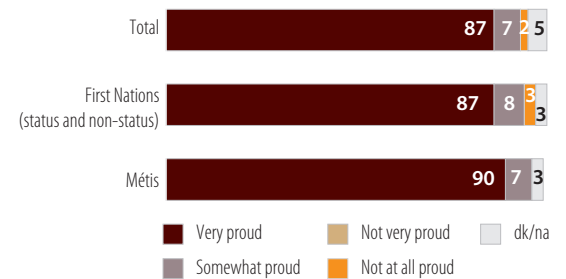
**PRIDE IN BEING ABORIGINAL.** Most Aboriginal peoples in Halifax (87%) are also very proud of their *Aboriginal* identity.

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*?



Note: Total data include Inuit (n=5)

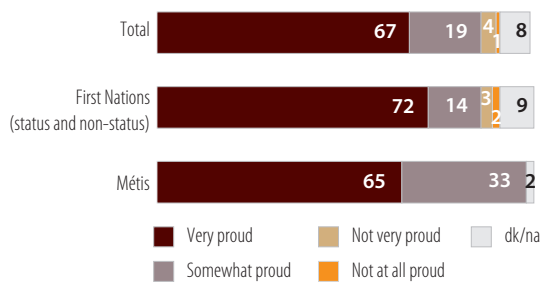
Pride in being *Aboriginal*  
Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very, or not at all proud to be *Aboriginal*?



Note: Total data include Inuit (n=5)

## Pride in being *Canadian*

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



Note: Total data include Inuit (n=5)

**PRIDE IN BEING CANADIAN.** Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are least proud to be *Canadian*, although two in three (67%) say they are very proud of this aspect of their identity.

Strong pride in all three aspects of their identity (i.e., being *First Nations/Métis/Inuk, Aboriginal* and *Canadian*) is similar to that found among urban Aboriginal participants in general. Within Halifax, the degree of pride is similar among both First Nations peoples and Métis.

What shapes urban Aboriginal peoples' pride in their *First Nations/Métis/Inuk, Aboriginal* and *Canadian* identities? The sample size for Halifax alone (202 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 (45 years of age and over), those who feel they belong to a mostly or exclusively Aboriginal community, and those who know their family tree very well.



## 2.2 Knowledge of Aboriginal ancestry

**Seven in ten Aboriginal peoples in Halifax know their Aboriginal ancestry at least fairly well, a level of knowledge which is higher than average.**

The legacy of policies of assimilation in Canada and their outcomes have contributed to multiple, ongoing challenges experienced by Aboriginal people, 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.

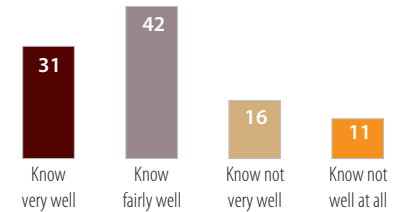
The *UAPS* results indicate that Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are generally familiar with their family tree (i.e., who their Aboriginal ancestors are), and are more likely to be knowledgeable than those in any other *UAPS* city except Vancouver and among Inuit in Ottawa. Seven in ten know their family tree very (31%) or fairly (42%) well, while three in ten say they know their family tree not very (16%) or not at all (11%) well. First Nations peoples in Halifax are more likely than Métis to say they know their family tree.

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), six in ten (61%) Aboriginal peoples in Halifax identify their parents as their main source of learning. Fewer say they have learned what they know about their family tree from extended family (37%), although this is more widespread in Halifax than average, as well as grandparents (22%), immediate family relatives such as aunts and uncles (15%), siblings (9%) and/or Elders (7%).

A range of non-family sources are also mentioned, such as home communities and community members, archives and historical records, and the Internet or social networking sites, but none by more than five percent each. The sources of learning about one's family tree are generally similar for both First Nations peoples and Métis in Halifax, although Métis are more likely to have learned this information from extended family.

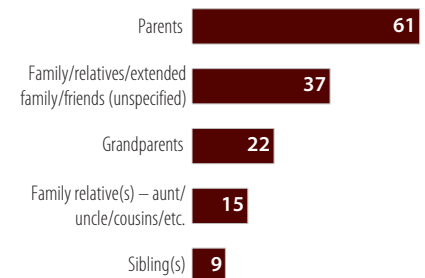
### Extent of knowledge of family tree

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 Halifax:**

*Always important to know where you come from. It shapes who you are.*

*It's good to know where you're from to know how to get to where you are going.*

*It gave me more of a sense of self. I feel more connected with my ancestors.*

*No words to describe that feeling – maybe a feeling of being one with the Creator.*

*I've become proud of my Aboriginal heritage, but equally ashamed of my ancestors of European heritage.*

*It's made me feel really connected and I've discovered some of my ancestors did the same kind of activist work that I do, and have been very involved in education and healing. One of my ancestors signed the Treaty of 1752.*

*I have something to pass on to my children and grandchildren.*

*I found that it has helped me to appreciate our culture more.*

*I don't know much about my family. I realize I would like to know more.*

*It's made a great impact, there's been a lot of strong people in our ancestry: on my father's side, a Native war hero, sniper, purple heart; on my mother's side, my great-grandfather was a hero in the book "Lure of the Labrador," saved some Americans. My grandmother overcame lots of challenges.*

**Impact of family tree**

***A sense of greater personal meaning, and of family heritage, survival and tradition are the top ways knowledge of one's family tree has made a difference for Aboriginal peoples in Halifax.***

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

Both First Nations peoples and Métis in Halifax believe that knowledge of their family tree has had a significant personal impact on their lives and how they see themselves. UAPS participants cite two main ways in which knowing their family tree has contributed to their lives:

- **Greater personal meaning.** Three in ten (32%) Aboriginal peoples in Halifax emphasize the greater personal meaning they've gained from knowing their family tree, much more so than in any other city except Vancouver (35%) and Toronto (30%).
- **Understanding of family survival and cultural endurance.** Three in ten (29%) Aboriginal peoples in Halifax 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.

Smaller proportions of UAPS participants (14% or fewer each) mention other ways in which knowing their family tree has had a meaningful impact on their lives. These include greater self-identity and self-awareness (14%), pride in their Aboriginal "roots" (13%), as well as generational continuity, awareness of family connections and a sense of belonging. Ten percent say they would like to learn more.

Six percent say knowing their family tree has had only a little (4%) or no (2%) impact on their life, which is lower than in average for the UAPS cities. Only one percent feel knowing their family tree has had a negative impact on their lives.

**Impact of family tree**

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



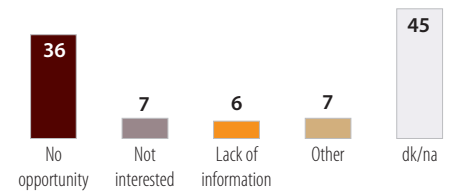
Why do some Aboriginal peoples in Halifax know their family tree and others do not?

There are many reasons why urban Aboriginal peoples may or may not know their family tree that are 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 Halifax say they do not know their family tree very well.

Aboriginal peoples in Halifax who do not know their family tree very well are much more likely to say it is because they have had no opportunity to learn more (36%) than to say they are not interested (7%); this is true for similar proportions of First Nations peoples and Métis. However, almost five in ten (45%) are unable or unwilling to say why they have not learned more about their family tree, more than in any other *UAPS* city.

### 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

**Half of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member; this is lower than in most other UAPS cities.**

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.”<sup>9</sup>

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 also 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.<sup>10</sup>

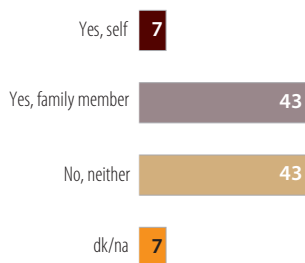
First Nations, Métis and Inuit children had varied residential school experiences, both in intensity and duration. Regardless, the residential school had a direct impact on Survivors and has spilled over to their descendants, creating challenges pertaining to identity, culture and parenting.<sup>11</sup>

UAPS participants in Halifax are less likely than Aboriginal peoples in general to say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member. When asked, half (50%) say either they themselves (7%) or a family member (43%) were a student at a federal residential school or a provincial day school. Reported attendance at Indian residential schools is lower in Halifax than in any other UAPS city except Montreal and Winnipeg.

As is the case across most UAPS cities, First Nations peoples in Halifax report more widespread experience with residential schools than do Métis, both in terms of personal attendance (11%, compared to 1% of Métis) and family attendance (50%, compared to 26% 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](http://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

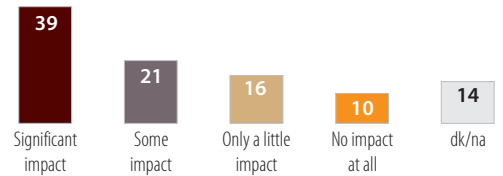
**A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax with first- or second-hand Indian residential schools experience say it has had at least some impact in shaping their life and who they are today.**

The Indian residential schools experience continues to shape the lives of urban Aboriginal peoples today. Among those Aboriginal peoples in Halifax who say they or a family member were a student in one of these schools, six in ten say this experience, or the experience of their family member, has had either a significant impact (39%) or some impact (21%) in shaping their life and who they are today. This represents one-third (30%) of all UAPS participants in Halifax.

As well as being less likely than Aboriginal peoples in other cities to have had experience with residential schools, Aboriginal peoples in Halifax with such experience are also less likely than average to feel it has had a *significant* impact on their lives, especially compared to those living in Montreal (60%), Vancouver (60%), Toronto (58%) and Calgary (58%).

### 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.

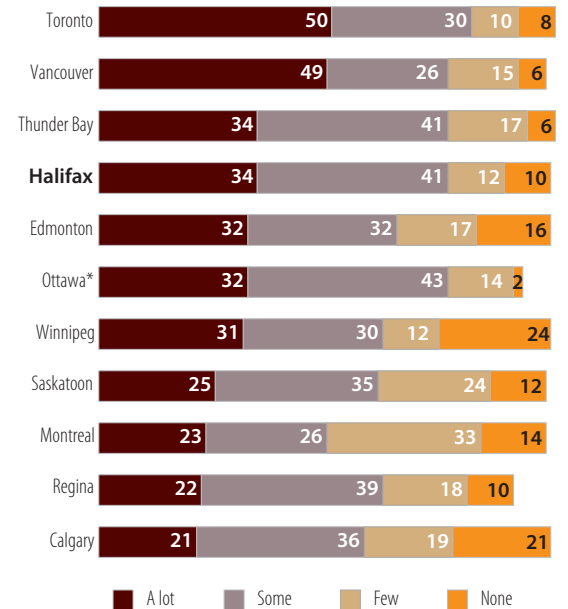
## 2.4 Aboriginal cultural activity in the city

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

Aboriginal cultural activities are perceived to be widely available in Halifax. Three in four Aboriginal peoples in Halifax say there are either a lot (34%) or some (41%) Aboriginal cultural activities available in the city; a minority say there are only a few (12%) or no (10%) such activities available to them (4% cannot say or offer no opinion). Of all UAPS participants, Aboriginal peoples 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?

