

BC First Nations Post-Secondary Partnerships Program (PSPP)

2026-2027 Guidelines and Call for Proposals

1. Introduction

The PSPP is a First Nations directed, regionally delivered program that supports delivery of community-based post-secondary programs by First Nations and First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes, in partnership with public post-secondary institutions, based on priorities set by applicant First Nations.

2. Objective

The overall objective of the PSPP is to increase the number of First Nation students pursuing post-secondary education by providing funding for the development and delivery of post-secondary programs in First Nation communities.

3. Partnerships with Public Post-Secondary Institutions

First Nations can partner with any public post-secondary institution in Canada and are not obligated to partner with the public post-secondary institution that serves the region in which they are located.

The Post-Secondary Partnership Agreement Toolkit developed by the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA), the University of Victoria and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology outlines good practices for negotiating partnerships and suggested content for agreements with public post-secondary institutions. It is available on the IAHLA website at <http://iahla.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PUBLICATION-IAHLA-Toolkit-Dec-2011.pdf>.

4. Eligible Activities

Under the PSPP, there are two categories of eligible activities:

- 1. Program/Course Development or Adaptation:** PSPP funding is available for researching, developing, and accrediting new post-secondary courses and programs, or for adapting and converting existing post-secondary courses and programs to online delivery and distance education. PSPP funding for program/course development or adaptation must include the development or adaptation of curriculum.
- 2. Program/Course Delivery:** PSPP funding is available for community-based delivery of post-secondary programs that lead to the attainment of a post-secondary education credential.

PSPP-funded programs and courses must provide students with transferable credits that lead to a credential that is granted by a public post-secondary institution.

Successful 2026-2027 proposals are not guaranteed funding in subsequent years, as funding provided through PSPP is based on an annual cycle. Applicants who will not be delivering a full program during the timeframe for this Call for Proposals (May 1, 2026 – May 31, 2027) must provide details on their plans for ensuring that students are able to attain a credential if the applicant is unsuccessful in accessing funding through PSPP in subsequent years.

PSPP funded programs and courses can include Adult Basic Education (ABE) and University and College Entrance Preparation (UCEP) programs and courses that provide students with the academic level required for entrance into post-secondary programs. **PSPP Funding cannot be used to support a BCTEA- funded First Nations Adult Secondary Education Program**¹. The curriculum must consist of courses offered through public post-secondary institutions' ABE curriculum and not Ministry of Education and Child Care grade K-12 courses.

PSPP funded programs can also include trades foundation programs provided that the foundation program leads to a credential granted by a public post-secondary institution and includes completion of Level 1 apprenticeship technical training as well as work-based training hours towards an apprenticeship. In this case, the transferability of level 1 apprenticeship technical training is considered to be equivalent to transferable academic credits.

Given that the purpose of PSPP funding is to deliver community-based programming, programs and courses should generally be delivered in person. On an exceptional basis, PSPP-funded programs can also include programs being delivered fully or partially online due to health and safety concerns or pedagogical considerations. Other circumstances may be considered by the PSPP Review Committee. Proposals for online or blended delivery must include details on additional supports that will be provided to students in order to contribute to their success.

Evidence of the commitment of a public post-secondary institution to partner in the project must be attached to all proposals. Evidence could include a copy of a signed partnership agreement with the public post-secondary institution, or a letter of intent signed by a Dean, Associate Dean, Director, Vice-President Academic or President of the public post-secondary institution that commits to partner in the development and/or delivery of the specific program or courses, as applicable.

