

# Indigenous Pathways and Partnerships Program 2025/26

Submission Guidelines



Ministry of  
Post-Secondary Education  
and Future Skills

## Applicant Guide

These guidelines are intended to provide guidance to public post-secondary institutions, First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, First Nations-mandated institutes (including Indigenous Adult Higher Learning Association members) and Indigenous organizations for annual submissions to the Indigenous Pathways and Partnerships (IPP) program. For more information, please contact: [PSFS.IPP@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PSFS.IPP@gov.bc.ca)

The IPP program supports public post-secondary institutions to respond to the [Calls to Action of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) and implement the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan](#). Collaboration with and participation of *Indigenous partners* aligns with the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action 4.5](#) which includes “Developing mechanisms for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners and communities to play an integral role in public post-secondary institutions decision-making.”

Last updated: April 11, 2025

## A. Purpose and Goals

The purpose of the IPP program<sup>1</sup> is to address the academic, social, emotional, and cultural needs of Indigenous<sup>2</sup> learners and ensuring that *Indigenous partners* are invited to participate in shaping programs and services provided by public post-secondary institutions.

The program goals are to:

- Increase access, retention, completion and transition opportunities for Indigenous learners;
- Strengthen partnerships and collaboration with First Nations, Métis, Inuit, Indigenous organizations with a post-secondary education, and training mandate, inclusive of Urban Indigenous and off-reserve Indigenous peoples; and,
- Increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Indigenous learners, including providing support for initiatives that address systemic barriers.

Budgets are developed and implemented by public post-secondary institutions in consultation with *Indigenous partners*. Institutions may submit budgets that go over multiple years (up to 3). However, annual submissions with annual updates including evidence of engagement are required.

For the purposes of the IPP program, the term *Indigenous partners* refers to:

- First Nations on whose territories the institution is located and other BC First Nations;
- Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) and their chartered communities;
- Indigenous organizations with a mandate related to education and training or related supports, (e.g., Aboriginal Friendship Centres); and,
- Indigenous students and their representative organizations.

For the purposes of the IPP program, the term *Indigenous partners* does not include:

- People, faculties or departments internal to the post-secondary institution; and,
- Organizations that are not led by First Nations, Métis, Inuit or Indigenous people, even if they are partners in delivering the program or activity (for example, school districts, businesses, training organizations, governments).

You still may include these people in your work, but documenting their participation is not a requirement of this program. If an *Indigenous partner* appoints someone to be their representative who is also working for the institution, include evidence of the *Indigenous partners'* appointment in the submission.

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly called the Aboriginal Service Plan (ASP) program.

<sup>2</sup> "Indigenous" is used in these guidelines to be inclusive of all people who identify as First Nations, Métis, Inuit in the province, whether or not they have status or have a connection to a particular community; recognizing that many peoples prefer the terms that are specific and traditional to their communities.

## B. Evidence of Collaboration

A requirement of this funding is that post-secondary institutions specifically invite *Indigenous partners* to collaborate in the development and review of IPP funded programs and activities. Submissions for funding are to include evidence of collaboration with *Indigenous partners*. (See definition of *Indigenous partners* above).

Some examples of evidence:

- Where an Indigenous education or advisory council has reviewed the program budget and proposed activities, the institution has provided minutes from applicable meetings or a letter from a member of the council.
- Where such a council has not formed, the institution has included a statement from *Indigenous partners*. It may be as simple as, “I was meaningfully involved in the development of this budget, and I support it”; “I agree with it but was not able to be involved in the development”; “I was not involved in the development and do not agree with it”.

If an *Indigenous partner* participated but did not provide a letter, the institution may include a description of the engagement, the feedback provided by the partner(s) and how the institution has reflected feedback in the proposed budget.

The Ministry supports *Indigenous partners* to choose the public post-secondary institution with whom they wish to partner and as such, they may choose not to be involved in the local institutions’ IPP delivery. However, the institution must seek the involvement of First Nations on whose territory the institution is located in issues which impact their students and/or rights and retain an open invitation for collaboration on the design and delivery of funded programs should their ability to participate change. If there was no response to the PSI’s invitations, please include that in your submission.

## C. Distinctions-Based Approach

The IPP program is intended to support the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) and reflect the Province’s commitment to distinctions-based approaches, consistent with the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan](#) (Declaration Act) and the [Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia’s Relationship with Indigenous Peoples](#).

These commitments require that the Province’s dealings with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples be conducted in a manner that acknowledges the specific rights, interests, priorities and concerns of each, while respecting and acknowledging these distinct Peoples with unique cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments. A distinctions-based approach to engagement with First Nations, Métis and Inuit includes the unique relationships to lands and territories and, as such, may result in different actions and outcomes. Please refer to: [Distinctions-based Approach - Province of British Columbia](#).

Through the IPP program, a distinctions-based approach is to be adopted at public post-secondary institutions when planning with *Indigenous partners*. Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, recognizes and affirms the rights of Aboriginal Peoples of Canada (First Nations, Métis and Inuit). The Constitution Act and the UN Declaration both expressly state that not all rights are uniform or the same among or between all Indigenous Peoples. The

Declaration Act outlines the importance of an approach which “consider[s] the diversity of the Indigenous peoples in British Columbia, particularly the distinct languages, cultures, customs, practices, rights, legal traditions, institutions, governance structures, relationships to territories and knowledge systems of the Indigenous peoples in British Columbia.”