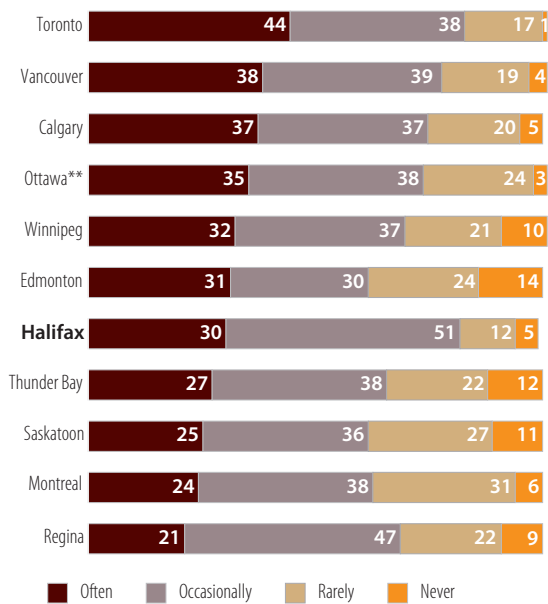


\* Inuit only

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

**Eight in ten Aboriginal peoples in Halifax aware of cultural activities in their city participate at least occasionally, a rate of participation that is higher than average.**

Among those urban Aboriginal peoples who say Aboriginal cultural activities are available in Halifax, a large majority say they participate in them at least occasionally. Eight in ten say they often (30%) or occasionally (51%) participate in these activities, compared to about two in ten who rarely (12%) or never (5%) do.

Overall participation in Aboriginal cultural activities in Halifax (often or occasionally) is higher than average, although frequent participation trails that of Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary.

## Strength of Aboriginal culture

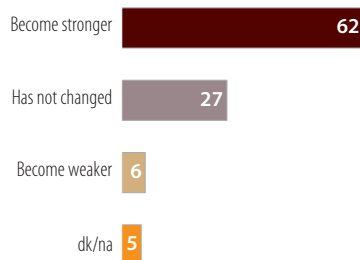
**Aboriginal peoples in Halifax display a greater than average sense of cultural vitality.**

There is a sense of optimism about the direction of Aboriginal culture in Halifax in recent years. Overall, six in ten (62%) Aboriginal peoples in Halifax think that Aboriginal culture in the city has become stronger in the past five years, while only six percent say it has become weaker; one in four (27%) say it has not changed. These views are similar for Métis and First Nations peoples in Halifax.

Optimism about the direction of Aboriginal culture in Halifax is higher than average, but falls short of Vancouver and Toronto (where 70% each believe Aboriginal culture has strengthened).

## 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

**Aboriginal peoples in Halifax feel language is the most important aspect of Aboriginal culture to be passed on to future generations, followed by customs and traditions, spirituality and ceremonies.**

Aboriginal peoples in Halifax believe there are numerous aspects of Aboriginal culture that should be passed on to future generations, but feel language is the most important.

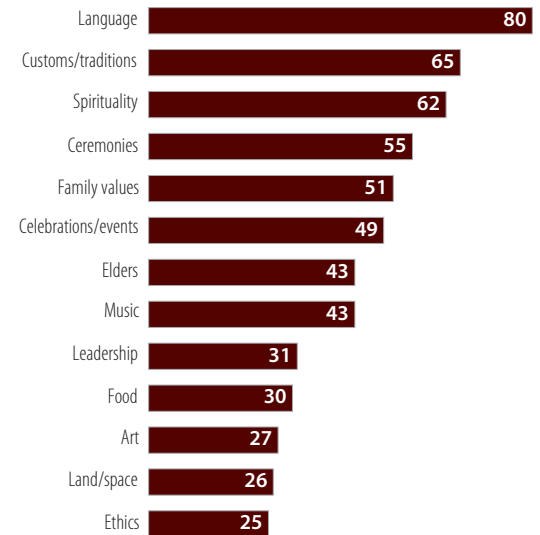
When Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are asked what aspects of Aboriginal culture are most important to be passed on to their children or grandchildren, or to the next generation (unprompted, without response options offered), they are most likely to mention language (80%), followed by Aboriginal customs and traditions (65%), spirituality (62%) and Aboriginal ceremonies (55%).

Also important are family values (51%), Aboriginal celebrations and events (49%), Elders (43%), music (43%), leadership (31%), food (30%), art (27%), connection to the land (26%) and ethics (25%). This set of cultural priorities is similar to that found among urban Aboriginal peoples in general. Within Halifax, First Nations peoples are more likely to emphasize the importance of Elders, while Métis are more likely to cite Aboriginal history.

### 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

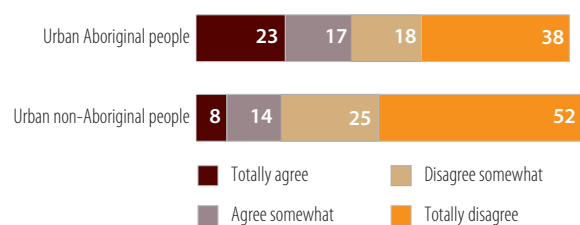
***A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are reasonably confident they can protect their cultural identity, although they express greater concern about this issue than do non-Aboriginal people in the city.***

As the previous results demonstrate, most Aboriginal peoples in Halifax 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 posed with the statement “I am concerned about losing my cultural identity,” Aboriginal peoples in Halifax 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 (40%) agree at least somewhat. Moreover, strong confidence (38% totally disagree) outweighs strong concern about this issue (23% totally agree). A similar degree of confidence in their ability to protect their cultural identity is evident among both First Nations peoples and Métis in Halifax.

### 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 Halifax are generally unconcerned about losing their cultural identity, strongly expressed confidence is higher among non-Aboriginal residents (52% totally disagree with the statement “I am concerned about losing my cultural identity,” compared to 38% of Aboriginal residents). Among non-Aboriginal Canadians, only Montrealers express a significant degree of concern about the loss of cultural identity.



## 2.6 Communities and connections

### **Aboriginal peoples in Halifax define their community in a variety of ways, but as in other UAPS cities, 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* survey explored how participants define their community, along with their sense of belonging and connection to various groups and entities.

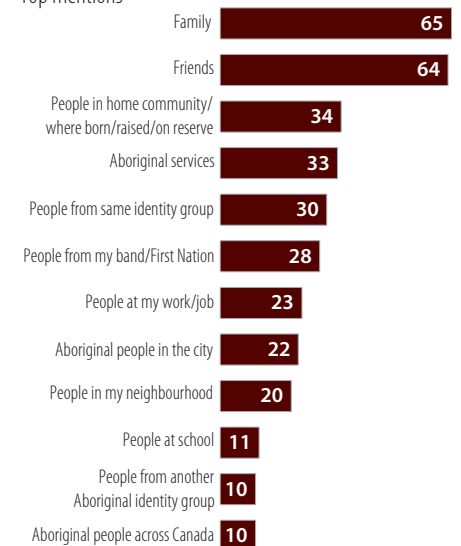
Who or what do Aboriginal peoples in Halifax consider to be a part of their community? *UAPS* data show attachment to family and friends is top-of-mind for majorities of urban First Nations, Métis and Inuk residents in Halifax, which is consistent with those living in other *UAPS* cities.

When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), Aboriginal people in Halifax most frequently mention family (65%) or friends (64%) as part of their community. Also included in their definition of community are people from their home community (34%), Aboriginal services such as friendship centres (33%), people from one's own identity/cultural group (30%), people from their band/First Nation (28%), co-workers (23%), Aboriginal peoples in the city (22%) and people in their neighbourhood (20%). Fewer consider people at school (11%), people from another Aboriginal identity group (10%) and/or Aboriginal peoples across Canada (10%) as part of their community.

First Nations peoples and Métis have generally similar views about who makes up their communities, but First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to mention people from their own identity group and Aboriginal services.

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

Top mentions



## 2.7 Belonging to Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal communities

### Belonging to Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal community

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



**Aboriginal peoples in Halifax 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 Halifax 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 (37%) of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax feel they belong to a community that is equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Smaller proportions say they belong to a mostly non-Aboriginal (31%) or a mostly Aboriginal (20%) community. Very few describe their community as exclusively Aboriginal (7%) or exclusively non-Aboriginal (2%).

The views of Aboriginal residents of Halifax are similar to those of urban Aboriginal participants in general. Within Halifax, the view that they belong to either a mostly or an exclusively Aboriginal community is more widespread among First Nations peoples in Halifax than among Métis.

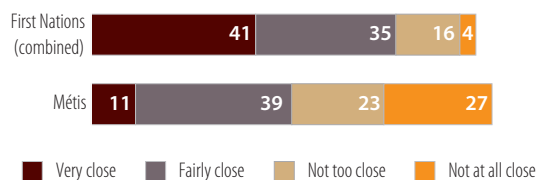
### Connection to Aboriginal peoples in the city

**First Nations peoples express a stronger connection to their own identity group in Halifax 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 IN THE CITY.** How close a connection do Aboriginal peoples in Halifax have to members of their own Aboriginal group? Overall, First Nations peoples feel a closer connection to other members of their First Nation in Halifax than do Métis to other Métis in the city. Three out of four (76%) First Nations peoples feel either a fairly or very close connection to other members of their First Nation in Halifax, and are the most likely in any UAPS city to feel this way. By comparison, half (50%) of Métis feel a close connection to other Métis in Halifax.

### 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 Halifax (60% 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 *other* Aboriginal peoples in Halifax? Métis (59%) feel more connected to other Aboriginal peoples in the city (i.e., to First Nations peoples and Inuit) than First Nations peoples feel toward Métis and Inuit (39%), likely as a result of being the minority Aboriginal group in the city.

## Friendships in the city

**Majorities of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax report close friendships with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, although the latter is more common among Métis than First Nations peoples.**

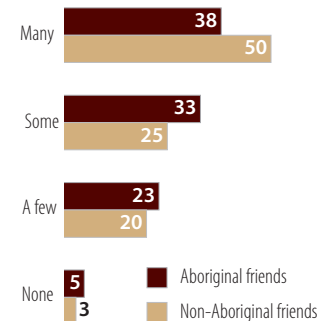
Beyond their sense of connection to members of their own or other Aboriginal groups, the *UAPS* asked Aboriginal residents of Halifax about their friendships with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

**FRIENDSHIPS WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLE.** Overall, seven in ten (71%) Aboriginal peoples in Halifax say they have many (38%) or some (33%) close friends in the city who are Aboriginal, and this is similar for First Nations peoples and Métis. However, the likelihood of having many close Aboriginal friends is lower in Halifax than in the western cities.

**FRIENDSHIPS WITH NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLE.** Just as *UAPS* participants in Halifax have close Aboriginal friends in the city, a similar proportion have close non-Aboriginal friends where they live. Three in four (75%) say they have many (50%) or some (25%) close friends who are non-Aboriginal, although Métis (61%) are more likely than First Nations peoples (43%) to say they have *many* close non-Aboriginal friends. These findings are similar to those reported by *UAPS* participants in general.

### Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal friends

Do you have many, some, a few, or no close friends in Halifax 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. However, Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are among the least likely to report personally having to deal with this kind of racism.

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

- **A slim majority of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax believe that they are viewed negatively by non-Aboriginal people, although this perception is less widespread than in most other *UAPS* cities.** They identify a wide range of negative and distorting stereotypes that they believe non-Aboriginal people hold about them, the most common being about substance abuse. Stereotypes relating to laziness and “getting a free ride” are also more commonly mentioned in Halifax than in other *UAPS* cities. Views are divided about whether impressions are improving or staying the same, with only a small minority who think they are deteriorating.
- **Most Aboriginal peoples in Halifax agree that others behave in an unfair or negative way toward Aboriginal people.** Just over half also say they, personally, have been teased or insulted because of their Aboriginal background, but this proportion is lower than in any other *UAPS* city. Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are similarly divided on the question of whether they feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people. In all three cases, Métis express more negative views than do First Nations peoples.
- **Aboriginal peoples in Halifax report a substantial amount of contact with non-Aboriginal banks and the health care system, but much less experience with other services.** Reported use of non-Aboriginal social housing programs is higher than average, while use of social assistance programs is lower than average. Positive assessments of these service experiences largely outweigh negative ones. Negative experiences are generally related to being poorly treated by the people who deliver the services, rather than to concerns about the overall effectiveness of the services or about the process of accessing them.