5. Eligible Recipients

All First Nations in BC are eligible to apply for funding through this Call for Proposals. If a proposal is submitted by a First Nations-mandated post-secondary institute or Tribal Council on behalf of a First Nation or First Nations, the First Nations-mandated post-secondary institute or Tribal Council must

¹ A First Nations Adult Secondary Education Program is a BCTEA-funded program of study for adult learners who have not yet graduated and who are taking secondary level courses to access the Dogwood or Adult Dogwood Diploma, and adult learners who have graduated and are taking one or more eligible provincial academic upgrading courses in order to pursue further studies or employment opportunities.

provide documentation that it has been designated to submit proposals on behalf of the First Nation(s) served, unless such documentation has already been provided to FNESC. Evidence could include a letter from the Chief of the First Nation Band Council(s) or the most senior staff member who is directly accountable to Chief and Council, or a Band Council Resolution(s) that designates the First Nations-mandated post-secondary institute or Tribal Council to submit proposals on behalf of the First Nation(s) either on an ongoing basis or in the specific instance of the proposal being submitted for PSPP. If the proposal is being submitted on behalf of multiple First Nation Bands, documentation from at least one First Nation Band Council must be provided.

Due to limited funding, if a First Nation has designated a First Nations-mandated post-secondary institute or Tribal Council to submit proposals on its behalf, the First Nation cannot submit an additional proposal.

Agents and service delivery organizations of federal departments and agencies are not eligible to submit a proposal for funding through this Call for Proposals.

Applicants must be up to date on their reporting for previously funded PSPP projects in order to be eligible for funding through this Call for Proposals.

6. Costs

6.1 Eligible Costs

Eligible costs include the direct costs for First Nations and First Nations-mandated post-secondary education institutes to develop and deliver post-secondary education programs and courses for First Nation students that lead to the attainment of a post-secondary education credential.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Purchase of instructional services;
- Salaries and benefits for non-permanent employees of recipients (given restrictions with federal funding);
- Instructor/employee travel and accommodation (within the guidelines set out in Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's Travel Directive: <https://www.njc-cnm.gc.ca/directive/d10/en>);
- Instructor materials;
- Costs for cultural activities (e.g., drum-making materials, traditional foods);
- Costs for Elders, Knowledge Keepers and guest speakers;
- Costs associated with the development and publication of learning and/or instructional materials;
- Equipment rental or lease (operating leases only; capital leases are not eligible);
- Laptops and computer equipment (for classroom use);
- Rental of facilities to host post-secondary activities; and
- Administration costs (program management and reporting, office/general expenses, insurance), not to exceed 15% of the subtotal of costs.

6.2 Ineligible Costs

Ineligible costs include:

- Costs associated with the development and delivery of programs or courses that are not for First Nation students.
- Eligible expenses under the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and the University and College Entrance Preparation Program (UCEPP) are ineligible under PSPP. These include:
 - tuition and other student fees
 - initial professional certification and examination fees
 - books and supplies required by the student for their program of study
 - official transcript fees
 - application fees
 - living expenses, including for dependents, if applicable
 - expenses associated with travel home, including for dependents, if applicable
 - supplemental tutorial, guidance and counseling services
 - child care, as needed
 - scholarship and incentive payments;
- Capital purchases such as land, buildings, vehicles and equipment (except for laptops and computer equipment);
- Capital improvements;
- Maintenance costs;
- Permanent staff salaries (PSPP is not intended to provide operational funding);
- Activities and costs that are already paid for through partnerships and by other funders, including government funders; and,
- Daily and ongoing activities of the applicant that are not related to the proposed project.

NOTE: As of 2025, Indigenous Services Canada has made changes to the eligible costs in the PSPP National Program Guidelines. Student support costs are no longer eligible. See details above.

Other programs that could be leveraged to fund student tuition, fees, books, supplies and living costs include the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP), the University and College Entrance Preparation Program (UCEPP) and the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program. There are also free online textbooks available through BCcampus at <https://opentextbc.ca>.

7. Maximum Amount of Funding

Due to limited funds, the overall maximum amount that can be applied for is \$350,000. Of this maximum, up to \$100,000 can be used for Program/Course Development or Adaptation. Applicants can submit proposals for delivery of more than one program provided that the overall maximum of \$350,000 is not exceeded.

Funding for program delivery is capped at a maximum of \$50,000 per course to be delivered. This cap does not apply to any funds requested for program development.