The Ministry expects that institutions will respect formal protocols of the First Nation(s) on whose territories the institution is located. The Ministry expects that institutions work with multiple *Indigenous partners*, including First Nations on whose territories the institution is located, Indigenous nations with specialized programs at the institution, other First Nations, local Métis Chartered Community or MNBC and Indigenous organizations (including Indigenous student organizations) with a mandate related to education and training.

## D. Application Process and Eligibility Criteria

Proposals must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Applicants are to complete the Submission Template and provide any additional required supporting documentation. This template includes:
  - A list of the *Indigenous partners* who were invited to collaborate on developing the IPP budget;
  - Evidence that the budget was collaboratively developed with *Indigenous partners*.
2. A high-level budget for how funds will be spent in the 2025/26 year.
3. Confirmation that a Distinction Based Approach was adopted when planning with *Indigenous partners*.
4. Applicants confirm by signing the budget template that their proposal **does not** include any ineligible expenses as listed in *Section G: Eligible and Ineligible Expenditures*.

## E. Program Cycle

Date	Activity
<b>SUBMISSIONS:</b> April 30, 2025	Post-secondary institutions email <a href="mailto:PSFS.IPP@gov.bc.ca">PSFS.IPP@gov.bc.ca</a> a completed <b>Submission Template</b> including any additional required supporting documentation.
<b>REVIEW:</b> May-June 2025	Ministry staff review submissions and follow up with institutions if questions arise.
<b>DELIVERY BEGINS:</b> Following receipt of funding letter (June 30)	Delivery begins after the institution receives the Ministry’s approval letter. Funding letters will be sent by email to Presidents with a cc to VP Finance and IPP coordinators. Reallocation <b>between approved programs</b> may be done through the delivery period. However, if any funds are unspent by the end of the year, please complete and submit the <b>Deferral Request Template</b> with the final report.
<b>CHECK IN:</b> January – February 2026	Ministry staff will reach out to the institutions to check in on delivery and discuss possible reallocation of funds to other planned and approved projects to mitigate deferrals or repayment of funds.
<b>DELIVERY ENDS:</b> June 30, 2026	Institutions are to complete delivery/expenditures by June 30, 2026.

Date	Activity
<b>FINAL REPORT:</b> Friday, July 31, 2026	Final high-level statement of expenditures. See <i>Final Report Template</i> . If any funds were not spent within the 2025/26 delivery cycle, please complete the <i>Deferral Request Template</i> .

## F. Funding Amount

Each post-secondary institution is eligible for up to \$250,000. If there are large deferral requests, the annual amount may be reduced to bring the upcoming year’s budget closer to the annual amount of \$250,000. For example, if an institution defers \$100,000 to the following year, it could receive \$150,000 in funding that following year, rather than \$250,000.

## G. Eligible and Ineligible Expenditures

A condition of IPP funding is that the institution is investing in programs and services for Indigenous learners from base budget and leveraging additional external resources. Budget templates have a column for demonstrating institutional contribution to the activity. IPP funding is intended to support new and innovative approaches and is not for initiatives that have been previously supported through core institutional funding or other funding sources.

### Eligible Expenditures

Only costs associated with approved activities are eligible. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Partnership development costs incurred (meeting costs, travel, etc.);
- Curriculum development or enhancement of programs/courses;
- Delivery of new programs/courses on campus or in First Nations communities;
- Costs for Elders, Knowledge Keepers and guest speakers;
- Learner and cultural support costs (e.g., transportation, food, etc.);
- Cultural and outreach activities and events;
- Creation or purchase of training services (if delivering Indigenous cultural training for faculty, staff or administration, please refer to and leverage existing [open resources developed by BC Campus](#));
- Salaries and benefits to increase Indigenous representation for faculty or staff;
- Student support services and initiatives; and,
- Indigenous policy initiatives (if developing policies related to any of the Indigenous Leading Practices in Post-Secondary Education, please refer to the [BC government webpage on this topic](#)).
- Artworks may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### Ineligible Expenditures

The following expenditures are ineligible:

- Administration costs (administrative assistance or clerical support, office/general expenses, insurance, materials and supplies, and printing costs);
- Activities/programs previously financed by the institution;
- Activities and costs that are supported through other grant funding, the public post-secondary institution’s base operating funding, or by other funders, including government funders;
- Daily and ongoing activities of the post-secondary institution not related to the proposed project;

- Room rentals at public post-secondary institutions; and,
- Capital purchases meaning anything that may become a fixed asset of the post-secondary institution (e.g., vehicles, computer equipment or land).

## H. Proposal Review and Funding Process

Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills staff will collectively review and evaluate proposals for completeness during the period of March to April 2025.

If a submission is found to be incomplete, the applicant will be informed of the reason for its ineligibility and Ministry staff will follow up to support the institution in the process of bringing the submission in alignment with the expectations of the program.

A written response will be sent to all applicants to confirm whether their submission meets the program criteria and can proceed with delivery. Successful submissions will be supported through a funding letter sent by the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills.

If the post-secondary institution provides funding to an *Indigenous partner* to deliver activities, the post-secondary institution is responsible to make sure that the partner is aware of the reporting dates and requirements.

## I. Support

The Ministry hosts regular Community of Practice meetings. This is a forum for post-secondary institution representatives involved in the Program to bring forward questions, challenges, ideas and opportunities to share and learn from each other. This is a way to keep lines of communication open between Ministry staff and post-secondary institutions and, importantly, provide opportunities for everyone to learn from one another.

If you have any questions about the program or wish to be added to the Community of Practice meetings, please email [PSFS.IPP@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PSFS.IPP@gov.bc.ca).