

The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Program and the question of honoraria for Elders

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Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, August 2013

This document represents research drawn from conversations with a sample of the myriad cultural and educational bodies across Canada that draw on the skills and knowledge of Aboriginal Elders. As the organizations in question vary, so to do the ways in which they engage with Elders. Regarding the question of honoraria paid to Elders for their time and expertise, there is a broad range of practices – from a school board that pays \$25 for an hour-long classroom session, to a cultural centre that pays up to \$1200 a day for an Elder acting as a consultant.

The vast majority of organizations, however, fall within a fairly narrow range. It seems to be standard practice, from coast to coast, to pay an honorarium of between \$100 and \$200 for a workshop/ceremony. The time commitment for a session of this nature ranges from one and a half or two hours to a full day.

Rates for interviews and primary research with Elders on traditional knowledge or oral history also vary, ranging from \$30 for an interview to \$400 per day. Researchers associated with the Labrador Institute have given honoraria of \$200/interview, for interviews of one-two hours, or \$50/hour for projects that were longer-term but less intensive. Other researchers have reported a minimum of \$250 per day for Elders/experts (\$125 per half day). Rates among the Inuvialuit for traditional knowledge projects were reported as being \$200 per interview session, with each session lasting a maximum of 3 hours.

Many organizations stress the flexible nature of honoraria given to Elders. As a gesture of respect and gratitude, an honorarium must be appropriate to the service/knowledge provided, but it must also be reflective of the feelings of the organization or community, and of their ability to give. (A smaller honorarium from a group with little money is not seen as ungenerous or ungrateful.)

Some organizations recommend giving a gift instead of a cash honorarium, something in line with the figures mentioned above; however, cash honoraria now seem to be much more common than gifts. Ceremonial gifts, such as a tobacco tie or pouch, or a blanket, are sometimes given in addition to an honorarium. Although a certain degree of flexibility is important when dealing with this question, the figures here should provide a useful baseline for cultural organizations.

While conducting this research, several policy documents came to light. Two, in particular, were notable for their thoughtful approach: the University of Manitoba's *Elders Protocol* and the University of Alberta's *Elder Protocol and Guidelines*. The University of Alberta's Council on Aboriginal Initiatives studied Manitoba's example closely before drafting their own document. Tracy Bear, who was involved in the creation of the U of A's policy, has written an interesting commentary on the process (http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/aps/article/view/17708/pdf_1), which was highly collaborative. Whether or not we choose to engage in a similar process, these documents should be invaluable.

