




2025 Grant Recipients

Thriving Indigenous Systems Fund

In 2025, Vancouver Foundation's Thriving Indigenous Systems Fund (TISF) granted \$9.2 million to 31 organizations. The fund is designed to create the conditions for systemic change by preserving, evolving, and transforming the social, political, economic, and cultural systems of Indigenous communities in B.C.



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

Binche Whut'en will strengthen healing, land, inherent rights, and culture through the '*Alhgo'h 'uts'ut'en*' ("We all work together") project and youth cultural science camps. This work supports healing by addressing the intergenerational impacts of mercury mining and residential schools, promoting well-being deeply connected to the land. It will strengthen culture and identity by reconnecting youth with ancestral territories through land-based learning, traditional skills like birch bark basketry, and Dakelh language revitalization.

Campbell River Indian Band: This proposal outlines a community-led, land-based educational initiative that centers our inherent rights and responsibilities as sovereign peoples; the revitalization of our language and cultural teachings; and the restoration of wellness through intergenerational learning on the land. Our objectives are to facilitate seasonal camps and place-based learning on key traditional sites. We will teach harvesting, fishing, medicinal plant use, and protocols connected to land stewardship. We will also offer workshops and teachings on hereditary governance, Indigenous law, and UNDRIP.

The **Gitanyow Huwilp Society** will protect our inherent rights and territory, which are foundational to our cultural wellbeing and continued healing. Rather than accepting the limitations of the B.C. treaty process, the Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs will uphold our inherent title to the entire Lax'yip (territory) and their sacred responsibility to protect it from continued and ongoing colonial harm and encroachment. By using community-led governance and legal defence, these initiatives reaffirm our relationship to the land and build the capacity of Wilp (House groups) to practice traditions and protect Gitanyow ayookxw (law).

The **Gwagwāltama Revitalization Society (GRS)** will strengthen the healing and re-connection to our lands, inherent rights and culture enacted through transformative language revitalization work. Through full-time immersion programs, land-based learning, Elder engagement, language technology, and culturally-rooted methodologies like Where Are Your Keys (WAYK), GRS builds pathways for Bakwāmkala learners to reclaim fluency and pass it forward, as is their birthright. The work serves learners from Kwakwaka'wakw Nations including the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw, 'Namgis, Kwakiutl, Quatsino, Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis, and Dzawada'enuxw. Across our programs, GRS creates conditions for systemic transformation by centering Indigenous youth leadership, knowledge, and kinship for a future where Bakwāmkala is once again spoken across territories.

Heiltsuk Tribal Council is supporting a governance model that is a unique blend of Hereditary Chiefs (Y'imas) and elected officials. This innovative approach adheres to our ancient governance traditions and fulfills requirements of the Indian Act. It strengthens our vision of unity, self-reliance, and self-governance while upholding culture, language, and values.

Homalco First Nation will strengthen our deep-rooted connection to the land, ensuring its preservation for generations to come. This will advance food security and sovereignty through traditional harvesting practices, sustainable mariculture, and local food initiatives, reinforcing our ability to nourish community in culturally significant ways. Additionally, we will prioritize economic development that is both sustainable and rooted in Indigenous values, creating opportunities for growth that empower our people while respecting the land we steward.

Iskut Band Council: Ka'a Jani Astit'in: Returning to the Camps of Our Ancestors is a land-based healing and cultural revitalization project led by Iskut Band Council. This initiative will restore our ancestral camps at Ealue Lake and Met'sentan — two sacred sites tied to our matriarchal teachings, naming ceremonies, and survival knowledge. The camps will serve as year-round and seasonal spaces for youth and community members to reconnect with the land, learn Tahltan law and language, and participate in ceremonies that have been displaced by colonization. Elders and knowledge holders will guide programming focused on cultural identity, healing, and intergenerational learning.

Kitasoo Xai'xais Nation will expand our community-led healing and reconnection initiatives. Building upon existing workshops, we aim to offer lateral kindness and non-violent communication sessions quarterly, fostering a culture of respect and understanding. Seasonal gatherings with neighboring Nations, such as Hartley Bay and the Kwakiutl, will be organized to mend and strengthen kinship ties disrupted by colonial systems. Additionally, we plan to host annual workshops with family lawyers to educate members on navigating both Indigenous and Canadian legal systems, empowering them to advocate effectively.

