

Deputy Representative for Advocacy and First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations Office of the Representative for Children and Youth

Questions and Answers

Introduction

This document has been created to address questions that prospective candidates for the RCY position of Deputy Representative for Advocacy and First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations may have following review of the job profile. This includes Qs and As about terms used and requirements set out in the job profile, the application and selection process, salaries and benefits, and position location.

We are aiming to provide as much information as we can and make the application and selection process as transparent as possible for prospective applicants so that they can assess whether this is a position that is a good fit with their background, experience, and aspirations for meaningful work.

We have tried to think of the questions that prospective applicants may have but expect that there are some we have not thought of. We are happy to respond to additional questions and post updates to this Q and A document in the Careers section of our website. Please direct any questions to Linda Shout, Director of Human Resources for the RCY and OHRC, at linda.shout@rcybc.ca. You are also welcome to participate in one of the informational webinars being offered by the Representative, Jennifer Charlesworth. Questions are welcome at this time also. The webinars will provide participants with an opportunity to learn more about the RCY's mandate, strategic priorities and projects, the role that the new Deputy Representative position will play on the team, and the knowledge, skills and abilities that will be beneficial in this role. Webinars will be held on the following dates:

- Monday, January 27, 2020 – 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.
- Monday, February 3, 2020 – 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Advocacy Leadership

Q. In the job profile, you refer to the RCY's Advocacy mandate expanding over the next few years and note that the Deputy will have a significant role to play in stewarding this change. What will the mandate expansion involve and when will it roll out?

A. By way of background, under the RCY Act, the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth is required to review the legislation every 5 years and make recommendations for any changes that they think are necessary. The Committee draws on their own experience and

receives proposals from the Representative as well as other interested parties, such as the Ministry of Attorney General (who is responsible for legislative amendments). Transcripts of the presentations to the Committee are accessible here: <https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/committees-calendar/20171207-ChildrenYouth-1000>. The Committee reviewed the RCY Act in 2018 and made a number of recommendations for changes (see full report here: https://www.leg.bc.ca/content/CommitteeDocuments/41st-parliament/3rd-session/cay/Report_SSC-CY-41-3-1_StatutoryReview_Web.pdf), which included the following with respect to an expanded mandate: 3. The Act be amended to allow the Representative for Children and Youth to support, assist, inform and advise young adults who have previously been in care with respect to services and programs necessary to support them in their transition to adulthood; and 6. The Act be amended to define a young adult as a person aged 19 years of age but under age 26, to align with the eligibility for agreements with adults under section 12.3 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, and remove the requirement that a young adult is required to have received a reviewable service within the 15 months before the individual's 19th birthday.

Some changes to the RCY mandate have already been implemented by RCYA Regulation. This includes the expansion of our role to provide advocacy services to young people between the ages of 19 and 24 who are receiving or are eligible for Agreements with Young Adults and/or Tuition Waiver Program. Staff have been recruited to support this mandate expansion and reach out to eligible young adults to ensure they are aware of this. This is a good starting place for learning how to meaningfully and effectively engage and support this young adult population, in anticipation of further mandate expansion.

The scope and details of legislative amendments are now being considered by the Ministry of Attorney General. We expect that amendments will be tabled in the Legislature in late 2020 or early 2021 but in the meantime, there is significant work to be done to plan for any expansion of services and to engage the ministries and authorities that we'd be working with as a result.

Q. You note that the Deputy would be involved in Systemic Advocacy – what does this entail?

A. Through the day-to-day work of RCY advocates we see patterns and themes that point to systemic issues. These are recurring concerns that may pertain to: practice (e.g. absence of cultural or transitional planning that contributes to increased vulnerabilities for children and youth); policy (e.g. differences or inconsistencies in interpretation); funding (e.g. lack of funding or funding inequities); services (e.g. lack of timely access to specific services that children and youth are eligible for and inconsistencies in services between regions). The Deputy would work with the ED of Advocacy and the Advocacy team to identify and bring forward systemic issues for the consideration of the Representative and Executive team and the RCY's Systemic Issues Working Group. In addition, the FNMIR community engagement team may also identify systemic issues through their work in and with communities.

Q. Will the Deputy be directly involved in individual case advocacy?

A. Typically, the Deputy would not be involved in individual case advocacy unless there are extenuating circumstances that require engagement from a member of the senior leadership team. These would be situations in which multiple advocacy efforts had already been made and it was determined that it was necessary to escalate the advocacy efforts to the ADM or Deputy levels in Ministries or CLBC.

