

NEC Native Education College, British Columbia



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First Nations Post-Secondary Education:
A Costing Analysis on the Establishment
and Advancement of First Nations
Institutions.

Full summary report available at www.afn.ca





NEC Native Education College, British Columbia

NEC Native Education College (formerly the Native Education Centre) was established in 1967 to provide developmental, vocational, and applied academic programs to meet the needs of Indigenous adult learners in accessing employment or further post-secondary education. It became a private college in 1979, controlled and operated by BC First Nations. The College strives to be the first choice for Indigenous learners in British Columbia. It focuses on providing a supportive learning environment that delivers academic programs that provide pathways into careers. Its vision, mission, and values (2016-2022 strategic plan) are:

Vision: The Native Education College is the college of choice for Indigenous learners who chose Indigenous cultural supports for the realization of their education and career goals.

Mission: The NEC Native Education College provides a culturally appropriate and supportive learning environment for Indigenous learners, within available resources. Non-Indigenous learners are welcome. In pursuit of this Mission, the NEC Native Education College will bring about the following results:

- Learners will experience a learning environment that respects and reflects the diversity of Indigenous culture.
- Learners get the support they need to achieve their educational goals in a way that respects their individual cultural values.
- Learners are prepared for meaningful roles in Indigenous communities and society in general.
- Graduates are prepared for employment or to go on to further their education.
- Graduates receive recognition in the form of a certificate, diploma or degree.
- There is an informed respectful working relationship amongst Indigenous groups.
- The public is better informed on Indigenous education issues.

Values

- **Diversity** We recognize that while we are all Indigenous people, we come from many nations. We celebrate the diversity of our ways as a source of strength within our nations. Thus in diversity we find unity.
- **Respect** We recognize that nothing is barred from consideration as long as it does not intrude into the lives of others. From our unity arises our respect for Mother Earth, upon which we all depend, our respect for the ways and opinion of others, even if we do not share those ways or opinions. In respecting others, we respect ourselves; our capacity to appreciate each other as we are, and our resolve not to see our ways compromised.
- **Gratitude** From our unity arises our responsibility to our present generation and generations yet unborn and our gratitude to the generations that have come before us.
- **Understanding** We will rely on example and persuasion rather than authority and force when change is considered. We are determined to explore the limits of our understanding.



- **Accountability** We all have a role to perform that is an extension of a grand design. As adults we share freedom of choice and freedom of action and thus we also have the responsibility to accept the results of our choices and actions.

NEC's main campus is in Vancouver, BC, where it provides programming to Indigenous learners in Metro Vancouver. NEC has partnerships with First Nations, Métis, and Indigenous community agencies to deliver accredited adult upgrading and post-secondary programs in communities across British Columbia. Qualified local instructors and local community resources are engaged to provide the programming and services.

Programming

NEC offers adult basic education that is recognized across the province and certificate and diploma programs that have credits transferable to other post-secondary institutions in British Columbia. It has also offered employment readiness programming.

Table 1. NEC Native Education College Programs

Type	Current Programs (2021-22)
Adult Upgrading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Adult Basic Education (accredited by the Ministry of Advanced Education)
Business (Certificate and Completion Certificate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Service Representative Completion Certificate • Business Start-Up Completion Certificate • Career and College Prep Completion Certificate • Security Professional Completion Certificate • Office Administration and Employment Training Certificate
Fine Arts (Certificate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northwest Coast Jewellery Arts Certificate
Health Sciences (Certificate and University Transfer Credits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Care Assistant Certificate • Human Anatomy & Physiology I, Human Anatomy & Physiology II (University Transfer Credits)



Type	Current Programs (2021-22)
Humanities and Social Sciences (Certificate and Diploma)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indigenous Justice Studies Certificate• Indigenous Early Childhood Educator Certificate• Family & Community Counselling Certificate• Indigenous Land Stewardship Certificate• Indigenous Special Needs Educator Diploma• Indigenous Infant and Toddler Educator Diploma• Family & Community Counselling Diploma

Programming at NEC is developed with an Indigenous lens and content. For example, the Indigenous Adult Basic Education program offers courses in First Peoples English, First Nation Studies, Self-Government, and Social Justice and Indigenous Approaches alongside Biology, English, Business and Technical Math, and Education and Career planning. The provincial-level English courses include literature from Indigenous authors to provide an Indigenous cultural and philosophical worldview. Graduates of this program meet the Grade 12 prerequisites for post-secondary education.

Another example of NEC's grounding of education in Indigenous knowledge of land, ecology, and community is the one-year Indigenous Land Stewardship Certificate program. Graduates are prepared for careers in land and resource management and pathways to further post-secondary education. Learners are able to:

1. Apply Indigenous principles of stewardship to land and resource management
2. Practice skills from multiple knowledge systems (Indigenous and Western scientific) for respectful cross-cultural engagement
3. Explain the effects of colonialism on traditional land management and the implications of recent legal decisions
4. Synthesize traditional and contemporary methods of Indigenous land mapping and knowledge sharing
5. Contribute to the design, planning, and development of projects on Indigenous and other lands that address environmental challenges
6. Articulate the benefits of an ecosystem approach to land and resource decisions
7. Engage in key issues relevant to Indigenous communities based on traditional principles of environmental and social justice[and]



8. Use persuasive oral and written communication to convey ideas, proposals, arguments, and solutions to meet environmental challenges.¹

NEC has transfer agreements with several public post-secondary institutions to provide credits toward bachelor and diploma programs, including Capilano University, Douglas College, Emily Carr University of Art + Design, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, Royal Roads University, Simon Fraser University, The University of British Columbia, and Vancouver Community College. Adult basic education is provided through an affiliation agreement with the Vancouver Community College. NEC is certified by the Private Training Institutions Branch of BC under the Private Training Act. The institute is also a member of the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association of BC.

Between 2016-17 and 2019-20, enrollment ranged between 170 and 192 full-time equivalent students, approximately one-third to one-half of whom were enrolled in Indigenous Adult Basic Education. Many of the ABE students are mature students who reengage with education through NEC and continue on to gain employment or further education after completing their NEC program.

Student Services

Students are supported in their education journey through a wraparound approach to student services, including academic, emotional, spiritual, cultural, physical, and financial supports. NEC welcomes students to the College as a home, family, and community. Staff and faculty focus on developing relationships with students, supporting them flexibly to help them succeed. Supports include Elders in Residence (support that was provided remotely during COVID-19), counselling services (including licensed counsellors to support Indigenous student wellness and transition into student life), a Knowledge Centre with academic support services and library supports, food security supports, and family violence resources. Student activities sponsored by NEC emphasize cultural values and teaching, including Indigenous cultural activities, athletics, and peer mentorship.

Growth and Development

The institute is planning to continue relationship building with First Nations, academic, industry, and service partners; expanding its program offerings; and creating greater efficiencies in its activities. NEC will begin community and staff engagement for its next strategic plan as the current plan ends.

¹ <https://www.necvancouver.org/programs/humanities-social-sciences/indigenous-land-stewardship-certificate>



To learn more, please visit: www.afn.ca/policy-sectors/education



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