

Policy Title: Indigenous Honorarium Policy	Policy Number: P159
Policy Category: Finance	
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Approved by: Board	File Reference: 0340-50

PREAMBLE

This policy provides honorarium protocol for Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) staff when engaging First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous people, who are not employees of the CVRD. An honorarium recognizes an individual's time, as well as the knowledge, input and guidance they provide. It is a gesture of respect and appreciation for an individual, rather than a fee-for-for-service payment. This payment is for an individual not an organization

PRINCIPLES

1. To better support the gift giving and compensation components in reciprocal, respectful, relationship-based collaborations between Indigenous partners and the CVRD.

PURPOSE

2. This policy supports guidance provided by the Comox Valley Reconciliation Advisory Committee to *provide financial compensation for the time and expertise of any Indigenous person that has been invited to participate in a meeting, event or activity*. It also supports the CVRD's commitment to Reconciliation and its efforts to follow the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples. An organization-wide policy that guides staff is needed to support the CVRD's ongoing relationship building efforts with First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous people and to ensure consistent treatment of honoraria.

SCOPE

3. The policy applies to CVRD staff when engaging First Nations, Inuit, Métis, urban Indigenous groups, or their appointees, who are not employees of the CVRD, where an honorarium is appropriate such as blessings, welcomes, presentations, cultural work or CVRD engagement. This list is not exhaustive.
4. This policy does not apply to a situation where an individual is engaged in a contract with the CVRD to provide professional services.

5. This policy does not apply to representatives of the CVRD Board, Committees or Commissions.
6. This policy does not apply to capacity building payments to a First Nation, Inuit, Métis or urban Indigenous organization and those employees acting in their employment capacity related to this.
7. For information related to remuneration for Board Committees or Commissions refer to the Board Remuneration and Expense Reimbursement bylaw.

DEFINITIONS

Cash gifts include currency, cheques, and direct deposit.

Cultural Advisor refers to an Indigenous partner who is consulted for their unique cultural knowledge. They may also be considered a Knowledge Holder or Knowledge Keeper.

Cultural works are defined as works or activities performed by a First Nations, Inuit or Métis representative that is connected to Indigenous culture or protocol.

Elder: The term Elder does not refer to ones' age; rather, the term is typically bestowed to an individual by their community because of the vast spiritual and cultural knowledge they hold. Elders are not self-taught; rather they have been gifted their respected teachings by other Elders or Knowledge Keepers through many years of mentorship and teaching. This is a very honorable title, and Elders should be treated with the utmost respect.

Honorarium is an expression of recognition in the form of remuneration to a member of a First Nation, Inuit, Métis or urban Indigenous community group providing a voluntary service to the CVRD. It is intended as a gesture of respect and gratitude to show CVRD's appreciation for the work. It is typically a nominal payment made on a special or non-routine basis to an individual who is not an employee of one of these respective groups. An honorarium is not a fee for service arrangement.

Knowledge Holder/Keeper: The term Knowledge Holder or Knowledge Keeper refers to an individual who has been taught by an Elder or a senior Knowledge Keeper within their community. They typically hold traditional knowledge and teachings, and understand how to care for these teachings (and when it is or is not appropriate to share this knowledge with others). A Knowledge Holder does not imply a specific age; rather, an individual of any age can be a Knowledge Holder.

Near-cash gifts include items that can be used as cash in exchange for goods and services, such as vouchers, gift cards, and gift certificates (including prepaid credit cards).

Non-cash gifts are an expression of recognition and thanks to an Elder or knowledge keeper. First Nations cultural protocol often includes gift giving as a way to show respect.

POLICY

8. In order to build relationships and include Indigenous voices in its process, the CVRD may ask representatives of First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous community groups to be a part of activities and events related to CVRD operations. It is customary and appropriate to demonstrate respect to those who are asked for their time by offering an honorarium and/or a gift.
9. It is ideal for the project lead, or most senior staff, to give the gift as a sign of respect. To demonstrate genuine respect and gratitude for the traditional knowledge that has been shared, it is recommended that a personalized card or note accompany the gift.
10. Gifts are appropriate when Indigenous Traditional Knowledge or teachings are shared for the benefit of CVRD. Typically, this knowledge is offered by an Elder or Knowledge Keeper and should be reciprocated with a gift, as their Traditional Knowledge and oral stories are intangible and are viewed as communal property. Accordingly, this traditional knowledge cannot be bought or sold. Gifting complements honoraria but does not replace them.

Non-Cash Gifts

11. Non-cash gifts can include art, scarves, coffee, tea, glassware, plants and sacred medicines. Please note that gift cards are considered near-cash gifts and should not be used.
12. The Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives can provide guidance on non-cash gifts.
13. The total value of non-cash gifts provided to an individual should not exceed \$500 in fair market value in a calendar year.
14. It is the responsibility of project leads to track non-cash gifts provided to ensure the total value of non-cash gifts does not exceed this dollar threshold. Should the total value of non-cash gifts exceed \$500, the project lead must notify Financial Services.