Organization	Description of Organization	Types of Work Funded	Breakdown of Payment	Contact	Notes	Location
Council on Aboriginal Initiatives (University of Alberta)	The Council (CAI) is a sixty-member steering committee, composed of students from five Aboriginal student groups, faculty from several University of Alberta departments, "members of Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal post-secondary institutions, members of the Senate and City of Edmonton employees." The CAI was established to "provide a voice dedicated to the interests of the Aboriginal community at the University of Alberta." In this capacity, the CAI has developed a document, "Elder Protocol and Guidelines," for groups/organizations who wish to draw on the skills and expertise of Aboriginal Elders.[1]	Prayers, pipe ceremonies, cultural workshops, traditional ceremonies, convocations	Groups requesting the presence and expertise of Elders should cover the cost of travel, meals, and accommodations, as necessary. They should also provide an honorarium, in cash or in kind. In addition to the honorarium, a blanket should be presented to the elder. The honorarium itself can vary greatly, depending on the services provided and the resources of the individual/group who has requested them; as this is a gesture of gratitude and respect, it is difficult to quantify what is appropriate. For this reason, the Elder Protocol document does not include concrete figures; however, the Aboriginal Student Centre (as of summer 2013) gives an average honorarium of \$125 for an event. Other campus organizations, departments, etc. may give more or less, but the above number seems to be the standard.[2]	Lisa Ladouceur, Office Assistant, ascc. reception@ualberta.ca		AB
BC Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (BC MARR)	"For thousands of years the First Peoples of British Columbia have valued their cultures – cultures that include songs, stories, ceremonies, values, beliefs, ways of life and languages. Today's Aboriginal peoples continue the tradition of teaching and sharing their language and traditions so that their knowledge can be passed on to future generations. The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation works to support these important traditions and assist in the revitalization, promotion and protection of Aboriginal languages, arts and culture." In order to carry out this cultural work, the Ministry engages with organizations throughout the province, including the First Peoples' Cultural Council, Friendship Centres, and youth groups, to name a few.[3]	Due to the collaborative nature of the work the ministry does, the type of activities funded are incredibly diverse. MARR acts as a granting agency for community projects. The ministry also works more directly to partner with organizations on certain initiatives. For example, in 2011, MARR partnered with the Native Women's Association of Canada to host "Collaboration to End Violence: National Aboriginal Women's Forum". This was a three-day event at which a respected Elder acted as Master of Ceremonies, as both a speaker and an advisor. MARR might also arrange for a moderator to facilitate intensive meetings/negotiations. Each year MARR also organizes an Elders Gathering, which brings together community members from across the province.	In its capacity as a granting agency, the ministry does not dictate what is an appropriate honorarium. Standards will depend on the project in question, the size of the organization, and the size of grant they are working with. Some organizations will give an honorarium of \$25 for participation in a project, as a token of appreciation, while some will combine a ceremonial gift (such as a blanket, tie, tie clip, or cedar rose), with a card and financial gift (perhaps \$50). For an Elder leading a workshop, organizations might give an honorarium of \$100/day. For large events and significant commitments of time, honoraria tend to be somewhat higher. The MC for the National Aboriginal Women's Forum was given an honorarium of \$300/day. (He was present and actively engaged not only for the full length of the forum, but also during the pre-conference and debriefing that occurred.) For moderating an intense and fractious day-long meeting, a skilled facilitator was given \$1000. Contractors providing cultural services at MARR's Elders Gathering are given honoraria of \$600-\$800/day. In some cases, honoraria take the form of a gift only, ceremonial or otherwise. For example, UN Delegates, attending a conference, might be given a ceremonial hat or button blanket.	Connie Larochelle, Senior Operations Advisor, Intergovernmental and Community Relations Branch, Ministry of Aboriginal Relations, (250) 356-0174		BC
University of Northern British Columbia	A small, research-intensive university with campuses located throughout central and northern British Columbia. UNBC is known as Canada's "Green University." [4]	Class presentations and contributions made as part of planning committees	"\$50/hour to a maximum of \$150/day plus direct travel costs (mileage, meals and lodging, at the University's rate)." [5]	Kathy Shaw, Administration Assistant, shawk@unbc.ca, (250) 960-5772		BC
Canada Council for the Arts, Aboriginal Programs	"The Aboriginal Arts Office collaborates with the Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee and with all sections of the Canada Council to support Aboriginal Peoples' artistic practices in all arts disciplines." [6]	"The arts projects that we receive range between 1 week long workshops, to 6 month long apprenticeships. These are always projects involving Aboriginal youth in addition to Elders, who collaborate on an artistic practice."	"We generally stick to the average of \$2000 a month for the services of an Elder or senior artist. This breaks down to about \$100 a day for 20 days but we rarely enforce a daily rate for Elders. Most jury members understand that when it comes to the arts & artists, the amount being paid is more for their experience & training rather than an hourly or daily rate. The same rule applies well to Elders."	Noel Habel, Director, Aboriginal Programs, (613) 566-4414, ext. 4178		Federal program