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

#### Non-Aboriginal perceptions – positive or negative

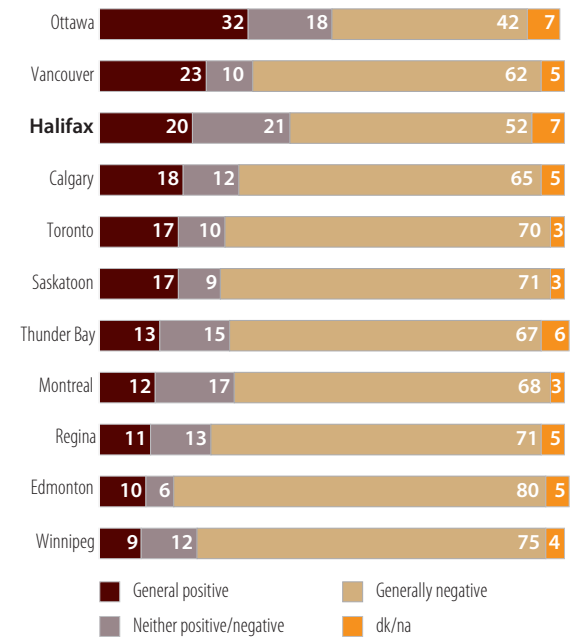
*Half of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax believe that they are seen in a negative light by non-Aboriginal people, but this perception is less widespread than among urban Aboriginal peoples in general.*

Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are twice as likely to believe that non-Aboriginal people view them negatively as to think they are seen in a positive light.

Half (52%) of UAPS participants in Halifax believe non-Aboriginal people’s impressions of Aboriginal people are generally negative, a view that is less common than average for the UAPS cities. In turn, the proportions who believe non-Aboriginal people’s impressions are generally positive (20%), or are neither positive nor negative (21%), are larger than average. Views about non-Aboriginal perceptions of Aboriginal peoples are similar among First Nations peoples and Métis in Halifax.

#### 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 Halifax:**

*Non-Aboriginal people see natives as lazy people who depend on the system too much. They think that we get too many benefits from the government.*

*That Aboriginals want to be like non-Aboriginals – that they want to have their cake and eat it too.*

*They think we have it made: no taxes, free houses, free furniture, etc.*

*Alcoholics, drug addicts, flaky, stupid.*

*That they are alcoholics and that they are lazy. That they are always looking for government handouts.*

*Racism has become more subtle – looks, quips, body language.*

*Lazy, drunk, less intelligence, less capable, unable to hold a job. Those who have successful lives are assumed to have equality program assistance.*

*Drunken Indian. Uneducated. No class.*

*Uneducated, alcoholics, “bums” who are spoiled by the government.*

*Some of the non-Aboriginals think we still live in teepees, and they think that saying “savage” is a joke.*

## Perceptions of non-Aboriginal stereotypes of Aboriginal people

**Addiction problems lead the list of negative and distorting stereotypes that non-Aboriginal people are believed to hold about Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal residents in Halifax are more likely than average to feel associated with laziness and “getting a free ride.”**

Overwhelmingly, Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples in Halifax believe non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of stereotypes of Aboriginal people, and that these most commonly relate to 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 asked (unprompted, without response options offered) what they believe are the most common stereotypes that non-Aboriginal peoples hold about Aboriginal people, five main stereotypes emerged:

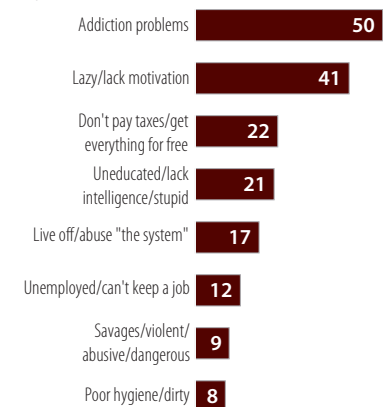
- **Addiction problems.** Half (50%) believe non-Aboriginal people associate them with drug and alcohol abuse. While this is the stereotype most frequently mentioned by UAPS participants in Halifax, it is less pronounced than in any other city except in Ottawa (among Inuit).
- **Lazy and lack motivation.** Four in ten (41%) Aboriginal people in Halifax think this is a common stereotype non-Aboriginal people hold of Aboriginal people. This view is more common in Halifax than average for the UAPS cities. Within Halifax, it is more widely held by Métis than by First Nations peoples.
- **Get a “free ride.”** Two in ten (22%) believe non-Aboriginal people see Aboriginal people as not paying their fair share of the tax burden and getting everything for free. This perception is also more pronounced than average in Halifax.
- **Lack intelligence and education.** Two in ten (21%) believe non-Aboriginal people see Aboriginal people as lacking intelligence and education.
- **Abuse government assistance.** Just under two in ten (17%) believe Aboriginal peoples are seen as taking unfair advantage of government benefits.

Smaller proportions of UAPS participants in Halifax (12% or fewer) believe non-Aboriginal people hold several other negative stereotypes of Aboriginal people, including that they are perennially unemployed and unable to keep a job; are violent or dangerous; or have poor hygiene. Notably, the perceptions that they are associated with poverty and welfare, homelessness and criminal activity are less widely held in Halifax than average, and particularly in comparison to the Prairie cities.

### Common stereotypes of Aboriginal people

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

#### Top mentions



## Do Aboriginal peoples believe non-Aboriginal impressions are changing?

***Opinion is divided about how non-Aboriginal people's impressions of Aboriginal people have changed over the past few years.***

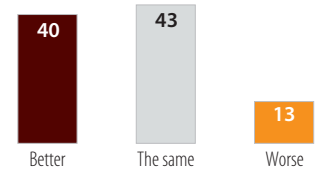
In Halifax, there are mixed opinions about whether non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people has improved over the past few years or stayed the same; only a small minority think impressions have deteriorated.

When asked about the change in non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people over the past few years, four in ten (40%) UAPS participants in Halifax think impressions have gotten better and a similar proportion (43%) think they have stayed the same. Just 13 percent believe non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people has gotten worse over the past few years. These perceptions are consistent with those of urban Aboriginal peoples overall.

Métis are more likely than First Nations peoples to believe that impressions have deteriorated, although this is still the minority opinion among both groups.

### 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?



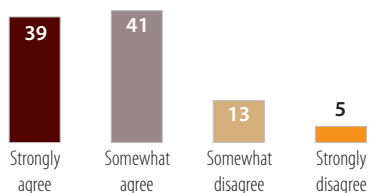
## 3.2 Experiences of discrimination

***Eight in ten Aboriginal peoples in Halifax agree that others behave in an unfair or negative way toward Aboriginal people as whole. Half report that they personally have been teased or insulted because of their Aboriginal background, the lowest proportion of any UAPS city.***

There is a broad consensus in Halifax that Aboriginal peoples, as a group, experience widespread negative treatment. However, there is much less consensus on the question of whether they as individuals have been treated unfairly because of who they are.

### Negative behaviour

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



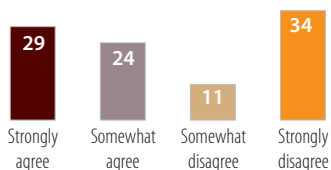
**NEGATIVE AND UNFAIR BEHAVIOUR TOWARD ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN GENERAL.** The large majority of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax agree with the statement "I think others behave in an unfair or negative way towards Aboriginal people." Eight in ten either strongly (39%) or somewhat (41%) agree with this statement. Although only a minority (18%) disagree with this statement, this proportion is twice the average for the UAPS cities. Within Halifax, Métis are more likely than First Nations peoples to strongly agree that people behave negatively towards Aboriginal peoples.

### PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH INSULTS AND TEASING BY NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLES.

Aboriginal peoples in Halifax hold mixed views about whether 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," just over half (53%) strongly or somewhat agree, while just under half (45%) somewhat or strongly disagree. Métis are more likely than First Nations peoples in Halifax to report having been insulted because of who they are.

### Unfair treatment

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



Compared to their counterparts in other UAPS cities, Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are the least likely to say they, personally, have been treated unfairly because of their Aboriginal background.



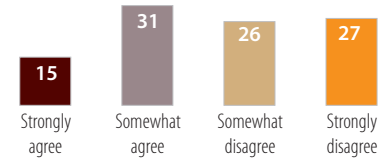
## Sense of acceptance

**Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are divided on the question of whether they feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people. However, a sense of being accepted is less common in Halifax than average.**

Aboriginal peoples in Halifax express mixed views about whether or not they feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people. Despite being less likely than Aboriginal peoples in other UAPS cities to report personal experience with discrimination and prejudice, Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are more likely than average to say they don't feel accepted.

Just over half (53%) of UAPS participants in Halifax either strongly (27%) or somewhat (26%) disagree with the statement "I don't feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people." However, just under half strongly (15%) or somewhat (31%) agree that they do not feel accepted. In Halifax, Métis are less likely than First Nations peoples to feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people.

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 Halifax feel their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have shaped their lives and identities in positive ways. At the same time, the minority who say such experiences had no impact on them is larger than in other UAPS cities.***

For the most part, Aboriginal peoples in Halifax 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 Halifax are most likely to frame the impact in a positive light. Summarized, the responses of both Métis and First Nations peoples fall into the following three main categories:

- **Greater motivation.** A greater sense of motivation and desire to achieve is one of the top way in which Aboriginal peoples in Halifax (26%) 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 made them stronger, drove them to work harder at school and elsewhere, and made them more ambitious.
- **More tolerant and accepting.** One in four (23%) Aboriginal peoples in Halifax also feel they developed more tolerance and acceptance of other people through their experiences with non-Aboriginal people. Specifically, they feel these experiences gave them a perspective on other cultures, and made them less prejudiced and judgmental, and they are much more likely than average to feel that these taught them to be more adaptable in a non-Aboriginal society (14%).
- **Mentoring and a sense of direction.** One in ten (11%) Aboriginal peoples in Halifax report how a non-Aboriginal teacher, professor or other individual gave them a positive experience and guidance about “how to stay out of trouble,” pursue a career, and mentored them at a critical point in their life.

One in ten (12%) Aboriginal peoples in Halifax 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, and distrust and anger.

A total of one in three Aboriginal peoples in Halifax either say their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have had no impact at all on them (28%), or are unable or unwilling to answer the question (7%). The view that such experiences had no impact is more common in Halifax than in any other UAPS city.

### 3.3 Experiences with non-Aboriginal services and organizations

#### Extent of contact with non-Aboriginal services

**Aboriginal peoples in Halifax report a substantial amount of contact with non-Aboriginal banks and with the health care system, but much less contact with other services offered. They are more likely than average to report recent use of social housing programs, and among the least likely of all UAPS participants to have recently used social assistance programs.**

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 Halifax have contact with non-Aboriginal services or organizations? Of the seven non-Aboriginal service types included in the survey, banks or credit unions, and the health care system are by far the most likely to have been recently used by Aboriginal peoples living in Halifax. Nine in ten (90%) say they have made use of banks/credit unions in the past 12 months, and more than eight in ten (84%) say the same about the health care system.

There is a substantial gap between these two non-Aboriginal services and others in degree of contact reported. Minorities report using non-Aboriginal employment and training services (27%), elementary and secondary schools as a parent (23%), social housing programs (23%) and non-Aboriginal social assistance programs (17%).

