

Community Relations Officer–Indigenous Job Description

Purpose of the CRO Program

Community relations officers (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 returning officer (RO) and/or additional assistant returning officer (AARO) office and the target group, thereby making voting as accessible as possible to that population.

The program aims to reduce barriers by:

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

The role

Ideally, CROs are members of the community. When this is not possible, the CRO needs to 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 places might not be set up in some Indigenous communities. A CRO who is appointed to liaise with electors in one of these communities may be asked to coordinate and provide special ballot voting support to electors on behalf of their RO/AARO office.

In addition to holding information sessions and distributing information materials, attending Indigenous cultural events is a good way 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 Elders and youth who could work as part of the Indigenous Elder and youth Program. The CRO–Indigenous can help organize registration events at band offices and can also work with Indigenous health offices to determine ways to make polling day easier for electors with disabilities.

Impartiality

The CRO must always provide information only, not 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:

- sign a solemn declaration before they begin work
- remain non-partisan throughout their duties
- agree to maintain the secrecy of the vote

Tasks

- Maintain contact between the RO office and Indigenous electors through interaction with organizations representing or serving them.
- At the RO's request, assist the training officer and the recruitment supervisor in selecting, appointing and training Indigenous poll workers.
- Raise awareness about where, when and ways to register and vote through kiosks, information sessions and distribution of information materials (in-person or virtual).
- Assist SAs with the implementation of the Targeted Revision Program as it relates to the 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 necessary.
- Keep the RO updated on activities/trends related to voting in Indigenous communities.
- Support the Indigenous Elder and Youth Program; in particular, by helping the RO recruit and train the Elders and youth.
- If requested, help the RO with the search for suitable polling places or help make the necessary arrangements for their set-up and opening.

Job qualifications

Experience

- building community relations
- volunteering or working for an organization providing 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 providing 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 roles and responsibilities of election officers
- bilingualism (English and French)
- knowledge of principles set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- understanding of language(s) of the target group
- access to Internet and Microsoft Office suite

Rate of pay; hours

A CRO will be appointed for a period of 36 to 50 days before election day. The number of hours for a CRO depends on the target group that is present in each ED and the action plan that is developed to serve them. The maximum number of hours during an electoral event, allotted without special justification, is 100. The hourly pay for the CROs can be found in the “Employment” section on the Elections Canada website.