

July 2007

**ABORIGINAL FINANCIAL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION  
AFOA ABORIGINAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**

**FACT SHEET**

**Background**

The Aboriginal Financial Officers Association (AFOA) is pleased to introduce the Aboriginal Fellowship Program (AFP). The purpose of the program is to transfer vital financial management knowledge to Aboriginals and ultimately develop needed capacity in First Nations.

The AFP will provide selected, qualified Aboriginal financial professionals currently working in Aboriginal communities and organizations with the opportunity to receive on-the job internal training and classroom training at Canadian host institutions/organizations such as the Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

**Focus of Fellowship**

The Fellowship will enhance experience and knowledge in a combination of the following areas, contingent on the candidate Fellow's needs and background and assignments available:

- Performance management, measurement and reporting;
- Accountability practices;
- Accounting practices;
- Audit and audit-related methodologies & practice
- Public sector administration/government practices; and,
- Performance audits (sometimes referred to as value-for-money audits)
- Results-based management

**Recruitment of Fellows for 2007/2008**

AFOA is currently seeking two qualified candidates to train with the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) of Canada from October 2007 to January 2008.

**Criteria for Fellowship Candidates**

Candidates for the Fellowship with the CAFM designation will receive priority. Candidates must also meet the following criteria:

- A senior financial manager with over five years experience managing finances in an Aboriginal organization/community.
- An "agent of change" with leadership qualities.
- Willing to re-locate to Ottawa for a period of 3-4 months.
- Willing to take full advantage of the Fellowship opportunity; bring back the knowledge and experience gained in the Fellowship to the employer; transfer that knowledge and experience to peers and others within the organization.
- Candidate's employer must be willing to support the candidate during the Fellowship by continuing to

pay the candidate's salary (or a portion thereof – see monthly stipend below) and maintaining the candidate's seniority in the organization.

### **Placement at OAG – what will you be working on?**

Candidates will be asked about their areas of experience, qualifications and interest, and a tailored program will be developed that meets their needs and those of their employer. The main focus of the Fellowship placement at the OAG would involve the following components, based on candidates' experience, qualifications and interests:

#### **1) Participation in ongoing audits**

**A.** For candidates with an accounting designation or for those working towards a designation, this could include financial audits of departments and agencies.

Financial audits answer the question: Is the government keeping proper accounts and records and presenting its financial information fairly?

Every year, the Government of Canada publishes the *Public Accounts of Canada*, which contains the government's annual financial statements. The Auditor General provides an opinion as to whether these financial statements are fairly presented in accordance with the government's stated accounting policies. The Auditor General also conducts annual financial audits of most Crown corporations and many federal organizations.

**B.** For candidates with an interest in performance audits, this could include working on ongoing and planned audits of departments and agencies, including those providing programs and services to aboriginal peoples. Performance audits (formerly known as value-for-money audits) answer these questions: Are programs being run with due regard for economy, efficiency, and environmental impact? Does the government have the means in place to measure their effectiveness?

Performance audits do not question the merits of government policies. Rather, they examine the government's management practices, controls, and reporting systems based on its own public administration policies and on best practices. The Office reports its findings, which may include areas that are working well and recommendations for improvement.

**C.** There may also be an opportunity to work on methodology-type products.

#### **2) Audit and audit-related training**

This would take two forms: **A. classroom training on audit methodology, practices and related issues.** Participation would be limited to the timing of course offerings.

**B. one-on-one training,** which would be based on candidates' expressed areas of interest. For example, a session could be planned for a candidate to meet with an Office expert regarding audit sampling, audit substantiation, or recent developments in accrual-based accounting.

#### **3) A Special Project**

This would involve a candidate submitting a plan for a special project related to something that the candidate would endeavour to implement within his or her organization in an agreed-upon amount of time, upon return to that organization.

### Administrative arrangements - How does it work?

AFOA will provide the necessary support for travel to and stay in Ottawa including:

- Covering the cost of travel to and from Ottawa (economy class) to participate in the Fellowship
- Covering the cost of one trip home during the Fellowship period
- Making the travel arrangements (if needed)
- Covering acceptable costs for the shipment of personal effects if needed
- Arranging for furnished accommodation in Ottawa for the Fellowship period
- Paying the rent and basic utilities on the accommodation

In addition Fellows will receive a monthly stipend of \$800.

### What happens at the end of the Program?

At the end of the placement, the Fellow will be required to submit a plan for a Special Project related to the AFP skill areas designed to improve their organization's financial management and performance, and which they will endeavor to implement in their organization in an agreed upon amount of time upon their return.

Upon completion of the Program Fellows will participate in a "graduation ceremony" at which Fellows will present their Special Project assignment and receive acknowledgement, recognition and congratulations on their achievement, including a certificate of completion.

### How to apply and when does it start?

The current Fellowship placement is from October 2007 to January 2008. If you are interested in this program, please send the following to the attention of Suzanne Seebach, Director, Programs & Services, at [sseebach@foa.ca](mailto:sseebach@foa.ca), or fax to 613-722-3467.

- 1) Current resume
- 2) Letter stating your reasons for wanting to take part in the program
- 3) Letter of support from Employer

Applications must be received by August 15, 2007.