



Indigenous and
Northern Affairs Canada

Affaires autochtones
et du Nord Canada

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

Education Partnerships Program:

Partnership Establishment and Partnership Advancement Components:

National Program Guidelines 2018-2019



Canada 

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1 Introduction

Established in 2008, the Education Partnerships Program (EPP) is a proposal-based program designed to promote collaboration among First Nations, provinces, INAC and other stakeholders to advance First Nation student achievement in First Nation and provincial schools.

The Program has two distinct components:

1. **Partnership Establishment and Partnership Advancement:** This first component supports the establishment and the advancement of formal tripartite partnership arrangements that aim to share expertise and, resources and develop practical working relationships between officials and educators in provincial systems and in regional First Nation organizations and schools, to ensure supports are in place to support all First Nation students. These partnership arrangements open the way to better coordination between First Nation and provincial schools and smoother transitions for First Nation students who move between systems. The result will be concrete benefits for the students, teachers and administrators involved, which will lead to improved educational outcomes for First Nation students. In addition to pre-existing tripartite arrangements in Nova Scotia and British Columbia, 11 new tripartite education Memoranda of Understanding have been established since the program's inception in 2008. These include agreements in New Brunswick; Manitoba; Alberta; Prince Edward Island; Yukon; and in Ontario with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, as well as the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians; in Quebec, with the First Nations Education Council as well as Tshakapesh; in Saskatchewan, with the Saskatoon Tribal Council; and in Newfoundland and Labrador with the Mamu Tshishkutamashutau - Innu Education Inc. For eligible recipients that are interested in applying to the Partnership Establishment or Partnership Advancement Components of the EPP please refer to the separate document *Education Partnerships Program – Partnership Establishment and Partnership Advancement Component Guidelines 2018-2019* available under the [Education Partnerships Program](#) page on INAC's website.
2. **Structural Readiness (SR):** The second component of the EPP supports Structural Readiness (capacity development). These activities build the capacity of First Nation organizations to strengthen their organization; to cover start-up costs for First Nation school boards; and to support the conclusion of agreements to allow for the operation of on-reserve schools by provincial school boards. While both components of EPP utilize the same Education Partnership Program proposal template, each component has different eligibility criteria and guidelines and must be accessed via a separate proposal. Recipient eligibility for Structural Readiness is not dependent on having a tripartite MOU. For eligible recipients that are interested in applying to the Structural Readiness component of EPP please refer to the separate document *Education Partnerships Program – Structural Readiness Guidelines 2018-2019* available under the [Education Partnerships Program](#) page on INAC's website.

The Partnership Establishment and Advancement components of the Education Partnerships Program are currently set to expire on March 31, 2020.

2 Objective

The overall objective of the Education Partnerships Program is to advance First Nation elementary and secondary student achievement in both First Nation and provincial schools.

3 Eligible Recipients

Eligible regional First Nation organizations must meet the following criteria:

- be provincially or federally incorporated;
- have a documented management framework (e.g. policies and/or by-laws) outlining the organization's governance structure and procedures;
- have documented support from First Nations/communities/schools (e.g. band or tribal council resolution, or other documentation such as formal letters of support);
- have documented and publically available policy guidelines;
- demonstrate economies of scale;
- organizational structure includes an Executive Director or equivalent, Finance Officer and a Board of Directors or equivalent;
- undertake, as a key function, elementary and secondary education support for groups of First Nation communities/schools;
- be in a sound financial position;
- agree to produce publicly available annual reports on education partnership projects and expenditures; and
- if new, replace an existing organization or an amalgamation of existing organizations.

Regional First Nation organizations can also manage partnership funding or coordinate partnership initiatives for independent, non-member First Nations if these independent First Nations agree to such an arrangement. Organizations will be required to provide a signed written statement from each non-member First Nation saying that they agree to have EPP funding administered and managed by the organization on their behalf.

Regional First Nation organizations cannot act only as a flow-through to member or non-member organizations under this program. They cannot issue calls for proposals to member or non-member organizations for activities funded through this program.

4 Broad Parameters

The EPP supports two categories of partnership activities, Partnership Establishment and Partnership Advancement:

1. **Partnership Establishment** – activities supporting the establishment of partnership agreements and joint work plans between First Nations, provinces and INAC that identify the shared priorities that the parties are committed to working on together to improve First Nation student achievement.
2. **Partnership Advancement** – activities supporting collaborative and time-limited initiatives and activities aimed at improving First Nation student achievement, in both First Nation and provincial schools. Activities should be identified within a joint work plan.

