

LIRN BC Update

LIRN BC: Providing Learning Opportunities for Rural and Northern BC Communities

As the acronym implies LIRN BC provides support to rural, remote, and northern BC communities to advance community learning through capacity building and collaborative networking on locally relevant issues.

LIRN BC partners include the BC Rural Network, Canadian Rural Partnership, Self-Help Resource Association of BC (SHRA), Service Canada (New Horizons for Seniors Program) and the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC). Collectively these organizations recognized the need to collaborate in order to provide meaningful opportunities for community learning initiatives. As such they combined their collective expertise and resources to provide locally relevant one or two day community dialogues or workshops to successful applicant communities.

As a collaborative strategy for building community capacity, LIRN BC encourages government (municipal, provincial and federal), First Nations, non-government organizations (community-based, regional and provincial) and businesses to work together by planning, delivering and evaluating a locally relevant learning initiative. Dialogues and workshops facilitated by LIRN BC partners cover a wide range of topics. Some of these include:

- Community Dialogues between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Peoples
- Building Sustainable Communities through Smart Growth Land-Use and Transportation Planning
- Community visioning
- Developing Sustainable Tourism
- Gaining Community Acceptance for Housing and Homelessness Solutions
- Immigration Planning for Your Community
- Learning about the Components of an Accessible Community
- Literacy and Community Development
- Productive Partnerships: Community Building through Multi-Sectoral Collaboration
- What is a Social Enterprise and How to Access ENP Funding?
- Youth Engagement

The support offered by the LIRN BC partners includes curriculum resources and facilitation services related to each topic area, as well as financial support for event related costs such as rent, food, refreshments, and participant travel from adjacent communities. As such, the LIRN BC partners do not award direct grants. All successful applicants to LIRN BC are expected to engage in planning and delivering the event, as well as contributing to logistical support such as recruiting participants and identifying appropriate local facilities.

Now in it's second year, 36 rural communities and organizations responded to the LIRN BC Call for Expression of Interest released in June 2007. Using a framework for assessing and rating, the LIRN BC partners ranked each EOI according to community location, organizational profile and community support. The 19 communities that were selected demonstrated the most need for LIRN BC's assistance, or were in regions of the province that have limited access to community development programs. Successful communities working with LIRN BC partners to plan community learning events in 2007 include:

- Chetwynd
- Prince George
- Dawson Creek
- Dease Lake
- Prince Rupert
- Terrace
- Salmo
- Beaver Valley
- Trail
- Cortes Island
- Bowen Island
- Gold River
- Port Alberni
- Fort St. James
- Vanderhoof
- Quesnel
- Horsefly
- Revelstoke
- Grand Forks

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