

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples – About Us

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is a nationally incorporated umbrella organization that represents the interests, nationally, of its provincial and territorial affiliate organizations across Canada. Its head office in Ottawa is the center of operations for its elected executive of a National Chief and Vice Chief, an administrative core staff, program managers and coordinators, and consultants on a range of Aboriginal issues. CAP, itself, does not have individual memberships or provide programs and services directly to individuals. In effect, the "members" of CAP are its affiliate organizations. This office manages the day to day activity of CAP between meetings of its Board of Directors.

Each affiliated organization (PTO) is a provincially or territorially incorporated organization that has legally associated itself with CAP at various times since 1971. Each has its own constitution, membership, and elected executive officers with its own administrative staff and program officers. The size and numbers of the affiliate administration vary widely with the size of the province and numbers of members. In all but the smallest of affiliates, potential members apply to a local of the affiliate organization in or near their community and, in the larger organizations these locals are often organized into regions or zones. Each of these regions or zones has their own Board or Council elected and/or appointed by their respective locals. The provincial President or Chief is elected at an annual assembly of the affiliate by assembly delegates selected by each organization.

CAP's national Board of Directors is composed of the national Chief, the national Vice Chief, and the President or Chief of each of the affiliated organizations. The Board meets several times a year to monitor and direct the activity of CAP. The Board is the decision making body of CAP between Annual General Assemblies.

CAP's Annual General Assembly is the body that sets the general policy of the organization and, through its motions and resolutions, determines much of the activity of CAP for the next year. The national Assembly consists of the national executive, and 16 delegates from each affiliate most often each delegation includes the affiliate's executive officers, its Board of Directors or Council, and appointed members for a total number of 16.

In election years all of the delegates vote by secret ballot for a national Chief and a Vice Chief for a three year term. At every Assembly the delegates examine an audited report of expenditures since the last Assembly, and hear reports from CAP on their programs and operations of the previous year. Every delegate is entitled to bring forward motions and resolutions for a vote of the Assembly. At most assemblies workshops for delegates are held on priority issues and concerns.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) was founded in 1971 as the Native Council of Canada (NCC). It was established to represent the interests nationally of Métis and non-status Indians, a population that outnumbered all other native people combined. In essence, the principle of the NCC's organization at that time was to address the lack of recognition of themselves as Aboriginal peoples and to challenge the exclusion of our constituency from federal responsibility.