



2024 Grant Recipients

Thriving Indigenous Systems Fund

What's unique about this grant?

TISF was developed in partnership with Indigenous communities. In 2022, we consulted with grantees, past applicants, Indigenous-led systems change experts, community members, and Indigenous leaders to learn how to develop a grant program honoring Indigenous self-determination. [Learn more about how deep listening informed the Thriving Indigenous Systems Fund.](#)



“TISF offers multi-year, flexible grants for up to \$100,000 per year, over three years for Indigenous-led initiatives focused on healing, land, rights & responsibilities, and culture.”

A Foundation for Change.

vancouver
foundation

The **Awí'nakola Foundation** merges Indigenous knowledge, science, and the arts to help steward territory and enhance ecosystem health. Programming supports Indigenous communities' efforts to protect their legal orders, rights and title, and responsibilities to their Awí'agwis (lands). By documenting impacts from resource extraction on ecosystems, delivering land-based healing programs and engaging in legal strategies, Awí'nakola advocates for Indigenous sovereignty and environmental protection, aligning with TISF's focus on community self-determination and stewardship of land and natural heritage.

The **Alkw Media Society (AMS)** fosters healing and cultural revitalization among the Nuxalk people through Nuxalk Radio and language programs. Dedicated to promoting Indigenous language fluency and Nuxalkmc well-being, AMS plays a critical role in revitalizing the Nuxalk language and culture. By broadcasting content that upholds the laws of the land and waters, AMS supports the vision of a sovereign nation where the Nuxalk language thrives, and the community governs according to ancestral practices, aligning with TISF's focus on cultural and language revitalization.

Carrier Sekani Family Services' (CSFS) Calls to Justice project focuses on reconnecting and building relationships with the guidance of traditional knowledge holders to repair kinship systems and address health inequities exacerbated by the MMIWG crisis. CSFS is a non-profit organization that offers comprehensive services including health care, mental wellness, child and family support, and legal research, all infused with cultural practices. Serving over 10,000 individuals, CSFS seeks to restore justice, health, and family services through a culturally grounded approach, aligning with TISF's priorities on healing, community reconnection, and Indigenous sovereignty.

The **Centre for First Nations Governance (CFNG)** is dedicated to transitioning First Nations from Indian Act governance to exercising their inherent right to self-governance. By providing education, coaching, and strategic advice across Canada, CFNG aims to empower First Nations to embrace self-governance fully. With extensive experience and a trusted network, CFNG facilitates the development of a roadmap to self-governance, emphasizing the protection of Indigenous rights and traditions. Their work supports the re-establishment of traditional governance structures, advocating for policy change and the recognition of Section 35 rights.

The **Coldwater School, located on the Coldwater Reserve**, integrates language and cultural revitalization into its curriculum, serving both Band and non-Band members. It boasts modern facilities and a commitment to combining traditional and contemporary learning. With a dedicated language teacher and a Culture Coordinator, the school engages students in traditional practices, including hunting and culture camps, food gathering, and preservation. This initiative, aimed at addressing health inequities and fostering community connections, aligns with TISF's focus on cultural revitalization and traditional knowledge sharing.

The **Gidimt'en clan, part of the Wet'suwet'en Nation**, asserts Indigenous sovereignty by maintaining a checkpoint to control access to their territory, opposing extraction projects doing harm to their territories. This action reflects their unbroken right to govern 22,000 square kilometers of Northern British Columbia, a right affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1997. Upholding Wet'suwet'en law, the clan system emphasizes the responsibility to control territory access, reinforcing traditional governance, protecting sacred lands, and strengthening community connections, in line with TISF's focus on supporting hereditary governance and asserting Indigenous rights.

The **Huu-ay-aht First Nations'** initiative leverages traditional knowledge to repair and nurture kinship systems, guided by the three Sacred Principles of Sacred Principles: ʔiisaak (Greater Respect); Hišuk ma čawak (Everything is One); and ʔuuʔaʔuk (Taking Care Of). Based in the Barkley Sound region, the initiative aims to build a strong, self-reliant Nation by fostering a safe, healthy, and sustainable community. Focusing on cultural reconnection, health equity, and sustainable development, it perfectly aligns with TISF's goals to address social determinants of health through Indigenous practices, ensuring the flourishing of culture, language, spirituality, healing and economy for all citizens.

