



Aboriginal Affairs and
Northern Development Canada

Affaires autochtones et
Développement du Nord Canada

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

Education Partnerships Program

National Program Guidelines 2014-2015



Canada 

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1 Introduction

The Education Partnerships Program (EPP) is designed to promote collaboration among First Nations, provinces, the Government of Canada and other stakeholders in order to improve the success of First Nation elementary and secondary students in First Nation and provincial schools. It is an opt-in program for interested First Nation organizations and provinces which supports tripartite education partnerships, provides impetus for joint activities and seeks to strengthen the readiness of First Nation organizations for the delivery of education services to First Nation schools. **The program concludes on March 31, 2015.**

The Program supports the establishment and the advancement of formal partnership arrangements that aim to develop practical working relationships between officials and educators in provincial systems and in regional First Nation organizations and schools. These partnership arrangements open the way to better coordination between First Nation and provincial schools. The result will be concrete benefits for the students, teachers and administrators involved.

Since 2008, eight new tripartite education agreements have been established (in New Brunswick, Manitoba, Alberta, Prince Edward Island, Yukon, Ontario and with the Saskatoon Tribal Council and the First Nations Education Council of Quebec). These are in addition to pre-existing arrangements in Nova Scotia and British Columbia.

Building on these successes, Canada's Economic Action Plan 2012 committed \$100 million, for the *Strong Schools, Successful Students Initiative*, over three years to help ensure readiness for the new First Nation education system expected to be outlined in legislation and to strengthen their relationships with provincial school systems.

For the 2014-2015 Call for Proposals, in addition to supporting ongoing EPP investments, a priority will be given to proposals that address the Structural Readiness component found in both the EPP and the First Nation Student Success Program National Program Guidelines. This will continue support for First Nation education organizations to strengthen their organizational capacity for the delivery of educational services to First Nation Schools.

To assist applicants "self-assess" their organizational capacity, the *Education Organization Planning Tool (EOPT)* has been developed. The tool provides a step-by-step guide for organizations to complete their own assessment of the regional First Nation organizations' capacity to deliver education support and services for band-operated schools. For organizations who have or will complete the Education Organization Planning Tool, the results of the tool and / or Capacity Development Plans should be submitted as supporting documentation.

2 Objective

The overall objective of the EPP is to advance First Nation student achievement in First Nation and provincial schools. It will do this through support for partnership arrangements, where First Nation and provincial officials share expertise and services, and partners coordinate learning initiatives in support of First Nation students.

3 Broad Parameters

Partnership Categories – The EPP supports two categories of partnership development:

- 1) Partnership Establishment – the negotiation and drafting of tripartite education Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and joint activities between a regional First Nation organization(s), the provincial Ministry of Education and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), where they do not already exist.
- 2) Partnership Advancement and the development and implementation of joint activities, within established partnerships where an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or similar formal tripartite partnership agreement is already in place, between regional First Nation organizations, the provincial Ministry of Education and AANDC.

Priority areas – All partnership development at both MOU development and implementation stages must focus on one or more of the following priority areas:

- A. Developing First Nation-provincial arrangements or strategies to improve programs and services for First Nation students attending provincial schools (e.g. tuition agreements).
- B. Mutual sharing of expertise and provision of services (e.g. professional development, culturally appropriate curriculum).
- C. Improving coordination between First Nation and provincial schools to ensure smooth transitions for students.
- D. Creating better linkages between elementary and secondary education on reserve and early childhood programs, and/or labour market training programs, through partnerships involving other federal and provincial departments.
- E. Structural Readiness – Increasing and sustaining the capacity of regional First Nation management organizations to deliver education supports and services.

See a detailed description of the priority areas in section 4.2 Partnership Advancement.

Membership in the Partnership – Partnerships will include a minimum of one regional First Nation organization, the provincial Ministry of Education and AANDC. 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. 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 could also play a role in the implementation of joint partnership plans.

