

NATIVE COURTWORKER & COUNSELLING  
ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



A N N U A L   2   0   R E P O R T  
0   2

OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

NATIVE COURTWORKER



Photos of the Winnipeg Conference courtesy of Steve Turner



NATIONAL NATIVE  
COURTWORKER CONFERENCE

W I N N I P E G

2002



# 2001 PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2002



*This past year has been host to a myriad of challenges and opportunities. During this time, it has been a pleasure to work with the dedicated staff and Board members who through their various roles, continue to provide a valuable service to aboriginal people and their communities.*

One of the leading challenges was the announcement by the Ministry of Solicitor General that \$300 thousand was cut from the Native Courtworker Program budget, to be implemented during this fiscal year. These cuts come on the heels of cuts to legal aid, closure of all native community law offices, friendship center legal information programs, and the closure of many provincial courthouses throughout the province. Inevitably, these cuts mean that our clients will suffer and there will be greater delays in the courts. Because of our experience, we are able to anticipate that these cuts will result in fewer services in rural areas of British Columbia, fewer services to woman and fewer services to children.

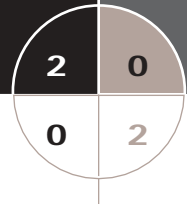
The Board of Directors had to make a number of difficult decisions. Native Courtworkers in Duncan; Williams Lake; Burnaby/New Westminster; and Mount Currie/Squamish were laid off. Mission/Abbotsford goes to half-time, as does the victim support worker in Vancouver. Three receptionists, one in Prince George and one in Nanaimo, and one in Vancouver are also victims of the budget squeeze, as is one Regional Manager who covered the northern interior and north coast.

As we face these challenges, it is important to recognize that we are not alone. As other services are facing similar cuts we must stay as responsive as possible to the changing needs of the community.

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## NATIONAL COURTWORKER PROGRAM

The federal government continues to review this program in cooperation with the provincial, territorial and aboriginal agency carriers, with a view to enhancing its ability to meet the changing needs of aboriginal communities and the evolving priorities of the federal government.

Extensive consultations have taken place and a Recommendations Paper dealing with the future of the program has been produced. In addition, the Department of Justice has approved a Native Courtworker Program - Tripartite Working group. British Columbia participates on this group. Some of the issues being discussed are national training curriculum, accreditation, communications/promotion initiative, results-based management and accountability framework, data collection, and database.

## NATIONAL NATIVE COURTWORKER CONFERENCE 2002

In February 2002, a national forum was held. It was a first in the Native Courtworker Program's 33-year history. This gathering provided all native Courtworkers with an orientation of the new Youth Criminal Justice Act, as well as the chance to spend time with colleagues from across the country. Training in the Gladue decision, the issue of agents and "friends of the court" and courtworker training needs were discussed. It is our hope that the next conference will be held in British Columbia to kick start our 30-year anniversary of this association.

## MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

On September 9, 2002, an agreement was signed with the province of British Columbia and the four political aboriginal organizations. The First Nations Summit, Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, United Native Nations and the Metis Provincial Council and the provincial government will work on a government-to-government basis towards reducing the number of aboriginal children in care. This agreement establishes a Joint Aboriginal Management Committee (JAMC) that will make decisions about how programs and services will be improved. Lynn Lidberg, Vice-President for this association signed her name on behalf of the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC, to a memorandum of understanding as a supporter and member of the aboriginal advisory committee.

Finally, this association has worked very hard to secure the support of the four political aboriginal organizations, as well as other agencies and organizations. Our thanks is extended to Scott Clark, past President of the United Native Nations who gave his support to the NCCABC Board of Directors. Also, to Harley Desjarlais, President of the Metis Provincial Council of BC, who presented our board with a letter of support to develop an affiliation agreement and to support our request for increased government funding from provincial and federal governments.

Our thanks are also extended to Byron Louis who presented a resolution to the recent Union of BC Indian Chiefs' annual conference to support our association. We were very pleased to receive their unanimous motion of support. Finally, to Chief Ed John from the First Nations Summit who met with us to give his support to our association and our mutual involvement on the issue of justice.

