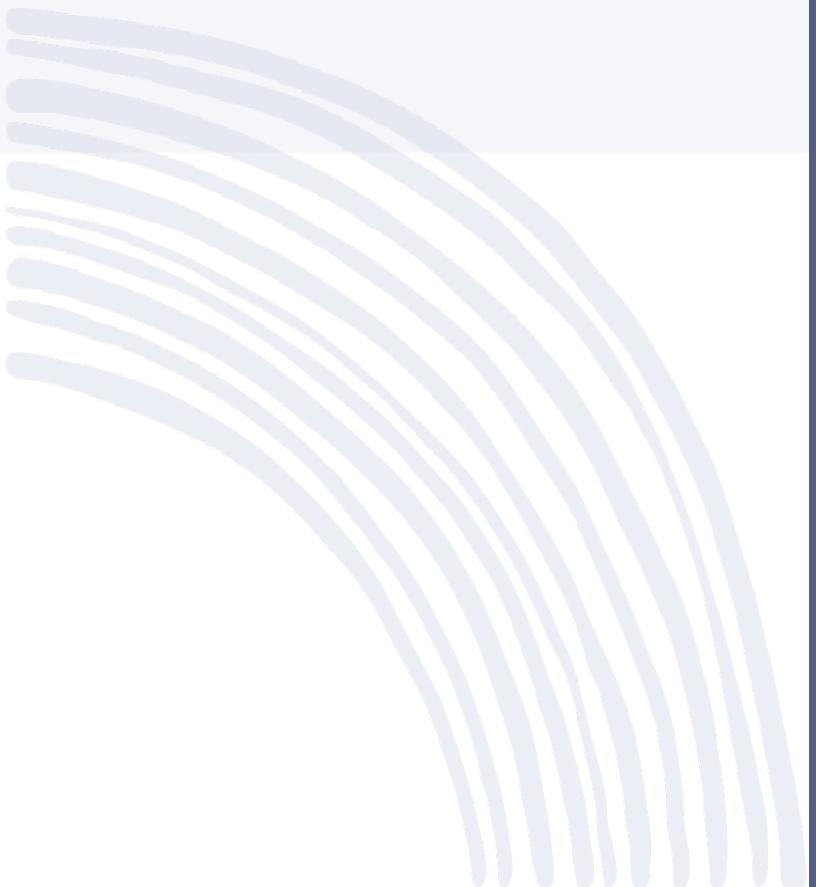




## 2025 Grant Recipients

# Transforming Systems Grants

In 2025, Vancouver Foundation's Transforming Systems Grants (TSG) provided \$11.1 million to 37 organizations. The grant was designed to fund organizations that are advancing systemic change by addressing the root causes of inequality and supporting people most affected by systemic issues to shape their own futures. TSG offers up to \$100,000 a year for three years to qualified organizations, registered non-profit societies, and community co-operatives operating in B.C. It was created to support operational costs, rather than specific projects.



**Abundance Community Farm Society (ACFS)** is advancing systems change through a community-led, land-based model that reimagines how people relate to food, land, and one another. Rooted in regenerative agriculture, and sociocratic governance, ACFS challenges colonial paradigms that prioritize extraction, hierarchy, and individualism. Its free, low-barrier community agriculture program reconnects urban residents with the land, fosters collective stewardship, and builds reciprocal relationships that counter isolation and inequity. Through workshops on reskilling, decolonization, emotional regulation, and land-based healing, the farm nurtures personal and collective transformation while modeling alternative economic structures grounded in shared responsibility and the creation of commons. By practicing cooperative governance, cultivating regenerative ecological systems, and sharing its model through sector networks and partnerships, ACFS is helping to shift food systems, governance practices, and community relationships toward equity, interdependence, and ecological justice.

