
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Funding will help First Nations improve quality of life, reduce poverty

VICTORIA – First Nations across B.C. will benefit from a \$15-million investment from the Province to the First Nation Well Being Fund.

The fund, implemented by the First Nations Public Service Secretariat, an initiative of the First Nations Summit Society, supports First Nations in their efforts to promote well-being, improve the quality of life for members, and reduce poverty at the community and Nation level.

“We want First Nations to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together,” said Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. “We are funding First-Nations-led service delivery, supported by Indigenous culture and teachings.”

The First Nation Well Being Fund supports the development of community-led solutions for B.C. First Nations to develop a well-being plan or framework, and to consider how they might develop indicators that measure the progress of wellness within their communities. It also funds action projects that help improve the quality of life for its members.

“We are looking forward to the continued partnership with the Province in making shared progress towards addressing the disproportionately high rates of poverty for First Nations in B.C.,” said Cheryl Casimer, First Nations Summit political executive and member of the poverty reduction advisory committee. “Our hope is that this new investment will create additional opportunities for First Nations to undertake activities that focus on closing the identified poverty gaps our communities face to improve/restore our social well-being and economic prosperity to levels enjoyed prior to colonialism and by other British Columbians.”

The call for applications is now open. First Nations and Tribal Councils can submit proposals until Dec. 31, 2023. Successful applications will be announced in January 2024, and First Nation communities will start to receive the grants right away.

There are two streams available:

- a maximum of \$100,000 per community-led project that supports First Nations to improve the quality of life for its members; and
- a maximum of \$50,000 per project to support First Nations with community engagement activities to develop a plan to promote well-being and reduce poverty at the community level, providing resources to support dialogue within First Nations about how they wish to measure wellness within their community.

“Through this fund, First Nations have completed food-security projects, engaged in cultural-based training, and delivered skills-building and development workshops,” said Jehan Casey,

director of the First Nations Public Service Secretariat. "First Nations have also been undertaking work to engage with community, Elders and Knowledge Keepers to develop their own uniquely defined frameworks to implement and measure well-being. The fund has been heavily oversubscribed, and the additional funding will allow First Nations to continue projects that reduce poverty and achieve well-being."

The Province will continue to work with trusted partners so First Nations in B.C. can access the services they need.

Quotes:

Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation –

"Through the First Nations Well Being Fund, partnerships between First Nations and the Province help address the inequities faced by Indigenous people due to the ongoing legacy of colonialism. This fund is designed to support collaborative, Indigenous-led projects that promote wellness and increase access to healthy and nutritious foods. I encourage First Nations and Tribal Councils to submit project proposals."

Wellness planning funding recipient –

"We were able to engage community around definition of wellness and well-being in process of health-plan development – first in over 10 years – ask Elders, gather Knowledge Keepers to get their input to see how wellness should be."

Learn More:

To apply for funding from the First Nations Well Being Fund, visit: <https://fnps.ca/community-projects/wellbeingfund/>

To learn about the First Nation Summit, visit: <https://fns.bc.ca/>

First Nations Public Service Secretariat: <https://fnps.ca/>

TogetherBC, B.C.'s poverty-reduction strategy: www.gov.bc.ca/togetherbc

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