

September 2026

Dear Friends,

The Indigenous Reconciliation Fund Committee of the Diocese of Victoria is pleased to announce they are continuing to accept applications for the National Indigenous Reconciliation Fund. Since the Fall of 2022, we have approved grant applications for 24 local Indigenous-led projects and initiatives, granting over \$810,000 for the good work of reconciliation.

The Committee includes: Anthony Black, Coast Salish with deep roots in Cowichan and Penelakut; Bertha Landrie, a French Cree Métis Elder living in Victoria; Stacey Rhodes-Neset, a member of the Métis Nation of BC living in Nanaimo; and James Swan, hereditary Chief of Manhousaht.

We are eager to encourage projects from Indigenous groups anywhere on Vancouver Island and the surrounding Islands that foster good medicine for people harmed by the legacy of residential schools.

The attached document, also available at [www.rcdvictoria.org/irf](http://www.rcdvictoria.org/irf), gives information about the Fund and how to apply. After review by our Committee, selected applications will be forwarded to the national Fund for payment. We have elected to now offer up to \$60,000 per project, until the full \$1.25 million of the local fund has been dispersed.

To submit an application or if you have any questions, please email [irf@rcdvictoria.org](mailto:irf@rcdvictoria.org). A voicemail can also be left at 250-800-3167 and a Committee member will return your call. The deadlines for applications are:

- November 15, 2026
- February 15, 2027
- May 15, 2027

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask. We look forward to hearing about initiatives that will help our people in the journey of healing and strengthening.

Sincerely,

The Indigenous Reconciliation Fund Committee  
Diocese of Victoria

# Indigenous Reconciliation Fund Application Guide

- Diocese of Victoria -

September 2026

*The Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria acknowledges with gratitude that we work, play, and pray on the territories and traditional lands of the Coast Salish, Nuu-chah-nulth, and Kwakwaka'wakw Peoples. In the light of this truth, and in humility, we commit ourselves to continue to work for reconciliation, and for respectful relationships with the Creator and all creation.*

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## **Overview of the National Indigenous Reconciliation Fund:**

Roman Catholic Dioceses across Canada, in their continuing journey of seeking reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous Peoples, have voluntarily committed to contributing \$30 million over five years in new funding to the National Indigenous Reconciliation Fund (the Fund) to facilitate further reconciliation efforts. The Fund is an arms-length, federally-incorporated not-for-profit registered charity with its own independent Board of Directors, whose members include Rosella Kinoshameg, Giselle Marion, the Honourable Graydon Nicholas, William Angalik, and Dennis Whitford.

The purpose of the Fund is to:

- Independently approve funding requests from Diocesan Reconciliation Committees that are consistent with the Fund's granting guidelines;
- Independently manage the receipt of funds and send monies directly to support approved reconciliation projects and initiatives; and
- Independently, annually report to Dioceses and the public on the flow of money into the Fund and out in support of approved projects.

The Fund will have an Accounting Contractor and a cadre of 5 to 10 grant reviewers across the country to assist the Fund's Board of Directors in its work.

## **Discerning Local Needs: The Role of the Diocese of Victoria Indigenous Reconciliation Fund Committee**

The goal of the Diocese of Victoria Indigenous Reconciliation Fund Committee (the IRF Committee) is to identify the priority, meaningful reconciliation work in our Diocese to be funded by the national Indigenous Reconciliation Fund. To this end, the IRF Committee is comprised of local lay Indigenous members who will discuss and discern reconciliation initiatives that will have a meaningful local impact. The current members of the committee are Anthony Black, Coast Salish with deep roots in Cowichan and Penelakut; Bertha Landrie, a French Cree Métis Elder living in Victoria; Stacey Rhodes-Neset, a member of the Métis Nation of BC living in Nanaimo; and James Swan, hereditary Chief of Manhousaht.

We are eager to encourage projects from Indigenous groups anywhere on Vancouver Island and the surrounding Islands that foster good medicine for people harmed by the legacy of residential schools. The IRF Committee can recommend funding local initiatives up to the extent of the funds the Diocese of Victoria has contributed to the Fund, which totals \$1.25 million.