**The African Friendship Society** advances systems change by reclaiming and revitalizing traditional African knowledge, cultural practices, and worldviews as a direct challenge to colonial narratives and systemic racism. Through community-led, spiritually rooted governance guided by Elders, Griots, and Knowledge Keepers, it strengthens belonging, healing, and intergenerational resilience. Its programs — from cultural festivals and children's immersion initiatives to healing circles, friendship-building projects, and youth empowerment — restore dignity, nurture cultural pride, and create spaces where African and Black diaspora communities can thrive on their own terms. By shifting mental models, expanding cross-community relationships, and elevating African artistic and cultural expression, the organization is building a transformative, culturally grounded foundation for long-term systemic change.

**The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC)** is advancing sector-wide systems change by strengthening Indigenous governance across BC's nonprofit landscape, with a particular focus on the realities and leadership of urban Indigenous communities. Through Elders-guided

teachings, community-owned governance standards, peer-led training, and a growing provincial network of Indigenous leaders, the partnership is rebuilding the infrastructure of the Indigenous nonprofit sector from the ground up. Their work creates space for Indigenous organizations to speak and advocate on their own behalf, disrupts colonial governance norms, and expands Indigenous capacity to lead, train, and support one another without reliance on external "experts." By cultivating long-term relationships, shared policy frameworks, and a coordinated provincial table, Strong Circle and BCAAFC are laying the foundation for a resilient, Indigenous-led governance system that strengthens friendship centres and elevates the voices, rights, and priorities of urban Indigenous people.

**Black + Indigenous Design Collective (BIDC)** is reshaping the spatial design and public art sectors by centering Black and Indigenous knowledge, culture, and leadership. Through decolonized methodologies, community-led governance, and programming that uplifts Indigenous and African diasporic worldviews, BIDC challenges the colonial and Eurocentric frameworks that have long shaped design professions and contributed to displacement, inequity, and cultural erasure. Their work strengthens community agency, builds pathways for emerging artists and designers, and models a transformative approach that has the potential to influence how design education, public art processes, and planning systems operate across the province.

**The BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN)** advances systems change by centering First Nations law, governance, and jurisdiction in policy development across environmental, social justice, and economic sectors. Guided by mandates from the Chiefs-in-Assembly and a governance structure that includes youth, Knowledge Keepers, women and girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ voices, BCAFN ensures that its advocacy is accountable, intersectional, and community-led. Through initiatives such as the First Nations Climate Leadership Agenda, the non-GDP Wellness Indicators Framework, and the Gender Equity Strategic Action Plan, the organization challenges colonial policy frameworks and introduces alternatives grounded in traditional knowledge, relationality, and long-term stewardship.

Rather than seeking inclusion in systems built to exclude First Nations, BCAFN works to rebuild those systems in alignment with inherent rights and responsibilities, supported by the legislative context of UNDRIP implementation. With a clear, phased plan for development, scaling, and sustainability, BCAFN is strategically positioned to translate community-mandated frameworks into measurable, structural change for current and future generations.

The **BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA)** is driving systemic transformation by challenging the legal, policy, and institutional structures that undermine civil liberties and disproportionately harm marginalized communities. Through strategic litigation, policy reform, and community-rooted organizing, BCCLA works to shift the behavior of governments, courts, and public institutions while expanding access to justice for those traditionally excluded. Their current focus on supporting unhoused people confronts the systemic violence of decampment bylaws and advances a national conversation about human dignity, housing rights, and state accountability. By pairing legal action with public education campaigns that amplify the voices of directly impacted people, BCCLA reshapes public narratives and strengthens collective understanding of interconnected rights. Their work also defends free expression—particularly political expression—as a cornerstone of democracy, resisting state repression and cultural imperialism.

**Canadian on Paper Society for Immigrant Physicians Equality** is driving structural reform in Canada's medical licensing system by challenging the discriminatory policies and practices that exclude internationally trained physicians (most of whom are racialized) from practicing medicine. Through rigorous research, policy advocacy, strategic litigation, and coalition-building, the organization exposes how credential recognition processes, quota caps, and opaque review systems are used to limit physician numbers, suppress competition, and devalue immigrant expertise. They work alongside internationally trained physicians, community partners, and academic allies to shift public narratives, advance human rights compliance, and build a fair, merit-based licensing system that reflects the diversity and needs of Canada's population. Their efforts aim to unlock an underutilized medical workforce, strengthen healthcare equity, and transform an exclusionary professional system.

