

Definition of Terms:

Aboriginal People: Includes all indigenous people of Canada. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people: Status and Non-Status First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, each having their own unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

First Nation: The term First Nation refers to the Indian people of Canada, both Status and Non-Status, who were the original people to inhabit Canada, or "First Nation".

Métis: A person of Aboriginal ancestry whose history dates back to the days of the fur trade when First Nations people married people of European descent. The blending of European and First Nations cultures gave rise to a distinct language, culture and identity known today as the Métis Nation. The Métis have been recognized as Aboriginal people under the Canadian Constitution. Unlike Status First Nations, the Federal Government does not presently acknowledge a fiduciary responsibility for Métis people.

Inuit: The Inuit are people of Aboriginal descent in northern Canada who generally reside in the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and Labrador with a small percentage living throughout the rest of Canada. The Inuit are officially recognized as Aboriginal people in the Constitution. "Inuit" has replaced the term "Eskimo".

Status First Nation or Registered First Nation: Status First Nation or Registered First Nations persons are defined as Indian under the *Indian Act* and are usually members of a First Nation or Band. Prior to the mid-1960s, most Status First Nations lived on-reserve; however, recently a steady migration to urban centres has seen almost 50 per cent choosing to live off-reserve, usually in towns near their home reserves or in cities far from them.

Non-Status First Nation: A person of Aboriginal ancestry who is not registered under the *Indian Act*.

Reserve: "A tract of land, the legal title to which is vested in Her Majesty, that has been set apart by Her Majesty for the use and benefit of a band." *Indian Act*, 1876.

Band: Many First Nations communities have legally changed their name from "Indian Band" to "First Nation". A First Nation or "band" is usually made up of one or more land bases, more commonly known as reserves. Generally, First Nations identify themselves as communities and not bands.