Respectfully  
Hugh Braker | President

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN | *September 9, 2002*

The purpose of this MOU is to establish a joint dialogue and decision making process regarding general and systemic issues relating to the safety and well-being of aboriginal children and families that:

- a) is on a government to government basis;
- b) recognizes that First Nations the Metis Nation, Inuit and other Aboriginal Peoples assert jurisdiction over their children and families, regardless of residence;
- c) recognizes the importance of transferring the delivery of services to Aboriginal communities;
- d) draws on the expertise of Aboriginal service delivery agencies and research institutions; and
- e) reflects the historic and new relationship established at Tsawwassen on June 11, 2002

## profile

## DONNA JOSEPH

COURTESY OF THE VICTORIA TIMES COLONIST

**D**onna Joseph isn't a lawyer but the soft-spoken, 58-year-old woman with the bubbly laugh is held in high regard at the Victoria court house. She is a native court worker, a guide through the legal system for First Nations people accused of crimes. Joseph translates complex legalities into a language her people can understand. She's employed by the Native Court Workers Counselling Association of B.C., but it's clearly more than a job. Helping her people reconnect with their culture brings Joseph a great deal of satisfaction. She's called upon more and more by lawyers and

**//**  
*If I can help one person,*

*it's all worthwhile," she says.*

judges to bring a cultural component to sentences handed down to offenders.

Instead of going to jail, the offender could be sent back home to learn First Nations' songs and dance in the long house, which are in themselves a way to heal. Joseph believes that First Nations people stand a better chance of turning their lives around by reconnecting with their culture than they would by spending time behind bars.

"I always say to my regional manager in Nanaimo that I'm sitting on a gold mine here in Victoria because I'm actually asked to assist some lawyers on how some First Nations are treated by the legal system," Joseph said in an interview. Being called

upon to offer cultural options was only a dream when she became a native court worker nine years ago, she said.

She accompanies First Nations people from the day they show up for their first appearance and assists as they apply for legal aid and find a lawyer. Frequently, judges will call upon her ideas on appropriate sentences. Joseph is a welcome friend to those who need help navigating through a tangled legal process.

"People are afraid of the legal system — they don't understand it," she said.

And the judiciary in Victoria is learning through Joseph how First Nations traditions can dovetail



Sylvia Brown (top) and Donna Joseph

with the legal system. The long house is a viable option for judges hoping to rehabilitate, rather than just incarcerate. “The long house is a political arena but we don’t call it political,” Joseph said. “We make things right in there.

“I honestly feel that us as First Nations people have reclaimed our culture, our tradition, our dance and our song and our long houses that have spiritual connectiveness for us and gives back our dignity and pride as First Nations people.”

Lawyer Tom Morino calls Joseph “indispensable” when it comes to dealing with First Nations offenders.

“The criminal justice system is confusing enough to even those who are participants, never mind someone coming in to it the first time. In my opinion, the judiciary have a very high regard and opinion of everything Donna Joseph presents to the court. “We need more Donna Josephs.”

Joseph grew up in the Gwawaineuk band of the Kwakwaka’wakw nation of northern Vancouver Island. Joseph went to school at a native residential school in Alert Bay where she,

like many others, suffered years of abuse. “I raised all my brothers and sisters — there were 13 of us — and their children. I’ve raised children from the off-reserve school program and then I’ve operated safe homes for women caught in the cycle of violence. “I’ve operated safe homes for children who were apprehended. I’ve been raising children forever and ever.” She understands what it’s like to hit rock bottom. And she remembers the kind words of a stranger — an RCMP officer from Nanaimo — that helped turn her life around.

Joseph was in an abusive relationship and suffering from alcoholism. The RCMP constable looked at her bruises and asked if she wanted to lay charges. She said no. “He said, ‘Can I tell you something, Mrs. Joseph?’ He said, ‘You know, you don’t deserve this. You’re a nice-looking woman.’ It was so simple and he was so genuine. That was the turning point in my life.” This past year has been a tough one for Joseph. She lost an uncle who was the mentor and rock of the family. A brother and sister also died. “And my baby sister — Janet Henry — she’s one of the missing women in Vancouver. That’s been really difficult for me. She’s been missing for five years. All I ever wanted from that was some kind of closure.”