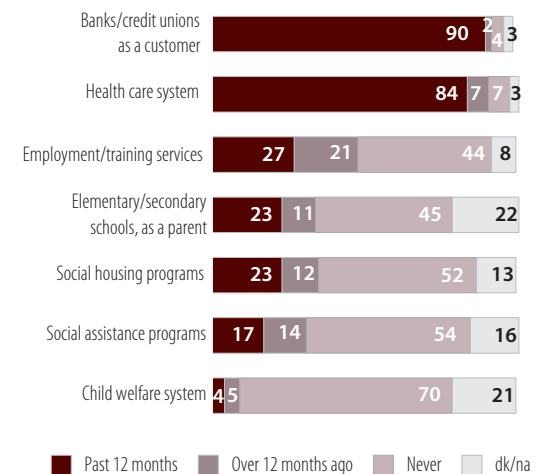
Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are least likely to report recent experience with the child welfare system. A very small proportion (4%) report using it within the past year, and another five percent have had less recent contact, while the majority (70%) have never used it (in this case, two in ten do not know or choose not to answer the question).

Reported contact with these non-Aboriginal services and organizations is largely similar for First Nations peoples and Métis in Halifax, with the exception of employment services and social assistance programs, both of which are more widely used by First Nations peoples.

The UAPS found some variation in contact with these non-Aboriginal services across the 11 cities, perhaps due to the specific needs of the community and/or the varying availability of Aboriginal services in these areas. Compared to in other cities, Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are more likely than average to have had recent contact with non-Aboriginal social housing programs, and are among the least likely to have recently used social assistance programs.

#### Contact with non-Aboriginal services and organizations

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



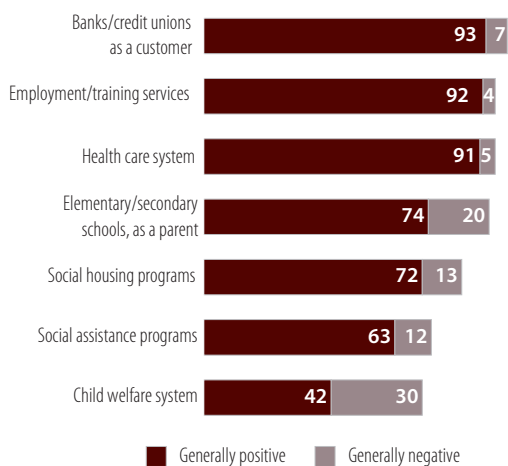
Note: Percentages don't add up to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer this question.

## Assessing experiences with non-Aboriginal services

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

### 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.

Positive experiences with non-Aboriginal services in Halifax tend to far outweigh negative ones.<sup>12</sup>

Aboriginal peoples in Halifax who have ever used or made contact with these non-Aboriginal services<sup>13</sup> were asked if the experience was generally positive or generally negative. They are most likely to report positive experiences with banks and credit unions (93%), employment and training services (92%), and the health care system (91%). In each of these cases, only a minority (ranging between 4% and 7%) say they had a negative experience.

Positive experiences are the case for fewer, but still majorities, of those who have accessed elementary or secondary schools (as a parent) (74%), social housing programs (72%) and social assistance programs (63%). In each of these cases, between one and two in ten say their experience was negative.

Perceptions of these services among Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are largely shared with those living in other *UAPS* cities, although they are among the most positive about their experiences with the health care system.

12 Assessments of the child welfare system are not reported due to the small sample size of respondents reporting experience with this service (n=20).

13 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 Halifax.

**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 about being treated poorly. Almost half (47%) say their experience was negative due to racism or discrimination; because they were treated unfairly or disrespectfully; or because they encountered staff who were judgmental or lacked empathy.

Two in ten (17%) report negative consequences to the service, mostly related to having an application rejected. Others (15%) question the effectiveness of the service they used, saying it was not supportive, unhelpful and didn't actually achieve its goal. Thirteen percent have concerns that the services lack resources, such as qualified staff or funding, and therefore provide poor or disorganized service. They are much less likely than average to report having had problems related to process (7%), such as waiting lists, paperwork or that the service costs too much.

### What Aboriginal peoples in Halifax say about their negative experiences with non-Aboriginal services:

*I just didn't like the way they were talking to me.*

*There is obvious hidden systemic racism delivered with the basic services.*

*The worker wasn't available. They should have back-up. I don't think that was professional for a government service.*

*Lack of service, felt lied to. Halfway through the mortgage process, we discovered we had to do it another way – had to deal with three different people.*

*Banks and credit unions refused me a credit loan, always treated me poorly. At one point, I thought I was going to take the bank to the Human Rights Commission.*

*I'm a professional graduate of two programs and able to earn a very good income from both. I was denied a student line of credit even though I am already a well-educated woman. A man would have gotten it!*

*They put me through the wringer. I was separated from my husband and we had a house, had to go through the court system.*

*General assumptions before knowing credit history.*

## 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 Halifax, and *UAPS* participants in this city are among the most convinced of the importance of these services to the well-being of their community.

### Key findings

- **Half of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax use and rely at least occasionally on Aboriginal services and organizations in the city, similar to the proportion in other *UAPS* cities.** They are used primarily because of their positive environments, but also for specific services. Users of Aboriginal services in Halifax are more likely than those in any other *UAPS* city to mention friendship centres as being of particular value to them.
- **Regardless of how much interaction they have with Aboriginal services, there is a strong consensus among Aboriginal peoples in Halifax (and especially among Métis) that they are very important.** In fact, the perceived need for Aboriginal services in all areas (e.g., addiction programs, child and family services, employment services) is more widespread in Halifax than in other *UAPS* cities.

## 4.1 Use of urban Aboriginal services and organizations

### Extent of use of services

***Five in ten Aboriginal peoples in Halifax use Aboriginal services and organizations in the city at least occasionally, which is on par with reported use in other UAPS cities.***

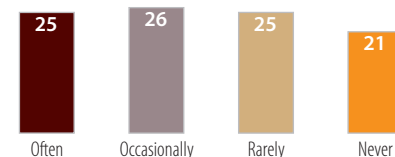
Many Aboriginal services and organizations promote culture and identity for urban Aboriginal peoples through the types of services they offer, the events they sponsor and simply through their existence as Aboriginal organizations in Halifax. The *UAPS* asked participants how often, and why, they use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

Half of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax often (25%) or occasionally (26%) use or rely on Aboriginal services or organizations, while half rarely (25%) or never (21%) do so. 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%). In Halifax, the proportion who never use Aboriginal services is higher among Métis than among First Nations peoples.

What explains the use of Aboriginal services and organizations in cities? The sample size for Halifax alone (202 survey participants) is too small to allow for a detailed analysis by socio-demographic factors. However, the national *UAPS* data (across all 11 cities) indicate 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 Halifax?



**Why urban Aboriginal peoples in Halifax use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations:**

*Because I'm welcome.*

*Because there are always things to do at the friendship centre.*

*The people at the friendship centre helped me find a job.*

*Part of the community, gives you that connected feeling.*

*I did use Aboriginal employment services. They helped me with my resume and my job search. It was a good service.*

*I am Aboriginal. It's there for us, so I have to take advantage of it. They have a deeper understanding of our needs. Our needs are different than the mainstream population.*

*They are there when we are in need of advice, friendship or for help*

## Reasons for use

***As in other cities, Aboriginal services and organizations in Halifax are used primarily because of the positive environment they create for users, but also for specific resources.***

Beyond asking Aboriginal peoples in Halifax 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 Halifax who are regular users<sup>14</sup> of the city's Aboriginal services and organizations say they are motivated by the specific services offered and/or by the positive environments they find. 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.

- **Positive environment.** Four in ten (39%) users of Aboriginal services and organizations say they are drawn by the presence of positive environments, whether it be the supportive community, personal relationships, connection to Aboriginal culture, greater degree of comfort or the convenience that they offer. Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are more likely than average to value the convenience of these services.
- **Specific resources.** Three in ten (30%) regular users of Aboriginal services and organizations are motivated by a desire/need for specific resources. Programs and social services, education services, and services related to Aboriginal benefits or advocacy, are the most typical resources they describe using.
- **Employee/volunteer.** One in ten (13%) are connected to Aboriginal services and organizations because they are either employed by them, or volunteer their time and services.

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<sup>14</sup> Those who report using services often or occasionally (51% of UAPS participants in Halifax overall).



**WHY THEY DON'T USE.** Those who rarely or never use Aboriginal services and organizations (46% of UAPS participants in Halifax overall) give various reasons why not, including that they are not interested or are too busy (23%), that they don't need or want to become reliant on these services (17%), they are unaware of what is available (17%), and/or that they can't access or don't qualify for these services (17%). Considerably fewer do not use them because they feel the services aren't helpful (6%). Twelve percent say they don't use the services now but would know where to go if they needed them. 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 Halifax are more likely than any other UAPS participants to identify friendship centres as useful to them.**

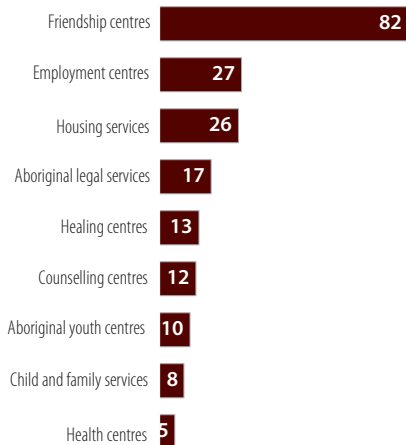
Aboriginal peoples who have used Aboriginal services and organizations in Halifax have found a wide range of these to be useful, but first and foremost value friendship centres (82%). One in four each have received useful services from employment centres (27%) and housing services (26%). Smaller proportions have found Aboriginal legal services (17%), healing centres (13%), counselling centres (12%) and youth centres (10%) to be helpful.

Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are most likely of those using Aboriginal services in the UAPS cities to mention friendship centres as being particularly valuable; they are also more likely than average to mention housing services. In turn, they are less likely than others to mention employment centres, counselling centres, health centres, and child and family services as being useful to them.

### 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.

### Why urban Aboriginal peoples in Halifax do not use or rely on Aboriginal services and organizations:

*I am very busy working and taking care of my family, but I know where to go to access the Aboriginal services I need.*

*Because I don't have that Indian status card and I guess you would have to have one of those to get anything.*

*There's nothing I need from them.*

*I don't need the daycare anymore, but my relationship with the friendship centre went from being a client to being on the board.*

*I don't even know where to go or where to start in my research to find them. I'm simply not informed. It's too bad.*

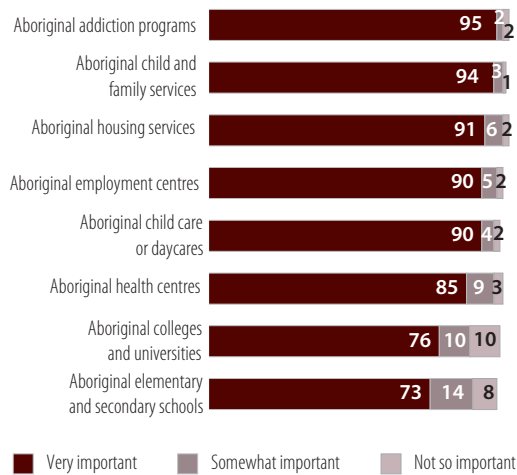
## 4.2 Importance of Aboriginal services in addition to non-Aboriginal services

**Almost all Aboriginal peoples in Halifax believe it is very important to also have Aboriginal services. In fact, they are among the most convinced of all UAPS participants of the need for Aboriginal-specific services.**

There is a strong consensus among Aboriginal peoples in Halifax that it is important for *Aboriginal* services to exist in addition to non-Aboriginal ones.

### 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.

Nine in ten or more each say it is *very important* to have Aboriginal addiction programs (95%), child and family services (94%), housing services (91%), employment centres (90%), and child care or daycares (90%). More than eight in ten say the same about Aboriginal health centres (85%), while three-quarters say it is *very important* to have Aboriginal colleges and universities (76%), and Aboriginal elementary and secondary schools (73%). In all cases, most of the remaining participants say having these Aboriginal services is *somewhat important*, and no more than 10 percent say it is *not so important*.

