

Community Relations Officer–Indigenous Information Sheet

Introduction

This information sheet provides an overview of the Community Relations Officer (CRO) Program, with a focus on the role of the CRO–Indigenous, for easy reference. Returning officers (ROs) can use it to help guide their discussions with Indigenous communities and their efforts to identify potential resources for CRO–Indigenous positions.

This is not a public-facing document; however, it may be shared during meetings with Indigenous leaders.

Purpose of the CRO Program

CROs are appointed in electoral districts (EDs) where electors in certain target groups, known to face barriers to registering and voting, represent a significant portion of the population. The CRO facilitates communication between the RO and/or additional assistant returning officer (AARO) and the target group, making voting as accessible as possible to that group.

The CRO–Indigenous program aims to reduce barriers by:

- informing Indigenous electors about the election process (registering to vote, getting to polling places, ways to vote, etc.)
- creating a comfortable environment for Indigenous electors
- having the CRO act as a liaison between the RO/AARO office and Indigenous communities
- ensuring that Indigenous electors have the opportunity to fully participate in the electoral process

The CRO's role

Ideally, CROs are members of the community. When this is not possible, the CRO must be someone who understands the history, culture and needs of the target group they serve.

The CRO–Indigenous is appointed in EDs with a First Nations, Inuit or Métis population. They are appointed by and report directly to the RO or their delegate (i.e. assistant returning officer, AARO or service point supervisor).

Depending on the circumstances at the time of the general election, advance or ordinary polling stations might not be set up in some Indigenous communities. A CRO appointed to

liaise with electors in such communities may be asked to coordinate and provide special ballot voting support to electors on behalf of the RO/AARO office.

In addition to holding information sessions and distributing information materials, attending Indigenous cultural events is a good way for the CRO–Indigenous to inform Indigenous electors about the voting process. At the same time, the CRO–Indigenous can identify potential Indigenous resources from each community to work as service agents (SAs) and poll workers, including participants for the Indigenous Elder and Youth Program (IEYP). The CRO–Indigenous can help organize registration events at band offices and can also work with Indigenous health offices to find ways to make polling day easier for electors with disabilities.

Impartiality

The CRO must provide information only and never offer opinions. They are **not** allowed to canvass for a political party or a candidate, or to try to influence electors. In addition, they must:

- take an oath before they begin work
- remain non-partisan while performing their duties
- agree to maintain the secrecy of the vote

Tasks

- Maintain contact between the RO/AARO office and Indigenous electors by interacting with organizations that represent or serve Indigenous communities.
- At the RO's request, assist the training officer and the recruitment officer in selecting, appointing and training Indigenous poll workers.
- Raise awareness about where, when and the ways to register and vote by setting up kiosks, holding information sessions and distributing information products (in-person or virtual).
- Assist SAs with implementing targeted revision activities aimed at Indigenous communities; liaise with local leaders to explain the benefits of being registered at the right address before polling day.
- Provide translation, interpretation and literacy services as needed.
- Keep the RO updated on activities/trends related to voting in Indigenous communities.
- Support the IEYP, in particular by helping the RO recruit and train the Elders and youth.
- If asked, help the RO search for suitable polling places or help make arrangements for their set-up and opening.

CRO qualifications

Experience

- building community relations
- volunteering or working for an organization that provides services to the target group
- interacting with the target group in the ED
- providing outreach and community services

Knowledge of

- the target group's customs, culture, sensitivities, languages, issues and concerns
- key contacts and organizations in the community
- local organizations that provide services to the target group

Abilities and skills

- communication
- strong interpersonal relations
- active listening and observation
- analytical reasoning
- effective time management
- proactive problem solving

Personal suitability

- professional
- team player
- prepared to travel in the ED
- punctual and reliable
- conscientious, respectful and outgoing

Assets

- knowledge of the election process
- knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of election officers
- bilingual (English and French)
- knowledge of the principles set out in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- understanding the language(s) of the target group
- access to the Internet and MS Office suite

Pay rate and hours

The current rate of pay for the CROs can be found on the [Tariff of Fees –Reference Table \(EC 11795\)](#).

The number of hours a CRO works depends on the target group in their ED and the action plan for serving them. The maximum number of hours worked during an electoral event, allotted without special justification, is 100.