Five grandchildren are there to buoy up Joseph when she feels the need for a boost. “They renew my spirit. I feel I have to go on to create a better and safer place for them.”



Donna Josephs

*“I honestly feel that us as First Nations people have reclaimed our culture, our tradition, our dance and our song and our long houses that have spiritual connectiveness for us and gives back our dignity and pride as First Nations people.”*







southern interior  
lower mainland  
south coast  
north coast-  
northern interior

DATE

THE REGIONS REPORT



# lowermainland

I would like to take this time to thank all of those who have assisted the Native Courtworkers, and other programs of the Association, to provide a better service to our First Nations Communities. I would also like to especially thank all the hard working Board of Directors of the Native Courtworkers and Counselling Association of BC. A special thanks needs to be given to Darlene and the accounting staff for their support and hard work. Additionally, a thank you is



*Nicole Peters  
of New Westminster*

needed for the volunteers and practicum students for their hard work and commitment.

This year's funding restraints have created a great sense of loss, beginning with the loss of very experienced staff and long time service agencies. We know that this has drastically affected our communities. As for this association, hopefully we have come to the end of our funding cuts and can strive to build successfully on what we have left. The greatest solution to the problem of working with very little funding is that you can only go up from here.

Although we have been subject to funding cuts, we have done our best to survive these hard times and continue to provide excellent services. The closure of the Native Community Law Offices throughout BC has increased the demand for assistance for Native Courtworker services. These demands for service or assistance have

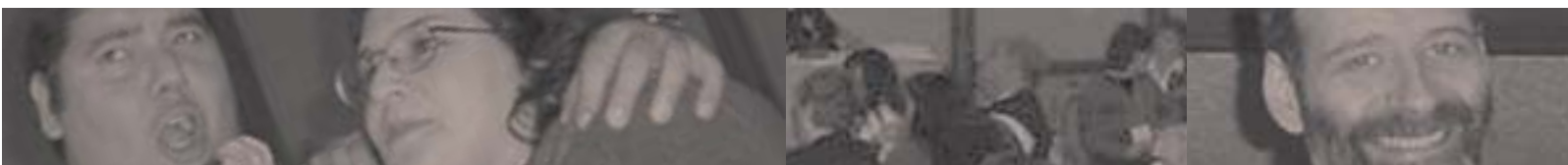
caused a level of misunderstanding and have lead to complaints that Native Courtworkers are not doing their job. These concerns focus mostly on issues relating to clients in Civil Actions, Human and Tenant Right matters and the appeals and the ever-increasing Family Court matters. We are doing our best to fill the gaps on the lack of services in these areas.

Our focus has been to find new resources and support service links. We have been attempting to do this by networking at any and all meetings. Our progress in the development of partnerships has been impressive and we hope to continue developing connections with more working partners that will create a better service delivery for aboriginal communities.

The connection between the association and the University of BC First Nations Legal Clinic has made giant steps in assisting aboriginal people in conflict with the law at the front line level. Having the ability to provide immediate legal advice to our clients is the strongest hand we have ever had in helping our people.

Our bond with the Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Program is also a major asset. The program directors and community council members are very impressive in changing the way things have been done to deal with aboriginal accused and are making huge steps to offer them the opportunity to empower positive changes in their lives.

The Problem Gambling program networking open house was another success. The group showed great interest in the service provided by asking a lot of great questions. New partnerships have sprouted from this open house. We will continue to lobby for another full time position that will work in the Downtown core. Victim Assistance has new vigour and aspirations as to the services we are waiting to provide to the Vancouver area. Urban and rural requests for workshops and educational sessions have increased. We have partnered with the remaining Victims Services workers and hope to



have networking group sessions to develop a plan on how to deal more effectively with the growing workload. Courtworkers of the lower mainland are thankful for the first National Native Courtworker Conference held in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The training provided great networking with the other Provincial Native Courtworkers across Canada. Everyone looks forward to doing it again.