Aboriginal residents of Halifax are more convinced than urban Aboriginal peoples in general of the importance of Aboriginal-specific services in all of these areas. Within Halifax, the perceived importance of having Aboriginal services is higher in almost all cases among Métis.

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 Halifax, their reasons for choosing their neighbourhood (and the extent to which they feel they have a choice), how much they believe they can make Halifax a better place to live, along with their openness to other languages and cultures.

### Key findings

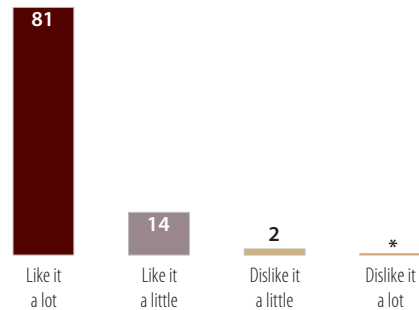
- **Most urban Aboriginal peoples (across all cities) like living in their cities, and this is especially true for Aboriginal peoples living in Halifax.** They like Halifax primarily for the quality of life it offers (including the variety and convenience of amenities). Their primary concern about life in the city is about common urban pressures like overcrowding and the cost of living, and crime.
- **Proximity to school or work is the most common reason for choosing a neighbourhood.** Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are more likely than average to feel they have a lot of choice as to where they live in the city.
- **Aboriginal peoples are divided as to whether they can make Halifax a better place to live.** Just over four in ten are confident that they can make a positive difference in their city, and their level of confidence is lower than in any other city except Ottawa (among Inuit).
- **Like their counterparts in other *UAPS* cities, Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are strongly accepting of other languages and cultures, and much more so than *non-Aboriginal* people in Halifax.**

## 5.1 Satisfaction with city life

**Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are among the most positive about life in their city, due primarily to the quality of life it offers.**

### Like living in Halifax

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



\* Less than one percent

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 Halifax.

Almost all Aboriginal peoples say they like living in Halifax, and the degree of satisfaction expressed is higher than in any other UAPS city except Vancouver. When asked, eight in ten (81%) like it a lot, while another 14 percent indicate they like it a little. Very few say they dislike living in their city a little (2%) or a lot (less than 1%). Satisfaction with living in Halifax is similar for Métis and First Nations peoples in the city.

What do UAPS participants like most and least about living in Halifax? General quality of life, employment and education opportunities, and city life are among Halifax's most appreciated features, while certain city conditions (i.e., overcrowding) and crime are what they like least about the city.

**LIKE MOST.** When asked what they like most about living in Halifax (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 Halifax is the quality of life it offers. A total of four in ten (42%) indicate this is what they most like about living in the city. They place the greatest emphasis on the variety and convenience of amenities (31%), but also mention good neighbourhoods, resources and services, and green spaces.
- **Career and education.** Another feature Aboriginal peoples like about living in Halifax is the career and employment opportunities (15%), and the education and training available to them (9%).
- **City life.** More than one in ten (14%) say they enjoy the city life available in Halifax, including recreation and entertainment opportunities, the fast pace of city life, and the cultural and artistic events.

Smaller proportions of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax say they appreciate the presence of family and friends (8%), the friendly people (8%), or that they were born or grew up in Halifax and are very familiar with the city (7%).

First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to say they like the employment opportunities in Halifax; in turn, Métis are more likely to mention that they grew up in the area, the lower crime rate and that they like everything about life in Halifax.

**LIKE LEAST.** What do Aboriginal peoples like least about living in Halifax? Although they mention a broad range of issues, their responses clearly reveal two main concerns.

- **Urban pressures.** A universal complaint of all city-dwellers, one in three (35%) Aboriginal peoples in Halifax dislike certain urban pressures, such as a sense of overcrowding, the higher cost of living, the traffic and noise. However, this evokes less concern in Halifax than in Toronto (55%), Calgary (48%), Vancouver (45%) and Montreal (45%), where it is by far the primary complaint.
- **Crime.** One in three (33%) Aboriginal peoples in Halifax also say they are concerned about crime in the city, which is notably similar to the level of concern in the Prairie cities (ranging from 29% to 45%), and higher than in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Thunder Bay.

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (13% or fewer each) mention other features they dislike about living in Halifax, including being away from family/friends and a lack of employment opportunities. Six percent say there is nothing that they dislike about the city.

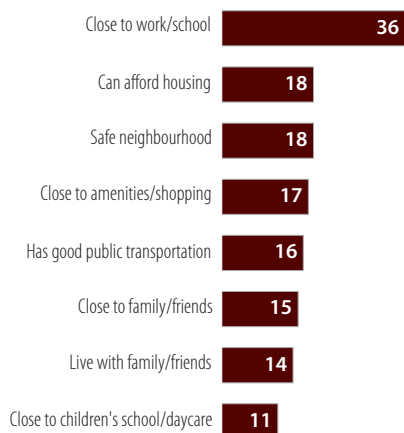
First Nations peoples are more likely than Métis to mention they dislike being far from family and friends, while Métis are more likely to mention the lack of employment.

## 5.2 Reasons for choice of neighbourhood

**Proximity to school or work is the most common reason for Aboriginal peoples' choice of neighbourhood in Halifax, and to a greater extent than in other UAPS cities. Halifax residents are among the most likely to believe they have choice about where they live.**

### Why do you live in your neighbourhood?

Why do you live in the neighbourhood you do?



Aboriginal peoples in Halifax choose their neighbourhood for a range of reasons, but they are most likely to have been influenced by its proximity to work or school.

When asked why they live in their neighbourhood (unprompted, without response options offered), Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are most likely to say it is because it is close to work or school (36%); this reason is more widely mentioned in Halifax than average.

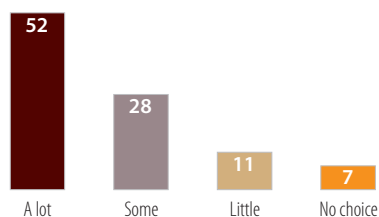
Other important considerations include affordability of the housing (18%), the perception that it offered a safe environment (18%), the desire to be close to amenities (17%), good public transit (16%), the opportunity to live *with* (14%) or *close to* (15%) family and friends, and proximity to daycare (11%). A variety of other reasons are mentioned, but none by more than six percent (each) of participants.

The affordability of housing, perceptions of safety, access to good public transit and being close to other members of their identity group are more salient factors for First Nations peoples than for Métis. In turn, Métis are more likely than others to say they live in the neighbourhood where they grew up.

**EXTENT OF CHOICE.** To what extent do Aboriginal peoples in Halifax feel they have a choice about the neighbourhood they live in? When asked directly, eight in ten say they have either a lot (52%) or some (28%) choice about where they live in the city, compared to two in ten who feel they have either a little (11%) or no choice at all (7%). Aboriginal residents of Halifax, together with those living in Montreal (53%) and Toronto (51%), are the most likely of all UAPS participants to feel they have *a lot* of choice about where they live.

### 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

**Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are divided on the question of whether they can make the city a better place to live. Their sense of empowerment is weaker than in any other UAPS city except Ottawa, and is also weaker than that expressed by non-Aboriginal people in Halifax.**

There are mixed opinions among Aboriginal peoples in Halifax as to whether or not they can make the city a better place to live, but confidence in this area is lower than among Aboriginal residents of other cities.

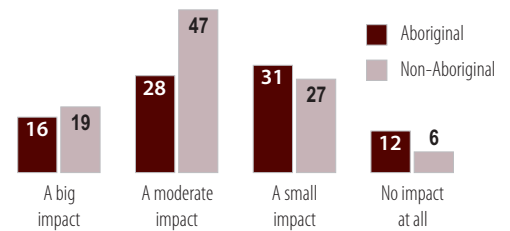
Just over four in ten (44%) Aboriginal peoples in Halifax think people like themselves can have either a big (16%) or moderate (28%) impact in making the city a better place to live. An equal proportion (43%) believe they can have only a small impact (31%) or no impact at all (12%) on their city. Métis are much more likely than First Nations peoples to believe they can have at least a moderate impact on the city.

Individuals in Halifax have among the weakest sense of empowerment, indicated by one of the smallest proportions of all UAPS participants who believe they can have at least a moderate impact in making their city a better place to live. By comparison, Toronto and Vancouver have the strongest sense of empowerment (37% and 35%, respectively, say they can have a big impact on their city).

UAPS participants' belief in their ability to be positive agents of change in Halifax is far below the belief non-Aboriginal people have in their own ability to affect change: non-Aboriginal people are more likely to believe they can make at least a moderate impact on Halifax (66% vs. 44% of Aboriginal people).

#### Making Halifax 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

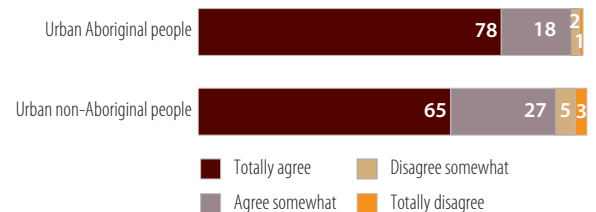
**Like Aboriginal peoples in other cities, Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are strongly accepting of other languages and cultures, and much more so than non-Aboriginal peoples in Halifax.**

Virtually all Aboriginal peoples in Halifax totally (78%) or somewhat (18%) 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, although the proportion in total agreement is highest in Vancouver and Montreal. In Halifax, Métis and First Nations peoples are equally likely to totally agree with this statement.

**ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVES.** Notably, Aboriginal peoples in Halifax 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 Halifax (78%) are considerably more likely than non-Aboriginal people in the city (65%) to totally agree that there is room for a variety of languages and cultures in Canada. This pattern is consistent across most UAPS cities, with the exception of Calgary.

#### 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. Education is also important for Aboriginal peoples in Halifax, as are a broad range of other aspirations including a strong family and general happiness and success.

### Key findings

- **The leading life aspirations for Aboriginal peoples in Halifax include *personal* goals such as raising a family, completing one's education and being happy, as well as more *financially-based* goals of home ownership, financial security and a good job.** Their life aspirations are largely consistent with those of Aboriginal peoples in other *UAPS* cities, although they express more interest than average in general happiness and success, financial independence and finding a life partner.
- **For Aboriginal peoples in Halifax, the definition of success revolves around family and friends.** Compared to *UAPS* participants in larger cities, they place greater importance on financial independence and home ownership. They are also more likely than average to equate success with having a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage and living in traditional ways.
- **Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are most likely to express the hope that future generations make better decisions that make it possible for them to have better lives, and they are more likely than Aboriginal peoples in general to express this desire for their children and grandchildren.**



## 6.1 Life aspirations

**The top life aspirations for Aboriginal peoples in Halifax include raising a family and completing their education, and they are more likely than average to talk about achieving overall happiness, success and financial independence.**

What do Aboriginal peoples in Halifax 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.

Aboriginal peoples in Halifax identify a wide range of life aspirations, none of which stand out as more prominent than others. Important goals include raising or providing for a family (27%), completing their education (25%), happiness (24%), home ownership (22%), financial security or independence (21%), and having a good job or career (19%). Also mentioned are good health (14%), general success (14%), seeing their grandchildren be educated and succeed in life (13%), and finding a partner/spouse (11%). A wide range of other aspirations are mentioned by nine percent or fewer each, including travel, peace and balance, good family relationships and being the best that one can be.