Kitsumkalum First Nation will reach our goals in honouring our Sm'algyax language through resource development, telling stories, learning Sm'algyax vocabulary, and honouring our Kitsumkalum place names and hereditary names. We will support the continuation and deepening of our vital work, which includes providing fair wages and fluent speaker honorariums, supporting on-the-land harvesting initiatives conducted in Sm'algyax, feasting, doing protocol work, and hosting community celebrations. We will also continue planning meetings with Matriarchs, youth, leadership and Elders.

K'omoks First Nation (KFN) will support Indigenous legal education to the community and law reform by the enrichment of self-governance values through Land Code law development. K'omoks First Nation (KFN) adopted Land Code in June 2016. The Land Code governs the management and administration of the KFN reserves and is the fundamental land law of the KFN. By governing with Land Code, the KFN follows the Framework Agreement that recognizes First Nations' inherent right to govern their reserve lands which returns/restores power to the community in ways that bring people together.

Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation: This three-year project, "Revitalizing Our Ancestral Food Sovereignty," directly addresses the urgent need for enhanced food security by reclaiming and revitalizing our traditional practices of harvesting clams, crabs, halibut, sockeye, and other vital seafood from our ancestral territory. Recognizing the accelerating loss of Elder knowledge, this initiative prioritizes intergenerational knowledge transfer through hands-on learning and mentorship. By establishing bi-monthly community harvesting gatherings, we will foster kinship, collaboration, and local capacity building while providing our members of all ages with access to nutritious traditional foods.

The **Lax'yip Firekeepers** is an Gitxsan youth-led organization dedicated to the protection of our territories, revitalization of our culture, and empowerment of all youth (35 and under) living on the Gitxsan Lax'yip in northwest British Columbia. Rooted in the Gitxsan law (Ayookxw) and guided by values of equity, stewardship, and intergenerational responsibility, we provide culturally grounded programming that addresses urgent social and environmental challenges while affirming our sovereignty and connection to the land. Our core programs include land-based gatherings, sustainable living workshops, cultural mentorship, and political education that supports youth in navigating modern challenges with traditional knowledge.

Lhoosk'uz Dene Nation will support the development and delivery of a culturally grounded wellness program rooted in the focus areas of healing, land, and culture. This program will include a land-based healing camp where community members can reconnect with traditional territory, participate in ceremonies, and engage in intergenerational learning with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and clinicians. Workshops will also be delivered within the community to ensure accessibility and reduce barriers, especially for members with mobility challenges or caregiving responsibilities. These workshops will blend cultural teachings with practical wellness tools, addressing topics such as lateral violence, effective communication, burnout, and the impacts of colonization on mental health.

Likhtsamisyu clan has been in the process of re-occupying the traditional territory at Parrot Lake, formerly known as Misdzii kwih (Owl River). The Likhtsamisyu project is currently under construction. Funding will go toward building infrastructure that will better aid us in our endeavour as we provide outdoor education opportunities for children, youth and adults. We have used the territory as a source of traditional ecological knowledge, story-telling, food gathering, hunting, fishing and traditional land based healing.

Old Massett Village Council: The Tidewalkers project will support a powerful, community-led initiative rooted in healing, cultural revitalization, and the restoration of inherent rights through land-based practices. This work reconnects Haida people to traditional knowledge, places of significance, and the teachings that sustain us. At the heart of this initiative is the belief that healing—of people, land, and spirit—comes from returning to the places our ancestors walked. Through traditional food gathering, ceremony, plant knowledge, and youth mentorship, Tidewalkers strengthens cultural identity while building community resilience.

Peace & Unity Delgamuukw Gisday'wa: The Peace & Unity Summit will strengthen land, inherent rights, healing, and culture for the Wet'suwet'en and Gitxsan Nations. We believe we are the land, and the land is us. Generationally we have established deep connections with elders and knowledge keepers with younger generations to exercise cultural practices, language, and governance principles. United together, this summit enhances land stewardship through nation-led resource management, integrating traditional ecological knowledge.

