

Community Initiatives Program – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Community Initiatives Program?

The True North Aid Community Initiatives Program supports Indigenous-led projects in northern and remote communities in Canada that aim to create positive and impactful community-centred change. As a registered Canadian Charity, we believe that Indigenous self-determination and self-governance are key to addressing inequities and social justice initiatives.

Who can apply for support?

Any Indigenous-led community or organization supporting northern and remote areas of Canada is welcome to apply. We prioritize requests that are community-driven and based on locally identified needs, and those in northern and remote communities.

What does it mean by northern and remote?

True North Aid defines ‘north and remote’ as communities that are in the northern regions of Canada (approximately north of 55° latitude), and/or more than two hours from a city or town with:

- a hospital;
- access to specialized care and support services;
- big box stores and grocery stores;
- other essential goods and/or services

*Exceptions can be made based on specific circumstances

What types of support are available?

True North Aid supports projects that empower communities with **holistic and sustainable projects** focused on, but not limited to:

- The advancement of education, cultural revitalization, and community-building
- Reclaiming plant/food sovereignty
- Addressing housing inequities
- The promotion of holistic physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being
- Equitable access to essential resources

What do you NOT fund?

We do not fund the following:

- Projects that do not support Indigenous Peoples
- Food requests that are not sustainable
- Research and Development Projects
- Insurance
- Administrative Fees/Costs
- Consulting
- Giftcards
- Cash prizes
- School trips lacking an educational/cultural component
- [Capital Purchases](#)

How do communities apply?

Communities can apply by filling out a simple request form on our website or by contacting us at bethany@truenorthaid.ca. If your project falls within our mandate, an application link will be sent to you.

We aim to make the process as accessible and responsive as possible. Here is the link to the general inquiry form: [General Inquiry Form for Support](#)

What criteria do you use to evaluate requests?

We prioritize:

- Requests made by or in close collaboration with Indigenous leadership
- Community-led initiatives that address essential needs or enhance well-being
- Projects with clear, achievable goals and a clear budget

Does True North Aid support ongoing projects or only one-time requests?

Both! We support one-off events/programs or ongoing projects in the community. True North Aid is open to building long-term relationships and supporting communities over time, based on need and capacity.

What is the maximum amount awarded per project?

We have three funding levels:

1. Community Seed Fund - \$10,000 (ongoing, awarded monthly)
2. Community Growth Fund - \$25,000 (2 in the spring, 2 in the fall)
3. Community Impact Fund - \$50,000 (2 in July)

How many applications can I submit in a year?

Applicants may apply **two times per calendar year** from the submission of their first application.

When will I find out about the decision of whether my application has been approved or declined?

We do our best to let applicants know within 90 days of their application deadline cycle.

How are applications reviewed?

Once an application is submitted, the True North Aid team meets to determine if additional information is required. Once all the data is collected, the Indigenous Advisory Circle reviews applications and approves recipients and communities. They also identify and provide support for capacity-building opportunities.

Who can I ask for help with my application?

Our Finance and Operations Coordinator is here for you! If you have any questions, please email Bethany Sorichetti at bethany@truenorthaid.ca.

We can assist you with the application process, either over the phone or via video conference, if you'd like to work together.

How far in advance should I apply for my project?

We cannot fund programs that are already in program so **it is best to apply at least three months in advance of your planned project date, in case we have questions or need additional** information about your project. This also allows time for the Indigenous Advisory Circle to review and provide feedback and approval.

How will my application be funded?

True North Aid may provide support for your project if it is approved, in one of three different ways.

- Direct Funding. True North Aid will provide funding in three separate payments;
 - First payment of 70% of approved funding upon completion and signing of the Memorandum of Understanding
 - Second Payment of 20% of approved funding upon completion of mid-term update.
 - Third Payment of the remaining 10% of funding upon completion of the final update
- Virtual Spend Card
 - True North Aid will issue a virtual VISA card to the primary applicant
- Direct Vendor Payment

- True North Aid will pay the vendor directly

Honouring Indigenous Knowledge

At True North Aid, we recognize the importance of Indigenous knowledge, teachings, and cultural practices. When Elders, Knowledge Keepers, or community members share their wisdom, time, or guidance, it is important that this contribution is valued and respected.

Therefore, we enable communities to include honoraria in their project budgets. Honoraria are not wages or salaries; they are a gesture of appreciation, a way to show respect and reciprocity for the knowledge and gifts that are shared.

Honoraria can take different forms, including monetary gifts, traditional gifts, or other culturally meaningful offerings. The most important thing is that those who give of their knowledge and time are recognized in a good way.

By supporting Indigenous honoraria, we ensure that community voices, traditions, and teachings are properly respected and included in the work we do together.

Our Approach to Funding Trips

We know that school trips, sports tournaments, and cultural exchanges can be powerful experiences for children and youth. They help build confidence, teach new skills, and open doors to opportunities that may not otherwise be available.

Because trips can also be expensive and usually only benefit a small group, we consider certain factors.

We may support trips when they:

- Support learning and growth - educational, cultural, or youth development activities.
- Include fair access - opportunities for youth who might not otherwise afford to go.
- Benefit the community - skills, knowledge, or experiences are shared when participants return.
- Show shared responsibility - costs are supported by more than one source (families, schools, sponsors, etc.).

We do not fund trips that are mostly recreational or that have no lasting benefit to the community. Our goal is to make sure that when we fund a trip, it creates opportunities that last well beyond the journey itself.

Why We Fund Contract Services but Not Wages

At True North Aid, we want to make sure that we support programs that create direct and lasting benefits for communities.

- Wages (salaries for staff) create ongoing financial commitments. Once our funding ends, communities may be left with staff they can no longer afford to pay, which can create hardship and instability.
- Contract services, on the other hand, are project-based and time-limited. They allow communities to bring in expertise, training, or professional support for a specific need, like hiring a facilitator for a workshop, an instructor for a class, or a translator for a program.

By focusing on contract services, we can support clear outcomes that directly benefit communities without leaving them with long-term financial obligations they may not be able to sustain.

Our goal is to provide help that is impactful, responsible, and sustainable.