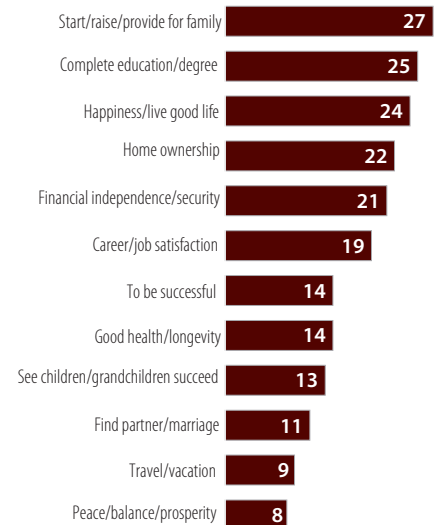
The life aspirations of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are largely consistent with those held by Aboriginal peoples living in the other *UAPS* cities. However, they are more likely than average to mention in achieving overall happiness, success and financial independence, and in finding a life partner/marriage.

In Halifax, First Nations peoples and Métis identify similar life aspirations, although First Nations peoples are more likely to mention a desire to complete their education and to own their own home, while Métis are more likely to aspire to travel and “the good life,” and to staying close to family.

### 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 Halifax most associate success with family and friends. Compared to UAPS participants in other cities, they place greater importance on having a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage and living in traditional ways.**

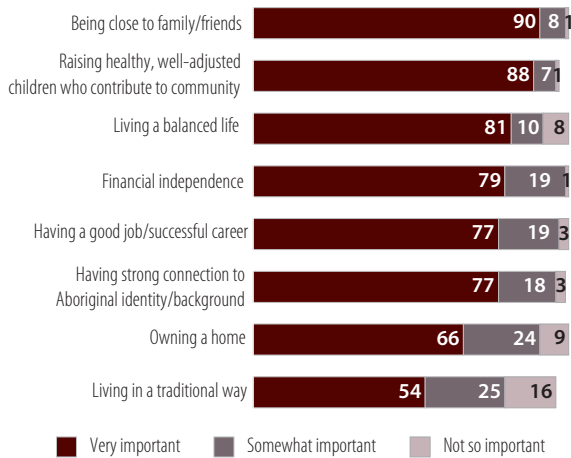
The UAPS asked urban Aboriginal peoples to rate the importance of eight factors to their idea of a successful life: financial independence; having a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity or background; owning a home; having a good job or a successful career; being close to family and friends; living a balanced life; living in a traditional way; and raising healthy, well-adjusted children who contribute to their community.

Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are most likely to consider family central to a successful life. Nine in ten each say it is very important to be close to family and friends (90%), and to raise healthy, well-adjusted children who contribute to their community (88%).

Close to eight in ten place the same degree of importance on living a balanced life (81%), financial independence (79%), having a good job or a successful career (77%), and having a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity or background (77%). Slightly fewer think it is very important to own a home (66%), while just over half (54%) say the same about living in a traditional way.

### 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.



First Nations peoples and Métis in Halifax possess similar ‘universal’ notions of a successful life.

Aboriginal peoples in smaller urban centres, including Halifax, place greater relative importance on financial independence and owning a home than do those living in the largest urban centres (Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal). The importance of a strong connection to their Aboriginal heritage is also higher in Halifax (77%), as well as in Vancouver (74%), Toronto (76%) and among Inuit in Ottawa (78%). Finally, living in a traditional way is more important to Aboriginal peoples in Halifax than in any of the other UAPS cities (except Ottawa).

## 6.3 Hopes for the future

**Aboriginal peoples in Halifax hope that future generations make better decisions and have better lives, and are more likely than average to express this desire.**

When 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), the most prominent hope is that future generations will learn and benefit from the past.

Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are most likely to hope that future generations will make better decisions that will result in them having better lives (26%). Moreover, they are more likely to express this hope than Aboriginal peoples in any other UAPS city.

They are also hopeful that their children and grandchildren will be more aware of, involved in and connected to their Aboriginal cultural community (16%); have better access to and support for educational opportunities (16%); live in a society free of racism and discrimination (14%); learn the importance of education and finishing school (11%); and avoid addiction to drugs and alcohol (10%).

A wide range of other hopes for future generations were also expressed (each by fewer than 7% of participants), including that they live happier, healthier and more stable lives, be more financially secure, have access to better resources, and to have strong and stable family relationships. Some of these hopes are presented in participants' own words in the sidebar on this page.

In Halifax, the hope that future generations will complete their education is more commonly expressed by Métis, while hopes for stronger connections to the Aboriginal cultural community are more widely expressed by First Nations peoples.

**The hopes of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax for future generations:**

*I hope they get a better education and make better choices than I have. Also, to learn our language and everything they can about our culture.*

*I am hoping that they listen and learn from our Elders. Also, to really think before making important choices or decisions.*

*Know their language. Be proud of who they are and never forget where they come from (grass roots). Know culture, traditions, treaties, medicine, spirituality.*

*Live in a world that's more accepting of who they are. That they avoid drugs and alcohol. That we will have decolonized ourselves and are self-governing. That they learn to speak up when they see injustice. Economically viable.*

*That they take education much more seriously, that they are taught their true history, that they are much more proud of who they are than the last generation and they stay drug-free – with good, healthy brains.*

*I hope that they live without racism and live in the community peacefully, and that they continue the ways and culture of our people.*

*Hope they will be more financially stable and have better home environments.*

*I hope that they learn from the mistakes I have made and use that knowledge to make life a little easier for themselves.*

## 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 the total population of Nova Scotia, but made up seven percent of individuals sentenced to custody in the correctional system.<sup>15</sup> That is, the representation of Aboriginal adults in provincial sentenced custody in Nova Scotia is more than three 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 Halifax 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 Halifax do not have great confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada; this finding is consistent with that in other UAPS cities.** Moreover, a majority of seven in ten endorse the concept of creating a separate Aboriginal justice system, more than in any other city except Toronto. While support in Toronto is related at least in part to the relatively widespread involvement (and thus lower confidence) in the criminal justice system, the strength of support in Halifax is particularly interesting since such experience is much less common here. In Halifax, the main reason given for supporting a separate justice system is the belief that Aboriginal culture and history is different, and that Aboriginal people would be better served by a system that recognizes these differences.
- **Majorities of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax support the idea of a criminal justice system that incorporates alternate approaches to justice.** Aboriginal peoples in Halifax are among the most likely to 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.

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<sup>15</sup> 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 Halifax express great confidence in the system, similar to other UAPS cities.**

Aboriginal peoples in Halifax hold mixed opinions about Canada's criminal justice system. Half (53%) have at least some confidence in this system, but this includes only a very few (6%) who have a lot of confidence. Just over four in ten say they have little (26%) or no (18%) confidence in the criminal justice system. These views are similar for First Nations peoples and Métis in Halifax.

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 Halifax alone (202 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) suggests 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). About one-quarter (27%) of Aboriginal peoples in Halifax report serious involvement of this sort, which is by far the lowest level of any UAPS city.

### 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

**There is strong support in Halifax for a separate Aboriginal justice system, more so than in any other city except Toronto.**

Support for the creation of an Aboriginal justice system is higher in Halifax than in any other city except Toronto.

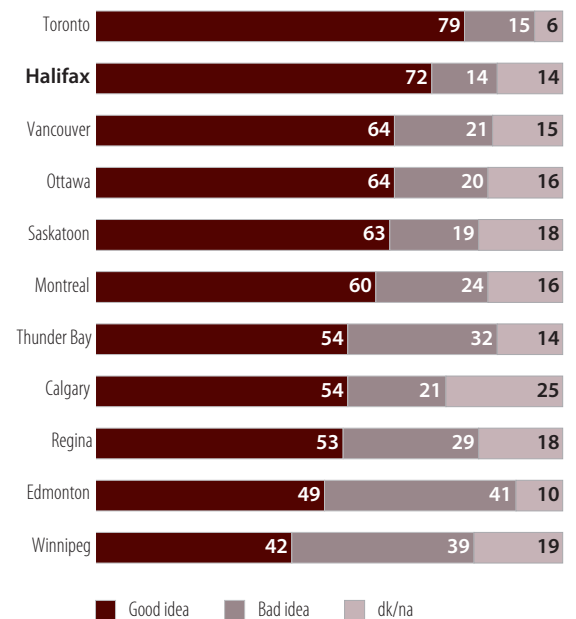
Seven in ten (72%) Aboriginal peoples in Halifax think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a good idea, clearly outweighing the one in ten (14%) who believe it is a bad idea. Another one in ten (14%) offer no opinion. Views are largely similar between First Nations peoples and Métis in Halifax.

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. The reason for the extent of support in Halifax is unclear, while in Toronto, the strength of support is at least partly related to the relatively widespread involvement in, and the lower degree of confidence in, the criminal justice system (which is not the case for Halifax).

### 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 Halifax think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is**

**...a good idea:**

*I don't really think that the white justice system treats them fairly. They have a tendency to be judged before they're tried. Cultural ways of being are not taken into account.*

*We need our own system to reflect our own values and beliefs.*

*I have spoken to a few people who were in trouble with the law and they found the sentencing circle helpful.*

*It couldn't possibly be worse than the existing system for First Nations people.*

*I don't think they're treated fairly. Their culture and their past are not considered and there's no effort to solve the problem.*

**...or a bad idea:**

*If you separate us from mainstream society, it makes a bigger gap between non-Aboriginals and Aboriginal peoples.*

*Yet another way for others to say we receive special treatment. Educate the justice system of Aboriginal ways, values and culture instead.*

*I feel that there should be one justice system for all people. Everyone should be treated the same.*

**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 Halifax are most likely to say 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 (26%).

Other reasons for supporting a separate system include the view that Aboriginal beliefs and values regarding justice are different (17%); that healing or sentencing circles are effective approaches (14%); would offer a setting that is more comfortable culturally for Aboriginal peoples (12%); would simply be better for Aboriginal peoples (10%); or would offset a current justice system that they perceive to be biased and that treats Aboriginal people unjustly (9%).

**WHY A BAD IDEA.** Aboriginal peoples in Halifax 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 by far most likely to say it is because they feel Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people should be treated equally to avoid discrimination (52%). Also mentioned is the view that a separate system would cause resentment or create conflict with the broader Canadian population (16%). Some opponents say it would be preferable to incorporate Aboriginal beliefs and values regarding justice into the existing justice system (9%).

## Perceived impact of alternate approaches

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

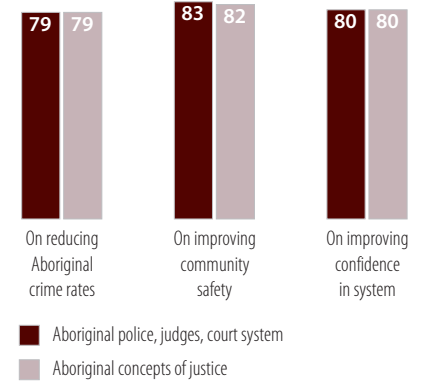
Aside from their opinions about the value of an Aboriginal justice system, what do Aboriginal peoples in Halifax think would make a difference in reducing Aboriginal crime rates, improving community safety, and improving their own confidence in the criminal justice system? Urban Aboriginal peoples were 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. Eight in ten Aboriginal peoples in Halifax 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. Support for these approaches tends to be even higher in Halifax than among 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 Halifax.

### 8.1 Perceptions of Aboriginal peoples

#### Top-of-mind impression

***There is no single common impression of Aboriginal peoples among non-Aboriginal people in Halifax, but the terms First Nations, Métis or Inuit are what come to mind most frequently.***

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

- **First Nations/Métis/Inuit.** For two in ten (19%) non-Aboriginal people in Halifax, what comes to mind is simply 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 the impression of Aboriginal peoples among one in ten (12%) non-Aboriginal people in Halifax.
- **Reserves.** For an additional one in ten (10%), reserves are what first come to mind when thinking of Aboriginal peoples.
- **Culture and art.** The most top-of-mind impression for another one in ten (9%) non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax is of cultural and artistic traditions among Aboriginal peoples.