## **Purpose of this IRF Application Guide:**

This guide has been prepared to support Indigenous groups and individuals in the Diocese of Victoria who would like to apply to the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund for grants to address local needs. If you have questions, please direct them to the Diocese of Victoria IRF Committee at [irf@rcdvictoria.org](mailto:irf@rcdvictoria.org) or 250-800-3167.

### **Grant Application Process:**

To submit an application, please complete the “*Indigenous Reconciliation Fund 2026-2027 Application for Project Funding*”, available at [www.rcdvictoria.org/irf](http://www.rcdvictoria.org/irf) or by calling 250-800-3167, and forward to the Diocese of Victoria IRF Committee at [irf@rcdvictoria.org](mailto:irf@rcdvictoria.org).

Indigenous communities and individuals in the Diocese of Victoria may apply for a one-time grant of up to \$60,000. Deadlines for applications are:

- November 15, 2026
- February 15, 2027
- May 15, 2027

After the final grant application deadline in May 2027, if funds allow, a sixth round of funding may be offered.

### **Indigenous Reconciliation Fund General Criteria & Granting Guidelines:**

The Fund and the IRF Committee have established the following General Criteria and Granting Guidelines.

- All IRF grants are to be made in support of local Indigenous projects and initiatives of:
  - Healing and reconciliation for communities and families
  - Culture and language revitalization
  - Education and community building
  - Dialogues involving Indigenous elders, spiritual leaders and youth with focus on Indigenous spirituality and culture
- Projects receiving grants are to be in harmony with the teachings to love the Creator, neighbor and oneself.
- Capital projects consistent with the General Criteria and Granting Guidelines are eligible for funding
- Priority should be given to projects which will have or contribute to a lasting impact on reconciliation within communities
- All grant applications must be made by Indigenous people or groups
- Grant requests may be made for funding up to a two-year limit, and grants may be renewed within the lifespan of the Fund

- All Fund grant recipients must be registered charities or qualified donees (as listed at <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/other-organizations-that-issue-donation-receipts-qualified-donees/other-qualified-donees-listings/list-municipal-public-bodies-performing-a-function-government-canada-registered-qualified-donees.html>)
- Funds must be directed towards the agreed upon reconciliation project / initiative outlined in the Grant Application
- IRF grants are to be used to directly support Indigenous healing and reconciliation initiatives and programs and are not primarily to be used to cover expenses (i.e., accommodations, travel, etc.)
- The Diocese of Victoria IRF Committee may choose to reply to a grant application with a request for revisions or further information. When this occurs, the grant may be resubmitted a maximum of one (1) time.
- Grant applications must be submitted as PDF or Word attachments. Applications submitted as a web link will not be considered.
- Recent audited financial statements of the organization receiving the funds must be included with the application. If unavailable, the latest financial information provided to the CRA Charities Directorate may be included instead. The application cannot be considered if this information is not provided.
- The Diocese of Victoria IRF Committee can recommend the funding of local Indigenous projects and initiatives to the extent of the funds the Diocese of Victoria has contributed to the Fund
- The Diocese of Victoria IRF Committee can seek support from other Dioceses/Regions for projects that have impact beyond the Diocese of Victoria, or are in excess of the Diocese of Victoria's contribution
- While the \$30M in the Fund will be contributed by Dioceses within five years, projects receiving grants must be completed by December 31, 2029

As a registered charity under the Canada Revenue Agency, the national Indigenous Reconciliation Fund must direct all funds to other registered charities or qualified donees. Therefore, money to fund approved grants will be sent by the Fund directly to the registered charity or qualified donee named in the grant application. In situations in which the Diocese of Victoria IRF Committee has identified worthy reconciliation projects or initiatives with groups that are not registered charities or qualified donees, the Committee may be able to assist in a search for trusted registered charities or qualified donees who can serve as partners by receiving money from the Fund on behalf of the grant recipient.