Federal funding – Federal funding under the EPP will be available to regional First Nation organizations to support their participation in tripartite partnerships and to support joint initiatives directed to First Nation schools and to support activities intended to strengthen the capacity development of the organization. Provinces would financially support joint activities directed to provincial schools through a joint action plan and the regional First Nation organization may choose to purchase required services from a provincial government.

Scope of Program – The EPP is meant to support tripartite education partnerships, the implementation of joint action plans and support the establishment of tripartite education partnerships where they do not already exist, o provide impetus for more joint activities, and to strengthen the capacity of First Nation organizations for the delivery of education services to First Nation schools. **These are all one time or time-limited activities.**

4 Activities

4.1 Partnership Establishment

The EPP will provide funding, for a period of up to 12 months, for the negotiation and drafting of an MOU between a regional First Nation organization, the provincial Ministry of Education and AANDC (where an MOU does not exist), including necessary consultations with communities. The MOU must include a set of joint activities that is based on one or more of the five priority areas (*Section 4.2*). All partners will sign the MOU.

4.1.1 Eligible activities:

- Establishing common goals and targets to improve student achievement;
- Drafting a set of joint activities that sets out partnership priorities and each partner's commitments, roles, responsibilities and contributions of resources (financial and/or in kind); and
- Drafting an MOU.

Once the partners have signed an MOU with a set of joint activities, the regional First Nation organization can then submit a proposal to AANDC to access funding for the implementation of eligible activities (see *Partnership Advancement in Section 4.2*).

4.2 Partnership Advancement

For established partnerships, the EPP will provide funding to support the continued development and implementation of joint activities, including necessary engagements with communities and negotiations with partners. The joint activities can range in size and scope and be province-wide or specific to several First Nation communities. Joint activities will be for one year as **the program concludes on March 31, 2015.**

4.2.1 Priority Areas and Eligible Activities:

A. Developing First Nation-provincial arrangements or strategies to improve programs and services for First Nation students attending provincial schools

Eligible activities:

- 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; and
- Development of other strategies, such as service enhancement agreements, to improve the outcomes of First Nation students attending provincial schools.

B. Mutual sharing of expertise and provision of services**Eligible activities:**

- Mutual sharing of expertise in pedagogy and existing curriculum;
- Mutual provision of services such as professional development and training;
- Pilot-proven provincial initiatives in First Nation schools; and
- First Nation pilot initiatives in provincial schools.

C. Improving coordination between First Nation and provincial schools to ensure smooth student transitions**Eligible activities:**

- 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, etc.); and
- Coordinating First Nation and provincial school schedules, policies and strategies.

D. Creating better links between elementary and secondary education on reserve and early childhood programs, and/or labour market training programs, through partnerships involving other federal and provincial departments**Eligible activities:**

- Establishing coordination to facilitate better program links between early childhood, elementary and secondary schools;
- Establishing labour market training for First Nation students in First Nation and provincial schools;
- Developing education initiatives and/or curricula in First Nation schools on a pilot-project basis, focused on improving essential skills leading to job-readiness and employment; or
- Improving kindergarten readiness, involving the appropriate federal and provincial departments, the private sector and other stakeholders.

For the 2014-2015 funding cycle, the EPP continues to support the Structural Readiness activities to strengthen the organizational capacity of regional First Nation organizations for the delivery of educational services to First Nation Schools in preparation for legislation.

Funding for the *Education Organization Planning Tool (EOPT)* also continues to be available to assist regional First Nation organizations to reflect on current priorities, map assets, assess needs, and to build an organizational capacity development plan.

The completion of a self-assessment using the EOPT tool is encouraged for those organizations who wish to seek funding for Structural Readiness activities in the EPP. However, if an organization has used other organizational capacity tools or has an education capacity development plan, these will also be accepted.

The set of eligible activities below is intended for applicants who wish to address one or more of the areas. AANDC is encouraging all program applicants submitting a proposal for Structural Readiness activities to include copies of their capacity development plan as an attachment to their proposal submission. **Priority may be given to proposals which include this supporting document** and which demonstrate the greatest need for developing Structural Readiness and, which work to address these needs identified through the self-assessment.

