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Indigenous Elections: Did you Know?

1. Indigenous institutions and organizations conduct elections in accordance with a number of legal regimes, including the *Indian Act*, the *First Nations Election Act (FNEA)*, the *Cree-Naskapi (of Québec) Act*, custom election codes, and Inuit statutes and corporate by-laws.
2. Depending on the legal status of the particular Indigenous institution or organization, there may be flexibility to choose one particular platform or another, or at least modify election procedures. Every election system has pros and cons to consider in deciding which is best for your community.
3. A custom election code provides the opportunity to modernize your election process, change procedures that are not working well and codify practices that reflect the customs and traditions of your community. A custom code allows for greater flexibility. A custom code or the FNEA can streamline your elections since they remove the reliance on Ministerial oversight. Efficiency can be further enhanced by having a custom membership code, taking the membership list out of the hands of the federal government.
4. Some Indigenous groups use on-line voting to help increase voter turn out, especially in communities with a large number of off-reserve members. This can also help capture the interest of a younger generation of voters, further revitalizing an interest in community governance. On-line voting may be a useful tool where high voter turn-out is particularly important, such as a Land Code ratification, settlement agreement ratification or constitutional amendment.
5. Some innovative web-based and mobile applications could be useful additions to the governance toolkit. These include on-line voting, full election management, membership management and governance communication tools. They may help improve administrative efficiencies, streamline communications, strengthen the connection between members and community leaders, and increase engagement with younger members.
6. Funding may be available to help support electoral reform initiatives.

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