And bringing it all together for the client the Alcohol and Drug team is seeking a three-year CARF certification we believe that CARF has been centrally part of self-awareness

and enhancement of the program. There is a need for additional Native Courtworkers in the following areas; namely Mount Currie, Squamish, Port Coquitlam, Richmond, Surrey Other areas of needed services area, that we are working on are additional mental health service workers, increase to Drug Court Resources, Addictions Counselling service to clients over-night lockup, and counsellors for children of Incarcerated parents.

Arthur Paul | Regional Manager

## south coast region

**E**arlier this fiscal year the NCCA's efforts to rework our budget to maintain the services to aboriginal people in the province were easier said than done. The provincial government's need to acquire a balanced budget affected a lot of groups in this province - ours included. The NCCA Board, Management and workers needed to adjust to some pretty hard choices. For our own development and stability it was an uphill struggle to maintain a justice service to the First Nations People of B.C.

In the South Coast Region, Donna Joseph, Bill Rice, Naomi Williams, Trisha Pantell, Boyd Gallic, Georgia Colclough, Les Taylor and Sylvia Brown for this past year have done an incredible job. They have managed a service in their area that the Courts, RCMP, Band offices and Community appreciate considerably.

I am fortunate to be able to sit on a few boards that are made up of Chiefs/Band Councils/First Nations resource workers/First Nations fieldworkers from throughout the island. While I am at these meetings I like to ask how our workers *we doing*. There is always appreciation expressed for these island courtworkers. A huge THANK-YOU to the South Coast staff for their efforts of this year from their community, I am sure I can speak on behalf of the NCCA board and management also.

Each of these workers has a busy year ahead of them as the

result of some of the cutbacks. Most of our island staff is the only justice service aboriginal people will have access to. Apart from regular courtworker duties, our island staff also participated in other activities. Each of them have been involved with career fairs, workshop presentations on paralegal work at school law classes, discussion tables with colleges/universities criminology classes and then their own participation with justice related issues and restorative justice/sentencing circle mediations. They all sit on at least one community committee dealing with youth initiatives, Friendship centers, resource panels, court users, child/family services and the development of the Wills and Estates pamphlets being put out by legal services here on the island. Sylvia Brown and Les Taylor who work in isolated communities, continue to be accessed and recognized as a leading professional for aboriginal connections by the courts and other professionals. However this does not exclude Donna, Bill, Trisha, Naomi, Boyd and Georgia as also being accessed/of the same importance in their communities as well. Our Island Staff have been and will always be the foundation and stronghold of our association.

All of us attended and participated in the first ever courtworker conference held at Winnipeg this year. We spent our time reviewing changes to how we will do our job and the new legislation been implemented next year. We also welcome to our board Doug White from Nanaimo, Hugh Brak-



er at Port Alberni and Lynn Lidberg at Courtenay.

It was an honour to be a witness to The Ministry of Children and Family Development, Regional Aboriginal Authorities that will be implemented throughout the province. The signing ceremony took place at the University of British Columbia in September.

Our island staff received training earlier this year on Restorative justice mediation at Victoria. This was a three-day conference giving us the necessary tools to function at/or organize one of these sessions. Despite some the needed changes to NCCA services this has been another dynamic year.

Gordon Edwards | Regional Manager

## southern interior region

**I**n the past year we achieved good consequences in Southern Interior Region with attracting qualified personnel, reorganization and professional development for new and existing staff and improved communication amongst employees and directors.

An approval by STEP for the “needs analysis” proposal has allowed Bill Vass of Kelowna contractor to review existing and new employee qualifications to determine professional upgrade to providing added skills training. The end product will provide quality services to aboriginal in conflict with the law. Further training proposals will be devel-

oped to submit to the five training management boards within this region over the next two years.

We have been getting more walkins with people wanting assistance with civil matters, wcb, poverty law and mva's. We are keeping taps on this when appropriate we will provide detail stats to the government representatives in hope of resolving this setback.

The NCCA regional director elections went off quite well getting new faces. Bringing with them both private and professional experience which ultimately add leadership and strenght to the board.

The youth and family advocate program in northern interior region has been proven to be a successful venture. The ministry has approved for another year for Terrace. Whereas the prince george position will likewise be further extended early next year. I am pleased with the progress attain.

Since the closure of NCLO there is a steady notable clientele increase need for assistance with family court, mediation, concerns. In continued talks with the ministry we hope to mention that we need new computers for the two offices. We will be discussing multi-year contract which will be better suited for security of this program.