**Grant Approval Process:**

Once a reconciliation project or initiative has been deemed to have local significance by the Diocese of Victoria IRF Committee, the IRF Committee will forward the grant application to the national Indigenous Reconciliation Fund.

Upon receipt of a grant application, the national Indigenous Reconciliation Fund reviewers will examine it and work with the Diocese of Victoria IRF Committee to make any necessary changes to ensure compliance with the General Criteria & Granting Guidelines prior to the application being submitted to the Fund's Board of Directors for approval. The Board of Directors will provide its approvals at its regularly scheduled meetings

**Acknowledgement and Completion of Grant Project**

Grant recipients will be expected to acknowledge receipt of the funds when granted. Grant recipients are also to provide a written report to the national Indigenous Reconciliation Fund, annually or at the conclusion of the project with a copy to the Diocese of Victoria IRF Committee. Be sure to include an accounting for how the funds were invested and demonstrating the reconciliation impact of the funds received. If possible, please include a few photos from your project.

## Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions

- ***Are we confident the Bishops will meet their new \$30M target?***

Yes. Canada's Bishops are fully committed to meeting the joint \$30 million voluntary financial commitment over five years. The CCCB has received firm commitments from 73 dioceses who will help reach this target. Under the planned framework, the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund will publish annual reports and be subject to an independent accounting firm each year, to ensure full transparency and accountability.

- ***Who will be managing the fund?***

The Indigenous Reconciliation Fund will be managed with financial measures in place to ensure transparency and good governance. Board directors and members of the corporation will collectively bring a strong financial acumen and deep commitment to the healing and reconciliation journey. The IRF Board is comprised of the following directors and members:

- **Rosella Kinoshameg (Board Chair):** Rosella is an Odawa/Ojibway woman and residential school survivor from the Wikwemikong Unceded First Nation Territory, with over 50 years of nursing experience, mostly working with First Nations communities on community health care. She has an honorary doctorate in Sacred Letters from Regis College at the University of Toronto. In April 2023, she was honoured with the Magis Award.
- **Giselle Marion (Director):** Giselle is a Tlicho Citizen, born and raised in Behchoko, North West Territories. She is the Director of Client Services with the Tlicho Government, which represents the Dene people of NT. She holds a law degree from the University of British Columbia.
- **The Honourable Graydon Nicholas (Director):** Graydon has a lengthy history of working for justice for First Nations and other people. He was the first Indigenous person in Atlantic Canada to earn a law degree, the first Indigenous judge in New Brunswick, and was Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick from 2009 to 2014, also a first for an Indigenous person. Presently, he is the Chancellor of St. Thomas University, where he is the Endowed Chair of Native Studies.
- **William Angalik (Director):** William Angalik is an Indigenous educator from Arviat, Nunavut, who teaches Information and Communication Technology in both Inuktitut and English. Ordained in January 2023, he serves as a Deacon for St. Theresa Church and has actively contributed to Indigenous initiatives during his three-year term with the Canadian Catholic Indigenous Council. Currently, William is a member of the Diocesan Reconciliation Fund Committee for the Diocese of Churchill-Hudson Bay, Nunavut.
- **Dennis Whitford (Director):** Dennis Whitford, who is of Métis heritage and was bestowed the name Two Thunder Caller by an Elder from the Blackfoot Confederacy, brings a wealth of experience and dedication to the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund Board. Following a 27-year career with the Government of Alberta, Child and Family Services, he is currently the owner of 2Thunder Consulting. Dennis holds a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Calgary and is a registered Social Worker with the Alberta College of Social Workers.
- **Nat Gallo (Member):** Nat is a former Supreme Director of the Knights of Columbus.
- **Omar Ellis (Member):** Omar is the Vice-President Social Justice of the National Council of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.
- **Barbara Dowding (Member):** Barbara is a former National President of the Catholic Women's League of Canada.

- ***Why should Indigenous peoples believe that we will follow through on this commitment?***

Canada's Catholic Bishops recognize and share the immense disappointment that past fundraising efforts did not live up to the responsibility to meaningfully address the Catholic Church's role in Canada's Indian Residential School System. We recognize that there is no single step that can eliminate the pain and suffering felt by residential school survivors, but by listening, seeking relationships, and working collaboratively, we hope to learn how to walk together on the long journey to healing and reconciliation.