Smaller proportions of non-Aboriginal people in Halifax associate Aboriginal peoples with abuse or mistreatment by Canadian citizens and government (6%); poverty and poor living conditions (6%); tax breaks, and additional rights and privileges (4%); loss of culture and oppression (4%); land taken by settlers or the government (4%); and treaty claims, disputes and protests (4%).

A wide variety of other impressions are cited, but none by more than three percent (each) of non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax. More than one in ten (14%) cannot say what first comes to mind when they think of Aboriginal peoples.

## Are non-Aboriginal impressions changing in Halifax?

***The majority of non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax say their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have not changed in the past few years.***

Non-Aboriginal Halifax residents are more likely to say their impressions of Aboriginal peoples are unchanged in recent years than to report their views have changed for better or worse.

Seven in ten (72%) non-Aboriginal people in Halifax say their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have stayed the same over the past few years. Of the minority who report shifting impressions of Aboriginal peoples, non-Aboriginal people in Halifax are slightly more likely to say these impressions have improved (17%) than worsened (10%). Halifax residents are among the least likely to report their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have recently worsened, consistent with perceptions in Vancouver (5%), Toronto (8%) and Montreal (10%).

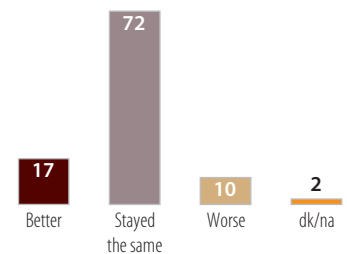
**REASONS FOR IMPROVING IMPRESSIONS.** Non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax who say their impressions of Aboriginal people have improved over time cite a number of reasons for this, most commonly the more visible and positive presence of Aboriginal peoples in the local community and media (22%).

Others associate their more positive impressions with more government or social assistance for Aboriginal peoples (17%); the development of a personal relationship with an Aboriginal person (14%); a better general understanding of Aboriginal culture or issues (13%); improvements in the economic, social or educational circumstances of Aboriginal peoples (12%); or learning more about Aboriginal cultures through educational courses (10%).

**REASONS FOR WORSENING IMPRESSIONS.** The very small group of Halifax residents who say their impressions of Aboriginal peoples has worsened primarily attribute this change to the perception that Aboriginal peoples rely on “handouts,” and are not self-sufficient. However, the sample size of non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax who report their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have worsened (n=24) is too small to provide a meaningful basis for further analysis or conclusions.

### Stable impressions

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



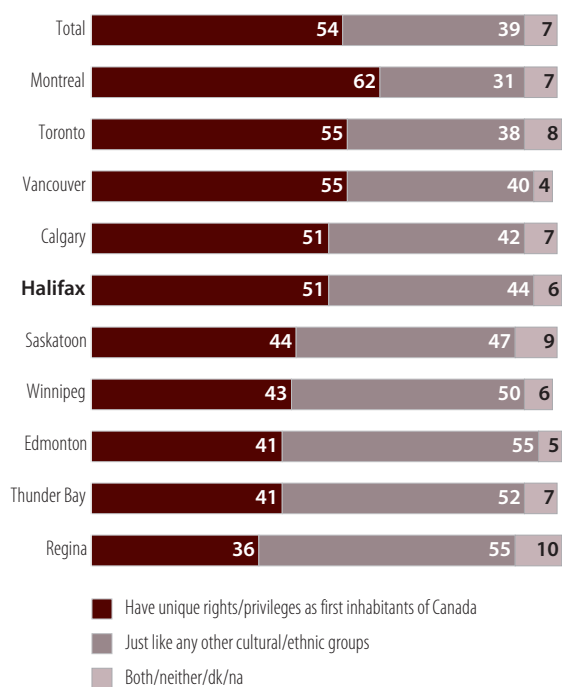
## 8.2 Unique rights and privileges

*Non-Aboriginal people in Halifax are divided on whether Aboriginal peoples are just like other ethnic or cultural groups in Canada, or have unique rights and privileges as the country's first inhabitants.*

Non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax are divided in their perceptions of whether Aboriginal people hold a distinct status, or whether they are just the same as other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada.

### Unique rights and privileges, or just like other groups?

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



Half (51%) of non-Aboriginal people in Halifax believe Aboriginal peoples have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada, whereas more than four in ten (44%) feel Aboriginal peoples are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada's multicultural society (2% say they are both equally or neither, while 4% do not have an opinion).

Views in Halifax are most similar to those in Calgary, Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal, where the belief that Aboriginal people have unique rights and privileges tends to outweigh belief that they are no different from other cultural or ethnic groups. Typically, it is residents of cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations who are more likely to hold this latter view.

## 8.3 The big picture: explaining views of Aboriginal peoples among non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax

***More than half of non-Aboriginal people in Halifax are “Cultural Romantics;” individuals with fairly high cultural and media exposure to Aboriginal peoples, but little personal contact.***

The overall picture of what is going on among Halifax residents in terms of their attitudes toward Aboriginal peoples can be somewhat elusive when there are so many individual questions and answers to consider. In order to achieve this overall picture, our examination of the survey results included 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.

Non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax are predominantly Cultural Romantics (57%), a segment that is larger in Halifax and Toronto than in any other city. The second largest group (23%) falls into the category of Dismissive Naysayers, although this view is less common in Halifax than in the Prairie cities and Montreal. Noticeably fewer Halifax residents are Connected Advocates (12%) or Inattentive Skeptics (8%), groups smaller than average for non-Aboriginal Canadians overall.

**Cultural Romantics (57%)**



**Dismissive Naysayers (23%)**



**Connected Advocates (12%)**



**Inattentive Skeptics (8%)**



## 8.4 Awareness and perceptions of an Aboriginal community in Halifax

### Awareness of an Aboriginal community in Halifax

***Almost all non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax know there are Aboriginal peoples living in the city, and many are also aware of the existence of an Aboriginal community, although to a lesser extent than in cities with a large relative Aboriginal population.***

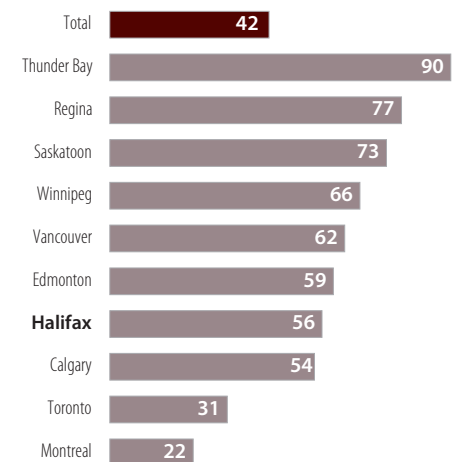
The UAPS non-Aboriginal survey asked non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax how aware they are of Aboriginal people and communities. Awareness of Aboriginal people in the city is almost universal, and many are also aware of an Aboriginal community (i.e., a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community)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

Nine in ten (89%) Halifax residents know there are Aboriginal peoples living in their city, a level of awareness consistent with most other UAPS cities; by comparison, such awareness is lower in Montreal (54%) and Toronto (73%).

A majority (56%) of Halifax residents are also aware of an Aboriginal *community* in their city. This is noticeably higher than the levels of awareness among residents of Toronto (31%) and Montreal (22%), but is lower than in Thunder Bay (90%), Regina (77%) and Saskatoon (73%).

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, Montreal and Halifax, making a distinct Aboriginal group and/or community more apparent to NA urban Canadians in those cities. However, this does not entirely explain the variation in levels of awareness among cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations. Other factors that may explain this variation 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.<sup>16</sup> For instance, among those aware of an Aboriginal community or Aboriginal people living in their city, awareness of any Aboriginal organizations which 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 (in Halifax, 39% are aware of any Aboriginal organization in their city).

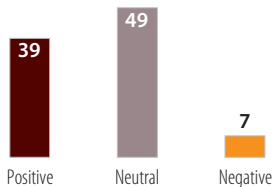
**Aware of Aboriginal community in my city**  
Are you aware of an Aboriginal community in your city?  
By community, I mean either a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community.



<sup>16</sup> 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 Halifax.

## Positive or negative presence

**Non-Aboriginal people in Halifax largely believe the presence of Aboriginal peoples has a positive or neutral impact on the city.**

How do Halifax residents perceive Aboriginal peoples and communities in their city? When asked, residents who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in the city offer mixed views about whether this presence is positive or neutral, but very few describe it as negative for Halifax.

Half (49%) of non-Aboriginal residents aware of Aboriginal people or communities in Halifax believe this is a neutral presence in their city, while four in ten (39%) think it is positive. Only seven percent view the presence of Aboriginal peoples or communities as negative for the city; this point of view is more prevalent in the Prairie cities and Thunder Bay than elsewhere in Canada.

## Contributions and challenges

**Halifax residents who view Aboriginal people and communities in their city positively are most likely to believe they contribute to Halifax's artistic and cultural diversity.**

In what ways do those who believe the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is positive for their city think Aboriginal people contribute?<sup>17</sup> When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), they are most likely to think Aboriginal peoples and communities contribute to Halifax in the following main ways:

- **Enrich urban art and culture.** Three in ten (32%) believe Aboriginal people and communities make great contributions to Halifax's artistic and cultural life.
- **Add cultural diversity.** One in four (25%) believe Aboriginal people and communities contribute different perspectives and add to the general cultural mosaic of Halifax.
- **Stimulate city economies.** Halifax residents also note the economic contributions Aboriginal peoples and communities make to the city as employees and employers of local businesses (20%), and by paying taxes (8%).
- **Impact of Aboriginal organizations.** Fifteen percent identify the work of Aboriginal community outreach programs and the ability of their leaders to act as role models for others as a contribution to the city.

An additional 16 percent of non-Aboriginal people in Halifax say Aboriginal peoples are citizens that contribute to society the same as everyone else.

<sup>17</sup> The subsample of Halifax residents who believe the presence of Aboriginal peoples is negative for the city (n=13) is too small for meaningful analysis of the reasons for this perception.

## Contact with Aboriginal people

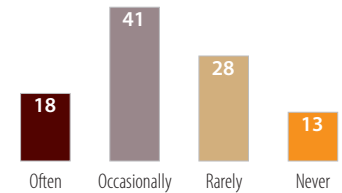
**The majority of non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax have at least occasional contact with Aboriginal people.**

A majority of non-Aboriginal people in Halifax are in contact with Aboriginal peoples in their daily lives, although not to the same extent as those in the Prairie cities and Thunder Bay. Two in ten (18%) Halifax residents say they often encounter Aboriginal people and another four in ten (41%) do so occasionally. The remainder rarely (28%) or never (13%) have contact with Aboriginal peoples.

Not surprisingly, NA 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, while this 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

**Very few Halifax residents have Aboriginal peoples as neighbours, co-workers or close friends, which is understandably more common in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations.**

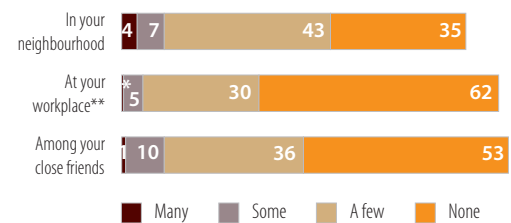
Aside from casual contact, how many Halifax residents know Aboriginal people, either as close friends, neighbours or co-workers? Among Halifax residents who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in the city, only a small proportion know many or some Aboriginal people as close friends (11%), neighbours (11%) or as co-workers (5% of those who are currently employed). In each case, the remainder know only a few or no Aboriginal people in those ways.

As could be expected, the proportions of NA 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, such as Regina, Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Thunder Bay.

