



WORKING IN  
INDIGNEOUS  
COMMUNITIES

## Considerations for Filming in Community

Working in community not only requires a different approach, but it also requires a different set of values and ethics that are based in relationship in order to give communities agency, as opposed to taking a capitalist, commodity based, or transactional approach.

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*Films create a huge footprint. As filmmakers, our responsibility to community compels us to determine how we are responsible in that way. What does the film mean economically, socially and to the environment? Am I making a positive or negative impact? How am I impacting this community? How am I being responsible for it? How do you create a system of support for stories while understanding all of your social and economic obligations? How are you ensuring that you are not affecting daily lives? What trauma are we creating, and then leaving behind? If you want to make a residential school story it is necessary to figure out how it impacts people. And now that your film is made – what are you bringing back to your community?*

*Darlene Naponse, Filmmaker*



## Considerations for Filming in Community

### **Whose story is it and who is telling the story?**

- How will the story be told?
- Who has editorial control over the story?

### **Are Indigenous people in key creative and story-telling roles?**

- Is the writer, director, and/or producer Indigenous?
- Who is advising on the script or other stages of the project?
- Do you plan to involve Indigenous people in all stages of the project?

### **Are you proposing to use, adapt or alter traditional knowledge, communally owned material or cultural heritage material in any way?**

- How will you manage and respect sacred information? What are you going to do with it?
- What process will you follow to get consent?
- What legal issues (if any) are involved? For example, is the Indigenous content intended for the film or television program copyrighted?
- Will members of the community be asked to sign release forms?

### **Will the work expose confidential, personal and/or sensitive material?**

- Does it reinforce negative stereotypes?
- Is the use of language and framing of the issue appropriate?

### **How do you intend to collaborate on your project?**

- What benefits will the community get for participation?
- How will you acknowledge the Indigenous communities where the project is located?

### **Do you have the right approvals? Have you secured the proper permissions?**

As we know, community governments are expected to govern over all sorts of things they do not actually have capacity to deal with and are then expected to help or create support for or approve of complex productions taking place within their communities. When considering community governments, you may expect to:

1. Send letter of interest
2. Present at a community meeting to make everyone aware of your project and what to expect
3. Send out community notice
4. Make sure local government know when you are filming and let them know what to expect weeks ahead

### **What are the resources that can be used at the community level?**

- What does the community want to put forward?
- Are there job opportunities for catering? Set design? Or costume design?
- Will you want to employ knowledge keepers and language holders?
- Are there training or mentorship opportunities for community?
- Are there opportunities for the community to earn revenues from the production?

**How will the community have a voice?**

- Do they get to look at scripts?
- Do they get the first screening?
- Is there going to be a fee?
- Does the community get copies?
- Are you using staff and crew from community?
- How are they going to be compensated?

**How will the production be accountable to community / community members?**

- Will the community be providing feedback? Do they get to look at scripts?
- Does the community get the first screening?
- Is there going to be a fee?
- Does the community get copies of footage?
- What is the process to get information back to them?