8. Proposal Process

Eligible proposals must:

- Be in alignment with these Guidelines, using the applicable electronic proposal template;
- Be 15 pages or less, not including attachments, in the case of Program Delivery proposals;
- Be 7 pages or less, not including attachments, in the case of Program/Course Development or Adaptation proposals;
- Be from a First Nation, or from a First Nations-mandated post-secondary institute or Tribal Council on behalf of a First Nation (including documentation from the First Nation Band Council designating the First Nations-mandated post-secondary institute or Tribal Council to submit proposals on its behalf, unless such documentation has already been provided to FNESC);
- Provide students with transferable credits that lead to a credential that is granted by a public post-secondary institution;
- Include documentation of the commitment of a public post-secondary institution to partner in the project;
- Be submitted with the applicable budget template. Budgets must provide an estimate of eligible costs to be incurred and request no more than the maximum amounts set out in section 7 of these guidelines;
- Be complete; a proposal is incomplete if sections of the proposal template are not completed, if the budget template is not provided, or if required documentation is not provided; and
- Be signed and submitted by the deadline.

8.1 Submission of Proposal

- Only complete proposals submitted using the applicable electronic proposal template and budget template will be considered. The Program Delivery proposal template and program delivery budget template should be used if the applicant wishes to deliver a program.
- Program/Course Development or Adaptation costs can be included in a proposal for Program Delivery if these costs are related to delivery of the same program, and if both can be accomplished within the time period for which funding is approved. If this is the case, a separate Program/Course Development or Adaptation proposal/budget is not required and the Program Delivery proposal template and budget template should be used.
- The Program/Course Development or Adaptation proposal template and Program/Course Development or Adaptation budget template should be used if the applicant wishes to develop or adapt curriculum that is not associated with a Program Delivery proposal.
- If an applicant proposes to deliver more than one program, a separate Program Delivery proposal must be submitted for each program.
- Please refer to the instructions in the applicable proposal and budget templates for further details.

- Applications are due by **March 16, 2026**. Please submit your proposal, applicable budget, and required documentation by email to pseallocations@fnesc.ca or fax to 604-925-6097.
- Applicants will receive an email confirmation that their application has been received within two business days after the due date; if you do not receive an email confirmation, please contact FNESC staff at 1-877-422-3672 (toll-free).

8.2 Adjudication of Proposals

Eligible proposals will be reviewed by the PSPP Review Committee, which consists of five members selected by the FNESC and IAHLA Executives.

The PSPP Review Committee will review all eligible proposals and assess against the BC PSPP Assessment Criteria included in the call package.

Every effort will be made to ensure a regional distribution of funds.

Approval of a proposal for Program/Course Development or Adaptation does not guarantee that funding will be provided for delivery of the program or course through subsequent calls for proposals.

Funding under PSPP is annual funding and is based on an annual proposal and adjudication process; PSPP projects that have previously received funding are not guaranteed continued funding. At this time, FNESC cannot enter into multiyear funding agreements with successful recipients given restrictions associated with federal and provincial funding for this program.

A written response will be sent to all applicants to confirm whether or not their proposal will be funded. If a proposal is found to be ineligible, the applicant will be informed of the reason for its ineligibility. A list of successful applicants will be posted on the FNESC and IAHLA websites.

9. Timeframe

The timeframe for delivery for projects funded through this Call for Proposals will be from May 1, 2026 to May 31, 2027.

10. Accountability and Reporting

Funding recipients must deliver the program in accordance with the provisions of their Contribution Agreement and these Guidelines.

Funding recipients must be up-to-date with their reporting for previous PSPP years in order to be eligible.

Reporting requirements will be listed in each recipient's Contribution Agreement. All funds must be expended, and all activities completed by **May 31, 2027**.

11. Contact Information

Should you have any questions, please contact FNESC at pseallocations@fnesc.ca or toll-free at 1-877-422-3672.

Proposal Deadline:

March 16, 2026

Please submit complete proposals to:

Fax: 604-925-6097 Email: pseallocations@fnesc.ca