I hope to meet with the two management boards in northern interior and north coast regions to funding training initiatives. The employees would benefit with added skills, knowledge of mediation, conflict resolution and negotiation.

The cost-cutting measures has certainly curtail the operations. With limited resources we are not able to perform our duties adequately, most employees complain about not able to use the telephone, limited office supply and the list goes on hopefully that this is on temporary measure.

Pleased to have both the opportunity and chellange to working in southern interior region. Excellent progress attain for the past year, will await next years chellange.

Kenneth Peters | Regional Manager



# north coast-northern interior region

Since the closure of the Native Community Law Offices, including legal information counsellors and managing lawyers in both regions, native courtworkers are being asked for assistance with poverty law, motor vehicle issues, workman's compensation, etc. As we are not able to provide assistance as we are only doing criminal matters, we are recording how many requests for poverty law. When appropriate we will forward to the provincial government for action. The Youth & Family Advocate contracts both Terrace and Prince George have been renewed. The advocates are making the difference and receiving good support from aboriginal community resources in the urban setting. I will be seeking additional training once the proposal call is out in the spring. I am pleased with the support and progress attained with this program. Congratulations to Brian Grant Youth & Family Advocate from the Terrace office for being the proud recipient of the "Employee Of The Year" award for 2002. Brian has been with the Association for five years making the difference for youth and families great work.

The Courtworker office relocation from Fort Nelson to Fort St. John approval by the Board of Directors is a positive move and in the right direction. We will be back in operation as soon as formalities are worked out.

Due to cost-cutting measures we made a couple changes with office moves. The courtworker from Quesnel has moved to Prince George regional office still covering Quesnel including the McBride/Valemount circuit with limited funds. The town of Vanderhoof has purchased the courthouse thus provincial court sitting has resumed. The courtworker has since moved back to Vanderhoof and it is business as



usual since November 2002.

The Dawson Creek courtworker was on leave during the past year and since returned back to active duty in the month of November 2002. The Smithers staff member was on leave and has since return. Others have expressed concern with limited travel funds, office expenditure and what about the future?

This has been a difficult year with all the challenges with cutbacks, layoffs yet we are still intact providing quality services as mandated with limited funds. We will await next fiscal year as to what it has to offer in the way of funding.

Kenneth Peters | Regional Manager

*Sally Johnson,  
Smithers/Hazelton*

*Terry Fox Run  
North Coast Region*



# THE VATJS An OVERVIEW

## *The Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services*

***The Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services (VATJS) is the first and only restorative justice program to serve the diverse Aboriginal community of Vancouver. It has been recognized by the British Columbia Ministry of Attorney General's office as an authorized adult program since April 28, 2000.***

**W**hile housed in the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, an Aboriginal Caucus comprised of representatives from Aboriginal political entities, community service providers and advocacy groups in the Vancouver region (such as the Circle of Eagles Lodge Society, Urban Native Youth Association and the Vancouver Metis Association) provide guidance, leadership and overall direction to the program. The VATJS has the technical support of a Steering Committee that, in addition to the members of the Aboriginal Caucus, is made up of provincial and federal government representatives. In May 2002, Program sustainability and potential was further enhanced as the VATJS moved under the administrative umbrella of the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of B.C., who bring with them a wealth of criminal justice-related expertise and professional relationships.

The VATJS provides offenders and victims with a satisfying and culturally appropriate alternative to the mainstream criminal justice system. During a Community Council forum - made up of trained Aboriginal volunteers dedicated to community wellness, an Elder, the victim and offender and their support people - participants discuss the offence, its effects, and the causes of the behaviour that led to the offence. At the conclusion of the forum, a healing plan is developed with a goal towards making amends and positively reintegrating the victim and offender into the community.

The model represents an 'evolutionary' approach to programming — that is, implementation has been phased-in at a pace determined to be suitable by VATJS orga-

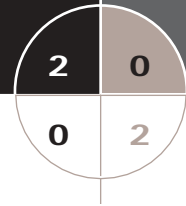
nizers and workers, available services in Vancouver and community support. Accordingly, while the VATJS currently receives provincial Crown counsel referrals for Aboriginal adults (18 years old +), it has also begun to receive federal Crown referrals and expects to implement youth-specific programming by March 2003.