Structural Readiness – Increasing and sustaining the capacity of regional First Nation management organizations to deliver education supports and service.**Eligible activities:**

- **Governance and Leadership:** May include developing and/or formalizing policies, processes and mechanisms to improve leadership attraction, selection, and professional development; recognize First Nation membership and establishing codes of conduct; formalizing relationships to local provincial bodies (e.g. school boards, ministries and colleges of teachers); ensuring transparent and well-respected practices for convening meetings, decision-making, conflict-resolution, conflict of interest, communication, ethics, and fairness.
- **External Relations:** May include developing networks with federal and provincial departments, non-government organizations, professional associations, and corporations; participating in intergovernmental forums, committees, working groups pertaining to education issues; developing a process and procedures for communications with the public and other governments and mechanisms for participating in policy and program development.
- **Parental/Community Involvement:** May include developing or formalizing community engagement processes that allow First Nation schools and communities to participate in decision-making, and that keep the community informed of decisions and changes to programs or policies; and dispute resolution measures and appeal mechanisms for First Nation members.
- **Planning, Performance Measurement and Risk Management:** May include defining and acquiring stakeholder input and support for your organization's mission, objectives, and vision; conducting long term strategic planning and ongoing policy development; developing and implementing a risk management framework and reporting mechanisms to foster continuous improvement, accountability and results; and establishing processes to administer, monitor, and report on delivery of second-level services.
- **Financial Management:** May include developing and/or implementing a financial management plan; developing processes to track financial transactions and monitor assets, liabilities, revenues and expenditures; developing policies, procedures and processes for the collection of revenues, development and distribution of audited financial statements, and tendering/awarding of contracts; and developing formal processes and procedures for allocation of funding to individual First Nations in a fair and transparent manner.
- **Human Resources Management:** May include developing a human resource management plan; and establishing or formalizing human resource policies and processes for recruiting, screening (including volunteers), hiring, retaining, terminating, professional development and/or compensating personnel required to deliver education services.
- **Information Management and Information Technology:** May include developing an Information Management and Information Technology management plan and policies; and developing or improving business practices related to collecting, storing and distributing information (e.g. data security, access to information and privacy policies, document management, and computer hardware and software).

Please note: A list of examples of eligible activities is provided in Annex A. This will be used to guide the proposal assessment.

5 Eligibility Requirements

EPP funding will be available for Partnership Establishment and Advancement only where the partnership meets the following basic criteria:

- All partners share a common goal to improve First Nation student achievement in First Nation and provincial schools;
- The partnership includes a minimum of one regional First Nation organization that meets the eligibility requirements in Section 6, *Eligible Recipients*, the provincial Ministry of Education and AANDC;
- The partnership involves educators and education specialists in First Nation schools and organizations, and in the provincial system;
- The partnership is focused on one or more of the priority areas of the program as described in Section 3;
- 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 AANDC EPP); and
- All partners commit to practical measures to improve outcomes.

6 Eligible Recipients

Eligible recipients include regional First Nation organizations. To encourage better coordination, efficiencies and economies of scale, priority will be given to regional First Nation organizations with a large representation of communities and students attending band-operated schools.

A regional First Nation organization will meet the following eligibility requirements to qualify for funding:

- Have documented support from First Nations/communities/schools (e.g. Band or Tribal Council resolution, or other documentation such as formal letters of support);
- Organizational structure includes an executive director or equivalent, finance officer, and a board of directors or equivalent;
- Undertakes, 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 activities and expenditures; and
- If new, replace an existing organization or be an amalgamation of existing organizations.

Other Terms and Conditions:

- Regional First Nation organizations can manage partnership funding and/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.

