

## **PAIR Value and Benefit – Partnership Accreditation in Indigenous Relations (PAIR) program**

The Partnership Accreditation in Indigenous Relations (**PAIR**) program was created in 2001, and has been growing since its launch in February 2001. The PAIR program is now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, and there are currently over 230 companies in the PAIR program.

The PAIR program encourages companies to evolve and participate in a growing Indigenous business economy across Canada. The fastest growing segment and Canada's population comes within its Indigenous community, which is also becoming increasingly urbanized. These four performance areas; **Leadership Actions, Employment, Business Development, and Community Relationships** provide a foundation for the PAIR program and represent the core components to successful positive business relations with the Indigenous community.

Partnership Accreditation in Indigenous Relations (PAIR) is an online management and reporting program that supports progressive improvement in Indigenous relations, and a certification program that confirms performance in Indigenous relations at the bronze, silver or gold level. Certified companies/organizations promote their certification with a PAIR logo that signals to First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities that they are good business partners; great places to work and are committed to prosperity in Indigenous communities.

The PAIR framework evaluates companies on four PAIR performance areas known as the PAIR drivers, which are designed to ensure comprehensive business engagement with a community. The four PAIR drivers are Leadership Actions, Employment, Business Development, and Community Relationships. PAIR companies recognize the importance of Indigenous participation in the Canadian economy and have demonstrated their commitment to working across cultures

\_\_\_\_\_ has stated an intent to move toward inclusion, engagement and dialogue with First Nation, Metis and Inuit communities to impact in a meaningful way. The PAIR process will assist in providing a roadmap in defining the statement of commitment and can be achieved in the following ways;

**Leadership Actions:** the intent to reinforce an organizational focus on Indigenous relations by leaders of the organization. Actions include setting and cascading a clear commitment and policy, identification and communication of the community of interest, setting self-assessment exercises against the PAIR criteria to review status, and the application of a structures to help drive and sustain the commitment to Indigenous relations across the organization.

**Employment:** committing resources (time and money to achieving equitable representation of Indigenous persons in the workplace. This involves recruiting and retaining Indigenous talent, supporting their career development and advancement, and promoting mobility of Indigenous employees. This driver also includes promoting cross cultural awareness and/or cultural awareness sensitivity training and providing training and support for existing or prospective Indigenous employees through specific programs or actions.

**Business Development:** Through commitment of resources (time and money) to develop business relationships with Indigenous owned businesses. These activities are sustained through mutual benefit. Capacity building and mentorship also directly relate to sustaining, enhancing or developing future business development.

**Community Relationships-** Engagement and support

Through engagement the company/organization will have the opportunity to provide time and resources to develop and sustain positive and progressive relationships with Indigenous communities, groups, and rightsholders. Engagement can include information sharing, involvement in events and activities, and partnerships. Support is defined as a commitment to develop positive and progressive with Indigenous communities, groups and rightsholders by providing financial and/or in-kind support. These components work together to nurture and

sustain positive and progressive relationships. Organizations that are viewed as being part of the community have a far better chance of sustaining good relationships, versus those that go into a community to give an occasional presentation.

## **Opportunity and Benefit**

As organizations seek to find ways to answer TRC Calls to Action there is a growing need for a process that ensures that an organization is on the right track in working with any First Nation, Metis or Inuit community. PAIR is a process that provides a structure in a way that is manageable for the organization, and collaborative with any community they choose to work with.

## **Benefits to PAIR company/organization**

- **Competitive Advantage:** PAIR certification is a competitive advantage in establishing your reputation in CSR. PAIR certified companies are leading corporate citizens that have proven the business case for sustainable Indigenous relations. PAIR certification differentiates an organization from its competitors. PAIR companies can raise their profile, and promote their Indigenous relations success with the use of the PAIR logo
- **Relationship building:** PAIR
- PAIR companies/organizations with effective Indigenous relations, that practice continual improvement and have good community feedback processes in place, are in good position to receive greater certainty for their operations.
- **Strategic Planning, Employment and Procurement Opportunities:** PAIR is a management tool that provides a framework to build out vision, principles, policies, strategies, goals, targets and action plans in the areas of Leadership Actions, Employment, Business development and community relationships with successful positive outcomes.

By developing and integrating a PAIR process within the organization, the opportunity to develop knowledge and a deeper appreciation of working directly working with First Nation, Metis and Inuit communities through the four PAIR drivers will create stronger more

meaningful partnerships in a way that is engaging, inclusive and collaborative. By building trust within the community of interests (COI's) and creating alignments with the 4 drivers within the organization, it will raise the visibility and credibility of organizational trust within those communities.