



News release

CESO and NWAC sign MOU on program to assist Aboriginal women build capacity

OTTAWA – March 13, 2008 - The Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO) and the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) are set to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) tomorrow on the delivery of a highly-successful program designed for Aboriginal women.

"This exciting event tomorrow formalizes our partnership and recognizes the success of the Aboriginal Women for Tomorrow (AWFT) Program," said Bob Dickson, CESO's Vice-President of National Services. "The Program prepares First Nation and Métis women through on-site skills training that is tailored to their individual needs. It promotes leadership among Aboriginal women and assists them and their communities to work on common goals towards self-sufficiency and self-determination."

Since 1967, CESO has provided support and capacity-building to Aboriginal communities across Canada and around the world. CESO's mission is to build capacity in governance and economic development through the transfer of knowledge and skills by Volunteer Advisers.

Incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1974, NWAC is an aggregate of 13 Aboriginal women's organizations and is the national voice of Aboriginal women in Canada. NWAC's mission is to empower women by being involved in developing and changing legislation which affects them and by involving them in the development and delivery of programs promoting equality for Aboriginal women.

"CESO's partnership with NWAC is truly valued and its investments into the working lives of Aboriginal women will bring about many promising opportunities," expressed NWAC President Beverley Jacobs. "Skills training can change one's fortune and outlook in life. Women are the cornerstones of our families and by improving job prospects this will strengthen families and the communities they live in."

The CESO/NWAC partnership, supported by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), created a series of workshops designed to build leadership and business skills, and to foster greater participation of Aboriginal women in the community and in the economy.

"We are pleased to support the Aboriginal Women for Tomorrow Program," said the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians. "This program will help provide Aboriginal women with knowledge and skills needed to fully participate in their local economies and the Canadian economy as well."

Mr. Dickson said the Program will increase the labour market, leadership and business-readiness development of Aboriginal women through a combination of needs assessments and skills development.

The Aboriginal Women For Tomorrow workshop series covers topics such as building confidence, communication and job search skills, entrepreneurship, budgeting and financial management, and governance skills development for Board participation.

CESO and NWAC are pleased to welcome Status of Women Canada (SWC) as a new financial partner in the delivery of the AWFT Program. SWC has agreed to provide a full three years of funding totaling \$450,000 that will fund 210 individual workshops delivered to approximately 2,100 women across the country through November 2010.

SWC is a federal government organization that promotes the full participation of women in the economic, social and democratic life of Canada. SWC works to advance equality for women and to remove the barriers to women's participation in society, putting particular emphasis on increasing women's economic security and eliminating violence against women.

“The process of empowering Aboriginal women starts at the grass roots level, and reaches across communities, both on- and off-reserve,” said the Honourable Josée Verner, Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages. “As this partnership effort demonstrates, we can be most effective when we work together to empower Aboriginal women, and provide them with real, lasting opportunities for full participation.”

A Program evaluation for the fiscal year 2006-2007 determined that 93 per cent of the participants were either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall workshop and 92 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the information received through these workshop series will influence decisions and/or actions they take.

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