Q. What is the makeup of the Advocacy and FNMIR teams, respective roles and office locations?

A. The Advocacy Team includes an Executive Director, three Managers (one manager located in each office although they all hold province-wide duties), and 18.5 front line staff comprised of Intake call coordinators (2), Intake Advocates (5.5) and Advocates (11). Advocacy staff are located in the three RCY offices and there are also three staff who work remotely. The FNMIR team is comprised of a manager based in Victoria, two monitoring staff and two community engagement staff. A part-time manager position is also shared between FNMIR and Advocacy to manage all community engagement activities and work across the organization on youth and community engagement activities.

Q. What are the key advocacy issues that Advocates deal with in their day to day casework?

A. The advocacy team receives calls from across the province from parents, caregivers, service providers, teachers, counsellors, lawyers and many other professionals that work with children, youth and young adults as well as calls directly from children, youth and young adults themselves. Intake Advocates handle all initial calls and correspondence to the office and assess the need for advocacy by providing information support and advice to the caller about how to problem solve and address issues, coaching in self-advocacy or assign the file to an advocate for direct advocacy. Intake Advocates and Advocates keep at the forefront of their work relevant rights-based legislation and conventions, the voice and views of the child, as well as related policy and guidelines.

Key issues that the advocacy team see in advocacy are:

- Children and youth not having their views considered in decisions that affect them or not having decisions explained to them in ways they can understand
- A lack of adequate foster placements across the province that can meet the needs of children and youth with more complex care needs. This often leads to multiple placement breakdowns
- A lack of cultural planning
- A lack of responsive and culturally attuned substance use and mental health supports
- Inadequate or incomplete transition planning from care to adult support services, including transitions to CLBC supports and services.

On First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations

Q. You are asking for someone with a strong cultural background and relationships who can also work within a legislatively mandated bureaucracy which might result in some tensions and conflicts. How do you see this being reconciled?

A. Tensions are inevitable in an independent office such as the RCY and the Representative recognizes that the Deputy Representative for Advocacy and First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations will likely experience tensions or conflict as they fulfill their role. The reality is that we work with government systems and bureaucracies and we have to be able to understand that worldview as well as First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous worldviews. Perhaps this is best captured by the concept of “two-eyed seeing” as presented by Mi’kmaq elder Albert Marshall. It refers to learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing ... and learning to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all. Elder Albert indicates that Etuaptmumk - Two-Eyed Seeing is the gift of multiple perspective treasured by many Indigenous peoples.

We need a strong Indigenous perspective in senior leadership and that leader needs to be somebody who is also adept at understanding other perspectives and able to work efficiently in both Indigenous communities and systems as well as other systems (governments, etc.) that are not Indigenous by nature. There will be tensions and conflict and the ability to hold space for this while being committed to resolution is key.

These tensions and conflicts are important opportunities for learning and could help to reveal opportunities for systems change. For example, the Deputy might review an action plan from a ministry that has been developed in response to an RCY report recommendation and determine that it conflicts with core cultural values, principles or ways of being. This is an important perspective to bring forward.

The Deputy may also experience tension within the RCY as we are also a bureaucracy working with legislation that is constructed within a colonial system. The aim of the RCY is to work with tensions or conflicts in respectful ways as a platform for learning and development towards more culturally responsive and safer workplaces and practices. In the RCY we are building our capacity for restorative justice and conflict resolution by investing in training and fostering greater capacity in working with complexity. Through meetings with the Representative, executive team and advisors, the Deputy will have opportunities to identify, explore and hopefully reconcile the inevitable tensions.

Q. How does this position interact with other teams that are not under direct authority of the Deputy Representative for Advocacy and First Nations, Métis and Inuit Relations?

A. There are formal lines of accountability within the organization for the purposes of managing the work and providing clarity and support to staff. However, both Deputies work with the Representative to support all RCY staff and to guide the work being undertaken in all teams. There are a number of ways in which the Deputy will interact with other teams including on the executive team and in project/report work, monthly review meetings (with CID), all-staff gatherings, and in training and education. One of the RCY's strategic priorities is to foster greater collaboration between teams and to tap into the diversity of knowledge, skills, experiences and ideas that staff have. We believe that this will add to the depth and quality of our project work. The Deputy will contribute significantly to this. In addition, as the Deputy will be providing leadership to the entire organization on cultural safety and in weaving Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing into practice, they will be engaging with all teams and staff members.

Q. Becoming a more culturally attuned and safer organization is not just one person's responsibility. What has the RCYBC done so far and where is the organization at developmentally? How committed is the leadership and staff to this agenda?

