



Indian and Northern
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Improving educational outcomes – a shared responsibility

L'amélioration des résultats scolaires – une responsabilité partagée

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EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q1. What is the Education Partnerships Program?

- A1.** The Education Partnerships Program is an opt-in program that supports two categories of partnership development:
- the negotiation and drafting of tripartite education Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and joint action plans, where they do not already exist (Partnership Establishment); and
 - the drafting and implementation of joint action plans within established partnerships where there is an MOU or similar formal tripartite partnership agreement already in place (Partnership Advancement).

Q2. What is the objective of the Education Partnerships Program?

- A2.** The overall objective of the Education Partnerships Program is to help 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 to assist First Nation students.

Q3. What are the priority areas supported by the Education Partnerships Program?

- A3.** Joint activities must focus on one or more of the four priority areas of the Program:
1. Developing First Nation-provincial arrangements or strategies to improve programs and services for First Nation students attending provincial schools (e.g., tuition agreements).
 2. Mutual sharing of expertise and provision of services (e.g. professional development; culturally appropriate curriculum).
 3. Improving coordination between First Nation and provincial schools to help ensure smooth student transitions.
 4. 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.

Q4. Who are the partners?

- A4.** At a minimum, partnerships will include a regional First Nation organization, the provincial Ministry of Education, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). At this level, partnerships can maximize opportunities for coordination and cost-efficiency. Other stakeholders may also participate in the partnerships. These could include, for example, organizations such as other federal and provincial government departments and/or the private sector. 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. A partnership in Yukon could receive support, if the partnership proposal meets program guidelines.

Q5. How can First Nations access Education Partnerships Program funding?

A5. The Education Partnerships Program is a national program for which interested organizations must submit a proposal. Eligible recipients are regional First Nation organizations that meet program eligibility criteria, as outlined in Section 6 of the Education Partnerships Program Guidelines. Funding will be available to support their participation in tripartite partnerships and to support those joint activities directed to First Nation schools. Applicants will submit partnership proposals, which will be assessed and funded based on the meeting of Program eligibility criteria and the strength of the proposal. Funding for approved partnerships will be provided on an annual basis in the form of a Contribution.

Q6. Can new regional First Nation organizations receive funding under this Program?

A6. A new regional First Nation organization can receive funding under the Education Partnerships Program, provided that the new organization is a replacement of an existing organization or an amalgamation of existing organizations. In addition, the organization must meet all eligibility criteria for regional First Nation organizations, as set out in Section 6 of the Education Partnerships Program Guidelines.

Q7. What joint activities can partners undertake through this Program?

A7. In addition to supporting the negotiation and drafting of tripartite education MOUs and joint action plans, the Education Partnerships Program supports the development and implementation of joint activities in one or more of the four priority areas. Examples of such activities include, but are not limited to:

- Replacement of tuition agreements with programs and services-type agreements that set out accountability regimes and strategies for improving outcomes for First Nation students in provincial schools.
- Sharing of expertise by educators in First Nation schools and organizations regarding First Nation languages and cultures and First Nation learning strategies.
- Sharing of expertise by educators in provincial systems on pedagogy and the provincial curriculum.
- Development of transition protocols and/or strategies to enable First Nation and provincial schools to track students moving between schools.
- On a piloted basis, development of education initiatives in First Nation schools focused on improving essential skills leading to job-readiness and employment.



Q8. Do self-governing First Nations have to submit proposals for funding under the Education Partnerships Program?

A8. All interested applicants, including self-governing First Nations, must submit proposals to be eligible for funding through the Education Partnerships Program. This is a national program that assesses proposals received from across the country. There is no regional allocation of funding.

Q9. Can First Nations in the territories access funding under the Education Partnerships Program?

A9. The Education Partnerships Program, and the broader Reforming First Nation Education Initiative, are intended to support improvements for First Nation students living on reserve, as represented by a regional First Nation organization. A partnership in Yukon may be supported, building on a history of partnership activity between self-governing First Nations and the territorial government, if eligibility criteria are met.

Q10. Will preference be given to activities in one priority area over another?

A10. A partnership proposal will not be favoured or disadvantaged if it focuses on one priority over another. Similarly, a partnership proposal will not be favoured or disadvantaged if it focuses on one priority or all four. A National Selection Committee will review each proposal submitted. The proposal assessment criteria on which the Committee will base its selection of successful applicants are outlined in Section 7 of the Education Partnerships Program Guidelines.

Q11. Is having a signed MOU a requirement to be eligible to receive funding for the implementation of joint activities?

A11. Partners are expected to negotiate and draft a tripartite education MOU where one does not currently exist. The Education Partnerships Program will provide funding for a period of up to 18 months for the negotiation and drafting of an MOU and joint action plan. Once an MOU has been signed, the regional First Nation organization can submit a proposal to INAC to access funding for implementation of joint activities.

Q12. What activities can the one-year preliminary consultation funding be used for?

A12. If required, the Education Partnerships Program may provide a regional First Nation organization with a limited amount of funding for up to one year in advance of the MOU negotiation and drafting stage. This limited funding is to assist in bringing First Nations and other prospective partners together. A regional First Nation organization can use this funding to communicate with member communities and seek their support for a tripartite partnership. This funding can also be used to engage provincial officials in the negotiation and drafting of a tripartite education MOU.



Q13. Who will sign the Education Partnerships Program proposals?

A13. Proposals seeking funding for partnership establishment or partnership advancement must be signed off by the First Nation organization, the Province and the INAC Region, at an appropriately senior level as determined by each partner. For example, INAC regional approval is expected to be at the Associate Regional Director General level or above. Proposals seeking funding for preliminary consultations should be signed off at an appropriately senior level within the regional First Nations organization.

Q14. Are partnerships required to be province-wide?

A14. While the Education Partnerships Program supports partnerships that are at a level which maximizes opportunities for coordination and cost-efficiency, it may not always be practical or desirable to have a province-wide partnership. Sub-regional partnerships may receive support. However, these partnerships must include the provincial ministry. Regional First Nation organizations with large representation of communities and students attending band-operated schools will receive priority.

Q15. Do all partnership activities have to occur in all represented communities?

A15. Partnership activities can range in size and scope and may occur at a regional, school board and/or school level depending on the nature of the partnership activities. Moreover, the activities may either be province-wide or specific to several First Nation communities. For example, a transition protocol can be developed between a school board/district and nearby First Nation schools.

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