The **Carnegie Housing Project** is driving grassroots systems change in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside by mobilizing low-income residents to challenge the commodification of housing and advance non-market, community-led solutions. Rooted in the leadership of those most affected by displacement and inequity, the project combines policy research, public education, and coordinated organizing to shift power dynamics and hold decision-makers accountable. Through solidarity campaigns—such as a province-wide renter coalition advocating for rent stabilization—and community mobilization against harmful municipal policies, CHP strengthens collective capacity to resist gentrification and protect housing rights. By building symbiotic relationships across the housing justice ecosystem and supporting meaningful participation through accessible, low-barrier practices, the project amplifies community voice and advances structural change toward a just, non-market housing future in the DTES.

The **Cortes Island Academy** is transforming rural and Indigenous education by creating a community-rooted, youth-led high school model that reconnects students with land, culture, and local knowledge. Through experiential, place-based learning co-designed with students, Elders, and community partners, the Academy offers meaningful, culturally grounded education for young people who have historically lacked accessible secondary school options. By addressing the systemic barriers created by centralized, colonial education systems and demonstrating a viable, locally driven alternative, the Academy is building a scalable model that other rural and remote communities can adapt as they work toward equitable, community-centered education.

This **Eastside Community Action Project Society** is advancing grassroots systems change in the Downtown Eastside by centering unhoused and low-income residents as rights holders and leaders in housing justice. Through peer-led initiatives, community education, and frontline advocacy—including support for tent city residents, mobile outreach, and culturally grounded alternatives to policing—the organization challenges exclusionary bylaws, stigma, and systemic neglect. Its flat, community-driven governance model shifts power to those most affected by housing inequity, while its collaborative, relational approach is transforming local and national conversations about homelessness, harm reduction, and dignified, community-controlled housing.

**Gallery Gachet** is advancing systems change by using art as a vehicle for cultural resistance, community healing, and structural transformation in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Rooted in a long history of artist-led organizing by artists with lived experience of mental health challenges, the gallery now operates as an inclusive cultural hub that challenges cultural imperialism and systemic exclusion through mentorship, low-barrier creative programs, and community-led cultural production. Its hybrid programming—ranging from expressive arts drop-ins and digital literacy sessions to exhibitions and publishing projects—supports both the material needs of participants and the broader struggle for narrative power, positioning the DTES as a vital site of cultural memory, critique, and innovation. By amplifying the work of BIPOC, Deaf, disabled, and systemically marginalized artists, and by grounding its operations in reciprocal relationships, care-based accountability, and ongoing community feedback, Gallery Gachet resists deficit-based narratives and builds collective agency. Looking ahead, the organization is expanding its role through initiatives such as a digitally accessible archive and deeper institutional critique, strengthening its long-term vision for cultural self-determination and systemic change.

**Heiltsuk Housing Society** is advancing systemic change in Indigenous housing by restoring local governance, strengthening policy and data systems, and building community capacity to address the root causes of housing inequity. Through culturally grounded governance development, investment in sustainable housing infrastructure, and a focus on equity for Elders, persons with disabilities, and single-parent households, the organization is working toward long-term, community-controlled housing solutions that support Heiltsuk members in Bella Bella and across the province.

**The Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society** (KAFS) advances systems change in urban Indigenous communities by restoring cultural identity, strengthening family and community connections, and rebuilding the supports eroded by colonization, residential schools, and systemic racism. Through holistic, culturally grounded programs — from early childhood development and family preservation to addictions support, youth mentorship, Elders wellness, cultural education, and homelessness services — KAFS provides wraparound care that addresses both immediate

needs and the structural barriers Indigenous people face in housing, health, justice, and education. Funding will strengthen leadership capacity and expand critical infrastructure such as housing, daycare, and food programs, enabling the Friendship Centre to meet growing community needs while deepening its role as a culturally rooted alternative to mainstream systems. Guided by Indigenous self-determination and community connection, KAFS works to heal intergenerational harm, revitalize traditional knowledge, and build the foundations for long-term systemic transformation in Kamloops.