7 Proposal Assessment Criteria

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 and schools; and the extent of, and approach to, community engagement.
 - In proposals, clearly describe in detail how consultation activities are undertaken and with whom (e.g. parents, teachers, principals) including 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.
 - The description of each activity in the proposal should include 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.
 - The description of the expected results for each activity in the proposal should include the goals and/or objectives of the activity and the indicators that will be used to measure progress.
- **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 the proposal, clearly identify and reflect the time-limited nature of joint activities and/or describe how they may be subsequently sustained through other avenues.
- **Project Costs:** The extent to which the proposed budget is reasonable in relation to the goals, design and potential impact of the partnership activities.
 - The explanation for each expense type in the proposal should include 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 in the proposal, identify all in-kind contributions from provinces and others

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

8 Proposal Submission

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

All proposals **must** be submitted through the AANDC Services Portal using the appropriate template. To access the proposal template, log on to the [AANDC Services Portal](#). If you do not have access to the AANDC Services Portal, contact your [regional office](#). PDF Proposal templates are also available on the AANDC Education Web site in the [Education Partnerships Program](#) page.

Important! Proposals must be signed off by the regional First Nation organization, the Province and the AANDC Region.

EPP Schedule	
Call for Proposals launched by AANDC	November 2013
Applicants prepare a proposal to receive EPP funding	November 2013 – January 2014
Deadline for submission of project proposal	January 15, 2014
Proposal Assessment	February 2014
Announcement of successful proposals	March 2014
Contribution Agreements Prepared/Amended	April 2014

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

8.1 Eligible Expenditures

8.1.1 Partnership Establishment

The following costs associated with a regional First Nation organization's participation in the development of MOUs are 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/Elders' fees related to tripartite partnership development;
- Legal engagement related to the tripartite partnership agreement; and
- Administration costs not covered above (not exceeding 10%).

8.1.2 Partnership Advancement

- 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;
- IT services, purchase of hardware/software, license fees, repairs, and maintenance;
- Professional development and training;
- Salaries and benefits for employees working on the advancement of tripartite development;
- Purchase of learning and/or instructional materials; and
- Eligible administration costs, as outlined below.

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 the sub-total amount requested before administration costs. The program's Data Collection Instrument (DCI) will automatically calculate the amount.

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

- Clerical support;
- Office supplies;
- 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 AANDC's funding recipients: When a funding recipient further transfers, to a Third Party, funds that were received under this 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 the sub-total amount requested before administration costs.

Ineligible Expenditures

- Provincial tuition;
- Activities related to the negotiation and implementation of self-government agreements that are covered through AANDC self-government funding;
- Construction, operation and maintenance of federal and First Nation school facilities;
- Duplication of federal funding for a given activity (i.e. receipt of funding from more than one federal source for the same activity); and
- Legal Fees.

9 Funding

The EPP is a national program for which interested applicants must submit proposals. Funding will be provided in the form of a one-year Set contribution. Proposals are approved on an annual basis and funding is available until March 2015. For information on funding approaches, visit the [Transfer Payments](#) page on AANDC's website.

The EPP does not allow for funding of an identical activity for the same recipient under two different education programs (e.g. Structural Readiness – for the FNSSP and the EPP). The program may fund eligible activities previously supported under another AANDC program.

The maximum amount payable for Partnership Establishment will be \$300,000 per recipient, per year.

10 Monitoring and Accountability

Each partnership will be required to undertake ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress against agreed-upon objectives, timelines and outputs/outcomes as described in the proposal and set out in the Contribution Agreement.

AANDC is committed to providing assistance to recipients in order for them to effectively carry out the obligations contained in each funding agreement. Regional offices and other departmental contacts are available to answer questions and provide guidance related to AANDC programs and funding.

To ensure that program terms and conditions and funding criteria are being met, that funds are expended on the intended purposes, and that AANDC's accountability to Parliament is being met, in-office and on-site monitoring and compliance activities may be conducted with all recipients.

11 Reporting Requirements

The reporting requirements are listed in the recipient's funding agreement. To access the reports (Data Collection Instruments), log on to the [AANDC Services Portal](#). If you do not have access to the AANDC Services Portal, contact your [regional office](#). Reports are also available on [AANDC's website](#).

