

### Building a Local First Nations Governance Profile

It is important for teachers and students to understand the cultural diversity that exists among First Nations around BC (and Canada) and that this gives rise to varying forms of governance. This diversity can exist even within a small geographic area. So, it cannot be assumed that neighbouring First Nations will have the same cultures or systems of governance.

In preparation to teach about First Nations governance, you may want to gather the information outlined on the following page. If your school serves more than one community, find information for all of them. A sample of the profile is provided on page 17. It is also available on Blackline Master 1, “First Nations Governance Profile” on page 103.

It may be appropriate to seek the assistance of Aboriginal/Indigenous support staff in your school or district to see if this information has already been gathered, and if not, to make an initial connection with the community.

### Guide to Compiling a First Nations Governance Profile

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#### First Nation

There may be many spellings of the First Nation. Some may go by their traditional names and spelling, while others may go by a post-contact English name. It is respectful to confirm the preferred name of the First Nation (e.g. through direct contact with the First Nation, signage in the territory, or reference to the First Nation’s website)

#### Community Names

Some communities have the proper name in the local language and also have an English name. Often the community name is the same as the First Nation name.

#### Acknowledgement

What is an appropriate acknowledgment of the First Nations territories where your school is situated? Your local First Nations community, school, or school district should have a preferred acknowledgment already.

#### Geographic Location of the Community

Is there a major geographic feature associated with the community? For example, WJOLELP (Tsartlip) is located at Brentwood Bay. Spakxomin, a community of the Upper Nicola Band, is on Douglas Lake. The location could also be described as relative to another town or city.

## First Nations Governance Profile

**First Nation:** (There may be many spellings of the First Nation. It is respectful to use the preferred name as identified by the First Nation)

**Community Name** (Some communities have the proper name in the local language and also have an English name.)

**Acknowledgement:**

**Location:**

**Nation or Tribal Council Affiliation**

**First Nations Language or Languages Spoken**

**Words About Governance in the First Nations language**

Land or territories:

Laws:

Oral histories:

Chief and other leadership titles:

Other words:

**Traditional Government**

Names of people who hold positions of chiefs, matriarchs and other leaders

**Current Form of Government**

Is the local government a Band Council, a Treaty or Self-governing body, or another form of government?

Names of elected leaders and council members:

## BC FIRST NATIONS LAND, TITLE, AND GOVERNANCE: INTRODUCTION

### **Nation or Tribal Council Affiliation**

What larger group is the community or local First Nation affiliated with? For example, Old Massett is a member of the Haida Nation.

### **Language or Languages Spoken**

What is the proper name of the language or languages spoken in the local community? For example, nsyilxcən is the language of the Syilx (Okanagan) people. You may find references to a broader language group (such as Interior Salish for nsyilxcən) but wherever possible identify the most specific language name for the local community.

### **Words About governance in the First Nations Language**

What is the vocabulary used when speaking of the land and governance? Each language has its own words or phrases that are similar to these English terms. How are these English terms translated into the First Nations language?

### **Forms of Government**

Many communities have a distinction between traditional leadership, usually hereditary or selected through a form of consensus, and an elected government under the Indian Act or other contemporary governance systems.

#### *Traditional government*

Names of people who hold positions of leadership, such as chiefs, matriarchs, clan leaders and others.

Many communities have one person recognized as the hereditary or ancestral leader. However some communities may have a number of different heads of clans, houses or family groups.

#### *Current form of government*

Is the local government a Band Council, a First Nation Government operating under a Treaty or Self-Government Agreement, or another form of government?

#### *Names of elected leaders and council members.*

Identify the form of elected government, and the current members of that government. Many communities have a Chief Councillor, though some will have other titles for their leaders. The community's website should provide the names of the current people serving on the local elected government.