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Aboriginal Student Centre (University of Manitoba)	"Providing student support in a manner consistent with the culture and values of Aboriginal Peoples for the purpose of increasing/enhancing the accessibility and retention of Aboriginal students. The Aboriginal Student Centre is dedicated to the creation of an educational environment that includes the affirmation of Aboriginal cultures, values, languages, history, and way of life by virtue of increasing the knowledge foundation offered at the University of Manitoba."[7]	The Aboriginal Student Centre (ASC) has a group of Elders in residence, working three days a week (Monday to Wednesday), who act as councillors for students at the university, providing cultural teachings and advice. These Elders also engage with faculty and campus groups by providing knowledge and insight, and assisting with ceremonies. Outside organizations will often contact the ASC if they wish to consult with and Elder.	Elders working with the ASC are given an honorarium of \$200/day on average. Some of the organizations or companies that contact Elders through the ASC may pay more (up to \$500 or \$1000 a day), depending on the nature of the contribution made by the Elder(s) in question.	Kali Storm or Carl Stone, (204) 474-8850		MB
Labrador Institute (MUN)	"The Labrador Institute was established by Memorial University to stimulate, coordinate, and support major University projects and programs and to expand the Labrador knowledge base. It is our hope that these activities will facilitate the educational aspirations, research requirements, and the socio-cultural well-being of the people of Labrador."[8]	Input or collaboration on research projects. Opening prayer at an event.	There is no set rate at the Institute. Honoraria vary widely, depending on the occasion/type of project. An Elder might be given an honorarium of \$25, or a bouquet of flowers, for giving an opening prayer. Researchers associated with the Institute have given honoraria of \$200/interview, for interviews of one-two hours, or \$50/hour for projects that were longer-term but less intensive.[9]	Martha MacDonald, Associate Director, martha.macdonald@mun.ca, (709) 896-6213		NL
Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council	"The Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council (NLAC) is a non-profit Crown agency created in 1980 by The Arts Council Act. Its mission is to foster and promote the creation and enjoyment of the arts for the benefit of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The NLAC receives an annual grant from the Province to support a variety of granting programs, office administration, and communications. It also seeks support from the public and private sector. It supports the following artistic disciplines: dance, film, multidiscipline, music, theatre, visual art, and writing." [10]	Elders are often asked to conduct an opening or closing prayer at events of various kinds.	Although there is some variation, Elders tend to be given an honorarium of \$100 (minimum) for an event.[11]	Donna Roberts, Labrador Cultural Outreach Officer, droberts@nlac.ca		NL
Nunatsiavut Government	"The Nunatsiavut Government was established in 2005. It is born out of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement, the result of three decades of work to realize our long-held dream of self-governance. The Nunatsiavut Government is a regional Inuit government within the Province of Newfoundland & Labrador [...], the first Inuit region to achieve self-government, an accomplishment of which all Labrador Inuit should be proud."[12]	An Elder asked to partipate in an event would likely conduct an opening ceremony, blessing and closing ceremony.	The Nunatsiavut Government pays a standard honorarium of \$75 a day for an Elder's participation in an event.	25 Ikajuktauvik Road, P.O. Box 70, Nain, NL, Canada A0P 1L0 Tel. (709) 922-2942 Fax: (709) 922-2931		NL