A. The Representative and executive team are strongly committed to leading and investing in staff and the organization so that we become a more culturally attuned and safer workplace for both the people working in the RCY and for the people that we serve. This is one of the primary strategic directions for the RCY in the coming years and the Representative has set out a 'cultural safety framework' for the RCY that recognizes this is an ongoing journey of building individual and collective cultural awareness, understanding, humility and agility as the foundation for greater cultural safety. Actions taken include:

- Retaining an advisor on cultural safety who has assisted us to both identify work that we need to do to become more culturally attuned and safer and take concrete action.
- At the annual 2-day all staff face-to-face gathering in May 2019, cultural safety was the primary learning focus and it will remain a primary staff development focus for 2020.
- Staff are supported to participate in education and training to enhance their cultural awareness and understanding.
- Knowledge keepers have been engaged to offer healing practices to staff e.g. cedar brushings.
- A cultural space has been established in the Burnaby office.
- The FNMIR team is identifying opportunities for self-directed learning and group discussion. They are also creating resources that will be accessible to all staff to help prepare them for any community-based work (e.g. information about the lands and the people of the lands, protocols, key contacts etc.)

- Project leads are actively encouraged to review their methods and approaches and to weave Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing and doing into the project design, methods, analysis and drafting of reports.

Staff will be at different places in their journey and our aim is to encourage openness, curiosity and ongoing learning. As an organization we recognize that there are areas in which we are doing quite well and others in which we have significant work to do. While the Deputy will play an important leadership role, it is a collective responsibility.

Q. How many Indigenous-identifying staff work in the RCY? What actions have been taken for recruitment and retention of Indigenous staff?

A. Twenty percent of RCY's staff identify as Indigenous. The RCY received an exemption from the Human Rights Tribunal that has enabled 'Indigenous only' postings. Each position that comes available is assessed as to whether it should be an Indigenous only hire, Indigenous preferred hire or not specified. The majority of postings are Indigenous only or Indigenous preferred.

Retention is just as important as recruitment and Indigenous staff have advised that we have work to do to improve support and retention. Becoming a culturally safer organization is a key part of this, as is establishing the new Deputy position.

Q. Many of the reports such as the those prepared by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry are National in scope. What role does the RCY have with respect to monitoring these calls to action/justice?

A. The RCY does not have a mandate outside of BC so is unable to monitor implementation of recommendations that are National in scope. However, many of the recommendations and calls to action are relevant to the provinces and territories. For example, the TRC's first call to action on child welfare sets out a number of things that are within provincial jurisdiction – from monitoring and assessing neglect investigations, to ensuring staff who conduct child welfare investigations are educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential school. Therefore, the RCY is focussing its monitoring efforts on how the calls to action and recommendations from these National reports are being implemented or acted upon at the provincial level, where there is intersection with recommendations that the RCY has already made to government or findings and recommendations that we are making in our forthcoming reports.

Q. Indigenous people in largely non-Indigenous organizations are often asked to be the expert on Indigenous experience and to 'call in' or 'call out' colleagues. This can be a burden on Indigenous staff - how does RCY deal with this?

A. Please see the response to the question above on actions being taken in the RCY to become more culturally attuned and safer. We understand that this is a burden that many Indigenous people are expected to carry in organizations. That is not what we want to set the Deputy (nor any Indigenous staff person) up for at the RCY. We expect all staff, regardless of heritage, to be on the journey towards becoming more culturally attuned, and to hold each other up and accountable.

Q. Are you expecting that the candidate will be either a Métis citizen or have First Nation's status?

A. This position is restricted to people who identify as Indigenous. First Nation's Status or Métis Citizenship is not a requirement. However, it is important that the candidate be someone who is culturally connected and who has sought out and received cultural knowledge. Candidates who are recognized and respected by their own community as having lived experienced and a learned understanding of Indigenous culture and their traditional teachings, and who carry themselves within community according to those teachings will be most successful in this role.

Q. I am Indigenous from another province/territory who has lived and worked outside of BC. Would you consider my application?

A. We welcome applications from anyone who meets the qualifications set out in the job profile. Given the diversity and richness of the First Nations, Métis and urban Indigenous landscape in BC it may be more difficult for someone who has practiced outside of BC to step into the Deputy role. Prospective candidates who are in this situation are encouraged to think about how they would transfer their experience from another jurisdiction into the BC context and how they would undertake to build and nurture strong working relationships with First Nation, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous leaders and services providers in BC.