IndigenEYEZ, operating across the lands now known as BC from Okanagan territory, offers innovative training and camps that blend ancestral practices with modern tools for change-making, targeting all generations and genders. Addressing the fragmentation of trust and community caused by colonization, their programs aim to rebuild relationships and empower community leaders and frontline workers. The TMX^wULAX^w Touch the Earth training seeks to enhance land-based activities, offering a mix of online workshops and land-based camps for intensive mentorship, focusing on healing, cultural revitalization, and traditional knowledge sharing.

Through tools and frameworks that respect cultural protocols and ancient wisdom, **Indigenous Food Systems Network Society** facilitates ethical engagement in food system policy. Adopting a chapter-based model, it advances initiatives like the Secwepemc Foodland Conservation Area, focusing on traditional conservation practices, and the East Vancouver Chapter's Indigenous Foodland Restoration Garden. These efforts embody food security and sovereignty, community land connection, and cultural revitalization, enhancing governance capacity and advocating for policy change.

The **Indigenous Food Sovereignty Association (IFSA)** revitalizes Indigenous knowledge, ensuring food sovereignty and security outcomes. Serving communities across lands now known as BC, IFSA promotes healthy, resilient Indigenous communities through education, skills development, network building, and support in mental health and culture, centered around access to culturally appropriate foods. This aligns with TISF's focus on cultural revitalization, health equity, and Indigenous sovereignty, emphasizing traditional knowledge sharing and the vital role of food security in sustainable community development.

The **ᔨkamnin'tik Children's Truth and Reconciliation Society**, led by the Ktunaxa Nation and Shuswap Band, focuses on healing and cultural revitalization within the St. Eugene Resort, the site of the former Kootenay Indian Residential School. By providing education, reclamation, and cultural programming, the society addresses the intergenerational trauma of residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and the foster care system. This project aligns with TISF's emphasis on healing, community reconnection, and traditional knowledge, supporting survivors and their families through cultural conversations, teachings, and artist residencies to reclaim and revitalize Indigenous cultures and histories.

The **Kanaka Bar Indian Band** (T'eqt'aqtnmux), part of the Nlaka'pamux Nation, is dedicated to regaining stewardship of their territory through establishing an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA). Focused on sustainability and community self-sufficiency, Kanaka Bar aims to protect their lands from unsustainable industrial development while ensuring natural goods for future generations. With initiatives in hydro and solar power, water treatment, and achieving food self-sufficiency, their goal aligns with TISF's emphasis on Indigenous sovereignty, environmental protection, and community connection to land.

The Tsaxis Community Garden, a **Kwakiutl Band Council** initiative, promotes healing and cultural reconnection through food sovereignty and security. Established in the 1990s at Tsaxis (Fort Rupert), it supports community health by offering garden spaces for raising food, teaching gardening and the Kwak'waka language, and facilitating traditional food and medicine gathering. Emphasizing traditional Kwakiutl values, the project aligns with TISF's goals by revitalizing Indigenous knowledge, enhancing food security, and addressing health inequities through a strong connection to land and culture.

Kwakwaka'wakw Hereditary Chiefs Confederation Society is focused on addressing various critical issues facing the communities it serves, particularly within the context of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation and the broader North Island region. Primary concerns center around the impact of the Indian Act, which has historically divided and weakened Indigenous communities.

Guided by Snuw'uy'ulh teachings and led by nine Coast Salish Nations, the **Kw'umut Lelum Foundation's** focus is expanding cultural, economic, social, educational and recreational access in support of Indigenous children and their families. It provides grants for health, wellness, and cultural practices, aiming to rectify disparities and foster self-determined sovereignty. This initiative aligns with TISF's priorities in traditional knowledge sharing and addressing health inequities, promoting a future where Indigenous practices are central to community well-being.

The **Kyuquot / Checlesheht First Nations** initiative focuses on repairing and nurturing kinship systems through traditional knowledge to heal intergenerational trauma and promote community well-being. Serving members in Kyuquot and beyond, the project emphasizes education, health, social development, and particularly family support for a healthy, safe environment. This aligns with TISF's priorities in addressing health inequities, cultural reconnection, and land-based healing, aiming to enhance community cohesion

and individual well-being through Indigenous methods and perspectives.