Priority Areas – All partnership activities must address one or more of the following priority areas:

- A.** Activities to support the establishment and advancement of agreements with provinces and provincial school boards to improve student outcomes through improved programs and services; sharing expertise; and improving coordination between First Nation and provincial schools to ensure smooth transitions, including between elementary and secondary education on reserve and early childhood programs, and/or post-secondary and labour market training programs through partnership activities that involve other federal and provincial departments;
- B.** Partnership activities that directly respond to recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (e.g. changes to curriculum);
- C.** Partnership activities that lead to the development of new approaches to tuition/education service and delivery agreements; and/or
- D.** Partnership activities that lead to the development of new unique student identifiers enabling the progress of First Nation students to be tracked as they move between education systems or relocate on and off reserve.

Membership in the Partnership – Partnerships will include a minimum of one regional First Nation organization, the provincial Ministry of Education (or provincial school board) and INAC. At this level, partnerships can maximize opportunities for coordination and cost-efficiency. Other stakeholders may also participate in the partnerships. For example, these stakeholders could include other federal and provincial government departments and private sector organizations. For the purposes of the partnership, a regional First Nation organization can manage partnership funding and/or the coordination of partnership activities for independent, non-member First Nations, if these independent First Nations agree to this arrangement.

Roles and Responsibilities – All partners share a common interest and responsibility for identifying ways to support the success of First Nation students and participate in the activities. All partners will be responsible for the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the partnership and its activities. In many partnerships, provincial school boards/districts/divisions will also play a role in the implementation of joint partnership plans.

Letters of support – Proposals must provide evidence of support from the regional First Nation organization and the Province (and/or provincial school board where applicable). Provincial support letters may be provided by director-level or higher officials, preferably from the Ministry of Education.

Federal funding – Federal funding of approved proposals submitted under the Partnership Establishment or Partnership Advancement components of the EPP is provided to regional First Nation organizations to support their participation in tripartite partnerships and to support joint initiatives directed to First Nation students. Federal funding is intended to primarily support services to elementary and secondary First Nation students ordinarily resident on reserve between the ages of 4 to 21 years attending schools on reserve. Provinces are expected to be primarily responsible for financially supporting joint activities directed to students in provincial schools, through a joint action plan. The regional First Nation organization may choose to purchase required services from a provincial government.

Multi-year funding – Applicants may submit a one-year or two-year proposal for EPP activities. Organizations seeking multi-year funding should indicate how activities progress from year-to-year, including identification of results, data and evidence from previously supported activities and a description of how the proposed activities in future years are intended to build upon these results.

Funding will be approved on an annual basis, with future years of funding approved in principle and indicated as such in the decision letter for 2018-19. Successful program recipients must revise their proposals and work plans, as required, and resubmit them annually.

5 Eligible Activities and Expenditures

EPP funding is provided to support time-limited eligible activities and expenditures related to Partnership Establishment and Partnership Advancement only where the partnership meets the following basic criteria:

- All partners share a common goal and work in collaboration to improve First Nation student achievement in First Nation and provincial schools;
- The partnership involves educators and education specialists in First Nation schools and organizations, or in the provincial system;
- The partnership is focused on one or more of the priority areas of the program as described in Section 4;
- All partners agree to report on the results of the partnership to member communities;
- All partners contribute financially or in-kind (First Nation contributions can be funded in whole or in part through the INAC EPP); and
- All partners commit to practical measures to improve outcomes.

5.1 Partnership Establishment

The program may provide funding to support Partnership Establishment activities, including the negotiation and drafting of an MOU between a regional First Nation organization, the provincial Ministry of Education and/or INAC (where an MOU does not exist) and any necessary consultations with communities. The maximum period of funding for Partnership Establishment will be 36 months. Proposals can be for one year or two years. However, funding will be approved and provided on an annual basis. All partners will be required to sign the tripartite partnership agreement (MOU).

5.1.1 Eligible Activities:

- Development of a tripartite partnership agreement (MOU) and a joint work plan that identify shared priorities and each partner's commitments, roles, responsibilities, and planned activities. Activities must address one or more of the EPP priority areas.