Prophet River First Nation: We will launch a community-led wellness program rooted in healing, cultural resurgence, and inherent rights. This six-week, paid program is designed to support individuals returning from treatment by offering a safe, structured space to reconnect with identity, build skills, and chart a meaningful path forward. The program honours Dane Zaa systems of care by centering cultural knowledge, land-based practices, and individual healing journeys. This program will help restore methods of cultural continuity, support personal and collective healing, and ultimately contribute to Nation sovereignty.

Seabird Island Indian Band will use the TISF funding to enhance our Life Givers Wellness Home – a culturally rooted family wellness hub dedicated to reclaiming Indigenous birth ways, parenting practices, and kinship support systems. Grounded in healing, land-based teachings, and our inherent rights, this initiative weaves together culture, tradition, and community wellness. TISF support will fund a part-time maternal, child and family wellness navigator to coordinate wraparound supports, and expand our midwifery team to ensure Indigenous families receive culturally safe, accessible family wellness care. Through ceremonies, matriarchal mentorship, land-based healing, and family-centered programming, families are held in safety, sovereignty, and community.

The **Secwepemc Hunting Society** will expand our vital land-based cultural camps and workshops for the Secwepemc Nation. Funding will build our capacity to offer more accessible, seasonal camps annually, ensuring more youth, families, and Elders can participate, regardless of their financial situation. This initiative deeply strengthens our connection to the Land (Secwepemcúlecw), as we practice sustainable harvesting, share traditional ecological knowledge for stewardship, and advance our community's food sovereignty.

Sníchim Foundation Society: Our project deepens our transformative efforts centered on Skwxwú7mesh language revitalization — a powerful and necessary response to the impacts of colonization, particularly the Residential School System. This funding will support us in restoring our language to the heart of our identity, relationships with land and one another, and cultural practices. Language revitalization is a healing process that reconnects us with our ancestral knowledge, our lands and waterways, strengthens community wellbeing, and reclaims a sense of wholeness.

Sq'éwlets: We are working towards having our land returned via a specific land claim that was stolen from us over 100 years ago. This celebration is so important to us as land is where our culture, traditions, food and medicines come from. This work honors our inherent right to self-determination by celebrating the return of our land and re-establishing cultural and educational protocols rooted in traditional governance, knowledge, and identity. It is a vital step in reclaiming place, authority, and responsibility over our territory.

Squamish Nation is on an exciting journey to reshape the future of education in our community. The s7ulh wa nexwniówéyalh (Our Ways of Education), Curriculum Development Initiative will strengthen our inherent rights, culture, support our healing and land stewardship practices.

Taking back control of our education on reserve lands from the federal government, allows us to strengthen our inherent right to self-determination, right to education and right to culture. This initiative allows us to design and deliver education that is rooted in Squamish language, culture and worldview which will ensure our children grow up with a culturally appropriate education and have pride in their identity.

The **Sts'ailes** Community Safety Officer (CSO) Program will advance our Justice Strategy's long-term vision: to restore and revitalize our legal systems, support community healing, and uphold inherent Sts'ailes rights through Snowoyelh (our teachings and laws). We will begin by hiring legal support to develop a living database of Sts'ailes Law. This includes building relationships with Elders and Knowledge Keepers and drawing laws from stories, ceremony, and Longhouse teachings. This foundation will directly support justice work that reflects who we are as Sts'ailes people.

Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation will advance the revitalization of the Nuuchah-nulth language, which is central to our cultural identity, inherent rights, and the restoration of our traditional governance systems. Colonial policies have historically suppressed our language and cultural practices, resulting in a significant loss of knowledge. This funding will enable us to continue and expand essential language revitalization initiatives that promote healing and strengthen our community's connection to the land and our heritage. Specifically, the funds will support our Language Department in sustaining and expanding language programming for children, youth, and adults, including immersive language learning at Tlucha Daycare, Wickaninnish Elementary School, and the ʔaʔuukʷiʔaʔ Summer Camp.