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Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network	The Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network (NAWN) was formed in 2005 to address "the issue of representation for [Aboriginal] women" on the island of Newfoundland. NAWN's mandate is "to promote, enhance and encourage the health, social, educational, economic cultural, and political, well being of Aboriginal women within the Island portion of Newfoundland and Labrador." [13]	Elders might be asked to conduct a smudging or an opening or closing ceremony at a workshop run by NAWN. They might also be asked to run a sweat lodge or share a skill (e.g. sweet grass doll-making) at a Powwow. An Elder might also be asked to run a full workshop on violence awareness and prevention, using traditional teachings on healing.	The standard honorarium for an opening/closing ceremony and/or smudging is roughly \$150. The honorarium given for a full-day commitment of time and expertise, such as one of the other examples mentioned, would likely be about \$500. NAWN also covers travel and accommodation costs for visiting Elders.	Linda Wells, Executive Director, excdirector@nawn-nf.com , (709) 643-1290		NL
Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre	Over the past several years, the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) has been engaged in the process of establishing "a place where they can '...share, protect and explore the stories and lives of our earliest ancestors and those who have come after them in Mi'kma'ki.'" The CMM has been engaging with federal, provincial and municipal governments - as well as members of Mi'kmaq communities - on the development of a cultural centre associated with the Debert archeological site in central Nova Scotia. [14]	The CMM is committed to engaging Mi'kmaq Elders from the thirteen local communities, in every step of the planning process for the cultural centre. There are regular planning meetings, which cover everything from site planning and land management, to fundraising, to communications planning, and collections and research. Elders from every community are invited to each planning session and are given honoraria as a token of appreciation for their time and contributions.	"This varies greatly depending on the request and the Elders involved. We pay \$200 per day for a meeting honoraria (9am-2pm with lunch provided as well as full travel expenses including meals per CMM's travel rates). It's important to note that this is an honorarium—a token of appreciation for their expertise and time rather than a payment for their time. If an Elder is providing expert opinion the way an outside consultant is utilized, then consultant level fees may be appropriate (\$500-\$1200/day are the ranges we pay on a regular basis for our outside consultants)." [15]	Leah Rosenmeier, leah@cmmns.com		NS
Lakehead District School Board	The board administers 29 public schools (at the elementary and secondary level) and one adult education centre in the Thunder Bay area.	Class presentations on cultural beliefs and traditional practices.	"The proposed minimum amounts listed are recommended, but not mandatory: gift (blanket, gift certificate, broad cloth, craft supplies, practical items etc.); or \$25.00 (one hour); \$50.00 (half day); \$100.00 (full day). Please let the Elder/Senator know if a gift or honorarium will be given, or if you are not able to meet these honorarium guidelines. Some Elders/Senators may prefer a gift over an honorarium; therefore ask the Elder/Senator [...] his/her preference. Tobacco may also be given but it is good to inquire with the Elder/Senator first to find out if this is appropriate protocol. It is okay to ask the person if he/she accepts tobacco or not." [16]	lakeheadschoools.ca or 1-888-565-1406		ON

1. Drawn from communication with Lisa Ladouceur, from the CAI webpage (<http://www.aboriginal.ualberta.ca/en/OurCommunity/CouncilonAboriginalInitiatives.aspx>) and from the Elder Protocol document (<http://www.aboriginalservices.ualberta.ca/en/~media/aboriginalservices/EPGMay120122.pdf>)
2. Drawn from Elder Protocol document and email communication with Lisa Ladouceur
3. Drawn from the Ministry of ARR's statement on Culture and Language (<http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/cultural/default.html>)
4. Drawn from the UNBC website (<http://www.unbc.ca/about-unbc>)
5. Drawn from UNBC Policies and Procedures document on honoraria for Elders(http://www.unbc.ca/assets/policy/first_nations_centre/first_nations_centre_honorarium_first_nations_elders.pdf)
6. Drawn from www.canadacouncil.ca/aboriginal
7. Drawn from the ASC's website (<http://umanitoba.ca/student/asc/mission.html>)
8. Drawn from <http://www.mun.ca/labradorinstitute/index.php>
9. Drawn from conversation with Donna Roberts
10. Drawn from the NLAC's website (<http://www.nlac.ca/aboutus/index.htm>)
11. Drawn from email communication with Donna Roberts
12. Drawn from <http://www.nunatsiavut.com/index.php/home>
13. Drawn from <http://nawn-nf.com/about-us/mission-and-mandate/>
14. Drawn from <http://www.parks-parcs.ca/english/pdf/aboriginal/09NS%20CPC%20CaseStudies.pdf>
15. From email communication with Leah Rosenmeier
16. Drawn from the Lakehead District School Board "Elder/Senator Protocol"(http://ontariodirectors.ca/UA_Pilot_Project/files/Lakehead%20Resources/Elder%20Senator%20Protocol%2009%20LPS.pdf)

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