5.1.2 Eligible Expenditures:

- Salaries and benefits for employees working on tripartite partnership development;
- Travel and accommodations within Canada related to tripartite partnership development;
- Meetings directly related to tripartite partnership development;
- Communications with First Nations related to tripartite partnership development;

- Professional/consulting/Elder fees related to tripartite partnership development fees (indicating daily rate and duration of contract);
- Legal advice (but not for litigation);
- Evaluation of the project's outcomes and impacts by an independent evaluator; and
- Eligible administration costs, as outlined below (not exceeding 10%).

Note: Mileage and per diem travel expenses cannot exceed those contained in the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's [Travel Directive](#).

Once the partners have a signed tripartite partnership agreement (MOU) and concluded a joint work plan, the regional First Nation Management Organization will be eligible to submit a proposal to INAC to access funding for eligible activities under the program's *Partnership Advancement* component.

5.2 Partnership Advancement

For established partnerships, the program may provide funding to support the continued development and implementation of time-limited activities identified within a joint action plan. Proposals can be for one year or two years. However, funding will be approved and provided on an annual basis.

5.2.1 Eligible Activities:

- Developing First Nation-provincial arrangements or strategies to improve programs and services for First Nation students attending provincial schools (*e.g. development of new, or replacement of existing, tuition agreements with programs and service-type agreements that set out strategies and measures to improve First Nation student outcomes in provincial schools; development of other strategies, such as service enhancement agreements, to improve the outcomes of First Nation students attending provincial schools*);
- Mutual sharing of expertise and provision of services (*e.g. sharing expertise in pedagogy and existing curriculum; mutual provision of services such as professional development and training; piloting proven provincial initiatives in First Nation schools*);
- Improving coordination between First Nation and provincial schools to ensure smooth student transitions (*e.g. development of transition protocols and/or strategies to enable First Nation and provincial schools to track and support students moving between schools (e.g. development of a common student identifier that is linked to the provincial system), data-sharing protocols, mentorship programs, guidance and preparation for students entering provincial schools, coordinating First Nation and provincial school schedules, policies and strategies etc.*); and
- Creating better links between elementary and secondary education on reserve and early childhood programs, and/or labour market training programs, through partnership activities involving other federal and provincial departments (*e.g. establishing coordination to facilitate better program links between early childhood, elementary and secondary schools; developing education initiatives and/or curricula*).

in First Nation schools; development of strategies designed to improve the essential skills of secondary students leading to job-readiness and employment or to improve kindergarten readiness for children entering kindergarten, involving the appropriate federal and provincial departments, the private sector and other stakeholders).

5.2.2 Eligible Expenditures:

- Costs associated with the implementation of joint agreements, protocols or strategies as they relate to First Nation schools (e.g. data-sharing protocols, mentorship programs, guidance and preparation for students entering provincial schools);
- First Nation purchase of services directly linked to joint partnership plans;
- Costs associated with the implementation of extending provincial initiatives/programs into First Nation schools;
- Travel and accommodations within Canada related to tripartite partnership advancement (Note: Mileage and per diem travel expenses cannot exceed those contained in the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's [Travel Directive](#);
- IT services, purchase of hardware/software, license fees, repairs, and maintenance;
- Professional/consulting fees and elder fees (indicating daily rate and duration of contract)
- Legal advice (but not for litigation);
- Evaluation of the project's outcomes and impacts by an independent evaluator;
- Professional development and training;
- Salaries and benefits for employees working on the advancement of tripartite development;
- Purchase of learning and/or instructional materials; and
- Administration costs, as outlined in *Section 5.3.1* not exceeding 10% of total costs.

5.3 Limitations and Ineligible Expenditures

Ineligible expenditures include, but are not limited to the following:

- Provincial tuition;
- Activities related to the negotiation and implementation of self-government agreements;
- Infrastructure, planning, construction, operation or maintenance of federal and First Nation school facilities;
- Travel outside Canada; and
- Any activity expenditure that would result in a duplication of funding (i.e. receipt of funding from more than one source for the same expenditures on an activity) including fees and services covered through tuition agreement.

In addition, funding may not be used to support the acquisition or maintenance of equipment and supplies in provincial schools, or the provision of professional development to provincial staff. Federal funding is intended to primarily support services to elementary and secondary First Nation students ordinarily resident on reserve between the ages of 4 to 21 years attending schools on reserve. Provinces are expected to be primarily responsible for financially supporting joint activities directed to students in provincial schools.

