Thriving Indigenous Systems Fund | Application Questions

**Stage 1 & Stage 2**

**Purpose of Document:** These are the same questions and rationale that you will see in the online grant management system (GMS). You can use this document to prepare your answers outside GMS, paying close attention to the maximum word count for each question.

Please ensure you transfer your answers to the online application **before May 21 at 5 pm**.

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# Stage 1 Application Questions

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| 1. **Please select the option that best describes your community or organization (check box):**
* Band Council
* Hereditary Group
* Indigenous-Led Non-Profit Organization serving land-based First Nation or Hereditary Groups
* Indigenous School
 |
| **Rationale:** TISF grants support Land-based First Nations and Indigenous-led organizations. The following question helps determine your alignment with our eligibility criteria. Please select the option that best describes your community or organization. If you identify as an Indigenous-led organization or school, you will be asked to provide additional details about your Indigenous-led composition in a follow-up question. |

***If you are an Indigenous school, OR Indigenous-led organization, please read the following and answer questions 2a, 2b, and 2c. If you’re a land-based First Nation or Hereditary Group, skip to*** [***question 3***](#Q3)***.***

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| **2a. If your organization is Indigenous-led two-thirds (67%) of senior staff and/or board leadership positions identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, please confirm:*** Yes
* No
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| **Rationale:** TISF defines “Indigenous-led” as groups where at least **two-thirds (67%)** of **senior staff, leadership team and/or board/non-conventional governance structures** are held by individuals who identify as First Nations, Métis or Inuit. For instance, if your organization serves Indigenous people and has two senior staff members—where the CEO is non-Indigenous and the Finance Manager is Métis—you would **NOT** qualify, as only 50% of senior leadership is either First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. However, if your organization has five board members and four senior staff (for a total of nine), and three of the board members and three of the senior staff are First Nations, Inuit, or Métis, your organization would qualify as Indigenous-led. This is because at least 67% (or two-thirds) of both the board and senior staff are Indigenous (6 out of 9). |

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| **2b. Please share your leadership composition and how they identify:** *[Table includes: Title, Name, First Nation, Metis or Inuit Community (Y/N)]* (max 15 rows) |
| **Title** | **Name** | **First Nation Metis or Inuit Community (Y/N)]** |
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| **2c. Briefly describe the agreement(s) your organization has with the land based First Nation(s) you are serving (these may be formal or informal). You will be asked for additional information if invited to submit a Stage 2 application.** **(100-word limit)** |
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| **3. Please briefly share what your community or organization does, and the community it serves.** **(300-word limit)** |
| **Rationale:** This question helps us understand your organization’s mission, activities, and the community you serve. **Please provide a clear and concise overview, including:*** Your organization’s focus (e.g., education, health, social services, advocacy, arts).
* Key programs or services you offer.
* The specific community you serve, including geographic location and any defining characteristics (e.g., age, underserved populations, low-income communities).
* How your organization engages with the community, including relationships, outreach, and partnerships.

TISF is particularly interested in how your organization builds and maintains relationships with the community. Be sure to highlight how you collaborate with and listen to community members to address their needs.**Your response should include:*** A brief mission statement or summary of your organization's purpose.
* A description of your core programs or services.
* Details about the community you serve (who they are, where they are located, any specific characteristics).
* How you engage with and maintain relationships within the community, including any outreach efforts or partnerships.
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| **4. What does success look like for your work and how will you celebrate successes?** **(maximum 200 words)** |
| **Rationale:** This question helps us understand how your organization defines and measures success in a way that reflects the values and traditions of the community you serve. **In your response, please describe:*** The specific goals or outcomes your work aims to achieve.
* How you measure success, ensuring it aligns with the needs, values, and traditions of your community.
* How you celebrate successes, whether through community gatherings, cultural practices, storytelling, or other forms of recognition.

TISF is particularly interested in how your organization’s understanding of success is rooted in community priorities and how achievements are acknowledged in meaningful ways.**Your response should include:*** A description of what success looks like for your work.
* The goals or outcomes you strive for and how you track progress.
* How success is measured in ways that reflect community values and traditions.
* How your organization celebrates achievements in a way that honors the community.
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| **5. Who are you accountable to? Do you have a culturally specific way of practicing accountability? If so, please explain.** **(maximum 300 words)** |
| **Rationale:** This question helps us understand who your organization is accountable to and how you practice accountability in a way that reflects the values and traditions of your community.**In your response, please describe:*** Who you are accountable to (e.g., community members, Elders, Hereditary Chiefs, leadership groups, advisory councils).
* How you ensure accountability within your organization and community.
* Any culturally specific ways you practice accountability, such as through traditional governance, ceremonies, storytelling, or decision-making processes.