**KUU-US Crisis Line Society** provides culturally grounded, Indigenous-led crisis response that addresses the structural roots of mental health and substance-use inequities. For more than 30 years, KUU-US has filled a critical gap created by colonial underfunding, inaccessible services, and the absence of culturally safe crisis supports — offering 24/7 crisis intervention, mobile outreach, and housing stabilization across Vancouver Island and remote communities. Their approach strengthens Indigenous self-determination through policies and practices rewritten from an Indigenous worldview, deep investments in staff wellness, and trauma-informed training that counters systemic harms. With over 100 protocol agreements with First Nations and Métis Nation BC, KUU-US coordinates rapid, culturally relevant responses that mainstream systems are unable to provide. Importantly, KUU-US plays an essential role in shifting crisis response toward Indigenous-led, community-rooted models that challenge colonial service structures and build long-term pathways to safety, dignity, and wellness.

**The Living With The Land Foundation** is advancing holistic systems change by revitalizing traditional ancient cultural teachings and restoring the central role of Elders, matriarchs, and knowledge keepers in community life. Through land-based learning, ceremonies, sharing circles, and the creation of a culture camp rooted in Secwepemc laws and values, the work reconnects people to identity, belonging, and sacred relationships. By preserving Elders' stories, teaching traditional skills, and fostering environments of safety, trust, and mutual respect, the organization strengthens intergenerational continuity and community resilience. Its programs challenge the root causes of marginalization — disconnection from land, culture, and one another — while empowering participants

to carry traditional teachings into their daily lives. Grounded in humility, reciprocity, and living in right relationship with Mother Earth, the initiative offers a powerful, culturally grounded pathway toward healing, self-determination, and long-term systemic transformation.

**Loud Voice Society** is advancing systems change through an Indigenous-led, culturally grounded recovery model that addresses the root causes of substance use, homelessness, and intergenerational trauma. Guided by a decolonizing, five-phase healing framework, the organization integrates supportive housing, mental health care, cultural practices, and peer-led recovery into a holistic alternative to mainstream systems. Their newly opened supportive recovery home embodies this approach, offering a stable, community-driven environment where individuals can heal at their own pace and remain connected even through setbacks. By collaborating with Indigenous leaders, service providers, and local organizations, Loud Voice Society tailors programs to community needs while reducing stigma and expanding access to trauma-informed, culturally safe care. Investments in trained staff and long-term capacity will strengthen and scale this model, demonstrating a pathway toward self-determined, culturally rooted recovery systems that better serve Indigenous communities and those most affected by structural inequities.

**Matsqui-Abbotsford Impact Society** is advancing emerging systems change by centering Indigenous leadership, lived and living experience, and youth-driven cultural revitalization in its approach to substance use, homelessness, and systemic marginalization. Through programs like VYPER, Drug War Survivors, and peer-led housing and harm reduction initiatives, the organization shifts power to those most affected by colonialism, criminalization, and inequitable service systems — supporting them to design and lead their own solutions. Impact Society strengthens cultural identity and community connection through youth-led powwows, culture nights, and workshops, while also driving policy and systems reform through its leadership in BCCOPUD, legal advocacy, and cross-sector collaborations such as Abbotsford's Community Action Table. By pairing frontline support with structural advocacy, research partnerships, and public education, the organization works to transform the narratives, practices, and institutional responses that shape substance use and youth wellbeing. At its core, the society restores voice, agency, and belonging to those most impacted

by systemic harm, fostering self-determination and community-led pathways to long-term change.

