



BACKGROUNDER

Whether you're Aboriginal or not, we all know that an education after high school can open doors and help build a brighter future for any child. However, post-secondary education isn't a reality for many of BC's Aboriginal students. For those that do move onto higher education and training, the funds and support often aren't enough. The reality is that funds available are not getting any larger even though the Aboriginal youth population is growing at six times the national average.

A well-educated work force is critical to the continued success and growth of BC's Aboriginal communities. In order to encourage youth to continue their education, they need to be supported by their family, caregivers and friends. By encouraging families to invest in the future by saving for their children's education, BC's Aboriginal communities can continue taking control of their own futures.

Using a community outreach program, Hummingbird Aboriginal Student Futures will give BC's Aboriginal families the information they need to make informed decisions about the importance of setting money aside for their children's post-secondary education. One way is by opening a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP).

The Hummingbird Aboriginal Student Futures program will consist of the following:

- Materials that are culturally sensitive, easy to read and understand
- Community workshops about RESP's and the government grants that go with them, at no cost to the community or organization hosting the workshop
- Ongoing meetings with community partners, and parents
- Multimedia communication/outreach strategy and materials featuring Aboriginal community champions and endorsement.

A network of local "Community Champions" – to provide on-site support for low and modest income Aboriginal families with children – will be provided with training to continue to share this information at the grass-roots level. These champions are made up of local Band administrators, financial officers, and family service providers including staff at other Aboriginal organizations.

The goal is to have 60 local community champions trained across the province, who are able to provide continuing RESP guidance and support to Aboriginal families through training, mentoring and support.

Hummingbird Aboriginal Student Futures is brought to you by the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society.