The new Indigenous Reconciliation Fund will be transparent and accountable in supporting the healing and reconciliation initiatives that our Indigenous partners value.

- ***Why are we only promising \$30 million over five years?***

We recognize that there is no single step that can eliminate the pain and suffering felt by residential school survivors. The Indigenous Reconciliation Fund is a tangible expression of the Bishops' commitment to walk with Indigenous peoples along the long journey towards healing and reconciliation. By creating a time-limited fund, we hope to achieve a sense of urgency from Catholic entities and their faithful communities, as well as accountability to Indigenous partners and the general public.

- ***Can we confirm what date the \$30 million will be delivered by?***

\$30 million will be delivered over the next five years, through contributions made by 73 dioceses across Canada.

- ***How much has each diocese committed to fundraise?***

Seventy-three dioceses across Canada have made concrete, voluntary commitments to help fulfill the \$30 million financial commitment over five years. We recognize that exact amount fundraised by each diocese may vary from these initial commitments. With that in mind, under our proposed framework, the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund will transparently report on the fund's finances on an annual basis, and be subject to an audit by an independent accounting firm each year.

- ***Doesn't the Church have enough money to fulfill this commitment? Why are you asking Catholics to donate?***

The Catholic Church in Canada consists of thousands of independent entities, each with their own financial circumstances. It is up to individual dioceses to determine how best to meet their financial commitments. Having said that, we have heard loudly from Catholics across Canada who wish to participate in the healing and reconciliation journey.

By launching a grassroots-led campaign where local dioceses and their faithful can raise funds and provide meaningful input on disbursement plans, we believe that we can engage Catholics in a new way around this critically important priority.

- ***Who actually determines / authorizes the projects by diocesan or regional reconciliation committees?***

Both the local Reconciliation Committees AND the Fund Directors play a role in determining and authorizing projects. It is up to the diocesan/ regional reconciliation committees to discern and recommend projects that fulfill the requirements as set out by the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund Grant Application criteria. It is the Fund Directors who confirm and decide that recommended projects fulfill the requirements and can be approved.

- ***What happens if a proposed project is rejected by the Fund Directors?***

It is anticipated that this would be a rare situation. If a diocesan or regional reconciliation committee project proposal is fulfilling the criteria as set out in the Fund Grant Application Process, then rejection of a submitted project should not occur. However, if it does, then a dialogue should occur between the Fund Directors and the local Diocesan/Regional Committee as to how to adjust/ amend the project so that it may fulfill all criteria and achieve approval.

## Appendix B: Further Information/ Resource Links

- Indian Residential Schools and **TRC Settlement**: <https://www.cccb.ca/indigenous-peoples/indian-residential-schools-and-trc/>

- Overview of **\$30 million Indigenous Reconciliation FUND**

<https://www.cccb.ca/media-release/canadian-bishops-announce-30m-national-financialpledge-to-support-healing-and-reconciliation-initiatives/>

- **Regarding the performance and fulfillment by CCEPIRSS** (Corporation of Catholic Entities Party to the Indian Residential School Settlement) of obligations re: IRSSA (Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement)

<https://www.cccb.ca/indigenous-peoples/indian-residential-schools-and-trc/canadasbishops-provide-update-on-indian-residential-school-settlement-agreement/> (summary)

<https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Summary-Memorandum-datedJanuary-28-2022.pdf> (independent legal review, release in Jan. 2022)

- Regarding the “**Doctrine of Discovery**” and *Terra Nullius*

[https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/15.-29-Mar-2016\\_Catholic-response-to-doctrine-of-discovery-and-tn.pdf](https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/15.-29-Mar-2016_Catholic-response-to-doctrine-of-discovery-and-tn.pdf)

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2023/03/30/0238/00515.html>

- **Chronology of CCCB** (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops) **engagement**

<https://www.cccb.ca/indigenous-peoples/chronology-of-cccb-engagement/>