As per the VATJS Provincial Crown Protocol Agreement, the VATJS accepts category 3 (less serious) and 4 (least serious) offences involving first-time and repeat Aboriginal offenders and will consider category 2 (more serious) offences, except those involving spousal or sexual assaults.



For more information regarding the VATJS, please contact us at (604) 251-7200 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. The VATJS staff members are:

Christine Smith-Parnell - Justice Coordinator  
Crystel Grisdale - Community Coordinator  
Jason Burnstick - Youth Services Coordinator  
Kimberly Graham - Administrative Assistant  
Barry Warhaft - Program Director



# 2001 | 2002

## STATISTICS

### CLIENTS ASSISTED

	Description	Adult	Youth	N/A
Clients Gender	Male	4,717	870	33
	Female	1,521	399	18
Previous Conviction?	Yes	4,298	657	0
	No	1,471	432	0
	Unknown	513	191	47

### CHARGES

Category	Adult	Youth	N/A
Homicide/Attempt Murder	21	5	0
Assault	2,313	219	5
Sexual Assault	235	27	1
Robbery	406	132	4
Other violent offences	1,745	399	15
Property Offences	319	83	4
Morality	494	51	2
Firearms-Related Criminal Code Offences	0	0	0
Other Criminal Code Weapon Offences	1,056	17	4
Impaired Driving/Refuse to Blow	246	25	0
Other Criminal Code Offences	386	35	3
.....			
Federal Statutes			
Drug Offences	458	18	4
Firearms-Related Federal Offences	0	0	0
Other Federal Statutes	155	24	0
Provincial/Territorial Statutes	292	5	2
Unknown	0	0	0

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

REGION #1  
Ben Cardinal  
Wonowon, B.C.

REGION #2  
Charles McKay  
Terrace, B.C.

REGION #4  
Marilyn Baptiste  
Williams Lake, B.C.

REGION #6  
Lynn Lidberg  
Courtenay, B.C.

REGION #8  
Hugh Braker  
Port Alberni, B.C.

REGION #10  
Henry Hall  
Abbotsford, B.C.

REGION #12  
Byron Louis  
Westbank, B.C.

REGION #3  
Andrew Yellowback  
Prince George, B.C.

REGION #5  
Wally Webber  
Bella Coola, B.C.

REGION #7  
Doug White Sr.  
Nanaimo, B.C.

REGION #9  
Bill Wilson  
Vancouver, B.C.

REGION #11  
Linda Thomas  
Kamloops, B.C.

REGION #13  
Donna Frances  
Cranbrook, B.C.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTEE  
Sgt. Brenda Butterworth-Carr  
Aboriginal Policing Services  
Island/S western Dist. Coordinator  
Vancouver, B.C.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTEE  
Rob Watts, Provincial Director  
Community Corrections  
Corrections Branch  
Victoria, B.C.

THE NATIVE COURTWORKER & COUNSELLING ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA WISHES TO THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR GENEROUS FUNDING AND SUPPORT:

- B.C. Ministry for Children and Family Development – Northern Interior • B.C. Ministry of Health – Aboriginal Health Division • Vancouver Coastal Health Authority • Ministry of Public Safety and solicitor General – Corrections Branch – Community Programs Division • Aboriginal Healing Foundation • Family Services of Greater Vancouver • HRDC Canada • Department of Justice Canada • United Way of the Lower Mainland • Law Foundation of British Columbia