Cash Gifts/Honoraria

15. **Appendix A** has been included to assist staff with determining an appropriate amount of honorarium. Presented ranges, are based on existing honorarium rates for K'ómoks First Nation Elders, as well as guidance from the Comox Valley Reconciliation Advisory Table. Other rates can be considered should existing fee schedules or Terms of Reference already be in place
16. When a request is outside of the ranges noted in Appendix A, approval from the Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives and/or Chief Administrative Officer is required.
17. Honorarium should be paid in the form of a cheque.
 - a. Departments must submit the Honorarium Request Form to Financial Services at least two weeks before the event to ensure that the cheque is available to be provided at the event.
18. Honorarium can be paid in the form of cash (i.e. through cash advance or petty cash) under exceptional circumstances only. These exceptional circumstances must be clearly documented and approved by the Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives and/or CAO. Exceptional circumstances could include the following:
 - a. Where payment is to equity-seeking groups without access to bank accounts and thus unable to cash a cheque
 - b. To individuals who are facing other established barriers to accessing the funds
19. Where payment is to be made by cash, the Department must submit a requisition for a cash advance **before the date** the honorarium will be paid. Reimbursement requests will not be accepted.

Canada Revenue Agency Requirements

20. While it is clear to the CVRD that an honorarium is not a payment for services, the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has an administrative policy requiring the CVRD to issue certain information slips to individuals who have received more than \$500 in honorariums annually; more information can be found [here](#).
21. The CVRD acknowledges this federal requirement is contrary to the spirit of reconciliation and will work directly with those who are impacted and/or their organizations to explain the process in a culturally safe manner. The CVRD will make all efforts to work together with honorarium recipients to remove any barriers that would prevent payment of an honorarium.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
Employees	• Determine when an honorarium or gift should be considered in accordance with this policy • Adhere to the policy and escalate differences in honorarium ranges in Appendix A and honorariums requested to the Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives and/or CAO as appropriate • Collect necessary information on honorarium request forms (direct payments, staff advance or petty cash) • Provide honorarium request forms to Accounts Payable within stated timelines
Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives	• Provide guidance to staff in the application of this policy • Approve honorarium requests outside of the ranges noted in Appendix A
Accounts Payable	• Process honoraria requests by issuing a cheque or electronic funds transfer
Financial Accountants	• Track payments made through petty cash, cash advance or accounts payable
Manager of Financial Operations	• Review payment disbursements for adherence to policy
Chief Financial Officer	• Oversee the honorarium program and ensure effective internal controls
Chief Administrative Officer	• Approve honorarium requests outside of the ranges noted in Appendix A
Board	• Review and approve this policy and any changes as applicable

REVISION HISTORY

Approval Date	Approved By	Description of Change

APPENDIX

Appendix A – Honorarium Guidelines

APPENDIX A – HONORARIUM GUIDELINES

The honorarium rates described below have been informed by discussions with the Comox Valley Reconciliation Advisory Table. They will be reviewed and updated as needed to ensure rates provide meaningful recognition for time and knowledge shared with the CVRD.

Activity	Request Details	Benefits	Minimum Suggested Gift
Meeting attendance	An individual, appointed staff member or elected representative of a First Nation or an Inuit, Métis or urban Indigenous community group attending a CVRD meeting.	Ensures the perspective of First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous community groups are represented.	\$125 for half day meeting; \$250 for full day meeting.
Welcome/Prayer /Blessing	A territorial welcome, prayer, or a blessing from an Elder at an event.	Sets the tone of an event and starts and/or ends an event in a good way.	\$150 and a small gift
Formal Presentation/ Honoured Guest and CVRD Reconciliation Advisory Table	Invitation to have an Elder or honoured community member give formal remarks present and/or participate at a CVRD event or meeting; includes Elder attendance at the Reconciliation Advisory Table	Contribution of content and learnings to the event; knowledge sharing.	\$450
Elder or Knowledge Keeper attendance at a meeting or learning session.	An Elder or Knowledge Keeper may be invited to a CVRD meeting or learning session to provide traditional knowledge/teachings, or to support attendees when	Provides traditional teachings, knowledge and support	\$450 for half day or less; \$900 for full day.

	difficult topics such as residential schools are discussed.		
Elder Support Person	Elders may request a support person/helper to ensure their needs are met.	The Elder feels safe and in a good place to provide services	\$125 for half day; \$250 for full day; also reimburse their travel (if applicable)
Indigenous Mentor	An Indigenous mentor asked to provide advice to CVRD staff in an informal or one-on-one setting.	Provides expertise related to Indigenous knowledge systems.	\$50/hr
Cultural Performance	Requesting dancers, singers, or other K'ómoks First Nation, Inuit or Métis artists to perform culturally, often with traditional regalia.	Provides meaningful experience to increase awareness of cultural activities; informative.	Up to \$1,500 as per set rates or charitable donation amount communicated by artists.
Reimbursements for Travel	Mileage to/from the event, parking costs, per diems (if travel requires meals on the go), and accommodation should all be offered as needed. These costs need to be covered for Elder support as well, if applicable.	Elders may need additional accommodations (in addition to an Elder Support Person) to ensure their health and wellness during their engagement with the CVRD; all of these types of support should be considered.	Reimbursement as per rates in the CVRD board Remuneration and Expenses Bylaw