5.3.1. Maximum Administration Costs

Eligible administration costs for both Partnership Establishment and Partnership Advancement include only the actual costs associated directly with administering EPP and must not exceed 10% of total costs. The program's Data Collection Instrument (DCI) will automatically calculate the percentage based on the amount entered for administration.

Eligible administration costs include the following, but are not limited to:

- Clerical support;
- Administrative overhead (office space, equipment and supplies etc.);
- The collection, maintenance, and reporting of data and information in accordance with program and financial reporting requirements; and
- Costs associated with ensuring that personal information is appropriately managed and safeguarded during its collection, retention, use, disclosure and disposal.

Note: Further distribution of funds by INAC's funding recipients: When a funding recipient transfers to a Third Party funds that were received under the Education Partnerships Program, the 10% allowed for administration costs must be divided between the parties, as agreed to between the parties. The total administration costs retained by all parties must not exceed 10% of total costs.

5.3.2 Activities must be time-limited

The Education Partnerships Program does not provide core operational funding. Recipients are advised that Education Partnerships Program funding should not be relied upon as a source of ongoing revenue. Program funding is time-limited and may not be used to fund identical projects year-over-year with the same beneficiary. Continued funding for an activity is permitted in some cases, such as piloting a new initiative or providing a professional development activity for new beneficiaries that have not previously attended the training. In such cases, it is recommended that applicants provide evidence of the success of the activity to date, and a rationale for continuing or expanding the activity.

Recipients and beneficiaries should not interpret funding for the current year's activities as a guarantee that INAC will fund related activities planned for upcoming fiscal years.

5.3.3 No Duplication of Funding

The Education Partnerships Program is designed to be flexible in order to address shared partnership priorities, but it is not designed to duplicate activities funded by other programs or to supplement funding in other program areas. Activities that provide training, resources, and/or services that can be addressed under another specific INAC program are not eligible for funding. However, activities that relate to the development of new strategies or incremental costs associated with piloting innovative approaches to program or service delivery of existing programs may be eligible for funding on a time-limited basis.

6 Assessment Process and Criteria

Potential recipients must provide sufficient detail in proposals to support the assessment process by INAC. This is especially true of information on the activities planned, expected results and expense breakdowns. Insufficient detail will, at best, require revision and, at worst, may render the proposal ineligible for funding. If potential recipients have questions, they are encouraged to contact the appropriate program analyst. Further information may be obtained by contacting: Education@inac-aanc.gc.ca.

All proposals are assessed on their merits, in accordance with the following criteria:

- **Capability:** The experience, expertise and/or capacity of all partners to undertake the proposed partnership activities successfully and achieve the desired results in a timely manner (for established partnerships, the track record of past partnership activities will be taken into account). In proposals:
 - *clearly link proposed activities to student needs or evidence-based approaches to student achievement.*
- **Commitment and Engagement:** The extent to which the proposal has the support of communities, schools and partners (Ministry of Education, provincial school board). In proposals:
 - *clearly describe the extent of participation of the partners in the development of the proposal and involvement in the proposed activities.*
 - *clearly describe in detail how community engagement activities were undertaken and with whom (e.g. parents, teachers, principals) in the proposal development*
- **Implementation Activities:** The extent to which the proposal aligns with eligible activities and meets program objectives. The assessment process will consider timeliness, cost-effectiveness and the degree to which the activities will result in expected outcomes. In proposals:
 - *clearly describe each activity including the specific actions planned to accomplish the activity, the implementation plan, the roles and responsibilities of partners, and a progress update for activities being continued from a previous year.*
 - *clearly describe the expected results for each activity including the goals and/or objectives of the activity and the indicators that will be used to measure progress.*
 - *clearly describe how partners will share resources and knowledge.*
- **Project Management:** How the project will be managed, including project governance, management of project scope, quality, budget, human resources, risk management, and project monitoring, control and reporting. In proposals:
 - *clearly identify and reflect the time-limited nature of joint activities and/or describe how they may be subsequently sustained through other avenues of funding.*

- **Project Costs:** The extent to which the proposed budget is reasonable in relation to the goals, design and potential impact of the partnership activities. In proposals:
 - *provide an explanation for each expense type including a detailed description of how the cost estimates were determined (e.g. for travel list, the mode of transportation, cost per trip, and number of trips).*
 - *clearly identify all in-kind contributions from provinces and other partners.*

Note: Meeting these criteria does not guarantee funding from the EPP.