The **Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance (LFFA)** represents First Nations of the Lower Fraser River, promoting a sustainable fishery and supporting cultural traditions. Guided by shared values like respect, inherent fishing rights, and ecosystem connectivity, the LFFA facilitates collaboration between member nations, government entities, and stakeholders. Through the RELAW initiative, they integrate Indigenous laws on watershed management and fisheries, based on land-based learning and Elders' knowledge, aiming to protect sacred homelands and manage resources holistically, underscoring Indigenous sovereignty.

Lower Similkameen Indian Band's initiative focuses on strengthening ancestral roles and responsibilities and environmental protection to preserve land, history, culture, and traditions for future generations. With a vision for a holistic, healthy, self-sufficient, and independent community, the initiative emphasizes safeguarding the environment, climate change adaptation, and asserting Indigenous sovereignty. It aligns with TISF's goals of enhancing community connection to land, protecting sacred homelands, and fostering healing and cultural reconnection, driven by the leadership's commitment to uphold Lower Similkameen Indian Band Title and Rights for the prosperity of their greatest resource - their children.

The **Luutkudziwus project, rooted in the Gitxsan Wilp of the Frog Clan**, emphasizes community connection to land and self-determination through the exercise of ancestral rights on the Madii Lii and Xsi Gwin Hauums territories. Guided by Gwalx Yee'insxw, the foundational law of Ayookw, this initiative aims to protect sacred homelands, reinstate traditional governance, and assert Indigenous sovereignty, aligning with TISF's focus on cultural revitalization and the inherent right to self-government. It fosters the transfer of ancestral inheritance to future generations, ensuring the perpetual stewardship and vitality of their lands, culture, and traditions.

The **Miin Simoiget (Head Chief) of Wilps Miluulak's** project focuses on managing the LaxYip (land and resources) for sustainability and future generations. The Head Chief engages with government and industry to represent and protect Wilps Miluulak's interests, ensuring Indigenous sovereignty over lands and resources. This leadership role extends to cultural representation at the liligit (feast), serving members within and beyond the Hazelton community. This initiative underscores the importance of healing, cultural revitalization, environmental protection, and the exercise of inherent rights to self-government.

Maiyoo Keyoh Society's project focuses on asserting the community's Indigenous rights and self-determination by protecting their inherent right to self-governance and responsibly managing their keyoh (traditional territory). Through a respect and recognition protocol, it fosters Keyoh to Keyoh reciprocity, strengthening ancestral roles, reinstating traditional governance, and advocating for policy changes. This initiative, aligning with TISF's goals, upholds Indigenous sovereignty and the inherent right to self-government, embodying the spirit of section 35 of the Canadian Constitution.

The **Nawalakw Culture Project** initiative will revitalize the Kwakwaka'wakw language (Kwak'wala)) and culture through apprenticeships and camps, hi'manis ka'kutla'a'tsi, located in Hada, one of the four tribes of the Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw. Nawalakw brings together youth and elders, providing traditional teachings in all aspects of Kwakwaka'wakw language and culture and environmental stewardship as part of a community-led, land-based healing initiative. Partnering with local organizations, it offers youth employment, builds knowledge of sustainable food systems, and aims for food sovereignty, embodying TISF's focus on cultural revitalization, language preservation, and community connection to land.

Sik-E-Dakh (Glen Vowell Indian Band) emphasizes land connection and traditional knowledge to foster a healthy, sustainable community for future generations. By prioritizing agriculture, Sik-E-Dakh, situated on prime farmland along the Skeena River, aims to enhance food security, economic self-sufficiency, and cultural revitalization. This aligns with TISF's focus on strengthening ancestral roles, environmental protection, and Indigenous sovereignty, driving towards climate resilience and sustainable development within the Gitxsan Nation's territory.

Sim'oogit Hanamuxw, a Gitxsan Hereditary Chief, leads a project to enhance Wilp governance, involving research by Gitxsan researchers Kolin Sutherland-Wilson and Vernon Wilson. Focused on ayookxw niyee/Gitxsan law, this initiative aims to strengthen traditional governance and protect sovereignty by working with the Huwilp to foster their function of government. Representing three House families and the Gitxsan community, this work aspires to inspire and serve 420 Gitxsan people, reinforcing self-determination and Indigenous sovereignty.