**The Minaq Indigenous Editors Association (MIEA)** is advancing systems change in the publishing sector by restoring Indigenous authority, knowledge, and leadership in how stories are created, edited, and shared. Governed by a consensus-based Indigenous Council and grounded in culturally safe, Indigenous-led practices, MIEA strengthens self-determination through training, mentorship, and professional development for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis editors, writers, Knowledge Keepers, and language experts. The organization is reshaping industry norms, shifting power dynamics, and ensuring that publishing about Indigenous peoples is guided by Indigenous protocols and worldviews. As the only organization providing dedicated training for Indigenous storytelling professionals across Canada, MIEA is building the infrastructure for long-term sector transformation and helping create a publishing landscape where Indigenous stories are stewarded with integrity, respect, and cultural authority.

**Oxygen Art Centre** is advancing systems change through decolonial, feminist, and anti-oppressive art practices that challenge the neoliberal, heteropatriarchal, and white-centered ideologies shaping rural cultural life. As the only artist-run centre in the Columbia Basin, Oxygen provides free, accessible programming that supports historically marginalized artists, fosters critical cultural research, and creates space for diverse artistic and pedagogical practices. Through residencies, exhibitions, workshops, reading groups, and community-engaged projects, the organization cultivates slow, care-centered approaches rooted in regional histories and ecological rhythms. Its multi-year curatorial frameworks, accessibility action plan, and collaborative governance model embed structural change into both programming and institutional practice. By nurturing relationships, amplifying underrepresented voices, and integrating countercultural and decolonizing methodologies, Oxygen strengthens rural cultural infrastructure and contributes to long-term transformation in the arts ecosystem — locally and across broader networks committed to equity and inclusion.

The **As'in'iwa'chî Ni'yaw Nation**, through the leadership of Nikihk Management and Community Development Society, is advancing long-term systems change by reclaiming governance, cultural identity, and community wellbeing after generations

of exclusion from federal recognition and funding. Grounded in Cree law, oral tradition, and collective leadership, the organization is building an alternative governance model that resists colonial structures and strengthens Indigenous self-determination. Through community-defined development, cultural revitalization, and programs that support housing, services, and cultural continuity, Nikihk is fostering a thriving, resilient Nation where members can reconnect with their rights, lands, and traditions. Their work lays the foundation for a sovereign, culturally grounded future shaped by and for the people of the As'in'īwa'chî Ni'yaw Nation.

The **Nuxalk Nation's Food Office** is advancing Indigenous food sovereignty by rebuilding local and regional food systems grounded in Nuxalk knowledge, governance, and cultural identity. Through land-based harvesting, community-led food distribution, and programs that reconnect people with ancestral foods and teachings, they're addressing the deep impacts of colonialism on food access, health, and cultural continuity. Their work strengthens household self-sufficiency, restores traditional roles and relationships, and creates dignified, culturally rooted pathways to food security. By reimagining food systems from the ground up — and working to remove institutional barriers to traditional food access — this initiative is modeling a transformative, community-driven approach that can inspire systemic change across other Indigenous and rural communities.

**Xaad Kíl Née** advances systems change by revitalizing Xaad Kíl in ways that directly confront the colonial forces that have eroded Haida language, culture, and identity. Guided by Elders, the Xaad Kil Language Authority, and Haida protocols, the program strengthens linguistic sovereignty through immersive education, intergenerational learning, and community-owned curriculum development. By partnering with leading Indigenous language scholars and grounding all content in Haida values, the initiative trains new fluent speakers who can carry the language forward and embed it in daily life. Its activities — from seasonal camps and mentorship to resource creation and storytelling — restore cultural continuity, foster community resilience, and reinforce self-determination. Xaad Kíl Née offers a sustainable, community-led pathway for cultural reclamation and long-term systemic transformation rooted in Haida knowledge and leadership.

**Propolis Cooperative Housing Society** is reimagining housing systems through a bold, community-owned model that challenges the colonial and capitalist structures driving the housing crisis. Rooted in mutual aid, climate resilience, and collective well-being, Propolis is building affordable, net-zero homes governed by residents and financed through community bonds — redistributing power and creating long-term stability outside the private market. Their approach addresses interconnected systemic issues, from affordability and environmental sustainability to food security and social isolation, while fostering intentional community and shared stewardship. Propolis is laying the groundwork for a transformative network of cooperative, deeply sustainable housing in Kamloops, guided by partnerships, reflection on Indigenous rights and title, and a commitment to building inclusive neighbourhoods.