General questions

Q. Will the Deputy Representative be involved in the development of reports that are released by the Representative?

A. The Deputy will be engaged in the design, development and drafting of reports – including investigative, aggregate and special reports - in a number of ways. First, any report that is contemplated by the Representative will be discussed at Executive and scoped out by a team, including the Deputies. As the project progresses there will be regular briefings and opportunities to provide input and ensure that Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing are reflected in the work. Drafts of reports prepared by the project teams and Communications

will be reviewed by the Deputy and they will be involved in discussions on recommendations. The Deputy will also participate in and support the consultations respecting reports with First Nations, Metis, DAA and urban Indigenous groups with whom we have agreements and MOUs. Although the final decision on the content, release and presentation of any report is the responsibility of the Representative, the Deputy plays an important role at all stages of the process.

Q. What qualifications do you expect the Deputy to have?

A. This is addressed in the job profile. If additional clarification is required you are welcome to submit questions to Linda Shout, Director, Human Resources (linda.shout@rcybc.ca) who will respond or refer your question as needed.

Q. What do you envision a typical week will look like? What are the rhythms and routines that could be expected?

It is expected that one third to one half of the Deputy's time will be devoted to external facing activities and developing relationships. This will include connecting and meeting with diverse groups and leaders, listening and facilitation time within communities, attending forums, attending Select Standing Committee meetings, and offering talks and presentations on the RCY's work. Some of this will be done out in communities and some of this will be done using technology while based in Victoria. The balance of time will be devoted to internal leadership activities and priorities associated with the Advocacy and FNMIR teams and corporate responsibilities.

Given the diversity of responsibilities and the need to be responsive to community and leadership invitations, there is no 'typical week' in the life of a Deputy Representative. However, one can expect that each week will include: a 1-1 meeting with the Representative for supervision and collaborative review of issues and projects, a meeting between the Representative and the 2 Deputies for collaborative review of major initiatives and issues, meetings with the ED and discussions with staff on project work, drafting contributions to the RCY update for staff, as well as review and drafting of documents, emails and ongoing communications with stakeholders. Executive meetings are held every 2 weeks, and on a monthly basis the Deputy would participate in All Staff gatherings, and review of CID 'reportables'. Each quarter, the executive team spends a full day working together on strategic issues, reflecting on progress made in the preceding quarter and planning for the upcoming quarter. Also on a quarterly basis, the CID team presents a quarterly data analysis and comprehensive reviews for discussion and decision making. Annually, the RCY hosts a 2-day face-to-face gathering for all staff. This is co-designed with staff and the Representative and offers opportunities for professional development as well as networking amongst staff from the different offices.

Although at times situations require an urgent response, the Representative's Office does not provide emergency services or deliver programs to children, youth and young adults. Although the work is expected to be demanding, with travel across the province required, modelling and supporting work life balance is important for all positions at RCY.

The work of the Office can be challenging and at times heartbreaking given what we are privy to and are committed to acting upon. Supports are available for all staff, including specialized counselling services, and it is the role of RCY's leaders to ensure that they are supporting staff as they navigate these challenges and that they are also managing their own self-care effectively.

Q. The location of the position is noted as being Victoria. Are you willing to consider the Deputy being located in other communities?

A. Because of the very close working relationship between the Representative and the two Deputies, and the value of being close to government ministry staff, the location for this position is necessarily Victoria.

Q. What benefits are available with this position?

This position is created pursuant to the *Public Service Act* as an excluded management position. This position offers a flexible benefits program covering extended medical, dental, and life insurance; vacation and other special leaves; short and long term sick leave benefits; and participation in the BC Public Service Pension Plan. For more information on the available benefits, please visit the [Benefits for Excluded Employees](#) web page. If you have any questions, please direct them to Linda Shout, Director, Human Resources: linda.shout@rcybc.ca

Q. What will the recruitment process look like?

The recruitment process will be multi-staged. Our goal is not only for RCY to learn about the candidates, but also for candidates to learn about RCY and to feel confident that this is a good place for them.

The first step is to shortlist candidates based on the education and experience qualifications listed in the job profile. For this reason, it is very important that you tailor your resume and cover letter to show clearly how your education and experience match those qualifications.

Next, we will be inviting shortlisted candidates to complete a written assignment over the course of 1 week. This will include several questions including a scenario in which candidates will be asked to describe how they would respond to the situation presented.

We are committed to working with key community partners in this selection process. Representatives from First Nations and Metis groups that we work closely with, and with whom the Deputy will be actively engaged, will be participating in the interview process. This will

enable us to identify between 1 and 3 candidates who will then have the opportunity to meet individually with the senior leaders of the RCY. Finally, the Representative will meet with each candidate to confirm a final decision. Thereafter, references will be checked and an offer presented.

More specific information will be provided to candidates at each stage of the recruitment process.

Q. When are you expecting the new Deputy to begin work?

A. We will negotiate a mutually acceptable start date however we hope that the successful candidate will begin their work in April or May 2020.