TISF is particularly interested in how your organization builds trust and transparency within the community and ensures that your work remains guided by its needs and values.**Your response should include:*** A clear statement of who you are accountable to and why.
* The ways in which you practice accountability (e.g., regular check-ins, advisory councils, consultations).
* Any culturally specific approaches, such as traditional governance structures, ceremonies, or storytelling.
* Examples of how accountability is demonstrated in your work.
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| **6**. **Please tell us about the values that your organization/community has defined to guide your work.**  |
| **Rationale:** This question helps us understand the core values that shape your organization’s work and how these values are reflected in your actions and decision-making. **Please describe:*** The key values that guide your organization or community.
* How these values reflect the priorities and needs of the community you serve.
* How your organization actively practices these values in its work, ensuring accountability in a culturally responsive way.

TISF is particularly interested in how your organization embodies its values, fosters trust within the community, and aligns with TISF’s priorities.**Your response should include:*** A list of key values that guide your organization.
* A brief explanation of how each value is practiced in your community or organization.
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| **Value** | **Explanation** |
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| **7a. How is your organization, community or project addressing one or more of the focus areas?** Please select one or more of the four focus areas that the TISF aims to support.If your initiative addresses more than one focus area, please select “Interconnection” and indicate which ones, and how they align with the work.* Healing
* Land
* Inherent Rights
* Culture
* Interconnection (If your work is interconnected between the focus areas, please explain).
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| **7b. How does your work/initiative align with the selected focus area(s)?** **(maximum 150 words)** |
| **Rationale:** This question helps us understand how your organization, community, or project aligns with one or more of TISF’s focus areas: Healing, Land, Rights & Responsibilities, and Culture.**In your response, please describe:*** Which focus area(s) your work aligns with.
* How your project, organization, or community addresses these focus areas.
* Specific initiatives, programs, or actions that demonstrate your commitment to these areas.

TISF is particularly interested in how your work reflects Indigenous-led approaches to healing, land stewardship, rights advocacy, and cultural revitalization.**Your response should include:*** A clear connection between your work and the selected focus area(s).
* Specific activities or programs that demonstrate alignment.
* How your work benefits and responds to the community’s needs.
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| **8. What is the governance model overseeing this work, and how are you approaching governance? (maximum 300 words)** |
| **Rationale:** This question helps us understand the governance model overseeing your work and how your approach supports Indigenous self-determination. **In your response, please describe:*** The governance model guiding your work (e.g., Band Council, Hereditary system, collective decision-making, or a hybrid model).
* How governance is informed by Indigenous cultural practices, perspectives, and self-determination.
* Any efforts to revitalize or strengthen traditional governance structures, such as supporting hereditary groups, houses, or Clans.
* How your approach moves away from Western governance models and prioritizes Indigenous knowledge and decision-making.

TISF is particularly interested in how your governance model centers cultural worldviews, revitalizes Indigenous governance traditions, and supports Indigenous self-governance.**Your response should include:** * A description of your governance model and leadership structure.
* How decision-making is guided by Indigenous cultural practices.
* Any specific governance structures you are revitalizing or strengthening.
* Examples of how your governance model supports self-determination and decolonial approaches.
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| **9. Where are you in your journey to identify, influence, or disrupt colonial structures, barriers and behaviors that impact your work and community? (maximum 300 words)** |
| **Rationale:** This question helps us understand how your work addresses colonial barriers and promotes Indigenous self-determination.**In your response, please describe:*** Where you are in your journey to identify and challenge colonial systems that impact your work and community.
* The specific ways your work asserts Indigenous rights and sovereignty.
* How your approach reflects a return to cultural systems rather than being disruptive from an Indigenous perspective.
* The barriers you face, especially related to funding challenges due to colonial structures.

TISF is particularly interested in how your work actively influences or disrupts colonial systems and how these efforts strengthen Indigenous governance, culture, and self-determination.**Your response should include:*** A description of the colonial structures or barriers you are addressing.
* Specific actions or strategies you use to challenge these systems. How your work restores and revitalizes Indigenous cultural systems.
* Challenges you face in securing funding due to colonial funding models.
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| **10. How much of this work is funded through other existing sources? What are the challenges you are experiencing trying to secure all the funding you need?** **(maximum 300 words)** |
| **Rationale:** This question helps us understand how much of your work is already funded and the challenges you face in securing the necessary resources. **In your response, please describe:*** The percentage of your work currently funded and the sources of that funding (e.g., government programs, grants, private donors, fundraising, self-generated revenue).
* Any gaps in funding and how they affect your ability to carry out or expand your work.
* Specific challenges you face in securing funding, particularly if your work is considered "hard to fund" due to eligibility restrictions, colonial funding structures, or systemic barriers.

TISF is particularly interested in how your work navigates funding challenges and whether traditional funding structures fail to support Indigenous-led initiatives.**Your response should include:*** A breakdown of current funding sources and how much of your work is supported.
* Key funding gaps and their impact on your ability to deliver your work.
* Challenges in accessing funding, particularly if traditional funding models do not align with Indigenous governance, decision-making, or priorities.
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## Funding Request Amount

TISF is seeking to learn how the allocation of funds directly reflects the initiative described in the application that meets TISF funding priorities and can lead to systemic transformation and work.