The **Salish Sea Indigenous Guardians Association** (SSIGA) is advancing transformative systems change by restoring Indigenous authority, knowledge, and stewardship in land and water governance across the Salish Sea region. Rooted in Indigenous self-determination, SSIGA confronts the colonial foundations of current land management systems — legal fictions, broken treaties, environmental racism, and regulatory processes that sideline Indigenous priorities — and replaces them with community-led approaches grounded in Indigenous worldviews and cumulative, place-based knowledge. Through Indigenous-led monitoring, data collection, education, and stewardship programs, SSIGA equips member Nations with the tools needed to assess impacts, assert their rights, and make informed decisions about their territories. By building regional databases, strengthening partnerships, and supporting meaningful participation in policy and regulatory processes, SSIGA is reshaping how environmental decisions are made and creating pathways toward justice, sustainability, and Indigenous-led land governance that benefits both communities and ecosystems for generations to come.

The **Sníchim Foundation** is leading cultural resurgence by revitalizing Skw̱xwú7mesh sníchim (Squamish language) through land-based, intergenerational, and immersion-focused learning. With the language once on the brink of extinction, the foundation has helped more than 100 community members develop advanced fluency and continues to expand accessible pathways for

learners at all levels. Their work strengthens cultural identity, wellbeing, and belonging, while directly addressing the systemic impacts of colonialism by restoring language as a source of sovereignty, healing, and community leadership. Through partnerships, certificate programs, and culturally grounded employment opportunities, the foundation is rebuilding the conditions for Sḵwxwú7mesh sníchim to thrive across generations — in homes, schools, and on the land — offering a transformative, community-led model for long-term systemic impact.

The **Squamish Welcome Centre** (SWC) is advancing systems change by fostering social inclusion, challenging harmful narratives, and addressing the structural conditions that marginalize migrant workers and other vulnerable community members. Through participatory, lived-experience-driven leadership, SWC creates welcoming spaces and programs that bridge divides across immigration status, age, and background, while confronting the inequities embedded in Canada's systems of differential inclusion. Its work combines direct support — such as assisting migrant workers facing wage theft or exclusion from services — with broader advocacy, public education, and policy engagement to shift mental models and institutional practices. By strengthening community ties, amplifying marginalized voices, and filling critical gaps in the social safety net, SWC is laying the groundwork for long-term structural transformation and a more equitable, connected communities.

The **John Howard Society of BC** (JHSBC) is advancing meaningful systems change by addressing the structural drivers of criminal justice inequity and supporting people impacted by social, economic, and legal injustice. JHSBC combines research, advocacy, public education, and culturally safe programming to tackle interconnected root causes such as housing insecurity, systemic racism, unmet mental health and addiction needs, and stigma. Through province-wide partnerships with communities, Indigenous leaders, lived-experience experts, academics, and policymakers, the organization works to reform justice practices, expand restorative and prevention-focused approaches, and strengthen early supports that reduce pathways into the criminal justice system. Their federated model empowers regional autonomy and community-led solutions while advancing coordinated policy change across B.C. By integrating direct support with structural advocacy — ranging from policing reform and safe supply recommendations to literacy initiatives,

record suspension supports, and data transparency — JHSBC is reshaping justice and social systems toward equity, dignity, and long-term reintegration for all.

The **North Shore Restorative Justice Society** (NSRJS) is advancing systems change by embedding restorative, anti-oppressive, and decolonizing practices across the education and justice systems. Through initiatives that center youth voices, Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, and lived-experience leadership, NSRJS challenges punitive structures and builds cultures of accountability, empathy, and relational healing. Their Restorative Justice in Education Initiative disrupts exclusionary school practices by co-creating restorative circles and conflict-capacity programs with students and educators, while their Restorative Response Program diverts cases from the criminal justice system into culturally affirming, community-led processes. Guided by justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion principles, NSRJS strengthens partnerships with local Indigenous Nations, conducts equity audits, and adapts policies to remove barriers related to language, disability, and status. By focusing on prevention, education, advocacy, and collective healing, the organization shifts power to those most impacted by harm and works toward long-term systemic transformation.