When asked if they have any interest in having more Aboriginal friends, the majority (62%) of Halifax residents who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in the city say they are. Few (10%) say they are not interested, while one-quarter say “it depends” (23%). The level of interest in having more Aboriginal peoples as friends in Halifax is higher than in the Prairie cities and Thunder Bay, and similar to interest expressed in Toronto and Montreal.

### Numbers of Aboriginal people

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



\* Less than one percent

\*\* Excludes those who do not work

## 8.5 Perceived barriers facing Aboriginal people

### Most important issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada and in cities

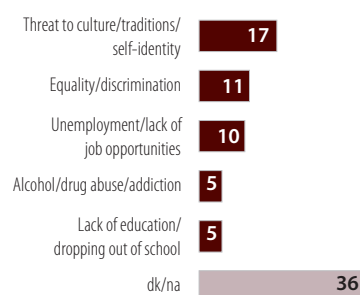
#### Most important issue in Canada (top mentions)

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?



*Halifax residents identify a range of challenges facing the Aboriginal population today, both generally and in cities, the most common being threats to culture and self-identity.*

**MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE.** When non-Aboriginal people in Halifax are asked to identify the one issue they consider to be the most important facing Aboriginal people in Canada today (asked unprompted, without offering response choices), there is no consensus in their views. The problem most frequently mentioned as facing Aboriginal peoples is threats to culture and self-identity (11%). Other problems frequently identified as facing Aboriginal peoples include substance abuse and addiction (8%), discrimination (8%), unemployment (8%), poverty and homelessness (8%), land claims (6%), a lack of education (5%), and issues of acknowledgement and recognition (5%). A wide range of other potential problems are mentioned, but none by more than four percent (each) of Halifax residents. Two in ten (20%) are unable to identify any issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada today.

**MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN CITIES.** Non-Aboriginal people in Halifax do not have any better sense of the most important issues facing Aboriginal people living in Canadian cities specifically (asked unprompted, without offering response choices). They are again most likely to identify threats to culture and self-identity (17%), followed by discrimination (11%) and unemployment (10%), as the leading concerns for the urban Aboriginal population. Halifax residents also perceive urban Aboriginal people to be dealing with substance abuse (5%), lack of education (5%) and poverty (4%). A number of other issues are mentioned, but none by more than three percent each, while more than one in three (36%) cannot identify any issues facing Aboriginal people in Canadian cities today.



## Indian residential schools

*Halifax residents are less aware of Indian residential schools than those in most other UAPS cities except Montreal and Toronto. However, a majority of those who are aware believe the challenges faced by Aboriginal communities are, at least to some extent, the result of this experience.*

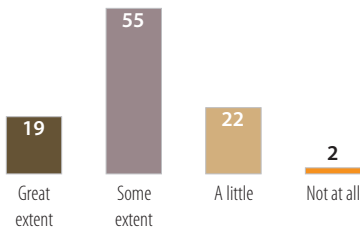
The survey examined awareness of Indian residential schools among non-Aboriginal people in Halifax, and their views about the consequences this experience has had for Aboriginal people.

**AWARENESS.** More than half (54%) of non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax report they have read or heard something about Indian residential schools. This level of awareness is similar to Toronto, and higher than in Montreal, but much lower than areas with a greater proportion of Aboriginal peoples, such as Regina, Saskatoon, Thunder Bay and Winnipeg.

**IMPACT.** Residents of Halifax who are aware of residential schools also recognize that these institutions have had a significant impact on Aboriginal peoples. Of those who are aware of residential schools, three in four think that the challenges faced by Aboriginal communities today are, to a great extent (19%) or to some extent (55%), the result of Aboriginal peoples' experiences in residential schools. A minority see little (22%) or no (2%) relationship between the two. Views among non-Aboriginal people in Halifax about the impact of residential schools are similar to the average seen across all UAPS cities.

### Impact of Indian residential schools\*

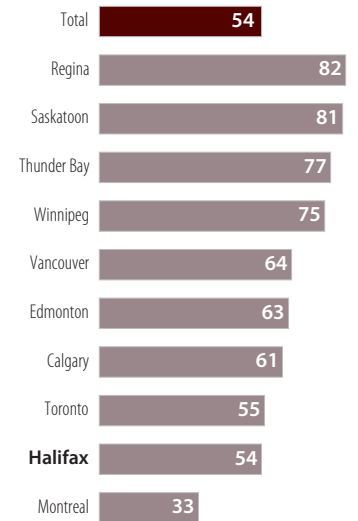
To what extent do you think that the challenges facing Aboriginal people communities today are a result of Aboriginal peoples' experiences in residential schools?



\* Subsample: Among those aware of Indian residential schools

### Aware of Indian residential schools

Have you read or heard anything about Indian residential schools?

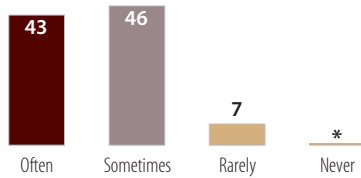


## Perceptions of discrimination

**The large majority of non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax think Aboriginal people experience discrimination at least some of the time, and as much or more than 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?



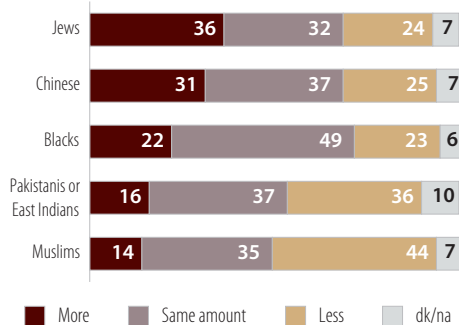
\* Less than one percent

There is widespread recognition among non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax that Aboriginal peoples are the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today, consistent with the views of non-Aboriginal Canadians overall. Nine in ten Halifax residents believe Aboriginal peoples often (43%) or sometimes (46%) face discrimination; only seven percent believe they rarely do and less than one percent say they never experience discrimination.

Majorities of non-Aboriginal people in Halifax 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, more than one in three (36%) Halifax residents think Aboriginal people endure *more* discrimination than do Jews, while three in ten think they are subject to more discrimination than the Chinese (31%). About two in ten think Aboriginal people endure more discrimination than Blacks (22%), while fewer say they experience more discrimination than groups such as Pakistanis or East Indians (16%), and Muslims (14%).

### 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 people face more discrimination relative to other groups are more common in cities with large relative Aboriginal populations. In fact, perceptions that Aboriginal peoples face *less* discrimination relative to Pakistanis or East Indians, or to Muslims are more common to Non-Aboriginal people in Halifax, Toronto and Montreal than among those living in other UAPS cities.

## Main source of problems facing Aboriginal peoples

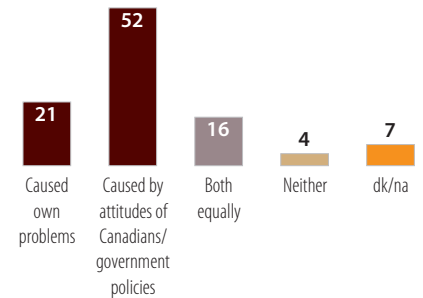
***The balance of opinion in Halifax is that the problems faced by Aboriginal peoples have largely been caused by the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of government rather than by Aboriginal peoples themselves.***

Non-Aboriginal people in Halifax tend to believe that many of the problems facing Aboriginal people are largely due to external factors over which they have no control. Half (52%) of non-Aboriginal people in Halifax attribute the problems faced by Aboriginal peoples to the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of governments, compared to two in ten (21%) who say these are problems that Aboriginal people have brought upon themselves. The remainder say both parties are responsible (16%), or neither side is to blame (4%), while seven percent offer no opinion.

These views are closer to those expressed in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver than to those in the Prairie cities of Edmonton, Regina, 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?

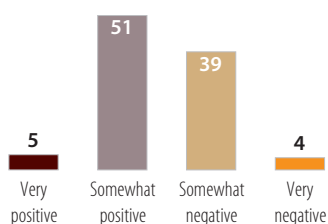


## 8.6 Relations with Aboriginal people and the future

### 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 people in Halifax are among the most optimistic about the current state of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.**

When Halifax residents are asked about the state of current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, they are more likely to be optimistic than pessimistic. A slight majority (56%) believe current relations are very (5%) or somewhat (51%) positive, while just over four in ten (43%) describe them as very (4%) or somewhat (39%) negative.

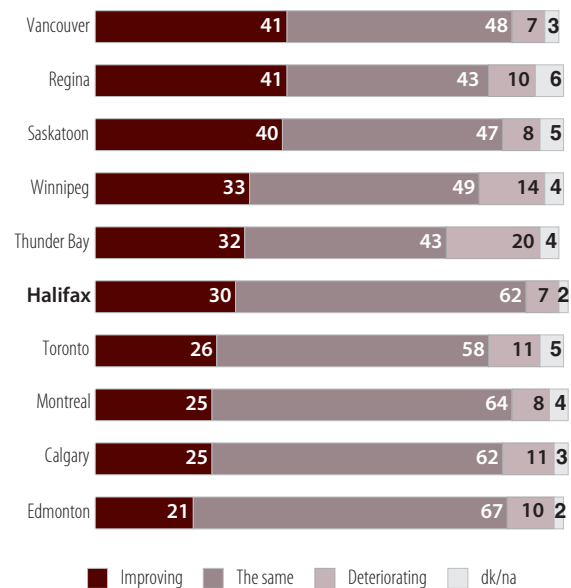
The view that current relations are positive is most pronounced in Vancouver (58%) and Halifax (56%), followed by Toronto (50%). In contrast, non-Aboriginal residents of Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Regina and Thunder Bay are more pessimistic than optimistic about their relationship with Aboriginal people. Montrealers and residents of Saskatoon are more evenly divided between the two viewpoints.

### Perceptions of change

**Non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax are more likely to say relations with Aboriginal peoples are staying the same than improving or deteriorating.**

#### Changing relations

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



The majority of non-Aboriginal people in Halifax see little change in the evolution of the Aboriginal-non-Aboriginal relationship. Six in ten (62%) say relations between the two groups are staying the same, while three in ten (30%) say they are improving; only a small minority (7%) believe relations are deteriorating.

Halifax residents are among the most likely to perceive the status quo in relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. By comparison, optimism that relations are improving is highest in Vancouver, Regina and Saskatoon.

## Future quality of life for Aboriginal peoples

**The majority of non-Aboriginal residents of Halifax are optimistic that Aboriginal peoples' quality of life will approach that of the rest of the population's in the next generation.**

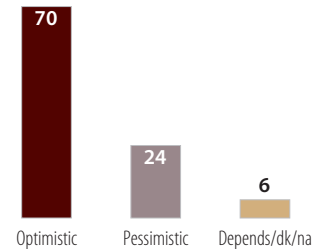
Looking to the future, what do Halifax residents foresee for the quality of life of Aboriginal peoples in their city? Residents of Halifax are largely optimistic that Aboriginal peoples' quality of life in the city will improve to the same level as that of non-Aboriginal people in the next generation. Seven in ten (70%) non-Aboriginal people in Halifax are optimistic about such progress, compared to one in four (24%) who are pessimistic. Notably, the degree of optimism about Aboriginal peoples' future quality of life is similar across all UAPS cities.

How do Halifax 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 Halifax suggest a range of approaches, including fair and/or equal treatment and opportunity for Aboriginal peoples (15%), the creation of greater educational opportunities (14%), promoting acceptance and respect of cultural differences (11%), providing funding for community and social outreach (9%), providing employment and job training opportunities (8%), and increased communication and co-operation with Aboriginal peoples (8%).

A wide range of other approaches are mentioned, but none by more than three percent each of the population. Three in ten (30%) of Halifax's non-Aboriginal residents have no suggestions for ways in which their city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal peoples, while one percent say they feel the city is doing everything it possibly can.

### 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 Halifax can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people?



