

Governance Pilot Project: Lheidli T'enneh

The Lheidli T'enneh Government Administration Code establishes and defines the authority and responsibilities of Lheidli T'enneh government administration.

The Code is relatively brief, but is clear in its purpose and easy to comprehend. The purpose of the Code is to:

- ensure effective and efficient administration of First Nation programs and services,
- define the relationship between Council, senior managers, and other First Nation employees,
- establish the roles and responsibilities of the First Nation administration,
- promote accountability of administration to Council, and
- ensure First Nation programs and services are administered in a fair and equitable manner.

The Code identifies the role of Council and provides a clear separation between administrative matters and the political role of Council. The Code specifies that Council's role is to employ and give direction to a senior First Nation administrator through the development of codes, bylaws, and policies. A "communication protocol" authorizes Council collectively to provide directives to the senior administrator, and requires that Council refrain from directing First Nation staff members in any matter. If Council has concerns related to First Nation staff, they are to be forwarded to the Administrator and dealt with according to applicable First Nation codes and personnel policies.

Amendments to the Code can be proposed by a resolution signed by at least ten Lheidli T'enneh eligible voters and approved either through a general meeting of electors or a community referendum. Threshold levels of support are specified.

A second code, the Financial Administration Code establishes a framework for First Nation financial management. The Code is described as "a code to govern the management of Lheidli T'enneh's finances". Its purposes are to:

- ensure the effective and efficient administration of the community's finances, and
- ensure accountability to Lheidli T'enneh community members.

The role of Council in the administration of the First Nation's finances is to:

- establish annual program budgets,
- ensure policies and procedures are in place for First Nation program delivery,
- ensure an impartial administrative appeal process is in place, and
- negotiate funding agreements on behalf of the First Nation.

The complementary roles and responsibilities of the First Nation Administrator are also described. The financial code documents key financial management policies and procedures in areas such as annual budgeting, expenditures, reporting, audit and tenders. Transparency is built into the code through provisions allowing community members to access financial and related information and documentation, including for example:

- the annual budget,
- the audit,
- funding agreements, and
- multi-year financial plans that include planned levels of debt.

At general meetings of Lheidli T'enneh membership, held at least once per year, Council presents audited year end financial statements, together with a narrative report describing the services delivered in the past year, and a Council-approved annual budget.

Excerpted from *First Nations Governance Pilot Projects: Challenge and Innovation. A Final Report Prepared for the National Centre for First Nations Governance* by Carleton University Centre for Community Innovation. February 2005.