The **Skidegate Band Council** focuses on Indigenous Independence and community well-being through negotiations, program implementation, and resource management. Their partnership with Local Food 2 School directly aligns with TISF's priorities by emphasizing Indigenous Independence, food security, and cultural revitalization. By fostering community well-being, enhancing educational initiatives, and promoting mentorship in traditional food practices, this initiative supports Skidegate's move towards food independence and sustainable resource management. It embodies TISF's focus on strengthening community connections to land and sea and revitalizing Indigenous knowledge and leadership.

St'at'imc Northern Tribe Powwow Society

(SNTPS), embodying a union of elders and youth within the Lil'wat Nation, advances the inherent right to self-governance and Indigenous sovereignty. This assembly is a vital voice for rights-holders, ensuring leadership continuity and advocating for community interests against decisions that diverge from their collective vision. With a focus on moving beyond the Indian Act towards a future of self-determination and traditional governance, SNTPS is dedicated to realizing a prosperous, self-sufficient Lil'wat Nation grounded in their ancestral rights and connection to the land.

The **Sts'ailes Community Care Society** aims to blend traditional knowledge with modern healthcare through the Traditional Healing Centre of Excellence, fostering holistic wellness. This initiative disrupts colonial healthcare impacts, reinvigorating physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional health practices. Focused on First Nations from Mission to Agassiz, it aligns with TISF's goals by addressing health inequities and strengthening community connections to culture, land, and traditional practices.

Taku River Tlingit First Nation's project aims to restore food sovereignty by reconnecting with traditional food systems in Áa Tlein addressing barriers of displacement and food insecurity. This initiative aligns with TISF's focus on healing, culture, and food sovereignty, aiming for systemic transformation by integrating Indigenous knowledge and practices in achieving sustainable food security and cultural revitalization.

Thélá:ylexwawtxw (House of the Life Givers)

work focuses on healing, cultural revitalization, and asserting inherent rights through the empowerment of Stó:lō womxn. Aiming for Stó:lō families to thrive in united communities, the project prioritizes rematriation, integrating Stó:lō ways of life, and ensuring inclusivity. Key activities include fostering connections,

advocacy, the 'On the Land' series, and creating safe cultural spaces, all aimed at amplifying Indigenous womxn's voices and strengthening traditional governance. This initiative aligns with TISF's emphasis on cultural revitalization, traditional knowledge sharing, and self-determination, serving the Stó:lō and wider Indigenous community in S'ólh Téméxw.

Since 1969, the **Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs** has advocated for sovereignty, self-determination, and well-being for First Nations in the lands now known as BC. As a pivotal force in advancing First Nations Title, Rights and Treaty Rights, UBCIC unites more than half of BC First Nations to foster power, trust, respect, and healing. Engaging in legal advocacy, research, and information sharing, UBCIC holds Special Consultative Status with the UN's Economic and Social Council. It actively addresses systemic racism and gender-based violence, convenes the Coalition on MMIWG2S+, and supports First Nations in exercising their own laws and jurisdiction to protect their lands and lifeways.

The **Unist'ot'en Healing Centre**, rooted in the Wet'suwet'en Nation, offers land-based healing for individuals facing intergenerational trauma and addictions, emphasizing reconnection to unceded territory and traditional practices. Operated by the Unist'ot'en House group, it combines clinical expertise with traditional knowledge, enhancing healing through land-based programs. This initiative aligns with TISF's focus on self-determination, traditional governance, and protecting sacred lands, upholding the rights and sovereignty of the Wet'suwet'en people through cultural and therapeutic practices.

The initiative by **Wilp Gwininitxw** aims to sustainably manage their ancestral lands, Maxhla Didaat and Galaanhl Giist, focusing on preserving intact ecosystems and supporting unique wildlife populations, including distinct species of Skeena salmon. This stewardship, combining traditional Gitxsan laws and knowledge with contemporary scientific insights, seeks to maintain ecological balance and community well-being with ecosystem monitoring and management practices. This effort aligns with TISF's emphasis on environmental protection, Indigenous sovereignty, and the revitalization of Indigenous cultural and governance systems, addressing barriers to sustainable land management and conservation.

Even though 32 initiatives were awarded, their reach extends far beyond. The initiatives are estimated to reach and positively impact more than 80 communities due to the interconnected solutions and innovation spearheaded by grantees.