**T'akhu Átlén Conservancy** advances systems change from a Tlingit perspective by restoring traditional governance, cultural revitalization, and land stewardship as the foundations of community wellbeing and self-determination. Guided by the concept of Yaa nax'aku—"fish is swimming," a return to ancestral ways — TAC delivers land-based programs and leadership training that reconnect Elders, Knowledge Keepers, youth, and community members to Tlingit laws, language, and homelands. Initiatives such as the Nakina Trail Hike and the forthcoming Taku Leadership Training strengthen intergenerational knowledge transfer, build confidence in cultural and legal traditions, and prepare youth to participate in Nation-level decision-making. As a TRTFN-led charity, TAC integrates cultural continuity with environmental stewardship, ensuring that conservation efforts uphold Lingit Kusteeyi and the long-term health of the territory. Through intentional governance, community accountability, and Tlingit-led solutions, TAC challenges colonial systems and nurtures a sustainable, culturally grounded future for the Taku River Tlingit people and beyond.

**The Indigenous Law Research Unit (ILRU) at UVic** is advancing transformative systems change by revitalizing Indigenous legal orders and restoring their authority in contemporary governance, justice, and community life. Working in deep partnership with Indigenous communities, ILRU supports the re-articulation and implementation of Indigenous laws through collaborative research, clear-language resources, and tools that help communities apply their own legal traditions to today's challenges. Their work empowers individuals and Nations to reclaim law as a living, evolving practice — countering colonial narratives that confine Indigenous law to the past — and fosters meaningful engagement through workshops, youth-led learning, and community-driven legal education. By providing public legal education to legal professionals, academics, and the broader public, ILRU is also reshaping the mainstream legal landscape, ensuring Indigenous law is recognized, taught, and practiced as a vital part of Canada's legal fabric. Through these interconnected efforts, ILRU is helping build more respectful, balanced, and relational systems of law and governance grounded in Indigenous knowledge and self-determination.

**Living Wage BC** is advancing systemic change by tackling poverty and wage inequality through an intersectional, community-driven approach rooted in equity, self-determination, and accountability. Grounded in commitments to Truth and Reconciliation, anti-racism, and Right Relations with the land, LWBC works alongside low-wage workers to identify the structural barriers created by racism, gender inequity, and immigration status, and to advocate for policy change. Through community-informed research, compensated focus groups, and partnerships across the province, the initiative calculates living wage rates, certifies employers committed to fair compensation, and pushes for broader reforms in labour laws, economic policy, and corporate accountability. Building on policy wins such as paid sick leave, LWBC is expanding its advocacy and public education efforts to strengthen worker protections and shift the systems that keep people in poverty. With a clear strategy and growing momentum, the organization is helping to reshape BC's economic landscape toward dignity, fairness, and long-term structural change.

**The Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society (VAHS)** is advancing a transformative, Indigenous-led model of healthcare that restores cultural authority, self-determination, and holistic wellness

for urban Indigenous communities. Rooted in traditional medicine, land-based healing, and food sovereignty, VAHS is building a parallel health system that addresses the root causes of harm — including systemic racism, cultural erasure, and the social determinants of health — while offering trauma-informed, culturally grounded care across the lifespan. Guided by Elders, clients, and frontline staff, the organization weaves together medical and dental services, early years supports, cultural programming, and the development of a new healing center to create a community-driven, spiritually anchored approach to wellness. Through strong partnerships and a vision for scalable change, VAHS is modeling a powerful alternative to mainstream healthcare — one that centers Indigenous knowledge, relational accountability, and the full spectrum of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual wellbeing.

**Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU)** is advancing systems change by challenging the structural discrimination faced by illicit drinkers and reshaping how substance use is understood and addressed in public health, shelter systems, and policy. Rooted in peer leadership and Indigenous-informed harm reduction, the organization works to dismantle punitive practices, reform shelter and municipal policies, and expand access to programs that offer safety, dignity, and stability. Through evidence-based advocacy, community education, and partnerships with health agencies and researchers, this initiative brings the lived expertise of illicit drinkers into policy conversations that have historically excluded them. Their work addresses the intertwined impacts of racism, poverty, and criminalization while building a continuum of care that centers autonomy, cultural safety, and meaningful access to support.

**Vancouver Association for the Survivors of Torture (VAST)** is advancing systems change in BC's mental health and criminal justice systems by centering survivor leadership and trauma-informed practice as essential foundations of care and public safety. Drawing on nearly four decades of frontline experience with refugees and newcomers who have survived torture, war, and political violence, VAST provides culturally grounded, trauma-informed mental health services while using those insights to push for institutional reform. Their work integrates clinical care, capacity building, and policy advocacy — training health authorities, municipal agencies, and settlement organizations to adopt trauma-informed, culturally safe approaches, and advancing provincial strategies

to remove regulatory barriers to federally funded mental health programs. VAST advocates for policing models that protect rather than penalize survivors, including efforts to separate immigration enforcement from local law enforcement. With more than half of the team identifying as survivors and shaping programs, training, and organizational direction, VAST is transforming not only access to care but the systems that have historically excluded and harmed those most affected by violence and displacement.

**BC Indigenous Housing Society (BCIHS)** advances systems change by embedding Indigenous cultural practices, governance, and values into every aspect of its housing, wellness, and community-support work. Governed by an all-Indigenous board and guided by principles of reconciliation, equity, and self-determination, BCIHS counters cultural erasure and systemic marginalization through programs co-designed with residents and grounded in ceremony, language, and trauma-informed practice. Its culturally rooted housing, addiction supports, wellness initiatives, and community partnerships uphold dignity and cultural safety while strengthening long-term resilience for urban Indigenous Peoples. By challenging systemic barriers, advocating for equitable access to healthcare and housing, and fostering agency through life-skills, employment, and cultural revitalization programs, BCIHS builds pathways toward structural equity and community-led transformation. The organization's governance, values, and holistic service model position it as a vital force advancing Indigenous-led solutions and collective liberation.

with education and systems-level collaboration to shift public perception, strengthen rural health infrastructure, and build healthier, more informed communities.

The **Worker Solidarity Network (WSN)** is advancing transformative systems change by confronting the structural drivers of precarious employment and racialized inequality in British Columbia. Rooted in community leadership and self-determination, WSN organizes non-unionized, low-wage workers across retail, hospitality, and the gig economy to strengthen labour rights, improve workplace standards, and build an inclusive economy where everyone has access to stable, secure, and dignified work. Through legal advocacy, policy engagement, Know Your Rights education, and worker-led research, the organization exposes systemic injustices — from climate-related workplace dangers to exploitative employment practices — and mobilizes collective action for stronger protections. The planned drop-in center will serve as a hub for legal support, workshops, and community organizing, expanding access to justice while deepening long-term advocacy infrastructure. By centering the voices of racialized, gender-diverse, and other marginalized workers, WSN is reshaping labour systems toward equity, accountability, and economic justice.

**West Kootenay/Boundary AIDS Network Outreach Support Society (ANKORS)** is advancing systems change in rural health and harm reduction by centering people with lived and living experience in every aspect of its work — from governance to service delivery. Serving the West Kootenay Boundary region, the organization supports people who use drugs and those affected by HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, and other blood-borne infections, offering low-barrier health services, referrals, and trusted relationships in communities where supports are limited. Through partnerships with Elders, health authorities, local governments, and community agencies, ANKORS influences healthcare practices, housing systems, and public policy, contributing to measurable improvements such as reduced overdose deaths and expanded provincial advocacy. Grounded in allyship, mutual liberation, and community leadership, ANKORS combines frontline support