Tluu Xaada Naay Society (TXN) – “Canoe People’s House”: TXN provides safe accessible environments/spaces, educational/cultural programs for healing, reconciliation, involvement, learning; extending into our Ancestral Heritage Territorial Villages/waters-areas on northern/western Graham Island. In Kaayang (Old Massett) we have and maintain the Canoe Peoples’ House Cultural Centre, Haida Canoe, Totem and Design Carving Shed and Cedar Working House production facility. Building on these accomplishments we strive to re-establish a living presence in Tliiduu & Xwa by reinstating our Ancestral Village sites in their original west coast location which is currently known as Haines Creek, in K’aanan gandlee-part of Duuguusd Haida Tribal Park.

The T̓silhqot’in Ts’iqi Dechen Jedilhtan (T̓silhqot’in Women’s Council) are responsible to community members, and the elected Chief and Councillor’s who govern **Tsilhqot’in National Government**. We meet with the Nits’il?in-qi regularly to advise on issues and decisions prior to implementation. Our focused areas of Healing, Land, Inherent Rights and Culture are all interconnected within this project. This funding will help us continue to promote healing while being out on the land by filling in the intergenerational gap.

Tū’desē’cho Wholistic Indigenous Leadership Development (TWILD): We believe that bringing our people onto the land, tying Tahltan culture into all practices, and creating safe and belonging environments will bring about health and wellness (mind, body and spirit) to ensure the success of our youth and communities. Our goal is to work with the newly appointed SD87 Indigenous Vice Principal, Dhakāle (Hayle Gallup), to fully integrate TWILD initiatives into Tahltan public schools’ annual schedule and budget. This grant enables our team to walk beside community leaders, such as Dhakāle, providing them with the resources and support they need to succeed. By centering our

teachings around wellness, cultural identity, and land access and stewardship, we believe that we can create learning environments that honour Tahltan values to help students flourish and thrive.

Whispering Pines/Clinton Indian Band: The funds will be used for the WPCIB TSO Range Riders program. This program will put community members and staff out on the land on horseback, on foot, and on ATVs to reestablish a connection to the land and reaffirm title and rights to the territory. Range Riders will be involved in data collection for traditional use sites, wildlife, land use, grazing, and species at risk projects. The data from this program will be invaluable for community members who want to engage in traditional practices such as hunting, fishing, medicine gathering, and plant harvesting.

The **Wilps Aasosxw** Dog Sanctuary operates on the Gitxsan Lax’yip known, as Naa Dax Deet, under the authority of Wilps Gitludahl. The sanctuary is led by Teresa Brown (Maasxw Gutgwinuuxs), Wilp Matriarch and Hereditary Representative of the territory. Governance is rooted in Gitxsan Ayookw (traditional law), and the sanctuary functions as a form of land-based re-occupation, authorized by and accountable to Gitxsan hereditary governance. All board members are Gitxsan women, and the project is deeply embedded in cultural, legal, and territorial frameworks maintained through relational, hereditary authority rather than external or colonial agreements.

Wilps ‘Wii K’aax is a Gitxsan hereditary House group working to protect and restore our territories in northwest B.C. We will strengthen our land-based programs that focus on healing, cultural revitalization, and traditional governance. This funding will help us support our Elders, train youth as Gitxsan Guardians, and create spaces for intergenerational learning on the land. We will continue developing policies based on Gitxsan law (Ayook) to guide access, environmental protection, and decision-making.

The **Xeni Gwet'in** Nashl'ny Nexwelh ?Anadanx Program (Horse Program) is designed to foster cultural reconnection, land-based education, horsemanship, and language revitalization, while remaining inclusive for all age groups within the Xeni Gwet'in community. Rooted in healing and tradition, the program uses horses and horseback riding as a pathway to strengthen cultural identity and well-being. Tsilhqot'in Elders have emphasized the vital role horses play in their heritage and the importance of reintegrating them into everyday life. At the same time, youth have expressed strong interest and enthusiasm to learn, engage, and build meaningful connections through the program.

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 develop a grant program honoring Indigenous self-determination. [Learn more about how deep listening informed the Thriving Indigenous Systems Fund.](#)