LOWER MAINLAND	Phone	Fax
Toll Free Number	1-877-771-9444	
Vancouver	604-687-0281	604-687-5119
Robson Street Courthouse	604-660-7455	604-660-7455
New Westminster/Burnaby	604-775-0855	604-522-1695
Surrey Courthouse	604-572-2293	604-543-3151
Chilliwack/Hope	604-792-5535	604-792-5535
Mission/Abbotsford	604-814-3444	604-826-4056
Mount Currie/Squamish	604-894-6422	604-894-6422
First Nations Focus Program	604-681-6536	604-681-2117
Administration	604-985-5355	604-985-8933
Toll Free Number (Administration)	1-877-811-1190	
SOUTHERN INTERIOR	Phone	Fax
Toll Free Number	1-877-811-0206	
Kamloops Office	250-828-9758	250-828-9831
Williams Lake	250-398-6818	250-398-6819
Penticton	250-490-9513	250-493-5302
Vernon	250-545-1264	250-545-8885
Cranbrook	250-489-2464	250-489-5760
SOUTH COAST	Phone	Fax
Toll Free Number	1-877-511-2281	
Nanaimo	250-755-1916	250-755-1281
Bella Bella	250-957-2381	250-957-2544
Bella Coola	250-799-5959	250-799-5426
Campbell River	250-923-2809	250-923-2726
Port Alberni	250-724-3143	250-724-3110
Victoria	250-386-6717	250-386-6760
Duncan	250-748-2368	250-748-3276
Port Alberni	250-724-3143	250-724-3110
Port Hardy	250-949-8343	250-949-7201
Prince George Courthouse	250-614-2683	250-562-1578
NORTHERN INTERIOR	Phone	Fax
Toll Free Number	1-877-511-2280	
Prince George	250-562-9513	250-564-1134
Fort Nelson	250-774-3669	250-774-3665
Dawson Creek	250-782-7335	250-782-7329
Quesnel	250-992-3077	250-992-3071
Vanderhoof	250-567-2636	250-567-2637
NORTH COAST	Phone	Fax
Prince Rupert	250-624-4621	250-624-3897
Smithers / Hazelton	250-847-4008	250-847-4082
Terrace/Kitimat	250-638-8558	250-635-8105

ALCOHOL & DRUG  
PROGRAM OFFICES

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Surrey Office  
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Fax: (604) 588-9942

GENERAL INQUIRIES

nccabc@radiant.net

WEBSITE

www.nccabc.ca



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAIR, EQUITABLE AND CULTURALLY SENSITIVE

JUSTICE FOR ABORIGINALS



## NATIVE COURTWORKER AND COUNSELLING ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

### Q. Are Native Courtworkers lawyers?

A. No, Native Courtworkers are not lawyers. They are trained to assist people in conflict with the Justice System.

### Q. Can Native Courtworkers offer legal advice?

A. No, Native Courtworkers cannot offer legal advice. However, they can explain how the Court system works and when a person should seek legal advice from a lawyer.

### Q. Do the services of a Native Courtworker cost anything?

A. No, Native Courtworker services are free for qualified individuals.

### Q. What is a 'qualified individual'?

A. A person of Aboriginal, Metis or Inuit descent who is in conflict with the law and requires guidance or explanation in regards to how the Justice system works.

### Q. How can I acquire the services of a lawyer?

A. If you require the services of a lawyer, a Native Courtworker can give you a list of persons with experience in cases similar to yours. If you cannot afford a lawyer, a Native Courtworker can arrange a referral to Legal Services.

### Q. Is everything I tell my Courtworker confidential?

A. In general terms, yes. However, if you disclose a case of child abuse or neglect, it is required by law to immediately report to authorities.

### Q. Can they help me if my case is in Family Court?

A. No, Native Courtworker services are limited to criminal court, as we are not funded to provide family court services.

### Q. Should I contact a Native Courtworker if I become aware of a crime being committed?

A. Only if you cannot contact a police officer and only in an emergency.

### Q. Can a Native Courtworker refuse to assist me?

A. No, Native Courtworkers cannot refuse, however, Native Courtworkers cannot represent an accused and victim at the same time. Courtworkers will make every attempt to refer you to another agency.

### Q. Can Native Courtworkers assist me in obtaining my police report?

A. Yes, Native Courtworkers can ask crown counsel for circumstances to provide you with information for you to make an informed decision on how you want to proceed with charges.

### Q. Can Native Courtworkers assist in speaking to sentence?

A. Yes. If you make a decision to plead guilty, the Native Courtworker can speak on your behalf. If you decide to plead not guilty, the Native Courtworker can assist you in the trial process.