**As a reminder, TISF does not fund:**

* Endowments
* Operating deficits or after-the-fact support
* Debt retirement
* Monetary reserves
* Mortgage pay-downs
* Large public infrastructure projects and,
* [Activities deemed not charitable](https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/operating-a-registered-charity/activities/charitable-activities.html) as defined by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

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| 1. **Complete the table below to confirm how much funding you are requesting and over how many years:**

TISF is offering grants up to $100,000 per year over three years. |
| **Year** | **Funding Amount** |
| Year 1: |  |
| Year 2: |  |
| Year 3: |  |

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| 1. **Briefly describe how the funds will be allocated.** **(maximum 250 words)**
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# Stage 2 Application Questions

In July 2025, selected applicants will be invited to submit either a written (submitted online) or oral application as part of Stage 2 of the application process.

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| 1. **Tell us more about your Nation or organization’s initiative, elaborating on how it aligns with one or more of the focus area(s) of healing, land, rights & responsibilities, and/ or culture, that you selected in Stage 1 of the application?** **(maximum 700 words or 5 minutes speaking time)**
 |
| **Rationale:** We are assessing your awareness of the systemic barriers your community faces and how your initiative addresses these challenges and their root causes.**Your answer should:*** Describe how your initiative directly aligns with the focus areas you selected, such as healing, land, rights & responsibilities, or culture.
* Highlight key goals, activities, or outcomes and how they connect to your community’s specific needs.
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| 1. **What are the systemic barriers impacting your community that you are confronting through this initiative?** **(maximum 700 words or 5 minutes speaking time)**
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| **Rationale:** We are looking for clear recognition of the challenges and a plan to tackle them.**Your answer should:** * Identify and explain the systemic barriers your community faces, such as historical or current inequities, colonial structures, or lack of resources.
* Explain how your initiative directly confronts these barriers and works to address their root causes.
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| 1. **What does success look like for your work and how will you celebrate successes?**

 **(500 words or 4 minutes speaking time)** |
| **Rationale:** We are assessing how your success definition reflects community engagement and support, as well as cultural values in both the process and celebration.**Your answer should:** * Describe the markers of success for your initiative, focusing on measurable goals and community impacts.
* Explain how you plan to celebrate these successes, ensuring alignment with community values and traditions.
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| 1. **How do you intend for this initiative to build on the good paths of your Ancestors and breathe life into ancestral values? Are there cultural values and/or protocols that guide your work? If not, is there an openness to developing these? (maximum 700 words or 5 minutes speaking time)**
 |
| **Rationale:** We are evaluating your understanding of culturally relevant practices and your strategies to build this knowledge.**Your answer should:** * Include examples of how your initiative incorporates ancestral knowledge, cultural values, and protocols into your work.
* If cultural knowledge gaps exist, acknowledge them and describe how you plan to address them, demonstrating an openness to develop cultural competency.
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| 1. **Are you an Indigenous-led organization serving a land-based Nation(s)?**
* Yes
* No
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| **5a. If you are an Indigenous-led organization serving a Land-based First Nation or Hereditary Group, please describe the formal or informal agreement(s) that you have in place for those you are serving.** **(maximum 500 words or 4 minutes speaking time)** |
| **Rationale:** We are seeking documentation or clear evidence of support from the Nation(s) and the initiative’s recognition as a priority.Strong recommendations will show clear documentation and alignment with the Nation's priorities.**Your answer should:*** Include any formal or informal agreements or partnershipswith the Land-Based Nation(s) you serve, and how the initiative aligns with their priorities.
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| **6. This grant fits outside of a funding model that has historically left out the voices we want to uplift. Can you tell us more about any barriers your organization has experienced accessing funding for this initiative/work?** **(maximum 700 words or 5 minutes speaking time)** |
| **Rationale:** We are assessing whether your initiative is feasible without VF funding and whether the funding gap reflects systemic challenges.**Your answer should:*** Explain any barriers your organization has faced in securing funding for this initiative, particularly if it is considered "hard to fund" or not supported through traditional funding channels.
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| **7.** **Regarding Indigenous solution building, how are you using Indigenous governance structures and/or decolonial processes to approach this work? (maximum 700 words limit or 5 minutes speaking time)** |
| **Your answer should:** * Include examples of how you are integrating Indigenous governance structures or decolonial processes into your work, focusing on how these approaches are used to challenge or disrupt colonial systems.
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## Supporting Documents & Media Files

It is optional to include supporting documents such as community letters of support and photos to highlight your initiatives. That said, you may upload:

* A maximum of one letter of support (.docx or .pdf) that is no longer than 1000 words.
* A maximum of five photos (.png or .jpg)
* A maximum of one video or audio file (.mp3 or .mp4) that is no longer than 5 minutes.