7 Proposal Process

The annual *Call for Proposals* letter, which includes important proposal information, can be found on INAC's website in the [Education Partnerships Program](#) page.

Only proposals presented in an INAC electronic proposal form will be considered for assessment. Proposals must be submitted to the relevant INAC [Regional Office](#). Refer to the proposal form and the attached instructions for application details. Incomplete proposals will not be considered and will be returned to applicants.

Previously, some general observations were made by the National Selection Committee that would make proposals stronger and more comprehensive, including:

- Organization should provide results, data and evidence from previously supported activities and describe how proposed activities will build upon these results;
- Proposed activities could be prioritized, as it may be difficult for organizations to complete all of the proposed activities;
- Organizations should provide more detail on professional development activities including how the training will respond to the needs of those professionals working in the schools;
- Organizations that have applied for funding for Information Technology assistance should ensure that they provide a comprehensive technology plan that describes their proposed activities and include how the proposed activities and technologies complement or connect with current or previous activities and how the funding will be used; and
- Organizations must ensure that all sections of the proposal are completed.

| Process Schedule | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Call for Proposals launched by INAC | Early October 2017 |
| Deadline for submission of project proposal | December 13, 2017 |
| Proposal assessment | December 2017 to March 2018 |
| Announcement of successful proposals | End of March 2018 |
| Funding Agreements / Amending Agreements Prepared | April 2018 |

The number of proposals funded will depend on the quality of submissions, priority and the funds available for each year.

8 Funding

Funding will be approved on an annual basis and provided in the form of a one-year Contribution. Successful program recipients must revise their proposals as required and resubmit them annually. For information on funding approaches, visit the [Transfer Payments](#) page on INAC's website.

9 Monitoring and Accountability

Funding recipients must deliver the programs in accordance with the provisions of their funding agreement and the program delivery requirements outlined in these National Program Guidelines while also ensuring that the necessary management controls are in place to manage funding and monitor activities. Funding recipients are required to exercise due diligence when approving expenditures and must ensure that such expenditures are in accordance with the eligible expenditures set out in these National Program Guidelines.

INAC is committed to providing assistance to recipients in order for them to effectively carry out obligations under these National Program Guidelines and funding agreements. Regional offices and other departmental contacts are available to answer questions and provide guidance related to INAC programs and funding.

To ensure that program delivery requirements are being met, that funds are expended on the intended purposes and that INAC's accountability to Parliament is being met, activities including audits, evaluations, as well as desk and on-site compliance reviews will be conducted with all funding recipients.

- The Department's collection and use of personal information and other records for the purposes of program compliance reviews will be limited to what is necessary to ensure program delivery requirements are met.
- The Department is responsible for all information and records in its possession. The confidentiality of the information will be managed by INAC in accordance with the *Privacy Act* and other related policies on privacy. Recipients are responsible for the protection of personal information per the privacy legislation, regulations and/or policies that govern them up to the point that it is transferred to INAC.

10 Reporting Requirements

The recipient will be responsible for ensuring that each participant completes an annual report, and that one aggregated report is submitted to the INAC relevant regional office by June 30, 2019.

The reporting requirements are listed in the recipient's funding agreement, and details on these requirements are available in the [Reporting Guide](#). Recipients are responsible for ensuring that reporting requirements are met and reports are accurate and submitted on or before the established due dates. Recipients who have access to the [INAC Services Portal](#) can access the reporting forms (Data Collection Instruments) by opening a session on the Portal. If you do not have access to the Portal, contact your [Regional Office](#).

11 Contact Information

For further program information, please visit the [Education Partnerships Program](#) page.

The regional offices coordinates can be found on the [Regional Offices](#) page.

You can also write to:

Education Branch
Regional Partnerships Directorate
Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
10 Wellington Street
GATINEAU, QC K1A 0H4
Education@inac-aanc.gc.ca

These National Program Guidelines are available electronically on the [Education National Program Guidelines](#) page of INAC's website and through the *View Instructions* button on the first page of this program's *Data Collection Instrument* (DCI).