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415 West Esplanade Avenue  
North Vancouver, B.C., V7M 1A6

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COLUMBIA - MINISTRY OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL AND  
THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



**NATIVE  
COURTWORKER  
& COUNSELLING  
ASSOCIATION  
OF BRITISH  
COLUMBIA**

# NATIVE COURTWORKER SERVICES

C O N T A C T   A   C O U R T W O R K E R   I N   B . C .



**The Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia facilitates and enhances access to justice by assisting aboriginal people involved in the criminal justice system to obtain fair, just, equitable and culturally sensitive treatment.**

**The objectives of the NCCABC are:**

- To provide aboriginal people accused, at the earliest possible stage and at all stages of the criminal justice process, with timely and accurate information about:
  - the nature and consequences of the charge;
  - their rights, responsibilities and options under the law, including alternative justice processes (if available);
  - the philosophy and functioning of the criminal justice system and of alternative justice processes (if available);
  - court procedures and the disposition or direction given by the court or community to the offender.
- To provide aboriginal people accused with appropriate referral to legal resources (as available and where practical).
- To refer aboriginal people accused to appropriate social, education, employment, medical and other resources to enable them to address the underlying problems that contribute to their charges, and where appropriate, follow-up on these referrals.

- To liaise between aboriginal people accused and criminal justice personnel to help overcome communication barriers and reduce aboriginal alienation from the criminal justice system. This may include being available to provide appropriate information to the court and/or speaking on behalf of the accused.
- To inform justice officials of the cultural traditions, values, languages, socio-economic conditions and other concerns of the aboriginal community and the perspective of aboriginal accused. Initiate opportunities to improve understanding as appropriate.
- To promote understanding, within the aboriginal community, of the existing criminal justice system and alternative justice processes.
- To promote and facilitate practical community-based justice initiatives; and help build community capacity to identify and address problems which could end up in the courts or community justice system.

- To assist aboriginal communities in improving their relationship with the justice system.
- To facilitate, assist or act as advocate in relation to complaints received about police, crown counsel, lawyers and any other persons in the justice system.

**NCCABC facilitates and enhances access to justice.**

CONTACT US

<b>LOWER MAINLAND</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Fax</b>
Toll Free Number	1-877-771-9444	
Vancouver	604-687-0281	604-687-5119
Robson Street Courthouse	604-660-7455	604-660-7455
New Westminster/Burnaby	closed	
Surrey Courthouse	604-572-2293	604-543-3151
Chilliwack/Hope	604-792-5535	604-792-5535
Mission/Abbotsford	604-814-3444	604-826-4056
Mount Currie/Squamish	closed	
Administration	604-985-5355	604-985-8933
Toll Free Number (Administration)	1-877-811-1190	
<b>SOUTHERN INTERIOR</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Fax</b>
Toll Free Number	1-877-811-0206	
Kamloops Office	250-828-9758	250-828-9831
Williams Lake	250-398-6818	250-398-6819
Penticton	250-490-9513	250-493-5302
Vernon	250-545-1264	250-545-8885
Cranbrook	250-489-2464	250-489-5760
<b>SOUTH COAST</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Fax</b>
Toll Free Number	1-877-511-2281	
Nanaimo	250-755-1916	250-755-1281
Bella Bella	250-957-2381	250-957-2544
Bella Coola	250-799-5959	250-799-5426
Campbell River	250-923-2809	250-923-2726
Port Alberni	250-724-3143	250-724-3110
Victoria	250-386-6717	250-386-6760
Duncan	closed	
Port Alberni	250-724-3143	250-724-3110
Port Hardy	250-949-8343	250-949-7201
<b>NORTHERN INTERIOR</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Fax</b>
Toll Free Number	1-877-511-2280	
Prince George Courthouse	250-614-2683	250-562-1578
Prince George	250-562-9513	250-564-1134
Fort Nelson	250-774-3669	250-774-3665
Dawson Creek	250-782-7335	250-782-7329
Quesnel	250-992-3077	250-992-3071
Vanderhoof	250-567-2636	250-567-2637
<b>NORTH COAST</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Fax</b>
Prince Rupert	250-624-4621	250-624-3897
Smithers / Hazelton	250-847-4008	250-847-4082
Terrace/Kitimat	250-638-8558	250-635-8105

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