12 Contact Information

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

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

You can also write to:

Education Branch
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
10 Wellington Street
GATINEAU QC K1A 0H4
Fax: (819) 934-1478
Education@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca

These National Program Guidelines can be downloaded from AANDC's website, in the [Education Partnerships Program](#) section. They can also be accessed through the *View Instructions* button on the first page of this program's Data Collection Instrument (DCI).

ANNEX A –DETAILED EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Structural Readiness – Increasing and sustaining the capacity of regional First Nation management organizations to deliver school education supports and services

Strengthening Capacity for Governance and Leadership - Example activities:

- Developing processes for improving leadership attraction and selection (e.g. board and executive director selection codes, clear articulation of roles and responsibilities).
- Professional development to strengthen leadership skills of executive director, board members and other managers.
- Leveraging provincial school board expertise to strengthen board governance practices.
- Formalizing processes, policies, protocols and/or agreements for First Nation membership in your organization (e.g. membership codes, codes of conduct).
 - Development of formal education service agreements with individual schools, First Nations, Tribal Councils;
 - Development of formal mechanisms to assess and support member schools capacity to efficiently and effectively deliver education programming.
- Developing or formalizing board governance policies, processes, and mechanisms (e.g. for convening meetings, decision-making, conflict-resolution, conflict of interest, communication, ethics and fairness).
- Developing processes for encouraging cultural consideration in policy-making and governance (e.g. involvement of Elders).
- Developing or formalizing of dispute resolution measures and appeal mechanisms for member First Nations.
- Developing or formalizing of processes, policies, protocols and/or agreements with local provincial school boards/authorities agreements defining roles, responsibilities and education standards to ensure the transferability of students without academic penalty; protocols amongst partners relating to sharing of information and/or services, reasonable-cost access to education initiatives, performance measurement and reporting, or consultations on curriculum and programming).

Strengthening Capacity for External Relations - Example activities:

- Developing a network with governments, non-governmental organizations and corporations.
- Participating in education intergovernmental forums, committees and working groups.
- Developing processes and procedures for communications with the public, professional organizations, private and non-government sectors and other governments.
- Developing mechanisms for participating in policy and program development.

Strengthening Capacity for Parental and Community Involvement - Example activities:

Formalizing community engagement processes that allow First Nation schools and communities to participate in decision-making and that keep the community informed of decisions and changes to programs and policies.

Strengthening Capacity for Planning, Performance, and Risk Management - Example activities:

- Developing processes or mechanisms for acquiring stakeholder input and support for organizational vision, mission, priorities and goals.
- Professional development for strategic planning, policy development and risk management.
- Developing reporting mechanisms for accountability, results, and continuous improvement.
- Developing and implementing a risk management framework.
- Conducting a self-assessment through the Education Organization Planning Tool or similar tool and developing an education capacity development plan.
- Developing a long-term strategic plan which includes needs identified in the self-assessment process.
- Establishing of processes to administer, monitor, and report on the delivery of school supports and services.
- Developing an organizational performance evaluation framework which links the delivery of school support services to student outcomes and school success.

Strengthening Capacity for Financial Management - Example Activities:

- Developing a financial management plan.
- Developing and implementing processes to track financial transactions and monitor assets, liabilities, revenues and expenditures.
- Professional development for financial management.
- Developing policies, procedures and processes for financial management (e.g. for the collection of revenues, development and distribution of audited financial statements, tendering/awarding of contracts).
- Developing formal processes and procedures for allocating funding to First Nations in a fair and transparent manner.

Strengthening Capacity for Human Resource Management - Example Activities:

- Establishing or formalizing human resources policies and processes for recruitment, screening (including volunteers), hiring, retaining, terminating, professional development and/ or compensation for personnel required to deliver education services.
- Developing a human resources plan.
- Professional development related to human resources management.
- Training or professional development for staff.

Strengthening Capacity for Information Management and Technology - Example Activities:

- Developing or improving business practices related to information management and information technology (e.g. data security, access to information and privacy policies, document management, and computer hardware and software).
- Developing an Information Management and Information Technology management plan and policies.
- Professional development related to Information Management and Information Technology.